



Sustainable Development and Planning in India

KEYWORDS

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the subject matter covering the relevance, objectives, methodology, data sources and limitations of the research undertaken and the layout of the thesis.

The Research Problem

The Emergence of the Sustainable Development Paradigm:

Economic growth became a subject of topical interest in the second half of the 20th century. Nations vied with each other to occupy more space in the expanding global economy. Not all of them could succeed in equal measure. The More Developed Countries (MDC) could record consistently high growth. As a result they could scale unprecedented heights in material affluence. The Less Developed Countries (LDC) as a group also grew at rates exceeding the trend values of immediate past. But, for them, growth was not accompanied by significant development

Growth of varying magnitudes, in the MDC S and LDCs, resulted in a widening of the development gap. The per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the North which was 11 times of the South in 1960 reached more Than 22 times of the latter in 1993. Meanwhile, the affluent societies began facing a unique set of problems the problems of plenty. Historically unprecedented growth, brought in this train, a variety of new issues connected to environment. Resources and social management the truth that growth was not an unmixed blessing was evident.

DATA SOURCES

Literature on sustainable development has already grown to voluminous size. Effort was made to review all the important works in the field. These included books from individuals as well as periodic reports from institutions. The latter sources are mainly: The World Bank (The World Development Reports), the United Nations development programmer (The Human development Reports) and the world resources institute (reports under the title World resources). The World Bank, has in the last Five Years, Published a number of books under the "Environmentally sustainable Development Series".

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT RATIONALE AND MEANS

The Sustainable Development paradigm (SDP) emerged as a reaction to the large number of problems related to the dominant model of economic growth which is pursued worldwide. There is a growing apprehension that, the model, if allowed to operate unchanged for a few decades more, may invite a number of complex issues which may be beyond the management capability of the technological, social and political systems that nations possess at present. This chapter deals with topics centered on repercussions of non- sustainable growth, emergence of the New Economics and the rationale and means to sustainable development.

ECONOMIC PLANNING IN A SCHEME OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT A SUMMARY VIEW OF INDIAN PLANS

The chapter opens with a discussion on the relevance of planning as a strategy of sustainable development. This is

followed by a brief history of planning in India. The closing section makes a critical assessment of the overall performance of Indian Five year Plans.

Rationale of State planning in Sustainable Development

Planning as a strategy of macroeconomic management has wide acceptance today. The difference on this score is limited to the nature and extent of planning. The question being answered in this section is: Has the advocacy of SD necessitated any change in the approach to planning? There is broad consensus among the proponents of the SDP on the point that planning has to be democratic and comprehensive. They suggest several changes in the planning framework as conventional plans are largely based on the Neoclassical Economics.

The Need for Planning

Advocates of SD start with the presumption that human societies have the capacity to adapt to changing conditions. The WCED noted. "Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable Technology and social organizations can be both managed and improved to make way for a new era of economic growth.4. Planning is one, if not the only, mechanism of social management. The support for comprehensive planning is almost total in the 'strong model' of SD. In such models plans cover a range of social issues2. Rodham and Konstidakopulos note that SD involves "sating targets for key environmental indicators and then influencing economic activity to meet these targets. Here planning requires a high degree of state intervention and coordination3. The necessity of planning may be explained from different angles.

POPULATION MANAGEMENT IN INDIAN PLANS

The population management policy of the Government of India is the subject of this chapter. The population issue is approached from a broad angle. The chapter opens with a statement of the major issues in sustainable management of population. In the next section the population- related programmer of the government of India, as contained in the plan documents is outlined. The period covered is 1951 to 1997. This is followed by an evaluation of the achievements of the plans related to population management. The final section constrains critical basements of the programmer.

POVERTY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF PROGRESS

Poverty promotes non-sustainable life styles. The major challenge that a programmer for sustainable development faces in developing countries, therefore, is the speedy alleviation of poverty. The theme of this chapter is poverty in India. The question posed essentially is, to what extent the plan programmer enabled the country to get out of the tricky poverty trap? The criterion applied for judgment is the "sustainability' of progress. In the opening part, the various desirable features of a sustainable poverty eradication is subsequently summarized (First Plan to the Ninth plan) in this chapter, followed by a survey of the actual condition of poverty in the country, and a critical appraisal of the plan programmer.

Planning for Poverty Alleviation

In the first years of planning, the planners generally held the view that growth will automatically trickle down. Specially

designed programmer aimed at a direct attack on poverty became a permanent feature of Indian plans only from the Fourth Plan³. The advocacy of the cause of the poor was high pitched in the Sixth Plan when it adopted as its motto, the politically profitable slogan 'Garibi Hatavo' (eradicate poverty). With the acceleration of the structural adjustment programmers (SAP) in the 1990s there was widespread concern on the undesirable effects the new policy has on the poor. In the Eighth Plan, Planners responded to the above apprehensions.

N.B: Plan wise discursion follows, acknowledging quotation from plan documents after giving the plan number in roman letter, followed by the relevant chapter or page number.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OF INDIA

The policy and programmers of the Government of India for the protection and improvement of country's environment is reviewed in this chapter. The focus is on plan programmed. Actions taken outside the planning process are also covered.

Efficacy of official policy is judged on the basis of well-known norms of sustainable environmental management. The first part concentrates on the policies outside in the Five year Plans. The major environmental problems faced by India are discussed. This is followed, in the final part, by an analysis of the problems facing the environmental management system.

Norms of Sustainable Management of the Environment

1. Economic growth, by itself, will not put a break on environmental deterioration. A proactive social intervention system is a sine qua non for environmental stability and safety.
2. Vital components of environment have synergic interrelation, and hence the need for a comprehensive approach.
3. Only a long-term management of environmental problems, based on a sound strategy can minimize deterioration.
4. There are limits to governmental action; Participation of the community is an important component of a programmer of environmental management.

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