

Sustainable Development: A Global Challenge

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ABSTRACT: *Development being the most important objective of developing country through more and more exploitation of natural resources, has also created negative externalities towards the environment and future generations. On one hand, rapid industrialisation has made countries more competitive and increase in production whereas, on the other hand it has created a rapid depletion of natural resources which are limited. It is very important to use the resources optimally so that the resources are left for future generations who can use it in a better way. So, the study is concerned basically on how to use resources in the process of development without comprising the needs of the future. Sustainable development is now become a global issue due to the negative impacts of industrialisation and exploitation of natural resources which has caused climatic and environmental imbalance.*

Key Words: *exploitation, depletion, natural resource, sustainable, imbalance.*

Introduction

Growth and development of the economy with rapid and smooth pace is sole objective of every developing country. With the objective of development and compete in the world market, countries tries to utilize maximum resources for increasing production and becoming self- dependent. Self- sufficiency, export promotion and import substitution being the major determinant for the development, developing countries through rapid industrialisation tries to increase its manufacturing and production abilities, even in the primary sector along with secondary sector. But, such a development process come along with pollution, loss of fertility, extinction of species, change in environment and depletion of resources. The motive of rapid development has now become a challenge, as there have been ecological disturbances and changes being felt worldwide. The rapid depletion of natural resources has given birth to a new concept of development; i.e., sustainable development.

Sustainable development is basically the concept describing the path for of overall development without compromising the needs of the future generation. As the resource are limited and many of those are non-renewable, therefore maintaining the process of productivity indefinitely even for the future generation is important.

The idea of sustainable development was first developed with Sustainable Forest Management in Europe during 17th and 18th century. The idea led to the awareness in England, about the depletion of timber tress. However, the modern concept of sustainable development is from the Brundtland Report, 1987. It described twentieth century environmental concerns, and shifted the focus on economic development, social development and environmental protection for future generation. Sustainable development shifts the focus from over- exploitation of resources and sustaining it for the needs and ability of the future generation.

Purpose of the Study

As the deterioration of environment and depletion of resources has become a global issue, this study focuses on understanding about sustainable development. The study undergoes the need for sustaining resources and look into the way of development without compromising the future. We through the study will know the steps being taken and scope to go forward in the way sustainable development world-wide.

Sustainable Development

The concept has got global recognition due to the linkage and close correlation between environmental health and human development. The alarming situation called the need to alter social and economic policies globally to minimize the human's negative impact on the environment and planet. Sustainable development is the convergence of three factors- social, economic and environmental. The term sustainable development was first coined by International Union for Conservation of Nature with the publication of Brundtland Commission in 1987. Definition of sustainable development given by Brundtland Commission is as, economic and social growth that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs". The commission was created in 1983 to address growing

concerns about the accelerating deterioration of the human behaviour and natural resources and the consequences of the deterioration of economic and social development.

The Earth Summit (1992)

The Earth Summit held at Rio in 1992 was attended by 152 countries, resulting Agenda 21 for sustainability. Agenda 21 was an action plan which recommended strategies being followed by all countries for producing sustainable development. However, in spite of various conventions and numerous reports, sustainable development seems to be not much known to the people around the world. According to the World Development Movement, there has not a great change since the 1992 earth Summit in poverty levels, inequality and sustainable development.

Sustainable development for poor countries is perceived as expensive to implement and ultimately a barrier in the development process; as the developing countries and underdeveloped countries lack physical infrastructure, human capabilities and ideas to integrate into their development process.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

It was a 2500 page report prepared in four years, and was released in March, 2005. It was a survey of planet, which concluded the following points:

1. Everyone in the nature depends on nature and ecosystem services to provide the conditions for a decent, healthy and secure life.
2. Humans have made unprecedented changes to ecosystems in recent decades to meet growing demands for food, fresh water, fibre and energy which has helped to improve the lives of billions, but at the same time they weakened nature's ability to deliver other key services such as purification of air and water, protection from disasters, and the provision of medicines.
3. Human activities have taken the planet to the edge of a massive wave of species extinctions, further threatening our own well- being.
4. The loss of services derived from ecosystem is a significant barrier to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals to reduce poverty, hunger and disease.
5. The pressure in ecosystem will increase globally in coming decades until human attitudes and action change.
6. Measures to conserve natural resources are more likely to succeed if local communities are given ownership of them, share the benefits and are involved in decisions.
7. Even today's technology and knowledge can reduce considerably the human impact on ecosystems. They are unlikely to be deployed fully, however, until ecosystem services cease to be perceived and free and limitless, and their full value is taken into account.
8. Better protection of natural assets will require coordinated efforts across all sections of the governments, businesses, and international institutions. The productivity of ecosystems depends on policy choices on investment, trade, subsidy, taxation and regulation among others.

Global Biodiversity Outlook 3

In the convention on Biological Diversity, UNEP 2010, Global Biodiversity Outlook 3 summarizes that, however numerous successful conservations supporting biodiversity were made, none of the targets were met, and deterioration of biodiversity continues. The actions to promote biodiversity have got not much attention and funding compared t developments of infrastructure and industries. So, there has been lack of integration of biodiversity issues into broader policies, strategies and programmes. Due to the increasing pressure on biodiversity there has been continuous deterioration, despite of increase i continuous efforts.

Environment and Economics

Concept of externality has a very important role to play when it comes to environment. Industrial development and infrastructural development came along with lots of negative externalities for the environment. A study conducted by The Economics of Ecosystem and Biodiversity (TEEB) estimated that around the world 3000 listed companies were responsible for over \$2 trillion externalities in the environment. Compared to their total revenue, it was about 7% and 1/3rd of their combined profits.

Siting the example according to BBC, biodiversity is fundamental to economics:

1. G8 nations, along with five major economies, i.e. China, India, South Africa, Brazil and Mexico- uses almost three- quarters of the Earth's bio capacity.
2. 40% of the world's trade is based on biological products and processes.

Economics measures such as GDP also ignores the environmental costs, and underestimates the value of the services which are public goods and available for free in nature. Numerous studies show the benefits of investing and protecting the environment. One such example is, planting and protecting nearly 12000 hectares of mangroves in Vietnam which cost just about 1 million dollars but saved annual expenditure of dyke maintenance over 7 million dollars.

Sustainable development has its importance economically. Suppose, a country is over- exploiting its resources to maximize its production, but the continuous exploitation will sooner deplete the available resources making it scarce. This will automatically increase the cost and in order to decrease the cost, manufacturers mobilize automatically to address this problem of increasing cost by looking for ways to bring it down. Suppose, if energy costs go up, businesses will look ways to minimize such costs leading to Research & Development, and finding alternative ways so that existing resources lasts longer and used more efficiently. Therefore, depletion of resources could be averted.

Taking the example of Uganda, charcoal is the integral part of the country's everyday life relying on wood fuel for cooking purposes and sale of trees as their income. The cutting down of trees leads to loss to wildlife and leads to change in climate. Each year around 80,000 hectares of lands are cleared for meeting the demand of charcoal and timber. According to National Forestry Authority, demand for charcoal has increased dramatically over recent years which are being due to Uganda's population growth and urbanisation.

Environment and Poverty

Studies have shown that reduction in poverty is possible through protection of biodiversity. Global issues such as poverty alleviations and environmental deterioration are the global issues which are haunting the world. These two issues are treated as two different and separate issues, however has lot in common. Some of them are as follows:

1. Continuous climate change due to human activities and development is threat to future.
2. There has been a high rate of extinction of plants and animal species due to human activities, which is a big concern for biodiversity.
3. Inequality especially in developing economy is at its extreme.
4. Human Development Report 1998, reveals that globally 20% of the world population in the highest income countries accounts for 86% of the total private consumption compared to just 1.3% of the poorest 20% countries population.

According to Centre for Science and Environment, a Delhi based environmental organisation, "if the poor worlds were to develop and consume in the same manner as the West to achieve the same living standards, we would need two additional planets Earth to produce resources and absorb wastes".

For survival it has been witnessed that populations living in poverty uses much of the resources which is not been utilized in the right manner. Examples of countries like Bangladesh and Nepal shows that they have faced various environmental problems such as floods which is being believed that, it is due to the large-scale deforestation for development and survival of the economy. Forests resources are being used intensively by timber companies, agricultural businesses and local needs. These are the worrying concern for the development of third world nations and their poverty alleviations initiatives. Because of rural poverty and over exploitation of resources, environmental resources should be treated as an important economic asset. According to ecological economist Malte Faber, ecological economics is defined as the focus on nature, justice and time. Sustainable development of the ecological economic analysis and valuation is guided by the issues of integrational equity, irreversibility of environmental change and long-term uncertainty.

Sustainable energy is usually clean and can be used over a long period of time. Unlike fossil fuels and bio-fuels that are non- renewable and provide the bulk of world energy now, instead more focus and encouragement should be on renewable sources of energy such as wind energy, solar energy and hydroelectric.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

There has been 17 SDGs to be achieved till 2030 known as the 2030 agenda for Sustainable development. The goals and targets are universal which apply to all countries of the world and not just poor and developing countries. To achieve the goals of Agenda 2030, actions and co-operations from all fronts are required. Goals of Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 are:

1. No poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well Being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10. Reduced Inequalities
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institution
17. Partnerships for the Goals

Initiatives towards Sustainable Development

1. High –Level Political Forum

The establishment of the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) was mandated in 2012 by the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), "The Future We Want". The format and organizational aspects of the Forum are outlined in General Assembly resolution 67/290. The Forum meets annually under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council for eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment and every four years at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the General Assembly for two days. The Forum's first meeting was held on 24 September 2013. It replaced the Commission on Sustainable Development, which had met annually since 1993.

The HLPF is the main United Nations platform on sustainable development and it has a central role in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the global level. General Assembly resolution 70/299 provides further guidance on the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

The Forum adopts intergovernmental negotiated political declarations. As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda encourages member states to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven" (paragraph 79). These national reviews are expected to serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the HLPF. As stipulated in paragraph 84 of the 2030 Agenda, regular reviews by the HLPF are to be voluntary, state-led, undertaken by both developed and developing countries, and shall provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders.

In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 66/288 and 67/290, the Forum, consistent with its universal intergovernmental character, shall:

- a. provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development;
- b. enhance integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels;
- c. provide a dynamic platform for regular dialogue and for stocktaking and agenda-setting to advance sustainable development;
- d. have a focused, dynamic and action-oriented agenda, ensuring the appropriate consideration of new and emerging sustainable development challenges;
- e. follow up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments contained in Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy and The Future We Want and, as appropriate, relevant outcomes of other United Nations summits and conferences, including the outcome of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries as well as their respective means of implementation;
- f. encourage high-level system-wide participation of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and invite to participate, as appropriate, other relevant multilateral financial and trade institutions and treaty bodies, within their respective mandates and in accordance with United Nations rules and provisions;

- g. improve cooperation and coordination within the United Nations system on sustainable development programmes and policies;
- h. promote transparency and implementation by further enhancing the consultative role and participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders at the international level in order to better make use of their expertise, while retaining the intergovernmental nature of discussions;
- i. promote the sharing of best practices and experiences relating to the implementation of sustainable development and, on a voluntary basis, facilitate sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned;
- j. strengthen the science-policy interface through review of documentation, bringing together dispersed information and assessments, including in the form of a global sustainable development report, building on existing assessments;
- k. enhance evidence-based decision-making at all levels and contribute to strengthening ongoing capacity-building for data collection and analysis in developing countries; and
- l. Promote system-wide coherence and coordination of sustainable development policies.

2. Global SDG 7 Conference

In recognition of the fundamental role of sustainable energy in achieving almost all of Sustainable Development Goals, from the eradication of poverty through advancements in health, education, water supply and industrialization, to combating climate change, a global preparatory meeting in support of the review of SDG7 at the 2018 UN High-level Political Forum will be held from 21-23 February 2018 in Bangkok, UN ESCAP. The Global SDG7 conference will bring together key stakeholders from Governments, UN system and other international organizations, the private sector, and civil society to engage in a dialogue that emphasized the integrated and cross-cutting nature of sustainable energy and its multiple roles in supporting the achievement of the SDGs. The Global SDG 7 Energy Conference is held in support of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

3. High- Level Panel on Water

United Nations Secretary-General and President of the World Bank Group convened a High Level Panel on Water (HLPW), consisting of 11 sitting Heads of State and Government and one Special Adviser, to provide the leadership required to champion a comprehensive, inclusive and collaborative way of developing and managing water resources, and improving water and sanitation related services.

The core focus of the Panel is the commitment to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, as well as to contribute to the achievement of the other SDGs that rely on the development and management of water resources.

On 21 September 2016 the HLPW called for a fundamental shift in the way the world looks at water. The Panel issued an Action Plan for a new approach to water management that will help the world to achieve the 2030 agenda, including the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The HLPW commits itself to take action on water, and calls upon Heads of State and Government, and all people, to do the same.

The Panel was announced by the co-conveners at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2016, and officially launched in April 2016 in New York. The Panel is a time-bound initiative, established for an initial period of two years.

4. Sustainable development Goals

The Partnerships for SDGs online platform is United Nations' global registry of voluntary commitments and multi-stakeholder partnerships, facilitating global engagement of all stakeholders in support of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Partnership for SDGs platform is open to all stakeholders, including Member States, civil society, local authorities, private sector, scientific and technological community, academia, and others, to register a voluntary commitment or multi-stakeholder partnership which aims to drive the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Managed by the Division for Sustainable Development, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DSD/DESA), it is intended to provide space for sharing knowledge and expertise among different actors that are engaged in multi-stakeholder SDG-related partnerships and voluntary commitments, and for providing periodic updates on their progress. The platform brings together online registries that were launched in support of various United Nations conferences and processes dealing with sustainable development, including the 2017 The Ocean Conference, the 2016 Global Sustainable Transport Conference, the 2014 SIDS Conference, and the 2012 Rio+20 Conference. It also provides access to several other thematic multi-stakeholder action networks that aim to galvanize partnerships and commitments in support of the SDGs.

Conclusion

In the study we find that due to intensive exploitation of resources for the development purposes we have affected the biodiversity in such a manner that, it has now become a global concern and, right measures to be taken are very essential. The most significant issues faced by humanity today are climate crisis. There has been more intense natural disasters, droughts and floods leading to food insecurity and hunger across the globe. The continued use of fossil fuels is threatening the very existence. So, today's demand is biodiversity in fossil fuels and investing in greener technologies.

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