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EVOLUTION SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable development does not focus solely on environmental issues. The United Nations 2005 World Summit Outcome Document refers to the four 'interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars' of sustainable development as including: economic development, social development and environmental protection. The fourth pillar is indigenous people and culture. Proponents of Sustainable Development argue that it provides a context in which overall sustainability is improved where cutting edge Green development is unattainable. For example, a cutting edge treatment plant with extremely high maintenance costs may not be sustainable in regions of the world with fewer financial resources. An environmentally ideal plant that is shut down due to bankruptcy is obviously less sustainable than one that is maintainable by the community, even if it is somewhat less effective from an environmental standpoint. During the last ten years, different organisations have tried to measure and monitor the proximity to what they consider sustainability by implementing what has been called sustainability metric and indices. Sustainable development is said to set limits on the developing world. While current developed countries pollute significantly during their development, the same countries encourage developing countries to reduce pollution, which sometimes impedes growth. Environmental sustainability is the process of making sure that the current processes of interaction with environment is pursued with the idea of keeping the environment as pristine as naturally possible based on ideal-seeking behaviour. An 'unsustainable situation' occurs when natural capital (the sum total of nature's resources) is used up faster than it can be replenished. Sustainability requires that human activity only use nature's resources at a rate, which they can be replenished naturally. Inherently, the concept of sustainable development is intertwined with the concept of carrying capacity. Theoretically, the long-term result of environmental degradation is the inability to sustain human life. Such degradation on a global scale could imply extinction for humanity.



KEYWORDS: Sustainable development, Resources, Capital, Growth.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development in this environment therefore, calls for cooperation of all countries both industrialized and developing. That cooperation must be based on the foundation of the right to development and the need for an equitable distribution of burden.

The need for equity is starkly reflected in the fact that the emissions per capita in industrialized countries are ten to twelve times those of developing countries. The total emissions in the world must

decline. We must find a way of solving this problem in a way that does not deprive developing countries of their right to develop.

Economic growth, social development and environment protection are the three pillars of Sustainable development. Sustainability has different meanings for different contexts. For example, while developed countries are grappling with lifestyle sustainability, the developing countries are tackling issues of livelihood sustainability.

As a developing country in the frontlines of climate vulnerability, India has a vital stake in the evolution of a successful, rule-based, equitable and multilateral response to issues relating to climate change. The principles of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change provide the basis for creating a workable framework along these lines.

India's Sustainable Growth:

India is one of the mega bio-diverse countries of the world. Our traditional knowledge is both coded as in our ancient texts on Indian systems of medicine, and non-coded, as in oral traditions. With four global biodiversity hotspots, India ranks amongst the top ten species rich nations.

India was one of the first few countries to enact a comprehensive Biological Diversity Act in 2002 to give effect to the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992. Yet India and the world have miles to go before we can claim notable success in fulfilling the three objectives of the Convention namely, conservation of biological diversity, and sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits.

India's tiger population is on the rise. The 2011 tiger census showed a 20 percent increase in the number of tigers over that of the year 2006. It is estimated that there are today around 1700 wild tigers in India out of a global population of around 3,000.

India's forest cover had increased by nearly 5% between 1997 and 2007 with a small decrease since then. It hopes to see further accretion with the implementation of the Green India Mission which aims to increase the forest and tree cover by 5 million hectares and improve forest cover on another 5 million hectares.

Eventually these forests will act as a sink that could absorb 50-60 million tons of carbon dioxide annually. This would offset about 6 percent of India's annual emissions. The Government of India is trying to put in place institutional arrangements and mechanisms to promote policy development and stakeholder engagement on sustainable management of commons.

India has recently established a National Green Tribunal under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010. The Tribunal provides for the effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.

This includes the enforcement of any legal right relating to environment, including providing relief and compensation for damages. The National Ganga River Basin Authority is yet another example where the Government is trying institutional innovation to protect the sacred River.

The objective of the Authority is to ensure conservation of the river Ganga & to maintain environmental flows by adopting a comprehensive river basin approach. The Rio Declaration of 1992 enunciated 27 far reaching principles that sought to protect the integrity of the global environmental and developmental system. These principles have stood the test of time.

India's journey on the path of sustainable development has so far been marked both by reasons for celebration and introspection. The right place to begin the story would be the 1980s and early 1990s, which mark the beginning of economic reforms, catalyst for India's phenomenally faster growth rates since, and coinciding with a time when countries around the world acknowledged and started addressing the increasing environmental concerns, such as at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992.

India's faster gross domestic product (GDP) growth over the last two decades has been unprecedented; but at the same time India's rankings in terms of the human development index (HDI) as well as indices measuring environmental sustainability are yet to fully reflect this growth.

However, it would be a mistake to downplay the enormous progress made, as India has followed a much more conscious path of sustainable development with impressive results on the ground. The key environmental challenges have become sharper in the past two decades.

The 2009 State of the Environment Report by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) clubs the issues under five key challenges faced by India, which are climate change, food security, water security, energy security, and managing urbanization.

Climate change is impacting the natural ecosystems and is expected to have substantial adverse effects in India, mainly on agriculture on which around 58 per cent of the population depends for livelihood, water storage in the Himalayan glaciers which are the source of major rivers and groundwater recharge, sea-level rise, and threats to a long coastline and habitations.

Climate change will also cause increased frequency of extreme events such as storms, floods, and droughts. These in turn will impact India's food & water security problems. India also faces the critical challenge of meeting its rapidly growing energy demands.

It currently depends on around 80 per cent imports for its crude oil requirements. A large section of the rural population is still not connected to the grid or efficient modern cooking fuel sources, and India's per capita energy consumption of 439 kg of oil equivalent is far below the world average of 1688 kg (Planning Commission report in 2006).

India's Progress towards Sustainable Development:

There is a strong sense of progress made at community level, where it matters. India has made remarkable gains so far in sustainable development, as measured, for example, in three summary 'outcome' indicators.

1. Life Expectancy India has achieved a decade's gain, which is a broad indicator of economic well-being with social justice.
2. Forest Cover there has also been a rise in forest cover despite the pressures on land use, which is a measure of environmental sustainability. Satellite data confirms that not only has India been able to control deforestation, but its forest cover has also been increasing between the 1990s and 2011. India is one of the few developing countries where forest cover has increased over the last 20 years and continues to increase, although a slight dip is reported in the latest data for 2011.
3. Literacy a third summary indicator is gains in literacy among younger women, an indicator of future generations' well-being.
4. On all three counts, India has outpaced the 'deltas' on global averages, although it could have done even better.
5. The Constitution of India and relevant amendments that have been incorporated over the years, reinforce the policy and legal basis of sustainable development in India. The pillars of sustainable development are embedded in the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution, which lay down the framework for social justice in India.
6. Article 21 conferring the Right to Life has been assigned the broadest interpretations by the judiciary to encompass the right to a clean environment, right to livelihood, right to live with dignity, and a number of other associated rights.
7. The National Environment Policy 2006-has attempted to mainstream environmental concerns in all developmental activities. The Government of India, through its various policies, has been factoring ecological concerns into the development process so that economic development can be achieved without permanently damaging the environment. The challenges ahead are, nevertheless, large.

India and GHGs:

Although India ranks among top five countries in terms of GHG emissions, its per capita emissions are much lower than those of the developed countries even if historical emissions are excluded.

Its high level of emissions is due to its large population, geographical size, and economy. The most recent data available for India come from the assessment carried out by the Indian Network for Climate Change Assessment (INCCA) in May, 2010. The key results of the assessment are that total net GHG emissions from India in 2007 were 1727.71 million tons of CO₂ equivalent (eq.), of which CO₂ emissions were 1221.76 million tons, CH₄ – 20.56 million tons, and N₂O-0.24 million tons.

In 1994, the total net GHG emissions for India were 1228.54 million tons of CO₂ eq. this represents a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.9 per cent during the period 1994 to 2007.

GHG emissions from the energy, industry, agriculture, and waste sectors in 2007 constituted 58 per cent, 22 per cent, 17 per cent, and 3 per cent of net CO₂ eq. emissions respectively. India's per capita CO₂ eq. emissions including land use, land use change, and forestry (LULUCF) were 1.5 tons per capita in 2007.

Developed v/s Developing Countries:

Developed countries, in spite of their opprobrious colonial and imperial pasts, never fall short of toeing the line with double standards. They pollute the planet to the maximum extent, and then expect developing countries like ours to spend the same on environment protection as they do.

For record, all countries except the US have signed and ratified Kyoto Protocol. Canada openly criticized India's contribution, only to show its dichotomy and backing out from Kyoto Protocol (after having signed and ratified it way back).

The leaders of the first world thought they could have it their way at the last year's United Nations Climate Change Conference (held in Durban, South Africa), and could scheme poor countries into falling for their flawed ideals. The developed countries never talk beyond total emissions.

Poor countries, due to vicious cycle of poverty, have high populations, which add up to net emissions being more for them. There is a need to look at per capita emissions, and that is what our minister tried to explain. Even then, India's contribution to global emissions (5%) is lesser than that of China (17%), US (16%), EU (11%), Indonesia (6%).

When we compare per capita emission stats (total emission per person), we find that for India, they are way lower than all top ten polluters (for India, it is 2.1 tonnes, as against 24.1 for the US, 23.2 for Canada, and 5.8 For China).

India Oppose Replacing of MDGs with Sustainable Development Goals:

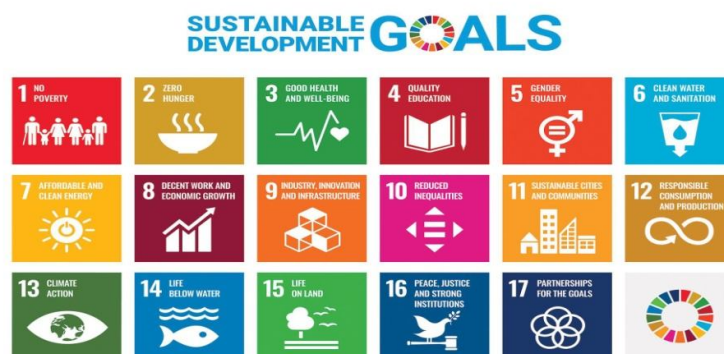
The United Nations has proposed replacing Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015 with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which could have norms for green economy, energy efficiency energy appliances, water efficiency, protecting endangered species such as tigers and whales. Although India's concerns regarding carbon tax and technology dependence on the developed world has found place in the zero text many issues raised by India are missing. India negotiators, say that there was unanimity of setting up a Sustainable Development Council in UN but many other issues remain to be worked out.

The SDGs targets on range of issues including reducing emission for per unit of GDP, preserving bio-diversity, provide quality education, ensure food and clean drinking water to all and gender equality would be applicable after 2015 will have to be met by 2030. The nations will decide these targets between 2012 and 2015 and also setup a mechanism to monitor the progress.

The developed and the developing world are already at loggerheads over the UN's 128 page draft called 'The Future We Want', which seeks major policy shifts to meet the proposed goals with some financial assistance from the rich nations.

The UN has incorporated some elements of the position taken by India and other developing countries such as that green economy should not result in creation of new green barriers such as carbon tax, impose new conditions on aid and finance and increase dependence of the developed countries on rich nations for cleaner technologies. What remains missing from the UN draft is India's strong opposition to defining and aiming for quantitative targets towards sustainable development.

India believes that the target should only be for the developed world and not the developing world, which has to deal with poverty eradication and providing livelihood avenues to its large deprived population.



Indian States and Sustainable Development:

When we talk about progress in India, we focus on growth – and we mostly assume that it means economic growth. Most of our policies, strategies and our budget, all focus on maintaining a GDP growth of 8 – 9%. Where does Development feature in all this?

We all know that while the words may be interchangeable in the dictionary, in reality they have come to mean very different things. The world is constantly talking about Sustainable Development, since the time it was brought to the forefront by the Brundtland Report in 1987. And Sustainable Development does not mean only economic growth.

It is an integrated approach to development, encompassing the environment, society and economy. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

We need to understand that all the three are intrinsically linked, and we cannot hope for any progress for our nation or the world without tackling all of these aspects. Is it possible to have a society that only takes into account the health, education and income of a privileged, small percentage of its population?

Can we continue to give land for constructing corporate, luxurious hospitals, when millions still die of preventable diseases like Malaria? Should we keep expanding our roads and adding flyovers, without investing in footpaths, cycle tracks and public transport? Is it fair to keep marginalising the already marginalised? What choice will the poor have, but to turn to crime. And then we lament the sorry state of law and order in the country.

With an alarming increase in pollution all over the globe, India is not far away from facing the consequences of this problem. We are in an urgent need to understand the environmental problems and address the issues with effective solutions. How is India dealing with this dire problem? There are several laws which have been passed which include the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act of 1974, the Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980, and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act of 1981. After Bhopal gas tragedy, government of India enacted the Environment (Protection) Act of 1986. India has also enacted a set of Noise Pollution (Regulation & Control) Rules in 2000. But is it enough what we are doing for our environment where we live in? A country like India has varied environmental conditions in different states. There are states which have made a remarkable progress in environmental quality.

States like Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur and Meghalaya have set an example that environmental quality can be restored with constant efforts. These states have made countless efforts and achieved the position of most sustainable states from the point of view of environmental protection.

An interesting thing about this achievement is these are all low income states. What about rich states like Gujarat and Punjab? They have literally scored very low on sustainable index. They are far from reaching a sustainable point. Gujarat is one of the richest states and is the first to set up Climate Change Department, but has eventually failed in achieving sustainable development.

For successful implementation of any environmental policy, people of that state have to cooperate. Policies will be penned down every now and then but its implementation is dependent on willful cooperation of people. That's what is lacking in the high income states like Punjab and Gujarat.

Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh have not reached a sustainable point while Uttarakhand, Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya and Odisha have been doing well in achieving sustainable development. These are resource rich states, it's very important for them to protect their biodiversity.

Whereas Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Goa are amongst the moderately sustainable states. Rajasthan, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir are far from sustainable development and are experiencing increase in environmental degradation.

Deforestation, desertification, pollution, and climate change have led to the problems like water pollution and water scarcity, air pollution, soil degradation, loss of biodiversity and adverse atmospheric changes. We need to conserve our environment for that people have to give up consumerism and follow a holistic approach towards the whole issue.

Making people aware is not enough; I think we need to ask them the solution community should come out with prospects of how they will contribute to environment sustainability. Then it will be easier for the people to follow the decisions framed rather than following a law order which they fail to even understand so implementation is far away.

India Initiated:

According to the latest Economic Survey, India has announced a domestic goal of reducing the emission intensity of its GDP by 20-25 per cent (at the 2005 levels) by 2020. The following are the key enablers of this vision as per the latest economic survey of the government:

National Solar Mission:

The program Seeks to deploy 20,000 MW of solar electricity capacity in the country by 2020. The first phase (2010-12) is currently underway during which 1,000 MW is planned to be installed, and about Rs. 4,337 crore will be spent on it.

National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency:

This mission aims to create new institutional mechanisms to enable the development and Energy Efficiency strengthening of energy efficiency markets. Various programmes initiated under it include the PAT mechanism to promote efficiency in large industries, and the Super-Efficient Equipment Programme (SEEP) to accelerate the introduction of deployment of super- efficient appliances. A total of Rs. 425.35 crore will be spent on the first phase to be completed in 2012.

National Mission on Sustainable Habitat:

It has been envisioned to promote the introduction of sustainable transport, energy-efficient buildings, sustainable Habitat and sustainable waste management in cities. About Rs. 1,000 crore would be needed to realise these goals.

National Water Mission:

This mission is to promote the integrated management of water resources and increase water use efficiency by 20 per cent, and a whopping Rs. 89,101 crore will be spent on it.

National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Eco-system:

The Himalayas, as grand they are, are also a relatively new ecosystem and too fragile at that. This program, therefore, establishes an observational and monitoring network for Himalayan glaciers, and looks forward to promote community-based management of ecosystems.

More than Rs. 1100 crore would be spent on these goals. National Mission for Green India: This program would result in afforestation of an additional 10 million hectare of forest lands, wastelands and community lands, over the next 10 years, with a cost of Rs. 46,000.

National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture:

The focus of this mission is on enhancing productivity and resilience of agriculture, in order to reduce vulnerability to extremes of weather, long dry spells, flooding, and variable moisture availability. It will invite a total investment of Rs. 108,000 crore.

National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change: This program would aim to identify challenges arising from climate change. It will also look into the possibility of diffusion of knowledge in the areas of health, demography, migration and livelihood of coastal communities.

A total of Rs. 1050 crore will be spent on it. Clearly, India's doing all she can do in her capacity to prevent a dark future of our planet. India's leadership show at Durban and her commitment to sustainability is something every Indian should be proud of.

CONCLUSION

The Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a call-to-action for people worldwide to address five critical areas of importance by 2030: people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership. In 2015, the 193 countries that make up the United Nations (UN) agreed to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The historic agenda lays out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets for dignity, peace, and prosperity for the planet and humankind, to be completed by the year 2030. The agenda targets multiple areas for action, such as poverty and sanitation, and plans to build up local economies while addressing people's social needs. In addition to global efforts to achieve the SDGs, according to the UN, there are ways that an individual can contribute to progress: save on electricity while home by unplugging appliances when not in use; go online and opt in for paperless statements instead of having bills mailed to the house; and report bullying online when seen in a chat room or on social media.

With the incremental growth in overall world population, environmental related aftermaths of industrial development are becoming challenges for sustainability. In social perspective, poverty eradication is still the biggest global need which is an indispensable prerequisite for sustainable development (SD). As a solution, business organizations in various industries need to do the efforts with zero-sum competition for a trailblazing initiative of SD in context of social and environmental protection. Based on triple bottom line theory, this paper introduces the terminologies of social and environmental collective protection (SECP) and social and environmental collective development (SECD) by answering the research question as how the nonprofit orientation can be promoted and sustained within the for-profit businesses. Using textual analytical approach, this research achieves the main objective to highlight the impact of mutual corporate initiatives as a business strategy on social and environmental sustainability. This article finds that social and environmental development depends upon social and environmental protection when it is measured in terms of collective SD goals. In addition to initiating the new terminologies contributing to the literature of SD measures for society and environment, this paper has practical implications for United Nations (UN) for their 2030 vision of social development for SD. Utilization of this paper is not limited till 2030 because it is expected that a broad range of researchers will use our described concepts for scholarly discussions and future empirical studies.

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