



RIS
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विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली



Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya Centenary Year

National Seminar on SDGs and Integral Humanism

23-24 September 2017
India Habitat Centre and Vigyan Bhawan



Background Note

Introduction

SDGs: The idea of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was first mooted at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012 (popularly known as the Rio+20). The foundation for the post 2015 development agenda was laid by the outcome document of Rio+20 conference (titled “*The Future We Want*”), which was based on international consensus at the highest level on the entire gamut of sustainable development issues. The SDGs were slated to be built upon the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which were conceptualized in 2000 as a set of eight goals on diverse dimensions with most direct relevance to universal developmental outcomes. The MDGs encapsulated eight globally agreed goals in the areas of poverty alleviation, education, gender equality and empowerment of women, child and maternal health, environmental sustainability, reducing HIV/AIDS and communicable diseases, and building a global partnership for development. The time period allocated for MDGs was fifteen years which ended in 2015. At the conceptual and operational level SDGs may not merely be an extension of MDGs, but focus on global systemic reforms to remove main impediments to development and secure an accommodating international environment for sustainable development. The SDGs have been evolved through participatory consensus building process at various level and collectively adopted by nations in 2015 including India. The SDGs cover 17 goals and 169 targets. India is already following an impressive national agenda of sustainable development guided by the vision and leadership of the Prime Minister. Thus, India has also pledged full ownership of the SDGs and is committed to fulfilling the objectives, not merely to honour global commitments, but to ensure welfare and wellbeing of

its citizens. The high volume of India's aspirations and actions is however unmatched by others and India is steady on its path of paradigm changes both at the conceptual as well as operational level.

Integral Humanism: Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya (1916-1968) was one of the tallest political thinkers of the 20th Century, who has been highly influential in guiding India's post Independence political trajectory and social movements. He glorified the notion of integrated existence of 'man and nature' rooted in ancient Indian philosophy and spiritualism. He called this philosophy as 'Integral Humanism'. This rendition of the old Indian wisdom suggests prosperity, happiness and progress of society wherein physical, mental, intellectual, and spiritual well-being of every individual are essential constituents. He underlined that Indian culture stands on the foundations of interdependence, cooperation and concord, rather than conflict, contradiction and discord. He was of the firm view that despite their variegated characteristics, different nations can play a complementary role in the building of world unity. He suggested that 'Man' is not only integrated in society, he is also an integral part of the world or nature. In Indian tradition nature is worshipped as 'Mother'. To pollute nature is a sin.

According to Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, the main desideratum of a country's economic system, as of its polity, should be all-round development of the individual. We need a system in which man's own initiative remains unobstructed and in which his relation with the rest of society, human values do not suffer. He considered individual to be the expression of the integral of body, mind, intellect and the soul. Progress of man means simultaneous progress of body, mind, intellect and soul of the man. It must be realized that the object of our economic system should not be to make extravagant use but a well-regulated use of available resources. Instead of thriving on the exploitation of nature, we need to sustain nature. He further stressed on the merit of securing employment for all, patronage of education and health and the importance of capital formation through restrained consumption. He favoured decentralized economic systems, protection of cultural and other values of life. Finally, he strongly advocated a principled approach originating in ideals of 'integral humanism' for promoting the economy, protecting the nature and nurturing the society.

About the Seminar: In view of the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals globally and the new enthusiasm of present times aimed at preparing for a 'New India' under the vision of the PM, an occasion of deliberations on progress, prosperity, and sustainability would be timely and meaningful. The Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) and Deendayal Research Institute shall jointly organize the 'National Conclave on SDGs and Integral Humanism' on 23-24 September 2017 at New Delhi. The objective of the seminar would be to explore the vitality and contemporary value of the Indian wisdom as enshrined in Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's idea of 'Integral Humanism' which is not only older in origin but as explained, a precedent for global understanding and persuasions on inclusive and sustainable

development. Accordingly, appropriate way forward on strategies for national development and the SDGs may emerge from the deliberations.

SDGs and Integral Humanism – Moving for New Paradigm of Development

The SDGs are considered integrated and indivisible connecting 5 Ps – people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. To implement an overtly ambitious global agenda, SDGs have identified several means of implementation, viz. resources, knowledge, trade, capacity building, policy coherence, multi-stakeholder partnerships and monitoring mechanisms as a standalone and the final goal (SDG 17). The integrated nature of the SDGs, the desire of universal accomplishment across all countries (with the underlying philosophy of *leaving no one behind*) and connecting all 5 Ps in thought and action have initiated reforms in approach and transformations in practice in many countries. India, guided by its well conceived national policy priorities is poised for paradigm shifts to bring about the so called triple transition in politics, economics and social life. Taking cue from one of India's leading policy architects, we note, India is trying to promote a globally competitive economy based on impressive benchmarks of sustainability, while at the same time affording to its people liberal democratic rights and overcoming the deep-rooted and widespread caste and other social evils

Keeping in view the ideals of 'Integral Humanism' it needs to be emphasized that there is underlying unity and interconnectedness among all SDGs. Hence, implementation of one particular SDG cannot take place in isolation. The SDGs are to be achieved in an integrated manner wherein efforts are made for simultaneous implementation of all SDGs. Successful implementation of one SDG would reinforce implementation of other SDGs. The entire implementation mechanism needs to work with the spirit of cooperation and coherence. In doing so, SDGs would sustain and enrich one another for fuller realization of material prosperity, equity and sustainability.

Sustainable Economic Growth: Implementing SDG 8 and SDG 12

The SDG 8 and its associated targets are a comprehensive prescription for attaining high economic growth by infusing productivity, creativity and innovation at all levels of production but at the same time caring for resource efficiency, inclusiveness through gainful and secure employment and bridging disparities between big and small, formal and informal, and man and woman.

The SDG 12 and its targets that place reduction of wastes in production and regulation of wasteful consumption at its core are however a departure from conventional approach on economic policymaking. The template of sustainable consumption and production as advocated in SDG 12 cover sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources; reduction of

food wastage and food losses; environmentally sound management of chemicals and wastes; substantial reduction of waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse; encouragement of sustainability compliance through strict reporting and monitoring; adoption of sustainability oriented public procurement practices; awareness; scientific and technological capability; sustainable tourism; and rationalizing inefficient fossil fuel subsidies apart from suggesting implementation with rigor of international agreements in these areas.

While the SDG 8 is sufficiently well meaning and well equipped for promotion of economic growth grounded in principles of sustainability, the domains identified in the SDG 12 offer definite solution oriented approach internalising sustainability challenges. The ideas of sustainable production and consumption are often elusive and at best conceptual. This makes it extremely difficult for policymakers to be able to chart a credible roadmap towards a paradigm of economic prosperity that is environmentally sustainable and inter-generationally equitable. The SDG 12 is a close approximation and a commendable effort in framing a direction on the subject. Hence, one sees a lot of merit in pursuing objectives of the SDGs 8 and 12 together.

Multidimensionality of SDGs for harmony between ‘Man & Nature’

Critical to the idea of sustainable development is holism, integration and confluence of actions meant for conserving and protecting the natural habitat, and combating contamination and changes in the agro-climatic conditions. The SDGs in their approach of integration have robustly connected the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development across the 17 Goals. Economic policymaking has to be socially sensitive since a well nurtured and equitable society provides the most convincing ecosystem for economic growth, prosperity and all round development. The economy and the society thrive in an environment that is least damaged and sustainably exploited. The philosophy of the intrinsic connection between ‘Man and Nature’ is old, time tested and eternal. Human existence is invalid without resources drawn from the nature and human consciousness is void without the imagination of the surroundings. However, such ideals have come under stress and crisis in the post industrial revolution era, when economic progress through rampant industrialization has been reckless and insensitive. The early industrialized countries carry much greater shame and responsibility in this regard. The SDGs are looked upon as an agenda of course correction. This entails multipronged approach and adoption of sustainability practices at all levels. There is natural connect and convergence between several targets under the SDG 2 (covering sustainable agriculture), the SDG 4 (mandating skills for sustainable lifestyles), the SDG 13 (for combating climate change and its impacts), the SDG 14 (for conservation and sustainable use of marine resources) and the SDG 15 (for protecting terrestrial ecosystems).