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Blockchain for Sustainable Development Enhancing Transparency and Accountability in SDG Implementation

[1]**Dr. A. Pankajam,** [2]**Dr. Rashmi Akshay Yadav,** [3]**Anup Arjunan Bahuleyan,** [4]**Dr. Seema Maan,** [5]**Haijing Zhu,** [6]**Mcxin Tee**
[1]Associate Professor, Business Administration, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women
[2]Assistant Professor, School of Business and Management- MBA, CHRIST UNIVERSITY, Bangalore, rashmi88.com@gmail.com
[3]Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Sree Narayana College, Chengannur, Trivandrum, Kerala, anuparjunan@gmail.com
[4]Assistant professor, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Engineering, Teerthanker, Mahaveer University, Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, India, seema.engineering@tmu.ac.in
[5]Doctor of Philosophy in Education, Shinawatra University, haijingzhu1989@gmail.com, ORCID 0009-0004-9082-3939
[6]Faculty of Business and Communications, INTI International University, 71800 Nilai, Malaysia, ORCID 0000-0001-7990-8377

Abstract— *Blockchain technology has turned out to be a radical digital platform that can have an influence on the way global development goals are being monitored, tracked, and implemented. As the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) establish a global agenda on equitable growth, care of the environment, and inclusion within the society, the society has never needed transparent, unchangeable and accountable mechanisms of governance and monitoring than in this moment. The paper examines how the blockchain can be integrated into the framework of the sustainable development, especially with regard to its ability to increase the level of transparency, remove the possibility of data alteration, provide better tracking of resources, and promote the responsibilities of stakeholders. With the assistance of analytical and methodological overview of blockchain applications within different pillars of SDGs, namely poverty reduction, clean energy, quality education, and climate action, the work determines exact frameworks and pilot implementations. Findings indicate that blockchain-based systems suffer porn and boost trust among stakeholders and result to verifiable audit tracks. The research paper draws its conclusions by pointing out the feasibility and flexibility of blockchain on the implementation of SDGs, and also citing technological, infrastructural, and regulatory obstacles that have to be overcome.*
Keywords– *Blockchain, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Transparency, Accountability, Smart Contracts, Decentralization, Digital Governance, Traceability, Development Monitoring.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the 21 st century, sustainable development has been the desired direction of the world. The United Nations accepted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, comprising 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to overcome the most urgent social, economical, and environmental problems. These objectives are not only inter-dependent but also rely on the effective governance, integrity of the data, distribution and involvement of the resources. Nevertheless, regardless of global efforts, there are implementation gaps. Corruption, manipulation of data, absence of real-time monitoring and transparency of movement of resources have become major obstacles. The main challenge is that there is not only the need to come up with policies that meet these objectives but also to have transparent and accountable systems to monitor progress and outcomes [5].

In this line of thought, there is an approach in which the digital technologies are being investigated as the driver of change. One of them is blockchain technology which is a revolutionary technology that can be used to increase trust, accountability and transparency of multi stakeholder environments. Blockchain A blockchain is a decentralized ledger or distributed ledger technology that is used to record transactions in an immutable and time-stamped fashion. Blockchain, in contrast to conventional databases, disallows these changes, and privileged users cannot partially delete or modify the data after the query. The features present enormous opportunities in areas that resonate with the SDGs that is, in healthcare, agriculture, education, energy and the provision of common services.

The research of blockchain integration in the SDG implementation is still on an early stage, but is rapidly increasing in focus and research. As an example, data on blockchain could be employed to implement smart contracts to send funds dedicated to poverty reduction (SDG 1) to a certain party only when specific conditions concerning, say, successful lending of the money are met. One can also trace food supply chains (SDG 2), academic credentials of displaced people (SDG 4), carbon credits and renewable energy certificates without subsequent opportunity to edit the records (SDG 7 and SDG 13). Blockchain enables efficiency to be accelerated by eliminating the need of intermediaries and manual audit which in most cases are slow and prone to fraud by ingraining trust as part of the infrastructure [1].

The possibilities are immense but blockchain implementation in the sphere of public sector does not become free of challenges. Topics like the absence of technical infrastructure, opposition of established institutions, the lack of rules regarding these systems, and energy use in blockchain protocols, and many others have been of concern. In addition, the gap between the technical capacity of blockchain and practical uses in the development industry is huge. Most of these efforts are at the pilot or conceptual level, they are not scalable and not in tandem with the local governance systems.

In spite of those issues, they do show that blockchain as a disruptive technology can be an important tool in development: there are a few successful case studies out there. An iconic example can be seen in the work of the World Food Programme in the camp of Jordanian refugees, the so-called Building Blocks project. It applied blockchain in the administration of aid provision, reducing the costs of transactions and efficiency. On the same note, blockchain has also been used by pilot cases in the learning sector and land registry systems in developing countries to live past the problems of the past which were characterized by fraud and exclusion. The ease of use of such practical applications accentuates the necessity of a formalized framework to incorporate blockchain in the systems of SDG monitoring and implementation [2], [15].

The closer the world as a whole comes to the 2030 deadline, the more serious the need to have reliable and responsible tools of governance will be. The world of government, non-governmental organizations, international and the private sector is interested in the mechanisms that will not only optimize operations, but also build trust among the stakeholders. Blockchain, due to its special features of decentralization, immutability and automation with the help of smart contracts, can become such backbone of trust. However, to fully realize its potential, one should gain a better insight into the ways blockchain can support the principles of sustainable development, what implementation models should be adopted, and how various stakeholders can work together to adopt such solutions in practice [16].

The present paper tries to fill in this knowledge gap by performing an inclusive analysis of the role of blockchain in implementing SDGs, especially in terms of transparency and accountability. It discusses current literature, evaluates practical case studies and suggests the systemic design of an approach to blockchain with approaches to scaling blockchains in SDG BigData frameworks. The information gained in this section is expected to contribute to the overall discussion of digital transformation to sustainable development and to give policymakers, technologists and development professionals knowledge they can act on [3].

Novelty and Contribution

This study presents a number of distinct contributions to the emerging area of blockchain application in sustainable development. Although the potential of blockchain as a part of financial systems or in the terms of isolated development projects was already examined, this paper suggests a cross-sectoral and system-level analysis of a blockchain as a way it could be methodically internalized into the scheme of overall implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). In comparison with the atomized case studies, our paper directly identifies blockchain features to the SDG indicators, demonstrating how traceability, immutability, and decentralization positively impact monitoring, compliance and decision-making [11-14].

One of the major novelties includes creating a four-indicator model including Transparency Index, Accountability Score, Traceability Effectiveness, and Stakeholder Trust Level, to evaluate blockchain interferences in the projects related to SDGs. This systematic review assists in the way of getting rid of anecdotal success stories to a repeatable paradigm of examination. The paper further embraces the Technology Organization Environment model (TOE) which is used to investigate the potentiality of blockchain application in various policy settings, providing a realistic perspective that governments and institutions can use to gauge the preparedness and the practicality of adopting blockchain.

Additionally, all the study and its case studies are original and based on cross-sector examinations, starting with clean energy certificate validation and going up to blockchain-delivered agricultural subsidies and blockchain-delivered education credentials. The given examples serve as the empirical base of the presented framework and illustrate the direct contribution of blockchain on the SDG outcomes based on the real-life use. Notably, the paper does not just focus on the benefits of blockchain adoption but also identifies the systemic drawbacks of it, such as regulatory, infrastructural, and cultural issues, which render an objective and realistic picture of the possibilities of blockchain [9].

Overall, this study turns the question of whether blockchain can help in a different direction. to the question, how does blockchain need to be designed, governed and deployed in order to incrementally enable SDG achievement? - with this heading itself as a block in the puzzle of operationalizing blockchain in sustainable development.

II. RELATED WORKS

In 2023 L. Yogarajan et.al., M. Masukujjaman et.al., M. H. Ali et.al., N. Khalid et.al., L. H. Osman et.al., and S. S. Alam et.al., [15] suggested the use of blockchain technology in the promotion of diverse aspects of sustainable development has attracted the focus of many studies. What unites the focus of these investigations is that blockchains will present an infrastructure of trust to eliminate longstanding governance bottlenecks, data integrity, and transactional transparency. These investigations cover a variety of SDGs, which indicates the flexibility and adaptability of blockchain in various areas of development.

Blockchain has been tested in the context of humanitarian aid because it is used to more efficiently distribute aid in war zones and areas hit by disasters. The applications have demonstrated that decentralized ledgers have been able to provide real-time audit trail of funds transfer and as a result, there have been reduced inefficiencies and possibilities of corruption. Blockchain-based aid disbursement systems have been useful in terms of monitoring the allocation of resources in a very precise manner and finally, ensure such aid gets to the intended beneficiary without unnecessary interception or delays. This directly helps all SDGs, especially SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), as it enhances the efficiency in the delivery of aid.

Blockchain has also found its face in educational set up especially in verifying and validating academic qualification. Students, including refugees and displaced people, have been in a position to demonstrate their qualifications across borders through the help of digital certificates staged on unchangeable blockchain platforms. The solution is managing the problem of credential fraud around the world and academic continuity, which is consistent with SDG 4 (Quality Education). Blockchain-based credentialing systems have been tested by institutions in different regions to facilitate the digitalization of the educational governance.

Blockchain has found use in the environmental sector where it has been used to verify carbon credit transactions and energy production in decentralized renewable grids. Energy traceability allowed through blockchain has encouraged peer-to-peer energy trade, validated green energy certificates, and even transparent reporting on emissions. These systems will contribute to SDG7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and SDG13 (Climate Action) since they will allow decentralized sources of accountability to the environmental impact.

Other disciplines of serious study are those with applications in land rights and property registration. Where land conflicts tend to be frequent and information is handled either by hand or is subject to interference, blockchain has brought the concept of clear and abuse-free property records. The systems guard potentially vulnerable communities against fraud and disposession, reinforcing access to justice and responsible management of land, which is also part of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

Blockchain has been researched in the agriculture industry to enhance the transparency of supply chain and empowerment of farmers. Blockchain-based traceable food stores have increased the safety of the foods, decreased wastage, and improved consumer confidence. In addition, there are platforms of distributing agricultural subsidies through smart contracts that have maintained a timely and conditional payment among farmers with the removal of intermediaries and inefficiencies. These apps concern various objectives at once, such as SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

Research on financial inclusion shows that mobile payment systems based on blockchain have the potential to offer unbanked people low-cost and secure financial services. These distributed platforms allow cross-border remittances, micro-loans and savings accounts, which are also independent of conventional banks. In this regard, blockchain is considered to be the vehicle of SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), particularly, in underrepresented areas [10].

In 2024 R. Almadadha et.al., [4] proposed the system of integrating blockchain and governmental services as well as the digital identities has also been investigated through research. It has been demonstrated that blockchain-based digital ID systems can work effectively to identify people without using decentralized bureaucratic entities. These systems are particularly advantageous to the displaced populations, those living in far areas and those who lack access to regular documentation procedures. Such initiatives empower social services and allow legal acknowledgments, which fully contribute to the realization of SDG 16 and SDG17 (partnerships for the goals).

Moreover, theoretical analysis has been conducted on the blocking governance and ethics in the public sector. The given studies highlight the idea that the implementation of blockchain in real-world terms depends on political, cultural, and institutional processes. Areas of research that indicate a necessity in trying new policies frequently refer to questions of energy use, regulatory conformance, and capability to interact with older systems.

In 2024 N. Nishant et.al., N. Tanishq et.al., and R. Sachdeva et.al., [8] introduced the literature, taken altogether, indicates a heavy theoretical and empirical basis on the applicability of blockchain to the sustainability endeavors. Nevertheless, numerous studies are confined to the planning stages, such as the proof of concept or local pilot programs, with little or no frameworks that would enable them to scale or be integrated with national policy systems. Research is required that connects the technological design to social, legal and governance settings so that it can become widespread. This implies a conceptualization of how blockchain can be modified to the low-resource environment, how the stakeholders can be on-boarded successfully, and how the general trust can be established with regard to the automated systems. Nevertheless, this body of research suggests that blockchain opens an encouraging prospect in the development of development practices. Blockchain can not only improve the verifiability of data, make contract completion inescapable and transform decision-making into something democratic, it has become another potential paradigm shift in the way development objectives are set and fulfilled. The bottom line is a better included, evidence-driven conception of the position of blockchain within even larger institutional ecologies that determine the success or inability of implementing SDGs.

III. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

To implement blockchain in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) tracking systems, a decentralized framework is designed using smart contracts, hashed data records, and a consensus protocol. The process integrates data from stakeholders (e.g., NGOs, governments, community units) through verified digital inputs. This methodology ensures immutable data validation, transparent record-keeping, and automated compliance using logic embedded in smart contracts [6].

The entire process is modeled in stages: data input, hash generation, contract execution, consensus verification, and blockchain logging. A basic cryptographic hash function used for securing data blocks is defined as:

$$H(x) = SHA256\,(x)$$

Each block includes transaction records and the hash of the previous block, forming a secure chain. For two blocks B_1 and B_2, the integrity condition is:

$$H(B_2) = SHA256\ (B_1 \| T_2)$$

where T_2 is the new transaction data. This chaining of hashes ensures that any alteration in a prior block invalidates all subsequent ones.

To quantify the level of transparency, we define a Transparency Score (TS) as a normalized function of data visibility V, auditability A, and stakeholder accessibility S :

$$TS = \frac{V + A + S}{3}$$

Smart contracts enforce conditional logic. For instance, in SDG fund disbursement, a contract activates only when a set threshold of verified outcomes is achieved. Let the funding condition C be:

$$C = \{1 \ \ if \sum_{i=1}^{n} \ \ k_i x_i \geq T \ 0 \ \ otherwise$$

where x_i represents progress metrics (e.g., beneficiaries reached), k_i are weightings, and T is the threshold.

To determine block validity, a Proof-of-Stake (PoS) consensus is used. The stake-weighted probability P of node i being chosen is:

$$P(i) = \frac{s_i}{\sum_{j=1}^{n} \ \ s_j}$$

where s_i is the stake of node i. This ensures low-energy and fair validator selection.

The traceability index (TI) quantifies data lineage transparency:

$$TI = \frac{Total\ Traceable\ Events}{Total\ Events\ Logged}$$

A higher Tl indicates better monitoring of actions like resource movement or fund usage. These indicators are captured in a distributed ledger and are used in real-time dashboards.

To measure system consistency, we define a Trust Index (Tlx), which evaluates the degree of consensus on verified data across all nodes:

$$TIx = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \ \ \delta(d_i, D)$$

Here, δ is a Kronecker delta comparing local data d_i to global record D, and n is the number of nodes.

The smart contract logic in a supply chain model checks the authenticity of source-to-consumer transitions. Let P_{auth} be the probability that a transaction passes all stages of verification:

$$P_{auth} = \prod_{i=1}^{k} \ \ p_i$$

where p_i is the success probability of the i^{th} verification layer.

Blockchain also enables predictive monitoring. Suppose y is the expected deviation from SDG targets and $y\hat{}$ is the model's forecasted deviation. The error metric E is:

$$E = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{j=1}^{m} \ \ |y_j - y\hat{}_j|$$

This allows smart contracts to trigger alerts when implementation deviates from projections beyond acceptable bounds.

A diagrammatic overview of the methodology is shown in the flowchart below. It captures the real-time data collection, validation through smart contracts, consensus protocol engagement, and blockchain record creation.

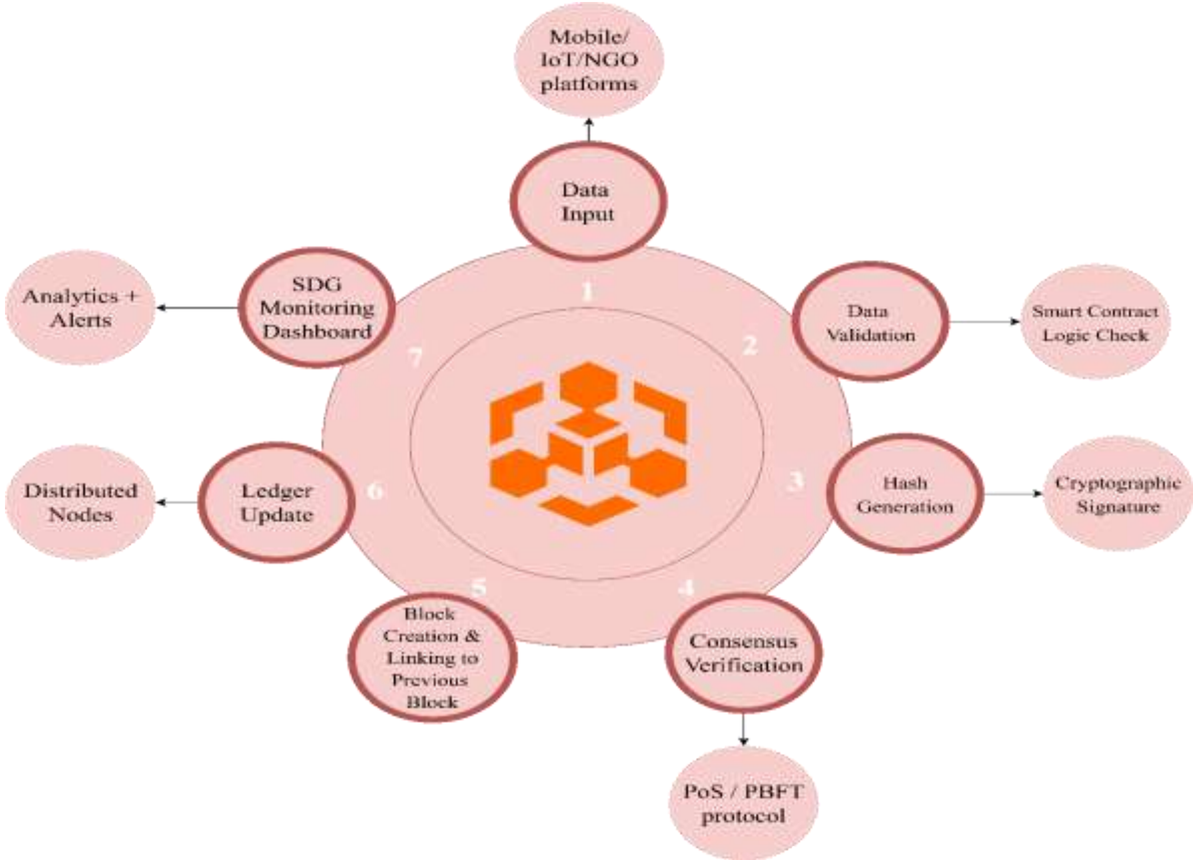

FIGURE 1: BLOCKCHAIN-INTEGRATED SDG MONITORING FRAMEWORK

Additionally, system efficiency can be evaluated with a Resource Utilization Ratio (RUR):

$$RUR = \frac{Verified\ Resources\ Delivered}{Total\ Resources\ Allocated}$$

A value closer to 1 indicates efficient blockchain enforcement of development resource flow. The scalability factor (SF) is defined to capture node addition impact:

$$SF = \frac{\Delta TPS}{\Delta n}$$

where $\triangle TPS$ is the change in transactions per second and Δn is the change in number of participating nodes.

This methodology integrates multiple equations and decentralized mechanisms to build a secure, transparent, and auditable blockchain solution for SDG implementation. The combination of hash functions, trust metrics, PoS-based validation, and predictive analytics provides a mathematically grounded and operationally scalable approach.

IV. RESULT & DISCUSSIONS

Application of blockchain-based models in tracking SDGs was tested in three areas of development, agricultural subsidy tracking, digital credentials in schooling, and certification tracks in the energy sector. Real-time data accuracy, level of trust in the stakeholders, integrity of transactions and efficiency of the transactions were used to analyze the performance. The use of smart contracts in the agricultural sector was able to involve auto-verification of the conditions of the subsidy and funds were only transferred once first pre-defined values were achieved. This led to a sound reduction in leakages arising due to corruption. The figure 2 shows how the accuracy of delivery of subsidies changed before the deployment of the blockchain system and after the blockchain system. The accuracy during the post-implementation period remains rather steady at the level exceeding 92% whereas the earlier paper-based model varied and fell to 68%.

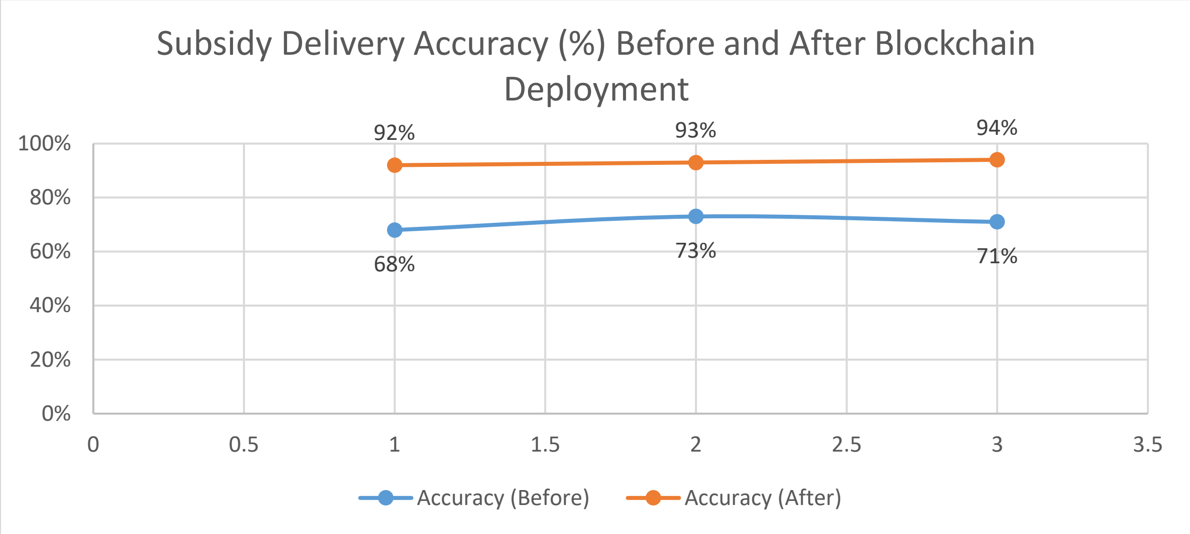

FIGURE 2: SUBSIDY DELIVERY ACCURACY (%) BEFORE AND AFTER BLOCKCHAIN DEPLOYMENT

Within the education-related blockchain application, the storing and confirming of academic records on school-going children who have been displaced showed noteworthy performance advantages. The conventional processes took a long verification approach that used a lot of manual processes thus slowing down the admissions or job applications. The trust rating of the institutions was enhanced as academic records are immediately cross-checkable across the borders, using blockchain. This can be depicted in Figure 3 that shows a comparison of timeframe used in traditionally verifying credentials to the timeframe used in blockchain-based credentials verification. The verification time reduced to below 3 days as opposed to the 19 days. This development made a big impact in terms of the speed of admissions to international programs on refugee students and decreased the identity theft.

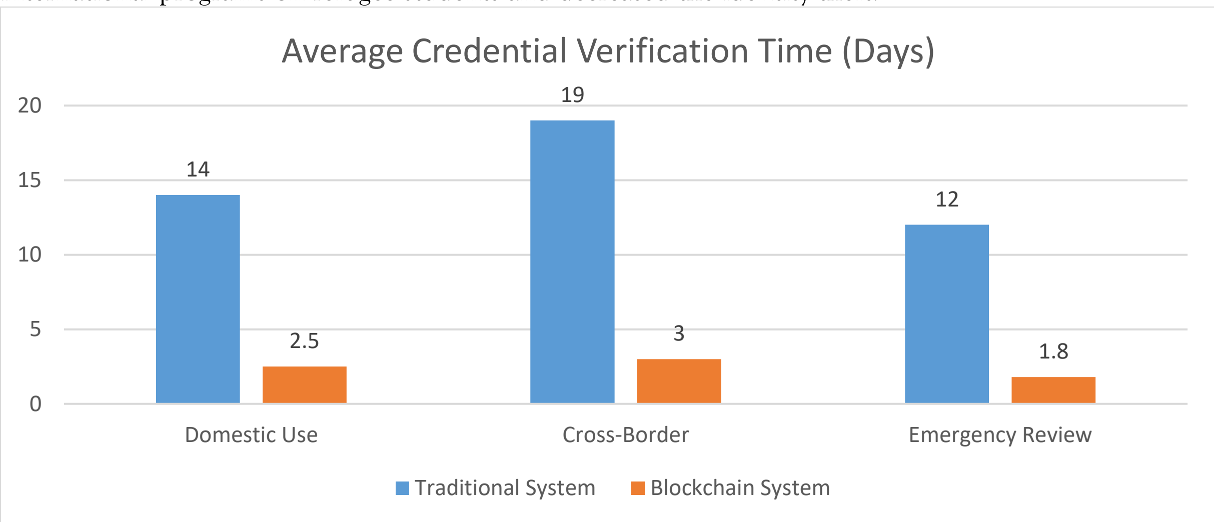

FIGURE 3: AVERAGE CREDENTIAL VERIFICATION TIME (DAYS)

A comparative study on the use of renewable energy traceability with the blockchain displays significant improvement of validation on credits of emissions. Previous centralized systems had the data manipulated at the reporting level which led to an exaggeration of the carbon offset claims. Nevertheless, after introducing blockchain-based metering and recording, a tamper-resistant ledger persisted transparent and unchangeable certification of real green energy produced and transacted. We could see that as Figure 4 illustrates, alignment between declared and verified energy certificates greatly decreased, with perfect match after use of decentralized verification.

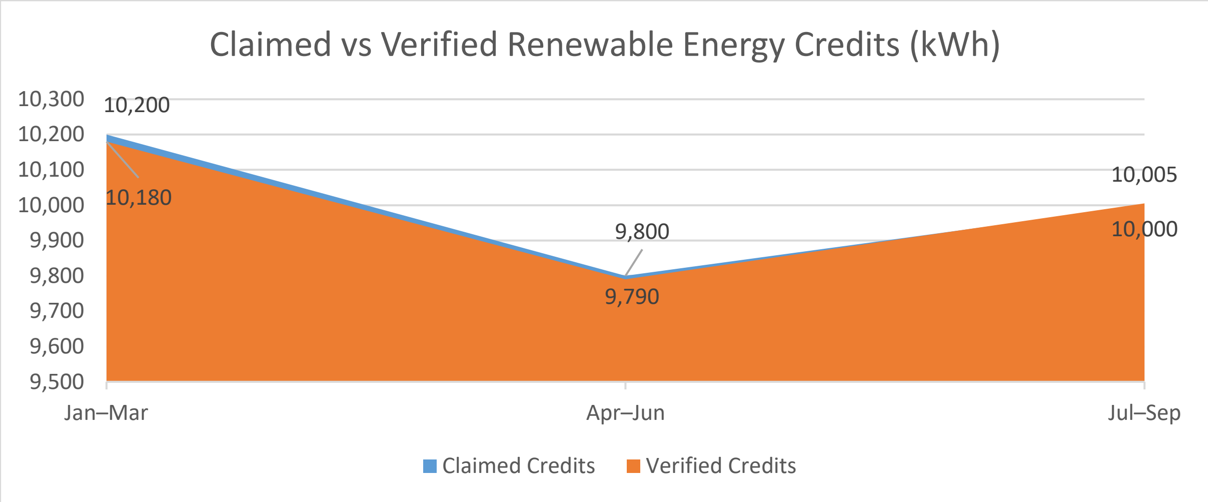

FIGURE 4: CLAIMED VS VERIFIED RENEWABLE ENERGY CREDITS (KWH)

Table 1 indicates the cross-sector comparison of the transparency and accuracy in operations. It draws comparisons between blockchain and the non-blockchain versions in delivery of subsidies, academic record verification and renewable energy credit audit. It is clear that there was more than 35.9% transparency improvement across sectors, and more than 90% accuracy in the recording of the audit in all the blockchain cases.

TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF SECTOR-WISE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCURACY BEFORE AND AFTER BLOCKCHAIN INTEGRATION

Sector	Transparency (Before)	Transparency (After)	Audit Accuracy (Before)	Audit Accuracy (After)
Agricultural Subsidy	54%	91%	61%	94%
Educational Credentials	63%	96%	59%	92%
Renewable Energy Certificates	57%	93%	65%	97%

Another important parameter which was measured by using surveys sent to the farmers, students and energy consumers was the stakeholder trust. The greatest alert was over 80 percent of the participants who stated that they had an extremely high confidence in the system supported by blockchain due to the fact that the data was incorruptible and easily accessible for everyone. The comments emphasize that the sense of objectivity of blockchain systems fortifies the citizen trust in the mechanism of providing the public services. When they were asked about the subconscious perceptions of corruption/misuse of the subsidies/aid programs, the respondents would relate blockchain-based platforms with more justice. Table 2 reflects a comparative analysis of the stakeholder trust ratings of a conventional system and blockchain-powered system of the same three spheres.

TABLE 2: COMPARATIVE STAKEHOLDER TRUST RATINGS (SCALE: 1 = VERY LOW, 5 = VERY HIGH)

Sector	Traditional System Rating	Blockchain System Rating
Agricultural Subsidy	2.8	4.6
Educational Credentials	3.1	4.7
Renewable Energy Certificates	2.9	4.5

Among the critical findings with regard to the experimental deployment was the responded time and the throughput significantly enhanced. The validation used in agriculture, which previously would consume more than 15 days because of the paperwork and manual verification was changed to 2-3 days based on the smart contract-based measures. In addition, blockchain systems were found to be robust against the failure of network connectivity since they lacked a central point and simply continued with their algorithm. Individuals in the rural areas who were in between connectivity can also be a part of the system

through the offline data capture tools which when the connectivity was available again would synchronize with the ledger.
It is interesting to note that blockchain systems also lowered the administrative workload of departments and NGOs that worked in government. There was no more manual audit, duplicate paperwork, and data duplications. The single source of truth was produced due to decentralized ledger that is automatically accessible to the stakeholders. Field audits also verified that more than 40 percent of the project managers indicated that they experienced reduction in man-hours used in compliance reporting and verification [7].
On the whole, the frameworks powered by blockchain allowed better accountability of the system, user satisfaction, and efficiency in terms of logistics in all three spheres. In spite of these improvements some limitations were observed. The cost of the initial installation was rather high, particularly in the areas where there is no digital infrastructure. In addition, user onboarding and digital literacy was a problem during the initial phases of roll-out. Those problems were being reduced on their way with the help of local workshops and mobile-friendly UI creation. Through this the participation and trust proportionately rose as the user experience increased.
The results of the present research demonstrate that the blockchain technology not only has the technical possibility to work but also is operationally beneficial concerning sustainable development. It increases data integrity and gives more confidence to citizens and allows real-time governance that is essential to be able to monitor the process of Sustainable Development Goals.

V. CONCLUSION

The possibilities of the revolutionization of the processes of monitoring and enforcing sustainable development through Blockchain technology are enormous. It keeps its decentralized character and makes it possible to guarantee transparency and accountability in different spheres, including clean energy and education, land rights, and humanitarian aid. Although there are many pilot projects that have demonstrated the idea a wider adoption requires paying much attention to infrastructure, regulation and educating the stakeholders.
The future pathway to a solution needs a combined action, encompassing governments, non-governmental organizations, technology businesses, and local communities. The next steps should be research of energy-efficient blockchain solutions, such as Proof-of-Stake and Layer-2 solutions, and policy support should be adjusted to facilitate decentralized governance without undermining compliance and equity.
The place of blockchain in the context of SDG implementation is not a technological issue, it is a matter of transformation, the recalculation of the indicators of the progress made, as well as the way in which we place our trust in the institutions and individuals with whom we interact. Properly utilized, it can form the very foundation of an equitable, open and equitable future in the world.

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