

Sustainable Development Relevance in Today's World: An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on three core basics of sustainable development are economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. Sustainable development plays the most important role in preventing climate change by developing practices that are sustainable. One of the importance's of Sustainable development is rewarding human development goals without arduous resources for future generations. The paper highlights the importance in fostering long-term economic growth while ensuring social well-being and environmental protection. The paper enhances the prevention of nature from being used as an infinite source of resources and make sure its safeguard and rational use.

Key words: Sustainable, development, environmental, protection, production and resources

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development can be defined as a dynamic process designed to meet today's need without compromising the needs of future generations to fulfill their own needs. However, the concept of sustainable development moves beyond environment. It is also about social and economic development. It is about maintaining a balance between economic growth, social equality and preservation of the environment. It is the overlaps and interactions between social, environmental, and economic considerations. Sustainable development is a concept that aspires to smack a balance between economic growth, social development, and environmental protection.

Emergence of the Concept: The term 'sustainable development' was coined by Eva Balfour and Wes Jackson. The concept was developed by World Commission on Environment and Sustainable Development, commonly known as the Brundtland Commission in 1987, under the Chairmanship of Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway. The commission document was titled 'Our Common Future'. The concept received most attention in 1992 at the UN conference on Environment and Development held in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. "The aim is to have a society where living conditions and resources meet human needs without undermining planetary integrity" (Robert, Kates W.; Parris: 2005: 22)

Goals and Objectives of Sustainable Development: The commission highlighted its goals and objectives which are still relevant today. It strived to achieve long-term environmental strategies for achieving sustainable development; greater co-operation among developing countries and between countries at different stages of economic and social development. This is done for the achievement of common and mutually supportive objectives that considers interrelationships between people, resources, environment and development. "The environmental effects of different dietary patterns depend on many factors, including the proportion of animal and plant foods consumed and the method of food production" (McMichael, Anthony 2007)

It also aims to discover ways and means by which the international community can deal more effectively with environment concerns, share perceptions of long-term environmental issues and the appropriate efforts needed to deal successfully with the problems of protecting and enhancing the environment. "The largest concerted corporate sustainability action plan to date – include reversing the damage done to ecosystems, addressing rising greenhouse gas emissions and ensuring societies move to sustainable agriculture." (Wills, Jackie 2014)

It is a long-term agenda for action during the coming decades and aspirational goals for the world community. "Sustainability is a social goal for people to co-exist on Earth over a long period of time. Definitions of this term are disputed and have varied with literature, context, and time" (Ramsey, Jeffry L. 2015)

Sustainable Development Goals, 2016: The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the UN in the year 2016, when the Millennium Development Goals expired and was named as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls on countries to begin efforts to achieve the 17 SDGs over the next 15 years.

Following are the 17 SDGs adopted by UN:

- Goal 1: End poverty in all its form everywhere by 2030.
- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030.
- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages by 2030.
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030.
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030.
- Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030.
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030.
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all by 2030.
- Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation by 2030.
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries by 2030.
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable by 2030.
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns by 2030.
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by 2030.
- Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development by 2030.
- Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification by 2030.
- Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels by 2030.
- Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development by 2030.

Though, the goals are not internationally binding, all countries are free to take ownership of planning and establish national framework for achievement of these goals. As the implementation and success of these goals rely on the national process and plans, each country has a vital role to play. All stakeholders i.e. the government, civil society, private sector and others are expected to contribute to the realization of these goals. "Several studies have noted that efficient policies for renewable energy and pollution are compatible with increasing human welfare, eventually reaching a golden-rule steady state" (Ayong Le Kama, 2001) Criticism against Sustainable Development: The concept of sustainable development has however met through constant criticism due to various challenges in achieving them as well as their lack of focus on social issues. Some of the criticisms received against sustainable development are as follows:

- The sustainable development has also been criticized due to narrowness of the term and to confine global problems to the environmental content only.
- The goals are wishful and unattainable. For instance the eradication of poverty by 2030 will be almost impossible in the wake of low economic growth and various other issues in the conflict-ridden world.
- To achieve the goal of sustainability, not only in developing countries but also the developed world will be requiring a lot of funding. The absence of planning regarding the financing of sustainable development is the biggest drawback of these goals.
- There is also a lack of support for developing and poorer countries on the part of developed countries for the financing and technology transfer to achieve the goal of sustainable development.
- There is also a lack of political will to deal with the issue of environmental degradation and climate change in various countries of the world. Natural occurrences and disasters such as earthquakes, tsunami etc also can pose a threat to sustainability.

- There is no proper monitoring and ownership mechanism to measure the implementation of sustainable development in various-countries of the world.

India's Stance on Sustainable Development: India is ranked 117 out of 193 nations on a global index (Sustainable Development Goals Index, 2020) that assesses the performance of countries towards achieving the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). India, which scored 61.92, is behind countries like Nepal, China, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Iran. "Policymakers have many possible interventions to increase sustainability, in macroeconomics or purely environmental" (Hamilton, K.; Clemens, M. 1999)

In the context of India with a huge population and social challenges: like massive poverty, hunger, malnutrition, acute gender discrimination, and low per capita income, these goals are nearly impossible to achieve. However, India can play an important role in achieving sustainable development goals. In fact, these goals can be treated as 'ideal goals' which can act as a guideline for the national and international governments to measure their success in achieving inclusive and sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

Sustainable development, calls for a more balanced view thereby ensuring development of all the sectors and not just be biased for environmental sustainability. In brief, sustainable development needs democratic thinking, but it can also help strengthen democratic institutions through consensus-based public participation. It, therefore can be concluded that, sustainable development be considered a 'means' and not an 'end' in itself. Therefore, it is a 'process' and not a 'product'. It is tackling climate change and fostering sustainable development are two reciprocally strengthening issues.

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