



Special Issue

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The role of India in shaping sustainable development goals

Archana Pandey

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Dr. R. M. L. Government Degree College, Aonla, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India

Correspondence Author: Archana Pandey

Abstract

The term sustainable development which began to gain wide acceptance in the late 1980's, after its appearance in Our Common Future, also known as the Brundtland Report. The Brundtland Report defines the term: according to which the sustainable development is the development which meets the need of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs. It requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life. Sustainable Development is being considered as an act of humanity where development should take place without bargaining the necessities of the upcoming generation. The sphere where humans live in is generally known as “Environment” and those entire acts humans do in order to enhance their lives within that habitat is “Development”. These two go hand in hand and are attached to one another. India has embraced the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals and has integrated them into its national development agenda. The government has implemented various policies and programs aligned with the SDGs, focusing on areas such as poverty eradication, healthcare, education, gender equality, clean energy and sustainable consumption and production.

Keywords: development, sustainable development, India, SDGs

Introduction

Sustainable development is viewed as a humanitarian endeavour in which progress is made without compromising the needs of future generations. The realm in which people reside is commonly referred to as the "Environment," and the entirety of the actions people take to improve their quality of life there is referred to as "Development." These two are interdependent and go hand in hand. The goal of sustainable development is to address the environment and development from two perspectives. According to the idea, people, society, and economy should grow while maintaining nature (earth, biodiversity), life support (ecosystem, resources, and environment), and community. If we move our eyes towards the environment and climate changes it shows a clear picture of how frequently things are degrading. The approach of sustainable development is a masterstroke to overcome these issues along with encouraging the development. As it can be seen from the past records that every nation who has gained freedom has attained it by economic development, thus to cope up with the world, economic development becomes the only way to exist.

One view of sustainable development is that it is a human endeavor. There is still a gap in terms of international harmony and integration notwithstanding progress and expansion. The world is also plagued by problems including resource scarcity, global warming, climate change, and species extinction. All of them are related to one another and can be settled through the application of sustainable development as a cohesive strategy.

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The goal of sustainable development is to advance justice and equality, promote growth in all spheres, and save the environment. This is the point at which sustainable development becomes challenging because these issues typically conflict with one another.

In the present time, the race of economic development has left environment far behind, a lot of damage has been caused to earth and reason being pollution, industrial waste and extensive use of resources. Lately, people have shown concern towards the planet and now they understand that living in a developed society with a degraded environment will not work. The major challenge being faced today is that this understanding of sustainable development is required to be put into practice by reducing unsustainable methods. Sustainable development tries to provide the basic needs to the economy but in a sustainable way and reducing the 2 wastages of natural resources in all ways. In the prosperity of a country economic development is the key and the route towards it is good business and technologies used, in which education plays an important role. Ultimately, healthy education in any country will enable people to sustain the resources by using them effectively and efficiently and also by expanding the business with their knowledge.

Various economies of the world are joining hands and are integrating with each other to save the planet. Countries whether developing or developed need to implement sustainable ways and methods.

Sustainable development goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the outcome of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Summit held in September 2015. There are altogether 17 goals which focus on eliminating poverty and protect the environment in every possible manner. SDGs are replacement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or to say, SDGs are add-ons in MDGs. In 2015, the UN formed 17 SDGs in place of existing eight MDGs to eliminate extreme poverty. All members of the UN adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' in which 17 SDGs were introduced. This is a huge responsibility as this agenda is a planet saviour; this is why 2015 is said to be a Landmark year. Some major agreements were adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015:

India has also adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and they are dealt with by NITI Aayog. In this context RIS (Research and Information System), NITI Aayog and State Government integrated into shaping the policy framework for the better implementation of SDGs. The goals to transform the world are and their respective targets are described below -

SDG 1 no poverty: This goal's primary objective is to eradicate poverty in all of its manifestations. It also seeks to provide everyone's fundamental necessities and free them from the oppressive and dangerous cycles of poverty.

SDG 2 zero hunger: The primary objectives of this goal are to eradicate all forms of malnutrition and boost agricultural output and enhancing farming methods, preserving ecosystems, and strengthening sustainable production method.

SDG 3 good health and well-being: The goal emphasizes in reducing maternal mortality ratio and strengthens the preventions and treatment measure for premature mortality. It also promotes mental health and well-being by providing availability of good medicines and vaccination.

SDG 4 quality education: Education plays a significant role in development. This objective is to guarantee high-quality education to all people without exception.

SDG 5 gender equality: There need to be equality and no differences in treatment based on gender. Equal rights for women should be granted in the areas of education and political empowerment. They should also be free from violence and have the same freedoms as men.

SDG 6 clean water and sanitation: Water is a basic necessity for the existence of life. Thus this goal aims at providing clean water in both ways quality and quantity wise. Also to provide access to proper sanitation facilities.

SDG 7 affordable and clean energy: This is an approach towards clean resources and sources of energy, available at affordable rates.

SDG 8 decent work and economic growth: The ultimate goal is steady economic growth, so everyone should have access to job possibilities. Industries and MSMEs should be adequately built in order to generate jobs.

SDG 9 industry, innovation, and infrastructure: This goal is an attempt to promote sustainable industrialization using environment-friendly techniques to enhance production.

SDG 10 reduced inequality: Based on the rich-poor criterion, there should be no disparities both within and between nations.

SDG 11 sustainable cities and communities: Building cities and communities by preserving the natural heritage and providing safe and amenities inclusive habitat to live in.

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SDG 12 responsible consumption and production: Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, as a goal, aims to prevent overuse and promote reuse, recycle and reduce techniques.

SDG 13 climate action: The threats of climate hazards need to rectify immediately thus this goal emphasizes on creating awareness about climate change and adapt ways to protect it and also to strengthen the facilities to cover natural hazards.

SDG 14 life below water: There should not be any marine pollution and life underwater should be protected by not contaminating it is the motive of this goal. Taking special measure in regards to overfishing and promoting scientific methods to improve the water life.

SDG 15 life on land: The most important thing is to protect nature, the ecosystem and all the diversity of nature. It also aims to promote the implementation of sustainable management in all forest types, stop deforestation, restore degraded forests and significantly increase afforestation and reforestation worldwide.

SDG 16 peace and justice: Strong Institutions Reducing all type of violence in the form of trafficking, abusing and exploitation of any age group is the main concern of this goal. This includes a strong legal framework and access to justice by all.

SDG 17 partnerships to achieve the goal: This is the main factor as these targets can be achieved only through the integrated and combined efforts of all countries together.

India's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals is reflected in its approach to the National Development Agenda, as reflected in the motto of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikaas (Collective Efforts for Inclusive Economic Growth). Based on evidence from the SDG India Index, which measures progress at the national level, the country has developed a robust SDG localization model that focuses on adoption, implementation and monitoring at the state and district levels.

The following narrative further encapsulates India's progress across the SDGs. India plays a significant role in shaping sustainable development due to its size, population and diverse socio-economic challenges. Some keys aspects of India's role are-

Empowered and resilient India

India has successfully lifted more than 271 million people out of multidimensional poverty through economic growth and empowerment. Enhanced access to nutrition, child health, education, sanitation, drinking water, electricity and housing, has led to reduced inequalities especially among people in vulnerable situations.

Healthy and clean India

India attained 100% rural sanitation, a significant decrease in stunting, and low rates of infant and mother mortality through a national program sparked by the Clean India Campaign and the National Nutrition Mission. Ayushman Bharat, the world's largest health protection system, has institutionalized universal health coverage by providing an annual benefit of USD 7,000 to 100 million households, or almost 500 million individuals. Leading the charge for coordinated international action to combat the COVID-19 epidemic is India. The nation has established the SAARC COVID-19 Emergency Fund with an initial commitment of USD 10 million and has provided

medical help to a number of nations. Within the country, India's reaction to the COVID-19 epidemic includes direct cash transfers for the most disadvantaged, a comprehensive health coverage plan for front-line workers, and an initial economic stimulus package valued at USD 22.5 billion.

Entrepreneurial and inclusive India

Social inclusion is sought by making access to food, healthcare, education and social protection universal and developing entrepreneurship and employment skills. Financial inclusion through Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) trinity – near universal access to bank accounts aided by the Jan Dhan Yojana (National Financial Inclusion Scheme); Aadhaar card (National unique identity number) for over 90% of the population; and expansive access to mobile phones, has propelled new avenues of credit, insurance, and Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) to the poor, including to over 200 million women, thereby accelerating their economic empowerment.

Sustainable India

India's climate action plans include planned eco-restoration, disaster-resistant infrastructure, and clean and efficient energy systems. In accordance with its nationally-determined contributions, India has electrified all of its villages, restored 26 million hectares of degraded land and installed 450GW of renewable energy by 2030. It has also cut its yearly carbon emissions by 38 million tonnes by using energy-efficient appliances and supplied clean cooking fuel to 80 million impoverished households. India is ranked third in the world for renewable energy, fourth for wind power, and fifth for solar power. To harness international collaborations for climate change and catastrophe resilience, India founded the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for catastrophe Resilient Infrastructure.

Vibrant and prosperous India

India is a rapidly expanding emerging market economy, characterized by a youthful populace and a thriving innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem. India, whose GDP was \$2.72 trillion in 2018–19, aims to reach \$5 trillion in GDP by 2025. To do this, it will pursue an inclusive and sustainable growth trajectory through increasing entrepreneurship, infrastructural development, manufacturing, investments, and technological innovation. The Indian government is determined to keep up its cooperative efforts with all regional and international partners in order to expedite the creation of a sustainable world for coming generations.

Sustainable agriculture

Agriculture is a vital sector in India and sustainable agricultural practices are crucial for food security, rural development and environmental conservation. India has been promoting sustainable agriculture techniques such as organic farming, precision farming and water management practices. These measures aim to enhance productivity while minimizing the environmental impact of agriculture.

Waste management

India faces significant challenges in waste management due to its large population and urbanisation. However, the country has been taking steps towards sustainable waste management

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practices. Initiatives include waste segregation at source, recycling and composting programs and the promotion of waste-to-energy technologies. These efforts contribute to reducing pollution, conserving resources and promoting sustainable development.

Renewable energy transition

India has made substantial progress in promoting renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power. The country has set ambitious targets for renewable energy capacity and has implemented various policies and incentives to encourage their adoption. India's efforts in renewable energy contribute to global efforts in mitigating climate change and transitioning to a low carbon economy.

Sustainable urbanization

As urbanization continues to accelerate in India, sustainable urban development becomes crucial. The government has launched initiatives like the Smart Cities Mission and AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) to promote sustainable urban planning, efficient infrastructure and improved quality of life in cities. These initiatives focus on areas such as transportation, energy efficiency, waste management and green spaces.

National implementation

India has aligned its national development plans with the SDGs. The government has launched programs such as the National Action Plan on Climate Change and the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission) to address specific SDGs such as climate action and clean water and sanitation.

Conclusion

Although India has made significant progress in meeting several Sustainable Development Goals, there is still work to be done to achieve the goals by 2030. Despite all that has been achieved, challenges remain due to a number of factors such as inadequate resources, limited capacity, social and economic inequality and systemic barriers. In addition, complex and interconnected issues such as climate change, poverty and gender inequality require a holistic and collaborative approach. Social capital can help address these challenges by fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing and local ownership. It can promote social cohesion and inclusion, improve resilience and increase the adaptive capacity of communities, ultimately leading to more sustainable and inclusive development. The government, civil society organizations, and various stakeholders need to continue to collaborate and implement initiatives to address the remaining challenges and accelerate progress towards the SDGs. The country recognises the importance of sustainable development and is working towards integrating the goals into its policies, programs and actions.

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