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MDG's to SDG's: A necessary shift

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Abstract

In today's world, there is an immense need to sustain the ecology and environment. The development in India should be made to ensure ecological sustainability. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) have played an important role in uplifting people from poverty, hunger, death and illness and illiteracy. To address the emerging challenges of sustainable development the SDG's were brought in post 2015 which are more focussed, concrete and include 17 goals leading to holistic development addressing key issues. This paper is an attempt to understand the shift from MDG's to SDG's, Implementation of SDG's and its challenges in India.

Keywords: Sustainability, MDG'S, Sustainable development, SDG'S

Introduction

According to a United Nations report, India's population currently encompasses about 1.2 billion people and is expected to grow by another 300 million people within next couple of decades. With cities generating two thirds of countries economic output, an increasing number of Indians are leaving rural areas to seek employment in cities. By 2030, it is predicted that sixty eight Indian cities will have more than one million inhabitants and six megacities with more than ten million each. The rapid growth of cities causes a large number of challenges, including insufficient power supply, unreliable public transport, limited access to adequate medical treatment. To meet the challenges of continuing growth, without destroying environment and social harmony, city planning for sustainable development is crucial. Gupta K.K, Chirayath S. (2013) [14]

The Brundtland report (WCED, 1987) defined Sustainable Development as "development that meets the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". In simple terms, Sustainable Development refers to maintaining development over time.

United Nations adopted the Millennium Declaration comprising the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as an outcome of deliberations in the United Nations Millennium Summit on 8 September 2000. It gave a new vision to the global efforts on development over the next 15 years. The Report of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio-de-Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012 (also known as Rio+20) called "The Future We Want" paved the way for formal consultations on post-2015 development agenda in the form of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) based on three dimensions of development, namely, economic, social and environmental. SDGs are viewed as extensions of MDGs with sustainability parameter added to each MDG to be implemented in the post-2015 era along with a set of all new goals which were ignored in the MDGs. The SDGs are a set of 17 specific goals offering special focus on important areas related to sustainable development that require urgent and extensive attention at present and in the near future. The SDG framework undertakes to provide systematic solutions to the obstacles identified in case of the MDGs like inequality, sustainability, institutional resourcefulness, implementation efficacy, environmental deterioration, etc., (UN 2014).

Mehodology

The research paper is an attempt of exploratory research, based on the secondary data sourced from media reports, research, journals and articles

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Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) include eight goals were framed in 2000 to address the world's major development challenges with health and its related areas as the prime focus. In India, considerable progress has been made in the field of basic universal education, gender equality in education, and global economic growth. However there is slow progress in the improvement of health indicators related to mortality, morbidity, and various environmental factors contributing to poor health conditions. Nath A (2011)^[15]

Health constituted the prime focus of the MDGs. While three out of eight goals are directly related to health, the other goals were related to factors having a significant influence on health. Hence the eight MDG goals were to (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) achieve universal basic education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; (8) develop a global partnership for development. Nath A (2011)^[15]



(UN.org)

A reality check

India has already achieved the target for reducing poverty by half (Goal 1) by official estimates – and is close to doing so by international estimates. India has already achieved gender parity in primary school enrolment (Goal 3) and is likely to reach parity in secondary and tertiary education also by 2015. India is set to achieve reducing hunger by half (Goal 1); to reduce maternal mortality by three quarters (Goal 5); control of the spread of deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis (Goal 6); has increased forest cover and has halved the proportion of population without access to clean drinking water (Goal 7). But India is lagging behind on targets for achieving universal primary school enrolment and completion and achieving universal youth literacy by 2015 (Goal 2); empowering women through wage employment and political participation (Goal 3); reducing child and infant mortality (Goal 4); and improving access to adequate sanitation to eliminate open defecation (Goal 7).

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG'S)

Sustainable development is the central drama of our time. The MDGs focused on ending extreme poverty, hunger and preventable disease. They have been the most important global development goals in the UN's history. The SDGs will continue the fight against extreme poverty, but also add the challenges of ensuring more equitable economic growth and environmental sustainability, especially the key goal of curbing the dangers of human-induced climate change. (World Economic Forum)

The concept of the SDGs was born at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, in 2012. The SDGs replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which in September 2000 rallied the world

around a common 15-year agenda to tackle the indignity of poverty. Each of these goals contains specific targets and actions, and requires indicators to assess levels of success and failure.

The objective was to produce a set of universally applicable goals that balances the three dimensions of sustainable development: environmental, social, and economic.

The MDGs established measurable, universally-agreed objectives for eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, preventing deadly but treatable disease, and expanding educational opportunities to all children, among other development imperatives. (UN)

At the United Nations Summit for Adoption of Post-2015 Development Agenda, PM Modi reaffirmed India's commitment, saying, "Today much of India's development agenda is mirrored in the SDGs." Studies and analysis have repeatedly highlighted that while the MDGs were limited in scope, the SDGs—which have been drafted after in-depth consultations and deliberations—are much more comprehensive. India was not fully successful in accomplishing its targets for the MDGs. This makes the strategy adopted by the country for accomplishing the SDGs a top concern.

There is an opportunity to achieve the sustainable development collectively by the committed leadership, conviction and courage, hard work and devotion to the common progress assisted by improved science and technology. It is an opportunity for the health champions to highlight the interdependence of health and the themes of education, growth, population, energy and governance, and present health as a precondition for social sustainability and progress to prosperity.

The interconnected nature of the SDGs makes them complex but also demonstrates complementary benefits

from specific goals and targets. For instance, clean drinking water and sanitation would enhance health, leading to improved nutrition and well-being. For health to remain central in post-2015 SDGs, it will need to be pervasive in

each of the dimensions of sustainable development economic, social, environmental, and not quarantined from them. Emergence of this new sustainability paradigm offers an unprecedented opportunity.



(UN.org)

The 17 SDGs and 169 targets of the new agenda will be monitored and reviewed using a set of global indicators. Studies and analysis have repeatedly highlighted that while the MDGs were limited in scope, the SDGs—which have been drafted after in-depth consultations and

deliberations—are much more comprehensive. India was not fully successful in accomplishing its targets for the MDGs. This makes the strategy adopted by the country for accomplishing the SDGs a top concern.

Table: Shows the overlap and deference’s in MDG’s and SDG’s

S. No.	Millennium Development Goals (MDG’s)	Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s)
1	Eradicate Extreme Poverty and hunger	SDG 1 & 2: No Poverty. Zero hunger
2	Achieve Universal Primary Education	SDG 4: Quality Education
3	Promote gender equality & empower women	SDG 5: Gender Equality
4	Reduce Child mortality	SDG 3 Good health and well being
5	Improve maternal health	SDG 3 Good Health and Well being
6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria & other diseases	SDG -3 Good health and well being
7	Ensure Environmental Stability	SDG 6: Clean water & sanitation SDG 7: Affordable & Clean Energy SDG11: Sustainable Cities & Communities SDG 12: Responsible consumption and Production SDG 13: Climate Action SDG 14: Life below water SDG 15: Life on land
8	Global partnership for development	SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals

The need was felt to deal with various issues and agendas leading to sustainability. Some goals which were not covered in Millennium Development Goals MDG’S have been emphasized in SDG’s.

- SDG 8: Decent Work & Economic Growth
- SDG 9: Industry Innovation & infrastructure
- SDG10: Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 16: Peace Justice and Strong Institution

Implementation of SDG’s

The institutional framework for coordinating initiatives on the SDGs, and for tracking progress, consists of several organisations. NITI Aayog is the nodal agency responsible for coordinating the 2030 Agenda. In this position, it has listed the goals and indicators against the current

government structure and allocated roles to various ministries. Almost 50 Ministries/Departments have been entrusted with various schemes linked to the SDGs. The NITI Aayog itself has been given the following roles with regard to the SDGs:

- National level co-ordination of the 2030 Development Agenda
- Identification of national targets
- Assigning Ministries/Departments for implementation of targets
- Consulting with the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) and the Ministry of External Affairs for assigning roles to various Ministries.

- The MoSPI is entrusted with tracking and reporting the progress of implementation and is expected to play the following roles:
- Undertaking work related to develop indicators reflecting the SDG goals and targets
- Working in close coordination with NITI Aayog and other ministries/departments
- Creating mechanisms to monitor and track the progress on SDGs

India's Challenges for achieving SDG's

While the Government of India is actively preparing for the successful implementation of the SDGs, the transition may present some of the following challenges:

- Projects with insufficient financial resources will be an overriding concern; public funding will be far from sufficient and the best way to mobilise alternative kinds of resources is unclear.
- The lack of data for many of the SDGs targets is seen as a major obstacle to effective monitoring. Access to technology is also a longstanding concern—one that will require further definition and deliberation over an international technology facilitation mechanism.
- The need for awareness raising, both within the government administration and among stakeholders, is another emerging area, especially given the importance attached to free flows of information in India's democratic system of government.
- Finally, the great diversity of India, and the fact that different regions are facing different development challenges, appears likely to affect the ability of the central government to achieve the SDGs.

SDGs face a multitude of challenges at various stages in India, ranging from indicator identification to actual implementation. Ensuring the statistical and institutional capacity to keep track of the 169 SDGs targets will not be easy. Some feel that the government already struggled with monitoring the 25 indicators associated with the 12th Five Year Plan, so tracking SDG could pose an even greater challenge (Sidhu, 2015)

Conclusion

While India has done well on some MDGs (especially extreme poverty and women's empowerment), work remains on others (notably HIV/AIDS, water and sanitation, nutrition, and maternal health).

While the MDGs were limited in scope, the SDGs are more comprehensive. The new sustainable development agenda seeks to ensure that the momentum generated by the millennium development goals is carried forward beyond 2015 — to achieve not just substantial reductions in poverty, hunger and other deprivations but finally end them to provide a life of dignity to all. At this crucial juncture, the responsibility of steering development in India has been passed on to a new Government. It is now an opportune moment to take stock of the achievement of the MDGs in India and lessons learned that can be incorporated into the design and implementation of the sustainable development goals to build upon the unfinished MDG agenda.

Achieving the SDGs in a country as diverse as India will definitely be a challenging task, yet unachievable. We need to clearly identify priorities, have locally relevant and people-centric development policies, and build strong partnerships. The government also needs to have a focused

plan for tracking and evaluating impact and scaling up successful interventions. The SDGs are a direction and a vision for India to achieve Sustainability.

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