

Sustainable Development Goals and Its Challenges: For Achieving 2030 Agenda in India

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Abstract

Today, in the era of globalization where all the countries are trying to get ahead of each other on the path of development and for this; all possible measures are being for development of economies. India is booming therefore sustainable development becomes increasingly more important. The world economies have unified in their efforts to achieve the goals of sustainable development. This is in sheer contrast to various earlier approaches where governments pursued goals for the growth and development of their respective economies. The struggle for growth and excellence has created imbalance in the economic development among countries, depleted some of the natural resources and has thus altered the ecological balance. The impact of this is being experienced in the form of global warming and climate change. Since this threatens the very existence of human life on earth, a course of action that would ensure a safe environment for future generations has become the need of the hour. The resolution of 'Transforming Our World': The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was accepted by 193 countries including India in September 2015. By adoption this agenda, the countries are moving forward for achieving a world free from poverty, gender inequality and economic inequality and thereby ensuring a healthy planet for future generations. India has been progressing rapidly towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This paper makes an attempt to understand the scenario of SDGs in India in achieving Sustainable development goals and offers suggestions to overcome them.

Keywords: Millennium Development Goals (MDG), Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG)

Introduction

Sustainable development is a term coined to ensure that development takes place in such a way that natural resources are sustained and passed on to the future generations unimpaired. Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aimed to build a more prosperous, more equal, and more secure world by the year 2030 have been developed. They have been adopted by 193 Member States at the UN General Assembly Summit in September 2015 as a part of their agenda for Sustainable Development. India is a signatory to this summit and is strongly committed to the 2030 agenda. Sustainable development is a process in which certain actions are taken to ensure that future generation requirements are not curtailed while using available resources to meet the current requirements. According to The United Nations sustainable development defines as “that type of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Earlier sustainable development has less focused on climate change and environmental issues, but the new perspective of sustainable

development, includes all efforts towards an inclusive, sustainable and flexible future for people and the planet.

The concept of sustainable development emphasizes on making economic development policies suitable for environment. The purpose of this is to change the development policies that govern the environment. Sustainable development is not only to adapt to the environment but it is also a paradigm whereby the exploitation of resources, the direction of investment, the state of technological development and the gradual changes can be adapted to the present as well as the future needs. Sustainable development includes economic and social development that protects the environment and social equality. Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aimed to develop a more prosperous, more equal, and more secure world by the year 2030. India is a signatory to this summit and is strongly committed to achieve the 2030 agenda.

Objective of the paper

- To study the concept of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda-2030
- To find out the importance and current status of Sustainable Development Goals in India.
- To find out the challenges in successful implementation of this programme in India.
- To give suggestions.

Research Methodology

A number of researches already took place on different aspect of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda-2030. This is descriptive research based on the secondary data collected from NITI Aayog reports, research articles, magazines, newspapers and various websites. This paper examines India's readiness to assess its progress towards the SDGs. Current study has not assessed and evaluate some targets of SDGs due to inability to find relevant data or appropriate methodologies.

The sustainable development goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is more than a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets. The 2030 Agenda build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) but are much broader in scope and ambition, encompassing the eradication of poverty and hunger and improved health and nutrition; reduction of inequality; the building of peaceful, just and inclusive societies; the protection of human rights; the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls etc. It also aims to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all, taking into account different levels of national development and capacities. The 2030 Agenda advocates sustainable development in all of its three dimensions, for all countries (developing and developed) based on the fundamental recognition and protection of human rights, dignity and equity.

A total of 17 goals were set in the United Nations Agenda 2030, which are as follows:



1. Eradication of all forms of poverty from all over the world.
2. End hunger, food security and promote better nutrition and sustainable agriculture.
3. Promoting health protection and healthy living in people of all ages.
4. Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and giving everyone the opportunity to learn.
5. Empowering women and girls while achieving gender equality.
6. Ensuring availability of cleanliness and sustainable management of water for all.
7. Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy.
8. Promoting inclusive and sustainable economic development, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.
9. Promote flexible infrastructure, inclusive and sustainable industrialization.
10. Reducing inequality between and within countries.
11. Building safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements.
12. Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. To take immediate action to deal with climate change and its effects.
14. Conservation and utilization of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. Strive to prevent increasing loss of terrestrial ecosystems, safe forests and biodiversity promoting sustainable use.
16. Along with promoting peaceful and inclusive committees for sustainable development, making them effective, accountable at all levels to ensure justice for all.
17. Strengthen the means of implementation in addition to reviving the global partnership for sustainable development.

Agenda-2030 and India

Need of Sustainable Development in India

India started economic reforms in the 90s. The reforms were expected to improve the economic conditions of the people, but social problems such as poverty, malnutrition, corruption and gender inequality have increased due to lack of focus on education and health services. Now it is affecting the development of the country. The country has progressed due to two decades of economic reforms, but one third of the population is still living below the poverty line. India has become a country in this period where one third

of the poor live around the world. India has achieved some of the targets set under MDG such as HIV / AIDS, poverty, universal education and infant mortality among the targeted targets. But India is still far behind in achieving other goals. However, the Millennium Development Goals have been included within the goals contained in the Agenda 2030.

Measures taken for implementing SDGs in India

NITI Aayog, has been designated as the nodal agency for overseeing the implementation and coordination of the SDGs. States have also been advised to undertake a similar mapping of their schemes, including centrally sponsored schemes. It prepared the SDG India Index which tracks the progress of states and union territories towards SDGs.

In addition, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is engaged in the process of developing national indicators for the SDGs.

Many of the Government's flagship programmes such as Swachh Bharat, Make in India, Skill India, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Ayushman Bharat, National Skill Development Mission and Digital India are at the core of the SDGs. State and local governments play a pivotal role in many of these programmes. State governments are paying keen attention to visioning, planning, budgeting, and developing implementation and monitoring systems for the SDGs district level action plans and monitoring frameworks have been developed to ensure bottom up implementation. India through its various developmental programmes has played an important role in shaping the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). India has been effectively committed to achieving the SDGs before 2030.

Many programs being implemented by the government to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, such as:

1. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)
2. Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY) -National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)
3. Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana - Gramin
4. National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)
5. Market Intervention Scheme and Price Support Scheme (MIS-PSS)
6. Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY)-National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM)
7. Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana –Urban
8. Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana
9. Employment Promotion Scheme
10. Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana
11. Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana
12. Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)
13. Atal Pension Yojana (APY)
14. Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY)
15. Umbrella Programme for Development of Scheduled Castes and Other Vulnerable Groups
16. Nation Rural Drinking Water Programme
17. Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural) etc.

Apart from and along with above mentioned initiative Government also launches programmes which aimed at promoting sustainable development in agriculture sector.

- a. National Food Security Mission (NFSM)
- b. Rastriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)
- c. National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Area (NWDPA)

- d. Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP)
- e. National Project for Repair, Renovation and Restoration (RRR) of Water Bodies
- f. Command Area Development and Water Management Programme (CADWM)
- g. Kissan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme, etc.

Key achievements

NITI Aayog the Think Tank of the Government of India, designs strategic and long-term policy and programme frameworks and initiatives and also monitors their progress and their efficacy regularly. NITI Aayog role is to carry out a detailed mapping of the 17 Goals and 169 targets to Nodal Central Ministries, Centrally Sponsored Schemes and major government initiatives. To have transparency in the system the results of the mapping exercise were circulated to the Central Ministries and placed on the NITI Aayog website to facilitate better awareness, common understanding and faster implementation of the SDGs.

Goal 1: End Poverty in All its Forms Everywhere: The economic reforms initiated from 1991 have led to significant reduction in poverty. Continuous growth has created gainful employment and helped raise wages thereby directly empowering the poor. Several large-scale anti-poverty programmes such as The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act has generated over 2 billion person-days of employment during 2016-17 alone, largely for the disadvantaged sections of society. Additionally, initiatives have been launched for providing pension and insurance to workers in the unorganised sector, widows and the differently abled. Over 130 million people have accessed life and accident insurance under these programmes.

In order to achieve the goal of housing for all by 2022, direct financial assistance is being extended to poor households through various schemes. Till date more than 3.21 million houses were constructed as part of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana initiative in rural areas. Skill development Programmes such as PMKVY, GNSDTM etc. are also being implemented for empowering skill and employment. Other priority areas are drinking water and sanitation, around 77.5% of rural habitations are being provided with 40 litres of drinking water per capita on a daily basis. Another 18.9% habitations have been covered partially thus far. Under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana over 80 million families have been provided with Liquefied Petroleum Gas connections.

Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture: Significant progress has been made towards improving food and nutrition security to end hunger problem. The Mid-Day-Meal Programme is providing nutritious cooked meals to 100 million children in primary schools. Additionally, food distribution governance is made more unbiased & transparent through the digitization of ration cards and an online grievance redressal mechanism. Stunting among children of less than 5 years has declined from 48% to 38.4% between 2005-06 and 2015-16 periods. Also the percentage of underweight children has declined from 42.5% to 35.7%. To address this, a number of schemes are being implemented. For instance, more than 800 million BPL class people are covered in India by providing the food grains at affordable prices through the Public Distribution System.

Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being for people: India has made substantial progress in improving various health indicators. Through various government schemes like „Mission Indradhanush“ The Infant Mortality Rate has lower down from 57 in 2005-06 to 41 in 2015-16, by making a significant improvement in vaccination coverage for children between 12-23 months of age.

The National Health Policy 2017 (NHP-2017) was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2017 to attain the highest possible level of health and well-being for all the people through a

comprehensive health care policies and universal access to good quality health care services without anyone having to face financial hardship as a consequence. With the help of this policy the government wishes to shift focus from “sick-care” to “wellness” by promoting prevention and well-being of the people.

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls: The Sustainable Development Goals aim to build on these achievements to ensure that there is an end to discrimination against women and girls everywhere. While much more development remains to be made in this context, a number of indicators pertaining to the status of women in India have moved in the right direction over the years with the help of various schemes of woman empowerment. Various schemes have been put in place for promoting gender equality in India; such as the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme (Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child) which focuses on a comprehensive package of interventions for the girl child to provide education for their welfare. The Maternity Benefit Programme which was started protects women from wage loss during the first six months after childbirth. One Stop Centre Scheme which aims to provide support and assistance to women affected by violence at private or at any public place.

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation: Several reforms have already been made to build & expand all forms of transportation - roads, railways, civil aviation and waterways. Under The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) & Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana Road connectivity and electricity are being brought to all villages. Further, India is making efforts to become an Information Technology and manufacturing hub through its Make in India and Digital India campaign. These efforts have greatly accelerated Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows which reach to all time high level and helped the country sustain an average growth of 7.5% during the last three financial years (2014-15 to 2016-17). Employment-intensive manufacturing segments are being boosted by providing easy credit under Mudra Schemes to small-scale business entrepreneurs. Additionally the Start-up India and Skill India programme promotes entrepreneurship and labour-intensive economic growth.

Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development: Like other SDGs India also highlights the need for international cooperation for curbing illicit financial flows, defining aid unambiguously and establishing resilient systems for monitoring commitments made by donor countries & investors. A path-breaking tax reform agenda is being set in the country to optimise domestic resource mobilization. This includes direct tax reforms as well as the Goods and Services Tax (GST), a uniform and simplified form of indirect taxation. An innovative tax like the Swachh Bharat Cess (Clean India Cess) has also been levied for mobilizing resources for the Clean India Mission.

Challenges in Attaining SDGs in India

Defining Indicators: One of the major challenges for India is devising suitable indicators to effectively monitor the progress of SDGs. India's previous experience reveals that it has not been very successful in setting relevant indicators to measure outcomes.

Financing SDGs: Despite India's best efforts to reduce poverty it has the highest number of people living below international poverty line. As per the World Bank report 2013, 30 per cent of its population was under the \$1.90-a-day poverty measure. According to the United Nations report on MDGs, despite high economic growth, in 2010, one-third of the world's 1.2 billion extreme poor lived in India alone. At present the level of investment including both public and private in SDG related sectors in developing countries, an average annual funding shortfall over 2015-2030 of some \$2.5 trillion remains. This huge

gap can be bridged only through increased private sector investments, especially in infrastructure, food security and climate change mitigation sectors.

Development Strategy: In last 2 decades, many non-government schools, colleges and universities have opened, but lack of political will and corruption has not encouraged the level education. IITs and IIMs are known worldwide but they are not in a position to train engineers and managers necessary for the current development of India. To increase industrial production and create new jobs in the country, a plan for level training of workers and managers is necessary.

Corruption: Corruption remains a major problem of the country. According to Transparency International, India is at number 94 in the list of 176 countries. According to the latest report of the anti-corruption international body, the level of kinship is very high all over the world. According to the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), India's premier business body, India lost \$ 7 billion due to corruption between 2011 and 2012. Corruption is having a very bad effect on the development of the economy.

Poverty and unemployment: Due to the failure of the government to create new jobs and prevent poverty, there is a massive migration of people from the countryside to the cities. Due to this, the structural structure of cities is under pressure.

Other major challenge faced in making growth sustainable, in the country may be listed as:

- Education Access
- Inclusive Growth
- Lack of Infrastructure
- Regional Disparities
- Sanitation and Drinking Water
- Scarcity of Resource, Energy Security,
- Climate Change, Natural Disaster,
- Biodiversity related Challenges, and others.
- Environmental Quality and Urban Air Quality

Suggestions

To effectively overcome challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in India, it is crucial to focus on strengthening data systems for monitoring progress, enhancing multi-level governance and coordination, and fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships. Additionally, prioritizing inclusive economic growth, investing in education and skills development, and addressing climate change are essential.

Here's a more detailed breakdown of key suggestions:

1. Strengthen Data Systems and Monitoring:

Robust Real-Time Data Framework:

Establish a system to track SDG progress effectively, allowing for timely identification of challenges and adjustments to strategies.

SDG Dashboard:

Develop a dashboard to monitor progress on various SDGs, providing a clear overview of performance and areas needing improvement.

2. Enhance Multi-Level Governance and Coordination:

Improved Coordination:

Enhance coordination between Union, State, and District levels to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure seamless implementation of SDG initiatives.

3. Foster Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships:

Public-Private Partnerships:

Encourage collaboration between the public, private, and civil society sectors to leverage diverse resources and expertise.

Civil Society Engagement:

Involve civil society organizations in the implementation of SDGs to ensure community participation and ownership.

4. Prioritize Inclusive Economic Growth:

Sustainable Jobs:

Promote economic growth that creates sustainable jobs and improves living standards for all, particularly for marginalized communities.

5. Invest in Education and Skills Development:

Quality Education:

Ensure access to quality education for all, focusing on literacy, numeracy, and skills development for the workforce.

Technical and Vocational Training:

Expand access to technical and vocational education and training to equip individuals with the skills needed for sustainable livelihoods.

6. Address Climate Change:

Renewable Energy:

Promote the transition to renewable energy sources to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate climate change impacts.

Climate Resilience:

Strengthen climate resilience measures to protect vulnerable communities and ecosystems from the effects of climate change.

7. Specific SDG Focus Areas:

Poverty:

Address poverty through targeted interventions, focusing on social safety nets, job creation, and access to basic services.

Clean Water and Sanitation:

Invest in water management and sanitation infrastructure to ensure safe and accessible water sources for all.

Sustainable Urban Development:

Develop sustainable urban solutions that prioritize inclusivity, accessibility, and environmental protection.

Sustainable Agriculture:

Promote sustainable agricultural practices that improve food security and protect the environment.

By implementing these suggestions, India can effectively overcome the challenges in achieving the SDGs and create a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

Conclusion

India is a country with the second largest population in the world. The steps taken by India for the achieve

ment of SDGs matter a lot to the world. If India fulfils all the SDGs goals it would mean that a larger section of the world has achieved it. Therefore it is imperative for India to develop effective methods for implementing, monitoring and measuring the progress of SDGs. The biggest challenge for India is to develop the suitable indicators. This can be handled by developing an Indian Index for Sustainable Development (IISD) by taking the Ibrahim index as a base.

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