

# PAPER TITLE- INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: "SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND IMPLICATIONS"

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## Abstract:

*This article presents an in-depth discussion on sustainability development agenda of The United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) which is to be achieved within 2030. UNSDG includes 17 goals and 169 targets in totality, all of which are primarily focused on eradicating poverty, achieving financial stability, gaining access to health care programs, education, and community development. These initiatives are aimed to unlock environmental sustainability. Furthermore, UNSDG proclaims collaboration among different nations which exploits enhanced scope of freedom. In addition to this, "three pillars of sustainability" framework has been discussed in detail to shed light on sustainability indicators of UNSDG.*

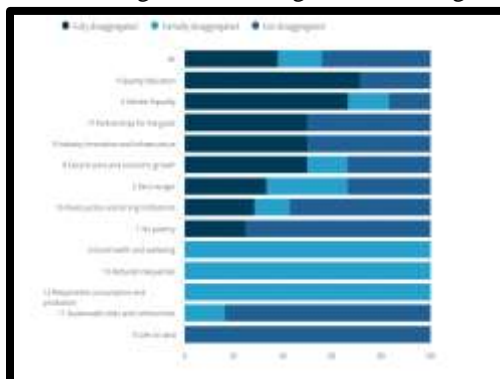
*Key words: UNSDG, sustainable, community, framework and indicators*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Ingenuity or innovation is key in offering possible solutions to longstanding challenges in sustainable development. "United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UN-SDG)" is an agency that is an amalgamation of financial resources of 36 nations and agenda of this group is to assist in sustainable policymaking and decision-making. This group plays a major role in tracking, guiding, and supervising developmental initiatives in several nations. Furthermore, this organization has become notable as it has proposed to obtain a poverty-free world by boosting its agriculture, ensuring security of food, overcoming diseases, protecting well-being of environment, achieving a low-carbon economy, and enhancing efficacy of education system to increase professional productivity within 2030. Ability to innovate certain products and services, attracting FDIs can be beneficial to infrastructure of sustainable development. Therefore, this assignment sheds light on various sustainability goals which advance on the shoulders of innovation along with theoretical learning of "3 pillars of sustainability".

### 1.1 Sustainability goals that are currently in progress

Acquiring sustainable development by 2030, which is a roadmap for peaceful prosperity all over the globe, was a proposal that was accepted in 2015. This proposal included 17 development goals which are sustainable and are designed considering the need of the hour. These goals have encouraged partnerships between developed and developing nations. UNSDG has acknowledged that eradicating poverty is key to improving health and education, which can in return facilitate economic growth. As a result, SDGs have been widely accepted by global business institutions [1]. Furthermore, these initiatives are deeply rooted in preserving natural resources, and forests, fighting climate change and ensuring the well-being of environment. 17 sustainable goals are mentioned below.



**Figure 1: Progress on SDG reporting**

(Source: Ons.gov.uk, 2020)

**1. “No poverty”**

This goal has been made to put an end to poverty in any form and shape around each corner of the world. People who are living under 1 pound each day have been identified as poor.

**2. “Zero Hunger”**

Second goal of UNSDG is associated with eradicating hunger by enhancing food security. Scope of nutrition has to be improved by promoting sustainable agriculture. By the year 2030, half of the proportion of people, across all ages and genders who are marked as poor should be reduced.

**3. “Good Health and well-being”**

Third goal of UNSDG attempts to promote good health conditions across all age groups by creating scope for healthy living. In order to make this goal a reality, extensive “social protection systems” which are supported by government of UK should be introduced. As awareness regarding sustainability has increased, improvement has been experienced exponentially [2]. Aim of this initiative will be to offer health coverage for people who belong to economically vulnerable statuses.

**4. “Quality education”**

This goal attempts to ensure education rights are inclusive and quality education is provided to all gender to ensure capability of obtaining life-long income opportunities. This goal translates to equal opportunity for both men and women, poor and rich should possess equal rights to economic resources. In addition to economic rights, each section of population should be given equal rights to other basic rights.

**5. “Gender equality”**

In order to empower women and girls, goal of gender equality has been taken up. This goal includes necessity of strengthening resilience of those who belong to economically weak and vulnerable populations in order to protect them from environmental degradation, including sudden natural calamities, economic disasters and social mishaps. UNSDGs have become more relevant after the outbreak of Covid-19 as management and accounting policies are in need of modifications [3]. Moreover, UNSDG has vouched for taking responsibility in order to protect people who are economically weak from being exposed to economic, environmental, and social disasters.

**6. “Clean water and sanitation”**

This goal attempts to ensure availability of clean water, proper distribution of water, mandatory sanitization initiatives, and sustainable management of drinking water. UNSDG is crucial for eradicating poverty because it proposes financial policies to improve conditions of those who are in economically disadvantageous positions [4]. This specific SDG encourages decreasing mortality rates due to exposure to unsafe and unhygienic water, consequently reducing health hazards and deaths due to water contamination.

**7. “Affordable and clean energy”**

This goal promotes accessibility to clean and sustainable energy which is affordable, dependable, updated and efficient. This SDG is supportive of increased investment, through mobilization of international coordination, and technology development.

**8. “Decent work and economic growth”**

This goal will involve sustainable and inclusive growth of economy, and consequently, this goal will promote decent employment opportunities for all. UNSDG is a commendable vision that assists in achieving a sustainable future [5]. This goal also supports expanded expenditure of government on essential aspects such as education facilities, safety of health, and social protection.

**9. “Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure”**

This sustainable development goal is rooted in building resilient infrastructure, that can promote sustainable industrialization, and in addition can encourage sustainable innovation initiatives. This framework encourages

increased agricultural productivity of small-scale food producers in order to support increased income, especially, women, an aboriginal fraction of population by 2030. Furthermore, scope of financial services and markets should be enhanced to create opportunities for non-agricultural employment.

#### **10. “Reduced inequalities”**

This goal acknowledges the necessity to foster inequality among different nations in order to remove barriers to promote sustainability. Especially, women face more challenging situations due to societal inequalities [6]. This framework supports a commendable increase in capacity to produce agricultural products, especially in the least developing countries.

#### **11. “Sustainable cities and communities”**

This goal promotes necessity of sustainable construction of habitation centres and cities which can foster viable and imperishable settlement for human society [7]. This framework encourages reducing the mortality rate among children and women including neonatal mortality rate.

#### **12. “Responsible consumption and production”**

This goal of sustainable development promotes necessity of ensuring scope of sustainability in consumption and production of different energy, products and services. In this respect, it is significant to understand crucial role played by technology in enhancing learning capacity [8]. This framework supports coverage for intervening treatments, such as rehabilitation centres and aftercare services for those who are suffering from substance abuse issues.

#### **13. “Climate Action”**

This goal sums up necessity of taking up immediate actions to counter adverse impacts of climate change and its instant impacts on global natural resources. Furthermore, this initiative will focus on reducing the number of drop-outs from school, which will reshape learning on climate calamity [9]. This SDG encourages sustainable agricultural practices in order to encourage adaptation to adverse climate changes, proper utilization of natural resources, and maintain integrity of ecosystem.

#### **14. “Life below water”**

This goal includes conserving marine lives and underwater resources, in order to ensure sustainable utilization of these resources in order to enhance scope of sustainable development. UNSDG attempts to change the current state of sustainable development initiatives [10]. This goal should support further research on development of vaccines and medicines for both communicable and non-communicable diseases.

#### **15. “Life on land”**

This goal includes initiatives to protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of earthbound ecosystems, sustainably manage vegetation, reduce scope of expanded desert regions, and prevent loss of biodiversity, and land degeneration [11]. This goal should focus on trade restrictions on global agricultural markets by eliminating parallel subsidiaries in agricultural markets.

#### **16. “Peace, Justice, and strong institutions”**

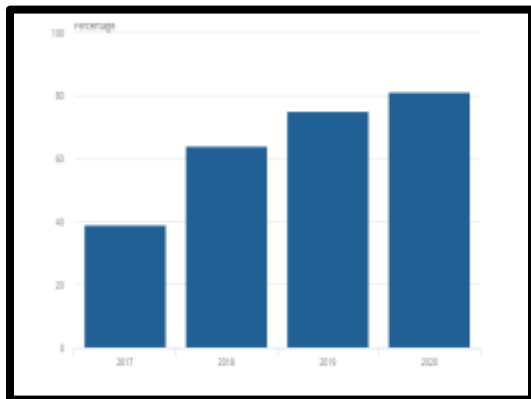
This goal includes attempts to form an inclusive and collaborative society for sustainable development. Furthermore, this goal sums up necessity of taking up a justifiable approach and constructing effective institutions that can ensure this. This goal should target summation of authorized development grants from investors who concentrate on eradicating poverty.

#### **17. “Partnerships for the goals”**

This goal acknowledges strengthening global partnerships to foster implementation of global sustainable development initiatives. Goal of UNSDG is to collectively address societal and environmental challenges [12]. This framework focuses on balancing disasters of direct economic loss and “Gross Domestic Product (GDP)”.

In addition to this, “Global Sustainable Development Report” is produced every four years. Largest share of institutions which have embraced “Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)” have informed that their employees

have become aware of becoming sustainable. The percentage of indicators of “sustainable development” has been estimated at 81% in UK in 2020, which is a 40% increment from 2017 [13]. Many SDG carriers require specific evaluations in order to obtain enhanced understanding.



**Figure 2: Progress on SDG goals**

(Source: Ons.gov.uk, 2020)

### 1.1.1 Significance of “UNSDG agenda 2030”

UNSDG includes many goals of action for prosperity of people and the planet, while simultaneously seeking freedom and universal peace. One of the most significant aspects on which sustainable development largely depends upon eradicating poverty. Poverty has been recognized as one of the most significant obstacles to implementing refining practices around the globe, and henceforth, has been identified as a factor causing major hindrances to sustainable developments. Furthermore, SDGs proposed by UNSDG can be successful only when all stakeholders and countries remain faithful to viable courses of action, and resist unsustainable practices. In order to free this world from grasp of poverty, transformative steps need to be taken to encourage all sectors of society to take up a more resilient course of action. Another aspect of SDGs is to acknowledge equal human rights by empowering women and other minority genders. Three aspects of SDGs, economic, environmental, and social, can be achieved through integrated and indivisible efforts. Along with 17 goals, 169 targets are also announced which can possible implementation of UNSDGs by 2030.

### 1.1.2 Challenges in fulfilling sustainable development goals

UNSDG has crafted a comprehensive range of sustainable development goals and targets in order to drive sustainable efforts in achieving a poverty-free world, however, these goals may, unfortunately, fail in case more attention is not given to emerging challenges. These challenges mainly revolve around governance issues in context of managing natural resources. Regardless, some of the most concerning challenges are mentioned below.

#### *Challenges in gathering right stakeholders*

Sustainable development involves contribution of different stakeholders who are working under different spectrums. Therefore, there may be difficulty in bringing together different stakeholders and aligning their contributions to resolving poverty issues all around the globe. Due to geographical changes, changes in cultures and societal issues vary drastically. Therefore, challenges in coordination loom large in not only energy sector, but also in poverty, agriculture, biodiversity, health, education, and scarcity of water.

#### *Conflicting interests*

Sustainable development usually sheds light on conflicting interests of different stakeholders, which can create additional challenges in implementing sustainable initiatives. For instance, companies and employees who are associated with fossil fuels will consider themselves non-profitable when they are asked to embrace sustainable practices, however, these sustainable practices will become fruitful for overall well-being of this planet. Therefore,

stakeholders have to be strongly willing to bring forth real changes in order to observe proper sustainable development. A genuine commitment to “sustainable development” can be beneficial in inspiring to make difficult decisions. Therefore, as responsibilities of stakeholders are scattered all over, serious conflicts in their interests may be understandable. However, these challenges can be countered with application of appropriate strategies.

#### ***Current financial crisis***

As this project is mainly dependent on funds allocated from different nations, financial crisis can deviate series of events on hold. Moreover, sudden outbreak of Covid-19 has resulted in unsatisfactory financial performance on global front. Furthermore, a lack of funds can Poor financial budgets to cause economic barriers to completion of a sustainable development agenda. Furthermore, challenges and benefits of SDG goals are oftentimes interconnected, therefore, a financial crisis can have a severe impact on sustainable development.

#### **1.1.3 Possible solutions to eradicate emerging challenges**

Following solutions can be helpful in overcoming emerging challenges during “Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)”.

##### ***Implementing different strategies to ensure flawless communication***

Different stakeholders have become engaged with sustainable development projects for different purposes. Therefore, advantages of suitable development projects, such as unique growth potential of a business, serve a higher purpose. As a result, it is a prerequisite matter to communicate these different interests individually to different stakeholders. Furthermore, approach to communication with different groups of stakeholders should be modified individually.

##### ***Differences in culture can be managed by assessing development progress***

Both cultural and linguistic barriers can be overcome by focusing on “Key Performance Indicators (KPI)” on a regular basis. As a result, prompt solutions will be acquired from these constant evaluations.

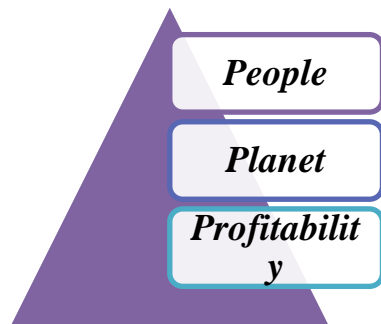
##### ***Promoting investment scope to overcome economic barriers***

Slow growth in income has created a hindrance and resulted in excessive fragility during sudden outbreak of Covid-19. Furthermore, it has imposed financial restraints on governments. Therefore, in order to ensure high-income scope, governments should encourage any scope of investment in order to instil a sense of resilience. As a result, enhanced financial mobility can guide the pathways of 2030 development agenda.

#### **1.1.4 Theoretical framework**

##### **3Ps of sustainability**

This theoretical framework can be utilised to measure sustainability metric of business institutions, which is applicable in this case because UNSDG attempts to enhance scope of sustainability. Therefore, this theoretical concept can lead to a sustainable future for this planet as it teaches to be sustainably profitable without wasting valuable resources [14]. Therefore, this concept assists in creating an alignment between commercial viability and a green environment.



**Figure 3: Three aspects of sustainability**

(Source: Inspired by the views of Khoshnava et al. 2018)

**People**

“Global Sustainable Development” is rooted in reducing overall state of poverty and hunger in all sections of society. According to this sustainable development program, all sections of society can reach their full potential, which can inevitably lead to enhancement of society. UNDG proposes an improvement of public policies, promotion of inequality and diversity, improved access to healthcare, refined education programs, and promoting development of community.

**Planet**

This development program attempts to encourage policies and initiatives that protect environment from further degradation, promote sustainable energy consumption, and management of natural resources. Therefore, goals proposed in UNSDG can attempt to mitigate adverse impacts of climate change or even slow it down. This initiative is attempted by making common citizens aware of becoming sustainable in their societal and environmental practices [15]. As a result, it can be anticipated that well-being next generations will be secured.

**Profitability**

This framework acknowledges economic fluidity is a prerequisite factor for ensuring sustainable development. Therefore, economic viability should be achieved through mobilizing and coordinating small-scale enterprises in order to eradicate poverty which can impede sustainable development programs.

**2. Conclusion**

As per the above research, it can be concluded that UNSDG has attempted to eradicate poverty, inequality, and protect environmental sustainability, and 17 goals have been formulated in this aspect which is to be achieved within 2030. This concept focuses on obtaining uninterrupted economic growth by taking initiatives to improve the agricultural sector even in underdeveloped countries. Considering imminent nature of degradation of natural resources and climate changes, collaboration among different nationals has become a matter of paramount significance. Furthermore, goals of UNSDG puts a prime focus on improving access to improved treatment facilities for economically backwards population as well, in order to achieve sustainability across all sections of society. Furthermore, “3Ps of sustainability” has been described in-depth to form an understanding of the way 17 goals of UNSDG are associated with three features of sustainability. Moreover, “3Ps of sustainability” is actually a fundamental framework for refining all sections of society, global economy, along with environment.

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