

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR SOCIAL WELFARE

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Abstract:

A new concept of sustainability has emerged with rapid development in the economy and lifestyle of people. With the advancement of technology, the economy has achieved bigger goals and made a tremendous transition in people's lives. Technology has supported social and cultural growth by introducing communication and interaction among people across the globe. However, development has hardly affected the environment with the increasing population and an imbalance in social, economic, and cultural development has been recognized. The researcher discusses the impact of community development on social welfare. The study also discusses the significance of sustainable development in a community with opportunities and challenges in this transition. The purpose of the paper is to highlight the need for an equitable distribution of resources and opportunities to attain sustainability goals.

Keywords: *social welfare, sustainable development, social justice, sustainability, community.*

Introduction:

In light of growing concern about the global environment and related quality of life issues, the goal of this article is to stimulate the community's contribution to sustainable development and to widen our insight into the issues for sustainable community development activity. 1

Today, governments and political parties of both the left and right across the industrialized world recognize that environmental concerns are indeed serious necessitating immediate action solutions that are more than just technical and may not be accessible at all without significant social and economic transformation. The concept of sustainable development has overcome the conflict between environmental protection and the economy, as evidenced by "the environmental debate of the 1970s and mid-1980s".

The definition of sustainable community development is the same as that of sustainable development, with the primary difference being the spatial scope. Sustainable development is recognized as a global concept while the term sustainable community development is considered a local concept. According to a study, it is stated the "definitions of sustainable community" development emphasize the significance of striking a balance between "environmental concerns and economic concerns". 2

It recognizes that protecting the environment necessitates fundamental decisions regarding the direction of economic growth and the institutions of government policy. However, it contends that this is compatible with growth in the economy in a (regulated) global capitalist system. In this context, sustainable development represents a historic compromise between the philosophy of the capitalist system and its environmental critique, allowing for the development of a single environmental discourse that is used by all types of organizations like governments, businesses, and environmental organizations. 3

Sustainability is the sense of enabling future generations to sustain whatever it is that one wishes to sustain. It is demonstrated that variations in genuine savings and environmental footprint can then be used as indicators of sustainability. The relationship between intergenerational welfare and sustainability emphasizes that the exclusive focus on opportunities left to future generations is an overly simplistic approach to social welfare. So, at best, sustainability can be regarded as a minimal and potentially insufficient obligation for the current generation. 4

Sustainable development and economic growth have progressed to include global environmental and social issues. Thus, as Mark Roseland stated that the economic growth with an ecological shortage is anti-economic, which makes us poorer rather than richer. More emphasis has been placed on the

three fundamental dimensions - social, environmental, and economic - in sustainable development where their balance is very important. The economic dimension compares the well-being of societies by using quantitative indicators such as GDP/GNP. However, the environmental dimension mainly focuses on the conservation of natural and biological processes as well as the protection of the species' long-term viability. Finally, the social dimension addresses the living conditions and social welfare of societies in order to ensure that people's basic needs are met. 5

As a normative concept, sustainable development entails trade-offs among social, ecological, and economic objectives and is required to maintain the overall system's integrity. Sustainable development considers conservation and change from economic, social, and ecological viewpoints. It is broadly defined, according to the WCED (1987), as "development that meets current needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs." This notion is founded on the ethical requirement of generational fairness. Moreover, sustainable development, in addition to providing for everyone's basic needs, sustainable development entails preserving the Earth's "natural life-support systems" and also contributes to empowering everyone to complete their "dreams of a better life." As a result, sustainable development is more properly defined as an actual period of transformation in which resource exploitation, financial direction, technology development orientation, and institutional change are all in harmony and something that enhances both current and future potential to meet human needs as well as their aspirations appropriately. (WCED, 1987)

As we approach the millennium, it is clear that human activity has harmed the natural integrity of major ecosystems on every continent, posing a serious threat to the security of the societies that rely on these ecosystems (e.g. Brown et al., 1998). Furthermore, the most concerning environmental trends are global in scope threatening all of humanity. Many international gatherings have agreed that the best available predictions indicate potentially severe economic and social dislocation for current and future generations, worsening international tensions and increasing the risk of conflicts between and within nations. 6

Research Review:

The research on social welfare is linked with sustainable development and clarifies that this is a normative concept involving social, ecological, and economic objectives. The need for sustaining the integrity of the complete system is usefully formalized in terms of a social welfare function. According to the study, the social value function is an important factor in the expansion of traditional conceptions of sustainability. It is based on concepts of "strong sustainability or weak sustainability", illustrating the principle to uphold some aggregate of capital or social, ecological, and economic assets constant. The welfare function is proposed with these economic, ecological, and social capital in terms of values of basic human needs and integrity of the ecosystem including the socio-cultural system. Thus, the sustainable development process is restricted through social opportunity space defining a new value function. 7

Different studies on sustainable community development discuss development in different contexts including economic, social, and cultural development. It mainly depends on social capital that is non-materialized and is not limited by resources. Thus, it impacts on development, improvement, and transfer of the sustainability for a longer time. However, the cultural sustainability of a community is developed through the contribution of traditions, conventions, and history. The impact of cultural capital on social capital due to its interrelation is observed as well. Thus, the study highlights the significance of social capital in sustainable community development in terms of creating communication among the local communities, moreover, with the outside community. While various types of capital need to be discovered as well as established for sustainable development. It is insufficient to consider any one of the capitals or any two since only depletion of natural resources is not only the concern but equity, equality, and other social and cultural issues are also integrated into it. However, equity is important in the distribution of resources for a protective, productive and healthy community development. Therefore, the community should have equal access to health,

education, and transportation resources as well as equal opportunities to participate in various cultural activities such as ceremonies or rituals so that it can justify sustainable development.⁸

Future generations and present generations are linked to sustainability including genuine savings and the ecological footprint to sustain. Social welfare is emphasized with the opportunities for future generations while there is a need to observe sustainability as a minimal and arguably insufficient obligation that focuses on the current generation. However, optimality is more related to sustainability than sufficiency and it is considered in several aspects of the definition of sustainability for well-being. In the case of maximum income and sustainable income, the current generation differs from future generations that can have higher living standards. Intertemporal transfers at the corresponding prices help to integrate the constant equivalent consumption with opportunities. Aggregate consumption depending on current actions is considered to check sustainability as compared to a unidimensional threshold.⁹

Economics and social relations are discussed for social issues, since traditional theories are based on competitive markets, and production and consumption processes. Whereas, there is the process of exchanging goods and services irrespective of consideration of society's issues. According to the study, green economics deals with social issues integrated with social relations that promote a revival of local economics and also reduce trade. The first priority in a green economy should be the relationship of the people instead of trade or monetary issues. It is further expanded to develop cultural, social as well as aesthetic exchanges of relationships despite the fact that a green economy is not against global activities or trade. It is helpful for economic growth as well as activities like agriculture that involve people. Good farming relies on a good farming community where people know each other and recognize each other's dependencies. It can place proper value on good farming for efficient agriculture illustrating the implication of the existence of the community.¹⁰

Social welfare in community development is the physical as well as mental welfare of the community. Sustainability in economic and environmental aspects, involving social aspects balances social and economic systems to endorse outcomes for the satisfaction of individuals and the community. Thus, the sustainable community is far beyond environmental concerns and resource management, integrating common issues such as energy savings, water consumption, green construction and waste management. Social welfare is closely related to sustainability while the rapid development of society raises substantial concerns. It increases social and environmental issues with increasing demands on resources. Thus, well-developed communities can struggle for social welfare and equal resource distribution indicating a need for sustainable development.¹¹

The study explains sustainable community development in terms of quality enhancement of life. While the community development detouring traditional approaches outlines a more social welfare sustainable approach. Therefore, sustainable communities are established with tactics that refer to ecologically healthy and economically productive communities with socially unbiased results. The aim to reduce the impact of population growth is achieved in sustainable community development by protecting natural resources and the environment. A sustainable community encourages local resources for capital investments that result in an adequate financial return, stimulating the local economy. However, it is incomplete without equity in resource access and enforcing decision practices for equal distribution of foods across all parts of the community.¹²

Methodology:

The researcher analyzed different studies on sustainable community development to identify the needs of communities and issues related to the same. The study also discusses sustainability in terms of economic growth and recognizes that there is a need to focus on various social issues such as poverty. The researcher considers three main aspects to analyze sustainability in community development including social, economic, and environmental aspects that are connected to each other and concerned with social issues. Thus, equity, equality, and social justice are widely explained to discuss the role of community in sustainable development.

The researcher scrutinizes various research related to social welfare and indicates its close relation with sustainable communities. The study discusses the goals and objectives of a sustainable community and its impact on social welfare. According to some studies, the need for a sustainable community is based on an equal distribution of resources, while some studies focus on local economic growth. However, the research has broadened the approach to the study of sustainability in various contexts. Furthermore, it discusses social issues in the community as well as environmental sustainability.

Furthermore, the study focuses on access to facilities for each individual and the involvement of the public in the decision-making process. Sustainability is a need of the growing community in today's rapidly progressing age. Thus, the significance of a sustainable community and its advantages are specified in the paper. Social welfare is the well-being of society that can be achieved through sustainable development and the paper aims to highlight its need to avail improved quality of life.

Findings:

The researcher studied various studies on community development to analyze various perceptions of sustainable development. It is found that these studies mainly deal with issues in environmental sustainability. The researcher also studied the relationship between social well-being and sustainable community development. According to the study, environmental sustainability is an important factor in the social and economic development of the community. Whereas, energy retrofitting of housing and transportation has a social impact on autonomy and health, which is a crucial part of a healthy society to enhance participation, and address social inequalities. It is a significant step to contribute to achieving goals like economic and clean energy, decrease in poverty, and improvement in the health and well-being of the community. The development should be focused on reduced inequality and responsible consumption and production in addition to climate action. A study highlights the need for a regeneration framework to deflect the attention away from approaches. The study also focuses on issues such as social exclusion, inequality as well as poverty including the study of challenges related to environmental behaviour change and education. Therefore, research acknowledges various community challenges and opportunities for sensible circulation of resources to households and the need for low-carbon society approaches. A development cost entails increased public health expenditure while opposition to strategies of climate change mitigation can fail the community transition to sustainability. As a result, negative impacts on lower-income households are observed, although their contributions to emissions are significantly less as compared to those on higher incomes. However, it may increase other challenges like social unrest, delinquency, and violence. Thus, community development for social welfare has to be based on equality and social justice in addition to environmental sustainability. 13

A sustainable community is further developed to meet the demands of clean air and water, safe and healthy foods, and pretty landscapes. Community development inspires "environmental embellishments" as well as promotes social and economic welfare through sustainable development. According to a study, the community is involved in decision-making and it lifts the spirit of cooperation in people that may impact on future of the community. A sustainable community invigorates the city centre and reduces the spread which helps to build regional identity and pride. The quality of life increases accordingly with effective public transport which is an important factor in reducing congestion, pollution, and transportation costs. A community providing easy access to jobs and services with a living wage standard and encouraging education and training help to improve quality of life. Moreover, it nurtures better future opportunities for the young population. However, it is crucial to create a vision for sustainable community development that plays an important role in the building of the nation. It can help to establish goals for sustainable development with civic, public, and private interaction. Projects are based on the objectives for the development of a sustainable community that start to address as well as solve the issues even with bigger goals and also provide better achievements. 14

According to the study on implementing an ecological village in Sweden, various strengths and weaknesses emerged during this project. They are discussed to highlight the challenges in sustainable community development, noting the benefits of social welfare. Eco-center developed in the village entails the concept of an ecological village where eco-friendly applications are promoted to use for enhancing the community with environmental aspects of sustainability. It includes solar energy implemented for household use like solar cookers and archaeological research upraised the attraction to visit for tourists as well as academicians or students. The research on this project is found to be helpful in increasing opportunities to access relevant data for further studies that may guide in setting future community development goals regarding sustainability. Whereas, it is difficult to convince the people for developing an ecological lifestyle that would enhance their wealth and lifestyle conditions.¹⁵

Another perceptive of community development challenges include various problems like urban sprawl, environmental degradation, and social injustice. Sustainable development provides accomplishment of the needs of the current generation. However, it should not affect the accomplishment of future generations' needs. A vision of each community plays a significant role in sustainable development with unique characteristics and challenges despite the common concerns of environmental protection, along with economic security and social justice. Also, consideration of a commitment to the social welfare of current generations as well as future generations broadens the view of the community toward the large scope of success. Thus, communities can define, recognize and structure their own social and economic goals to build capacity in natural, economic, and social capital for social welfare with physical and human capital. Thus, the study found that there is a need for a concrete decision in sustainable community development for social welfare ¹⁶

Sustainable development also entails a major threat of population growth affecting the overall system performance. However, it is not leading to affect sustainability but restricts the opportunities for sustainable community development. The value function in sustainability is established with the current development state as well as the population that considers long-term requirements. Thus, it is very close to the factor of limits of the population including other factors such as per-capita income, macroeconomic stability, social capital, and environmental quality. Consequently, higher values of social sustainability are related to the trade-off between evolution in revenue and other objectives. The trade-offs in the social welfare function are accessed with recognition of the levels of criticality to restrain the opportunity space for sustainable development and marginal changes are assessed. Thus integrated approach toward sustainability balances value function and safe minimum standards. Therefore, within the limits of critical levels of social, economic, as well as ecological capital, sustainable development is recognized for accomplishing the conditions with priority to the transition process. A viable development process defines such conditions to identify the least necessities in a socio-ecological and economic system. According to the study, sustainable development in the community is an evolution in the economy and society due to structural changes that mainly include changes in human-made production capital and social organization. Thus, the transition tends to attain minimum standards of criticality for social welfare through sustainable development. ¹⁷

Conclusion:

Sustainability is an important aspect of community development integrated with social and economic growth. Environmental sustainability plays a vital role in the availability of resources and their access which is mainly influenced by the development of the community and thus, impact on social welfare. The study strengthens the sustainable approach in community development where the environment is also taken into account and the need for its protection during progress. The economy is enriched by the opportunities offered by the development strategy and the objectives to achieve the goals of equality and social justice make the concern to relate poverty with sustainability. In short, sustainable community development is accomplished with economic and social progress without compromising social welfare and social justice.

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