

# Quality of Education for Sustainable Development

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## *ABSTRACT*

Education for Sustainable Development is a trans-formative form of learning that empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society. "Quality Education," as defined in the context of Sustainable Development Goal 4, goes beyond basic literacy and numeracy—it encompasses the development of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary to lead sustainable lives. Education is about learning skills and knowledge. It also means helping people to learn how to do things and support them to think about what they learn. It is also important for educators to teach ways to find and use information. Education needs research to find out how to make it better. Through education, the knowledge of society, country, and of the world is passed on from generation to generation. This may include education in morality, for example learning how to act as loyal, honest and effective citizen. Education may help and guide individuals from one class to another. Educated people and groups can do things like help less-educated people and encourage them to get educated. Quality education is a crucial component of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". This goal recognizes education as a powerful tool for sustainable development, poverty reduction, and promoting gender equality. The present research paper which is based on secondary data emphasizes that how good education system will be helpful in achieving the targets of Sustainable development.

**Keywords: Quality Education, Sustainable Development, Citizen, United Nation**

### **Introduction:**

Sustainable Development Goal 4, or SDG 4, is a commitment to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. This goal aims to provide children and young people with quality and easy access to education, as well as other learning opportunities, and supports the reduction of inequalities. The key targets of SDG 4 include ensuring that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education, increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills for employment, and eliminating gender disparities in education. Despite progress in increasing access to education, significant challenges remain, including the fact that 262 million children and youth aged 6 to 17 were still out of school in 2017, and more than half of children and adolescents are not meeting minimum proficiency standards in reading and mathematics. The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a devastating impact on

education, with hundreds of millions of children and young people falling behind in their learning. To achieve SDG 4, increased investment in education, particularly in developing countries, and international cooperation and partnerships are essential.

SDG 4 has 10 targets which are measured by 11 indicators. The seven outcome targets are: free primary and secondary education; equal access to quality pre-primary education; affordable technical, vocational and higher education; increased number of people with relevant skills for financial success; elimination of all discrimination in education; universal literacy and numeracy; and education for sustainable development and global citizenship. The three means of implementation targets are: build and upgrade inclusive and safe schools; expand higher education scholarships for developing countries; and increase the supply of qualified teachers in developing countries. SDG 4 aims to provide children and young

people with quality and easy access to education plus other learning opportunities. One of its targets is to achieve universal literacy and numeracy. A major component in acquiring knowledge and valuable skills in the learning environment. Hence, the urgent need to build more educational facilities and also upgrade the present ones to provide safe, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all. Major progress has been made in access to education, specifically at the primary school level, for both boys and girls. In terms of the progress made, global participation in tertiary education reached 225 million in 2018, equivalent to a gross enrollment ratio of 38%.

### **Rational to Study:**

Studying SDG 4, which focuses on quality education, is crucial because education is a fundamental human right and a key driver of sustainable development. It empowers individuals, promotes social progress, and is essential for achieving other Sustainable Development Goals. Here's a more detailed explanation:

### **Individual Empowerment:**

- Education equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to improve their lives and contribute to society.
- It enables upward socioeconomic mobility, helping people escape poverty and achieve better living standards.
- Literacy and numeracy are foundational skills for accessing information, participating in the workforce, and making informed decisions.

### **Social Progress:**

- Education promotes gender equality by ensuring that all girls and boys have access to quality education.
- It fosters critical thinking, creativity, and innovation, which are essential for addressing global challenges.
- Education can reduce inequalities and promote social inclusion by providing opportunities for marginalized groups.

### **Foundation for Other SDGs:**

- SDG 4 is interconnected with other SDGs, such as those related to health, poverty, gender equality, and sustainable cities.
- For example, education is essential for achieving good health and well-being (SDG 3) by promoting health awareness and healthy behaviors.
- It also contributes to economic growth by developing a skilled workforce.

### **Addressing Global Challenges:**

- Education is vital for promoting sustainable development and addressing global challenges like climate change, poverty, and inequality.
- It can help individuals understand the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic issues.
- Education for sustainable development can empower people to adopt sustainable lifestyles and contribute to a more sustainable future.

### **Lifelong Learning:**

- SDG 4 emphasizes lifelong learning opportunities, recognizing that education is a continuous process throughout life.
- This includes early childhood development, vocational training, and adult education.
- By promoting lifelong learning, SDG 4 ensures that individuals can adapt to changing circumstances and continue to develop their skills and knowledge.

In conclusion, studying SDG 4 is vital because it highlights the importance of education as a fundamental human right, a driver of social progress, and a foundation for achieving sustainable development.

### **Review of Literature :**

UNESCO has been a central actor in shaping ESD. Its report "Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives" (2017) outlines how educational systems should integrate ESD into curriculum, pedagogy, and policy. It

frames QESD as not just about access, but about content, relevance, and transformative pedagogy. SDG 4 emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education. Target 4.7 explicitly mentions ESD: “By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development...” (UN, 2015). This positions QESD as both an outcome and a driver of broader sustainability. Literature supports the shift toward learner-centered, inquiry-based, and participatory pedagogies (Sterling, 2001; Wals, 2011). These encourage critical thinking, systemic analysis, and ethical reasoning. Studies by Mochizuki & Fadeeva (2010) and Tilbury (2011) emphasize the integration of sustainability topics into various disciplines rather than treating them as standalone subjects. Interdisciplinary and trans disciplinary approaches are increasingly favored. Teacher education is essential for QESD. The UNESCO publication "Education for Sustainable Development: A Roadmap" (2020) highlights the importance of building teachers' capacity for ESD-specific pedagogic, content knowledge, and assessment methods.

### Objectives:

1. **Inclusive and Equitable Education:** Ensure all girls and boys have access to free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education.
2. **Early Childhood Development:** Provide quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education to prepare children for primary education.
3. **Technical and Vocational Training:** Increase access to affordable technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including university.
4. **Skills Development:** Substantially increase the number of youth and adults with relevant skills for employment and entrepreneurship.
5. **Eliminate Disparities:** Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training

### Research methodology:

To study quality education for SDGs, a mixed-methods approach can be employed, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods.

### Data and Frameworks:

This paper is based on secondary data which has been collected from Journal, National and international Conference Volume web journal, government reports, websites and Newspapers

**1. SDG Framework:** Use the SDG framework to guide the study and ensure alignment with SDG 4.

**2. Quality Education Frameworks:** Employ frameworks such as the UNESCO Quality Education framework.

### Results and Discussion :

Role of a Good Education System in Sustainable Development

### Building Awareness and Knowledge:

A good education system equips individuals with the knowledge and understanding needed to address global challenges such as climate change, poverty, and biodiversity loss. It fosters:

- Environmental literacy
- Understanding of social justice and equity
- Awareness of global interdependence

"Without education, we cannot expect people to know how to live sustainably." – UNESCO

### Developing Critical Skills and Competencies:

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) emphasizes 21st-century skills:

- Critical thinking
- Problem-solving
- Systems thinking
- Collaboration and communication

These competencies empower individuals to make informed decisions and take responsible actions.

### Promoting Social Equity and Inclusion:

A strong education system ensures access to learning opportunities regardless of gender, socio-

economic status, or geographic location. It:

- Reduces inequalities (SDG 10)
- Promotes gender equality (SDG 5)
- Enhances social cohesion and peaceful societies (SDG 16)

### Driving Economic Sustainability

#### Education is closely linked to economic development:

- Increases employment opportunities
- Encourages entrepreneurship
- Enhances productivity and innovation Sustainable economies require a well-educated workforce that can adapt to green and digital transitions.

#### Encouraging Responsible Citizenship:

Through civic and global education, learners become active citizens who engage in democratic processes, respect human rights, and contribute to community development.

Supporting Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship

Quality education fosters a sustainability mindset and inspires learners to adopt sustainable lifestyles.

Topics such as:

- Climate change
- Renewable energy
- Conservation

#### Strengthening Institutions and Governance:

Education helps develop ethical leaders and transparent institutions by:

- Promoting accountability
- Nurturing ethical decision-making
- Supporting good governance practices

#### Enabling Inter generational Equity:

A sustainable education system ensures that future generations inherit the tools to thrive without compromising the planet. It supports long-term thinking and resilience building

#### Benefits:

1. **Poverty Reduction:** Quality education helps

reduce poverty by providing individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to secure better-paying jobs.

2. **Environmental Stewardship:** Education for sustainable development promotes environmental awareness and stewardship, encouraging individuals to adopt sustainable practices.
3. **Social Justice:** Quality education promotes social justice by providing equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances.
4. **Economic Growth:** Quality education contributes to economic growth by developing a skilled and knowledgeable workforce.

#### Challenges:

1. **Access and Equity:** Ensuring equal access to quality education remains a significant challenge, particularly for marginalized communities.
2. **Teacher Training:** Providing teachers with the necessary training and support to deliver quality education for sustainable development is crucial.
3. **Curriculum Development:** Developing curricula that incorporate sustainability and global citizenship is essential for promoting quality education.

#### Suggestions :

1. **Integrate Sustainability into Curricula:** Incorporate sustainability and global citizenship into educational curricula.
2. **Teacher Training and Support:** Provide teachers with training and support to deliver quality education for sustainable development.
3. **Increase Access to Quality Education:** Implement policies and programs to increase access to quality education, particularly for marginalized communities.
4. **Promote Lifelong Learning:** Encourage lifelong learning opportunities to support individuals in adapting to changing circumstances.

**Conclusion:**

Quality education is a critical component of sustainable development, empowering individuals and communities to create a more just, equitable, and environmentally conscious world. By addressing the challenges and implementing solutions, we can promote quality education for sustainable development and achieve a brighter future for all.

**Notes:**

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