



Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara Institute for Management Development, Mysuru, India

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Revaluating Progress: Contextual Sustainable Development Goals for the Global South

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Abstract

In 1972, the first global convergence on planetary environment was held in Stockholm with the aim to create a common governance framework for the planetary environment and natural resources laying the foundation for the 17 sustainable developmental goals (SDGs) which were patronized by the United Nations around 2015. Global south, famed for poverty, inequality and economic vulnerability, is not just confined to a specific geographical location but to nations of similar socio-economic and political conditions that are facing fundamental problems like unsustainable industrialization, climate change and rapid urbanization that the SDG's address but their universal approach often overlooks regional disparities. This paper aims to focus on the SDGs that provide a global vision and its impact on global south nations that neglect the contextual needs, resources and priorities of the said nations since only 16% of the SDG targets are on track to be achieved by 2030, the remaining 84% show either limited progress or decline. Bangladesh, a prominent member of the global south due to its climate crisis, has been ranked 114th out of 167 countries as only 20% of its SDG targets are on track. The objective of this study is to delve into the possible conditions that are suitable for the developing and underdeveloped nation's inclusive growth, digital transformation and other alliances. Analysis for this paper is drawn from academic debates, documentation of official conferences and case studies making this a qualitative and feasible approach. A detailed study on the global South Nations depicts an image of how much such nations are yet to prioritize on poverty eradication, healthcare and education access, food and energy security and governance reforms. This research highlights how, through Global South perspective SDG's aim is to pave the way to a more equitable global development and intends on reshaping international discussions on sustainability.



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Introduction

The United Nations, in 2015 launched the sustainable developmental goals, a global outline of 17 goals, 169 targets that are crafted to help global development, be more sustainable and equitable, and to attain results by 2030. Sustainable Development goals is a key concept that is globally acknowledged and patronized. The term sustainable development refers to the notion of utilizing the required quantity of resources without compromising that of the future. SDG's primary goal is to ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity, end poverty, and protect the planet by 2030. Nevertheless, the universal implementation of SDGs is not even across the globe. 'Sustainable development is a pathway to the pathway to the future we want for all. It offers a framework to generate economic growth, achieve social justice, exercise environmental stewardship and strengthen governance.' said Ban Ki-Noon (UN secretary general, 2007-16). The concept of sustainable development originates from the 1987 Brundtland report. Sustainable Development goals provide a pathway for global actions as they provide a framework for development to all the countries that the rich and poor can align with, the lack of meeting such requirements would not just be one country's' crises but universal. These goals are intertwined to attain a holistic developmental success in all areas. The challenges that the global south faces with regards to the implementation of SDGs are not merely developmental or economic but also deeply rooted to their historical and geopolitical disparities. Economic imbalance, colonialist history, constant poverty, imbalance in trade relationships, lack of institutional capabilities and vulnerability towards the changing climate have diversely affected the global south. However, progress can be witnessed in certain areas, mostly hindered by the global power imbalance, monetary unreliability, and a generalized approach for local issues. The core problem that this paper addresses is the difference between universal aspirations and local realities. Lesser attention is paid to the normative questions such as what counts as progress and how goals should be adapted to represent the structure and conceptual restraints of the global south. This paper urges the justification of the contextualized SDG framework and argues that the evolution of progress is necessary through an environment specific view. The framework does not overlook the global goals instead offers interpretation and prioritization being realigned to come in line with the regional, national, and subnational conditions in the global south.

Role of Stakeholders: Sustainable Development Goals in Global South

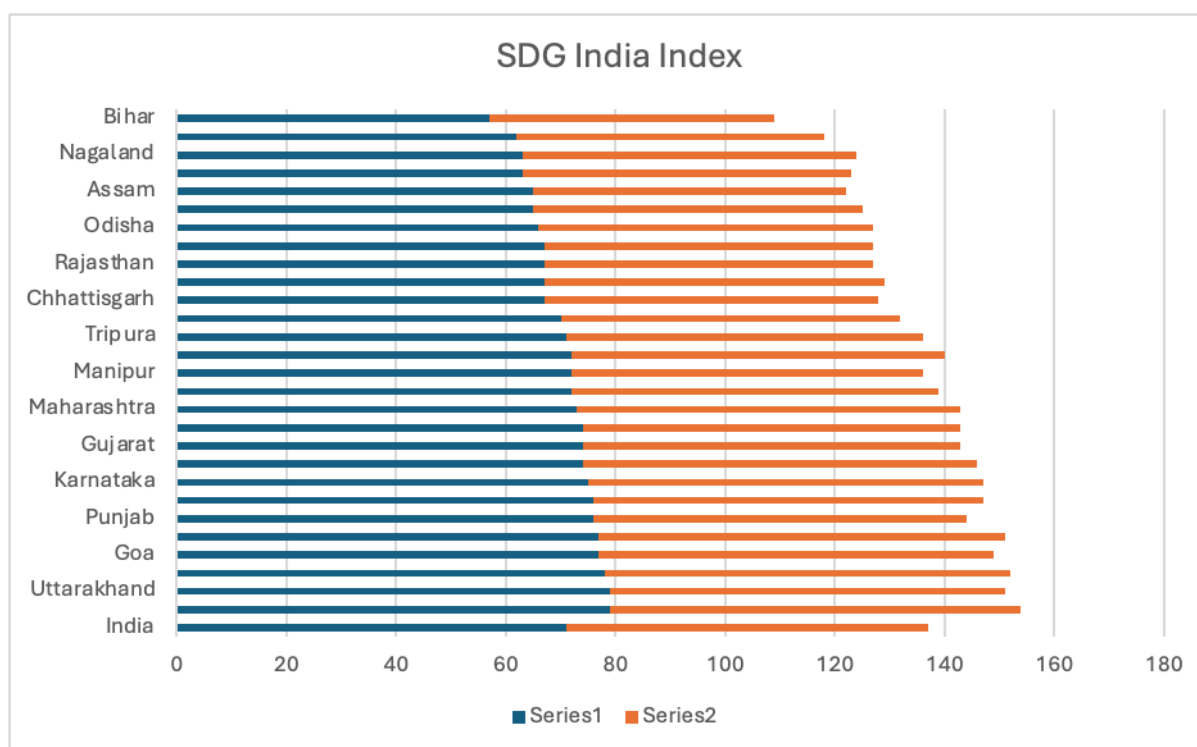
Governments And Policy Actors

The government is the grass route and the primary agent that is held responsible for implementing the SDG in the countries. Global South faces two challenges of not just applying with global status but also aligning to the local, social, and economic inequalities. Only 87% of the global south nations have established SDG coordination mechanisms, and only 43% of these align with their national budget (United Nations, 2023). The United Nations developmental program announces that the SDGs in local areas depend on the ownership and multilevel governance. It is necessary that the private sector contributes to this global cause. The United Nations developmental program has come up with a new initiative of how such Private sectors can fall in line with the sustainable development goals (*United Nations Development Programme, 2018*). The impact of management has certain principles, ISBN code 978-93-83302-82-6

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standards, and frameworks that provide a helping hand to capital investments for the achievement of sustainable developmental goals. This management project was a collaboration of more than a thousand organizations from different disciplines and geographical areas. There is also an intelligence that provides insights into how the local industries and entrepreneurs advance with SDGs, the impact facilitation alliance with the countries, presence of network that is between matchmaking of investors and development with enterprises that work towards the establishment of SDGs. The accelerator in Istanbul was also an initiative of this. Corruption has proved to be a global evil and the World Bank group has a critical analysis from 2023 about corruption (*World Bank Group, 2023*). It is to be made note that corruption is a fundamental problem for development in the global South, that targets the areas of market economies, job opportunities and also governance to prevent such negative impact. The countries are encouraged to have inclusivity, accountability, a large transparent system and encourage ties with other developing and developed countries. Strict strategic priorities are encouraged by India's Niti Aayog (*Government Of India, n.d.*) and Kenya's vision for 2030, both demonstrating the practicality of adopting and global implementation at a national level. India's NITI Aayog's Index states that Kerala (79) and Tamil Nadu (78) outperforms national average on health and education goals, showcasing the role of decentralized governance in SDG achievement (*Government of India, n.d.*). The below table depicts the infusion of SDGs in local governance in Indian states in 2 sectors (2023-24 and 2020).



(The above table draws data from the NITI AAYOG report 2023-24)

The policy making in the global South region is quite complex as there are legacies of dependency, foreign invasion, and some loopholes in their policy modules. Therefore, adopting SDGs is not merely an external framework of a global world order but to design a locally accepted way of policy

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sovereignty, which justifies the indigenous ideas, representation, knowledge, and the government's participation.

The International Organizations

The international organizations promote global initiatives by not just monitoring the progress of sustainable developmental goals but also financing and coordinating the initiatives of the United Nations, as the parent for the sustainable development goal has a new wing called United Nations Environmental Program that patronize it along with UNESCO, which addresses education, gender, poverty, and also climate challenges as the global priorities. The agenda is stated as a global plan for the people and the planet, focusing on prosperity where all the countries are active collaborative partners, who take bold and transformative steps that are immediately needed for the world to have a sustainable and a more resilient economy. The people are determined to end power and hunger, in all forms by protecting their full dignity and equality in a healthy environment (*United Nations, n.d.*). UNDP, on the other hand, supports more than 170 countries in SDG integration by 2024, but has almost 40% delay in projects because of weak institutional capacity (*The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition, 2023*). Financial institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund also contribute by supplying resources and other policy related advice to bridge the differences between countries, providing a consensual, financial and economic stability and climate adaptation. IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Trust approved \$40 billion in loan for climate adaptation in weak economies like Bangladesh and Rwanda (*IMF resilience and Sustainability Trust, n.d.*). The role of the international organization is based more on the Development Corporation. However, local support with innovation and capacity is what the enforcement of uniform policy requires. The UN South-South cooperation framework focuses on mutual learning and development among developing nations.

Civil Societies, Private Sector and Other Collective Account Abilities

The people, authentic actors, protagonists and instrumentalists are the key to any policy and global decision. The civil society contributes almost 12% of SDG (*UN Women, 2008*) related to financing in developing nations mostly focusing on gender equality, climate and education. Sustainable development goals are based on people, policies, inventions, interventions, recommendations for the people and their livelihood. Hence, it is crucial for such to observe and follow the SDG. There are several non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations that not just monitor government accountability but also put forth the cultural relevance of community action from women-led cooperatives in India to climate justice networks in Latin America. Also in Kenya, a community based organization under the Partnership for Resilience and Empowerment model has improved household food security by 22% in five years (*UNDP, 2024*). They are the driving and inclusive force which shapes the capacity of the state. Oxfam, ActionAid, and Care International are some of the projects that not just focus on livelihood, but also other global challenges like poverty, gender, equality, and climate change. There are certain campaigns that also highlight the concentration of wealth, specifically focusing on reducing the inequalities and to have redistributive policies focusing on gender equality, education and other key aspects of such noble bodies. The bottom of participation is vital and witnessed in this module. Amartya Sen argues that development is the actual freedom when communities are monitored. The decision-making policies and planning become more sustainable and legitimate. This occurs when societies encourage organizations that

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defend the development of ideas. There is no area that the private sectors have not entered in the global arena from education to health and from sanitation to sustainability. Private investment in renewable energy in the African region surpassed 10 billion in 2023 by partnership with firms like Enel and TotalEnergies (*Renewables 2024, n.d.*). Private sectors play a key role as not just drivers of innovation and investment, but a source of environmental and social harmony. The global South is a field for the multinational Corporation and other local Enterprises to have equal opportunities. This private sector has been finalized rightly in India, Kenya and other global South regions to focus on clean energy sources. Solar power and rural electrification have been a key to this initiative. In India, there have been subsidies for setting up solar panels and usage of solar power is encouraged by the government. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) must collaborate with government and private companies to work towards development goals, also popularly known as the public private partnership that has a huge reach. Sustainable development demands that the private sectors evolve from just profit maximization to shared moral value creation that are both ecological and social structure embedded. The United Nations Sustainable Development Progress Report of 2023 (*Guterres, n.d.*) states that 80% of SDG targets are off track in the global South. The gap must be minimized through context and sensitive governance along with local responsibility and inclusive partnerships that empower the communities to have responsibility towards the nation. This meets the goal of turning SDGs from just global initiative to local meaningful realities.

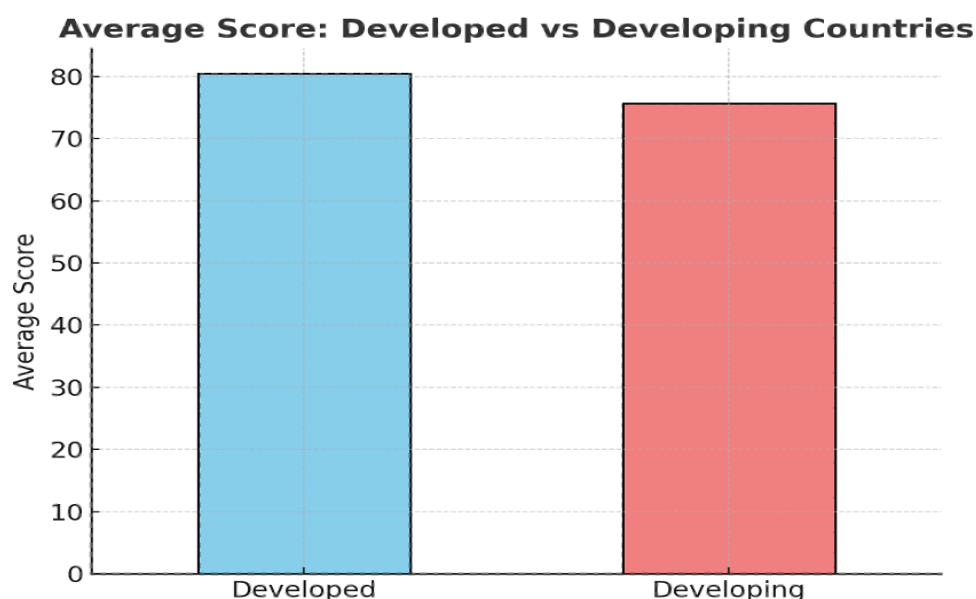
Methodology

This paper is the outcome of precise study and analysis of legitimate data through a qualitative and comparative approach that examines the process of implementing sustainable development goals across the selected region of global South, mostly in the African, South Asian and Latin American regions. The paper focuses on evaluating the conceptual, institutional, and structural factors that formulate the implementation of sustainable development goals with various regional contexts. Sustainable development, in this context, has multiple variable indicators that are dynamically and precisely analyzed. This approach allows conceptual interpretation rather than just statistical comparison of data. The paper relies on secondary data drawn from credible, recognized and internationally dependent databases such as the United Nations official website, United Nations statistical division, Data Centre, World Bank indicators and other regional reports. The framework across regional comparison is that of the patterns and diversions in sustainable development goals implementation. Each country's case study is interpreted through institutional capacity, social economic structure, and environmental sustainability lenses. The limitation for this data is that the research is based on secondary data as the availability of the official statistics is limited and secondary. The data inconsistency during various time periods and across various countries make the process of implementing the goals more complex. The conceptual depth depends on the qualitative interpretation that is published on the reports rather than the primary fieldwork. Therefore, multiple legitimate data sources reduce the queries and increase the validity of the study.

SDG Progress in Global South

The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2024 emphasizes the grave and thorough nature of the analysis with only 6 years remaining then, until 2030. Only 17 percent of the set targets are considered to be on track, more than half indicate moderate and minimal progress and one third are stagnating or revising. The report highlights the present geopolitical tension, residual effect of covid 19 and

climate shock that has slowed the process in many countries. The progress on Sustainable Development Goals in the Global South is not even as some regions like South Asia and East show rapid progress whereas others lag behind. While countries like Nepal, and India have been more specific in areas like renewable energy, the overall progress is insufficient due to challenges such as climate change, hunger, inequality, rising poverty and limited resources (*Bhowmick, 2024*). The global data states how the so-called global north and global South are differentiated. Countries like Asia, Africa, Latin America are facing limited global space due institutional constraints, and other human development deficits. The following graph compares the developing countries with the developed nations based on the SDG score (*Sustainable Development Report 2025, n.d.*).



(The above table draws data from Sustainable Development Report :index and dashboards)

Cross Regional Trends, Africa, South Asia, And Latin America

The sub-Saharan Africa region

The African region has implemented various SDGs, some being very significant. Goal number seven talks about progress in solar access and the electric friction has improved in some nations but still the United Nations Development Report, 2024 states that the climate change, land degradation, gains from agriculture and water scarcity could affect the health outcomes and food security. The African sustainable development report 2023 focuses that many states remain highly weak due to other shocks such as commodity price and extreme climate changes. This is an uneven development with many countries still struggling to comprehend their reliable data and the scale of social production systems in sub-Saharan Africa. Over 37% of the population here, still lives below the average 2.15\$ per day, compared to the 8.6% globally, according to the world bank. The poverty gap highlights the structural economic backwardness within the region (*World Bank Group, 2022*). The poverty infrastructure and health are primary concerns that most nations face, overcoming which is a challenging phase. UNESCO states that only 66% of children in this region have completed primary

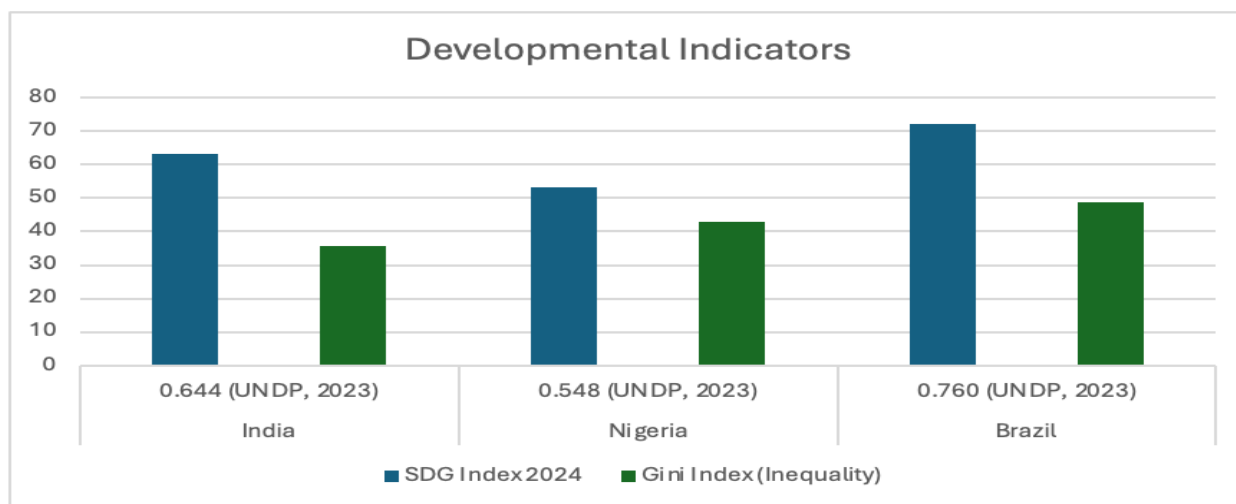
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education (*Introducing the GEM Report Countdown to 2030 Series | Global Education Monitoring Report, n.d.*), which is a backlash for the 4th, 9th and also 10th SDG that speaks about education, infrastructure and reducing inequalities.

The South Pacific area

Especially in Asia, the sustainable development goals process has been quite rapid compared to other parts. Digital infrastructure has brought more structured ideas like eradication of inequality, governance and climate resilience. The Asia and Pacific SDG progress report indicates that extreme poverty still persists and there is a need for basic health indicators to be continued. In many South Asian countries, there has been a significant development but the inter-district disparity growth in macro infrastructure often fails to translate the outcomes, particularly for marginalized rural tribal populations of the nation. South Asia has a literacy rate of 76% but still the digital divide on gender basis remains vast as only 28% of women in rural areas have access to mobile and internet in India (*Prusty, 2024*). India's Multidimensional Poverty Index had a steep decline from 24.8% to 14.96% in the span of 5 years, 2015 to 2020 (*NITI Aayog, 2023*). Bangladesh, on the other hand, has lost more than 3% of its GDP (*World Bank, 2022*) because of climate disasters that emphasize the unequal burden of climate change on the least developed countries. Similarly, Latin America's dependency on commodity exports, has contributed to the volatility of the price and other external shocks that can reverse very fast. The social interest, governance and institutional weakness hinder the much-required sustained progress. The following table shows the measurable difference in development between India, Nigeria and Brazil based on SDG index and inequality index.



(The above data is from SDG Index and dashboard)

The Case Study

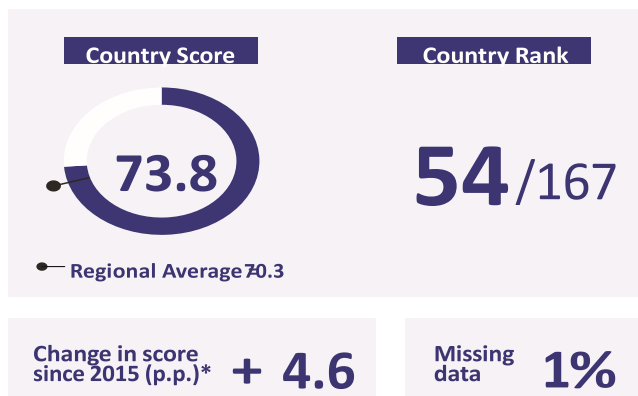
Brazil

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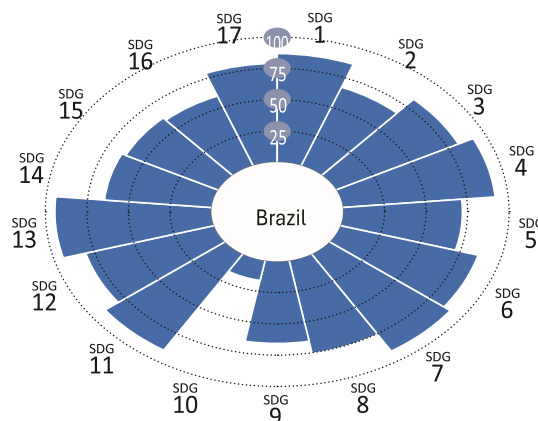
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Brazil, having an interesting part in the global South, has a comparatively high human development index and significant ecological responsibility with a strong institutional base (*Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply Secretariat of Innovation, Sustainable Development and Irrigation, 2022*). The State Forest Station report, 2024 states that the Amazon region has shifted in response to escalating climate changes and human changes. This environmental study reveals the difficulty in achieving goals such as climate action (SDG 13) and life on land and the other indigenous rights (SDG 15). The social indicators have made Brazil more progressive in reducing poverty and hunger, the first and second SDG. Programs such as Bosla Familia and social protection are key factors in these goals. There are still inequalities that refrain growth, for instance, wealth is found in a specific group of people and there are still ethnic and other racial disparities in terms of health and education and also urban infrastructure. Although Brazil's environment mandates intervention in the environmental tension, there is an aspect of economic ties of commodities and growth which states that they often conflict with biodiversity. The Amazon region is not just a source of global climate regulation, but its cruciality lies in the constant power struggles between nations and international communities, therefore retrieving ecological progress is not just globally consequential but subject to institutional weakness and political activities. However, Brazil witnessed an 8.6% increase in deforestation in the year 2023 (*State of the World's Forests 2020, n.d.*) that overturned the progress made in the past years, mostly because of agricultural expansion in the Amazon region. The below diagram shows the overall performance of Brazil and also its achievement in each of the SDGs (*United Nations, 2025*)

Overall Performance



Average Performance by SDG



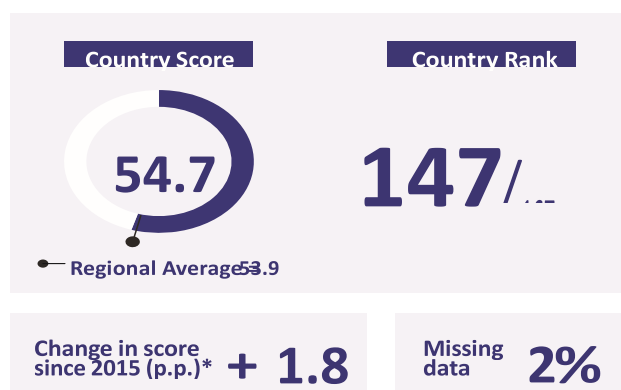
(The above is Brazil's extract of SDG index and dashboard for static)

Nigeria

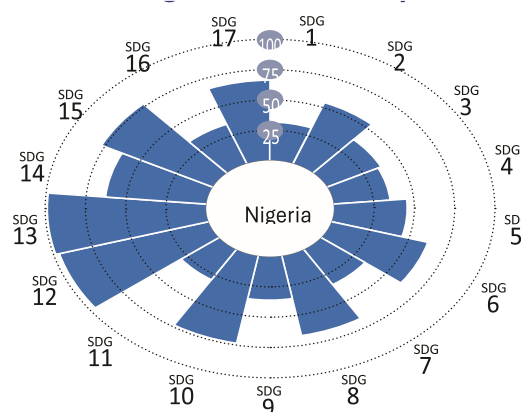
Nigeria represents the paradox of development in the sub-Saharan African region. They are rich in national resources but still their growth is hindered by inequality, poor governance and regional disparities. Some developments have occurred which have provided for progression in education, especially in urban areas, but insurgence of conflict in northern infrastructure and climate stress is indeed an obstacle. Nigeria has tried to reduce poverty in certain areas but the number of poor people is high because of population growth. Moreover, the northern states lag behind most of the indicators which is average between the national and international level SDGs, compared to the substate. The

below chart shows how SDGs are not effectively being implemented in Nigeria as poverty, hunger and other such primary goals are being ignored, while at the same time goals like climate actions, responsible consumption and life on land are in progress. This shows the unequal achievement and implementation of SDGs (United Nations, 2025).

Overall Performance



Average Performance by SDG



(The above is Nigeria's extract of SDG index and dashboard for static)

CHALLENGES WITH THE CURRENT SDG MODEL

The current Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) model that is globally accepted, faces several roadblocks and criticism that impact its efficacy in the global order. To begin with, the global south nations do not follow a unified 'SDG model' but they go by a framework that is common to all the countries which they customize to their local conditions to make it the most feasible and realistic. Most nations in the global south have interpreted the SDGs as goals and have translated them into the form of developmental plans or strategies which begins with plotting them as the country's main concern and incorporating them into the policy documents which are implemented with the establishment of support units by the government. However, some countries like Guinea, Mali, and Senegal only consider specific aspects of the Agenda 2030 which are already a part of their existing policies instead of prioritizing the ones that are needed the most. Countries also keep a check on the progress of these plans by presenting Voluntary National Reviews (VNR's) which plays a major role in evaluating and reviewing the developments with regards to the standards set. *From the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), Sustainable Development Report, 2025, it is known that only three United member states have not taken part in the VNR process- Myanmar, Haiti and the United States. Out of 195 countries, 187 (95.9%) produced at least one VNR during 2016-2022, the remaining eight countries are very small and fragile states that have a history of resisting power transfer (Sustainable Development Report 2025, 2025).* Although all the SDGs carry the same weight, there are certain ones that are prioritized such as no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, clean water and sanitation and climate action, specifically in Small Island Developing States and Sub-Saharan Africa. However, the implementation of these in the global south nations is hindered due to certain economic, political, social and institutional constraints, rooting from the financial constraints to the global structure barriers. Limited domestic resources, due to lack of sufficient tax

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revenue makes these nations depend on external funding and loans that trap them into debt which eventually results in the lack of private sectors as it becomes difficult to attract investments in these arrangements. The SDG model is viewed in the spirit of a 'blanket approach' that is likely to fill the gaps and resolve the shortcomings, adjusting itself to the cultural, regional and historical contexts of the nation. However, this blanket does not line up with the local realities as the local governments, in most cases, lack the authority and resources to involve the marginalized communities which in turn hamper the much-required community engagement. Data deficiencies and ineffective monitoring, which are pre-requisites for the SDG indicators, are in shortage due to the human resource gaps and the complications in systemizing the data across various regions. For instance, in Sri Lanka, only 19% of the indicators could be collected while in India large data gaps were found for goals 12, 13 and 14. According to The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report on access to information and VNR's: In 2021, out of 42 VNR-submitting countries, 28 (67%) reported on 'access to information', while in 2022, out of 44 countries, 25 responded that they have a legal guarantee for access to information as a fundamental right (UNESCO, n.d.). Prolonged exposure to catastrophic events, pandemics like covid-19 and financial crisis can erase the progress that these nations have struggled to achieve over the years and stir up the chronic threat points. The governments, in most cases, have interchanged the order giving more prominence to the GDP growth and industrial expansion over long term environmental goals or alleviation of inequality which results in misaligned conflicting policies. A fundamental principle in the international environmental law and policy specifically in climate change negotiations, referred as 'common but differentiated responsibilities' holds the view that while all the countries jointly bear the responsibility to tackle the global environmental concerns, their obligations towards the same depends on their historical and economic capabilities. The Sustainable Development Report, 2025 proves that the regional progress is uneven, for instance, East and South Asia has outperformed all other regions in SDG progress since 2015. Despite the development in the global world, lingering colonial structures in terms of trade, finance and diplomacy continue to be the roots of the inconveniences as development assistance consists of requirements that might not sync with the local needs. The overall lack of youth and community participation, which involves women and marginalized groups are habitually disregarded from the decision-making processes resulting in innovation drought, poor oversight and weak accountability mechanisms. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), The Sustainable Development Goals Report, states that only 17% of the SDG targets are on track globally. (A/79/79-E/2024/54 General Assembly Economic and Social Council, 2024)

Contextual Framework

Developing a contextual framework for the sustainable development in the global south requires examining how the goals are interpreted, implemented and disputed with definite political, economic, social and environmental realities, especially of countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Pacific. Despite the SDGs being global and universal, their execution in the global south so far is characterized by the distinct transformation patterns, colonial imprints, and institutional disparities. Academic reviews and country analysis point out that many global south countries have created coordination units but failed to endure budget lines and legal mandates leading to weak implementation. This necessitates localizing the goals while at the same time responding to the long-standing barriers that are different from those in the Global North. Historical and structural factors play a key role in

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providing the key dimensions of the contextual framework such as the colonial legacy and structural adjustment programs (SAPs) that refer to the economic policies and reforms implemented under the guidance of international financial institutions, have resulted in poorly developed institutions, debt burdens and fragile economies. Funding and ownership of the SDGs are determined by inequitable trade systems, exploitation of natural resources, and reliance on the developed countries. In the political and institutional context, several Global South countries face difficulties with implementation and monitoring due to poor governance, fragile statehood, or corruption. The UN Statistics Division maintains the SDG indicators database which is challenged by the lack of required data in many developing countries. Conflicting policies between ministries and inadequate institutional resources make it difficult for the countries to adopt the SDGs to their local policies, which in recent days are being worked on by emerging innovations such as national SDG dashboards that refers to the digital platforms used by the countries to monitor and track progress on the sustainable development goals at the national and the sub-national level and integrated development planning in countries like Bangladesh and Costa Rica. In terms of economic constraints, dependence on low tax-to-GDP ratios and high debt servicing reduces the flexibility that government has in its budget to spend on public priorities. Unregulated economies tend to be dominant, in a way that traditional benchmarks like the gross domestic product (GDP) may not confine within the existing context of livelihoods and inequality. Global financing across countries to support development, trade, or investment is constrained due to institutional prerequisites. For instance, multiple institutional estimates like the UNECA place Africa's annual SDG financing shortfall at about US\$1.3 trillion per year while the estimated gaps for developing countries amount to about US\$2.5 to 3.9 trillion, depending on the year. (*Africa SDGs Progress Report: Is the Continent on Track to Achieve the 2030 Goals?*, 2025) Increased poverty, gender inequality, and rising unemployment levels call for context-specific solutions that address the interconnected vulnerabilities amongst the marginalized groups such as the rural communities, women and person with disabilities must be the core focus to SDG planning and implementation. The need of the hour is to focus on nature specific solutions and climate-resistant infrastructure because issues such as land degradation, deforestation and biodiversity loss coincide with several of the sustainable development goals such as water (SDG 6), food security (SDG 2) and life on land (SDG 15) especially in the global south which is predominantly conditioned by climate change, despite contributing the least to emissions. Empowerment-based approaches such as localization of SDGs which involve adapting the global goals to fit trends in national and subnational priority settings are key to successful implementation of the SDGs. This can be done by decentralization of governance, that transfers responsibilities and authority to the lower levels of the government and allows the local governments and municipalities to line up the budgets with SDG targets. SDG 17 covers Global Governance and Partnerships which calls for restructuring global monetary and trade organizations like the IMF, WTO, World Bank to lend a hand to the Global South nations in achieving SDGs as these nations lack in resources and require knowledge exchange and technology transfer. Considering the SDGs, the challenges mostly turn up with the associated opportunities, like the gaps in data insufficiency carries the opportunity to develop mobile and digital technologies for real-time monitoring or the policy silos where the government departments or agencies operate independently with little coordination or dependency which often results in fragmented policy decisions, brings with it, the opportunity to harmonize different development strategies, policies or models to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in achieving development goals and mapping development goals. To put it in a nutshell, the implementation of the SDGs in the global

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south mandates a context-aware, justice-oriented and locally tailored approach. This framework draws attention to the significance of addressing historical inequalities, enabling inclusive governance, improving organizational effectiveness and channelling both national and international resources in a manner that upholds sovereignty and strengthens local communities.

Policy Recommendations

There are various realistic and feasible policy recommendations that have been put forward in the paper, given the shortcomings. Firstly, the significance of database systems and monitoring frameworks must be acknowledged as a crucial indicator to check the implementation of the SDGs globally because in the low and lower-middle-income countries, roughly 23% of the NSOs face severe funding shortages while about 50% face moderate gaps. Over 30% of the SDG indicators remain unmeasurable in many countries, especially for goals like sustainable cities (SDG 11) and partnerships (SDG 17). This matters because without reliable data, there can be no tracking or monitoring of policies due to which countries appear to have 'plans', the success of which cannot be tracked. This can be ensured by enhancing the information systems through making profitable investments in information capacity and open database systems to measure the SDG progress accurately or with the help of digital tools such as mobile surveys and artificial intelligence to monitor remote zones. (*The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024 | 2024, n.d.*) Secondly, SDGs must be institutionalized and be integrated into national developmental plans to stimulate inter-departmental collaboration and preclude uncoordinated implementation. This is a necessity because only 17% of the total targets are currently on track, and these low figures are an indicator of how mere adoption of the targets is not enough but translating them into funded and monetary policy matters. This can be achieved by integrating the SDGs across all levels of governmental planning and resource allocation processes, leading to the alignment of state indicators with SDG targets to evaluate performance with efficiency because national policies often fail to reach the local level like for how goal 2 (zero hunger) about 65% of the target show stagnation (*United Nations, 2024*). The third, predominantly recommended policy relates to the inclusive and participatory governance which involves engaging youth, marginalized sections, and local communities in planning and evaluating the progress pertaining to the execution of the SDGs. Participatory governance involves the active participation of the citizens, communities and stakeholders in policy making mechanisms and providing support to the community-led initiatives that contribute to the policy targets. (World Bank Document, 2020) Point four proposes the expansion of internal finance mobilization by making investments in private sectors and allocating financial resources to support actions that mitigate climate change, especially in developing and vulnerable countries. This is crucial because many Global South countries have frameworks but lack financial resources to implement the same. For instance, for Africa alone, achieving SDGs would require about US\$1.3 billion trillion annually, but its mobilization capacity is just 50% of the required numbers. Investments in human capital and social welfare programs is another suggested policy which requires expanded access to quality education, healthcare and sanitation facilities and prioritizing the promotion of gender equality, youth empowerment to provide persistent skill enhancement for the digital economy. The sixth point focuses on mainstreaming regional innovation networks to address the SDG concerns such as the clean energy which refers to the energy that is produced with minimal or no harmful environmental impact that aids in combating climate change and keeping air pollution in control or say Agri-Tech, short for agricultural technology that refers to the use of digital tools, modern technology and innovations to enhance the agricultural productivity and sustainability while

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also modernizing agricultural practices. It demands improvising the intellectual property right protections which provides legal protection to the individuals over the creations of their minds such as inventions, literary and artistic works, designs, symbols etc. balanced with greater access to required technologies and facilitating knowledge sharing. Point number seven, directs attention towards enacting more robust laws and incentives for conservation, clean energy and circular economy practices which refers to strategies and approaches targeting waste minimization, maximizing resource efficiency and places more emphasis on reuse, recycle and sustainable design to establish an eco-loop system. This notion also advocates for the instalment of early warning systems which denote mechanisms designed to detect potential threats or hazards so preventive measures can be taken for disaster risk reduction which minimizes the damage caused by the natural or human-made hazards such as community training for evacuation and emergency response or earthquake resistant infrastructures. The last but fundamental policy that draws a base to all others targets on building strong partnerships by encouraging inter-sectoral and cross-border collaboration amongst government, private sector and NGOs. This entails the need for fostering international cooperation on technology, trade and capacity building through bilateral and multilateral agreements and public-private partnerships or establishing inclusive collaborative platforms for routine assessment and accountability. This matters because many Global South countries operate in constrained global space which has led to many low-income countries still being indebted and have restricted financial resource capacity, constraining SDG investment. Examples of the above-mentioned policies are as follows: goal number one is no poverty that focuses on eradicating poverty, and the proposed policy to achieve this is by improving access to credit and targeting rural development. Goal number 5 is gender equality which prioritizes women's improvement, and the recommended policy for the same is by enforcing anti-discrimination laws and ensuring equal pay.

Conclusion

The execution of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Global South offers both substantial difficulties and significant prospects for change. Despite significant advancements in poverty reduction, educational access, and healthcare, several countries in the Global South still face persistent barriers as a cause of deep-rooted inequalities, financial constraints, political volatility, heightened climate-related risks, and financial constraints that undermine the comprehensive achievement of SDGs in these nations. These hindrances unevenly affect the vulnerable groups, deepening social or structural exclusion, and reducing the pace of the transformative change. This research draws attention to the significance of tailored approaches, enhanced global collaboration, and to inclusive governance to promote rapid progress and hasten improvements. Sustainable and equitable development relies on resilient government structures, precise data, and community engagement. In addition to it, global partnerships must advance beyond assistance-driven approaches towards structures that enhance fair and equitable trade, climate responsibility, and debt justice. Confronting these multi-dimensional challenges requires more than harmonizing policies with international goals but also calls for an inclusive, holistic and context-specific approach. Additionally, the global south cannot be bombarded with the responsibility to achieve all the set targets, and it must be a universal operation which involves strong international cooperation and coordination. The countries of the global north should be tasked with the responsibility to produce fair trade systems and responsible climate action along with innovative funding schemes which are instrumental in

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promoting equal opportunities. Achieving SDGs in the global south is not only a regional responsibility but one that demands a meaningful solidarity and adjustment of hierarchical structures that have historically oppressed these regions. Without such systematic changes, developments will remain uneven, and the transformative agenda set for 2030 will fail to meet its mark because for the countries in the global south, achieving the SDGs is not only responding to pressing development shortfalls but also breaking down structural barriers and legacy of discrimination that have hampered the progress. As a final outcome, SDGs represent global aspirations for a brighter tomorrow, but their success is assessed by how effectively they enhance opportunities and empower the historically marginalized. The path towards accomplishing the SDGs in the global south is a shared responsibility which requires strong leadership and persistent political determination and the will to implement unconventional methods. As the 2030 deadline approaches, the next decade must focus on transforming ambition into tangible outcomes, bridging the gap between global commitments and regional realities, and promoting a policy agenda for development that is socially equitable and robust. The way ahead may be complex, but the opportunities for substantive advancements are both concrete and attainable, if we move forward with dedication and commitment.

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