

Navigating the Path to Global Sustainability: Assessing the Role of Strategic Alliances in Advancing Sustainable Development Goals

Vipin Sharma¹, Pooja Garg²

^{1,2}Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Indira Gandhi University, Meerpur, Rewari

Abstract

The global effort of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires the cooperation of nations, organizations, and individuals to achieve a sustainable future for all. The current status of these goals shows varying degrees of progress across different regions and sectors, highlighting the significant challenges that still need to be addressed to realize the SDGs fully. Global attention is required on SDG 17, highlighting the importance of international alliances in achieving the other 16 SDGs. Identify critical challenges hindering effective collaboration and explore potential opportunities to increase alliances for sustainable development.

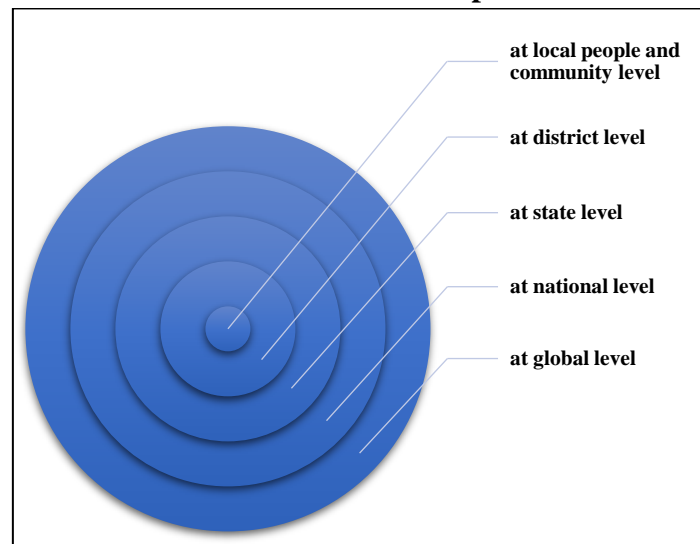
Keywords: Global alliances, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Stakeholder, Sustainable Development Index.

Introduction

The United Nations General Assembly adopted 17 associated goals with 169 targets for all countries after extensive stakeholder participation involving experts, policymakers, and global institutions from different countries as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) replaced the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were in effect from 2000 to 2015. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established after the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, with a broader scope and superior quality compared to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to Khalid et al. (2021), the SDGs provide a viable development route for member nations to ensure the balance between the different dimensions of sustainable development, such as economic, social, and environmental. These goals were established to address challenges such as poverty, hunger, environmental degradation, inequality, and the world's adverse climate changes and aid sustainable development. The world made some progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals from 2015 to 2019, but more is needed to meet the targets. Global progress has ceased after the Covid-19 pandemic and other crises. Developed nations have implemented measures such as emergency expenditure, automatic stabilizers, and recovery plans to mitigate crises' impacts on socioeconomic outcomes, causing fiscal burden in less developed nations. The issues mentioned above lead to showing downward trends in several indicators. Regardless of it, SDGs are still achievable, and the world's off-track status encourages increased focus on them. SDG 17 advocates for a renewed global development partnership, requiring increased resource mobilization. As per OECD Development Assistance Committee data, from 2019-2022, Official Development Assistance (ODA) increased significantly due to the COVID-

19 pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia war. However, support for the world's poorest countries remained lower than pre-pandemic levels. At this stage, global alliances play an essential role in addressing the challenges of our time, especially in achieving sustainable development goals. Alliances are required not only at the global level to achieve sustainable development goals but also at different levels, such as the local people and community level, the zonal level, the district level, the state level, and the national level.

Figure 1 shows the level of alliance needed to accomplish sustainable development goals.



Source: Developed by authors

SDG 17 underlines the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in mobilizing and sharing knowledge, financial resources, technology, and experience to achieve sustainable development goals in all nations, particularly developing ones. Demirović & Petrović (2020) emphasized that partnerships are essential for attaining the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and global collaborations depend on partners' competence, accessible funding, a clear vision and mission, and trust. According to Bulmer & del Prado-Higuera (2021), the execution and successful implementation of the 17th SDG is necessary for achieving the other 16 SDGs, which is possible with governance at multiple levels. The long-term consequences of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on developing countries would necessitate extensive international cooperation and active participation from developed countries and the United Nations. It is crucial to involve key participants such as NGOs, vulnerable groups, private sectors, and civil society to facilitate the actual implementation of SDGs by framing appropriate policies.

Literature review

Demirović & Petrović (2020) highlighted the importance of global partnership in the service industries for sustainable development. They concluded that fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals requires the participation of various stakeholders, including civil society, public, commercial, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Stakeholder partnerships and mobilizing resources, including technology, finance, and capacity building, are critical to accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is vital to conduct regular progress evaluations, including civil society, business, and interest groups. Global collaborations rely on partners' competence, accessible funding, a clear vision and mission, and trust. Bulmer & del Prado-Higuera (2021) investigated the significance and viability of Sustainable

Development Goal 17 with a case study on a marine turtle conservation project set in Valencia, Spain. The study highlighted conflicting interests among stakeholders, including conservationists, fishermen, and municipality representatives, gathered through desk-based research and semi-structured interviews from October 2018 to October 2019. The study also demonstrates the effectiveness of multi-actor governance in achieving SDG 17 and SDG 14, potentially promoting sustainable use of seas, oceans, and marine resources. Gadre & Deoskar (2024) explored integrating Industry 4.0 into higher education and its impact on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals using a mixed-methods approach, including an extensive literature review and interviews with academia, industry, and government. The authors find that Higher education's integration with Industry 4.0 fosters economic growth, entrepreneurship, and innovation, promoting sustainable urban technology development and contributing to the advancement of SDG 9. Khalid et al. (2021) analyzed concerns raised by developing countries regarding the SDGs, incorporating expert opinions from 17 states and one Union Territory, and proposed suggestions for effective planning and implementation in India. An online survey of 350 experts across India (10-15 experts from each state or union territory) over two months revealed that one-third of experts believe the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can address India's problems. In contrast, they need to be more robust due to loopholes favoring developed nations. Mishra & Maheshwari (2020) examined India's progress toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals and how 4th Industrial Revolution technologies can achieve these goals. The authors suggested that if digitalization is started promptly, the Fourth Industrial Revolution can help address poverty, hunger, inequality, and digital exclusion, resulting in long-term growth. The author discussed the country's challenges and highlighted modern technology solutions that can help achieve the UN SDGs. David (2018) discussed India's challenges in achieving sustainable development goals, including defining indicators, financing SDGs, management and ownership, evaluating progress, and regular monitoring. The author also suggested that an Indian Index for Sustainable Development (IISD) should be developed using the Ibrahim index as a base to address this issue. KOTYŃSKI & PRANDECKI (2023) investigated Poland's potential for future development in rapidly changing external conditions, focusing on global economic issues. The writers critically analyzed the literature on economic development strategies, economic changes, and future studies. They concluded that the increasing challenges and uncertainty, such as competition, migration, global conflict, and new challenges related to AI technologies, permanently affect interpersonal relations and communication methods. Roy (2024) examined the significance of G20 countries in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their potential to enhance their role in achieving these goals. The author analyzed that G20 must prioritize consistency in framing and executing policy, execute the 2030 Agenda, support underprivileged nations, and monitor its progress regularly. He found that partnering with international organizations focusing on sustainability and gender equality is pivotal. Leal Filho et al. (2022) examined the key barriers that need to be overcome to implement SDG 17 successfully and the role of partnerships globally in implementing sustainable development goals. The authors also incorporated ten selected examples of partnerships implementing the SDGs. Cordova & Celone (2019) discovered the relationship between sustainable development goals and innovation through careful reading of the overall content of over 100 papers. The authors concluded that innovation is a crucial driver for SDG pursuit in the industrial context. Social sustainability should be prioritized over economic sustainability. However, in the context of companies and civil society, it would not be prioritized over economic sustainability.

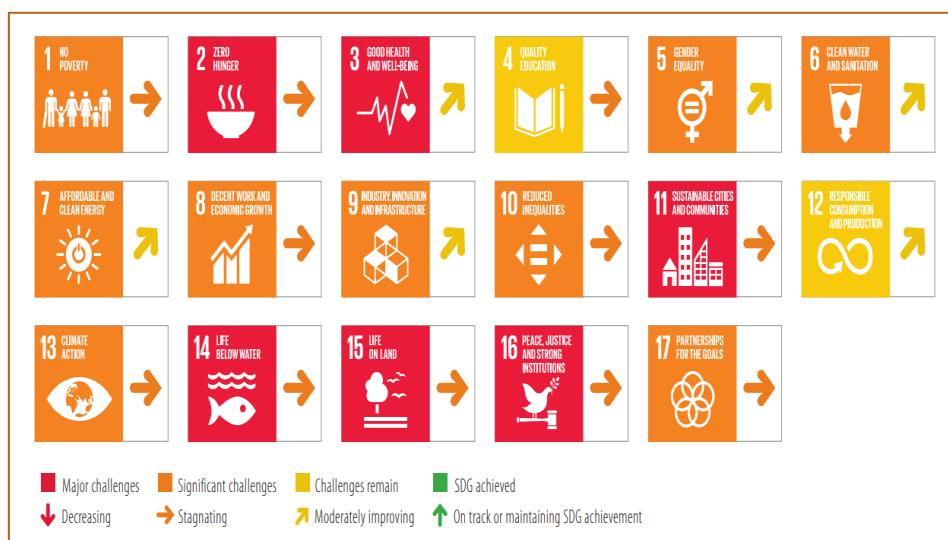
Research Methodology

Sustainable development goals are international objectives that require positive collaborative efforts from all developed and developing nations to attain sustainable development globally with the principle of no one behind.” The explorative methodology is incorporated in this research study to achieve the Path to Global Sustainability by Assessing the Role of Strategic Alliances in Advancing Sustainable Development Goals. The study is based on the information collected from an extensive existing literature review. Secondary sources of information, such as the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023 special edition and the Sustainable Development Report 2023 and 2022 dashboard, are also incorporated into the study.

Current Status of 17th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)

All Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are expected to be achieved worldwide by 2030. However, based on the speed of progress since 2015, the world needs to be on track to meet these goals. Figure 2 shows that the world is currently off the way to achieving SDGs. The SDGs Report 2023 Dashboard indicates that only approximately 18% of global SDG targets to be achieved by 2030 are on track. According to recent data published in the SDGs Report 2023 dashboard, Denmark, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, and the Slovak Republic are the top 5 countries that have achieved the most significant number of targets or progress on track (J. Sachs et al., 2022a). On the other hand, Myanmar, Venezuela RB, Papua New Guinea, Yemen Rep., and Lebanon are the least 5 countries that have shown reversal progress in achieving the many targets (J. Sachs et al., 2022a). The SDG Index is used to evaluate the overall performance of each country based on progress in achieving all 17 SDGs. A country's score on the index indicates its position between the worst possible outcome (a score of 0) and the target (a score of 100). Finland tops the SDG Index 2023 with a score of 86.8, followed by Sweden, Denmark, and Germany with 86.0, 85.7, and 83.4, respectively. India ranked 112th out of 166 countries on the SDG Index 2023 with a score of 63.4, while its neighbor countries Nepal and Bangladesh rank better, 99th and 101th, with scores of 66.5 and 65.9, respectively. India has a moderately increasing trend toward achieving sustainable development goal 17, but significant challenges remain.

Figure 2 shows the current scenario of the world at the halfway of the 2030 Agenda in achieving 17 SDGs



Source: Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023 Dashboard, p. 24.

Table A shows the current status and rank & score in the SDG index of India and its neighboring countries in achieving the SDG 17

Sr. No.	Name of country	Rank and score in SDG Index 2023	Rank and score in SDG Index 2022	Improve or reduce	Current status of SDG 17 (2023)
1	India	112 th and 63.4	121 st and 60.3	Improve	A moderately increasing trend, but significant challenges remain.
2	Nepal	99 th and 66.5	98 th and 66.2	Improve	A moderately increasing trend, but significant challenges remain.
3	China	63 rd and 72.0	56 th and 72.5	Reduce	Stagnation trends and significant challenges remain.
4	Bangladesh	101 st and 65.9	104 th and 64.2	Improve	Stagnation trends and major challenges remain.
5	Pakistan	128 th and 59.0	125 th and 59.3	Reduce	A moderately increasing trend, but major challenges remain.
6	Myanmar	125 th and 60.4	103 rd and 64.3	Reduce	Stagnation trends and major challenges remain.
7	Sri Lanka	83 rd and 69.4	76 th and 70.0	Reduce	Stagnation trends and major challenges remain.
8	Bhutan	61 st and 72.3	70 th and 70.5	Improve	A moderately increasing trend, but significant challenges remain.
9	Afghanistan	158 th and 49.0	147 th and 52.5	Reduce	A moderately increasing trend, but major challenges remain.
10	Maldives	68 th and 71.3	67 th and 71.0	Reduce	A moderately increasing trend, but significant challenges remain.

Source: Compiled from SDG Report 2023 & 2022 Dashboard

The International Spillover Index is an index that shows the adverse and specific effects of a particular country's actions on the performance of other countries to achieve their SDGs. This index is evaluated based on three dimensions - social and environmental impacts on other countries caused by a country's trade actions, the impact of a country's policies and practices related to finance on other countries, and the impact of security-related dimensions such as conflicts, peace, and stability. India's International Spillover Index score is 99.4, indicating that India's actions positively impact other countries in achieving their SDGs.

Figure 3 shows India's overall performance in achieving 17 Sustainable Development Goals.



Source: Compiled from Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023 Dashboard, p. 274.

Developing countries face a significant increase in external debt due to the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbated by record inflation, rising interest rates, competing priorities, and limited fiscal capacity. It is necessary to ensure sustained efforts to equitable access to digital technology worldwide, including Internet, laptops, and Android mobiles, because progress has shown downward trends after a 65% improvement in Internet access. Official development assistance (ODA) flows have reached record peaks, but the increase in 2022 is primarily due to spending on refugees and Ukraine aid. Geopolitical tensions and nationalism hinder international cooperation, emphasizing the need for collective action to accelerate the implementation of SDGs.

Role of Global Alliances for Sustainable Development

Facilitate exchange of knowledge: Partnership provides a platform for organizations to exchange their skill, expertise, best practices, and knowledge. This exchange of information allows players to learn from each other, adopt new ideas, and improve their processes.

Extension of networks: Partnerships provide efficient knowledge transfer and quick learning by connecting local to global and global to local, including government agencies, private sectors, and minority communities, and through planning, funding, and implementation (Davis & Howe, 2017).

Mobilization of resources: Partnerships can significantly leverage the strengths and resources of all participants when they are fully engaged as equal partners, from conceptualization to implementation and review. Mobilizing resources can lead to economies of scale and efficiency gains, utilizing each team member's unique strengths and capabilities (Davis & Howe, 2017).

Policy coherence: To remove contradictions and increase advance coherence, attempt to harmonize laws and regulations among participating countries or institutions. Global alliances could entail harmonizing policies, guidelines, and practices to foster cooperation and integration (J. D. Sachs et al., 2023).

Fostering innovation: Through open innovation, the alliance actively seeks ideas and solutions from external partners, including startups and academic institutions. Global alliances facilitate the transfer and adaptation of technologies across regions and sectors, enabling developing countries to leapfrog stages of development and access the latest innovations (J. D. Sachs et al., 2023) (J. Sachs et al., 2022b).

Challenges faced in achieving SDGs

The comprehensive nature and lack of clear responsibility and accountability pose significant challenges for the implementation of SDG 17. Economics is one of the critical challenges. At the national policy level, economic growth and stabilization are often prioritized over the SDG's pursuit, adversely affecting private enterprise participation in SDG cooperation. For example, the economies of some countries that heavily depend on tourism have established trade policies and partnerships that fail to address the related impact of increasing tourism and travel on regional attempts to decline the effect of climate change. However, they uphold travel for its financial advantage (Leal Filho et al., 2022). Accommodating divergent, potentially opposing opinions is also a significant challenge. That is due to numerous players' divergent engagement, devotion, and perception degrees. Partnerships create tension between active players when active/existing players' points of view, political choices, and corporations concentrate on short-term results rather than long-term accomplishing goals. Developing countries need more finance, technology, and human resources for effective partnership participation. So, the limited resources also pose a significant challenge. Coordinating stakeholders' various interests and preferences can also be challenging. To achieve the goals of SDGs, coordination and governing are needed for effective partnerships. Partnerships are necessary at the global level and local, zonal, district, state, and national levels to achieve sustainable development goals. Engagement at different levels is also a problem. It is essential to use other approaches that enable different levels of participation in the process. Legal obstacles and institutional factors can impede the successful implementation of partnerships. Different countries have divergent administrative or commercial protectionism, which creates barriers to partnership efforts (Leal Filho et al., 2022)

Conclusion

The critical challenges addressed by 17 interconnected goals with poverty, hunger, climate change, and inequality, SDG provides an extensive framework for collective action towards progress. Developing nations are often troubled with the burden of heavy debt. By joining forces and taking action, we can help ease the debt servicing burden and promote sustainable economic growth in these nations by facilitating debt relief initiatives such as debt restructuring, debt forgiveness, or concessional loans with favorable terms. Global alliances with the power of collaboration and innovation drive meaningful changes at all levels, such as local, national, and global, with the help of partnerships established between government, international organizations, and the private sector. In conclusion, for sustainable development goals, global alliances represent a light of hope and a route to a more reasonable, flourishing, and sustainable future for the planet and humanity.

References

1. Bulmer, E., & del Prado-Higuera, C. (2021). Revitalizing the Global Alliances for Sustainable Development: Analyzing the Viability of Sustainable Development Goal 17—A Multi-Actor Governance Approach. *Sustainability*, 13(8), 4247. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13084247>
2. Cordova, M. F., & Celone, A. (2019). SDGs and Innovation in the Business Context Literature Review. *Sustainability*, 11(24), 7043. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11247043>
3. David, M. P. C. (2018). Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)-Challenges for India. *Indian Journal of Public Health Research & Development*, 9(3), 1. <https://doi.org/10.5958/0976-5506.2018.00172.9>

4. Davis, L. A., & Howe, G. D. (2017). Concept Paper on the Inter-American Education Agenda: Building Alliances and advancing towards the Sustainable Development Goals. *9th Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education*, 12–15.
5. Demirović, D., & Petrović, M. D. (2020). Global Partnership in the Service Industries for Sustainable Development. In © Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2020 (pp. 1–12). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71067-9_63-1
6. Gadre, monika, & Deoskar, A. (2024). ALIGNING HIGHER EDUCATION WITH INDUSTRY 4.0: A PATHWAY TO ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS). *Madhya Pradesh Journal of Social Science*, 29(1), 233–240.
7. Khalid, A. M., Sharma, S., & Dubey, A. K. (2021). Concerns of developing countries and the sustainable development goals: case for India. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology*, 28(4), 303–315. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504509.2020.1795744>
8. KOTYŃSKI, J., & PRANDECKI, K. (2023). PROSPECTS FOR POLAND’S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONDITIONS OF NEW GLOBALIZATION AND INDUSTRY 5.0. *Scientific Papers of Silesian University of Technology. Organization and Management Series*, 2023(189), 327–337. <https://doi.org/10.29119/1641-3466.2023.189.20>
9. Leal Filho, W., Wall, T., Barbir, J., Alverio, G. N., Dinis, M. A. P., & Ramirez, J. (2022). Relevance of international partnerships in the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. *Nature Communications*, 13(1), 613. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-022-28230-x>
10. Mishra, H., & Maheshwari, P. (2020). Achieving sustainable development goals through Fourth Industrial Revolution: An Indian perspective. *Indian Journal of Commerce & Management Studies*, XI(2), 63. <https://doi.org/10.18843/ijcms/v11i2/06>
11. Roy, L. (2024). ROLE OF G20 IN ATTAINING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: A REVIEW. *Edumania-An International Multidisciplinary Journal*, 02(01), 60–76. <https://doi.org/10.59231/edumania/9019>
12. Sachs, J. D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., & Drumm, E. (2023). *Implementing the SDG Stimulus: Sustainable Development Report 2023*.
13. Sachs, J., Kroll, C., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., & Woelm, F. (2022a). *Sustainable Development Report 2022*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009210058>
14. Sachs, J., Kroll, C., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., & Woelm, F. (2022b). *Sustainable Development Report 2022*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009210058>