



TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND TREATIES IN ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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Abstract

International cooperation regarding the sustainability is quite challenging. The review analysis the present environmental laws treaties and conferences for the conservation of environment and sustainability. Defining the sustainability concept and implementing the sustainability model in institutional framework is total different scenarios. The milestones in the implementation of sustainable development and sustainability is Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The processor of SDGS are Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). MDGs and SDGs are compared based on the number of goals and targets. The review further explained MDGs shortcoming and critically give the comments on SDGs as well. Despite having these goals the ecosystem and environment of the earth is still deteriorating. Lack of awareness and still not considering a threat to environment is as big as terrorism is also a factor. Implementing the international laws and SDGs will take this earth towards the sustainable development and sustainability of life of every specie will be ensured. The proper monitoring of these Goals and fulfilling the responsibility will reform the institutions and better results can be obtained till 2030.

Keywords

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),
Sustainable Development (SD)



The concept of sustainability is the relative new term as compared to other environmental terms it was introduced in late 1990. Scientists and researchers have defined sustainability as meeting the present needs without compromising the needs of future generation or their ability to meet their future needs (Karami & Keshavarz, 2010). Sustainable development and sustainability both are different terms. Sustainability is a broad term and it could be used for every specie or any form of life on earth. Sustainability supports and conserve the present without compromising the future of the globe. sustainability is not just limited to construction or development work by human it also means the sustainability of resources as well as any form of life on earth (Trindade *et al.*, 2017). Sustainable development is the term mostly associated with human action or anthropogenic activities. It is the term that is relatively considered for human exploitation of natural resources. There are three pillars of sustainability environment economic society. For a sustainable world ecosystem have to balance economic and social aspect of sustainability as well (Siva *et al.*, 2016). International cooperation is the hope for all the developing countries who are facing resource exploitation issues and the climate change. International cooperation is the only source of hope at this point. International Corporation term was used for the war in 1972 afterward there were some serious environmental concern that has been observed by the scientists. Numerous conventions and laws has been passed till now (Kloke-Lesch, 2021). Recently after MDGs the 17 SDGs goals are now seems to be way forward for

sustainability. The review will compare the MDGs and SDGs and review and comments are further explained.

2. Methodology

This review paper used a systematic search strategy to select and extract articles from two prominent scholarly databases, Google Scholar and ScienceDirect. The search terms and keywords were carefully selected to capture the key concepts and scope of the review. The initial screening involved reviewing titles and abstracts of the identified articles to assess their relevance to the research topic. A meta-analysis technique was used to analyze the finding of the different studies and reports. Different environmental treaties that are important were reviewed to analyze the SDGs challenges, goals and way forward. The SDGs and MDGs comparison was the main part and starting point was analyzing the different environmental agreements.

3. A journey towards SDGS Goals & Achievements

Reportedly more than 900 treaties regarding the environment protections has been signed by different developing and developed countries since 1972. From Stockholm conference to SDGs 2015 following treaties have been signed by several developing and developed countries for global environment protection (Kotzé & Kim, 2019). International cooperation and treaties provide a platform for countries to collaborate, share best practices, mobilize resources, and address common challenges in order to advance the SDGs. (Blot *et al.*, 2022). Following are the recap of some important treaties.

- Paris Agreement on Climate Change: The Paris Agreement is the first one to highlight the global warming and the main clause is reducing the earth temperature to below 2 degrees Celsius and calls for global cooperation in reducing greenhouse gas emissions with calculating the climate change impacts. It also includes financial and technological support to developing countries. (Dimitrov, 2016).
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): The CBD pursues promoting the conservation of biodiversity, with the concept of sustainability, and fair and equitable sharing of genetic resources. It provides a framework for international cooperation on biodiversity conservation. (Essl et al., 2020).
- Addis Ababa Action Agenda: The Addis Ababa Action Agenda emphasizes the importance of domestic resource mobilization, international financial cooperation, private sector involvement, and alignment of financial flows with sustainable development objectives. (Montes, 2016).
- Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data: The Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data aims to improve the quality, availability, and use of data for sustainable development, promoting collaboration among governments, civil society, and the private sector. (Huang and Quibria, 2015).
- Millennium Development Goals MDGs: Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were signed by 189 countries in September 2000 Target date was set to be 2015(Fukuda-Parr et al., 2013). Overall, the progress was not very impactful in the case of MDGs. In June 2012, it was proposed to develop a new set of goals term as SDGs that will continue and upgrade the MDGs (Fukuda-Parr, 2016).

3.1 Challenges for Sustainability cooperation and treaties

Diverse and competing interests, sovereignty concerns, enforcement and compliance, time and urgency mismatches, resource limitations, political instability, global power dynamics, public awareness and engagement, evolving environmental challenges, and exit strategies and withdrawals all contribute to conflicts and disagreements during treaty negotiations. These factors can hinder the effective implementation of sustainable development and environmental protection agreements (Pandey et al., 2022). Not having enough framework to manage transparent, inclusive, and equitable negotiations, capacity-building support to developing countries, strengthen enforcement mechanisms, and foster greater public are biggest challenges to implement SDGs. Additionally, flexible and adaptive approaches may be needed to tackle emerging sustainability challenges effectively. By addressing these factors, international cooperation and treaties can continue to be crucial for addressing global sustainability

issues (Pandey et al., 2022). Following Table 1 explains the comparison of the MDGs and SDGs. The basic differences among indicator

and methodology were explained followed by the progress that Pakistan has in this regard.

Table 1: MDGs VS SDGS

Sr#	Millennium Development Goals(Fenwick et al., 2005)	Sustainable Development Goals(Lafortune et al., 2018)	Comments
1	Consist of eight goals, twenty-one targets and sixty indicators	Consist of seventeen goals, 169 targets and 232 indicators	MDGs were formulated by small group of researcher and scientist. However, for SDGs 193 united members of states and several researcher and scientist have worked together
2	Regarding poverty eradication, MDGs states that half of the poverty should be eradicated by 2015.	For SDGs term zero hunger is used	SDGs are extremely strict in these and seem unrealistic too. Ending the poverty, hunger and child mortality rate seems un-realistic.
3	MDG only targeted the developing countries and focus on donations from rich countries	SDGs applied to all developed and developed countries	The modification seems to appropriate. It focuses on all countries and forces them to take appropriate actions
4	The focused areas in MDGs were health and social dimensions	SDGs focus on Environment protection, education, human rights life below water etc.	More extensive and include all three pillars of sustainability.
5	MDGs were not costly to implemented and fundings were done by aids	More costly as compared to SDGs but it includes all counties	Many of aids in case of MDGs were not materialized, however SDGs taken the economy into consideration.
6	In terms of monitoring and evaluations MDGs lack the proper monitoring plan.	SDGs put an effort to start a proper monitoring & evaluation plan	Significantly emphasis the availability of quality data for monitoring and verified numbers

4. Pakistan at a glance

The total weighted index score has grown from 53.11 in 2015 to 63.49 in 2020, representing a 19.5% increase from the baseline of 2015. The progress towards the medium- and long-term targets from the baseline remains 14.6% and

7.3%, respectively. When the global and national SDGs indices are compared, Pakistan's performance is 5.8 points higher in the national SDGs index in 2020. The goal-by-goal development of the national SDGs index demonstrates that Pakistan is on pace to meet

the goals of Goals 1, 2, 3, 12, and 16. All additional goals that must be met by 2030 must be accelerated and supported by policy in order to synchronized targets, budgets, implementation plans, and frequent monitoring (Pakistan, 2021). However, considerable factors like economy and political stability and corruption issues are the main factors due to which meeting the goals till 2030 seems impossible.

5. Conclusion

While international cooperation and treaties are essential for advancing sustainable development, there are also challenges and criticisms associated with their implementation. These include the lack of enforceability of some agreements, the insufficient allocation of resources, and the unequal distribution of benefits among countries. Additionally, geopolitical tensions, competing national interests, and differing priorities can hinder effective collaboration and undermine the achievement of the SDGs. SDGs at time of launch seems a ray of a hope for a sustainable environment now become a concern because several developing countries might not achieve these targets due to financial and social challenges (Leal Filho *et al.*, 2023). To achieve these targets, we need to priorities some of goals especially renewable energy utilization and environmental conservations along with participation from civil society, business personals and individuals (Wadhvani and Malpani, 2023). In sum, after having hundreds of environmental laws treaties and

goals, the process of implementing the sustainability and framework is still not strong enough to bring some change. The progress till now is minimum and to mitigate the damage done to earth and environment a change in global perspective regarding sustainability is needed (Moyer and Hedden, 2020). SDGs must be followed and should be implemented in every institution to get tremendous results. Post COVID the progress is slow down (Colombano and Nabarro, 2020; Leal Filho *et al.*, 2020), still priority should be set for the SDGs implementations.

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