



An Analysis Of Sustainable Development Goals In The North-Eastern States Of India And Government Interventions

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Article History	Abstract
Received: Revised: Accepted:	India's North-Eastern region, known for its cultural diversity and scenic beauty, has confronted distinctive developmental challenges. This diversity has given rise to unique cultural practices, music, dance, and crafts that are renowned across the world. Despite this richness, the region has grappled with developmental challenges such as lack of infrastructure, poor connectivity, poverty, hunger and limited access to healthcare and education. The adoption of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by India in 2015 provides a framework to address these challenges and promote sustainable development in the region. This paper illustrates the progress made in achieving the SDGs in terms of SDG Index released by NITI Aayog and the various initiatives taken by the Government of India in the process.
CC License CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0	Keyword: Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), Poverty, Hunger, SDG Index, NITI Aayog.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are crucial as they provide a global roadmap for addressing pressing issues such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation. They offer a shared vision to promote economic growth, social equity, and environmental protection, ultimately ensuring a better and more equitable future for people and the planet. Sustainable development is a term coined to ensure that development takes place in such a way that natural resources are sustained and passed on to the future generations unimpaired.¹

India's North-Eastern region is a diverse and culturally rich part of the country. Despite its natural beauty and cultural heritage, this region has faced unique developmental challenges. The adoption of the United Nations'

SDGs by India in 2015 provided an opportunity to address these challenges and promote sustainable development. At this juncture this paper studies the progress made in terms of SDG score and the initiative taken by the Govt of India in achieving the SDGs in India's North-East.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Anand et al., (2023) in their study analysed the challenges faced and achievements made in the pursuit of sustainable development in Northeast India in 2018-2021. The study found that Sikkim's overall performance is better than all India average in terms of SDG score followed by Mizoram and Tripura.² Sarma, (2023), in his study provided detailed analysis of the health-related challenges and achievements in the North-Eastern states concerning SDG-3. The study also explained various dimensions, such as healthcare infrastructure, disease prevalence, access to healthcare, and socio-economic factors affecting health outcomes in the region.³ Sadashivam & Tabassum (2022) in their study focused on localized implementation of SDGs in the of India's North-Eastern (NE) states. The study examined the performance of district in the NE states of India towards achieving the SDG goals such as Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health & Well Being, Quality Education, Gender Equality. The study explored the challenges and opportunities associated with SDG localization, considering the socio-cultural and economic diversities of the North-Eastern states.⁴ Panda, Sethi & Agarwal (2018) provided India's status in relation to the SDGs by analyzing cross sectional data from various secondary sources. The paper ranks each of the states based on the SDG Index. The study found that the policy which may look sufficient on a national basis might not be appropriate on the state level. The study also indicated the clear disparity between India states and effort should be made to achieve uniform success across states.⁵ The Literature discussed above shows that the performance of NER in achieving SDGs is of paramount importance to the context of national level as the region covers a land mass of 2.55 lakh sq. km (nearly 7.8 percent of the total population of India as reported in Census, 2001). The paper indicates the performance of NER in terms attaining SDGs as well as the initiative taken by the government.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

1. To learn about the progress of NE States in terms of achieving SDGs.
2. To know about the measures taken for implementation of SDGs effectively and govt. initiatives to promote the SDGs.

METHODOLOGY:

The study only used secondary sources for its data. The SDGs Index, which assesses each country's overall performance on the 17 SDGs, giving equal weight to each Goal, calls for a thorough investigation using secondary sources of data. Information has been collected from journals, research papers, government reports and databases, reviews, and other sources.

THE NORTH-EASTERN STATES: AN OVERVIEW

The North-Eastern Region (NER) of India is a spatial-political region of India comprising of eight contiguous states namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim are known for their cultural and ethnic diversity. Despite this diversity, they face common developmental challenges, including limited infrastructure, high levels of poverty, and geographical isolation. In view of this, the Govt. of India has a special Ministry called the Ministry of Development of North-Eastern Region (MDONER) established in 2001, which is responsible for the matters relating to the planning, execution and monitoring of development schemes and projects in the North-Eastern Region.

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The 17 SDGs and 169 targets are part of a transformative agenda - the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by 193 Member States at the UN General Assembly Summit in September 2015, and which came into effect on 1 January 2016. At the core of this global agenda for 2030 is the principle of universality: Leave No One Behind.⁶ Development in all its dimensions must include all people, everywhere, and should be built through the participation of everyone, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised. With SDGs in place the Indian government is now trying to integrate the efforts taken towards achieving MDGs with SDGs. SDGs are wider in scope. The 17 SDGs are as follows:

Table-1 Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 1	No Poverty	Eradicating extreme poverty for all people everywhere by 2030.
Goal 2	Zero Hunger	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
Goal 3	Good Health and Well Being	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
Goal 4	Quality Education	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
Goal 5	Gender Equality	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
Goal 6	Clean Water and Sanitation	Ensure access to water and sanitation for all.
Goal 7	Affordable and Clean Energy	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy.
Goal 8	Decent Work and Economic Growth	Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.
Goal 9	Industries, Innovation and Infrastructure	Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.
Goal 10	Reduced Inequalities	Reduce inequality within and among countries.
Goal 11	Sustainable Cities and Communities	Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
Goal 12	Responsible Consumption and Production	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Goal 13	Climate Action	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
Goal 14	Life Below Water	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources
Goal 15	Life on Land	Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss.
Goal 16	Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.
Goal 17	Partnerships For the Goals	Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Source: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

PROGRESS OF NORTH-EASTERN STATE TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

As per the third edition of the SDG India Index (2020–21) released by NITI Aayog, India's overall SDG score improved by 6 points—from 60 in 2019 to 66 in 2020–21. The SDG India Index (2020-21) computes goal-wise scores on the 16 SDGs for each State and Union Territory (Goal No:15 is not considered). These scores range between 0–100, and if a State/UT achieves a score of 100, it signifies it has achieved the 2030 targets. States and Union Territories are classified in four categories based on their SDG India Index score. The categories are Aspirant (0 to 49), Performer (50–64), Front-Runner (65–99), Achiever (100).⁷ Goal wise SDG scores of north-eastern states are shown below: -

Table-2

Goal 1: No Poverty		
Name of NE States	SDG Score	Category
Tripura	82	
Mizoram	80	
Sikkim	80	Front Runner
Meghalaya	77	
Nagaland	73	
Manipur	60	
Arunachal Pradesh	54	Performer
Assam	51	
Goal 2: Zero Hunger		

Mizoram	72	Front Runner
Sikkim	69	
Arunachal Pradesh	66	
Nagaland	64	Performer
Manipur	64	
Tripura	52	
Assam	41	Aspirant
Meghalaya	37	
Goal 3: Good Health and Well Being		
Mizoram	79	Front Runner
Meghalaya	70	
Manipur	68	
Tripura	67	
Arunachal Pradesh	64	Performer
Sikkim	62	
Nagaland	61	
Assam	59	
Goal 4: Quality Education		
Manipur	63	Performer
Mizoram	60	
Sikkim	58	
Meghalaya	48	Aspirant
Assam	43	
Tripura	42	
Arunachal Pradesh	41	
Nagaland	39	
Goal 5: Gender Equality		
Sikkim	58	Performer
Mizoram	54	
Meghalaya	51	
Nagaland	48	
Manipur	41	Aspirant
Tripura	39	
Arunachal Pradesh	37	
Assam	25	
Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation		
Sikkim	89	Front Runner
Nagaland	87	
Manipur	87	
Mizoram	85	
Tripura	82	
Meghalaya	75	
Arunachal Pradesh	67	
Assam	64	Performer
Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy		
Mizoram	100	Achiever
Sikkim	100	
Assam	98	Front Runner
Manipur	96	
Arunachal Pradesh	85	
Tripura	83	

Nagaland	69	
Meghalaya	50	Performer
Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth		
Sikkim	71	Front Runner
Meghalaya	63	Performer
Tripura	57	
Mizoram	51	
Arunachal Pradesh	50	
Assam	50	
Nagaland	48	Aspirant
Manipur	36	
Goal 9: Industries, Innovation and Infrastructure		
Sikkim	52	Performer
Assam	39	Aspirant
Tripura	35	
Manipur	35	
Mizoram	32	
Arunachal Pradesh	31	
Nagaland	30	
Meghalaya	25	
Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities		
Meghalaya	88	Front Runner
Tripura	85	
Manipur	70	
Arunachal Pradesh	69	
Assam	65	
Mizoram	64	Performer
Sikkim	61	Aspirant
Nagaland	46	
Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities		
Sikkim	85	Front Runner
Tripura	67	
Manipur	65	
Mizoram	61	Performer
Assam	55	
Meghalaya	51	Aspirant
Nagaland	48	
Arunachal Pradesh	39	
Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production		
Tripura	99	Front Runner
Nagaland	91	
Manipur	89	
Mizoram	87	
Arunachal Pradesh	77	
Sikkim	76	
Meghalaya	73	
Assam	66	
Goal 13: Climate Action		
Nagaland	69	Front Runner
Mizoram	66	
Sikkim	65	

Meghalaya	62	Performer
Arunachal Pradesh	58	
Manipur	57	
Assam	53	
Tripura	41	Aspirant
Goal 15: Life on Land		
Arunachal Pradesh	93	Front Runner
Assam	78	
Sikkim	73	
Tripura	69	
Meghalaya	64	Performer
Nagaland	63	
Manipur	60	
Mizoram	48	Aspirant
Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions		
Mizoram	81	Front Runner
Tripura	80	
Nagaland	79	
Meghalaya	72	
Sikkim	72	
Manipur	69	
Arunachal Pradesh	64	Performer
Assam	62	
Goal 17: Partnerships For the Goals		
Sikkim	71	Front Runner
Mizoram	68	
Tripura	65	
Manipur	64	Performer
Nagaland	61	
Meghalaya	60	
Arunachal Pradesh	60	
Assam	57	

Source: Retrieve from <https://sdgindiaindex.niti.gov.in/#/ranking>.

Overall Discussion

From the table-2, Tripura is leading in terms of achieving Goal-1 among NER followed by Mizoram and Sikkim under the category of Front Runner. Whereas the Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur are remained as performer. In respect of Goal-2, Mizoram among the NER is the top state as front runner in terms of ensuring the zero hunger while Meghalaya as the bottom state among NER under the aspirant category. Again, Mizoram with SDG score of 79 under the front runner category leading in promoting Goal-3 while Assam ranks lowest among the NER with SDG score of 59 which comes under the performer category. In promoting Goal-4 Manipur ranks highest in providing equitable quality education while Nagaland ranks lowest as well as comes under the aspirant category among NER. In achieving the Goal-5 NER states struggles to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls as the states comes under the category of performer. In terms of ensuring Goal-6 most of the NER performing well except Assam which comes under the performer category. Whereas Mizoram and Sikkim are the only two states which has achieved the goal in accessing affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all i.e. goal-7. In promoting Goal-8, Sikkim is the only state among NER which is front runner. In attaining Goal-9, most of the NER states remained under the aspirant category. Meghalaya followed by the Tripura has achieved front runner category in Goal-10 within the country whereas Nagaland remained under the Aspirant category. Sikkim ranks top among the NER ensuring the Goal-11 and Arunachal remained in the bottom of the list of NER states. The North-East as a region has shown remarkable performance in promoting Goal-12. In terms of Goal-13, Nagaland followed by Mizoram and Sikkim are taking

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measures in combating climate change. Tripura among the NER lacking behind in ensuring action on climate change. Arunachal Pradesh not only among NER as well as among the other state of India has performed exceptionally well in upholding Goal-15. In promoting Goal-16, most of the NER has achieved the front runner category. In achieving the Goal-17, Sikkim, Mizoram and Tripura among the NER has performed exceptionally well.

MEASURES TAKEN FOR IMPLEMENTING SDGS IN INDIA

In the national level National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog, the Government of India's premier think tank, has been entrusted with the task of oversight, technical support and coordinating the SDGs. In addition to that the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is engaged for monitoring SDG indicators Data System for SDGs.⁸ For review and follow up SDG task force has been set up by involving Central Ministries, State Governments, think tanks etc. At the sub national level for coordination and convergence planning department, High level committee led by Chief Minister/ Chief Secretary level (in one-third of the States/ UTs), as well as SDG unit/cell is formed within Planning Department for knowledge and technical support.

Government's flagship programmes like Swachh Bharat, Make in India, Skill India, and Digital India are at the core of the SDGs. State and local governments play a paramount role in these programmes. State governments are paying keen attention to visioning, planning, budgeting, and developing implementation and monitoring systems for the SDGs.

The government has formulated policies to achieve SDGs to mitigate the effect of Climate Change and build Sustainable cities and communities. The Government is implementing the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) which provides an overarching policy framework for all climate actions.⁹

POLICY AND INITIATIVES

The Government of India (GoI) has launched several policies to address these challenges:

1. **Act East Policy:** The objective of Act East Policy is to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationships with countries in the Indo-Pacific region through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.¹⁰
2. **BharatNet:** BharatNet, one of the biggest rural telecom projects in the world, implemented to all Gram Panchayats to enabling access providers like mobile operators, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), Cable TV operators, content providers to launch various services such as applications like e-health, e-education and e-governance in rural and remote India.¹¹
3. **NER District SDG Index and Dashboard:** NER District SDG Index Report and Dashboard is a joint initiative of NITI Aayog and Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (M/DoNER) towards localisation of SDGs at the level of the districts of the NER.¹²
4. **Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North-East (PM-DevINE):** PM-DevINE scheme has been announced in Budget 2022-23 as a 100% Central Sector Scheme. Its objectives are - to fund infrastructure convergently, support social development projects based on felt needs of the NER States; enable livelihood activities particularly for youth and women.¹³

India has been actively working to cover every aspect of SDG Goals in the country. The various initiatives as well as the schemes of the Government includes are -

1. In order to combat chronic poverty, improve access to essential services, offer social protection, enable poverty escapes, and create gainful employment, the GoI has put in place a number of programs. initiatives aimed at combating poverty include the National Rural Livelihood Mission and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Beema Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Suraksha Beema Yojana (PMJSBY), Mission Antyodaya, the National Food Security Mission, Poshan Abhiyan, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), the Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Yojana, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), and others are a few of the other programs.
2. Working towards ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition, India has undertaken various programmes such as National Nutrition Mission POSHAN Abhiyaan, Antoydaya Anna Yojana (AAY), Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), Mid-day Meal (MDM) scheme, the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), etc.
3. India has been actively working to cover every aspect of Goal-3 and strengthen the health sector in the country. The various initiatives include National Health Mission (NHM) - sub-missions - National Rural

- Health Mission (NRHM) and National Urban Health Mission - 11 - (NUHM), AYUSHMAN BHARAT - Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (PMJAY), Mission Indradhanush etc.
4. The GoI's initiatives to improve education quality include Samagra Shiksha, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), Teacher Education (TE), NEP 2020, and others. Digital programs like SWAYAM, Shagun, Shaala Saarthi, and Shala Kosh aid in advancing technology in the field of education.
 5. India is committed, to achieving gender equality in all spheres of life through its policies such as Gender Budgeting, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, the Janani Suraksha Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), etc.
 6. Through multi-sectoral initiatives like the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRWDP), Swachh Bharat Mission - Gramin, Jal Jeevan Mission, etc., India has been actively working to provide Clean Water and Sanitation.
 7. To ensure that everyone has access to clean and inexpensive energy, the Government of India has created a number of programs, including the National Solar Mission, the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana- Saubhagya, the LPG subsidy (under PAHAL), the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana, the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, UJALA, etc.
 8. The government of India is implementing a number of programs to support the infrastructure sector, including the flagship Made in India and Digital India initiatives as well as the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Bharatmala, Sagarmala, and other programs geared toward innovation and industrial development.
 9. The Government of India has undertaken several measures to achieve the objectives outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 15. These include the National Agro-forestry Policy of 2014, the Green Highways Policy of 2015, the National Afforestation Program, the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats Program, the Programme on Conservation of Natural Resources and Eco-systems, and more.
 10. Through open and responsible institutions at all levels, India seeks to promote an atmosphere of justice, peace, and sound government. The Right to Information Act of 2005 ensures institutional accountability and transparency by granting citizens access to information from public bodies. The Aadhaar is one of the world's largest unique national identifications projects.

Conclusion

India is a country with the largest population in the world. The steps taken by India for the achievement of SDGs matter a lot to the world. Achieving the SDGs in India's North-East is a challenging yet attainable endeavour. Despite obstacles, there have been commendable achievements in various domains through various initiatives of GoI. By addressing infrastructure deficits, improving healthcare access, and emphasizing sustainable development, the region can unlock its full potential and ensure a better future for its people, all while preserving its unique natural and cultural heritage. The North-East serves as a testament to the importance of inclusive and sustainable development in building a brighter future for all.

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