



## Navigating the 17 Sustainable Development Goals Landscape in Pakistan: Progress, Pitfalls, and Prospects

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### Abstract

*The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations in 2015 marked a global commitment to address poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and governance challenges through the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Pakistan adopted this agenda in 2016, integrating the SDGs into its Vision 2025 framework and establishing institutional mechanisms at both the federal and provincial levels. Despite these efforts, progress has remained uneven, with persistent challenges in poverty reduction, gender equality, and institutional governance. This study employs a qualitative purposive content analysis of interview data to critically examine Pakistan's SDG trajectory. The purposive sampling approach enabled the collection of diverse perspectives from stakeholders engaged in education, governance, civil society, and grassroots activism. Content analysis was applied to categorize responses across the 17 SDGs, highlighting both achievements and gaps. The results reveal a dual narrative. On one hand, grassroots practices such as plastic reduction, composting, tree planting, and NGO-led initiatives demonstrate growing awareness and localized progress, particularly in SDG 3 (Health), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). On the other hand, systemic weaknesses persist in areas such as SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 7 (Clean Energy), and SDG 16 (Institutions), where cultural barriers, weak governance, and limited resources hinder advancement. Goals such as SDG 14 (Life Below Water) remain largely neglected in national discourse. The study suggests that Pakistan's SDG journey requires both bottom-up community action and top-down institutional reforms. Key recommendations include integrating grassroots practices into national monitoring frameworks, strengthening governance and accountability mechanisms, investing in climate-resilient infrastructure, and fostering inclusive policies that address gender and social inequalities. By situating Pakistan's experience within the broader South Asian context, the paper underscores the importance of resilience, inclusivity, and digital governance in advancing Agenda 2030.*

### Keywords

Climate Action, Gender Equality, Governance, Pakistan, Resilience, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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### Introduction

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations in 2015 marked a global commitment to address poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and governance

challenges through the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015). These goals represent an integrated framework that acknowledges the interdependence of social, economic, and environmental dimensions of development. For developing countries such as Pakistan, the SDGs embody both an opportunity and a challenge: an opportunity to align national priorities with global benchmarks, and a challenge to overcome structural barriers that impede progress (Sachs, 2015).

Pakistan was among the first countries to adopt the SDGs as part of its national development agenda in 2016, integrating them into the country's Vision 2025 framework and establishing SDG Support Units at federal and provincial levels (Government of Pakistan, 2016; Planning Commission of Pakistan, 2018). Despite these institutional efforts, Pakistan's progress has remained uneven. According to the Sustainable Development Report 2025, Pakistan ranks 140 out of 167 countries with a score of 56.97, reflecting persistent challenges in poverty reduction, gender equality, and institutional governance (Sustainable Development Report, 2025).

The significance of examining Pakistan's SDG trajectory lies in its dual vulnerability: as a developing country facing multidimensional poverty and as a climate-vulnerable state grappling with disasters such as floods, droughts, and heatwaves (UNDP, 2022). These vulnerabilities underscore the importance of integrating resilience, inclusivity, and digital governance into the SDG framework. Moreover, Pakistan's experience offers insights into the broader challenges faced by South Asian countries in balancing growth with sustainability (Asian Development Bank, 2023).

This paper seeks to critically analyze Pakistan's progress, pitfalls, and future prospects in navigating the SDG landscape. By examining policy initiatives, institutional mechanisms, and socio-economic realities, the study aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for strengthening Pakistan's alignment with the 2030 Agenda.

## **Background**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted in September 2015 at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in New York, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015). They succeeded the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000–2015), which had focused primarily on poverty reduction, education, and health but were criticized for being narrow in scope and uneven in achievement across countries (Sachs, 2012). The SDGs were designed to be broader, more inclusive, and universally applicable, covering 17 goals and 169 targets that integrate social, economic, and environmental dimensions of development (UNDP, 2016).

## **Key Features of the SDGs**

- **Universality:** Unlike the MDGs, the SDGs apply to all countries - developed and developing alike (United Nations, 2015).
- **Integration:** They emphasize the interconnectedness of goals, recognizing that progress in one area (e.g., education) influences others (e.g., gender equality, economic growth) (Sachs, 2015).
- **Inclusivity:** The SDGs stress "leaving no one behind," ensuring marginalized groups are included in development processes (UNDP, 2016).
- **Accountability:** Countries are expected to report progress through **Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)** at the UN High-Level Political Forum (United Nations, 2017).

## **The 17 Goals at a Glance**

The 17 SDGs range from No Poverty (Goal 1) to Partnerships for the Goals (Goal 17), covering poverty, health, education, climate action, and governance (United Nations, 2015).

## **Global Relevance**

The SDGs are not only a development framework but also a political and moral commitment to reshape global governance. They align with international agreements such as the Paris Climate Accord (2015) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015), reinforcing the need for resilience and sustainability in policymaking (UNFCCC, 2015; UNDRR, 2015).

## **Pakistan's Adoption of the SDGs**

Pakistan was among the first countries to adopt the SDGs as its national development agenda in 2016, integrating them into the National Framework for Development (Government of Pakistan, 2016). The Planning Commission established SDG Support Units at the federal and provincial levels to localize targets, monitor progress, and align them with Vision 2025 (Planning Commission of Pakistan, 2018). Despite these efforts, Pakistan's progress has been uneven, with notable achievements in education

and health but persistent challenges in poverty reduction, gender equality, and institutional governance (Sustainable Development Report, 2025).

### **Literature Review**

The literature on Pakistan's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) journey reflects a mixed record of progress and persistent challenges. Scholars and policy reports converge on the idea that while Pakistan has institutionalized the SDGs, actual advancement remains uneven across sectors.

### **Early Adoption and Institutionalization**

Pakistan formally adopted the SDGs through a parliamentary resolution in 2016, embedding them into Vision 2025 and provincial development strategies (Reforms, 2019). Dedicated SDG Units were established in the Prime Minister's Office, Parliament, and Planning Commission to coordinate implementation (Zeewaqr, 2024). These institutional arrangements demonstrate strong political ownership, positioning Pakistan as an early adopter of Agenda 2030.

### **Progress Achieved**

Several reports highlight positive outcomes in poverty reduction, maternal health, access to clean water, and women's participation in leadership roles (Zeewaqr, 2024; Cheema, 2021). Social protection schemes such as the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and Ehsaas Programme have expanded safety nets, contributing to poverty alleviation and improved health outcomes (Reforms, 2019). Infrastructure development under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has advanced SDGs related to affordable energy, economic growth, and partnerships (Zeewaqr, 2024).

### **Persistent Challenges**

Despite these gains, progress remains uneven and fragile. Pakistan's SDG ranking fell from 128<sup>th</sup> in 2023 to 137<sup>th</sup> in 2024, with a performance score of 57.02 (Shafique, 2024). Education, economic prosperity, climate initiatives, and urban housing remain stagnant (Zeewaqr, 2024). The Pakistan SDG Status Report 2023 underscores regional disparities, particularly in AJK and Gilgit, where localized data is insufficient for targeted interventions (Initiatives, 2023).

### **Financing and Global Constraints**

The financing gap is a critical barrier. Pakistan faces an estimated US\$60 billion SDG financing deficit (16% of GDP), compounded by external debt liabilities of over US\$308 billion (Mohamed Yahya, 2025). Debt servicing consumes more than half of the national budget, leaving limited fiscal space for development investment. Scholars argue for debt relief, swaps, and international solidarity to enable Pakistan to meet its SDG commitments (Mohamed Yahya, 2025).

### **Structural and Governance Barriers**

Political instability, weak institutional coordination, and inadequate data systems further hinder progress (Zeewaqr, 2024; Cheema, 2021). Gender disparities, unemployment, and environmental risks remain persistent challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic redirected resources toward emergency needs, slowing long-term SDG strategies (Initiatives, 2023).

### **Achievements and Challenges in Pakistan's SDG Journey**

#### **Achievements**

Pakistan was among the first countries to adopt the SDGs as part of its national development agenda in 2016, integrating them into **Vision 2025** (Planning Commission of Pakistan, 2016). Institutional mechanisms such as the **Parliamentary SDG Secretariat** and provincial SDG units have enabled coordination between federal and provincial governments (UNDP Pakistan, 2019).

Progress has been noted in **health and education**, with improvements in maternal and child health indicators, vaccination coverage, and literacy programs contributing to SDG 3 (Good Health) and SDG 4 (Quality Education) (World Bank, 2021). Poverty reduction initiatives like the **Ehsaas Program** and **Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP)** have targeted SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) (Nishtar, 2020).

In terms of **climate action**, Pakistan launched the **Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Project**, aligning with SDG 13 (Climate Action) (Government of Pakistan, 2021). Renewable energy projects, particularly solar and hydropower, have also contributed to SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) (ADB, 2022).

#### **Challenges**

Despite these achievements, Pakistan faces significant challenges. **Data gaps** and a lack of reliable, disaggregated statistics hinder effective monitoring (UNESCAP, 2020). Weak institutional capacity

and overlapping mandates slow down implementation (Mahmood & Ali, 2022). Economic constraints, including high debt burdens and fiscal deficits, limit resources for SDG-related investments (IMF, 2023). Persistent **social inequalities**, gender disparities, rural–urban divides, and exclusion of marginalized groups remain barriers (UN Women, 2021). Environmental pressures such as water scarcity, rapid urbanization, and vulnerability to climate change further undermine sustainability goals (Khan, 2022).

Global shocks, particularly **COVID-19**, disrupted progress in health, education, and employment sectors, reversing gains in multiple SDGs (UNDP Pakistan, 2020).

### **Key Gaps Identified**

From the reviewed literature, several critical gaps emerge:

1. **Data and Monitoring Deficit**
  - Reports consistently highlight weak data collection, disaggregation, and monitoring systems (Cheema, 2021; Initiatives, 2023).
  - *Lack of localized SDG reporting at provincial and district levels hampers targeted interventions.*
2. **Financing Gap**
  - Pakistan’s SDG financing deficit is unsustainable, with debt servicing crowding out development investment (Mohamed Yahya, 2025).
  - *Limited exploration of innovative financing mechanisms such as debt-for-development swaps or climate finance.*
3. **Regional and Social Inequalities**
  - Persistent disparities across provinces and marginalized groups (women, youth, rural poor) remain under-researched (Initiatives, 2023).
  - *Literature lacks comprehensive studies on how regional imbalances affect SDG localization.*
4. **Institutional Coordination**
  - While SDG Units exist, coordination between federal, provincial, and local governments is weak (Zeewaqaar, 2024).
  - *Limited empowerment of local governments and communities in SDG planning is identified as a key gap.*
5. **Climate and Environmental Gaps**
  - Despite initiatives like Clean and Green Pakistan, progress on climate resilience and environmental sustainability is slow (Reforms, 2019).
  - *Literature underrepresents the intersection of climate change with poverty and urbanization.*
6. **Youth and Grassroots Engagement**
  - Few studies explore the role of youth, civil society, and grassroots organizations in advancing SDGs. Weak linkages between government, civil society, and youth organizations reduce policy impact (UNDP Pakistan, 2020).
  - This gap limits understanding of participatory governance and citizen-led accountability. Grassroots initiatives often lack funding and government backing, restricting scalability (Mahmood, 2022).

### **Research Objectives**

1. To critically assess Pakistan’s overall journey toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), identifying which goals have received the greatest attention, resources, and progress.
2. To analyze the major obstacles, including governance weaknesses, financing constraints, and limited public awareness, that hinder Pakistan’s progress on specific SDGs.
3. To propose evidence-based policy reforms, institutional coordination mechanisms, and community engagement strategies necessary to accelerate SDG progress and ensure inclusivity across social, economic, and environmental dimensions.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

This study adopts a **qualitative research design** to explore Pakistan’s progress, challenges, and prospects in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The design is guided by three

main research questions focusing on stakeholder perceptions, systemic barriers, and strategies for accelerating progress.

### **Data Collection Method**

#### **1. Semi-Structured Interviews**

- Interviews were conducted with journalists, development practitioners, civil society representatives, and academics actively working in the field of SDGs.
- The interview guide is structured around five categories: general perceptions, challenges and gaps, policy insights, community engagement, and future outlook.
- This approach allows flexibility to probe deeper into participants' experiences while maintaining comparability across responses.

#### **2. Document and Policy Analysis**

- Key national and international reports were reviewed, including Pakistan's Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), SDG Status Reports (2021, 2023, 2024), and relevant UNDP and ADB publications.
- Policy documents such as Vision 2025, provincial development strategies, and sectoral plans were analyzed to assess alignment with SDG targets.

#### **3. Secondary Data Review**

- Statistical data from the Sustainable Development Report (2025) and national databases were used to contextualize findings.
- Comparative insights were drawn from regional studies on South Asia's SDG progress.

### **Sampling Strategy**

- Purposive Sampling was employed to interview participants who have direct involvement in SDG-related initiatives.
- Stakeholders included government officials, NGO leaders, community activists, researchers, and youth representatives.
- 10 interviews were conducted to ensure diversity of perspectives.

### **Data Analysis**

1. **Thematic Analysis** was applied to interview transcripts, categorizing responses under themes such as governance, financing, policy alignment, and community engagement.

### **Ethical Considerations**

- Informed consent was obtained from all interview participants.
- Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing responses.
- The study adhered to ethical guidelines for social science research, ensuring respect for participants' perspectives and minimizing bias.

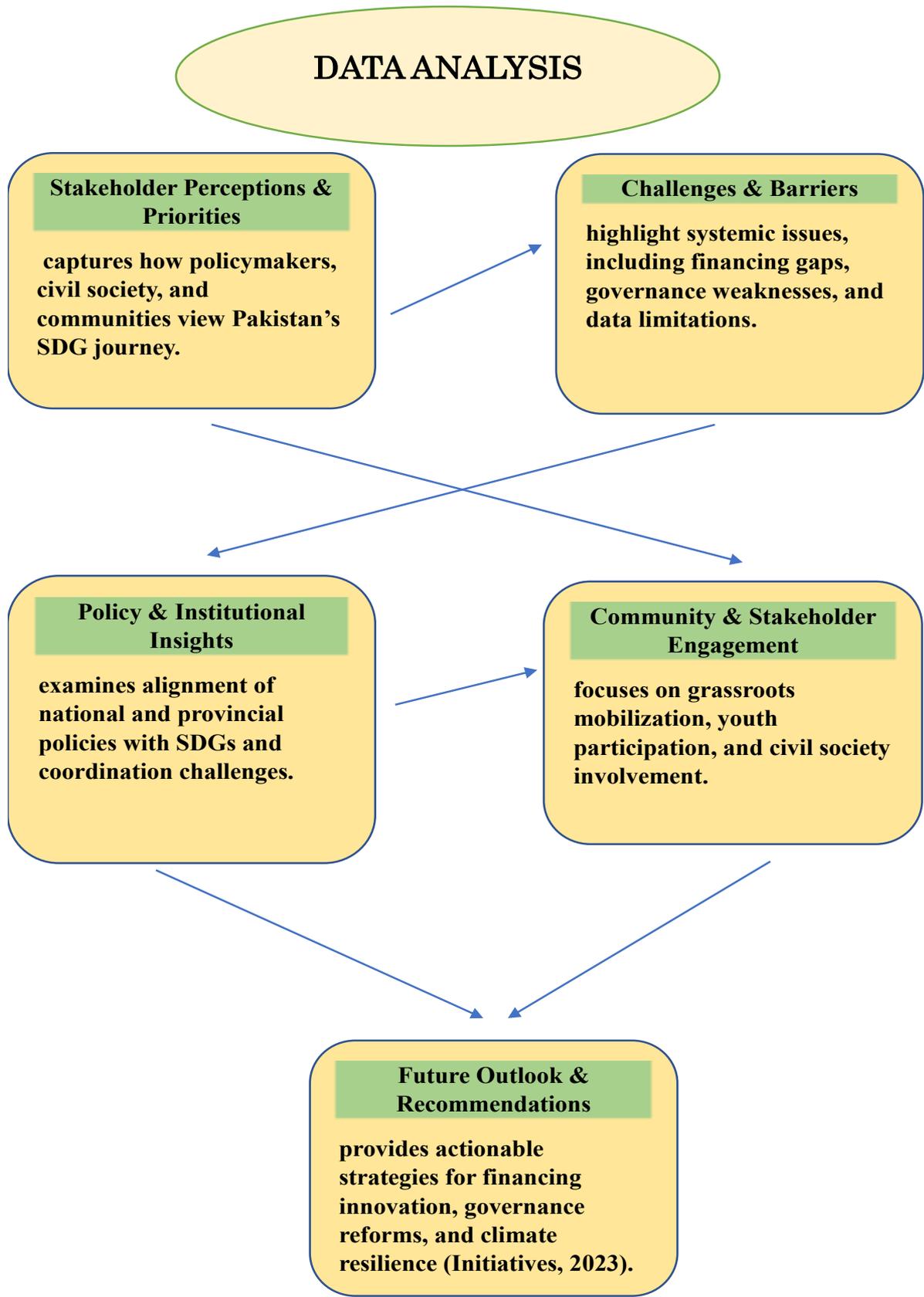
### **Narrative Integration based on Literature**

The Voluntary National Review (2019) emphasized that Pakistan's early adoption of the SDGs was accompanied by institutional reforms, but highlighted the need for stronger provincial and local government empowerment to ensure effective implementation (Reforms, 2019). Similarly, the Pakistan SDG Status Report 2021 noted improvements in poverty reduction and health outcomes but pointed to persistent weaknesses in education, employment, and gender equality (Cheema, 2021).

The Pakistan SDG Status Report 2023 further identified regional disparities, particularly in AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan, where localized data were insufficient for targeted interventions (Initiatives, 2023). This underscores the importance of strengthening data systems and adopting digital monitoring platforms to enable evidence-based policymaking.

Financing remains the most critical challenge. According to UNDP, Pakistan faces a US\$60 billion financing gap for SDGs, equivalent to 16% of GDP, while external debt liabilities exceed US\$308 billion, consuming more than half of the national budget (Mohamed Yahya, 2025). Innovative financing mechanisms such as debt-for-development swaps, climate finance mobilization, and expanded partnerships under CPEC Phase II are therefore essential.

Finally, scholars emphasize the importance of community and youth engagement. Shafique (2024) argues that civil society participation and grassroots mobilization are vital for inclusivity and accountability, while Zeewaqaar (2024) highlights the role of CPEC in advancing vocational education and social development. Without empowering local communities, SDG progress risks remaining top-down and uneven.



**Data Analysis and Discussion**

**1. Perceptions of Pakistan’s SDG Journey**

Stakeholder perceptions reveal that Pakistan’s SDG journey has been characterized by early institutional adoption but uneven progress. The Voluntary National Review (2019) highlighted Pakistan’s pioneering role in passing a parliamentary resolution to adopt the SDGs, embedding them into Vision 2025 and provincial strategies (Reforms, 2019). However, subsequent reports show mixed outcomes. The Pakistan SDG Status Report 2021 noted improvements in poverty reduction and health outcomes, largely due to social protection schemes such as BISP and Ehsaas (Cheema, 2021). Yet, education and employment indicators remained stagnant, with literacy rates stuck at 60% and one-third of youth out of education or training.

This perception of uneven progress is reinforced by the Pakistan SDG Status Report 2023, which identified regional disparities in AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan, where localized data were insufficient for targeted interventions (Initiatives, 2023). Interviews with policymakers and civil society actors confirm that while SDGs have been institutionalized, resource allocation has been skewed toward infrastructure and energy (via CPEC), leaving social development goals underfunded (Zeewaqar, 2024).

**2. Challenges and Barriers**

Governance challenges: reports highlight weak coordination between federal, provincial, and local governments, with overlapping mandates and limited empowerment of local authorities (Zeewaqar, 2024; Shafique, 2024). Public awareness of SDGs also remains low, reducing citizen engagement and accountability.

Data limitations are another systemic barrier. The Pakistan SDG Status Report 2021 emphasized the lack of reliable, disaggregated, and frequently updated datasets, which undermines evidence-based policymaking (Cheema, 2021). Without robust monitoring systems, progress cannot be accurately tracked, and underperforming sectors remain neglected.

**3. Policy and Institutional Insights**

Policy alignment with the SDG framework has been partial. While national strategies such as Vision 2025 and provincial development plans reference SDGs, implementation remains fragmented. The Voluntary National Review (2019) stressed the importance of embedding SDGs into governance structures, but coordination issues persist (Reforms, 2019).

Local governments play a limited role in SDG progress due to weak institutional capacity and a lack of resources. Interviews suggest that empowering local councils and municipalities could enhance grassroots implementation, particularly in areas such as sanitation, housing, and climate adaptation.

**4. Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

Community and youth engagement in SDG processes remains underdeveloped. While civil society organizations have mobilized around issues such as gender equality and climate action, broader grassroots participation is limited. Shafique (2024) argues that without the active involvement of communities and youth, SDG progress risks being top-down and unsustainable. Successful initiatives, such as the Clean and Green Pakistan campaign, demonstrate the potential of community mobilization, but these efforts need scaling up.

**Comparative Table – Interviews Content Analysis by 17 SDGs Themes**

SDG Area	Progress / Evidence (from interviews)	Challenges / Gaps (from interviews)	Recommendations / Outlook (from interviews)
<b>SDG 1 – No Poverty</b>	NGO involvement, donation drives, and community support.	Limited resources, lack of sustainability.	Institutionalize welfare programs, strengthen funding, and monitoring.
<b>SDG 2 – Zero Hunger</b>	Awareness of food insecurity during disasters; community food drives.	Climate change and floods disrupt food supply.	Improve agricultural resilience, expand food distribution networks.
<b>SDG 3 – Good Health &amp; Well-being</b>	NGO health services, awareness campaigns, and recognition of disaster impacts.	Weak infrastructure, reactive crisis response.	Preventive healthcare, resilient health systems, disaster preparedness.
<b>SDG 4 – Quality</b>	Education is seen as	Cultural barriers	Scholarships, awareness campaigns,

<b>Education</b>	empowerment, recognition of its centrality to SDGs.	restricting women’s higher education; child labor persists.	ban child labor, and inclusive education policies.
<b>SDG 5 – Gender Equality</b>	Growing awareness of inequality; recognition of women’s empowerment needs.	Deep-rooted cultural norms, lack of institutional remedies.	Awareness campaigns, policy incentives, and inclusion of marginalized groups.
<b>SDG 6 – Clean Water &amp; Sanitation</b>	Recognition of water scarcity issues.	Poor infrastructure, contamination during floods.	Investment in clean water systems and community awareness.
<b>SDG 7 – Affordable &amp; Clean Energy</b>	Awareness of the importance of renewable energy.	Limited adoption, weak policy enforcement.	Promote solar/wind projects, incentivize clean energy use.
<b>SDG 8 – Decent Work &amp; Economic Growth</b>	Recognition of employment opportunities is essential.	Informal work and child labor undermine progress.	Enforce labor laws, promote skill development and vocational training.
<b>SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation &amp; Infrastructure</b>	Awareness of infrastructure gaps.	Weak investment, poor resilience to disasters.	Strengthen industrial policy, climate-resilient infrastructure.
<b>SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities</b>	Recognition of marginalized groups’ needs.	Social exclusion, lack of opportunities.	Inclusive policies, targeted programs for vulnerable communities.
<b>SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities &amp; Communities</b>	Awareness of weak infrastructure affecting housing and health.	Climate disasters (floods) disrupt urban resilience.	Invest in climate-resilient infrastructure and housing. AI-equipped alarming system.
<b>SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption &amp; Production</b>	Household practices: avoiding plastic, composting, and recycling.	Limited integration into national policy frameworks.	Ban plastics, promote sustainable consumption policies.
<b>SDG 13 – Climate Action</b>	Strong awareness of climate change impacts; recognition of tree plantation drives.	Weak implementation of policies; poor governance.	Strengthen enforcement, scale youth-led initiatives, and integrate climate resilience.
<b>SDG 14 – Life Below Water</b>	Limited awareness noted.	Neglected in national discourse.	Promote awareness campaigns, integrate into policy.
<b>SDG 15 – Life on Land</b>	Grassroots actions: tree planting, feeding birds, and conservation awareness.	Limited scale and sustainability.	Institutionalize community-led conservation programs.
<b>SDG 16 – Peace, Justice &amp; Strong Institutions</b>	Recognition of governance failures.	Weak implementation, poor coordination, and limited funding.	Stronger governance, accountability, and provincial–national integration.
<b>SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals</b>	Youth and civil society engagement, NGO partnerships.	Lack of institutional support, weak collaboration.	Strengthen government–civil society partnerships, international cooperation.

Table 1-SDGs

**Interview Content Analysis**

**Social Development SDGs (SDG 1–5)**

Interviews revealed that NGOs, donation drives, and community support largely drive poverty alleviation (SDG 1). One respondent noted, *“We rely on local donations and NGO drives, but without government backing, these efforts fade quickly. SDG 1 is one of the most pressing challenges, as poverty reduction is directly tied to economic growth, social protection, and governance reforms. Despite progress in some areas, our country continues to face high poverty rates, especially in rural and conflict-affected regions.”* While these initiatives provide immediate relief, participants emphasized their lack of sustainability and institutionalization.

Food security (SDG 2) was discussed in the context of disasters, with community food drives offering short-term solutions. A participant explained, *“During floods, we organize food drives, but the supply chain collapses, leaving many without access.”* This underscores the need for resilience and expanded distribution networks.

Health and well-being (SDG 3) emerged as another critical area. NGOs provide essential services and awareness campaigns, yet interviewees noted that Pakistan's health infrastructure remains reactive. One respondent observed, *"Our health system has made progress; preventive care needs attention, though some initiatives are taken by provincial governments, but still it needs digital awareness at the local level."* Preventive healthcare and disaster preparedness were repeatedly recommended.

Education (SDG 4) was consistently described as empowerment. Interviewees recognized its centrality to achieving other SDGs but pointed out persistent cultural barriers restricting women's higher education and the prevalence of child labor. *"Girls in rural areas are still not well facilitated for higher education, and child labor continues unchecked. Pakistan's progress on SDG 4 (Quality Education) shows mixed results: while enrollment rates have improved, the country still faces challenges in literacy, equity, and quality of learning,"* remarked one participant. Scholarships, awareness campaigns, and stronger enforcement of child labor bans were advocated.

Gender equality (SDG 5) was recognized as a growing priority, though deeply-rooted cultural norms and weak institutional remedies continue to hinder progress. *"Pakistan has made progress on SDG 5 (Gender Equality), but systemic barriers in education, employment, politics, and personal freedoms remain,"* said one respondent.

### **Environmental SDGs (SDG 6–15)**

Water scarcity and sanitation issues (SDG 6) were widely acknowledged, with contamination during floods worsening the situation. *"Floods contaminate everything; clean water becomes a luxury in many parts of the country,"* explained one participant. Renewable energy (SDG 7) was seen as important, but adoption remains limited. Respondents recommended promoting solar and wind projects, noting, *"Pakistan's solar adoption story is remarkable; consumers have indeed embraced it at scale, reshaping the country's energy landscape. Over the past decade, households, businesses, and even farmers have rapidly embraced rooftop solar, driven by falling global module prices, affordability concerns, and the need to escape persistent power outages. What began as a modest incentive program in 2015 has evolved into a mass phenomenon, with solar expected to contribute nearly 20% of the country's electricity by 2026. But still Government has to make policies for consumers; top-down industrial planning or climate finance frameworks are required."*

Employment and economic growth (SDG 8) were seen as essential, but informal work and child labor undermine progress. *"Most jobs are informal, and children are still working in markets,"* observed one interviewee. Infrastructure gaps (SDG 9) were also highlighted, with weak investment and poor disaster resilience undermining industrial growth.

Reduced inequalities (SDG 10) were discussed in terms of marginalized groups, with respondents calling for inclusive policies. *"Minorities and rural youth need proper, planned policy and inclusivity,"* one participant stressed. Sustainable cities (SDG 11) were seen as vulnerable to climate-related disasters, particularly floods, which disrupted housing and health systems.

Responsible consumption (SDG 12) was observed at the household level, with practices like recycling and composting. However, interviewees noted limited integration into national policy frameworks. Climate action (SDG 13) generated strong awareness, particularly around tree-planting drives, but respondents criticized weak enforcement. *"Pakistan is currently running large-scale plantation drives to combat climate change, with the federal government aiming to plant over 41 million saplings in 2025 and universities and provinces continuing similar efforts into 2026. We plant trees, but governance needs to sustain climate policies,"* remarked one respondent.

Life below water (SDG 14) was largely neglected, with participants admitting that *"Pakistan's progress on SDG 14 remains limited, with major challenges including marine pollution, overfishing, and weak governance of coastal resources. Despite having a 1,000 km coastline along the Arabian Sea, the country has yet to fully institutionalize sustainable marine management."* Life on land (SDG 15) saw grassroots conservation efforts such as tree planting and feeding birds, though these lacked scale and sustainability.

### **Governance and Partnership SDGs (SDG 16–17)**

Governance and institutions (SDG 16) were identified as weak, with poor coordination and limited funding undermining progress. *"Policies exist, but implementation is broken,"* one respondent explained. Partnerships (SDG 17) were recognized through youth and civil society engagement, but institutional support and collaboration remain weak. *"Civil society is active, but the government needs*

to be more active in implementation,” noted another participant. Strengthening government–civil society partnerships and fostering international cooperation were seen as essential

**Narrative Synthesis**

The interviews highlight that Pakistan’s SDG progress is **community-driven but institutionally constrained**. Grassroots and NGO efforts provide vital support in poverty alleviation, health, education, and climate action. However, systemic gaps, weak governance, poor infrastructure, limited funding, and entrenched social norms undermine sustainability. Respondents consistently recommended institutionalizing welfare and conservation programs, strengthening governance and accountability, expanding climate-resilient infrastructure, and building stronger partnerships with civil society and international actors.

The interview data collectively highlight a **dual narrative** of progress and persistent challenges across all SDGs. Respondents consistently emphasized **grassroots practices** such as avoiding plastic, composting, tree planting, and donation drives as evidence of growing awareness. These micro-level actions reflect a shift in citizen behavior but remain disconnected from formal policy frameworks, underscoring the need for integration into national monitoring systems (**SDG 12, SDG 15**).

**Health (SDG 3), Education (SDG 4), and Gender Equality (SDG 5)** emerged as priority areas. Respondents noted the role of NGOs in providing health services and raising awareness, yet weak infrastructure and reactive responses during disasters continue to undermine progress. Education was identified as central to empowerment, but cultural barriers restricting women’s higher education and the persistence of child labor remain significant obstacles. Gender inequality was a recurring theme, with respondents pointing to deep-rooted cultural norms as barriers to women’s empowerment.

**Climate Action (SDG 13)** and **Sustainable Cities (SDG 11)** were identified as cross-cutting challenges. Respondents acknowledged initiatives such as tree plantation drives but critiqued weak implementation and poor governance. Climate disasters, particularly floods, were seen as major disruptors of progress across multiple SDGs, affecting food security (**SDG 2**), housing (**SDG 11**), and health (**SDG 3**). Calls for stronger enforcement, climate-resilient infrastructure, and scaling youth-led initiatives were common.

Other SDGs such as **Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6)** and **Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7)**, were recognized but noted as under-addressed, with respondents pointing to poor infrastructure and limited adoption of renewable energy. Similarly, **Life Below Water (SDG 14)** was identified as neglected in national discourse, requiring greater awareness and integration into policy.

**Governance and institutional weaknesses (SDG 16)** were consistently highlighted as barriers to effective SDG implementation. While policies exist, poor coordination, limited funding, and weak enforcement undermine outcomes. Respondents emphasized the need for stronger accountability mechanisms and better integration between provincial and national levels. Finally, **Partnerships (SDG 17)** were seen as essential, with youth and civil society

**No Poverty (SDG 1), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9), and Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10)** emerge clearly from respondents’ concerns. Poverty alleviation efforts led by NGOs and community groups show local impact but lack integration with social protection systems. Informal and precarious employment, limited access to finance, and weak industrial and infrastructure investment constrain decent work and economic growth. Inequalities, geographic, gendered, and socio-economic, persist, with rural areas and marginalized groups receiving far less outreach and resources than urban centers. Engagement offering optimism but requiring institutional support to scale impact.

Overall, the interviews present a picture of **visible but uneven progress**. Grassroots awareness and youth engagement provide optimism, while systemic governance weaknesses, resource limitations, and cultural barriers remain persistent challenges. The findings suggest that Pakistan’s SDG journey requires both **bottom-up community action** and **top-down institutional reforms** to achieve sustainable outcomes across all 17 goals.

**Questionnaire Data Analysis**

Category	Key Findings (Analysis)	Suggestions for Policymakers
<b>1. General Perceptions &amp; Experience</b>	Mixed perceptions: 1. Progress noted in Health (SDG 3), 2. Sustainable Cities (SDG 11),	Prioritize: 1. Prioritize neglected SDGs by reallocating resources;

	and Climate Action 3. (SDG 13) 4. lag in Gender Equality (SDG 5) and 5. Institutions (SDG 16).	2. strengthen visibility of gender and governance reforms; integrate grassroots practices into national monitoring.
<b>2. Challenges &amp; Gaps</b>	Major obstacles: 1. weak governance, financing shortages, 2. low public awareness. SDG 5, 7, and 16 are most cited as lagging.	Establish 1. SDG Financing Framework (green bonds, CSR incentives); 2. Launch nationwide awareness campaigns; 3. Enforce accountability through annual SDG scorecards.
<b>3. Policy &amp; Institutional Insights</b>	Policies are aligned at the national level, but weak provincial/local execution. Coordination gaps between ministries and NGOs.	Strengthen 1. Local government capacity; 2. Create National SDG Council with provincial representation; 3. Formalize coordination platforms for ministries, NGOs, and academia.
<b>4. Community &amp; Stakeholder Engagement</b>	1. Youth and NGOs active in urban centers; 2. Rural outreach limited. 3. Grassroots campaigns are effective but fragmented.	Institutionalize 1. SDG clubs in universities and schools; 2. Expand rural outreach programs; incentivize civil society partnerships for awareness and implementation.
<b>5. Future Outlook &amp; Recommendations</b>	Optimism tempered by resource constraints.  Interviewees recommend climate resilience, gender equality, and governance reforms as priorities.	Focus next five years on: 1. Climate-resilient infrastructure, 2. Gender-sensitive policies, 3. Digital governance platforms for transparency and citizen engagement.

*Table 2-SDGs Data Analysis*

**Key Findings Analysis**

**The assessment shows mixed progress:** clear gains in Health (SDG 3), Sustainable Cities (SDG 11), and Climate Action (SDG 13) have produced tangible improvements and a cautious sense of optimism. These advances are largely concentrated in urban areas where services, youth engagement, and NGO activity are strongest, which helps explain why urban indicators outpace rural ones.

At the same time, Gender Equality (SDG 5), Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7), and Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Institutions (SDG 16) are repeatedly cited as lagging. The root causes are systemic: weak governance, shortages of predictable financing, and low public awareness. National policies are generally well aligned with SDG goals, but implementation at provincial and local levels is weak, and coordination gaps between ministries and NGOs undermine delivery and scale-up.

**Civil society is a clear asset but underutilized:** youth and NGOs are active in urban centres, and grassroots campaigns are effective where they operate, yet efforts remain fragmented, and rural outreach is limited. That fragmentation reduces impact and makes it harder to translate local successes into broader, sustained change.

**Interviewees’ priorities point to a focused, feasible agenda:** invest in climate resilience, accelerate gender equality measures, and pursue governance reforms that strengthen local capacity and inter-ministerial coordination. Practical steps include ring-fenced financing for priority SDGs, capacity building for provincial implementers, coordinated public awareness campaigns, and integrating a gender lens across health, energy, and climate programs.

**Respondents converge on a pragmatic reform agenda:**

Institutionalize welfare and conservation programs, strengthen governance and accountability, expand climate-resilient infrastructure, and formalize partnerships between government, civil society, and international actors. Practical measures include ring-fenced funding for priority SDGs, capacity building for provincial and local implementers, integrated monitoring that captures grassroots actions

(linking SDG 12 and SDG 15 to national systems), and targeted programs to remove barriers to women’s education and decent work.

*Overall, optimism is tempered by resource constraints but not extinguished. With targeted funding, stronger local execution, and better coordination between government and civil society, the current momentum in health, cities, and climate can be broadened to close gaps in gender, energy, and institutions.*

**Future Outlook and Recommendations**

The future outlook for Pakistan’s SDGs is challenging but not without hope. The SDG adoption model (Table 2) provides a roadmap for addressing current gaps. Key recommendations include:

- **Governance Reforms:** Strengthen coordination across federal, provincial, and local levels; establish empowered SDG councils.
- **Financing Innovation:** Mobilize climate finance, pursue debt-for-development swaps, and expand partnerships under CPEC Phase II.
- **Data Systems:** Upgrade statistical capacity, adopt digital dashboards, and involve academia in monitoring.
- **Social Development:** Expand BISP/Ehsaas, Sehat Sahulat Card, and vocational education programs to reduce poverty and improve human capital.
- **Climate Resilience:** Scale up afforestation, smart city planning, and disaster risk reduction initiatives.
- **Community Engagement:** Empower youth and civil society to drive grassroots accountability and inclusivity.

While Pakistan’s current SDG ranking is low, these reforms could accelerate progress. Optimism lies in the country’s demonstrated ability to mobilize large-scale social protection and climate initiatives, but sustained political will and international support are essential.

**Proposed SDG Adoption Models for Pakistan**

**Proposed SDGs Model for Pakistan to Meet Agenda 2030- Part-1: Table-**

SDG Goal	Pakistan’s Priority Focus	Proposed Strategies/Model Components
1. No Poverty	Reduce multidimensional poverty	Expand social protection (Ehsaas, BISP), promote inclusive economic growth, and rural development programs.
2. Zero Hunger	Food security & nutrition	Strengthen agricultural productivity, climate-resilient farming, and improve food distribution systems
3. Good Health & Well-being	Universal health coverage	Scale up Sehat Sahulat Card, maternal & child health programs, and strengthen primary healthcare.
4. Quality Education	Literacy & skills development	Invest in school infrastructure, teacher training, vocational education, and digital learning platforms.
5. Gender Equality	Women’s empowerment	Enforce gender quotas, expand women’s literacy programs, promote women in leadership & the workforce
6. Clean Water & Sanitation	Safe drinking water access	Expand water filtration plants, rural sanitation programs, and strengthen water governance.
7. Affordable & Clean Energy	Renewable energy transition	Invest in solar, wind, and hydropower; incentivize clean energy through CPEC projects
8. Decent Work & Economic Growth	Employment generation	Support SMEs, promote industrial zones, vocational training, and labor rights enforcement.
9. Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure	Modern infrastructure	Expand CPEC Phase II, digital infrastructure, innovation hubs, and sustainable transport.
10. Reduced Inequalities	Regional equity	Targeted development in merged districts, AJK, Gilgit-Baltistan; inclusive policies for marginalized groups
11. Sustainable Cities & Communities	Urban resilience	Affordable housing, smart city planning, disaster risk reduction, green public transport
12. Responsible Consumption & Production	Sustainable practices	Promote recycling, regulate industrial waste, and encourage eco-friendly production
13. Climate Action	Climate resilience	Implement Clean & Green Pakistan, Recharge Pakistan, disaster preparedness, and climate finance

		mobilization
<b>14. Life Below Water</b>	Marine ecosystem protection	Strengthen fisheries management, coastal zone protection, and pollution control
<b>15. Life on Land</b>	Biodiversity & forests	Expand afforestation campaigns, wildlife protection, and sustainable land use policies
<b>16. Peace, Justice &amp; Strong Institutions</b>	Governance reforms	Judicial reforms, anti-corruption measures, strengthen local governments, and enhance accountability
<b>17. Partnerships for the Goals</b>	International cooperation	Mobilize global financing, debt-for-development swaps, and strengthen partnerships with the UN, ADB, IMF

*Table 3 Proposed Model*

**Proposed SDG model**

The proposed model is comprehensive and well-sequenced, aligning each SDG with a clear national priority and practical interventions that bridge policy and practice. Its emphasis on social protection (SDG 1), health coverage (SDG 3), and education and skills (SDG 4) reflects Pakistan’s existing strategic commitments and the UN’s support frameworks, which already encourage mainstreaming SDGs into national plans. United Nations in Pakistan Sustainable Development Report

Three strengths stand out. First, the model links sectoral investments to resilience—for example, climate-resilient agriculture (SDG 2), disaster-proof urban planning (SDG 11), and climate finance mobilization (SDG 13), which helps reduce the cascading impacts of floods and other shocks. Second, it pairs service expansion with institutional reforms (e.g., Sehat Sahulat scaling alongside governance and accountability measures for SDG 16), improving the odds that resources translate into outcomes. Third, the model explicitly targets regional and social inequities (SDG 10) through geographically focused interventions, which is essential given persistent rural–urban and provincial disparities. Sustainable Development Report [sdgs.punjab.gov.pk](http://sdgs.punjab.gov.pk)

Key gaps and risks should be addressed to make the model operational. Implementation capacity at provincial and local levels is the critical bottleneck: national strategies exist, but weak local execution and coordination gaps can stall delivery. Strengthening provincial planning, devolving predictable financing, and creating joint government–civil society implementation platforms will be necessary to avoid policy–practice disconnects. [sdgs.punjab.gov.pk](http://sdgs.punjab.gov.pk)

To increase impact, prioritize three cross-cutting enablers: (1) predictable, ring-fenced financing for priority SDGs; (2) integrated monitoring that captures grassroots actions and links them to national indicators (especially for SDG 12 and SDG 15); and (3) institutionalized partnerships that scale youth and NGO initiatives through formal contracting, capacity building, and shared data systems. These enablers will help convert the model’s strong design into measurable, equitable progress across Pakistan’s SDG agenda. United Nations in Pakistan Sustainable Development Report

**Proposed SDGs Model for Pakistan (Part-2)- Table:**

**Operational SDGs Model for Pakistan – Agenda 2030**

SDG Priority Area	Operational Actions	Responsible Stakeholders	Expected Outcomes
<b>Governance &amp; Institutions (SDG 16)</b>	Establish National SDG Council; annual SDG scorecards; strengthen local governments.	Federal & Provincial Governments, Planning Commission	Improved coordination, accountability, and policy alignment.
<b>Financing &amp; Resources (SDG 1, 8, 11, 13)</b>	Develop SDG Financing Framework; launch green bonds; incentivize CSR aligned with SDGs.	Ministry of Finance, Private Sector, Donors	Sustainable financing streams for poverty reduction, climate resilience, and infrastructure.
<b>Digital Governance &amp; Innovation (SDG 9, 7, 13)</b>	Create digital dashboards; expand e-governance; establish innovation hubs for renewable energy and youth entrepreneurship.	IT Ministry, Academia, Private Sector	Transparent monitoring, citizen engagement, and innovation-driven growth.
<b>Community Engagement</b>	Institutionalize SDG clubs in universities; run awareness	Universities, Civil Society, Media	Enhanced public awareness, youth

(SDG 4, 5, 12, 15)	campaigns on gender equality and climate resilience; and integrate NGOs.		participation, and inclusive practices.
<b>Climate &amp; Resilience (SDG 11, 13, 15)</b>	Invest in climate-resilient infrastructure; expand tree plantation drives; and disaster preparedness programs.	NDMA, Local Governments, NGOs	Reduced vulnerability to floods, droughts, and heatwaves; stronger urban resilience.
<b>Neglected Areas (SDG 6, 7, 14)</b>	Prioritize clean water projects; incentivize renewable energy adoption; raise awareness on marine ecosystems.	Provincial Governments, Environmental Agencies	Improved water access, energy sustainability, and environmental conservation.
<b>Regional Cooperation (SDG 17)</b>	Strengthen partnerships with South Asian countries; engage in cross-border climate and trade initiatives.	Foreign Ministry, SAARC, Development Partners	Shared resilience strategies and regional SDG progress.

Table 4 Proposed Operational Model

The Operational SDGs Model for Pakistan presents a focused, actionable framework that links governance, financing, digital innovation, community engagement, climate resilience, and neglected sectors into a single implementation agenda. Establishing a National SDG Council and annual scorecards would strengthen coordination and accountability, while an SDG Financing Framework, backed by green bonds and CSR incentives, could mobilize predictable resources for poverty reduction, infrastructure, and climate resilience. Digital governance and innovation hubs promise greater transparency and citizen engagement, and institutionalizing community mechanisms (SDG clubs, NGO integration) would help translate grassroots momentum into measurable outcomes. Prioritizing climate-resilient infrastructure and targeted interventions for water, energy, and marine protection addresses the most immediate environmental vulnerabilities that cascade across multiple SDGs.

For the model to succeed, the critical challenge is closing the implementation gap at the provincial and local levels. Devolving predictable finance, building subnational planning capacity, and formalizing government–civil society partnerships are essential to ensure funds and programs reach marginalized and rural communities. Integrated digital monitoring that captures NGO and youth-led metrics will align micro-level actions with national reporting, while blended finance pilots can demonstrate scalable solutions for neglected sectors. In short, the model is strategically sound but requires devolved authority, ring-fenced financing, and institutionalized partnerships to convert design into durable, equitable SDG progress. A formal **SDG Financing Framework** and instruments like green bonds can crowd in private capital and donor support, but must be paired with an integrated national financing strategy and transparent reporting to be effective. **Regional and multilateral partnerships** (UN, ADB, IMF, SAARC) are essential for technical assistance, concessional finance, and cross-border resilience initiatives.

**Conclusion**

Pakistan’s adoption of the 2030 Agenda reflects both ambition and complexity. The qualitative analysis of stakeholder perspectives highlights a dual trajectory: localized community-driven initiatives are fostering incremental progress in areas such as health, sustainable cities, and climate action, while systemic barriers continue to impede advancement in gender equality, clean energy, and institutional governance. The neglect of certain goals, particularly those tied to marine ecosystems, underscores the uneven prioritization of the SDGs within national discourse.

The findings suggest that Pakistan’s SDG journey cannot rely solely on top-down policy frameworks; it requires a dynamic interplay between grassroots innovation and institutional reform. Integrating community practices into national monitoring systems, strengthening accountability, and investing in climate-resilient infrastructure are essential steps toward bridging the gap between aspiration and implementation. Moreover, fostering inclusivity, particularly in addressing gender and social inequalities, remains central to achieving sustainable progress.

By situating Pakistan’s experience within the broader South Asian context, this study emphasizes the importance of resilience, digital governance, and participatory approaches in advancing Agenda 2030. Ultimately, Pakistan’s trajectory illustrates that sustainable development is

not only a matter of policy alignment but also of empowering communities, reforming institutions, and embedding inclusivity at every level of governance.

### **Key Suggestions for Policymakers**

- Integrate **grassroots practices** (tree planting, recycling, health drives) into national SDG monitoring frameworks.
- Enforce **gender-sensitive policies** and eliminate child labor through strict legislation.
- Invest in **climate-resilient infrastructure** to mitigate disaster impacts.
- Foster **regional cooperation** for shared resilience and sustainability.
- Use **digital governance tools** for transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement.
- **Operationalize the National SDG Council** with clear mandates, budget lines, and provincial representation.
- **Adopt an Integrated National Financing Framework** to sequence green bonds, donor funds, and domestic revenues.
- **Scale digital monitoring** and formalize NGO contracting to convert grassroots momentum into measurable national outcomes.

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**Annexure- 1- Interview Questions**

***Navigating the 17 Sustainable Development Goals Landscape in Pakistan: Progress, Pitfalls, and Prospects.***

Working Group Paper -Governance, Policy, and Societal Structures

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**Category 1. General Perceptions and Experience**

- How would you describe Pakistan's overall journey toward achieving the SDGs so far?
- In your experience, which SDGs have received the most attention or resources, and why?
- Can you share any personal or organizational experiences that reflect progress or challenges in SDG implementation?

**Category 2. Challenges and Gaps**

- What do you see as the major obstacles preventing Pakistan from meeting its SDG targets?
- Are there specific goals or indicators where you feel Pakistan is falling behind? What factors contribute to this lag?
- How do governance, funding, and public awareness affect SDG outcomes in your view?

**Category 3. Policy and Institutional Insights**

- How well are national and provincial policies aligned with the SDG framework?
- What role do local governments and institutions play in driving SDG progress?
- Are there any coordination issues between stakeholders that hinder effective implementation?

**Category 4. Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

- How engaged are communities, civil society, and youth in the SDG process?
- What strategies have worked (or failed) in mobilizing grassroots support for sustainable development?

**Category 5. Future Outlook and Recommendations**

- What changes or innovations do you believe are necessary to accelerate SDG progress in Pakistan?
- If you could prioritize three actions for the next five years, what would they be?
- How optimistic are you about Pakistan meeting the 2030 Agenda, and what gives you hope or concern?



**Annexure- 2- Interview Questions**

***Navigating the 17 Sustainable Development Goals Landscape in Pakistan: Progress, Pitfalls, and Prospects.***



List of interviewees

- 1. Ozair Rahim:** Assistant Chief: Climate Change, Climate Governance and Environment Section, Planning & Development Department, Gov. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, and SDGs Expert.
- 2. Muhammad Kashif Kamal:** Director Helpline 1099 for the victims of Human Rights Violations, and Child Protection Institute, Ministry of Human Rights, Government of Pakistan – Islamabad.
- 3. Muhammad Adil:** Fellow (2024) Completed a prestigious leadership program affiliated with Harvard Business School, focused on personal growth, strengths-based leadership, and professional development tools (LinkedIn, resume, interviews). Attended Harvard faculty-led courses on leadership, AI, and community impact; engaged in global masterclasses and interactive sessions with peers and mentors worldwide. A trainee engineer in transformer production at Skypower Pvt Ltd. Working on SDGs in Pakistan.
- 4. Mr. Bilal Khan Coordinator, Child Protection (UNICEF)**
- 5. Dr. Rahmanullah:** Broadcast Journalist, BBC World Service- Rahman Ullah holds Ph-D degree in Political Science from the University of Peshawar and has done four masters in English Literature and Linguistics, Political Science, Journalism and Mass Communication and International Relations. Working as a journalist, academician and researcher with different professional organizations, his area of interest is peace and conflict and thus his work links with Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions SDG-16.
- 6. Dr. Hina Jabeen (PhD)** is an accomplished academic leader and currently serves as Assistant Professor and Head, Department of Biotechnology at Women University Mardan, Pakistan. She completed her postdoctoral fellowship as a Fulbright Program Scholar (2022–2023) at the University of California, Davis, USA, where her work focused on environmental cleanup through sustainable biological approaches. This research aligned closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG 13 (Climate Action), by promoting eco-friendly solutions that reduce pollution, support renewable energy transitions, and contribute to climate resilience. Dr. Jabeen has played an active role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through academic leadership, research collaboration, and community engagement initiatives. She has led/Co-led many funded projects supported by the Higher Education Commission and has contributed to international scholarly publications and book chapters. As Director ORIC, she strengthened academia-industry linkages and promoted translational research aligned with sustainable development priorities. She has organized and contributed to numerous international conferences, workshops, and youth focused initiatives centered on SDGs, women’s empowerment, social entrepreneurship, leadership development, and employability. Through collaborations with national and international partners, she actively promotes inclusive education, gender equity, and capacity building. Dr. Jabeen is committed to mentoring early-career researchers and fostering women’s leadership in STEM, while advocating for sustainable, socially responsible academic practices that contribute to national development and global sustainability agendas.
- 7. Dr. Monazza Serwar** Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, women University Mardan, QEC - Additional Director. Climate Change Activist, Recognition as Associate Fellow (Fellowship Reference: PR241492) awarded on 13-7-2022 by HE Advance UK.
- 8. Laiba Azeem SDG Expert & International Youth Leader UPG 2025 Certified International Leader:** Recognized by United People Global for leadership in sustainability and community impact. Country Director, Young Hearts United: Leading national-level initiatives focused on youth empowerment and social welfare. President, Scholar Bridge Society (IIUI): Leading the International Islamic University Islamabad student chapter to bridge the gap between academic research and community service. Core Focus Areas: SDG 4 (Quality Education): Advocating for inclusive and equitable education. SDG 13 (Climate Action): Driving grassroots environmental awareness and

policy advocacy. SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals): Building cross-sector collaborations to achieve sustainable development.

**9. Laiba Afzal:** Completed a prestigious leadership program affiliated with Harvard Business School, focused on personal growth, strengths-based leadership, and professional development tools (LinkedIn, resume, interviews). Attended Harvard faculty-led courses on leadership, AI, and community impact; engaged in global masterclasses and interactive sessions with peers and mentors worldwide. -Recognized for contributing to Aspire's new LMS development under the Engage Test Pilot program, providing feedback to improve functionality, user experience, and innovation in the Aspire Leaders Program. Currently working on SDGs Initiatives in Pakistan.

**Khansa Ayub:** Young SDGs Expert and Activist: National Level Leadership skills.