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Dr.S.Gnanalakshmi
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**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR INCLUSIVE
GROWTH: INFRASTRUCTURE, INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**



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Editors

**Dr.S.Gnanalakshmi
Dr.R.Ramachandran**



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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND INDIA'S PROGRESS: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE

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Abstract

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constitute a universal agenda for economic, social, and environmental development. While India has made notable strides at the national level, regional-level analysis provides deeper insights into the actual progress and challenges. This study is based on 460 respondents from Coimbatore district, focusing on their awareness, perception, and willingness to contribute towards SDGs. The findings reveal that while respondents show high concern for health, education, and employment-related SDGs, comparatively less emphasis is placed on climate action and gender equality. The paper concludes with policy recommendations to enhance awareness and local participation in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, Coimbatore, Awareness, Perception, Inclusive Growth

Introduction

The concept of sustainable development was first highlighted in the Brundtland Report of 1987, which defined it as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Building upon this vision, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** in September 2015, which includes **17 goals and 169 targets**. These goals collectively aim to address poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and promote peace, justice, and partnerships across nations.

For India, the SDGs hold extraordinary significance, as the country faces the dual challenge of sustaining economic growth while ensuring social justice and ecological balance. With a population of more than 1.4 billion, India's success in implementing SDGs is central not only to its national progress but also to the global achievement of these goals. Recognizing this, India has localized the SDGs through national programs and state-level implementation strategies, with the NITI Aayog taking the lead in monitoring progress through the **SDG India**

Index.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations in 2015, provide a **17-goal framework** to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality, and ensure environmental sustainability by 2030. India, as a fast-growing economy, has aligned its national development strategies with these goals through programs such as Swachh Bharat Mission, Digital India, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, and Skill India.

However, the success of SDGs depends not only on **national policies** but also on **local participation and awareness**. Urban and industrial districts like **Coimbatore**, a hub of MSMEs and manufacturing, play a vital role in implementing and achieving SDGs. Hence, this study examines the perception of 460 respondents from Coimbatore regarding SDGs and their readiness to adopt sustainable practices.

Progress of India in Achieving SDGs

India's progress on the SDGs presents a mixed picture. On the positive side, programs such as the **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana**, **Ayushman Bharat**, **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao**, **Ujjwala Yojana**, and **National Skill Development Mission** have contributed towards reducing poverty, improving health access, enhancing gender equality, and promoting decent work. However, challenges such as regional disparities, low female labor force participation, high unemployment, and climate vulnerabilities persist.

According to the **SDG India Index 2023** (NITI Aayog), the overall national composite score stood at **66 out of 100**, reflecting moderate progress. States like **Kerala (75)**, **Tamil Nadu (74)**, and **Himachal Pradesh (73)** emerged as frontrunners, while states such as Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh continue to lag behind.

Objectives of the Study

2. To analyze the awareness of respondents in Coimbatore regarding Sustainable Development Goals.
3. To assess priority areas (Health, Education, Employment, Climate Action, Gender Equality) as perceived by respondents.
4. To suggest measures for enhancing regional contribution towards SDGs

Methodology

- **Sample Size:** 460 respondents
- **Study Area:** Coimbatore District
- **Sampling Technique:** Stratified random sampling (covering MSME employees, students, professionals, and entrepreneurs)
- **Tools Used:** Percentage analysis, cross-tabulation

Statistical Overview of India's SDG Performance India's Progress on Selected SDGs (2023)

SDG Goal	Key Indicator	India's Status	Remark
SDG 1 – No Poverty	Poverty headcount ratio	65 (Index Score)	Moderate progress
SDG 3 – Good Health & Well-Being	Maternal Mortality Ratio (per 100,000) = 72	Significant progress	
SDG 4 – Quality Education	Literacy rate = 77%	Needs improvement	
SDG 5 – Gender Equality	Female labor participation = 35%	Low progress	
SDG 8 – Decent Work & Economic Growth	Unemployment rate = 7.2%	Critical challenge	

SDG Goal	Key Indicator	India's Status	Remark
SDG 13 – Climate Action	CO ₂ emissions per capita = 1.9 MT	Moderate progress	
SDG 16 – Peace, Justice & Institutions	Index Score = 62	Needs strengthening	

Top Performing States in SDG Index (2023)

Rank	State	Composite Score
1	Kerala	75
2	Tamil Nadu	74
3	Himachal Pradesh	73
4	Andhra Pradesh	72
5	Karnataka	70

Table 1

Awareness of SDGs among Respondents (Coimbatore, N=460)

Awareness Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Fully Aware	132	29%
Partially Aware	196	43%
Not Aware	132	28%
Total	460	100%

Source: Computed

Interpretation: Only 29% of respondents are fully aware of SDGs, while 43% have partial awareness. This shows that while the concept has some penetration, a large segment (28%) still lacks basic knowledge about SDGs.

Table 2

Respondents' Perception on Priority SDGs

Priority Area (Selected SDGs)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
SDG 3 – Good Health & Well-being	124	27%
SDG 4 – Quality Education	106	23%
SDG 8 – Decent Work & Growth	92	20%
SDG 13 – Climate Action	68	15%
SDG 5 – Gender Equality	70	15%
Total	460	100%

Source: Computed

Interpretation: Respondents prioritize health (27%), education (23%), and employment (20%) as the most crucial SDGs in Coimbatore. Climate action (15%) and gender equality (15%) receive relatively lower priority, indicating the need for more awareness campaigns in these areas.

Table 3
Intention of Respondents to Contribute towards SDGs

Intention to Contribute	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes – Strongly Willing	252	55%
Neutral/Unsure	110	24%
No – Not Willing	98	21%
Total	460	100%

Source: Computed

Interpretation: A majority (55%) of respondents are strongly willing to contribute towards SDGs, especially through initiatives like waste management, tree plantation, and skill development. However, 21% of respondents show reluctance, often due to lack of awareness or belief that SDGs are the government’s responsibility.

Discussion

The statistical analysis demonstrates that Coimbatore respondents are moderately aware of SDGs, with strong focus on health, education, and work-related goals. However, **environmental goals** and **gender-related goals** receive lesser priority. This aligns with India’s national performance, where indicators on health and poverty reduction show improvement but gender participation and climate action remain challenging.

The findings suggest that **local-level awareness programs**, especially among MSME workers and students, can significantly improve community involvement in sustainable practices.

Suggestions

1. Awareness Campaigns: Universities, industries, and local bodies must jointly organize SDG awareness programs in Coimbatore.
2. Skill Development for SDG 8: Tailor vocational programs to link MSME workers with green jobs and digital economy.
3. Community Participation in Climate Action: Encourage public participation in water conservation, solid waste management, and renewable energy adoption.
4. Women Empowerment Initiatives: Promote gender equality in Coimbatore’s MSME sector through policy incentives and workplace reforms.

Conclusion

The study reveals that while respondents in Coimbatore recognize the importance of SDGs, their understanding and prioritization vary significantly. Health, education, and work-related goals dominate their concerns, but climate action and gender equality require stronger attention. To achieve the **2030 Agenda**, greater collaboration between government, industries, academic institutions, and civil society in Coimbatore is essential. By strengthening local participation, Coimbatore can emerge as a model city in India’s journey towards sustainable development.

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Dr.S.Gnanalakshmi, a passionate teacher has experienced and dedicated faculty with strong commitment to commerce education who work with zeal and enthusiasm to provide a vibrant and optimum learning environment has been teaching and training for nearly 16 years in the field of commerce at undergraduate and postgraduate level. She has been with prestigious institution of Sona College of Arts and Science since 2018, prior to which she worked in Jairam Arts and Science College, Salem, in 2008. She combines her knowledge of theory with practical application to make her sessions useful and interesting. Apart from teaching, she has published 19 Research Papers in various National and International Journals to her acclaim. She has also presented several 28 research papers in various sponsored UGC, ICSSR National Level and International Level Seminars and Conferences. She has also attended 20 National and International Workshops and also participated in Faculty Development Programme conducted by various universities and colleges. In addition to this, she has also completed 5 NPTEL courses and 8 online courses conducted by various universities and institutions. She has been a resource person for 14 Guest Lectures and Webinars to various institutions. For over 16 years, she has also guided several projects for B.Com and M.Com students. As a Head, she was instrumental in initiating several activities and conducted many Guest Lectures, Intercollegiate Meet, Workshops, Departmental Competitions, arranged Industrial Visits and involved the students in Extension Activities as a social service to the society.



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