

Sustainable development and climate change under union budget 2021-2022

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India and the sustainable development goals

The World economies are in the fifth year of the 17 sustainable development goals(SDGs) to be achieved in 2030. India ranks 117th amongst 166 countries in terms of sustainable development goals in overall performance as per the Sustainable Development Report, 2020. According to the report, the short-term impact of the COVID-19 is highly negative in the case of SDGs such as poverty, zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, decent work and economic growth and inequality. Whereas mixed and moderately negative impact in the cases such as gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, industry, innovation and infrastructure, sustainable cities and communities, peace, justice and strong institutions and partnership for the goals. However, the impact is still unclear in the case of responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water and life on land. All these goals are direct components of well-being as well as directly or indirectly related to environmental sustainability. Even though, the reduction in economic activity and all forms of transportation reduces the vulnerability of the environment, it reaches its previous level immediately after removing the lockdown. Studies show that the impact of climate change on the Earth system is clear recently and it's affecting across the world. Anthropogenic activity is the major cause of climate change and it affects not only human being but also the whole flora and fauna. If this situation continues, it would be difficult to achieve the philosophical solution of SDGs, balance among the three-dimension ecology, economy and society and the slogan "no one leave behind". So concerted efforts are needed to mitigate and adapt the situation of climate change.

In order to achieve a sustainable future, the Paris Agreement holds the rise in global average temperature within 2 degrees by 2100 and if possible, maintain the rise in temperature to 1.5 degree Celsius. Another highlight of the accord is the importance given to financial flows in encouraging adaptation and mitigation. Towards adaptation, shifting to cleaner and greener sources of energy such as wind, solar and tidal power are necessary. Also, the emission intensity of production is sought to be reduced. On the mitigation front, efforts to neutralise the rise in carbon dioxide emissions has been mooted. This includes the creation of carbon sinks and carbon sequestration methods which would allow natural avenues for capturing carbon. More effort is needed from the part of the government to expand green cover, afforestation, etc. For this the accord has called for actions spanning mitigation, adaptation, emission reduction and ensuring adequate financial flows to supplement the financing and budgetary requirements arising from this commitment. All these points towards the need for reforming the legal structure to have an efficient ex-post mechanism for dispute resolution and contract enforcement in India.

The Economic Survey stresses the importance of the Localization of the SDGs to achieve the 2030 agenda. It involves the process of adapting, planning, implementing and monitoring the SDGs from national to local levels by relevant institutions and stakeholders. Here the role of the State is very important in developmental activities based on the principles of cooperative and competitive federalism.

Climate change

India has set its own intended Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) keeping in mind the developmental imperatives of the country and is on a "best effort basis". The main aims are to achieve a reduction in the emissions intensity of GDP by at least 33-35% with reference to 2005 level, to achieve 40 per cent of cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel sources and enhance forest and tree cover to create an additional carbon sink equivalent to 2.5 to 3 billion tons of carbon dioxide by 2030. Besides, the State has to be achieved sustainable lifestyles based on traditional values of conservation and moderation, adaptation to climate change, clean economic development and environment friendly technology, etc. The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) has actively taken initiatives to achieve these through eight national missions. India also has the Bureau of

Energy Efficiency (BEE), an agency under the Ministry of Power to develop programs for conservation and efficient use of energy.

Climate change is a global issue and to a large extent requires co-ordinated and synchronised policy actions to reduce vulnerability within a limited time frame. If we do not control the rise in global average temperature, it would increase the risk to human health, livelihood, food production and economic growth. It is noted that financial stability is needed to balance livelihood and economic growth. In order to achieve financial stability, the three major actions to be strengthened are aligning finance with sustainability, augmenting finance for sustainable development and investing in resilience for sustainable development. Market failure is one of the major reasons for climate change which need ample budgetary allocations.

Union budget 2021-22

In the budget, 2021-22, the proposals in Part A do not mention anything directly related to climate change. Out of the six pillars of budget, the expenditure on the first one health and well-being is directly promoted SDGs. Universal coverage of water supply and clean environment, as a pre requisite to achieving universal health is also a pre requisite for controlling climate change. The major recommendation in this regard is the Jal Jeevan Mission, which aims at a universal water supply in all 4,378 Urban Local Bodies with 2.86 crores household tap connections, as well as liquid waste management in 500 AMRUT cities, will be implemented over 5 years, with an outlay of Rs. 2,87,000 crores. Besides, the Urban Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 will also be implemented with a total financial allocation of Rs.1,41,678 crores over a period of 5 years from 2021-2026. Clean Air to tackle the burgeoning problem of air pollution, the budget proposed to provide an amount of `2,217 crores for 42 urban centres with a million-plus population in this budget.

The other positive measures taken to control carbon dioxide emissions are the voluntary vehicle scrapping policy, to phase out old and unfit vehicles. This will help in encouraging fuel efficient, environment friendly vehicles, thereby reducing vehicular pollution and oil import bill. The budget also proposed to launch a Hydrogen Energy Mission in 2021-22 for generating hydrogen from green power sources, to provide an additional capital infusion of Rs.1,000 crores to Solar Energy Corporation of India and Rs. 1,500 crores to Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency. All these are a step towards to control climate

change by giving a boost to the non-conventional energy sector. Moreover, to justify the SDG life below water and conservation of deep seas bio diversity the budget proposed a Deep Ocean Mission with an outlay of more than Rs. 4,000 crores, over five years.

India's SDG initiatives have been based on the Voluntary National Review (VNR), that is the report presented to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development. The focus of the report was the principle of "Leaving No One Behind", which lies at the heart of SDGs. The implementation of NDC has started on 1st January 2021. There is a huge gap between resource availability and the requirements and the implementation of wide-ranging NDC goals presents a major challenge. Therefore, a co-ordinated and planned approach is needed to break the "Tragedy of the Horizon", myopic policy actions taken by several stakeholders of the financial system that lacks clarity and inaction when it comes to eliminating climate change.

Maximum governance is suitable for the sustainable management of climate issues, because there are a number of institutions, rules and stakeholders within and outside the country involved in decision making. But it is seen that the state lost its control over the citizen, institutions and other participants. It's still a player because environmental governance need management across the local, national and international level. Since innovative new forms of organizations are developing at different stakeholders' levels, most of them need support and control, the slogan should be "maximum government with maximum governance" rather than "minimum government with maximum governance".

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