Sustainable Development Goals and Indian Government Policy

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Abstract:
India occupies 2.4 percent of the world's land area and supports 16 percent of the world's population. The compounding effect is the severely uncertain use of natural resources for many generations. Currently, India is facing rapid and widespread environmental degradation. A country's land and natural resources are under enormous pressure to support the huge population. Over the past few decades, it has become clear that we can no longer consider socio-economic development in isolation from the environment. The nature of the problems we face with increasing interdependence among nations requires countries to come together to chart a sustainable path to development. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, was a landmark event, drawing the world's attention to the environmental and development issues facing us as a global community. In this paper we focus on sustainable development strategies in India which are essential for the survival of our present generation as well as future generations
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Introduction:
The 17 SDGs and 169 goals are part of a transformative agenda – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by 193 member states at the UN General Assembly Summit in September 2015 and which entered into force on 1 January 2016. At this global level, the 2030 Agenda is a principle of universality: 'Leave no one behind'. All dimensions of development must involve all people, everywhere and be shaped by the participation of everyone, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized. This inclusive agenda recognizes that it is no longer enough to focus on economic development alone, but on a fairer and more equal society and a safer and more prosperous planet.

India's commitment to the SDGs is reflected in its convergence with the National Development Agenda as reflected in the motto *Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas* (Collective Effort for Inclusive Growth). Based on evidence from the SDG India Index, which measures progress at the subnational level, the country has developed a robust SDG localization model focused on adoption, implementation and monitoring at the state and district levels.. Sustainable development in India includes various development schemes in the social, cleantech (clean energy, clean water and sustainable agriculture) and human resource sectors, which have attracted the attention of central and state governments and the public and private sectors.In fact, India is expected to start greening its national income accounts, making natural resource wealth depletion a key component of its gross domestic product (GDP) measure.India's sustained efforts towards greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction will ensure that the country's per capita GHG emissions remain low by 2030-31, and it is estimated that per capita emissions in 2031 will be lower than global emissions. According to a new study in 2005 GHG. Even in 2031, India's per capita GHG emissions will remain below four tonnes of CO_2, lower than the global per capita emissions of 4.22 tonnes of CO_2 in 2005.

What is Sustainable Development?
Sustainable development is an organizing principle that aims to meet human development goals and enable natural systems to provide essential natural resources and ecosystem services to humans. The desired outcome is a society where living conditions and resources meet human needs without compromising the integrity of the planet and the stability of natural systems. According to the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission, 1987), sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising

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the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Special emphasis is placed on protection of environment and biodiversity.The United Nations defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The concept of sustainable development can be interpreted in many different ways, but at its core is an approach to development that balances different, and often competing, needs against an awareness of the environmental, social and economic constraints we face as a society. Sustainable development is linked to the normative concept of sustainability. UNESCO has drawn the distinction between the two concepts as follows: "Sustainability is thought of as a long-term goal (ie a more sustainable world), while sustainable development refers to a range of processes and ways to achieve it. The concept of sustainable development has been criticized in various ways. Some see this as a paradox (or an oxymoron) and view development as inherently unsustainable, while others are frustrated by the lack of progress achieved so far. Part of the problem is that "development" itself is not consistently defined. Sustainable development is a development paradigm where resources are used in such a way that they meet human needs while protecting the environment so that these needs can be met not only for the present but also for future generations.

The Need ofSustainable Development:

Sustainable development is important to ensure that our society does not run out of resources that are essential for our survival. By implementing processes that promote sustainable development, human civilization can survive for many years using resources.Many problems can be solved by choosing sustainable development. Economic problems such as poverty, climate change, disruption of aquatic life, emissions of greenhouse gases can be addressed.By adopting sustainable development, we will be able to maintain balance in the ecosystem as nature takes its natural call.

All available indicators point to the environmental situation being nothing short of catastrophic. Natural ecosystems are under stress and declining in most parts of the country; About 10 percent of the country's wildlife is threatened with extinction; Agricultural biodiversity has declined by more than 90 percent in many regions; More than half of the available water sources are polluted beyond potable and often agricultural use; Two-thirds of the land is degraded to various levels of sub-optimal productivity; Air pollution in many cities is among the worst in the world; 'Modern' waste, including electronic and chemical, is generated at a rate that exceeds our ability to recycle or manage it. A 2008 report by the Global Footprint Network and the Confederation of Indian Industries indicates that India has the third largest ecological footprint in the world, its resource consumption is twice its bio-capacity, and this bio-capacity has itself halved.

Policy Initiatives for Sustainable Development:

By adopting the 2030 Global Agenda, countries are moving forward to achieve a world free from poverty, gender inequality and economic inequality, thereby ensuring a healthy planet for future generations. These goals are multifaceted and integrate various social, economic and environmental dimensions. India adopts a holistic approach towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by launching various schemes. India's SDG index score ranges between 42 and 69 for states and 57 and 68 for union territories. Among all states Kerala and Himachal Pradesh lead with 69 points, Chandigarh and Puducherry are the UT's, leading the surveyed states with 68 and 65 points respectively. Current Government of India policies towards achieving SDGs. These include Swachh Bharat Mission, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Smart Cities, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Deendayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana.

Governments have formulated policies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to reduce the impact of climate change and build sustainable cities and communities. The government is implementing the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) which provides a comprehensive policy framework for all climate action.

▪ **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) -** The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) is a government initiative to address, combat and adapt to climate change. It includes eight major missions namely Solar Energy, Enhanced Energy Efficiency, Sustainable Habitat, Water, Sustainable Himalayan Ecosystem, Green India, Sustainable Agriculture and Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change. States and Union Territories are also a part of this

initiative. 33 States and Union Territories have prepared State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCC) aligned with the objectives of NAPCC.

- **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) -** The National Clean Air Program (NCAP) is a national level strategy to reduce air pollution levels across the country. Under it, city specific Clean Air Action Plans have been prepared and implemented in 132 non-achieving and million plus cities. These action plans focus on city-specific short/medium/long-term actions to control air pollution from sources such as vehicular emissions, road dust, biomass burning/crop/garbage/municipal solid waste, landfills, construction activities and industrial emissions. Further, some of the other flagship schemes/missions or programmes to implement SDG 11 by other ministries include Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM-U), Atal Mission for rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Smart Cities Mission (SCM), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U) and Metro Rail Projects.
- **National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP) -** The National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP), an initiative of the Government, aims to undertake appropriate structural and non-structural measures to mitigate the effects of cyclones in coastal states and union territories of India. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) implements the project in coordination with participating state governments and the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM).The NCRMP has been implemented in eight coastal states with four main components; i) Early warning dissemination system; ii) cyclone risk mitigation infrastructure; iii) Technical Assistance for Capacity and iv) Project Management and Monitoring, in two phases viz (Phase-I: Andhra Pradesh and Odisha); (Stage-II: Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and West Bengal). Phase-1 works were completed in December 2018 and Phase-II is scheduled to be completed by September 2022.
- **Net zero commitment -** India achieved a 24% reduction in the emissions intensity of its GDP between 2005 and 2016. India will achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2070. India has made this commitment at COP26. To achieve the goal, the country is taking several initiatives. This includes a complete ban on single-use plastics recently. Moreover, despite no binding commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), India announced its voluntary target of reducing the emissions intensity of its GDP by 20-25% by 2020 compared to 2005 levels.
- **The State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) -**The State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) aims to build institutional capacity and implement sectoral initiatives to address climate change. These plans focus on adaptation with mitigation as co-benefits in areas such as water, agriculture, tourism, forestry, transport, habitat and energy. So far, 28 states and 5 Union Territories (UTs) have submitted their SAPCCs to MoEF & CC. Out of these SAPCCs of 32 States and Union Territories have been approved by the National Steering Committee on Climate Change (NSCCC) in MoEF & CC.

Conclusion:

India has an opportunity today to be a country that can show the world what inclusiveness and sustainability can do. There is no need to resort to the current ways of capitalism which is creating a gap between the rich and the poor. By the time it completes 100 years in 2047 after independence, India is likely to become a one-stop knowledge hub of sustainability for the world. Currently, India does not appear to be doing well in many Human Development Indexes (HDI). India's diversity, culture, geography and conditions require customized programs to enhance HDI and SDG indicators.As India focuses on improving healthcare and sanitation, these issues cannot be resolved without strengthening local governance. Most public programs are delivered at the last mile by local government bodies. By creating the Urban Platform for Governance (UPYOG), India has taken a decisive step towards improving the quality of governance in its cities. India can make substantial progress towards achieving SDG 11 by using available data to improve the quality of data for policymaking and performance management.The government has launched many initiatives and initiated many reforms to take the country on the path of higher development. Major programs like Make in India; Digital India; Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT); And the SDGs have been linked to flagship programs like the Smart Cities Mission. The SDG

agenda is a great opportunity to include issues such as climate change, natural resource scarcity and inequality in a country's development plan.

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