

An Insight to Sustainability in Indian Perspective

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Abstract - It is quite obvious that the societies and the world around us will grow and naturally develop. But in this present day and age, the world is developing at a breakneck speed due to technological advancements. However, the concern is, that we as human beings are not considering the downsides of the unbalanced economic growth including it's on the people's wellbeing and environment. It is high time that the world all over should start changing its perspective on unbalanced growth and become more sensitive towards achieving the goals of sustainability. This paper aims at exploring the literature related to the concept of sustainability and how different sectors like business houses, tourism and energy can reduce their negative impact on the environment by adopting sustainable business practices. It also talks about the various measures being adopted in India so as to contribute towards sustainable development.

Key words: Sustainability, Sustainable Development, Business Sustainability, Sustainable Tourism.

I. INTRODUCTION

All across the globe there has been a rising concern for environmental and climatic change. Other than these, issues related to poverty, social inequality, violation of human rights, health and welfare of people, economic growth etc. are also drawing the attention of national and international institutions, policy makers, governments, researchers, practitioners and academicians. As a result, the concept of sustainability is under spotlight. Due to an increasing awareness and pressure from national and international regulations, and from society so many individuals, groups and communities have come together to attain the goal of sustainable development.

It is quite evident that sustainable development cannot be achieved through isolated initiatives. It requires an integrated effort at various levels and across different sectors so that policies and principles can be formulated and adopted so as to become socially, environmentally and economically responsible.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE: SUSTAINABILITY

SUSTAINABILITY DEFINITIONS

One of the most famously accepted definition of sustainability was given by Brundtland Commission when it released its final report, Our Common Future in the year 1987 [1]. It defines sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSMP, 2013) [2] defines corporate sustainability as efforts a company makes related to conducting business in a socially and environmentally responsible manner.

Many definitions of sustainability have been derived from the concept of the "Triple Bottom Line" (Elkington 1997) [3]. "Triple Bottom Line" is one of the most widespread concepts in the literature that considers sustainability as the integration of the economic, social, and environmental goals of a firm. These goals namely economic, social and environmental are also considered to be the three pillars of sustainable development by the Brundtland Commission.

The economic dimension addresses that human communities should be able to maintain their independence and have access to the resources to secure their livelihood. The social aspect is concerned with human rights and employees' health and safety while the environmental facet assures waste minimization, emission reduction and protection of natural resource depletion (Bansal and McKnight 2009; Krause et al. 2009) [4].

Triple Bottom Line is also generally called: People, Profit and Planet (3Ps). The intersection of these three dimensions depicts the core of sustainability (Mertcan 2015) [5].

The term "sustainability" has been defined in journals from various technical fields, such as environmental science, management and social science (Linton et al. 2007) [6].

The concept of sustainability is fairly new. Although there are some common descriptions of sustainability in the literature, there exists a variety of definitions of sustainability in existing research

According to Hockerts (1999) [7] sustainability can be defined as any state of business in which it meets the needs of its stakeholders without compromising its ability also to meet their needs in the future.

Hockerts and Dyllick (2002) [8] define sustainability as consumption of natural resources at a rate that can be

naturally replenished and the emissions of waste at a rate that can be absorbed by nature.

Ehrenfeld (2005) [9] defines sustainability as the possibility that all forms of life will flourish forever.

One of the another definition of sustainability as defined by Porter and Kramer (2006) [10] is: "Securing long-term economic performance by avoiding short-term socially detrimental and environmentally wasteful behavior".

According to Carter and Rogers (2008) [11] sustainability can be defined as achievement of an organization's social, environmental and economic goals.

Sustainability has been defined by Walker, Di Sisto and McBain (2008) [12] as: "Activities that attempt to improve the environmental performance of purchased inputs, or of suppliers that provide them".

Pagell and Wu (2009) [13] define sustainability as performing well on not only traditional measures of profit but also in social and natural dimensions.

Pfeffer (2010) [14] in his work has defined sustainability as: "An effort to conserve natural resources and avoid waste in operations".

The concept of sustainability has also been defined by Paulraj (2011) [15] as an intersection of economic, environmental and societal superiority.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study presented are:

1. To provide insight to the concept of sustainable development.
2. To present how three selected sectors i.e. Energy, Business and Tourism are working and achieving the goals of sustainable development.
3. To explore sustainable development in the context of India, especially in the modern digital world.
4. To present the measures taken at Centre or State level in India so as to achieve sustainable growth.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present paper is an attempt to examine the concept of sustainability. The concept is further explored in Indian context after selecting 3 sectors: Energy, Business and Tourism. The selection of the sectors reflects the motive of covering the entire management domain taking consideration to environment and society through energy sector, business and corporate houses and lastly touching the service sector through tourism sector. The present paper mainly relies on the secondary data collected through review of literature, government of India publications like annual financial and sustainable development reports from different bodies. The latest schemes and development plans are also analyzed to study

their role and contributions to the sustainable development.

V. SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY

The various sustainable development factors such as economic, social and environmental are strongly related and implemented in the energy generation and use. The entire development of human civilization relies greatly on the availability and use of different energy resources. But despite this, in past few decades the energy sector is neglected to finalize different developmental strategies. But the sustainability in energy sector has added in new concerns in this era. According to the report submitted by the International Institute of Environment and Development, the entire world is facing an energy crisis and it strongly emphasizes on the need of addressing the energy issues and to work on sustainable energy services.

According Çelikler et. al. 2013 [16] and Kacan et al 2015 [17], the concept and twin terms sustainability and renewable energy have emerged as new term, that is acting as means to reduce the negative impacts of various concerns such as natural resource depletion, climate change, energy depletion etc. Due to this the researchers have been greatly attracted to develop different sources of sustainable and renewable energy that can ensure secure energy consumption, protect the environment and also promote the regional development.

According to Charles McConnell [18], energy sustainability relies on three parameters which are as follows:

1. **Access:** For the world's poorest, access to sustainable, healthy sources of energy remains a basic critical need. About 2.4 billion people across the world lack access to clean and safe cooking fuel, while another 1.6 billion people have no access to electricity. Unsustainable use of fuel wood depletes natural resources and its inefficient burning poses the risk of respiratory diseases and illnesses among people. So many renewable energy resources like wind, solar, hydropower etc. are available but they remain under-exploited in most of the poorest countries. Government energy policies need to recognize and support decentralized options for poor consumers. The geopolitical stability of our world will also be driven by accessibility. In many parts of the world, nations rely exclusively on the supply of energy from other nations, which may not be environment friendly. We all know that this cannot be a feasible option for future sustainable energy supply. Therefore, emerging economies like China and India are making strides in sustainable energy innovation. If we especially look at the Indian context, India has some advantage in sustainable and renewable energy issues. This sector has become quite attractive for both

foreign and domestic investors because of the government's ambitious green energy targets. According to a report submitted by brand equity foundation; the energy sector is expected to attract investments of up to US 80 million dollars in the next four years. Also India ranked fourth in Renewable Energy Country Attractive Index 2018.

2. **Affordability:** Apart from accessibility and availability, the cost of using sustainable energy sources is another important parameter in its usage by end consumers. For any nation to grow and prosper, it needs global industry competitiveness, affordability to the general population for health and well-being, and be driven by a low-cost, competitively advantaged portfolio of energy. Developing nations must focus on having an access to the most abundant and lowest-cost options of renewable energy resources to enable their economies to grow. Many times countries artificially subsidize energy costs to consumers in order to provide a better life for its citizens. Ultimately, the cost and competitiveness of a nation's energy supply will be the global measurement to know whether a country is a growing or stagnant economy. The Affordability principle is based on the fact that says that value and cost can be optimised only if there is secure supply of sustainable energy choices.
3. **Responsibility:** This parameter recognises the importance of responsible use of our energy resources including all air, water and land. There is no doubt that in order to achieve long-term sustainability every citizen needs to take the responsibility for the limited supply of resources and the world where we all live in.

The sustainable cycle of energy can only be satisfied if all the three principles i.e. accessibility, affordability and responsibility are aligned together.

VI. SUSTAINABILITY IN BUSINESS AND CORPORATE ORGANIZATIONS

Business sustainability is a process by which companies manage their financial, social and environmental risks, obligations and opportunities and also control its impact on profit, people and planet. Achieving business sustainability strongly requires businesses to adhere to the principles of sustainable development. According to the World Council for Economic Development (WCED), sustainable development is development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." So, for industrial development to be sustainable, it must address important issues at the macro level, such as: economic efficiency (innovation, prosperity, productivity), social equity (poverty, community, health and wellness, human

rights) and environmental accountability (climate change, land use, biodiversity).

According to Admas et al, 2002 [19], business sustainability requires more integrated thinking and reconfiguration of several business aspects such as capabilities, stakeholder relationships, knowledge management, leadership and culture. There are various models and practices taken up by different business houses and even the corporates to achieve business sustainability.

According to Schaltegger. et al 2012 [20], the business model innovation is emerging as a potential measure to integrate sustainability in the businesses. However there is exist a lack of clarity on concept, characterization and classification on sustainable business model. Also, when businesses are considering the innovative business model for sustainability they are primarily not able to assess the impact of sustainable innovation. Despite this, sustainable business development is the need of the hour and every type of business and corporates are using different mechanisms to incorporate sustainability in its activities. Some of the best practices that push the businesses to move along the path from lagers to leaders are:

1. **Customer Engagement:** The businesses not only require deliverance and communication to the customers; rather sustainable business strongly relies on learning from the customers. The sustainable business pushes the customer engagement including understanding customers, finding the common ground and involving customers in the decision-making process of the organization.
2. **Environment Sustainability:** The business sustainability cannot be achieved these days without integrating environmental efficiency in the organizational culture and risks. Green Technology, Green Information Systems are some of the novel terms that cover the combination of environmental sustainability in the business to make the business sustainable in the real sense. Different industrial standards also raise the implementation of best environmental practices to achieve business sustainability.
3. **Reporting and Disclosures:** The accurate measure and control is considered as the main elements of sustainable practices. The organizations are not only required to collect, measure and collate the information from different sources but they also need to be completely transparent with all the stakeholders to achieve business sustainability. The framing and implementation of the Global Reporting Initiative is one of the recognized initiative taken globally to achieve business sustainability.

According to John Wiley & Sons Ltd. [21] the entire sustainable value for the business can be generalized under three value systems achieved through: Environment value forms (including renewable resources, low emissions, low waste, biodiversity etc), the social value forms (including equity and diversity, well-being, community development, secure livelihood, health and safety etc) and lastly Economic value form for the business including profits, return on investments, long term viability etc.)

VII. SUSTAINABILITY AND TOURISM

One of the specific sectors where sustainability can be discussed is tourism. Since tourism is so essentially related to natural areas, it is also one of the major threats to biodiversity and natural resources universally. Therefore, it is extremely essential to undertake efforts to make tourism more sustainable.

The most frequently used definition of sustainable tourism is the one of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO):

"Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support system."

The challenge of sustainable tourism development is to make the best use of tourism's positive impacts, enhancing and channeling the benefits into the right directions, and to avoid or alleviate the negative impacts as far as possible.

Indian tourism has the potential to grow at a high rate and ensure the development of infrastructure at the desired destinations. It has the capability to take advantage of the country's success in the services sector and provide sustainable models of growth.

Since tourism is mainly driven by the private sector and has multiple stakeholders ranging from micro enterprises to large intercontinental corporations; it is very important to determine the impact of these players along with those of tourists and the local communities on the environment.

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, recognized its role in promoting sustainable tourism and extensively deliberated with the industry and other stakeholders to formulate the wide-ranging "Ecotourism in India – Policy and Guidelines".

It has been realized that an integrated approach to tourism planning and management is now required to achieve sustainable tourism.

According to Jamieson and Walter (2000) [22] sustainable tourism needs to be based on some of the important principles mentioned below:

- Tourism should be initiated with the help of broad-based community-inputs and the community should maintain control of tourism development.
- Tourism should provide quality employment to its community residents and a linkage between the local businesses and tourism should be established.
- A code of practice should be established for tourism at all levels - national, regional, and local - based on internationally accepted standards. Guidelines for tourism operations, impact assessment, monitoring of cumulative impacts, and limits to acceptable change should be established.
- Education and training programmes to improve and manage heritage and natural resources should be established.

According to an article by Daniela Dumbraveanu [23], sustainable tourism should be based on principles like:

- Ecological sustainability (practicing tourism forms that do not have an impact on the environment).
- Social sustainability (developing of those forms of tourism that do not upset and disturb the daily life of the population at the tourist destination)
- Cultural sustainability (developing tourism capable of determining the authenticity and individuality of local cultures to be preserved, and avoid their saturation with 'external' cultural influences).
- Economic sustainability (maximizing the economic benefits of the local population as a result of developing tourism).
- Education, preparation, information (educating the tourists about impact generated by them, so as to improve personal attitude towards the environment and reducing the impact)
- Involvement of local community.

In order to achieve the goals of sustainable tourism, the different stakeholders like Governments, tourism businesses, local communities, NGOs and the tourists should cooperate and stimulate each other to put the principles into practice.

VIII. INDIA'S STAND AND VIEW ON SUSTAINABILITY

India is a multi-cultured and full of diversity. In spite of different challenges as it is developing economy, India is always a conscious aspirant in meeting the standards of sustainable development. The sustainability has always been a core component of Indian culture. Its philosophy and values have emphasized a sustainable way of life. From the different yogic principles to the entire study and

practices of Yoga and Ayurveda demonstrates the sustainable holistic Indian living. The sustainable and eco friendly practices are always part of Indian lifestyle and culture. Also, according to Voluntary National Review Report on Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, India is considered one of the least wasteful economies. It has frequently been acknowledged by its stakeholders for its cooperation and efforts to promote climate change mitigation, and environmental sustainability.

In India, the responsibility for overseeing and implementation of sustainable development plans has been assigned to the National Institute for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), which is the premier policy think tank for the Government and its chaired by the Prime Minister of India. NITI Aayog has mapped the country goals, objectives and plans of the country with the world's holistic approach to the sustainable development. Even the states, nodal bodies are mapping their plans with that of sustainable development.

Some, the key recognized initiatives taken by India to promote the sustainable development are identified and summarised as follows:

1. **Thrust for cleaner environment:** The initial framework for the sustainable development has work very closely with the environment protection. So, India's lunch of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and its success surely reflects the India's commitment to the sustainable development goals.
2. **New business strategy - CSR:** The Corporate Social Responsibility is no longer a charity rather its complete business strategy. Business organization are closely looking for business ethics and principles, innovating and implementing different methods and principles to achieve the corporate social responsibility. Separate funds and investments are kept for the CSR activities.
3. **Renewable energy sources:** With strong pitch to work towards the Paris Agreement, the companies are significantly working to focus more and more on renewable fuels such as solar, biofuels and winds. The various public and private corporations are increasingly engaging with the government in policy making to contribute towards effective public-private partnerships on renewables. All major enterprises and organizations in India have ambitious plans for Solar. The rooftop solar system developed by Noida-based Jakson Engineers is one of the directions taken by the Indian Railways Organization for alternate fuels.
4. **Global partnerships for sustainable development:** India is closely working with its neighbouring countries and also the developed countries to achieve the sustainable development goals. Since the developed countries have essential obligations to provide the financial assistance to the developing countries on various issues related to

sustainable development such as climate changes, global warming etc. so India has also taken various stands to have international cooperation through leadership such as solar alliance, south Asian alliance etc.

5. **Sustainability in tourism:** Lastly the tourism in India also reflects India's commitments to achieve the sustainable growth. The tourism tag lines "Incredible India", "Atithi Devo Bhavah" completely reflects the same. Some of the key initiatives in this direction are finalizing the sustainable tourism criteria and Indicators for the hotels and operators, separate financial assistance has been continuously sanctioned to develop the way side amities and even the bio degradable toilets. The entire sustainable tourism reflects the reduction in negatives and significant increase in positive effects in all forms and activities of tourism such as environment, economic growth etc.

IX. CONCLUSION

Sustainability is a pivotal and multi- dimensional aspect which is very essential in the today's environment. Most commonly sustainable development means meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The study concludes with the urge of India, as developing nation to achieve the sustainability in each and every sector and society as a whole. This paper highlights sustainability achievements and issues in 3 sectors namely: energy, tourism and business organizations. It talks about swachh bharat abhiyaan, corporate social responsibility funds, use of renewable energy sources in various government projects and entering into global partnerships to combat the effects of climate change and promoting sustainability as a way of life. The study presents the latest plans and policies in India at the centre and state level to achieve the objective of sustainability as stated in the global forums. It is finally concluded through research that sustainability is the top priority in all policies of India and defiantly a millennium goal for development. The research can further be explored in all domains of management and society.

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