

**Impact  
Factor  
3.025**

**ISSN 2349-638x**

**Refereed And Indexed Journal**

**AAYUSHI  
INTERNATIONAL  
INTERDISCIPLINARY  
RESEARCH JOURNAL  
(AIIRJ)**

**Monthly Publish Journal**

**VOL-IV**

**ISSUE-III**

**MAR.**

**2017**

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**Sustainable Development Goals Addressing Health Challenges****Vaishali Dhanvijay**

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**Abstract**

*Sustainable development is not just confined to environment but also covers vast areas for better quality of life. The Millennium Development Goals were established in 2000 to overcome the specific global challenges by 2015. A new set of goals is appeared in 2016 as Sustainable Development Goals which need to be achieved by 2030. This review article concisely discusses these goals in relation to the global health challenges.*

**Introduction**

The sustainable development defined by United Nations as, "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Previous dialogues on sustainability have more or less focused on climate change and environmental issues, but the new paradigm of sustainability, includes all efforts towards an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and the planet. (Kavithalyer)<sup>1</sup>

The World Health Organization (WHO) describes about Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that, in September 2000, committed world leaders signed the United Nations Millennium Declaration to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women. The MDGs were derived from this declaration, which comprised 8 goals with specific targets and indicators that all 189 UN Member States agreed to try to achieve by the year 2015. The MDGs have been superseded by the Sustainable Development Goals, a set of 17 integrated and indivisible goals that build on the achievements of the MDGs but are broader, deeper and far more ambitious in scope.<sup>2</sup>

**Sustainable Development Goals – 2030 given by United Nations<sup>3</sup>**

1. No Poverty - End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. Zero Hunger - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Good Health and Well-being - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4. Quality Education - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Gender Equality - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Clean Water and Sanitation - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Affordable and Clean Energy - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure - Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10. Reduced Inequalities - Reduce income inequality within and among countries
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Responsible Consumption and Production - Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Climate Action - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy
14. Life Below Water - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Life on Land - Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Partnerships for the Goals - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development<sup>3</sup>

The MDGs established measurable, universally-agreed objectives for eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, preventing deadly but treatable disease, and expanding educational opportunities to all children, among other development imperatives.

### Addressing Health Issues

Health has a central place in sustainable development goals. SDG 3 – Ensure Healthy Lives and Promoting Well Being for All at All Ages – consists of 13 targets. Almost all the other 16 goals are directly related to health or will contribute to health indirectly. The new agenda which builds on MDGs aim to be relevant to all countries and focuses on improving equity to meet the needs of women, children and the poorest, most disadvantaged people.<sup>4</sup>

According to Henk Bekedam, unlike MDGs, which had three dedicated health goals, the SDG agenda has only one health goal (SDG-3) which aims to 'ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all in all ages'. The 13 broad targets under health goal are in-tune with current global epidemiological reality. Besides the unfinished MDG agenda of reducing maternal and child mortality and tackling the communicable disease, the SDG-3 also aims to tackle the epidemic of NCDs, substance abuse and ill-effects of environmental hazards. Health is also interlinked to several other SDGs related to poverty, gender equality, education, food security, water sanitation etc.<sup>5</sup>

### The Challenge behind SDG 3

Poor health constitutes suffering and deprivation of the most fundamental kind. Over the years, significant strides have been made in increasing life expectancy and reducing some of the common killers associated with child and maternal mortality. Despite global progress, an increasing proportion of child deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. Globally, the incidence of major infectious diseases has declined since 2000, including HIV/AIDS, malaria, and TB, but the

challenge of these and new pandemics remains in many regions of the world. We have made immense progress globally in finding newer treatments, vaccines, and technologies for healthcare, but universal affordable access to healthcare remains a challenge.<sup>6</sup>

### Importance of SDG 3

Not only does disease impact the well being of an individual, it burdens family and public resources, weakens societies, and squanders potential. The health and well being of people at all ages therefore lies at the heart of sustainable development. Protection from disease is not only fundamental to survival, but it enables opportunity for everyone and strengthens economic growth and prosperity.<sup>6</sup>

### Targets - By 2030

The SDG health goal (SDG-3) aims to 'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages' and is underpinned by a set of 13 broad targets that cover a wide spectrum of health aspects that can be broadly placed into three categories: the unfinished and expanded MDG agenda, the new SDG-3 targets and the means of implementation, with universal health coverage (UHC) being the overarching umbrella. All the UN Member States, including India have committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) between 2016 and 2030.<sup>7</sup>

### The targets specifically includes universal health coverage(UHC)are 8-

1. Reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births
2. End preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births
3. End the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases
4. Reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being
5. Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol
6. Halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents 3.7, by 2020
7. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes
8. Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
9. Substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination
10. Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate
11. Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and noncommunicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement

and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all

12. Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States

13. Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks<sup>8</sup>

The UN's Development Agenda states that the new goals are unique in that they call for action by all countries, poor, rich and middle-income to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. While the SDGs are not legally binding, governments are expected to take ownership and establish national frameworks for the achievement of the 17 Goals. Countries have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review of the progress made in implementing the Goals, which will require quality, accessible and timely data collection. Regional follow-up and review will be based on national-level analyses and contribute to follow-up and review at the global level.<sup>9</sup>

### **Development Goals – Indian Scenario**

Kumar et al., (2016) stated that MDGs helped in mobilizing international community, leaders, politicians, civil society and sectoral ministries, and departments to focus on achieving these time-bound and measurably goals. Though not achieved fully all these goals made a substantial progress in saving lives and improving quality of lives of millions of people within the country and globally. India has not made progress commensurate with its economic and technological might and needed to do more. MDGs have been easy to relate, understand, communicate, implement, and monitor, whereas SDGs, though to some extent, are a continuation of MDGs, yet suffer from the weakness of being too many and unwieldy to implement and monitor. Providing required funding to these a reality remains a challenge and there is a need to improve accountability from international level to local level. <sup>10</sup>

All the UN Member States, including India have committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) between 2016 and 2030. Accelerated economic progress in recent years leaves India on-track to achieve halving hunger just after the 2015 deadline. India remains home to one quarter of the world's undernourished population, over a third of the world's underweight children, and nearly a third of the world's food-insecure people.<sup>11</sup>

In India, NITI Ayog is coordinating implementation of SDGs. To achieve SDG – 3, the nodal ministry is Health and Family Welfare which works with other concerned ministries for the set targets.

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