

A STUDY ON CHANGING DIMENSIONS OF GOVERNANCE TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE GREEN GOVERNANCE

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ABSTRACT

From the Stockholm Conference on Human Environment in 1972 till the recent global environmental protection initiatives worldwide, it has been now an established fact recognized from the international community, that, sustainable green efforts in the use of natural resources can only be achieved through green perspective and initiatives. In today's scenario, where economic expansion is inevitable and bombarding population growth has become the reality, the exploitation of global natural resources for catering developmental needs of the society, has become the necessity but with a challenge which is certainly posing threat to already depleting environment. The paper focuses on the need, challenges and global initiatives taken for having a Greener Governance with special focus on India's effort for achieving greener goals by practicing Green Administration. The term Green not only refers to the nature and environmental ecosystem but also connotes to more cleaner and healthy administrative practices, where different sub systems of society are peacefully and harmoniously inter-connected to a much bigger system. The world today is in danger and if collective efforts are not taken to address the environmental issues then the results will be more intimidating for the global community.

Keywords: Green initiatives, Sustainability, Green Governance, Green Goals.

Introduction

The concept of 'governance' is as old as human civilization. Simply put "governance" means the process of decision-making and systematic implementation of those decisions for the overall upliftment and betterment of the people. Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance and very demanding these days is the Green Governance. It involves all those initiatives and efforts that a Government takes in the form of policies or laws for protecting the environment by augmenting the natural resources judiciously for sustainability. Since governance is the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented, an analysis of such governance becomes even more imperative focusing on the formal and informal actors involved in decision-making and implementing.

Environmental Governance is a combination of ecology and policies related to environment that in every aspect advocates for sustainable development as its prime consideration. It not only requires policies and stringent regulations to ensure green and life supporting environment but also equal participation from people worldwide, strong local governance to ensure the policies are implemented well, involvement of environmental scientist, NGOs and civil societies. The contribution from a common man can help conservation managers and other stakeholders to plan the initiatives, thereby driving sustainable efforts towards sustainability of resources to save and serve the mankind. Since man and environment are inseparable, one cannot think of man without his environment. Man has been dependent and constantly interacting with the nature for his needs since years and civilizations. With the growth of

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technology and modernization, there has been a breakthrough in various agriculture and industries which have been effecting the environment adversely consequently, expanding and shaping the societies. With time, humans started dominating landscape and intruding the environment for his own interest and advancement. His constantly growing needs have impacted the environment critically and in turn, are getting impacted from its detrimental effects.

The term 'green' has numerous connotations. Green is a symbol of life and peace and the colour of nature. Green is often used to refer to economic, social and environmental systems, which can further represent the balanced relationship between humanity and nature. A good ecological environment is an important basis for human survival and development which if ruined, will pose threat to human civilization and forthcoming generations.

Literature Review

The first ever concern for the environment was shown by Rachel Carson, an American Marine Biologist and a well known conservationist, who wrote book like 'Silent Spring' which embarked the beginning of the environmental protection movement. Her sensible literature for making Americans aware of the deadly repercussions of using pesticides in agriculture and raising concerns on other environmental issues stimulated the global movement for environmental protection.

She stated that man has acquired significant power to alter the nature of his world, the most alarming of which is the contamination of air, earth, water with dangerous and poisonous materials, to which she meant were irrecoverable. According to her, man is a part of nature and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself. And today, man has really gone against himself, over exploiting the biosphere and discharging thousand of pollutants. All these have been immensely contributing to Global Warming and climate change, thereby the gradual loss of biodiversity. Though, the loss is gradual but the scope of its impact is devastatingly long term and huge. It is evident that man himself alone is responsible for the present degrading environment.

There have been other environmentalists whose contribution in protecting the wildlife, biodiversity and working for augmenting the resource utilization is worth mentioning here like Jane Goodall, who lead research for species like chimpanzee and constantly devoted her life for transforming relationship between humans and animals. Wangari Maathai, both woman activist and famous environmentalist, won the Noble Peace Prize in the year 2004 for her huge contribution for land conservation in Kenya. Vandana Shiva, an Indian environmentalist who spent her life to protect biodiversity. Queen of recycling, Isaton Ceesay from Gambia, believed and spread the green concept of reuse and recycling the waste.

Some of the famous books on environment and ecology which paved the way and gave the world a vision to protect the nature before it gets too late for mankind to survive, included 'Collapse: How societies choose to fail or succeed' by Jared Diamond, 'Rise and Resist: How to change the world' by Clare Press. 'An appeal to Reason: A cool look at Global Warming' by Nigel Lawson in 2008, ' Beyond the limits' on population by Donella Meadows, Dennis Meadows and Jorgen Randers, in 1992, is a book on consequences of a rapidly growing global population. All these books have already alarmed the global community and conservationists across the globe for depleting resources and their consequences. Other such environmental activist includes Sunderlal Bahuguna, David Brower, Edward Abbey, Al Gore, Malaika Vaz, etc.

Global Environmental Initiatives

The *Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants* 2001 is an international agreement by the nations of the world to address the threats posed by global chemical pollution with an objective to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants. But, there was no serious concern and action until the formation of World Commission on Environment and Development popularly came to be known as Brundtland Commission. Its report 'Our common future' in 1987 recommended the concept of "Sustainable Development", and made an appeal to all nations to address the issues of the environment while implementing development programmes.

Then with the progress, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and United Nations Conference on Environment and Development also known as the **Rio** Conference of 1992, played major role to stabilize greenhouse-gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous effects on humanity. It also paved directions for addressing challenges of poverty, food security and protecting the bio diversity. Yet, another major landmark to raise and address

the global environmental challenges was The Earth Summit-II, held at Johannesburg in 2002, restated the need for global assurance to sustainable development ensuring the harmonious and balanced relationship between natural resources and human needs that is the development that is generated at the cost of natural resources should not exceed the Planet's carrying capacity. The summit focussed on Water and Sanitation, Energy, Health, Agricultural Production, Biodiversity and ecosystem management to promote better dignified living conditions. Subsequently, UN Conference on Sustainable Development held in 2012 and UN Sustainable Development Summit held in 2015 laid directions for further green initiatives by its commitment to eradicate poverty and achieving sustainable development goals by 2030.

UN globally promotes the transition to economies that are low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive thereby promoting an inclusive green economy that improves human well-being and builds social equity while reducing environmental risks and scarcities. According to the UN, an inclusive green economy is an alternative to today's dominant economic model, which further aggravates inequalities, encourages waste, triggers resource scarcities, and generates widespread threats to the environment and human health. Over the past decade, the concept of the green economy has emerged as a strategic priority for many governments. UN assists the governments in developing and applying national and international environmental laws; promoting, protecting and respecting environmental rights; and encouraging links between civil society and governments in the development and implementation of environmental policies. It also helps in identifying common goals across international environmental agreements and support dialogues on environmental issues at the regional level.

Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP) is an initiative by the Global Green Growth Institute, established in January 2012, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank, to form global network of international organizations and experts that together identifies and addresses major knowledge gaps existing in green growth theory and practice. By encouraging widespread collaboration and world-class research, the GGKP offers practitioners and policymakers the policy guidance, good practices, tools, and data necessary to support the transition to a green economy.

India's Effort to Combat Environmental Degradation

- **Environmental Provisions in the Indian Constitution**

Although there are no direct provision for the protection of environment anywhere in the Fundamental Rights but the Supreme Court has interpreted Article 21 as right to life guaranteed in context to the wholesome environmental efforts which says that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according procedure established by law. Another such mention has been vented in Article 48A which states that the State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country. Likewise Article 51A(g) states that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures. Moreover, the Directive Principles of State Policy also mentions about the environmental duty of the state to improve public health and furthermore with the 42nd Amendment Act of 1976, the state was directed to protect the environment and in turn have casted on the citizens to help in preservation of natural environment.

Environmental Policy and Administrative Framework in India

Indian mythology has reference of 'panchatatva' i.e it believes that body is made up of five elements namely, air, water, fire, sky and soil in a specific combination which shows the existence of life is dependent on the environment so there is an utmost need to build a healthy environment for a balanced life. Since independence, India's policy makers have attempted to address the problem of environment by introducing number of rules and regulations from time to time. The first step towards it, was on the response of the Stockholm Conference on Human Environment in 1972 when India created National Commission on Environmental Planning and Coordination in 1972. This NCEPC reviewed programmes and policies from environmental perspective and consequently sparked the formation of various environmental legislation like Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act of 1974, Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act of 1981, Environment (Protection) Act in 1986, the most stringent and comprehensive legislation which conferred the enforcement agencies with punitive powers to restrict any activity which degrades the environment. Apart from this, other legislations which were formed are Hazardous Waste Handling and Management Act of 1989, Public Liability Insurance Act of 1991, Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules of 2000, Biological Diversity Act of 2002, Wild life (Protection) Amendment Act of 2002, National Green Tribunal Act 2010, National Forest Policy (draft) 2016. Amongst them is the most recent one which is Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules of 2017.

As per the WHO's report, half of the world's twenty most polluted cities are in India due to massive expansion of our urban cities facing acute challenge in air, water and noise pollution. In 1985, Ministry of Environment and Forests was established which incorporated the Department of Environment., which today is the apex body of central government which is responsible for the planning, promotion, coordination and monitoring the related policies and programmes. In 2014, the Ministry was renamed as Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change with primary focus on conservation of biodiversity and environment. Environmental initiative in the form of Environment Information System for planning and decision making on related issues was initiated by the Ministry in 1983 to collect, store, retrieve and disseminate environmental information and data for better policy framework. An awareness campaign in the form of National Environmental Awareness Campaign was also launched in 1986 for creating awareness to all its stakeholders on environmental issues.

- **National Environmental Tribunal**

This is one of the major step taken by the Government to ensure that the environment and natural resources of the country are properly utilized and defaulter could be penalised for harming the environment and with the genesis of Public Interest Litigation, it became more easy for environment protecting agencies and other Civil Society to approach the Courts in addressing the environmental grievances. According to National Environment Tribunal Act of 1995, National Environment Tribunal was established for speedy and effective disposal of related cases and to compensate any damages done to the environment, property or person. In 2010, National Green Tribunal was established by Ministry of Environment and Forest under National Green Tribunal Act, 2010 for expeditious disposal of cases on Environmental protection and Forest Conservation.

The problem of environmental challenge and protection is not limited to a nation or region, it is now a global issue invited global collective efforts. Achieving a clean, healthy and ecologically balanced environment requires that we cultivate a practical governance on green issues and have a sense of respect for nature, sufficiency, interdependence, shared responsibility and fairness among all human beings that insists upon transparency and accountability in all activities affecting the integrity of the environment.

Conclusion

If the current trends of exploiting the nature continue this way, the global per capita use of natural resources will increase by 70 per cent by 2050, as per the global reports. In our globalized world, environmental threats require effective measures that promote peace, justice, development and the fulfilment of both environmental and human rights. The Governments of all nations should work for promoting sound environmental governance, rules, policies and institutions that shape on how humans interact with the environment. Only a robust governance system can safeguard the environment and human rights and work toward all seventeen UN Sustainable Development Goals. The foundation for smart environmental laws and policies should be adopted to help protect the environment from degradation and fulfil environmental and human rights obligations. Such an effort would require global partnerships with all the stakeholders, be it at the level of national governments, judges, parliamentarians, enforcement officers, local people and other policymakers through which environmental concerns are incorporated into the administrative systems and people working in areas like agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism, etc., could be trained and made aware of the responsibilities they owe towards the global efforts for environmental concern.

A global platform should be made to assist the governments in obtaining all environmental information and its dissemination for proper decision-making and framing out the green policies and also providing citizens with greater access to information pertaining to their environmental rights enhancing environmental cooperation both at the global and regional levels. The Governments of all nations and regions should work to institute Green Department to exclusively focus on framing green policies or promoting policies which leads to green environment and to incorporate all sectors which directly and indirectly bear an effect on environment like Transport, Agriculture, Industries, Mining, Energy, Infrastructure, Tourism, Forest and Wild Life, etc. Incorporating the efforts from Local Governments like Municipal bodies and Panchayats, that would not only ensure their full participation in curbing environmental degradation and protecting overall environmental aspects for a better future of the country. More Environmental Trainings and awareness camps on how to protect our environment from pollution and other adverse effects of the resultant of environmental abuse. This also at the same time calls for

healthy and green practices like promoting electronic governance and ICT usage more in government departments and make the citizens more technology savvy to save papers, time and delays. Government should also incorporate green awards to promote greener initiatives and practices amongst its citizens by reframing the policies towards greener collaborative efforts by all.

For inculcating Green Economy, focus should be on tracking Green House Gases and monitoring Carbon Emission, Resource Efficiency (reuse and recycle), Social Inclusion, Conserving energy and other scarce resources which uses such products and services that conserve and produce clean energy, to curb pollution with preventing, reducing, controlling environmental damages for better future and better India.

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