

Chapter 10

India's March Forward: Progress on the Index for the Sustainable Development Goals

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ABSTRACT

The Sustainable Development Goals are a bold pledge by leaders of the world to establish a global agenda that encompasses aspects of the economy, environment, and society. India as a UN member has approved the “Agenda 2030” comprising 17 goals and 169 targets. This study intends to measure India’s progress toward the SDGs by evaluating the performance of all Indian States/UTs using the NITI Aayog’s SDG India Index versions 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 produced in compliance with international standards. The findings of the study suggest a consistent improvement in the overall score of India from 57 in 2017-18 to 66 in 2020-21. This suggests a considerable improvement in state and UTs performance during the tenure. The study emphasizes that if nations have to adhere to the SDG goals by 2030, robust frameworks and indexes have to be designed and implemented in an effective manner.

1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations member states created and accepted the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) originated from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) address the objectives left unmet by the MDGs and are envisioned as the conclusion of a long history of efforts by member countries and UN ministries (Nair et al., 2021). Since the Millennium Development Goals were adopted in 2000, the world has seen tremendous political and economic developments. The gains of growth were not dispersed fairly in many nations. Resulting in a decrease in economic welfare in response to the depletion of natural resources and other material inputs due to a rise in energy consumption. As a result, in 2015, the Sustainable Development Targets (SDGs) were created

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to address these issues with greater ambitious, inclusive, and comprehensive goals than the MDGs (N. I. T. I. Aayog, 2018). SDGs have a greater reach than MDGs and apply to both developed and developing countries. Three pillars of sustainable development, are economic development, social development, and environmental protection. These characteristics set the Sustainable Development Goals apart from the Millennium Development Goals.

1.1 India and the SDGs

As the global economy shifts southwards, the countries like China and India are gaining economic heft and weight, and policy decisions made by these countries on sustainability will be heavily scrutinized. Therefore, these countries are already pursuing a progressive sustainable development agenda and are keen to lead and influence the future of sustainable development and global governance concepts (Chaturvedi et al., 2019). The world's progress toward achieving the SDGs is primarily dependent on India's success. India is a major contributor to the development of the SDGs, at the same time SDGs reflect much of India's National Development Agenda. SDGs' holistic approach is consistent with the Indian tradition, which emphasizes the harmony between living and non-living life forms, as embodied by the Vedic dictum *Vasudhaiva kutumbakam* meaning, that is, everything on the planet is related to each other. India couples its development process with the SDGs as well as emphasizes quality. (Chaturvedi et al., 2019). The Indian government is firmly committed to Agenda 2030, especially toward the Sustainable Development Goals. The Government of India has strongly pledged its commitment to Agenda 2030 and SDGs on various national and international platforms. Further, they have emphasized the significance of the SDGs on a worldwide scale, such as at G-20 meetings. The Indian parliament has made outstanding efforts to advance the SDG agenda by organizing a briefing session on the SDGs for members of parliament and bringing together legislators from South Africa and other BRICS countries to work together to achieve these goals. In recent years, India has accelerated several of its development initiatives, without misusing the environment and as a result, the economy and society are progressing well. India is confronted with several distinct issues. It is a vast country with population and language diversity across the continent. It also has a lot of geographical variation, including deserts, evergreen woods, and snow-capped mountains, as well as a lot of ecological diversity. As a result, India will have to face several challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by the deadline. In the last several years, however, there have been numerous successful projects and interventions aimed at achieving inclusive development.

India's Think Tank, the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), is responsible for the supervision of the country's progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Governmental support for the SDG goals drove the NITI Aayog to develop an index that could be used as an advocacy tool to encourage state-level initiatives. SDGs have benefited greatly from the efforts of the NITI Aayog, which has made a substantial contribution by sensitising various stakeholders, assessing progress, providing technical assistance, and encouraging collaborative learning among States/UTs. NITI Aayog has made substantial efforts to generalize the concept of SDGs in India. It has also successfully mapped the government programs at both the national and state level to SDG goals for tracing India's progress towards SDG. Apart from effective execution of policies, it is also important to assess the impact of the policies related to SDGs. Therefore, to keep a track of the progress the nodal agency appointed by the GOI is The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). The national indicator framework was created by the MoSPI in collaboration with ministries at various

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