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ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Sustainable development is the imperative of the 21 Century said Mr Ban Moon, Secretary General United Nations². The indiscriminate use of the resources is a threat than the legitimate use of the same. The Global warming is a serious issue for the world. This paper tries to highlight who is contributing to this global warming and what they are doing it to control. It also evaluates the reason for the unsustainable development and its impact. It concludes with the solutions to educate the youth to ensure the mitigation of the issue permanently.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

India as country, did not see much development during the colonial rule of the British. Post-independence, the first five year plan emphasised on the industrialisation giving priority to heavy and infrastructure development projects. The agriculture industry was on the back foot giving way to the mega infrastructural projects. Without much exposure to the planned sustainable disciplined industrialisation the country headed ahead limping, which resulted in the present mess of unsustainable development. The best democracy of the world ensured the unlimited freedom to damage and escape the law. Even though the state control on the industries was ensured to control the environmental and economic violations, they miserably failed to implement because of the lack of accountability and discipline which has further aggravated in all these years. The excessive control gave rise to excessive corruption leading to the compromise of all the sustainable requirement. Everyone used their discretion to deviate from the requirement and to promote an unhealthy development projects. The industries went into competition amongst themselves to deviate and have last laugh on the compliance industries. Bhopal Gas tragedy was a living example to the systemic disaster. We seem to have forgotten all that and heading in the same way.

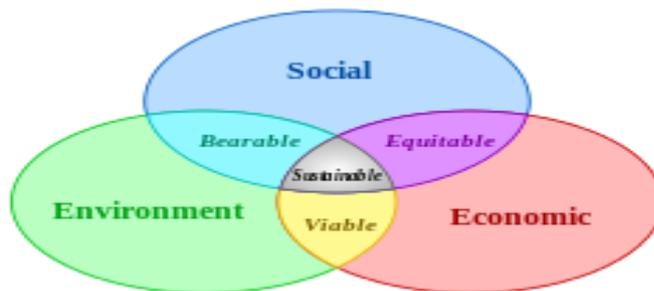
The example of the real estate industry in Bengaluru is a live example where the lakes were dried and acquired by builders after de-notification. Also all over India, the agricultural lands were acquired for the industries which were sold to the builders after two decades to make more money instead of job creating industries.

It is a fact that the humans need the nature and there is enough for the need of everyone. The challenge is the greed of the people. The indiscriminate use of the resources is a threat than the legitimate use of the same. Therefore understating the need the, the United Nations world commission on Environment & Development Commission in 1987 defined the phrase 'Sustainable development' as the 'meeting needs of the poor while not increasing environmental problems'. Etymologically of the phrase 'sustainable development' leads to the Brundtland Report in 1987. It is the policy of the world population to exploit the natural resources to a level that it can rejuvenate itself. Sustainable development is the

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² <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39647#.WBfsLvI97IU>

imperative of the 21 Century said Mr Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General United Nations³. Sad it is still a decorative word for most without understanding the necessity and the importance of the two components of the phrase, i.e. Sustainable and Development. As usual it is also stretched to interpret the preconceived set of individual ideas. It is also the use of the natural resources to a level without jeopardising the capacity of the future generation's requirements. The present generation, not being the owners, have no right to destroy it. They need to protect it as trustees and handover the nature and its resources as it is the next generation. It was a path breaking move to take forward the whole concept of bringing together the two opposite forces needed for existence of mankind. The developmental activities should be so much that they should not be impacting the nature to a non-irreversible process.



Picture courtesy: <http://thesustainableleader.org>

This is also called the Triple Bottom Line comprising the Social, Environment and Economical aspects. The development is an artificial man made process towards liberating the poor from their curse of poverty. Since it is an human intervention to alter the nature to increase the resources, it interacts with nature, which when uncontrolled has an adverse impact on nature. And environment is a gift of creation to facilitate the healthy living of the living beings which are interdependent and interacting in existence. This conflict between the development and the environment has given rise to the theory of 'Doom and gloom'. The freedom of development should limit itself to a level of the reversible state so as to not to impact the regenerative capacity of the nature. To ensure this the society needs to consider the triple issues comprising of environment, economics, and social needs. The point where they align is the sustainable part of the whole development scenario. This needs to be understood by everyone so that the nature is taken care and at the same time the poverty also is eradicated by the development. Emphasis on either of them in slight excess is detrimental to the human sustenance because of which the term Sustainable development takes its importance.

The two words and the explanation could be easily understood by everyone who knows the English language. The trouble is in its interpretation and application. We suffer with the problem of perspectives. Every person or an organisation has its own interpretation with respect to a development project and its sustainability factors. The scientific studies are successful in providing the main substance for reasoning against or for the project. But the point of concern is the bias of the people towards their own subject or project. This kind of approach defeats the whole process of evaluating the sustainability of the development projects.

The United Nations initiated a forum called United Nations Global compact to encourage ethical and sustainable business. A new platform was established to ensure Sustainable Development Goals. Many companies have begun to align or map the content of their sustainability reports with the global goals. Then world's two leading frameworks in corporate sustainability, came together to enable reporting on the SDGs. To monitor and manage the sustainable development goals, a voluntary organisation Global reporting initiative developed standard protocols for the Corporates on the basis of TBL. GRI standards are the first of its kind global standards for voluntary sustainability reporting. They feature a systematic structured procedure to report on the TBL.

For more than fifteen years, the UN Global Compact and GRI have pioneered and cooperated in sustainability reporting. The UN Global Compact receives over 5,000 Communications on Progress

³ <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39647#.WBfsLvI97IU>

each year from participants in over 160 countries, and the total number of GRI reports has exceeded 20,000 in over 95 countries.⁴

ENVIRONMENT

The environment is the creations in which we live and interact every day. It is the land, air, and water we need every day. The indiscriminate intervention with the nature to alter it to suit the human greed has many places showed its draconian impact. The famous botanist Ms Rachael Carson had warned us about the use of pesticides in her book 'Silent spring'. She had found that the evidence to prove the relation between the pesticides being carcinogenetic leading to human cancer⁵. The world did take note of it, but ignored it to suit the greed of our society. One glaring example is the Punjab agricultural success story. The sixty years of the increased productivity achieved by using the chemicals has resulted in slow accumulation of the toxins within water, soil, and entering food chain of the region. It is available on the internet that the considerable population of the state of Punjab has been suffering with cancer but we try to push it under the carpet to introspect our mistakes.

S.No	Total cases reported	Count	%
1	Total malignancies reported	5,737	100
2	Female	3,257	56.8
3	Male	2,480	43.2

Table 1. Total and frequently reported cancers, stratified by gender and age-group (Jan. 1, 2014-Dec. 31, 2014)⁶

In the case of the Tirupur textile industrial growth in the last two decades, there was an indiscriminate development improving the social and economic issues but leaving behind the environment circle. This circle pulled down the growth when it went beyond control. The effluent discharged into the ground without the proper use of technology and slack respect to the laws led to the closure of many plants. As per the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and the Loss of Ecology Authority report the thousands of hectares of agricultural lands have been damaged leading to the reduction of the agricultural production.

In 14.07.2005 The Hon'ble High Court of Tamil Nadu expressed its displeasure on the conduct of the industrial units in not installing the Reverse Osmosis Plants as agreed to reach Zero Discharge status and recorded.

Positive environmentalism is a word which refers to a pro-technology, pro-progress perspective of protecting the world's environment. There are fundamentally two approaches to environmental action. One is negative environmentalism, full of doom and gloom, and another one is positive environmentalism which means that, while representing the project in any way, everyone should avoid criticisms or negativity but instead just be a supporter of positive environmental initiatives wherever they come from on all sides in the community. This approach seeks to influence the issue as partners -- and not as adversaries⁷

All the people of this country have the same right on all the natural resources. All the people should have the same right to exploit till there is an equitable sharing of the resources. One poor man has his per capita carbon foot print in double digit decimal and the rich has his in double digit. Therefore it is necessary to develop till this per capita carbon foot is almost reached to a sustainable level.

1	Country	Per Capita Carbon Emissions
2	India	1.64
3	USA	17.5

⁴ <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/>

⁵ Silent Spring, Rachael Carson

⁶ http://www.punjabcancerregistry.org.pk/reports/PCR2_2014.pdf

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Positive_environmentalism

4	UK	7.96
5	France	5.75
6	Japan	9.25
7	China	6.18
8	Kuwait	34.24
9	Iran	7.73
11	Vietnam	1.71

Courtesy-<http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/SeriesDetail.aspx?srid=751>

The Global warming is a serious issue for the world. Who is contributing to this global warming and what they are doing to control it. The authors in Hot Topic say that the Asian monsoon is likely to get gradually wetter which could also result in flooding, which needs to be seen even after so many years.⁸

Carbon credit is a term used as the quantitative measure to trade the permit representing the right to emit one tons of carbon dioxide or the other greenhouse gas with a carbon dioxide equivalent to one tons of carbon dioxide. Carbon credits and carbon markets are a component of national and international attempts to mitigate the growth in concentrations of greenhouse gases. One carbon credit is equal to one tons of carbon dioxide, or in some markets, carbon dioxide equivalent gases. However this process called off in 2013. However the Paris agreement in the year Dec 2015 has revived the whole process again. It was opened for the signature on 22 April 2016 in New York City. As of October 2016, 192 UNFCCC members have signed the treaty, 87 of which have ratified it. After the European Union ratified the agreement in October 2016, there were enough countries that had ratified the agreement that produce enough of the world's greenhouse gases for the agreement to enter into force

By October 2016, 191 states and the European Union have signed the Agreement. 87 of those parties have ratified or acceded to the Agreement. China, United States, and India, the countries with three of the largest greenhouse gas emissions of the signatories totalling to 42%.

The Dr Karthikeyan report of the high level working group on Western Ghats are a very good example of the research texts. The exploitation of the Western Ghats by the rich, need to be stopped immediately; without affecting the livelihood of the poor and tribal.

As per the analysis of the High Level Working Group headed by Dr Karthikeyan, revealed that close to 60 per cent of the Western Ghats region is under cultural landscape which is human dominated land use of settlements, agriculture and plantations (other than forest plantations) and only 41 per cent of the land area can be currently classified as natural landscape. Of the natural landscape, the biologically rich area, with some measure of contiguity is roughly 37 per cent of the Western Ghats which is alarming.⁹ But till now the will to ensure the effective measure is lacking from the administration.

The subject of environment has been included as part of the curriculum from the last decade in under graduation levels. However the poetry on this subject was there from many years. However the focus on the development was missing in the student's curriculum. The emphasis on the environment, blinded the students and the teachers against the requirement of the development to ensure social justice to the poor. It is true that the students are overloaded with the inclusion of many subjects.

We should evaluate and understand, what exactly needs to be taught to the children and how. In this regard the western education system can show us the way in which they have been doing effectively. The society needs better human beings than the qualified human beings. Whatever they become, first they should try to become good human beings. With this objective in mind we should frame our education system so that the children can acquire qualities to develop himself as a good citizen from whom the society can benefit. They should be trained to teach themselves whatever they need to become good people.

⁸ Hot Topic. Gabrielle Walker and Sir David King

⁹ Dr Karthikeyans HLWG Report on western Ghats

One major difference between the Indian education and the western education is the word 'Why'. The west teaches them to ask the question why, whereas we snub them from asking why. The word why allows them explore the reasons behind the question which can clarify them further and change with time. Every succeeding generation comes with the exposure to the fresh thinking and inventions which should be harnessed and developed in a forward thinking approach instead of looking back and hold on to those. They should be facilitated with the skill to survive in this imperfect world for which they need to be taught with human values of sharing and caring. The sharing and caring is an element of the sustainable development wherein all the people poor or rich share the same environment viz, air, water, and land.

CONCLUSION

It is a fact that the humans need the environment and there is enough for the need of everyone. Along with the environment they also need the development. The challenge is the greed of the people. The indiscriminate use of the resources is a threat; than the legitimate use of the same. Considering the dramatic rise in the population, there is no other way other practical way other than the industrialisation, through which employment can be generated to feed the poor of the world. If you ask me, I would say the focus on Positive Environmentalism is fundamental to our development. Always face the sunshine and your shadows will fall behind you. It is true that uncontrolled industrialization will create havoc with all sorts of pollution around making it unfit for living. However, it can be controlled to the limit of human tolerance until a balance is achieved between growth and environment, neither of the parties should take advantage of each other¹⁰

Therefore it is imperative that the society adopts the principle of sustainable development to ensure uniform growth for the betterment of the future generation



- Courtesy:<http://topenglishlessons.blogspot.in/2015/03/sustainable-development.html>

The principles of Sustainable Development includes mainly other things

- Strategy and policy
- Review and assessment of policies
- Living with Environment and sustainable development
- Ecology and sustainability
- Social aspects of sustainability
- Political Dimensions of sustainability
- Economic, Social and natural resources

¹⁰ Sale of souls, Vidyadhar Durgekar, 2013

- Good governance, Control and regulations
- Future visions and scenarios

We have lost considerable number of years, to understand and implement the sustainable way of development. It can only be done through the effective knowledge sharing with the future generation. There is an immediate necessity of the sustainable environmental education to be more focussed on the scientific approach with the commitment to the people around. The education needs to be more rational than emotional in nature without any bias towards the subject nor the research. The assessment reports needs to be authenticated or the authors need to be accountable for the lapse in the report. The honesty is essential in promoting the environmental issues which have direct impact on the eradication of poverty.

The Corporates and the industrial houses needs to be more ethical and accountable to the society failing which serious action to be taken by the government. It is only possible if the society as a whole is valuing the ethical practices. Which is again the factor of value education system.

There are enough or more legislations in India but poor application because of the slackened justice delivery system. Need to strengthen the effective monitoring and implementation machinery. The youth has to be educated to understand both the sides of the issues instead of relying on sided education. They should be taught to reason everything given to them before accepting it. The education needs to be based more on their own study and field study rather than lecturing.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, *Environment*, *Poverty alleviation*, *Environment Education*

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