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Prasanna S,

Chairman of Institute of Legal Education (Established by I.L.E. Educational Trust)

No. 08, Arul Nagar, Seera Thoppu,

Maudhanda Kurichi, Srirangam,

Tiruchirappalli – 620102

Phone : +91 94896 71437 – info@iledu.in / Chairman@iledu.in



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INDIA'S JOURNEY TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

AUTHOR – AMAN, STUDENT AT ASIAN LAW COLLEGE

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Abstract

Sustainable development provides a holistic approach to tackling these problems by combining economic growth, social inclusivity, and environmental preservation. Urgent attention is required to address pressing environmental challenges, including climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, pollution, and resource depletion. The rapid rise of industrialization, population growth, and unsustainable consumption patterns has hastened the degradation of our ecosystems, posing a threat to planetary stability and human societies. Achieving sustainable development necessitates collaboration and joint efforts from governments, businesses, civil society, and individuals alike. Each individual, community, government, and organization holds the responsibility to take prompt and meaningful actions toward this cause.

Keywords: Environment, Sustainable Development, Society, Resource, Pollution.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development emphasizes the importance of integrating environmental protection, social equity, and economic prosperity. It calls for responsible practices that minimize negative environmental impacts, promote social inclusion and equity, and foster economic growth that benefits all members of society. The idea of sustainable development emerged as a response to the growing recognition that human activities, particularly industrialization and rapid population growth, were having severe impacts on the planet's ecosystems. These activities were depleting natural resources, causing pollution, and contributing to climate change, which posed significant challenges to the well-being of both current and future generations. India's significant contribution in shaping the SDGs has naturally led to the alignment of its national development goals with the SDGs. Consequently, India has been wholeheartedly dedicated to accomplishing the SDGs long before their formal crystallization. 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) and the associated national programs closely track the SDGs.

Sustainable development comprises three fundamental pillars: economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection, all of which must be balanced and integrated.

Environmental Sustainability: The concept of environmental sustainability revolves around responsibly managing and preserving nature's resources, avoiding their depletion. It involves safeguarding the environment and promoting rational resource usage. Embracing practices like environmental conservation, investing in renewable energy sources, water conservation, supporting eco-friendly transportation, and innovation in sustainable architecture and construction all contribute to achieving environmental sustainability from various angles.

Social Sustainability: Social sustainability aims to foster gender equality and the holistic development of individuals, communities, and cultures. Its goal is to ensure a reasonable and equitable quality of life for people worldwide, encompassing access to healthcare and education. By nurturing social inclusion, we can achieve a more balanced and fairly-distributed society.

Economic Sustainability: The principle of economic sustainability centers around promoting balanced economic growth that benefits all while preserving the environment. It emphasizes equitable distribution of economic resources and strives to eradicate poverty in all its dimensions, thus creating a thriving and sustainable economy.

GROWTH IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Based on the current trends observed during the period 2015-2019, India is projected to surpass its lower-middle-income country group before the year 2030. Moreover, at the current pace, the country is expected to achieve its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by approximately 2059. While this timeframe falls significantly short of the initial target of 2030 for SDGs, it still outperforms any grouping of countries categorized by income levels.

The delay in progress can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, some of the goals set, such as eradicating war, poverty, climate change, hunger, and disease, are extremely ambitious and difficult to attain. Secondly, the sheer number of promises made makes it challenging to prioritize effectively. With 169 targets, the focus is dispersed, leading to a lack of clear priorities. Additionally, many nations lack the capability or willingness to allocate sufficient resources to fulfill all their commitments. Empirical data suggests that countries are currently spending only a quarter of what is required to achieve the promised targets worldwide.

In 2018, the NITI Aayog introduced an index to assess the nation's progress on the goals using

data-driven evaluation and to encourage healthy competition among States and Union Territories in achieving these goals .NITI Aayog has a dual responsibility of overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the country and promoting a spirit of competition and cooperation among States and Union Territories.The index reflects the comprehensive essence of the Global Goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda, while also aligning with the country's specific priorities. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015, consisting of 17 SDGs, which are a significant commitment to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and addressing more pressing challenges.

To improve the situation, it is crucial to concentrate resources more efficiently. Utilizing economic cost-benefit analysis can aid in identifying policies where a minimal allocation of resources can lead to substantial progress, while also pinpointing areas where significant resource allocation may yield limited results.

Government initiatives regarding the Sustainable development goals in India

GOAL 1 – NO POVERTY	Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Beema Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Suraksha Beema Yojana (PMJSBY), Ayushman Bharat, Mission Antyodaya, the National Food Security Mission, Poshan Abhiyan, Swachh Bharat Mission, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) etc
GOAL 2 – ZERO HUNGER	National Nutrition Mission POSHAN Abhiyaan, Antoydaya Anna Yojana

	(AAY), Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), Mid-day Meal (MDM) scheme, the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)		Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY),
GOAL 3 – GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	The National Health Mission (NHM) - sub-missions - National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and National Urban Health Mission (NUHM), AYUSHMAN BHARAT - Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (PMJAY), Mission Indradhanush, the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP), the National Leprosy Eradication Programme, the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP), the National Programme for control of blindness, the National Programme for Prevention and control of cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and stroke (NPCDCS)	GOAL 6 – CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRWDP), the National Water Quality SubMission, Swachh Bharat Mission - Gramin
		GOAL 7 – AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	National Solar Mission, Dedicated Green Energy Corridor, the Off-Grid and Decentralized Solar PV Applications Programme, the National Biogas and Manure Management Programme, the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana- Saubhagya, the LPG subsidy (under PAHAL), the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana, the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, UJALA
		GOAL 8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), Start-up India, Skill India the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
GOAL 4 – QUALITY EDUCATION	Samagra Shiksha, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE), etc. Digital initiatives like Shala Kosh, Shagun, Shaala Saarthi	GOAL 9 – INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Bharatmala, Sagarmala, Make in India, Digital India
GOAL 5 – GENDER EQUALITY	Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, the Janani Suraksha Yojana, One Stop Centre, the	GOAL 10 – REDUCE INEQUALITY	Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) enacted in 2005, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen

	Kaushalya Yojana (DDUGKY), Stand-Up India Scheme.
GOAL 11 – SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	Atal Mission For Rejuvenation And Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban, Smart Cities Mission
GOAL 12 – RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	Promote resource efficiency, green economies and sustainable infrastructure, reduction in waste and pollutant activities, and adoption of technologies focusing on renewable resources
GOAL 13 – CLIMATE ACTION	Plan and promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management
GOAL 14 – LIFE BELOW WATER	Preventing marine pollution, ending illegal and destructive fishing practices, and sustainably managing and protecting marine and coastal ecosystems
GOAL 15 – LIFE ON LAND	National Environment Policy, 2006 and National Agro-forestry Policy, 2014, the Green Highways Policy, 2015, the National Afforestation Programme, the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats Programme, the Programme on Conservation of Natural Resources and Eco-systems.

GOAL 16 – PEACE AND JUSTICE	Environment of peace, justice and good governance through transparent and accountable institutions at all levels.
GOAL 17 – PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	Financing for development, access to technology, capacity-building measures, trade as a facilitator of global growth, institutional coherence and policy convergence, involvement of multi-stakeholders and forging partnerships, and also ensuring accountability by regular monitoring.

INDIA'S INITIATIVES

At National Level:

Empowered and Resilient India - **Sashakt Bharat - Sabal Bharat:** India has successfully lifted over 271 million people out of multidimensional poverty by promoting economic growth and empowerment. Improved access to nutrition, child health, education, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, and housing has led to reduced inequalities, particularly among vulnerable populations.

Clean and Healthy India - **Swachh Bharat - Swasth Bharat:** Through nationwide initiatives like the Clean India Campaign and the National Nutrition Mission, India achieved 100% rural sanitation and significant reductions in stunting and child and maternal mortality rates. Universal health coverage has been established through Ayushman Bharat, the world's largest health protection scheme, benefiting 100 million families and nearly 500 million individuals with an annual cover of USD 7,000.

Inclusive and Entrepreneurial India - **Samagra Bharat - Saksham Bharat:** Social inclusion is promoted through universal access to nutrition,

health, education, and social protection, alongside fostering entrepreneurial skills and employment opportunities. The Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) trinity, comprising bank accounts, Aadhaar cards (unique identity numbers), and mobile phone access, has facilitated financial inclusion, credit, insurance, and Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) to over 200 million women, contributing to their economic empowerment.

Sustainable India - **Satat Bharat - Sanatan Bharat:** India's climate action strategies focus on clean and efficient energy systems, disaster-resilient infrastructure, and eco-restoration. The country has achieved electrification of 100% of its villages, reduced 38 million tonnes of CO2 emissions annually through energy-efficient appliances, and provided clean cooking fuel to 80 million poor households. India aims to install 450GW of renewable energy and restore 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030, showcasing its leadership in renewable power globally.

Prosperous and Vibrant India - **Sampanna Bharat - Samridh Bharat:** India, as one of the fastest-growing emerging market economies, seeks to become a USD 5 trillion economy by 2025. The country's youthful population, burgeoning innovation, and thriving business ecosystem drive inclusive and sustainable growth. India is committed to stimulating manufacturing, developing infrastructure, encouraging investments, fostering technological innovation, and promoting entrepreneurship to achieve its goals.

At State Level:

Kerala secured the highest position on the Index with a score of 70, closely trailed by Himachal Pradesh with 69 points. Additionally, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana jointly occupied the third rank, each state scoring 67 on the Index.

On the other hand, Bihar obtained the lowest score of 50, making it the poorest performer. Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, and

Uttar Pradesh are among the states with the weakest performance on the index.

Among the states showing improvement, Uttar Pradesh demonstrated the most significant progress, followed by Odisha and Sikkim.

WHAT IS INDIA'S PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING SDGs?

PROGRESS INDICATORS	SDG's
Good	Health, Water, Sustainable energy, reducing inequality
Moderate	Poverty, Education, Sustainable Economy
Poor	Hunger, Gender Equality
Stable	Conserve sea and marine resources

Conclusion

By embracing sustainable lifestyles and reducing our ecological footprint, we can minimize our environmental impact. This involves utilizing renewable energy sources, encouraging recycling and waste reduction, and supporting businesses committed to environmental responsibility. Conserving biodiversity is essential for the well-being and resilience of ecosystems. Preserving natural habitats, protecting endangered species, and implementing conservation initiatives are crucial steps in this endeavor. To mitigate the effects of climate change, it is imperative to transition to clean energy, promote energy efficiency, and advocate for sustainable transportation. Public awareness plays a pivotal role in environmental preservation. Educating and advocating for informed choices empower individuals to influence policymakers and industries to adopt sustainable practices. Every small action counts, and together, we can protect and preserve the environment for a brighter and greener future. Saving the environment is not just an obligation; it is an opportunity to forge a more harmonious



relationship with nature and secure a sustainable planet for generations to come

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