

ORIGIN AND NEED OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a transformative and ambitious agenda for global development, aiming to address poverty, inequality, and environmental challenges by 2030. Building on the Millennium Development Goals, the SDGs encompass 17 goals and 169 targets, covering areas such as climate change, economic inequality, and sustainable consumption. The goals reflect a universal commitment, involving governments, businesses, communities, and NGOs worldwide. This paper reviews the evolution of the SDGs, emphasizing their inclusive nature, science-based approach, and the shift from the Millennium Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda stresses the interconnectedness of economic, social, and environmental dimensions, necessitating a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach. However, despite the global commitment, progress has been insufficient, with challenges highlighted in areas such as gender equality, poverty reduction, and climate action. The study examines existing literature on SDGs, emphasizing the importance of science-based analysis, interdependence among goals, and the need for innovative solutions. A critical review of India's progress on the SDGs underscores the challenges faced in achieving these global targets, including issues of hunger, gender equality, and sustainable industrialization. The significance of the SDGs lies in their integration of economic, social, and environmental dimensions, fostering multi-stakeholder engagement, and emphasizing leaving no one behind. The review also highlights the need for regular monitoring, adaptation, and financing for successful implementation. Further research opportunities include exploring regional and national-level implementation, the role of emerging technologies, and the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder partnerships. Understanding interlinkages between specific goals, addressing barriers to SDG attainment, and promoting inclusivity in development are crucial areas for future investigations. The SDGs remain a dynamic framework, requiring ongoing assessment and adaptability to ensure a sustainable and equitable future.

KEYWORDS: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Interconnectedness, Multi-stakeholder Engagement, Global Development, Implementation Challenges.

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) encompass a comprehensive set of seventeen goals and 169 targets, with the overarching objective of eliminating poverty, fostering peace and prosperity, and safeguarding the environment by the timeframe of 2030 (Elham, 2020). The

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aforementioned objectives are an extension of the achievements made under the Millennium Development Goals, encompassing other domains such as climate change, economic disparity, and sustainable consumerism (Haniza, 2019). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a comprehensive and all-encompassing agenda that encompasses crucial areas such as climate change, infrastructure, and governance. This agenda serves to redefine the concept of development as a challenge that is applicable universally (Sakiko). The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) necessitates the utilisation of science-based analysis and a comprehensive comprehension of the interconnectedness among various goals. This approach is crucial for facilitating effective decision-making processes and monitoring progress towards the attainment of the SDGs. (Sonal, 2020).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) encompass a set of 17 ambitious objectives aimed at fostering a more environmentally sustainable, healthy, socially equitable, and peaceful global community. The primary aim was to generate a comprehensive set of universally applicable objectives that effectively address the pressing environmental, political, and economic concerns confronting our global community (<https://www.undp.org>). The process of designing the goals and targets spanned duration of three years. The discussions witnessed the active involvement of various stakeholders, including governments, corporations, communities, universities, NGOs, and youth from across the globe. Notably, the process garnered significant public engagement, as evidenced by the participation of over seven million individuals who cast their votes in 84 national surveys

The sustainable development agenda was initiated by the United Nations in 2015, signifying the increasing recognition among Member States that a development framework which ensures sustainability for present and future generations presents the most effective approach for poverty reduction and enhancing global well-being (<https://www.un.org>).

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were a collection of eight global development objectives that were formulated subsequent to the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000. They primarily focused on poverty reduction, education, gender equality, child mortality, maternal health, and combating diseases like HIV/AIDS and malaria. However, it was acknowledged that the MDGs had limitations in terms of inclusivity, environmental sustainability, and addressing broader development challenges (<http://in.one.un.org>, (Source: United Nations India. Accessed at <http://in.one.un.org/page/sustainable-development-goals/>)) there were several initiatives and consultations that contributed to the conceptualization of the SDGs. One notable initiative was the "Future We Want" campaign, which solicited inputs from people around the world about their vision for a sustainable future. This campaign helped shape the discussions and priorities at the Rio+20 conference. After this, an Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals was established by the United Nations General Assembly to develop a proposal for the post-2015 development agenda. The OWG consisted of representatives from 70 countries and engaged in extensive negotiations to identify the key areas of focus and targets for the new set of goals. A significant shift from the MDGs to the SDGs is the emphasis on universality. The SDGs were designed to apply to all countries, recognizing that global challenges require global solutions. This inclusivity reflects the understanding that sustainable development is a shared responsibility that involves both developed and developing nations. (<http://in.one.un.org>). The objective was to employ the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a novel framework to supplant the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which lapsed in 2015. On 25 September 2015, all 193 nations ultimately reached a consensus and endorsed the SDGs, pledging to accomplish them by 2030. Therefore, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are complemented by a total of 169 precise targets and 232 quantitative indicators. Every Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) consists of a collection of sub-targets. Furthermore, it is important to note that each goal is accompanied by a comprehensive collection of indicators, collectively referred to as the global indicator framework, which serve as a means to evaluate the advancement made towards achieving these goals. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) formulated the global indicator framework, which was subsequently endorsed as a pragmatic initial step during the 47th session of the UN Statistical Commission in March 2016. The report of the Commission, which contained the global indicator framework, was subsequently acknowledged by ECOSOC during its 70th session in June 2016. The provided list of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contains hyperlinks that direct users to the specific targets and indicators associated with each goal. Additionally, the links provide access to recent updates regarding the progress made towards achieving these goals (<https://unemg.org>).



Source: <https://www.un.org/en/sustainable-development-goals> retrieved on 23/8/23

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- The eradication of poverty, in all its manifestations, across all geographical locations.
- The first sustainable development goal is to eradicate hunger, attain food security, enhance nutrition, and advance agricultural practises.
- The objective of this goal is to guarantee the attainment of good health and promote overall well-being for individuals of all ages.
- The objective is to guarantee an inclusive and fair provision of high-quality education, as well as to foster opportunities for lifelong learning for individuals of all backgrounds.
- The objective is to attain gender equality and enhance the empowerment of women and girls.
- The objective is to guarantee the sustainable administration and accessibility of water and sanitation for all individuals.
- The aim is to secure access to reasonably priced, dependable, sustainable, and contemporary energy for all.
- The goal is to foster continuous, comprehensive, and sustainable economic growth, as well as full and productive employment, and decent work opportunities for all individuals.
- The ninth sustainable development goal focuses on industry innovation and infrastructure. This goal aims to develop infrastructure that is resilient and capable of withstanding various challenges. Additionally, it seeks to promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, ensuring that economic growth is accessible to all members of society. Furthermore, this goal emphasises the importance of fostering innovation, as it plays a crucial role in driving progress and addressing global challenges.
- The goal of reducing inequalities is to address and mitigate disparities both within nations and across nations.
- The objective is to foster the development of cities and human settlements that are inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
- The objective of responsible consumption and production is to establish and maintain sustainable patterns of consumption and production.
- The imperative for climate action necessitates the expeditious implementation of measures aimed at mitigating climate change and addressing its consequential effects.
- The objective of this goal is to promote the conservation and sustainable utilisation of marine resources, as well as the preservation of oceans and seas, in order to achieve sustainable development.

- The objective is to safeguard, rehabilitate, and advance the sustainable utilisation of terrestrial ecosystems, effectively administer forests, counteract desertification, cease and reverse land deterioration, and put an end to the decline of biodiversity.
- The objective of this goal is to foster the development of peaceful and inclusive communities that are conducive to sustained progress. This entails ensuring universal access to justice and establishing robust and responsible institutions at various levels.
- The objective of this goal is to enhance the mechanisms for achieving sustainable development and reinvigorate the global collaboration for this purpose.

As an educator, I encountered numerous instances in which conflicts, crises, and emergencies arose, necessitating the use of my utmost capabilities and fortitude in addressing them (<https://unemg.org>). The utilisation of these targets and indicators will facilitate governments in formulating their policies, assessing their advancements, identifying deficiencies, and communicating the outcomes to the global community. In order to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the year 2030, an estimated annual investment of approximately \$2.5 trillion (USD) will be required on a global scale and the aforementioned figure corresponds to around 3% of the global GDP. (www.sdgzone.com). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were concurrently established with another significant accord achieved in 2015 during the Conference of Parties 21 (COP21) in Paris, which focused on climate change. In conjunction with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which was ratified in Japan in March 2015, these agreements establish a shared framework of criteria and attainable objectives aimed at diminishing carbon emissions, mitigating the consequences of climate change and natural calamities, and facilitating resilient recovery efforts in the aftermath of a crisis (<https://www.undp.org>).

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- The scope of the current global agenda extends beyond "developing" countries, in contrast to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- The foundation of this concept is rooted in principles such as fairness and the recognition of fundamental human rights.
- The implementation of this initiative is dependent upon various strategies, including sustainable finance, scientific research and innovation, as well as monitoring and evaluation.
- The implementation of this approach necessitates a novel methodology that entails collaborative efforts from several stakeholders across different sectors.
- The objective of this initiative is to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of health systems in order to achieve universal health coverage (UHC) (<https://www.who.int>).

The Sustainable Development Summit held in September 2019 brought together Heads of State and Government to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The summit concluded that the global community is currently not on course to achieve the SDGs by the designated target year of 2030. The prevalence of vulnerabilities is increasing, and the persistence of deprivations is becoming more deeply rooted. The prevalence of food insecurity is increasing. The pace of advancement towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is insufficiently rapid. There is a growing disparity in wealth, earnings, and opportunities both inside individual countries and among other nations. The United Nations website states that there are ongoing concerns regarding biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, the release of plastic waste into the oceans, climate change, and the escalating risk of disasters. These issues have the potential to result in severe consequences for humanity (www.un.org).

Review of Literature

(Sonal, 2020) provides an overview of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations in 2015, which aim to promote sustainable development globally. It discusses the

importance of science-based analysis and other tools in understanding the interlinkages and relationships between different SDGs, which can support effective decision-making and progress monitoring.

(Yadav & Dardi) emphasizes the need to modify the roadmap for accomplishing the SDGs and discusses the interdependence of the goals, such as the linkage between quality education, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequality, peace and justice strong institutions, health and well-being, gender equality, and decent work and sustainable growth.

(Bangera S. P, 2020), focuses on the need for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the progress that India has achieved in meeting these goals and discusses the challenges associated with sustainable development in India. The studies is based solely on secondary sources and provide an overview of the progress made by India in achieving the SDGs and the challenges that need to be addressed in order to ensure sustainable development.

(Rajib, 2022) discusses India's progress on the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and traces the history of the UN SDGs. India's rank in the SDG Index dropped from 117 in 2015 to 120 in 2016, and further slipped to 121 in 2022. The drop in rank is primarily due to India's performance on 11 out of the 17 SDGs. Areas of concern for India include goal no. 2 (zero Hunger and food security), goal no. 5 (gender equality), and goal no. 9 (inclusive and sustainable industrialization and innovation). India has implemented various programs and initiatives to address the SDGs, such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) for poverty eradication and gender budgeting for achieving gender equality.

(Julián, 2023) explores the sustainability opportunities offered by hemp in the context of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Agenda 30, including its potential as a medicinal plant, as well as its applications in various sectors such as paper, textiles, plastics substitute, construction, transport, water and marine protection, and organic farming. It also highlights the importance of political involvement (SDG 17) and the need for education, research, and enlightenment (SDG 4) in achieving these sustainability goals.

(Clara, 2015) discusses the need to prioritize safeguarding the Earth's life-support system in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and highlights the lack of attention given to environmental sustainability in the past decades. The paper criticizes the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for their limited focus on poverty-related issues and weak environmental goals. It argues for the adoption of a comprehensive "Earth system SDG" that applies to all countries, including OECD and non-OECD countries, to safeguard the Earth's life-support system and ensure sustainable development.

(Mark, et al., 2018) discusses the United Nations' Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) that were agreed upon by world leaders in 2015. The paper highlights the need to manage interactions and dependencies among the SDGs, particularly in relation to climate change (SDG13) and other goals such as responsible consumption and production (SDG12) and hunger (SDG2). It emphasizes the role of the research community in understanding synergies and trade-offs to make informed decisions. The paper mentions Future Earth, an initiative created to address the structural challenge of integrating knowledge across disciplines and beyond academia to tackle global environmental change.

(Sarra, 2023)The paper argues that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should include a clean air goal, as air pollution is a significant threat to human health and well-being, causing seven million premature deaths annually. The chapter recommends that the clean air SDG should align its targets with the World Health Organization (WHO) air quality guidelines.

(Joana, 2021)The paper discusses the 2015-2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, which aims to build a better future for humanity and end poverty while saving the planet. It highlights the skepticism surrounding the feasibility of achieving these goals, even for developed economies like the European Union countries. The article empirically tests the (in) compatibilities among the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) pillars, showing that they have heterogeneous determinants that are to some extent incompatible. The paper emphasizes the need for solid bridges and innovative networks at a transnational level to promote welfare and prosperity in these ecosystems.

(Soundappan, 2018)The paper discusses the global epidemic of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and how it is addressed by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030. The paper highlights the importance of establishing national action plans and monitoring frameworks for

the prevention and control of NCDs as initial initiatives to implement effective interventions. The paper suggests that implementation strategies at the sub national level and engagement of sectors other than health should be reviewed and researched for effective implementation of the identified interventions.

Objectives

- To know the origin and concept of Sustainable development.
- To identify the need and significance of Sustainable Development Goals

Need and Significance

The integration of the three components of sustainable development, namely economic, social, and environmental, is emphasised by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This integration reflects the understanding that these dimensions are interconnected and that progress in one area can affect progress in others. Multi-Stakeholder Engagement: The development of the SDGs involved a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, civil society organizations, academia, businesses, and more. This multi-stakeholder approach ensured that the goals were reflective of diverse perspectives and expertise. Indicators and Monitoring: Alongside the adoption of the SDGs, a framework of indicators and a monitoring mechanism were developed to track progress on each goal. These indicators provide a way to measure and assess the extent to which countries are achieving the targets set out in the goals. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was endorsed by global leaders on September 25, 2015, at a United Nations Summit. This agenda outlines the 17 SDGs and their associated 169 targets. The Agenda also stresses the importance of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first.

Follow-Up and Review: The 2030 Agenda established a commitment to regular reviews of progress at the global level through the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). National-level reviews and reporting mechanisms were also encouraged to ensure that countries are held accountable for their progress toward the SDGs. Overall; the Sustainable Development Goals represent a collaborative effort to address the complex and interconnected challenges facing the world. They provide a comprehensive framework for sustainable development that takes into account social, economic, and environmental dimensions, and they guide efforts to create a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

Interlinkages and Synergies: One of the key features of the SDGs is their recognition of the interconnected nature of various global challenges. The goals are designed to work together synergistically, meaning that progress in one goal can contribute positively to others. For instance, improvements in education (Goal 4) can lead to better economic opportunities (Goal 8) and reduced inequality (Goal 10). Ambitious and Transformative: The SDGs are often described as ambitious and transformative. They set out a broad and ambitious vision for the world, aiming not just to improve existing conditions but to transform societies and systems to ensure long-term sustainability, social inclusivity, and economic prosperity.

Climate Change and Environmental Focus: Unlike the Millennium Development Goals, which had limited emphasis on environmental issues, the SDGs explicitly address environmental sustainability and climate change. Goal 13 focuses on climate action, and other goals such as Goal 14 (life below water) and Goal 15 (life on land) address ecosystem conservation and biodiversity.

Partnerships and Collaboration: Achieving the SDGs requires collaborative efforts from various sectors. The private sector, civil society organizations, academia, governments, and international organizations are all expected to contribute their expertise and resources to work collectively toward the goals.

Leaving No One Behind: A core principle of the SDGs is the commitment to "leave no one behind." This means that efforts should be directed toward reaching the most marginalized and vulnerable populations, ensuring that progress benefits all segments of society, regardless of their socioeconomic status, gender, age, or other characteristics. Localization and Adaptation: While the SDGs are global goals, their implementation requires customization at the national and local levels. Countries are encouraged to adapt the goals and targets to their specific contexts, considering their own development priorities and challenges.

Financing for Development: The successful implementation of the SDGs requires significant financial resources. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted in 2015, outlines a framework for financing sustainable development and mobilizing resources from diverse sources, including domestic resources,

international aid, and private sector investment. Education and Awareness: The SDGs also emphasize the importance of education and raising awareness about sustainable development. Goal 4 focuses on quality education, but the overall agenda seeks to promote understanding and engagement among people of all ages to foster a sense of global citizenship.

Regular Review and Adaptation: The SDGs are not static. They are subject to periodic review and adaptation to ensure that they remain relevant and effective in addressing emerging challenges and opportunities over the course of the 2030 agenda.

Digital Revolution and Innovation: The rapid advancement of technology and the digital revolution are recognized as tools that can accelerate progress toward the SDGs. Innovative solutions, data-driven insights, and technological advancements play a role in addressing complex issues (<http://in.one.un.org>).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a comprehensive and transformative global agenda for addressing the interconnected challenges of poverty, inequality, environmental sustainability, and social well-being by 2030. The goals emphasize leaving no one behind, targeting marginalized populations, and encouraging a focus on sustainability. The SDGs require continuous monitoring and assessment through a robust framework of indicators, fostering accountability and adaptability. However, as of 2019, a comprehensive review indicated that the world is not on track to meet the SDGs by 2030, with rising vulnerabilities and persistent deprivations. The SDGs are a dynamic and adaptive framework, subject to regular review and responsive to emerging issues. The success of the SDGs relies on collaborative efforts and a collective commitment to creating a more equitable, sustainable, and prosperous future for all. Further research could explore the effective implementation and impact assessment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at regional and national levels, considering contextual variations and challenges. Investigating the role of emerging technologies, digital innovations, and data-driven approaches in advancing SDG targets could provide insights into accelerating progress. Additionally, research could delve into the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder partnerships, examining how collaborations between governments, businesses, civil society, and academia contribute to SDG achievements. Exploring strategies for overcoming barriers to SDG attainment and promoting inclusivity in the development agenda would also be valuable for future research endeavours.

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