

A Study on Environmental Sustainability- Growth, Trends and Concerns

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Abstract

Environmental Sustainability is a concept gaining increasing importance which seeks to ensure preservation of natural resources for the sake of future generations. Its broad idea is meeting requirements of the present generations without sacrificing or compromising on the ability of our future generations to sustain them.

Environmental sustainability is a global issue requiring contribution from and collaboration between various parties, which can include businesses, individuals, and also governments if seen from a larger perspective. It involves a multitude of various activities which include water treatment, waste reduction, pollution control, resource conservation by using renewable methods etc. This goal of sustainability can be achieved by moving away from the present model of unlimited and unmonitored growth, consumption and wastage, to a model of monitored usage, savings, wastage and other factors without compromising on growth for a better future.

Keywords: Sustainability, Renewable, Environment, Survival, Eco-friendly, Future

Introduction – Background

This research is being conducted to introduce the cause, impacts, and aftermaths of environmental degradation.

We aim to tackle the important aspects relating to battling these global problems that include global warming, deforestation, ozone depletion etc.

The environment is an important component of human survival and well-being. We get the resources required to live a sound life from the environment. These resources include food, water and shelter. However, there has been exponential increase in exploitation of our natural resources by humans. This has caused various environmental problems such as drastic climate change, pollution, loss of biodiversity and deforestation.

This paper focuses on concepts of environmental sustainability, their importance and the challenges associated with them. It also discusses different approaches that can be adopted to promote the idea of

sustainability, which can include usage of renewable energy sources, implementation of sustainable agricultural practices and introducing sustainable and safe transportation systems.

Importance of Environmental Sustainability

This is essential for survival and well-being of both future and present generations. It is to make sure that there is no lack of resources necessary to sustain human life, which includes food water and shelter. It also aims at protecting other forms of life to maintain the ecological balance. Moreover, it is essential for addressing the major problem of climate change, which has drastic consequences on human life and also the environment.

Challenges associated with Environmental Sustainability

As evident as it is, achieving environmental sustainability is a challenging task because it requires a well synchronised approach to tackle the various dimensions of sustainability such as economic, social and environmental. Some of these challenges include:

1. **Lack of Political will:** Achieving environmental sustainability requires commitment from governments and leaders to promote good policies and practices. However, this commitment is often lacking specially in developing countries. It can be due to lack of interest, or lack of knowledge about the effects that sustainability can bring out.
2. **Limited Resources:** Sustainability requires significant resources-financial, technical and human resources to get started towards the goal. Most countries lack the resources or choose to not use them on implementing sustainable development practices.
3. **Public Awareness:** Public is generally not aware of the importance of sustainability, and how the condition of our environment is deteriorating day by day. This lack of information makes it harder to implement policies and practices.

Effects of Sustainability

The advantages and benefits of environmental sustainability are numerous. Improved public health, enhanced economic stability and social inclusiveness are some of them. The most direct effect of sustainability is reduced impact of climate change, safer biodiversity and natural habitats and prolonged availability of natural resources. When there is a proper management of exhaustible resources, combined with use of renewable resources, nature begins to sustain itself. This is what the concept of environmental sustainability aims for.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. (Goni et.al, 2015) - The importance of sustainability has resulted in a surge of sustainable development research. The authors of this paper conducted a survey research to study environmental sustainability and its trends. The goal of this research paper is to provide an overview of the research trends, literature categorization and research focuses of environmental sustainability engineering research from a historical perspective, using five high impact factor journals in ‘the Journal Citation Report of the Institute of Scientific Information.’ The methodology employed for classifying research articles is time horizon. This paper presents a deepcheck of 29,616 research articles between a span of

24 years, reflecting the growth of research in the field of environmental sustainability. Water research was one of the 2 most frequent focuses along with pollution control and prevention. Furthermore, 'the Journal of Environmental Science and Technology' emerged with highest number of research publications on the topic of sustainability. The results of this study have implications for the direction of further research in the field of sustainability.

2. (K. Ozili, 2022)- This paper assesses already existing research on the topics of sustainable development and sustainability around the globe. It initially defines the two concepts briefly. It then highlights the dimensions of the concepts based on previous literature. It also looks on the relationship between the two using literature review methodologies. The paper has identified that each sector has made significant progress towards attaining sustainable development but also faced unique challenges during reaching this goal. The paper also explores the practicality of sustainable development in policy circles while suggesting benefits of incorporating it into business or environmental management. Finally, the paper gives some suggestions on areas for future research.

3. (Swain & Wallentin, 2015) - This paper talks about how there has been criticism on the United Nations SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) for being inconsistent, difficult to implement and quantify, being very broad and universal and hard to monitor. It quantifies and prioritizes the SDGs and how they impact sustainable development. Structural equation models (SEM) are employed to investigate which pillar of SDG (social, economic, environmental) is more effective in the drive towards attaining sustainable development. The results show that fully stable countries are gaining more by focusing on environmental and social factors, however, still developing countries gain by focusing on economic and social factors.

4. (Scoones, 2016): This article looks upon the connections between sustainability, politics and development. It proceeds to present a broad look on sustainability thinking across traditions, the effect of scarcity narratives on research, policy and practice. The paper emphasises politics of transformations and the ways they occur under combinations of various processes. It particularly highlights "politics of alliance building and collective action for sustainability and development." It shows that transformations cannot be manipulated; instead they must rely on unpredictable politics that involves multiple actors having diverse knowledge. The article also highlights articulation of politics through truth and accumulation regimes and how understanding these political processes affect institutional and governance responses. The paper concludes by reflecting on future priorities on research and the situation required for effectively responding to political changes on sustainability and development.

Objective of study

1. The objective of a study about environmental sustainability is to analyse and understand the effect on environment by human activities and to identify strategies and solutions to minimize negative effects and promote sustainable practices.
2. It is to find ways to protect nature's resources and to figure out alternate sources of energy while reducing harm caused to environment and reducing pollution.

Research Gap

1. Lack of information about specific aspects of sustainability:
Many of the issues relating to sustainability are very complex and there may be gaps of information that is available relating to these complex issues. For example, there may be a gap of information about the scale of the harm caused by a certain problem related to sustainability.
2. Environmental sustainability consists of different components such as social, economic, ecological factors and there may be lack of understanding between interaction or correlation between these components, and how changes in one component can affect the others.
3. Insufficient consideration of long lasting impacts of early sustainability measures: Some actions taken to achieve sustainability may backfire, due to being taken too early or too large in scale. For example, a complete revolution from conventional petrol vehicles to electric vehicles will cause disruption in economies, not to mention the problems caused by excessive mining of lithium.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

SOURCE OF DATA COLLECTION:

For our research we used the secondary source of data collection

We collected the information from Government publications, websites, books, journal, articles, internal records and other research papers which were published before.

We used the primary data of information which was collected by the other researchers and used it as the secondary source of data for analysing and interpretation.

Findings of study

- Environmental sustainability is important for the well-being of current and future generations. In past decades, the effects of climate change have become increasingly apparent, from rising global temperatures and other visible extremes to intensifying tropical storms, devastating forest fires and devastating floods. Climate change presents many complex environmental, social and economic challenges to various countries of the world.
- As the world suffers from the dangerous consequences of climate change, many communities, societies and associations around the world are embracing environmental sustainability and changing this to a priority. With these measures, our world can preserve natural resources to support the health and well-being of unborn generations.
- "Ensuring that mortal society operates with ecological borders". Planetary Boundaries (PB) concept was the name given to this. Introduced in 2009, it defined where the thin line between humans and their safe operations with surroundings. Although most of the planet is disconnected from the working of the world, according to Weinstein, it is easy to forget important factors affecting the planet. "Humans are a part of the Earth and live in the same space as the rest of the living organisms on the planet. Our current profitable activity ignores these boundaries," Weinstein said.

- Striking a balance between natural resources and consumption that respects nature but reinforces our ultra-modern way of life is one of the most important parts of assessing climate change. With too many restrictions on utilisation of natural resources, we are slowing down technological and profitable development. With an unlimited reduction of resources, we are risking a global food problem, an energy problem and an increase in greenhouse emissions, leading to global warming.
- ‘The UN World Commission on Environment and Development’ goes further, defining environmental sustainability is timely in a way that ensures that unborn generations have enough natural resources to maintain an equal, if not better, quality of life to the current generation. . The collection of renewable resources, the reduction of renewable resources and the absorption of pollution can of course be continued indefinitely.

It is critical to the future of our world to balance the competing demands of environmental protection and sustainable development so that both nature and society can thrive. Attaining this balance is exhausting, though not impossible and the focus of scientists, philosophers, politicians and experts has changed towards these issues in the recent decade.

Suggestion and Scope of study

- Increases productivity and reduces costs: Developing a sustainable company makes operations more efficient, as it saves resources and makes business work more efficient. This improves employee productivity and reduces production costs. It can start by using proximity sensors to turn lights on or off in the office, or insulating the walls to reduce heating and cooling of the structure.
- Attract high-quality employees and smart investors: Indirect employees want to join a company that is dedicated to protecting the environment. This is especially true for younger generations who are more aware of the atmosphere. This particular group of people prefers to distance themselves from companies that are responsible for environmental disasters or are involved in activities that result in pollution. Additionally, when making investment decisions, investors take into account various factors such as a company's carbon footprint, greenhouse gas emissions, and waste management practices. Globally, it is assumed that organisations that showing their commitment to "green" operations have a higher probability of being profitable.
- Improved Brand image: Many consumers consider the company's environmental footprint when making purchase decisions. They are more likely to prefer companies that demonstrate a commitment to environmental protection. Consumers continue to love, support and buy from companies that actively support their communities. Therefore, many well-known brands now focus their advertising campaigns to promote their interest in the community.
- Sustainable waste management development Outcomes: One of the easiest ways to make a business feasible is sustainable waste management. From the initial work companies did nearly three decades ago to figure out the details of recycling to today's zero-waste operations, waste management is now common in every sustainable business.

Conclusion

Environmental sustainability is the duty to protect nature and secure global resources to aid health and welfare of the present and future. It has consideration of the ‘economic, social, and environmental impacts of human activities and the implementation of ideas.’ It involves sustainable practices such as

energy production, waste management, water conservation, biodiversity preservation, climate changes and adaptation.

It also involves addressing social justice and equity issues, promoting education and awareness, fostering collaboration among stakeholders including governments, businesses, communities, and individuals.

However, achieving environmental sustainability is not without challenges. It requires overcoming barriers such as short-term economic interests, lack of political will, social and cultural norms that prioritize growth and consumption over sustainability. It also requires addressing global disparities in resource consumption and environmental impacts.

In conclusion, aggressive population increase has led to extensive agriculture, which leads to increased greenhouse gas discharges and deforestation. Technology and industries are growing fast meaning we need more power than before. Even with these needs, our world is reaching a snapping point. That's why businesses need to start being sustainable while also focusing on social responsibilities. This will contribute to direct sustainability as well as positively affect their customers.

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