

Sustainable Development: Environmental, Social, and Economic Integration for Rural Development

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SUMMARY

The approach of sustainable development is central to Rural Development. Sustainable development, socially, encourages the eradication of poverty and supports social capital. Rural areas attain economic sustainability subsequent to investment in vital infrastructure and services. At the environmental dimension, sustainable development incorporates environmental preservation and natural resource management to safeguard and ensure an environmentally friendly utilization of traditional knowledge. To address the challenges of sustainable development, strategies include poverty alleviation, fund increment for research targeted at issues of climate change, boosting the capability of rural population through setting up of new occupation opportunities and income generation other than agro-based industries, rural health-care facilities advancement, gender unbiasedness and ensuring environmental sustainability, to name a few. The application of inclusive methods for coping with constraints in developing countries is essential for the success of sustainable rural development.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is a worldwide participatory approach enabling individuals to partake democratically in social, economic, and environmental advancement. Sustainable development empowers the poor and marginalized to build a future that can accomplish social order and improve their standard of living. The participation of rural residents and communities in the management of their social, economic, and environmental goals improves rural livelihoods. This includes empowering rural residents, particularly young people, and women through local cooperatives and different organizations. Integration of the three dimensions is fundamental for social order, biological systems, and the economy of the nation. A long-term view of advancement is followed to achieve sustainable development for rural areas. With the required knowledge and skills essential for the combination of the three dimensions, challenges to policymaking in sustainable development can be addressed. It is, therefore, vital to coordinate rural development activities through efforts at the global level.

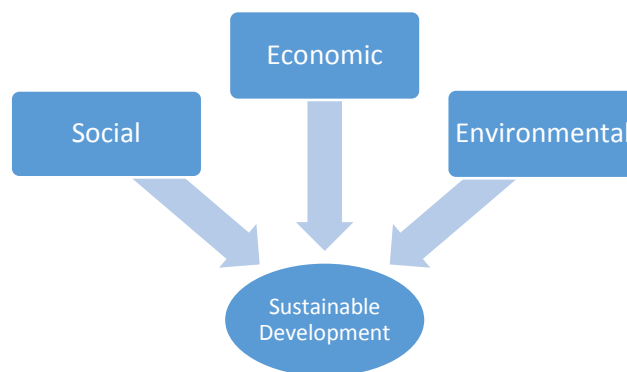


Fig. 1: Sustainable Development Dimensions: Social, Economic and Environmental

Economic

Economic sustainability implies lessening the inequality in income and providing access to education, and health care, especially for the women and underprivileged. Asian economies such as South Korea, Malaysia, and Taiwan are leaders in attaining economic sustainability. Economic sustainability widens the interest in financial capital to individual and social capital. Where policies focus on economic interests without respect for the effect on individual and social capital, negative results such as pollution and social conflicts are obtained. The overall well-being of a nation depends on investments in rural infrastructure, rural health care, and rural education.

The economic goal of sustainable development is to switch national security from military to development needs such that finance is invested more in attaining social advancement and environmental protection.

Environmental

Environmental sustainability implies the managerial use of natural resources. The consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources has hampered biodiversity. Urban areas are the greatest consumers of resources and producers of waste products as the waste quantity is growing with per capita income. Although there is a notion that the rich are cleaner, this can be claimed to be true when the surplus is sufficient to empower them to have technology that can decrease emissions and purge the environment of waste. Environment Sustainability is the living of the population with an effective water supply, solid waste management, paved roads, sanitation, and other frameworks essential for individual and social health.

Social

Social sustainability refers to economic growth with social equity. It includes participation, empowerment, equity, and cultural identity (Basiago, 1999). It stabilizes population growth and minimizes migration into urban areas by raising the standard of living in rural areas in terms of health, education, and participation in development planning. In India, Kerala's highest literacy rate according to Census 2011 (94%), and the highest Human Development Index characterize the prudence and social integrity of the society. Sustainable development is crucial in the removal of unemployment, poverty, and discrimination against women and the underprivileged in society.

Challenges to Rural Development:

- Ethical values are the backbone of poverty alleviation and the establishment of human rights ensures people to live in dignity. Given that rural areas make up a large majority of the poor, poverty is a major problem.
- Rural people are vulnerable to financial and economic crises, as well as to climate change and water scarcity.
- Rural people are lacking in basic requirements as well as requisite infrastructures as a result of insufficient attention and low funds.
- Rural areas are primarily agrarian with little to no exposure to other alternative sources of income.
- As opposed to urban areas, proper waste management practices are absent in rural areas.
- Access to basic services, employment prospects, and difficulty in planning in relation to the rural-urban gap are constraints for rural areas in developing nations.

Strategies for Rural Development:

Economic:

- Endorsing equitable land, water, innovation, and finances to marginalized groups.
- In order to help small-scale farmers, especially women, in developing nations effectively handle the risks related to price, weather, water scarcity, and natural disasters, access to credit and other resources for farm-insurance markets is to be provided.
- Increase agricultural productivity in the least developed nations by increasing investment in rural infrastructure, extension services, agricultural research, and technology development.
- Increase both private and public funding in rural construction projects such as highways, waterways, transport infrastructure, storage and commercial services, livestock, systems for irrigation, affordable housing, services for water and sanitation, electrification services, and networks for communications.
- Aid the growth of community-driven cooperatives to increase investment in services and identify the contribution of urban areas in motivating rural development.
- Supply proper land-use structures that foster the emergence of agrarian and non-farming services while recognising the rights of rural populations and indigenous peoples.
- Develop viable methods to add value to agricultural commodities and earn extra income.
- Supply entrepreneurial education, credit, and additional support to non-farm and non-basic manufacturing operations.
- Improve connections between agriculture and different industries of the rural economy.

- Promote sustainable tourism as a source of employment as well as a substitute for agriculture and different basic production operations.
- Improve rural populations' access to marketplaces and reasonably priced business advisory services, including the use of microcredit, and guaranteed loans, which is especially important for youth, women, and indigenous groups.
- Increase exposure to markets by helping rural manufacturers, associations, and businesses, particularly those from developing countries, to meet market demand.

Environmental:

- Apart from agriculture and rural industry, rural employment can be initiated in infrastructure development, waste reduction, and residue management.
- Ensure sustainable use of indigenous knowledge and ensure its ethical application for natural resources management.
- Strengthen rural communities' capacity for coping with and recovering from natural disasters.
- Promote rural communities capacity building efforts so that they are able to execute local adaptation to climate change initiatives.
- For sustainable rural development, increase the accessibility of reasonable, dependable energy supplies such as renewable and alternative energy resources.
- Increase access to appropriate sanitation and purified drinking water.
- Aid the use and invention of secure and eco-friendly techniques and practices alongside housing to create employment opportunities.
- Encourage the promotion of sustainable forest management.
- Increase potential for green employment and rural infrastructure development, while considering the International Labour Organization's agenda for decent work.
- Encourage sustainable natural resource utilization and management, which involves conserving ecosystems by community-based programmes.
- Promote safe sewage and waste management practices.
- Promote sustainable land resource usage to mitigate land degradation brought on by unsustainable land resource exploitation.

Social:

- At local and national levels, planning and budgeting in favour of the poor are essential.
- Providing basic needs and improving the access and provision to services facilitates people's participation in social activities.
- Offering social assistance programmes to vulnerable households, the elderly, the handicapped, and the jobless.
- Motivating indigenous peoples, small-scale farmers, and women by safeguarding land tenure aided by suitable legal structures.
- Supporting initiatives to integrate recent technologies with traditional knowledge.
- Encourage vulnerable groups to take leadership, and actively participate in the preparation and decision-making of local policies while taking into account federal laws.
- Increase rural residents' and communities' access to information, training, extension services, and learning materials to assist planning.
- Support and foster rural communities' capacity for the development of social capital.
- Train nutritional and health experts to improve access to reasonable healthcare services for disease prevention, cure, and treatment.
- Initiate informative programmes for rural populations intended to disease prevention.
- Eliminate both traditional and contemporary forms of illiteracy, assure access to educational opportunities, in addition to vocational and entrepreneurial education to build capacities specifically for youth, women, and indigenous people.
- Develop rural population access to communications technologies to facilitate internet access as well as for making good use of these technologies.
- Develop public and private services that utilize cellular banking and e-extension services.

- Promote diversification from agricultural to non-agrarian and other non-basic manufacturing operations such as mining, construction, businesses, and service industries.
- To better understand how non-farming activities contribute to poverty reduction and earning capacity, build the infrastructure needed, and recommend data collection, such as segmented population data, processing and assessment.
- Promote gender equality and women's empowerment by including women in actions to be taken pertaining to rural development.
- Encourage women's ownership of the means of production, such as businesses, land, and capital.
- Foster equal opportunities for men and women in every aspect of rural development.
- Educate people widely and raise knowledge about women's rights, empowerment, and gender equality.

CONCLUSION

To foster sustainable agriculture and rural development, significant changes are required at the national and international levels, in both developed and developing nations. In order to ensure stable supplies of food that are nutritionally adequate, access to the needs of marginalized people, and agri-marketing involves the use of economic incentives and the development of appropriate technologies. Policy reform, land conservation, diversified income generation, and input management are the key factors of Rural Development. The support and involvement of rural residents, the commercial sector, national and state governments, and international assistance, are crucial for sustainable development.

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