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MEDIA AND CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: Some of the resources we get from nature are finite while some others are exhaustible. Often renewable resources can be destroyed by excessive exploitation as human wants for economic prosperity, material propriety and yearning for pleasure cannot be satisfied until and unless one has resolved to satisfy himself with the few he has, enough to meet his needs while conserving the rest for the future generation. Development without sustainability has earned worldwide condemnation as we mean to understand it as exploitation of natural resources resulting in extreme changes in nature, not adaptable for the human race. Bruntland Commission defined Sustainable Development as 'development meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs'. The concept of sustainable development has gained currency widely in the national and international platforms and political circles as it is disseminated widely in mass media. It is dealt under three dimensions: economic, social and environmental aspects. The economic aspect refers to meeting the needs of the world's poor. The social aspect refers to distributional equity and increasing welfare of people while the environmental aspect focuses on conservation of biological diversity, avoiding over exploitation of resources and maintenance of atmospheric and ecosystem stability. Poverty, population, deforestation, geologic mining, and climate change are hurdles to sustainable development. The United Nations has framed global policies and signed agreements to guide nations and to formulate laws to protect the environment, clean the atmosphere, to have equal distribution of resources, and improving access to health care, education, etc. to achieve sustainable development. India has all the necessary policies, strategies and the required laws in line with international norms. Media has a great role to make people aware of sustainable development keeping in view of future generations.

Keywords: Climate Change, Deforestation, Pollution, Sustainable development, United Nations, World Health Organization

INTRODUCTION: The natural world had been there millions of years before man existed on this beautiful planet, the earth, and several species had become extinct and several species had newly evolved, from time to time, that could survive the challenges of nature. It is man who is dependent on this natural world for all his needs- food, shelter, water, air, light, energy and many other resources for sustenance. Some of these resources are finite, some are exhaustible and some are constantly renewed. Our existence without these natural resources is rather impossible. Hence, it calls for the use of resources sustainably if human race along with all other living beings have to continue surviving on this planet. Even renewable resources can be destroyed by excessive exploitation. If a household consumes abundant consumer goods, foods or material resources, that house also disposes of a great deal of material wastes.

The terms 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development' are the day-today talks of the modern world as it has been widely disseminated in mass media. It has gained currency widely as forming public opinion in the local, national, international platforms and political circles because of its urgent requirement, while ringing the alarm bell to check the rapid strides towards mass destruction and exploitations of natural resources in the name of development without proper conservation for future or leaving less scope for future generations. However, the difficulty lies in the systematic change of attitude, change of behaviour and the process towards attaining it. For, the erstwhile models, approaches and attitudes towards development are responsible for taking us rapidly into destructive situations that endanger the continued survival of human societies as well as natural environment that sustains us.

The concept of the term 'development' without the qualifying term 'sustainable', has earned condemnation as we mean to understand it as economic prosperity and achievements for personal gains and because of which the world is being stripped of its rich natural resources with hazardous impacts on the environment. Development without sustainability may be 'willful', and 'one sided' and it may mean instant physical or material development without a winkling of thought for future or what next. It is a fact that human wants for economic prosperity, material propriety and yearning for worldly pleasure has never had any limitations until and unless man has resolved to satisfy himself with the few he needs, enough to enjoy and support his survival while conserving the rest for the future generations. Sustainability is a search for ecological stability and human progress within certain limits so that it could ensure the survival of the living world. Though nature is not stable and is in the process of continuous change, extreme changes in the ecological system may not be found adaptable for the human beings.

"The Bruntland Commission Report, OUR COMMON FUTURE, defined sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED-1987). The concept of sustainable development has three principal dimensions:

economic, social and environmental"(Sharma, 2015,p252). On economic front, it is eradication of poverty through the optional and efficient use of natural resources. As regards 'needs', mentioned in the Bruntland definition, it refers to the essential needs of the world's poor. Secondly, the social aspect refers to a socially sustainable system based on distributional equity, increasing the welfare of people and improving access to health care, education, service, gender equity, political accountability and participation. It also refers to the development of various cultures, diversity, pluralism and effective grass root participation in decision-making. The environmental aspect is concerned with the conservation and enhancement of the physical and biological resource base, avoiding over exploitation of renewable resources and depletion of non- renewable resources. Environmental sustainability has main focus on maintenance of biological diversity, atmospheric stability and ecosystem functions and services.

A special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1997 reviewed progress in implementing Agenda 21. The main documents agreed upon at the Earth Summit are as follows: The Convention on Biological Diversity is a binding treaty requiring nations to take inventories of their plants and wild animals and protect their endangered species. The Framework Convention on Climate Change, or Global Warming Convention, is a binding treaty that requires nations to reduce their emission of carbon dioxide, methane and other 'greenhouse' gases thought to be responsible for global warming; the treaty stopped short of setting binding targets for emission reductions. The Rio declaration also laid down 27 non-binding principles for environmentally sound development. It is also a fact that achieving sustainability is not possible without improving health-care, education and other conditions necessary for a healthy and productive life.

The need for promotion of sustainable development has been taken up at several international conferences including the WCCSD (World Congress on Communication for Sustainable Development), the 4th UNESCO International Conference on Environmental Education (ICEE) in 2007 as well as the three Rio Conventions. In those conferences, the role of media, communication and education as regards sustainable development had been discussed. 'UN agencies regard communication as being central to the achievement of empowerment and participation, the two critical prerequisites of sustainable development. Communication is seen as being critical to building consensus and development of an understanding of new ideas and approaches at every point in the project cycle'(FAO, WCCSD 2006).

CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

There had been several seminars, conferences and conventions held from time to time on sustainable development at social, economic and political platforms after the United Nations had deliberated ten key factors for sustainable development. In

such seminars, conferences and conventions, some issues had been given predominance over other issues considering its bearing on sustainable development. Some of the common issues predominating over other issues are poverty, education, health care, protection of the atmosphere, climate change, deforestation, geologic mining, environmental policy, etc. It also deals with the role of education, media and communication on sustainable development and which areas are to be made aware of to help achieving environmental sustainability and development. Some of the challenges to sustainable development are given below:

REDUCING POVERTY AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

Equitable distribution of resources is one of the first tasks of sustainable development in a democratic country. While a few people live in increasing luxury, the poorest population suffers from inadequate diet, unhygienic housing, lack of basic sanitation, drinking of polluted water, and health hazards. Policy makers now understand that eliminating poverty and protecting our common environment are inextricably interlinked. The world's poorest people are both the victims and the agents of environmental degradation. Bereft of basic amenities such as lack of adequate food supply, poor communication system and deprivation from cooking gas and electricity connectivity in many remote areas where forests are abundant, the forest people are used to killing wild animals for food, cutting down large portions of the forests, setting it on fire to get a piece of agricultural land and to use the cut and dried wood as fuel for cooking, heating as well as lighting their dark thatches throughout the year. What they have earned as food produces cannot even be worth the prices of the trees and plants that had been cut and burned down to ashes. Being far away from the towns and cities, and amidst poor communication system, these poor people are satisfied with their age old lifestyles, habits, customs and traditions. Such poor people are often forced to meet short term survival needs at the cost of long term sustainability.

Finding no piece of land for their settlement, illegal migrants, refugees and encroachers settle in and around the forest areas away from the vigil of state administration. Desperate for cropland to feed themselves and their families, many move into virgin forests to cultivate steep, erosion prone hillsides, causing vast erosion and deforestation. Others migrate to the grimy, crowded slums and ramshackle shantytowns that surround most major cities and towns in the developing world. With no way to dispose of wastes, no proper toilet, no separate kitchen, the residents have no choice but to foul their living rooms and the environment further and contaminate the air they breathe and the water they use for washing and drinking. Lack of proper guidance, basic education and less health care in a filthy atmosphere, they run their life just for a living. Children raised in poverty and illness, with a few economic opportunities, often are condemned to perpetuate a cycle of poverty.

Such imbalances pollute and destabilize both democracy and economy because the small but powerful elite can get themselves elected using money power and can exert pressure to make shortsighted policies which are more beneficial to them at the cost of the remaining majority poorer groups. It becomes easier for the corrupt leaders in the remote areas to lure the down trodden people with false promises or by satisfying their urgent needs. It is a fact that, globally, natural resources as well as economic wealth are also unevenly distributed. According to a report published by Oxfam International in 2017, the world's 8 richest men are as wealthy as the poorest half of the world's population**.** Persons having the highest per capita income make up only 10 percent of the world's population. More than 70 percent of the world's population, live in countries where the average per capita income is very low**.** Where poverty is widespread, there is less health care and as such life span is shorter. In such areas, people are often victims of many types of incurable diseases. Because of low access to education, the average family in the poorest countries has more than four times as many children as those in the richer countries.

POPULATION, FOOD PROBLEM AND HEALTH CARE

Population explosion is the root cause of innumerable problems such as poverty, pollution, diseases, environmental degradation, climate change, shortage of food supply etc. It is estimated that more than 7 billion people live on this earth at present which is twice as many as there were 40 years ago with the additional increase of a population of about 80 million more each year. The impact of massive population on our natural resources and eco-system is very disastrous and is the source of problems we face at present and which are the causes of our concerns for our future generations. It is also a fact that developments in the field of science and technology, modern inventions and discoveries, researches in medical science and bio-technology, have saved the lives of millions and have greatly reduced the death rate. It is estimated that by 2050, the present trend projects a population between 8 to 10 billions. In-spite of massive increase in global food production, more than double times and faster than human population growth rate, majority are the areas lacking in food supply and where children are dying out of malnutrition and hunger as the natural resources, economic conditions and food production are not equally distributed. One in three, suffer from some form of malnutrition. And the crises have been aggravated as the soil scientists have reported that about two thirds of all agricultural lands show signs of degradation.

'Around one person out of every nine, altogether an estimated 795 million people on earth, suffers from chronic hunger .Asia is the continent with the most hungry people- two thirds of the total. The vast majority of the world's hungry people live in developing countries where 12.9 percent of the population is undernourished'(UN hunger report 2015). 'An estimated 12.6 million deaths each year are attributable to unhealthy environments' (WHO PHE, 2016). Poor nutrition causes nearly half (45%) of deaths in children under five. Hunger is especially serious

in sub-Saharan Africa. Even in wealthy country such as the United States, millions lack in healthy diets. Almost 6 million children under the age of 5 years die every year of diseases exacerbated by hunger and malnutrition. Providing a healthy diet might eliminate as much as 60 percent of all child deaths worldwide. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has estimated that 'nearly 3 billion people (almost half of the world's population) suffer from vitamin, mineral or protein deficiencies resulting in devastating diseases, deaths, reduced mental capacity, developmental abnormalities and stunted growth' (Cunningham & Cunningham,2013, p.157**)** . Shortage of vitamin A causes countless people to go blind every year.

According to estimates from WHO Department of Public Health, Environmental and Social Determinants of Health(PHE) 'An estimated 12.6 million people died as a result of living or working in an unhealthy environment in 2012 – nearly 1 in 4 of total global deaths. Environmental risk factors, such as air, water and soil pollution, chemical exposures, climate change, and ultraviolet radiation, contribute to more than 100 diseases and injuries.'(WHO PHE, 2016). A healthy environment is fundamental for a healthy population. If countries do not take actions to make a healthy environment where people live and work, millions will continue to become ill and die young. One of the primary responsibilities to make a healthy environment is reduction in the use of solid fuels for cooking and increasing access to low-carbon energy technologies. The WHO PHE report finds that 'Environmental risks take their greatest toll on young children and older people; with children under 5 and adults aged 50 to 75 years most affected. Yearly, the deaths of 1.7 million children under 5 and 4.9 million adults aged 50 to 75 could be prevented through better environmental management. Lower respiratory infections and diarrheal diseases mostly impact children under 5, while older people are most impacted by non-communicable diseases.'

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND GEOLOGIC MINING

To meet our daily requirements, geologic resources are mined or pumped from sites around the world. We use scores of metal and minerals, in our modern equipments, hi-tech machines, lights, computers, watches, etc. Extracting and purifying these resources can have even more severe environmental and social consequences. The most obvious effects of mining and well drilling are often conversion of forest areas into waste landscapes, loss of biodiversity, removal or loss of top soil of the agricultural lands, the disturbances of natural land formation, causing air and water pollution. Analysis of annual range concentration of ambient air quality of some specific locations of India with respect to PM10 revealed that '295 (82%) locations exceeded the standard of 60 $\mu g/m^3$ (annual) in residential/industrial/rural/other areas' (Sharma 2015, p.292). The acidic wastes/run-off from several mines damage or destroy our ecosystem, polluting our drinking water and contaminating the soil**.** On one hand, we are able to save the lives of millions

from severe diseases and epidemics by using modern technologies, new medicines, modern methods of treatment and inventions. On the other hand, we are victims of natural calamities such as earthquake, floods and droughts, at the same time we are also suffering from cardio-vascular diseases, cancer, dementia, diabetes and depression because of our own anthropogenic activities.

Modern society functions largely on natural resources extracted from geologic metallurgic deposits. 'The metals consumed in greatest quantity by world industry include iron, (740 million metric tons annually) aluminum (40 million metric tons), manganese (22.4 million metric tons), copper and chromium (8 million metric tons each) and nickel 0.7 (million metric tons**).** The complex, worldwide network that extracts, processes and distributes these metals has become crucially important to the economic and social stability of all nations'. (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2013,p.288). Our sources of energy are also extracted from the geologic deposits in the form of oil, coal and natural gas which are used in large scale in our industries, transports and other mechanical activities. The volume would have been very huge in the crude form before extraction of these resources, and a large portion of the earth will be left hollow after extraction. And it would not remain hollow for long as nature will seek its own balance at the right time at the right place, may be in the form of earthquakes, floods or other seismic movements that may cause disasters and natural calamities.

Some rare metals such as platinum, gold, etc. are often found in a very low concentration in sulfide ores. Cyanide, mercury and other toxic substances are used to chemically separate metals from the minerals that contain them. Furthermore, a great deal of water is used in washing the crushed ores. After use, much of this water can no more be used for any other purposes. Surface mining also destroys landscapes. In some parts of the world, even drinking water is hardly available. Polluted water contributes to the death of millions of people every year. According to the United Nations, nearly 1000 children die every day due to preventable water and sanitation related diarrhoeal diseases**.** Some 842,000 people are estimated to die each year from diarrhoea alone as a result of unsafe drinking-water according to the World Health Organization (WHO PHE, 2016). Moreover, in-spite of various careful studies and analysis of the project report as regards safety measures and approval of the Environment Impact Assessment Report is made mandatory, very often accidents occur and there finds a lacunae in the safety measures after the incidents had happened. And when any untoward incident occurs, it is only the local people or the workers who suffer the most.

COMBATING DEFORESTATION AND DESERTIFICATION

Forest, woodlands, pastures and rangelands together occupy almost 60 percent of global land cover**.** These ecosystems provide many of our essential resources, such as lumber, fuel, paper pulp, medicinal herbs, construction materials of various items,

furniture, and grazing ground for livestocks. They also provide us essential ecological services, including regulating climate, controlling water runoff, providing wildlife habitat, purifying air and water and supporting rainfall. Moreover, photosynthesis which is the food preparing process of the plants begins with a series of light dependent reactions including splitting of water molecules and release of molecular oxygen. This is the source of nearly all the oxygen in the atmosphere on which all animals including ourselves depend for life.

As forests are cleared, it is recorded by scientists and ecologists worldwide that there is a change in rainfall patterns leading to rise in temperature and dry landscape. It is because forests take up and release moisture, absorbing heat and contributing to regional rainfall in the process. When droughts and wildfire become very frequent, it finds harder for the plants to re-grow. Moreover, when trees are burned, it releases carbon stored in wood and leaves and the accumulated carbons trapped in the soil are exposed to be released to the atmosphere, disturbing the natural balance. Afforestation in large scale only, proportionate to the present uncontrolled carbon emissions, can help avert a climate catastrophe. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without conservation of forests as conservation of forests is conservation of all bio-diversities and its habitats besides ecological services it renders.

Major causes of deforestation are population explosion, the construction of hill roads, forests degradation, conversion of forest lands into agricultural lands, lack of awareness, lack of education, large scale mining activities, enhancement of the demand for timber, fuel woods etc. This impacts people's livelihood and threatens a wide range of plants and animal species. According to the World Wildlife Fund(WWF), 'Some 46-58 thousand square miles of forest are lost each year- equivalent to 48 football fields every minute.'

'Forests are a huge carbon sink, storing some 422 billion metric tons of carbon in standing biomass. Clearing and burning of forests accounts for about 17 percent of all the carbons released by human actions every year- more than all vehicles combined- and is a major factor in global climate change'. 'Everyday over 30,000 hectares of tropical forest are destroyed by logging and burning and another 30,000 ha are degraded. Some 1.2 billion people depend on forests for their livelihood. More than 2 billion – a third of the world's population- use firewood to cook and to heat their homes'(Cunningham & Cunningham,2013, p.133,p.137). It is estimated that replanting 300 million ha of degraded forests should capture about 1 billion tons of CO_2 over the next 50 years.

PROTECTION OF THE ATMOSPHERE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The atmosphere is filled with air- composed of different types of gas at different proportions, naturally. As a consequence of modern civilization, industrialization and developmental activities, many types of unnatural pollutants,

such as smoke, haze, ash, dust, noise, odour, corrosive gases and toxic compounds have been released in the atmosphere. However, there may be natural processes of pollution such as carbon monoxide by volcanic action, natural gas emission, marsh gas production. Some trees also contribute to air pollution. 'For example, eucalyptus, cottonwood, oak, sweetgum, spruce trees emit hemiterpens (a complex chemical compound) which undergo several chemical reactions in the air and form particulate matters' (Yadava,2000,p.182)**.** Breathing polluted air increases probability of heart attacks, respiratory diseases, and lung cancer. This can mean as much as a five to ten year's decrease in life expectancy. Bronchitis and emphysema are common chronic conditions resulting from air pollution.

According to a United Nations Report, 'some 6.5 million people die annually from air pollution and 92 per cent of the world's population live in places where levels exceeds recommended limits'(UN News,2016). The major problem of air pollution occurs mostly in metropolitan cities and industrial areas. In such areas, environmental quality is abysmal. As for instance, Mexico City may be mentioned for polluted air. 'There are 131,000 industries and 2.5 million vehicles spewing out more than 5,500 tons of air pollutants daily. More than half of all of its children have lead levels in their blood high enough to lower intelligence and retard developments while 400,000 factories, in China, had no air pollution controls. Experts estimate that home coal burners and factories emit 10 million tons of soot and 15 million tons of sulfur dioxide annually'. (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2013, p.245).

Since the dawn of industrialization, atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide have been enormously increased. Carbon dioxide is dangerous because of its abundance and it lasts for decades or centuries in the atmosphere. Fossil fuel use is responsible for 80 percent of carbon emissions. Methane is much less abundant than carbon dioxide, but it absorbs 23 times as much infrared energy per molecule and is accumulating in the atmosphere about twice as fast as carbon dioxide. Nitrous oxide produced mainly by chemical reactions between atmospheric N and O, which combine in the presence of heat from internal combustion engines. CFC is produced from the use of modern refrigerators, contributing to maximum GHG effect and climate change. There are many other gases such as carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and other forms of oxides and compounds. All these pollutants in any form are largely responsible for catastrophic climate change.

"The latest data from World Carbon Report 2013 shows that a record 36 billion tons of carbon from all human sources were emitted in 2013.The biggest emitters were China, which produced 29% of the total, followed by the US at 15%, the EU at 10% and India at 7.1%. In an interesting development, China's emissions per head of population have exceeded those of the European Union for the first time. While the per capita average for the world as a whole is 5 tons of carbon dioxide,

China is now producing 7.2 tons per person, to the EU's 6.8 tons. The US is still far ahead on 16.5 tons per person."(Mc Grath, BBC,2014)

Since air pollution in the developed countries is associated with emissions from transportation, energy production and industrial activities, the most effective strategy would be alternative arrangement with lesser emissions i.e. use of renewable energy sources such as electricity from hydro/solar/wind power stations in place of thermal power stations, use of CNG or clean coal, use of filters to be made mandatory. Industrial/toxic effluents have to be collected in a safe place/tank. Legal and penalty provisions have to be made stricter and harsher. We can reduce dependence on coal which produces more CO_2. Removal of particulate matters involves filtering of air emissions. Filters trap particulates in a mesh of cotton cloth, spun glass fibers, or asbestos-cellulose. Mandatory use of air filters in all industries and electronic precipitators in power plants have to be strictly followed. Sulfur removal is important because sulfur oxides are the most damaging of all air pollutants for human health, infrastructure, and ecosystems.

Pollution causes artificial greenhouse gas effects resulting in climate change. Climate change has a global impact. Global sea level has risen approximately 20 cm in the past century because of thermal expansion of sea water, melting glaciers and melting icebergs in Greenland and Antarctica. Polar regions are getting warmer faster than rest of the world. Arctic sea ice is less than half as thick as it was 30 years ago. Seal pups are collapsing and polar bears are listed in the endangered species. Ice shelves in the Antarctica are breaking up rapidly. Penguin population is declining by half over the past 50 years. Plants and animals are having earlier breeding seasons. Many animals, species, insects have become extinct. Coral reefs worldwide are losing their colourful algae they rely on for survival as water temperature rises above 3°C.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

To talk of sustainable development without consideration of a good nationwide environmental policy, strategy and action plan is just meaningless as sustainable development lies in keeping tact of the environment. Mere conservation of environment is even a good service for protection of environment. India as a member nation of the United Nations, follows all the policies, norms and dictates for the protection of environment. As per international norms we have a separate Ministry for Environment and Climate Change, Environmental Acts, Environment Conservation Acts, Biodiversities Acts, Forest Protection Acts and many other acts and rules as required for protection of the environment and sustainable development. Apart from the separate acts, there are provisions earmarked for environmental protection in our Constitution

The interplay of material cycles and energy flows in natural ecosystems generates a self correcting homeostasis with no outside control or set points. The

ecosystem is capable of self maintenance. However, the equilibrium is very sensitive to external stimuli, such as human activities prompted by socio-economic considerations. The socio-economic system of man in contrast to natural ecosystem is founded on a material base. Increasing demands and aspirations of human society create a rising demand for goods and services which are detrimental to the balance of the environment. Thus, human beings impose on themselves restrictions and limitations in order to save the environment and ecosystem for their own sustenance by framing policies and programmes. For, environmental degradation in any one country affects the global environment.

On a national level, we have policies to protect our properties, individual rights, public health and other priorities. International policies and agreements regulate international trade in hazardous chemicals or in endangered species. Recently there had been efforts to enact policies, aiming at slowing down climate change-such as EPA rules on carbon dioxide emissions. The safety of drinking water, air and food are all protected by laws developed by our predecessor policy makers. Access to public lands and public waterways are also protected by laws. The national policies are framed to accord with international policies or laws. The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, in line with international norms, formulated a National Environment Policy (2004). The preamble speaks about numerous challenges in the economic, social, political, cultural and environmental arenas in addition to alleviation of mass poverty, livelihood security, health care, education, empowerment of the disadvantaged, and elimination of gender disparities.

The present national policies are contained in the National Forests Policy 1988 and the National Conservation Strategy and Policy Statement on Abatement of Pollution, 1992. The National Environment Policy is a response to our national commitment to a clean environment, mandated in the Constitution in Article 48 A and 51A (g) strengthened by judicial interpretations of Article 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution. It is recognized that maintaining a healthy environment is not the state's responsibility alone, but also that of every citizen. The key environmental challenges relate to the nexus of environmental degradation with poverty and economic growth. The proximate drivers of environmental degradation are population growth, large scale use of technology, increasing consumption rate, lack of knowledge of the relation between people and ecosystem, and developmental activities such as intensive agriculture, polluting industry and unplanned urbanization.

ROLE OF MEDIA

Media and communication initiatives help to create an increasing awareness of the linkages that exist between citizens and changing trends of social, political and economic system. These understanding and linkages are so required as to make good global citizenship an urgent and pressing requirement to achieve sustainable development. It is because that sustainability is for sustenance of all living beings. So,

it cannot be an ethnic or sectarian effort. The rise of new media technologies and the internet have served to create a complex arena for civic participation for diverse ethnic groups across varied cultural contexts. In this era of one global citizenship and information technology, media has played a leading role in providing opportunities to develop a new discourse through which citizens can express the values and identity of their society. 'Media is not only instrumental in the transfer of information and the maintenance of transparency, but also in the formation of public spheres' (Death, 2010).

News about the environment, environmental disasters and environmental issues or problems are not self-manifestations out of public concerns for environmental issues or environmental hazards or fears in the minds of public. They are rather 'created', 'produced', 'manufactured' or 'constructed. 'Environmental news, like other types of news, is the result of a complex set of interactions between claims-makers and media organizations and their operatives. The way these operate is in turn circumscribed by political, economic and cultural factors. Environmental issues or problems only become recognized as such through the process of claims-making. Key tasks for claims-makers are identified as those of commanding attention, claiming legitimacy and invoking action. (Hansen, 2010, p.72).

"Media discourse has constituted a public arena for the negotiation of meaning attributed to concepts like sustainability within society. It was therefore unsurprising that in 1992, Agenda 21, the UNCED road map was for sustainable development, carefully delineated the educational role that media and communication must play in order to facilitate the changes for a sustainable world. Agenda 21 tasked media along with other institutions, with creating public awareness on matters relating to sustainability in order to pave the way for improving a greater sense of responsibility among the global publics**"(**Nambiar,2014, p.15).

Media is the fourth pillar of a democratic country. As such, it is a critical social institution and presenter of culture, politics, and social life. It also shapes and reflects how culture, politics and social life are formed and expressed. Media discourse not only reflects the image of the society but also determines its character. Its influence on society is, in fact, overwhelmingly powerful as it furnishes people with ideas and representations of their reality. Media serves a key function as a public platform, while media discourse is a process by which people's realities are constructed. Media conserves and transmits knowledge and is now the primary source from which most sections of society derive their understanding of the world thereby replacing older religious and social institutions like churches and trade unions in terms of public influence

It has been widely accepted that media assists with mobilizing support, shaping norms, instigating behavior change, influencing policy and adjusting frames in which social issues are cast **(**Wilkins, 2003**).** As Wright Mills(1956) pointed out

early in the day, the prime task in a democracy was to groom citizens through making them more knowledgeable and thereby, better able to think and to evaluate public matters. Describing sensibilities as a set of qualities that are in the middle range of the scale of good citizenship with skills at one end and values at the other, Mills rated the inculcation of sensibilities as being most essential to the creation of liberal public. Thus knowledgeable members of a liberal public, would, according to Mills, have the required perspective to be able to link personal issues to broader social ones (Nambiar 2014,p.15).

Media's efforts to sensitize the public about environment issues and its continuing central role in the struggle against the cause of environmental problems are indispensable. However, most of the people at present are interested in the headline news information or event based information rather than the cause and effect analysis as they are not serious about the gravity of environmental problems. In underdeveloped countries, environmental issues have not yet reached a stage where they are media's prime agenda. It is not the fault of the public only, but also the fault of the media reporters and claim makers failing to catch public attention due to lack of skill in framing environmental issues. The media fails to take a creative approach in producing stories about environmental protection and gives insufficient attention to environmental hazards and its accompanying consequences. Formal education only cannot cover the whole issues as it is based on selected topics and time bound programme. For mass awakening, mass media is the best option.

CONCLUSION

The earth is one. It is only on the surface of the earth that there are demarcations, divisions and territories as countries, nations, states etc. Whatever is extracted or pumped out, is from the same earth whether it may be done in India or in the Gulf countries or in the United States and as such evil effects, if any, will have repercussion on the same earth. Some people are not aware of environmental hazards as they do not know about its gravity as a child is not afraid of fire before it gets hurt. Some pretend to know about it, while some others are fully lethargic in meeting with day –today survival needs. Simply knowing about environment will not help solve the problem. It requires change of attitude to bring about change of behavior into action to protect the environment by doing environment friendly activities and restraining others doing hazardous activities to the environment. "National Environmental Policy(NEP) 2006 intends to facilitate realization of sustainable development by mainstreaming environmental concerns in all developmental activities and describing key environmental challenges currently and prospectively facing the country" (Ganeshmurthy,2001, p.27).

It is the role of media and education to make people aware of environment before it is too late. Nature has its own limitations. Population control is at the top priority as the earth cannot be so productive as to afford food for the ever increasing

population. Rising population is the root cause of poverty, food and health problems, deforestation, large scale geologic mining, pollution etc. Under the 'Polluter Pays' principle, man is responsible for all environmental hazards and he has to make it good. Moreover, natural resources such as the light, air, water know no boundary. Climate Change is a global phenomenon requiring global efforts to control it. If the present trend continues, it is projected that there will be a change in global climate that may not be adaptable for the human race. It is also a fact that intensity of climatic conditions may be varied from place to place, depending on the level of the anthropogenic activities, altitude of the place (above the sea level), regional location, annual rainfall and wind direction. But it cannot be confined to any single place for long. It is also a fact that the effect falls somewhere for an action done somewhere such as Ozone Hole (depletion) above the Antarctic region, i.e. no man's land. So, global efforts are called for its solution. It is the first and foremost responsibility of media to raise a wake -up call to come together to protect the environment.

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