

India's Path to Sustainability: Accelerating Progress towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

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Abstract:

In the contemporary period of globalization, nations are striving to surpass one another in growth, employing all conceivable strategies from industrialization to the exploitation of natural resources. India is seeing significant growth, making sustainable development increasingly vital. Ecologically viable development entails a dedication to social advancement, quicker economic expansion, and enhanced environmental conservation. The resolution of 'Transforming Our 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' was adopted by 193 Nations, including India, in September 2015. By adopting this agenda, the Nations are progressing towards the attainment of a society devoid of poverty, gender disparity, and economic inequality, while preserving a sustainable planet for future generations. India is advancing swiftly towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Numerous initiatives have already been executed to attain the Sustainable Development Goals, like the Clean India campaign and Digital India, among others. However, the administration is encountering several hurdles on the route to sustainability, including inadequate infrastructure and social issues and regional disparities, significant proportion of the world population, and limitations of water and energy. This study is descriptive and based on secondary data, concentrating on the problems related to sustainability and the initiatives undertaken for sustainable development in India

Keywords Sustainable Development Goals, Clean India, Digital India

1.INTRODUCTION:

It is unequivocally evident that development exerts an influence on the environment; yet, this does not imply that progress should be halted. Development must be directed appropriately, rendered humane, and devoid of environmental damage. Sustainable development emerged from the depletion of natural resources and the apprehension regarding the stagnation or cessation of economic and industrial systems. Sustainable development is a process that involves implementing activities to guarantee that the needs of future generations are not compromised while utilizing available resources to satisfy present demands. The United Nations defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Earlier sustainable development mostly neglected climate change and environmental concerns; however, the contemporary approach encompasses all initiatives aimed at fostering an inclusive, sustainable, and adaptable future for both humanity and the earth.

The notion of sustainable development underscores the necessity of aligning economic development strategies with environmental considerations. Its objective is to reform the laws that regulate environmental governance. Sustainable development entails not just environmental adaptation but also a framework in which resource exploitation, investment

orientation, technology advancement, and incremental improvements are aligned with both current and future requirements. Sustainable development encompasses economic and social advancement that safeguards the environment and promotes social equity. Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are designed to foster a more affluent, equitable, and secure world by 2030. India is a signatory to this summit and is firmly dedicated to realizing the 2030 goal.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER:

1. To examine the notion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda 2030.
2. To ascertain the significance and present condition of Sustainable Development Goals in India.
3. To identify the obstacles to the successful implementation of this program in India.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

A series of studies have been conducted on various aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda 2030. This is descriptive study based on secondary data collected from NITI Aayog publications, research articles, journals, newspapers, and other websites. This report evaluates India's preparedness to measure its advancement towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The current study has not analyzed or evaluated some objectives of the SDGs due to the difficulty to get relevant data or suitable techniques.

4. THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encompasses not just 17 Sustainable Development Goals but also 169 objectives. The 2030 Agenda expands upon the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with a broader scope and greater ambition, aiming for the eradication of poverty and hunger, enhancement of health and nutrition, reduction of inequality, establishment of peaceful, just, and inclusive societies, safeguarding of human rights, promotion of gender equality, and empowerment of women and girls, among other objectives. It seeks to establish circumstances for sustainable, inclusive, and continuous economic growth, equitable prosperity, and dignified employment for all, considering varying degrees of national development and capabilities. The 2030 Agenda promotes sustainable development across all three dimensions for all nations, both developing and developed, grounded in the essential acknowledgment and safeguarding of human rights, dignity, and equity.

- Eradication of all forms of poverty from all over the world.
- End hunger, food security and promote better nutrition and sustainable agriculture.
- Promoting health protection and healthy living in people of all ages.
- Ensuring inclusive and equitable equality education and giving everyone the opportunity to learn.
- Empowering women and girls while achieving gender equality.
- Ensuring availability of cleanliness and sustainable management of water for all.
- Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy.
- Promoting inclusive and sustainable economic development, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.
- Promote flexible infrastructure, inclusive and sustainable industrialization.
- Reducing inequality between and with in countries.
- Building safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements.
- Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns.

- To take immediate action to deal with climate change and its effects.
- Conservation and utilization of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- Strive to prevent increasing loss of terrestrial ecosystems, safe forests and biodiversity promoting sustainable use.
- Along with promoting peaceful and inclusive committees for sustainable development, making them effective, accountable at all levels to ensure justice for all.
- Strengthen them means of implementation in addition to reviving the global partnership for sustainable development.

5. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA-2030 AND INDIA:

Requirement for Sustainable Development in India:

India started economic reforms in the 1990s. The anticipated changes were to enhance the economic circumstances of the populace; nevertheless, social issues like as poverty, starvation, corruption, and gender inequality have escalated due to insufficient emphasis on education and healthcare facilities. It is now impacting the nation's progress. The nation has advanced as a result of two decades of economic reforms; nonetheless, one-third of the populace continues to reside below the poverty threshold. India has emerged as a nation where one-third of the global impoverished population resides. India has accomplished some objectives established under the Millennium Development Goals, including those related to HIV/AIDS, poverty alleviation, universal education, and infant mortality rates. However, India remains well behind in attaining other objectives. The Millennium Development Goals have been included into the objectives outlined in Agenda 2030.

6. Measures taken for implementing SDGs in India:

The government slogan "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas," translated as "Collective Effort, Inclusive Development," constitutes the foundation of India's national development plan. The aim of the SDGs in India is to provide an egalitarian, secure, peaceful, prosperous, and habitable working environment for all, while comprehensively addressing the three dimensions of development: social inclusion, economic advancement, and environmental conservation. India, via its many developmental initiatives, has significantly contributed to the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The nation has demonstrated a robust commitment to realizing the SDGs by 2030.

The government is implementing many projects to attain the Sustainable Development Goals, including:

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)
- Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY) -National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)
- Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana - Gramin
- National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)
- Market Intervention Scheme and Price Support Scheme (MIS-PSS)
- Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY)-National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM)
- Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana–Urban
- Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana
- Employment Promotion Scheme
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana

- Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana(PMSBY)
- Atal Pension Yojana(APY)
- Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY)
- Umbrella Programme for Development of Scheduled Castes and Other Vulnerable Groups
- Nation Rural Drinking Water Programme
- Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural)etc.
- In addition to the aforementioned endeavor, the Government also develops programs targeted at fostering sustainable growth in the agricultural sector.
- National Food Security Mission(NFSM)
- Rastriya Krishi Vikas Yojana(RKVY)
- National Watershed Development Project for Rain fed Area (NWDPR)
- Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP)
- National Project for Repair, Renovation and Restoration (RRR) of Water Bodies
- Command Area Development and Water Management Programme (CADWM)
- Kissan Credit Card(KCC)Scheme, etc.

7. ACHIEVEMENTS:

NITI Aayog, the Government of India's think tank, formulates strategic and long-term policy frameworks and programs, while also routinely monitoring their progress and effectiveness. NITI Aayog's job is to conduct a comprehensive mapping of the 17 Goals and 169 goals to Nodal Central Ministries, Centrally Sponsored Schemes, and significant government activities. To ensure openness in the system, the outcomes of the mapping exercise were disseminated to the Central Ministries and published on the NITI Aayog website to enhance awareness, foster common understanding, and expedite the implementation of the SDGs.

SDG Goal 1: Eradicate Poverty in All Its Forms Globally:

The economic changes implemented since 1991 have resulted in a substantial decrease in poverty levels. Ongoing expansion has generated lucrative work opportunities and increased earnings, so directly empowering the impoverished. Numerous extensive anti-poverty initiatives, including The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, produced nearly 2 billion person-days of employment in 2016-17, mostly benefiting marginalized segments of society. Furthermore, steps have been implemented to offer pension and insurance to workers in the informal sector, widows, and those with disabilities. More than 130 million individuals have obtained life and accident insurance through these programs.

To attain the objective of universal housing by 2022, direct financial aid is being provided to impoverished households through many initiatives. To present, about 3.21 million residences have been created under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana project in rural regions. Skill development programs, such as PMKVY and GNSDTM, are being executed to enhance skills and promote employment. Additional priority areas include drinking water and sanitation, with around 77.5% of rural habitations receiving 40 liters of drinking water per capita daily. Additionally, 18.9% of habitations have been partly covered to date. Under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, more than 80 million households have been granted Liquefied Petroleum Gas connections.

SDG Goal 2: Eradicate hunger, attain food security, enhance nutrition, and advocate for sustainable agriculture:

Substantial advancements have been achieved in enhancing food and nutrition security to eliminate hunger. The Mid-Day Meal Programme delivers nutritious prepared lunches to 100 million students in elementary schools. Furthermore, the regulation of food distribution is rendered more equitable and transparent through the digitalization of ration cards and the implementation of an online grievance redressal system. The prevalence of stunting in children under five years has decreased from 48% to 38.4% over the periods of 2005-06 and 2015-16. The proportion of underweight children has decreased from 42.5% to 35.7%. In response, several initiatives are being executed. In India, nearly 800 million individuals classified as Below Poverty Line (BPL) get subsidized food grains through the Public Distribution System.

SDG Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being for individuals:

India has achieved significant advancements in enhancing several health metrics. Through numerous government initiatives such as "Mission Indradhanush," the Infant Mortality Rate has decreased. The reduction from 57 in 2005-06 to 41 in 2015-16 was achieved by a substantial improvement in immunization coverage for children aged 12 to 23 months.

The National Health Policy 2017 (NHP-2017) was initiated by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2017 to achieve optimal health and well-being for all individuals through comprehensive healthcare policies and universal access to high-quality healthcare services, ensuring that no one experiences financial hardship as a result. This program aims to transition the government's focus from "sick-care" to "wellness" by advocating for prevention and the well-being of the populace.

SDG Goal 5: Attain gender equality and empower all women and girls:

The Sustainable Development Goals seek to build upon these accomplishments to eradicate discrimination against women and girls globally. Although significant progress is still required, several indicators regarding the status of women in India have improved over the years, facilitated by various women's empowerment initiatives. Numerous initiatives have been established to advance gender equality in India, including the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme, which emphasizes a holistic array of interventions aimed at ensuring the education and care of the female child. The Maternity Benefit Programme, created to safeguard mothers from income loss during the initial six months postpartum. The One Stop Centre Scheme seeks to offer support and help to women impacted by abuse in both private and public settings.

SDG Goal 9: Construct resilient infrastructure, promote equitable and sustainable industrialization, and nurture innovation:

Numerous changes have already been implemented to develop and enhance various modes of transportation, including roads, trains, civil aviation, and waterways. The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) and Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana are facilitating road connection and energy access to all communities. Moreover, India is striving to establish itself as a hub for Information Technology and manufacturing through its Make in India and Digital India initiatives. These endeavors have significantly boosted Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows to unprecedented levels and facilitated an average growth rate of 7.5% over the past three financial years. Employment-intensive industrial sectors are being enhanced through the provision of accessible finance under Mudra Schemes to small-scale company owners. The Start-up India and Skill India initiatives foster entrepreneurship and labor-intensive economic development.

SDG Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development:

Similar to other Sustainable Development Goals, India emphasizes the necessity of international collaboration to combat illicit financial flows, clearly define aid, and establish robust systems for monitoring commitments made by donor nations and investors. A transformative tax reform plan is being established in the country to enhance domestic resource mobilization. This encompasses direct tax changes and the Goods and Services Tax (GST), a standardized and streamlined form of indirect taxes. An unique tax, the Swachh Bharat Cess, has been imposed to generate resources for the Clean India Mission.

8.CONCLUSION:

This working paper has examined the efforts exerted and problems encountered by the government in attaining the objectives established under the SDG Agenda 2030. As a developing nation, India has achieved significant achievement and has either met or is close to meeting several benchmarks established under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Although power and sanitation facilities have been extended to all villages in India, challenges such as poverty, unemployment, education, health, and technology necessitate substantial governmental efforts to surmount these obstacles in the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). India's National Development Goals and the Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas policy effort for equitable growth align with the Sustainable Development Goals, positioning India to play a pivotal role in the global attainment of these objectives.

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