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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – A CHALLENGE FOR MANKIND

***Rukmini.K,**

Associate Professor, Department of Commerce, GFGC NELAMANGALA Bangalore.rural 562123

Abstract

The economic growth, over the past couple of decades has come at the expense of the environment. The natural resources of mother earth have been and are being exploited in ways that are environmentally unproductive and hazardous. This has extremely dangerous consequences such as a marked decrease in the quality of air, water, land and the overall climate.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 put forth a set of seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to encounter the pressing the environmental, economic and the political challenges. The seventeen goals being: to put an end to poverty; zero hunger; provision of quality education; establishment of gender equality; access to clean water and sanitation; to provide affordable and clean energy; availability of decent work and economic growth; industrial innovation and infrastructure; to reduce inequalities; establishment of sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; life below water; life on land; peace, justice and strong institutions and partnership for the goals.

India, being a developing country has had a constantly rising economy resulting in flourishing industrialisation in the recent past, hampering the environment. Observing this rampant degradation of the environmental resources, the Supreme Court of India in an attempt to conserve the resources and protect the environment, played a noteworthy role in determining and assuming the policy of Sustainable Development led by Justice Kuldip Singh, who eminently came to be recognized as the 'Green Judge'. Today, with the constantly developing economies and the need and greed for more, the Sustainable Development policy arises as the most pertinent principle. According to the Brundtland Commission, the Sustainable Development has been made to facilitate a development that satisfies all the needs of the present generation, without bargaining the potential of the future generations to meet their needs. Sustainable Development basically attempts to establish and maintain an equilibrium between development and the environment. It upholds inter-generational equity, that is a better quality of life for both present and the upcoming future generations. The advantages of development need to be associated with its impact on the environment. While development is imperative or in fact a necessity, its impact on the environment must be deliberated before enterprising such a development. The elementary notion of sustainable development aims to uphold a balance between the economic advancement all the while guarding the environment.

INTRODUCTION:

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), signed by the United Nations Millennium Declaration in the year 2000, is a historic milestone and an effective technique of a comprehensive global mobilisation to accomplish a few imperative social precedence worldwide. The MDGs express a pervasive public concern with regard to gender inequality, poverty, environmental degradation hunger, unmet schooling and disease. (griggs 2013) Many of the developing countries have been striving towards making considerable progress in achieving the MDGs, granted the progress is extremely variable across the goals, population and countries. Mostly due to the staggering economic development in China, the developing countries en bloc have reduced the poverty rate by almost half during the years between 1990 and 2010. Few of the countries were thought to most definitely achieve most if not all of the MDGs, while others were thought achieve very few by 2015.

In the year 2012 the United Nations Rio+20 summit in Brazil, persuaded the governments all over to establish a new set of goals named, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that would be assimilated to follow up the MDGs post their deadline in 2015. (sachs 2012) The UN in New Yor, an organisation termed as the Open Working Group that was created by the UN General Assembly recommended a set of global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This comprised of 17 goals and 169 targets to be achieved by the year 2030. Furthermore, a set of 330 preliminary indicators were put forth in March 2015. Some of these SDGs build on the preceding MDGs while the others incorporate a whole set of new ideas. The existing format of thus projected SDGs and their targets have laid down a policy agenda; nevertheless, without a thorough and scientific follow up on the operationalization the preliminary indicators would be ambiguous. **(**Tomáš̌ Hák**)**

India, home to approximately one-sixth of all humanity, plays a crucial role and holds the key to success of the 2030 framework. India in its second Voluntar National Review put forth by the NITI Aayog has brought about a paradigm shift to the “whole-of-society” methodology with Indian Government appealing to the local governments, civil service organizations, local community population, the people in at risk situations and the private sector. The comprehensive progress in the SDGs is fundamentally contingent on India’s progress, as India, home to 1.3 billion people (2016) accounts for approximately 17% of the global population. The country has large distinctions in socioeconomic development across its states. Over the last couple decades, India has successfully achieved unremitting economic growth, cut poverty by almost half and also has made admirable progress in refining reproductive and child health services throughout country.(panda bk)

As a countersigner of the SDG assertion, the official statistical system in India is incorporating the SDG targets and its preliminary indicators into planning and programmes of the country. A contemporary study based on the SDGs stated that India stood in the 143rd position among the188 countries, holding an SDG index value of 42 (Lim et al., 2016). However, among BRICS countries, the performance of India in fulfilling the SDGs is relatively poor and is also lower than that of Sri Lanka and China. This low rank has been attributed to the fact the lowly

child and maternal mortality, poor sanitation and an increased burden of contagious and non-contagious diseases in India (Lim et al., 2016; Singh, 2012, 2016). The National Health Policy of 2017 aims at accomplishing most of the preliminary indicators of SDGs in a time-bound modus. Furthermore, the state governments also plan to assimilate SDG indicators to quantify the developmental progress.

ROLE OF SDGS IN INDIA

Vasudaiva Kutumbakam, a primeval Indian locution meaning "the whole world is one family", succinctly emphasises the spirit of Indian approach to all the aspects of life and this of course includes economic development. The Sustainable Development Goals are, therefore, an integral part of the country's time-honoured tradition and heritage. Undeniably, the goals substantively echo the development schema of India, as the Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself emphasised in his speech at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in September of 2015.

India, over the past few years, has focused its development trail to meet its precedence of employment, food and water, economic growth and energy security, poverty alleviation and disaster resilience. India has aimed also to restore its natural capital funds and assume a transparent and stout governance alongside democratic lines. Nonetheless, emerging challenges of increasing inequities, climate change impacts, and poor human development manifestations are well acknowledged by both the Government and the citizens of the nation. The 2015 UN Sustainable Development goals framework offers an opportunity to reintroduce and integrate efforts for the purpose of meeting, to a substantial degree, the national and comprehensive aspirations in a distinct time frame.

GOAL 1: NO POVERTY

To completely and efficiently eradicate poverty is one of the paramount challenges that humanity is facing. The United Nations has given 17 Sustainable Development Goals which are to be accomplished by the year 2030 and the first and foremost goal is to eradicate poverty. The Goal 1 of the SDGs aims to moderate, at the least by half, the proportions of men and women and children, living in poverty in all its magnitudes according to the nation's definitions. Furthermore, it lays an emphasis on establishing sound policy backgrounds, deployment of resources from a diverse range of sources and instigating nationally apposite social protection arrangements. (AchievingSDGsinIndia_DA_21Sept)

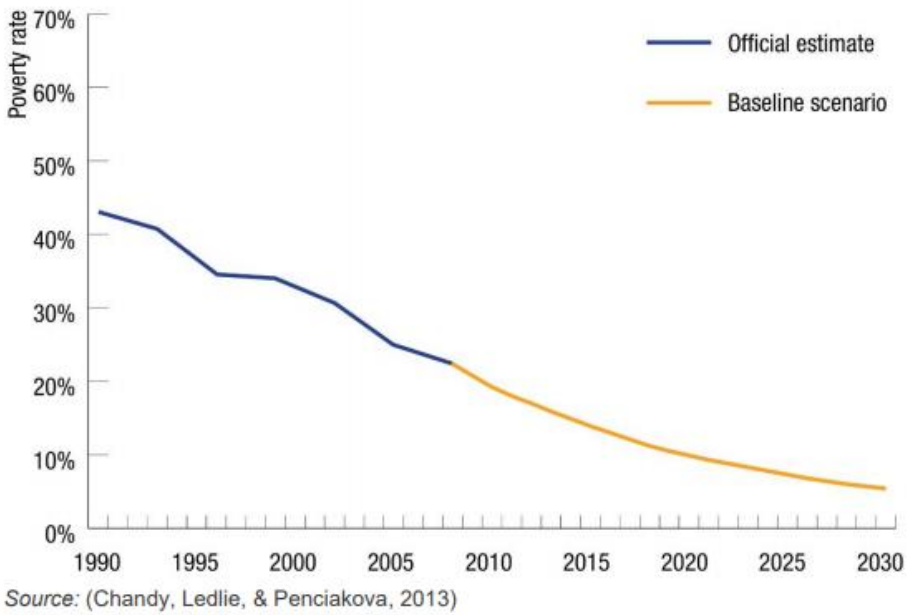
To begin with, India is strving to sustain a high GDP growth rate as it is the most critical for generating jobs for new candidates to the labour arcade as well as for individuals facing lay-offs in the numerous subdivisions of the economy. In addition, the government is trailing the progress of all the States as well as the Union Territories in various SDGs with the help of the SDG India Index of which the NITI Aayog has lately published the second edition. For accomplishing Goal 1 the NITI Aayog has designated five national-level indicators to quantify

India's enactment towards exterminating extreme poverty. These are as follows with their National Target Value for 2030:

1. % of population living below the National Poverty line (10.95%)
2. % of households with any usual member covered by any health scheme or health insurance (100%)
3. Individuals that have been provided employment as a percentage of persons who demanded employment under MGNREGA (100%)
4. Proportion of the population (out of total eligible population) receiving social protection benefits under Maternity Benefit (100%)
5. Percentage of households living in kutcha houses (rural + urban) (0)

Furthermore, to reach these targets the stratagem that the government is trying to chart incorporates concentrating on the economic growth, employing poverty alleviation schemes, providing beneficial employment, amassed livelihood opportunities and refining access to elementary services and predominantly the vulnerable sectors of the population.

Anti-poverty policies like MGNREGA and National Rural Livelihood Mission, Deendayal Upadhyay Grameen Kaushalya Yojana mainly focus on creating employment, skill development, micro-credit and capacity building to upsurge employability amongst the underprivileged. Social security programmes have been facilitating to build resilience and decrease exposure to liabilities. The National Social Assistance Programmes (NSAP), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Suraksha Beema Yojana (PMJSBY) and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Beema Yojana (PMJJBY) that aid access to life insurances and personal accident insurances, and the newly launched health insurance scheme, Ayushman Bharat. Schemes like National Food Security Mission, Mission Antyodaya, Poshan Abhiyan, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Swachh Bharat Mission, Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) etcetera, targets ensuring access to elementary services to the vulnerable sections (can india achieve goal 1)



Source: (Chandy, Ledlie, & Penciakova, 2013)

In the above report the estimates from 2008 forecasts that according to the above-mentioned Baseline Scenario the global poverty rate in 2020 would be 9.9 per cent. Also a recent World Bank Group report states that the global poverty rate was 10 per cent as of September 2019. (Atamanov, et al., 2019)

GOAL 2: ZERO HUNGER

The concept of "Zero Hunger" was first put forth at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Brazil in June of 2012. As quoted by General Ban Ki-moon the Secretary of United Nations - "zero hunger aims for a future where every individual has adequate nutrition". Truthfully, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1974 had avowed that by the year 1984 " no child, woman or man should go to bed hungry and no human being's physical or mental potential should be stunted by malnutrition". Dr Manmohan Singh, the former Prime Minister of India had emphasized in his Independence Day speech that "nobody will be allowed to go hungry". Zero hunger is a challenge that India has to unavoidably meet and not just for its own people but also because there cannot exist a hunger free world lacking a significant breakthrough by India.

To accomplish "zero hunger", India will have to warrant

1. A 100% accessibility to adequate food throughout year.
2. Sustainable food systems.
3. A 100% upsurge in smallholder productivity and income.
4. 0 food wastage
5. 0 malnutrition in children less than 2 years of age.

To battle the challenge of zero hunger successfully

1. The government ought to develop contemporary technologies and adopt prepared effective mechanism to implement and review the national food security program
2. There should be a shift of foucus from mere accessibility to enough food to enough quantity and quality of right kind of food
3. Effective implementation of safety-net programs to avert diseases, provision of safe drinking water, sufficient sanitation and education

To effectively achieve Zero Hunger there should be a significant upsurge in food output to feed India's swarming millions by the year 2030, it demands a contemporary and professional agricultural division exemplifying the components that can enhance farm productivity that is food crops together with fruits & vegetables, pulses, livestock, fish etcetera and make India achieve "zero hunger" through adequate availability of wholesome food, its easy and reliable access, affordability, proper assimilation and stability of food production.(October_16_World_Food_Day_Making_India_F)

GOAL 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL BEING: (can india achieve)

It is a well known fact that there is a the positive correlation between a healthy society and the economic output. An upgrade in the standard of living in the developing countries has had a negative impact on the dietary and lifestyle behaviors resulting in a greater incidence of epidemics (Sinha et al. 2009). These unwholesome dietary practices are attributed to the increased consumption of food and beverages with high salt and sugar content and a low micro and macro nutrient content. Additionally , the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that majority of the global population, approximately 868 million suffer from malnutrition (FAO 2012). Challenges like this on the nutritional content of health are referred to as the 'triple burden of malnutrition' that is, undernutrition, micronutrient deficiency, overweight and obesity (Pinstrup-Andersen 2007, Labadarios 2005). It has been emphasised that the lack of balanced dietary intake either due to decreased food availability or poor dietary habits tend to weaken the immune system resulting ino premature deaths and increased health care expenses. Gomez et al. (2013). UNICEF in 2016 and WHO in 2017 stated that, at least one in three people globally suffer from one or the other form of malnourishment, and approximately 88% of the countries have triple burden of malnutrition affecting all age groups.

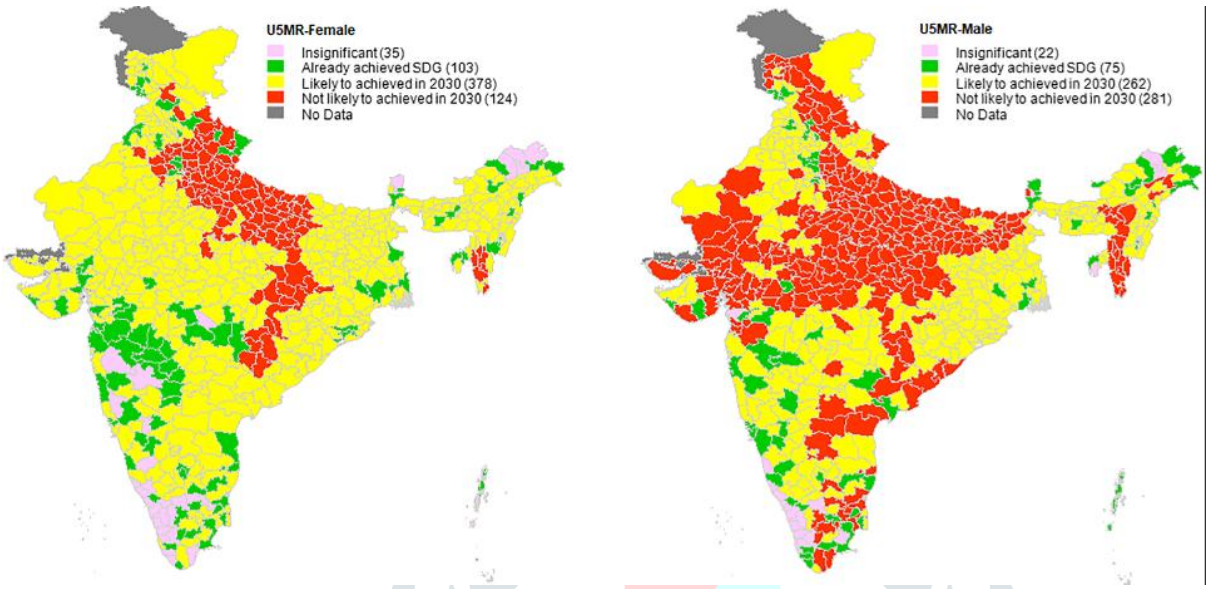
Indian government, keeping in mind, its obligation to the SDGs agenda, has proposed several programms and schemes in association with the SDG health targets. The National Health Policy 2017is one such scheme that addresses quite a few targets of the Goal 3 including communicable and noncommunicable diseases, health workforce and universal health coverage. Ever since the beginning of the SDGs, the government has passed legislation explicitly around Mental Health (Mental Health Care Act, 2017), Disabilities (Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2017), HIV /AIDS (Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome Prevention and Control Bill, 2017) and maternity benefits (Maternity Benefits Amendment Act 2017). In March of 2017, the Ministry of Statistics Planning and Implementation (MOSPI) evolved the national indicators for the SDGs, in agreement with the global indicators.

In the year 2015, the Rural Health Statistics (2014-15) indicated that there is yet a shortfall in the prerequisite number of Sub-Centres, Primary Health Centres and Community Health Centres, regardless of the investments in NRHM over the decade. Though India is one of the most important manufacturers of pharmaceuticals globally, it has been estimated that a little 65% of its population still does not have a proper access to essential medications [http://www.searo.who.int/publications/journals/seajph/issues/seajphv3n3p289.pdf? ua=1)

In the year 2012, India put forth a web-based reporting system –"Nikshay" for employing a policy of compulsory TB notification. Despite systems like these, India needs to trail close to one million unreported cases of TB per annum, particularly in the private sector. Alongwith the rising threats of infectious diseases, it is imperious that private suppliers act in accordance with the reporting requirements.

The VNR report of the Indian Government also quotes "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" underprops its development efforts. "Leaving no one behind" infers reaching out to the neglected and underprivelaged populations making use of different approaches to address their unique concerns. ([10]http://unicef.in/CkEditor/ck_Uploaded_Images/img_1364.pdf)

India contributes to the maximum global cut of deaths amongst the under-fives. Continuous monitoring of the reduction in the under-five mortality rate (U5MR). A recent study conducted in 2018, aimed to deliver an update on the district-level disparities in neonatal mortality rate (NMR) and the U5MR with a special reference to the SDG3 on preventable deaths among new-borns and children under five years of age.



This study brought to light that both NMR and U5MR differ immensely across the Indian districts. With reference to the SDG3 target for the year 2030 for NMR and the U5MR, the probable NMR for India for the duration studied was about 2.4 times greater, whereas estimated U5MR was double. Also at a district level 9% of the districts have successfully reached the NMR targeted in SDG3, and nearly half that is 315 districts might not be able to achieve the target by 2030. Likewise, 177 districts that is less that one third of India are highly unlikely to reach the SDG3 target on the U5MR by 2030.hence, t o achieve the SDG3 target by 2030, India evidently needs to make a massive leap to decrease their NMR and U5MR. (bora2018)

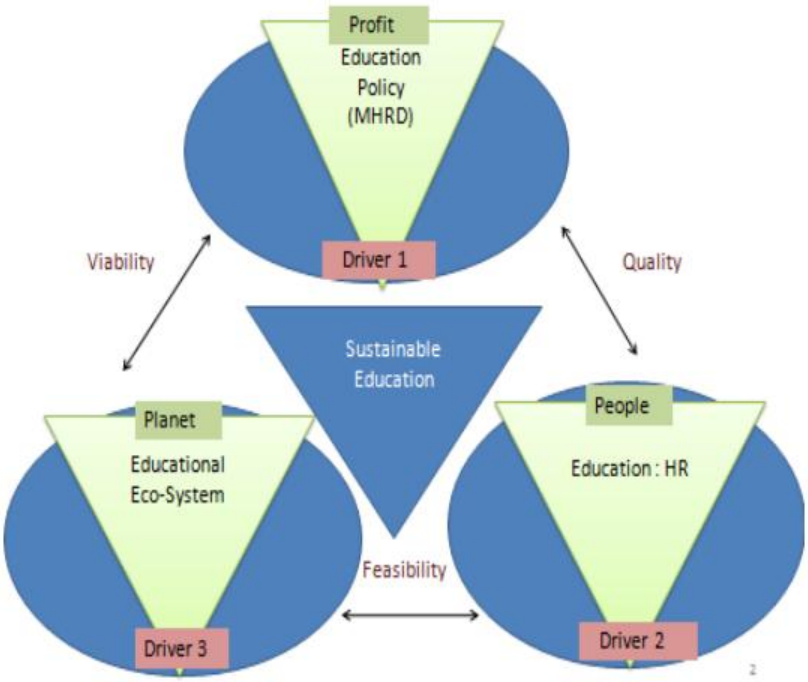
GOAL 4: QUALITY EDUCATION

India has made noteworthy progress in the direction of employing the scheme of Education for all. Numerous programmes and policies have been introduced for the provision of free and compulsory education to all the children between the age groups of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right. Initiatives like the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Right to Education (RTE) have provided the desired motivation for the education system in the country. Although it has considerably upgraded the enrolment rates all across the country in provision of primary education, there are still a few challenges that remain to be addressed.

A theoretical model of viable education has been proposed and this model has 3 vital components termed as the three drivers –

1. Driver1-profit, component Driver – 1 constitutes the 'Ministry of Human Resource Development' (MHRD) of Govt. of India as the chief policy maker, a decision making body and an economic resource provider for successfully running a centralized board of education in the country; hence termed the 'Profit'.
2. Driver 2 – people; component Driver 2: 'people' that are engaged in the education sector, and all the direct and indirect stakeholders that is the human resources of the school education system
3. Driver 3 – planet; component Driver 3: 'planet' is the education set up or the school environment, this can be termed as the "educational eco-system" that governs all the teaching – learning activities.

These three components are anticipated to work together amicably in order to make the education system an efficient and sustainable one.



An education system that endorses the awareness of the uncertainties, complexities and diversities and encourage change through Education for sustainable development (ESD) strategies can undoubdetly be deliberated as reflexive in relation to social learning (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2015). To bring about a reform in the education system, the basic unit of schools have to be improved as organizations that comprehend the human effort and material equipment that could communally improve a student's learning, a teachers' performance and the school culture (Kelley and Dikkers, 2016). The current ESD literature on SDGs by the year2030 advocate for "Whole School Approach" to bring about a sustainable revolution in the schools' vision, routines and structures, professional knowledge creation and pedagogical practices. (IJDSPublication-A.mohanty)

CONCLUSION:

Energy policy, environmental planning and economic development are three elements that play a crucial role in the course of sustainable development. Sustainable development to be efficient demands suitable and strategic policies and programmes satiating multiple and incompatible objectives. India has played and is playing an imperative role in whittling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This means that the national development goals of the country are reflected in the SDGs. India must carry on to pursue the employment of the SDG goals through a close association between the national and sub-national governments alongside an active participation of all the other relevant stakeholders. The SDGs implementation process undeniably yields valuable discernments, the documentation and dissemination the processes coupled with the provision of technical support for solving problem areas will certainly be the key functions to accomplish the SDGs at the national level.

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