
An analytical study of sustainable development and its emerging dimensions in India

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Abstract: *Sustainability also includes resolving the differences between two competing goals i.e. natural integrity and the sustenance of human life. Living beyond the ecological means will lead to the destruction of humanity's only home. This paper tries to study the problems and challenges which India faced in the path of achieving sustainable development. The objective of this paper is to examine the obstacles behind sustainable development in India and to study the challenges faced by India in achieving sustainable development. It is concluded from the finding of the research that countries must develop strategies to better educate, inform and sensitize their populations on environmental matters and sustainable development.*

Keywords: *Development, Environment, Education, Literacy, etc.*

1.1 Meaning:

Sustainable development indicates growth of economy along with environmental quality protection, each strengthening the other. The kernel of this system of development is a stable relationship between nature and human activities, which does not reduce the scenarios for future generations to enjoy a good quality of life.

Sustainability also includes resolving the differences between two competing goals i.e. natural integrity and the sustenance of human life. Living beyond the ecological means will lead to the destruction of humanity's only home. In a sense, peoples are putting a change on the old vs. new world question.

Sustainable development is a notion that has varied array of views. There are three main tendencies which are exhibited when sustainable development is discussed.

Economic: Good and services are produced on a continuing basis in an economically sustainable system, to maintain controllable governmental levels and external debt, and to evade risky sectoral differences which hurt agricultural or industrial production.

Environmental: Maintenance of a stable resource system, avoidance of over-utilisation of resources that are renewable and depletion of resources that are non-renewable is possible in an environmentally sustainable system up to the extent that investment is made in acceptable alternatives. This contains upkeep of biodiversity, stability of atmosphere, and other functions of ecosystem which cannot be ordinarily categorized as economic resources.

Social: A system which is sustainable socially must attain distributional fairness, suitable delivery of social services including education and health, equity in gender, and participation and accountability in political issues.

These three areas of development are interconnected. They can't be separate from one another. the developmental problem arises when society, economy and environment are viewed as unrelated parts of a development. Economic development councils try to create more jobs. Needs of society are addressed by authority of housing and health care services. Agencies in environmental issues try to protect and rectify problems of pollution. This disorganized method can have a number of bad ill-effects.

Solutions to one of the problems can lead on to make another problem worse. Creation of cheap housing is a decent thing, but when that housing is constructed in areas far from the place of work leads to increase in rate of traffic and thereby lead to increase in the pollution that is generated from such increased traffic.

A need of maintainable growth is desired because the modern industrial society, which is growing continuously in scale and complexity, is also distorted. Reason is interaction of man with nature involves him in utilising the resources accessible in the earth in satisfying his wants. This interaction leads to extraction, processing and consumption of resources which are naturally available and which are required by man in order to survive and also required for economic development. The enthusiastic life style and extravagant consumption encounters it opponent in the ecological tragedy that lurks all life present on earth. It has mutilated land and tainted the seas, foundation of nature has been eroded, which lurks to finish the only resources of survival of humanity. The extraordinary growth in producing material wealth and their consumption leads to overburden on environment which has impact both global and local. Such impact due to development and growth are categorised in to four forms, although they interrelated;

1. Physical changes such as deforestation, mining etc;

2. Chemical changes due to pollution,
3. Direct biological changes due to overkill of bio-diversity
4. Social pathologies changes

2.1 Literature Review:

Sajjan Choudhari (2014)¹ reviews Indian sustainable development initiatives. In this systematic review, forty papers/articles that are related with sustainable development in India (2008-2014) had been reviewed from numerous sources. The researcher found that, there are only limited literature regarding Indian sustainable development initiatives and majority of the SDG's were untouched by the researchers. This research is concluded by recognizing the SDGs of equality in gender, decrease in disparity, harmony and fairness, and responsible consumption and production as the most auspicious functions for future research in the area of sustainable development initiatives in India.

According to Bora Pankaj and Sharma MM (2011)², sustainable development is socio-economic growth that meets the requirements of the today's world without negotiating the capability of future generation to meet their own requirements. It is a philosophy which upholds a suitable balance between development of economy, development of society and prevention of environment. This is a course which efficiently balances the requirements of development with worries for the environmental health. Sustainable development is considered by economic growth that does not finish the resources. It is an eco-friendly development, where it lastingly improves the capacity of a society to expand its quality of life. The researchers in this paper, tries to theoretically define sustainable development, s importance and also discusses the steps taken up by India for it and where India is lacking especially in policy making.

According to Singhal Vipin (2014)³, environment is a wide-ranging concept surrounding the whole range of diverse surroundings in which one observes experience and react to events and

¹ Sajjan Choudhari (2014), "A research on sustainable development in India", International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering (IJRTE) ISSN: 2277-3878, Volume-8, Issue-2S3, 1210-1215.

² Bora, Pankaj & Sarma, MM. (2011). Sustainable Development and Indian manifestos: A study of haves and have-nots..

³ Singhal, Vipin, Environment and Sustainable Development in India – An Overview (February 21, 2014). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2399549> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2399549>

changes. It contains the air, land, vegetation, and the full range of the social order. It also comprises the physical and ecological setting. It concerns people's capability to acclimatize both physically and mentally to the enduring changes in environment.

3.1 Objectives of the study:

1. To understand the concept of sustainable development.
2. To examine the obstacles behind sustainable development in India
3. To study the challenges faced by India in achieving sustainable development.

4. Sustainable Development in Indian Scenario:

The concept of 'Sustainable Development's is not new to India. From the talks of Buddha, Ashoka and Gandhi, the notion of sacrifice for others became the essential part of the oriental thinking. Gandhi said that nature can meet our requirement not greed. But this concept as an ideology has been considered and accepted much later. India, to achieve the target of growth, adopted the strategy of environment friendly development model which imitates the above ideologies. "The constitution of India does not openly hypothesize the inter-relationship between environment and development. However, a scrutiny of the 'Directive Principles of state Policy' and 'Fundamental Duties' incorporated in it discloses that the constitution has only drawn possible guidelines of development but also ensured prevention and upgrading of environment."⁴

5.1 Obstacles in the present Scenario

- a. The major problem India is facing today is the size and growth of Indian population. Since 1951 the population has grown from 361 million to 1.35 billion making every 6th person in the world as an Indian. As India constitutes only 2.4 percentages of the total land area of the world, the density of Indian population is at 464 persons per square km and burdens on the environment are harmoniously high. India records a skimpy 2.4 per cent of the surface area of world, still it supports and sustains a enormous 17.7% of world population. As population is still increasing very fast, the pressure of such increase in

4 Vibhute, K. I, "Environment, Development and the Law: the Indian perspective", pp139

population on the natural resources available in India is certain to grow. India's population density has increased from 117 people per sq.km in 1951 to 464 people per sq. km in 2021. High density population States like Bihar and UP are now observing rapid growth in population which may worsen the already very poor social and demographic indicators in these States. There is no reason to say that the population pressure will badly affect the per capita availability of available land, water for drinking and other purposes and housing. In the health-care facilities, people are still operating on the basis of 1991 population. But even on that source, a large infrastructural and human resource gap prevailing mostly in the high population growth regions of the society. The population explosion will continue to persist the single major hindrance in the way of progress of India for much more years to come.

- b. Everyone knows that for every aspect of growth and environment protection literacy is considered highly important. For example, literacy of women helps in reducing the fertility rates and hence it helps in reducing the pressure on population. Literacy is also helpful in dropping poverty as it offers people more opportunities to earn also it increases their productivity and earning capability. Literacy lets individuals to become more open towards alternate technologies and management of environment. Overall, literacy helps to decrease pollution as the additional mindfulness allows people to link the environmental health with their own health and well-being. Literacy also lets people to become extra amenable towards latest technology.
- c. Obviously, one of India's major problems is poverty. Luckily, notwithstanding the progress of the population and the little level of development of economy during independence in 1947, India has made noteworthy advancement in reduction of poverty. The population under the poverty line has decreased considerably. But still, there are majority of people living below the poverty line. The economically weaker section of the society, from lack of alternatives relies intensively on the environment for their needs. Since this part of the society is depended heavily on the nature, its deprivation affects the living of this section of the society to a great extent. They, therefore, become both victims and agents of deprivation of environment as they both require (and often exploit) the environment to live but suffer the most when it damages. However, the poor are also

victims of pollution. When the sources of water are polluted the economically weaker women have to walk extra miles and spend lot of time bringing it.

5.2 Challenges in achieving sustainable development

The process to achieve sustainable development is a very difficult task. There are so numerous challenges in the path of development process. Here there's description of those challenges which are divided into different segments:

- a. **Agriculture:** It is projected that about an average 16.75 to/ha/year of soil is lost through erosion every year in India i.e. in excess of 5,000 million tons of soil is extracted annually. After looking at the current health of the soil and water resources discloses their cruel misuse has damaged the environment. More than 50% of the soil in country, are endangered by numerous types of deprivation such as salinity, alkalinity, areas under water logging, voracious and gullied lands, areas under effects of shifting cultivation, desertification, etc. The problem of land degradation has taken humans in person with an ever-increasing reduction of the productivity and the elementary land stock through deficiency in nutrient on the one side and the increasing demand for food, fodder, fibre, fuel, land based industrial raw materials and many non-farm land uses on the other side.
- b. **Atmosphere:** The big cities of India are the poorest affected mainly due to uneven city planning and improper place of industrial units.
- c. **Energy:** Since a great part of energy is required in the village economy is generated through gathering of firewood this creates deforestation. The decrease in cover of trees is again a stern problem however several programs have been flung by the administration towards afforestation. The problems of deforestation are mainly on two sums. Though the first problem is the lack of access to commercial forms of energy, the another is the pure absence of buying power. The administration is continuously trying to lighten the difficulties by giving kerosene to persons surviving below the poverty line at a very subsidized rate. There is mandatory reforestation for power projects and other projects which are the reason for forest degradation. Administration is taking numerous movements on the controlling pollution and has formed firm norms for controlling pollution for all projects that generate energy.

- d. **Forests:** Major forest areas in India and other developing countries are owned and managed by government, and local people have rights and concessions over the usufructs. The main problem area in India is of financial resources or funding.
- d. **Fresh Water:** Even though important ongoing National programmes are in progress at various stages, quite a few constraints are being faced in their implementation. Some of these are: a) deficiencies in systematic data collection and establishment of a good data base (a periodic review and implementation of the hydrology project may improve the situation); b) proper implementation of a suitable blend of structural and non-structural flood management measures is needed; c) effective control and improvement in water quality through water pollution control measures is required urgently; d) degradation of fish habitat due to increased water abstraction, land development, and pollution; e) improvement in catchment area treatment and compensatory afforestation is necessary to combat soil erosion, mismanagement, and other over-exploitation of natural resources; f) the constraint of funds is seen as the greatest obstacle to the implementation of Agenda 21 and needs global consideration and assistance; and g) greater human resource development including adequate training is necessary in all areas of concern.
- e. **Toxic Chemicals:** To reduce the risk, the long-term objective of Government is to eliminate the use of chemicals. However, the technological information on viable alternatives is generally not available. Consequently, the immediate and complete elimination of toxic chemicals seems difficult. Purification techniques and other end-of-pipe measures are capital and energy intensive and, taken alone, have not yielded the desired success in reducing the discharges of hazardous substances.
- f. **Solid Waste and Sanitation:** The major environmental concerns in an urbanizing India relate to high levels of water pollution due to poor waste disposal, inadequate sewerage and drainage, and improper disposal of industrial effluents. The dumping of solid waste in low-lying areas contributes to land and groundwater pollution. All these developments have contributed to the deterioration of the urban environment, a critical concern that requires specific interventions to achieve sustainability of human settlements.
- g. **Health:** Changing lifestyles, longevity, and dietary habits have resulted in increased prevalence and earlier age of onset for diabetes, and cerebro- and cardio-vascular

diseases over the last decade and a concomitant rise in the disease burden and disability adjusted life years (DALY) due to non-communicable diseases. The overall cancer incidence in the country is low. Even though the two common cancers of the oropharynx and uterine cervix are easy to diagnose and treat, the available data indicate that the majority of cases are detected at a late stage when palliative rather than curative treatment remains the only possible therapeutic modality. Thus, there is a need to improve the facilities for early detection of cancers so that effective treatment could be provided.

6. Conclusions:

To conclude, countries must develop strategies to better educate, inform and sensitize their populations on environmental matters and sustainable development. For example, ecological and environmental concerns can be integrated into school programs; the awareness of the general public can be raised through extensive information campaigns, particularly through the media; "green" projects can be encouraged in local communities, and training programs can be developed to promote more informed resource management and the use of clean technologies. By following these suggestions it's become easier for government to achieve sustainable development.

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