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RELEVANCY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR FUTURE GENERATION

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Abstract

Sustainable development is the economic development that is conducted without depletion of natural resources. Today, population and industrialization are increasing at an alarming rate. With increasing population the pressure on the environment has also been increased in order to fulfill the needs of everyone. This leads to over exploitation of natural resources resulting in degradation of the environment. Its consequences are also visible today in the form of scarcity of water, polluted air and depletion of natural resources. The earth itself has been treated simultaneously as a factory, pleasure park, garbage dump, larder, market place and war zone. It is self-evident that we, as a species cannot continue as we are doing because our lives are widely dependent on natural resources. **Therefore, in today's perspective simple way of living is the best example of sustainable development. Mahatma Gandhi said that Earth provides enough to satisfy everyman's need but not any man's greed**. If there is balance between usage of resources and availability of resources than lives of people and integrity of planet could be managed well. The root cause for degradation of environment is increasing population which can be controlled through education and awareness. The concept of "Use and Throw" should be replaced with "Reduce, Recycle and Reuse". Present generation should fulfill their need without compromising the need of future generation. In the name of development, we are exploiting our natural resources without giving a single thought. It is necessary to understand the difference between development and sustainable development. All the components of the Earth are interdependent. If any of the components is eliminated then it will disturb the whole ecosystem. Therefore, for sustainable development, Earth's natural resources must be conserved and enhanced by using renewable resources such as solar and wind energy and by recycling and reuse of wastes. Our small efforts towards conservation of nature can minimize the pressure on the Earth. It is our moral and ethical duty for other living beings and the future generations.

Keywords: Sustainable development, Natural resources, Conservation, Population, Renewable energy.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is simple and effective. The idea that the future should be better and healthier place than the present is not new but, the way it is understood, reflected upon, cultivated and implemented is

innovative (Blewitt, 2008). In simple words, sustainable development means to fulfil the present needs without compromising the needs of future. According to Pearce *et al*. (1989), sustainable development refers to non-declining natural wealth and the maintenance of a constant stock of (natural) capital. Economic development is an essential process of progress for comfort, raising living standards, improving education and health for people. There is an inverse relationship between the human productive activity and the natural environment, biosphere and services the ecosystem provides. If the human productive economy grows too big then the biosphere will be unable to support it, and the development is literally unsustainable. Sustainable development requires increase in both the adaptive capacity and opportunities for improvement of economic, social and ecological systems (Gunderson and Holling, 2001).

It is our thinking that nature is for human being and can be used to any extent and in any way. We don't think about our responsibility for nature and future generations. We are exploiting natural resources especially non- renewable resources without any control in the name of development. Of course, we are developing in the field of science and technology to increase our comfort but, at the cost of nature. Such type of development is inappropriate as we are not thinking about the survival of our future generations. Progress is human nature. Why have we developed nuclear weapons, for saving nature or humankind? Advancement of science and technology cannot check natural calamities, cannot give renewable and non- renewable resources then why are we destroying the nature. Development and environment are interlinked. If development tries to dominate the environment then NATURE shows its own reaction in the form of natural calamities which science and technology cannot check (Gupta, 2015). Our ways of doing business of producing goods and services, have used the earth's resources as if they were inexhaustible. We knew about climate change for many years but refused to acknowledge that we were mainly responsible for it.

Environmental sustainability is the most burning issue with which everyone of us are familiar. Munasinghe (1992) proposed the term sustainomics to describe "a transdisciplinary, integrative, comprehensive, balanced, heuristic and practical meta- framework for making development more sustainable". This approach seeks to synthesize a science of sustainable development, which integrates knowledge from both the sustainability and development domains. Munasinghe (1994) described sustainable development as a process for improving the range of opportunities that will enable individual human being and communities to achieve their aspirations and full potential over a sustained period of time, while maintaining the resilience of economic, social and environmental systems. Economic, social and environmental systems, all the three domains are interconnected. The economy focuses on human welfare and the social domain emphasizes the enrichment of human relationship whereas, environmental domain is for protection and conservation of ecosystems.

Environmental Awareness Programs

Before 1960, there were no efforts made in the direction of conservation and sustenance of the environment. In 1970, an attention was drawn towards environmental degradation and was decided to observe 5th June as Earth Day. After that many efforts have been made at international level for environmental sustainability. In 1983, the UN General Assembly realized that there was a heavy deterioration of the human environment and natural resources. Then World Commission for Environment and Development started working on environment. In 1987, the report titled "Our Common Future" was published by Brundtland

Commission which states the limits imposed by present technology and social organizations and the ability of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities on environmental resources. It gave the definition for the sustainable development for the first time as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". In 1992, The Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro took place in which various agreements were produced. An agreement on the Climate Change Convention was made which led to the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. Another agreement was not to carry out any activities on the lands of indigenous people that would cause environmental degradation. Aim of Agenda 21 was to achieve global sustainable development. In 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development was also held in Rio, in which following issues were discussed-

i. Systematic scrutiny of patterns of production- especially the production of toxic components such as lead and radioactive wastes.

ii. Use of alternative sources of energy to replace fossil fuels.

iii. New reliance on public transportation systems in order to reduce vehicle emissions, congestion in cities and the health problems caused by polluted air and smoke.

iv. The growing usage and limited supply of water.

Impact of Globalization

Everyone is after wealth creation and accumulation. Globalisation is driving unsustainable growth, trade, investment and debt while accelerating the depletion of natural resources and filling waste sinks. The way forward is to create a new global economy operating within the Earth's ecological limits. In Hind Swaraj, Gandhi wrote that relentless quest for material goods and services and civilization driven by endless multiplication of wants is 'Satanic'. He talked about the dangers of unplanned and reckless industrialization. The growth-oriented theory must be replaced by theories of sustainable development which lead to harmonious co-existence of man and the ecosystem. In 1911, Gandhi used the phrase 'Economy of Nature' which brings out the sensitivity and deeper understanding of human actions vis-à-vis ecology (Daptardar, 2018).

The concept of sustainable development has a focus on economic development, social development and environmental protection for future generations. It is interlined with a normative concept of sustainability which means the ability of the people to co-exist on Earth over a long time (Purvis *et.al*., 2019 and Ramsey, 2015). Environment is one of the most important aspect from sustainable point of view as it includes various problems like climate change, loss of biodiversity, land degradation and air and water pollution, etc. The threat of global climate change poses an unprecedented challenge to humanity.

Dematerialization

The idea of dematerialization employs reuse, sharing, repair, refurbishment, remanufacturing and recycling of materials to create a closed loop system. It minimizes the use of resource inputs and the generation of waste pollution and carbon emissions (Shigeta and Hosseini, 2020). The European Commission has adopted Circular Economy Action Plan 2020 which emphasizes on developing sustainable products (European Commission, 2020). In India also many awareness programs are being organized on sustainable use of products. Dematerialization is being encouraged through the ideas of industrial ecology, eco design and ecolabelling (Fuad-Luke, 2006).

Management of Resources

With increasing population consumption of resources has also increased. Non-renewable resources are limited on Earth. If we use it excessively without thinking about its availability then our future generations will deprive of resources and will face severe results with respect to their survival. The environmental impact of a community as a whole depends on population which in turn depends on the resources being used by them (Basiago, 1995). Resource management can be applied carefully at various sectors like agriculture, manufacturing and industry to work organizations, the consumption patterns of human beings (Brower & Leon, 1999 and Clark, 2006). Basic resources related to human needs are food, water, energy and raw materials. Human impact on environment is directly proportional to human consumption of resources (Michaelis and Lorek, 2004). The deterioration of environment can be controlled by efficient use of resources and its disposal in a sustainable manner.

Biodiversity and Sustainable Development

Biodiversity is the variety and variability of life on Earth, also called biological diversity. It is an important element of our natural capital. Biodiversity plays an important role in sustainable development as it is not only crucial for the well- being of animals and wildlife but also plays a positive role in the lives of human beings in the way in which it aids development of human life. Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services published a summary for policy makers in 2019 which recommended that human civilization will need a transformative change including sustainable agriculture, reductions in consumption and waste, fishing quotas and collaborative water management (Deutsche Welle, 2019). Ongoing loss of biodiversity as a result of short- term focus has to be halted in view of long- term responsibilities and benefits. Traditional conservation and protection measures are important but they also need to be complemented with additional policies to address drivers and pressures of biodiversity loss.

Sustainable Development Goals

A group of seventeen interlinked objectives has been designed to serve as a "shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future" (Isnaeni *et al*., 2022). The seventeen sustainable development goals are zero hunger, good health and well- being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice and strong institution, and partnerships for the goals. All the above goals emphasize on the interconnected environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainable development by keeping sustainability at the center (Schleicher *et.al*., 2018).

Education and Sustainable Development

We cannot think of sustainable development without education. United Nations defined education for sustainable development as education that encourages changes in knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to enable more sustainable and just society for all. It empowers and equip current and future generations to manage their needs utilizing a balanced and integrated approach to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development (Leicht *et al*., 2018). It requires teaching and learning methods. We need to create awareness to change in our behaviour and take action in a collaborative way for sustainable

development. One has to be aware about modern day environmental challenges and seeks new ways to adjust to a changing biosphere without degrading it.

Conclusion

There is need to change our attitude so as to make this earth a living place for all. We have to follow the sustainable approach of containment of wants. Greed can only lead to destruction of nature. If we continue exploiting the earth, one day the resources will vanish and will not be available for our future generations. Our lifestyle should be changed and use the resources only to fulfill our requirement not to greed. Development is necessary for any country or man but it should be in a sustainable manner. For this we have to start it with ourselves. Our every small step towards conservation of the earth and its resources will be a great help for the survival of the future generations.

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