

Sustainable Development Goals and Social Capital among School Children in The District of Sivagangai, Tamil Nadu

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Jimmy AJ

Research Scholar

Department of Social Work, Alagappa University, Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu, India

Dr. MA. Velusamy

Associate Professor & Head i/c

Department of Social Work, Alagappa University, Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) have been in action and recognition across the globe since 2015. This mission of the United Nations is owned and implemented by the respective governments in their territory. It aims to improve the lives of children globally. Out of 17 goals seven are child development oriented. Other goals are also indirectly linked with child development. SDG amidst students' social capital is a new subject of study. Teachers and textbooks serve as the primary source of knowledge for students. Teachers have the facilitating role of SDG in the school. There is the dual cycle of social capital i.e., between students and teachers and among students' community. Social capital enables child development. The role of SDG in the social capital of students is investigated. The survey was conducted among students using a quantitative method. This study combines the results of the responses from 358 students of VIII Standard from the district of Sivagangai. Results demonstrate a lack of knowledge and social capital among students.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, Social Capital, Child Development, Role of Teachers

Introduction

In this decade countries around the world have made the progressive shift in the development outlook by aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the economic planning, policy, and implementation. United Nations (UN) introduced Millennium Development Goals in 2000 and it made the drastic shift to sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015 to address the global challenges. It is a set of 17 global goals with 169 targets aimed at achieving a better and more sustainable future for all by 2030. The preamble of SDG states that it is a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity. It is a great vision of life its totality of biotic and abiotic beings of the line of economic, social, and environmental areas. The major operation of SDG is founded on people, the planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership.

Learning and practices from the school are the base for actions and community involvement by the students in their younger and later stages of life. The act of Cognition and the types of social capital is budded and nurtured in the behavioral pattern of children through school learning. Growth and development. Present-day school children are expected to be aware and follow SDGs in particular related to children. it is preserved as Progress toward Good health, gender quality, quality education, peace and justice, zero hunger, and poverty. Knowledge-based society of fair utilization and preservation of resources is envisaged in the SDG regarding children. this transmission and practice of SDG is centered around the social capital among children and teachers. SDG agenda2030 considers children as agents of change and partners of development. A child rights-based approach with the motive of leaving no one behind is adopted in SDG related to Child Development. School education revolves around syllabus and co-curricular activities. Thus, it may sometimes undermine the current development and major happenings in the world. Instead, students are shined into the world of syllabus. this paper attempts to look at the understanding of SDGs among school children and the social capital landscape generated and maintained in the academic and cocurricular activities of children.

Background of the Study

Empowerment of vulnerable groups occupies a core place in the agenda of SDG. Children are considered one among them. SDG aims to improve children's lives in its totality universally. After the introduction of SDG significant changes have been reported in child care and development globally. Out of Seventeen Goals, seven are pro-child development oriented. These are SDG1: No Poverty targets eliminate poverty among children ensuring access to basic needs like food, shelter, and education. SDG 2: Zero Hunger focuses on ending hunger and ensuring all children get decent and nutritious food. SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being for the reduction of child mortality and increase of maternal health. SDG 4: Quality Education for all children with a guarantee of inclusive and equitable education. SDG 5: Gender Equality to neutralize gender bias and empower all girl children in par with opportunities as of boys. SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation aimed at guaranteeing safe drinking water and sanitation facilities for all children to be physically healthy. SDG16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions for International National and Local Network of Enterprise for Child Development in the areas of inclusion of child rights promotion exclusion in violence and exploitation.

Children deserve to grow up in health, quality education, and a clean planet. Envisaged by the UN in SDG but far behind in achievement in Global South. India's performance against the 45 child-related SDG indicators, reveals a mixed scale of progress in some areas with advancement while other areas lagging. India has incorporated SDG into the School Curriculum under the 2030 KaBharat. We are on the half a way of SDG it is right to look into the progress at a particular level of SDG among the students' cognition and social capital. Child development. Hence this is a preliminary study into the awareness level and social capital of SDGs generated among school Children. In Child development children acquire knowledge, and develop behavioral patterns and skills based on childhood background and experiences. The process of child development enables motor and physical coordination, cognitive grasping, social and emotional milieu, communication methods, and adaptability. Therefore, SDGs for child development ought to be part of students' academic cognition and social capital. Certain SDGs are fully for child development and rights. Child development without the knowledge and practicum of SDGs remains a mirage.

Conceptual Framework

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of universal goals aimed at addressing broader challenges threatening sustainable development, such as poverty eradication, environmental sustainability, and sustainable consumption and production. UN took this global initiative in 2015 for ending the poverty, protection of the environment, and promotion of peace and prosperity for all by 2030. The SDGs were formed in response to the shortcomings and constraints encountered by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and serve as the basis for a comprehensive framework for sustainable development. The SDGs aim to realign and reignite worldwide efforts towards creating a sustainable future, addressing both social and environmental dimensions of development. Beena writes India in response to SDG Agenda 2030 diverse practices and methods integrated to execute SDGs on education in the Indian context by joining them into the design of New Education. This new education policy inspects the levels of curriculum inputs in education and its impact at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of the country.

Medina-Hernández points out that the global North countries maintain their accelerated phase in sustainability characteristics of economic growth and environmental responsibilities in the use of conventional and non-conventional resources. On the other hand, the countries of the global South having low purchasing power are to rework and reorient the policies and strategies for the betterment of the populations in the areas of household services like water, sanitation, electricity, and internet, among others, and the general equality of life scale satisfaction. Gillett-Swan, J. K., & Burton, L. O. (2022) view the absence of sufficient empirical research purely focusing on children and their direct involvement in the decision-making processes of the programme associated with Children. The result of studies of the child-related experience of universal strategies for facilitation of the programme and implementing processes show the disparity between the global north and south.

Fortune, N., Madden, R. H., & Clifton, S. (2021). Children's views about the built environments and child development programmes where they keep the intellectual distance noticeably from existing literature relating to child development tentative. Few studies of child development programmes articulate how they support the inclusion of diverse views of global but varied cultures and customs interrelated to child rearing and support systems. It is noted SDGs are realizable largely in the context of the western world. It can be replicated in the global south too on a priority basis within the period of SDGs.

The concept of social capital includes resources and the mode of human interaction in the local community and society at large over the chain of a social network. This notion of social capital has evolved from social science. Today social capital leverages human connections to solve problems, and exchange universal facts locally, and local information universally. Robert Putnam (1995) explains social capital in terms of social organization such as trust, norms, and networks that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. This is to improve the efficiency of the society by facilitating coordinated actions. He further states communities with low levels of social capital are less capable of organizing themselves effectively. This shows the collective nature and action required for social capital. Social Capital nature is always relational. It cannot exist in isolation. It works in its interaction with others in the society. Thus, it can bring fast and progressive changes to the society. Students' social capital in the school is a major medium of intellectual discourse and development of their worldview. Thus, the social capital link of children is to be furnished with the basic conceptual clarity of SDGs. The relational social capital, the literature has focused on variables such as trust or cooperation.

It is the heterogeneous and diversified nature of the network of relationships or social capital that strengthens meaningful coexistence in the ambit of operation in society. It is the social capital that

makes the school hours of the children lively and useful. It is necessary to have a smooth transfer of the knowledge of SDGs and other related universal targets to the students for active communication among the students. Cohesion reflects the bond of interaction and social capital with one another in the group. The Concept of social capital describes the purposive nature of social relationships and its key role in maintaining and transmitting the importance of resources within social networks to the targeted stakeholders. Putnam (1995) also explains another communitarian focus and features of social organizations like school social like schools in the networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation with mutual benefit for all the students and staff that form the unit of dynamic social capital.

Social Capital enables students to gain the norms of reciprocity, shared values, interpersonal relationships, shared understanding cooperation, and a sense of belongingness. Linking social capital refers to relationships between people at different hierarchical levels. For Dekker and Uslaner 2001, Social capital is about the value of social networks, bonding similar people and bridging between diverse people, with norms of reciprocity External relations often play the role of bridging social capital. The internal relationship encourages us to advance in the bonding aspect of social capital. There are other ways of categorization social capital based on strong or weak ties, horizontal or vertical, open or closed nature of operation. Baker (1990) says Social Capital is derived from specific social structures of various hierarchy that promotes interaction between structures of society. In short, it is best explained that bonding social capital is horizontal among communities on the other hand bridging holds a vertical nature between communities.

Wallis and Crocker (1998) referred to bonding capital as a localized way of interaction among people of the same or nearby communities, and bridging capital to individuals and organizations that are more remote or outside. Anheier and Kendall (2002) interpret bridging social capital as thin trust, to the bonding social capital of thick trust. Claridge, T., 2004 assesses the social capital level located and diffused through discussion conceptualization among the target people. Different components of social capital function in a multidirectional mode in societal interaction. It is operated at the individual, meso, and macro levels of community interaction. Education is for civic engagement too. Therefore, SDGs need to be an integral part of education. It may have a noticeable impact on the social capital of students. In 2015 the UN member states agreed to adopt and practice SDGs and to achieve the expected targets by 2030. This literature review on Sustainable Development Goals, Social Capital, and education provides the foundation for the study and sets the buildup of the entire study.

Rationale of the Study

UN proposed the mission of SDG for an integral developed world assuring the coexistence of all flora and fauna at present as well as for future generations. This is to have equitable distribution of resources and preservation of natural resources. The seventeen goals exhibit a comprehensive dimension of development in all walks of life. The entire world is bound to follow them because the SDG has to be achieved in a collective manner not in isolation. Development history is of separated and disconnected but nation-centered one. Hence, we global South lagging back in development. Here SDG is a decisive factor in Child development irrespective of all childcare measures still there are child mortality, violation of child rights, school drops, etc. India had adopted SDG for School Curriculum integrating Bharatka 2030. Despite all the govt initiatives, the Children the direct beneficiaries of the SDG remain uninformed even after the eight years of the start of SDG. Knowledge transfer among students is done through the mediating factor of textbooks and teachers. It is further enmeshed through the social capital among the children. This makes the study a significant and contextual one. The extents of child development are inseparably aligned

with sustainable development goals about Child rights. It is urgent to transform some of the school curriculum with SDG in teaching content for social capital enhancement for interdisciplinary integration.

Theoretical Framework

Self-determination theory (SDT) introduced by Edward Deci and Ryan is known for its psychological framework. It could be applied for the transfer of the knowledge of SDG to the students thereby creating Social Capital resulting in actions. SDT refers to a person making choices and regulating life. SDT postulates three psychological needs autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy is about the command of one's goals and behavior. Students develop this quality as they get higher in age and education. The autonomy postulated by SDT could be connected to SDGs linked with Child development. Competence is the area of new learning and adaptation. Relatedness stands for belongingness and social capital among the students.

Edward L. Deci and Richard Ryan in their titled 'Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior' developed it as an empirical theory. Intrinsic motivation in Self Determination Theory refers to an initiative and activity on personal account and interest rather than external compulsion. Thus, knowledge of SDG could be gained through the academic personal pursuit of students as well as by extrinsic motivation of teachers. Hence the theory of SDT becomes applicable in the knowledge transmission of SDGs and the development of social capital among the children. It can be applied for the children regarding the practical steps towards the realization of SDG. The intrinsic motivation of many collective progressive actions in public institutes given SDG ends with an abruptly end after the inauguration without continuity. Hence, intrinsic motivation is essential for the attainment of SDG among children in school and in later years. Through the internalization of extrinsic motivation from the teacher, students may transform their behaviors in the line of SDG.

Generally, people act out of motivation for themselves and others. Parents and teachers struggle to motivate and mentor children in mobilizing effort for the expected impact in the form of knowledgeable citizen in the future. people are motivated from within, by interests, curiosity, care, or abiding values. The interplay between the extrinsic forces acting on persons and the intrinsic motives makes the Children delve deep into the SDG and its nuances. It can sustain passion, creativity, and sustained efforts of SDG among the children through social capital.

It is innate and internal of the child to delve into the vast extents of knowledge other than the textbook. Therefore, the theory of self-development could be applied to attaining the knowledge of SDGs and the progress of social capital centered on it. Ryan and Deci argue Competence is connected to the experience to undertake activities that are within the reach of a person's capacity. Relatedness refers to a feeling of connectedness to fellow human beings who are part of the activity context. This relatedness is another form of social capital among students.

Greco's view of knowledge transmission is that knowledge generation is at the start and it is transferred through distinct agents enabling them knowledgeable. Bransford & Schwartz's theory is that to understand human thinking and problem-solving in complex and novel situations we need to have a general theory for how people use and adapt their prior knowledge to solve new problems. Aspirations towards such a goal have traditionally been discussed in terms of transfer, or how knowledge acquired from one task or situation can be applied to a different situation.

Methodology

It is an empirical Study. VIII standard students are the population of the study. The sample is taken from conveniently selected ten matriculation schools in the district of Sivagangai Tamil Nadu.

A qualitative research design involving a questionnaire survey. It comprised general questions relating to the understanding of SDG and its social capital among children. The study was carried out in 2024. From ten Schools 358 participants were interviewed for the study. Data was gathered within two weeks. Data was collected through a questionnaire. Information was collected from students in groups in the class and others individually outside the school. Researchers explained the questionnaire in the class and collected the responses from the students. In Schools where there was no chance to meet the students in the class met them outside the class personally for the collection of primary data.

The Study was Carried Out to Get the Answer to these Questions

1. Do the Students have any knowledge of Sustainable Development Goals?
2. How did students get to know about SDG?
3. How far is the Knowledge of students on SDG related to Child development?
4. The communication and social capital of students among themselves.
5. Activities concerning SDGs by the students.

Analysis of the Finding

The study utilized a quantitative method approach for the collection of data primary sources focusing on eighth-standard students of Matriculation schools Sivagangai TN. Quantitative data was collected through the questionnaire survey. Chart 1 points to the Response from the Survey revealing that only 10% of the students know about the SDGs. The rest 90% of students from nine Schools never knew or heard about SDGs. Chart 2 indicates a minority of students came to know about the SDGs through teachers in the wake of an exhibition. For VIII standard Students textbooks don't impart any knowledge on SDGs. 100% of the respondents do not know any SDG pertaining to Child development. It is evident in chart 3. Though 10% of respondents have an understanding of SDGs none of them communicate on the same matter. In terms of social capital, 100% of respondents do not have any communication or interaction regarding social capital (Chart 4). Finally, in the fourth chart, it is evident that 100% of respondents take any action individually or collectively towards the attainment of SDGs. There is a weak transmission of the concept and knowledge of SDG 2030 to school children. The study noted a massive unawareness of the SDGs among the school Children. Global initiatives of for Child development and rights under SDGs are blurred from conceptual understanding for the school Children. The paradox lies here that all children directly or indirectly enjoy the scheme under SDGs without knowing the nomenclature.

Chart 1 Knowledge of SDGs



Chart 2 Medium of Knowing SDGs

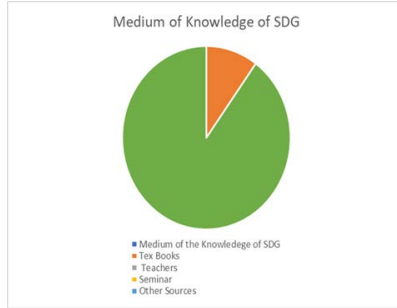


Chart 3 Knowledge of SDGs for Children



Chart 4 Social Capital on SDGs

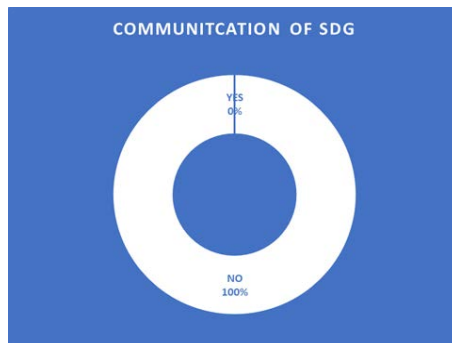
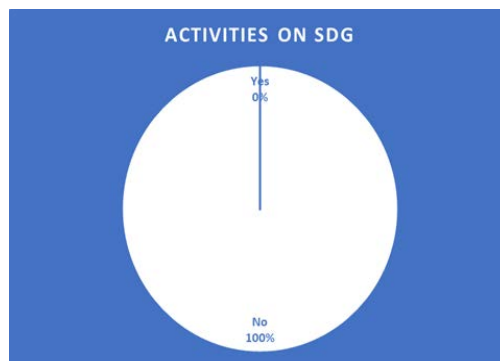


Chart 5 Activities & Initiatives on SDGs



Recommendations

- It is high time to ensure the integration of SDGs into school curricula and syllabi both in theory and practice.
- The study recommends the inclusion of SDGs in the Social Science Syllabus of UP School itself. The student's academic range is placed on textbooks and school assignments. Therefore, it is inevitable that SDGs will be incorporated immediately into academic learning.
- SDGs even after nine years of its introduction are marred concepts for students. Teachers must be equipped to impart general but universal concepts and targets of importance to the students.
- There is a need to set bridging and bonding social capital among students and teachers on the matters of SDGs. SDGs to reach the student's social capital link is needed to accelerate the phase of transmission of conceptual knowledge of SDGs among students.
- The global concept of SDGs is to be localized involving the beneficiary students' active participation and making them pro in implementing the localized programs.
- A chain of activities could be organized towards SDGs in the school under the aegis of important days and clubs. It could be maintained through the same enabling better social capital.
- Intergraded Child Development Scheme (ICDS) and Local Self Government (LSG) can also take the initiative to teach the SDGs regarding Child Development among the Children. The targeted beneficiaries should know the universal programme for their rights and development.
- The role of teachers in assisting SDGs and creating social capital needs to be asserted well.
- There is a need to improve the social capital among students in line with SDGs intended for child welfare and progress.

Conclusion

The study has examined the knowledge level of SDG and its social capital of SDG among School Children. It is found lowest in cognition and performance. It is understood that children have only very limited knowledge of SDGs and cherish no social capital on the matter of SDGs among children. It is urgent to transform some of the school curriculum with SDGs in teaching content for social capital enhancement for interdisciplinary integration. The concept of SDG has to be part of everyday life and activities of children. SDG becomes an integral part of child development and schooling through the medium of bridging and bonding capital. The role of teachers is crucial in the social capital of SDG among Children. School education has an impact on local and regional levels. Therefore, a cognitive input and practicum of SDG among children would accelerate child development consciousness and social capital as well. Teachers have the major role of facilitating the knowledge gap of students and bridging the social capital among them. This is increasingly challenging to update and upgrade the students with the current.

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