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## **A GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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# A Geographical Study of Environment and Sustainable Development

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**Abstract** – This paper deals with the concept of Environmental Sustainability which is the need of hour. In the world of economic development intelligent management of natural resources is an appreciable step. Environmental Sustainability aims at ensuring the protection, conservation and better management of Earth's natural resources. It aims at such a pattern of use, that resources are neither exhausted nor polluted nor destroyed. All natural ecosystems are characterized by four qualities. These are complexity, stability, diversity and resilience. If any of these characteristics are weakened, the system collapses. The quality of human life is inseparable from the quality of the environment. Both are inseparable from the questions of human members and concentrations. Its aim is four fold : Environmental protection, Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded ecosystems, Augmentation of the carrying capacity of both natural and human managed ecosystems, Creation, expansion and development of new ecosystem, both minor and major.

**Keywords-** Environmental Sustainability, Augmentation and restoration

## INTRODUCTION

Environmental Sustainability aims at ensuring the protection, conservation and better management of Earth's natural resources. It aims at such a pattern of use, that resources are neither exhausted nor polluted nor destroyed. All natural ecosystems are characterized by four qualities. These are complexity, stability, diversity and resilience. If any of these characteristics are weakened, the system collapses. The quality of human life is inseparable from the quality of the environment. Both are inseparable from the questions of human members and concentrations. Its aim is four fold : Environmental protection, Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded ecosystems, Augmentation of the carrying capacity of both natural and human managed ecosystems, Creation, expansion and development of new ecosystem, both minor and major.

If we understand development in the proper perspective, if we do not mean it to be quick profit for a few, if we mean it as the sustained improvement in the living conditions of the majority, then environment is required for development. We are interested in environment for the sake of human beings.

### The Three Environment Concept :

The environment can be classified into micro, macro and global.

- i) Micro Environment : We are most sensitive to the changes in our immediate environment. People's response to such impacts are quick and sharp.
- ii) Macro Environment : Soil Erosion, Desertification are comparatively slow processes. People's response to the macro environmental impacts have been tardy.
- iii) Global Environment : Increased Carbon-dioxide content, has resulted in increased average global temperature. Acid rains, Ozone depletion, Radioactive fallout are examples of global environment. But people are unable to relate them to their own life.

### The Three Mode of Existence :

The socio economic forms can be basically classified into three categories.

- i) Primitive : Man's relationship with nature was co-operative. He was conscious of its depletion and destruction which he prevented through the various Taboo's.
- ii) Exploitative : With the development of competitive capitalistic economy demand on natural resource began to increase much

more rapidly. First macro and later global environment become affected.

- iii) Scientific : A competitively organized society makes it impossible for the entrepreneur to care for the environment, to care for tomorrow. To overcome the present predicament, mankind has to cooperate.<sup>8</sup>

### The Three Trend of Interaction:

In the cultural environment, there are three district trends— Nature Centered, Profit Centered and Man Centered.

- i) Nature Center : This trend oppose categorically nuclear energy, large hydel stations, chemical industries etc. They advocate going back in history, back to nature. They do not perceive the impracticability and impossibility of their suggestions.
- ii) Profit Centered : This is the attitude of a socio economic environment which demands total freedom for profit making and profit maximizing. Fear of unseen radiation is superstition according to them.
- iii) Man Centered : They understand the compulsion of the socio economic environment, the limitations of the physical – biological environment and the urgency of change. They clearly see the costs and benefits involved in the various developmental activities.

### NATURE OF SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability is not an isolated phenomenon. It is a part of a complex web of relationships in nature. It is the democracy of resources-natural or otherwise. It is part of one great interdependence and integrated system. What happens with one resource will affect another. As the resources-soil, water, fire, sky and air themselves influence each other and also depend on the mutual action, reaction and interaction similar to the eyes that do not see objects unless the mind cooperates. All the organs draw their automation from the mind compulsorily. In the same way, resources, whatsoever, therefore are not themselves responsible for their individual sustainability.

Thus the cruel exploitation of one resource will ultimately kill the sustainability of another resource. This suggests that sustainability is always an integrated phenomenon. It is a conglomeration of vitalities of different resources at a time. It is the continuity from one sustainability to another. It is unbroken to flow. It flows uninterrupted. It is all three the subject, the verb and the object at the same time.

The sustainability is thus a 'synthesis' of all the natural and otherwise resources, known so far by mankind. It is again subject to a continuous change. Every time the born and new born 'synthesis' is subject to a continuous change. This process is unavoidable and un-explorable. The evolution of new 'synthesis' is irresistible. This process never stops. It is both automatic and continuous. It can, therefore, be said that the sustainability is, it has always been, and always will be.

It, would thus be a mistake to look at the sustainability of one resource or any region in isolation. It is because the sustainability is a democracy of resources. It is a collective endeavour of resources. The definition and application of sustainability thus vary from one reference to another.

### CONSTITUENTS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Every atom, sub-atom and split atom enjoys different types of potentials for their existence, function and change. Sustainability also continues to vary accordingly. It happens within the framework of time, space and place. Contrary to the cruel exploitation of resources of WEST we try to give more to nature than what we extract from it. Our cultural and spiritual ethos favours a happy blending of the environmental concerns within a certain developmental priorities. We, therefore, consider sustainability as the vitality of the resource to maintain the process of self-regeneration automatically and live longer for a certain and constant utilization by the human body. We worship such vitalities in the form of gods and goddesses with the result we consider the earth as our mother and the nature as our father. We worship both of them. We also request them for our sustainability. It is because we consider them jointly as the source of life, longevity etc. As against this the WEST believes in 'virgin birth', that emphasises the need of the only one i.e. the mother for the human birth.

The bodies that sustain life are a resource. Resources continue to become weaker and weaker and that ultimately they collapse and finally die out or are rendered useless.

### FACTORS AFFECTING SUSTAINABILITY

It is open to philosophical questioning. Philosophically speaking sustainability is life, Soul, of the resources. It is not confined to naturo-human resources only. It also encompasses at the same time, the social, individual, economic, political, religious and cultural aspects and emotional behaviour of mankind. The culture-emotional behaviours of every day's human suffering, pain, pleasure, joy, trust person social relationships, anger, pride, vanity, insincerity, loyalty, courage, affection, strength, loneliness. Companionship etc. enjoy their own sustainability's in a particular reference and context. It is all the web of thoughts. A circular reasoning is involved in them.

These emotions are cultivated by self-experience and maximum feeling. These thoughts emerge through the incalculable mutation of ideas and perception. It is very difficult to sustain them for long. They remain transitory, always keep on shifting, gradually diminish and finally stand for replacement. There is nothing that they cannot be changed or replaced. These are practiced by an individual towards another, and by one group towards another group, by one nation towards another. These are practiced universally and they equally cause socio-mental disorder and collective ill-being.

The changes in the styles of an individual, level of technology, environment and also methods of governance, politico-religious set-up and eco-cultural traditions greatly work to change the state of sustainability. Demographic set-up and cultural values of the society and individuals also affect it. Since there is a constant change in skill, pattern, perception, recognition, cultural knowledge, flexibility in thinking, vision, energy, new intelligence, and global values so also accordingly the sustainability of a particular nature faces the danger of its extinction.

The sustainability of different concepts like-ancient, mediaeval, modern, post-modern, tribal, feudal, agrarian, industrial upper caste, lower caste, intermediate castes and outcastes etc. also vary from time to time and in turn they also affect the social sustainability at a particular time. The sustainability may be rejuvenated by the revolutions. It is because revolutions shake-off all those traditions and habits which remained so far very comforting. The revolutions may be scientific, technological, cultural, religious, economic and national etc.

### **SUSTAINABILITY: THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The guiding principles of sustainability cut across ecological, economic, social and cultural dimensions, and there are obvious trade-offs. What needs to be addressed is sustainable development- for whom, in what context, and with what objectives?

- Inter-generational equity: providing for today while retaining resources and options for tomorrow.
- Conservation of cultural and biological diversity and ecological integrity.
- Constant natural capital and 'sustainable income'
- Anticipatory and precautionary policy approach to resource use, erring on the side of caution.

- Resource use in a manner that contributes to equity and social justice while avoiding social disruptions.
- Limits on natural resource use within the capacity of the environment to supply renewable resources and assimilate wastes.
- Qualitative rather than quantitative development of human well-being.
- Pricing of environmental values and natural resources to cover full environmental and social costs.
- Global rather than regional or national perspective of environmental issues.
- Efficiency of resource use by all societies.
- Strong community participation in policy and practice, during the process of transition to an ecologically sustainable society.

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