

The Path Towards Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Development is the process of change in a current system for comfort. The outcome of development can be positive or negative. Only development concept has failed and produces damage to lives and its consequences are natural calamities and terrorism. So the whole world is searching for sustainable development. Religious values are a strong denominator against which all other values could be equated and is trusted instrument. Different religions advocates for Nature, Spirituality and sustainability. Hinduism contains numerous references to the worship of divine Nature in Vedas, Purans. Buddhism says for survival mankind has to depend on Nature for his shelter, food, clothing, medicine and other requisites. Buddhism teaches us love for Nature and nonviolence. Islam's Quran says that Allah is the creator of world. They are told to look after the world for Allah and for future. Christianity teaches us to spread love for Nature, Peace and nonviolence. It also teaches us to help poor people. According to the theory of Jainism, the five elements of Nature, Prathivi, Jal, Agni, Vayu and Akash are living creatures and must be treated as living beings. So every religion advocates for the protection of Nature natural elements and biodiversity conservation. Gandhiji said, "Earth provides enough to fulfill man's need but not man's greed." For sustainable development, reduce, reuse and recycle is the best concept. New social ethics should be inculcated among children both in school and at home emphasizing concern.

Keywords: Spirituality, Nonviolence, Natural elements, Denominator, Greed

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Introduction

Development is the process of change in current system comfort and luxury. However the outcome of development can be positive or negative. Positive are advance science and technology, advanced medical science, good infrastructure, and electronic goods.

Instead of this modern man in his search for pleasure and affluence has exploited Nature without any moral restrain to such an extent that Nature has been incapable of sustaining healthy life. Invaluable gifts of nature such as air, water, soil and sky have polluted with severely disastrous consequences.

Man is now searching for ways and means of overcoming the pollution because his health too is alarming threatened. So the Human kind wants development which can sustain and can protect the Nature. To overcome this problem and maintain balance between development and nature, the term sustainable development is coined. Hence sustainable development is defined as a pattern of development which fulfills human needs while taking in to consideration the factors regarding security and protection of environment, culture, moral and socio-religious values.

Now human being feels that it is irresponsible and morally wrong on his part to commit polluted planet to future generation. He is searching to find an appropriate environmental ethic to prevent further aggravation of the present pollution problem. He has forgotten wisdom of environmental values in the area of religion. Now human is realizing religious values are most effective on general public. In past, every culture and civilization, every religion used to be a strong denominator against which all other values could be equated. The religion is trusted instrument and has been used effectively to achieve socio-economic, environmental and cultural targets.

Every religions advocates spiritual values, health, environment, non-materialism and non-violence. Religion preaches us our duties and emphasize on maintaining balance between “Needs and Greed”.

Thus today understanding about sustainable development is not a new concept but just a revised terminology which we all forgot once. Now we will note, how different religion talks about sustainable development”.

We have tried to discuss view points of different religions and cultures in brief to focus on importance of choosing right path for “sustainable and holistic development”.

Hinduism- It is oldest but most evolved, scientific religion. It contains ready references from Vedas, Purans, Upanishads to understand, Why Nature is called “Mother”? Hinduism teaches us that the five great elements (space, air, fire, water and earth) that constitute the environment are all derived from Prakrati. In Hinduism, Nature is called Prakrati.

Why we worship divine elements related to “Nature”. Millions of Hindus recite Sanskrit mantras daily to revere their rivers, mountains, trees, animals and the Earth. This Religion preaches us our duty between Needs and Greed’s.

The Chipko (tree hugging) movement is the most widely known example of Hindu environment leadership. In Hindu mythology the five elements which create life are air, water, fire, earth and space. These five elements derived from “Prakrati”. Hindu religious books guide us that every element of Nature should be respected and should not pollute. If not taken care “Mother Nature” may result into devastating curse from respective deities leading to Natural calamities like flood, drought, Psunami and chakrabat (earth quakes).

The scientific facts Hindu culture walks closely holding and bridging ties between culture, nature and technology.

Naturopathy and Ayurveda is example of this symbiotic relationship between uses of Nature in healing process. Cutting down green trees like Banyan and Peepal is a strong sin in Hindu mythology. River is considered Mother and holy religious ceremony takes place on river bank from birth to death.

Hinduism and its off-shoots like Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism are all based on same school of thoughts. The Jainism is an extreme example of belief on the theories of non-violence and truth.

Buddhism- In Buddhist culture and belief system there are following characteristic theories which are based on principles of

1. Simple and moderate life style.
2. Satisfaction of basic human necessities.
3. Reduction of wants to the minimum frugality.

It is only possible when whole mankind adopt a simple and moderate lifestyle. Whole mankind adopts a simple and moderate life style. Whole mankind will stop to polluting the environment. This seems to be the only way of over-coming the present eco-crisis and problem of alienation. With such life style, man will adopt a non-exploitative, non-aggressive, gentle attitude towards Nature. He can than live in harmony with Nature utilizing its resources for the satisfaction of basic needs. Our planet is very beautiful. Its life is ours life and its future is ours future. Earth nourishes us just like Mother. We, like children are dependent on her. So the global problems cannot be solved by a single Nation. All nation of the Earth, should work together to protect nature. Our Mother Earth is teaching us a lesson of universal responsibility. Buddhism always preaches us the virtues of non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion in all human pursuits. Greed breeds sorrow spoils Nature and unhealthy consequences. Buddhism advocates a gentle non-aggressive attitude towards “Nature”.

Jainism- is one of the most environmentally conscious religion in the world. The religion is based on the principles of nonviolence all living beings and Nature.

Sikhism- In Sikhism, environment is part of an integrated approach to life and Nature. As all creation has the same origin and end. Humans must have consciousness of their place in creation and their relationship with the rest of creation.

Islamism- It also give due respect and importance to natural elements. Islam teaches us that all creation of God whether it is tiny ant or huge lion serves a certain purpose in the larger scheme of God's world. "There is not an animal(that lives on the earth or a being that flies on its wings, but form part of communities like you."(Quran6:38). Allah reminds us in Quran not to temper with his divine balance.

Main trustee and vicegerent- The following Quran verses emphasize the point " Believe in Allah and his messenger and spend of that where of he hath made you trustees and such of you as believe and spend (a right) there will be a reward. (Quran 57:7). So we are mere trustees of the wealth in our possession.

For environmental crisis, Quran call us to recognize our own contribution to the crisis. The sanctity of planting trees- Prophet Mohammad said that if one plants a tree then whatever is eventually eaten from it by humans, animals counts for the planter as an act of charity.

Equilibrium of all lives- Muslims believe that all creation of Allah including animals, trees glorify God (Allah) in their way and bow down in worship all things that are in the heavens and on the Earth, Sun, Moon, Stars, Hills, Trees, Animals and Mankind. (Quran 22: 18). Allah reminds us in the Quran, not to temper this divine balance (measure). In Quran, " The sky he hath uplifted and He hath set the divine balance, not to destroy divine balance but measure strictly , nor fall short there of." (55:7-9). Hence, irresponsible deforestation and wanton killing of even the tiniest of God's creature is strongly discouraged in Islam.

Conservation- Wastefulness is a major contributing factor to our present woes. So in life, reduce, reuse and recycling should be the moto in the modern time. The Quranic caution, " But waste not by excess: for Allah love not the wasters." The principle of conservation is illustrated by the following rule, Islamic act of worship: while making ablutions in the preparation for prayer, use minimum water. Muslims following this rule is must, due to conservation of water and other natural resources as divine provisions.

The Quran calls us to recognize our own contribution to the crisis. " corruption doth appear on land and sea because of (the evil) which men's hands have done, that he may make them taste apart of that which they have done, in order they may return. (Quran: 30: 41). Due to deterioration of our environment and our natural resources, we need to do our best to restore, preserve and conserve the balance in Nature. Allah has appointed us as viceroys and trustees of Earth planet. So it is our responsibility to save and flourish the planet. We can do some efforts. Reduce, Reuse and Recycle should be the main theme of

living style. For reforestation, plantation should be encouraged at high level. We should conserve and should not pollute the natural resources such as water, air, land and sky.

Christianism- Christianity has a long tradition of reflection on Nature and human responsibility. Christian environmentalist opposes policies and practices that threaten the health or survival of the planet. According to Bible, human is keeper, we are called “Steward of the Earth”. There are three principles—We all live on the same planet and ultimately dependent on natural fruits of earth for the life support. So every individual person should take care of nature and its elements.

1. God created world and therefore values all his works for creation(Principle of creation value).
2. God created and sustain all elements and systems in his creation within practical order to meet certain outgoing purposes.(Principle of sustain of order and purpose).
3. Everything in the created world and universe is subject to corruption by sin and ultimate redemption through Jesus Christ. (Principle of universal corruption and redemption).

According the direction of holy books (keep in Middle) country policy makers should emphasis the following strategies for sustainable development.

The concept of sustainable development gives the new direction of resource conservation strategies which are:

1. Conservation or reduction of excessive resource use.
2. Recycling and reuse of material.
3. More use of renewable resources like Solar, Air and Water energy rather than non-renewable resources such as oil and coal.

Sustainable development requires fulfilling basic needs for all people of the world not luxury for some people. Ecological interest of the whole world is same eg effects of pesticides, insecticides, fertilizers and irrigation practices are common in every country. One country should share to another country.

For sustainable development in the world, we require policy changes at the global level . The key points of all religion about conservation, environment, moral and spiritual from east to west should combine (keep in middle) than policy makers innovate and discover the new policies for sustainable development.

There are some obstacles in the path of sustainable development.

1. High technology
2. Non conservation
3. Deforestation
4. Population
5. Economic policy

Instead of these obstacles, we should follow the

1. Appropriate technology
2. Conservation
3. Reforestation
4. Space ship economy

Characteristic feature of appropriate technology

1. Small to medium sized are used, which maximize human output.
2. Technology is simple and easy to understand.
3. Employees do a variety of tasks resulting in increased output.
4. It is less capital intensive and maintenance is easy.
5. Local resources are used, products are mainly created for local use. leading to self sufficiency.
6. Decentralized production and control and small amount of pollution.
7. It emphasis the use of natural biodegradable material.
8. Small amount of energy and material input and small amount of pollution.
9. The use of renewable energy resources emphasized.
10. Compatible with local culture and the environment.
11. It encourages local talents and handicrafts and the products are durable.

New global economic system

Appropriate technology is advantageous and is boon. It increases happiness, health and satisfaction, it gives employment and should reduce corruption and crime. Some economist believe that new economic system at global level is necessary for long term survival of the human race.

On contrary, the present economic growth system is indexed by maximum flow of money, maximum production, maximum consumption, maximum resource use and maximum profit.

The **frontier economy** should be replaced by **spaceship economy** which says that earth like a spaceship is a closed system. Spaceship economy or a sustainable economy promotes recycling, reuse and reduce. It emphasize on conservative use of renewable resources, product durability and a clean and healthy environment. Broken goods should repair rather than replaced. Harmful non degradable wastes would be eliminated as much as possible.

In future, patterns of developments should be based less on materialism. There should be some common and major goals that developed and developing nations need to set to achieve a sustainable economy.

Conservation—For sustainable development basis, earth's natural resources must be used smartly to enhance their utility without prejudice. The solar energy, wind energy

and water energy can help us to maximize the benefits with minimum damage to natural resources.

Population--- UNO has warned the countries about population growth. For achieving goals of sustainable development, the population growth should be controlled.

Here I want to relook at the definition of developed and un-developed countries. The countries involved in polluting ecosystem in name of Science and Technology for their own comfort and luxury and to raise living standard. Similarly those countries who exploit environment to develop arms and advanced weapons can not be graded as developed countries. Rather, those countries which are eco-friendly, happy, healthy and where basic living needs are satisfied and economy is stable. Those who live with peace and harmony with human kind and nature are real developed countries.

To achieve path of sustainable development we must have to think about pollution free and green planet for generation. Countries have to invest on long term futuristic goals and develop policies likewise keeping in mind the real meaning of development.

In search of wisdom and knowledge, human have discovered the path of religion which can enlighten mankind towards new attitude, culture and society. It would be best to follow popular **Buddha's Middle-path** concept which means balanced growth.

Thank-you.

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