

OUTCOME DOCUMENT
4th INTERNATIONAL SDG CONFERENCE,
22nd -24th NOVEMBER 2024, CHITRAKOOT

The 4th International Conference on SDGs was held on 22nd–24th November, 2024 at Chitrakoot. The framework for the dialogue is based on *Ekatma Manav Darshan* (Integral Humanism) as propounded by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, as well as the inspiration of Bharat Ratna *Rashtrarishi* Nanaji Deshmukh and the Chitrakoot Declaration (2023).

Nanaji’s work through Deendayal Research Institute (DRI) founded in 1968, provides a platform for realising the philosophy of Integral Humanism through holistic development of villages around Chitrakoot. This illuminates our path in the ongoing process and activities of the World SDG Forum and the spirit of ‘*Gramodaya se Sarvodaya*’ (From Rural Upliftment to Upliftment of All); and from ‘*Sarvodaya to Abhyudaya*’ (From Upliftment for All to the Rise of All). This conference focused on SDG 5 and 7, namely Gender Equality and Affordable and Clean Energy.

The Plenary Session examined the premise of the family as a fulcrum for creating solutions for both SDG 5 and 7 - since attitudinal and behaviour change start with socialisation at home, echoing the words of Pandit Deendayal ji who said, “Developing a civil society is impossible without educating the mothers.” The speakers recognised and emphasised the necessity of parents and society to encourage behavioural change in its citizens in order to accelerate gender equity’; They also highlighted the role for the family in reducing energy consumption and more efficient energy usage.

Presentations also showcased the progress made by the state of Madhya Pradesh, who have improved their status from a ‘*BIMARU*’ state to a ‘*front runner*’ state, with a focus on Gender Equality and Renewable Energy.

The technical sessions, on SDG 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”; and SDG 7 “Ensure access to clean and affordable energy”, offered new perspectives for accelerating these goals. The scholarly gathering of eminent educationists, economists, agricultural experts and practitioners drawn from nearby villages, highlighted some of the issues and suggested pathways for progress in these two SDGs:

1. Women’s participation is essential for effective community-based responses to disaster and risk reduction.
- 2 Leveraging the mechanism of Gram Sabha to implement gender legislation or programmes: While there are several schemes for the empowerment of women including adolescent girls, the awareness and uptake will improve provided there is a connection with discussions in the Gram Sabha meetings.
 - 2a. Prior to a Gram Sabha, a Mahila Sabha should also be held so that the village development agenda could be looked at through a ‘Gender Lens’.
3. Investment in the Care Economy is often neglected. However, such investments support women who are looking to stay on in the workplace.
4. Indian men spend 19 minutes on household work. The contribution of men in household tasks will ensure insulation against job losses.
5. Young women in the 18-23 years are particularly vulnerable and therefore their inclusion into schemes such as the PM Internship scheme is critical.
6. The Digital economy has the potential to build pathways to equity for women entrepreneurs.
7. Stigma around menstrual health needs to be combated with a National and state level Menstrual Hygiene Policy. Ensuring events and gatherings as well as workplaces are menstrual health positive with necessary menstrual hygiene products will enable women to participate more fully.
8. Heat exposure in Urban Heat Islands has led to the loss of 512 billion potential labour hours in 2023, worth US\$ 835 billion in potential income losses, and a huge jump in heat related mortality for senior citizens and infants. Achieving Net Zero through ‘Waste to Wealth’ initiatives can lessen Urban impact of climate change and stay below the 1.5°C threshold, as mandated in the Paris Agreement.

9. A non-lapsable Green Budget of 10% should be mandated for Panchayat and Municipalities.

10. Energy Efficiency norms to be enforced just like Fire Safety Norms in all public and private buildings.

11. Public Transport should be promoted and incentivised and the share of EVs in both Public and Private Transport increased.

12. An appropriate mix of renewable and traditional energy generation is the way forward, with a focus on the lowest hanging fruit in the area, to create maximum cost benefits and viability.

12a. Free electricity needs to be dis-incentivised as it hampers the viability of discoms that then impacts the transmission and generation companies. Once these become financially viable then renewable energy projects will get a viable market.

12.b .While exploring and promoting new innovative energy sources like Green Hydrogen with low carbon footprint is essential, large scale promotion of these technologies should only be encouraged when cost benefit ratios are achieved.

The conference recognised the transformative potential of the Women's Reservation Bill, steered this year under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

It also reiterated the necessity of family and society as agents of change as evident in the outcomes of the Self Reliance Campaign conducted by Deendayal Research Institute in the villages of Chitrakoot.