

# Sustainable Development Goals: A Powerful Mantra for Revamping India

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## Abstract

Sustainable development at global level is immensely required for the survival of our beautiful planet. The Post 2015 UN Development Agenda is a milestone that has laid down the architecture of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and replaced Millennium Development Goals. The determined SDGs require significant rethinking in development processes across the world. India is upcoming as fastest growing economy and projected as a global engine of growth which is moving ahead to hit the 2030 agenda. India believes in the concept of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' and thus successful implantation of sustainable development goals are part and parcel of the country's long-lasting tradition and heritage. The Government of India is also committed for the implementation of sustainable development goals and spending significant amounts by the launch of versatile schemes that targets almost all SDGs. The mission of 'Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas' has transformed the vision of policy makers and their vision has directed towards the achievement of sustainable development goals. The national plans which are ambitious and persistent reflect the image of India's development agenda in sustainable development goals. This study highlights the status of sustainable development goals in India and also enlists the different schemes and policies initiated by the Government of India post 2015 UN Development agenda.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development Goals, Millennium Development Goals, UN Development Agenda, Heritage.

## Introduction

Sustainable development is indispensable for overall security of our beautiful planet and for the prosperity of world. The report of "Brundtland" has given a very precise definition of sustainable development and according to this sustainable development is development that meets the needs of present generation but also leave ample scope for meeting the necessities of future generation. The concept of sustainable development has constructed a bridge between economics and environmental science. One articulation suggest that sustainable development is a blend of economic, social and ecological approaches and ultimately it will maximize the environmental, economic and social benefits.

In September 2015, the meeting of world leaders on UN Development Agenda has substantiated the origination of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which has replaced the Millennium Development Goals. The SDGs are more ambitious than earlier Millennium Development Goals and have prescience of a world free from poverty, inequality and unsteady ecological balance. These SDGs are embedded with extensive list of interdependent issues. The each member state of UN Development Agenda is committed and dedicated for the implementation and successful achievements for targets of aspiring SDGs. But targets of these SDGs need revamping in development process across the globe and this requires availability of significant resources and investment.

The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development is focussed on poverty eradication, environmental sustainability, peace and prosperity and these goals are going to benefit to not just to a single country but to community as a whole. This is clearly evident from the UN resolution that key role from corporate, non-corporate and even individuals is required for achieving SDGs. Therefore, every country must ensure the participation from each of these sectors and review and frame their policies accordingly. India has also joined the hands with world leaders and participated with full zeal in the race of maintaining the balance between economy and ecology.

The government as a top most authority and an entity with all essential and prerequisite resources has the prime responsibility that these SDGs will get implemented. Being a diverse country, India has imperatively reviewed its existing system and framed policies in such a manner so that all stakeholders will ensure their participation in the implementation of SDGs. However, India's development agenda has for long been rooted in principles that are closely associated with the aim of 2030 Development Agenda.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India has number of times raised the issue of sustainable development directly or indirectly in his number deliberations and clearly indicated that Government of India is very much keen for achieving SDGs and in one of his talk he emphasized

Being one sixth of the worldwide population, the development needs of India are enormous. Hence, the poverty or prosperity will create a quickest impact on poverty or prosperity at global level. The people of India had availed the access of all modern amenities and means of development after a very long time and accordingly, Government of India is committed to adopt these SDGs prior to its anticipated time. However, all efforts will be taken to do all this task in a cleaner and greener way (Prime Minister Narendra Modi, 2018).

#### **Objectives of Study**

This paper is based on the following objectives;

1. To discuss the status of SDGs in India.
2. To present different schemes initiated by Government of India to implement SDGs.

#### **Review of literature**

The concept of sustainable development is a burning topic and a lot of research and studies are going on at national and international level. The key studies in this area are discussed below:

(Pradhan et al., 2017) highlighted the synergies within and among the SDGs and further reflected their trade-offs in most of the countries. The author also suggested the significance of successfully adoption and implementation of SDG agenda. Therefore, interactions within these SDGs may lead to bifurcated results. The financial requirements and gaps for the implementation of SDGs in India are clearly discussed in the study of Technology and Action for Rural Advancement A Social Enterprise of Development Alternatives Group in 2015. This study conducted a financial assessment for India to achieve the SDGs. The study assesses the existing infrastructure and available public resources with various government and policies.

Further, (Choudhuri, 2019) has done a systematic review of sustainable development initiatives in India. It has been concluded that there is lack of available literature regarding sustainable development initiatives in India and moreover, the most of the SDGs are untouched by the researchers. (OECD, 2016) has presented some guidelines for policy makers and emphasized upon the transitioning phase from the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) to a universal

sustainable development goals. The study shows that there is an immense need for reformation of current approaches specifically which have roots in past and further ensuring that proposed institutional mechanism will lead to successful implementation of the SDGs.

(Priyadarsini, 2016) discussed the environment policies in India and different challenges in this regard for achieving SDGs. The study highlighted the areas like green economy and drivers behind changes in drivers concern.

(Srivastava and Ramachandran, 2016) also discussed the Environment Impact Assessment process in India for sustainable development. For this purpose, Nyamjang Chhu hydropower project in northeast India has been used and proclaimed that existing development model of India demands revaluation. Further, this is emphasized that efforts must be taken to achieve a development which is sustainable for all stake holders and it will only happen when proper impact assessment will be done for the effects of cultural marginalization and breakdown of traditional social structures and livelihoods.

(Vinati, 2016) focused on various strategies for sustainable development which are necessary for survival of our present generation as well as coming generation. (Voluntary National Review Report, 2017) has stated that India has played an important role in shaping the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and further explained that India has been effectively perpetrated for the achievement of SDGs even before they were completely crystallized. As one of the countries that has volunteered to take part in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2017 and it is also mentioned in this report that India appreciates the focus on 'Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world'.

NITI Aayog, which is a premier body for the implementation of SDGs in India has published various reports from time to time i.e. 2018, 2019, on implementation and performance Indicators on SDGs in India. In 2018, it had brought SDG India Index Baseline report on SDGs. This report has showed that how SDGs will be measured in India. It is also mentioned that indicators shall be refined, data collection and reporting process shall be improved and the potential for disaggregating data shall be explored over the coming years. In 2019 it has published a report on early lessons from India on localizing SDGs. The report shared the versatile experiences of different States and UTs in localising the SDGs. One audit report is also presented in 2019 for preparedness for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals.

#### **Research Methodology**

This is a descriptive paper and made with an attempt to analysis sustainable development efforts made in India. The study is entirely based on the secondary based data as published sources are used for showcasing the current Indian economic scenario for the implementation and achievement of SDGs. The major schemes of Government of India in its

Union Budget from 2016-17 to 2019-20 have been reviewed for assessing the implementation of SDGs.

**Status of Sustainable Development Goals in India**

The 17 SDGs which are ambitious and universal in nature were officially come into force on January 1, 2016 and are adopted by 193 nations. These goals provide a blueprint for each member state of path of development that is fair, equitable, and inclusive and environment friendly. The emerging economies in world are at limelight for the positive outcome from these SDGs as these economies account for highest proportion of poorest communities. In spite of rising Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in India, there is largest number of people who are living below the international poverty line. In terms of numbers, it is 30 per cent (around 800 million) population of India is living under \$ 1.90 a day (Civil Society Report, 2017).

At the global level, total investment which is required for the achievement of SDGs according to UNCTAD are in the order of USD 5 to USD 7 trillion per year (Technology and Action for Rural Advancement, 2015, p-11). The financial requirement of developing countries for achieving SDGs is presented in the Table-1:

**Table-1 Financial Requirement of Developing Countries for Achieving SDGs**

	Amount in USD	Targeted Sectors for Investment
<b>Total investment needs</b>	3.9 trillion per year (Approx.)	Basic Infrastructure
<b>Current investment</b>	around 1.4 trillion	Basic Infrastructure
<b>Gap in Investment</b>	2.5 trillion	Basic Infrastructure

**Source: (Technology and Action for Rural Advancement, 2015)**

India has been progressing rapidly on the way to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, the estimated India's financial gap which is a matter of concern for the policy makers is given in Table 2:

**Table – 2 India's Financial Gap**

	Amount
Financial shortfall over the mandated 15 years for achieving SDGs	INR 533 lakh crores (USD 8.5 trillion)
Per year, on average	INR 36 lakh crores or USD 565 billion.

**Source: (Technology and Action for Rural Advancement, 2015)**

There is an immense need for strong coordination between different governments, development institutions, private sector and financial institutions for the effective financing and implementation across the globe (India Budget, n.d.). The policy makers have to consider the large number of potential interaction across the 169 targets of SDGs. Although a framework has been projected to exemplify SDG interactions (Pradhan, P, et.al. 2017). The researchers of Stockholm Environment Institute

(SEI) have developed a practical approach which can be used to prioritize action on SDG targets and to identify the most effective partnerships and collaborations, based on an understanding of real world interactions between targets in a given context (Weitz, et.al. 2019).

The Parliament of India has taken praiseworthy steps to propel the SDG agenda forward. The Lower House of the Parliament has organized a number of deliberations on the SDGs with parliamentarians from both Houses as part of the Speaker's Research Initiative. The gender equity was one of the key area of these initiatives in context of SDGs. The South Asian Speakers' Summit on SDGs was another landmark regional program organized in 2017, which is centralized on the theme of 'Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Resources for SDGs' (Voluntary National Review Report, 2017).

The Government of India is on the way of implementing SDGs and has done a lot of progress and in this direction NITI Aayog has played a vital role. The Civil Society Organization which is working on SDG-related issues from the grassroots to the national level has contributed by way of popularizing SDGs at national and sub national level.

The NITI Aayog has drafted National Indicators and further civil society organization has submitted a compendium of recommendation on these indicators on April 7, 2017 (Civil Society Report, 2017). Further NITI Aayog has framed a single measurable index based on its 62 indicators for tracking the progress of all the States and Union Territories (UTs). However, progress of only 13 out of 17 SDGs will be tracked and remaining four will be untouched on account of unavailability of comparable data across States/UTs). The NITI Aayog, which is a 'Think Tank' for the Government of India, has undertaken following key actions with the support of its stakeholders (SDG Business Hub, n.d.):

1. For recording interlinkages among SDGs, a thorough mapping has been taken place.
2. For the achievement of SDGs, the all stakeholders have been consulted in series of 22 deliberations at national and regional levels.
3. First Voluntary National Review Report on the implementation of the SDGs in 2017
4. Launch of SDG India Index Baseline report in 2018 for tracking the progress of all the States and UTs.
5. Development of national dashboard to present SDG India Index 2018 analysis.
6. Development of National Indicator Framework under the assistance of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation and in consultation with Ministries and States/UTs.

In single measurable index of NITI Aayog, the range of score on each SDG is between 0 to 100. States will be rewarded with the title of 'Achievers (in Blue)' if having a score of 100. The tag of 'Front-Runners (in Green)' will be given to those states which scores greater than or equal to 65. Those getting a score between 50-64 will become 'Performers' (in Yellow)'. If the score is less than 50

then states will be classified as 'Aspirants (in Red)'. The score of 0 will make state 'worst performer'. The

following Table -3 figures out the progress of different states and UTs of India for SDGs.

**Table -3 Performances of State/UTs on SDGs**

States	SDG 1 (End Poverty)	SDG 2 (End Hunger)	SDG 3 Health	SDG 4 Education	SDG 5 Gender Equality	SDG 6 Water	SDG 7 Energy	SDG 8 Eco Growth	SDG 9 Infrastructure and Industrialization	SDG 10 Inequality	SDG 11 Resilient cities	SDG 15 Ecosystem and Biodiversity	SDG 16 Institutions
Andhra Pradesh	67	50	68	77	44	59	76	81	31	75	26	87	90
Arunachal Pradesh	52	58	38	44	32	64	44	72	16	47	44	73	77
Assam	53	53	30	54	36	42	18	61	35	75	32	100	53
Bihar	45	39	40	36	24	31	67	58	38	82	43	56	60
Chhattisgarh	50	46	42	53	49	98	36	56	30	73	54	100	65
Goa	62	80	65	71	35	65	61	90	0	50	71	100	87
Gujarat	48	49	52	67	31	100	67	80	65	79	52	71	73
Haryana	50	53	57	65	31	80	50	72	50	55	30	43	78
Himachal Pradesh	60	58	62	82	42	95	62	71	43	98	41	93	91
Jammu & Kashmir	61	60	53	51	39	52	58	43	35	71	23	74	69
Jharkhand	37	35	40	58	32	51	20	52	47	72	52	96	64
Karnataka	52	54	69	76	43	62	77	72	57	68	36	88	74
Kerala	66	72	92	87	50	62	60	61	68	72	46	75	82
Madhya Pradesh	44	41	38	49	33	63	58	57	27	75	39	91	59
Maharashtra	47	47	60	74	43	81	69	74	53	76	34	86	82
Manipur	44	74	67	65	25	44	39	33	72	98	31	100	70
Meghalaya	68	43	52	38	36	40	11	62	42	100	39	94	53
Mizoram	71	69	53	54	43	67	78	65	0	100	32	69	71
Nagaland	59	69	34	45	42	58	45	40	0	80	32	75	87
Odisha	59	46	54	46	43	46	23	53	32	78	34	100	55
Punjab	56	71	71	63	43	60	61	57	48	62	36	67	84
Rajasthan	59	45	49	73	37	43	63	57	62	79	45	68	81
Sikkim	64	67	52	47	50	78	47	57	1	67	56	98	66
Tamil Nadu	76	61	77	75	38	66	89	71	46	85	33	74	61
Telangana	52	53	73	66	43	55	63	75	16	100	44	83	66
Tripura	71	58	53	56	38	38	32	52	38	89	38	86	71
Uttar Pradesh	48	43	25	53	27	55	23	55	29	38	37	55	61
Uttarakhand	65	53	36	68	41	78	55	67	33	62	41	100	86
West Bengal	57	50	66	51	40	54	40	63	45	76	25	88	72
A & N Islands	57	38	60	69	58	71	56	60	0	69	64	84	72
Chandigarh	39	70	23	85	51	100	96	82	76	52	40	83	90
Daman & Diu	58	42	47	46	38	99	84	91	0	100	49	84	79
D&N Haveli	21	40	32	77	41	100	73	84	0	100	6	100	63
Delhi	30	72	47	58	37	62	51	86	100	80	39	77	68
Lakshadweep	43	47	64	62	35	100	60	60	0	100	Null	100	74
Poducherry	61	71	66	69	27	45	61	85	100	94	27	50	92
India	54	48	52	58	36	63	51	65	44	71	39	90	71

Source: NITI Aayog's SDG India Index Baseline Report, 2018

**Schemes for Implementing Sdgs in India**

India has been actively participating in the resolution titled 'Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' consisting of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets. Being a sixth largest economy and a global engine of growth, India is projected to be fastest growing economy in 2019-20 (NITI Aayog, 2019). The targets of SDGs necessitate every country to prioritize their agendas and carefully frame various policies in accordance with local challenge, capacities and accessible resources.

As NITI Aayog has only come into existence to integrate the national development agenda with sustainable development goals. Though the genesis of sustainable development lies even in the constitution of India and yearly Union Budgets always have different schemes for balancing the economic, social and environmental areas. In view of this objective, NITI Aayog has framed two documents namely "Three Year Action Agenda" and "Strategy for New India @75". The different policies and guidelines of these documents broadly mirrored the SDGs and carried out mapping of Goals/Targets (NITI Aayog, 2019a).

However, Three Year Action Agenda and the Strategy Document of NITI Aayog has keenly focused on 'Health Sector' related subjects (Goal 3). A National Health Policy (NHP) publicized in 2017 also recognize the significance of SDGs and target to increase the Public Health Expenditure to 2.5 per cent of GDP by 2025 (NITI Aayog, 2019a). After reviewing the Union Budget of India from 2016-17 to 2019-20, the different schemes and policies initiated by Government of India have been categorized into following sections:

1. Agricultural Sector
2. Industrial Sector
3. Environment
4. Health Sector
5. Education
6. Rural Sector
7. Poverty Eradication
8. Women and Child Welfare
9. Upgradation of Minorities
10. Other Schemes

**The schemes initiated by the Government of India in Agricultural Sector are:**

1. Green Revolution
2. Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojna
3. Crop Insurance Scheme
4. Agricultural Universities and Institutions
5. Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampda Yojna
6. Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Yojna (PM-AASHA)
7. Market Intervention Scheme and Price Support Scheme (MIS-PSS)

**The schemes which focus on Industrial sector include the following:**

1. National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NICDIT)
2. North Eastern Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy (NEIPP)

3. Promotion of Digital Payment
4. Equity Capital to Micro Units Development Refinance Agency (MUDRA Bank)

**The schemes which are having their attention directly on environment includes:**

1. Environment, Forestry and Wildlife
2. Wind Power- Grid Interactive Renewable Power
3. Solar Power- Grid Interactive Renewable Power
4. Green Energy Corridors-Grid Interactive Renewable Power
5. Solar Power- Off-Grid/Distributed and Decentralized Renewable Power
6. National River Conservation Programme
7. National Ganga Plan and Ghat Works
8. Namami Gange – National Ganga Plan

**The schemes directly entitled for health sector includes:**

1. National Health Mission
2. Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojna
3. Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojna
4. National AIDS and STD Control Programme
5. National Health Protection Scheme- erstwhile RSY

**The following schemes are entrusted with the task of promoting education in India:**

1. National Education Mission
2. National Programme of Providing Mid Day Meals in Schools
3. Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA)
4. Education of Minorities Girl Child
5. National Means Cum Merit Scholarship Scheme
6. Scholarship for College and University Students

**The schemes for upgrading rural sector include:**

1. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna
2. National Rural Drinking Water Mission
3. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana
4. Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojna (Rural) - Saubhagya

**The schemes for eradicating poverty and facilitating equality include the following:**

1. National Social Assistance Program
2. Mahatama Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Program
3. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna
4. Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna
5. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana
6. National Livelihood Mission-Ajeevika
7. Jobs and Skills Development
8. Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)
9. LPG Connections to Poor Households
10. Pradhan Mantri Paridhan Rojgar Protsahan Yojna (PMPRPY)

**The Government of India has also launched different schemes for supporting women and child, which are as follows:**

1. Beti Bacho Beti Padhao,
2. Mission for Protection and Empowerment for Women
3. Umbrella ICDS
  - i. Anganwadi Services
  - ii. National Nutrition Mission
  - iii. Maternity Benefit Programme
  - iv. Scheme for Adolescent Girls



v. Child Protection Scheme and Scheme for wellbeing of working children in case of care and protection

vi. National Creche Scheme

4. Stand-Up India (through NCGTC)

**The schemes that are initiated with the aim of upgrading the minorities and other backward class include the following:**

1. Umbrella Scheme for Development of Scheduled Castes
2. Umbrella Programme for Development of Scheduled Tribes and Other Vulnerable Cases
3. Umbrella Programme for Development of Minorities
4. Stand-Up India (through NCGTC)
5. National Fellowship for SCs
6. National Fellowship & Scholarship for Promoting Higher Education in case of ST Students

**Apart from above mentioned categories there are other current flagship policies and major schemes of Government of India for implementing sustainable development goals include:**

1. Swachh Bharat mission,
2. Urban Rejuvenation Mission : AMRUT - Urban Transformation & Smart Cities Mission
3. Bharatnet

#### **Conclusion**

The successful implementation of SDGs is the only means for the survival of human-being, economic prosperity and safety of ecosystem and can be achieved partly through a feeling of moral obligation and even more through self-interest and commitment at the government level as well as at the individual level. However, it will happen only when these policies must have in place a participation approach that obtains the collective feedback of all stakeholders in the country.

All SDGs will have to consider together and moreover, interaction and interdependence among them will have to be given top priority. So, the vision of sustainable development will become reality only if everybody contributes to a world where economic freedom, social justice and safety of ecosystem go hand in hand, making our present and future generations prosperous and comfortable than now.

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