

# A GLOBAL ATTITUDE, A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE, A GLOBAL PLEDGE TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY: AN APPROACH OF UNDERSTANDING

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## ABSTRACT

It is reflected in our daily lives that people are becoming more aware about sustainability issues, in a generalised manner, without much awareness about the seventeen SDGs to be achieved by 2030. As a result, our attitude, our perspective towards sustainability issues are not reflected as concerted effort. Time has come to develop, to monitor, to inculcate, to spread, to understand the importance of a global attitude, global perspective, global pledge towards sustainability. At the very outset, this needs widescale circulation of 17 SDGs through all medias, electronic, print from the grassroot levels, covering schools and college notice boards, marketplaces, cinema halls, café, restaurants and so on through posters, handouts, billboards etc. The importance of HEIs in the implementation of SDGs has been discussed at length as per Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI). This is to be followed by small scale classroom lectures, TV shows with demonstrations and developing questionnaire on sustainability issues. The challenges of implementation of SDGs as outlined by The Borgen Project, such as Data Deprivation, Prioritization and Accountability, should also be made known to the stakeholders as far as practicable. The work done by other premier institutes like SEI, such as, Good Life Goals, SDG synergies for Agenda 2030 also deserve wider circulation through seminars and workshops. A thorough understanding of synergies and trade-offs should be carried out as well by the stakeholders. The Science Platform advocates the importance of the 2030 Agenda as a covenant for the future of Global Community. From their perspective, the primary task of the platform is to support sustainable transformation mechanism towards sustainable development pathways with a prolific cultural transformation, by exploring the synergies and trade-offs through dialogues between science and civil society about knowledge, moral responsibility, pluralistic values to drive specific transformations.

**Keywords:** 17 SDGs, 2030 Agenda, Science Platform, Global Perspective, Cultural Transformation, Stake Holders, Moral Responsibility

## INTRODUCTION

The process of implementation of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their associated 169 targets started on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016. These are thought to be universal and therefore considered to be applied to all countries, irrespective of economic status and nevertheless to all segments of the society. These SDGs are deemed to be integrated, indivisible and together support a development agenda, depicting a crucial balance among the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainability. It is further emphasized that this 2030 should not be considered as a full proof blueprint for any specific action and on the other hand it would develop both synergies and trade-offs during the process of implementation. This should also be regarded as a challenge thrown by the scientific community to the policymakers. As per several international goal of Agenda 2030, this is Transformation Mechanism in a nutshell (A Framework for understanding SDG interactions, Nilsson *et al.*, 2018).

There are some specific messages for transformation towards sustainable future as outlined in TWI2050. As we know, these include many such like Human Capacity and demography, Consumption and production, Decarbonisation and energy etc. It is emphasized that the entire transformation mechanism demands an all-pervasive approach. The meaningful identification of Sustainable Development Pathways (SDPs) should be integrated along with Shared Socio-economic Pathways (SSPs) which should bring forth a robust approach, cutting across disciplines and methodologies. Furthermore, we should keep ourselves away from the effects of counter-transformation. It is to be remembered that the transformations towards the SDGs should cope with global overwhelming trends like digital revolution, which are driven by path-dependent second order dynamics. The relationships between the SDGs and their specific targets, cutting across all the dimensions like directionality, geography specific locations, governance, technology and time frame are to be understood. Reiterating Nilsson *et al.*,

(2018), we promote coherence relationship across multiple facets and levels of government to achieve our goals.

It is emphasized that the Science Platform advocates the importance of the 2030 Agenda as a covenant for the future of Global Community. From their perspective, the primary task of the platform is to support sustainable transformation mechanism towards sustainable development pathways with a prolific cultural transformation, by exploring the synergies and trade-offs through dialogues between science and civil society about knowledge, moral responsibility, pluralistic values to drive specific transformations in a concerted participating manner of all stakeholders under vigorous monitoring to drive away the challenges of data deprivation and accountability. Thus, the entire approach of understanding towards attaining 17 SDGs goals requires: "A Global Attitude, A Global Perspective, A Global Pledge Towards Sustainability".

It would reflect that these components are independent but thoroughly interconnected like compartments in a train running on a track and named as "Sustainability Express". Here, every single component like global attitude, global perspective, global pledge is contributing towards sustainability issues, but getting enriched by other aspects as well. Thus, the present topic of discussion is categorically entitled as: "A Global Attitude, A Global Perspective, A Global Pledge Towards Sustainability: An Approach of Understanding".

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The entire work is carried out based on analysing secondary data, obtained from published research articles and blogs, as posted in different websites. All such data essentially comprise issues related to environmental sustainability and more particularly on 17 Sustainable Development Goals of United Nations, which are to be attained by 2030. These articles and blogs reflect the different paradigms of such goals, their interrelationship, their implementation from different aspects.

## RESULT & DISCUSSION

All the three segments of understanding, viz Global Attitude, Global Perspective and Global Pledge are separately dealt with, based upon secondary data. The approach of understanding of these three different compartments of SUSTAINABILITY EXPRESS has been discussed separately.

This clearly reflects that the approach is meant to be comprehensive and all pervasive. The following points

are mentioned in support of this:

### A. Global Attitude

This aspect is immensely developed through different blog postings and research articles on sustainability issues. One such blog by Nichols (2018) enlists the top ten environmental issues like Climate Change, Ecosystems and Endangered Species, Deforestation, Pollution, Water Scarcity & Water Pollution, Loss of Biodiversity, Overpopulation, Waste Disposal, Land Management & Urban Sprawl and Public Health.

The article published in Forbes Media (2019) by Marguerita Cheng described eight characteristics of millennials that support SDGs (it is a fact that the people born between 1981 and 1996 constitute the largest portion of the world population and represent the millennials, who show different attitudes than other generational cohorts) and these include Social Consciousness, Technology based approach, Ethnically Diverse and Optimistic, Embracing Experiences and Ethical Spending, Educated and Knowledgeable, Health Consciousness, Financial Consciousness (preference for sharing economy, like hiring cars instead of buying), Spiritual Consciousness (less attraction to organized religion, but showing interest in spirituality).

### B. Global Perspective

This aspect is intricately mixed up with the different SDGs and their corresponding interrelationship in terms of sub-themes. Following the article, "SDG Synergies: An approach for coherent 2030 Agenda implementation by Weitz *et al.*, (2018), it can be suggested that the core of the synergies approach is understood as a three-step collaborative analysis involving the scientists, different other sectors representing the Government and a gamut of stakeholders. The step one is identified as Customization, where every single use of SDG synergy can be eventually unique, depending upon the nature of coalition of mixing of stakeholders using it. It is estimated by the authors that about 30,000 possible interactions between 169 targets. Once, this is done, the next step is designated as Scoring Interactions, where the targets are put into "cross-impact matrix", as developed by the authors and there by scoring each interaction of targets. In their own language, it is written as, "If progress is made towards Target A, how does this influence progress towards Target B"?

The third step is identified as Analysis: Beyond direct interactions, which help in offering valuable insights for policies and corresponding implementation

strategies regarding the 2030 agenda. It enhances the process the discussions around different policy pathways in order to broaden their perspectives to attain consensus on the 2030 agenda.

### C. Global Pledge

While dealing with Global Pledge, let us investigate certain catch lines, which are important in understanding Sustainability issues as part of Sustainability movement. One such approach is “leave no one behind” to combat global inequalities. According to Business World blog by Jagjeet S. Kandal (2019), titled, “Sustainability: The New World Order”, the responsibility of saving the planet is not a single entity’s responsibility, but everyone’s duty. There is immense need for Sustainability Codes to act as a guiding road map to achieve Sustainable Goals. Rainforest Alliance, Sustainable Mining Initiative (an initiative by the Federation of Indian Mineral Industries), the Trust tea Sustainability Code in the tea sector, are considered as Benchmark initiative from the Corporate Sector, one of the key stakeholders.

According to the blog of WBA (World Benchmarking Alliance) (2018), entitled, “Young people and the sustainability agenda: Three avenues for impact”, it has been noted that the young people are the planet’s future and it is absolutely necessary to listen to them and take appropriate action. The blog reports that the respondents represent the major countries of the globe, spreading across Asia, Europe and North America and they are more concerned about “a sustainable economy, “a sustainable environment” and “a sustainable society”. This blog also register that the millennials are arguably the strongest as consumers, as influencers and as employees to promote sustainability.

Apart from this, Social Progress Index 2019 must be taken care off, as published in Firstpost (2019). As per this blog posting, the SPI, has been calculated by the Social Progress Imperative, a US based NGO and ranked 149 countries on 51 indicators like nutrition, shelter, safety, health, personal rights over a period of six years, between 2014 and 2019 and it is important to note that the index reveals results related to all 17 SDGs, within those indicators. The results reflect that the world is below par on eight issues out of twelve major criteria of the SPI. Underperforming areas include water and sanitation, nutrition, basic medical care, personal rights, shelter etc. All these are alarming and according to Michael Green, CEO of Social Progress Imperative the world would not be able to

successfully fulfil the UN SDGs until 2073. The comment made by Amit Kapoor; the Chair in India should be taken as an indirect approach in terms of Global Pledge. In his words, ‘the Social Progress Index suggests that immediate action towards building momentum and commitment to people, purpose and planet.....’

### CONCLUSION

As emphasized by Claudia Neubauer and Matthieu Calame in their article, entitled, “Global Pressing Problems and the Sustainable Development Goals”, the present author also advocates their observations that the SDGs should be used as a unique opportunity to reinforce and intensify sustainability dynamics in HEIs worldwide.

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