

Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals in South Asia



The much talked and promoted buzzword, Sustainable Development is considered to change the world into a paradise as it is socially accepted, economically viable and environment friendly way of life on earth. Land, air and water will be safe for life on earth if everything is done on sustainable basis but in developing countries in South Asia, it would be very hard to do so. People in South Asia primarily depend on earth's resources for living and the growing population coupled with increased economic activities has increased pressure on the natural resources. Most of the people in South Asia use wood and animal dung as a source of domestic energy, defecate in open, overgraze rangelands beyond the carrying capacity and over fishing of the marine/fresh water resources leading to the tragedy of commons. Urban solid waste is dumped in open without any recycling or adequate landfill facilities and untreated sewage finds its way into water bodies.



Sustainable Development in South Asia appears to be a remote dream as the ground reality is different. Thus achievements of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) would be real hard challenge as it has never been the priority of the governments in South Asia. Developing countries are mostly facing the capacity and coordination problems in dealing with new and emerging issues related to sustainable development. As sustainable development involves almost all sectors of economy and to bring

together all those stakeholders is very difficult for the comparatively weak hosting ministries of environment, forestry and climate change to coordinate with the stronger ones like Finance and

Planning. It has been observed that developing countries instead of indigenizing SDGs and other such donor driven initiatives, institutional response would not change.



South Asia offers a great deal of strengths for mainstreaming sustainable development and achieving the objectives of SDGs. Growing population of youth and mostly educated ones can become agent of change for putting their respective countries on the path of sustainable development. In addition industrialization and market economy is yet to advance thereby offering space and time for putting them on the sustainable path. The National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS)

already developed by most of the countries has to be implemented in line with the SDGs objectives. New cadre of professional leadership has to be developed by devising and implementing need based and harmonized capacity development programmes at sub-national, national, regional levels.

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