



FOSTERING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND AWARENESS: EXPLORING EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES AND KNOWLEDGE-SHARING PLATFORMS FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Ms. Surekha Chidambaranath

Assistant Professor, MES's Pillai College of Education & Research, Chembur, Mumbai

Ms. Athira S. R.

Alumna Batch 2020-2022, MES's Pillai College of Education & Research, Chembur, Mumbai

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Abstract

Sustainable living is a way of accessing one's needs without harming the potential for the future population to do the same in order to promote inner and outer peace. With the help of sustainable practices, we can imagine a future where the environment, economy, and societies are in harmony. This study looks at how education and knowledge-sharing technologies can support the SDGs and contribute toward an environmentally sustainable world. It draws attention to the ignorance possessed by the stakeholders regarding the SDGs and their responsibilities as global citizens that can encourage them to engage in sustainable living practices. This study uses an exploratory research design to address three progressive objectives: assessing the level of awareness about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among stakeholders, exploring the role of education in promoting SDGs and identifying effective platforms for spreading awareness about the SDGs. A heterogeneous sampling strategy was applied to achieve different views and experiences to the sample. Structured Google Form survey was used whereby 47 subjects were the target sample. The paper concludes by advocating for educational reforms, community-focused initiatives, and collaborative efforts to foster a thriving, sustainable future.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Sustainability, Education, Community Engagement, Knowledge-Sharing Platforms, Social Media, Curriculum Integration, Responsible Citizenship, Global Stakeholders.

Every human holds the power to shape a sustainable world through mindful choices, collective action, and a commitment to the well-being of future generations.

INTRODUCTION:

Sustainable living describes the efforts made by an individual or a community to use the natural resources available on the earth conservatively. This includes lifestyle choices like adopting

renewable sources of energy, minimizing waste generation, saving water, using green products, and buying from the local businesses.

In the 21st Century, such sustainable development has become extremely important because humanity faces challenges, like climate change, global warming, natural resource degradation, and social injustice that have never been witnessed in history. Sustainable development promotes reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, switching to renewable energy sources, and environmentally friendly practices to lessen impacts and achieve ecological sustainability.

In 2015, the global community in the form of the United Nations adopted a set of 17 interconnected goals which are known as the sustainable development goals (SDGs) as a part of the 2030 agenda on sustainable development. The SDGs address problems that affect the masses such as poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. The importance of the SDG's is that they provide a unifying framework for action to the entire community consisting of governments, organizations and people providing hope for a sustainable world.

Community participation and mobilization is important in accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as it enable the communities to penetrate knowledge key to taking sustainable development actions. Community engagement encourages a collective conscience that translates into mobilization towards the active participation of initiatives geared towards issues of poverty, climate change, and even issues of inequality.

The world in search for advancement that is sustainable requires a multi-faceted approach from actors who brings different capabilities that all seek to achieve the SDGs. For example, the governments are responsible for the developing policies and application of relevant strategies to achieve sustainability while the business sector most times creates and looks for capital in green technologies. This is where educational institutions come in to ensure they create awareness and build responsibility for tomorrow's generation by including sustainability in the curricula. NGOs and community members promote society's initiatives in the bottom-up approach and stand for justice and diversity. Without the media, public awareness on the important issues would not be as great, people's opinions would not be formed and the people would not be inspired to act. Importantly, individuals are the cornerstone, adopting sustainable lifestyles and holding institutions accountable. Collaboration among these stakeholders creates synergies that drive meaningful progress, addressing interconnected global challenges like poverty, inequality, and climate change. Together, their contributions ensure a holistic approach to sustainable development, leaving no one behind.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 requires that both individuals and institutions are aware about these global goals and have a clear understanding of how they can contribute towards the achievement of these goals. This study is important because it emphasizes the need to determine the best ways to promote the SDGs to various stakeholders and get them involved.

The study intends to explore educational initiatives and knowledge-sharing platforms to promote sustainable living and SDGs. It emphasizes the importance of educational processes in transforming attitudes, deepening comprehension of the issues and organizing joint efforts. Such knowledge as provided by the study intends to establish a participatory environment where all members of the society are involved in the quest for a sustainable world.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To assess awareness of SDGs among various stakeholders.
2. To explore the role of educational initiatives in promoting SDGs.
3. To identify effective knowledge-sharing platforms and tools for sustainability.

RESEARCH QUESTION:

1. How aware are stakeholders of SDGs?
2. What role does education play in promoting SDG awareness?
3. What platforms and tools are most effective for knowledge-sharing on sustainability?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study employs an exploratory research design to investigate two primary objectives: assessing the level of awareness about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among stakeholders and identifying effective platforms for spreading awareness about the SDGs. A heterogeneous sampling method was adopted to ensure diversity in the sample, capturing varied perspectives and experiences. Data was collected using a structured Google Form survey, targeting a sample of 47 individuals from major Indian cities, including Mumbai, Chennai, and Trivandrum.

The collected data were analyzed descriptively to summarize the findings, identify patterns, and address the research questions.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION:

- In the study sample, 42.6% of respondents were aged between 18 and 30 years, 36.2% were between 31 and 45 years, 12.8% were above 60 years, 6.4% were between 46 and 60 years, and the remaining were below 18 years of age.

- Regarding occupational distribution, 46.8% of respondents were working professionals, 23.4% were students, 12.8% identified as teachers or educators, 10.6% were retired employees, and the remaining respondents were unemployed graduates. This diverse demographic composition provides a comprehensive perspective on the awareness and engagement levels concerning sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- When asked about their idea of a sustainable world, 75% of respondents demonstrated a clear understanding of the concept. Their responses revealed a collective vision centered on environmental conservation, social equity, and responsible resource use. A significant number emphasized the principle of meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. This included protecting ecosystems, conserving natural resources, and adopting practices like "reduce, reuse, recycle" to minimize waste. Social equity emerged as a prominent theme, with respondents advocating for equal treatment of all individuals, regardless of socio-economic background, caste, or religion. They also stressed the importance of ensuring access to fundamental necessities such as food, water, education, and healthcare. These insights highlight a shared aspiration for a sustainable world that balances environmental preservation with inclusivity and fairness.
- The responses revealed varying levels of awareness about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among participants. Only 21.3% of respondents were highly familiar with the SDGs and could list some goals, while 46.8% had a partial understanding but were unable to name few. A significant 31.9% admitted to having no familiarity with the SDGs. When asked about their role as stakeholders in achieving a sustainable world, 55.3% recognized themselves as stakeholders, 34% were uncertain, and 10.6% believed they were not stakeholders. These findings underscore the need for targeted educational initiatives to enhance awareness about the SDGs and individuals' roles in contributing to their achievement, addressing the gap in knowledge and engagement among stakeholders.
- When asked what were the most pressing issues the world needs to address, the responses reveal that the most pressing global issues identified by participants align closely with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Poverty, Clean Water and Sanitation, and Good Health and Well-Being emerged as the most frequently mentioned priorities, highlighting a focus on basic human needs. Quality Education and Gender Equality were also emphasized, underscoring the importance of social equity and

empowerment. Environmental concerns, such as Climate Action and Affordable and Clean Energy, were consistently identified, reflecting the urgency of addressing climate change and sustainable resource use. Overall, the responses highlight the interconnectedness of these issues and the need for integrated solutions.

- 57.4% of respondents have never participated in social activities, while most have engaged in charity, tree plantation, or cleanliness drives. This lack of participation may stem from limited awareness about their roles as global citizens and stakeholders in creating a sustainable world. Many individuals remain focused on personal well-being, overlooking the broader responsibility of contributing to societal and environmental betterment. Bridging this gap requires targeted educational initiatives to foster a sense of global citizenship, emphasizing that collective efforts are essential for addressing pressing issues and achieving a more sustainable and equitable future.
- The respondents demonstrated limited awareness about SDGs but expressed a strong interest in learning more about them. Among the preferred modes of gaining awareness, 36.2% favored informal platforms like social media and blogs, while 17% preferred structured learning through courses and certifications. The remaining respondents suggested a blend of both approaches. When asked about the platforms they currently use to learn about sustainability or related topics, 78.7% mentioned social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. Additionally, 23.4% listen to podcasts, 23.4% participate in community and local group activities, 21.3% explore online learning platforms like Coursera and edX, and 17% expressed interest in webinars and live discussions. This highlights the potential of diverse educational platforms to enhance sustainability awareness.
- When asked about the integration of SDGs into the education system, 93.6% of respondents agreed that it could enhance awareness and participation. This overwhelming consensus underscores the belief that education is a powerful tool not only for individual growth but also for societal progress. Incorporating sustainability and SDGs into school curricula and professional studies, such as engineering, medicine, law, and business management, can prepare students to apply these principles in their future careers. Such an approach would foster a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities as stakeholders, empowering them to actively contribute to building a sustainable world.

- To understand effective awareness initiatives for promoting sustainable living and achieving SDGs, respondents provided insightful feedback. A significant 78.7% emphasized incorporating SDGs into school and higher education curricula, while 55.3% suggested organizing workshops at community centers, societies, and local groups. Additionally, 48.9% supported educational initiatives on social media platforms, and 44% recommended hands-on sustainability projects.
- For increasing community engagement, respondents advocated integrating SDGs into educational systems, leveraging social media, and conducting workshops. Community outreach, partnerships with NGOs, and localized, inclusive approaches were highlighted as impactful strategies. Suggestions included storytelling, art, gamification, volunteerism, and recognizing efforts to inspire action. Many emphasized starting sustainable practices at home, fostering sustainable habits, and gradually extending these to social activities. Changing mindsets was seen as a crucial first step toward achieving SDGs.

CONCLUSION:

This study helps us understand that many individuals are unaware of their roles as stakeholders in achieving a sustainable world and lack knowledge of practical steps to contribute. This underscores the urgent need for widespread awareness campaigns tailored to diverse audiences. Educational initiatives play a critical role in promoting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among stakeholders by fostering awareness, understanding, and action. Key strategies include:

- Integration into Curricula:
 - Embed SDG concepts into school and university curricula to ensure early exposure and understanding of global challenges.
 - Develop value-added courses highlighting the interconnectedness of SDGs across sectors like environment, health, education, and technology.
- Workshops and Seminars:
 - Organize interactive workshops for diverse groups, including students, educators, and professionals, focusing on practical applications of SDGs.
 - Facilitate seminars and expert talks to explore innovative solutions and success stories related to sustainable development.
- Skill-Based Learning:
 - Introduce hands-on activities like recycling projects, tree plantation drives, and energy conservation initiatives to promote experiential learning.

- Encourage student-led research and projects addressing specific SDG-related issues in local contexts.
- Use of Technology:
 - Leverage online learning platforms, apps, and social media to provide accessible and engaging SDG-related content.
 - Gamify learning with challenges and simulations that demonstrate the impact of sustainability practices.
- Collaborations and Community Engagement:
 - Partner with NGOs, local governments, and businesses to implement SDG-related programs.
 - Engage communities through outreach activities that promote awareness and collective action.
- Awareness Campaigns:
 - Design campaigns targeting various age groups and professions, using real-life examples to demonstrate the relevance of SDGs.
 - Include storytelling, art, and media to make SDGs relatable and inspire participation.

With knowledge, skills, and action-oriented attitudes, these initiatives empower stakeholders to actively contribute toward achieving SDGs.

Promoting sustainability requires innovative platforms and tools to share knowledge, foster collaboration, and inspire action. Here are some effective approaches:

- Online Learning Platforms:
 - Platforms like Coursera, edX, and Udemy offer courses on sustainability and SDGs, enabling individuals to learn at their own pace.
 - Virtual workshops and webinars connecting global experts with local communities.
- Social Media:
 - Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter are effective for creating awareness through campaigns, infographics, and success stories.
 - YouTube and TikTok provide engaging video content that explains sustainability practices and SDG initiatives in accessible ways.
- Knowledge Repositories and Databases:

- Open-access resources like the UN SDG Knowledge Hub and ResearchGate provide research papers, toolkits, and case studies on sustainable practices.
- Interactive Storytelling and Media:
 - Documentaries, podcasts, and storytelling platforms like StoryCorps inspire action by sharing real-life examples of sustainability success.
- On-Ground Engagement:
 - Community centers and libraries serve as hubs for workshops, discussions, and resource-sharing on sustainable practices.

By leveraging these platforms and tools, individuals and organizations can effectively share knowledge, create awareness, and collaborate for a sustainable future.

In conclusion, this study reveals the pressing need to bridge the gap in awareness and participation in sustainable practices and SDGs. Information is power: educating people, informing them through proper channels can turn them into players and not just bystanders in the sustainability game. *A sustainable world is built not by chance, but by choice-where every action today shapes a thriving tomorrow for all.* By fostering collective responsibility, we can create a harmonious balance between present needs and future aspirations.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

The findings of this study open avenues for further research in multiple areas. Future studies can

- Explore the long-term impact of integrating SDGs into educational curricula across different levels of education, assessing how this influences behavior and participation in sustainable practices.
- Investigate the effectiveness of various knowledge-sharing platforms, such as social media, workshops, and gamified tools, in driving sustainable living and community engagement.
- Examining the role of local cultural and socio-economic factors in shaping sustainable practices could offer valuable insights for developing tailored approaches.
- Comparative studies across regions or demographic groups can further highlight best practices and barriers to sustainability awareness and implementation.

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