

A study on millennium development goals and sustainable development goals: Lesson from Bangladesh

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Abstract

This paper aims to present the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the general inclusive growth of the world and Bangladesh in particular. With the passing of time, the world economy and economic systems have been changing rapidly in order to reach the development facilities of the deprived people living in the world. For this, the United Nations and world leaders have undertaken Millennium Development Goals to reduce the extreme economic hardship of the deprived people living there. Based upon MDGs, the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has undertaken Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to reduce the extreme poverty of the people living in Bangladesh. The study is mainly based on secondary information. Data have been collected from different publications from the United Nations, different websites, and institutional publications.

During analysis of the collected data, it is seen that the steps undertaken by the Government of Bangladesh to reduce extreme poverty have become effective and the economic development of Bangladesh has been moving towards sustainability because the deprived section of people has started improving their lives and to some extent starts entering into development opportunities available in Bangladesh.

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Introduction

Poverty is a socio-economic phenomenon that affects a section of people in society, preventing them from fulfilling even their most basic needs. It's not just about the lack of purchasing power, but also about the denial of opportunities and human potential. Poverty is influenced by various factors such as health, education, demographics, and political and socio-cultural environment, all of which determine access to development opportunities as noted by Amartya Sen. It is a prevalent social issue in underdeveloped and developing countries, especially in Asia and Africa, where extreme poverty is characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs such as food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education, and information. To combat extreme poverty, the United Nations and world leaders have prescribed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for developing, least developed, and all countries in the world [1]. The MDGs were designed for developing the least developed countries and focused on 2015, while the SDGs were designed for all countries to help the deprived people access development facilities available in the world.

Millennium Development Goal (MDG) for the World

Inclusive growth is when the growth is sustainable in the long run and benefits all participants of the economy. This means that everyone has access to development facilities and the economic environment supports their growth. The United Nations has established sustainable development goals, which build upon the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) [2]. There are eight goals in total, including halving extreme poverty rates, providing universal primary education, and halting the spread of HIV/AIDS. These goals were agreed upon by all leading development institutions as a blueprint to be achieved by 2015. The UN has been working with governments, civil societies, and other partners to meet the needs of the poorest in the world and ensure that the MDGs are met. The goals include eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, providing gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development.

Sustainable Development Goals on Focused 2030

The post-2015 UN Development Agenda was created to address a problem and consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals. These goals replaced the Millennium Development Goals and are considered to be ambitious and aspirational [3]. They call for development processes all over the world. The goals are as follows [4]:

- I. No Poverty
- II. Zero hunger
- III. Good health and well-being
- IV. Quality Education
- V. Gender equality
- VI. Clean water and sanitation
- VII. Affordable and clean energy
- VIII. Decent work and economic growth
- IX. Industry, innovation, and infrastructure
- X. Reduced inequality
- XI. Sustainable cities and communities
- XII. Responsible consumption and production
- XIII. Climate action
- XIV. Life below the water
- XV. Life on Earth
- XVI. Peace, justice, and strong institutions
- XVII. Partnerships for the goals.

The goals prioritize inclusivity for the poorest and most vulnerable by ensuring that global development should leave no one behind.

Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review is to identify gaps in research that justify the study. A number of literary works were reviewed to achieve this objective.

A paper from 2020 [5] highlights that SDGs were adopted in 2015 to improve the well-being of developing nations, building on the implementation of MDGs. The SDGs aim to reconcile economic, social, and ecological development across all countries.

A report from 2018 [6] emphasizes the United Nations Millennium Declaration's focus on combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women.

Another report from 2011 [7] highlights the need for high-level policy dialogue with international financial and trade institutions on current developments in the global economy. According to the Asian Development Bank's report from 2023 [8], world leaders throughout history have emphasized the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration to build new global partnerships that reduce extreme poverty and establish different targets for it. Iryna, K., Ana, N., et al (2023) [9] discuss two consecutive development projects, namely, the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, with apparent gaps in knowledge. The main findings focus on the role of education in both UN projects, highlighting important aspects of its dynamic nature in various themes covered in both MDG and SDG projects.

This study titled "A Study on Millennium Development Goal and Sustainable Development Goal: Lesson from Bangladesh" aims to examine the importance of the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Objectives of the study

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To comprehend the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
2. To familiarize with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
3. To evaluate the economy of Bangladesh.
4. To examine the government's plan for Bangladesh to reduce extreme poverty for sustainable development.
5. To provide some practical suggestions to reduce the extreme poverty level in Bangladesh.

Methodology of the study

The study focuses on the global economy as a whole, as well as the economy of a specific country. The data used in the research is secondary and has been sourced from various publications by the United Nations, Asian Development Banks, and websites. The analysis has been conducted in a tabular format for ease of understanding.

Findings

Achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 Forms in the World

Through different programs initiated by Governments, civil societies, and other partners, goal-wise achievements [10] against the goals are given below:

Goal I: In the last two decades extreme poverty has declined significantly. In 1990, nearly half of the population (1.9 billion) in the developing world lived on less than \$1.25 a day that proportion dropped to 14% (836 million) in 2015. Most progress has occurred since 2000.

The number of people in the working middle class living on more than \$4 a day has almost tripled between 1991 and 2015. This group now makes up half the workforce in the developing regions, up from just 18% in 1991.

The proportion of undernourished people in developing regions has fallen by almost half since 1990, from 23.3% in 1990-1991 to 12.9% in 2014-15.

Goal II: The primary school net enrolment rate in the developing regions reached 91% in 2015, up from 83% in 2000.

The number of out-of-school age worldwide has fallen by almost half to an estimated 57 million in 2015, down from 100 million in 2000.

Sub-Saharan region has achieved 20% points increase in the net enrolment rate from 2000 to 2015, compared to a gain of 8% points between 1990 and 2000. The primary school enrolment rate was in Sub-Saharan Africa in 1991 52%, in 2000 60%, and in 2015 80%.

The literacy rate among youth aged 15 to 24 has increased globally from 83% to 91% between 1990 and 2015.

Goal III: Many more girls are now in school compared to 15 years ago. The developing regions as a whole have achieved the target of eliminating gender disparity in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

Women now make up 41% of paid workers outside the agricultural sector, an increase from 35% in 1990.

Between 1991 and 2015, the proportion of women in vulnerable employment as a share of total female employment declined to 13%. In contrast, vulnerable employment among men fell by 9%.

Women have gained ground in parliamentary representation in nearly 90% of the 174 countries with data over the past 20 years. The average proportion of women in parliament has nearly doubled during the same period. Yet still, only one in five members are women.

Goal IV: The global less than 5 mortality rate has declined by more than half, dropping from 90 to 43 per thousand live births between 1990 and 2015. Since the early 1990s, the rate of reduction of fewer than 5 years of mortality has more than tripled globally.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the annual rate of reduction of fewer than 5 years of mortality was over five times faster during 2005-13 than it was during 1990-95.

Measles vaccination helped prevent nearly 15.6 million deaths between 2000 and 2013. The number of globally reported measles cases declined by 67% for the same period.

About 84% of children worldwide received at least one dose of measles-containing vaccine in 2003.

Goal V: Since 1990, the maternal mortality ratio has declined by 45% worldwide and most of the reduction has occurred since 2000.

In southern Asia, the maternal mortality ratio declined by 64% between 1990 and 2013, and in Sub-Saharan Africa, it fell by 49%.

More than 71% of births were assisted by skilled health personnel globally in 2014, an increase from 59% in 1990.

Contraceptive prevalence among women aged 15 to 49, married or in a union, increased from 55% in 1990 worldwide to 64% in 2015.

Goal VI: New HIV infections fell by approximately 40% between 2000 and 2013 from an estimated 3.5 million cases to 2 million.

By June 2014, 13.6 million people living with HIV received antiretroviral therapy (ART) globally, an immense increase from just 1.8 million in 2003. ART averted 7.6 million deaths from AIDS between 1995 and 2013.

Over 6.2 million malaria deaths have been averted between 2000 and 2015, primarily of children under 5 years of age in Sub-Saharan Africa. The global malaria incidence rate has fallen by an estimated 36% and the mortality rate by 58%.

More than 900 million insecticide-treated mosquito nets were delivered to malaria-endemic in Sub-Saharan Africa between 2004 and 2014.

Between 2000 and 2013, tuberculosis prevention, diagnosis, and treatment interventions saved an estimated 37 million lives. The tuberculosis mortality rate fell by 45% and the prevalence rate by 41% between 1990 and 2013.

Goal VII: Ozone-depleting substances have been virtually eliminated since 1990 and the Ozone layer is expected to recover by the middle of this century.

Terrestrial and marine protected areas in many regions have increased substantially since 1990. In Latin America and the Caribbean, coverage of terrestrial protected areas rose from 8.8% to 23.4% between 1990 and 2014.

In 2015, 91% of the global population was using an improved drinking water source, compared to 7.6% in 1990.

Globally, 147 countries have met the drinking water target, 95 countries have met the sanitation target and 77 countries have met both.

The proportion of the urban population living in slums in developing regions fell from approximately 39.4% in 2000 to 29.7% in 2014.

Goal VIII: Official development assistance from developed countries increased by 66 % in real terms between 2000 and 2014, reaching \$135.2 billion.

In 2014, Denmark, Luxemburg, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom continued to exceed the United Nations' official development assistance target of 0.7% of gross national income.

In 2014, 79% of imports from developing to developed countries were admitted duty-free, up from 65% in 2000.

The proportion of external debt service to export revenue in developing countries fell from 12% in 2000 to 3% in 2013.

As of 2015, 95% of the world's population is covered by mobile cellular signals.

The number of mobile cellular subscriptions has grown almost tenfold in the last 15 years, from 738 million in 2000 to over 7 billion in 2015.

Despite significant progress on several Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) worldwide, the poorest and most vulnerable people are still being left behind, leading to significant gaps. Millions of people, especially those disadvantaged due to their sex, age, disability, ethnicity, or geographic location, are being left out of the progress. To ensure the success of the MDGs, targeted efforts need to be made to reach the most vulnerable people. Several challenges need to be addressed, including gender inequality, climate change and environmental degradation, conflicts in human development, the gap between the poorest and richest households, and between rural and urban areas, and poverty and hunger without access to basic services.

Achievement of Millennium Development Goals on the Focus 2015 in Bangladesh

To provide equal opportunities to impoverished and disadvantaged groups, the Government of Bangladesh has adopted the Millennium Development Goals 2015 as a long-term plan. Details of the plan organized by goals are outlined below [11]:

Goal I: The proportion of people below the national upper poverty line (2122 k.cal) was 56% in 1990-91 and it should be reduced to 29% in 2015.

The poverty gap ratio was 17% in 1990-91 and it should be 8% in 2015. The employment-to-population ratio was 48.5% in 1990-91 and 100% should be in 2015.

The prevalence of underweight children under 5 years of age was 66% in 1990-91 and 33% should be in 2015. The proportion of the population below the minimum level of dietary energy was 28% in 1990-91 and 14% in 2015.

Goal II: Net enrolment in primary education was 60.5% in 1990-91 and it should be brought up to 100% in 2015. The proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 was 40.7% in 1990-91 and it should be brought up to 100% in 2015.

Goal III: The ratio of girls to boys in primary education was .83 in 1990-91 and it should be brought up to 1 in 2015. The ratio of girls to boys in secondary education was .52 in 1990-91 and it should be 1 in 2015. The ratio of girls to boys in tertiary education was .37 in 1990-91 and it should be 1 in 2015.

The share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector was 19.1% in 1990-91 and it should be brought up to 50% in 2015. The promotion of seats held by women in the national parliament was 12.7% in 1990-91 and it should be brought up to 33% in 2015.

Goal IV: Under-5 mortality rate per thousand children was 146 and it should be brought down to 48. The infant mortality rate per thousand was 92 and it should be brought down to 31. The proportion of 1-year children immunized against measles was 54 and it should be brought up to 100.

Goal V: Maternal mortality ratio per 1,00,000 was 574 in 1990-91 and it should be brought down to 144 in 2015. The proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel was 5% in 1990-91 and it should be brought up to 50%. Antenatal care coverage of at least one visit was 27.5% in 1990-91 and it should be brought up to 100% in 2015. Antenatal care coverage of at least four visits was 5.5% in 1990-91 and 100% should be 100% in 2015.

Goal VI: HIV prevalence among the population per 1,00,000 was 0.005 in 1990-91 and it should be at a halting stage in 2015. The prevalence of malaria per 1,00,000 population was 43 in 1990-91 and it should be brought down at the halting stage in 2015.

Goal VII: The proportion of land area covered by forest was 9% in 1990-91 and should be brought up to 20% in 2015.

CO₂ emissions, metric tons per capita were 0.14 in 1990-91 and it should be brought down to 0 in 2015.

Consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs in metric tons was 195 in 1990-91 and it should be brought down to 0 in 2015.

The proportion of the population using improved drinking water sources was 89% in 1990-91 and it should be brought up to 100% in 2015.

The proportion of the population using improved sanitation was 21% and it should be brought up to 60% in 2015.

Goal VIII: To develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, and non-discriminatory trading and financial system.

To address the special needs of the least developed countries.

To address the special needs of landlocked developing and small developing states.

To address comprehensively the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term.

Government's Initiative Taken to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals on Focused 2030 in Bangladesh

The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has undertaken the following strategies to achieve the SDGs [12] on focused 2030:

Faster, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient economic growth.

Coverage and effectiveness of social safety net progress.

Migration and remittance have been key drivers of economic growth, the economic transformation of less well households, poverty reduction through positive impact on rural wages and entrepreneurship development in rural areas.

To reduce gender discrimination.

To undertake micro-credit programs.

One house, one farm project: A model for poverty alleviation.

Providing quality health service
 Addressing nutrition Issues.
 Ensuring quality health service.
 Primary and secondary education development program.
 Creating an enabling environment for women's advancement and gender-responsive budget.
 Increase power generation capacity.
 Well-maintained transport and communication.
 Improved information and communication technologies.
 Employment generation and enhancing labor productivity.
 Improvement of housing, slum housing, and road infrastructures.
 Ensuring sustainable production in agriculture, manufacturing, and energy and power sectors.
 Protection for helms
 Special biosphere reserve etc.

Economy of Bangladesh

Bangladesh gained independence on December 16, 1971, and since then, the government has been actively working towards the country's economic development. With a land area of 147570 square kilometers, Bangladesh is located in South Asia and is home to over 170 million people, making it the eighth most populous country in the world. Bangladesh's economy is in its early stages of development and consists of the agricultural, industrial, and service sectors. Table 1 shows the sector-wise contributions to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Table 1
Sector-wise GDP change in percentage during 2018-2022

Year	Agriculture	Industry	Service	Total
2018	14	33	53	100
2019	13	34	53	100
2020	13	35	52	100
2021	13	34	53	100
2022	12	36	52	100

Source: Bangladesh Economic Survey 2022, Ministry of Finance, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Table 1 highlights that while the agricultural sector's contribution to GDP decreased in earlier years, the industry and service sectors have been steadily increasing their contribution with the passage of time.

Bangladesh has abundant natural resources including gas, coal, limestone, hard rock, glass, and ceramic clay. Gas, limestone, and coal are currently being extracted while the extraction of other resources is ongoing.

Investing in productive employment opportunities for the workforce and exploring material resources is crucial for any country's development. However, such investment is dependent on effective resource mobilization. In Bangladesh, the economy was primarily based on agriculture. However, due to the limitations of cultivable land and a large workforce, the government has shifted its focus towards the manufacturing and service sectors. This change in strategy has led to a significant improvement in the country's macroeconomic indicators. By adopting liberalization policies to attract foreign direct investment, Bangladesh has created a competitive environment for trade and commerce.

The percentage of people living below the poverty line has decreased from 73.5% of the total population in 2010 to 14.8% in 2016. The per capita GDP was recorded at \$1521 in 2017. Presently,

Bangladesh has an inflation rate of 5.7% and a predicted growth rate of 8.13%, as per the Economic Outlook 2019 report.

Factors for Economic Development

Economic development in Bangladesh is heavily reliant on the government's plans, policies, and their timely implementation. To prepare effective plans and policies, numerous factors that hinder the process of economic development must be identified. Despite the increasing trend of economic growth in Bangladesh as shown in Table 3, the country's economy is still facing significant challenges.

Poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and resource constraints have contributed to an adverse balance of payments in Bangladesh. Currently, about 24% of the population lives below the poverty line, with an unemployment rate of 4.5% and an illiteracy rate of 42%.

All economic activities in an economy are closely related to each other. The impact of one activity may affect the others, making the whole economy interlinked. Thus, in order to accelerate economic development, it is necessary to address all the problems confronting the economy of Bangladesh simultaneously in national plans. This can be achieved by establishing relative priorities.

Productivity is a crucial factor in the economic development of any country. The efficient use of human and material resources leads to an increase in productivity, which in turn creates more job opportunities. The level of productivity also affects the cost of living, per capita income, GDP growth rate, education, technological development, know-how, and resource generation.

Low productivity can have a negative impact on important indicators such as economic growth, employment opportunities, and standard of living. Therefore, in order to ensure continued progress, it is essential to have a practical plan that utilizes human and material resources in an efficient and productive manner. This would require significant investment in areas such as equity capital, advanced technology, managerial expertise, and other resources.

In Bangladesh, a developing country facing continuous resource constraints, underdeveloped technology, inadequate managerial skills, illiteracy, and unequal distribution of wealth, setting millennium development goals can serve as a long-term perspective plan. This will ensure equal opportunities for all participants during economic activities, contributing towards sustainable development.

Discussion and Conclusion

Sustainable Growth in Bangladesh

It is evident from the information presented above that Bangladesh has made significant progress in achieving many of the MDG targets. However, progress has not been uniform across the country, and there are still gaps that need to be addressed. There are millions of people who are being left behind, particularly those who are poor, female, disabled, aged, or living in remote areas. To reach the most vulnerable, targeted efforts will be required. The following are some of the challenges that need to be addressed:

- Gender inequality still exists.
- Climate change and environmental degradation pose a significant threat to the progress made, and the poor are the most affected.
- There are significant disparities between the rich and poor households, as well as between rural and urban areas.
- Millions of people are still living in poverty and hunger without access to basic services.
- Conflicts remain a threat to human development.

Concluding Remarks

Over time, the global economy has become increasingly integrated, resulting in a need for global policymaking. In this changing environment, the world economy, including that of Bangladesh, has developed tremendously. However, inclusive development has not made it easy for people to access the labor market, resources, and regulatory environment, leaving a huge number of individuals behind. To rectify this, the United Nations introduced the Millennium Development Goal in 2015 to promote economic equality. Bangladesh's government also adopted this goal to ensure that economic development benefits are equally accessible to all. Unfortunately, it became clear after 2015 that development in many areas remained unequal. In response, the United Nations created 17 Sustainable Development Goals to replace the Millennium Development Goals. Bangladesh's government has already taken steps towards sustainable development for the country.

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