

## KEY ISSUES RELATING TO THE CONCEPTS OF DEVELOPMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Paper Received: 16.08.2019 / Paper Accepted: 29.09.2019 / Paper Published: 30.09.2019

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### Abstract

The paper deals about the development, as a concept, has been associated with diverse meanings, interpretations and theories from various scholars. Development is defined as 'an evolutionary process in which the human capacity increases in terms of initiating new structures, coping with problems, adapting to continuous change, and striving purposefully and creatively to attain new goals.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, Development.

### Introduction

Sustainable Development (SD) has become a ubiquitous development paradigm - the catchphrase for international aid agencies, the jargon of development planners, the theme of conferences and academic papers, as well as the slogan of development and environmental activists. The concept seems to have attracted the broad-based attention that other development concepts lack (ed), and appears poised to remain the pervasive development paradigm for a long time (Scopelliti et al., 2018). However, notwithstanding its pervasiveness and popularity, murmurs of disenchantment about the concept are rife as people continue to ask questions about its meaning or definition and what it entails as well as implies for development theory and practice, without clear answers forthcoming (Shahzalal & Hassan, 2019). SD therefore stands the risk of becoming a cliché like appropriate technology - a fashionable and rhetoric phrase - to which everyone pays homage but nobody seems to define with precision and exactitude.

In the endeavour to move past the sustainability talk and seek after a progressively important motivation for sustainable development, an unmistakable meaning of this idea and clarification of its key measurements are required (Mensah and Enu-Kwesi, 2018). This need, as indicated by Gray (2010), as referred to in Giovannoni and Fabietti (2014), has been pushed by the two scholastics and professionals so as to advance sustainable development. While it can't be questioned that literature on SD flourishes, issues with respect to the idea's definition, history, columns, standards and the implications of these for human development, stay misty to numerous individuals. Therefore, the abundance of literature in any case, further explanation of the vague issues about SD is basic since leaders need not just better information

and data on the linkages among the standards and mainstays of SD, yet additionally upgraded comprehension of such linkages and their suggestion for activity in light of a legitimate concern for human development.

### The Key Issues

#### The Concept of Development

Development, as a concept, has been associated with diverse meanings, interpretations and theories from various scholars. Development is defined as 'an evolutionary process in which the human capacity increases in terms of initiating new structures, coping with problems, adapting to continuous change, and striving purposefully and creatively to attain new goals. According to Reyes (2001) development is understood as a social condition within a nation, in which the needs of its population are satisfied by the rational and sustainable use of natural resources and systems. Todaro and Smith (2006) also define development as a multi-dimensional process that involves major changes in social structures, attitudes, and institutions, as well as economic growth, reduction of inequality, and eradication of absolute poverty. Several theories have been put forward to explain the concept of development. They include the Modernisation, Dependency, World Systems and Globalisation Theories.

The Modernization Theory of development recognizes two primary classifications of society on the planet, in particular the customary and current social orders. The theory, contends that the customary social orders are snared by standards, convictions and qualities, which are hampering their development. Accordingly, so as to advance, the conventional social orders must imitate the way of life of present day social orders, which is portrayed by collection of capital and

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industrialization which are good with development. Fundamentally, this theory looks to improve the way of life of conventional social orders through monetary development by presenting current innovation. This theory is reprimanded for not considering perspective on development with respect to opportunities and confidence. The Dependency Theory, in view of Marxist belief system, exposes the principles of the Modernization Theory and attests that industrialization in the created nations rather subjects poor nations to underdevelopment because of the financial excess of poor people nations being misused by created nations. The theory, be that as it may, neglects to explain the reliance of the less created nations on the city as far as how the created nations secure access to the monetary excess of the poor nations.

The World Systems Theory sets that international exchange specialization and move of assets from the fringe (less created nations) profoundly (created nations) smother development in the outskirts by causing them to depend on centre nations. The World Systems Theory sees the world economy as an international chain of importance of inconsistent relations and that the inconsistent relations in the trade between the Third World and First World nations are the wellspring of First World excess. This diverges from the old style Marxist Theory, which places that the surplus outcomes from the capital-work connection that exists "underway" itself (Reyes, 2001). The World System Theory has been reprimanded for overemphasizing the world market while ignoring powers and relations of generation.

Like the World System Theory, the Globalization Theory begins from the worldwide instruments of more profound coordination of monetary exchanges among the nations. Be that as it may, aside from the monetary ties, other key components for development translation to the extent globalization is concerned are the social connections among countries. In this social direction, one of the cardinal variables is the expanding adaptability of innovation to interface individuals around the globe (Reyes, 2001). Hence, open and simple correspondence among countries has made justification for social homogenisation, in this way making a solitary worldwide society. Political occasions never again take nearby character yet worldwide character. Along these lines, as indicated by Parjanadze (2009), globalization is supported by political, monetary, innovative and socio-social variables and orientations. In spite of the fact that these developments hypotheses have their shortcomings, they have made ready for the current worldwide development concepts and worldview, in particular

"sustainability" and "sustainable development" (SD).

## **Sustainability**

Literally, sustainability means a capacity to maintain some entity, outcome or process over time, in development literature, most academics, researchers and practitioners (Thomas, 2015) apply the concept to connote improving and sustaining a healthy economic, ecological and social system for human development. Defines sustainability as the efficient and equitable distribution of resources intra-generationally and inter-generationally with the operation of socio-economic activities within the confines of a finite ecosystem. On the other hand, sees sustainability as a dynamic equilibrium in the process of interaction between the population and the carrying capacity of its environment such that the population develops to express its full potential without producing irreversible adverse effects on the carrying capacity of the environment upon which it depends. From this standpoint (Thomas, 2015) continues that sustainability brings into focus human activities and their ability to satisfy human needs and wants without depleting or exhausting the productive resources at their disposal. This, therefore, provokes thoughts on the manner in which people should lead their economic and social lives drawing on the available ecological resources for human development.

Hák et al (2016) have argued that transforming global society, environment and economy to a sustainable one is one of the most uphill tasks confronting man today since it is to be done within the context of the planet's carrying capacity. The World Bank (2017) continues that this calls for innovative approaches to managing realities. In furtherance of this argument, posits that the ultimate objective of the concept of sustainability, in essence, is to ensure appropriate alignment and equilibrium among society, economy and the environment in terms of the regenerative capacity of the planet's life-supporting ecosystems. It is this dynamic alignment and equilibrium that must be the focus of a meaningful definition of sustainability.

However, as argued by Mensah and Enu-Kwesi (2018), the definition must also emphasise the notion of cross-generational equity, which is clearly an important idea but poses difficulties, since future generations' needs are neither easy to define nor determine. Based on the foregoing, contemporary theories of sustainability seek to prioritize and integrate social, environmental and economic models in addressing human challenges in a manner that will continually be beneficial to human. In this regard, economic models seek to accumulate and use natural and financial capital

sustainably; environmental models basically dwell on biodiversity and ecological integrity while social models seek to improve political, cultural, religious, health and educational systems, among others, to continually ensure human dignity and wellbeing and for that matter, sustainable development.

## Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has become the buzzword in development discourse, having been associated with different definitions, meanings and interpretations. Taken literally, SD would simply mean “development that can be continued either indefinitely or for the given time period. Structurally, the concept can be seen as a phrase consisting of two words, “sustainable” and “development.” Just as each of the two words that combine to form the concept of SD, that is, “sustainable” and “development”, has been defined variously from various perspectives, the concept of SD has also been looked at from various angles, leading to a plethora of definitions of the concept. Although definitions abound with respect to SD, the most often cited definition of the concept is the one proposed by the Brundtland Commission Report. The Report defines SD as development that meets the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Acknowledging the Acknowledging of WCED's definition, Cerin (2006) just as Abubakar (2017) contends that SD is a centre idea inside worldwide improvement arrangement and plan. It gives a mechanism through which society can cooperate with the earth while not gambling harming the asset for what's to come. Consequently, it is an improvement worldview just as idea that calls for improving expectations for everyday comforts without imperilling the world's biological systems or causing natural difficulties, for example, deforestation and water and air contamination that can bring about issues, for example, environmental change and termination of species.

Taken a gander at as a methodology, SD is a way to deal with advancement which utilizes assets in a manner that permits them (the assets) to keep on existing for other people. Further relates the idea to the sorting out rule for meeting human improvement objectives while simultaneously supporting the capacity of regular frameworks to give the normal assets and environment administrations whereupon the economy and society depend. Considered from this point, SD targets accomplishing social advancement, natural harmony and economic development. Investigating the requests of SD underscored the need to move away from destructive financial exercises and

rather take part in exercises with positive ecological, economic and social effects.

It is argued that the relevance of SD deepens with the dawn of every day because the population keeps increasing but the natural resources available for the satisfaction of human needs and wants do not. Hak et al. (2016) maintain that, conscious of this phenomenon, global concerns have always been expressed for judicious use of the available resources so that it will always be possible to satisfy the needs of the present generation without undermining the ability of future generations to satisfy theirs. It implies that SD is an effort at guaranteeing a balance among economic growth, environmental integrity and social well-being. This reinforces the argument that, implicit in the concept of SD is intergenerational equity, which recognises both short and the long-term implications of sustainability and SD. This is achievable through the integration of economic, environmental, and social concerns in decision-making processes. However, it is common for people to treat sustainability and SD as analogues and synonyms but the two concepts are distinguishable. According to Diesendorf (2000) sustainability is the goal or endpoint of a process called sustainable development. Gray (2010) reinforces the point by arguing that, while “sustainability” refers to a state, SD refers to the process for achieving this state.

## Relationships among the Environment, Economy and Society

The concept of sustainability appears poised to continue to influence future discourse regarding development science. This, in the view of Porter and van der, implies that the best choices are likely to remain those that meet the needs of society and are environmentally and economically viable, economically and socially equitable as well as socially and environmentally bearable. This leads to three interconnected spheres or domains of sustainability that describe the relationships among the environmental, economic, and social aspects of SD as captured in Figure.

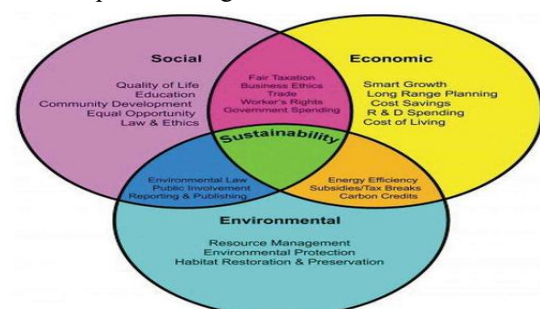


Figure 1.1: Relationships among social,

## Environmental and Economic Sustainability

Basically, it can be concluded from the figure that, nearly everything man does or plans to do on earth has implications for the environment, economy or society and for that matter the continued existence and wellbeing of the human race. Akin to this, as argued by, the spheres constitute a set of interrelated concepts which should form the basis of human decisions and actions in the quest for SD. Supports the argument by opining that basically, the figure depicts that proper decisions on sustainable resource management will bring about sustainable growth for sustainable society.

## The Debate about the SDGs

A key feature of the SDGs is that their development objectives and targets are basically interdependent but interlinked. It is argued that the SDGs entail complementarities or synergies as well as trade-offs or tensions which have implications for global and national contexts. The complementarities imply that addressing one goal could help to address some others at the same time. For instance, addressing issues of climate change could have co-benefits for energy security, health, biodiversity, and oceans. As opined by Fasoli (2018), what needs to be noted is that, the SDGs are not standalone goals. They are interconnected, implying that achieving one goal leads to achieving another and, therefore, they should be seen as indispensable pieces in a big and complex puzzle. This choice, according to Meurs and Quid (2018), would have to be informed by country-specific priorities and resource availability. It is also worth noting that because of the complementarities of many of the goals and target areas, a single indicator may serve to measure progress across some goals and targets.

It is further argued that the SDGs have competing stakeholder interests attached to them. Continues that the trade-offs can present governance issues, in the case of complex problems within the SDGs where the interests of different stakeholders conflict. Another key challenge according to Spahn (2018) is ensuring responsibility and accountability for progress towards meeting the SDGs. Several commentators, researchers and academics (Diesendorf, 2000) are of the opinion that this calls for appropriate indicators and ways of monitoring and evaluating progress on the SDGs, especially at the national level. In this regard, it would be important to measure both inputs and output in order to check whether the various countries are investing what they set out to invest by way of addressing the issues, as well as tracking outcomes to check if they are actually achieving the set goals and targets, over half of the global population already resides in urban areas and this is expected to increase further to two-thirds by 2050. This will

create socio-economic costs and benefits in many sectors. Businesses can take advantage of creating healthy and liveable cities to expand their operations, thus boosting employment.

## Principles of Sustainable Development

Achieving SD depends on various principles. Be that as it may, the prevalent message with respect to the principles of sustainable development floats towards the economy, environment and society. In particular, they relate, among others, to protection of biological system and biodiversity, generation frameworks, populace control, human asset management, preservation of dynamic culture and individuals' participation.

One key standard of SD is the protection of the environment. There is the need to monitor the biological system and biodiversity in light of the fact that without these, living being will stop to exist. The constrained methods and assets on the earth can't be sufficient for the boundless needs of the individuals.

This implies development exercises must be completed by the limit of the earth. That is the reason it is significant, for example, to have elective wellsprings of vitality, for example, sun oriented, rather than depending vigorously on oil based goods and hydro-electricity.

Moreover, so as to accomplish SD, there is the requirement for populace control. Individuals squeeze out laving by using the constrained assets on the earth.

Fasoli (2018) opines that appropriate human asset management is another significant guideline of SD. The individuals need to guarantee that the principles are received and clung to. It is individuals who have the obligation to use and monitor the environment. It is likewise contended that, the procedure of SD must be participatory so as to be effective and sustainable. Furthermore, SD flourishes with advancing dynamic social conventions, customs and political culture.

## Conclusion

SD has attracted much attention in the academic, governance, planning and development intervention space. A wide range of governmental and non-governmental entities appear to have embraced it as an appropriate development paradigm. This is because most, if not all proponents and advocates of the paradigm, virtually seem to concur that the challenges confronting humankind today such as climate change, depletion of ozone layer, water scarcity, and loss of vegetation, inequality, insecurity, hunger, deprivation and poverty can be addressed

by adhering to the tenets and principles of SD. The ultimate aim of SD is to achieve a balance among environmental, economic and social sustainability, thus, making these the pillars on which SD rests. While not assuming a definitive posture, sustainability of society can be said to depend on the availability of proper health systems, peace and respect for human rights, decent work, gender equality, quality education and rule of law.

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