Ensuring Sustainable Development Goals do not Become Rhetoric

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From Silo to Convergence

By

Aruna Sharma

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Abstract: Pandemic and economic wars cannot be excuses for stagnation in the progress of SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). The SDG index has stalled since 2020 and is one full point below the projected target in 2022. Only 12% are currently on track.[1] The excuse is that stagnation is occurring in the face of multiple crises across the globe, and it is sad that 30% of the SDG goals are not showing any progress and are frozen at their current level of performance. As the economy has shown signs of recovery across the globe, the focus on achieving the SDGs is expected to take centre stage in the next six years. To ensure the SDGs do not get reduced to mere rhetoric like MDGs (Million Development Goals), and to accelerate the same for the household-related goals (13 out of 17 focused on eradication of poverty – SDGs 1 to 7, 10, 11, 16 and 17) while also developing environment-friendly sustainable livelihood opportunities (SDGs 8 and 9), the strategy has to be specific targeting rather than thin spread of efforts. The debate over whether to revisit the goals or push the 2030 deadline is not the answer. Instead, the focus should be on realigning the approach to SDGs. The key lies in a system-based systematic approach. The common household-wise socio-economic database is the answer to providing targeted support like financial aid, food coupons, skilling, housing, better sanitation, and enhanced livelihood opportunities with corresponding wages. This will enable better targeting on a real-time basis. Not just that, it also optimises resources for accelerated achievement. This book argues for a shift towards a common household database in each country, using real examples of developed, developing and underdeveloped economies to achieve the SDG goals 1 to 7, 10,11, 16 and 17 that will lead to inclusive growth. The remaining six goals need specific common approaches and agreements across the globe.

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[1] July 2023 UN progress on SDG report 2023

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PREFACE

With six years still remaining to meet the SDG achievement commitment, discussions are already underway to extend the SDG goals to 2050. It is true that the achievement of the SDG goals is not up to the desired levels, but the approach for the same needs a complete paradigm shift to break the silo database approach to multidimensional poverty that constitutes 9 of the 17 SDG goals. SDG Goal 16 talks about the lens of human rights as the major strategic approach to achieving these goals. The concept of "no one should be left behind" can only be achieved if we have robust, real-time data to identify the special needs of those who have been consistently left behind over the past decades. Besides reflecting the failure of governance, both at national and international levels, it also breeds other issues like illegal migrations. Food security continues to be of concern and more so after the pandemic hit.

The underlying principle of the SDGs was to transform the world with development that is inclusive and also sustainable. Efforts should be directed towards universally achieving the SDG goals, and not just succeeding in some parts of the world or be happy with temporary achievements. A methodological approach is needed using tools that will ensure that SDGs do not remain a rhetoric. Eradication of poverty should not be done through constant handholding but rather through the optimisation of resources to achieve systematic, targeted support. That makes it sustainable. The need is to learn from each other and develop effective intervention tools so that SDGs do not remain mere rhetoric or subject to constant extension of deadlines.

This book builds on the successful case study of the concept of SAMAGRA (all comprehensive) common household database approach and how effectively it has been adopted across India as well as in the neighbouring countries. Other developed and developing economies are also in the process of making efforts to break the silo approach by shifting to a common household database that can be utilised by all the welfare and regulatory bodies. This enables access to a real-time and time-series database for better targeting. This book presents the case study of SAMAGRA and similar approaches adopted by developed, developing

and underdeveloped economies across the globe. The model is easily replicable and optimises the efforts and scarce resources while accelerating the pace towards inclusive sustainable development and poverty eradication.[2]

The facts for the status of database have been taken from published resources and data from the public domain in the selected developed, developing and underdeveloped economies to ensure accuracy. The data has not been edited to ensure authenticity of the projected standing of those countries.

I thank my parents and my soulmate for encouraging me to document my experiences and enabling the SDG community to think and adapt accordingly. I would also like to especially thank Ms C Vaishnavi and Ms Jayatee for assistance in the editing process.

I am confident that the world will learn and embrace the common household database model, thus allowing us to achieve the SDGs for inclusivity and a better humanity.

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[2] How Samagra has improved quality of life for millions of people - TheDailyGuardian.
https://thedailyguardian.com/how-samagra-has-improved-quality-of-life-for-millions-of-people/

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Development (SD) became the centre of discourse on the growth model when, in 1987 the Brundtland Report was published.[1] It identifies people, planet and prosperity as the areas where the policymakers are to rally and work out mechanisms to implement and have impact studies.

As a sequel to MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) for developing economies, in 2015 the UN agenda adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for both developed and developing economies and also underdeveloped economies. SDGs adopted in 2015 are new in history and focus on multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder participation. SDGs, also known as Global Goals, are applicable to both developed and developing economies. The listed 17 goals were signed in 2015 by 193 countries, with 169 listed targets to commit to and achieve by the year 2030. These goals require inter-country policy with mechanisms to target the vulnerable to ensure their entitlements, as well as intra-country arrangements for preventing migration due to distress. Thus, SDGs are to be considered inter and intra-country approaches, and the partnership to develop tools that will enable better targeting and achieving the goals.

SDGs are a step ahead of the 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that had 21 measurable targets in a time frame of 15 years, i.e. 2000 to 2015. MDGs were signed by 189 countries. They were basically a target set for underdeveloped and developing economies to catch up with the developed world. It was an outcome of a common framework that integrated the UN Millennium Declaration and the international development goals adopted at major international conferences held in the 1990s. It is important to appreciate what worked, and where there were setbacks on MDGs after fifteen years of efforts of strategising to accelerate, achieve, and ensure sustainable access to SDGs.

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[1] Brundtland Report (Oslo 1987); (Commission on Environment, 1987) Agenda 21 (Rio 1992); (United Nations, 1992) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000-2015); (United Nations, 2015b) Addis Ababa Action Agenda (Addis Ababa - July 2015); (United Nations, 2015a) UN 2030 Agenda – SDGS (NYC – September 2015); (United Nations, 2015c)

East Asia has made relatively steady advances towards achieving the MDGs, whereas sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia as a whole fell short. Disparities were also found within the same region and country. The achievement of the MDGs was affected not only by the policies of the developing countries themselves but also largely influenced by world economic trends. Even basic minimums in areas of food supply and employment in developing countries suffered significant setbacks.[2] Thus, intra-country efforts and focus only on developing economies were not sustainable. There was a need to have universal goals that were targeted with the intention that no one would be left behind – i.e. an all-inclusive approach had to be embraced and a partnership among countries had to be established to achieve the same.

Subsequently, the Paris Agreement led to the emergence of the SDGs with a clear objective and defined goal post worded as follows[3] :

> *"Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. We recognise that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. All countries and stakeholders, acting in a collaborative partnership, will implement this plan. We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want to heal and secure our planet. We are determined to take bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one is left behind. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets that we are announcing today demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda[4].*

Thus, the SDGs, more comprehensive, with a human rights perspective, roping in concerns of environment and climate with policies that will enable universal well-being were formulated and accepted. The 17 SDG global goals targeted to transform the world status are:

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[2] May 2015, UNDP Evaluation of Role of UNDP in Supporting National Achievement of MDGs
[3] Paris – December 2015, (United Nation, 2015)
[4] Neves, P. M. D. (2020). SDGs, Why? And For Whom? How to Implement Partnerships to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
https://core.ac.uk/download/372701889.pdf ;   Dying Mekong | Bangkok Tribune.
https://bkktribune.com/dying-mekong/

Figure 1. Listed SDGs

The available literature is more focused on highlighting the laudable intentions. Some critiques label SDGs as a mere wish list. The critiques also call them unachievable. Doubts were cast right from the beginning, whether they are achievable or oriented in different directions, i.e., the multidimensionality itself is a recipe for failure. Though the SDGs were signed by 193 countries with big fanfare, the political acceptance in terms of giving the top-most priority is not yet visible. Thus, right in the beginning, the note is not positive, but the signatories definitely do not intend to make it mere rhetoric. This book is about strategies to achieve and accelerate the SDGs.

The literature on SDGs builds on the transitional framework of the MDGs, and clearly accepts the principle of a multidisciplinary approach. The governance models developed over the past three decades, with an increasing focus on the rights agenda, have often taken the silo approach towards issues like health, poverty, sanitation and water, livelihood opportunities, etc., while all along focusing on a basic needs approach centred on survival, only at a subsistence level.[5] The endeavour has been to ensure the availability of basic needs like food and shelter.

The approach continued to focus on a welfare agenda rather than focusing on rights and equity. The shift would take place by ensuring human rights have been incorporated into the SDGs, and that is through SDG 16. Thus, when we deliberate all the other goals through the lens of SDG 16 of human rights, it becomes mandatory to not only achieve the goals but also to ensure that they are sustainable. The SDGs is a multidisciplinary, multi-stakeholder, and multi-sector approach. Thus, breaking the silos and converging mechanisms towards a unified approach is vital for its success.

Can the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) be achieved by 2030? Overseas Development Institute (ODI) has projected what the world is likely to do on all 17 SDGs, based on current trends[6]. While performance across the goals and in each region is likely to vary widely, current global performance is leading towards failure on all the SDGs come 2030. The challenge lies in reassessing the current approach that has been adopted so far, and exploring the possibility of having a system-based approach to not just achieve the outcomes but also ensure the efforts and results are

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[5] Sabina Alkire, Oxford 2002: Valuing Freedom Sens Capability Approach and Poverty Reduction
[6] Development Progress, Susan Nicolai, Chris Hoy, Tom Berliner and Thomal Aedy. Projecting progress, reaching the SDGs by 2030

sustainable. Another challenge is not only to achieve but also how to accelerate the pace, as the accepted deadline is 2030 (even though talks have been initiated to extend it to 2050). The SDG index has stalled since 2020 and is one full point below the projected target in 2022. Only 12% are currently on track and have been labelled as "stagnation in the face of multiple crises," as half had "moderate or severe deviations," and 30% more either stagnated or regressed.[7] SDGs are a recognition that emphasises the fact that countries have to develop policies and methodologies targeting zero tolerance towards continued poverty and its related issues. The other mandatory issue is that the growth path is to be seen through the lens of climate and environment. It is a commitment to initiate and modify efforts to ensure that the outcomes are not one-off but sustainable. The time left is now only six years. The extended deadline debate will only be of value if, in the next six years, the approach to achieve it is on track, preventing further extension of dates.

Building on lessons learnt from the MDGs, the SDGs represent a universal call to action for developed, developing and underdeveloped economies, with inter and intra-country actions required on issues of continued poverty, inequality, environment and climate concerns. The key word is sustainable; thus, a framework that is lasting and heading towards zero tolerance needs to be implemented. Hence, it has to have a business-like approach. There is a need to strategise, plan, implement, and monitor to achieve goals that are sustainable. Therefore, the focus has to be more on effective management tools than just good policies. Policies reflect intention, but the SDGs are to graduate to be an execution plan. It is, therefore, important to develop parameters, methodology, measures, and monitoring from the perspective of sustainability of efforts, break silos by converging efforts, and optimise by using a common household database. **The paradigm shift from a subsistence existence to a sustainable co-existence is deliberated here by advocating the use of a common household database to break the silos. This will enable real-time data and system approach for effective accelerated implementation. These methodologies will require global partnerships to achieve the SDGs.**

To accelerate the efforts and constantly evaluate the path, the data has to be real-time for both the micro and macro impact assessment. The goal of the SDGs is heading towards prosperity that is sustainable, encompassing human rights, the multi-dimensional aspects of poverty, and the environment. The word "Prosperity" has acquired currency. This very term

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[7] July 2023 UN progress on SDG report 2023

encompasses the concept of well-being, ensuring human dignity, equity of opportunities, and sustainable quality living conditions.[8] Promoting shared prosperity is indicator 10.1.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as this indicator monitors the progress of the bottom 40 and how the less well-off can benefit from economic growth. It is relevant even in higher-income countries, where extreme poverty is much lower. The 17 goals cannot work in silos. They have to work in tandem, converging to complement and supplement towards achieving common goals.[9]

Although it may sound complex, there have been successful experiments and efforts across the globe that need to be explored in terms of transferability. The real endeavour is to develop a methodology that ensures and prevents SDGs from becoming mere rhetoric.

Poverty is not just an individual phenomenon. It is the outcome of the household and eco-system. To achieve sustainability and thus, work towards the "leave no one behind" poverty eradication agenda, there is a need to have simultaneous intervention and policy approach. Multidimensional issues of poverty are not just on income levels but extend to issues related to infrastructure, livelihood opportunities, housing, education for children, social security, food security, etc. Thus, a common database of households can be the real parameter to access status, entitlements, and delivery. The impact of multifarious interventions working in a complementary and supplementary manner would be far-reaching. This approach would be key to accelerating the achievement of SDGs.

The advocacy of the approach to the use of a common household database is an outcome of effective experimentation, execution, and expertise gained on adopting SAMAGRA – an all-comprehensive database. A case study in the state of Madhya Pradesh, replicated in 8 other federal states in India and now adopted at the national level, is discussed in detail. Acceptance of the concept of a shift to the common household database is analysed, and efforts have been made to adopt it in developed economies like France, UK, and USA along with the

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[8] World Bank 'Shared Prosperity' debate –
https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/brief/global-database-of-shared-prosperity
[9] How Philanthropy Can Narrow the Racial Wealth Gap | Bridgespan.
https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/how-philanthropy-can-narrow-the-racial-wealth-gap

Nordic countries.   In developing economies too like Malawi, Chile, Rwanda, Bangladesh and Africa as a continent, the concept has been discussed and adopted to some extent. These countries have also made attempts to evolve a system-based approach.

The transferability of this approach across the countries to accelerate the pace of achieving SDGs is discussed. The ease of shifting to the common household database based on existing data practices and then planning, intervening, handholding and assisting to achieve the SDGs is explored in detail. The approach will enable the development of a methodology to maintain a common household-wise database with an eco-system to ensure the eradication of poverty (SDGs 1 to 7, 10, 11, 16 and 17) and develop environment-friendly sustainable livelihood opportunities (SDGs 8 and 9). If the various assistance plans by UN agencies and other grants are directed towards supporting and developing this approach, it would be a sustainable methodology that avoids wastage, simplifies scaling, and identifies actual needs to accelerate achieving the SDGs.

Shift to have a Common Household Database:

The silos have been talked about in governance for quite a long time, and so are the issues related to concerns of eradication of poverty and inclusive growth so that no one is left behind. However, the sector-based approach by agencies with a limited vision of their respective sectors has not given the desired results. The simple reason is that growth is never a linear process, and it is correctly underlined in the SDGs to focus on a multidimensional and multi-sectored approach. Thus, there is a need for systemic thinking to achieve the same. The intervention should trigger the cycle of the virtual circle to accelerate the achievement, and the common household data-base approach is advocated in that perspective. Below is an International Monetary Fund (IMF) graphic display of global inequality measured by the Gini Coefficient.
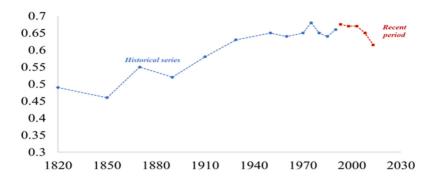
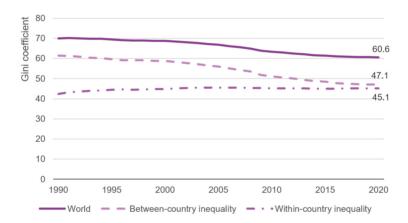Figure 2. Change in Income Inequality, 1985-2015 (percent of countries)

Figure 3. Global Gini-Coefficient Trends

This figure was produced by UNU-WIDER and suggests that in 2020, the global Gini-coefficient decreased by 0.1 point (from 60.7 to 60.6) due to a reduction in within-country inequality, while the between-country Gini-coefficient stayed constant between 2019 and 2020. Other estimates provide a different narrative on what happened to global inequality in 2020.[10]

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[10] Inequality: Global trends - Development Initiatives.
https://devinit.org/resources/inequality-global-trends/?nav=more-about)

The above visualisation is based on estimates of inflation-adjusted average incomes per country (GDP per capita) and single-point estimates of within-country income inequality. While this gives us a rough idea of how the distribution of incomes changed, it is neither very detailed nor very precise.[11]

These estimates rely on data measuring household incomes at each decile of the income distribution. The downside of this approach is that we can only go as far back in time as household surveys were conducted. Thus, the critical household data is available only when surveys are done at one time or by different agencies in silos. Therefore, disaggregated data is not available on a real-time basis or as time-series data. The need of the hour is to explore the possibility of having common household data that provides insights into real-time data for accurate planning, implementation, and specified targeting of vulnerable groups. These groups are at risk of completely being left out in traditional silo approaches as they are not captured in the universe of data.

The approach is equally relevant to developed economies that may not be battling absolute poverty but do have serious concerns for inequality, environment, and climate. Due to abject poverty or lack of opportunity in the country of origin, the migration issue is also of concern for developed economies. Hence, there is a need for transferability and handholding approaches to develop a mechanism for creating a common household database strategy through symbiotic partnerships.

However, the moot question is how to move towards having a common household database and ensure monitoring as a time-series and real-time data for multi-dimensional progress from poverty to prosperity (P2P) leading to sustainable goals as envisaged in SDGs. The challenge is to have a data system that captures different interventions by multiple government agencies and civil societies, whether they directly transfer the benefit or create an enabling environment for sustainable growth. This study deliberates how adopting the SAMAGRA approach can make the SDGs achievable for both developed and developing economies.

Chapter 1 is the literature review. The general impression is that there is enough literature in terms of data, status and concerns on SDGs. So, the question is – why is there a need for this new book? This chapter

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[11] Income Inequality - Our World in Data.
http://news-infographics-maps.net/income-inequality.html)

emphasises on literature review and highlights the gap. None of the literature that is available today mentions the concept of the shift to convergence by breaking silos using the common household database approach and intertwining 17 SDGs to accelerate the path of achieving the same.

Chapter 2 discusses in detail the issues faced and how they were resolved and mainstreamed into the governance model in the state of Madhya Pradesh, India, by adopting the Common Household Database approach. It explores the impact of this approach, the replicability and sustainability of the SAMAGRA model as well as its outcomes.

Chapter 3 elaborates on the present approach adopted by the developed, developing and underdeveloped economies and how achieving SDG goals is slow-paced or that it is receiving sufficient focus working in silos. The task laid out is not only to correctly define the multidimensional aspects of poverty but also to improve targeting. Good governance aims at reducing or mitigating poverty.

The GDP-based economic growth over time has proven that the trickledown theory has failed and continuously left out the most vulnerable. To achieve inclusiveness in growth, it is important that the mechanism to ensure "no one is left behind" has to work by targeting better. Neglect of any one of these will put the sustainability of efforts in danger and trigger poverty. Economic inequality exists between countries, within countries and even within households, affecting vulnerable members like differently-abled individuals, women etc. Thus, it encompasses income distribution, wealth distribution, and consumption across all these groups. In this chapter, the silo versus the convergence approach is discussed, highlighting how some initiatives aim to establish a common household database. Efforts in that direction are listed for developed economies like France, UK and USA along with the Nordic countries and developing economies like Malawi, Chile, Bangladesh and the continent of Africa.

Chapter 4 discusses the livelihood issues. Sustainable growth cannot be achieved without providing sustainable livelihood opportunities to all. The SDGs target the creation of opportunities within countries to avoid distress migration, not only from rural to urban areas but also to developed economies due to a lack of opportunities in their own countries. The inter-country issues become relevant as a developed economy attracts migrations. The format of aid can be pin-pointed by assisting and enabling

the developing economy to embrace a common household database, target their benefits and invest in livelihood opportunities by identifying the potential in each area. The common database will enable the optimisation of local opportunities and manufacturing competitively. Policies to trigger local quality livelihood and growth opportunities would go a long way to make the income levels sustainable by breaking the poverty trap. Optimal use of natural resources will trigger new avenues of employment.

Chapter 5 discusses the need to incorporate a climate lens into the SDGs. It elaborates on the "waste to wealth" approach, emphasising that new livelihood opportunities cannot be only based on banning certain activities, but also focus on optimising the local resources. It is a fact that natural resources are untapped and available in abundance in economies that are developing or underdeveloped; thus, the right balance is required. The need to apply a climate lens requires a paradigm shift towards moving with the philosophy of "waste to wealth." Even the smallest amount of plastic of 30 microns can be recycled. It can become a sustainable income source and contribute towards a sustainable environment. Thus, the answer lies in research and adoption of appropriate technology that can ensure effective waste usage. It requires a business model to ensure sustainability of policy and approach, aligning it with SDGs 1 to 11. To illustrate, the use of plastics less than 30 microns mixed with bitumen will not only create a business model of waste disposal but also generate additional employment opportunities. Mining is a big contributor to GDP and a major source of employment in developing economies, but reckless mining is a huge concern. The challenge is to find an effective balance in fulfilling both objectives. Although, at face value, they look contradictory, they can be transformed into becoming complementary. The correct approach to climate and environment issues by the above approach will sustain concerns of natural resources and yet provide new avenues of growth. Community commitments and transferability of the common household database will enable precise targeting of each household, fostering a wider conceptual approach towards climate change.

Chapter 6 covers SDG 17, as to how, with the help of a big common household database approach, the rights perspective and global cooperation and collaboration can be achieved. It flags how transferability of technology, and development capability will be advantageous for both developed and developing economies. The partnership will show results on real time-series data by ensuring inclusiveness, as no one will be left behind and thus, resolve issues of distress migrations and abject poverty.

Chapter 7 discusses the ease of transferability and replicability of the concept of SAMAGRA across all the economies. The common household database is an effective governance tool to accelerate achieving SDGs while optimising resources and converting rhetoric to reality.

Chapter 8 is the concluding chapter and discusses how the approach of resorting to a common household database may become a game-changer in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs by the year 2030. It will not only enable time-series data but also real-time data to succeed in graduating from subsistence to sustainable to surplus economy that protects both the climate and environment. It will be a climb from poverty to prosperity (P2P).

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable Development (SD) became the centre of discourse in the growth model when the Brundtland Report was published in 1987. It put people, planet and prosperity as the key areas where the policy-makers are to rally, work out mechanisms to implement and have impact studies. In 2015, the UN agenda adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These SDGs are new in history and focus on multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder participation. The goal of SDGs is all-comprehensive and focuses on the "no one to be left behind" approach and total poverty eradication. The need for political acceptance and flagging of the importance of climate and environmental sustainability in efforts of growth is emphasised. Partnership among countries is underlined as a mandate and, thus, triggers actions that enable the understanding of the global impact of action or inaction by any one of the countries. Therefore, working together to fulfil the commitment is the call of the day.

Now, the literature that has been written so far is directed more towards highlighting the laudable intentions. The available literature focusing on achieving a multidimensional approach was first highlighted in Sustainable Development (SD) and is now being made a commitment and mandated in the SDGs. Analysis has been done in that respect. The literature review focuses on where participating countries stand after four years and, identifies the gaps in the literature that contribute to the slow progress in achieving the SDGs by 2030. The effort in this book is to explore the solutions to accelerate achieving the SDGs. Hence, the literature also examines the aspect of the transferability of good practices.

The focus of the book is more on achieving the SDGs by 2030. Thus, the literature review is structured around the following aspects:

1. The origin of ingraining the terms of sustainable development in political economy and policy-making parlance – the transition from SD to SDG

2. The SDGs is a multidisciplinary, multi-stakeholder, multi-sector approach; thus, the importance of breaking the silos and the literature on bringing in convergence is being discussed.

3. Literature on impact studies since 2015, the current status of the SDGs, and the likelihood of achieving the targets

4. Various new models to have a real-time impact study and quick feedback for course corrections

5. Paradigm shift from poverty to prosperity – its acceptance in literature.

6. There is a gap in the existing literature regarding effective tools that can ensure the ambitious goal of leaving no one behind. This includes the need for enablers that provide real-time hand-holding, feedback mechanisms, and opportunities for course corrections. The commitments, though laudable, cannot be achieved if a system approach and partnership to remove multidimensional aspects of poverty are not adopted. The climate and environmental issues in terms of "waste to wealth" to trigger local employment levels are also explored. If the concept of having a common household database is deliberated, the challenge lies in determining whether successful experiments can be transferable. The literature concerning it is also reviewed.

The origin of ingraining terms of sustainable development in political economy and policy-making – the path from SD to SDG led to the emergence of the SDGs.[12] There were doubts right from the beginning whether they are achievable or too oriented in different directions; multidimensionality itself is a recipe for failure. Though the SDGs were signed by 193 countries with big fanfare, the political acceptance in terms of giving the top-most priority is not yet visible.

SDs – The Sustainability of Development is an issue that has been deliberated since 1987. Co-operation among developing countries and

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[12] Brundtland Report (Oslo 1987); (Commission on Environment, 1987) Agenda 21 (Rio 1992); (United Nations, 1992) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000-2015); (United Nations, 2015b) Addis Ababa Action Agenda (Addis Ababa - July 2015); (United Nations, 2015a) UN 2030 Agenda – SDGS (NYC – September 2015); (United Nations, 2015c) Paris Agreement (Paris – December 2015). (United Nation, 2015)

between countries at different stages of economic and social development leads to the achievement of common and mutually supportive objectives that account for the interrelationship between people, resources, environment, and development.[13,14]

It has been highlighted that the income gap between the top 10% and the bottom 40% is severe and thus needs an integrated approach within the financial framework. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda is intended to be the guiding factor, aligning with the United Nations' adoption of the UN 2030 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UN's introduction to the SDGs reflects the ambition of all the UN member states and is definitely based on the need for global cooperation, not only for ethical and environmental reasons, but also for economic, financial and, political ones.[15]

"Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a holistic plan that covers not only leading people to prosperity but also protecting the planet. It reiterates the basic agenda of the UN – universal peace. The adoption of the SDG goals stems from the recognition of failed attempts in the past to eradicate poverty in all its forms. Thus, to combat this greatest challenge and ensure sustainable growth, it is essential to adopt out-of-the-box ideas and their effective execution. It is a commitment by 193 countries to work in a collaborative partnership to work towards not making the SDGs rhetoric.

The commitment signed has been on resolving to eradicate 'the tyranny of poverty' as that is the basic violation of human rights and the major impediment to sustainable growth. The determination to take the bold step should involve a complete shift to adopt a common household database approach (household is the basic unit for poverty) and evolve mechanisms for correct interventions, better targeting, and having a real-time and time-series database. The resolve is to urgently take steps towards a sustainable and resilient path. The emphasis is to embark on a collective journey and pledge that no one is left behind. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals

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[13] Duraiappah, A. K., & Muñoz, P. (2012). Inclusive wealth: A tool for the United Nations. Environment and Development Economics. https://doi.org/10.1017/s1355770x12000150)
[14] Brundtland, G. H. 1987
[15] (Neves, P. M. D. (2020). SDGs, Why? And For Whom? How to Implement Partnerships to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. https://core.ac.uk/download/372701889.pdf)

and 169 targets which we (Member Countries) are announcing today demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda."[16]

The literature on the evolution of SDs through MDGs and now to the SDGs clearly accepts the principle of a multidisciplinary approach. The governance models developed over the past three decades, with more and more focus on the rights agenda, have developed into a silo approach towards issues like health, poverty, sanitation and water, livelihood opportunities etc. These models have predominantly centred on basic needs versus the capability approach, focusing on survival, often at a subsistence level. The endeavour has been to ensure the availability of basic needs like food and shelter. [17] This kind of approach has continued to be a welfare agenda rather than one focused on rights and equity. However, this has been corrected in the SDGs through the lens of SDG 16 of human rights when emphasis was given to the word "sustainability."

This approach needs to break the silos and have a complete paradigm shift towards the convergence approach. Sustainable Development uses a three-vector approach – the social aspect (people), the environmental aspect (planet), and the economic aspect (prosperity).[18]

The fact that a sustainable development solution has these three vectors interdependent implies a more complex development model.[19] Convergence of efforts and resources is the key factor, as a silo approach is not going to accelerate the pace of achieving the SDGs.[20] This clearly highlights the drawback of the silo approach and the need to move towards convergence.[21] Many efforts have been made globally, but none could establish the necessary tools for a holistic approach. A few of the welfare schemes have been merged, yet we still see numerous examples of a siloed

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[16] Neves, P. M. D. (2020). SDGs, Why? And For Whom? How to Implement Partnerships to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
https://core.ac.uk/download/372701889.pdf)
[17] Sabina Alkire, Oxford 2002: Valuing Freedom Sens Capability Approach and Poverty Reduction,
[18] (2016). United States: General Assembly Adopts Resolution on Follow-up to, Review of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in Consensus Action. MENA Report, (), n/a.)
[19] Aruna Sharma, Resource Convergence Mantra Model
[20] Resource Convergence Mantra Model (Aruna (Limaye) Sharma, 2008
[21] Mainstreaming of Resource Convergence in Policy making Programme, Design and Execution (Aruna (Limaye) Sharma) December 2013, published by UNDP India

approach in issues of health, education, poverty, etc – not only by individual countries but also by UN agencies in their approach towards assistance through SDG funds. [22] Therefore, in this book, the 17 SDGs are categorised into four independent sets and would need a convergence approach for quality sustainable outcomes.

1. Literature on impact studies since 2015, the current status of the SDGs, and the likelihood of achieving the targets

The Development Progress should be the red signal that has projected how the world is likely to do on all 17 SDGs based on current trends.[23] While performance across the goals and in each region is likely to vary widely, current global performance is leading towards failure on all the SDGs come 2030. The Congress on Political Economy that took place in Lisbon on January 25-27, 2018, resonated with the same concern as the importance paid to SDGs was evident more by its absence. This forum was developed by the recently created Portuguese Association of Political Economists. Of 25 panels, only one addressed the topic of climate change. Not a single panel addressed the topic of Sustainable Development or the Sustainable Development Goals.

Besides, the Quality Impact Protocol (QUIP)[24] – social impact methodology for quality approach measurement – is a unique methodology for assessing rural transformation. Now, a tool kit has been introduced for quick quality impact that will enable linking of the common household database with the advantage of quality assessment of the outcomes.

The UKSSD report examined the UK public policy and published data to assess the country's current performance against the 17 SDGs and 196 associated targets – the results are mixed at best. Of the 143 targets considered relevant to the domestic delivery of the SDGs, the UK is performing well on only 24 per cent of them, while 57 per cent are performing inadequately or have gaps in policy. The remaining 15 per cent have '"little to no policy in place" at all.

2. Various new models to have a real-time impact study and quick feedback for course corrections.

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[22] https://www.sdgfund.org/
[23] Susan Nicolai, Chris Hoy, Tom Berliner and Thomal Aedy. Projecting progress, reaching the SDGs by 2030
[24] James Copestake & Fiona Remnanat 2012 QuIP

The basic principle of governance is constantly evolving, going back to the drawing board, and guided by the principles of growth that are inclusive in nature. China has recently evolved an unsaid cap on capital worth. There are always "change agents" from the government, civil societies, or the concerned groups themselves. If they are triggered and facilitated by appropriate policies, they can bring in sustainable change. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were designed to be "integrated and indivisible", balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development.[25]

A non-holistic approach or focusing only on one of the components of the sector, leads to a piecemeal approach in policy making, planning and execution. The result is – the adverse impact on the related component is not addressed and thus, leads to more internal battles of correction than progress. A holistic convergence approach ensures that the impact is sustainable. An integrated approach to the SDGs is, therefore, critical in making efforts to implement the new global agenda. The approach should be holistic, cost-effective, and manageable. While integration is much needed, it is not entirely new. Integration has been part and parcel of the discourse on Sustainable Development since the concept was conceived three decades ago. [26] However, for many of the reasons noted above, the 2030 Agenda has brought in an added sense of urgency to integration. It highlights the need for integration but falls short of addressing how to achieve it quickly in order to meet the concern of urgency.

The above statement is a recognition that the approach to SDGs should be multidisciplinary, however, the literature lacks a clearly defined tool to effectively achieve prosperity. The concept of "converging divergence"[27] in the 21st century reflects a shift in growth centres, yet with the increasing use of Information Technology (IT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), the need for a common understanding of many of the policies is still relevant. The focus will now be on agreed norms across geographies for ensuring inclusiveness and protection of human rights. SDGs are not merely aspirations or normative ideals. They need to be achieved. Hence, there is a sense of urgency to have a road map to achieve the SDGs. Failure to do

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[25] United Nations General Assembly, 2015(2016). United States: General Assembly Adopts Resolution on Follow-up to, Review of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in Consensus Action. MENA Report, (), n/a.
[26] World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987
[27] Rory Horner, David Hulme, Global Development, Converging Divergence and Development Studies: A Rejoinder, 2019, https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12496), International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague

so by 2030 will do irreparable damage in terms of not only equity but also course correction of climate and environmental warnings.

Thus, there is a need for a tool that is effective, replicable, transferable and achievable. The reliance on Information Technology, databases, and mechanisms to monitor is feasible. The recognition and effectiveness of using a common household database lies in understanding the need for effective targeting by pinpointing interventions, guiding policy framework, and accordingly ensuring proper execution and implementation. This has been reviewed here. There is a gap in the literature, and this book tries to fill the gap by capturing various experiments across the globe working on the need for a common database. The book elaborates on the comprehensive successful model of SAMAGRA in Madhya Pradesh, India.[28] Here, the concept and model of SAMAGRA for different populations under different interventions, ranging from health to food security, housing for all, skilling, etc., across developed, developing, and under-developed economies is discussed.

In the United Kingdom, a similar common data approach is attempted through the National Council for Development and International Solidarity (CNDSI), and each of the 'lead' ministers has been designated for each of the SDGs. However, this again leads to a siloed approach.

In the French system, the participation of civil society, as well as the implementation of collaborative tools, are advocated. Hence, there is recognition to move away from a silo to a convergent approach if the SDG is to be prevented from becoming rhetoric.

In the UK, the focus on departmental plans is inadequate to break the silos and SDGs into future educational programmers. The work of the National Health Service and the activities of the local, regional and national governments are again distributing the SDG goals into departments and schemes i.e. silos. To break this approach, a common household database approach is needed.

The mechanisms to measure credible impact evaluation have relied on human development indices that capture hunger but have missed out on

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[28] http://samagra.gov.in/; http://sssm.nic.in; Samruddhi the Madhya Pradesh Model of Financial Inclusion done by UNDP, https://issuu.com/undp/docs/samruddhi---the-Madhya-Pradesh-model December 2013, Process Documentation of Samagra Portal (UNICEF and IIT Indore) released on 10th June 2019

the index of vulnerability. There are strong ethical grounds for simply asking those intended to benefit about their experiences. [29] The evolution of a proposed common household database, utilising real-time and time-series data, will help eliminate irrelevant questionnaires and provide authentic data. There is a need to also examine the impact measurement models, as they are key to the success of the SDGs. To ensure these goals do not remain rhetorical but become a reality by 2030, it is essential to have real-time data and impact assessments.

The QUIP model aims to provide credible, timely, and cost-effective evidence of impact based on the testimonies of intended beneficiaries of livelihood interventions without needing a control group. The QUIP aims to address the perennial question of how international development agencies evaluate the impact of their work, with particular reference to the challenges faced by NGOs seeking to assist smallholder farmers with often complex agricultural and livelihood transformations associated with market integration and adaptation to climate change.[30] This can encourage what [31] is referred to as "obsessive measurement disorder".[32]

While often framed in technical terms, the issue of how the impact of development interventions can realistically and credibly be evaluated has been a battleground for these debates[33] [34]

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[29] Credible impact evaluation in complex contexts: Confirmatory and exploratory approaches.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280772189_Credible_impact_evaluation_in_complex_contexts_Confirmatory_and_exploratory_approaches [accessed Sep 21 2018].

[30] Eyben, 2013

[31] Natsios (2010)

[32] Copestake, J., & Remnant, F. (2015). Assessing Rural Transformations: Piloting a Qualitative Impact Protocol in Malawi and Ethiopia. Palgrave Macmillan UK EBooks. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137452511_6

[33] Rural Transformations: Piloting a Qualitative Impact Protocol in Malawi and Ethiopia
(https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304885348_Assessing_Rural_Transformations_Piloting_a_Qualitative_Impact_Protocol_in_Malawi_and_Ethiopia [accessed Sep 21 2018])

[34] Camfield and Duvendack,
https://realty.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/brand-connect-initiative/indias-most-versatile-real-estate-marketing-specialists-eye-robust-growth/111474212field and Duvendack, 2014).