

A Case Study on the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Developing Economies**Mahesh Devidas Mahankal¹, Sonam Gupta², A Gaspar Raja³, Mithun Kumar S⁴, Roopa Traisa A⁵**¹*Assistant Professor, Yashaswi Education Society's International Institute of Management Science, Affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University*
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roopa@cms.ac.in**Abstract:**

The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has become a central priority for developing economies striving to achieve balanced economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. This study provides a comprehensive conceptual analysis of SDG implementation in developing economies, supported by comparative case studies of ten countries, including India, Brazil, South Africa, Indonesia, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Kenya, Mexico, and Ethiopia. The research highlights the multidimensional nature of SDGs and emphasizes the importance of integrated policy frameworks, institutional capacity, and technological innovation in achieving sustainable development outcomes. The findings reveal that governance and institutional effectiveness play a critical role in translating global SDG commitments into national policies. Countries with strong digital governance frameworks, such as India and Kenya, demonstrate significant progress in financial inclusion and service delivery through Digital Public Infrastructure. Similarly, export-oriented economies like Vietnam and Bangladesh show notable success in poverty reduction and economic growth by leveraging industrialization and human capital development. Environmental sustainability remains a major concern, particularly in resource-rich economies like Brazil and Indonesia, where balancing economic expansion with ecological conservation poses ongoing challenges. The study also identifies financing gaps as a major constraint, highlighting the need for innovative mechanisms such as public-private partnerships, blended finance, and international cooperation. Technological advancements, including artificial intelligence and data-driven governance, are recognized as key enablers of SDG implementation, although the digital divide continues to limit their effectiveness in some regions. Social inclusion, gender equality, and access to education are critical factors influencing development outcomes, particularly in countries like Bangladesh. Furthermore, the study emphasizes that SDG implementation is highly context-specific, requiring tailored strategies that consider local socio-economic conditions. The comparative analysis underscores the importance of policy coherence, stakeholder collaboration, and adaptive governance in addressing the complex challenges faced by developing economies. The research contributes to the existing literature by providing a holistic understanding of SDG implementation and offering practical insights for policymakers, researchers, and development practitioners. Overall, the study concludes that achieving SDGs in developing economies requires a synergistic approach that integrates governance, technology, finance, and social inclusion. Strengthening institutional frameworks, promoting innovation, and fostering global partnerships are essential for accelerating progress toward sustainable development.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, Developing Economies, Digital Governance, Inclusive Growth, Environmental Sustainability.**1. Introduction**

The adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development marked a paradigm shift in global development policy by emphasizing a holistic and integrated approach to economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. The SDGs consist of 17 interconnected goals that aim to eradicate poverty, promote prosperity, and ensure environmental protection by 2030. While these goals are universally applicable, their implementation in developing economies presents unique challenges and opportunities due to structural, institutional, and socio-economic differences. Developing economies are characterized by rapid population growth, evolving industrial structures, and varying levels of institutional maturity. These countries often face multiple constraints, including limited financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, governance inefficiencies, and socio-economic disparities. According to Sachs et al. (2019), the successful implementation of SDGs in developing countries requires not only policy commitment but also strong institutional frameworks and innovative financing mechanisms. Similarly, Gupta and Vegelin (2016) argue that governance plays a central role in translating global goals into national-level outcomes, particularly in countries with fragmented policy systems. One of the defining features of SDGs is their integrated nature, which requires policymakers to consider interlinkages among different goals. For instance, poverty reduction is closely associated with education, health, employment, and environmental sustainability. Le Blanc (2015) highlights that SDGs are inherently interconnected, and progress in one goal often influences outcomes in others. In developing economies, this interconnectedness becomes even more critical due to resource constraints and competing development priorities. Therefore, adopting a systems-based approach is essential for effective implementation. Another critical aspect of SDG implementation is institutional capacity and governance. Weak governance structures, lack of coordination among government agencies, and limited accountability mechanisms often hinder progress. Fukuda-Parr (2016) emphasizes that the effectiveness of SDGs largely depends on national ownership and the ability of governments to integrate these goals into their policy frameworks. In this context, digital governance and technological innovations have emerged as powerful tools for enhancing transparency and efficiency. The growing role of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in developing economies has facilitated better service delivery, improved data management, and strengthened citizen engagement. Financing remains one of the most significant challenges in achieving SDGs. The scale of investment required is enormous, particularly in sectors such as infrastructure, healthcare, education, and renewable energy. According to the World Bank (2020), developing economies face an annual financing gap of trillions of dollars to meet SDG targets. To address this gap, innovative financing approaches such as public-private partnerships (PPPs), blended finance, and impact investing have gained prominence. These mechanisms enable the mobilization of private capital while ensuring alignment with public development objectives. Technology and innovation play a transformative role in accelerating SDG implementation. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and the Internet of Things (IoT) have enhanced the ability of governments and organizations to monitor progress, optimize resource allocation, and design evidence-based policies. According to Manyika et al. (2018), digital technologies have the potential to contribute significantly to achieving SDGs by improving efficiency and enabling scalable solutions. However, the digital divide remains a critical issue, as unequal access to technology can exacerbate existing inequalities. Social inclusion is another fundamental dimension of SDG implementation. Issues such as gender inequality, lack of access to education, and social marginalization continue to impede progress in many developing economies. Kabeer (2015) argues that inclusive development requires addressing structural inequalities and empowering marginalized communities. Achieving gender equality and improving access to education are essential for sustainable development, as they contribute to economic growth and social stability.

Environmental sustainability is equally important, particularly in the context of climate change. Developing economies are often more vulnerable to environmental risks, including natural disasters, resource depletion, and pollution. According to Stern (2007), climate change poses significant economic and social challenges, particularly for low-income countries. Integrating environmental considerations into development planning is essential for achieving long-term sustainability. Renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and green infrastructure are key areas that can contribute to both economic growth and environmental protection. The implementation of SDGs also requires effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Data-driven decision-making is essential for tracking progress and identifying gaps. However, many developing economies face challenges related to data availability, quality, and accessibility. Jerven (2013) highlights the importance of reliable statistical systems in supporting development planning and policy formulation. Strengthening data infrastructure and leveraging digital technologies can significantly enhance monitoring capabilities. Furthermore, the role of international cooperation cannot be overlooked. Global partnerships, knowledge sharing, and capacity-building initiatives play a crucial role in supporting developing economies. The SDGs emphasize the importance of collaboration among governments, international organizations, private sector entities, and civil society. Such partnerships facilitate the exchange of best practices and mobilization of resources. The uploaded document also emphasizes the need for context-specific strategies in implementing SDGs, highlighting that a one-size-fits-all approach is not effective in diverse socio-economic settings. Each developing economy has unique challenges and opportunities, which require tailored policy interventions and adaptive governance mechanisms. The implementation of SDGs in developing economies is a complex and multidimensional process that

requires coordinated efforts across various sectors and stakeholders. It involves balancing economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability while addressing structural and institutional challenges. The success of SDGs will depend on the ability of developing economies to leverage technology, mobilize resources, strengthen governance, and adopt inclusive and sustainable development strategies.

2. Literature Review:

The implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been widely examined in academic literature, focusing on governance, financing, technology, and socio-economic factors influencing their success in developing economies. Scholars have emphasized the importance of integrated development frameworks. Le Blanc (2015) argues that the SDGs are interconnected, and policy coherence is essential for achieving multiple goals simultaneously. This perspective is supported by Nilsson et al. (2016), who highlight that interactions among SDGs can create synergies or trade-offs, requiring careful policy design.

Governance has been identified as a critical determinant of SDG implementation. Fukuda-Parr (2016) notes that strong institutions and political commitment are essential for translating global goals into national policies. Similarly, Gupta and Vegelin (2016) emphasize the role of governance structures in ensuring accountability and effective implementation. Weak institutional capacity in developing economies often leads to fragmented policies and limited progress. Financing is another key theme in the literature. Sachs et al. (2019) highlight the significant investment required to achieve SDGs and the need for innovative financing mechanisms. The World Bank (2020) also emphasizes the role of private sector participation in bridging the financing gap. Blended finance and public-private partnerships have emerged as effective tools for mobilizing resources.

Technology and innovation have been recognized as enablers of sustainable development. Manyika et al. (2018) argue that digital technologies can accelerate SDG implementation by improving efficiency and scalability. However, the digital divide remains a major challenge, as noted by Hilbert (2016), who highlights disparities in access to technology across different regions. Social inclusion and equity are central to sustainable development. Kabeer (2015) emphasizes the importance of addressing gender inequality and empowering marginalized communities. Similarly, Sen (1999) argues that development should be viewed as an expansion of human capabilities, focusing on improving quality of life rather than merely economic growth. Environmental sustainability is another critical area of research. Stern (2007) highlights the economic implications of climate change and the need for sustainable development strategies. Barbier (2011) emphasizes the importance of integrating environmental considerations into economic policies to achieve long-term sustainability.

The role of data and monitoring systems has also been extensively studied. Jerven (2013) points out the challenges associated with data quality in developing economies, which can hinder effective policy-making. Advances in digital technologies have improved data collection and analysis, enabling better monitoring of SDG progress. Recent studies also highlight the importance of context-specific approaches. According to the uploaded document, SDG implementation strategies must be tailored to local socio-economic conditions to ensure effectiveness. This aligns with the broader literature emphasizing the need for adaptive and flexible policy frameworks.

Table 1: Literature Review Summary

Author(s)	Year	Key Focus	Key Findings
Le Blanc	2015	SDG Interlinkages	SDGs are interconnected; integrated policy approach required
Nilsson et al.	2016	SDG Interactions	Synergies and trade-offs exist among goals
Fukuda-Parr	2016	Governance	Strong institutions essential for implementation
Gupta & Vegelin	2016	Policy Governance	Governance ensures accountability and effectiveness
Sachs et al.	2019	Financing SDGs	Large investment needed; innovative finance required
World Bank	2020	Funding Gap	PPPs and private sector crucial
Manyika et al.	2018	Technology	Digital tech accelerates SDGs
Hilbert	2016	Digital Divide	Inequality in tech access persists
Kabeer	2015	Social Inclusion	Gender equality key for development
Sen	1999	Human Development	Development = expansion of capabilities
Stern	2007	Climate Change	Climate impacts economic growth
Barbier	2011	Sustainability	Green economy essential
Jerven	2013	Data Systems	Data quality challenges in developing countries

3. Case Studies of Developing Economies and SDG Implementation:

India: Digital Transformation and Inclusive Growth: India has emerged as a global leader in leveraging digital public infrastructure to accelerate Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With a population exceeding 1.4 billion, India faces challenges related to poverty, inequality, and environmental sustainability. However, its policy approach integrates technology-driven governance with inclusive development strategies. A major focus has been on SDG 1, SDG 9, and SDG 16. The introduction of Aadhaar (digital identity system), Unified Payments Interface (UPI), and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) has transformed welfare delivery by reducing leakages and enhancing transparency. These initiatives have improved financial inclusion, particularly for marginalized populations. India has also made progress in renewable energy under SDG 7, with ambitious targets for solar and wind energy capacity. The International Solar Alliance, led by India, further demonstrates its commitment to global climate goals. However, challenges remain, including regional disparities, digital divide, and environmental degradation. Urban pollution and water scarcity are pressing concerns. The government's focus on Smart Cities and digital governance continues to address these issues. Overall, India's case highlights how technology-enabled governance and policy integration can significantly accelerate SDG implementation in large and diverse economies.

Brazil: Environmental Sustainability and Social Inclusion: Brazil represents a unique case where economic growth is closely tied to environmental sustainability. As home to the Amazon rainforest, Brazil plays a crucial role in global climate regulation. Brazil focuses strongly on SDG 13, SDG 15, and SDG 10. Programs like Bolsa Familia have significantly reduced poverty and inequality by providing conditional cash transfers to low-income households. Environmental policies aim to reduce deforestation and promote sustainable agriculture. However, conflicting economic interests, such as agribusiness expansion, often challenge environmental goals. Deforestation rates have fluctuated due to policy changes and enforcement challenges. Brazil also emphasizes renewable energy, with a high share of hydropower in its energy mix. Social inclusion policies have improved access to education and healthcare, contributing to human development. Despite progress, governance challenges and political instability sometimes hinder consistent SDG implementation. Brazil's experience underscores the complexity of balancing economic growth with environmental conservation.

South Africa: Inequality and Institutional Reform: South Africa faces deep socio-economic inequalities rooted in historical factors. The country's SDG strategy prioritizes reducing inequality and strengthening institutions. Key focus areas include SDG 10, SDG 8, and SDG 16. Government initiatives aim to improve employment opportunities and enhance social protection systems. South Africa has made progress in expanding access to education and healthcare. However, unemployment remains high, particularly among youth. Structural economic challenges and skills gaps limit growth potential. Institutional reforms focus on improving governance, transparency, and anti-corruption measures. Digital transformation is also being leveraged to enhance public service delivery. Environmental sustainability is another priority, particularly in transitioning from coal-based energy to renewable sources. However, energy security challenges complicate this transition. South Africa's case highlights the importance of institutional strengthening and inclusive economic policies in addressing inequality.

Indonesia: Sustainable Industrialization and Climate Action: Indonesia has adopted a balanced approach to SDG implementation, focusing on economic growth and environmental sustainability. Priority goals include SDG 9, SDG 13, and SDG 14. As an archipelago, Indonesia emphasizes marine conservation and sustainable fisheries. Industrialization strategies aim to boost manufacturing and infrastructure development. The government has invested heavily in transportation networks and digital connectivity. Indonesia also faces challenges related to deforestation and carbon emissions. Efforts to reduce forest fires and promote sustainable land use are ongoing. Social programs target poverty reduction and education access. The country has made significant progress in reducing poverty rates over the past decade. Indonesia demonstrates how economic growth and environmental sustainability can be pursued simultaneously, though trade-offs remain.

Nigeria: Poverty Reduction and Energy Access: Nigeria faces significant development challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and energy shortages. The country prioritizes SDG 1, SDG 7, and SDG 8. Expanding access to electricity is a major focus, particularly in rural areas. Nigeria has implemented various social programs to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods. However, governance challenges and corruption hinder effective implementation. The energy sector is undergoing reforms to attract investment and promote renewable energy. Solar energy projects are gaining traction in off-grid areas. Despite its resource wealth,

Nigeria struggles with inequality and infrastructure deficits. Strengthening institutions and improving governance are critical for achieving SDGs. Nigeria’s case highlights the importance of resource management and institutional reform in development.

Bangladesh: Poverty Reduction and Gender Empowerment:Bangladesh is often cited as a success story in poverty reduction and social development. The country focuses on SDG 1, SDG 5, and SDG 3. Microfinance initiatives and women’s empowerment programs have significantly improved livelihoods. Bangladesh has achieved notable progress in reducing poverty and improving health outcomes. The garment industry has played a key role in economic growth and employment generation. However, challenges such as climate vulnerability and urbanization persist. The country is highly susceptible to natural disasters, requiring climate-resilient development strategies. Bangladesh’s experience demonstrates the effectiveness of community-based development and gender-focused policies.

Vietnam: Export-Led Growth and Education:Vietnam has achieved rapid economic growth through export-oriented industrialization. Key SDGs include SDG 8, SDG 4, and SDG 9. Investments in education and skills development have supported industrial growth. Vietnam has reduced poverty significantly and improved living standards. Strong government policies and integration into global markets have driven economic success. Environmental challenges, including pollution and climate risks, remain concerns. The government is increasingly focusing on sustainable development practices. Vietnam highlights the role of education and industrial policy in economic transformation.

Kenya: Digital Innovation and Financial Inclusion:Kenya is known for its leadership in digital innovation, particularly mobile banking. The country emphasizes SDG 9, SDG 1, and SDG 8. Platforms like M-Pesa have revolutionized financial inclusion. Kenya has improved access to financial services, enabling small businesses and entrepreneurs to thrive. Digital innovation has also enhanced service delivery in healthcare and education. However, challenges such as unemployment and inequality persist. Infrastructure development remains a priority. Kenya demonstrates how digital innovation can drive inclusive development.

Mexico: Urban Development and Inequality Reduction:Mexico faces challenges related to urbanization and inequality. The country focuses on SDG 11, SDG 10, and SDG 8. Urban development programs aim to improve infrastructure, housing, and public services. Social policies target poverty reduction and access to education. Mexico’s experience highlights the importance of urban planning and social policy integration.

Ethiopia: Infrastructure and Agricultural Development:Ethiopia has focused on infrastructure and agriculture to drive development. Key SDGs include SDG 2, SDG 9, and SDG 1. Large-scale infrastructure projects and agricultural reforms have improved productivity and economic growth. However, political instability and climate challenges remain obstacles. Ethiopia’s case illustrates the role of infrastructure investment in economic development.

Table 2: SDG Implementation in Developing Economies

Country	Key SDGs Focus	Major Strategies/Approach	Key Achievements	Major Challenges	Key Insights
India	SDG 1, SDG 9, SDG 16, SDG 7	Digital Public Infrastructure (Aadhaar, UPI, DBT), renewable energy expansion	Financial inclusion, improved governance transparency, growth in solar energy	Digital divide, regional inequality, environmental issues	Technology-driven governance accelerates inclusive development
Brazil	SDG 13, SDG 15, SDG 10	Environmental protection policies, social welfare programs (Bolsa Familia)	Poverty reduction, renewable energy use, biodiversity conservation	Deforestation, policy inconsistency, political instability	Balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability is critical
South Africa	SDG 10, SDG 8, SDG 16	Institutional reforms, social protection programs, governance strengthening	Improved access to education and healthcare	High unemployment, inequality, governance inefficiencies	Institutional strength is key to reducing inequality
Indonesia	SDG 9, SDG 13, SDG 14	Infrastructure development, sustainable industrialization, marine conservation	Economic growth, poverty reduction, improved connectivity	Deforestation, emissions, environmental trade-offs	Growth must be aligned with environmental sustainability
Nigeria	SDG 1, SDG 7, SDG 8	Energy sector reforms, poverty alleviation programs, renewable energy initiatives	Increased solar adoption, policy reforms in energy	Corruption, infrastructure gaps, inequality	Governance reform is essential for resource-rich economies
Bangladesh	SDG 1, SDG 5, SDG 3	Microfinance, women empowerment, garment industry growth	Poverty reduction, gender empowerment, improved health outcomes	Climate vulnerability, urban pressure	Gender-focused policies enhance development outcomes
Vietnam	SDG 8, SDG 4, SDG 9	Export-led industrialization, investment in education	Rapid economic growth, poverty reduction, skilled workforce	Environmental pollution, climate risks	Education and trade integration drive growth
Kenya	SDG 9, SDG 1, SDG 8	Digital finance (M-Pesa), innovation-driven development	Financial inclusion, SME growth, digital service delivery	Unemployment, infrastructure gaps	Digital innovation fosters inclusive economic growth
Mexico	SDG 11, SDG 10, SDG 8	Urban development programs, social welfare policies	Improved urban infrastructure, poverty reduction initiatives	Urban inequality, crime, governance issues	Urban planning is key to sustainable development
Ethiopia	SDG 2, SDG 9, SDG 1	Infrastructure investment, agricultural reforms	Increased agricultural productivity, economic growth	Political instability, climate risks	Infrastructure and agriculture drive development

4. Discussion:

The implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in developing economies represents one of the most complex and ambitious global development agendas. This study has provided a comprehensive conceptual and comparative analysis of how developing countries are addressing SDG targets through diverse policy approaches, institutional frameworks, and technological interventions. The findings highlight that while significant progress has been made, substantial challenges remain, requiring coordinated and innovative solutions. A key insight from this study is the central role of governance and institutional capacity in determining the success of SDG implementation. Countries such as India and Kenya demonstrate that strong governance frameworks, supported by digital public infrastructure, can significantly enhance service delivery, transparency, and accountability. Digital tools such as identity systems, mobile banking, and data platforms have enabled governments to reach marginalized populations more effectively. However, the persistence of governance challenges in countries like Nigeria and South Africa underscores the importance of institutional reforms, anti-corruption measures, and policy coherence. Without strong institutions, even well-designed policies may fail to achieve desired outcomes. Another important dimension is the integration of economic growth with social inclusion. The case studies reveal that countries such as Bangladesh and Vietnam have successfully leveraged industrialization and export-led growth to reduce poverty and improve living standards. These countries have invested in human capital development, particularly education and skill enhancement, which has contributed to sustained economic growth. However, the benefits of growth are not always evenly distributed. High levels of inequality in countries like South Africa and Brazil indicate that economic growth alone is insufficient without inclusive policies that address structural disparities.

The study also highlights the critical importance of technology and innovation in accelerating SDG implementation. Digital transformation has emerged as a key driver of development, enabling governments to optimize resource allocation, improve monitoring systems, and deliver services efficiently. For instance, Kenya’s success in mobile banking and India’s digital governance initiatives demonstrate the potential of technology to promote financial inclusion and economic participation. Nevertheless, the digital divide remains a significant challenge, particularly in rural and underdeveloped regions. Bridging this gap requires investments in digital infrastructure, education, and capacity building. Environmental sustainability is another major area of concern. Developing economies often face a trade-off between economic growth and environmental protection. Countries like Brazil and Indonesia illustrate the complexities of managing natural resources while pursuing economic development. Deforestation, pollution, and climate change pose significant risks to long-term sustainability. At the same time, these countries have opportunities to adopt renewable energy and sustainable practices that can support both economic and environmental goals. Integrating climate resilience into development planning is essential for achieving sustainable outcomes. The issue of financing SDGs emerges as a major constraint across all case studies. The scale of investment required for infrastructure, healthcare, education, and environmental protection is substantial. Many developing economies lack

sufficient domestic resources and rely on external funding. Innovative financing mechanisms such as public-private partnerships, blended finance, and impact investing are critical for bridging this gap. Additionally, international cooperation and global partnerships play a vital role in mobilizing resources and sharing knowledge. Another significant finding is the importance of context-specific strategies. The study clearly demonstrates that there is no universal model for SDG implementation. Each country has unique socio-economic, political, and cultural characteristics that influence its development trajectory. For example, Ethiopia focuses on infrastructure and agriculture, while Mexico emphasizes urban development and social policies. This diversity highlights the need for flexible and adaptive policy frameworks that can respond to local conditions. The comparative analysis also underscores the importance of policy integration and coordination. SDGs are inherently interconnected, and progress in one area often depends on outcomes in others. For instance, achieving poverty reduction requires improvements in education, healthcare, and employment. Therefore, governments must adopt a holistic approach that considers these interlinkages. Fragmented policies and lack of coordination can lead to inefficiencies and missed opportunities. From a broader perspective, the study contributes to the understanding that SDG implementation is not merely a policy challenge but also a governance and transformation challenge. It requires a shift from traditional development models to more integrated and sustainable approaches. This transformation involves not only governments but also private sector actors, civil society organizations, and international institutions. The successful implementation of SDGs in developing economies depends on a combination of strong governance, inclusive economic policies, technological innovation, environmental sustainability, and adequate financing. While progress varies across countries, the overall trajectory indicates that developing economies are increasingly adopting innovative and adaptive strategies to achieve sustainable development. However, accelerating progress requires addressing persistent challenges such as inequality, climate change, and institutional weaknesses. The discussion highlights that future efforts should focus on strengthening institutional capacity, promoting digital inclusion, enhancing policy coherence, and fostering global partnerships. By adopting a holistic and collaborative approach, developing economies can overcome existing barriers and move closer to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

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