

## **Sustainable development and zero hunger : A focus on India's social entrepreneurship initiatives**

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**Abstract**

The study examines global challenges in sustainable development, particularly in food security and achieving zero hunger, focusing on India. It discusses the World Bank's commitment of \$45 billion to address food and nutrition issues and the FAO's goal to reduce food insecurity by half. The study highlights India's strategic initiatives to promote innovation and entrepreneurship for economic and social advancement, aligning with the SDGs. It emphasizes the critical role of social enterprises in addressing developmental obstacles and advancing towards zero hunger. The study calls for urgent, coordinated actions to create a world free of hunger by 2030, underscoring the importance of partnerships between the private sector, government, academia, and indigenous groups.

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**1. Introduction**

Sustainable development is a worldwide approach that encompasses the entire human species. Significant Civilization is currently facing significant global challenges in the environment, society, and economy. Increasing disparities exist between developing and developed nations and regions. As a result of recent international events, the worldwide economic crisis, and the repercussions of natural disasters, there is a scarcity of essential resources required to ensure sustainable and balanced development for all members of humanity and to avert extreme poverty [1].

Food security will remain a paramount concern worldwide through 2024. This is the rationale behind the World Bank's designation of food and nutrition as one of eight pressing global issues requiring large-scale attention and its commitment of \$45 billion to mitigate problems and protect livelihoods worldwide [2].

The FAO, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, established a target at the 1996 World Food Summit to reduce food insecurity by half. 2000, this objective was incorporated into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). At the Rio+20 Summit, it was emphasized that the fundamental aims of sustainable development encompassed poverty reduction, substituting unsustainable consumption and production patterns with more sustainable paradigms, conservation, and managing natural resources in a manner that maintained equilibrium with economic and social progress. The realization of this vision, as expounded upon during the World Food Summit, is contingent upon resolving the issue of food insecurity.

The World Food Programme (WFP) asserts that starvation and malnutrition are more severe than the combined burden of AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis when considering the variety of health issues present. Nonetheless, starvation is a considerably easier problem to address than complex diseases and the potential for their transmission. There is adequate food on the globe to satisfy the hunger of all individuals. Nonetheless, this will necessitate appropriate policy decisions, effective food resource management, and alterations in consumer behavior.

Over time, India's strategic planning process has transformed, with the government now placing utmost importance on innovation and business support strategies. Numerous strategic initiatives exist to bolster entrepreneurship for job creation, economic expansion, social enterprise support, and small business global standing improvement [3],[4].

According to the 12th Five-Year Plan of the Government of India (2012-2017), innovation and social enterprise are critical for advancing humanity and improving living conditions. Therefore, social enterprises are prioritized in national policymaking. The government has articulated its intention to foster the growth of social enterprises as a fundamental component in addressing the nation's developmental obstacles. Hence, the prime objective of the policy is to accelerate the expansion of social enterprises while fostering innovation among MSMEs [5], [6].

With one of the largest economies experiencing rapid growth globally, India maintains a leading position in sustainable development and inclusiveness. India is actively striving to harmonize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the environmental, social, and economic scopes of development [7], [8]. On the internal front, India implements diverse strategies, policies, and systems across multiple programs.

## **Methodology**

The study employs a mixed-methods method. The data is gathered from the World Bank, FAO, and Indian government reports to analyze global food security trends and the impact of the World Bank's \$45 billion commitment. Qualitative data is gathered through interviews with key stakeholders in India's sustainable development sector. Data scrutiny comprises thematic analysis for qualitative data. The study also reviews existing literature on sustainable development, social entrepreneurship, and food security to contextualize findings.

## **Rationale for Zero Hunger: A Multifaceted Approach to Global Development**

Sustainable development facilitates fulfilling fundamental human requirements and improving living conditions for all while safeguarding the quality of life for future generations (WCED, 1987). To transform society, we must utilize natural resources to resolve global environmental matters such as climate change and ecosystem degradation. Social entrepreneurship governance is essential to shaping the economy and attaining global sustainability (British Council, 2015). Social entrepreneurs can foster economic growth and promote global sustainability by managing social entrepreneurship.

Achieving zero hunger is critically important for several reasons:

**Basic Human Right:** Access to adequate, nutritious, and safe food is recognized as a fundamental human right. Hunger and malnutrition deny individuals their fundamental right to live a life with dignity. It is essential to prioritize efforts to ensure that every person has access to adequate food to meet their nutritional needs.

**Health and Well-being:** Ending hunger is crucial for improving health outcomes and overall well-being. Malnutrition, especially in children, can get to weakened immunity, cognitive impairments, stunted growth, and increased susceptibility to diseases. Adequate nutrition is essential for healthy development, productivity, and overall quality of life.

**Poverty Alleviation:** Hunger is often linked to poverty, and addressing hunger is critical to poverty alleviation efforts. Access to nutritious food can break the cycle of poverty by improving productivity, enabling individuals to engage in education and work, and creating opportunities for economic growth.

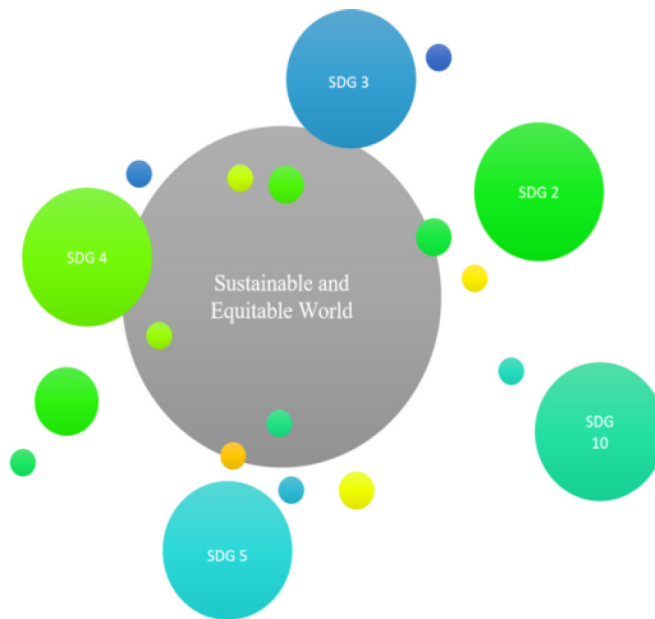
**Social Stability:** Hunger and food insecurity can lead to social unrest, political instability, and migration. By ensuring access to food for all, we can contribute to social stability, reduce resource conflicts, and create more inclusive and resilient societies.

**Environmental Sustainability:** Promoting zero hunger through sustainable agricultural practices also advances ecological sustainability. Organic farming, agroforestry, and water conservation mitigate agriculture's adverse environmental effects, including deforestation, soil degradation, and excessive water consumption.

**Ethical and Moral Responsibility:** As global citizens, it is our moral responsibility to eliminate hunger and guarantee that no individual goes

to bed hungry. Addressing hunger is not only a matter of ethical obligation but also reflects our shared commitment to building a more just and compassionate world.

**Sustainable Development:** The issue of hunger intersects with various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as (SDG 3) promoting good health and well-being, (SDG 4) ensuring quality education, (SDG 5) advancing gender equality, and (SDG 10) reducing inequalities. By achieving zero hunger, progress can be made towards achieving other SDGs, creating a more sustainable and equitable world. As shown in Figure 1:



**Figure 1**

**Focusing on selected SDG Goals for Equitable World**

*Source:* Authors Own Compilation

Achieving zero hunger is crucial for human rights, health, poverty alleviation, sustainable development, social stability, environmental sustainability, and ethical considerations. It requires collective efforts, innovative solutions, and strong commitment from individuals, communities, governments, and organizations to create a world where everyone has achieved nutritious, safe, and sufficient food.

Based on the information provided, here are a few examples of social entrepreneurship initiatives working in India to achieve zero hunger:

Table 1 shows the activities undertaken by Social Entrepreneurs leading to fulfilling the criteria of SDG 2

**Table 1**  
**Social Entrepreneur and its activities fulfilling SDG**

| <b>Social Entrepreneurships</b>          | <b>Activities</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>Fulfilling Criteria of SDG 2</b>           |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Akshaya Patra Foundation</b>          | Providing Nutritious meals to school going Children                                                                                           | Food Security and Nutrition                   |
| <b>Goonj</b>                             | Redistributing excess material wealth from Urban areas to rural area and creating awareness among the rural about nutrition                   | Educating rural vulnerable about malnutrition |
| <b>Action Against Hunger</b>             | Based in more than 50 countries and with over 40 years of experience dedicated to identifying, treating and preventing hunger-related issues. | Ensuring nutritional wellbeing                |
| <b>Pratham</b>                           | Works to providing education and nutrition through a unique approach teaching at the right level to the slum area children                    | Nutrition                                     |
| <b>Oxfam India</b>                       | Educates the dalits, adivasi people to reduce inequalities and discrimination                                                                 | Creating awareness about malnutrition         |
| <b>HelpAge India</b>                     | Helps the disadvantaged and destitute elderly people and cares about their well being                                                         | Food Security                                 |
| <b>India Food Banking Network (IFBN)</b> | Addresses the issue of hunger and malnutrition through a network to vulnerable communities and malnourished children                          | Food Security and improves nutrition          |
| <b>Naandi Foundation</b>                 | Helps the tribal women farmers in growing chemical free , nutritious vegetables using regenerative agriculture techniques                     | Supports sustainable agricultural practices   |

*Contd...*

|                                |                                                                                              |                    |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Smile Foundation</b>        | Provides comprehensive healthcare services to the doorsteps of under privileged communities. | Improved nutrition |
| <b>Save the Children India</b> | Works on the issue of education, health, nutrition, child protection                         | Nutrition          |



**Figure 2**  
**The cycle of SDG 2**

*Source: Author's Own Compilation*

The following model in Figure 2 shows how social entrepreneurs help to achieve the elements of Sustainable Development Goal 2 by their efforts.

### **Conclusion**

The dedicated efforts of NGOs in India exemplify a commitment to addressing the complex challenges of hunger and malnutrition, striving to create sustainable solutions and enhance the well-being of vulnerable communities. By integrating social and environmental considerations into

their operational framework, these organizations play a pivotal role in advancing the targets of SDG2. Their innovative approaches and community-focused strategies underscore their role as critical drivers toward a world free of hunger and malnutrition.

However, urgent and coordinated actions are needed, with just six years remaining until the 2030 deadline for achieving SDG2. Partnerships must be strengthened between the private sector, government, academia, indigenous communities, and farmer groups. Policies promoting climate-smart agriculture and community-led extension services are crucial for significant progress toward SDG2 and realizing a world without hunger by 2030.

#### *Limitations and Scope for Further Research:*

While this study sheds light on the impactful work of NGOs in addressing hunger and malnutrition in India, it has limitations. Further research could delve deeper into these organizations' specific strategies and initiatives to assess their effectiveness and scalability. Additionally, examining the role of technology and innovation in enhancing food security and nutrition outcomes could provide valuable insights for future interventions. Moreover, exploring the socio-economic factors influencing food access and utilization among vulnerable populations would pay to a more broad understanding of the opportunities and challenges in achieving zero hunger.

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