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Sustainable development through environmental ethics

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Abstract

The continuous maintenance of quality environment for many years is called “Sustainable Development”. The environment and its resources are not allowed to degrade. The natural resources must be used in a limited way. It produces an ideal balanced ecosystem. All the components are available for the future generations. Sustainable Development recognizes that all development decisions must simultaneously consider aspects of Economy, Environment, and Equity. If future generations are to enjoy a high quality of life, then this generation’s plans must guarantee the integrity of our natural resources. Sustainability implies that adjustment of a system, to a foreseeable change in land use can be made without necessitating expensive construction, or that provisions are made for accommodating potential changes. Proper maintenance is one key condition to preserve utility of a system.

To fail to develop ethically sound solutions to the population problem and our relationship with the biosphere is a mistake we cannot afford to make. Perhaps the most important factor in obtaining sustainable environmental systems is that the local people must take the responsibility for their environmental system, as they have been doing in many parts of the world. Environmental ethics, distinct from concern for animals or animal rights, outlines the development of a long-term, objective opinion about how we as humans ought to be dealing with our non-human environment to ensure its wellbeing. The emphasis of environmental ethics, the effect of human behavior, comments on how detrimental behaviours ought to be changed as to benefit the entire biosphere.

Keywords: Environment, Sustainable, Development, Ethics, Maintenance, biosphere.

Introduction

Sustainable development represents a commitment to advancing human well-being, with the added constraint that this development needs to take place within the ecological limits of the biosphere. Progress in both these dimensions of sustainable development can be assessed: we use the UN Human Development Index (HDI) as an indicator of development and the Ecological Footprint as an indicator of human demand on the biosphere. Sustainable development has broad appeal and little specificity, but some combination of development and environment as well as equity is found in many attempts to describe it. Despite the persistent definitional ambiguities associated with sustainable development, much work (over 500 efforts) has been devoted to developing quantitative indicators of sustainable development. The emphasis on sustainability indicators has multiple motivations that include decision making and management, advocacy, participation and consensus building, and research and analysis. We select a dozen prominent examples and use this review to highlight their similarities and differences in definition of sustainable development, motivation, process, and technical methods.

Aim

The aim of this study is to categorize the challenges of Environment and framed ethics for sustainable Development.

Objectives

- 1) To understand the present conditions of Environment in India.
- 2) To analyze the various Environmental challenges.
- 3) To frame the ethics to protect the Environment.
- 4) To suggest the ways and means to maintain the sustainable Development.

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Importance

The World Commission on Environment and Development was initiated by General Assembly of the United Nation in 1982, and its report, 'Our Common Future', was published in 1987. It was chaired by the Prime minister of Norway Gro Harlem Brundtland (thus earning the Name "Brundtland Commission"). One most formidable definition has been given by him. "Meets the need of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Therefore sustainability is an attempt to provide the human and natural environment both now and into the indefinite future. Savinder Singh (2003) defined the sustainable development "as an overall socio-economic growth of the society through rational exploitation and optimum utilization of resources by adopting ecofriendly technologies, environmental education and maintenance of better organization leading to sustainable economy and maintenance of environmental quality and ecological balance so that continuous yield of resources is insured to the present and future generations"

According to the "United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development" sustainable development must meet their own needs of the present generation without compromising on the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs and aspirations. It is possible to have development without destroying the environment. Provided, man ensures that any single use does not deplete the environmental resources. To ensure sustainable development, the depletion of renewable resources should not take place at a rate faster than their regeneration. Therefore the environmental aspects should be included in the development policies and activities. We should develop those technological aspects which have minimum environmental

hazards in order to sustain the environment for future generations. Sustainable development is closely linked to the carrying capacity of an ecosystem. So these developments should prevent further damage to our life support systems like air, water, land and forests. It should also conserve and nurture the biological diversity, gene pool and other resources for long term food security.

Thus sustainable development has dual role to perform i.e. i) to provide the strategy for wealthy human life and (ii) to provide the strategy for healthy planet the Earth.

Causes of Environmental Degradation

There are several causes for environmental degradation. They are Modern Technology, Industrialization, Modern Life style, Overuse of natural resources, Water Pollution, Air Pollution, Land Pollution, Pesticide Pollution, Radioactive Pollution, Thermal Pollution, Noise Pollution, Urbanization, Population Explosion, Wrong use of natural resources, Deforestation, Hunting and poaching, Felling trees and Forest Fire.

Principles to achieve Sustainable Development:

A Number common principals are embedded in most action programmes to achieve sustainable development. These include (Hargroves & Smith 2005).

- i) Dealing transparently and systematically with risk, uncertainty and irreversibility.
- ii) Ensuring appropriate evaluation, appreciation and restoration of nature.
- iii) Integration of Environmental, Social, human and economic goals in policies and activities.
- iv) Equal opportunity and community participation/ sustainable community.



- Conservation of biodiversity and ecological integrity.
- Ensuring inter-generational equity.
- Recognizing the global integration of localities.
- A commitment to the best practice.
- No net loss of human capital or natural capital.
- The principal of continuous improvement.
- The need for good governance.
- Create a global alliance.
- Minimize depletion of nonrenewable resources.
- Conserve earth's vitality and biodiversity.

Rio Summit 1992

It was clear during the Rio Summit 1992 that meaning of sustainable development vary far developed and developing countries, it was fluctuating between two extremes of 'no growth' verses unlimited growth. To make it clear one

should know about what is to be sustained, and what is to be developed. On the basis of this there were two aspects of sustainable development.

1. Intergenerational equality

It states that it is our responsibility to handover a healthy, resourceful and safe environment to the future generations, by justified use of resources, reducing pollution, controlling population and maintaining an ecological balance.

2. Intra – generational equality

An equality within and between the nations by such type of technological development which will support economic growth of the poor countries so as to reduce the wealth gap between the national. It will also provide equal opportunity to use natural resources for all.

Goals of Sustainable Development

Goals of sustainable development categorize in three groups.

- i) To fulfill the basic needs of human – like foods, cloth, house, education, health and respect.
- ii) Development should be done with minimum side effect on ecosystem purity of environment.
- iii) It should be done at global level.

There are three sets of goals that use different time horizons. The short term (2015) goals of the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations; The two generations goals (2050) of

the sustainability transition of the ‘Board on sustainable Development’, and the long term (beyond 2050) goals of the ‘Great Transition of the Global Scenario Group’.

Un Millennium Declaration

To make the millennium, heads of states gathered in New York at the United Nations in September 2000. There, the UN general assembly adopted some 60 goals regarding peace; development; environment, human rights; the vulnerable hungry and poor Africa and the United Nations. Many of these contained specific targets.

2011 Environmental Sustainability Targets and Achievements



Steps for Sustainable Development

To achieve the goals of sustainable development three different components (i.e. By physical, economic and social) should be considered together. Therefore, sustainable development advocate a development process that is biophysically admissible economically feasible and socially acceptable. Following are the steps for the sustainable development.

1. 3- R approach should be followed: it states,

- Reuse of natural resources instead of generation of waste and pollutants.

- Reduce indiscriminate use of natural resources.
- Recycle to reduce the pressure on existing natural resources recycle the materials.
- 2. **Education:** environmental education and awareness should be provided through education system and mass media to develop “earth thinking: (feeling of belongingness to earth) from childhood.
- 3. **Technology:** to use locally adoptable, ecofriendly and resource efficient technology.
- 4. Justified use of natural resources.

Initiatives recently taken by GOI

Policy Development	1.	Expert group on low Carbon Economy	Planning Commission – led Group setup to develop strategy for India as a low carbon economy; in twelfth plan process.
	2.	State action plans on climate change	Delhi was the first state to release climate change action plan; other states finalising plans.
	3.	National Policy on Biofuels	National policy on bio- fuels approved by the Cabinet Committee of India to promote cultivation, production, and use of bio- fuels for transport and in other applications
Policy Implementation	4.	National Missions under National Action Plan on Climate Change	National Missions on Solar Energy, Energy Efficiency and strategic Knowledge approved, other Missions in final stages of preparation.
	5.	First National Conference on Green Buildings – Materials and Technologies	Conference to stimulate green building sector; to set an example, GOI proposes that all its new buildings will be GRIHA 4+ compliant subject to site conditions.
	6.	30 “ Solar Cities”	In Principle approval given to “30 Solar Cities” with aim of 10% deduction in projected demand of conventional energy through a combination of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures.
	7.	Energy Efficiency Standards for appliances.	Energy Efficiency ratings made mandatory for four free appliances – refrigerators, air conditioners, tube lights and transformers from January 7, 2010d, more to follow through 2010.
	8.	Fuel Efficiency Norms	Plan for fuel economy norms for vehicles announced, to be made operational during the coming years.
	9.	CDM Programs	India assessed as best CDM country, Indian projects to neutralise 10% of emissions by 2012.

Environmental Ethics -Suggestions and Discussions

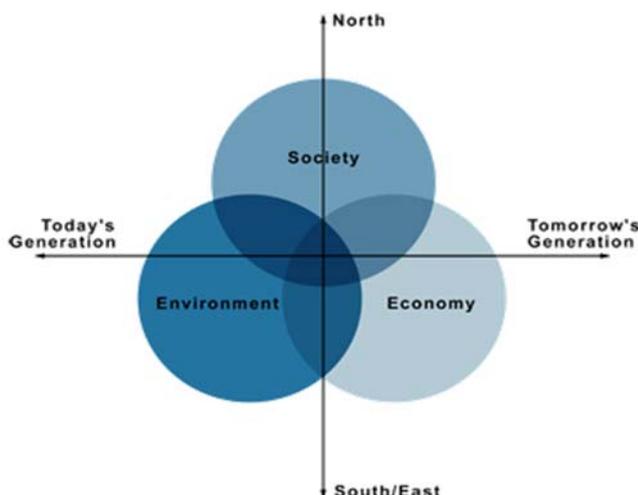
'Ethics' word is derived from the Greek word 'Ethos', which means customs. The other meaning of ethics is 'Set of moral principle'. All of us know that ethics is beliefs, attitudes or norms that form the basis of customs. Not only in India but all over the world, there is a growing concern for ethical norms in all spheres of human activities. Our duties towards the environment and living beings is also referred to as environmental ethics.

Environmental ethics is the scientific looking of various issues related to the rights of individuals on the environment. It is the moral relationship of human beings with the environment. It is concerned with do's and don't's of the human beings to the environment. It deals with ecological rights of all creatures present today as we fruitful as those which will come next to live on the Earth. Ethical standards are necessary a long – term conservation and maintenance of nature and its resources. A mango tree bears mango fruit to propagate its kind. Man plucks the fruit and eats it. But we should do justice to the tree. After eating the flesh of the fruit, don't throw away the seed. Sow it in a safe place and nurse it to grow into a tree. This is environmental ethics.

Environmental ethics is maintained by the following methods

- Equitable utilization of natural resources.
- Equity among the people of rural and urban areas.
- Equity for males and females.
- Conservation of resources for future generations.
- Environmental rights of animals.
- Environmental education.
- Conservation of traditional value systems.
- Prevention of sacrifice of animals to poojas.
- Prevention of ecoterrorism.
- Use of ecofriendly items.
- Keeping the environment neat and clean.
- Avoid carry bags and plastic items.

Conclusion



The concept of sustainable development is much more than environmental protection because it needs joint effort of economists and ecologists by parallel care and respect for the ecosystem and for the people live in. 'Checking land degradation, Water management, Control of population explosion, Pollution control, Waste management, Management of urban and industrial areas, Conservation of

bio diversity, Use of alternative energy sources, Awareness creation among people and Global partnership are the efforts have been taken to make a sustainable environment. Role of environmental experts involves providing intellectual with philosophical and ethical perspectives on the current and controversial issues being considered in the field of environmental ethics and to enable them to think through complex environmental problems involving scientific, economic, political and ethical aspects within a framework that gives due weight to the disciplinary approaches, yet also aims for integrated and rigorous understanding and entertains possible solutions. To ensure a rich and harmonious existence of man in nature, time has come for man to keep harmonious interactions with nature, which forms the basis for better environmental management. So every citizen must take an oath to protect our beautiful environment.

Let us not forget

Little drops of water
 Little grains of sand
 Make the mighty ocean
 And the pleasant Land.

Methodology

The study is based on secondary data. The secondary data required for the study was collected from various books, magazines, journals, newspapers etc.

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