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HOW TO PROMOTE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Radhika Rattan*

Abstract

Sustainable development is largely about people, their well-being, and equity in their relationships with each other, in a context where nature-society imbalances can threaten economic and social stability. The sustainable development goals are aimed at bringing a better world, and there are 17 sustainable development goals associated with the development of the nation, and they can potentially be achieved by today's youth for tomorrow's better world. Likewise, the future lies in the hands of today's young generation which will pass the torch to future generations. According to United Nations statistics, youth are defined as persons aged between 15 and 24 years. Young people's contributions to the process that led to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development shaped the entire outcome. This conceptual paper will discuss definitions of youth, sustainable development, a conceptual overview of sustainable development and youth, and a historical perspective. This article also explores effective strategies and policy recommendation to engage young people and what youth can do to contribute to Sustainable Development as there are several various difficulties of implementing sustainable policies and how to make development sustainable.

Keywords: Youth, Sustainability, History, Youth Engagement, Youth-led initiated.

Introduction

What is Sustainable Development?

Sustainable development is a comprehensive strategy for promoting development that aims to fulfil the current generation's needs while ensuring that future generations' needs can be met without any hindrance. It involves balancing economic, social, and environmental objectives and promoting

* Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology S.D College Hoshiarpur

policies, practices, and technologies that are sustainable and equitable. Sustainable development ensures that economic growth is inclusive and sustainable, social well-being is improved, and environmental quality is maintained or improved. It is a long-term approach considering economic, social, and ecological interdependence. It aims to promote harmony to achieve a more sustainable and equitable world.

History of Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development gained significant recognition at the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm where the idea of development that considers environmental conservation for future generations was first discussed prominently; however, the term “sustainable development” was formally defined and popularized in the 1987 Brundtland Report, “Our Common Future” which is considered the key turning point for the concept.

Early Discussions: The initial ideas related to sustainable development were discussed at the 1972 Stockholm conference.

Brundtland Report: The term “sustainable development” gained widespread recognition through the 1987 Brundtland Report, which defined it as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

Global recognition: The 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (also known as the Earth Summit) further solidified the concept of sustainable development on a global scale.

17 Sustainable Development Goals (17 SDGS)

1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) (UNDESA, 2020a).

Need and Importance of Sustainable Development

The ever-increasing population, urbanization, industrialization, and globalization have put immense pressure on the natural resources, leading

to their depletion. Sustainable development is necessary to ensure that we conserve our natural resources, maintain ecological balance, and mitigate the impact of climate change. The depletion of natural resources is a global problem that requires global solutions.

Objectives of Sustainable Development

The objectives of sustainable development are focused on addressing the environmental, economic, and social challenges facing the world today. These objectives provide a framework for promoting sustainable economic growth and ensuring that the needs of future generations are met.

Poverty Alleviation

One of the main objectives of sustainable development is poverty alleviation, aimed at reducing the number of people living in extreme poverty. Sustainable economic growth is necessary for poverty alleviation, as it creates income generation and employment opportunities. However, it's essential to ensure that economic growth is inclusive and benefits all members of society, particularly those living in poverty.

Social Equity

Social equity is another crucial objective of sustainable development. This involves reducing inequality and ensuring that all members of society have access to essential services such as health care and education. Reducing inequality and addressing the root causes of poverty and social exclusion are necessary to achieve social equity. This can be achieved through various policy interventions, such as targeted social programs, progressive taxation, and affirmative action. One of the key areas where social equity is significant is access to essential services such as health care and education. There are substantial disparities in access to these services in many countries, with marginalized communities often facing significant barriers to accessing quality care and education.

Environmental Protection

Environmental protection is a crucial objective of sustainable development. It seeks to ensure that natural resources are used in a way that keeps them healthy for future generations. This includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving biodiversity, and managing natural resources to maintain productivity. Conserving biodiversity is another critical aspect of environmental protection. This can involve protecting endangered species,

preserving natural habitats, and promoting sustainable land use practices. Preserving the environment is vital to ensure our planet's survival and future generations' well-being.

Economic Development

Economic development is also an essential objective of sustainable development. It aims to promote economic growth that is inclusive and sustainable. By pursuing inclusive and sustainable economic growth, we can create a thriving economy that benefits everyone while protecting the planet for future generations.

Examples of Sustainable Development

- 1. Renewable energy:** Investing in renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydropower can reduce reliance on fossil fuels, contributing to climate change.
- 2. Sustainable agriculture:** sustainable development goals can improve soil health, reduce water usage, and reduce the need for harmful pesticides and fertilizers.
- 3. Green buildings:** Designing and constructing energy-efficient buildings using sustainable materials can reduce energy consumption, water usage, and waste.
- 4. Sustainable transportation:** Promoting the utilization of public transportation, walking, and cycling, and promoting the use of low-emission vehicles, can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality.
- 5. Waste reduction and recycling:** Implementing waste reduction and recycling programs can reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills, conserve resources, and reduce pollution.
- 6. Conservation and protection of natural resources:** Protecting natural resources such as forests, oceans, and waterways can preserve biodiversity, mitigate climate change, and provide essential ecosystem services.
- 7. Sustainable tourism:** Promoting sustainable tourism practices, such as responsible tourism and ecotourism, can benefit local communities, preserve cultural heritage, and reduce the negative impacts of tourism on the environment.

And The Sustainable Youth Engagement Development Goals

Young people are a valuable asset to their countries and investing in

them brings tremendous social and economic benefits. Managing these valuable assets and improving its returns quality by reducing vulnerabilities and risks creates real differentiation and it is need of hour. Recognising youth as assets towards development; at local, national, regional and international levels, makes another differentiation. Crucially for countries experiencing a youth bulge, where youth-led conflict or crime may be a perceived risk, involving young people in meaningful activities and programmes builds social cohesion and embeds them within their communities. Young people can play a great role in creating more impact and outcome at faster rate than other ages as history and trend of today show that youth are more conscious of global issues like climate change and social equity than others.

Moreover, today, there are 1.8 billion people between the ages of 10-24-they are the largest generation of youth in history. Close to 90 per cent of them live in developing countries, where they make up a large proportion of the population. Their numbers are expected to grow-between 2015 and 2030 alone, about 1.9 billion young people are projected to turn 15 years old.

Provided with the necessary skills and opportunities needed to reach their potential, young people can be a driving force for supporting development and contributing to peace and security. Youth-led organizations need to be encouraged and empowered to participate in translating the 2030 Agenda into local, national and regional policy. They play a significant role in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Agenda as well as in holding governments accountable. With political commitment and adequate resources, young people have the potential to make the most effective transformation of the world into a better place for all.

India is a young nation in the sense that share of youth in total population in 2011 stands at 34.8%. India is also seen to remain younger when compare to most populous countries This has been a great opportunity for nation to reap the benefit of being nation with more youth for economic development. Size of economic development of any nation is determined by percentage of young enthusiastic trained productive youths (Jaafar, Noor, & Rasoolimanesh, 2015). Youth in India are contributing to sustainable development in the following ways.

1. PM Jandhan Yojana-world largest financial inclusion
2. Direct benefit transfer through Biometric identity system and mobile telephoning-to introduce transparency
3. Swachh Bharath Abiyan-to inculcate habit of cleanliness

4. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee-direct financial assistance to eradicate poverty
5. Beti Padao Beti Bachao-to educate girl child
6. Maternity benefit scheme: to support female working member of a family during her maternity period
7. Digital India and Start Up India-to promote innovation and digitalization
8. Smart city program- to enhance development of recognized cities
9. Mid-day meals-food distribution with an intension to move away from hunger
10. National Health Policy Scheme-to ensure good health
11. Coastal cum Monitoring and Prediction System and Oil Spilling Management System- to save sca
12. Sagaramala-port connectivity program
13. A path breaking tax reforms agenda- to optimize domestic sources
14. Swatch Bharath Cess to mobilize fund for clean India Mission

Feature youth-led initiatives:

Poverty and Zero Hunger

Hunger and malnutrition often prevent youth and children from taking part in society, at every level responsibly engaging youth sustainable agricultural policies and practices is essential for achieving Sustainable Development. Attract and engage youth in farming, enterprises to help introduce innovation and smart technology. Children and youth account for two thirds of the world's poor, yet are often excluded from decision-making processes on poverty reduction and eradication financial inclusion can support youth in accumulating savings and reducing the impact of economic stocks. Engage local youth to participate in the development and monitoring of poverty reduction.

Health and Well-Being

Empowering youth includes addressing their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Access to healthcare, mental health services and information about healthy lifestyles contributes to their overall empowerment. Investing in the health and well-being of youth can support sustainable development outcomes. around the world. The active participation of young people can lead better health outcomes, including with respect to vaccination programmes and mental health.

Education and Awareness-Raising

- Integrate sustainability education into school curriculums at all levels, focusing on critical thinking and problem-solving skills related to environmental and social issues.
- Utilize interactive learning methods like workshops, webinars, and online platforms to educate youth about sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- Develop youth-friendly educational materials and campaigns to raise awareness about local and global sustainability challenges.

Youth awards and recognition

Youth empowerment and sustainable development are interconnected concepts that highlight the importance of involving young people in the process of achieving long-term social, economic, and environmental progress. Highlight and celebrate youth achievement making significant contributions to sustainable development through awards and recognition programs.

Civic Engagement:

Encouraging young people to engage in civic activities, and participating in community projects, empower them to have a voice in shaping the future of their communities.

Empowerment and Leadership Development

- Establish youth councils or advisory boards at local, national, and international levels to provide a platform for youth voices and perspectives.
- Offer leadership training programs to equip young people with necessary skills to advocate for change, manage projects, and mobilize their peers.

Providing leadership development programs helps young individuals develop the skills needed to take on leadership roles, make decisions, and influence positive change.

Social and Political Awareness

Encouraging young people to be informed about social, political, and environmental issues enables them to advocate for causes they care about and contribute to meaningful change.

Access to Technology and Information

In the digital age, access to information and technology plays a vital

role in empowering youth by connecting them to a wealth of knowledge and enabling them to amplify their voices through various platforms.

Nurturing Environmental Stewardship

Environmental education plays a pivotal role in instilling sense of stewardship among the youth. By comprehending the intricate workings of the environment, young individuals recognize the impact of their actions and make informed decisions. Formal and informal education equips children and young adults with environmental concepts, cause-and-effect relationships, and a deep appreciation for the natural world, preparing them to be responsible caretakers of our planet.

Raising Awareness and Knowledge

Education serves as a powerful tool for raising awareness about environmental issues among young people. By providing access to knowledge and information about environmental challenges, we empower them to actively engage in the global fight for environmental preservation. Armed with understanding, young individuals become catalysts for change, inspiring their families, friends, and communities to adopt sustainable practices and spread the message of environmental conservation.

Fostering a Culture of Action

Youth education and awareness act as catalysts for action. Environmental education programs provide the knowledge and motivation necessary for young people to make a positive impact in their communities. Engaging in practical activities, such as tree planting, waste reduction initiatives, and sustainable lifestyle choices, young individuals become active participants in the pursuit of environmental sustainability. Through their actions, they exemplify that small steps can lead to significant transformations, inspiring others to follow suit.

Harnessing the Power of Youth Initiatives

Youth-driven initiatives and competitions offer powerful platforms for environmental education and action. Projects like “New Boundaries for Youth” encourage high school students to research local environmental issues, propose solutions, and implement action-oriented projects. Such initiatives foster critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and instil a sense of responsibility and leadership in young individuals. Actively involving youth in

real-world sustainability challenges unlocks their potential as change-makers and future environmental leaders.

Creating safe and supportive environments where young people can express their opinions, voice concerns, and share ideas without fear of judgment fosters their empowerment.

Employment and Economic Opportunities

Offering job training, internships, and employment opportunities to young people not only helps them financially but also builds their confidence and self-reliance.

Publish youth perspectives

Provide a platform for young voices through opinion pieces, interviews, and personal narratives that highlight their experiences, challenges, and aspirations related to sustainability issues.

Highlight youth innovation

Feature cutting-edge ideas and technological solutions developed by young innovators addressing environmental concerns like renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and circular economy practices.

Promote youth leadership development

Share stories of young leaders actively participating in policy dialogues, decision-making bodies, and community engagement initiatives, emphasizing the importance of mentorship and capacity-building programs.

Focus on SDG-aligned content

Align publications with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, highlighting the critical role of youth in achieving targets related to education, health, gender equality, climate action, and poverty reduction.

Utilize diverse media formats

Engage a wider audience by using a variety of publication formats like online articles, info graphics, videos, podcasts, and social media campaigns to reach young people where they are.

Partner with youth organizations

Collaborate with existing youth-led organizations, networks, and movements to amplify their voices and disseminate information about sustainable development initiatives.

Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Increase the access of youth to information and communication technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to internet.

Reduced Inequalities

Empower all young people to drive social, economic and political inclusion.

Sustainable Cities and Communities

Involve young people in strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.

Responsible Consumption and Production

Promote youth volunteerism and innovation in reducing waste generation through reduction, recycling and reuse.

Climate Action

Promote mechanism for strengthening capacity for effective climate change related planning and management focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities.

How can we achieve sustainable development?

Achieving sustainable development requires a coordinated effort across all sectors of society, including government, businesses, and individuals. Here are some ways we can work towards a more sustainable future:

Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

One of the most fundamental ways to achieve sustainable development is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This can be done by investing in renewable energy, promoting energy efficiency, and reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

Conserve Natural Resources

Conserving natural resources is essential for promoting sustainable development. This can be done by reducing waste, promoting recycling, and using resources to preserve them for future generations.

Promote Inclusive Economic Growth

Promoting inclusive economic growth is crucial for reducing poverty and advancing sustainable development. This requires creating economic opportunities that are accessible to all individuals and based on sustainable practices rather than benefiting only a privileged few.

Address Inequality

Addressing inequality is essential for promoting sustainable development. This involves creating inclusive societies that value diversity and ensure everyone can access basic human needs like food, shelter, and healthcare.

Invest in Education

Investing in education is essential for promoting sustainable development. This can be done by providing access to quality education for all and promoting education focused on sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Challenges For Sustainable Development

Furthermore, there are several barriers related to the difficulties of implementing sustainability policies. The challenges of Sustainable Development focus on key issues like climate change, over conjunction of resources, population growth, poverty and equality, lack of access to basic need, environmental degradation, urbanization, political stability and inadequate policies frameworks. To make development sustainable reduce poverty, plan population, control population, strength & participation, rectify policy and market failure, establish good governance, manage disasters and promot partnership.

Conclusion

The world is faced with challenges in all three dimensions of sustainable development-economic, social and environmental. More than 1 billion people are still living in extreme poverty and income inequality within and among many countries has been rising; at the same time, unsustainable consumption and production patterns have resulted in huge economic and social costs and may endanger life on the planet. Achieving sustainable development will require global actions to deliver on the legitimate aspiration towards further economic and social progress, requiring growth and employment, and at the same time strengthening environmental protection. Sustainable development will need to be inclusive and take special care of the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. Strategies need to be ambitious, action-oriented and collaborative, and to adapt to different levels of development. They will need to systematically change consumption and production patterns, significant price corrections; encourage the preservation of natural endowments; reduce inequality; and strengthen economic governance. Sustainable development is an essential concept that seeks to balance economic growth, social development, and environmental protection in a long-term sustainable

way. It is needed to address the challenges of environmental degradation, social inequality, and economic instability we face today. The objectives of sustainable development are to achieve economic growth, social development, and environmental protection in a way that is entirely sustainable in the long term.. Youth-led organizations need to be encouraged and empowered to participate in translating the 2030 Agenda into local, national and regional policy.

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