

Chapter 13

Creating Awareness About UN Sustainable Development Goals in Higher Education Institutions Through Short-Term Programs

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ABSTRACT

Universities are the key institutions in the process of social transformation and development, they can facilitate knowledge and skills needed to meet the challenges of sustainable development in the society. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of short-term programmes in accelerating the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Higher Education Institutions. To understand the comprehensiveness of the programme, a qualitative approach was adopted. A descriptive survey design using a structured questionnaire was formulated by the researchers. The delegates of the short-term programme on SDGs conducted in the university were surveyed and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (Version 23). Along with the session coverage of separate Sustainable Development Goals mentioned in each session were included to understand the completeness of

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the programme. The paper highlights the importance of organising programmes on SDGs to educate the society through academic community.

1. INTRODUCTION

In September 2015, the United Nations brought together more than 150 world leaders at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York to collaborate on the forming of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Table 1), 169 associated targets and 247 agreed-upon global indicators to be achieved by the year 2030. The Goals were grouped in five thematic areas such as people, prosperity, planet, peace, and partnerships. The SDG accord calls upon the world's colleges, polytechnics, and universities to embed the SDGs into education and research. Every sector needs to take accountability to innovate sustainable processes and ensure the implementation of SDG in all its possible ways. Before the SDGs, the UN previously had Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which had limitations due to lack of acceptability from the developing countries. Rather it was more leaned to the economic progress of western developed nations, to an extent only the developed nations were able to contribute to it. Out of the 129 countries, 72 countries excluding developing regions missing it by small margin have partially achieved the MDG. (Seventy-Two Countries Achieve the MDG Target to Halve Proportion of Hungry People, 2015) Even then some developed nations failed to achieve it implies the lack of universal approach in MDG.

Higher education was never explicitly included in the Millennium Development Goals as either a development goal or addressed to become a potential agent in any other development goals, for that matter. By adding 'Quality Education' as the fourth goal in SDGs associated with other goals, we can see the relevance education has received in the SDGs. Recently, nations and International Organisations are voluntarily taking initiatives to express their support for the SDGs. NITI Aayog, the nodal agency for policy making tasked with catalysing economic development in India, has given a special section to coordinate and monitor the development of India in SDGs (*Sustainable Development Goals | NITI Aayog*, 2021).

While SDGs are in action, giving emphasis to the environmental concerns and climate change, the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) was held in Glasgow on 31st October – 13th November 2021 (Mountford, et al., 2021). With the aim to end climate change in the future. Having the world leaders come together and take measures for the wellbeing of the environment there is more to be done if people are aware of preservation and minimising the negative impact on nature i.e., sustainability. That may be a herculean effort for most of us since it involves a wide geographical area. Then there's the regional development with local resources in hand. Making

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