

Chapter 17

Sustainable Rural Development

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable development on social, economic, and ecological dimensions explores the approaches embracing the wellbeing for the rural communities. The chapter initiated with the description of sustainability by providing its comprehensive dimensions, proceeds to development by explaining the essential steps of development process as analysis, requirements, planning, implementation, and evaluation. After in-depth interpretation of sustainability and development, the chapter focused its discussion on sustainable rural development by emphasizing the demarcation of rural communities, their distinctive features and portrayal of needs confronted by rural communities, the core values and importance of sustainable rural development for the general awareness and setting grounds for policy makers. Rural zones are subject to socioeconomic problems. To lead human existence towards prosperity and progression depiction of UN established 17 sustainable development goals known as global goals are undertaken. Measures of sustainable rural development reviewed to recommend new strategies.

SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Literally, sustainability means a capability to uphold or retain certain object, product, or procedure persistently. Sustainability is the strength of methods and procedures to use resources for the fulfillment of human needs for the survival and wellbeing, ensuring restoration of means for future generations. Since there are a number of features of the natural environment that effect the gratification of human wants, making direct or indirect relation with our socio-economic provisions, therefore, the formation and conservation of such conditions is essential to ensure harmony among human being and natural environment that confirm prolific coordination to remain productive indefinitely. Such conditions will be termed as sustainable one those supporting the present and future generations.

In 1987, the UN-sponsored body, World Commission on Environment and Development formulated a report, “Brundtland Report”, named after the then chairperson of the Commission and the President of Norway (1981-96). The commission constituted a group of twenty two members from developed and

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developing nations. The focus of this document was the conflict between the human desire, headed for the improved prosperous existence and the nature, enforcing the limitations and restraining the progression of man's objectives.

In the light of Brundtland Report, the concept of sustainability encompasses three dimensions namely as social, economic and environment. Complete sustainability demands all its dimensions to be persistent in way that confirms societal impartiality, financial progress and ecological quality. Sustaining the procedures of productivity indefinitely necessitates a steadiness in the inputs (assets, facilities, materials) of production. These inputs generally exist in four forms; Human inputs- resources which are related to humans and their competencies, Financial input- related to money and its associated strategies and implements, Environmental inputs- refers to natural resources, and Manufactured inputs- denotes to human-made infrastructure, technologies, gears, industrial units etc. The radical changes through reorientation and reformation of economic, social and ecological systems, to gratify human needs and improve the quality of human life, may be termed as Development.

Development is a multidimensional process which is perceived to comprise commonly valued aims of individuals, families, societies and nations for the betterment of survival. It is the steady growth of circumstances in a more progressive, innovative and durable way than the preceding one. Human societies are prone to dynamism and innovation to keep them updated and modernized. The core intention behind development process is to transform human beings life and its surroundings positively. The inherent urge to survive and develop exists differently in diverse contexts. However development may takes place by changing policies according to the area requirements and availability of resources. Development improves human condition by enhancing their potentials so that they can play significant part in social, cultural, economic and political fields.

Generally a sound development process involves following five steps;

Table 1. Dimensions of sustainability

Sustainability					
Dimensions	Meaning	Mode			Manifestations
		Survival	Maintenance	Improvement	
Social sustainability	The ability of a social system, such as a country, to function at a defined level of social wellbeing indefinitely	Capacity to solve serious problems	Maintenance of decent social quality	Improving social quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social justice • Cultural diversity • Homelessness prevention • Community wellness • Self sufficient • Equality opportunity • Human rights etc.
Economic sustainability	The ability to support a defined level of economic production indefinitely.	Subsistence	Maintenance of decent standard of living	Improving standard of living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce development • Business engagement • Entrepreneurial support • Profit etc.
Environmental sustainability	The ability to maintain rates of renewable resource and non-renewable resource depletion that can be continued indefinitely.	Protection of life support system	Maintenance of decent Environment quality	Improving Environmental quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling center • Waste reduction • Air quality program • Pollution prevention • Natural resources use • Energy efficiency etc.

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