CHAPTER 7

The Sustainable Development Goals: A Global Agenda for Transformative Change towards a Sustainable World

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Abstract

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2012, aimed to establish a series of global objectives that address the environmental, political, and economic obstacles confronting humanity. As a result, the UN voted in 2015 to adopt 17 universally relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are intended to transform the world. These SDGs are being promoted as the new global targets for sustainable development, replacing the previous 8 Millennium Development Goals and covering the period between 2015 and 2030. This paper is based on a review of existing literature on the topic, including academic research papers, reports, and policy documents from international organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank. The analysis focuses on the period from 1950 to 2000 and examines the relationship between economic growth and well-being in developing countries during this period.

The United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also referred to as the Global Goals, in 2015 to encourage worldwide action towards ending poverty, safeguarding the planet, and ensuring peace and prosperity for all by 2030. Comprising 17 objectives, the SDGs acknowledge that progress in one domain has a ripple effect in others, and that development must prioritize social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Countries have pledged to prioritize the advancement of marginalized groups. The SDGs aim to eradicate poverty, hunger, AIDS, and gender discrimination, with India making notable strides towards achieving the 13th goal. From the outset, the SDGs have focused on the 2030 Agenda, which serves as a blueprint for creating a sustainable world with shared prosperity, where people can live productive lives in harmony with a healthy planet.

Keywords: Poverty, Development, Millennium Development Goals, Sustainable Development Goals

Historical Background of the Millennium Development Goal

The period from 1950 to 1980 marked a significant departure from the stagnation in the colonial era, with developing countries experiencing economic growth at a respectable pace. However, this economic growth did not necessarily translate into improved well-being for ordinary

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Despite the positive outcomes achieved by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it is important to remain focused on the elimination of extreme poverty in all its forms. It is also crucial to address emerging global realities, such as the worsening environmental pressures that threaten the livelihoods of millions of people, the increasing number of middle-income countries struggling with internal poverty challenges, and the rapid spread of non-communicable diseases. Looking ahead to the next generation of goals, it is important to maintain the same achievable candor that enabled the success of the MDGs, while also establishing better accountability mechanisms within and between governments. The new goals should also give developing countries greater opportunities to shape the agenda. It is critical to maintain momentum, as progress in individual areas of the MDGs has inspired further campaigns, and the work done in the final stretch will have a lasting impact on the future. While the deadline of 15 years marks an endpoint for the MDGs, the achievements made will serve as a springboard for the next generation of goals. It is essential to act quickly, as time is of the essence.

India, being the second most populous country in the world, holds a significant role in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) globally. The successful implementation of SDGs in India would lead to significant progress in the global agenda. Therefore, it is crucial for India to develop effective methods to monitor and measure the progress of SDGs. The development of suitable indicators is the biggest challenge that India faces. To address this issue, the Indian Index for Sustainable Development (IISD) could be developed based on the Ibrahim index.

India faces several challenges in achieving sustainable development, such as a growing population and rapidly changing urban lifestyles that cause environmental and social problems. To promote sustainable development, higher education can be a powerful tool in addressing societal problems through interdisciplinary research. It is necessary to develop empowering curricula that bring about transformation for a sustainable future. Indian universities can apply various approaches to bring about a paradigm shift in higher education. The effort in higher education is crucial to make sustainable development a reality.

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