

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

VISHAL DAGA*

ABSTRACT

"Sustainable Development is a dynamic process which enables all people to realise their potential and improve their quality of life in ways which simultaneously protect and enhance the Earth's life support systems". This contributed to understand that sustainable development encompasses a number of areas and highlights sustainability as the idea of environmental, economic and social progress and equity, all within the limits of the world's natural resources.

Environmental management and sustainable development are two intertwined concepts related to methods of meeting human needs without damaging the environment. Environmental management focuses on maintaining natural resources such as timber, water and open land without diminishing or destroying them. Sustainable development seeks to meet human needs without depleting resources.

Author's study is set against the backdrop of the global depletion of natural capital in a rare axis which, if not brought under an integrated sustainability purview, might lead to the loss of this quickly disappearing natural resource. Many people also believe that environmental problems can wait until developing countries are richer.

Key Words: enhance, equity, intertwined, depleting, natural, environment.

*VI - 3rd year B.A.LLB.(Hons.) SCHEEDLING SCHOOL OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE, JAIPUR NATIONAL UNIVERSITY.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Development continues to be the key idea around which Environment and Development are structured. The whole world depends on nature and ecosystem amenities to provide the conditions for a decent, healthy, and secure life. Environmental problems went far beyond the edges of any country, region and local areas and thus had an impact on the world as a whole, globalizing the responsibilities to a wide extent.¹

To sustain socio-economic development and improve eminence of life, it becomes inexorable to consider natural environment as the sole principal. The “lost decade for sustainable development’ also indicates deepening poverty, global inequality and environmental destruction”. Many people also rely that environmental teething troubles can wait until developing countries are richer. Sustainable development was, therefore, not about technology but about a political structure, which established authority and gave people, the victims of environmental degradation, rights over natural resources. The involvement of local communities in Environmental Management was a prerequisite for sustainable development.² More attention is required on emerging technologies that are “environment friendly.” It cannot be implemented by specialists hired precisely for the project. It needs to be implemented every day by the people who live and work in the community.³

2. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Resource Management is the resourceful and active positioning of an organization's resources when they are necessary. Section 2(a) of Environment Protection Act 1986 “environment” includes water, air and land and the interrelationship which exists among and between water, air and land, and human beings, other living creature, plants microorganism and property.⁴ Sustainable management of natural resources are required for achieving food, nutritional, environmental and livelihood security in the country. Sustainable management of natural resources is vibrant for the development. Positive growth and long term sustainability cannot thrive on a worsening natural resource base. The condition is getting further compounded with the recent climate change impacts on natural resources.

¹Prof. Dr. Semra ATABAY, 38th Congress of the European Regional Science Association, ‘Sustainable Development and Environmental Management- Southeast Anatolia Project Example’, 28th Aug- 1 Sept (1998) in Vienna, p. 2. Print.

²Sunita Narain, “Devolution has to happen.” It will, Down To Earth Magazine, January 31, 2003. Print.

³Sustainable Measures, “Sustainability Indicators 101”, West Hartford CT 06137- 0502, Maureen halt, 1998.

⁴Section 2(a), The *Environment (Protection) Act, 1986*, 23rd May, 1986.

2.1 *Forest & Forestry*

Forests are nature's most magnanimous and inventive renewable resource, providing instantaneously a wide range of economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits and services. Forests help in sustaining the ecological balance. Forests epitomize a distinctive state in terms of global environmental issues. The character of forests is receiving particular consideration in the climate change and biodiversity conventions currently under conciliation. While special concern groups are only aiming on a specific role or function of forests, national and international policy-makers face the challenge of reconciling the role of forests in meeting national socioeconomic and environmental objectives as well as the global environmental and socio-economic interests of the community of nations. In framing a forest law, the lawmakers will have to consider three factors- justice to the people, justice to nature and justice to future generations. The justice to the people includes justice to forest dwellers and non-forest dwellers.⁵

2.2 *Land Resources*

Appropriate management of land resource is a key element of maintaining ecological balance, as well as attaining economic growth, without distressing the resource base. In India, both land and water are matters, which come under the state list in the Constitution. Only the states can enact legislation in these areas in normal circumstances. Once eminence of land is vanished, declining of it comes into operation with an adverse impact upon the rural economy. A pattern for land development should aim at conservation of soil and eco-system. It should neither disappoint the socio-economic conditions under which the people live, nor should it block future growth and development of regions. Conservation of open spaces, wet lands, paddy lands or agricultural lands into brick kilns or housing or industry site are examples of abuse and unsustainable use resulting in ecological imbalance.

2.3 *Water Resources*

Water is a kind of natural resource. Water is a prime natural resource, a basic human need and a precious national asset. Planning and development of water resources need to be governed by national perspective.⁶ In order to protect the water from pollution the Indian Parliament has passed a legislation on the request of some states legislative assemblies. This legislation is called the water (Prevention and control of pollution) Act, 1974. The key objective of this Act is only prevention and control of water pollution and the maintaining or restoring of water. It also provides machinery to take appropriate action to achieve the objective of the legislation. This

⁵Chatrapathi Singh, "*Common Property and Common Poverty*" Indian Forest Dwellers and the Law, 1986, p 7. Print.

⁶Reddy N Sreeram, '*Realisation of Water Policy for All Zones*', The Hindu, September 17th, 1981. Print.

Act is silent regarding the planning and management of the underground water and streams. At the same time, it does not deal with prohibition of indiscriminate tapping of underground water, storage of rain water, etc.

Energy

Energy efficiency and renewable energy are said to be the twin pillars of sustainable energy.⁷ Green power is a subset of renewable energy and represents those renewable energy resources and technologies that provide the highest environmental benefit. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines green power as electricity produced from solar, wind, geothermal, biogas, biomass, and low-impact small hydroelectric sources. Customers often buy green power for avoided environmental impacts and its greenhouse gas reduction benefits.⁸ There are numerous organizations within the academic, federal, and commercial sectors conducting large scale advanced research in the field of sustainable energy. This research spans several areas of focus across the sustainable energy spectrum. Most of the research is targeted at improving efficiency and increasing overall energy yields.⁹

2.4 Mines and Minerals

Mining of resources can never be eradicated, but has to be done without leaving an adversarial impact on ecosystem. The impact of excavation of limestone was once again in the issue. There were indiscriminate blasting of the rocks causing danger and threat to dwellers and disturbance to ecosystem and environment. The mining operations carried out in a wild and unscientific manner were an imminent and real threat to the soil, the rivers, streams, nallah, water resources, the flora and fauna, and the water supply scheme. The Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra case¹⁰, the Himachal Pradesh High Court issued directions to take immediate measures for regulating mining operations and for conserving affected resources. Utilization of minerals resources is essential for industrial growth, but can be permitted only if it does not bring biological harm. It is well established that the concept of sustainable development influences the judicial opinion.

2.5 Indigenous Knowledge

Sophisticated knowledge of the natural world is not confined to science. Human societies all across the globe have developed rich sets of experiences and explanations relating to the environments they live in. These 'other knowledge systems' are today often referred to as traditional ecological knowledge or indigenous or local

⁷Bill Prindle, Maggie Eldridge, Mike Eckhardt and Alyssa Frederick, "*The Twin Pillars of Sustainable Energy: Synergies between Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Technology and Policy*", May 2007, ACEEE Report Number E074, p.1. Print.

⁸United State Environmental Protection agency, "*Green Power Market*" March 25th, 2013, p.1.

⁹S.C.E. Jupe, A. Michiorri, P.C. Taylor (2007). "*Increasing the Energy Yield of Generation from New and Sustainable Energy Sources*". Sustainable Energy 14 (2): p.37–62. Print.

¹⁰Rural Litigation & Entitlement. v. State of U.P 1989 AIR 594, 1989 SCC Suppl. (1) 537

knowledge. They encompass the sophisticated arrays of information, understandings and interpretations that guide human societies around the globe in their innumerable interactions with the natural milieu: in agriculture and animal husbandry; hunting, fishing and gathering; struggles against disease and injury; naming and explanation of natural phenomena; and strategies to cope with fluctuating environments.¹¹ “There is growing interest at national and international levels in the role that indigenous knowledge plays in participatory approaches to development. Research is generating more and more data showing the relevance of indigenous knowledge for sustainable development”¹² Cultural diversity is closely linked to biodiversity. Information base of biodiversity regarding its proper utility and management depend on cultural diversity and in reverse biodiversity often helps strengthening cultural integrity.¹³

3. DISASTER MANAGEMENT

The waves of natural disasters is increasing over time in corresponding to the expansion of human activity. Mounting urbanization upturns exposure and vulnerability of large numbers of people to natural hazards. Sustainable and unified management of natural resources will increase the flexibility of communities to disasters by retreating current trends of environmental degradation.

3.1 *Natural and Manmade*

Natural disaster have several effects on national economies that can tolerate on the conduct of the economic policy, on the sustainability of long-term development strategies, and on productive performance. During the past four decades, natural hazards such as earthquakes, droughts, floods, storms and tropical cyclones, wild land fires, and volcanic eruptions have caused major loss of human lives and livelihoods, the destruction of economic and social infrastructure, as well as environmental damages. Economic losses have increased almost ten times.¹⁴ Vulnerability to disasters is a function of human action and behavior. It describes the degree to which a socio-economic system or physical assets are either susceptible or resilient to the impact of natural hazards. It is determined by a combination of several factors, including awareness of hazards, the condition of

¹¹Nakashima, D. Prott, L. and Bridgewater, P. (2000) “*Tapping into the World’s Wisdom*”, *UNESCO Sources*, 125, July-Aug, p. 12. Print.

¹²Slikkerveer, L.J. with G.W. von Liebenstein and D.M. Warren 1993, “*Networking for Indigenous Knowledge, Indigenous Knowledge and Development Monitor*”, 1(1): p.2-4.

¹³A. Das Gupta, “*Indigenous Knowledge*”, *Antrocom Online Journal of Anthropology* 2011, vol. 7. n.1, p.63. Print.

¹⁴Munich Re Group, “*Topics 2000*”, *Natural Catastrophes- The Current Position*, 1999, p. 274. Print.

human settlements and infrastructure, public policy and administration, the wealth of a given society and organized abilities in all fields of disaster and risk management.¹⁵

3.2 *Disaster Risk Management and Urbanization*

Today, more than half of the world's population lives in urban that is why we need to focus on urban areas for disaster risk reduction. Urbanization and speedy population growth lead to the concentration of population in hazard- and risk- prone urban areas, both in mega-cities and in small and medium- sized urban centers. Although both types of urban growth represent different concerns for disaster risk. Unplanned and ill-planned urbanization has been the cause of environmental degradation (e.g., deforestation), overexploitation of natural resources (e.g., water), ecological disturbances (e.g., pollution), and social destitution (e.g., increase in poverty). These factors turn hazards into disasters. Increased population concentrations and substandard construction increase the vulnerability of the built environment and the fragility of socioeconomic systems. In the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction¹⁶, the current frame for disaster risk management was developed in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–1015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster and was summoned as:

- Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation;
- Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and early warning;
- Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels;
- Reduce the underlying risk factors; and
- Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

Decision-making is a fundamental responsibility of noble governance at both national and local altitudes. There have emerged a number of arguments in favour of a more participatory approach, which stress that public participation is a crucial element in environmental governance that contributes to better decision making. It is

¹⁵The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, “*Natural Disasters and Sustainable Development*” Understanding The Links Between Development, Environment And Natural Disasters, 28 January – 8 February 2002, Background Paper No. 5, p.4. Print.

¹⁶The World Conference on Disaster Reduction, Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015), “*Disaster Reduction Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*” United Nations (UN) (2005) Report of. A/CONF. 206/6, Kobe, Hyogo. p. 20. Print.

recognised that environmental problems cannot be solved by government alone.¹⁷ Participation in environmental decision-making effectively links the public to environmental governance. By involving the public, who are at the root of both causes and solutions of environmental problems, in environmental discussions, transparency and accountability are more likely to be achieved, thus secures the democratic legitimacy of decision-making that good environmental governance depends on. However, the uncertain nature of many of the environmental issues would undermine the validity of public participation, given that in many cases the actors come to the table of discussion hold very different perceptions of the problem and solution which are unlikely to be welded into a consensus due to the incommensurability of different positions.¹⁸

4.1 *Environmental Impact Assessment*

Environmental Impact Assessments, or EIAs, are a key tool in effective environmental management. In the past, development endeavors have not considered environmental issues in the evaluation of development projects. This negligence and unwise utilization of the natural resources resulted in degradation of the environment and scarcity of the resources.¹⁹ EIA's are a system of scrutinizing and reporting on the effect of certain types of activities to facilitate decision makers to decide what sort of activities should and shouldn't take place and to decide what measures should be taken to alleviate and manage the impacts of the activity. The law governing EIAs does alter.

EIAs essentially be directed by environmental assessment practitioners (EAPs). EAPs are mandatory to regulate whether the activity is subject to a basic assessment or a full scoping report. For all activities the EAP must conduct a public participation procedure (PPP) and must compile a list of all interested and affected parties (I&APs). The EAP must then give in the application for an environmental agreement, the basic assessment or full scoping report and the details of the public involvement procedure to the competent authority who must decide whether to grant the environmental authorisation, to grant it subject to various conditions or to refuse the application. This decision must be made within the timelines set out in the EIA regulations. Once the decision has been made, the decision can be amended, suspended and appealed.

4.2 *Enforcement of Rights to Environment*

Man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being, and he bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve

¹⁷Human Rights in Natural Resource Development, "*Public Participation in the Sustainable Development of Mining and Energy Resources*", Oxford University Press, Oxford (2002), p.76. Print.

¹⁸Pellizzoni, L. (2003): "*Uncertainty and Participatory Democracy*", *Environmental Values* 12(2): p. 195-224. Print.

¹⁹Adohinzi J, Xu L, Du J and Yang F. (2010). "*Capacity Strengthening for Environmental Assessment in Benin.*" Dec 7th 2010.

the environment for present and future generations.²⁰ Environmental deterioration could eventually endanger life of present and future generations. Therefore, the right to life has been used in a diversified manner in India. It includes, *inter alia*, the right to survive as a species, quality of life, the right to live with dignity and the right to livelihood. In India, this has been expressly recognised as a constitutional right. However, the nature and extent of this right is not similar to the self-executory and actionable right to a sound and healthy ecology prescribed in the Constitution of the Philippines.²¹ Article 21 of the Indian Constitution states: 'No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedures established by law.'

The Supreme Court expanded this negative right in two ways. Firstly, any law affecting personal liberty should be reasonable, fair and just.²² Secondly, the Court recognised several unarticulated liberties that were implied by article 21. It is by this second method that the Supreme Court interpreted the right to life and personal liberty to include the right to a clean environment.²³ In addition, the Constitution of India (Forty Second Amendment) Act 1976 explicitly incorporated environmental protection and improvement as a part of state policy. Article 48A, a Directive Principle of State Policy, provides that: 'The State shall endeavor to protect and improve the environment and safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country. Moreover, article 51A (g) imposes a similar responsibility on every citizen 'to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife, and to have compassion for living creatures. Therefore, protection of natural environment and compassion for living creatures were made the positive fundamental duty of every citizen.

4.3 *Legal Remedies for Environmental Offences*

Legal Remedies

- Continuous Mandamus
- Restitution or Remediation
- Damages

Purpose of legal remedies

- Environmental Restoration

²⁰UNEP, "Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment" Principle 1 of the Stockholm Declaration, 21st Plenary Meeting, Chapter 11, June 16th 1972.

²¹Antonio G.M. La Vina, "The Right to a Sound Environment in the Philippines: The Significance of the Minors Oposa Case" (1994) RECIEL Vol 3, No.4, p. 246-252. Print.

²²*Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India*, AIR 1978 SC 597, 623-624; *Francis Coralie Mullin v. The Administrator, Union Territory of Delhi*, AIR 1981 SC 746, 749-750. Print.

²³ P. Leelakrishnan, "Law and Environment" (1992), Eastern Book Company, India, Chapter 10, p.144-152. Print.

- Redress Those Affected
- Implement Legislation
- Reinforce The Rule Of Law
- Promote Sustainable Development

Courts tend to give priority to the following kinds of remedies in environmental cases:

1. Injunctive relief to halt the harmful activity;
2. Damages to compensate for the harm suffered;
3. Orders of restitution or remediation;
4. Sanctions to punish the wrongdoer and to deter future violations; and
5. Awards of litigation costs and fees.

5. POLLUTION PREVENTION

Pollution prevention is well-defined as the use of processes, practices, materials, products, substances or energy that avoids or minimizes the creation of pollutants and waste, and reduces the overall risk to the environment and human health. What can be done to slow the human population growth? “Experience shows that the most effective ways to slow human population growth are to encourage family planning, to reduce poverty, and to elevate the status of women.”²⁴ Effective pollution prevention can be achieved only by integrated land-use planning which offers the broad framework for coordinating technological and non-technological means to achieve sustainable development.

5.1 Marine Pollution

As a front-runner in the world of environmental services, Marine Pollution Control is staunch to environmentally responsible operations. Marine Pollution Control is committed to promoting sustainability. MPC is guided by respect for all living things and by our determination to promote wise stewardship of the planet our children will inherit. MPC will rely on best practices to achieve economic, environmental, and social well-being for ourselves, our customers, our suppliers, and our community.

5.2 Pollution by Hazardous Chemicals

Economic development has led to marvelous improvements in people’s well-being, but time and again at the expense of the environment. Industrialization has contributed to pollution of air and water, changing eating

²⁴Miller & Spoolman, 2009, p. 133

patterns, and shifting patterns of transportation and land use. Exposures to air and water pollutants directly increase disease. Globalization and the large geographic scale over which rapid industrialization is occurring make these environmental health problems global health problems. Industry and Agriculture are two sectors that have the potential to use and generate hazardous chemicals. Furthermore, there is need for increased worker awareness about personal protective equipment and handling of toxic wastes and agricultural chemicals. Agricultural pollution by farm chemicals, particularly pesticides, contaminates drinking water and affects those who handle the chemicals.²⁵

5.3 *Air Pollution*

Air pollution as a menace is known to one and all. Air pollution has numerous disadvantages, which are both on a micro and a macro scale. On micro scale, it causes health problems like respiratory diseases and degradation of immediate environment. On macro scale, it leads to greenhouse problem, ozone layer depletion, climatic discrepancies etc. Air pollution takes place by virtue of both natural and manmade causes. It has various harmful effects which include health hazards, greenhouse effect and acid rain. It has many negative economic effects as well. Polluter pays principle and precautionary principle are the two principles devised to control air pollution. They have been recognised and encouraged at both national and international level.

5.4 *Water Pollution*

With the increased development and industrialization of the world so the likelihood of water pollution increases. While it is essential that we have clean fresh drinking water for drinking and cooking. Other main forms of water pollution come from: runoff from farms whether pesticide, herbicide or fertilizer all will pollute the watercourse into which it runs. Besides being an integral part of the ecosystem, water is a social and economic good. Demand for water resources of sufficient quantity and quality for human consumption, sanitation, agricultural irrigation, and manufacturing will continue to intensify as populations increase and as global urbanization, industrialization, and commercial development accelerates.²⁶ Membrane technology can be used for recycling wastewater. Advanced economies, has come up with some principles that are of great significance to urban water supply. These are:

²⁵Southern African Development Community towards a common Future, "Industry and Agriculture" Waste management, SADC 2012.

²⁶Flint, R.W. & W.L. Houser. (2001) "*Living a Sustainable Lifestyle for Our Children's Children*". I Universe, Campbell, CA. 288 p. Print.

1. Fresh water is a finite and vulnerable resource, essential to sustain life, development and the environment.
2. Water development and management should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners and policy-makers at all levels.
3. Women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water. Institutional arrangements should reflect the role of women in water provision and protection.
4. Water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognized as an economic good.²⁷

5.5 Pollution Control Mechanism

Production or consumption of goods and services often results in costs or benefits to people other than the buyers and sellers. For example, if an industry disposes of wastes in a stream, it imposes costs to people who want to use the stream for other purposes, such as drinking water. People who live in that municipality will have to pay to clean up the water if they want to drink it. The cost of cleaning the stream is a hidden cost of the production of goods by the industry. This hidden cost, which will be assumed by taxpayers, is referred to in economic terms as a negative externality.²⁸ A system or rule that requires the use of specific pollution control devices on certain sources of pollution or applies strict emission standards to specific emitters.

6. WASTE MANAGEMENT

The social and economic development of a country can cause an increase in pressures on its environment and increases the need for a reduction in environmentally damaging activities. Some of these damaging activities involve the production and disposal of waste. The more waste we produce, the more we have to dispose, either by recycling and re-using, burial (landfill) or burning (ignition). Meeting human needs is inseparably allied with the abstraction and processing of resources, substances and materials which generate some kind of benefit. At the end of their intended use, these products and materials become available once again in the form of waste,

²⁷Qiang, He. Li Zhai Jun, Huang. 3rd SWITCH Scientific Meeting, “*Application of Sustainable Water System the Demonstration in Chengdu (China)*”. 2008. p.1. Print.

²⁸Adler, Robert W, Jessica C. Landman, and Diane M. Cameron. “*The Clean Water Act 20 Years Later*”. Washington”, D.C: Island Press, 1993. Print.

and may be reused as raw materials. Hence, the handling of resources is an essential component of any strategy for sustainable development.

6.1 *Urban Waste*

Millions of people in cities in the developing countries cannot meet their basic needs of shelter, water, nutrition, sanitation, health and education. Thus urban poverty becomes a characteristics feature of urbanization in the twentieth century. Cities are attaching the environmental resources at a energetic pace, taking their ecological footprints far beyond their geographical limits. Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) is defined to include refuse from the households, non-hazardous solid waste, discarded by the industrial, commercial and institutional establishments, market waste, yard waste and street sweepings which are collected by the municipal authorities for disposal. MSW is only a relatively small fraction of all the solid waste that is generated in an advanced economy. Municipal Solid Waste Management, broadly deals with post-consumer waste, in prevention, treatment, recycle, reuse and disposal.²⁹

6.2 *Nuclear Waste*

Nuclear energy plays vital role in providing hygienic energy for global sustainable development. The world has seen the successful international development and expansion of nuclear technology for energy, agriculture, medicine, food preservation, hydrology, industry and ecology in support of sustainable development. Nuclear power generation does not contribute to air pollution and can therefore help to reduce acid rain and global warming. The waste must be managed to present no hazard to humans or the environment. The radioactivity of waste however, will decay over time. Sustainable living conditions in the densely populated urban areas of the future will require abundant, reliable, affordable electricity generation that does not compromise the environment, such as nuclear energy.³⁰

7. ECO-TOURISM

To be with nature and enjoy its creations in the most natural way without endangering it is known as ecotourism. Though the word ecotourism has gained importance only recently, India has been experiencing it through the ages.³¹ India offers enormous diversity in topography, natural resources and climate. The country has unparallel cultural diversity, a mixture of races, languages, religions, customs and traditions. Indians have embraced almost all the major religions of the world and the country has given rise to five religions: Hinduism,

²⁹Ajit Kumar Jain, I.A.S., “*Sustainable Development and Waste Management*”, Vol. 13 No. 1 - January 2007. Print.

³⁰Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI), “*Sustainable-Development*”, U.N. Declaration Offers Sustainability Principles, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Principle 5, 1992. Print.

³¹Raveendran G, “*Development of Ecotourism in India*”, ESCAP Publications, 2009, p. 91-93. Print.

Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and “Tauhid-i-illahi” of Akbar.³² Sustainable Tourism minimizes environmental damage, maintains resource diversity, renewability and productivity over time and seeks to mitigate the inevitable negative effects of tourism on local, regional and global levels.³³

People’s Participation in Steering Eco-Tourism/ Ecotourism and Role of People

Generally, ecotourism deals with living parts of the natural environments.³⁴ Local peoples have a vested interest in the well-being of their community, and are therefore more accountable to environmental protection than multinational corporations. The lack of control, westernization, adverse impacts to the environment, loss of culture and traditions outweigh the benefits of establishing large scale ecotourism. Many of the ecotourism projects are not meeting these standards. At the local level, ecotourism has become a source of conflict over control of land, resources, and tourism profits. In this case, ecotourism has harmed the environment and local people, and has led to conflicts over profit distribution. In a perfect world more efforts would be made towards educating tourists of the environmental and social effects of their travels. Very few regulations or laws stand in place as boundaries for the investors in ecotourism. These should be implemented to prohibit the promotion of unsustainable ecotourism projects and materials which project false images of destinations, demeaning local and indigenous cultures.

8. CONCLUSION

Sustainability is ultimately about the interplay between people and ecologies. We constantly seek to maintain or enhance our quality of life - a rich mix of basic and more abstract needs. Our fundamental task in the coming decades is to redesign our socio-political-economic system in ways that reintegrate the dependencies between people and our underpinning ecological systems. In the context of globalization, establishment of interactions between socio-economic development plans and natural spaces, and taking natural and cultural compounds into consideration as a whole are a starting point for developing the concept of countrywide physical plan. This relationship contains a diverse range of research, analysis and planning processes at different levels. Furthermore, geographical space analysis will lead to the collection of data about ecosystems and will bring about the management and sustainability of ecological and economic resources in the planning process of national, regional and local areas.

³²Mohan Krishen Khanna, “*Ecotourism in India*” Chapter Eight, ISSN: 2065-3921 Date: 2010 Volume: 5 Issue: 8 (17) p. 64. Print.

³³Global Base Camp, “Sustainable Tourism and Eco-Tourism”, ©2014. (<http://www.globalbasecamps.com/sustainable-tourism-ecotourism>).

³⁴Sadry, B.N (2009), “*Fundamentals of Geotourism: With a Special Emphasis on Iran*”, Samt Organization Publishers, Tehran. p.220. Print.

The only way forward, in order to assure that resources and environmental systems will keep sustaining life in this urban environment, is through sustainable development. Development programmes should give special attention to human needs, and the distribution of development benefits, rather than focus all efforts on economic development. A more people-orientated development should empower people to take greater control over all aspect of their lives: social, political, economic and ecological.