



Environment and Sustainable Development

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Abstract: *Environmental impact is in turn having an impact on ecosystems that are critical to our survival. Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) is a pattern of resource usage that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that those needs can be met not only in the present, but also for all future generations. For development to be locally appropriate and sustainable, it must be guided by local considerations which lie in cultural diversity and traditions. Therefore recognition at the policy level, of the significance of diversity, and the need to preserve it, is an important precondition for sustainable development.*

Key words: *Environment, Sustainable, generations, human population*

1. Introduction:

From the 1987 Brundtland Commission, the most common definition of sustainable development is "*meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*" In 2003, Dr. Rolf Jucker further illuminated the idea: "*Sustainability is achieved when all people on Earth can live well without compromising the quality of life for future generation*". The vision of sustainable human society resides in the simultaneous and synergistic creation of economic growth and equity, conservation of natural resources and the natural environment, and sustainable social development and social justice.

1. Ecologically Sustainable Development:

Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) is a pattern of resource usage that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that those needs can be met not only in the present, but also for all future generations. ESD brings together concern for the carrying capacity of natural

systems with the social challenges facing the larger human population. ESD is to a certain extent nothing really new; rather it is recognition that the current pace of resource consumption, particularly in our building architecture design and construction, is not a sustainable undertaking in the longer term. In particular this is having a serious impact on our collective environment, in terms of:

- consumption of none renewable resources;
- loss of natural habit and environment, and
- pollution and general 'wastage'

This environmental impact is in turn having an impact on ecosystems that are critical to our survival. Global warming is an example of such a long term net effect of our lack of collective awareness of how to behave a sustainable way. ESD can be thought of as a three-legged stool:

The Economy: Satisfaction of basic needs, Equity enhancing and producing useful goods and services.



The Environment: Biological diversity, Ecological function and Resilience.

Society: Cultural diversity, Social justice and Participation.

The stool needs its three legs to function and be stable; without its three legs it will collapse. Similarly, ESD requires a healthy economy, environment and society. If any one of these components is missing, development will not be sustainable. For instance, a development that fails to consider the social dimension, such as local community concerns about decreased privacy, increased pollution or loss of open space, will suffer from lack of community support. A development that ignores the environmental dimension will result in a degraded resource base.

2. Environmental Pollution in India

The environmental pollution affects the health of more than 100 million people worldwide. Pollution is the contaminant into a natural environment, usually by humans. The specific types of pollution are Land pollution, Air Pollution, Water pollution (Oceans, rivers, ground water), Plastic pollution, Noise pollution, Light pollution, space Ozone layer and many more. In India the increasing economic development and a rapidly growing population that has taken the country from 300 million people in 1947 to more than one billion people today is putting a strain on the environment, infrastructure, and the country's natural resources. Industrial pollution, soil erosion, deforestation, rapid industrialization, urbanization, and land degradation are all worsening problems. Overexploitation of the

country's resources is its land or water and the industrialization process has resulted in environmental degradation of resources.

Environmental pollution is one of the most serious problems facing humanity and other life forms on our planet today.

India's per capita carbon dioxide emissions were roughly 3,000 pounds (1,360 kilograms) in 2007, according to the study. That's small compared to China and the U.S., with 10,500 pounds (4,763 kilograms) and 42,500 pounds (19,278 kilograms) respectively that year. The study said that the European Union and Russia also have more emissions than India. India is among the world's worst performers when it comes to the overall environment. A study released earlier this year by the environmental research centers of Columbia and Yale showed that India was at the bottom of the heap when it came to air pollution.

3. India and US clean energy pact:

India and the U.S. on November 8, 2010 inked an agreement to establish a bilateral energy cooperation programme to promote clean and energy-efficient businesses. The US President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced the setting up of Joint Clean Energy Research and Development Centre. The proposed centre is part of the Partnership to Advance Clean Energy (PACE), which forms the core of the "green partnership". Funding for the centre is expected from national budgets and the private sector. "Now the Indian consumer is increasingly conscious of the benefits of environmentally friendly and sustainable practices... 86% Indian consumers surveyed, place faith in energy efficient products and appliances, followed by recyclable packaging (79%)," Global OnlineEnvironment and Sustainability Survey by Nielsen said on August 29, 2011.



4. Sustainable Development in a Globalizing World:

Globalization as it is taking place today is increasing the divide between the rich and the poor. It has to be steered so that it serves not only commercial interests but also the social needs of development. Global business thrives on, and therefore encourages and imposes, high levels of homogeneity in consumer preferences. On the other hand, for development to be locally appropriate and sustainable, it must be guided by local considerations which lie in cultural diversity and traditions. Therefore recognition at the policy level, of the significance of diversity, and the need to preserve it, is an important precondition for sustainable development. In an increasingly globalizing economy, developing countries, for want of the appropriate skills, are often at a disadvantage in negotiating and operating multilateral trade agreements. Regional cooperation for capacity building is therefore necessary to ensure their effective participation in all stages of multilateral trade. Globalization is driven by a vast, globally spread, human resource engine involving millions of livelihoods. Their security is sometimes threatened by local events causing global distortions (e.g. the impact of the WTC attack on jobs in India or, in a wider context, sanctions against countries not conforming to 'international' prescriptions in human rights or environment related matters). Mechanisms to safeguard trade and livelihoods, especially in developing countries, must be evolved and negotiated to make globalization an effective vehicle of sustainable development. War and armed conflict are a major threat to sustainable development. It is imperative to evolve

effective mechanisms for mediation in such situations and to resolve contentious issues without compromising the larger developmental goals of the conflicting parties.

5. Health and Sustainable Development:

Human health in its broadest sense of physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing is to a great extent dependent on the access of the citizen to a healthy environment. For a healthy, productive and fulfilling life every individual should have the physical and economic access to a balanced diet, safe drinking water, clean air, sanitation, environmental hygiene, primary health care and education. Access to safe drinking water and a healthy environment should be a fundamental right of every citizen. Citizens of developing countries continue to be vulnerable to a double burden of diseases. Traditional diseases such as malaria and cholera, caused by unsafe drinking water and lack of environmental hygiene, have not yet been controlled. In addition, people are now falling prey to modern diseases such as cancer and AIDS, and stress-related disorders.

6. Population:

With India's population crossing a billion in the year 2000, the National Population Policy announced in that year has special significance. Its change in focus from merely setting target population figures to achieving population control through greater attention to socio-economic issues such as child health and survival, illiteracy, empowerment of women, and increased participation by men in planned parenthood, gives it greater breadth and depth, thereby holding forth better promise of achieving its long-term objective of a stable population by mid-century.



The official realization, that population is not merely about numbers but about the health and quality of life of people in general and women in particular, must be reinforced and sustained by an informed debate to bring key population issues into ever sharpening perspective at various levels of policy making from the national and state legislatures to local government institutions. There is need for a better and more widespread understanding that the number of children desired by any couple depends on a large and complexly interrelated number of socio-economic and cultural factors, and that any policy action seeking to control population must seriously take all these variables into account. An important part of empowering women in matters pertaining to population, is to explicitly recognize and respect their rights over their bodies and their reproductive behavior. This recognition must permeate society in general, and religious, judicial and law-enforcement institutions in particular, through continual campaigning and dialogue.

The pursuit of population control must not be allowed to compromise human rights and basic democratic principles. Such compromises are often implicit in the disincentives aimed at controlling family size; in comments on the fertility of particular social groupings; and in the occasional demands to control immigration to metropolitan areas. It is essential to place these

Matters in a balanced and rational perspective through informed public discourse supported by the wide dissemination of authentic data.

7. Sustainable Development at the Local, National and International Levels:

Local:

Effective management of resources requires participation by all stakeholders. At the local level, strengthening democratic institutions generally leads to better and more sustained management of natural resources. To enhance effectiveness of people's participation in local governance,

Committees comprising both elected and executive members of local bodies and representatives of community groups, must be formed. Appropriate capacity building would enable them to undertake local development activities according to community priorities, monitor project

Implementation and manage community assets. Where the conditions for such community empowerment have already been created, as in India through the 73rd and 74th amendments of its Constitution, effective implementation of the provisions should be ensured. All members of society are the stakeholders of sustainable development. Women make up half of this group. Affirmative action to ensure representation and power to women in local governance, and appropriate capacity building, are necessary to make them effective and equal partners in the development process. Social groups which have been traditionally discriminated against must be represented in local governance and empowered to ensure that they become effective and mainstream partners in development. Children are a valuable asset of every society. It is the responsibility not only of the parents but of the community that children realize their potential fully, growing up in a healthy, enriching and fulfilling environment. Ensuring the provision of such an environment is a major challenge of governance at the local level. The occupational, cultural and economic heterogeneity of population is on the



whole a major asset in making development sustainable; but there are times of crisis when the same heterogeneity can become the basis of conflict and social insecurity. It is imperative to evolve participatory mechanisms of governance involving citizen groups and local authorities which will provide effective means of conflict resolution.

National:

Sustainable development is achieved through optimizing gains from several variables, rather than maximizing those from a single one. This requires government departments, by convention sectorally organized, to work together, or in some cases as a single multi-disciplinary authority. For this joint planning, transparency and coordination in implementation are required. The richness of skills available in society must be harnessed through partnerships involving institutions in civil society, such as NGOs, CBOs, corporate (including private) bodies, academic and research institutions, trade unions, etc., which must be made an integral part of planning and implementation for sustainable development. There is on the one hand a surfeit of laws, many of them outmoded and irrelevant. On the other hand, effective enforcement is lacking in respect of laws relevant to contemporary concerns and conducive to governance. This calls for a thorough review of laws, elimination of those which are outmoded, and simplification of the procedures for implementing those which are relevant. Internal reviews as well as learnings from international experience should be the basis of identifying and filling gaps in existing laws. It must, however, be recognized that laws in themselves do not provide solutions, unless there are mechanisms to effectively enforce them.

There are many traditional systems and practices whose value and validity needs to be recognized and brought into the mainstream of governmental development thinking and policy. Appropriate mechanisms for integrating them need to be created. Many policies were framed either before sustainable development became a major concern or in a sectoral perspective. These need to be reviewed from the point of view of sustainable development. All future policies must be guided by considerations of sustainable development. Areas lacking policies should be identified and adequate policies compatible with the imperatives of sustainable development framed, taking into account successful examples, of policies and initiatives in similar areas.

International:

There is both a need and a scope for regional and global cooperation in sustainable development. Some of the areas of common concern are marine and riparian issues, environmental impacts, and management of bioresources, technology sharing and sharing of sustainable development experiences. Efforts must be made, especially by developing countries, to work towards synergizing experiences and raising shared regional concerns as a strong united front in international forums. Mechanisms must be put in place to facilitate such international exchange of domestic and global experiences in sustainable development. There must be mechanisms for monitoring the compliance of countries to their obligations under various environmental agreements. Currently there is a multiplicity of institutions with fragmented responsibilities. A better governance regime is required to ensure cooperation and compliance. "You have to



decide whether development means affluence or whether development means peace, prosperity and happiness"-- Sunderlal Bahuguna. "You must be the change you wish to see in the world" -- Mahatma Gandhi.

8. Conclusion

Sustainable development is achieved through optimizing gains from several variables, rather than maximizing those from a single one. A better governance regime is required to ensure cooperation and compliance in this regard.

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