



INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INDIA'S STRATEGIES

R. Bharathi*

Ph.D Research Scholar. *Corresponding Author

Dr. V. Mohanasundaram

Associate Professor & Head, Department of Economics (UA), PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore – 641014.

ABSTRACT The goal of sustainable development has to be achieved so as to maintain not only rate of economic growth but also the quality of life in terms the relevant environmental parameters. The realization of the dangers of pollution of all types, across the countries, made the human kind to think of alternatives. Towards this the international organisations like UNO have convened a number of Meets, Summits, Conferences, Conventions, Protocol and Accords. A brief analysis of the relevant international conventions was done to bring home the point that achievement of sustainable goals was not an easier task. Then a description of each of the 17 SDGs and the policy initiatives taken by the Government of India were taken up. It was found that among the 28 states of Indian Union, five states namely Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana took the first three ranks in the SDG Index (2019).

KEYWORDS : Sustainable Development Goals, International Convention, Strategies for Sustainable Growth, SDG Index

INTRODUCTION

Earth is flourishing with natural beauty and a plethora of natural resources. It is providing everything to living things in abundance without any cost or priceless and so human kind is exploiting it to a possible extent which can be termed as “committing ecocide”. As the nations are racing fast to develop themselves in various aspects, they leave behind the repeated infliction they made to the environment. Increased spending power is the major reason for natural exploitation and for polluted land, air and water which are basic necessities of life. **Honore de Balzac** pointed out that “Behind every great fortune lies a great crime”. This applies to nature also and hence it is the duty of nations to make radical plans to save environment. As the society started to realize the past mistakes in handling natural resources, the catch phrase sustainable development came to every international agencies vision from the World Bank and almost to all nations. According to Ranjeev (2015), a green activist “Any development cannot be sustainable by ignoring environmental concerns. If our water and air are polluted, what kind of development are we talking about? Development minus environment is like fish without water”. The consequences of environmental degradation that leads to pollution and health issues force the governments to sustain its environmental quality. In this context, as the significant global level initiatives are continuously taking place, it has been felt that a brief note can be prepared, on each one of them, and discussed to bring home the point, which is relevant to the present work.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs – World Commission on Environment and Development, Our Common Future. According to **Sukhamoy Chakravorty**, the phrase 'sustainable development implies nothing precise and therefore, means anything to anybody. For a logging company, sustainability means sustained projects. For an environmentalist, sustainability means a clean heritage for our generation, for social ecologists, it is sustained use of forest. Hence it is important to understand the political content of sustainable development. That is, it has more political overtones than purely economic. It can be safely said that it means a measured way of exploitation of natural resources and conscious actions of human beings.

International Conventions on Sustainable Development

The first 25 years (1947 to 1972) saw a rapid economic growth among the developed nations and their vision and commitment towards sustainable development has been virtually absent. Thereafter, for another 25 years (from 1972 to 1997) the nations found committing themselves to fix the environmental problems that the globe is facing because of economic growth and hence emerged many international conventions, during this period. The important conventions took place during these years. After 1997, 23 years have passed with much more seriousness and the human kind is waiting to see the fruition of all these efforts.

Table 1 International Conventions on Protection of Environment

Sl. No	Global Initiatives/ Accords/ Conventions	Year
1	International Whaling Commission	1947
2	Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organisation (IMCO)	1954
3	Stockholm Conference on Human Environment	1972
4	International Energy Agency (IEA)	1974
5	Helsinki Convention	1974
6	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCE)	1988
7	Basel Convention on Hazardous waste	1989
8	Montreal Protocol	1989
9	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio-De Janeiro (Rio Declaration)	1992
10	Agenda 21	1992
11	Un Framework Convention on Climate Change	1994
12	Kyoto Protocol	1997
13	Copenhagen Accord	2009
14	UN Sustainable Development Summit	2015
15	Paris Agreement	2016

UN Sustainable Development Summit

World leaders from more than 150 nations gathered for the summit where the mission statement is a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all by 2030. This summit has demarcated 17 SDGs

Responses of India and its Strategies towards Sustainable Development

Environmental consideration has been an integrating part of the Indian culture. India is one of the parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Treaty. Many environmental laws were amended and passed by Indian government. Even before 1990s, Supreme Court of India proactively engaged in India's environmental issues which show country's commitment to protect environment. India follows an integrated approach towards 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by launching various schemes and programmes to achieve the set goals in a sustainable manner. The highlights of the sustainable goals and India's strategy towards them are given in a table format

Table 2 India's Strategies to achieve SDGs

Goals Goal	Description	Policy Initiatives
1. No Poverty	Complete eradication of extreme poverty and finding out the determinants that influence poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana “Leaving no one behind” – a significant initiative

2. Zero Hunger	To eliminate all forms of hunger and malnutrition by 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted Public Distribution System Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) Poshan Abhiyaan National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture E – NAM Mid – day meal programme The National Mission on Agriculture Extension and Technology 	9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	Creation of reliable and resilient infrastructure and also to - promote clean and environmentally sound technologies in industrial processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana Bharatmala Sagarmala Make in India Digital India Bharat Net Coverage Aadhar Programme
3. Good Health and Well Being	To ensure the people to lead a socially and economically productive life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Health Mission (Rural and Urban) Ayushman Bharat Mission Indradhanush Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme National Leprosy Eradication Programme Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme National Programme for Control of Blindness National Programmes for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular diseases and Stroke 	10.Reduced Inequalities	To reduce income inequalities and inclusive growth to promote social, economic and political inclusions of all irrespective of age, sex and disability, race.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) MGNREGA Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojna Stand – up India Scheme
4. Quality Education	To ensure inclusive, equitable and quality education for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Samagra Shiksha Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) Shalakash, Shagun, Shaala Saarthi (Digital Initiatives) Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas 	11. Sustainable cities and Communities	To provide access to safe and affordable housing, public transport, basic amenities and green public spaces through improved urban planning and management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Smart Cities Mission Door to Door Waste Collection
5. Gender Equality	To achieve by ending all forms of gender discrimination, violence and harmful practices against women and girls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Budget Statement Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Yojana Sukhanya Samridhi Yojna Janani Suraksha Yojna MUDRA Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) 	12.Sustainable Consumption and Production	“Doing more with less” by ensuring environmentally sound waste management systems, efficient use of natural resources and also spreading awareness on sustainable life style practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Policy on Bio-fuels National Clean Energy Fund National Mission for a Green India National River Conservation Programme SAMPADA Yojana RURBAN Mission
6. Clean Water and Sanitation	To improve water quality by reducing pollution, increasing proper waste and sanitation management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRWDP) The National Water Quality Sub-Mission Namami Gange Swachh Bharat Mission – Gramin Open Defecation Free Districts Rural Households with Individual Toilets Installed Sewage Water Capacity 	13. Climate Action	Integration of climate change measures and national policies by promoting mechanisms for effective climate change related planning and management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Action Plan on Climate Change National Air Quality Monitoring Programmes
7. Affordable and Clean Energy	To ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services by the year 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Electricity Plan National Energy Policy National Solar Mission Green Energy Corridor The Off- Grid and Decentralized Solar PV Applications Programme The National Biogas and Manure Management Programme Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojna – Saubhagaya PAHAL – LPG Subsidy Deen Dayal Upadhyaya gram Jyoti Yojana Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana 	14. Life below Water	Focus on preventing marine pollution and sustainably managing and protecting marine and coastal ecosystem by committing to conserve and sustainably use ocean, seas and marine resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Plan for Conservation and Aquatic Ecosystems Project SAGARMALA Mangrove Forest Management Marine Protected Areas Online Oil-Spill Advisory System Coastal Ocean Monitoring and Prediction System
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth	To promote sustained and inclusive economic growth by providing productive employment and decent work for all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) Start-up India Skill India Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojna Ease of Doing Business (e-Biz Project) 	15. Life on Land	To protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable forest management and combat desertification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Environment Policy The National Agroforestry Policy Green Highways Policy National Afforestation Programme Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems
			16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	To promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and providing access to justice for all and inclusive institutions at all levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gram Nyayalaya Right to Information Act Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan National Labour Project

17. Partnership for the Goals	Strengthening of the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.	Participation in International conventions, meetings Prime Minister of India participated in the G20 Summit – Safeguarding the Planet: The Carbon Economy Approach, November 2020
-------------------------------	---	--

SDGs – State-wise Analysis

An index has been constructed to rank the states of India the realm of achievement of SDGs. The Sustainable Development Goal India Index of Indian States are given below

Table 3 Ranking of the states on the SDG India Index

Sl. No	States	Rank 2019
1	Kerala	1
2	Himachal Pradesh	2
3	Andhra Pradesh	3
4	Tamil Nadu	3
5	Telangana	3
6	Karnataka	6
7	Goa	7
8	Sikkim	7
9	Gujarat	9
10	Maharashtra	9
11	Uttarakhand	9
12	Punjab	12
13	Manipur	13
14	West Bengal	13
15	Madhya Pradesh	15
16	Odisha	15
17	Tripura	15
18	Haryana	18
19	Nagaland	18
20	Rajasthan	18
21	Chhattisgarh	21
22	Mizoram	21
23	Assam	23
24	Uttar Pradesh	23
25	Meghalaya	25
26	Arunachal Pradesh	26
27	Jharkhand	26
28	Bihar	28

Source: PHD Research Bureau; PHDCCI; NITI Aayog

Among the 28 states, Kerala stood first and Bihar came in the last. Three states Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Tripura came in between. Other states – Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana got the third rank and Karnataka placed at 6th rank. Even the so called developed states like Maharashtra and Punjab got only the 9th rank. Four out of seven north-eastern states (Assam, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh) got very low ranks.

To Sum up

India is the only country to rank its state governments on SDGs. Kerala ranked first in SDG India index as the state shows significant progress in the area of health, education and gender equality and performed its best level towards goal 3, 4 and 5 followed by Himachal Pradesh which got best score in performing towards goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institution). Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar stood last in ranks as they are not closer towards achieving the targets. Overall Andhra Pradesh, Chandigarh, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Puducherry, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu and Telangana are meant to be front runners towards achieving the targets and other states are performers where they still have a long way to go and achieving their goals. Even though the country has shown overall performances, there is a need to step up its performance in areas pertaining to poverty, hunger, gender inequality and climate actions. Valuable efforts to limelight the SGD agenda is needed at national, state and local levels.

REFERENCES

1. Business Standard, "In Bihar battle who cares about environment?", October 26, 2015
2. <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/classroom/whatis-sustainable-development-29774>