Overview of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal One in South Africa

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ABSTRACT
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) One aims to eradicate poverty in all its manifestations across the world. The key study question to be theoretically explored is "how can the South African government's commitment to the UN Post-2015 Agenda and the National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030 be realised to accomplish Sustainable Development Goal One?". The research method used in the article is qualitative. The data were gathered through literature and document reviews, and conceptual analysis was employed to analyze the data. The findings show that the government has put in place a variety of legal frameworks, including the NDP, as well as social protection actions, to address SDG One implementation. However, in order for poverty reduction programmes to be successfully executed, problems like the high unemployment rate, job losses brought on by COVID-19, corruption straining taxpayers' finances, and other difficulties need to be addressed. The article presents recommendations in a country-specific context based on the findings to eliminate poverty and achieve SDG One.

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Introduction
The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were born at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. The objective was to produce a set of universal goals that meet the urgent environmental, political, and economic challenges facing our world (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2022:1). The SDGs replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which started a global effort in 2000 to tackle the indignity of poverty. The MDGs established measurable, universally agreed objectives for tackling extreme poverty and hunger, preventing deadly diseases, and expanding primary education to all children, among other development priorities (UNDP, 2022:1). The SDGs are an urgent call to shift the world onto a more sustainable path. They are a bold commitment to finish what human beings started, and tackle some of the more pressing challenges facing the world today (Prasetyo, 2020:304). All the 17 Goals interconnect, meaning success in one affects success in others. These goals were intended to be, inter alia, universal, action-oriented, and aspirational, considering different social realities, capacities, and levels of development, for example, developing countries versus less developed countries (Cropley, 2019:12). The focus is on a universal sustainable development agenda with transformative aspirations “to provide a comprehensive vision and framework for the evolution of all countries in the years ahead” (Osborn, Cutter & Ullah, 2015, in Rantšo & Seboka, 2019:3). Sustainable development is a difficult topic to finalise as it comprises many variables. Further, it is a method, not an end.

This is the worldwide intention to work on the social, financial, and natural prosperity of people in the future. The intention was set under the MDGs in 2000 and was supposed to be finished by 2015. Nevertheless, the absence of accomplishments of MDG targets brought about the presentation of SDGs as a follow-up measure to ensure a worldwide turn of events.
The article explores various aspects of the topic in different sections. After the introduction follows the research methodology considered for this study. The proceeding section defines sustainability and sustainable development, followed by a section on the overview of SDG One in detail. The section thereafter discusses the reasons for poverty in general and in the specific context of South Africa. These reasons lead to exploring initiatives for the successful implementation of SGD One in South Africa in the subsequent section. The last section concludes, offers recommendations, and discusses the contribution and limitations of the study.

The research approach is qualitative, which according to Anderson (2020:141) involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data that are not easily reduced to numbers. These data relate to the social world. This study adopts the opinions of Watkins and Gioia (2015, in Nyikadzino & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020:33) who offer the following characteristic features that help to define qualitative research as it: “seeks to develop an in-depth understanding; views social phenomena holistically; and provides insight into the meanings of decisions and actions”. The information was compiled through literature and document reviews. Journal articles, newspaper articles, theses, dissertations, internet sources, Acts, and official records of various institutions form part of literature and document reviews. A literature review involves identifying and analysing information resources and/or literature that relates to a given research problem (Robson, 2011, in Makhubu & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2022:3). A document review is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give a voice and meaning around an assessment topic (Bowen, 2009, in Chiware, 2021:26). The information was analysed through conceptual analysis. A conceptual analysis “is generally regarded as an explanation proposed to reach a better understanding of the social reality and/or phenomenon that is being investigated (Auriacombe, 2011, in Bangani & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020:2). The information based on the research methodology is stated in various sections below.

**Sustainability and Sustainable Development**

Stoddart, Schneeberger, Dodds, Shaw, Bottero, Comforth & White (2011; Mensah, 2019:5) defines sustainability as the efficient and equitable distribution of resources intra-generationally and inter-generationally with the operation of socio-economic activities within the confines of a finite ecosystem. Ben-Eli (2021:1) sees sustainability as a dynamic equilibrium in the process of interaction between a population and the carrying capacity of its environment such that the population develops to express its full potential without producing irreversible, adverse effects on the carrying capacity of the environment upon which it depends. In “the attempt to move beyond the sustainability rhetoric and pursue a more meaningful agenda for sustainable development, a clear definition of this concept and explanation of its key dimensions is needed” (Mensah & Enu-Kwesi, 2018; Mensah, 2019:5). This need, according to Gray (2010; Mensah, 2019:5), has been advocated by academics and practitioners to promote sustainable development. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) (2008:20-24), sustainability is taking care of the economy, environment, and social development for the future, whereas development is an evolutionary process in which new plans are born to change structures, problems and adapt to change in social, economic and environmental development. Both terms give rise to sustainable development (SD). Emas (2015:2) added that decisions made now about society, the environment and the economy should consider how they will impact the future. This concept of conserving resources for future generations is one of the major features that distinguish sustainable development policy from traditional environmental policy, which also seeks to internalise the externalities of environmental degradation. The overall goal of SD is the long-term stability of the economy and environment; this is only achievable through the integration and acknowledgement of economic, environmental, and social concerns throughout the decision-making process. Diesendorf (1999:3) suggests that sustainability is the goal or endpoint of a process called sustainable development. Gray (2010; Mensah, 2019:6) reinforces the point by arguing that, while sustainability refers to a state, sustainable development refers to the process of achieving this state.

**Overview of Sustainable Development Goal One**

There are 17 SDGs set by the United Nations (UN) as post-MDG goals. This article focuses on SDG One linking to global (economic) reforms as poverty reduction is the number one priority in the UN list of SDGs that needs to be achieved by governments globally (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2021:2). The “UN has defined 7 targets and 14 indicators for SDG One that are available on SDG Tracker website (2018), which also highlights the situation of SDG One stating that, one-in-five people in developing regions still live on less than $1.90 a day. Millions more make little more than this daily amount. It needs to be considered that in terms of global governance, as highlighted by World Vision (2020), by 2030, as part of the UN SDGs, global leaders aim to eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere” (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2021:2). This statement is substantiated in the UN Report (2022:1) emphasising that “more than 700 million people, or 10 per cent of the world population, still live in extreme poverty today, struggling to fulfil the most basic needs like health, education, and access to water and sanitation, to name a few”. The UN Report (2022:1) further state that the majority of people living on less than $1.90 a day live in sub-Saharan Africa. The future is also scary as cited by Bradgdon (2019:163) stating that “over fifty per cent of people now live in urban areas, a proportion expected to increase to sixty-six per cent by 2050. Nevertheless, in the two regions with the highest rates of poverty, sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, fifty-seven percent, and sixty percent respectively of the population will still be rural in 2025 with these rural populations continuing to grow for many years. In all regions of the world rates of poverty and hunger are higher in rural areas than in urban areas” and hence requires appropriate poverty reduction policies and strategies to improve the situation. Lack of effective policies and methods for reducing poverty may have a negative effect on the availability of jobs, unemployment, lack of access to housing and other essential services, hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition, which may raise the overall level of poverty.
SDG One is aimed to reduce poverty. According to Townsend (1979, in Makhubu, 2021: 17), “poverty can be defined objectively and applied consistently only in terms of the concept of relative deprivation […] Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in activities and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved in the societies in which they belong”. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family, that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities, as cited by Makhubu (2021: 17). SDG One calls on governments to first develop pro-poverty policies and strategies as well as country-specific initiatives to combat poverty. Since apartheid policies separated different racial groups and widened the socioeconomic gap, South Africa's current state of poverty is a historical phenomenon. Inability to obtain better work and education was a problem for black people. The financial standing of Blacks-focused households was affected by this prejudice. However, things did not get better even after apartheid. Koma (2013, in Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2022:271) “cites statistics indicating that in 1995 an estimated 32% survived on less than $2 per day, which later increased to 34% in 2000 before falling to 24% by 2005. Considering a poverty line of R322 (in South African Rand value [R]) per capita per month in 2000, prices determined by the cost of a basic need basket of goods and services, 52% of the population was in the poverty bracket in 1995 and 53% in 2000. In 2005, the number went down”, reflecting the poverty-driven situation that demands policy-based considerations. Despite strategies and interventions, the situation remained concerning as the UNDP (2014:1, in Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2018:121) stated that the population of South Africa is 51.8 million with a poverty rate of 23%. This statistic was further discussed by Statistics SA (2017, in Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2019:86) highlighting that proportion of the population living in poverty increased to 55.5% (30.4 million) in 2015. The number of persons living in extreme poverty (i.e., persons living below the 2015 Food Poverty Line of R441 per person per month) in South Africa increased by 2.8 million, from 11 million in 2011 to 13.8 million in 2015. These poverty lines are explained by Statistics SA (2018:3, in Makhubu, 2021:36) as follows:

**Food poverty line**: R547 per person per month. This refers to the amount of money that an individual will need to afford the minimum required daily energy intake. This may also be known as the ‘extreme poverty line’.

**Lower-bound poverty line**: R785 per person per month. This refers to the food poverty line plus the average amount derived from non-food items of households whose total expenditure is equal to the food poverty line.

**Upper-bound poverty line**: R1183 per person per month. This refers to the poverty line plus the average amount derived from non-food items of households whose food expenditure is equal to the food poverty line.

The situation remains demanding, and the analysis conducted by Galal (2021:1) emphasises that as of 2021, an individual living in South Africa with less than 890 South African rands (roughly 62.8 U.S. dollars) per month was considered poor. Furthermore, individuals having 624 rands (approximately 44 U.S. dollars) a month available for food were living below the poverty line according to South African national standards.

According to the Country Report (Statistics SA, 2013, in Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2018:121), when compared to, absolute poverty, relative inequality remains high, as measured by the Gini coefficient. Contributing factors to the high level of inequality are the low labour force participation rate in South Africa [and the fact that] the employment-to-population ratio remains below the target set. Lyut (2008:1, in Makhubu, 2021:36) highlights that “South Africa has an outstanding Constitution and Bill of Rights, excellent social and economic rights as well as good pro-poverty policies” to address poverty issues; however, the status and extent of poverty have not changed much over the years. While the need for poverty eradication is undisputed, there seems to be an ever-widening gap between rich and poor due to income inequality in South Africa (Makhubu, 2021:36). Additionally, in 2021 South Africa's unemployment rate rose to a new record high of 35.3% in the fourth quarter of 2021 from 34.9% in the third quarter due to job losses mainly in manufacturing and construction, [and] the number of unemployed totalled 7.921 million people in the October-December period (Reuters, 2022:1). As a result, the nation has struggled to meet the SDG One and has previously failed to meet the MDG One. The South African government must take seriously SDG One, which encourages pro-poor measures and social protection actions, while also making sure to include youth and women in order to contribute to the nation's economic progress. As Former President, Late Mr Nelson Mandela stated that “like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings [and] overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life (The Borgen Project, 2022:1) hence all South African citizens deserve to live an acceptable standard of life without depriving basis necessities of everyday’s livelihood. Some of the reasons for poverty and initiatives taken by the South African Government are discussed below.

**Reasons for poverty: general and specific contexts**

Poverty is a complex problem. There are many aspects to it, and it has many causes. The most widely used poverty definition focuses on economic poverty. This definition measures poverty by the amount of money a person earns and establishes poverty rates for communities and countries based on income inequality and financially drawn poverty lines (Compassion International, 2022:1). Scholars stated various reasons for the existing poverty in the world (general context) and in South Africa (specific context). Some of the reasons are stated below:

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i. constrained choices made by poor people and the consequences these have for keeping them in poverty. Poor people face chronic risks, which are institutionally and relationally generated, in the form of ‘inequality, class relations, exploitation, concentrations of unaccountable power and social exclusion’ (Wood, 2003, in Francis, 2006:4);
ii. poverty is increased not only by the incidence of depth but by more unequal distribution of private consumption among the poor. Lack of food and nutritional security, income security, social security and human security build up the ingredients of poverty” (Das, 2006, in Ramphoma, 2014:64);
iii. ill-health, overcrowding, environmental degradation, the mismatch of opportunities and resources, race and gender discrimination, social isolation, government officials with unjust attitudes and behaviours, the absence of information concerning rights, as well as the lack of accountability at all government levels contribute to maintaining the existence of poverty (May & Govender,1998, in Makhubu, 2020:21);
iv. cultures have internal and external elements that contribute to the existence of poverty. Some of these conditions are tangible and external, like lack of shelter; limited access to clean water resources; food insecurity; physical disabilities; lack of access to health care; unemployment; absence of social services; gender discrimination; poor infrastructure; government corruption; and environmental circumstances such as natural disasters, droughts, limited resources or depletion of natural resources (Compassion International, 2022, 2);
v. poverty in South Africa stems from historically generated power inequalities (Francis, 2006:5);
vi. large portions of the poor in South Africa, live in areas where job opportunities are scarce, and their prospects in the job market often are constrained further by little or inferior education (Armstrong, Lekezwa & Siebrits, n.d.: 23);
vii. the effects of COVID-19 are still being felt in South Africa. More than ever, hunger and food security are experiencing significant growth. Lockdowns have closed employment and many South African citizens are currently forced to turn to food and stay home to avoid being exposed to risk (Greater Good SA, 2022:1).

Several factors, including physical division of land, resulting in an urban-rural divide; a lack of economic opportunities; age, unemployment, and gender, to mention a few, all contribute to the growth in poverty in South Africa. Due to a lack of educational and economic opportunities, the country's poverty levels have been perpetuated. To mention a few causes of poverty in South Africa, there is unemployment, ineffective leadership, a loss of social protection, and HIV/AIDS.

Given this circumstance, the government must demonstrate its dedication to the successful execution of several legal frameworks, pro-poor policies, and measures for reducing poverty.

**Initiatives for successful implementation of SGD One in South Africa**

The country has the following legislative frameworks implemented, such as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; Land Reform Programme (LRP), 1994; Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), 1996; Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), 2003; Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS),2001; Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP), 2004; Recapitalisation and Development Programme (RECAP), 2010; and NDP, 2012.

The study aims to explore the most relevant initiative that is the NDP: Vision 2030 – ‘Our future – make it work’. The NDP according to Minister Jackson Mthembu, the Minister in the Presidency: Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Republic of South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2019: i) was adopted in 2012, as South Africa’s development lodestar and roadmap. It predated the post-2015 development agenda of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The “2030 Agenda recognise that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions including extreme poverty is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development” (UN, n.d.: 5).

The NDP aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. According to the plan, South Africa can realise these goals by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society (Government of South Africa (GoSA), 2022:1).

The processes that should be followed in the implementation of the plan (GoSA, 2022:2) are discussed below:

i. The NDP and its proposals will need to be implemented in the right order over the next 17 years until 2030.
ii. The Plan is a plan for the whole country. The government will engage with all sectors to understand how they are contributing to implementation, and particularly to identify any obstacles to them fulfilling their role effectively.
iii. The Plan will shape budget allocation over the years until 2030.
iv. The Plan identifies the improvement of the quality of public services as critical to achieving transformation. This requires provinces to focus on identifying and overcoming the obstacles to achieving improved outcomes, including the need to strengthen the ability of local government to fulfil its developmental role.
v. Planning and implementation should be informed by evidence-based monitoring and evaluation.
vi. The President and Deputy President will be the lead champions of the Plan within the Cabinet, in government and throughout the country. Premiers and Mayors must be visible and active champions of the Plan, with their offices being the catalytic agencies to drive implementation at provincial and municipal levels.

The implementation level of this plan can only be assessed in the coming years. The concern may be that the country is facing maladministration whereby the State Heads, politicians and councillors are charged with corruption and financial mismanagement. Note that this situation is explored on various media platforms and the cases of corruption are available in the public domain. One such news to substantiate the statement is available in Mail & Guardian (M&G) newspaper whereby the reporter Eunice Stoltz published that “South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) tops corruption complaints as 347 cases opened in government. The Public Service Commission (PSC) said […] that it had observed a gradual climb in reported cases of alleged corruption for the third quarter of the 2021-22 financial year as whistle-blowers felt more confident coming forward” (Stoltz, M&G, 31 March 2022). Another example of misconduct is published on News24, dated 7 April 2022, where the reporter Jason Felix published that “Social Development Minister Lindiwe Zulu has implemented a raft of changes to counter fraud and corruption with social relief of distress (SRD) grant payments” (Felix, News24, 7 April 2022). In this unstable and ethically disturbed environment, one may wonder whether there is enough consideration diverted to the needs of the poor and vulnerable. The aspect of financial mismanagement in poverty reduction measures may be a significant area of future research.

However, the country needs to implement measures that offer socio-economic sustainability, hence are discussed below.

**Social Sustainability**

In terms of SDG One, since 1994, South Africa has made progress in reducing extreme poverty through a progressive, pro-poor tax system that supported the provision of social assistance and free basic services – old-age pension, child grants, orphan grants, subsidised water and electricity, provision of no Value Added Tax (VAT) on certain food items, and more public schools declared no-fee schools. The various programmes that South Africa has implemented to achieve SDG One include land reform and agriculture, free higher education, and growing entrepreneurship (in Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report, 2019:23). The country implemented social grants, that provide financial assistance to approximately 17 million South Africans to end poverty in all its forms everywhere (Statistics South Africa, 2017:32). These are considered social protection interventions.

Furthermore, the South African government has implemented a ‘Social Wage’ in terms of free education, free primary health care, social protection, Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) housing, and provision of free basic services to poor households. In addition, as a way of showing commitment towards reducing poverty in the country, South Africa’s expenditure on social grants has been increasing to R164.9 billion in 2016/17 financial year and is projected to increase to R209.1 billion by 2019/20 (VNR, 2019:23). According to the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAF, 2016:1, in Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020:8), social protection aims to ensure a basic level of well-being, to enable people to live with dignity. Governments introduce social protection policies to meet social, economic, and political objectives. These include addressing poverty and inequality, promoting economic growth and social stability, and political legitimacy.

**Economic sustainability**

A community is economically sustainable when that community has adequate employment and livelihood opportunities, economic growth, and an increase in general, as well as individual, prosperity (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, 2007, in http://dspace.nwu.ac.za). According to Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (2007, in http://dspace.nwu.ac.za), economic sustainability in a community can be achieved through, ensuring adequate access to education at all levels, the redistribution of wealth, the creation of work opportunities, and encouraging local production, trading, and service provision. Even though South Africa has made progress to fill the huge gaps created by decades of poverty, inequality and unemployment, much more needs to be done to achieve the social and economic goals set by the former MDG targets and more recently the SDG targets (Statistics SA, 2015; Statistics SA, 2019:11). To ensure a successful transition from the MDGs to the SDGs, and to address the way these targets relate to South Africa’s own development strategies, it is essential to recognise the specific progress made to date, rectify the relevant shortcomings, and build on lessons learnt in pursuit of the previous set of targets (Statistics SA, 2019:11). Therefore, the South African government has rolled out programmes aimed at training people without a business background on how to start their own businesses (VNR, 2019:23). It is important to engage youth in the economic upliftment of their living surroundings as well. Kilimani (2017, in Shava & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2022:2) holds the view that youths in democratic South Africa fail to participate in social and economic affairs due to historical inadequacies, limited access to resources, and general corruption that prevents governments from effectively delivering services. His view on the state of the youth is supported by Van der Westhuizen and Swart (2015, in Shava & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2022:2), who affirm that unemployment and poverty among the rural youth in South Africa trigger the underdevelopment of rural communities. The views of these scholars are synonymous with the contemporary discourse in South Africa, where rural youths feel that the government should do more to enhance their economic living standards.

As a result, the South African government must deal with a variety of challenges to combat poverty. The following aspects, based on the information gathered from literature and document studies, warrant additional investigation. To name a few, these areas include reasons for extreme poverty in rural South Africa, misconduct in social protection interventions in South Africa, poverty-divide in
South African municipalities, and socio-economic exclusion of rural youth, to name a few, all of which obstruct South Africa’s effective implementation of SDG One.

Conclusions

South Africa needs to develop collaboration with various stakeholders. The rationale is that different stakeholders hold different portfolios with diverse expertise, hence may play an important part in identifying and strategizing poverty reduction measures. The collaboration actions may include the following:

i. **National government**: needs to provide adequate loans and grants to lower levels of government offering financial assistance. Also, national government ministries and departments can open internships, leadership, and work-integrated learning programmes for both urban and rural youth, hence uplifting their practice-based knowledge for the job market.

ii. **Municipal government**: the council needs to allocate an adequate budget to integrated development plans (IDPs) and local economic development (LEDs) projects to ensure self-employment. Also, the Integrated Small Business Development Strategy established by the Department of Trade and Industry can be considered to involve local community members to develop entrepreneurial skills and support small local businesses using local resources.

iii. **Businesses**: need to assist young entrepreneurs and assist municipal IDPs to assist community members with start-up projects. Government departments and municipalities can also sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the private sector (under public-private partnership [PPP]) opening job prospects for youth in their areas of jurisdiction.

iv. **National and provincial governments with the support of businesses**: need to invest in the establishment of small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) to generate self-employed income.

v. **Community-based organisations**: need to offer vocational services to train and equip youth and women in their areas. Gender-based economic opportunities need to be established to mainstream women in the economic growth of their households, communities, and country at large.

vi. **Academia**: universities need to offer short courses to develop competencies in young students and offer articulation courses to fulfil the academic needs of the youth.

vii. **Technikons**: need to offer relevant and timely vocational courses for youth employment.

viii. **Scientists**: need to offer workshops and share knowledge regarding relevant areas of agriculture and ICT to equip youth, women, and community members with appropriate sector-based knowledge supplemented with technology.

Developing collaborations and “managing partnerships means building mutual understanding, fostering respect, focusing on solving a common challenge, and driving a productive relationship. For a partnership to have a lasting impact, they require long-term stakeholder commitments, sustained funding, ongoing resourcing and consistency of personnel to help ensure their success” (VNR, 2019:126). South Africa, according to VNR (2019:126) recognises that achieving the objectives of the global sustainable development agenda is underpinned by the multi-perspective from all stakeholders, including government, business, and non-governmental organisations. The multiplicity of voices provides practical tools and solutions to address most of the key development challenges, enabling the mutual exchange of ideas from all stakeholders.

Additionally, the following are also recommended:

i. The NDP Commission must collaborate with and monitor the different public organisations responsible for implementing SDG One, including municipalities.

ii. To avoid money embezzlement, the legislature should strictly enforce the legislation linked to misbehaviour and enforced by law enforcement agencies during the implementation of SDG One (particularly connected to social welfare programmes, for example).

iii. The monitoring and evaluation of the institutions in charge of implementing the NDP, as well as financial matters in general, should be taken seriously because they are being coordinated to improve people’s lives, as required by the Constitution under Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights.

iv. SDG One ought to be taken into account while creating national budgets and policies to help balance socioeconomic difficulties. The initiatives to review and amend the current system for eradicating poverty should be the focus.

Consideration must be given to skills to develop competencies and build capacities in the fields of human resources, talent management, financial management, along with developing an understanding of social protection interventions, and economic infrastructure. The skills and knowledge can assist people and especially the youth to apply for better-paid jobs and/or to start entrepreneurial-driven self-sustained businesses.

South Africa can also consider prioritising programmes and processes that promote legal, economic, and technological empowerment of people (including the poor and marginalised groups) in national action plans for implementing the SDGs. Promoting business rights as a means of eradicating poverty by adopting business-friendly policy UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), 2022:1) and encouraging innovation will lead to success in implementing SDGs.

Many parties, such as commercial entities working hand in hand with the government to address challenges of sustainable development, must be involved for the country to make success in these goals, despite the previously disadvantageous backdrop for
many South Africans. Every objective has a chapter on NDP that focuses on it, as well as the Medium-Term Strategic Framework that looks at the outcomes of each SDG to if they are moving toward the goals, and how they aim to do so. It is essential to consider that South Africa doesn’t have adequate human ability to handle the SDG objectives, nor does it have adequate assets to carry out the objectives.

Some indicators/targets are unrealistic since South Africa lacks the infrastructure to remove severe poverty; hence continue to have high unemployment, inequality, income disparity, and nepotism, and 2030 is just ten years away, COVID-19 has placed the country in a precarious position, delaying the achievement of the SDGs. When drafting the SDGs, the UN did not do an adequate study to assess the status of the country, even though poverty is a major problem that would not be solved by 2030.

Because all the goals are urgent, the government may have to adopt the minimalist approach advocated in the sustainability discourse by replacing the word ‘urgent’ with ‘important’. The larger, longer-term goal is to eliminate poverty on a local, national, regional, and global scale to achieve global sustainable development.

The article aims to understand the extent and causes of poverty hence the lack of achievement of SDG One in a country-specific context. The information may be considered significant by policymakers and economists to understand the gaps in the implementation of interventions and hence the unbearable impact on the economy.

If the interviews were included in the research, the paper would have been more valuable. Conducting interviews at the national and municipal levels, on the other hand, necessitates a macro-level investigation. This element may be considered in the future using a multi-case study technique, in which a small number of towns will be contacted to participate in the research. This might be included in longitudinal or comparative research, adding value to the subject of public administration and governance.

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