Dr. Nasra Shabnam
Assistant Professor,
Department of Adult &
Continuing Education &
Extension, Jamia Millia
Islamia, New Delhi, India

Understanding sustainable development goal 4: Targets and indicators

Dr. Nasra Shabnam

Abstract
The Agenda for Sustainable Development is universal, holistic and indivisible, with a special imperative to leave no one behind. Education and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all plays a central role in building sustainable, inclusive and resilient societies. Education is a basic right and elementary to human dignity. SDG 4 also has reciprocal linkages across the 2030 Agenda. It aims to provide children and young people with quality and easily accessible education plus other learning opportunities. One of its targets is to achieve universal literacy and numeracy. Hence, the urgent need to build more educational facilities and also upgrade the present ones to provide safe, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all. Access to quality education is an avenue for social mobility and reducing inequalities. Education is essential for building the knowledge base we need to tackle critical challenges like climate change. Education will help youth prepare for employment in the high-skill jobs of the fourth industrial revolution. And education is a foundation for peaceful societies and effective institutions.

Keywords: Sustainable development goal, equitable quality education, lifelong learning

Introduction

India is committed to the fulfillment of the SDGs, with the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (Mo SPI) and the National Institute for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog the key government departments/agencies entrusted with the task to plan SDG implementation and monitoring. MoSPI also represents India at various UN fora concerning SDG-related statistical activities. India has adopted an elaborate framework for planning, implementation and monitoring of all the 17 SDG son its territory. MoSPI was tasked, in consultation with concerned Central Ministries/ Departments, to develop a National Indicator Framework (NIF) form on it oaring

The progress of the SDGs and associated targets in the country. The NIF developed by the MoSP was designed to scientifically measure the outcomes of the policies to achieve the targets under different SDGs. The NIF also aim Ed to provide appropriate direction to the policy makers and the implementer of various related scheme sand programs.

MoSPI has the responsibility to establish coordination mechanisms with various line Ministries/Departments and other data source agencies relating to national as well as global SDG Indicators. An SDG Unit was created with in the Social Statistics Division (SSD) of the Central Statistics Office under the MoSPI, to act as the country's SDG Data Focal Point for coordination of data related activities and SDG global monitoring. This Unit also has the responsibility of assisting Indian States & UTs to establish a monitoring frame work at their level, and to develop the capacity of various statistical institutions at all levels.

The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), chaired by the Prime Minister of India, is the premier policy think tank of the Government and has been given the overall responsibility of SDG implementation and of aligning government schemes and programs to the SDGs. Thus, NITI Aayog facilitates and coordinates the implementation of SDGs in the country and also has the responsibility of comparative analysis of SDG achievement in the States and UTs.

Sustainable Development Goal 4 is about quality education and is among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations in September 2015. The full title of SDG 4 is "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". SDG 4 has ten targets which are measured by 12 indicators. The seven "outcome-oriented targets" are: free primary and secondary education; equal access to quality pre-primary education; affordable technical, vocational and higher education; increased number of people with relevant skills for financial success; elimination of all

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Nasra Shabnam
Assistant Professor,
Department of Adult &
Continuing Education &
Extension, Jamia Millia
Islamia, New Delhi, India

Discrimination in education; universal literacy and numeracy; and education for sustainable development and global citizenship. The three "means of achieving targets" are: build and upgrade inclusive and safe schools; expand higher education scholarships for developing countries; and increase the supply of qualified teachers in developing countries.

SDG4: Goal, Target and Indicators
Sustainable Development Goal 4. The full title of SDG 4 is "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

Target 4.1: Free primary and secondary education
The main mission of this target is: "By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to a relevant and effective learning outcome."
In choosing this mission, different issues were considered, with the mission statement itself stipulating that: students are publicly-funded, engaged through inclusive education regardless of their differences, resources, and means are equitably distributed, education has to be instrumental towards a profound learning outcome regardless of race, gender or ethnicity. This target has two indicators:
Indicator 4.1.1: "Proportion of children and young people (a) in grade 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) Mathematics, by sex"
Indicator 4.1.2: "Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)"
The provision of 12 years of free, publicly-funded, inclusive, equitable, quality primary and secondary education of which at least nine years are compulsory, leading to relevant learning outcomes should be ensured for all, without discrimination.

Target 4.2: Equal access to quality pre-primary education
The full main aim of this target is: "By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education." This target has two indicators:
Indicator 4.2.1: "Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning, and psycho social well-being, by sex"
Indicator 4.2.2: "Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex"
The provision of at least one year of free and compulsory quality pre-primary education is encouraged, to be delivered by well-trained educators, as well as that of early childhood development and care.

Target 4.3: Equal access to affordable technical, vocational and higher education
The full title of this target is: "By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university." This target has one indicator:
Indicator 4.3.1: Is "Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex"

It is imperative to reduce barriers to skills development and technical and vocational education and training (TVET), starting from the secondary level, as well as to tertiary education, including university, and to provide lifelong learning opportunities for youth and adults. The provision of tertiary education should be made progressively free, in line with existing international agreements. Increase the number of people with relevant skills for financial success

Target 4.4: Increase the number of people with relevant skills for financial success
The full title of this target is: "By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. "This target has one Indicator:
Indicator 4.4.1: Is the "Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill".
Access: Equitable access to TVET needs to be expanded while quality is ensured. Learning opportunities should be increased and diversified, using a wide range of education and training modalities, so that all youth and adults, especially girls and women, can acquire relevant knowledge, skills and competencies for decent work and life.

Skills acquisition: Beyond work-specific skills, emphasis must be placed on developing high-level cognitive and non-cognitive/transferable skills, such as problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, communication skills and conflict resolution, which can be used across a range of occupational fields.

Target 4.5: Eliminate all discrimination in education
The full title of this target is: "By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations."

This target has one indicator: Indicator 4.5.1 is "Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators"

Inclusion and equity: All people, irrespective of sex, age, race, colour, ethnicity, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or birth, as well as persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, and children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations or other status, should have access to inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. Vulnerable groups that require particular attention and targeted strategies include persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities and the poor.

Gender equality: All girls and boys, women and men, should have equal opportunity to enjoy education of high quality, achieve at equal levels and enjoy equal benefits from education. Adolescent girls and young women, who may be subject to gender-based violence, child marriage,

early pregnancy and a heavy load of household chores, as well as those living in poor and remote rural areas, require special attention. In contexts in which boys are disadvantaged, targeted action should be taken for them. Policies aimed at overcoming gender inequality are more effective when they are part of an overall package that also promotes health, justice, good governance and freedom from child labour.

Target 4.6: Universal literacy and numeracy
The full title of this target is: "By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men, and women, achieve literacy and numeracy. "This target has one indicator:

Indicator 4.6.1: is the "Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex".

The principles, strategies and actions for this target are underpinned by the contemporary understanding of literacy as a continuum of proficiency levels in a given context. It goes beyond the understanding of a simple dichotomy of 'literate' versus 'illiterate'. Therefore, action for this target aims at ensuring that by 2030, all young people and adults across the world should have achieved relevant and recognized proficiency levels in functional literacy and numeracy skills that are equivalent to levels achieved at successful completion of basic education.

Target 4.7: Education for sustainable development and global citizenship
The full title of this target is: "By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development." This target has one indicator:

Indicator 4.7.1: Is the "Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) Teacher education; and (d) student assessment"

It is vital to give a central place to strengthening education's contribution to the fulfillment of human rights, peace and responsible citizenship from local to global levels, gender equality, sustainable development and health. The content of such education must be relevant, with a focus on both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of learning. The knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required by citizens to lead productive lives, make informed decisions and assume active roles locally and globally in facing and resolving global challenges can be acquired through education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED), which includes peace and human rights education, as well as intercultural education and education for international understanding.

Target 4.a: Build and upgrade inclusive and safe schools
The full title of this target is: "Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and

provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all." This target has one indicator:

Indicator 4.a.1: Is the "Proportion of schools with access to (a) electricity; (b) the Internet for pedagogical purposes; (c) computers for pedagogical purposes; (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; (e) basic drinking water; (f) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (g) basic hand-washing facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions)"

Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all This target addresses the need for adequate physical infrastructure and safe, inclusive environments that nurture learning for all, regardless of background or disability status.

Target 4.b: Expand higher education scholarships for developing countries
The full title of this target is: "By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, Small Island developing States and African countries, for enrollment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programs, in developed countries and other developing countries." This target has one indicator:

Indicator 4.b.1: Is "Volume of official development assistance (ODA) flows for scholarships"

Scholarship programs can play a vital role in providing opportunities for young people and adults who would otherwise not be able to afford to continue their education. Where developed countries offer scholarships to students from developing countries, these should be structured to build the capability of the developing country. While the importance of scholarships is recognized, donor countries are encouraged to increase other forms of support to education. In line with the SDG 4 - Education 2030 focus on equity, inclusion and quality, scholarships should be transparently targeted at young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Target 4.c: Increase the supply of qualified teachers in developing countries
The full title of this target is: "By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for Teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and Small Island developing States." This target has one indicator:

Indicator 4.c.1: Is "Proportion of teachers in) pre-primary; (b) primary; (c) lower secondary; and (d) upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country"

Teachers are the key to achieving all of the SDG 4 targets. It requires urgent attention, with a more immediate deadline, because the equity gap in education is exacerbated by the shortage and uneven distribution of professionally trained teachers, especially in disadvantaged areas. As teachers are a fundamental condition for guaranteeing quality education, teachers and educators should be empowered, adequately recruited and remunerated, motivated, professionally

qualified, and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems.

Conclusion

Achieving SDG 4 will help to achieve these other SDGs: eradicate poverty (SDG 1), achieve gender equality (SDG 5), ensure good health and wellbeing (SDG 3), reduce inequalities among countries (SDG 10), promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all (SDG 8), build resilient infrastructure and foster innovation (SDG 9), ensure access to information and awareness for sustainable consumption and style of production in harmony with nature (SDG 12), provide education and awareness toward taking urgent action to combat climate change (SDG 13), and promote peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 16). An ordinary look at SDG4 would make it appear as an extension of "Education for All." However, there are differences. One difference that stands out is the undercurrent of the need to connect education to the key indicators of existence in its context especially through learning and equity. SDG4, as indeed many policies and agenda at the global level, tends to face challenges peculiar to the uniqueness of the nations. Most governments struggle to include such goals in their national plans in ways that connect the real context of their people. Big challenges need bold action to overcome them, and that is where the Global Goals come in. They are a plan agreed to by all world leaders to build a greener, fairer, better world by 2030, and we all have a role in achieving them.

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