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Sustainable Development: Mutual Relationship between Environmental Consciousness and Levels of Economic Growth

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There is a direct and functional relationship among man, environment and economic development which can be easily established to protect the mutual understanding to fulfill their interests for quicker economic development. Economic man has always had to be concerned with the environment. Healthy and hygienic environment is a pre-requisite of economic development of a country. Rather recognizing the role and importance of environment is the process of economic development.

The relationship between modern man and his environment is a major and growing problem. The very survival of man as a specie depends upon intellect and moral human action with respect to these problems. Dr. Gregory defines the major problem of environmental economics as the selection of that strategy for the management of environment which best promotes the welfare of society. The environment may be regarded as a reservoir of

mutual resources, some are renewable but many are non-renewable. Pollution may be defined as: any direct alteration of the physical, thermal, biological or radioactive properties of any part of the environment by discharging, emitting or depositing wastes so as to affect any beneficial use adversely to cause a condition which is hazardous to public health, safety or welfare of the animals, birds, wildlife, fish or aquatic life and plants.

Environmental quality is an important synergy of sustainable development. It is a direct offshoot of the conservation of environmental properties, the process of continuous flow of natural capital in the economy. Hence the sustainable development means such a kind of development of the economy where the needs of the people are fulfilled without hampering the share in renewable resources of the future generation.

According to the UN Report, ‘Sustainability means meeting the needs of present generation without compromising the abilities and opportunities of future generation. It thus,

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implies both intergenerational and intra-generational equity. Sustainability is an important dimension of human development. Human development is a process of enlarging peoples choices'. But such enhancement must be for both present and future generation without sacrificing one for the other.

The Seventh Five Year Plan states that India is fortunate in the richness of its natural resources and better to say, the abundance and diversity of its living resources. Adequately managed, these and other resources can meet a high level of material needs, now and for all time to come. The degree to which a nation can prosper depends upon its productivity, which is the efficiency with which it is able to utilize the resources of the environment to satisfy human needs and expectations. If the gains in productivity are to be sustained, resources must also continue to be available over time. This requires that while providing for current needs, the resource base be managed so as to enable sustainable development. This basic approach is to accelerate sustainable development in harmony with the environment. It means that there is a mutual relationship and interdependence between the contours of environment and the levels of development.

The finite land resources, population growth and diminishing returns of production led early classical economists to argue that economy has a tendency to converge in long run to a stationary state. In this majority of people live at a subsistence level where economic activities are not able to meet all human needs together with protection of the specific natural

system.

Sustainable development is the need of the day due to the three concerns-A-Moral B-Ecological and C-Economic A-Present generation has moral obligations to those generations which will come after us. B- The ecological threat originates through the economic activities in which nature is misused or overused to reduce such diversity that is intricately undesirable. C- From the standpoint of economic concern, it is essential to argue that sustainable economic behaviour is more efficient than unsustainable behaviour.

Greening and fostering of the resources of nature act as a nursing mother to the children of all living organisms of the globe. Rapid economic development of any country necessitates conducive environmental consciousness. The ultimate objective of any scheme of planned economic development is to achieve the targets of development fixed for a region in which it would be easier to attain if these targets are associated with contributing environmental conditions. From the ecological point of view a cautious behaviour leading to minimization of ecological disruption would be the essential requisite for sustainable development.

Orthodox economy theory provides the framework in which useful understanding for maintaining the sustainability can be gained and applied. The main sustainability criterion is of non-declining consumption. Constant consumption through time is obtainable in economy using a non-renewable resource. This can be achieved through accumulation of

physical capital, which in its own turn can be achieved in market economy, if all decision makers agree to a particular socially-optimal discount rate. As the possibility of such a market economy is very remote, it is essential to look for other methods.

The economic and ecological sustainability requires effective contribution of individual firms and consumers in ascertaining the environmental protection especially by restriction on the release of non degradable materials in the environment.

For the sustainability of modern economy, it is essential that environmental planning must be incorporated in the economics of sustainable development. The principal concern behind sustainable development is fairness to the future generation. Any generation can increase its present well-being at the expense of the future generation by plundering resources, affecting the sustainable yield of renewable resources and by releasing wastes into the environment in amounts greater than what it can assimilate. The basic rule of sustainable development is, therefore, to leave the same or improved endowment of resources as a bequest to the future than what has been inherited.

It has been observed that sustainable economic development assumes that the resource use in system remains reversible, but this usually does not occur. All the matters of environmental resource use are usually irreversible especially for non-renewable resources. Thus economic development on sustainable basis can be achieved through judicious use of non-renewable resources.

Environmental factors and ecological imperatives must be built into the total planning process if the long-term goal of making development, sustainable is to be achieved. People should not be over enthusiastic to destroy the valuable belongings of nature. If we want to live in qualitative environmental conditions, we have to mobilize awareness among the people to maintain ecological balance and to improve restrictions on all types of pollutions for the attainment of sustainable development. Thus the development of environmental consciousness is one of the most important factors of economic progress of the country.

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