

Integration of Three Pillars of Sustainability: A Key Phenomenon for Development and Well-Being

The 21st century has begun and in its third decade, numerous environmental challenges along with pertinent issues of economic unrest and social inequality lie ahead of us. In the face of inevitable climate change and increase in global demand for energy, food and water, there is no difference of opinion among the policymakers that the choice is no longer whether to participate or not in debates about sustainable development but rather it is on- 'how'.

The present century is driven by global integration and technological advances and has witnessed phenomenal economic growth over the last century. The challenge of decoupling economic growth from environmental protection has become the top priority of every ruling government and it seems imperative that countries in all parts of the world should build strong collaborations for solving this issue of common concern. Moreover, it is also pertinent on part of the countries to conduct cost-effective analysis about the use of natural and environmental resources. Even considering the broadness of the agenda of sustainable development, it becomes quite difficult to estimate the future impact of current actions. Two major questions impose a significant challenge as to; what is meant by needs? And how to ensure that these needs are being met. In this context, minimising the process of resource degradation is also an important issue.

A unified framework of institutions together with effective policies with significant involvement of civil societies in policy drafting and implementation will go a long way in enforcing sustainable development. Another prerequisite is a strong political commitment towards long term environmental concerns along with coordination between international organisations and national governments.

Developing countries, wherein approximately 80% of the world's population resides, shall play a pivotal role in maintaining global environmental norms. Increasing global economic interdependence between the countries has notably enhanced the critical role of developing and transition economies of the world. Investment in technology and innovation is on the rise and as such it will play a significant role in shaping the business processes, thereby influencing economic growth. Research and development have become more market-oriented and the prevailing socio-political system across the world is not providing due incentives for adapting sustainable green technologies. Additionally, innovative cleaner technologies require effective processes and product innovations that overlap many firms and sectors and requires an intersectoral as well as transdisciplinary approach to find the right solution.

In the present era, the unprecedented increase in consumption of energy, transportation facilities, output in food and non-food commodities and manufacturing has resulted in increased levels of pollution and destruction of wildlife habitat along with greater homogenisation of the landscape. Globalisation, sectoral adjustments, population ageing, migration are among the few factors which are bringing a sea change in the territorial development of the economies. The unsustainable pattern of development can result from such factors therefore the fostering the conditions favourable to endogenous growth is required to strike a balanced development urban and rural development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mahima Birla', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

(Prof Mahima Birla)

Editor in Chief