Outcome Report

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung India Office

in partnership with the

JSDP Network

37th Joint Staff Development Programme 2021

Corona Pandemic and sustainable development goals: Impact, Responses & Prospects

37th JOINT STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2021

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A Brief Outcome Report

I. THE CONTEXT

Our shared vision to eradicate poverty and inequality, save our planet and build a peaceful world by meaningfully working on universally accepted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is shattered by prevalent Corona Pandemic that began as a health crisis but quickly turned into a human and socio-economic crisis.

This necessitates now to dedicate our efforts with greater rigour and commitment turning this decade into the period of intense action. In this context, it's our endeavour to mobilize governments, political systems, businesses, civil society, communities and NGOs to work collectively and in synergy to create a better world for every form of life.

The pandemic has led us to think and rethink on the developmental processes, tools, outcomes and objectives afresh. A new churning in the form of analyses, debates and reshaped consensus is the imperative to chalk out newer strategies and action plans. NGOs are an important partner in the process to attain the SDGs. Their adaptability at aligning activities to the development goals as well as their competence in replicating best practices with peer groups will provide a meaningful cause to further enhance our march towards attaining SDGs. In the post-Covid-19scenario, it is therefore necessary for NGOs to focus on combining their diverse resources in order to create an effective human centric transformational approach.

II. AIMS AND OBJECTIVE

The Joint Staff Development Programme (JSDP) 2021 being held at Udaipur from 18th to 21st September 2021 major focus was on the pandemic and its impact on society in the context of SDGs.

The major aims of the event were as follows:

- Deliberate 360 degrees on major development goals as well as gain a clear understanding of their present status in India
- Recommend the way forward for the design of actions and measures towards achieving the SDGs for the networks partner organizations
- Sharing of good practices at the grassroots level with the aim of promoting a better understanding of the SDGs and their correct implementation
- Important occasion to enable participants to develop clarity on their programmes and actions adopting the Training Manual on SDGs for NGOs, specially developed by Council for Social Development.
- Improve NGOs' common understanding of the different SDGs and their targets in a simple way and convert the targets into actionable tasks
- The mutual sharing of methodologies on how the JSDP network can engage in the best possible way with various stakeholders/target groups, e.g., local authorities, educational institutions, banks and industrial companies as well as other NGOs to achieve the SDGs at the grassroots level.

III. KEY TAKEAWAYS

The event had a galaxy of speakers sharing their insights and experiences on the corona pandemic and sustainable development goals, thereby germinating quality discussions on the areas relevant to the SDGs.

- The forum led to informed and nuanced discussions that set the ground for further research and the way forward.
- Creation of methodologies on how the JSDP network can engage in the best possible way with various stakeholders/target groups, e.g., local authorities, educational

institutions, banks and industrial companies as well as other NGOs to achieve the SDGs at the grassroots level.

- The importance of appropriate systems to monitor and collect data was underlined with regard to achieving the SDGs, especially in the context of the pandemic.
- Policies to achieve the SDGs are only as good as their implementation and conceptualisation within the local context. Without such contextualisation processes and awareness-raising measures, even on paper, sound policies will not be effectively implementable.
- As much has moved online, business models have changed and jobs have to become more adaptable. Therefore, learning strategies must also change, apart from the fact that the children who go to school today will take on jobs that do not even exist today.
- Non-governmental organisations play a crucial role, especially in times of the pandemic, as they should, among other things, act as helping hands for ordinary people to access government aid programmes that exist but are very difficult for vulnerable groups to access without help.
- More critical discussions and sharing of best practices should take place among NGOs to streamline the shared efforts to achieve SDGs.
- The prevailing dichotomy between the messages brought out by science and solutions such as the introduction of clean technology often miss out on the importance of climate literacy to create active change. The human dimension to the problem thus becomes essential.
- Cooperation over competition drew consensus as a preferred response for viable exchange of green energy know-how to aid in achieving the SDGs.
- With a pressing necessity to act with tailor-made responses, the discussions resonated on the importance of technologically open and economically efficient partnerships.

List of Partner Organizations that participated at the JSDP 2021

IV. Inaugural Session

The video and audio recording of the talk during the Inaugural Session is available at:

1. Welcome Address & Overview of JSDP 2021
Mr Mayank Upadhyay, Secretary and Trustee, Indian Society for Community Education (ISCE)

Mr. Upadhyay introduced the speakers for the next session. He encouraged the participants to enjoy the stay and each other's company. He finished his remarks by expressing his hope that everyone might learn something throughout the conference and reminding the participants to follow the schedule.

2. Intoductory Remarks
Mr Peter Rimmele, Resident Representative to India, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

Mr. Rimmele started by exploring the fact that despite all negatives, development seems to somehow happen anyway. Therefore, he encouraged the participants to discuss the prices and chances of the current situation. He reminded his audience that all challenges are global ones. Furthermore, he suggested concerning the pandemic to not think of the what-ifs but to see the pandemic as a possibility to face reality.

He underlined how important grassroot work is, as a well-intended policy can change nothing without such efforts. Therefore, the conference intends to provide the participants with guidance, so that they can get nearer to achieving SDGs. Hereby the academic research presented at this conference aims to provide fresh perspectives.

He concluded by telling the participants that their success depends on if they truly have learned out of their experiences at the conference.

3. Keynote Address by the Chief Guest
Dr. Anil Gupta, Recipient of Padmashri, Founder of Honey Bee Network & Prof at IIM, Ahmedabad (Retd)

Prof. Gupta started his address by presenting the fact that about 15 % of the Indian population has no access to the internet and therefore throughout the last year no access to education.

He then outlined the three types of potential one has to have access to create innovations for a sustainable future: The first is social potential. To make this potential accessible external and internal sanctions against unacceptable behaviour must be installed. The second one is intellectual potential. To make this potential accessible, a voice has to be given to innovative people in the formal and informal sector. He explained that knowledge should be a public good. The problem at the moment is that one downloads more than one uploads. As long as not as much gets uploaded as downloaded, it is his opinion, that society cannot be fair.

Furthermore, Prof Gupta called for a use of language that does not disempower people. To him, people who struggle are sometimes able to solve problems very creatively. Furthermore, he believes that not the people but the markets are to blame for the lack of economic success of the poor. Finally, the third one is creative potential. He mentioned that a big problem is that as the knowledge is expanding every day, we feel comparatively less and based on that act even less. He reiterated the difference between autonomy and agency, being the willingness to choose autonomy. He diagnosed that the current society lacks agency. The solution however is not to experience what others are experiencing, because then one would only act to south one's own feelings.

He then continued to explain that developmental vulnerability is measured by the width of opportunities and timeframe. The wider the opportunities and the wider the timeframe the less vulnerable is one. He concluded by presenting his solutions for unlocking these potentials and improving the vulnerability of the poor.

Firstly, by showing the example of Maganlal Gandhi's competition for designing a Charkha or Samyukta Yantra he suggested challenge awards as an effective method to stimulate innovation.

Secondly, he encouraged the participant to become uneasy with themselves facing the fact that there are so many unsolved problems. However, he reminded the audience to keep in mind that sometimes bad design but good intentions can be good enough and that in finding these solutions one has to be inclusive of animals and humans.

Moreover, he called for institutions, where the cost of running the institution goes down every year as we learn by sharing our failures and achievements. To him, fast learning means fast economic growth.

Besides that, he pointed to the need for affordable, available, accessible solutions. The find these solutions he reiterated that knowledge and resources must be democratized

Prof Anil Gupta closed with the statement that the power of the JSDP network lays in learning from each other.

4. Q & A
In the Q & A session Prof Gupta, challenged participants not only to share knowledge for experts but from the grassroot level on their website. He also explained that whether or not an innovation is spread very widely or stays localized depends on the local specialty and the visibility of that innovation. However, he stated, that is not necessarily a problem as a diversity of innovations is indeed vital. But he also made clear that every individual who does not share innovations is part of the reason why solutions are not defused.

He also recommended to accept failure and to see it as a learning opportunity. He advocated for learning from the most productive people by spreading their techniques to start an experimentation phase. For this experimentation risk-takers are necessary.

He concluded by telling the audience that he is optimistic even dough the process of innovation is very slow at the moment and needs to be scaled up.

V. Session 1: Achieving Global SDGs Targets: Decade of Action – A Reality Check SDGs: Way forward for Better Human Life

The video and audio recording of the talk during Session 1 is available at: [Achieving Global SDGs Targets: Decade of Action – A Reality Check SDGs: Way forward for Better Human - YouTube](#)

Moderator: Mr Gandhi Doss, IYD, Bengaluru

Mr. Doss reiterated the fact that this is the first get-together after two years. He claimed that the most important ingredient for sustainable development is compassion. He explained that one cannot help everyone and that the Covid pandemic thought everyone how small human beings are.

1. Dr Sundar Narayan Mishra, Consultant SDG, NITI AYOG

Dr. Mishra started his speech by defining the SDGs as the first goals that integrate all aspects of human life. As they are clearly articulated goals for the first time, he explained, they build up pressure to act and succeed.

The first part of his presentation covered the implementation architecture of the SDGs. He explained that policy is very important from the grassroot up. Furthermore, coordination between ministries and the states and monitoring of the states and districts is crucial. The central ministries as the collectors of statistics of program implementation are very important. Here he pointed out that at this time in point there are not all the data on the state of district-level available. He then elaborated on the fact that States, local governments, and UTs are very important to localise SDGs, for example, 20 different states have their own indicators. Moreover, civil society and academia have important background roles to mobilize, hold accountable, support technically and strengthen initiatives for social inclusion. Besides that, the private sector can also be a huge support.

The second part of his presentation focused on the monitoring of the progress asking the question where we are now. Dr. Mishra showed the SDG India Index. Its monitoring can capture post-pandemic data mostly at a national level. It is measured from 0 to 100, 100 meaning full achievement. The overall results showed India's weakness in SDG 2 (Under feed people) and 5 (gender discrimination), which have been weaknesses from the beginning.

Dr. Mishra concluded by explaining that every SGD is tracked by indicators. He, therefore, recommended designing programmes accordingly to the specific weaknesses in one SDG. He concluded that progress is happening, but change has to happen on the individual level.

2. Prof Vidyut Joshi, Former Vice Chancellor, Bhavnagar University and Eminent Sociologist
First Prof Joshi explored the question; "How did it become so?" He showed that since 1969 scientists called for sustainable development but just recently the SDGs were established.

He went on to explore: "What went wrong?" He explained that due to lifestyle inflation pollution is increasing and that human rights are still being violated. To him the only way out is a paradigm shift: neoliberalism has to shift into ethics-orientated humanism. It is clear, according to him, that markets will not solve but create problems.

He then asked what the new paradigm will be and what needs to change. He said these questions must be answered in three dimensions.

First, there must be an institutional shift. The educations system has to be redesigned to teach knowledge and how to live in harmony with others. Furthermore, the market has to be redesigned. Therefore, the economic institutions must be redesigned: The government must not make policies for someone's profit any longer, federalism must be preserved to ensure the existence of layers of government and scientists must be indented. That however does not mean that inventions like AI must be regulated. Besides that, the legal systems must be redesigned so that it does not depend on the principle of winners and losers. and finally, civil society institutions must be strengthened as they have a better understanding of what is going wrong in society.

Secondly, there must be a shift in individual behaviour. Every individual should live a simple life, work for oneself and use the local market.The third dimension is a shift in cultural behaviour. The culture should show that the goal in life is to be happy and to live in harmony.

He closed with the statement that a paradigm shift is the only way of achieving the SDGs by 2030.

VI. Session 2: Inequality and poverty: A legacy to be abandoned – Indian perspective – Global perspective

The video and audio recording of the talk during Session 2 is available at: Inequality and poverty: A legacy to be abandoned - Indian perspective - Global perspectives - YouTube

Moderator: Mr Navin Sheth, PHD Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Sheth opened the session by asking how the huge gap in economic equality will be solved, pointing out that income equality is a major concern. He asked how we can improve within a live time.

1. Dr Kiran Pandya, Provost Babaria University, Economist
Dr. Pandya started his talk with some general comments about inequality. He believes that inequality is a key development challenge of the past. He explained that while discussing inequality what is true on a unique level is also true on a macro level and vice versa. It is his opinion that the labour market is key to understand as well as human capital as the quality of the labour force. The quality of education is also a big contributor to inequality as access to private education is limited and the quality of primary education is poor. He also sees a big contribution to inequality that India's budget for healthcare is one of the lowest in the world.

He closed by suggesting to provide quality primary education, as skill development cannot replace education, to decrease inequality. He also recommended to improve the quality of public services.

2. Prof Amitabh Behar, CEO, Oxfam India

Prof Behar opened his talk by stating that economic inequality has improved. Also, he pointed out that even dough inequality has increased during the pandemic, it is likely to decrease when the pandemic ends. However, it is his opinion that inequality will increase again after this short period of decrease.

Following that he claimed, as the Covid pandemic is an incident, not a social structure, that incidental poverty will go up. Which means the poorest of the poor will take the biggest setback. This means that SDGs achievements will be pushed back.

He then elaborated on the fact that representative democracy even though it is a great achievement has its limitations: To him, its biggest weakness is that if there is no control over the free-market economy there will be a concentration of political power. He explained that the open economy is only open in theory. In practice it allows wealth to concentrate. This leads to a great value in capital but little value in labour. Therefore, the sustainable development model is going to be set back.

To him, a paradigm shift is necessary, as still, the majority of people believe that the free market is the best market form. However, one must face the fact that the free-market economy is not value-neutral and a good economic system must be ethical. The only way to achieve this is through a participatory democracy. And the only place where this can be realized is in villages. There a free market can happen and be decentralized. It is however crucial, that the villages decide for themselves to decentralize their market.

He claimed a problem needs to be solved first on the village level, as the other way around will drive up carbon consumption. He closed with calling to enforce sharing of profits with society, as a profit cannot be created in isolation.

VII. Session 3: Panel Discussion on Upskilling & Reskilling Imperatives for Post Pandemic Employment Opportunities

The video and audio recording of the talk during Session 3 is available at: Panel Discussion On 'Upskilling & Reskilling Imperatives for Post Pandemic Employment Opportunities - YouTube

Moderator: Gp Capt R Vijayakumar (Retd), VSM Executive Director, MMA

1. **Laxmi Thaku, Seva Manir**
Mrs. Laxim Thaku presented the changes that happened during the Covid-19 pandemic and how her organisation tries to work with these changes.

Firstly, she noted that during the Covid-19 pandemic many, who had left their villages came back home and now do not want to leave again. The result was that there are now especially many young men in the villages, which creates a huge opportunity. As these young people get more interested in agriculture, agricultural productivity increases. Seva Manir now plans to get even more young people back to their villages by making agriculture more appealing by for example modernising it by introducing scientific farming methods. This would also help the farmers achieve value addition.

She continued by elaborating on the skills Seva Manir wants to teach the younger generation. Seva Mani wants to help them build negotiating skills so that they can market their work for a fair price. They also want to teach them how to handle technology and reproductive as well as sexual health.

Furthermore, she expanded on the importance of building an ecosystem in the village. This requires the building of good healthcare and education facilities. Besides that, she reported that the organisation is working on creating spaces and platforms where women can talk about their issues to breach generational gaps.

She closed with the challenges villages are facing right now. Unemployment and closed schools have not only decreased access to education but increased the workload on women.

2. Mr Vivek Chopra, Global Leader - Consultant - Facilitator - Executive & Leadership Coach

He opened his speech by presenting three key skills for implementing growth and development. The first skill is to have an open mind. The second skill is to have an open heart, which means the ability to emphasize not to sympathize. It describes the ability to take the perspective of others into account, which is required to achieve sustainable growth. The third skill is an open will, which describes openness to connect with and to be ready for the emerging future.

Mr. Chopra proceeded by presenting his ideas on how to implement these skills in society. He noted that the Covid-19 pandemic had already changed the way of thinking from "ego-systematic" to "eco-systematic." He explained that ego-system-thinking, is a thinking style in which one is disconnected from the whole, while in eco-system-thinking one sees oneself as part of the whole.

Answering a question of what management should take into account when it comes to their leadership during the pandemic, he explained that supervisors should not set expectations, but listen and empathize with their workers. The relationship between supervisor and employee should not be transactional. Rather there should be a strong connection between the supervisor and the employee, as this is ultimately what makes employees loyal and hardworking.

3. Mr Viswathan R, Global Lead Education & Skilling (CSR), Cognizant Technology & Solutions & TEDx speaker

Mr. Viswathan opened his talk by explaining that improving the workforce is not only about the implementation of artificial intelligence and automation but also about upskilling the workforce. As everything has moved to online spaces, business models have changed and work places have to be more adaptable. Therefore, learning strategies have to change, besides the fact that the children that are in school today will be taking over jobs that do not even exist jet.

In his opinion, another problem the educational system is facing today is the fact that the students of this generation learn by doing. Therefore, the classroom can no longer be a place only for lectures. He recommended that after the pandemic the classroom should become a space for interaction and active learning by doing.

He concluded by remarking that only in collaboration a difference can be made. He explained that the wheel does not have to be reinvented, rather we need to think about which wire needs to be put on the wheel and what road the wheel is driving on.

VIII. Session 4: SDG Manual – Discussion & Brain Storming

Chair: Prof Nitya Nanda, Director, Council for Social Development, New Delhi

Brainstorming session of all participants on ways to improve the quality of the 200-page training manual on the SDGs for Indian training staff, which was initiated and designed by the JSDP network.

IX. Session 5: Pandemic: Impact on Health Management & the way forward

Corona Pandemic: New lessons to learn and need for rethinking on Health Policy and Programs

The video and audio recording of the talk during Session 5 is available at: [Session 5 : Pandemic: Impact on Health Management & The way forward Corona Pandemic - YouTube](#)

Moderator: Mrs Shilpa Mirashi, IIYW, Nagpur

1. Dr Ali Mehdi, Senior Visiting Fellow, ICRIER

Dr Mehdi shed light on the Indian health management system with a special focus on the post-COVID era. He argued that the ambiguity over whether individual states or the central government are responsible for health care is one of the biggest challenges facing India today,

and that without resolving this issue, no real progress can be made in India's health care system. COVID-19 in India, especially the second wave, has brought this issue of responsibility very starkly to the fore. He went on to say that this lack of clarity left people scrambling to take responsibility for their own health in the midst of a devastating pandemic with minimal support from the state.

Furthermore, he added that the lack of adequate data collection by the Indian government to reflect the health-related reality on the ground leads to the failure of policies to properly address crucial healthcare challenges. He therefore called for increased government investment in research into India's healthcare system.

Dr. Mehdi concluded by stressing that when it comes to health, it is not enough to offer free medicines or health insurances, as there are much larger social, political and environmental issues at play that need to be addressed just as urgently in order to provide Indians with an adequate healthcare system.

2. Dr Dileep Malvankar, Founder Director of Indian Institute of Public Health

Dr Malvankar summarised the important lessons we have learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic. According to him, these lessons are firstly, that the public health system needs to be well understood and strengthened; secondly, that pandemics and epidemics will continue to occur in the future and we need to be prepared for such worst-case scenarios; thirdly, that we need to improve methods of data collection on death rates, infection rates, etc.; fourthly, that we need to improve primary care and hospitals.

In his opinion, policy changes and investments are essential to ensure an adequate public health system for Indians. Among other things, he suggested that more public health laboratories be established; a public health nurse shall be the minimum requirement for every Indian village; and an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) like public health management technical cadre shall be established.

X. Session 6: Pandemic Aggravating the concerns of Quality Education

Quality Education - Are we measuring up to it?

The video and audio recording of the talk during Session 6 is available at: Session 6 : Pandemic Aggravating the concerns of Quality Education Quality Education - YouTube

Moderator: Mr Dayanand Tandon, CREAT, Lucknow

1. Prof. Arun Kumar, Former JNU Professor and Writer

Spoke about his extensive experience in the education sector and related it to the current state of the education system in India. He underlined the critical role of the principles of autonomy and accountability without which quality educations is not achievable. In his opinion,

universities must always be committed to the long-term interest of society, and this can only be the case if students and teachers are autonomous and thus able and allowed to reflect on and criticise the existing knowledge and system.

He argued that there cannot be a "mechanical yardstick" for assessing educational quality, but that there must be an empathetic and constantly renewed way of measuring educational quality. He assessed that with the recent emergence of private elite schools and universities the access of socially and economically diverse population strata to each other has been completely cut off, ultimately leading to increase the gap between poor and rich population strata.

Furthermore, Prof. Kumar said that the problem is not that there are no funds available for the education sector, but rather the distribution of these funds. As part of the solution, he argued that the allocation of funding should be increased, especially for teacher trainings and the hiring of larger numbers of teachers, in order to create a positive domino effect all the way down to the students.

2. Mr J S Rajput, Former Director, NCERT, Educationist & Writer

Firstly, he mentioned the decline in the credibility of government schools over the last 20 years as the Indian government has encouraged private enterprises to take over the education sector, leading to the commercialisation of education. As a result, he felt that the constitutional right to equal quality of education for all, irrespective of all economic and social differences, as being violated.

Mr. Rajput also criticised the closure of schools during the pandemic, arguing that this led to mental health problems among students as well as a high number of dropouts who were unable to follow lessons online because they did not have modern equipment due to their family's economic situation. Here he pleaded for a comprehensive nationwide health concept that would guarantee all pupils the best possible physical safety from the virus in schools.

Mr. Rajput argued for education in India to be more embedded in the culture and to work for more equality among students. He concluded on a positive note by reminding that these positive changes in the education system are indeed possible but should be implemented as soon as possible at this critical juncture of the pandemic.

XI. Session 7: Panel Discussion on the theme "Institutional Responses in dealing with the challenges posed by the Pandemic"

The video and audio recording of the talk during Session 7 is available at: Session 7 : Panel Discussion on the theme "Institutional Responses in dealing with the challenges - YouTube

Moderator: Mr Subrata Nag Chaudhary, SPJS, Kolkata

1. Dr. Amee Yajnik, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha

Dr. Yajnik began to recount the numerous tragedies she personally witnessed during the second wave of the pandemic in her constituency, bearing testimony, for example, to numerous complaints of high rates of domestic violence. Data collected after the devastating wave indeed showed that the number of cases of domestic violence against women doubled during the Lockdown, and that many victims lacked social and technical infrastructure to avail help, despite the fact that the government had heavily promoted support facilities. She also shared how the justice system was overwhelmed with such cases of violence, resulting in a lack of justice and often leaving victims helpless and alone. She argued that, these vulnerable groups would need a special package of assistance tailored to their needs and limited to these sections of society.

Moreover, she stressed the role of NGOs as helping hands for ordinary people to access government aid programmes that exist but are very difficult for vulnerable groups to access without the help of such organisations.

2. Dr. Anshuman Karol, Lead, Local Governance, PRIA

Dr. Karol focused his presentation on the grassroots level and how panchayats from various parts of the country have coped with the COVID-19 pandemic. Referring to the state of Kerala, he argued that the local government institutions had been very successful in mitigating the negative impacts of the pandemic. He argued that such good disaster management was only possible, among other reasons, because all panchayats in Kerala adopted a community-based disaster management plan at the local government level, which was developed in 2018. Unfortunately, these coordinated grassroots efforts have been lacking in most other Indian states.

He further emphasised the importance of the work of such panchayats, which through programmes like skill mapping and creation of databases, have played a massive part in bringing people back to the workforce after the lockdown, especially in the rural areas of the country. Dr. Karol argued that decision makers need to learn from these best practices in states like Kerala and adopt them nationwide if they desire to strengthen local governance.

XII. Session 8: SDG Manual – Discussion & Brain Storming:

Chair: Prof. Nitya Nanda, Director, Council for Social Development, New Delhi

Brainstorming session of all participants on ways to improve the quality of the 200-page training manual on the SDGs for Indian training staff, which was initiated and designed by the JSDP network.