

Sustainable Development: Opportunities & Challenges

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ABSTRACT :-

The article attempts to understand the challenges & opportunities implied within the concept of Sustainable Development. The need to balance need for development and balancing the interface with the nature & environment are important. Human interaction with environment is not new, however in present times of neoliberal driven globalization, rise of new forms of technology, new infrastructure, have had a drastic impact on ecology. The concept of Sustainable Development brings out that how global relations have local impact, and the perils for existence of humankind, which therein call for appropriate corrective action.

Keywords: Development, Ecology, Globalization, Growth, Policy Making

INTRODUCTION:

Sustainable development is the key word to carry forward in domestic as well as international affairs. Though today because of presence of an interconnected World, what is local and what is global are interwoven. Sustainable development has been a guiding idea for influencing major international acts, conferences and summits. It has lead to rethinking and redefinition of what is meant by power, security and development in the realm of both domestic and international relations.

HISTORICAL INSIGHTS:

Globalization is the system of development which all countries of the world are following or making all efforts to follow. This idea posits that when governments charge taxes on goods crossing borders, then economic progress is hampered. Globalization relies on the idea of open markets which means that countries have to allow goods of all other countries to be sold in their markets. In an open market system, governments cannot discriminate between domestic and international manufacturers of goods. In this way there is an open competition between products coming from around the world.

Globalization is nothing new as movement of ideas and people has always been there since dawn of human civilization. However the rapid pace and rampant outreach of contemporary neo-liberal driven process of globalization, for all nations, entails challenges & opportunities. This requires a thorough study and understanding of notion of sustainable development, focusing on its three pillars. The aim of the paper is to narrate the significance of sustainable development strategies, as seen in context of a globalized world which is having its impact at every local level too. While elaborating and debating on the conceptual framework for globalization, one must take into account to depict how to reform and change it to let it sustain at beneficial terrain in a sustained way, to even places where technology is not

available or are geographically cut off from mainland. As globalization has led to space time compression in rampant way, which has had its pros and cons, positives and negatives.

When we talk about Silk Road across Central Asia that connected China and Europe during the middle Ages or trading by European companies in other countries in times of imperialism, it can be pointed that the idea of inter-change and exchange did exist in the past as well. Globalization is not new, but the 'scale and nature' of interconnectedness of the world makes globalization peculiar to current times.

Human civilizations have come together to form a single world system in the past also. This has occurred in broadly three waves. In the first wave, globalization was mainly driven by European explorers coming to other parts of the world like India, and establishing colonies there. This was called the age of discovery. This phase lasted roughly from 1450 to 1850 AD. According to American Sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein's concept of 'world system', capitalist economic foundation of globalization was laid as early as in 16th century. The second wave which lasted from 1850 to 1945 was the period of expansion of European Empires. Since the end of Second World War, world has indeed become more inter-linked through innovations and advances in sciences, travel and transportation, communications, and information technology. The defeat of the Axis powers and the de-colonization of Third World countries revived the global flows and international exchanges. The neo-liberal policy and structural measures under the rubric of market capitalism propelled changes. The early 1980s witnessed Reagan administration in the USA and the Thatcher government in the UK, global debt crisis, the fleshing out of neo-liberal Washington Consensus, imposition of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) on developing countries, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War hastened the acceptance by nations of capitalism as the only viable economic order that could create wealth.

CAN DEVELOPMENT BYPASS ENVIRONMENT?

Today with rampant increase in trade, communication, technology, there are many examples of degradation of environment. There are new challenges for biodiversity, wetlands, oceans, survival of islands, and availability of fresh water. There is an alarming increase for loss in worldwide genetic diversity in agricultural crops has been lost since 1900. The oceans of the world are being filled with plastic. There is a global concern about the health of glaciers, ozone layer, and oceans. Governments from around the world are coming together in multilateral forums to tackle climate change. Globalization depends on the spread of capitalism around the world. And capitalism depends heavily upon those industries which extract a lot of minerals from the earth like coal, petroleum, gas, etc. Hence we see that with more globalization, there is increase in industrialization and increase in pollution.

Countries that are rapidly industrializing today (like India, China, Brazil, South Africa, and Nigeria) are also witnessing a rapid degradation of their environment. For more development of economy, there must be more production of goods, and for more production of goods there must be a demand in the market for those goods. This is where consumerism comes in. Consumerism as being spread by globalization encourages people to buy more and consume more than they need. This is the result of consumerism as well as the idea of individualism.

Global warming is damaging the Earth's climate as well as the physical environment. Impacts began to be felt in different parts of the world about forty years ago, from the mid-1970s. One of the most visible effects of global warming can be seen in the Arctic as glaciers, permafrost and sea ice are melting rapidly. Global warming is harming the environment in several ways including: Desertification, Increased melting of snow and ice, Sea level rise, Ozone Depletion and Degradation, Stronger hurricanes and cyclones, Impact on Agriculture, Ecosystems etc. Unlike most other forms of pollution, the source of carbon dioxide and its effects are felt can be very far apart. Carbon dioxide generated in the United States affects the Maldives. A significant portion of CO₂ remains in the atmosphere for thousands of years. Also, climate change continues for a thousand years even after emissions stop. Hence, climate change is here to stay. It is the new normal.

ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS- FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL:-

In 1972, with the United Nations (U.N.) Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm. This paved way for environment being the focus for international diplomatic relations. The contextual evidence was clearly evident, namely acid rain, Smog, oil tanker spill, amongst others which brought to light the need to place environment protection as another major focus of international cooperation. Sustainable development has been understood in various ways. However the Brundtland Report: "Our Common Future"- famously defined it as: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Though, Tradeoffs in rich versus poor nations, developed versus developing countries, always existed in global environmental negotiations, yet with time, more and more environment issues came to light. It was at the United Nations- U.N. Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)—held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, that placed significance on the connection between environmental protection and social and economic development. This also made for new avenues for international cooperation and rise of new concern in global affairs, other than traditional ones.

Acidification, biodiversity, climate change, chemical and nuclear accidents, ozone layer depletion, waste transport, all became issues to be worth of attention both in domestic and international relations. It called for the need for harmonized environmental policies as well. It highlighted tensions of environmental regulation with respect to other development issues. There was rise in social movements to put pressure on nations to act and to cooperate with other countries to protect the environment.

Today, Nation all over the world has come a long way. They are being made to think and ponder over consequence of natural resources depletion. Further "environmental security is a key concern for everyone for their policy concern. Agenda 21, Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) , Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), are examples to show while discussion on environmental regimes for the the need to factor in international cooperation to deal with local to global, other social, economic, and ecological changes and challenges brought out by environmental degradation. Trade liberalization in present times has lead to exploitation of our natural resources as goods for export or import.

There are questions being posed to policy makers that whether development gains lead and compel countries to overexploitation of their forests, fisheries, amongst others. Montreal Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, debate on intellectual property rights (IPR), greenhouse gas emissions trading in the context of the Kyoto Protocol to the FCCC, demand answers that till what extent mere tariffs on trade can help the cause of

environment. Ethical and distributive issues also demand attention that what are the tradeoffs involved in this environmental bargains and at same time keeping pace with nature.

This is why today the idea of Sustainability is the main criteria for governance of nation's organizations, and the emerging as epitome for today's leading global framework for international cooperation— and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). When one tries to deliberate and understand the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, each of the SDGs have specific targets to be achieved by 2030. What is essential to note is plurality inbuilt here, that the goals and targets are universal, meaning they apply to all countries around the world, wherein in order to achieve the goals requires action on all fronts and arenas- governments, businesses, civil society, informal forums etc.

Global Relations have witnessed huge changes in the present times. New concerns have questioned existence of unilateral knowledge and systems. Multidimensional perspective with multidisciplinary perspective is needed for comprehensive ideas of global issues. Global warming, greenhouse gas emissions, climate change, have led nations across the globe to apply focus on the need for by re-use and re-cycling, which also implies shifts in operations towards a circular economy. Debates on issues of Circular economy, show that there is interdependence and intersections amongst various sections and realms, which have implications for global relationship too. It tries to show transnational concerns that are acquiring primacy in international issues too, inputs, waste, which are highly significant for energy security and working out efficient models of international business too. Circular economy is not only critical of linear model, but also highlights need for thinking on repair, reuse, remanufacturing, recycling. At the same time, one cannot ignore the mechanism and issues that arise wherein many governments barely consider circular economy measures. Accelerating development, deliberating on Climate change and material use input, national strategic interest in processing and manufacturing in having right stake in international business, are aspects that are all closely linked

CONCLUSION:-

Today, there are rising concern for international commitments, efforts and focus of analysis towards twin aims of both sustainability and development. With the rise of nontraditional security dimensions like ecological degeneration, global warming, climate change, and emergence of International environmental agreements, the interlocking of issues of international relations and sustainable development is evident too. Although Sustainable development and issues of Sustainability emerged as a distinctly in many discipline only in the last quarter of the 20th century, yet today no issue in any discipline, - global politics, domestic policy making, international business, is isolated & immune from its impacts.