

Concept of Sustainable Development Goals to Overcome Millennium Development Goals Failures on Environment Sustainability

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Abstract

The need for Environmental Protection is emerging concept and one of the most centralized issues which is being overlooked today to fulfill need of social and economic growth. Due to continuous and uncontrolled overexploitation of the environmental resources, issues like climate change, global warming, ozone depletion, acid rain, deforestation, desertification, hazardous exposure and loss of biological diversity have been raising extensively. Therefore, with all the concerns about the future existence of our environmental resources, initiatives for the protection of the environmental components are widely being in practice at national and international level by the various governmental and non-governmental organizations but somewhere there is gap in effective implementation of the efforts and participation and appreciation from the local society. This paper will help to understand that how far we have achieved the objectives of MDGs cooperatively with government schemes and programs in Indian context by addressing gaps which were targeted to resolve till 2015. Therefore, this paper would recommend how the practices under SDGs are work effectively to achieve goal of agenda 2030 that would help to overcome from the failures of the MDGs in the area of environmental sustainability.

Keywords: *Environmental Protection, Government Schemes, MDGs, Overexploitation, SDGs, Sustainability*

1. Introduction

In 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were formed based on the convergence of development agenda of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); World health organization (WHO); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); and other development agencies to meet the needs of the world's developing countries by United Nation [4, 14]. The MDGs are a set of targets for the period of 2000-2015, by considering 1990 as the base year to reduce extreme poverty, disease and deprivation of the world's poorest people [11]. Out of total eight goals, the first seven goals intended to be pursued by developing countries to deal with poverty, disease and environmental degradation, while the eighth goal was essentially a commitment to a global corporation between rich and poor countries to attain the first seven goals [9, 10, 13].

The MDG-7 seeks to ensure Environmental Sustainability with four main targets focusing on integration of policies and programme based on sustainable development to reverse the loss of environmental resources, biodiversity

protection, clean and safe drinking water and basic sanitation and improving the life of at least 100 million slum dwellers [15]. Today there are many warning signs of unnecessary change with the components of environment and their resources resulting climate change, global warming, ozone depletion, acid rain, deforestation, desertification, hazardous exposure and loss of biological diversity [12]. With all the concerns, National and International initiatives for the protection of natural resources, preservation of life, ecological balance are widely appreciated and accomplished at different organizational level but the efforts are insufficient and unevenly distributed. Thus, the objective of this paper is to analyze the picture of the progress on MDGs in India till the end of 2015 so the gaps to achieve the MDG-7 i.e. Ensure environmental sustainability could be identified. It also reflects that what was the need to look for the substitute of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in form of Sustainable Development Goals in September, 2015? This study would help to identify the current scenario of governance working for environmental protection in India for the preparedness and transition to the 2030 Agenda with a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN General Assembly.

2. MDGs: global as well as Indian context

The MDGs were the eight International Development goals for the year 2015 that were established to follow the United Nations Millennium Declaration. All 191 United Nations member states and about 22 international organizations promised to help each other achieving MDGs by 2015[3, 6]. Many countries adopted and implemented the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into their national and sub-national development plans and strategies to achieve the associated targets. The MDGs have been outstandingly successful to address major gaps in sustainability based human development (Fig 1).

MDGs offers a number of positive lessons as the MDGs are clear, limited in number, measureable, based on generally available data and easily communicable along with a number of unconstructive lessons as MDGs have been particularly successful in policy areas where progress did not require systematic changes to the economy or society. The MDGs are considered weak on social justice, equity, vulnerability and exclusion. The status of the MDGs goals achievements in India during the establishment of the post 2015 agenda reported that few targets have been achieved but many remained as very close to target and fell short of target. These gaps became the benchmark for setting the goals under SDGs sustainability agenda 2030 in India [6].

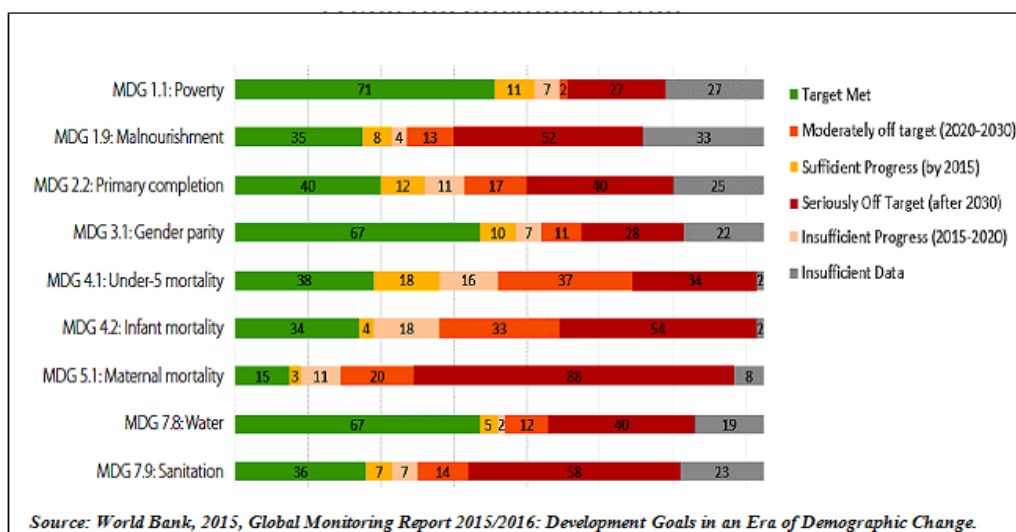


Fig 1: Millennium Developmental Goals, 2000 and Progress by number of Countries (2015)

3. Lessons from the Millennium Development Goal-7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Natural resources and ecosystems are managed sustainably to ensure that people's food requirements and other social, economic, and environmental needs should sufficiently met. However, Climate change, conflicts over access to resources, and increased water scarcity all pose a threat to not only environmental sustainability but also food security [9]. MDG 7 which has targeted the environmental sustainability is principally weak because it excludes crucial issues such as climate change, land degradation, or oceans, while highlighting others, such as drinking water or sanitation, apparently at random. Some of the major achievements of MDG-7 are as follows:

- The virtual elimination of ozone-depleting substances since 1990.
- Substantial increase in marine and terrestrial protected areas in many areas since 1990.
- The number of people using improved drinking water sources has increased from 76 percent in 1990 to 91 percent in 2015.
- 147 nations in the world have fulfilled the drinking water target; 95 nations have achieved the sanitation target; and 77 nations have met both.
- 2.1 billion people in the universe have gained access to improved sanitation. At the same time, the proportion of people practising open defecation has reduced by nearly 50 percent since 1990.
- A reduction in the proportion of urban population in developing nations living in slums from 39.4 to 29.7 percent in the period between 2000 and 2014.

Although MDG-7 targets have been largely achieved but environmental sustainability is still a core area of the Post-2015 agenda which focused that a healthy, diverse, and well-managed ecosystems can play a critical role in improving livelihoods and mitigating future environmental challenges [5].

4. Concept of Sustainable Development

Generally the concept of sustainable development includes the idea of developing without depletion by moving beyond the affordability and regeneration of ecosystems to integrate environmental and economic objectives with environmental protection. Despite effective outcomes of MDGs, most developing countries are still lagging in terms of sustainability and governance. Therefore, after reviewing the MDGs achievements and addressed gaps and weakness that remain unresolved in September 2015, the post 2015 UN Development Agenda, comprising of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets have been adopted, replacing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)[1, 2, 9].

India has made remarkable progress towards many of the MDGs. Identification of gaps in implementing a successful sustainable path could become an example to many Developing Countries (DCs) and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for transformation towards attaining the SDGs. Without the creation and evaluation of the MDGs, the same criticisms would be said about the SDGs [7]. Ultimately, the MDGs laid the foundation for the SDGs to become the better, new, and improved goals; there would not be as clear of an understanding regarding the complex and

comprehensive nature of development as a whole without them[1, 2]. The Sustainable Development Objectives cover different aspects of social development, environmental protection and economic growth.

5. Policies and Practices under Sustainable Development Goals: India's Perspective towards Environmental Protection

India's commitment to the national development agenda and SDGs, the country's Parliament organized several forums, including the South Asian Speakers' Summit in February 2017 that focused on poverty elimination, gender equality, climate change, and resource mobilization for SDGs. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi has stated, "These goals reflect our evolving understanding of the social, economic and environmental linkages that define our lives." India's development mantra "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas" (Collective Effort, Inclusive Development). NITI Aayog has carried out a detailed mapping of the 17 Goals and 169 targets to Nodal Central Ministries, Centrally Sponsored Schemes and major government initiatives and is keen on encouraging states and union territories to share inter alia any new knowledge or good practices from various fields to fast track the implementation of SDGs across the country. The NITI Aayog recently released a draft Three-Year Action Agenda covering the years 2017-18 to 2019-20 [8]. For implementing the SDG agenda focused on environmental protection, the Government of India has launched several programmes. However, emerging challenges of climate change impacts, increasing inequities, and lagging human development indices are well recognised by both the citizens as well as the government. The post 2015 UN Sustainable Development Agenda framework provides an opportunity to renew and integrate efforts in order to meet, to a significant degree, national and global aspirations in a defined time frame. In SDGs, the concept of environmental protection is interlinked with many goals as it was under MDG-7 for ensuring Environmental sustainability [6,8]. These environment protection specific goals are as follows:

5.1 GOAL 2: End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture

India's food security programmes are among the largest in the world and cover more than 800 million people in the country by providing affordable access to grains. Food security is influenced by a number of factors, including those that determine food availability domestic food production and the capacity to import food as well as determinants of food access, including the distribution of food among various segments of the population. Nearly 232 million ration cards entitling people to food and other supplies have been digitized. ICDS caters to the nutritional requirements of over 83 million young children and 19 million pregnant and lactating mothers in the country. The Mid-Day Meal Programme delivers nutritious cooked meals to 100 million children in primary schools.

India is the largest producer of milk, pulses and spices in the world. Food production in the country is therefore vulnerable to climate change. The National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA), in collaboration with other Missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change, is striving towards mitigating the impact of climate change and sustaining agricultural productivity. Under NMSA, Soil Health Cards are being issued to farmers for providing crop-wise nutrient management recommendations and enabling them improve soil fertility as well as crop productivity. Land under organic farming has increased by over 17-fold over the last decade. Agricultural Technology Management Agencies have been established across the country for disseminating the latest technologies to farmers. The Central Soil Salinity Research Institute has successfully developed and deployed

customized salt-tolerant varieties in major crops like rice, wheat and mustard. Further, sustainable and climate-adaptive agriculture has been boosted by, inter alia, promoting organic farming and issuing of 62 million Soil Health Cards to farmers. A comprehensive plan is also being implemented for doubling farmers' income by 2022 [6,8].

5.2 GOAL 6: Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for all

Goal 6 aims to tackle challenges related to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for populations, as well as to water-related ecosystems. Without quality, sustainable water resources and sanitation, progress in many other areas across the SDGs, including health, education and poverty reduction, will also be held back. For access to and availability of water and sanitation for all, India is estimated to require a sum of INR 13 lakh crores (USD 199 billion) till 2030. Ensuring water security (Goal 6) for domestic, agriculture and industry applications and sustainable management of our rivers and water bodies in order to retain the ecological flows is another huge task. The Namami Ganga Plan has an outlay for INR 20,000 crore (USD 3 billion) only for the next five year period; the operational management for the next 10 years are also to be funded by the government and the amounts for that are not yet known. On the other hand, the Ganga River Basin Management Plan (2015) (NDTV India, 2015) estimates that nearly INR 6-7 lakh crores is required to address the pollution problem in the Ganga. All of this is expected to be funded by the government [6,8]. By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water and sanitation related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies would be focused with the support and strengthen the participation of local communities.

5.3 GOAL 11: Make Cities and Human Settlements inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable

More than half the world's population, or nearly 4 billion people, lived in cities in 2015. However, while cities are incubators of innovation and help foster increased employment and economic growth, rapid urbanization has brought with it enormous challenges, including inadequate housing, increased air pollution, and lack of access to basic services and infrastructure.

For making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, India will require a sum of INR 131 lakh crores (USD 2067 billion). This includes housing for all, development and planning of cities, efficient transport systems, public spaces and other components of urban infrastructure costs. The government of India has already rolled out ambitious plans for sustainable urban development (Goal 11). The AMRUT (initial 500 cities) and 100 smart cities programmes have a Central allocation of INR 98,000 crore (USD 15.6 billion) for a period of five years, while the Housing for all (urban) by 2022 has a Central allocation of INR 5625 crore (USD 893 million). In addition the 'Rurbanisation Initiative' has an estimated cost of INR 43033 crore (USD 6.8 billion) which includes budgetary support of INR 33453 crore from Government of India for the entire implementation period [6, 8]. By 2020, the government will adopt and implement integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, develop and implement in line with the forthcoming Hyogo Framework holistic disaster risk management at all levels.

5.4 GOAL 12: Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Pattern

Sustainable consumption and production patterns enable efficient resource use and can reduce the impact of economic activities on the environment. To that end, this Goal focuses on decoupling economic growth from International Journal of Research in Engineering, IT and Social Sciences, ISSN 2250-0588

resource use, and ensuring that hazardous chemicals and wastes are managed in a way that minimizes their impact on human lives and the environment. The methodology for the calculation of this goal has considered the financial gaps for 'low carbon strategies' as detailed out in April 2014 by the Planning Commission, with projections up to 2030 (Planning Commission, GoI, 2014). The cumulative costs of low carbon strategies have been estimated to be around INR 62.5 lakh crores (USD 992 billion), between 2011 and 2030 [6, 8]. By 2020, the targets will achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment. Promote public partnership practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities ensure so that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.

5.5 Goal 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its impacts

Multiple schemes across departments and Ministries are in practice to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries. In India Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning have been adopted to enhance the Capacity building of institutional mechanisms for climate change. Planetary warming continued in 2016, setting a record of about 1.1 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial period. The extent of global sea ice fell to 4.14 million square kilometres in 2016, the second lowest on record. Mitigating climate change and its impacts will require building on the momentum achieved by the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Stronger efforts are also needed to build resilience and limit climate-related hazards and natural disasters. The overall finance required for adapting to climate change, mitigation and climate planning in the major sectors of the economy. The total finance required for climate adaptation alone from 2015 to 2030 is INR 17 lakh crores or USD 267 billion. In comparison, the Planning Commission of India has estimated the total costs of implementing the National Action Plan for Climate Change (NAPCC) and State Action Plan for Climate Change (SAPCC) at INR 17 lakh crores (USD 270 billion) from 2015-17. The estimated costs are for all programmes and activities envisaged in each of the eight identified missions [6, 8].

5.6 Goals 14 And 15: Conserve and Sustainably use the Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development; Protect, Restore and Promote Sustainable use of Terrestrial Ecosystems, Sustainably manage Forests, Combat Desertification, and Halt and reverse Land Degradation and halt Biodiversity loss

India has taken various steps to protect and enhance the coastal and marine ecosystem. The first Maritime Summit was organized in the country in April 2016. More than 4,500 delegates from across 40 countries participated in the Summit. More than 15,000 ha. of mangroves has been planted in the state of Gujarat alone through active participation of local communities under the Integrated Coastal Zone Management project. Further, India is a part of the regional initiative 'Mangroves for the Future', being coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme and the International Union for Conservation of Nature. India's Prime Minister has emphasized the need for a "Blue Revolution". In alignment with his vision, a central plan, the Integrated Development and Management of Fisheries, has been formulated. A detailed Integrated National Fisheries Action Plan, 2016 has also been formulated. The revised National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan, 2015 reflects the important national regulations as well as the current international norms. India is also setting up a Marine Observation System along the

Coast to gain a better understanding of coastal processes and monitor water quality. In 2016, the Prime Minister of India launched a flagship programme, Sagarmala, for promoting port connectivity, development and industrialization, in a phased manner during 2015 to 2025[6, 8]. By 2020, the target is to sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration, to achieve healthy and productive oceans. For Goal 15 of SDGs, by 2020, it is to ensure conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements.

The Indian National Biodiversity Support and Action Plan states that “Ecologically representative areas on land and in inland waters, as well as coastal and marine zones, especially those of particular importance for species, biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved effectively and equitably, on the basis of protected area designation and management and other area-based conservation measures and are integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes, covering over 20 per cent of the geographic area of the country, by 2020[17].

6. Conclusion

Today it is necessary to ensure the further development of economy on the one hand and on the other hand need to focus on reducing the environment contamination and to ensure the environment protection. The new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development supports a sustainable future for the humankind by integrating social, economic and environmental dimensions of development. Compared to the MDGs, 17 SDGs are more ambitious in scope and universal in coverage by setting targets both for developing and developed countries. These goals adopted a more comprehensive approach towards development by integrating social, economic and environmental dimensions of development. The success of implementing the 2030 Agenda will depend on the quality of governance. The key challenge will be to find an appropriate mode of governing for each country that models the complex institutional and incentive problems in the implementation and monitoring processes. India is continuing to pursue the implementation of the SDG agenda through close collaboration between the national and sub-national governments as well as active participation of all other relevant stakeholders. To conclude, there is need to ensure strong vertical and horizontal relations and policy coherence and cooperation at all levels of government for effective implementation of the multidimensional aspects of the 2030 Agenda. SDGs and MDGs are closely linked, in process and content. The SDGs should contain an integrated set of goals, which strikes an adequate balance between development needs and a high level of environmental protection. Apart from integrating the SDGs into its on-going national and sub-national policies and programmes, India will continue to focus on nurturing partnerships at the regional and global levels. It will work towards ensuring a greater flow of finances and technology from developed countries in alignment with their explicit commitment in the context of the 2030 Agenda to developing and least developed nations. India believes that with combined and sustained efforts at the national and global levels, it will indeed be possible protect the natural resource, environment conservation and ensure a prosperous world for all.

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