

7. Good Governance: A Sustainable Solution for Sustainable Development

Kritika Taneja

PhD Research Scholar,
Department of Public Administration,
Kurukshetra University,
Kurukshetra.

Abstract:

The prosperity of the nation depends on governance. It is the governance which makes the nation categorized into developed or developing one. If the nation prefix good with governance, then that governance in the words of Mahatma Gandhi is known as “Su-raj” meaning “Good Governance”. Good governance means adoption of new values of governance to establish greater efficiency, legitimacy and the credibility of the system leading the country on the path of sustainable development. Sustainable development means meeting the needs of present generation without compromising the needs of future generations. Sustainable development comprises 169 targets and 17 goals. Realizing the importance of good governance globally including India, as a sustainable solution for sustainable development, it has been placed under Goal-16 which the world has committed to achieve by 2030 in the form of SDG. This paper makes an attempt to understand the importance of integrating good governance into SDG’s as well as its effective criteria for its evaluation. This paper also limelight the India’s vision, initiatives and progress made towards attainment of SDG. Additionally, it will also highlight the challenges confronted while the attainment of the goals of sustainable development as well as the recommendations to overcome such challenges.

Keywords:

good governance, sustainable development, legitimacy, efficiency and credibility

7.1 Introduction:

The era of globalization has witnessed the tremendous development in the diverse arena of social, economic, technological and personal spheres resulting in the beginning of an epoch of digitalization, modernization and artificial intelligence. In the race of becoming more powerful, advanced and developed, the real meaning of development has lost its essence. Generally, the meaning of development is associated with economic aspect neglecting its other facets like social, environmental, political and technological development. The paradigm shift in the traditional concept to modern concept of development, the development is not just about economic growth of an economy rather it lay emphasis on raising human capabilities and freedom. Considering its dimension to the social aspect of development, it means enhancing social cohesion and stability which will help in tumbling the blot of poverty existing in our societies thereby making the societies free from

inequalities. The political development on the other hand implies establishment of democratic institutions advocating transparency, accountability and citizen participation on which the good governance stands leading to sustainable development¹.

The journey of development of nation will be more fruitful if they incorporate the trait of “sustainability” in their every phase of development. Sustainability means the harmonious balance between economic, environmental and social factors ensuing “sustainable development.” According to the Brundtland Commission (1987) the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs is termed as sustainable development². It stands on its three pillars namely, environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and socio-political sustainability. Environmental sustainability means the consumption of natural resources at a sustainable rate.

Economic sustainability means usage of resources efficiently and in a responsible manner so that it can operate sustainably to produce an operational output. By socio-political responsibility we mean, the ability of society, or any social system to persistently achieve a good social wellbeing³. Now, the question arises how it is possible for the country to achieve these three types of sustainability? The answer to this question is, it is possible by the sustainable solution of “Good governance”.

7.2 Good Governance:

Meaning and definition of Good Governance

Good governance refers to a “set of qualitative characteristics relating to the process of rule-making and their institutional foundations. It incapsulates values such as enhanced participation, transparency, accountability and public access to information that helps to combat corruption and secure both basic humans right and the value of law”⁴.

In the year 1992 **World Bank** report entitled “*Governance and Development*”, the *World Bank* set out its definition of good governance as “the manner in which the power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development”.

In the words of **Kofi Annan** “Good Governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development”.

Good governance is considered as the stepping stone to achieve sustainable development because the failure of MDG’s made the member state realize that the success of SDG’s depends on the effective governance. Effective governance implies strong political institutions and processes aiming at alignment of national sustainability plans with national development plans towards the top-down and the bottom-up.

Thus, Good governance will act as an agent in promoting the environment conducive for collective action certifying that the actors involved are held liable and dealing with the challenges emerging while attempting to achieve the sustainable development goals⁵.

It can be said that it is the good governance practices in terms of effective making, processing and implementing decisions which will lead to the development at the sustainable rate. There are few similarities among the decision-making processes and the practices of good governance which are the pre-requisites to achieve the Sustainable Development Agenda.

- Consultation policies and practices;
- Meeting procedures;
- Service delivery;
- Duty bearer conduct;
- Role clarification and good working relationships

7.3 Integrating Good Governance into Sustainable Development Goals:

Good governance plays an important role in achieving sustainable development because the concept of good governance includes the three dimensions out of the four dimensions of sustainable development. These dimensions include- the economic, social and political dimension. Economic dimension focusses on the efficacy and abilities of the government in managing the finite resources in fulfilment of their least possible expectations. This necessitates transparency and accountability for managing natural resources and protecting the environment within the private and public sector activities. The social dimension ensures the inclusion of all the social groups to act and work together irrespective of discrimination and promotes tolerance towards society. The political dimension denotes the lawfulness of the government and accountability of the political elements of the government and respect for the human rights and the rule of law⁶.

The doctrines of good governance (listed by United Nations) in the framing and implementing the plan of action for SDGs should focus on consensus oriented, participatory, follows the rule of law, effective and efficient, accountable, transparent, responsive and equitable and inclusive. According to Francisco Guzman, chief of the staff of the President of Mexico, SDGs are nothing but “the heart and core of government responsibilities”. These responsibilities should be carried out by the multiple government units operating at national, state and local level in-order to hook up various local agendas with the national policies.

Meanwhile these responsibilities also require the link up with the various actors and government ministries and government department in the planning, coordinating, implementing and reporting of various activities and action plans. It also comprises of sharing of financial resources and responsibilities for yielding effective outcomes. On the other hand, integration and coordination of different regulatory bodies at the same level of governance structures generate positive outcomes for sustainable development. This implies no single authority or an institution can achieve the goals of SD alone. It requires the free flow of cooperation among various structures and practices in the government.

The agenda 2030 for sustainable development which primarily focuses on five key areas (5 P's) i.e., people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships.

- **People:** to end poverty and hunger in all its form and dimension so that all human beings can live their life in healthy environment with dignity and equality.
- **Planet:** to protect our planet from further degradation by adopting and promoting the aspect of “sustainability” in the consumption and production of resources for meeting the needs of present and future generations; it also focusses on taking immediate action on climate change.
- **Prosperity:** to ensure all forms of prosperity for all human beings.
- **Peace:** to nurture peace and justice in the societies free from fear and violence. Without the existence of such societies the goals of sustainable development are hard to achieve.
- **Partnerships:** to mobilize the means required in implementing this agenda through a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development, based on the spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focusing particularly on the needs of poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

All the above key areas besides cooperation among various department structures require modelling of alternative three pathways which include change in technology, life style and decentralized governance.

These development pathways lead to synergies that enhance target achievement⁷. Thus, highlighting the importance of good governance in meeting the goals, it has been referred to as the fourth pillar of sustainable development- together with social, environmental and economic factors.

7.4 Effective Evaluation Criteria for Integrating Good Governance in SDG:

The effective evaluation criteria for integrating good governance into Agenda 2030 could be:

- **Integration/coherence:** None of the SDGs can be met until all of them are met. The social, economic, and environmental components of development are intricately intertwined.
- **No one left behind:** Priority should be given to meeting the needs of those who lag far behind. No objective is achieved unless it is achieved for everyone.
- **Equity:** Meeting the demands of the current generation as well as those of future generations is given equal regard (intergenerational fairness). All people should have the same rights, opportunities, and access to benefits and services.
- **Resilience:** To recover swiftly from shocks and flourish under tough or changing circumstances. Individuals, social groupings, human systems, and/or ecosystems should be equipped to tolerate social, economic, and environmental stress.
- **Environmental sustainability:** Governments and consumers of resources take steps to ensure that ecosystems continue function sustainably.
- **Universality:** The SDGs are organized around global issues that require global solutions. Countries need to encourage one another's efforts rather than criticizing them.
- **Mutual accountability:** All people trying to accomplish sustainable development goals must have mutual respect and trust. Roles and duties are widely agreed upon and evenly distributed, and every individual remains equally liable to each other for their acts and the results⁸.

7.5 India's Vision, Initiatives and Progress in The Achievement of SDG by The Means of Good Governance:

India addressing the concerns of the developing nations as well as being the member of the Open Working Group (OWG) entrusted with the task of preparing a proposal on the SDG. India also has the significant reasons to fulfil its commitment to realize the goals of sustainable development through means of good governance adopting effective and efficient implementations of its policies, plans and programmes to address the global commitments⁹. The practice of adopting good governance through citizen participation for ensuring every aspect of development is not new for India. India's commitment for ensuring all forms of development through the means of good governance was practiced much before the adoption of "AGENDA-2030". In fact, Dr. B.R Ambedkar and other constitution makers realize the need for inclusive governance in 1949 and thus make a special provision in the Indian constitution to reduce inequalities and discrimination in all its forms under the Article 15. They knew that without combatting with this social evil, India cannot relish the taste of development. This ideology of Dr. Ambedkar became an important aspect of the AGENDA-2030 which every country including India has to achieve in the form of Sustainable Development Goal with the spirit of "Leaving No One Behind".

7.5.1 India's Vision and Initiatives Towards Sustainable Development Goals:

India's commitment to achieve sustainable development goals by 2030 is reflected in its strategy of twinning their national development goals with sustainable development goals, with the motto of "Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikaas, Sabka Vishwaas". Following the footprints in this direction, several initiatives were taken by state government in their respective states which are as follows:

- A. ASSAM** has established an SDGs Centre within the Planning and Development Department, and an integrated framework for implementation has been devised. The state has also created its own vision for achieving the SDGs, known as ASSAM 2030. A pilot project is being carried out in a few villages and municipalities for indicating full accomplishment of the SDG objective. A solid technological base is also being established up for tracking the progress with respect to the SDGs.
- B. ANDHRA PRADESH** has established indicators for each of the 17 SDGs as part of its Vision 2029. It also described the baseline, objectives, milestones, and important strategies for achieving the SDGs.
- C. BIHAR** is in the process of drafting its SDG implementation strategy. The state government is already concentrating on a variety of SDG-related issues, including as road connection and drainage, toilets, safe drinking water, power, higher education, skill development, and gender equality.
- D. HARYANA** developed its Vision 2030 paper after thorough engagements with a wide spectrum of stakeholders. The document's strategies are centred on five basic principles: integrated planning and decentralized execution, equitable development, human capital development, fostering citizen-centric services, and green growth.
- E. MAHARASHTRA** is committed to balanced regional development and prioritizes sustainable livelihoods through improving water, land, and forest management, increasing access to health and education, and enhancing skills for job creation.

- F. KERALA** has developed detailed indicators and criteria to achieve SDG 3 on health. The state has sector-specific strategies for 2030, with an emphasis on fostering entrepreneurship in manufacturing industries, improving the basic foundations of the knowledge economy in areas like as education, science and technology, and so on, and guaranteeing Sustainability on two levels: environmental and social.
- G. KARNATAKA** prioritizes technology in 12 areas: education, medical science and health care, food and agriculture, water, energy, environment, habitat, transportation, infrastructure, manufacturing, materials, and information and communication technology.
- H. TAMIL NADU** focuses on six primary infrastructure sectors: energy, transportation, industrial and commercial infrastructure, urban infrastructure and services, agriculture, and human development.
- I. PUNJAB**'s Planning and Development Department has established an SDGs Support Unit. The SDGs Support Unit is a conduit for technical assistance at the state level, as well as a nudging unit for offering evidence, analysis, and viewpoints to improve public policy in the context of the SDGs.
- J. MADHYA PRADESH** has also set up an SDG cell. In order to combat the challenges of perspective planning and SDGs, the Madhya Pradesh State Planning Commission has additionally developed a Planning and Policy Support Unit, Project Monitoring Unit, Knowledge Management Unit, and International Division¹⁰.

7.5.2 Progress Made by India Towards Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals:

- A. Sashakt Bharat - Sabal Bharat (Resilient and Empowered India):** Through economic progress and empowerment, India has effectively pulled more than 271 million people out of multidimensional poverty. Access to nutrition, child health, education, sanitation, drinking water, power, and housing has resulted in reduced inequities, particularly among disadvantaged populations.
- B. Swachh Bharat - Swasth Bharat (Healthy and Clean India):** India achieved 100% rural sanitation and a significant reduction in stunting and child and maternal death rates through a countrywide program spurred by the Clean India Campaign and the National Nutrition Mission. Ayushman Bharat, the world's largest health protection plan, has institutionalized universal health care by providing an annual cover of USD 7,000 to 100 million households, covering almost 500 million persons.
- C. Samagra Bharat - Saksham Bharat (Inclusive and Entrepreneurial India):** Social inclusion is sought by universalizing access to nourishment, health, education, social security, and fostering competencies for entrepreneurship and employment. Financial inclusion through the Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) trinity - near universal access to bank accounts aided by the Jan Dhan Yojana (National Financial Inclusion Scheme); Aadhaar card (National unique identity number) for over 90% of the population; and widespread access to mobile phones - has propelled new avenues of credit, insurance, and Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) to the poor, including over 200 million women, thereby accelerating their economic empowerment.
- D. Satat Bharat - Sanatan Bharat (Sustainable India):** Clean and efficient energy systems, disaster-resistant infrastructure, and planned eco-restoration are all part of India's climate action policies. India has electrified 100% of its villages, reduced 38 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions annually through energy efficient appliances, provided

clean cooking fuel to 80 million poor households, and set a target of installing 450GW of renewable energy and restoring 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030, all in accordance with its nationally determined contributions. India ranks third in renewable energy, fourth in wind power, and fifth in solar power globally. To harness global alliances for climate change and catastrophe resilience, India established the Coalition for catastrophe Resilient Infrastructure and the International Solar Alliance.

- E. Sampanna Bharat- Samridhh Bharat (Prosperous and Vibrant India):** With a young population and a thriving innovation and business environment, India is one of the fastest growing emerging market economies. With a GDP of USD 2.72 trillion in 2018-19, India aspires to be a USD 5 trillion economy by 2025, and to pursue an inclusive and sustainable growth path by stimulating manufacturing, building infrastructure, spurring investments, fostering technological innovation, and fostering entrepreneurship.

In the spirit of South-South Cooperation, India assists developing nations in achieving the 2030 Agenda through the USD 150 million India-UN Development Partnership Fund. In the spirit of regional and global alliances, as well as the country's pledge to 'leave no one behind,' India enters the Decade of Action, gaining confidence from its expertise in dealing with setbacks. The Government of India will continue to collaborate with all local and global partners to accelerate efforts toward a more sustainable earth for future generations¹¹.

7.6 Challenges and Suggestions:

Good governance is essential to attaining the SDGs. Decisions and actions must be taken by economies utilizing creative processes and engaging multiple entities such as governments, enterprises, NGOs, CSOs, and researchers. To fulfil the SDGs, good governance must be enhanced by tackling the following challenges:

- A. Bringing together the appropriate stakeholders:** To tackle complicated poverty and sustainability challenges, the proper stakeholders must be brought together at the right time and place. Coordination at all levels, from global companies to national governments to local governments, is required to create successful results.
- B. Difficult trade-offs:** There are several spin-offs among the SDGs, where fulfilling one target aids in tackling others. Addressing climate change, for example, will have co-benefits for energy, security, health, biodiversity, and oceans. The SDGs, on the other hand, include trade-offs.
- C. Conflicting interests:** Each of the SDG objectives is associated with several conflicting stakeholder interests. Climate change is well shown in the World Economic Forum Report 2019. The fossil fuel businesses and their employees who would be harmed in the short term will regard themselves as losers if forced to shift, even though society as a whole will be a 'winner' in the long run by avoiding the dangers and repercussions of climate change. Goal trade-offs may be a major governance difficulty, especially when responsibility is distributed and different stakeholders' interests clash. Governments must negotiate difficult choices and difficult decisions with the commercial sector, non-profit organizations, and communities.
- D. Migration:** The world's population is growing at an exponential rate, with the African continent outpacing India and China. The African continent is expected to quadruple in

size by 2050, which will be unprecedented. If the overpopulation cannot live in their home nations, they will move, becoming a worldwide crisis with increased hunger and suffering. Unrestrained population growth poses several issues to current and future generations.

- E. Defining Indicators:** Many countries confront a serious difficulty with database development and generating indicators to assess results. In India, for example, even though the MoSPI has focused on developing indicators, it is difficult to judge 'quality of education' and 'safe drinking water', which appear equivocal. In India, water from hand pumps and tube wells is regarded as safe as water from a piped source. According to this viewpoint and official data, 86% of Indians have access to safe water, yet the frequency of waterborne infections and fatalities due to diarrhoea says otherwise. The SDG programs and initiatives in India are not sustainable on the ground. The statistics and indicators primarily concern a collection of data on poverty, health, agriculture, human development, and the environment, but they do not demonstrate how sustainability is mapped. Policies must be developed to account for realities in order to rank appropriately on the SDG indicators.
- F. Progress Monitoring:** Measuring progress is critical for understanding the extent to which the SDGs have been met. The lack of statistics at the subnational level, as well as periodicity concerns and inadequate coverage of administrative data, make measuring development difficult. To achieve the SDGs' social, environmental, and economic aims, an integrated strategy is required. A comprehensive framework for measuring progress, integrating communication/engagement into research, and co-creating research towards the SDGs is required.
- G. The Information Technology Challenge:** IT and innovation have the potential to improve and accelerate progress toward the SDGs. The SDGs can help in the development of laws to control robots and artificial intelligence. Innovators should design products that are in line with the SDGs to avoid worsening to the sustainability concerns. Another concern is information sharing, as the member states that committed to the UN SDGs are very competitive and do not share expertise or data, which is harmful to global development.

7.6.1 Suggestions:

Following are the suggestions in the form of solutions to attain the goals of development by overcoming the challenges:

- A. Facilitate the sharing of best practices and capacity building across member countries in support of Goals implementation through the development of social enterprise, impact investment markets, and information and communications technology;
- B. Continuous communication, dialogue, and learning among experts, policymakers, and a variety of other actors is required to understand diverse perspectives and to facilitate better understanding of progress.
- C. Restructuring governance structures to reflect interdependence will be a critical tangible step in capitalizing on beneficial synergies and reducing or eliminating negative repercussions.
- D. To promote informed decision making, think tanks, researchers, and academics must focus on holistic and integrated research (including scenario development and future casting).

- E. Data disaggregation should focus on the local level and be crowd-sourced to capture statistics about society's most poor, vulnerable, and marginalized citizens.
- F. The data revolution (data collection systems that provide low-cost, reliable, accurate, and timely data to policymakers) must be an inclusive and transparent process that includes statistical experts, CSOs, national human rights institutions, service providers, and marginalized populations.
- G. Governance processes should be shaped by formal, peer-reviewed research that is theoretically sound, culturally sensitive, statistically driven, and trustworthy.

7.7 Conclusion:

Sustainable Development has become the serious concern both at the national and global level. The attainment of these goals becomes difficult without effective governance or good governance. Good governance means adoption of new values of governance to establish greater efficiency, legitimacy and the credibility of the system leading the country on the path of sustainable development. Recognising its importance globally makes it one of the most important goals of sustainable development which the countries have to achieve by 2030. Our nation builder Mahatma Gandhi and Social reformer B.R Ambedkar realize the importance of “Su-raj” or “good governance” and Inclusive Governance respectively back then in post-independence era. Recognizing the importance of good governance and inclusive governance as the pathway of sustainable development, Indian government has taken several initiatives like Sashakt Bharat - Sabal Bharat (Resilient and Empowered India), Satat Bharat - Sanatan Bharat (Sustainable India) etc. with the motto of “Sabka Sath, Sabka vikaas, Sabka Vishwaas”. In following such footprints, Indian Government have confronted with several Challenges in the form of migration, conflicting Interest, difficult trades-off etc. In spite of facing several challenges, India hope for “Sustainable India” with “Sustainable Governance” leading “Sustainable Development”.

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