

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT- THE ENORMOUS NEED**

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### **ABSTRACT**

By the advancement of mankind and development of human civilization mankind develop from hunter gatherer to modern industrial and developed society. This development results in the overuse and even abuse of natural resources. But as a human if we want development we should not endanger the natural system that supports life on earth; rather with the development man should laid down a framework for the integration of environmental policies and developmental strategies which can be implemented from the grassroots' at home to the international level. Our present behavior with the environment is no longer life supporting. To make our relationship with the environment sustainable we have to take care of it by meeting our needs and aspirations of the present without comprising those of the future. And this is known as sustainable development. For the past few years 'Sustainable Development' has emerged as the latest development catchphrase. The term sustainability refers to keeping an effort going continuously or the ability to last out and keep from falling. The term sustainable development was used at the time of Cocoyoc Declaration on Environment and Development in the early 1970's. Since then, to the international organizations this, sustainable development become the trademark. To integrate environmental issues into development planning, initiative came not only from the government but also equally from Non- governmental organizations and individuals, as these nature assets should be saved. For achieving the sustainable development economy and ecology will have to merge. Environmental concerns must become an integral part of the decision-making at all levels and the sustainable development must become the overriding goal of all governments.

*“The ultimate test of man’s conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard.”*

*Gaylord Nelson<sup>i</sup>*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Nature equivalent to the natural world, physical world, or material world, gives us a beautiful world to live. It includes the essential character or essential quality of a things or person and refers to all geological processes, living plants and animal, weather, and physics, such as matter and energy. Nature not only provides the necessary environment for human existence and other valued physical components and functions but also offers aesthetic and internal attributes.<sup>ii</sup> It often refers to the "natural environment" or wilderness—wild animals, rocks, forest, beaches and in general areas that have not been substantially altered by humans, or which persist despite human intervention. It is a beautiful environment, which is a sum total of all surroundings of a living organism, including natural forces and other living things, which provide conditions for development and growth as well as of danger and damage.

It is a basic right of all humans to live in this blessed and healthy environment. As the human civilization developed, there is the advancement of mankind from hunter gatherer to modern industrial and developed society. But in the race of development we exploit this environment in a vast and a result of all this advancement is the overuse and abuse of natural resources. The acute poverty in the country requires developmental process to be accelerated but we cannot do at the cost of environment thereby endangering not only the present generation but also the future. The crying need of the hour is the *sustainable development*. United Nations on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2015 adopted an agenda *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* to plan an action for people, planet and prosperity. Aim is to end poverty and hunger in all forms and dimensions ; to protect the planet from degradation and take urgent action on climate change to support the need of present and future generations; to ensure all people enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature; foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies that are free from fear and violence and participation of all the countries and all stakeholders and all people in implementing the 2030 Agenda.<sup>iii</sup>

Sustainable Development as understood is “a form of societal change that, in addition to traditional developmental objectives has the objective or constraint of ecological sustainability.”<sup>iv</sup> It is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

As defined by Paul Hawkins’s ‘Sustainability is an economic state where the demand placed upon the environment by people and commerce can be met without reducing the capacity of the environment to provide for future generations. It can also be expressed in the simple terms of an economic golden rule for the restorative economy; leave the world better than you found it, take no more than you need, try not to harm life of the environment, make amends if you do’<sup>v</sup> The concept of sustainability originated in the context of renewable resources such as forests or fisheries, and has subsequently been adopted as a broad slogan by the environmental movement.<sup>vi</sup>

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The concept of sustainable development recognizes that economic growth and environmental protection are inextricably linked and that the quality of present and future life rests on meeting basic human needs without destroying the environment on which all life depends. It requires more than pollution prevention and tinkering with environmental regulations. It requires that environmental considerations become a part of the decision making processes of all government agencies, all business enterprises and in fact all people, international cooperation.<sup>vii</sup>

### ***Development of the Concept of Sustainable Development***

In a tussle between environment and development sustainable development emerged with its literal term means the process or the way in which the economics planning should be given shape so as not to disturb the ecology. It means it is a process through which development

activities can be sustained for coming generation. This concept is not a new idea many culture since human history have recognized the need for harmony between the environment, society and economy. But the doctrine comes to be known as early as in 1972 in *Stockholm Declaration*. Although the Stockholm Declaration does not use the term ‘Sustainable Development’ but it was the first agreement based on the concept. The declaration stated that<sup>viii</sup>

*Man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well being and he bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present generation.*

Sustainable development becomes an accepted strategy for the international community, largely as a result of the work of the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development. The report ‘Our Common Future’<sup>ix</sup> contains the first official definition of sustainable development as the development which is aimed “*To meet the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”. *The world sustainable development was brought into common use by the World Commission on Environment and Development in its report Our Common Future. This concept in Brundtland Report contains two key concepts within itself that is:*

- a) *The concept of needs , in particular the essential needs of the World’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given*
- b) *The idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet present and future goods<sup>x</sup>*

The concept of sustainable development attempts to balance the scale between the quantity of development and quality of environment, the effort being to ensure that the development does not disturb the delicate equilibrium. It thus deals with two types of equity: first, the equity for human generations yet to come, whose interests are not represented by standard economics analysis or by market forces the discount the future, and second: the equity for people living now who do not have equal access to natural resources.<sup>xi</sup> The conflict between the two kinds of equities has given rise to International treaty obligations, some of which have been incorporated into municipal laws and by most of which India feels itself bound to abide.<sup>xii</sup>

Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development; they are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.<sup>xiii</sup> The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.<sup>xiv</sup> In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it.<sup>xv</sup>

***But what is to be sustained?***

A difference between ecological and social sustainability could be a first step toward clarifying the question. In the case of ecological sustainability, a distinction needs to be made between renewable resources, non-renewable resources, and environmental processes that are crucial to human life, as well as to life at large.<sup>xvi</sup> Sustainability is the existence of the ecological conditions necessary to support human life at a specified level of well-being through future generations. As the concept is originated in the context of renewable resources such as forest, fisheries etc. In the context of sustainable use of renewable resources, it is necessary to go beyond the conventional simplistic notion of “harvesting the annual increment,” and take into consideration the dynamic behavior of the resource, stochastic properties and uncertainties about environmental conditions (e.g. climatic variations), the interactions between resources and activities (e.g. between forests, soils and agriculture), and between different uses or features of the “same” resources (e.g., tree foliage and stem wood).<sup>xvii</sup>

As a Barbier defines social sustainability<sup>xviii</sup> is ‘the ability to maintain desired social values, traditions, institutions, cultures or other social characteristics.’ A war destroying the human society and environment would be an example of social unsustainability and it in turn may have social or ecological causes.

The value of this concept of however, lies in its ability to generate an operational consensus between groups with fundamentally different answers to these questions, i.e., those concerned either about the survival of future human generations, or about the survival of wildlife, or human health, or the satisfaction of immediate subsistence needs (food, fuel, fodder) with a low degree of risk. It is therefore vital to identify those aspects of sustainability that do actually cater to such diverse interests and those that involve trade-offs. A distinction needs to be made

between renewable resources, non-renewable resources, and environmental processes that are crucial to human life, as well as to life at large.

### ***Pillars on which Sustainable development depends***

As suggested by Dominic McGoldrick,<sup>xix</sup> sustainable development can be structurally conceived as having a pillared on the structures of International Human Rights, International Environmental Law and International Economic Law. This structure has an element if an objective, process and a principle. It overarches a broad range of disciplines yet it is separate. The integrated structure of sustainable development is such that it requires a support from each of the pillars. As we want development, as a right we even want a clean and healthy environment to live. And it is only possible through these pillars.

In UN goals for sustainable development the three pillars are explicitly embedded in their formulation. As in the report on Conference on *The future we want- Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2012*- UN General Assembly set the environmental pillar in the context of sustainable development as *We reaffirm the need to strengthen international environmental governance within the context of the institutional framework for sustainable development in order to promote a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, as well as coordination within the United Nations system.*

The 1972 UN Conference on the Human – Environment in Stockholm marked the first global summit to consider human impacts on the environment and the first major attempt to reconcile economic development with environmental integrity which were commonly regarded as incompatible. The principle of sustainable development in developmental law is a combination of elements, such as environmental protection, economic development and firstly and most importantly combating of poverty and generally understood social issues.<sup>xx</sup> Emergent from the conference was the concept of ‘environmentally sound development’, which by 1973 had been coined as ‘eco development’<sup>xxi</sup>. Eco-development was defined by Ignacy Sachs in 1978 as ‘an approach to development aimed at harmonizing social and economic objectives with ecologically sound management, in a spirit of solidarity with future generations’<sup>xxii</sup>

### ***Perspectives and Approaches towards Achieving a Sustainable Future***

United Nations in a conference report *Our Common Future* comment that the reduction of poverty itself is a precondition for environmentally sound development and resource flows from rich to poor flows and resources flows from rich to poor flows improved both qualitatively and quantitatively are a precondition for the eradication of poverty.<sup>xxiii</sup> Sustainable development recognizes that growth must be both inclusive and environmentally sound to reduce poverty and build shared prosperity for today's population and to continue to meet the needs of future generations.<sup>xxiv</sup> Poverty and a degraded environment are closely inter-related, especially where people depend for their immediate environment. Restoring natural systems and improving natural resources management practices at the grass root level are central to a strategy to eliminate poverty.<sup>xxv</sup> Poverty magnifies the problem of hunger and malnutrition. While conventional economic development leads to the elimination of several traditional occupations, the process of sustainable development, guided by the need to protect and conserve the environment, leads to the creation of new jobs and of opportunities for the reorientation of traditional skills to new occupations.

United Nations comments <sup>xxvi</sup> that for sustainable development, the main task of education policy must be to make literacy universal and to close the gaps between male and female enrolment rates. Realizing these goals would improve individual productivity and earnings, as well as personal attitudes to health, nutrition and child-bearing. It can also instill a greater awareness of everyday environmental factors. Facilities for education beyond primary school must be expanded to improve skills necessary for pursuing sustainable development. Literacy and a basic education are essential for enabling the poor to access the benefits offered by development initiatives and market opportunities. Basic education is therefore, a pre-condition for sustainable development.

Agenda 21 is a dynamic programme, it is a comprehensive blue-print for local, national, regional and global actions to affect the transition to sustainable development on the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In this conference it was opined<sup>xxvii</sup> that *By the year 2025, 83 percent of the expected global population of 8.5 billion will be living in developing countries. Yet the capacity of available resources and technologies to satisfy the demands of this growing population for food and other agriculture commodities remains uncertain. Agriculture has to meet this*

*challenge mainly by increasing production on land already in use and by avoiding further encroachment on land that is only marginally suitable for civilization.* Agenda 21 further provide that there is a need of major adjustment in agriculture, environment and macroeconomic policy at both the national and international levels, in developed as well as developing countries to create the conditions for sustainable agriculture and rural development.

There is a need to integrate sustainable development considerations with agriculture policy analysis and planning in all countries, particularly in developing countries.<sup>xxviii</sup> Making agriculture sustainable is essential for future food security as well as for achieving several of the other sustainable development goals, such as ending hunger and improving nutrition, especially in the face of climate change. Climate change, land erosion and water scarcity are affecting food production, especially in developing countries

Adapting to climate change and building resilient agricultural and food security systems are the need of the hour. Globally, rainfed agriculture, which supplies two-thirds of the world's food, is practiced on 83% of cultivated land. In water scarce regions, rainfed agriculture is practiced on more than 95% of the crop land.<sup>xxix</sup> Since rain-fed agriculture is particularly susceptible to weather, so to boost small landholders productivity in a sustainable manner there is a need of governments help to them so that they become commercial viable in a competitive world. For this, governments must ensure better training via agricultural extension services, improved irrigation and water harvesting facilities, and easy access to improved irrigation and water harvesting facilities, and easy access to improved seeds, fertilizers, credit and other inputs. In safeguarding and sustainable livelihoods social protection plays a pivotal role to play in case of prolonged bad weather or natural disasters.

## **ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE**

In a discussion paper by the Commissioner of Office of the Audit general of Canada it was opined <sup>xxx</sup> that managing sustainable development requires analytical and management practices that compare and integrate environmental, social and economic objectives and that address multiyear and long term techniques. Foresight analysis, transition management and modelling are useful for considering the potential long-term effects of proposed policies and



programs. Stakeholder participation in the planning process is considered essential to helping organizations increase their knowledge, legitimacy and performance.

There is a need to encourage those practices which are sustainable to environment instead of adopting the new techniques and practices which are unsustainable. For that through appropriate mechanism including education, incentives and legislation there is need to applied and established a desirable limits and standards for consumption. The traditional practices which are sustainable and environmental friendly should continue to be regular part of the lives of the people in developing countries.

Agenda 21 advocating the method of recycling the resources and use it again and again instead of passing it on the waste stream. In this members approach the recycling of biomass, recovering energy, minimizing waste generation, it further emphasis to develop process to recover energy and provide renewable energy sources, animal feed and raw material from recycling organic waste and biomass, waste water reuse, water recycling, on the promotion of public participation in the collection, recycling and elimination of wastes.

All pricing mechanisms must be evaluated from a sustainable development point of view. Economic and social development is based on protection and management of the natural resources. Agriculture should be integrated with the land and water management and with ecosystem conservationist essential for both environment sustainability and agriculture production. The evaluation of all development and reorganization of the role of natural resources in a local livelihood must be guided from the point of environmental perspectives.

Development should not just focus just on one section of already affluent people rather it should include sharing of benefits between the rich and poor and strong community participation should be there in policy and practice<sup>xxxii</sup>. Population growth should be stabilized, tribal, ethnic people and their culture heritage should be also be conserved. For sustainable development environment as a subject right from the school stage should be introduced as it will inculcate a feeling of belongingness to earth from the childhood and that in result will greatly help in changing the thinking and attitude of people towards our earth and environment.

## CONCLUSION

If we need a development and we are aware of our rights then we should also be aware of our duty towards our nature, our society, our future generation. What we have from our ancestors we have to give those to our future generation. If we have a right on these things whatever nature gives they also has a right on these. It is not only the work of government to save our natural resources it the duty of common people to work for this. Sustainable development is only possible when every individual, government and non-government agencies joined their hand whether it at national or at international level to the natural resources, to save the earth for our future. We have to lay emphasis on framing a well-planned strategy for our developmental activity while increasing our economic growth. We have tremendous natural diversity as well as a huge population which makes planning for sustainable growth all the more important and complex. It is the enormous need of time, as is beautifully said by Leo Tolstoy<sup>xxxii</sup> that

*One of the first conditions of happiness is that the link between man and nature shall not be broken.*

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>iii</sup> Angel Gurria, *The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda: Towards a Successful Implementation by Poland*, 10OECD (2017), <https://www.oecd.org>

<sup>iv</sup> 2 MICHAEL REDCLIFT, SUSTAINABILITY: CRITICAL CONCEPTS IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES 170(London [u.a.] : RoutledgeVol. II 2005)

<sup>v</sup> Paul Hawken, *THE ECOLOGY OF COMMERCE: A DECLARATION OF SUSTAINABILITY* 139,(Harper Collins Publishers 1993)

<sup>vi</sup> Sharachchandra M. Lele, *Sustainable Development: A Critical Review* 19 (6), *WORLD DEVELOPMENT-ELSEVIER*, 609 (1991)

<sup>vii</sup> SURESH K. DHAMEJA, *ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES* 293 (2013)

<sup>viii</sup> Declaration of the United Nations on the Human Environment (Stockholm Declaration), 1972, Principle 1

<sup>ix</sup> United Nations, "Our Common Future - Report of The World Commission on Environment and Development," (1987)

<sup>x</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>xi</sup> *Id* at 50

<sup>xii</sup> *Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum v. Union of India*, AIR 1996 SC 2720 – 21(India)

<sup>xiii</sup> The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, (1992), Principle 1

<sup>xiv</sup> *Id* at Principle 3

<sup>xv</sup> *Id* at Principle 4

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<sup>xvi</sup> *supra* note 5 at 615

<sup>xvii</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>xviii</sup> GLENN ADELSON, JAMES ENGELL, ET.AL. SOCIOLOGY, ORGANIC FARMING CLIMATE CHANGE AND SOLI SCIENCE 145 (Yale University Press 2008)

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<sup>xxi</sup> RL Clinton, *Ecodevelopment* 140 WORLD AFF 111-126 (1977)

<sup>xxii</sup> Ben Purvis , Young Mao et. al., *Three Pillars of Sustainability: In Search of Conceptual Origins* 14 SUSTAIN SCI 681-695 (2018)

<sup>xxiii</sup> *supra* note 9

<sup>xxiv</sup> Iyyanki V. Muralikrishna & Valli Manickam, *Sustainable Development ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT* 25 (2017)

<sup>xxv</sup> Manoj Lashkari & Dharendra Kerwal, *Sustainable Development and Environment in India* 3 (3) INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS REVIEW 176 (2015)

<sup>xxvi</sup> *supra* note 9

<sup>xxvii</sup> Chapter 14, Agenda 21, United Nations Conference on Environment & Development Rio De Janerio, Brazil, June

1992; <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>

<sup>xxviii</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>xxix</sup> Improving Irrigated Production, *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation*, Rome, 2002, [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

<sup>xxx</sup> Office of the Auditor General of Canada, *Managing Sustainable Development A DISCUSSION PAPER BY THE COMMISSIONER OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT*, (2009), <https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca>

<sup>xxxi</sup> Anubha Kaushik & C P Kaushik, *PERSPECTIVES IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES*, 236, (4<sup>th</sup> Edn 2014)

<sup>xxxii</sup> Leo Tolstoy Quotes , <https://www.brainyquote.com>