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### The Impact of Sustainable Development Goals on Poverty Reduction and Social Equality

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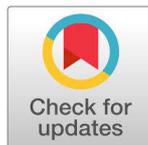
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***Abstract:** The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations in 2015, provide a comprehensive global framework aimed at addressing critical development challenges, including poverty reduction and the promotion of social equality. This paper examines the impact of the Sustainable Development Goals on poverty alleviation and the advancement of social equality, with particular emphasis on inclusive growth, access to basic services, and social protection mechanisms. The study explores how SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) contribute to improving living standards, enhancing economic opportunities, and reducing disparities among different social and economic groups. Using secondary data from government reports, international development agencies, and existing literature, the paper analyzes the effectiveness of SDG-oriented policies and programs in reducing income inequality and fostering social inclusion. The findings indicate that while significant progress has been made in expanding access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, persistent challenges such as regional disparities, gender inequality, and unequal resource distribution continue to hinder equitable development. The study concludes that achieving sustainable poverty reduction and social equality requires stronger policy coordination, targeted interventions for vulnerable populations, and sustained commitment from governments, private stakeholders, and civil society. The paper highlights the importance of inclusive and people-centered development strategies to ensure the successful realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.*

**Keywords:** Poverty reduction, Social equity, Sustainable development Goals

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## Introduction

Poverty and social inequality remain serious global challenges even in the twenty-first century, affecting millions of people worldwide. Many individuals continue to lack access to basic necessities such as food, safe housing, healthcare, education, and decent employment opportunities. Economic growth alone has not been sufficient to eliminate poverty, as benefits are often unevenly distributed. Social inequality, including income disparities, gender discrimination, and unequal access to resources, further intensifies poverty and social exclusion. These interconnected problems hinder inclusive and sustainable development. To address these issues, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The SDGs consist of 17 goals aimed at achieving economic prosperity, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. Among them, SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) are directly focused on poverty reduction and social equality. The SDGs adopt a holistic approach by recognizing poverty as a multidimensional issue influenced by education, health, employment, and social justice. They emphasize inclusive growth, social protection systems, and equal opportunities for all sections of society. Governments, international agencies, and civil society organizations have aligned their policies and programs with SDG targets to reduce disparities and promote equitable development. Through targeted interventions and inclusive policies, the SDGs aim to improve living standards, empower marginalized groups, and ensure that no one is left behind, contributing to long-term sustainable and inclusive growth.

## Review of Literature

**Sachs, J.D., Schmidt-Traub, G., Kroll, C., Lafortune, G., and Fuller, G. (2019)** in their study entitled, “Sustainable Development Goals and Global Development Progress”, explained that the Sustainable Development Goals provide an integrated framework to address poverty and inequality through inclusive economic growth and social development. The study highlighted that coordinated policy actions and investment in health, education, and social protection significantly contribute to poverty reduction and the promotion of social equality across countries.

**Alkire, S. and Foster, J. (2011)** in their research work titled, “Counting and Multidimensional Poverty Measurement”, emphasized that poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon that goes beyond income deprivation. The authors stated that access to education, healthcare, living conditions, and social inclusion are essential components of

poverty reduction, which are directly addressed under SDG 1 and SDG 10. Their framework has been widely adopted to assess the impact of sustainable development policies on social equality.

**Ortiz, I. and Cummins, M. (2013)** have written a paper on, “Inequality Trends and Social Policy”, which revealed that rising income and social inequalities weaken the effectiveness of poverty reduction strategies. The study stressed that redistributive policies, inclusive public expenditure, and social protection measures are necessary to bridge inequality and ensure sustainable development. The findings supported the role of SDGs in promoting equitable growth.

**Gupta, J., Vegelin, C., and Lynch, A. (2020)** in their study entitled, “The Sustainable Development Goals and Inclusive Development”, examined the implementation of SDGs in developing countries. The authors found that SDG-driven initiatives have improved access to basic services such as education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, thereby contributing to poverty alleviation. However, the study also noted that social inequalities persist due to regional disparities and uneven policy implementation.

**Barrientos, A. (2013)** in his study titled, “Social Protection and Poverty Reduction”, explained that social protection programs such as cash transfers and welfare schemes play a vital role in reducing poverty and vulnerability among marginalized populations. The study concluded that integrating social protection mechanisms within the SDG framework strengthens efforts to achieve social equality and inclusive development.

**UNDP (2021)** in its report, “Sustainable Development Goals and Human Development”, highlighted that progress towards poverty reduction and social equality depends on inclusive policies, institutional capacity, and community participation. The report emphasized that SDG-based development strategies have contributed to improvements in human development indicators, though challenges such as gender inequality and unequal resource distribution remain.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite significant economic growth and development initiatives across the world, poverty and social inequality continue to remain major challenges in both developed and developing countries. Large sections of the population still lack access to basic necessities such as adequate income, quality education, healthcare, housing, and employment opportunities. Social inequalities based on income, gender, region, and social status further widen the gap between different sections of society, limiting inclusive and sustainable

development. The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations in 2015 aimed to address these persistent issues through a comprehensive and integrated development framework. In particular, SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) focus on eradicating poverty in all its forms and promoting social equality by ensuring inclusive growth and equal opportunities for all. Although several countries have implemented SDG-oriented policies and programs, the extent to which these initiatives have effectively reduced poverty and bridged social inequalities remains uncertain. In many regions, progress towards achieving the SDGs has been uneven, with marginalized and vulnerable groups continuing to face economic and social disadvantages. Challenges such as inadequate policy implementation, regional disparities, lack of awareness, and insufficient monitoring mechanisms hinder the successful realization of SDG targets. As a result, poverty reduction efforts may not fully translate into improved social equality. Therefore, there is a need to systematically examine the impact of the Sustainable Development Goals on poverty reduction and social equality. Understanding the effectiveness of SDG-driven initiatives and identifying the existing gaps will help policymakers and development practitioners design more inclusive strategies to ensure equitable and sustainable development. This study seeks to address this problem by analyzing the role of SDGs in reducing poverty and promoting social equality.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To analyze the role of Sustainable Development Goals in reducing poverty across different sections of society.
- To study the impact of SDG 1 (No Poverty) on improving living standards and economic well-being.
- To assess the contribution of SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) in promoting social equality and inclusive growth.
- To identify the key challenges and barriers in the effective implementation of SDGs related to poverty reduction and social equality.
- To evaluate the extent to which SDG-oriented policies and programs benefit marginalized and vulnerable groups.
- To suggest measures for strengthening SDG implementation to achieve sustainable poverty reduction and social equality.

## Methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research methodology to examine the impact of Sustainable Development Goals on poverty reduction and social equality. The methodology is designed to understand the role of SDG-oriented policies and initiatives in promoting inclusive and equitable development.

## Nature of the Study

The study is analytical in nature and focuses on assessing the effectiveness of Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), in addressing poverty and social disparities.

## Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the global perspective of Sustainable Development Goals with specific reference to developing countries, where poverty and inequality remain significant challenges.

## Findings

**Table 1:**

Socio –Economic Profile of the Respondents

S.No	Variable	Percentage
1.	Gender (Female)	62%
2.	Age Group (18-35 Years)	54%
3.	Educational Qualification (Graduate & Above)	60%
4.	Occupational Status (Employed & Self-Employed)	48%
5.	Type of Family (Nuclear Family)	66%

## Interpretation

The gender-wise classification of the respondents reveals that 62% are female, while 38% are male, indicating higher female participation in the study. The age-wise distribution shows that 54% of respondents belong to the age group of 18–35 years, followed by other age groups, indicating that young adults form the majority of respondents. With respect to

educational qualification, 60% of respondents are graduates and above, showing a relatively educated sample population. Regarding occupational status, 48% of respondents are employed or self-employed, indicating economic participation. The type of family reveals that 66% of respondents belong to nuclear families, while 34% belong to joint families, reflecting changing family structures.

**Table 2:**

Awareness and Impact of Sustainable Development Goals

S.No	Variable	Percentage
1.	Awareness about SDGs	72%
2.	Awareness about SDG 1(No Poverty)	68%
3.	SDGs help in poverty reduction	70%
4.	Awareness About SDG10 (Reduced Inequalities)	64%
5.	SDGs promote social equality	66%

**Interpretation**

The findings reveal that 72% of the respondents are aware of Sustainable Development Goals, indicating a fairly good level of awareness. About 68% of respondents are aware of SDG 1 (No Poverty), while 64% are aware of SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Further, 70% of respondents agree that SDGs contribute to poverty reduction, and 66% believe that SDGs promote social equality, reflecting a positive perception of SDG initiatives.

**Table 3:**

Impact of SDGs on Poverty Reduction and Social Equality

S.No	Variable	Percentage
1.	Improvement in access to basic services	69%
2.	Increase in employment opportunities	58%
3.	Reduction in income inequality	55%

4.	Improvement in social inclusion	57%
5.	Benefit to vulnerable and marginalized groups	61%
6.	Satisfaction with SDG implementation	57%

### Interpretation

The study shows that 69% of respondents experienced improved access to basic services such as education and healthcare due to SDG initiatives. About 58% of respondents observed increased employment opportunities, contributing to poverty reduction. Nearly 55% of respondents felt that income inequality has reduced, while 63% reported improved social inclusion. Further, 61% agreed that SDG programs benefit vulnerable and marginalized groups. Overall, 57% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the implementation of SDGs, though a significant proportion still expects better execution.

### Suggestions

To enhance the impact of Sustainable Development Goals on poverty reduction and social equality, governments should strengthen the implementation of SDG-related policies by integrating them effectively into national and regional development plans. Greater focus should be placed on vulnerable and marginalized groups through targeted welfare schemes, social protection programs, and inclusive development initiatives. Increasing public awareness about Sustainable Development Goals at the grassroots level is essential to ensure community participation and ownership of development efforts. Investment in education, healthcare, and skill development must be prioritized, as these sectors play a crucial role in breaking the cycle of poverty and promoting social equality. Gender equality measures should be reinforced to ensure equal access to opportunities for women in education, employment, and decision-making processes. In addition, strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be established to assess the progress of SDG implementation and ensure transparency and accountability. Collaboration among governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and civil society should be encouraged to maximize the effectiveness of development initiatives. Finally, addressing regional disparities and improving data collection systems will help ensure that the benefits of Sustainable Development Goals reach all sections of society, thereby achieving sustainable poverty reduction and social equality.

## Conclusion

The study concludes that the Sustainable Development Goals play a significant role in addressing poverty reduction and promoting social equality across societies. The integrated approach of the SDGs, particularly SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), has contributed to improving access to basic services, enhancing social protection, and fostering inclusive economic growth. The findings indicate that SDG-oriented initiatives have positively influenced living standards and social inclusion, especially among vulnerable and marginalized groups. However, the progress achieved remains uneven due to challenges such as regional disparities, gender inequality, limited awareness, and gaps in policy implementation. Therefore, achieving sustainable poverty reduction and social equality requires strengthened governance, targeted interventions, effective monitoring, and active collaboration among governments, private sector, and civil society. With sustained commitment and inclusive development strategies, the Sustainable Development Goals can serve as a powerful framework for building an equitable and poverty-free society.

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