

A STUDY ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

Tamil Nadu actively pursues the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a comprehensive, state-level strategy, demonstrating strong progress as evidenced by its high rankings in the NITI Aayog's SDG India Index, particularly excelling in No Poverty, Affordable and Clean Energy, and Climate Action. The state's commitment is shown through its alignment of development programs with the 17 SDGs, focusing on inclusive growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability, with implementation overseen by a Chief Secretary-chaired committee and supported by various government departments and initiatives. In this study mainly focus on key area, initiatives, progress and performances.

KEYWORDS: Sustainable Developments, Goal, Performances, Growth, Equity, Initiatives, Implementation, Tamil Nadu.

INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015 by all United Nations Member States, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all by 2030. There are 17 interconnected goals that address a broad range of global challenges, including climate action, gender equality, and quality education. These goals provide a blueprint for a better and more sustainable future, requiring collaborative efforts from governments, businesses, and individuals to achieve.

What the SDGs are:

- A set of 17 interlinked goals designed to provide a better and more sustainable future for everyone.

- A universal call to action for all countries to promote prosperity while protecting the environment.
- A 15-year plan, known as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the UN in 2015.
- An integrated framework that recognizes that progress in one area affects others, requiring balance between social, economic, and environmental dimensions.

Vision of SDGs

The vision of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a world without poverty and hunger, where everyone enjoys health, education, equality, and prosperity, and where the planet and its natural resources are protected for future generations. This transformation is achieved by 17 interconnected goals, part of the 2030 Agenda that provide a comprehensive framework for global, social, economic, and environmental sustainability, aiming to ensure that no one is left behind.

Key aspects of the SDGs' vision:

- **Ending Poverty and Hunger**

The core vision includes eradicating poverty in all its forms and ensuring zero hunger through food security and sustainable agriculture.

- **Health and Well-being**

The goal is to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all people at all ages.

- **Education and Gender Equality**

The vision emphasizes inclusive, equitable, and quality education for everyone, along with achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

- **Clean Water and Energy**

Providing access to clean water, sanitation, and affordable, reliable, and modern energy is a central component.

- **Sustainable Cities and Communities**

The vision includes fostering sustainable cities and communities that are inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

- **Climate Action and Environmental Protection**

Urgently combating climate change, protecting biodiversity, and preserving natural resources like oceans, forests, and land ecosystems is crucial.

- **Peace and Justice**

Establishing peaceful, just, and strong institutions that promote constructive societies is a key aim.

- **Global Partnership**

The vision is supported by strengthening global partnerships and mobilizing means of implementation, including revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

Performance and key achievements of Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu is a "frontrunner" in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), demonstrating notable progress across key areas of social, economic, and environmental development. The state's efforts are guided by a specific roadmap, the "Tamil Nadu's Vision for Sustainable Development Goals," which was developed to systematically address the 17 SDGs.

As a top performer in India, Tamil Nadu has continuously improved its overall composite score in the NITI Aayog's SDG India Index. In the 2023–24 SDG India Index 4.0, Tamil Nadu excelled in several areas:

- **SDG 1: No Poverty:** The state has consistently ranked first in this goal, with a composite score of 92, and has a poverty rate much lower than the national average.
- **SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy:** Tamil Nadu has achieved a perfect score of 100% in both the SDG India Index 3.0 and 4.0 editions.
- **SDG 13: Climate Action:** The state has made significant strides in tackling climate change, jumping from 11th to 1st place with a score of 81. Initiatives like the Green Tamil Nadu Mission aim to boost forest cover and transform districts into carbon-neutral hubs.
- **SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being:** High institutional delivery rates (97.18% in 2023–24) and enhanced healthcare infrastructure demonstrate substantial results in this goal.
- **SDG 15: Life on Land:** With nearly 25% of its land as forest cover, Tamil Nadu prioritizes biodiversity conservation and environmental sustainability.

Governance and monitoring mechanisms

To ensure effective implementation of the SDGs, Tamil Nadu has established a robust governance and monitoring framework:

- **High-Power Committee:** Headed by the Chief Secretary, this committee oversees the state's SDG implementation.
- **Sustainable Development Goals Coordination Centre (SDGCC):** Established in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the SDGCC coordinates the localization, monitoring, and implementation of the SDGs.
- **Working Groups:** Eight thematic working groups have been formed to review and monitor specific sets of goals and targets.
- **Decentralized planning:** The state is localizing the SDGs at the district, block, and village panchayat levels by integrating them with Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP). A District Good Governance Index (DGGI) has also been developed to monitor progress at the district level.
- **Digital tools:** The state has developed an interactive, dynamic dashboard and SDG portal to track and monitor implementation.

Key government programs supporting SDGs

Several Tamil Nadu government schemes and policies directly contribute to achieving the SDGs:

- **Pudhumai Penn Scheme:** Supports quality education and empowerment for women.
- **Naan Mudhalvan Scheme:** Focuses on skill development and enhancing employment for youth.
- **Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme:** Aims to improve school attendance and nutrition.
- **Green Tamil Nadu Mission:** Seeks to increase forest and tree cover to 33%.
- **TNWeSafe:** This project focuses on fostering an inclusive workforce for women in emerging sectors.
- **Kalaigarn Mahalir Urimai Thittam:** Provides financial aid to women.

Challenges

Despite its strong performance, Tamil Nadu faces challenges, including regional imbalances, socio-economic disparities, and environmental vulnerabilities. The state's future efforts are aimed at:

- Strengthening collaboration with NITI Aayog on the localization and implementation of SDGs.
- Continuing to address climate change risks, especially in coastal areas.

- Ensuring that economic growth is balanced with environmental conservation.
- Deepening localization to ensure that no one is left behind in the pursuit of sustainable development.

Government Initiatives Driving Change

The Tamil Nadu government has rolled out several flagship initiatives aimed at accelerating progress on the SDGs, including: PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana): Targeting the construction of 4 million affordable housing units to ensure shelter for all citizens. Ayushman Bharat - PMJAY: Providing health insurance to over 300 million beneficiaries, enhancing access to essential health services. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan: Facilitating the construction of 11 million toilets, thereby improving sanitation and hygiene across urban and rural areas.

Future Commitments

SDG – Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development is universal, transformational, holistic and people-centered, and will leave no one behind. An intergovernmental set of 17 aspirational Goals with 169 targets, further elaborated through indicators focused on measurable outcomes. SDG is achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner. Several SDG targets are to be achieved before 2030; even by 2020. NITI Aayog, with the Prime Minister as its chairperson, has been entrusted with the role to co-ordinate with States and UTs for SDGs. In Tamil Nadu, the Government have constituted a High Power Committee with the chairmanship of Chief Secretary to Government to oversee the implementation of SDGs. Eight thematic Working Groups have been formed to review and monitor the achievement of goals and targets. The implementation is co-ordinated by the Planning & Development Department and State Planning Commission. The SDG India Index 2023-24 reports Tamil Nadu as one of the 32 states and union territories achieving frontrunner status. This success reflects the state's integrated approach towards sustainable development, fostering collaborative efforts across various sectors. Looking ahead, the Tamil Nadu government is committed to deepening its partnership with NITI Aayog in the localization and implementation of SDGs. The aim is to create a holistic framework that aligns developmental goals with community needs, paving the way for a prosperous and sustainable Tamil Nadu by 2047.

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