



Sustainability Leadership Summit Report

2023

A consolidated report of the Sustainability Leadership Summit 2023,
conducted by the Centre for Sustainable Development, Bengaluru.

4th November, 2023

Acknowledgement and Declaration

This report is compiled based on talks given by the speakers listed in the 'List of Delegates and Speakers' section of this report. It is drafted with an intention of providing an insight into the topics covered on the day and therefore any errors in the statistics or sources are to be kindly excused although best efforts to produce current data where necessary have been made.

We sincerely thank all the speakers, delegates, guests, media and others for all their support and for making the event a successful one.

The CSD 20th Anniversary Publication, India's Sustainability @ 75: Achievements, Challenges and Prospects, The Bengaluru Declaration on Acceleration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and more information about the events can be accessed in CSD's website 'www.csdindia.in'

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Background

Sustainability Leadership Summit was organised by Centre for Sustainable Development (CSD) to commemorate its 20th Anniversary. Release of the volume on India Sustainability @ 75 and Bengaluru Declaration to accelerate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was done. In addition, it organised an award ceremony for climate champions who participated in the National Youth Climate Conclave held in Bengaluru on 3rd November 2023 and also to selected startups and organisations in the field of sustainability. More than 120 delegates including diplomats, administrators, academicians, industrialists, Policy Makers, Students and NGOs have participated in the event. The eminent dignitaries from various organisations such as Department of Environment and Forests, Gokula Education Foundation, NITI Aayog, Mahindra University, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, National Biodiversity Authority, Skill Development Corporation, Skill Council for Green Jobs etc., located across India have given talks on several challenging issues of climate change and sustainable development. In addition, beneficiaries of CSD had shared their experience after getting trained on various subjects.

List of Delegates and Speakers

- Shri. Eshwara Khandre, Hon'ble Minister for Forests and Environment, Karnataka;
- Shri. Javed Akhtar, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary Dept. of Environment and Forests, Karnataka;
- Dr. Shalini Rajneesh, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner, Govt. of Karnataka;
- Mr. Lehar Singh Siroya, Member of Rajya Sabha from Karnataka;
- Shri. M.R. Sreenivas Murthy, Chief Executive, Gokula Foundation (Medical);
- Smt. Uma Mahadevan IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj and Skill Development.

Speakers:

- Dr. Abinash Dash, Director, Development, Monitoring and Evaluation Office, NITI Aayog, Govt. of India;
- Mr. Anirbhan Ghosh, Head, Centre for Sustainability, Mahindra University;
- Dr. S. Satapathy, Former Director, Climate Change, Ministry of Environment, Govt. of India;
- Dr. Achalendra Reddy, Chairman, National Biodiversity Authority, Chennai;

- Dr. Dola Bhattacharjee, Scientist, Regional Office, Ministry of Environment;
- Dr. Ramanjaneyulu, Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Hyderabad;
- Mr. K Krishan, Industrialist and Former Chairman, Skill Council for Green jobs, New Delhi;
- Ms. Sangeeta Patra, Vice President, Skill Council for Green Jobs, New Delhi;
- Mr. Naveen G.V, Managing Director, Benchmark Gensuite;
- Dr. Yale Lingaraju, National Director, River rejuvenation projects, Art of Living, Bengaluru.

Proceedings:

Activity 1: Experience Sharing

Mr. Ramanjeneya: Operator of STP had undergone a training programme conducted by CSD on Effluent Treatment Plant, through this he has learnt about how to use the treated water. Recently, he had applied these techniques and treated water which is now also used for drinking purposes. He had utilised the benefits of training in his professional services, as a result, at present his salary has been increased to Rs. 35,000 from Rs.25,000. He was happy with the curriculum of CSDs training programme.

Ms. Shameem: She has taken the training on Waste Management conducted by CSD, particularly on segregation of wet and dry waste. She stated that the training immensely helped her in gaining knowledge on how to segregate and manage wastes. She recalled an example where she visited a village where they manage waste with unique codes. Every household is given a code in which they get data on how people have separated the waste, quantity and other information. She was newly exposed to the concept of waste management and found it very enlightening. She was motivated by CSDs for designing such activities.

Ms. Chaitanya: She has taken training on Solar Energy Program particularly on Solar PV Technology. It was a 10 day program, in which she learnt the kind of raw materials used and their applications. This training program was designed in favour of the women for which she praised CSD. She appreciated KGTTI, which enabled the trainees to have hands-on technology exposure on solar technologies. Overall, she feels she has become a Solar Energy Engineer after having undergone the training conducted by CSD.

Activity 2: Release of Publication on India Sustainability @ 75 and Bengaluru Declaration

Dr. Srinivas R, Executive Director of CSD, welcomed the chief guest and speakers of the day and briefed about the evolution of the concept of sustainable development from Stockholm to Paris Agreement and Kyoto Protocol. Also, welcomed the dignitaries, Mr. Eshwara Khandre, Minister for Forest, and Environment, Government of Karnataka, Mr. Javed Akthar, IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of Ecology and Environment, Government of Karnataka, Mr. Srinivas Murthy Chief Executive, Gokula Education Foundation (Medical), Dr. Shalini Rajneesh, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner, Government of Karnataka and Mr. Ravindra, Chairman, CSD. After that, opening remarks were given by the dignitaries at the Sustainability Leadership Summit.

Highlights of Sustainability Summit

Activity 3: Opening Remarks

Shri. Javed Akthar, IAS

Additional Chief Secretary Dept. of Environment and Forests, Karnataka.

- To achieve the target of renewable energy i.e., 500 GW by 2030, Karnataka Government has set up EV Policy and also achieved 59 GW energy so far.
- Karnataka Government is planning to bring one-third of water pumps under solar energy.
- In Karnataka, efficient LED lights are used in households.
- The Department of Forest Ecology and Environment, Government of Karnataka brought out many schemes to achieve sustainable development goals such as 1. Blu Plastic Project, 2. Promotion of greener programs for industries, 3. Voluntary disclosure of GHGs (for industries having Rs. 250 crore turnover per year, Hotels, Malls and Government Institutions) and 4. Recycling and reuse of water (as an example, action taken for treating the waste water of Bengaluru and pumping it to dried tanks of Kolar)

Shri. M.R. Sreenivas Murthy

Chief Executive, Gokula Education Foundation (Medical)

- Mr. Murthy addressed largely on renewable energy and reuse of water. He has emphasised on his institute where they use 100 % renewable energy and don't take water from BWSSB. They recycle and reuses the water, if shortage it uses the groundwater.

- If everyone thinks about sustainable use of resources, we can achieve the target of SDGs by 2030. In addition, we need to inform all the industries to follow sustainable practices.
- He also pressed that Karnataka is in the forefront in India in achieving the renewable energy targets. These efforts have started since 2010 in Karnataka.
- Mr Murthy was suggesting an urgent attention is required to efficient and effective use of water and chemicals in agriculture.

Shri. Eshwara Khandre

Hon'ble Minister for Forests and Environment, Karnataka

- Mr. Khandre highlighted the necessity of Brundtland Commission to address SDGs and climate crisis.
- He remarked on how we have polluted the beautiful city (Bengaluru), he said unregulated, illegal constructions, sanitation issues, degradation of environment, mushrooming of pollution industries etc. have contributed to this present pollution.
- Therefore, he has suggested the necessity of effective waste management, rejuvenation of tanks, mitigating pollution from industries, air quality improvement and establishing policies on carbon neutral transport systems.
- He has also suggested making use of contributions from CSDs for capacity building of people to reduce GHGs to achieve SDGs.

Dr. A. Ravindra

Former Chief Secretary, Govt. of Karnataka; Chairman, CSD

- Dr. Ravindra praised the talk of Mr. Javed Akthar and Mr. Srinivas Murthy also emphasised the work of EMPRI in view of climate change. He was suggested to delegates to visit the EMPRI to see their labs established to curb climate change.
- In addition, he has suggested to Mr. Eshwara Khandre and Mr. Javed Akthar to establish a sustainable cities program in government lands. Also to take action to address malnutrition and undernutrition issues in the northern Karnataka region.

The Bengaluru Declaration has been handed over to Mr. Eshwara Khandre, Mr. Javed Akthar, Mr. Srinivasa Murthy, Mr, Ravindra, Ms. Shalini Rajneesh and specially handed over to Mr. Lehar Singh Siroye Member of Rajyasabha from Karnataka to give it to concerned department like MoEF&CC and also office of Prime Minister of India.

Leaders' Talks:

Introduction - SDGs

The IMPORTANCE and the IMPACT of focused work towards Sustainable Development Goals in current times was reiterated in the Sustainability Leadership Summit that was conducted in Bengaluru on 4th of November, 2023 which aimed to discuss much needed acceleration strategies to achieve the targets set for 2030. Theme of the summit being India's Sustainability @ 75 : Achievements, Challenges and Prospects, brought together leading individuals, eminent people, across a ton of sectors to provide insights on the same.

The SDG progress in India has been slow which gave rise to the need to bring together various leaders. India has an SDG Index score of 112 out of 163 countries according to the Sustainable Development Report, 2023. It is also stated in the report that with the current pace of progress, India would have 575 million of its population in absolute poverty and 87 million children out of school. "A divergence of growth in terms of performance is observed, meaning some states are doing good in certain sectors and lagging way behind in others" said Mr. Abinash Dash, Development, Monitoring and Evaluation Office, NITI Aayog, Govt. of India.

The gravity of the issue was commonly addressed throughout the event and will be discussed further in this report. The event not only focused on identifying the need for acceleration but provided a platform to ideate and formulate potential action towards achieving SDGs.

SDGs - Progress and Challenges

One of the major reasons for the gap in development and decrease in pace globally and in India is the Pandemic but it had also forced countries to focus on health infrastructure and well-being. The assessment carried out by the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) indicates that Malnutrition and Anemia are the biggest concerns in India due to improper nutrition. Malnutrition and undernutrition cases are increasing due to understaffing at PHCs, CHCs and district hospitals which needs to be addressed.

It is observed that the major difference between highly ranked countries in terms of SDG progress and India is the lack of availability and transparency of data and formulation and use of evidence based policies to address the Sustainable Development challenges.

In Karnataka -

The State is focused on SDGs 1, 4 and 9, No Poverty, Quality Education and Industry Innovation and Infrastructure respectively while incorporating other relevant SDGs in its efforts such as SDG 5, Gender Equality through promotion of STEM education for girls to help in SDG 9,

Importance and need of, SDG-1 No poverty, SDG-4 Quality Education and SDG-9 Industry Innovation and Infrastructure for Karnataka was discussed.

The State is working to measure SDGs by adopting Multi-Dimensional Poverty (MDP) index with respect to Zero Hunger aiming to eradicate malnutrition. The state has now uplifted 13000 children from malnutrition and is also moving from Agro to Agro-processing to help accelerate SDG 9 targets of the state. It has also carried out MDP assessment at sub-taluk levels and gram panchayat levels, of 750 villages. Karnataka state government and UNDP along with several other NGOs and partners (Nadge Foundation, Satya Sai Annapurna Trust) within the state made MOU to work together to eradicate malnutrition. Partners such as Selco Foundation for increased scope and effective use of Renewable energy.

With these efforts, the need for skilled professionals in these sectors is arising and increasing rapidly. Providing platforms and opportunities for skilling is the central part of achieving SDGs as skilling is interlinked to growth and therefore fasttracks the achievement of SDGs. To bridge this gap, there are Skill development bodies of the country and the state. Ms Uma Mahadevan, Additional Chief-Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj and Skill Development, Government of Karnataka had stated that the major challenge faced in skill development is bringing skills that are contemporary while keeping in mind the future and sustainability. She had also noted the Rural Solid Waste Management (RSWM) scheme in most of the GPs was introduced through which they trained about 11,000 SHG women about managing solid waste and also helped 2,600 women to get driving licences to transport the solid waste through vehicles. Equal skill development efforts to achievement the state's targets are also observed.

While it is important to transition at individual levels, some of the measures suggested overall to achieve targets are

- Adoption of science based sustainable activities in both corporate firms and the government/municipalities and use AI to achieve targets.
- **Competitive federalism** - NITI Aayog's approach in ensuring progress in states is by enforcing competitive federalism by active review and transparency of the status by ranking. One of their mechanisms is called the Data Governance Quality Index, put in place by the

Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), scores the 67 ministries of India based on Type, Frequency, Granularity, etc of data.

- Diversification of Public Distribution Systems to increase nutrition level.

Climate Change Challenge in achieving SDGs

According to an article in the Guardian, the top 100 corporations of the world are responsible for 71% of emissions. This calls for the much needed question of “why not” for clean and green alternatives with them being economically efficient as well. For example, LED Lights, Green Buildings.

Green operations within the organisations contribute very little to overall sustainability. The need of the hour is Climate Solutions.

Climate Change and SDGs are always interlinked. There is a need to create an awareness to bring change in the behaviours of the community to achieve not only SDGs, but also mitigate the adverse effects of climate change. One such example is the promoting and protecting the traditional knowledge which was discussed by Dr. Achalendra Reddy, Chairman, National Biodiversity Authority, Chennai. As we go deeper into the states, we find our villages which are tremendously rich in traditional knowledge. This is directly linked with livelihoods of the people in the forests/involved with use of natural resources. Proper laws and practices of sharing and using resources is essential to ensure both good living of communities involved and the environment.

Two of many efficient concepts with respect to Climate Change and SDGs, derived from the talks at the summit are

1. **Green Economy** : Adopting a Green Economy is calculated to be efficient in all aspects and the countries should strive to promote the same stressed Mr. K Krishan, Industrialist and Former Chairman, Skill Council for Green Jobs, New Delhi. 90% of 1.4 billion live below 3 USD a day which would mean 800 million live sub optimal lives. This calls for rapid transition to a green economy.
2. **Sustainable Agriculture** : Issues with crop production and producers like degrading fertility of the soil; currently 30% of soil is unfit for cultivation and over that data shows 50% of rains occur in the span of 10 days making it difficult for sustainable production of crops. **Six practices suggested by Dr. Ramanjaneyulu, Director, Centre for Sustainable Agriculture are as follows** Water and Moisture Management, Adaptive cropping systems, Integrating livestock, Non pesticidal management, Organic seed system, Sustainable nutrient

management. These help in achieving Sustainability and contribute to ultimately achieving SDGs. He also noted that agroforestry and agro-horticulture will help maintain/balance.

Road Ahead for SDGs

For youth:

As part of the community driven climate actions, skilling of youth and promoting Green Entrepreneurs is essential to achieve the targets. Ms. Sangeeta Patra, Vice President, Skill Council for Green Jobs, New Delhi has suggested youth to think out of the box and always nurture their thought process towards jobs and addressing the gaps in the job sector. The trend observed is that Renewable energies like solar, bio, cogent, hydrogen and carbon credits sectors possess great opportunities in generating jobs in future. The Indian Government allows youth to take training under the National Apprenticeship Scheme, NATS - Apprenticeship in Technical education in various sectors including green jobs.

How it creates sustainable ecosystems:

Promotion of the previously mentioned sectors in communities and individuals in general will slowly push away fossil fuel consumption and ultimately reduce GHG emissions in the country. This builds and enhances ecosystems. Maintaining proper data with respect to ecosystems and thorough understanding of the environment will address the sustainability issues.

When ecosystems are built, it becomes important to manage micro climates. Recharging groundwater by capturing rain, eco-friendly and sustainable practices will also benefit the wildlife and livestock. is essential and also capturing rain and recharging ground water wherever possible will help to improve the local ecosystem. Restoration of tanks will be beneficial for wildlife and livestock to sustain in the coming days. Adopting nature-based solutions rather than engineering solutions will help to solve the climate crisis in future.

Use of ESG:

Along with macro-managing ecosystems, we must also consider the footprint of Industries. It is observed that there is a lack of credibility of data recorded and published making it difficult to address the climate impacts raised by them. Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) is the tool to address the issues mentioned above by ensuring there is transparency and accountability of actions.

Now investments being focused on GHG emissions (82% investments by Generation Z) we can look ahead with hope into a promising and responsible future focusing on sustainable and inclusive growth.