

Demographic Transition by Agrarian to Manufacturing Character of Economies

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(Abstract)

Sustainable development is a much debated and talked issue all across the globe. The nature of development in past few decades in particular and around last one century in general all over the world and across all the nations has been a cruel story of unprecedented destruction of earth's environment. The rampant exploitation of natural resources has been a serious cause of concern all over the world. This development which is marred by such serious repercussions can never be treated as development in its true sense. There has been a peculiar demographic transition of almost all nations on earth and this transition is so pronounced that it can be said in a narrow sense that entire globe has undergone a peculiar demographic transition. This demographic transition is characterised by the drift away from agrarian to industrial & manufacturing character of economies. The contribution of Agriculture sector to world's total income has systematically gone down over the years and that of manufacturing and service sector has gone up. This shifted emphasis towards manufacturing has resulted into rampant exploitation of natural resources. The issue of sustainable development is quite contextual as it relates to the very existence of life on earth. It will not be unfair to say that in the past and even in the present, entire humanity has shifted towards sustainable destruction away from sustainable development. To foster sustainable development in true sense, multidisciplinary approach is most sought after. The logic is simple the destructive activities and stance of man has been so multi-facial and multidimensional that the remedy to it or in other words antidote to it lies in multidisciplinary actions and approach. The present paper by an author focuses on the issue of social relevance which is supposed to be the core bases of any course curriculum developed in academia. It is fundamental orientation around which academic curricula are developed. Education without social relevance is meaningless. However, author believes that with the issue of sustainable development ruling high on global scene, it is high time to not only materialise but also capitalise this social relevance in its true sense and converting it into social realisation. However, to achieve this sincere multidisciplinary approach will have to be attempted.

Key words: Sustainable development, Social relevance, Social realisation, Demographic Transition

Introduction

The overall tendency of the man's development over past century or so has been that of ruthless treatment to environment in order to fulfil his greed. There has been a prevalence of all round destructive approach towards environment. Industrial revolution paved way for mass production and growing consumerism all across the globe. The so called economy of scale further ignited the appetite of big companies to go for mass level production. The movement which was triggered by the developed nations of modern times has now engulfed the entire world in its grip.

There as a time when agriculture was the most dominant sector of economies of all nations across the globe. It will not be unfair to say that fundamentally, all nations on earth were agrarian in character. However, with the advent of industrial revolution and rise of manufacturing sector, the dominance of industries in nation's economy started to rise. The share of agriculture in the national income of various nations started to slip downwards. On the other hand the share of manufacturing sector and industrial sector started to rise. This tilt in favour of industrial activities and manufacturing sector has resulted in havoc to the environment. The voices are being raised all across the world to check this growing nuance as this kind of progress can never be termed as a true and sustainable friend of humanity.

The point raised by author in this paper is based on the simple logic that if this destruction to the environment is governed by multiple of forces, then the countering forces must also have multiple dimensions. Simply put it can be said that multi- disciplinary approach seems to be the most sought after approach to tackle this great problem faced by humanity in modern era. In a simple sense the essence of sustainable development is that the future generations may also reap and enjoy the benefits of development in present times. It remains to be seen that whether we are offering safe environment to our future generations or we are offering more of carbon dioxide and pollution to them in the name of so called industrial development in modern times. The paper makes an attempt to high light the importance of multi- disciplinary approach to counter the destructible stances of man towards his environment.

It is quite interesting to point out here that though social relevance is something which is supposed to be the part and parcel of any course curriculum taught in universities and colleges. It seems that either this aspect of social relevance is missing in the course curricula in its true spirits or we have failed to implement it properly thus costing us the problem of failing to realise sustainable development goal. It is high time to revive this spirit in its true sense so that social relevance becomes dominant in its true sense in our course curriculum. If we achieve it, we will surely counter the forces acting against the goal of sustainable development and there are all strong possibilities that an effective multi- disciplinary strategy will emerge out of all this exercise which will help in addressing the issue of sustainable development in an amicable manner.

Objectives of the study:

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To highlight the need to address the issue of sustainable development.
2. To visualise how the aspect of social relevance in course curriculum can lead to design a multidisciplinary approach to ensure sustainable development.

Hypotheses of the study:

The hypotheses of the study corresponding to above objectives are as follows. The nature of these hypotheses is declarative.

1. The rampant exploitation of natural resources has brought the issue of sustainable development as the most crucial issue facing humanity.
2. Multidisciplinary approach towards learning coupled with due weightage to social relevance in course curricula can help in developing effective strategy to counter the forces acting against sustainable development.

Methodology of the study:

The study is predominantly base on the secondary data. A thoughtful insight to the issue in question will be attempted. The plan will be as follows.

- (i) The relevance and gravity of the issue of sustainable development will be highlighted through secondary data related to various nations.
- (ii) Reference to some leading studies conducted in this regard will also be included along with interpretation.
- (iii) There after the aspect of social relevance in course curriculum will be elaborated based on various sources.
- (iv) An attempt will be made to highlight the issue covered in point (iii) above in the context of its relevance with goal of achieving sustainable development.
- (v) A deliberation on acceptance and rejection of the hypotheses will be presented.
- (vi) It will be followed by conclusion, suggestions and recommendations.

Peculiar demographic transition of world's economies and its impact on sustainable development:

Around 100 to 150 years back, entire earth was characterised by nations with agriculture being their main occupation. World population was not as alarming as today and was within manageable limits. However, certain compelling forces cited above in the paper have resulted in sweeping structural transformations in world economy shifting it from agriculture to non-agricultural activities. "The share of agricultural sector in total product declined in all developed countries except Australia. In the case of Great Britain, it declined from 22 percent in 1841 to 5 percent in 1955; from 42 percent between 1872-82 to 9 percent in 1962 for France; from 49 percent in 1879 to 9 percent between 1939-48 for United States; and from 63 percent between 1887-82 to 14 percent in 1962 for Japan. Thus by the end of the long periods the share of this sector in total product was less than 10 percent in the case of U.K., France, Germany, Netherlands and the USA, while it ranged between 10 to 26 percent in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Italy, Canada, Australia, Japan and USSR. On the other hand, the share of industrial sector rose to more than 50 percent by the end of the long periods for Great Britain (56%), France (52%), Germany (52%), Netherlands (51%), Norway (53%), Sweden (55%), and the USSR (58%), while it ranged between 22 to 49 percent for Italy (22%), Australia (30%), United States (42%), Denmark (48%), Canada (48%) and Japan (49%)."

Above statistics tells the story of spectacular rise in the share of manufacturing sector in the GDP of various nations. It has replaced agriculture which used to be traditional leading contributor to GDP of almost all nations in the world. It has been an across the globe phenomenon. In an attempt to produce goods in tune with the increasing demands of an increasing population, business firms have resorted to rampant manufacturing activities. This in turn has resulted in severe burden on environment. Traditional character of agriculture sector is that of eco-friendliness, if we discard the ill-effects like the ones brought about by 'Green revolution' in India due to excessive use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers. It can be safely argued that growing pollution in all parts of the world is due to the unplanned and anti eco techniques of production being used. Thus we see that structural changes in world economy are contributing to both factors – rise in GDPs and rise in global pollution. Here is an alarming statistics – “For Mexico in 1986-90, it was found that the environmentally adjusted domestic product was 13 percent less than the conventionally measured net domestic product. The new accounting measures also showed that net investment – which conventional measures showed as positive, at 46 billion pesos was a negative 700 million pesos. Net savings, also assumed to be positive, was actually close to zero”. It thus amply reflects from the ongoing discussion that manufacturing sector has played a lead role in systematically sidelining agriculture sector from world economy scene. The rampant exploitation of natural resources to suffice the needs of raw material for manufacturing sector has brought the world on the brink of disaster.

The spirit of social relevance needs to be transformed into social realisation to ensure sustainable development

Education and society are considered to be two intricately associated aspects of human beings. It is due to this intricate relation that social relevance occupies central focus while framing and developing any course curriculum. However, author is of the view point that social relevance seems missing in its true spirit considering the path towards which our societies are moving. After all, it is after getting educated and acquiring various skills one moves on to perform various activities in the society and if these activities are leading to sustainable destruction, there is something wrong with the social relevance aspect of the course curricula taught to them in universities and colleges. It is perhaps due to this fact that

social realisation further goes wanting. By social realisation, here author is hinting towards the responsibility of the educated man towards his society and nation so that the goal of sustainable development can be achieved.

Here it is interesting to refer to the different meanings of "Curriculum" as given by UNESCO. According to it curriculum can be envisaged from different perspectives. What societies envisage as important teaching and learning constitutes the "intended" curriculum. Since it is usually presented in official documents, it may be also called the "written" and/or "official" curriculum. However, at classroom level this intended curriculum may be altered through a range of complex classroom interactions, and what is actually delivered can be considered the "implemented" curriculum. What learners really learn (i.e. what can be assessed and can be demonstrated as learning outcomes/learner competencies) constitutes the "achieved" or "learned" curriculum. In addition, curriculum theory points to a "hidden" curriculum (i.e. the unintended development of personal values and beliefs of learners, teachers and communities; unexpected impact of a curriculum; unforeseen aspects of a learning process). Those who develop the intended curriculum should have all these different dimensions of the curriculum in view. While the "written" curriculum does not exhaust the meaning of curriculum, it is important because it represents the vision of the society. The "written" curriculum should therefore be expressed in comprehensive and user-friendly documents, such as curriculum frameworks; subject curricula/syllabuses, and in relevant and helpful learning materials, such as textbooks; teacher guides; assessment guides.

In some cases, people see the curriculum entirely in terms of the subjects that are taught, and as set out within the set of textbooks, and forget the wider goals of competencies and personal development. This is why a curriculum framework is important. It sets the subjects within this wider context, and shows how learning experiences within the subjects need to contribute to the attainment of the wider goals.

All these documents and the issues they refer to form a "curriculum system". Given their guiding function for education agents and stakeholders, clear, inspired and motivational curriculum documents and materials play an important role in ensuring education quality. The involvement of stakeholders (including and especially teachers), in the development of

the written curriculum is of paramount importance for ensuring ownership and sustainability of curriculum processes.

It amply reflects from the above versions of curriculum as mentioned by UNESCO that it has lot to do with the society. The author presents his simple logic that as the forces of destruction leading to a challenge for ensuring sustainable development are multifarious and multidimensional. Therefore, it becomes self explanatory that the forces trying to establish and ensure sustainable development also need to be multifarious and multidimensional. It is only possible through multidisciplinary approach with the grass root restructuring of all course curricula truly embodying in it the spirit of social relevance which is the only way to guarantee social realisation of whatever is embodied in course curricula in the name of social relevance.

Economics of Stress in Economy and Sustainable Development:

“Economics of Stress in Economy and Sustainable Development”, It is often said that some amount of stress is needed to accomplish various tasks but the stress must be kept within manageable limits. This section of the paper provides some insights to develop effective strategies for sustainable development drawing inputs from some other work of the author. Economics teaches us how to select best option out of many alternatives available. Selection of one best option or group of options as the case may be is the fundamental instinct on which Economics functions. The growth of Economics as a discipline is a story of deliberations on ways and means to establish equilibrium between fulfilment of wants and desires and means to achieve it. Most of the effort of Economics goes in establishing trade-off these two conflicting issues. Most optimum utilisation of resources is what Economics strives for. It has already been explained above that any attempt to utilize resource will require some amount of stress and if it can be effectively balanced by resistance developed or strain taken, the most optimum utilisation of resources can be achieved.

It logically appears from ongoing discussion that if we superimpose above graph of stress and strain of material, on stress and strain of Economics, the elastic region where the material returns to its original shape once the deforming force is removed is of vital concern. In other words, we can say that stress within elastic region is bearable. Once it crosses elastic region

and enters plastic region it becomes capable of causing permanent distortion. The same can be said about chronic stress which may result in a person when he is persistently subjected to stress for a long period of time. A person may become 'use to' to some level of continual stress but this definitely damages that person. There is a natural tendency among human beings to ignore chronic stress until obvious chronic symptoms come to fore. The concept of stresses when applied to Economics is not just limited to human beings but extends to all resources at the disposal of an economy. We often read statements like "economy is in stress" in literature related to business. If economy can resist this stress or the strain taken by economy is sufficient enough to counter stress and things remain within elastic region, there is nothing to worry. Once it crosses elastic limit and enters plastic region an alarm is set because stress has assumed distorting capabilities. Somewhere down the line the approach seems to be matching with the concept of deductive reasoning where we move from a sum total to something particular. The sum total (or the premises) here happens to be entire earth (or even universe) as sustainable development is holistic in character but its dividends are distributed among all individuals on earth including man, animal and natural resources etc. Author once argued in one of his papers that going to extreme is an invitation to getting in stress so plan your extremes carefully. The same applies to economy be it national or global economy. The resources must be stressed keeping sustainability in mind. "I was told in class eight that silver is a better conductor of electricity than copper. The reason of not using silver wire for carrying electricity from one place to another puzzled me as a child then. Perhaps my view was restricted to scientific and technological angle and was lacking an economist's insight. It is not unfair to call today's business education a brain child of modern Economics which has strong flavour of western thinking and has been contributed immensely by the works of western thinkers and writers. In today's Business Education there is an overemphasis on maximisation of profit. Business teacher guides his/her pupil every now and then to develop a tendency of maximising profit of their concerns. Profit comes after a process which incurs cost and effort. So, another way to express the same feeling as hidden in "maximise your profit 'is to say "minimise your cost and efforts for same or more output" or in other words "optimise your efforts". The frequent use of words like 'optimum' & 'trade off' etc are clear indication of western business education's repeated plea for optimisation of efforts. Even though western business education has made the importance of optimisation of efforts amply clear by repeatedly pointing towards it but no clear ways are mentioned to

achieve it.” Adopting Madhyammarga (middle path) seems an excellent remedy to address stress including stresses in economy. Excessive exploitation of natural resources mounts to increasing cost of sustainable development however we may feel complacent though for the time being only on capitalising on natural resources and adding to economic growth. Lower level of exploitation of natural resources portrays reverse picture. Cost of sustainable development is less but fear of failing to capitalise on natural resources is high. The point where cost of stress on natural resources and cost of idle natural resources balances each other is the most suitable to operate at.

Conclusion:

The deliberations put forward by the author in this study are more than enough to suggest that both the hypotheses of the study stand accepted. The first hypothesis of the study is- “The rampant exploitation of natural resources has brought the issue of sustainable development as the most crucial issue facing humanity”. It can be seen that the statistics regarding GDP composition of various nations of the world coupled with the peculiar demographic transition of national economies showing their drift away from agriculture to industrial and manufacturing sector clearly hints towards rampant and unplanned exploitation of natural resources. As far as the second hypothesis is concerned, it states that- “Multidisciplinary approach towards learning coupled with due weightage to social relevance in course curricula can help in developing effective strategy to counter the forces acting against sustainable development”. Here again we find that education and society are intricately related with each other and education rests on the course curricula we offer in our universities and colleges. Social relevance as an integral part of a course curriculum is the key to transform any course curricula into a useful asset for the society. The intricacy of society, course curricula and social relevance amply reflects from the various versions of the curriculum put forward by the UNESCO. Moreover, author has reasoned quite effectively that if destruction is coming from multitude of angles and reasons, the counter action must also have multifaceted orientation and the key to it is restoring to multidisciplinary approach. The second hypothesis of the study is also accepted. The **recommendation** from the study is that environmental concerns and sustainable development must be made core and fundamental building

principles of any course curriculum. The efforts must be afoot so that social relevance is just not restricted as a written document or hidden agenda of course curricula but it transforms into social realisation also. At the same time all policy initiatives and measures of all governments in the world must consider environment related issues and sustainable development as their central focus. Multidisciplinary approach towards teaching, learning and research must be promoter with a true fervour of social relevance leading to sustainable development

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