

Localising SDGs and Role of Local Governments: Opportunities and Challenges

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Many countries around the world are working proactively to implement strategies and policies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, it is necessary to keep in mind the 'whole-of-government' approach while measuring the success of any country in achieving the SDGs. In this aspect, the Government of India has moved in the right direction. Since their formulation in 2015, the Government of India, through its nodal ministry NITI Aayog, has issued various guidelines making it easier for local governments to formulate policies and strategies aligned with the SDGs.

Since 2015, local governments have faced various obstacles while implementing SDG centric policies. Various governments have still not integrated local and regional governments (LRGs) in their consultation processes before finalizing national plans on SDGs. This leads to lack of on-ground data on the part of the national governments and also results in formulation of plans which may not be suitable to the conditions and needs of LRGs. Additionally, various LRGs, particularly in the African sub-continent and South Asia, face shortage of funds and an inability, therefore, to implement large-scale policies. According to a research conducted by the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), policies implemented by many LRGs are short-term and do not focus on making long-term, sustainable changes. This is a major problem as this entails that even though nations may be able to achieve the SDGs, their effect may be short-lived and bring about a bigger, more intense crisis later. LRGs also need to work more on implementing inclusive policies which not only account for the residents of an LRG but also the migrants. These may include not only workers but also those who fall in the category of 'extreme poverty'.

The COVID-19 pandemic, on the other hand, has also brought the LRGs to the frontline and once again highlighted their importance. LRGs across the world are actively working on arresting the spread of coronavirus while also ensuring delivery of essential services to all those who reside within their jurisdiction. This is an opportunity that not only LRGs, but even national governments need to realise and utilize. Now that LRGs are working to coordinate activities in different spheres of public life, from mobility to security, and from health to sewage, national governments need to make them more independent in order to take decisions proactively. Moreover, LRGs can play an extremely important role in accelerating long-term economic and social revival of cities. However, this is possible only when everyone understands the importance and role of LRGs.

In order to discuss more challenges and opportunities faced in localising SDGs, **All India Institute of Local Self-Government**, in collaboration with **CITYNET**, is organising a webinar on '**Localising SDGs and Role of Local Governments: Opportunities and Challenge**' on **Friday, June 18, 2021, at 11:30 AM (IST)**. This is the first webinar in a series of monthly webinars.