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SUSTAINING THE ENVIRONMENT-NEED OF THE HOUR

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ABSTRACT

The millennium Eco Systems Assessment Report titled "Eco Systems and human well-being" backed by UN and prepared by scientists from 90 countries states that damage wrought by humans on biological diversity over the last 50 years has been formidable. It will grow further in the decades to come with rising population and rising consumption of biological and physical resources. Human induced impacts on eco systems have severely affected global climate while about 40% of agrarian land is degraded during last 5 decades. The destruction of eco system is bound to continue with economic growth. Nearly 60% of natural gifts of the world are either degraded or destroyed in the name of "Economic services" The only solution to this is **sustainable development** which implies preserving bio diversity for continued food security. One of the ways to remedy the situation is to make people directly benefit by conserving the eco systems. With human well-being so closely tied to eco systems the destruction of such eco systems should cease immediately. Many countries struggle with the consequences of unsustainable growth programs, affecting the climate, people and natural resources. Local authorities and their inhabitants are faced with droughts, floods, air pollution, land degradation, deforestation and rising sea levels. By developing sustainable growth policies, local governments in partnership with the community, can improve the quality of life of citizens and contribute to protecting the global environment. The objective of the paper is to discuss the causes of environmental degradation and solutions to safeguard environment within our limits.

Key words: Geothermal, aluminum, recycling, generations, biotic and abiotic, bio diversity

INTRODUCTION

"Environmental problems are really social problems...they begin with people as the cause and end up with people as victims."-Sir Edmund Hillary.

Environment:Environment means the things that surround something or someone. The environment of an organism includes purely physical or abiotic milieu in which it exists and the organic or biotic milieu.

The environment of human being includes the abiotic factors of land, water, atmosphere, climate, sound, odour, tastes and biotic factors of animals, plants, bacteria, viruses and social factor of aesthetics.

Eco system:Any spatial or organizational unit which includes the living and the nonliving constituents interacting with each other and producing an exchange of materials between the two is termed as eco system.

Natural resource: Anything that can be exploited or put to use for the benefit of man is resource. Land, rivers, ponds, lakes, mountains, climate, forests, oil, natural gas provided by nature are called natural resources.

Natural resources may be categorized as: Exhaustible or inexhaustible, maintainable or non maintainable, renewable or non renewable, reusable or non reusable and mutable or immutable.

Environmental pollution may be broadly defined as an alteration in our surroundings ie environment which is unfavourable for the existence and survival of flora, fauna and humankind.

Sustaining the environment is to protect the eco system and the natural resources.

Article 21 conferring the Right to Life encompasses right to clean environment, right to livelihood, right to live with dignity and of other associated rights .The Directive Principles of State Policy often referred to as the 'conscience' of the Constitution are intended to ensure 'distributive justice' and that political democracy in India is accompanied side by side with social and economic democracy

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs-WCED(World commission on Environment and development-1987)

Environmental damage almost always hits those living in poverty the hardest- United Nations(Human Development Report1998).

Sustainable development is a process of economic activities which leaves the environmental quality level intact with the policy directives corresponding to this notion being the maximization of net benefits of economic development for the present and future generations subject to maintaining the services and quality of natural resources overtime.

At the core of the idea of sustainability is the matter of meeting people's needs – for a home for a decent job for education for children for good health care and for a safe and healthy neighborhood to live in. If we don't take care for the world we live in now, we won't have anything to leave behind us for the future generations. Sustainability tries to find a way in which human beings live comfortably but respecting Mother Nature. The world is not something you enjoy today it was here before you were born and it might be here after you leave. If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe then man would only have four years of life left. No more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man!

Growth creates pollution.

The water lilies double their surface everyday. If their growth is not controlled it is assumed that it would take 30 days to cover the whole pond. For a long time the water lily seems small and we may decide not to care until it covers half of the pond. The same is our idea of pollution. we are not caring for it.

We must care for the pollution now!

Development means making life better ie to have a better standard of living and an improved quality of life. Sustained development means making sure that the things we do, the goods we buy and the lifestyle we have today will not harm the environment for us for people in other places and for future generations.

It also takes account of realizing that we are each responsible for our actions and that what we do can have a huge effect on other people and places and so think about our careful use of the earth's resources.

Be aware of How much plastic, aluminium, cloth, paper, energy are we wasting and how much can be recycled.

We should take into consideration the fact that everything is connected across generations and across countries. We should understand the principles of equality, green living, social progress, responsible consumption, etc. we need to sustain people and culture, natural resources, bio diversity, environment and ecosystems and need to develop quality of life, justice and social equality, equal opportunity, institutions, culture of sustainability, fair income, dialogue and communication.

Youth should take is seriously because it is the youth who will inherit this planet by advocating for sustainable development and adopting sustainable practices you are actively participating in shaping your own future.

Due to ignorance or economic necessity people may inadvertently destroy or exhaust the resources on which they depend for survival.

Sustainability may be defined in three ways:

1. Desired balance between economic growth and environmental preservation.
2. Meeting the needs of the present generations without compromising the needs of future generations
3. The overall capital assets remain constant or rise overtime. Capital assets include manufactured capital(machines, factories, roads), human capital(knowledge, experiences, skills), and environmental capital (forests, soil quality).

Sustainable development requires sustainable national Income or Sustainable Net National Product, the amount that can be consumed without diminishing the capital stock.

Causes for environmental destruction:

1. The worst perpetrators of environmental destruction include the billion richest and billion poorest.
2. With the rise in income and consumption levels of human beings there is likely to be a net increase in environmental destruction.
3. Rapid population increase accompanied by rural-urban migration leading to vastly increased strain on existing urban water supplies and sanitation facilities.
4. Collapses of the existing urban infrastructure which create circumstances ripe for epidemics and national health crises.
5. The costs associated with poor urban conditions productivity loss due to ill or diseased workers, contamination of existing water sources and destruction of infrastructure and increased fuel expenses incurred by people to boil unsafe water.
6. Although human systems may provide us with a steady stream of goods and services, they are systematically reducing the carrying capacity of the planet. Human systems (1) produce pollution in excess of the planet's ability to absorb and detoxify wastes, (2) deplete nonrenewable resources faster than substitutes can be found, and (3) use renewable resources faster than they can be regenerated.
7. Combustion of fossil like coal and the exhaust of automobiles are major contributors to the generation of an air pollutant called sulphur dioxide which reacts with water vapor to form dilute sulphuric acid that falls to earth known as acid rain.
8. Deforestation accumulates CO₂ causing depletion of ozone layer and man is exposed to high levels of ultraviolet rays that cause cancer.
9. Deforestation leads to desertification which reduces nature's capability of balancing natural fury of wind, rain and tides.
10. Unplanned urbanization leads to annihilation of eco system through filling of wet lands, deforestation and conversion of agrarian lands into plots and flats.
11. Industrialization depletes non-renewable resources besides polluting air, water and soil.
12. Modernization of agriculture by applying chemical fertilizers and pesticides is altering the natural ecology.

The possible solutions:

1. Use resources efficiently.
2. Invest substantially in pollution abatement technology and resource management.
3. Trade-off between output and environmental growth.
4. Give emphasis to bio-diversity, rain forest destruction and population growth.
5. Improve the environment at the expense of other social programs such as education, health services and employment schemes particularly in low income countries.

6. Water management: through drilled wells and dug wells and rain water harvesting through cisterns and catchments
7. Waste management through recycling, use of landfill to power sewage treatment plant and composting.
8. Food management through farmer's markets backyard gardens seasonal markets
9. Home design: green roofs, solar panels in yard or in the roofs ,catch south east breezes,grow trees on east west sides of the houses
10. Use of interior products like:repurposed hard wood floors and cabinets,low flow faucets and toilets,compact florescent light bulbs, use of recycled glass,paper, aluminium,carpets and fibre carpets.
11. Use of sustainable forms of energy:wind energy, solar energy, hydroelectric power,biomass energy and Geothermal energy.
12. Pollution causing inputs and processes may be replaced with those that are relatively pollution free. Use lead petrol instead of petrol.
13. Replace thermal power plants with hydroelectric plants-use electric cars and vehicles
14. Use nuclear energy which is cheap clean and compact.

Environmentally sound and sustainable development ESSD suggests:

1. Improving the access of the poor people to natural resource and alleviating poverty.
2. Limiting population to the carrying capacity of eco system.
3. Developing programs that preserve or maintain important function of eco system.
4. Assuring provisions for the needs of future generation in terms of resources and environmental quality as well as technologies for meeting the needs.
5. Preserving the diversity gives species communities habitats and eco system.
6. Using renewable natural resources on the basis of sustained yields.
7. Minimizing the impact of exploitation of natural resource.
8. Using waste minimization technique and clean technologies in industrial process.
9. Improving the efficiency of energy use, water use and land use.
10. Extending product life.

Conclusion

All the nations especially the industrially developed ones are taking necessary steps in the direction of sustaining the environment. So also India is taking steps. India also framed environmental policy in twelfth five year plan. It outlays Rs 17,899 crores and it has set monitorable targets in the field of environment like forestry,bio diversity, wildlife, and animal welfare sector, etc.

It is not only the responsibility of the Govt to sustain the environment but it is the duty of every citizen and we should take steps in our capacity to save and preserve environment.

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