

Sustainable Development of India: Growth and Challenges

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Abstract

Indian economy is growing very fast and this growth causes some bad impact on environment. This loss to the environment is irreparable. Than how can we achieve higher economic growth without environmental degradation? The answer to this could be found in sustainable development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs. This study emphasis on sustainable development in India, and what are the government initiatives to preserve environment? This paper highlights various act and rule and impact of government initiative on forest, tiger etc. further, this paper discuss on challenges before the country in implementing sustainable development.

Keywords: Sustainable development, Environment, Natural Resources, Government policies etc.

Introduction

The developing economy in present scenario has cause damage to the environment. This loss to the environment is irreparable. Than how can we achieve higher economic growth without environmental degradation? The answer to this could be found in the notion of sustainable development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs.

The government development policies apply equally to the shared and inter-linked responsibilities of environmental protection and human development. History has led to vast inequalities, leaving almost three-fourths of the world's people living in less-developed countries and one-fifth below the poverty line. The long-term impact of past industrialization, exploitation and environmental damage cannot be wished away. It is only right that development in this new century be even more conscious of its long-term impact. The problems are complex and the choices difficult. Our common future can only be achieved with a better understanding of our common concerns and shared responsibilities. Restoring natural systems and improving natural resource management practices at the grassroots level are central to a strategy of development.

Objective of the Study

- To understand the concept of sustainable development in India.

- To highlight the initiatives taken by Indian government to implement sustainable development.
- To discuss on challenges before the country in implementing sustainable development effectively.

Significance of Study

Natural resources are limited and need to be utilized with proper planning. This planning envisages the characteristic of sustainable development, so that environment degradation could be reduced. The industrial countries have already exhausted most of their natural resources and have achieved a decent standard of living. The developing countries which are under process of growth must use natural resource with planning from initial stage, otherwise it will delay and loss will be irreparable. Indian Government framing policies to improve environmental conditions and promoting growth simultaneously. Indian government has framed NGT Act and other rules to save environment but still many forthcoming challenges are there to solve. So need to create strategies for sustainable development and educating the masses for protecting environment.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."The concept of sustainable development can be interpreted in many different ways, but at its core is an approach to development that looks to balance different, and often competing, needs against an awareness of the environmental, social and economic limitations we face as a society. All too often, development is driven by one particular need, without fully considering the wider or future impacts. We are already seeing the damage this kind of approach can cause, from large-scale financial crises caused by irresponsible banking, to changes in global climate resulting from our dependence on fossil fuel-based energy sources. The longer we pursue unsustainable development, the more frequent and severe its consequences are likely to become, which is why we need to take action now.

Characteristics of Sustainable Development

- It attempt to minimize green house gases, reduce global warming and preserve environmental resources.
- It emphasizes on green architecture and eco-friendly building practices.
- Use of natural, biodegradable building material
- Use of renewable resources of water
- Emphasis on renewable energy sources such as Solar and wind.
- Protection of natural habitat.
- Planned replacement for any resources used.
- Non polluting construction practices and industries.

Development a Thought

It is increasingly realized that the human race stands at the crossroads in choosing the options it has in the areas of environment and development. The industrial countries, having enjoyed more than their share of development, have achieved a decent standard of living. This has given to the earth pollution and eco-degradation as a result of affluence and underlying greed. It has now become clear that such patterns of development, life styles and quality of life are unsustainable.

On the contrary, the developing countries are still struggling for minimum levels of sustenance. No doubt, they too have contributed to the eco degradation and pollution, but this is essentially need and poverty based. The developing countries need abundant material growth to fulfill the basic needs of their people, but they cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the industrial countries. As far as possible, these countries must take the sustainable path of development from the very beginning. If sustainable development has to be translated into action, some basic rethinking is needed and minimum agenda adopted. Notwithstanding what the techno-optimists and economists say, the planet as a whole is undergoing some changes which must cause far-reaching physical, chemical, biological, social and economic effects.

India's Sustainable Growth

India is one of the mega bio diverse countries of the world. Our traditional knowledge is coded as in our ancient texts on Indian system of medicine, and non-coded, as in oral traditions. With four global biodiversity hotspots, India rank amongst the top species rich nation.

India was one of the first few countries to enact a comprehensive biological diversity 1992. Yet India and the world have miles to go before we can claim notable success in fulfilling the three objectives of the convention namely, conservation of biological diversity, and sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits.

India's Tiger population is on the rise. The 2011 Tiger census showed a 20 percent increase in the number of tigers over that of the year 2006. It is estimated that there are today around 1700 wild tigers in the India out of a global population of around 3000.

India's forest cover had increased by nearly 5 percent between 1997 and 2007 with small decrease since then. It hopes to see further accretion with the implementation of the Green India Mission which aims to increase the forest and tree cover by 5 million hectares. Eventually these forests will act as a sink that could absorb 50-60 million tons of carbon dioxide annually. This would offset about 6 percent of India's annual emissions. The government of India is trying to put in place institutional arrangements and mechanisms to promote policy development and stakeholder's engagement on sustainable management of commons. India has recently established a National Green

Tribunal under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010. The Tribunal provides for the effective and expeditious protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.

This includes the enforcement of any legal right relating to environment, including providing relief and compensation for damages. The National Ganga River Basin Authority is yet another example where the govt. is trying institutional innovation to protect the sacred river. The objective of the authority is to ensure conservation of the river Ganga and to maintain environmental flows by adapting a comprehensive river basin approach.

The Rio Declaration of 1992 enunciated 27 far reaching principles that sought to protect the integrity of the global environmental and developmental system. These principles have stood the test of time. India's journey on the path of sustainable development has so far been marked both by reason for celebration and introspection. The right place to begin the story would be the 1980s and early 1990s, which mark the beginning of economic reforms, catalyst for India's phenomenally faster growth rate since, and coinciding with a time when countries around the world acknowledge and started addressing the increasing environmental concerns, such as at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992.

India's faster Gross domestic product (GDP) growth over the last two decades has been unprecedented, but at the same time India's ranking in terms of the Human Development Index (HDI) as well as indices measuring environmental sustainability are yet to fully reflect growth. However, it would be a mistake to downplay the enormous progress made, as India has followed a much more conscious path of sustainable development with impressive results on the ground. The key environmental challenges have become sharper in the past two decades.

The 2009 state of the environment report by the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF) clubs the issues under five challenges faced by India, which are climate change, food security, energy security and managing urbanization. Climate change is impacting the natural ecosystems and is expected to have substantial adverse effects in India, mainly on agriculture on which around 58 percent of the population depends for livelihood, water storage in the Himalayan glaciers which are the source of major rivers and ground water recharge, sea level rise and threats to a long coastline and habitations.

Climate change will also cause increased frequency of extreme events such as storms, floods and droughts. These in turn will impact India's food and water security problems. India also faces the critical challenge of meeting its rapidly growing energy demands. It currently depends on around 80 percent imports for its crude oil requirements. A large section of the rural population is still not connected to the grid or efficient modern cooking fuel sources, and India's per capita energy consumption of 439kg of oil equivalent is far below the world average of 1688kg (Planning Commission report in 2006).

Sustainable Development: challenges

Problems of sustainable development are rooted in issues of resource use and their pattern of distribution and ownership. Thus a policy towards sustainable development cannot be framed in isolation to politics and state regulations. The world community is confronted by a chicken and egg controversy, economic problems aggravate resources crisis and environmental despoliation and this leads to constrained economic revival due to which nations find it more difficult to solve problems of unsustainable use of environment. In a world where progress depends on sustainable patterns of growth involves as yet unresolved problems and challenges.

In the 1970s the debate on development was safely initiated between issue of environment and development. This decade saw a major challenge in the thought of development itself and that has presented a major challenge to the conventional consensus on economic development. New expressions such as 'sustainable development' have added new dimension to development debates. The problem today is not primarily one of absolute physical shortage but of economic and social mal distribution and misuse. Thus United Nations Environment programme (UNEP) 1975 explains environmental management implies sustainable development. since then the challenge as expressed in the Brundtland report also as the process of economic development which must be more soundly based on the stock of capital that sustains it.

Issues of sustainable development have become centre stage to economic debates and are now setting the pattern of economic growth and world trade. The conventional agenda of the transnational businesses is found to be inadequate for sustainable development programmes of developing and transitional countries and international institutions are require to implement inter and intra generational equity and justice in trade pacts. The challenge of changing lifestyles and mode of production would require a technological change towards a just order. Economic growth cannot be translated into economic well being till distribution of costs and benefits of both financial and natural resources in economic policies is accounted for. It has been found that the costs of development are generally borne by the poor and subsistence community but the benefits are always falling into the pockets of the rich.

This is also translated into international relations where the poor countries over extract their resources to meet the requirements of the international market under the pressure of debt and amortization payments leaving them with no choice but to abuse their environmental resources in an unsustainable manner. Thus the primary requirement of sustainable economic prosperity in the world is to make the international economic system more equitable and just so that the developing countries can access it more vibrantly. It would also need a firm action towards debt servicing so that the poor countries may come out of the debt trap and participate in the world economic recovery programmes. Success of sustainable development is dependent upon the capacity development of the developing countries and environmental management practices for both the human and the natural resources through innovations in technology, social policies, political and cultural paradigms.

Conclusion

Government is effectively framing policies to reduce degradation of environment. Every development project has to take concert of MOEF (Environment clearance) and proper assessment of that project on environment is analyzed. Further these policies to be implemented effectively before we reach a point of no return, we must take tangible steps and follow a road that leads to sustainability. In India, the areas which require particular attention are population growth, change from non-renewable and polluting energy systems to those that are renewable and non-polluting, land use Management, dry land faming and forestry. Above all there must be effective government policies on Environment and education of the masses. Finally, it is also very essential for us to try limiting our wants which are the chief cause to natural resource depletion.

References

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