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INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION

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Abstract: The United Nations (UN) General Assembly, in its 70th Session on September 25, 2015, adopted the document titled "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," which consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 related targets, to advance the success of the Millennium Development Goals. New global goals education is provided by this agenda (SDG 4). The objective is to offer high-quality, inclusive, and equitable education while encouraging possibilities for lifelong learning for all. It will take more work to ensure everyone has access to high-quality, inclusive education, particularly in India. Even with notable increases in school enrollment over the previous fifteen years, many students do not graduate from primary school without a minimum reading proficiency. This study was conducted to determine how well each Indian state is doing in reaching the sustainable development objective for education. Charts were used to show it, and an ANOVA was used to choose and assess four indicators to obtain empirical results. It was noted that the states of India varied in their ability to meet the targets for sustainable development goals.

Index Terms - Inclusive education, equality, SDGs targets

INTRODUCTION

In addition to being a human right, education promotes peace and sustainable development. Education is essential to achieving all of the 2030 Agenda's goals because it equips individuals with the values, information, and abilities needed to live honorably, pursue their own goals, and improve their communities. Over 262 million children and youngsters do not attend school today. After numerous years in school, six out of ten do not possess basic literacy and numeracy skills. Adult illiteracy rates of 750 million contribute to marginalization and poverty. The 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) states that by 2030, "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." This sums up the goals for education. Adopted in November 2015, the Education 2030 Framework for Action serves as a roadmap to attain the education goal, offering partners and governments direction on how to translate pledges into action. Issues with equity across nations present another difficult obstacle. By 2030, all boys and girls will have had free elementary and secondary education thanks to this aim. It also opposes achieving universal access to high-quality higher education, eradicating economic and gender inequalities, and granting equitable access to reasonably priced vocational training. The overview and effectiveness of the Indian states in attaining sustainable development for education are the main topics of this study.

Inclusive:

"Inclusive" education is defined as "a process that helps to overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation, and achievement of learners" by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). "Full participation and access to quality learning opportunities" is what's intended to be achieved. Therefore, "a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners" can also be used to describe inclusive education. Inclusive education, sometimes known as "education for all," aims to meet the requirements of all students, including those who are economically and socially disadvantaged, members of racial and ethnic minorities, and those with specific educational needs.

Equitable:

There is a strong relationship between inclusivity and equity. The phrase "equity" in education relates to the fairness concept, which means ensuring that societal and personal conditions, such as gender, socioeconomic class, or ethnic origin, do not prevent a person from realising their full educational potential.

Quality:

"A dynamic concept that changes and evolves with time, as well as the social, economic, and environmental context" is how quality education is defined. While defining universally accepted standards of quality education for every culture and every individual at every time is unachievable, UNESCO and UNICEF have created two widely used indicators. Education can be considered effective in two ways: first, in fostering cognitive development; and second, in fostering emotional and creative development that supports peace, citizenship, and security goals, equality, and the transmission of local and global cultural values to future generations.

According to the Education 2030 Framework For Action, "well-qualified, trained, adequately remunerated and motivated teachers" must impart "foundational skills of literacy and numeracy as well as analytical, problem-solving and other high-level cognitive, interpersonal and social skills" in "safe, healthy, gender-responsive, inclusive and adequately resourced environments."

The ensuing box denotes the policy's inclusion of diversity in many parts for improved learning for all:

Literature Review

(Jelle, 2015) disclosed that contrary to what the UNESCO definition and research suggest, there was less of a correlation between the pluralistic approach of ESD to teaching and the holistic approach of ESD to handling the content matter. They concluded that the outcome provided empirical support for ESD's efficacy.

(Arbuthnott, 2019) examined psychological studies that revealed a weak association between attitudes and behavior, the variables mediating this relationship, and the significance of these findings for higher education and ESD initiatives.

(Jeppe, 2010) He promoted the idea that a fundamental component of a democratically oriented education for sustainable development (ESD) should be a historical and sociocultural approach to participation. Using three real-world examples from an informal learning environment, it showed that while a framework for authentic involvement was quite open, some issues and themes might be sidelined in the mainstream debate on sustainable development. This conversation has been labelled as "ecological modernization" in northern Europe since the 1990s. It was demonstrated that there existed a possibility that participatory ESD might lead to a simulation that was self-deceptive, instead of empowering sustainable development. After researching "Higher Education and Curriculum Innovation for Sustainable Development in India,"

(Banga, 2010) discovered The education policy of India incorporates multiple sustainable development themes. Perhaps more than any other nation, the highest court has ordered environmental instruction at all levels of formal education, including a required undergraduate course. However, conventional methods of assessment in higher education and a lack of inter-disciplinary competency among staff and students make it difficult to properly

execute this criterion.

Numerous scholars have examined education in relation to sustainable development objectives. Upon reviewing the literature, it is evident that no research has been done to determine the educational requirements for reaching the targets of the sustainable development goals.

Objectives

1. To summarise the education goal for SDG4.
2. To study the COVID-19 pandemic effect on targets of SDG4.

A summary of the targets (SDG4)

SDG 4, which consists of ten targets, acknowledges the basic significance of having access to high-quality education. Since education plays a "key role in shaping values that are supportive of sustainable development," this goal has always been at the centre of the UN's sustainable development agenda. Goal 2 (aiming for universal primary education by 2015) and the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All (EFA), which included the goal of eradicating gender imbalance at all levels of education by 2015, established the foundation for SDG 4. In a same vein, SDG 4's text promises to guarantee everyone has access to all levels of education and learning, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, handicap, or other circumstances.

The globe is still not on pace, according to a report released by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Global Education Monitoring Report for the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Just 20% of adolescents finish secondary education. Less than half of students complete primary school with a minimum level of reading and math competency; in sub-Saharan Africa, just 10% of students do so, and the proportion of instructors with formal education is declining.

Target 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

The percentage of kids and teenagers who reach at least a minimal proficiency level in reading and maths is the indicator for this goal. With minimal improvement over the previous ten years, the global primary school net enrolment rate was 89.41% in 2018, highlighting hard-to-reach populations and areas of exclusion. In 2018, the net enrolment rate for secondary schools was 66.27%. When it comes to the school completion rate, there is still much space for improvement. In sub-Saharan Africa, just 63% of students finish primary school, even though 81% of children attend school. In lower secondary education, where 63% of students between the ages of 12 and 14 enroll in school but only 38% finish, the situation is considerably worse. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic's effects, school completion rates are anticipated to The COVID-19 pandemic's effects are predicted to cause a stalling or even reversal in school

completion rates.

This aim includes learning outcomes in addition to enrollment and completion rates. The related indication for this has, nevertheless, generated a great deal of debate. First, it gauges advancement in learning objectives by counting the proportion of students who graduate from school with a minimal degree of reading and math competency. International agreement on the technique or standards to evaluate this level has not yet been reached. Existing learning assessment studies are being linked together by a single standard framework that is being developed by the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML). Second, indicators can't measure every dimension completely because of their limitations.

Target 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

This target's success is assessed using two indicators. The percentage of children under five who are developing normally in terms of their health, learning, and psychological well-being is covered by the first indicator. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators very recently, in March 2019, reached a consensus on a methodology to evaluate early childhood development. Target 4.2 accomplishments are still evaluated using the UNICEF Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI) until this technique is widely implemented. The second measure looks at children who are enrolled in organised learning and are one year younger than

the official primary entry age. The global participation percentage increased from 67% in 2014 to 69% in 2017, a little rise. However, there is a significant difference in the rate between high-income countries (93%) and low-income countries (42%). According to pre-pandemic forecasts, 82% of children worldwide would attend structured schooling by the time they reach the official primary entry age in 2030. Only 50 of the 207 countries and territories had mandatory pre-primary education in 2016, according to a UNESCO report, while 38 countries offered free and mandatory pre-primary education for a minimum of one year.

Target 4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including university.

Equal access to lifetime learning beyond required schooling is demanded by this goal. It includes adult and juvenile formal and non-formal education for both work and non-work reasons. In 2018, the percentage of people enrolled in tertiary education worldwide was 38%. That varies greatly, though, from 9% in low-income nations to 75% in high-income nations. Over the last 10 years, there hasn't been much of a change in the numbers for these two income groups. The East Asian and Pacific region's middle- and upper-middle-income nations have seen the largest gains, with the gross enrolment ratio rising by more than 10% between 2013 and 2018. The total number of students enrolled in secondary vocational education worldwide reached 62.5 million in 2018, a figure that is gradually beginning to rise once more after declining to a peak of over 65 million in 2013.

Target 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

Information and communications technology (ICT) skills are the focal point of the indicator that was agreed upon for this goal. The justification for this is that it assesses abilities beyond reading and numeracy, which are critical for today's global workforce. It also encourages States to provide ICT education both within and outside of schools. Through household surveys, people are asked if they have engaged in nine specific digital activities in the past three months. This information is used to calculate the percentage of kids and adults who have mastered these abilities. In contrast to two out of three participants in high-income nations, one in three participants in middle-income countries reported having copied or moved a file or folder in the previous three months, based on a household survey conducted by the International Telecommunication Union in 2017. Of the nine computer skills surveyed, programming was the least used, with an average of just 5% of individuals worldwide having programmed in the previous three months. The majority of the time, data coverage is inadequate outside of wealthy nations. Not only is it hard to get adequate data, but this indicator has drawn criticism for concentrating only on ICT abilities. Financial literacy skills are currently not indicated, and efforts to record social-emotional skills continue to be difficult, despite the fact that these abilities are also essential for work.

Target 4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

The process of gauging the progress made towards this goal entails comparing various groups' educational markers. For example, gender, location (city versus rural), wealthiest versus poorest, and other variables that may affect a person's capacity to receive high-quality education, like disability status. As soon as the data is ready, this will be completed. The biggest obstacle to attaining fair education seems to be the differences in income. According to a 2016 study, inequality is a significant problem, with children from the richest 20% of households demonstrating higher reading competence than children from the poorest homes. In low- and middle-income nations, rural students have a 50% lower chance than urban students of finishing upper secondary school, according to the 2019 Global School Monitoring Report. Income inequality has had a significant impact on how well schools and students handled the shutdown of schools in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Target 4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.

Men's youth (ages 15 to 24) literacy rates in 2018 were 92.9%, while women's rates were 90.4%. In 2018, the male literacy rate for adults (15 years of age and over) was 89.8%, while the female rate was 82.8%. At 65.6%, Sub-Saharan Africa has an adult literacy rate that is more than 20% lower than the global average. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused school closures, which has had a negative impact on reading rates. For students in grades 1–8, advances achieved in the previous 20 years have been lost.

Target 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

This is possibly the hardest aim to understand and quantify because the phrasing is so outcome-oriented and difficult to define internationally. The current target 4.7 indicator measures the "extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education, and (d) student assessment" in order to describe the conditions necessary for sustainable development, human rights, and global citizenship education.

This indicator currently lacks an internationally recognized methodology and standards, and the available data is quite sparse, making it difficult to assess progress.

UNESCO

In order to accomplish this goal through partnerships, policy guidance, capacity building, monitoring, and advocacy, UNESCO is in charge of organising the global community. Although countries bear primary responsibility for guaranteeing the right to high-quality education, the 2030 Agenda represents a global and collaborative dedication. To address educational difficulties and create inclusive, egalitarian, and relevant learning systems for all students, political will, global and regional collaboration, and the involvement of all governments, civil society, the corporate sector, youth, the UN, and other multilateral agencies are necessary.

Since gaining its independence, the Indian government has worked to increase access to general, technical, and other pertinent education programmes. The post-independence education history of India includes pertinent laws, the quantity of commissions, recurring policies, national and state institutions, a range of pertinent projects, and funding for education. Higher education and

general education are expanding as a result of these initiatives. Informal and adult education has been promoted throughout the nation's regions and all social classes.

The COVID-19 pandemic's effects:

It is projected that during the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing widespread school closures, at least one-third of the world's children lack access to the technology necessary for remote learning. The epidemic has also led to a rise in educational disparities, with the completion rate for wealthy homes being 79% and for impoverished ones being 34%.

As is the case with all SDGs, the COVID-19 epidemic is likely to prevent the achievement of SDG 4, which calls for inclusive and equitable access to education. By 2030, it is predicted that over 200 million children will still not have received an education. The importance of health literacy and the system's inability to give everyone an equal chance at education were brought to light by COVID-19.

The ability of a person to make decisions based on the advice of a healthcare expert is known as health literacy. It is recommended that basic educational curriculum systems incorporate health literacy in order to promote informed people who can slow down the spread of diseases

like COVID-19.

Up to 91% of registered students were impacted by the closure of schools (including colleges) beginning in April 2020 as a result of the epidemic. The COVID-19 pandemic caused the majority of children worldwide to lose their formal education; this legacy could jeopardise the SDGs' core goal of leaving no one behind (LNOB). Looking back, the 2023 study projected that large-scale learning losses from COVID-19 occurred in around 80% of countries with data available.

Numerous academic establishments are striving to sustain their curricula through virtual learning. Even though COVID-19 had a significant impact on OECD nations, there are still opportunities to develop innovative educational models. Equity is still a significant barrier to remote learning, though, as many students in developing nations lack access to the internet or a secure, encouraging atmosphere that is suitable for online learning.

UNESCO established the COVID-19 Global Education Coalition in March 2020 as a multi-sector partnership involving the UN family, media, civil society organisations, and IT partners to develop and implement creative solutions to promote global collaboration and guarantee that education never stops.

Conclusion:

The challenges in our educational system, such as poor access to village schools in hilly regions of Adivasi areas, dropouts and out-of-school children, recruitment procedures, teacher quality and accountability, relevance of content and pedagogy, adult literacy access, appropriate technical and vocational training, low budgetary education, data and information systems on education, and the role of the private sector in education, can be found to be the reasons for differences in states' efforts to meet the sustainable development goal for quality education.

It is clear that nations have differed in their approaches to fulfilling the sustainable development aim of high-quality education. Of all the Indian states, Tripura does poorly in GER for primary education, Daman & Diu does poorly in GPI, Bihar does poorly in literacy rate, and Daman & Diu does poorly in GER for tertiary education. Telangana, on the other hand, does best in GER for primary education, Andhra Pradesh does best in GPI, Kerala does best in literacy rate, and Chhattisgarh does best in GER for tertiary education.

Expanding general education and higher education is suggested to be necessary in order to ensure that all children receive a primary and secondary education that is free, equitable, and of high quality and produces learning outcomes that are both relevant and effective. This requirement extends to states with low GER and literacy rates in particular. Access to high-quality early childhood development, care, and education is also advised to ensure that children are prepared for primary education. Additionally, it is advised to offer high-quality, reasonably priced technical, vocational, and postsecondary education, including university. Additionally, it is advised to raise the proportion of young people and adults with the necessary skills—technical and vocational—for employment, respectable jobs, and entrepreneurship. Additionally, taking action to end gender differences in schooling is advised. To ensure that all children and a significant percentage of adults can read and numerate, certain measures must be implemented.

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