

PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT. *Sustainable development refers to a mode of human development in which resource use aims to meet human needs while ensuring the sustainability of natural systems and the environment, so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for generations to come. Today, the philosophy of higher education focused on the maximum utilization of resources without considering the well-being of other human beings and planet as a whole itself. The present paper discusses on the issue of present philosophy and pedagogy of higher education and importance of paradigm shift in the philosophy education based on sustainable development of the society.*

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Environmental Sustainability, Economic Sustainability.

1.Introduction It is well to begin with the statement that there is yet no agreed definition of sustainable development. More than one hundred definitions of sustainable development exist, but the most widely used one is from the World Commission on Environment and Development, presented in 1987. It states that sustainable development is “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The Commission’s view of sustainable development is now generally regarded as standard. The definition seeks a balance between economy, society, and environment, and puts the satisfaction of the spiritual or non-material needs of people on the same footing as of material needs for measuring economic performance.

2.Issue of Sustainable Development Sustainable development is an emerging concept attempting to assimilate the dynamism of a process of change that cannot ignore local concerns, needs, and interests. It refers to a mode of human development in which resource use aims to meet human needs while ensuring the sustainability of natural systems and the environment, so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for generations to come. Sustainable development constantly seeks to achieve social and economic progress in ways that will not exhaust the earth’s finite natural resources. The needs of the world today are real and immediate, yet it’s necessary to develop ways to meet these needs that do not disregard the future. The capacity of our ecosystem is not limitless, meaning that future generations may not be able to meet their needs the way we are able to now. The world’s resources are finite, and growth that is unmanaged and un-sustained will lead to increased poverty and decline of the environment. We owe it to future generations to explore lifestyles and paths of development that effectively balance progress with awareness of its environmental impact. The Venn diagram of sustainable development has many versions, but was first used by economist Edward Barbier in 1987 (Figure 1). The sustainable development debate is based on the assumption that societies need to manage three types of capital (economic, social, and natural), which may be non-substitutable and whose consumption might be irreversible.

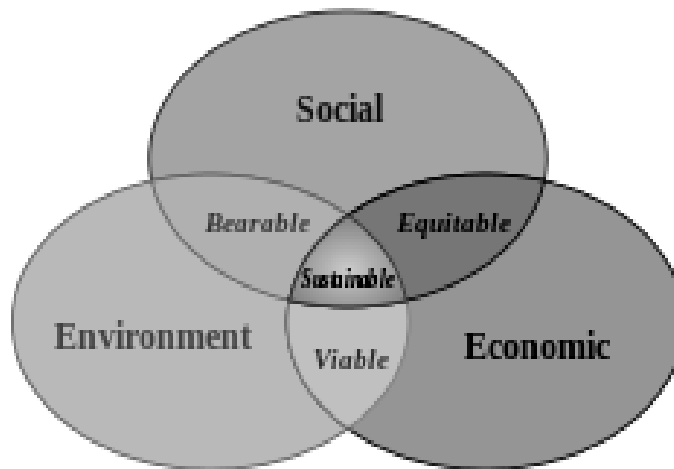


Figure 1. Scheme of Sustainable Development

2.1. Environmental sustainability Environmental sustainability is the process of making sure current processes of interaction with the environment are pursued with the idea of keeping the environment as pristine as naturally possible based on ideal-seeking behaviour. Thus, environmental sustainability demands that society designs activities to meet human needs while indefinitely preserving the life support systems of the planet. An "unsustainable situation" occurs when natural capital (the sum total of nature's resources) is used up faster than it can be replenished. Sustainability requires that human activity only uses nature's resources at a rate at which they can be replenished naturally. Theoretically, the long-term result of environmental degradation is the inability to sustain human life. Such degradation on a global scale should imply extinction for humanity.

The debate on sustainable development thus centers on the concern about the deteriorating environmental quality. The environmentalists continue to express dismay on the decadent health of the planet. They lament about the diminishing biodiversity, global warming, depleting fish stock, shrinking supplies of unsullied fresh drinking water, the plundering of virgin tropical forests, and air pollution reducing agricultural yields and affecting human health. The issues mentioned head a long list of concerns that environmentalists demand should urgently be addressed. To voice this sort of disappointment every year on the Earth Day has become a regular ritual. Achievements of the remedial measures undertaken, though impressive in some cases, cannot undo the fact that year after year the world moves from a bad to a worse environmental situation.

2.2. Economic sustainability Economic development and the factors that promoted it have been the prime concern of economics from its very inception. However, development acquired the status of a formal discipline essentially after the Second World War for a variety of reasons though there still remains an air of ambiguity around the concept and its objectives. The recent attachment of the condition of sustainability has only added to the fuzzy character of the notion. Achieving of full employment, stability, and equity in distribution were though formally recognized as goals of economic development, growth in GNP invariably occupied center stage. It was believed that growth would take care of employment and promote stability at the same time. The conflict between growth and distribution was alone considered substantive. The issue *was* vital for the developing countries where distributive inequalities were indeed acute. However, without growth nothing but poverty alone could be distributed more evenly. The hope was that the distribution process would make growth in income eventually *trickle down* to the lower rungs of society, and the upcoming industrial centers would *spill* growing prosperity far and wide with the passage of time. The centers of growth did not radiate prosperity around: they became the whirlpools of affluence sucking in men and material from all around, leaving the far flung areas in deep deprivation. In addition, rapid growth was characterized with aggravating poverty and inequalities topped with awesome environmental deterioration.

The world is in the midst of a financial crisis which threatens a worldwide economic recession. The financial crisis has proven very clearly that the apparent strength of modern financial markets was illusionary. The happy-go-lucky mood evaporated instantly, with the write down of losses accompanied by the sackings of executives and followed by more stringent lending for the real victims of the credit crunch. Furthermore, financial crisis was accompanied by rising inflation – as demand for oil and food pushed prices up globally. This crisis has stunned both the left and the right of the political spectrum and the different economic schools of thought. Many economists and policy makers have suggested more regulation and transparency, with only a few highlighting the role greed and speculation played. It stresses the need to change from old sector-centered ways of doing business to new approaches that involve cross-sectoral co-ordination and the integration of environmental and social concerns into all development processes.

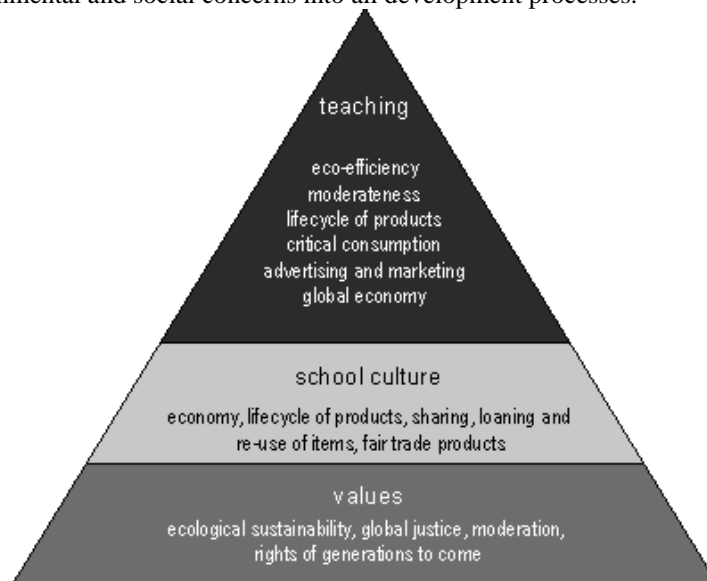


Figure. 2 Economic Sustainability

The growth of international trade has brought about significant economic benefits and prosperity to many. However, small-scale producers in many poor countries, particularly those whose livelihoods depend upon the farming of a single crop, are unable to compete in a world market controlled by large multinational companies and distorted by the subsidies provided by rich countries to their producers. It is estimated that due to trade restrictions in rich countries, poor countries lose out on an estimated US\$100 billion per year, which is double the amount of aid that they receive. As a consequence, farmers in poor countries have few options for generating an income and many live in poverty often unable to meet even their most basic needs. Fair trade is a response to these conditions.

The fair trade concept refers to an organized social movement aimed at alleviating poverty, promoting sustainable development and aiming for greater equity in international trade. The strategic objective of fair trade is to deliberately engage with marginalized producers and workers in order to assist them in moving from a position of vulnerability to security and self-sufficiency and at the same time to promote a more balanced and sustainable relationship and exchange between rich and poor. The most prominent principle of fair trade is the prompt payment of a ‘fair’ price to producers that covers not only their costs of production but also enables production that is socially just and environmentally sound. Indeed, fair trade aims to promote a more balanced relationship and exchange between rich and poor.

Fair trade aims to create opportunities for producers and workers in poor countries who have been economically disadvantaged or marginalized by the conventional trading system. Fair trade standards represent an effort to establish social guarantees that function through the global trade structure. In this respect, fair trade helps to protect producers and workers in poor countries against the imbalances and potentially pernicious consequences of the global market. Fair trade aims to promote sustainable development. This includes the promotion of better environmental practices and the application of responsible methods of

production. The use of genetically modified organisms is prohibited, while the use of harmful agrochemicals is limited in favour of environmentally sustainable farming methods that improve soil fertility, protect farmers' health and preserve valuable ecosystems for future generations.

The principles of fair trade encompass transparent management and commercial relations that aim to promote fairness and respect between trading partners. Such relationships aim to provide stability and a level of security, so that producers and their marketing organizations have an opportunity to improve their management skills and access to new markets. Essential to the success of the fair trade movement, the vision extends beyond producers to involve consumers and sellers. Fair trade advocates decent wages and working conditions for workers, as well as long-term trading contracts to provide greater security and a safe and healthy working environment for producers and workers. One of the primary justifications for fair trade is that it can promote diversification, long-term sustainability and greater returns by encouraging investment in poorer communities.

Ethical finance originated at a time when demands for enhanced financial transparency-along with the conviction that finance could be used to achieve social change-achieved greater emphasis. Ethical finance can be understood as a response by consumers to the negative outputs of a global economy that can have devastating effects on local communities, the climate, and ecosystems. Innovations in ethical finance may reflect a concern about the limitations of capitalism to provide solutions to issues of social justice, such as the widening gap between rich and poor. Transformation in economic circumstances makes a shift in the landscape for sustainable investment. In the last decade one of the most discussable issues is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR is an organizations commitment to conduct its business in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner whilst balancing the interests of a diverse range of stakeholders.

2.3. Issue of Sustainability from Islamic Perspective Islam is a universal religion and addresses the entire mankind not the believers alone. It is, therefore, no surprise that men irrespective of faith do often think along Islamic lines. The main objectives of the Islamic law put broadly are “to promote the well-being of *all* mankind which lies in safeguarding their faith (*din*), their human self (*nafs*), their intellect (*aql*), their posterity (*nasl*) and their wealth (*maal*)”. They entail wisdom, mercy, and justice. Muslims, like others, must be strong both materially, and morally to achieve these objectives. Rapid economic growth with priority for the fulfillment of basic needs and avoidance of wasteful expenditure are imperative to help move in that direction. The environmental deterioration continues unabated also in the Muslim world even as Islam preaches moderation in consumption, exhorts to avoid wasteful use of natural resources, reminds people of delicate proportions in the universe and enjoins on mankind to maintain the natural balance. It warned that greed will tempt mankind to disturb the proportions and tilt the balance. Safeguarding of intellect implies that the community is able to resist pollute cultural influences from alien sources and must stick to what remains still relevant in their heritage. It has to pay special attention to educational attainments, research and critical evaluations. *The insistence of Shari'ah on preservation of the progeny is intended for ensuring inter-generational equity in the distribution of wealth and prosperity, conservation of resources, and sustenance of the environment, all links of one chain.*

3. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Education for Sustainability (EFS) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) are interchangeable terms describing the practice of teaching for sustainability. ESD is the term most used internationally and by the United Nations. Agenda 21 was the first international document that identified education as an essential tool for achieving sustainable development and highlighted areas of action for education. Groundwork has been laid for sustainability education worldwide. Recent changes in service learning, a focus on literacy and skills, standards that support interdisciplinary thinking and the role of systems thinking have all increased the visibility of the movement. Various approaches to ESD encourage people to understand the complexities of, and synergies between, the issues threatening planetary sustainability and understand and assess their own values and those of the society in which they live in the context of sustainability. ESD seeks to engage people in negotiating a sustainable future, making decisions and acting on them. In recognition of the importance of ESD, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2005-2014 as the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD).

The goals of the decade are to provide an opportunity for refining and promoting the vision of, and transition to, sustainable development – through all forms of education, public awareness and training; and to give an enhanced profile to the important role of education and learning in sustainable development. The objectives of the DESD are to:

- facilitate networking linkages, exchange and interaction among stakeholders in ESD;
- foster increased quality of teaching and learning in ESD;
- help countries make progress towards and attain the Millennium Development Goals through ESD efforts;
- provide countries with new opportunities to incorporate ESD into education reform efforts.

4. Conclusion In order to preserve the future, we must appreciate the interconnectedness between humans and nature at all levels. Sustainable development practices can help us do this, and through education and building awareness, preserving the future is within everyone's reach. Sustainable development promotes the idea that social, environmental, and economic progress is all attainable within the limits of our earth's natural resources. Sustainable development approaches everything in the world as being connected through space, time and quality of life. When speaking about the 'reorientation of education practices through sustainability' takes for granted that many education systems promote unsustainable education practices that need to be revisited. The aim of Education for Sustainable Development is the 'reorientation of the current formal education curriculum'. The guiding document for the Decade explicitly states that its major objective is: to integrate principles, values and practices of sustainable development to all aspects of education and teaching, in order to create a more sustainable future in terms of the integrity of the environment, of economic viability and of a fair society for present and future generations. The programme Education for a Sustainable Development demands the re-examination of educational policy, from kindergarten, up to university and lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2005). The concept of sustainability has an excellent educational component because the preservation of the environment depends on ecological awareness, which depends on education. A concrete strategy to start this debate inside our schools is to have an eco-audit in order to discover where exactly schools have been unsustainable. It is very simple: we only have to trace every action taken and compare these data with the principles of sustainability. It is not hard to identify, in our curriculum, where we are and where we are not integrating the concept of sustainability in our concrete educational practices. A new educational practice requires a new pedagogy. That is why in recent years we have insisted on the need for an ecopedagogy, namely a pedagogy appropriate to education practices based on sustainability. Sustainable development essentially poses a moral, ethical, social and political issue. Economists or economics alone cannot resolve it.

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