
Sustainable Development through Recent and Higher Education in India

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is maintaining a balance between the human need to improve lifestyles and feeling of well-being on one hand, and preserving natural resources and ecosystems, on which we and future generations depend. Thus, it does not focus solely on environmental issues. More broadly, it encompasses the three general policy areas namely economy, environment and society. It was a key issue on the agenda at the 1992 U.N. Conference on environment and development (UNCED) on the Earth Summit, held in Rio and Janeiro. Higher Education for sustainable development means including key issues of sustainable development into teaching and learning like climate change, disaster risk reduction, greenhouse effect and poverty reduction. In other words, it is a critical training for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to

address environment and development issues (Melnychuk, 2003). It allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. In this research paper, an attempt has been made to create awareness among people about benefits of sustainable development and highlights the role of recent and higher education for sustainable development in India.

Keywords: Sustainable Development through higher education

Introduction

Sustainable development is a practice which involves human's intelligence, decision making efficiency, planning and management skills, development and production with environmental security etc. The issue related to sustainable development can be seen as one of the basics of any nation. Therefore, its major field of concern has been for the environment, but its applicability has been extended to covering almost each human attempt. The discussion is the main element in education for sustainable development.



Environmental education is the essential education to study the sustainable development. In other words, it can be able to make a path for education for sustainable development. Any researcher who is working for education for sustainable development can support the mode of life explained by value based interpretation of sustainable development. In the last decade, the education for this development has been accepted as a main policy which is the utmost need of the day for each country. Therefore, the sustainable development has obtained the due attention on international forum not only by researchers or environmentalists but also by the chiefs of several countries.

Initially sustainable development was discussed globally in UN Conference on Human Environment Stockholm in 1972. After that in 1987 UN World Commission on Environment and Development published a report on “Our Common Future” which was also promoted as Brundtland Report then concern for a sustainable development was came into consideration. In UN Earth Summit 1992, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, a conscious thought was emerged for environmental problems along with solutions to resolve the problems and the requirement of a multidisciplinary approach was accepted.

Again in 2000, the chief of various countries gathered to discuss the issue of environment conservation under the umbrella of UN. After Johannesburg conference in 2002 on sustainable development, 2005–2014 was declared as “Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (DESD)” by UN General Assembly accepting the significance of Education for Sustainable Development.

It is arrangement of using natural resources in such a way which provides regular individual desires considering the preservation of the environment for coming generations. After Brundtland Report sustainable development was defined as “Sustainable development is the development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. After Rio Earth Summit 1992, the role of education to avoid the ecological degradation was accepted as a result of Rio Declaration on Environment and development.

Higher Education for Sustainable Development is an indication of education which aims to empower the individuals to assume accountability to build a sustainable future. The thought of sustainable development touches aspects of the institutional and social framework. There has

been increasing identification of the important role of education in promoting sustainable development since 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

Concept of Sustainable Development

The most frequently used definition of Sustainable development is from the Brundtland Report “Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present (people) without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs”. In other words it is improving the quality of life of the present generation without excessive use or abuse of natural resources, so that they can be preserved for the next generation. The term was first coined in 1972 at the United Nations Conference on Human Environment at Stockholm. The most important piece of writing on Sustainable development is in the publication by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987 titled „Our Common Future”. In 1992 at the Earth summit at Rio-de-Janerio, 170 countries signed many important documents on sustainable development pledging preservation of environment.

Goals of Sustainable Development

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the “Universal, Integrated and Transformative” 2030 Agenda for sustainable development which is based on 17 sustainable development goals. These goals are to be enforced and attained in every country from the year 2016 to 2030. These goals are following:

- ❖ Eradicate poverty
- ❖ No Hunger
- ❖ Secure Health and Welfare i.e. Well being
- ❖ Character Education (quality education)
- ❖ No Gender discrimination
- ❖ Fresh and Clean Water and Sanitation
- ❖ Low priced and Clear Energy
- ❖ Acceptable Work and Economic Development
- ❖ Industry, Innovation and Contour
- ❖ Debase inequality
- ❖ Sustainable cities and Hamlet
- ❖ Amenable Consumption and Production
- ❖ Hostilities Climate Change and it Impact
- ❖ Reduce Marine Pollution

- ❖ Prevent and Improve sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.
- ❖ Lessen all forms of Violence and make Justice
- ❖ Join hand to achieve goals

Dimensions of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development requires balanced integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions. Integration of

these three dimensions is an urgent shift in policy approach because of the widening income and other gaps in society and the breach of planetary boundaries, which places humanity increasingly at risk.

Social

A socially sustainable system must achieve distributional equity, adequate provision of social services including health and education, gender equity, and political accountability and participation.

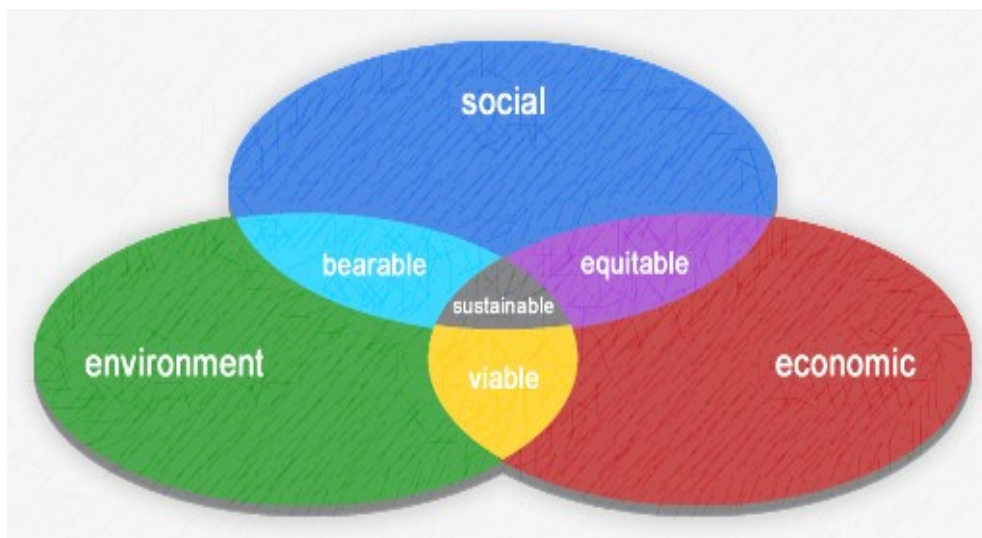


Figure: Dimensions of Sustainable Development

Environmental

An environmentally sustainable system must maintain a stable resource base, avoiding over-exploitation of renewable resource systems or environmental sink functions, and depleting non-renewable resources only to the

extent that investment is made in adequate substitutes. This includes maintenance of biodiversity, atmospheric stability and other ecosystem functions not ordinarily classed as economic resources.

Economic

An economically sustainable system must be able to produce goods and services on a continuing basis, to maintain manageable levels of government and external debt, and to avoid extreme sectorial imbalances which damage agricultural or industrial production.

Challenges of Sustainable Development

At present time, sustainable development has become a key concern at state, national and international level concerning education policy since last decade. Various stakeholders recognize the sustainable development in different ways and search for different outcomes. There are some specific challenges in the implementation of sustainable development in higher education and can be understood as:

- Poor communication skills in higher educational institutes for the term sustainable development and also in its application.
- Lack of trained professionals in higher educational institutes.
- Requirement of inter-disciplinary research in sustainable development manner.

- Collaboration, networking and coordination among different educational institutes.

Higher Education for Sustainable Development

The higher education for sustainable development enables the students and provides the direction for their mindset and aware for a sustainable future. Education for sustainable development is significant aspect of quality of education and it forms foundation of sustainable development and highlights the difficulties and interrelation of society, environment and economy of the country. Environmental education for sustainable development in higher educational institutes is very helpful to prepare a cadre of environmentalists who can promote it further by post graduate and research scholars and finally output may be useful for the government. There should be an interrelationship between technology and economic development. Therefore, the research in higher educational institutes should be field based. Besides, workshops, seminars and training programs on sustainable development should be organized for college and university faculties and also for students to prepare a group of experts.

Today 20 years has been passed when Earth Summit was held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 to consider the issues of sustainable development and after that Rio+20 has also been organized in 2012 for sustainable development. According to the Census 2011, the literacy rate is rising constantly and is estimated 82.14% for men and 65.46 percent for women. The National Environment Policy, 2006 of India represents the country's commitment to a clean environment in all development activities. The execution of policies with financial provisions possesses a key role during Five Year Plan. Some of the environmental challenges like deterioration of environmental quality, climate change and depletion of natural resources are emerging day by day rapidly. India, as a part of United Nations, is enthusiastic to recognize the global development goals. India has signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and acceded to the Kyoto Protocol in 2002. Moreover, the country has also become a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1993. Besides, India has been selected as host under Thematic Programme Network (TPN) for the Asian Regional Action Programme on "Agroforestry and Soil Conservation" by United Nations Convention to Combat

Desertification (UNCCD). India is achieving the major goals for sustainable development through its higher educational institutes. However, in this direction we have to adopt novel approaches for environmental regulation and principles for sustainable development considering the institutional role in critical areas. Finally, new tools and more decentralized approaches are required for the sustainable development with crucial role of educational institutes specially of higher education. Many faculties are working within 4 regulatory bodies under MHRD such as UGC, AICTE, Distance Education Council (DEC) and Council of Architecture (CoA), which are also dedicated for the sustainable development through higher education courses.

There are various Components of Higher Education for Sustainability which are:

Envisioning a better future

It establishes a link between long term goals and immediate actions and motivates people to action by harnessing their deep aspirations:

- It identifies relevance and meaning for different people.
- It explores how to achieve change.
- It offers direction and energy to take action.

Critical thinking and reflection

This ability challenges us to examine and question the underlying assumptions that shape our world, knowledge and opinions by looking beneath the symptoms of unsustainable practice.

- Develops the ability to participate in change.
- Provides a new perspective.
- Promotes alternative ways of thinking.

Participation

This process goes beyond consultation, involving people in joint analysis, planning, and control of local decisions:

- It puts decision-making and responsibility for outcomes in the hands of the participants.
- It creates a greater sense of ownership and commitment to action.
- It builds capacity for self-reliance and self-organization.
- It empowers individuals to take action.

Systemic thinking

It recognizes that the whole is more than the sum of its parts, and is a better way to understand and manage complex situations:

- It identifies connections and relationships.
- It shifts thinking from ‘things’ to ‘processes’.
- It integrates decision-making and adaptive management techniques.

Conclusions

So, the countries have joined hands for the betterment of this beautiful earth and can sustain the beautiful and natural species for the future generation. It becomes the very urgent task for each and every one to take responsibilities for the protection of the wonderful natural resources because everyone has the right to see the beauty of the nature. It is truly evident that the sustainable development has become a core of teaching programs within the higher and recent education. At the same time universities need strong methodological support and good international communication in terms of research and development. From the governmental point of view the creation of a national strategy for ESD is among the major tasks for the years to come in many countries of East and Central Europe. The balanced sustainable development for country and the ensuring of sufficiently high quality of people’s life can be possible only through

education which should acquire support at all levels, preserve its historic achievements and yet be permanently in a quest for progress. In relation to sustainability, this quest is urgent. Rapid and Substantial changes have to be achieved in order to support education to play its crucial role in the development of more sustainable economic and social systems.

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