

India likely to fail 2015 poverty goals

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New Delhi: India's poverty rates fell from 51% to 37% between 1990 and 2008. But it will still not reach the required poverty headcount ratio (percentage of population below the national poverty line) of 23.9% by 2015 to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG).

Now, the national HCR stands at 47.8%, and India will achieve poverty HCR level of 26.72% by 2015.

The Millennium Development Goals, 2012, report, released by the United Nations on Monday, says by 2015, 1 billion people will live across the globe on less than \$1.25 a day — a global extreme poverty rate of 16%. Four out of every five persons living in extreme poverty will be found in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia (of which India is the major country).

India will also fail to halve — between 1990 and 2015 — the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. Malnourishment of children is a significant indicator of food insecurity. From estimated 52% in 1990, the proportion of underweight children below three years is required to be reduced to 26% by 2015, according to the MDG.

But the proportion of



underweight children has declined from 43% to about 40% during 1998-99 to 2005-06. At this rate of decline, the proportion of underweight children below three years is expected to come down to only about 33% by 2015.

Some of the large states have a prevalence of underweight children above the national level estimate like MP (57.9%), Bihar (54.9%), Jharkhand (54.6%), Chhattisgarh (47.8%), Meghalaya (42.9%), UP (41.6%) and Gujarat (41.1%).

Frederika Meijer, UN Resident Coordinator, said, "Hunger remains a global challenge. Around 850 million people live in hunger, 237 million in India — the disparity is greatest in southern Asia."

Jayati Ghosh, professor of economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), said, "India has the largest hungry population and it's a cause of serious alarm."