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Comparative and critical analysis of SDG implementation, development structures, and implementation challenges

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a global structure to manage and reduce social, economic, and environmental difficulties. This study aims to compare the implementation of SDGs in developed and developing countries, identify country-specific barriers to achieving SDGs and ensuring human rights, and recommend strategies to enhance SDG implementation and human rights compliance. This Study is based on secondary sources, including UN SDG reports, peer-reviewed national and international journals, government index reports from various countries, and official SDG progress reports, this study employs an analytical approach to examine historical milestones, development structures, and challenges in SDG implementation. Conclusions suggest that developing countries emerging economies have high rankings, internal inequalities, dependence on imported technologies, and carbon outsourcing often obscure real progress. In contrast, new, community-based solutions have been demonstrated in developing countries like India, Brazil and Bangladesh-including digital public goods, hunger programs and health initiatives-which provide relevant lessons globally. The study emphasizes the importance of result-based evaluation, showing that the quality of the partnership should be measured by tangible results, such as a decrease in poverty, better educational access and environmental effects, instead of participation in international forums. In addition, two-way knowledge exchange, strengthened local institutions, and reference-specific intervention are important for addressing the interval.

Keywords: *Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), Implementation Challenges, Developed vs. Developing Countries, Community-based Solutions, Result-based Evaluation*

Analyse comparative et critique de la mise en œuvre des Objectifs de développement durable (ODD), des structures de développement et des défis de mise en œuvre

RÉSUMÉ

Les Objectifs de Développement Durable (ODD) constituent un cadre mondial visant à relever et à atténuer les défis sociaux, économiques et environnementaux. Cette étude a pour objectif de comparer la mise en œuvre des ODD dans les pays développés et les pays en développement, d'identifier les obstacles propres à chaque contexte national qui entravent leur réalisation ainsi que la garantie des droits humains, et de proposer des stratégies susceptibles de renforcer la mise en œuvre des ODD et le respect des droits fondamentaux. Fondée sur des sources secondaires, notamment les rapports des Nations Unies sur les ODD, des articles scientifiques évalués par les pairs, des rapports gouvernementaux nationaux et internationaux ainsi que des rapports officiels sur les progrès réalisés dans la mise en œuvre des ODD, cette recherche adopte une approche analytique afin d'examiner les principales étapes historiques, les structures de développement et les défis liés à la mise en œuvre des ODD. Les résultats montrent que, dans les pays développés, des classements élevés, des inégalités internes persistantes, une dépendance à l'égard des technologies importées ainsi que l'externalisation des émissions de carbone masquent souvent les progrès réels accomplis. À l'inverse, plusieurs pays en développement, tels que l'Inde, le Brésil et le Bangladesh, ont mis en œuvre des solutions innovantes fondées sur les communautés, notamment les biens publics numériques, les programmes de lutte contre la faim et les initiatives en matière de santé, qui offrent des enseignements pertinents à l'échelle mondiale. L'étude souligne également l'importance d'une évaluation fondée sur les résultats, selon laquelle la qualité des partenariats devrait être appréciée à partir d'impacts concrets, tels que la réduction de la pauvreté, l'amélioration de l'accès à l'éducation et les effets positifs sur l'environnement, plutôt qu'au regard de la seule participation aux forums internationaux. Enfin, elle met en évidence que les échanges bidirectionnels de connaissances, le renforcement des institutions locales et la mise en œuvre d'interventions adaptées aux contextes nationaux constituent des leviers essentiels pour combler les écarts observés dans la réalisation des ODD.

Mots-clés : *Objectifs de Développement Durable (ODD), défis de mise en œuvre, pays développés et pays en développement, solutions fondées sur les communautés, évaluation axée sur les résultats*

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were introduced by the United Nations to reduce poverty, decrease inequality, safeguard the environment, and improve social welfare by 2030 (UN, Government of India, 2016). Although these goals are global, their success depends on how countries apply them in practice, the capacity of their institutions, and the quality of governance (UK Government, 2020; Bishim, 2025). Many nations face challenges in implementing these goals due to inconsistent policies, limited funding, and conflicting economic priorities (van Zentan & Putinteva, 2025; Government of Australia, 2019). In India, progress is tracked through the National Indicator Framework, but regional differences show that governance and coordination are still uneven (Government of India, 2016). Often, the drive for rapid economic development clashes with the need to maintain environmental balance, creating difficulties for both national and local plans (Lomborg, 2015). This shows that achieving the SDGs is not just about setting policies; it requires well-functioning systems, strong governance, and coordinated action at multiple levels. India has implemented several national programmes to align with the SDGs. The 2017 voluntary National Review (VNR) stated that India's policies largely support the global goals. Programs such as Swachh Bharat Mission, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, and Ayushman Bharat illustrate the country's practical efforts (Niti Aayog, 2018). Despite these steps, regional inequalities, varying state capacities, and administrative challenges continue to create gaps in

implementation (Government of India, 2019). Additionally, balancing industrial growth, employment generation, and environmental protection highlights the tension between immediate development needs and long-term sustainability (DAS, 2022; Lomborg, 2015). Experts stress that the SDGs cannot be achieved by plans or statements alone. Their success requires effective governance, integrated planning, and the involvement of local communities and stakeholders at all levels (SSS, 2021; UNDP, 2023). Ultimately, while the SDGs provide a common vision, how well countries adapt them to their local realities determines the results.

Review of literature

According to recent research, there are considerable advances concerning the SDGs in terms of concepts, while serious difficulties are still encountered in their implementation. Yip (2023) notes that the concept of Triple Bottom Line (TBL) perfectly includes three components, thus broadening the field of sustainable development from just economic growth. Nonetheless, the practical implementation of this concept faces some issues related mainly to neglecting the social component, which makes achieving SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) rather problematic. Some of the problems in the field include the presence of institutional weaknesses, lack of cohesive governance, and policy inconsistency at national and regional levels (Yip, 2023). Moreover, according to Van Zanten and Putintseva (2025), structural defects in the government's policy-making framework also negatively influence the implementation process of the SDGs. Even in cases when the SDG-related policies are adopted in a country, they may encounter several limitations due to poor monitoring and adaptation to the regional context. On the other hand, China has a very centralized approach, which incorporates significant planning but little involvement of citizens, whereas Canada has a decentralized and participatory approach with significant coordination issues at the provincial level (Government of Canada, 2023; China Government, 2024). It is evident from the above discussion that no particular governance model is capable of ensuring successful implementation of SDGs. In conclusion, a review of literature shows that there is a significant gap between theoretical models and their implementation in practice. Indeed, although concepts such as TBL serve as a good foundation for implementation of SDGs, its efficiency is hampered due to governance issues, social exclusion, and weak monitoring practices. Additionally, poor consideration of the results achieved at the local level limits the scope and impact of SDGs. There is therefore an urgent need for more outcome-based models (Yip, 2023; Van Zanten & Putintseva, 2025; Saha, 2009; Senina, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

In this study, we applied Amartya Sen's capability approach, emphasizing the fundamental freedoms and opportunities of people—the ability to live a meaningful life.Ensuring human rights and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) depend not only on economic resources; rather, it depends on how efficiently people and societies can use those resources and build their capabilities.In developed

countries , strong institutions, effective infrastructure, and well-functioning social systems create many opportunities for citizens, which help them protect their human rights and achieve sustainable development goals. On the other hand, in developing countries, economic constraints, weak structures, and institutional flaws prevent people from working to their full potential, making it difficult to fully realize human rights and sustainable development. This research utilizes the Capability Approach to examine the differences in human rights and sustainable development between developed and developing nations. The study aims to enhance personal empowerment and reinforce institutional structures, enabling every individual to exercise their freedom and lead a fulfilling life.

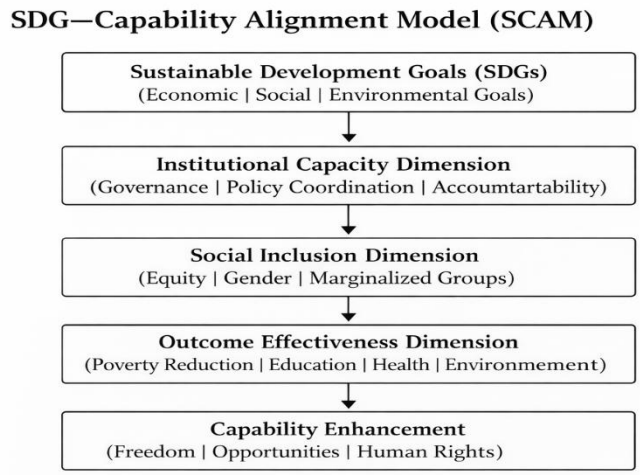


Figure X: SDG—Capability Alignment Model (SCAM)
Source: Developed by Author based on Capability Approach

The SDG–Capability Alignment Model, which we will refer to as the SDG–Capability Alignment Model is a way of thinking about how to make sure people have the capability to live meaningful lives. This idea is based on the work of Amartya Sen, who talked about what people are capable of doing. The SDG–Capability Alignment Model is a tool to see if countries that do well on the SDG Index are actually helping people live healthier more educated and dignified lives.

The global SDG Index only looks at how countries are doing overall but it does not show if people are really benefiting from these efforts. That is why the SDG–Capability Alignment Model has three parts to evaluate how well countries are doing:

1. Institutional Capacity Dimension

This part looks at how strong the government's how well it coordinates policies and how accountable it is. If the government is working well then the promises it makes to achieve the SDGs will actually happen.

2. Social Inclusion Dimension

This part checks if everyone, including women, minorities and poor people is benefiting equally from development efforts. A country can do well on the SDG Index. There still are big gaps between different groups of people.

3. Outcome Effectiveness Dimension

This part measures improvements, such as reducing poverty, making education and healthcare more available, cutting carbon emissions and making sure people have secure livelihoods. It looks at the results; not just how many people are participating.

The SDG–Capability Alignment Model says that just because a country does well on the SDG Index it does not mean that people's lives are actually getting better. A country can have a SDG ranking but still not be giving all its citizens the chance to live good lives. On the other hand, some countries that do not do as well on the SDG Index might be making big improvements in people's lives through community-based projects. The SDG–Capability Alignment Model looks at how different countries, such as Finland, Sweden, Germany, India, Brazil, Bangladesh and China,'re doing on the SDG Index and how this matches up with real improvements in people's lives. The SDG–Capability Alignment Model gives us a way to think about the SDGs by:

Analytical Implication

- Moving beyond just comparing rankings
- Looking at human rights and what people are capable of doing
- Focusing on actual results not just how many people are participating
- Highlighting the importance of strong local governments and fairness

This way of thinking helps us understand sustainable development better by connecting global goals with what is actually happening in people's lives. The SDG–Capability Alignment Model is a tool, for looking at the SDGs and the SDG–Capability Alignment Model helps us see what is really working.

Objectives of the Study:

$O_{1:}$ To compare the implementation of SDGs in developed and developing countries

O_2: To identify country-specific barriers in achieving SDGs

O_3: To recommend strategies for enhancing SDG implementation

Research Questions

RQ_1. How do SDGs differ in implementation between developed and developing countries?

RQ_2. What barriers hinder SDG achievement and human rights in different countries?

RQ_3. What strategies can improve SDG implementation?

Significance of the Study:

The importance of this research is in its examination of how sustainable development goals (SDGs) are applied to both developed and developing countries. It compares the progress made, the adopted strategies, and the unique challenges faced by each country. By recognizing such country-specific barriers, this study offers valuable insights for policy makers, professionals and international organizations in the formation of more effective structures for SDG implementation. In addition, the findings can guide resource allocation and support evidence-based decisions, eventually contributing to the development of policies and strategies that promote sustainable development in various national settings.

Research Gap

Most studies have focused mainly on policies or state directives, but there has been relatively little analysis of how these policies are implemented in practice. The extent to which institutional capacity and administrative effectiveness affect the implementation of human rights and the SDGs in developed and developing countries has not been sufficiently discussed. In addition, there is limited research on the challenges that local cultural, religious and political barriers pose to achieving human rights and the SDGs. Most studies have analyzed human rights and the SDGs separately; their interrelationships and the problems of effective implementation are relatively less discussed. In addition, there is still a lack of in-depth research on how the lack of reliable data in developing countries, the limitations of the use of innovative indicators, and the impact of international aid and the global economy create disparities in the implementation of human rights and the SDGs.

Methodology

This study relies on secondary data to explore the development and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), focusing on key historical milestones, global development frameworks, and the obstacles faced in achieving these goals. The information was collected from trustworthy sources such as United Nations reports, scholarly books, peer-reviewed articles, and verified online publications. Sources were chosen carefully based on their relevance to sustainable development, policy initiatives, SDG frameworks, implementation strategies, and critiques of previous development efforts. Outdated or irrelevant sources were excluded to ensure accuracy and reliability. Analytical method was applied to organize and interpret the data. First, each source was reviewed thoroughly to identify important concepts, policy measures, and strategies. Next, these findings were grouped into major themes, including historical milestones (for example, the Stockholm Conference 1972, the Brundtland Report 1987, and the Rio Earth Summit 1992), development frameworks (Millennium Development Goalss and Sustainable Development Goals), and implementation challenges. Finally, these themes were summarized to present a clear understanding of the evolution of sustainable development, the strategies applied globally, and the difficulties in achieving the SDGs.

Limitations of the Research

This study attempts to cover the SDG performance of the year 2025 only; previous data from 2000–2023 has not been comparatively analyzed. Graphical presentation highlights the highest, medium, and lowest performing countries, but due to the possibility of obstacles, not all 135 countries have been displayed in the graph. Therefore, when the study provides an overview of the SDG implementation patterns, the absence of longitudinal comparison and visualization of the entire country limits the scope of generalization.

History and goals of sustainable development

The journey of sustainable development is developed by sequential stages, emerging to eliminate the shortcomings of each previous one.

- **The Stockholm Conference (1972): Stockholm** Conference was the first global attempt to combine economic growth with environmental defense. However, it provides only comprehensive guidelines without binding commitments, which creates a strong definition requirement (the United Nations, 1972).
- **Brundtland Report:** The distance was filled by the Brundtland Report (1987), which presented the famous definition of sustainable development - the existing needs were met without compromising the future future generalations. Yet, it does not address global inequality enough (WCED, 1987; Redcift, 2005).
- **Rio Earth Summit (1992): Rio** Earth Summit tried to operate the ideas of Brundtland through the agenda 21 and the Rio announcement. But the commitments were voluntary and the financial support of developed countries was poor, so progress was limited (Najam, 2005). This revealed the need for measures that could be measured.
- **Millennium Development Goalss (2000–2015) :** Millennium Development Goalss introduced eight specific and measured goals, reduced poverty, gaining progress in education and health. Nevertheless, he was criticized for ignoring environmental concerns and being a large number of donors (Easterly, 2009). Therefore, a more integrated agenda was required (Index ,2015).
- **Sustainable Development Goal:** Finally, Sustainable Development Goal (2015–2030) extended space up to 17 goals and 169 targets, unifying economic, social, environmental and governance parameters. Despite this holistic vision, the challenges remain due to their widespread scope, lack of implementation and constant inequality (United Nations, 2015; SSS, 2015; Hickal, 2019).

This journey is finally reflected in the vision of people, planets, prosperity and peace.

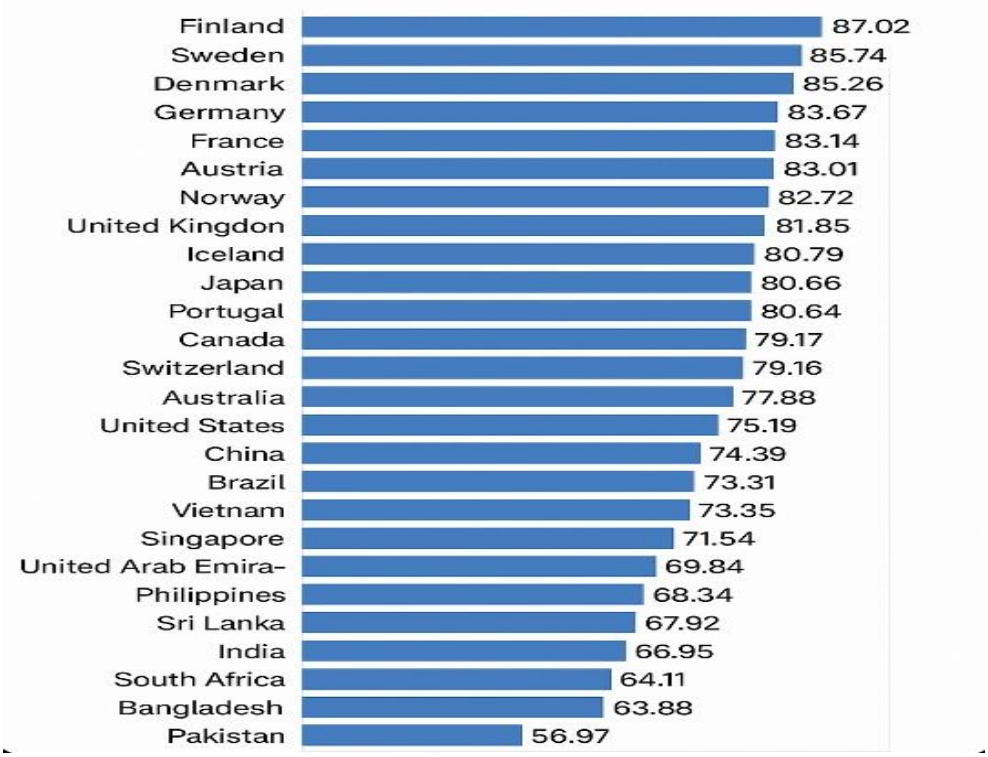
PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOALS – COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aims to face major global issues such as ending poverty, hunger, health, education and sustainable development. Developed countries - characterized by high income, advanced infrastructure and strong healthcare and education systems (e.g., USA, Germany, Finland) - generally gain high progress in implementing these goals. Developing countries, which are still facing industrial compulsion and resource limitations (eg India, Nigeria, Bangladesh), face more challenges in translating policies into effective actions.

No Poverty (SDG 1) According to the 2025 Sustainable Development Report, Finland, Sweden and Denmark Rank, not every poverty (SDG1) is not globally, each scoring each above 80. In the main economy, the U.S. 44th (75.2), China 49th (74.4), while India ranks 99th, entering the top 100 for the first time (67.0) (Soch). While China has eradicated full poverty (World Bank, 2022), the U.S. Faces issues of inequality (UNDP, 2023). India made extreme poverty from 16.2% (2011–12) to 2.3% (2022–23), raising 171 million (World Bank, 2023). **Zero Hunger (SDG 2)** Top performers include Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Chile, China, Costa Rica, and Brazil (GHI, 2024). Brazil's Fome Zero program is a global model (Government of Brazil, 2003). China eliminated extreme hunger by 2020 (World Bank, 2021). In contrast, India ranks 105th out of 127 countries, with a score of 27.3, reflecting high child malnutrition (GHI, 2024)**. Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3**) Finland, Sweden and Denmark lead globally (SS SH et al., 2025). Singapore considers 1st in the CIWLD Health Index, followed by Japan and South Korea (Severland, 2024). India has improved maternity mortality (1 130 → 97), five under-five mortality (45 → 32) and infant mortality (39 → 28), but NCD is a major issue (NHM, 2020). **Quality Education (SDG 4**) Australia, Iceland, New Zealand, Germany, Denmark and Finland domination (SS SH et al., 2025). According to PISA 2022, Singapore is 1st (OECD, 2022). Sub -Saharan Africa is far behind, while India struggles with secondary education and shortage of teacher (UNESCO, 2023). **Gender Equality (SDG 5)** is Iceland globally ranked 1st (World Economic Forum, 2024), followed by Nordic Nations and New Zealand (OECD, 2023). Countries like Pakistan and Sudan live at the bottom (UNDP, 2023). India is 131st (.4 64.4%) behind Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2023). **Clean water and Sanitation (SDG 6)** Lead with Norway and Switzerland near-Sarmic Access Cess (SDG 6 Data, 2023). India has made significant progress with the Clean India and Water Jeevan Mission (UNICEF India, 2023), while China has expanded rural entry (UN, 2024). Nevertheless, globally lacks more than 2 billion safe water (UN, 2024). **The affordable and clean Energy (SDG 7)** Sweden is 1st with 98% fossil free electricity (IEA, 20Energy (ark is second with 83% renewable, and Finland 3rd 95% with fossil Free Energy Raza (IEA, 2023). Despite the 50% non-independent established capacity (IEA, 2024), coal contributes more than 70% of power. **Decent work and economic growth (SDG8)** Luxembourg rank 1st, excellent with high HDI (Country economy, 2023). Sweden, Denmark and Norway maintain steady labor markets (UN, 2025). Singapore and Japan are strong under the leadership of technology (SSS et al., 2025). In India, Tamil Nadu,

Mizoram and Uttar Pradesh are locally prominent (PB, 2025). **Industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG9)** Switzerland (3th), Sweden (4th), and UK (5th). India is ranked 39th, with significant improvement in Bengaluru and Hyderabad as hubs (WIPO, 2024; IMD, 2025). Slovakia and China have also reduced to 0.63 in the Guinea (0.25) Index ,2023). **Sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11)** Finland comes 1st (86.7), followed by Denmark (2nd, 85.4), Sweden (3rd, 85.4), Norway (fourth, 85.1) and Slovakia. (Sweden), Hiddleberg (Germany) and Kurtiba (Brazil). **Responsible consumption and production (SDG 12)** Finland 1st (87.0), Sweden 2nd (85.7), and Denmark 3G (85.3) (SS ST EL., 2025). Sweden recycles almost all household waste and produces 98% of the renewable Energy. **Climate Action (SDG 13)** Denmark ranks 4th globally in CCPI 2025, having already reduced 46% of emissions (Germanwatch, 2025). Estonia ranks 1st in EPI 2024 (75.7) (Yale & Columbia, 2024). Philippines ranks 7th and Morocco 8th in CCPI 2025 (Germanwatch, 2025). India ranks 176th in EPI 2024, showing weak climate action (Yale & Columbia, 2024). **Life below water (SDG 14)** SDG 14 is a global challenge; No country could meet all four major goals, though Belgium and Germany have achieved three (UN, 2025). Sweden met with the maritime protected sector targets (14.5) in 2017, and the global coverage of the key maritime biodiversity has increased from 27% to 27% in 2022 (United Nations, 2025). The 2025 SDG index is ranked 99th of the 167 countries, showing moderate progress in Marine Sensation (Sechs et al., 2025). It has 31 main maritime protected areas, but the safe zone is below the 30% global target (Mospi, 2025). Continuous efforts are needed to reduce pollution and improve maritime resource management. In 2025 SDG **15 (Life on Land)**, Nordic countries received the highest scores at Finland 86.8%, Sweden 85.9%, Denmark 85.7%, Norway 82.0%, and Iceland 81.0% (SDG Index and Dashboards Reports). This high percentage reflects strong methods in forest conservation and biodiversity conservation. India, with a score of .55.5%, shows significant progress, but is still lagging behind these countries, in which the need for more efforts to increase land durability and ecological maintenance has been published. 68.7%runs, which indicate progress but still require more effort than Iceland (United Nations, 2025; UNDP Policy Center, 2025). This comparison shows that India can learn from the methods of Island to strengthen and effectively promote institutions (UN Nation, 2025). **Peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16)**, report, Iceland scored 90.5%, which showed strong regime, rule of rule, and human rights protection (United Nations, 2025; UNDP policy center, 2025). India made 68.7%, but more than 2025. Practices to strengthen Iceland's institutions and effectively promote justice (United Nations, 2025; UNDP policy center, 2025). **Partnerships for the goals (SDG 17)**. The 2025 Sustainable Development Report partnership for SDG 17 targets, Finland scored 87.02%, showing strong international cooperation, effective development assistance, and active connection in multi-styleholder partnerships (United Nations, 2025)

DATA INTERPRETATION



OVERALL SDG PERFORMANCE (2025) – SELECTED COUNTRIES. SOURCE: UN SDG REPORT, 2025.

This graph represents a comparative index or score of multiple countries, ranging from Finland at the top with a score of 87.02 to Pakistan at the bottom with 56.97. The exact nature of the index is not specified but the values likely represent some measure of development, quality of life,

Top Performance Countries:

Finland leads with the highest score of 87.02, followed by Sweden (85.74) and Denmark (85.26) closely, the top three countries are Nordic countries, known for strong social systems, high standards, and effective governance. Top countries have are closely grouped between around 83 and 87, indicating a relatively close performance among leaders.

Middle-level countries:

Germany (83.67), France (83.14), Austria (83.01), Norway (82.72), and United Kingdom (81.85) form the next tier. The group consists of mostly Western European countries, including high standards of education, health and industrial development.

Japan (80.66) and Portugal (80.64) also appear at this level, showing the balance of development in Asia and Southern Europe.

Emerging and developing countries:

China (74.39), Brazil (73.31), and Vietnam (73.35) lead the developing or emerging economy classes. Singapore (71.54), known as an advanced city-state, falls slightly below this group. Lanka (67.92), Bangladesh (63.88), and Pakistan (56.97) appear in the lowest levels with Pakistan, showing the lowest score by a significant difference.

Detailed insight:

Geographical Pattern:

Northern and Western Europe dominate the top scores, highlighting the effectiveness of social policies and infrastructure. In Asian countries, the middle-to-high shows, reflecting rapid economic growth and modernization.

Economic Correlation:

High scores are strongly correlated with high GDP and strong social welfare systems (Nordics, Western Europe). The economies (China, Brazil) show progress to reduce, but still lag behind developed countries.

Developmental Implications:

The top rank of Nordic countries suggests a successful model for combining economic prosperity with social equity. The decline in scores from western to East to South Asian countries indicates in areas with uneven global progress and investment. Pakistan's quite low status (56.97) may indicate important requirements between governance, infrastructure, education, or health sectors. The Nordic and Western European model looks the most successful according to the score, while South Asian countries are lagging behind. This type of visual policy helps makers to identify areas requiring priority and learn from top globally.

Summary Table for Clarity:

RANK GROUP	**COUNTRIES**	**SCORE RANGE**
Top (Excellent)	Finland, Sweden, Denmark	85-87
High (Very Good)	Germany, France, Austria, Norway, UK, Japan	80-84
Moderate (Good)	Portugal, Canada, Switzerland, Australia, USA	75-80

Emerging (Average)	China, Brazil, Vietnam, Singapore, UAE	69-74
Low (Developing)	Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, South Africa, Bangladesh	63-68
Very Low (Challenged)	Pakistan, Vietnam, Venezuela	56-57

FINDINGS:

The quality of partnerships should not be measured solely by participation in international summits or by the volume of aid provided. Instead, outcomes should be the measure—how many children gained access to schools, how many people moved out of poverty, and how much carbon reduction was achieved. Without addressing debt risks, technology transfer, and the financial capacity of local governments, SDG-17 remains practice. Finally, instead of one-way learning, a two-way exchange is necessary., Just as developed countries' technology and financing are essential, the innovative and community-based models of developing countries must also be brought to the center of global solutions. The study finds that high SDG rankings of developed countries often mask internal inequalities, reliance on imported technology, and carbon outsourcing. In contrast, community-based initiatives in India, Brazil, and Bangladesh—like digital public goods, hunger-reduction, and health programs—demonstrate globally relevant innovations, though often undervalued. Evaluating actual outcomes, such as poverty reduction, improved educational access, and lowered carbon emissions, is more meaningful than merely tracking participation or aid. Strong partnerships require international cooperation, local institutions, technology transfer, and two-way learning.

The novelty of this study lies in emphasizing outcome-based evaluation, critically examining ranking limitations, and highlighting India-specific innovative initiatives, showing how local solutions can inform global practices.

Discussion:

As for the findings, they contradict the common notion that countries with the best SDGs' scores are actually more developed. Indeed, the fact is that the developed nations score very high on most SDG-related rankings while failing to show any significant positive changes on the ground, with inequality, dependency, and carbon outsourcing being some of the most relevant examples. Thus, it becomes clear that the ranking mechanism per se is rather superficial and tends to overlook the complex nature of development and its specific features. On the other hand, developing countries manage to implement local-level innovations that lead to real improvement in people's lives. Some of them include innovative

health initiatives in villages, public digitization efforts, or poverty alleviation strategies, yet all of them are largely ignored by global ranking organizations. Thus, there is a structural flaw in how development is evaluated today that results in ignoring important local-level developments due to the focus on output-based metrics.

The latter point brings us to one of the most important conclusions of the research – there is a need to move away from the policy presence criterion and switch to the actual efficiency of actions and capabilities that are created due to these actions. It should be mentioned that the introduction of the SDG-Capability Alignment Model (SCAM) adds to the analysis of the issue in a more sophisticated manner. By taking into account institutional capability, social inclusion, and outcome effectiveness, the new tool turns the discussion from the question of "what policy there is" to "what outcome there is." In this regard, the analysis shows that an appropriate institutional structure is not enough if there is no alignment with social inclusion and the positive impact on the grassroots level. Thus, the efficiency of the implementation of SDGs is dependent on the alignment of governance capabilities, inclusion processes, and actual results. Using the SCAM, it becomes clear that the lack of alignment between these elements is what makes it possible for some highly ranked countries to avoid equal development, as well as to make it possible for some low-ranked countries to improve people's life in certain spheres. In general, it can be stated that the discussed issue shows the necessity to shift the analysis from a ranking-based one to capability-related evaluations.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Prefer measurable results, such as increased access of education, reduction in poverty and carbon emission control, instead of just participating in the initiative or providing assistance.

2. Increase the capacity of local bodies and community -based initiatives, unite the successful models of countries such as India, Brazil and Bangladesh in national and international strategies.

3. Facilitating reciprocity and technical transfer through south-south collaboration and combined R&D programs.

4. Eliminate internal inequalities by applying reference-specific interventions for marginal and sensitive groups.

5. Ensure financial and technical stability through long-term funding methods and capacity-building initiatives.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of SDG1-17 states that true progress is achieved not only by policy enactment or international rankings, but also by effective implementation, local innovation and measured results.

Developed countries contribute to technical skills and institutional capacity, while developing countries provide community -based solutions that can inspire global methods. Strengthening local abilities, adopting policies, promoting knowledge and technical exchange, and maintaining continuous international cooperation is necessary to cope with poverty, enhance education and health, to achieve gender equality, to promote clean energy and protect the environment. Ultimately, the success of SDG should be measured by tangible improvements and the health of ecosystems instead of alone numbers or rankings. Accepting a collaborative, resulting-centered strategy, sustainable development can produce a real, permanent impact in different contexts.

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