



Globalization and Sustainable Agriculture in India

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Introduction:

Development is a complex issue containing economic growth as one of the elements wherein human being is both the subject and the beneficiary of the development process. Development is fulfillment of human needs including physical, security, status, autonomy, self actualization etc. It pertains to quality and is multidimensional and covers personal life, social relations, politics, economics and culture of the countries and regions concerned.

Development experience of the past three decades has brought to us the realization of the deadly effects of development on environment. Out of this realization, has emerged the concept of sustainable development. As such, the idea of sustainable development implies on indictment of the hitherto followed mode of development mainly from the ecological point of view.ⁱ

In theory, development that is sustainable and not damaging to the planet is very possible. Of course though, in reality there are a lot of politics and challenges involved as highlighted throughout this site.

Meaning of Sustainable Development:

By late 1980s, the concept of sustainable development had become one of the mainstream development paradigms. In the process of its evolution numerous changes have taken place in its definition objectives. However, the acceptable and widely used definition, not only among scholars but also among administrators and policy makers so far, has been the one adopted by the World Commission on Environment and Development. According to this “sustainable development is development that meets the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED: 1987). Intergenerational and intergenerational equity and social,



psychological dimensions are highlighted in this definition. This definition contains with it two concepts: (1) the concept of 'need' especially the essential needs of the world's poor to which overriding priority should be given, and (2) the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment ability to meet present and future needs(WCED,1987:43)ⁱⁱ. This contributed to the understanding that sustainable development encompasses a number of areas and highlights sustainability as the idea of environmental, economic and social progress and equity, all within the limits of the world's natural resources. The terms 'sustainable development' is not easy to define.

Meaning of Sustainable Agriculture:

According to Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), sustainable agriculture has been defined as, "the management and conservation of the resource institutional changes in such a manner as to ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations. Such sustainable development is environmentally non-degrading, technically appropriate, economically viable and socially acceptable". From the definitional objectives of sustainable agricultural development it appears to be of a loll order.

Reddy (1995) has grouped these objectives under four properties of agro eco-systems productivity (measured in terms yield or net income or food value etc.), stability (measured as co-efficient of variation of yield or net incomes), sustainability (difficult to measures in quantitative terms) and equitability (in terms of income distribution).

The perception and attitudes of the people towards environment and sustainability play a vital role. Development and ecological concerns are often viewed as conflicting goals. Besides, social dynamics, agrarian structure and technologies are not given due consideration in the debate on sustainable agriculture development, through the role of markets is well recognized, especially by economists.

The Era of Globalization and Sustainable Development:

The Indian economy opened up in a big way for economic liberalization in July 1991. The main thrust of economic reforms of 1991 has been to allow a wider scope for the operation of the free



market by dismantling the elaborate structure of licences, controls and regulations which had been the outcome of strategy of self-reliant socialist development introduced after independence. The new economy policy marks a significant departure from the past. The long cherished principles of growth with justice, social responsibility and accountability, equity and self-reliance have been rendered obsolete with new slogans of liberalization, privatization, globalization, efficiency and competitivenessⁱⁱⁱ.

World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in its report entitled “Global Challenge Global Opportunity” has identified water and sanitation, energy, agricultural productivity, biodiversity, and human health, as the moot point.

UN Environment Programme (UNEP) believed that “A consumer lifestyle based on the desire for mobility, convenience and product disposability has undercut the further advancement of resource efficiency and waste reduction”.

The impact of globalization on environment and sustainable development needs to be continuously addressed in Indian context which profoundly remains in the transition. In spite of the potential of globalization to economic convergence it paved for an increase in inequality resulting in increased environmental impacts such as climate change, protection of the ozone layer, biodiversity and desertification. These international trade arrangements and environmental agreements contain very few provision for harmonizing trade and environment trade and development. The increasing tendency of trans national corporations to establish global standards for environmental performance enhances the contribution of FDI to sustainable development. The Commission on Sustainable Development urged creditor countries and international financial institutions to implement speedily the enhanced heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative. It also urged HIPC countries to develop national poverty strategies in a participatory way so that debt relief would be linked with poverty eradication. The Agenda 21 refers to national sustainable development strategies as important mechanisms for enhancing and linking national capacity so as to bring together priorities in social, economic and environmental policies. National sustainable development strategies provide an opportunity to put into practice common principles of strategic planning for sustainable development.



The substantial human and institutional resources required for the formulation of national sustainable development strategies may impose a burden on India.

Sustainable agriculture is based on the sustainable use of natural resources- land, water and agricultural bio diversity, including that of plants and animals. Sustainable use of these resources, in turn, requires that their ownership and control lie with decentralized agricultural communities in order to generate livelihoods provide food and conserve natural resources.

There are five major sources of external liberalization or globalization in India:

1. The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the World Bank
2. The Agreement on Agriculture of the World Trade Organization (WTO)
3. Bilateral trade pressure from countries such as the US
4. Internal policy pressure by TNCs in agribusiness
5. Commitment of experts and policy makers to the external liberalization programme

The world conservation strategy, while indicating the requirement for sustainable development, focuses on three main objectives of living resource conservation, first, to maintain essential ecological processes and life support system on which human survival and development depend, second, to preserve genetic diversity on which depend the functioning of ecological process and life support system and third, to ensure the sustainable utilization of resource and ecosystem which support millions of rural communities as well as major industries. Therefore if the degradation of the planet is too halted, then a major shift has to take in social, economic and political aspects. A kind of revolution is necessary to involve a change in lifestyles, a major shift in human reproductive behavior and a restructuring of the global economy^{iv}.

In the context of overall debate on sustainable development agriculture sector gets priority. The reason being that various environment problems are associated with the agrarian development .It is well recognized that sustainable agriculture production not only involves identification and application of improved technologies, but also ecological and socio-economic concerns.

**Conclusion:**

In this context, we need to re-examine our economic policies and develop technologies which are environment friendly and economically viable. Technologies available at present fall short either in productivity aspects (organic farming) or equity aspects (bio-technology). While the former are unacceptable in the developing countries where satisfaction of the basic needs is on top of agenda, the latter are against the concept of sustainability.

References :

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^{iv} Nayak, K. 2008: "Sustainable Development for Vulnerable Poor", *Kurukshetra*, Vol.56, No.5, pp:8-11