

Protect Labour Rights and Promote Safe Working environment

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Abstract: The achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals approved by the UN General Assembly will depend on whether or not the goal 8, Decent works and economic development; goal 8.8, protect labour rights and promote safe working environment. This paper discusses the meaning of Sustainable Development and how it is different from sustainability. Also, the paper discusses about the labour rights, safe working conditions and ways to promote it. The last section of the paper discusses about the two indicators of the goal 8.8 which are fatal and non fatal occupational injuries and migrant workers. Both of which have huge implications on SDG's goals. Without human resource no goal can be achieved, hence it is important to protect labour rights and provide safe working environment to all the workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.

Employees are drawn to a workplace that is devoid of injuries and accidents. Employees are more happy and productive when they work in a safe setting. For both companies and employees, safe working conditions are essential. Employees have a right to a safe working environment.

Objectives: In order to accomplish economic progress, it is critical to defend workers' rights and provide a safe working environment. Human casualties have difficult to quantify effects, yet they can have serious ramifications for the employees' families. As a result, the paper emphasizes the need of a safe working environment, as well as the capabilities of the federal and state governments to regulate employee interests, establish a safe workplace, and expand job prospects.

Keywords: SDG, IMF, OSH

Introduction

While poor nations have expanded at a quicker rate than developed areas, achieving our worldwide development goals over the next 15 years would need sustained economic growth in all regions. Economic development – making our planet a better place to live – is intricately related to all of our other concerns. Stronger economy will provide us with greater opportunity to create a world that is more resilient and sustainable. Economic growth must also be inclusive: growth that does not benefit all members of society, particularly the most disadvantaged, is uneven and unfair.

'No one is left behind' is at the heart of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and economic progress must be inclusive if it is to achieve a better society. This is the concept underpinning Goal 8, which aspires to maintain a 7% economic growth rate for LDCs by 2030 and attain full and productive employment for all men and women worldwide within the next 15 years. Nearly 736 million people lived in poverty in 2015, and poverty elimination can only be achieved via steady and well-paid work.

Research Methodology

The study is based on secondary data that are collected from various books, journals, research papers, and articles

Sustainable Development

As per the definition quoted by Brundtland Report, "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

The term Sustainable Development was first coined in the year 1987 by the Brundtland Commission Report to describe the ability of human beings to meet their present needs without compromising the possibility of existence for future generations. The idea of sustainable development was led by the United Nations. It includes dimensions of economics, social development, politics and environmental concerns, which are convolute.

Basically, sustainable development deals with the relationship between environment and human beings. Sustainability is a prototype for thinking about the future which has balanced societal, environmental and economic considerations in the aspiration of improved quality of life. For example: the availability of clean air, water, adequate food and shelter for the growing number of people on the planet.

Large amounts of green house gas is being emitted by automobiles, personal vehicles are responsible for it. Hence, transportation is one of the major areas of sustainable development in the industrialized world. The United States government has been seeking to lower these green house gas emissions. Increasing the cost to own an automobile, encouraging walking and public transportation can prove to be helpful.

The theories of sustainability depend on the idea of managing three types of capital:

- Social
- Natural, and
- Economic

Sustainability vs. Sustainable Development

Sustainability and sustainable development are often used interchangeably. However, there are nuances of differentiation between them.

- Sustainability: It is a broader term. It describes managing the resources without depleting them for future generations. It is beyond environment sustainability, which includes the concerns regarding earth's natural resources. It includes social and economic sustainability in addition to environment sustainability, which includes meeting present needs without compromising future generations.
- Sustainable Development: it describes the process of improving quality of life and economic well being in the long run, without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet there own needs.

Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) were born at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. The objective of SDG's was to produce a set of universal goals to meet the environmental, political and economic challenges facing our world.

The sustainable development goals basically mean defining the world we want. This applies to all nations, ensuring no one is left behind. United Nations has given a voice, by adopting the map of the world we want in 2030, in determining the future. The 17 goals of sustainable development are the agenda for 2030.

The youth of today, will be dominating the world tomorrow, has the chance to shape the world. To ensure no one is left behind, the United Nations and all its partners ensure that everyone has access to the SDG's goals and inclusive messages.

The countries have come together to prioritize the progress of those who are left behind. These goals have been designed to end the poverty, hunger, AIDS, and discrimination against women and girls. To achieve the sustainable development goals, technology, creativity, financial resources and knowhow from all the societies is necessary.

The 17 sustainable development goals are as follows:

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Quality Education

4. Gender Equality
5. Clean Water and Sanitation
6. Affordable and Clean Energy
7. Decent Work and Economic Growth
8. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
9. Reduced Inequalities
10. Sustainable Cities and Communities
11. Responsible Consumption and Production
12. Climate Action
13. Life Below Water
14. Life on Land
15. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
16. Partnerships for the Goals

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Economic growth is required to be a positive force for all the nations. Hence, financial progress shall create decent and fulfilling jobs without harming the environment. Sustained economic growth can lead to creation of decent jobs, safe working environment, and lead to progress and improve living standards. The labour rights must be protected and modern slavery and child labour needs to be put to end once and for all. If the access to banking and financial services is widened, everybody can reap the benefits of entrepreneurship and innovation.

Job losses are escalating, as COVID 19 has jeopardized the global economy. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts a global recession worse than 2009. Nearly half of the global workforce is at high risk of losing the jobs, as estimated by the International Labor Organization. The per capita incomes were likely to decline in 2020 even before the outbreak of COVID 19, as one in every five countries is living in poverty. The economic and financial shocks associated with COVID -19, such as, financial market vitality, industrial production, rising insecurities and falling commodity are aggravating the risks.

Goal Targets

- Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries.
- Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high- value added and labour – intensive sectors.
- Promote development – oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formulization and growth of micro, small and medium sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.
- Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavor to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10 year framework of programme on sustainable consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead.
- By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
- By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.
- Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child

labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.

- Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.
- By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.
- Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all.
- Increase aid for trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the enhanced integrated framework for trade – related technical assistance to least developed countries.
- By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization.

Labour Rights

As per the Indian Constitution, the Central as well as State governments have the power to protect and regulate the employees interests, also to create a safe working environment and increase employment opportunities. Over the years, India has had a number of laws governing labour and employment. These laws have provided a lot of protection to the employees. Although, compliance of such laws have been made very difficult for the businesses. Different legislations such as Factories Act 1948, Shops and establishment acts of the relevant states, and Industrial Disputes Act 1947 have been ratified depending on the number of employees, nature of work, location, type of industry, remuneration, etc.

In 2020/2021, over 29 central laws and corresponding state laws have been subsumed into four major labour codes, by Indian Government, so as to restructure and modernize the current regime. Government of India now has four major labour codes:

- The Code on Wages, 2019: This law has changed the definition of “employee” from the extant definition as contained under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. Under this act, irrespective of organized or unorganized sector, the wage code is extended to all the establishments.
Wages under this act encompasses
 - i. Basic pay
 - ii. Dearness allowance
 - iii. Retaining allowance
- The Industrial Relations Code, 2020: A “sole negotiating union” has been introduced by the IR Code, in establishment where there is more than one trade union. Such unions are required to have 51% or more workers as members. The act provides the workers security of employment after being laid off.
- The Occupational Safety and Working Conditions Code, 2020: Duties of employers with respect to the employees and their workspace are described by the OSH Code. The number of minimum contract labour has been modified from 20 to 50 for the code to apply.
- Code on Social Security, 2020: To amend the laws relating to social security, the social security code has been enacted. Extending social security to all the workers and employees is the ultimate goal of the social security code.

Safe Working Environment

Employees are attracted by a work environment which is free from injuries and accidents. Safe working environment makes employees more satisfied and productive. Having a safe working environment is the right of every employee. Safe working conditions are indispensable for both employers and employees alike. It is right of employees to have safe working environment.

Working environment is determined by various factors like health, safety, security and working hours. A poor working environment can put employee's safety at risk and can damage their health. The employer is held responsible legally for ensuring safe working conditions. Safe working conditions are pervasive for all companies, whether big or small. Well- implemented safety measures keep employees safe and also protect industrial equipment.

In 1993, the Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations became law. The law lays down certain minimum standards to be followed in or near workplaces. Workplaces must suit all those working in them, including workers with disabilities. Workers have the right to have a safe and healthy workplace which is suitable for all those working there. This means that it is the responsibility and duty of the employer to look at issues such as space, lighting, sitting space, cleanliness, adequate toilets, ventilation, washing and changing facilities.

Activities and working practices that seem harmless can lead to serious illness.

What is the need for Safety in the Workplace?

Effects of human casualties is not possible to measure but can have critical consequences for the families of the employees. Hence, workplace safety is of utmost importance. They are necessary for the safety and well being of the employees as well as employers. The assurance that the employees and their families have, knowing that they will return safely from work, is more consequential than anything else. Substance abuse, unsafe working conditions, workplace violence and environmental hazards can be some safety and health risks in workplace.

To avoid such risks, employers should take strategic measures that ensure safety of workers. To increase the productivity of the workers and improve the quality of goods and services, the employers should understand the desired aspects of their employees in terms of safety and protection.

How to promote a safe working environment

Any firm should never take workplace safety casually. It makes no difference if you have 1,000 or ten employees. Any company, regardless of size, must plan ahead of time for safety requirements, measures, and more thorough alternatives for their employees. Preventative actions against workplace accidents and/or deaths are critical for establishing a healthy and safe work environment.

- **Proper Uniforms**

Construction, home remodeling, the packing and shipping companies, firefighters, and other industries that demand extremely protective helmets and clothing all rely on this foundation. In some areas of the working site, construction workers must wear hard helmets at all times. Firefighters must wear the most up-to-date fire-retardant gear, as well as strong helmets. When working in a laboratory, chemists must wear safety eyewear.

From the time the first employee logs in to the last, putting up signs to stress the subject and training supervisors to remain on top of uniform requirements should be ongoing.

- **Promote Health Codes**

When you walk into a restaurant bathroom, there's a sign next to the sink stating that all staff must wash their hands before leaving. On many levels, having little signs in places like the washroom, kitchen, and other high-traffic areas is critical. The most crucial are health code standards, cleaning education, and encouraging personnel to take all required steps to make the area safe for the next person.

- **Proofing the Building**

This falls under the topic of having the building evaluated on a regular basis for minor changes such as stairways and outdoor paths. Little things like placing ribbed, rubber cushioning to the ends of stairwell stairs, de-icing the sidewalks leading up to the office, mats to stamp out slick footing, and other useful precautions may offer your employees piece of mind that their safety is being taken care of to the best of their ability.

Target 8.8

"Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working conditions for all employees, especially migrant workers, particularly women migrants, and those in insecure employments," reads the entire title of Target 8.8.

Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working conditions for all employees, especially migrant workers, particularly women migrants, and those in insecure jobs.

8.8.1 Fatal and Non- Fatal Occupational Injuries per 1, 00,000 workers, by sex and migrant status.

During the reference period, this indicator provides information on the number of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 employees in the reference group. It is a measure of each worker in the reference group's personal chance or risk of suffering a fatal or non-fatal occupational accident.

The incidence rate of occupational injuries is defined as the number of occupational injuries per a certain number of employees in the reference group.

Occupational accident: an unanticipated and unplanned event, including acts of violence, that occurs as a result of or in connection with employment and causes physical harm, sickness, or death to one or more workers. Occupational accidents are defined as travel, transportation, or road traffic accidents in which workers are hurt as a result of or in the course of their employment; that is, while engaged in an economic activity, at work, or doing the employer's business.

Occupational injury: any physical harm, sickness, or death caused by a workplace accident. An occupational injury is distinct from an occupational illness, which develops over time as a result of repeated exposure to risk factors associated with the job activity. Diseases are only mentioned in this category if they were caused directly by an accident. A workplace injury can be deadly or non-fatal (non-fatal accidents may result in lost work days).

Fatal occupational injury: a work-related injury that results in mortality within a year after the work-related accident.

Case of occupational injury: When a single worker sustains one or more occupational injuries as a result of a single workplace mishap.

Workers in the reference group: The average number of employees in the particular group under examination who are covered by the source of occupational injury statistics is referred to as the reference group.

8.8.2 Number of Migrant Workers

In nations already touched and those where the pandemic is growing, migrants – particularly those in lower-wage positions – may be more affected by and prone to the spread of COVID-19, but migrants also play a vital role in the response to COVID-19 by working in crucial sectors. Emigrants from the 20 nations with the largest number of COVID-19 cases made up 35% of the overall international migrant stock as of 15 July 2021, and they sent an estimated 36% of all remittances to their home countries in 2020. In 14 of the 20 nations with the greatest number of COVID-19 cases, immigrants made up at least 3.7 percent of the population, and in nine of them, they made up more than 8%. International migrants are overrepresented in these nations as compared to the worldwide percentage of international migrants, which accounts for 3.6 percent of the overall population.

The mobility of migrants and the function of humanitarian groups are both impacted by increased border controls. Between 11 March 2020, when COVID-19 was designated a pandemic by the WHO, and 12 July 2021, 109,956 movement restrictions were imposed all across the world. Simultaneously, 980 exceptions to these limits have been provided by 201 nations, territories, or zones, allowing for more movement. Estimates based on a zero-growth assumption in the number of migrants between 1 March and 1 July 2020 show a global decline of roughly 2 million international migrants between mid-2019 and mid-2020, compared to the previously predicted estimate. The first half of 2020 is predicted to be a historic low for migration to OECD nations, as measured by new permits issued. A decrease in migrant inflows might have demographic consequences for nations that rely on migration to increase their populations. According to projections for 2020, Germany's population will not rise for the first time in a decade due to a

reduction in immigration. At the end of 2020, the overall number of foreigners in Germany climbed by 1.8 percent, the lowest rate in the last decade. For the first time since 1945, net migration in Australia is predicted to be negative in 2020/2021, resulting in the lowest population increase in a century.

Conclusion

The Sustainable Development Goals, also known as Global Goals, The United Nations adopted them in 2015 as a global call to action to eradicate poverty, safeguard the environment, and guarantee that everyone enjoys peace and prosperity by 2030. They are an international call to action to eradicate poverty, safeguard the environment, and ensure peace and prosperity for all people. The 17 SDGs are interconnected, recognizing that actions in one area have an impact on outcomes in others and that development must strike a balance between social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Countries have agreed to emphasize improvement for those who are the most disadvantaged. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to eradicate poverty, hunger, AIDS, and discrimination against women and girls.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) encourage long-term economic development, increased productivity, and technological advancement. Encouragement of entrepreneurship and job development, as well as effective efforts to end forced labour, slavery, and human trafficking, are critical. By 2030, the objective is to attain full and productive employment for all women and men, as well as good work. The ultimate purpose of the sustainable development goal 8.8 is to protect workers' rights and promote safe and secure working conditions for all employees, especially migrant workers, particularly women migrants, and those in insecure employment.

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