

-: Environment, Development and Sustainability- Manage a Balancing Act :-

Environment has no face or shape. It is basically a combination of factors or variables linked with sustenance of natural system. It ranges from lakes to rivers, microbes to forests, minerals to soil and would include flora and fauna and all other types of symbiotic species. Heat, water, soil, wind and trees are the nodes of environment and all have inter-relationship in terms of our existence. In the context of this, our mandate is to protect environment and make it sustainable particularly for human beings. This would not mean keeping things as they are but development of the people and area not by violating, reducing, polluting or diminishing elements of the ecology of the area but by sustaining on its strength. It is generally said that one percent of development means half percent less environment. But this is never a truth if we adhere to the principle that natural products or natural resources lead to financial resources but the same final resources should reinforce the natural resources in one way or the other. It is true if it is only one way but not a truth if it is both ways. Recharging each other and sustaining environment with development is the key and sustaining on development by excluding environment can never be allowed.

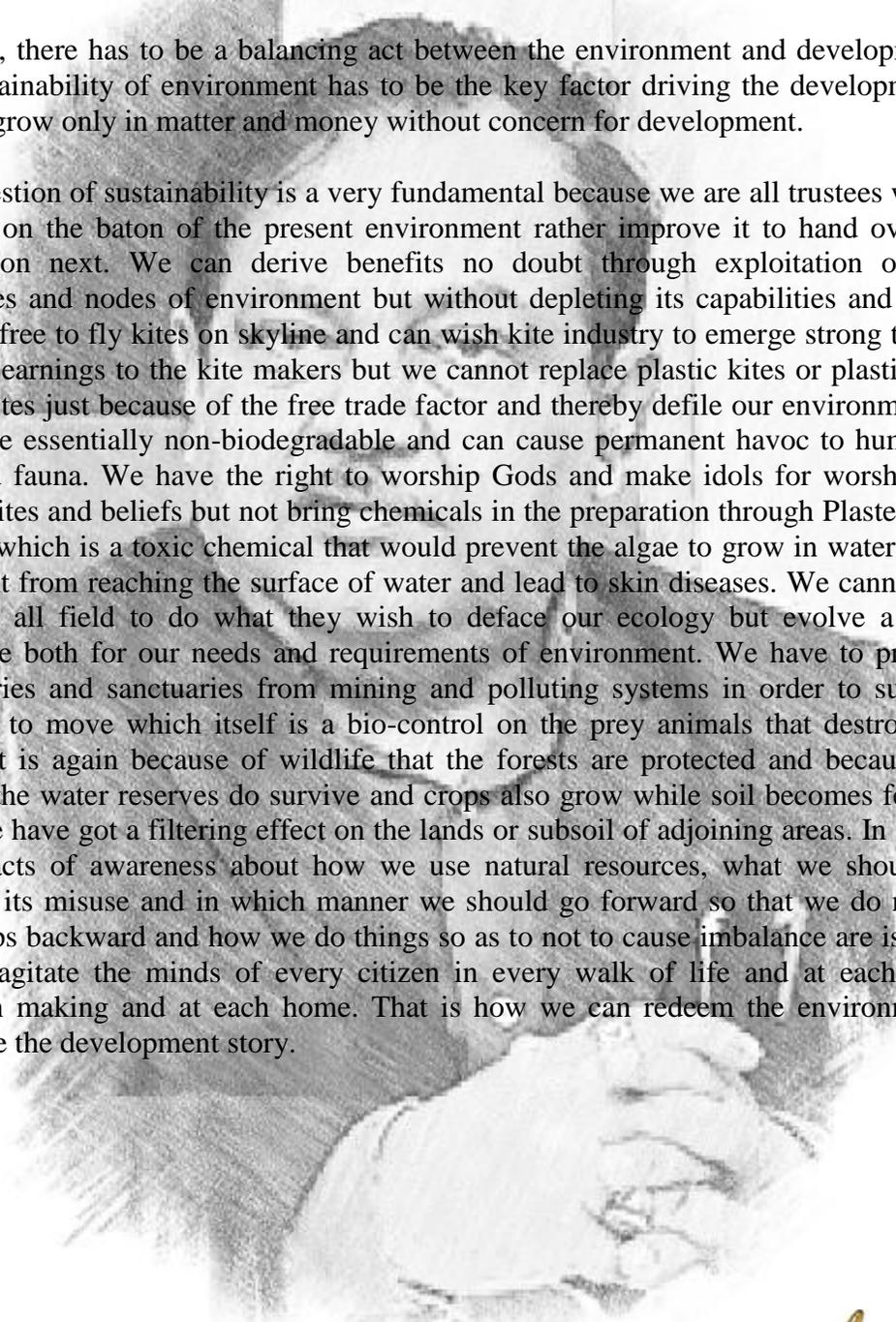
Environment is a subject that can be classified under (a) Attitude and approach, (b) As an end in itself, (c) As a geographical and technical knowledge field as well as (d) A system of emerging jurisprudence. But in all the elements that combine to form the basis or the pillars for environment are fixed and that is the Fire, Air, Water, Soil including trees and the sky of the Atmosphere. Any inter-relationship among these elements and in relation to human beings does constitute the entire gamut and therefore we have to take strides to see that we reduce pollutants, reuse the wastes arising out of the development process and recycle the water and waste to make it value added and not a burden on our mother earth.

Taking the instance of trees they are no less than Oxygen factories and they are fine examples of carbon locks. It is surmised that an acre of land can accommodate 700 trees which has a potential to lock up 70 tons of carbon. Similarly, a group of ten persons need one to two trees which are mature enough to sequester 2.5 kilos of carbon and release 1.7 kilos of Oxygen per hour so as to provide 20 grams of Oxygen per person per hour. These facts have to constitute a part of urban planning, urban forestry as a part of habitation policy and our estate developers have to connect themselves to provide Oxygen air to its residents as a part of carbon cycle. It is not without reason that mangroves, grasslands, trees, sea weeds, sea grass and dry shrubs contribute to the agility and the performance level of the environment since all these are repositories of Carbon-dioxide and help to catch the dust, improve the soil, check the carbon and contribute to protein formation in foods to trigger activities of conservation and growth of microbes, moisture conservation, conservation of water and finally make lands fertile for humans and cattle. Like human beings have an anemia problem. Environment also can have an Anemia problem if these features cease to exist and become thinner day by day. With the advent of industrialization and introduction of technology, activities have started which produce galore solid wastes, water effluents, obnoxious gases and lead to dust generation and all

these become afflictions on the environment system. Therefore technologies are to be got ready to trap the dust or capture it, prevent effluents to become volumes and treat the raw material to reduce its effects as well as eliminate the presence of metals, COD, BOD, TDS, PH factors in effluents by introducing state-of-the-art technologies that have to go hand in hand if wealth creation has to be a factor itself for development.

In short, there has to be a balancing act between the environment and development and the sustainability of environment has to be the key factor driving the development. We cannot grow only in matter and money without concern for development.

The question of sustainability is a very fundamental because we are all trustees who have to pass on the baton of the present environment rather improve it to hand over to the generation next. We can derive benefits no doubt through exploitation of natural resources and nodes of environment but without depleting its capabilities and efficacy. We are free to fly kites on skyline and can wish kite industry to emerge strong that gives income earnings to the kite makers but we cannot replace plastic kites or plastic threads to fly kites just because of the free trade factor and thereby defile our environment since these are essentially non-biodegradable and can cause permanent havoc to humans, our soil and fauna. We have the right to worship Gods and make idols for worship as per Hindu rites and beliefs but not bring chemicals in the preparation through Plaster of Paris (POP), which is a toxic chemical that would prevent the algae to grow in water, stop the sun light from reaching the surface of water and lead to skin diseases. We cannot have a free for all field to do what they wish to deface our ecology but evolve a win-win formulae both for our needs and requirements of environment. We have to protect the boundaries and sanctuaries from mining and polluting systems in order to sustain the wildlife to move which itself is a bio-control on the prey animals that destroy human crops. It is again because of wildlife that the forests are protected and because of the forests the water reserves do survive and crops also grow while soil becomes fertile and all these have got a filtering effect on the lands or subsoil of adjoining areas. In short, the basic facts of awareness about how we use natural resources, what we should do to prevent its misuse and in which manner we should go forward so that we do not move two steps backward and how we do things so as to not to cause imbalance are issues that should agitate the minds of every citizen in every walk of life and at each level of decision making and at each home. That is how we can redeem the environment and continue the development story.



- SK Manda