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The role of institutions in peace and justice for achieving sustainable development goal 16 and societal sustainability

دور المؤسسات في السلام والعدالة لتحقيق الهدف 16 من أهداف التنمية المستدامة والاستدامة المجتمعية

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Abstract

خلاصة

This article explores the relationship between Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) and institutions achieving societal sustainability. It highlights the crucial role of strong institutions in maintaining peace and justice, drawing upon social contract theory to explain their emergence. The study emphasizes the interconnectedness of SDG 16 with other SDGs, demonstrating that peace is a prerequisite for social and economic progress. Analyzing data from the Global Peace Index (GPI) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reports reveals a direct correlation between peace and the successful implementation of SDGs. The findings underscore that the fulfilling SDGs 16 is essential for achieving societal sustainability. It indicates that peace and sustainable development goals are directly proportional and shows that those countries doing well in SDG 16 also have good SDG rankings. The study has implications for the nations to build their global standards of the legal framework and institutions to promote human rights and encourage states to protect their people from violence. Social contract theory provides the significance of trust between government and its people, combating corruption and addressing the challenges associated with achieving SDG 16.

يستكشف هذا المقال العلاقة بين الهدف 16 من أهداف التنمية المستدامة والمؤسسات التي تحقق الاستدامة المجتمعية. ويسلط الضوء على الدور الحاسم للمؤسسات القوية في الحفاظ على السلام والعدالة، بالاعتماد على نظرية العقد الاجتماعي لتفسير ظهورها. وتؤكد الدراسة على الترابط بين الهدف 16 من أهداف التنمية المستدامة وأهداف التنمية المستدامة الأخرى، مما يدل على أن السلام شرط أساسي للتقدم الاجتماعي والاقتصادي. يكشف تحليل البيانات من تقارير مؤشر السلام العالمي (GPI) وأهداف التنمية المستدامة (SDGs) عن وجود علاقة مباشرة بين السلام والتنفيذ الناجح لأهداف التنمية المستدامة. تؤكد النتائج أن تحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة 16 ضروري لتحقيق الاستدامة المجتمعية. ويشير إلى أن أهداف السلام والتنمية المستدامة متناسبة طرديا ويظهر أن تلك البلدان التي تحقق أداء جيدا في الهدف 16 من أهداف التنمية المستدامة لديها أيضا تصنيفات جيدة لأهداف التنمية المستدامة. الدراسة لها آثار على الدول لبناء معاييرها العالمية للإطار القانوني والمؤسسات لتعزيز حقوق الإنسان وتشجيع الدول على حماية شعوبها من العنف. تتناول نظرية العقد الاجتماعي أهمية الثقة بين الحكومة وشعبها، ومكافحة الفساد ومعالجة التحديات المرتبطة بتحقيق الهدف 16 من أهداف التنمية المستدامة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السلام، العدالة، المجتمع، هدف التنمية المستدامة، نظرية العقد الاجتماعي

Keywords: Peace, justice, society, sustainable development goal, social contract theory.

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Introduction

In 1987, the United Nations Brundtland Commission stated that sustainability is concerned with meeting the present needs without considering the needs of future generations; the Sustainable Agenda 2030 of the United Nations with all its member countries was stated in 2015 for the peace and welfare of people and the planet (United Nations, 2015; Lee et al., 2016). The inclusion of SDGs16, which acknowledges the critical role of effective, responsible, and inclusive political institutions in supporting sustainable development, was one of the most important developments. (Dasandi, & Mikhaylov, 2019). All the sustainable development goals are essential to achieve sustainability in particular fields, but SDG 16 provides a strong base for implementing other sustainable development goals. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to foster sustainable development, ensure access to justice at all levels, and create institutions that are effective and responsible globally. (United Nations, 2015; Lee et al., 2016). SDG 16 emphasizes three significant aims, i.e., peace, justice, and strong institutions. Strong institutions are an embedded prerequisite for maintaining peace and justice within society. Strong institutions are necessary to enforce justice, ensure peace, and enhance sustainable development (Lin & Spaulding, 2022). We know that peace cannot be enacted exclusively through treaties, said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the high-level discussion on the culture of peace, which the general assembly had called (Adams, 2000). It is being nurtured through every man and woman's dignity, rights, and capacities (United Nations, 2015; Lee et al., 2016). There are two types of peace: negative peace and positive peace. Of the two types of peace, negative peace is a lack of overt or apparent acts of violence, whereas positive peace is self-sustaining and emancipatory. (Grewal, 2003). Our institutions should endeavor to spread the positive peace within the society.

Peace within a society illustrates harmonious relationships among the people. Peace and justice are both appurtenant to each other. Peace, justice, and strong institutions are significant elements to achieve the goal of societal sustainability. There are two faces of sustainability. The first looks outward at the requisites for maintaining a viable environment; the second focuses inward to assess and preserve, wherever possible, many of the ideals of the existing sociopolitical system (Pirages, 2016). The paper "Societal Sustainability" refers to the second face of sustainability, which focuses on people's well-being, prosperity, and dignity. Societal sustainability also eradicates social poverty, such as injustice, violence, and social discrimination through peace, justice, and strong institutions. The importance of societal sustainability can be seen in principle one from the Rio Declaration of 1992, which stated that sustainable development is a priority for human beings, who have a fundamental right to a productive and healthy life in harmony with the natural environment (Baines & Morgan, 2004). Social cohesiveness, inclusiveness, resilience, and process legitimacy are the four pillars of social sustainability. (Barron et al., 2023). All the components are interrelated with the significant elements of SDG 16. Strong institutions are the backbone of peaceful and just societies. The relationship of peace, justice, and strong institutions with societal sustainability has yet to be substantially weighed. This study examines the relationship among them and explores the possibility of sustainable societies in the future for the upcoming generations.

Literature Review

Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

This literature review endeavors to unfold the origin of institutions and examine the relationship between peace, justice, and institutions to achieve social equilibrium and harmony. SDG 16 and other sustainable development goals, directly or indirectly, are related to people's well-being. The United Kingdom's definition of a sustainable community is that it meets the requirements of both current and future inhabitants and responds to the diverse needs of people living and working in the UK. Sustainable communities are responsive to their environment. Sustainable communities provide a safe and inclusive place to live, work, and play. Sustainable communities have well-planned, well-built, and well-managed communities. Sustainable communities offer everyone equal opportunities and quality services (Eizenberg & Jabareen, 2017). Such places can be achieved only when institutions are trustful and robust.

SDG 16

SDG 16 can be regarded as the soul of all SDGs. SDG 16 is the fundamental precondition for accelerating the implementation of other SDGs. SDG 16 has 12 targets and 24 indicators (Hope, 2019). The 2030 Agenda asserts and is founded on the necessity of interactions and interlinkages among the SDGs. The

agenda emphasized the necessity and value of viewing the SDGs as an *indivisible whole* (Lawrence et al., 2020). SDG 16 plays a vital role in the 2030 agenda. Promoting inclusive and peaceful societies can aid in the growth of economies (SDG 8) and reduce inequality (SDG 10). (Hope, 2019). According to the compatibility examinations, SDG 2's (zero hunger) aspirations and SDG 16's (gender equality) aspirations were the least compatible and did not support each other effectively. SDG 16 was the most compatible with SDG 5, indicating that achieving SDG 16 goes a long way to support SDG 5 goals (Lawrence et al., 2020). SDG 5 emphasizes to reduce discrimination by equal opportunity to all its citizens in the country (Eriksen, 2016). All people have equal value, status, and rights and equal opportunity for social justice and advancement (Ornstein, 2017). SDG 16 on peace and governance requires a specific initiative to guarantee women's equal involvement in governance peace processes and institutions. In the pursuit of achieving Agenda 2030, it is imperative to comprehend the mutual reinforcement of SDGs 16 and 5, which pertain to gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender equality will have a solid foundation to insist that initiatives aimed at enhancing governance tackle the institutionalized barriers and prejudices that impede women's capacity to participate in public decision-making, access justice, and preserve peace, as stated by the advocates of gender equality (Goetz & Jenkins, 2016).

Peace and Justice

The Latin words "pacem" and "pax," which signify peace, reconciliation, a consent agreement, a peace treaty, serenity, and the absence of war, are the origin of the English term "peace." The peace theory is as old as war (Ihebuzor et al., 2020). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states, "Without peace, there is no sustainable development." The logic is the same behind the Security Council and the General Assembly Resolution on 'Sustaining Peace' in 2016 (De Coning, 2016). Thus, peace is directly proportional to development. According to Secretary-General of the UN Antonio Guterres, peace is more important than ever. Millions of people are displaced from their homes due to war and conflict's destruction, poverty, and hunger. The climate is in complete turmoil. And even peaceful nations are engulfed in escalating disparities and political polarization. (Petersmann, 2002; Richmond, 2020). Maintaining peace and fostering positive peace are complementary to one another. In positive peace, there is no threat of any violence. Sustaining peace includes many aspects, such as eradicating non-violence, poverty, and injustice. Sustaining peace also promotes social capital (increment of better social relationships among peoples) and good governance. Peaceful societies provide a healthy environment for development (Takian & Rajaeieh, 2020). Thus, positive peace is permanent as it is self-sustaining, while negative peace is temporary and includes some means of violence to establish peace. Forces generally use this type of peace to resolve severe conflict. Peace can be measured by factors such as happiness within society, level of expression of thought, and justice. The Global Peace Index states that constant domestic and international conflict, societal well-being and safety, and other factors can be used to gauge peace (Ihebuzor et al., 2020). Justice is one of the significant elements. Various Social thinkers defined justice in different ways. In his book, *The City of God*, St. Augustin wrote, "Set justice aside then, and what are kingdoms but fair thievish purchases." Thomas Aquinas describes justice as "The fixed and eternal desire to give each person his right." According to Manu, "The members of the court in which truth suffers from untruth are destroyed by sin." Aristotle talks about two types of justice: distributive justice and corrective justice. Corrective justice refers to keeping social life organized. According to John Locke, justice should flow from every decision or action and be a component of natural laws. Justice is the initial prerequisite to achieving societal peace (Khorram-Manesh, 2023). There are different forms of justice, such as global political justice; it is imperative that the right that's earned through justice isn't taken away by politicians or because of what is in everyone's best interest (Eriksen, 2016). Economic justice is concerned with the equitable allocation of resources between individuals. Societal chaos can emerge in the absence of proper justice.

We should not view peace and justice as abstract values, but rather as crucial strategies for effectively incorporating sustainability into world politics. Justice is unquestionably the first step in achieving peace, and there are moral and practical justifications for doing so. Developing some design guidelines for governmental institutions that represent a fair and nonviolent approach to sustainability is a second, and far more challenging, phase. Careful consideration, research, and some of the more general guidelines are needed for this (Norgaard, 1997).

Lack of Peace and Development

Initially, the relationship between lack of peace (violence) and development was given by Lawrence et al. (2020). Figure 1 shows that development is inversely proportional to violence. If there is a lack of peace,

no development will occur. The main finding of the AGE Report was that the crucial charter duty of maintaining peace has to be given more recognition on a worldwide scale, but it also needs to get less funding both outside and inside the UN system. (Caparini et al., 2017). Peace and justice can be adequately implemented with the assistance of strong institutions.

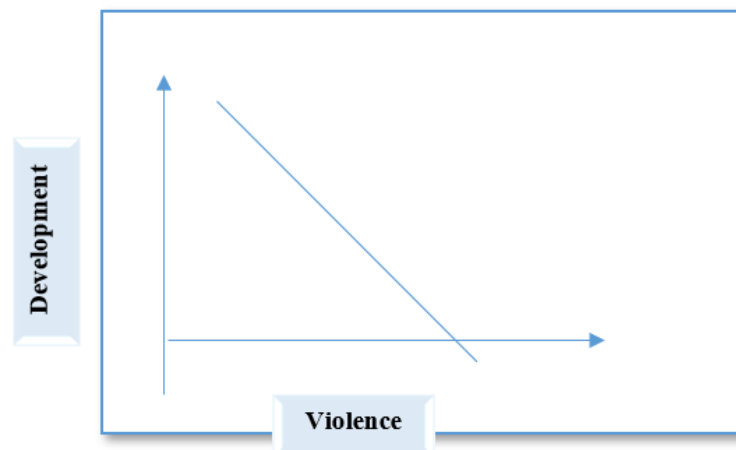


Figure 1. Relationship between Development and Violence.

Source: (Thebuzor et al., 2020)

According to SDG 16, establishing peace is necessary in order to accomplish sustainable development. Realizing international environmental goals and ensuring the successful execution of multilateral environmental accords are made possible by the enforcement of the law, strengthening of institutions, and the promotion of the rule of law (Martin, 2023). Using the lessons acquired from millennium progress goals demonstrate how low peace and weak institutions inhibit progress. Even the wealthiest countries are expected to find it difficult to collect the data needed to measure each SDG. As a result, less developed countries will prioritize the data that is most important to them, in addition to raising the possibility of an upsurge in organized crime, human trafficking, and interpersonal violence. Apart from taking lives, conflicts and wars also demolish buildings, structures and other resources like housing and infrastructure that are essential for growth. They also cause the loss of historical and cultural heritage sites. SDG 16 of the Sustainable Development Agenda may be compromised if not properly managed, which is a factor that must be kept in mind given how devastating conflict can be.

Institutions for Societal Sustainability

Institutions are a set of rules and regulations. Institutions help maintain stability within society. Institutions are permanent. Ogburn and Nimkoff (1950) defined an institution in their book 'A Handbook of Sociology' as a structured and dependable means of meeting some essential human needs. Gillin and Gillin (1950) also defined an *institution* in his book 'Cultural Sociology' as a social institution that is a set of enduring patterns of behavior, beliefs, attitudes, and material resources that are designed to meet perceived social requirements (Black et al., 2012). Institutions are structures that human created to ensure the stability of peace and justice in society. Institutions are made up of both informal (sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, and codes of conduct) and formal (laws, constitutions, property, rights) limitations. (North, 1990). The origin of an institution in the form of a state can be seen in the 'social contract theory'. In his book 'Leviathan' (Hobbes, 1985), he argues that security should be used in place of anarchic liberty, and that a strong sovereign, or "Leviathan," should uphold the law and maintain peace. Thomas Hobbes discussed the social contract theory that there is no scope for revolt and rebellion. (Donaldson & Dunfee, 1994; Ritchie, 1891). According to the social contract idea, there was no government or set of laws to manage society at first; thus, in order to get over these difficulties, society made two agreements. The first was 'pactum unionis', which means people sought the protection of their lives and property. The second agreement, known as a "pactum subjectionis," calls for citizens to swear allegiance to a particular authority while giving up their independence and rights. Consequently, these two accords led to the creation of the state. (Laskar 2013). All the thinkers have different views on initial human nature and societal environment but agreed on the emergence of the need for a political organization in the form of a state for societal sustainability.

Institutions are strongly concerned with immediate economic growth and have long-term economic impact (Staniek, 2023). Economic growth automatically becomes socio-economic development when historical, ecological, social, and institutional aspects are considered (Polanyi., 2018). By ensuring justice, openness, and accountability, SDG 16 can help people feel more confident that institutions are serving the interests of everyone, not just a wealthy few. Justice systems that prioritize people safeguard the rights of the weakest members of society and give them the ability to make decisions. The ongoing threats to SDGs include weak institutions, instability, war and access to air justice. Effective implementation of SDG 16 requires appropriate conflict management, particularly on an international scale. A few main factors that contribute to injustice are the conduct of reckless and self-centered people, corrupt practices, weak courts, dictatorial leadership styles, poor justice, and corruption. The reason why institutions are weak includes authoritarian leadership. These leaders are government officials who move the resources ineptly and prioritize personal favors while performing their duties. A strong and capable leader with the skills to deal with corruption effectively and efficiently in building strong institutions is needed.

The factors, such as poor institutions and political/economic corruption, contribute to widespread impunity and lack of justice. The countries have governments that are diverting the funds for development, especially in security weapons, and not educating the society by increasing numbers of education institutions and training platforms; this results in growing psychological problems among the people, resulting in negative impacts on society, especially people below the poverty level. Building a sustainable society will result in social empowerment and long-term job creation (Singh et al., 2022). In creating a peaceful society, institutions must have independent auditors continuously assess their performance, and the results should be made public in terms of the institutions' degree of autonomy from governmental interference and their actual performance relative to predetermined benchmarks. Peace and sustainable development are directly related to one another. Ornstein (2017) also advanced the idea that social justice and social mobility—the flexibility for people and families to migrate between social classes—are related. Ornstein supported the idea that all people are created equal, regardless of their rank, merit, or advantages. Eriksen (2016) further stated that every single person should have an equal right to vote and run for office. Discrimination will decline, and everyone will have an equal opportunity to support the nation.

Research Objective

1. To explore why SDG 16 and institutions are closely related with the concept of societal and sustainable development.
2. To explore how peace plays a vital role in achieving societal sustainability.

Methodology

This paper provides an inclusive study of SDG 16. The paper used social contract theory to explain the origin of institutions and its impact on society. The paper carefully reviewed the Title, abstract, and literature and collected data from secondary sources such as academic books, journals, and articles from online search engines (Google Scholar, Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus database). Indices and reports of authentic peace and sustainable development institutions also make this paper authentic. The research covers three significant elements of SDG 16: peace, justice, and strong institutions to assess future societal sustainability.

We can categorize the paper into three main parts:

1. The first part describes the term sustainability and also expounds on SDG 16.
2. The second part comprehensively explains the elements of SDG 16: peace, justice, and strong institutions and illustrates their importance in achieving societal sustainability.
3. The last part evaluates the findings on peace and SDGs among different countries.

The paper considered top 10 most peaceful and top 10 least peaceful countries and comparative study have been made on composite index based on 23 quantitative and qualitative factors, each weighted on a scale of 1–5. Comparison has been made among countries regarding peace and sustainable development. The first part tries to uncover the alignment of SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) with the achievement of the other 16 SDGs. To give a better understanding it explains the definitions, types and impacts of SDG 16's elements in its second part. Lastly, paper concluded all the data by measuring different reports related to peace and sustainable development goal. This paper aims to explain the relationship

between Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) and institutions about social and sustainable growth (Hope, 2019).

Results and Discussion

Social Contract Theory demonstrates that peace, equity, and preserving human life and property can be achieved only by an institution, the state, or the government. Through social contract theory, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean Jacques Rousseau tell us their perspective on life in the state of nature and also elucidate the reason and impact of social contract among the people of society.

Table 1.
Social Contract Theory and its Impact

Thinkers	State of nature	Reason for social contract	Impact of social contract
Thomas Hobbes	Life was lonely, nasty, savage, short and impoverished.	Self-safeguard and to avoid agony and fear.	Led to emergence of state which was referred to as 'Might is always right'.
John Locke	Locke referred state of nature as 'Golden Age'. Life was good and full of liberty.	For protection of property.	Led to emergence of society and an institution in the form of state.
Jean Jacques Rousseau	State of nature is a hypothetical construction where equality lies among people.	Invention of property led to the need of its protection.	Emergence of state and General Will (will of majority of people.)

Source: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the 'well-ordered society' (Viroli, 1988)

Although all the thinkers have different perspectives regarding human behavior in the state of nature, all have accepted the importance of strong institutions responsible for making society sustainable by ensuring peace, justice, and security. The state came up in the form of a strong institution. Similarly, the United Nations had been created to create peace and security. According to Archibald MacLeish, an American poet and playwright who authored the preamble to the U.N. Charter, establishing the United Nations was to save forthcoming generations from the adverse consequences of armed conflict. (Meisler, 2011).

State of Peace within World

As we know, International Peace Day was observed on 21 September 1981 by the United Nations General Assembly. This year's (2023) theme is Action for Peace: Our Ambition for the #Global Goal, which shows the importance of peace within society. The peace bell is also rung on 21 September to celebrate the International Day of Peace, which the United Nations Association of Japan donated in 1954 (Baines & Morgan, 2004; Barron et al., 2023). The global peace index measures global peacefulness. This report comprehensively analyzes peace and strategies for fostering peaceful civilizations. The 2023 report of the Global Peace Index has a total of 163 countries. Based on the findings presented in the research, it can be observed that there has been a discernible decline in global peace levels over the past 15 years. (Thekkanath & Bhattathiripad, 2023).

Table 2.
List of Top 10 Most and Least Peaceful Countries

Most Peaceful Countries				Least Peaceful Countries			
Rank (2023)	Most Peaceful Countries	Overall Score	Rank Change	Rank (2023)	Least Peaceful Countries	Overall Score	Rank Change
1/163	Iceland	1.124/5	No change	163/163	Afghanistan	3.448/5	No change
2/163	Denmark	1.31/5	+1	162/163	Yemen	3.350/5	No change
3/163	Ireland	1.312/5	-1	161/163	Syria	3.294/5	No change
4/163	New Zealand	1.313/5	+2	160/163	South Sudan	3.221/5	No change
5/163	Austria	1.316/5	-1	159/163	Democratic republic of Congo	3.241/5	No change
6/163	Singapore	1.332/5	+4	158/163	Russia	3.142/5	-3
7/163	Portugal	1.333/5	+1	157/163	Ukraine	3.043/5	-14
8/163	Slovenia	1.334/5	-4	156/163	Somalia	3.036/5	+2
9/163	Japan	1.336/5	No change	155/163	Sudan	3.023/5	No change
10/163	Switzerland	1.339/5	+1	154/163	Iraq	3.006/5	+3

Source: (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2024)

Table shows a composite index based on 23 quantitative and qualitative factors, each weighted on a scale of 1–5. The lower the score, the better the country's peace.

India got 126th position in the global peace index of 2023. India's rank increases by two from the 2022 global peace index. Saudi Arabia got 119th position in the global peace index. Saudi Arabia's rank increased by 5 in number from 2022. Without peace, societal and sustainable development cannot be possible. Peace and sustainable development are directly related to one another. Countries with good rankings on the global peace index are also performing well in achieving sustainable development goals. Implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is hindered in those countries that lack peace.

Table 3.
SDGs Index of Top 10 Most Peaceful Countries

Country	SDG Index Ranking	Country Score	Status of SDG 16
Iceland	29/166	78.27	Moderately improving
Denmark	3/166	85.68	Moderately improving
Ireland	17/166	80.15	Moderately improving
New Zealand	27/166	78.43	Stagnating
Austria	5/166	82.28	Moderately improving
Singapore	64/166	71.78	Moderately improving
Portugal	18/166	80.02	Moderately improving
Slovenia	13/166	81.01	Moderately improving
Japan	21/166	79.41	Moderately improving
Switzerland	15/166	80.54	Stagnating

Source: Sachs, J.D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Drumm, E. (2023). Implementing the SDG stimulus. Sustainable development report 2023.

Table 4.
SDGs Index of Least Peaceful Countries

Country	SDG Index Ranking	Country Score	Status of SDG 16
Afghanistan	158/166	49.0	Stagnating
Yemen	163/166	46.8	Decreasing
Syria	130/166	58.18	Decreasing
South Sudan	166/166	38.68	Decreasing
Democratic republic of Congo	151/166	52.6	Decreasing
Russia	49/166	73.79	Stagnating
Ukraine	38/166	76.52	Moderately improving
Somalia	162/166	48.03	Information unavailable
Sudan	160/166	48.55	Moderately improving
Iraq	105/166	64.79	Stagnating

Source: Sachs, J.D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Drumm, E. (2023). Implementing the SDG stimulus. Sustainable development report 2023.

These data show the direct relations between peace and sustainable development. Peace is the sub-goal under sustainable development goal 16. Thus, SDG 16 is closely related to other sustainable and societal development goals (Hope, 2019).

Peace, justice, and strong institutions play a critical role in building a sustainable society by giving opportunities to fulfill SDG 16 with other SDGs. By implication, attaining the SDGs—especially SDG 16—requires strong leadership, autonomous, dynamic institutions, and ongoing capacity building. Violent conflicts and wars are less common when the "Rule of Law" is upheld, solid institutions are developed, and dispute resolution is promoted. These pursuits are essential for sustainable development in a stable and continuously improving world. Political corruption is a major element that impedes sustained peace and prosperity, just as much as economic corruption.

Conclusion

The study emphasizes the interrelatedness of SDG 16 and other SDGs. Strong institutions are crucial in maintaining peace and justice within the society. Social contract theory reveals the emergence of the state in the form of institutions. It illustrates the importance of institutions for a healthy society, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, guaranteeing equitable access to justice, and establishing efficient, accountable, and inclusive institutions across all levels. To uphold and protect

individual rights, including privacy, freedom of speech, and access to information, Goal 16 promotes societies that comply with the broader human rights framework. For social and economic progress to occur, peace is a must. Based on Social contract theory, we can conclude that the motive behind the emergence of the state and formation of the United Nations was 'maintaining peace and justice within the society.' Report on Sustainable development goals and data from the global peace index reveals the direct relationship between peace and sustainable development goals. It indicates that peace and sustainable development goals are directly proportional. Another Finding shows that those countries doing good in SDG 16 also have good SDG rankings. Fulfillment of SDG 16 is a must to achieve societal sustainability.

Limitations of the Study

Due to the nature of the paper, this research is based on secondary sources. Sometimes, secondary sources may not be appropriate due to needing more accuracy. This paper uses some secondary sources, while the study does not use primary sources. The paper uses only the best and worst countries' data in terms of peace and sustainability. Due to the vast nature of the topic, the paper could only collect a narrow range of data while historical data were to be used, which gives quality and specification to the paper. The nature of the topic is very complex, which creates barriers to the research. The study can be further broadened and strengthened by adding more countries SDGs index and including experts' opinions as qualitative data.

Implications of the Study

The study has implication for the nations to build their global standards of legal framework (rule of law) and institutions to promote human rights, encourage states to protect their people from violence. In addition, the countries must strengthen their participation in the institutions for their global presence and governance ensuring law and polices for sustainable development. Social contract theory implicates to maintaining peace and justice. Social contract theory in the study provides the significant of trust between government and its people, effective implementation of rule of law for justice, inclusion and participation of society in decision making and combating with corruption to addressing the challenges associated with achieving SDG 16.

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