



A Study on Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development of India: With Special Reference to Selected SDGs

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Abstract: A systematic review has been conducted in this research and has explained various initiatives taken by India towards sustainable development initiatives. There are different articles based on sustainable development and many of them have been referred in this study. The published articles have been considered for review. The number of studies based on SDGs are limited and only a few of them have been discussed in the previous studies. There are different SDGs which have been covered in this study. A detailed information about the SDGs have been discussed further in this article. In this article, literature based on SDGs has been combined indicating the activities which were conducted in India during last few decades and for arranging them based on SDGs. This particular article aimed to evaluate progress which India has made during last few years and also aimed to evaluate progress in our country associated with sustainable development during last few years.

Keywords: *Sustainability, Sustainable Development, SDG, Sustainable Development Goals, Social Responsibility.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Social Responsibility and Sustainable development is key that brings prosperity in the world. There are many definitions of the word sustainable development and among them the definition which is most popular is the one given in report of “Brundtland”, it defines sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. For achieving sustainable development to protect planet and bring prosperity to the nation till 2030, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been developed. There are different SDGs and separate targets have been specified for them. A detailed information about the SDGs have been discussed further in this article. In this article, literature based on SDGs has been combined indicating the activities which were conducted in India during last few decades and for arranging them based on SDGs. This particular article aimed to evaluate progress which India has made during last few years



and also aimed to evaluate progress in our country associated with sustainable development during last few years.

In India, after freedom from the British rule, our leaders conceptualized need for planned development of nation when the Indians were struggling to make their new rules and laws after getting freedom from the British rule. Five-year plans that were started in the independent India during 1951 were considered to be an attempt towards development of our country in planned way. After that our country developed to a great extent and has achieved the level of self-sufficiency at many fields which also includes food. There was introduction of many river valley projects such as Damodar Valley Project, Farakka, Bhakra Nangal etc. There has been merger of industrial townships. With globalization, there has been introduction of Special Economic Zones which were privately sponsored such as Electronics City in Bengaluru. But the forests which were covered have deteriorated. Forest cover in India is around 25% of land area and this is quite below the international requirement which is 33%. There has been an increase in natural forces which are destructive such as cyclones have now increased. During 2021, six cyclonic storm had hit India which caused a lot of destruction and damage (Kumar, 2015). Taking such a destruction into consideration, it is important that development as a concept is considered again so that the economy moves towards becoming a developed country.

1.1 The Concept of Sustainable Development

‘Sustainable Development’ as a concept was formulated during 1987 by World Commission on Environment and Development which is popularly known as Brundtland Commission. This was established by United Nations General Assembly during 1983. During 1980s of 20th century, the world leaders have become aware in an acute manner about environment getting deteriorated due to exploitation of the nature which is a result of actions by the human beings. The Chairman of the Assembly observed that the present decade i.e. 1980s was marked by retreat from the social concerns. The scientists has brought to the attention of people in our country towards compelling problems and attention towards this urgent situation which is indicating problem of survival which includes global warming and has also been treated as a threat towards Earth’s ozone layer and deserts which are consuming the agricultural land.

1.2 Sustainable Development Goals

Based on recommendations of Brundtland Commission, United Nations have adopted 17 SDGs in the year 2015. Figure 1 below has indicated the 17 SDGs. Among them, the first twelve as well as last two goals have been regarded as Human Development Goals and goals no.13, 14 and 15 have been regarded as goals for environmental protection goals. United Nations have observed that such goals have been call for action by all the countries for promoting prosperity as well as protecting environment (United Nations).



Fig. 1 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Selection of Journals and proceedings

This study is based on the published review of literature based on different secondary sources like Books, Journals and other published sources.

2.2 Selection of key themes for literature review

This study has classified all 17 SDGs into mainly four broad themes and they have been bifurcated based on the published review of literature and the SDGs. This current study aims to identify research gaps based on different themes and would help in identifying futuristic research areas based on the concept of sustainable development in our country. The SDGs have been divided into mainly two parts i.e. Part A and Part B. Part A is related to Human Development and Part B is related to Protection of Environment. In Part A, the following SDGs have been analyzed:

- 1) Reduction of poverty
- 2) Reduction of hunger
- 3) Good health and well-being
- 4) Quality Education
- 5) Gender Equality
- 6) Water and Sanitation
- 7) Decent Work and Economic Growth

In Part B the following SDGs have been analyzed:

- 1) Climate action
- 2) Life in water
- 3) Life on land

Part A - Human Development

This part is based on human development. The following SDGs have been explained in detail:

- 1) Poverty Alleviation – This SDG aimed to remove poverty. Based on ‘2020 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index’, the situation of poverty is not good and there exists poverty at a very peak level in the developing countries. Among the developing countries, 22 percent which represents 1.3 billion people are living in multidimensional poverty. Around 84.3% of people who are multidimensionally poor are living in the sub-Saharan Africa (which represents 558 million) and South Asia (represents 530 million). Among



them, 1.3 billion are suffering from simultaneous deprivation based on a minimum of 5 SDG indicators in a simultaneous way (United Nations Development Programme, 2020). As published in Niti Ayog baseline report about poverty. The Niti Ayog's Poverty Index has indicated that Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar are the poorest states in our country. As such, Sikkim, Goa and Kerala are found to be least poor.

- 2) Food security – There are many people who remain hungry as they do not have sufficient funds for feeding themselves and their families. As per 2021 Global Hunger Index, India has been ranked as 101 among 116 countries. This has indicated that Food Security is not achieved at present in our country. The previous researches have shown that there has been decline in the agricultural production and this may lead towards social unrest in case it is not checked.
- 3) Good Health – Based on this SDG, it is important that all the people have good health and their well-being is also very important. India has been ranked 66 among 195 countries based on Global Health Security Index (GHSI). India has ranked in middle based on health. In some previous researches based on health, there have been inequalities based on mental health care among elderly and women. Secondly there has been an increase in physical disability based on age and also decrease in educational level and there are many women who are childless. Marriage at an early age is also a very big problem among people.
- 4) Quality Education – Education which is being provided should have a good quality so that the students could use their knowledge in future. India has been ranked as 32 based on education in 'World Population Review Educational Rankings by Country 2022'. There have been many problems associated with the educational system based on the previous studies and education system has been suffering from inequalities based on income, employment and education. Mean years in schooling in our country has been quite low as compared to the other emerging economies such as Brazil, China and other such developing countries. There has been steep dropout rate in the middle as well as primary school education. The dropout ratio has been quite high among the students belonging to Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Caste. The enrolment in the higher secondary level has also been quite low.
- 5) Gender Equality – Based on this SDG, there should be equality among people of different genders i.e. males or females. Sustainable development is dependent on equitable distribution of the available resources and there is gender equality maintained among people. It is very important to understand the impact that SDGs make toward sustainable development amongst women since they are partners and beneficiaries. (Pathania, 2017). Women play an important role and helps in developing our nation. They are the ones who encourage their children to get educated, take care of their families in a proper way and also encourage savings for long run and emergency. Gender equality is possible with reproductive girls. There is not enough data available among previous literature about adolescent girls. A report indicated that there has been gender gap of 62.5% in India.
- 6) Clean Water and Sanitation – Clean water is very important as if water is not pure, then there is a possibility that many kind of diseases which are prone to water could spread among people and even sanitation should be proper to avoid any kind of health issues among people. Based on a report from Niti Ayog, a water index has been developed by the government and it has shown serious concerns about the water availability in India



and also about sanitation. There has been development of cost estimated regarding water as well as sanitation by the World Bank and this study was focused on 140 developing countries. This study indicated that there is inequality between different cities regarding sanitation facilities, water accessibility and water availability. The sanitation facilities could improve with an improvement in GDP and this would reduce the diseases which are being caused due to improper sanitation facilities (Roy A. P., 2019). Jal Jeevan and Swachh Bharat missions have led towards an overall development. These studies have indicated that there has been a lot of progress in India based on SDG6.

- 7) Decent Work and Economic Growth – This SDG is concerned with economic growth and decent work. The level of unemployment is quite high in our country and this problem should be solved at the earliest. There has been a prediction by Marx that the capitalist mode related to production has led to growth of industrial reserve army. This was possible if he would have been aware about the role that pandemic played while livelihood was lost. There were around 122 million people who were Indians have lost even their livelihood after the announcement of Covid lockdown.

Part B Protecting the Environment

SDGs 13 which is based on Climate Action, SDG 14 which is based on Life on Water and SDG 15 which is based on Life on Land deals with the environmental protection. There are many scholars who have been associated with research based on environmental protection in our country and the results indicated that India has been constitutionally committed towards protection of environment. Amongst different measures which have been taken by Ministry of Forests and Environment for protecting ecosystem are based on following laws:

- 1) Wildlife Protection Act (1972)
- 2) Water Prevention and Control Act (1974)
- 3) Environment Protection Act (1986)
- 4) National Green Tribunal Act (2010) etc.

There are many such Acts which are related to legislation about environment and also indicate the ways they have to be implemented. Agarwal has criticized enforcement of the environmental laws. The author has given a recommendation that there should be set up of adjudicatory body for overseeing proper implementation. Education play a very important role in the environmental awareness. As per the other authors, Iyengar and Bajaj have found that the syllabus has been unsatisfactory, this is mainly related to Sustainable Development and Environmental Education. The role of women is very important and they help in protecting environment.

In Part B the following SDGs have been analyzed:

- 1) Climate action
- 2) Life in water
- 3) Life on land

1) Climate action

There has been many discussions based on climatic changes which have come up in India and there is a mention in the report of India based on SDG 13 i.e. “United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26)”, the report mentioned that there is a need for renewable energy source. The carbon emission as well as the projected one. Our country focuses on minimizing the



emissions level till 2070. There are many factors which have hindered to efforts which have been put in for achievement of SDG 13. But several factors hinder India's efforts to attain SDG 13. There are different reasons which have led to fewer discussions related to climate action, there is data deficiency and even the budgetary support has been inadequate.

2) Life in water

India has been a signatory towards Ramsar convention based on protection of wetlands. India is having many types of wetlands, conversion of wetland and human interference Though India a rich variety of wetlands, human interference and conversion of wetland to agricultural lands has led to loss in habitat for many such species. Ragavan et al has mentioned there is a need for scientific management in a proper and even wetland is being preserved.

3) Life on land

Based on SDG 15 which is related to life on land, a glance is considered for protecting wildlife. There are different projects based on life on land i.e. Project Elephant, Project Tiger, UNDP Sea Turtle and Crocodile Conservation Project. There are many other initiatives which have been set-up by government which is Wildlife Crime Control Bureau for tackling wildlife trade which is illegal and veterinary drug which is banned like diclofenac for saving Gyp vulture. There have been many studies which are based on conserving wildlife and also managing them so as to protect living spaces. Studies based on wildlife conservation as well as management pointed protection of living spaces which hold the key to protect bio diversity. India has achieved afforestation and even reduction in deforestation. There have been other threats such as poaching remain. It is necessary to encounter them in a successful manner and this is possible when there is captive breeding among the endangered wildlife. There should be rejuvenation of the endangered species. Prevention of man -wildlife conflict is considered to be another essential elements for preservation of wildlife.

Literature Review

Based on the study conducted by Koch and Ahmad (2018), there has been progress based on sustainable cities among Germany and India. This study is mainly based on different parameters i.e. inclusiveness, safety and resilience. As per SDG is concerned, economic growth and decent work has been studied and infrastructure has been regarded as the main factor of growth of economy. There has been more funding problems since there are many infra projects which are being executed through PPP models. There are different features of PPP model which consists of evolution, rationale, challenges and benefits of PPP model. This model was studied by Kaur and Prashanthi (2015) based on many big infra projects like airport in India. Role of the urban trail based on sustainable development of different cities in India has been studied by Sharma and Newman (2017) and at same time, quality evaluation based on sustainable bus services has been carried out based in Patna by (Sinha et al 2017) and helped in sorting out different parameters based on bus quality, the parameters being positive as well as negative. Biogas potential is having a solution of energy in India and this would help India to create more energy (Lohan et al. (2015)). The prospects, needs, barriers and applications of solar energy has been infused into energy basket in India and has been reviewed by (Manju and Sagar (2017)). There has been different problems associated with energy poverty and there has been an impact of new policies based on energy, popularizing alternate fields as well as associated



challenges with the sustainable development based on energy in India (Jewitt and Raman (2017)).

Futuristic Research

This article has been a systematic review based on sustainable development practices in our country and it has found that there exists a huge gap in the literature which is based on sustainable development. Out of the 17 SDGs, few SDGs based on

- Reduction in inequality
- Gender equality
- Decent work and economic system
- Responsible consumption and production
- Peace and justice
- Innovation and infrastructure
- Partnerships to achieve goals
- Industry
- Sustainable communities and cities

There are very few researches based on the above mentioned SDGs. There is sufficient gap in linking government plans, sanitation and clean energy are very important and even the government plans based on SDGs have been executed. Overall status with respect to existing research based on this area, there has been an ample scope towards research.

Concluding remarks

In this study, selected SDGs have been analyzed and some of them are based on Human Development and the others are based on protection of environment. There are different trends of research which are based on SDG have been analyzed. This study has classified all 17 SDGs into mainly four broad themes and they have been bifurcated based on the published review of literature and the SDGs. This current study aims to identify research gaps based on different themes and would help in identifying futuristic research areas based on the concept of sustainable development in our country. The SDGs have been divided into mainly two parts i.e. Part A and Part B. Part A is related to Human Development and Part B is related to Protection of Environment. There is sufficient gap in linking government plans, sanitation and clean energy are very important and even the government plans based on SDGs have been executed.

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