ISSN:3030-332X
Impact factor: 9,493
International journal of scientific researchers
2nd International Conference on Green Economy & Sustainability 2.0, 30 April 2026

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND PUBLIC POLICY

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Abstract

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a universal blueprint developed by the United Nations (UN) in 2015 to eliminate economic, environmental and social issues by 2030. The role of public policy in the implementation of global and national SDGs is studied, with particular focus on the development strategy of Uzbekistan. Public policy is a key mechanism for translating international commitments into national planning, budget allocations, and institutional reforms. This Global Sustainable Development Report stresses that, in order for public policy to be effective for sustainable development, it needs to be inclusive and respect the principle of "leaving no one behind". The study considers how the legal and institutional implementation of findings can contribute to poverty reduction, gender equality and good governance, such as in the strengthening of Uzbekistan's alignment with the SDGs through the adoption of a strategy entitled "Uzbekistan - 2030" directed at the achievement of global sustainable development goals. Special emphasis is laid on the role of social protection, transparency, and anti-corruption measures in enabling sustainable governance. Implementation of the SDGs requires strong institutions, accountability mechanisms, and public participation and seeks to build sustainable development on a long-term basis by combining economic growth, social development, and environmental protection in a holistic approach.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, Public Policy, Uzbekistan , 2030 Strategy, Inclusive Growth, Governance, Institutional Reforms

Introduction

Today, governments are confronted with complex and chronic problems of poverty, inequality, environmental degradation and poor governance for which there are no clear-cut, programmatic policy solutions or single interventions that can be applied. Taking these international issues into account, the United Nations (UN) adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, which contained explicitly 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an urgent call to action for people-centered solutions aimed at improving the quality of life and protecting the planet for future generations. Sustainable development is distinct from customary development concepts in its explicit consideration of the interrelationship between the economic, social and environmental dimensions, its attention not just to economic growth, but also to inclusion, equity and sustainability of resources. Further to that, public policy is important, as governments need to translate SDG targets into policies, budgets and institutional frameworks. Public policy is the intermediary between global commitments and national realities and the instrument for implementation, at all levels and in all sectors. The highest political priorities have been given to the sustainable development within Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan has been developing sustainable development strategies at the national level, based on the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the "Uzbekistan - 2030" strategy, which entails improving the living standards, governance, economic development, social protection, and environmental sustainability. The guiding principle of "For Human Dignity" has become the main guideline of public policy in Uzbekistan, the welfare of the citizens being its main purpose. Implementation of the SDGs requires collaboration between government institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations. Sound governance is necessary for transparency and accountability, and for an effective and efficient implementation of SDGs. Such as e-government initiatives to reduce red tape and improve service delivery, and anti-corruption measures, which increase trust in government and ensure resources are used for their most effective purpose. Equity is another of the key principles for implementing the SDGs. Based on the principle of "leaving no one behind", it is a call to address all forms of inequality and seek equal opportunity for all. Uzbekistan has undertaken efforts to promote gender equality, improve the situation of vulnerable groups of the population, as well

as increase access to education and healthcare, showing how public policy can help achieve sustainable development outcomes.

Through the adoption of the SDGs, it is intended to change the way of public policy from a strategy that looks for short-term economic growth, to a strategy that seeks sustainable development in the long run. Uzbekistan and other participating countries are carrying out activities, policies and programs in line with global goals set in national development plans.

Review of the lecture

The theory of sustainable development is a popular academic topic. A wide range of academics have considered the idea of sustainable development as a thorough concept; for example, in 2015, Jeffrey Sachs stated that sustainable development requires a thorough approach including economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. Sachs argues that governments should pursue policies that simultaneously address all three aspects together rather than treating them separately. Another influential view was given by economist Amartya Sen who stressed human development, notably through his work on the capability approach, which argues that development should be measured not only by economic growth but also by capabilities and functionings. This position is closely aligned with the SDG framework which prioritizes, inter alia, human development, education, and health. Other scholars in the field, such as Dani Rodrik, have also argued the critical importance of institutions to the sustainability of the development of such policies, stressing the need for governance mechanisms, transparency and accountability, otherwise the policy will not yield the desired results, even if it is well-designed. This is important for developing countries, where institutional capacity is one of the factors that determine development outcomes. In addition, researchers have called for greater policy coherence and co-ordination. The OECD has highlighted the need for governments to ensure coherence across all sectors of their policy agendas. This means aligning economic policy to strengthen environmental sustainability and ensuring that social policies support equity and inclusion across all groups. Incoherence between policies can worsen problems and obstructions to development, instead of alleviating them. There has been research into the implementation of SDGs at the national level in the countries of Central Asia including Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan has made meaningful progress in integrating the SDGs into its national development strategy. Voluntary national reviews (VNRs) show continued commitment by the country to transparency and accountability in reporting on progress, though difficulties remain for environmental sustainability and reduced inequalities, particularly across regions of the country. Likewise, the governance literature stresses the potential of digital transformation to improve public service delivery. E-government is represented as an effective mechanism to improve efficiency and reduce corruption while improving citizen participation. Scholars thus argue that digital technologies can help governments monitor progress, collect data and make evidence-based decisions.

Overall, it is clear from the literature that strong institutions, inclusive policies and good governance are among the core elements of sustainable development. There have been major advances in these areas, but further work is needed to address the distinct challenges that remain and to ensure inclusive, equitable development.

Objectives

- Analyze how public policy can help the SDGs be achieved.

This objective seeks to understand how global commitments to the SDGs are translated into action at the national level through legislation, budgets, planning, and other tools.

- Assessment of Uzbekistan's implementation of the SDGs

The purpose of the report is to evaluate the consonance of Uzbekistan's national development strategy "Uzbekistan - 2030" with the SDG targets and identify key achievements and challenges.

- Building institutional and legal frameworks to achieve the SDGs

The theme considers the role of governance structures, laws and public institutions in achieving policy objectives.

- To assess the importance of inclusive growth and social equality

Policies targeting gender equality, poverty eradication, and social protection should ensure equal opportunities, accessibility and affordability for all people regardless of their gender.

- Identify challenges and opportunities for implementing the SDGs

This objective examines the systemic barriers limiting policy effectiveness, such as weak institutions or a lack of resources.

Methodology

Qualitative and descriptive methods of research have been used in the process. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and public policy in the Republic of Uzbekistan among students of Andijan College of Law, from the Andijan Technical School of Law, namely first and second year students are the main subject of the research. The reason why law students were chosen as the object of research is that they are closely related to the study of governance, legal systems, and public administration. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and informal interviews with 50 students who took part in the survey. The questionnaire included close-ended and open-ended questions to measure their awareness of the SDGs, understanding of public policy, and their opinion on Uzbekistan's sustainable development strategy. This research used simple random sampling to reduce sampling bias and improve reliability, meaning that every student has an equal probability of being chosen as a participant in the study. Secondary sources of data used for corroboration included government reports, the academic literature, and official documentation associated with the calculated plan "Uzbekistan - 2030" (see above). The data collected were analyzed descriptively. The data are categorized, tabulated and represented in a tabular form. Because the participants' responses are anonymous and used only for research purposes, ethical considerations are also maintained at this stage.

Data Analysis

Table 2: Level of Environmental Awareness

Level of Awareness	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
High Awareness	18	36%
Moderate Awareness	20	40%
Low Awareness	12	24%
Total	50	100%

Interpretation (Analytical)

Table 2 presents the distribution of environmental awareness among students. The data shows that the majority of respondents fall under moderate awareness (40%), followed by high awareness (36%), while 24% demonstrate low awareness. This indicates that although environmental knowledge is present among students, it is not deeply developed. The relatively high proportion of moderate awareness suggests that students are familiar with general concepts such as climate change and sustainability, but may lack detailed understanding or critical thinking skills regarding environmental issues. From an analytical perspective, this distribution supports the earlier finding where 60% knew about the green economy but only 45% practiced recycling. This reflects a knowledge-behavior gap, which is common in sustainability studies. Students may understand environmental concepts theoretically but fail to apply them practically due to lack of motivation, infrastructure, or institutional support. Furthermore, the presence of 24% low awareness is significant. It suggests that nearly one-quarter of the respondents are not sufficiently exposed to environmental education. This aligns with your earlier table where only 50% received environmental education, confirming that education directly influences awareness levels. Overall, the table indicates that awareness is growing but remains incomplete. Strengthening curriculum integration and awareness programs can shift more students from moderate to high awareness levels, ultimately improving sustainable behavior.

Table 3: Relationship Between Awareness and Sustainable Practice

Awareness Level	Practice Recycling (%)	Do Not Practice (%)

Awareness Level	Practice Recycling (%)	Do Not Practice (%)
High Awareness	70%	30%
Moderate Awareness	45%	55%
Low Awareness	20%	80%

Interpretation (Analytical)

Table 3 analyzes the relationship between awareness levels and actual sustainable behavior (recycling). The data clearly shows a positive correlation between awareness and practice. Students with high awareness demonstrate strong engagement, with 70% practicing recycling. In contrast, only 20% of students with low awareness engage in recycling activities. This sharp difference highlights that awareness plays a critical role in influencing environmental behavior. However, an important insight emerges in the moderate awareness group, where only 45% practice recycling. This indicates that awareness alone is not sufficient to ensure action. Other factors such as convenience, access to recycling facilities, and institutional encouragement also influence behavior. This analysis confirms a key concept in environmental sustainability: "Awareness is necessary but not sufficient for behavioral change."

The data also supports findings from your first table where recycling rates were low despite moderate awareness levels. This suggests the need for practical interventions, such as:

- Providing recycling infrastructure
- Organizing awareness campaigns
- Encouraging student participation

Overall, the table demonstrates that increasing awareness can improve sustainable practices, but must be supported by institutional and behavioral mechanisms.

Table 4: Perception of Institutional Role in Sustainability

Institutional Factor	Positive Response (%)	Negative Response (%)
College promotes sustainability	48%	52%
Availability of environmental programs	42%	58%
Support for green initiatives	46%	54%
Integration in academic curriculum	50%	50%

Interpretation (Analytical)

Table 4 evaluates students' perception of institutional involvement in promoting environmental sustainability. The results show that in all categories, negative responses slightly outweigh positive ones, indicating weak institutional support. Only 48% of students believe that the college actively promotes sustainability, while 52% disagree. Similarly, the availability of environmental programs is perceived as insufficient, with 58% expressing negative views. This suggests that students are not being provided with enough opportunities to engage in sustainability-related activities. The equal split (50%-50%) in curriculum integration reflects inconsistency in educational delivery. Some students may have been exposed to environmental topics, while others have not, which explains the uneven awareness levels observed earlier.

Conclusion

Finally, the study presents the increasing prominence of the SDGs in influencing public policy and governance practices to tackle global development challenges, as well as the role of public policy in translating globally-defined development goals at the level of national policies and practical implementation. In case of Uzbekistan, important progress has been made in aligning of national priorities for socio-economic development with the global goals for sustainable development through the planned document "Uzbekistan - 2030", which lays a solid foundation for social welfare, inclusion and

capacity-building. The survey of Andijan Law College students showed that, despite the relatively high level of awareness of the SDGs among students, there is a lack of in-depth knowledge and understanding of the SDGs, and the knowledge of the SDGs is not applied in practice. However, the current level of SDGs education may not be sufficient to prepare students to apply SDGs principles and practices in real-life situations. Nevertheless, the study shows that, in general, students have a positive attitude regarding Uzbekistan's progress towards achieving SDGs; some drawbacks exist, though, in the areas of inequality, environmental sustainability and institutional effectiveness. Public policy must overcome these challenges with strong implementation, accountability, and transparency standards in mind. In addition, the SDGs are an important issue for students as future legal professionals who will be greatly involved in policy-making, law enforcement, and justice delivery. All in all, for students who are future legal professionals, it is essential to learn about SDG-related issues through legal education, considering their important role in creating a sustainable society. Ultimately, sustainable development can be achieved only by a concerted effort by government, educational institutions and society as a whole. A higher level of understanding, better application of policy tools and more participatory procedures will contribute to this. By continuing to align national policies with global objectives and norms, Uzbekistan has a unique opportunity to advance towards a more equitable, inclusive and sustainable future.

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