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An analytical study of sustainable development goals

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Abstract

Earth is home to all living organisms but greed of human beings has put the life of many organisms in danger. Consequently the environmental degradation caused numerous health hazards across the globe. The environment can be sustained with the help of environmental friendly development or sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development has emerged from a series of summits and conferences; Consequently UNO has come out with 17 SDGs containing 169 associate targets. It covers wide range of objectives such as poverty alleviation, good health, quality education, gender equality, environmental conservation, sustainable industrialization etc. which are legally non binding but needed to be accomplished by UNO members by 2030. They are considered as successors of millennium development goals which were established following the Millennium Summit of United Nations in 2000. The members of UNO were committed to achieve these goals by 2015 but under Sustainable Development more comprehensive goals were set up to sustain all forms of life be it aquatic or terrestrial. The widespread industrialization has deteriorated the quality of life in such a way that land, water and air all have been polluted. Consequently the Earth's carrying capacity, ground water level are also in danger. The North-South divide is also spreading due to over population in southern hemispheric countries and inequitable sharing of resources. The objective of this research paper is to analyze sustainable development goals so that the future perspectives in all forms of life can be generated.

Keywords: Sustainable development goals, UNO, hazards, millennium development goals

Introduction

The concept of sustainable development was envisaged to bring environmental concerns into the industrial development policies. Stockholm Conference (1972) on human development was the first truly international conference devoted on the environmental issues. 'Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. Defined by the Brundtland Commission in its report Our Common Future (1987). Sustainable development (SD) calls for concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and planet. The united nations development agenda was accepted by all members of the united nations in 2012 at the Rio De Janeiro council meet to promote a healthy and developed future of the planet and its people. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals agreed in sept; 2015 were described as a plan of action for people, Planet and Prosperity. The SDGs demonstrate 'the scale and ambitions' of the United Nations "2030 agenda for sustainable development" which is designed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path." There 17 goals and 169 targets and these goals embrace wide range of socio-economic, environmental, ecological and human development issues and concerns.

The 17 Goals to Sustain the globe are:-

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition.
3. Promote sustainable agriculture.
4. Ensure healthy lives and promote well being for all at all stages.
5. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
6. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
7. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
8. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
9. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

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10. Built resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
11. Reduce inequalities within and among countries.
12. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
13. Ensure sustainable consumption and production pattern.
14. Take urgent actions to combat climate change and its impact.
15. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.
16. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably managed forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
17. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
18. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Core Elements of Sustainable Development

There are numerous factors associated with the sustainable development and it contains various indicators with the goals as well as targets. The goals can be classified into three core elements of sustainable development considered by UNO are economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. It is essential to harmonize them. Sustainable economic growth, achieving sustainable livelihood, living in harmony with nature are important for sustainable development.

1. Environmental Protection

- It prevents nature from being used as an inexhaustible source of resources and ensures its protection and rational use.
- Aspects such as environmental conservation, investment in renewable energy, saving water, supporting sustainable mobility, and innovation in sustainable construction and architecture, contribute to achieving environmental sustainability on several fronts.

2. Social Inclusion

- This is very helpful in fostering gender equality, well fare of people in health and quality education to all across the globe.

3. Economic Growth

- It focuses on equal economic prosperity that generates wealth for all, without environmental degradation.
- Fair and equitable distribution of economic resources.
- Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions.

Global issues Related to Sustainable Development

- Inequitable growth of national economies (North-South Divide)
- Loss of Biodiversity: Despite enormous efforts over the past 20 years, the loss of the world's biodiversity continues.
- Climate Change: As a global problem, climate change requires a global solution. Within climate change,

particular attention needs to be paid to the unique challenges facing developing countries.

- Tackling climate change and fostering sustainable development are two mutually reinforcing issues.
- Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs): There is a need for welfare for all rich and poor to have affordable access to the results of innovation that can lead to sustainable development.

Regional Initiatives across the world for achieving sustainable development

Regional initiatives are essential for achieving global goals such sustainable development goals. Regional mechanisms are important for achieving SDGs

- The European Union (EU): It enforced certain environmental principles such as preventive principle, integrative principle, the polluter pays principle etc.
- SAARC adopted Environment Action Plan (1997)
- SAARC Convention on Cooperation on Environment has been ratified by all member states and entered into force in 2013.

India's initiative towards Sustainable Development Goals

India has promoted many socio-economic and welfare programs for achieving SDG's

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) being implemented to provide jobs to unskilled workers and focus is on women economic empowerment and improve their living standards.
- National Food Security Act is being enforced to provide subsidized food grains to the poorer section of society.
- The government of India aims to make India open defecation free under Swatchh Bharat Mission Program.
- Renewable energy generation targets have been set at 175 GW by 2022 to utilize solar energy, wind energy, geothermal energy and other such renewable sources of energy sources to reduce the dependence on fossil fuels.

Progress and Challenges Ahead

- **Progress in achieving sustainable development goals:** The Global goals of sustainable development has achieved many targets across the world. The goals have transformed the lives of millions of people and transformed global environment considerably. As per the Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2019 Extreme poverty has declined considerably. The under-5 mortality rate fell by 49 % between 2000 and 2017. Immunizations have saved millions of lives across the world. The vast majority of the world's population now has access to electricity. Countries are taking concrete actions to protect our planet: marine protected areas have doubled since 2010. Countries are making strong efforts to address illegal fishing. 186 countries have ratified the Paris Agreement (2015) on climate change, and almost all have communicated their first nationally determined contributions. About 150 countries have developed national policies to respond to the challenges of rapid urbanization and more than 70 countries and the European Union now have more than 300 policies and instruments supporting sustainable

consumption and production. A wide range of other actors such as international organizations, local authorities, the scientific community and civil society etc. have engaged with the SDGs in a manner that generates hope for the coming decade and for the coming generation

Challenges

The Goals are very comprehensive in nature and its challenging for all the member nations of UNO to achieve these goals within a stipulated time. Developing nations are still struggling in achieving their basic needs due to huge populations and resource scarcity. The North-South divide is also a big challenge for UNO and for developing nations. Creation of New International Economic Order which is demanded by developing nations still needed to be addressed because developed nations deny this fact and they do not want new international economic order.

As per the Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2019

Increasing inequality among and within countries requires urgent attention. 3 out of every 4 stunted children live in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Young people are more likely to be unemployed than adults. Achieving gender equality is a difficult task in patriarchic societies. Global hunger has been on the rise due to population explosion. Extreme poverty declined from 36% in 1990 to 8.6% in 2018, but the pace of poverty reduction is starting to decelerate as the world struggles to respond to entrenched deprivation, violent conflicts and vulnerabilities to natural disasters and man made disasters. Extreme poverty is three times higher in rural areas than in urban areas. 2018 was the fourth warmest year on record. Levels of CO₂ concentrations continued to increase in 2018. Natural environment is deteriorating at an alarming rate. Sea levels are rising due to global warming. Ocean acidification is accelerating. Ocean acidity is 26% higher than in pre-industrial era. 1 million plant and animal species are at risk of extinction. Land degradation continues unchecked. Moreover pandemic of Covid-19 has impacted all forms of life consequently level of unemployment and poverty increased mostly in third world countries like India. Inequitable sharing of resources is a barrier in achieving SDG's.

Way Forward

To make the process of sustainable development feasible and operational, it is important to establish a common focus that can integrate the outlook and efforts of various participants in development, worldwide, realizing the diversity, in terms of geography, society, economics, level of science and technology capabilities and capacities and education standards/levels. Developed countries need to change their production and consumption patterns, including by limiting the use of fossil fuels and plastics, and to encourage public and private investments that align with the SDGs. Environmental commons—such as the atmosphere, rainforests and oceans—must be safeguarded as crucial sources of ecosystem services and natural resources. All stakeholders must cooperate to conserve, restore and sustainably use natural resources. The food system must undergo widespread transformation to the infrastructure, cultural and societal norms and policies that are supporting the current, unsustainable, status quo. The much deeper,

faster and more ambitious response is needed to unleash the social and economic transformation needed to achieve SDG's by 2030. A far more optimistic future is still attainable only by drastically changing development policies, incentives and actions. The new international economic order should be established. The North-South divide can be filled with the initiative of the developed countries to share the resources equally with the developing or global south.

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