

# Impact of COVID-19 and A Challenge to Sustainable Development

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Environmental crisis has assumed one of the most important matter of concern of national international politics. This crisis has resulted in an number of natural calamities as well as peculiar type of disease. The uprisal of COVID-19 has intensified the issue. Various researches reflect at a glance that Corona virus owes a relationship to the changes of climate and that along with the ecosystem and bio-diversity balance. A group of experts opine that this virus has attained such a zenith dimension as a corollary to the reckless deforestation, throughout the world. The corona pandemic has impacted on the cultural, economic and social walks of human life. So environmental balance has to be restored to protect the human species from all out annihilation. The only way out of this unprecedented crisis is the sustainable development assuring environmental balance.

**Keywords:** Crisis of Environment, Impact of COVID-19, Relevance of Sustainable Development.

## Introduction

The impact of COVID-19 since the last year has told upon the balance of world system. Various researches reflect at a glance that reflect Corona virus owes a relationship to the changes of climate and that along with the ecosystem and bio-diversity balance. Hazards in the health system added with detrimental recessive interaction among the wild animals have led to the rise of this crisis. In respect of this covid pandarnic , the subject matter of the sustainable development withstanding an environmental balance has come to the forefront of humanity at large.

## Aim of the Study

In this study, we try to establish that sustainable development is the only way to prevent the Crisis. Development without concern for the environment can only be a short-term Solution. In the long term it can only be anti-development and can go on only at the cost of enormous human suffering like this pandemic, increased poverty and oppression. So nothing could be more important for planners and politicians today than to rebuild nature. It can only be done if a healthy relationship can be established between the people and their nature. It is now clear that sustainable development requires an integration of environmental and socio-economic factors. Only a holistic approach and dedicated political will solve the problem.

## Review of literature

The Impact of the cond-19 Pandemie on Green Societies: Environmental Sustainability, Editor-Chinmay Chakrabortry, Swapnila Roy Susmita Sharma, Tien Anh Tran. Published by springer Nature Switzerland AG. 2021

This book is a very remarkable and significant book on the studies of the impact of COVIDE-19 in the environment sustainability .The Editors try to establish the relation between enviromental pollution and Conid-19 Pandemic. The book focuses on the Paradigms Shift in sustainable - development for the decline of green environment during the time of isolation of covid-19.

They relate the idea of cohering the idea of environment to economic development and planning, so that matter of development of the future may be paid equal heed in comparison to that of the present-day generation. Hence natural resources has to be used moderately, Sustainable development incorporates such a development which involves the setting up of social and ecomic economic equality as well as social justice and this necessitates importantly peoples' participation in this developmental process.



## Manas Kumar Ghosh

Assistant Professor,  
Dept. of Political Science,  
Santal Bidraha Sardha  
Satabarshiki Mahavidyalaya,  
Goaltore, Paschim Medinipur,  
West Bengal, India

**Environment**

The word 'environment' originates from the French word 'environir', that means 'that which encompasses'. Therefore, etymologically the environment means that which encompasses or circumscribes. Our environment means the composite elements which encompass us. On the other hand, 'ecology' is regarded as a part of zoology. In 1866 the word ecology was used by German Zoologist Haeckel. The ecology consists of two Greek words 'oikos' and 'logos'. 'Oikos' means dwelling place and 'logos' means 'science'. J. L. Chapman and Mrs. Reiss have meant by the word 'ecology', the relationship that develops between human habitat and constituent elements encompassing it. So it can be taken for granted that environment is the composite impact on a living being by the interactions of the living and non-living elements around it. In other words, environment is a surrounding condition created by the mutual interaction among human beings, plants, birds, animals and insects added to water, light, air and soil and some other physical elements around. What is more, environment does not mean only the physical elements. It includes within its periphery the ideas of social, cultural, economic and political segments. From the ecological approach, environment consists of not only the sensible natural world but also the fields of science and technology erected by man as well as the social and cultural matters.

**Covid-19 on the environment**

Of late covid-19 impacted strongly on environment. The level of air, water and sound pollutions in the developed countries of the world came down temporarily. The rate of Green House emission has diminished to such an extent that people felt elated with the rejuvenated beauty and charm of natural sights and sounds. With a view to thwart the impact of coronavirus, the life style of man has undergone an undeniable change. Use of mask, keeping up of Social distancing, dependence on technology with respect to continuing office duty from home, minimised use of vehicles; all have brought about an unforeseen dimension to the improved social life process.

But this change was not to last for long. No sooner has the lockdown conditions got relaxed than the pollution - Level is taking an ever-increasing trend. As for example highways in Delhi again have got enveloped with smog. As a result of stressing much importance on the use of mask, gloves and P.P.E. increased, the production of these materials has increased which in turn added a dimension of medical worst ergonomics creating another environmental crisis.

A survey deployed by centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (C.R.E.A.) has shown an inexorable tie between air pollution and covid infection. This survey clearly conveys that the dire need of the hour is to thwart air pollution to combat this virus because numberless patients suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma and lung cancer bear an every possibility to be infected by the virus, if not to succumb to death. If unchecked, this air

pollution is likely to aggravate the situation with this pandemic becoming more and more devastating. Climate Diplomacy, on the other hand has got badly hampered effected by this pandemic. Each and every opportunity for programme, summit and conference centering Climate movement has come to a standstill. Consequently formulation of a worldwide acceptable environment-policy has taken a break off.

A wide range of discussion and review of the impact of covid-19 on the world economy at present is going on. But leaders of the Great powers have no headache about its short term and long-term impact on the present world economy. There lies the relevance of Sustainable Development. At this 'new-normal' situation much stress has been imposed on changes in man's habit and on green recovery. This present critical situation might be improving in future but more worsened recurrence of such pandemic may approach us in case a balanced development is not given its due consideration.

**Sustainable Development**

The idea of 'Sustainable Development' has put its head out from the present world situation under the perspective of a conflict between environment and development, particularly since the 80s of the last century. Advancement precedes development while environment has to be preserved with a view to the survival of the human species on the earth. Hence sustainable development is nothing but development in full amity with environment, socially and culturally, where development would be fostered as well as there would certainly actualise a balance between environment and eco-system. According to Brundtland Report for the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) Sustainable Development means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." This view, in other words, reiterates that no how the quality of the earth at present can be lowered and transferred to the generations to come, a wasteland.

The question is how to implement this idea. What is the way out if developmental growth poses to be annihilating to nature? Should the development be stopped to preserve environment? This approach aspires after "Zero Growth". Many urge to bring back the close co-existence which had been between man and nature in the bygone days. However, the modern Realist thinkers are of the opinion that development cannot be discarded in this modern civilisation. Development cannot but advance but that ought not to annihilate nature. Development must be continuing though it must be sustainable to nature and eco-system. Such a development would not only satisfy the needs of the present but also foster, a scope for the future generation to live a hygienic and decent way of life.

Sustainable development means that every production requires some resources, and with the productions of the intended commodity, some wastes are produced as by product. Sustainability aims at utilizing the renewable resources such and such that nature capacitates to regenerate them. Likewise, sustainable development looks into the matter so that

nature can assimilate automatically the wastes which are left residue in the end of the consumption of the products and the produced commodity, Economist Herman E. Dally adjectifies it with "Steady-state economy". However the level upto which the society can regenerate and assimilate these by-product waste matters is not fixed. This level may go up or come down keeping parity with human activities. That is why it is important to monitor the economic activities of man and their effects on environment.

Hence a question comes to the foreground as to whether or not the natural resources which are not renewable, cannot be utilised. How can then the requirements of the present generation be satisfied if all the resources available are kept reserved for the generations to come? Here the environmental developmentalists opine that a certain portion of the consumable resources may be deployed to efficiency improvement and quest for alternative sources of energy. However, there are endless debates and differences of opinions as to what would be reasonable varieties of requirements of the present demands. If the requirements of majority of common people may be taken for granted as the yardstick then would the elite class people be then persuaded to concede to their level of livelihood? On the other hand, if the level of consumption-requirement of the developed countries be accepted as the framework of reference, and the people belonging to the developing countries rush after following that level of consumption, then how can the sustainability level be assured? The proponents of Sustainable development suggest that the developed countries and the elite-class people of the developing countries have to check their consumption level. This is undeniably true that many economists at present express their concern for sustainability. What is more, present-day industries, too, are notably devoting time making propaganda magnifying 'sustainability'. But surprisingly, these institutions are recalcitrant to get persuaded to decrease their proportion of development. Here, developed industries are of a standpoint that any external control over their developmental production will de-stabilise the market economy, resulting in an inefficient economy, if not in other words, interfere in their unrestrained activities. They opine that a Price-mechanism and newer inventions will not only foster better balanced utilisation of resources but also restrict pollution level. Rajani Kothari looks upon sustainability as a 'rhetoric' if not an 'ethical principle' to re-orient "our relationship with the earth and its creatures in the realm of knowledge and arenas of action." Justifiably he argues that the industrialists have deliberately deployed "the environmentalist label and the sustainability slogan" as a "deceptive jargon" if not a "convenient cover for conducting business as usual."

Many Ecologists think that development is such a modus operandi where there remains no co-existence between development-oriented and profit-centric activities in one hand and the unbalanced economic activities on the other. So what is of dire need is not to exploit the resources to meet the

requirements of a handful of elite class people but to satisfy the basic needs of poverty-stricken grassroots people such as food, clothe, shelter, health, education and cultural amusements. The environmentalists, and the ecologists will determine the nature of techniques to be used for production. However, everybody admits that the population explosion in the Third World countries has to be controlled in strong hands.

Again, according to the Radical Ecologists, the idea of sustainable development is co-related with re-structurisation of existing economic-social and political value-orientation mechanism. And it would be possible when the two ideas of equality and diversity may be included within the periphery of the basic principles of the social organisations. Political empowerment of the local community of people has to be given a proper stress by assuring the opportunities to them for participation in the participatory political structure. On the other hand, major powers in the international arena, have to debar themselves from devoting to economic expansion, competition and attitude for political domination. Rather, they have to constitute a climate of co-operation. What is more, a mentality has to be inculcated into the mind of the people to put restraint on their consumption level.

Creation of a public opinion in favour of this public awareness is the crying need of the hour. People have to be convinced that too much availability of comforts without too much streets does not yield goodness always, even if better technology brings forth them smoothly. The fact is undeniable that people cannot help getting allured by such modern consumer goods because they have flavoured human life with too much comforts. In this present world, material affluence is considered to be the yardstick of prestige and dignity. Hence, it is indubitably a tough task to bring about a radical change in the paradigm of human demands and values. That is why, any discussion on sustainable development has lost its way into the darkness of futile intellectual argumentation. However, a ray of hope has been detected by many that people are gradually getting more aware of the environment.

Suffice it to say, countries worldwide need to formulate and implement effective policy in favour of it. Searching for and using unconventional energy are a must. "Biomass Policy" needs to be adopted. What is more, creating a favourable atmosphere must be done. To let a mentality grow in man regarding his mentality change. Otherwise, this theoretical observation would lead us nowhere.

### **Conclusion**

Finally speaking, the environmental decay and environment movement organised against it have assumed as the most important matter in recent India and worldwide. In a large and populated country like India there is no end of socio-economic problems. So, the government is compelled to get deviated from working out the problems concerning environment, under the pressure to solve the immediate closer problems. A handful of developed countries consume the lion-portion of resources. So the responsibilities to pollute the world go to them more. On the other hand, the matter of environmental pollution is

discernible in the developing countries. Environmental damage resulting in the ozone-layer erosion, global warming, acid rain and the natural calamities tell upon the entire world. But neither the developed nor the developing countries pay heed to the solution of this environment crisis. No expected hopeful result has come out of the world conventions held off and on. The countries both developed and developing reflect their apathy for carrying out research works and definite planning with a view to environment crisis, ozone-layer erosion and maintenance of an equilibrium in the environment. No sooner do people become destitute and jobless affected by natural calamities like flood, than a number of environment movements put its head. But no initiative is taken anyhow and anywhere with respect to keeping up future cleanliness of the environment or to maintain environmental balance. Once again environment protection has assumed the main focus of discussion in all the developed and developing countries of the world including India as a consequence of the uprisal of the corona pandemic. The experts throughout the world are of a firm opinion that more and more fatal diseases will approach us and likely to endanger human existence from the earth in case the wellbeing and balance of the environment is not ascertained. So, the crying need of the hour is to organise more and more such policy formulation as well as implementation at the government and non-government levels. And rigid planning by the government in the perspective of a review of the environment policy is what is direly wanted to save and secure the generations to come from the recurrence of any such horrible monster called covid-19.

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