

Environment and Sustainable Development: A Challenge to National Security

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Environmental change and unsustainable development has been posing a serious National Security Challenge for the world. Since National security is a matter of serious concern for all the nations of the world. How long the world will survive coping with the fast change and decay of the natural resources. Hence the question of sustainable development has come to the forefront.[1] The aim of this paper is to discuss the reasons of environmental changes which creates the challenges to National Security and attempt to suggest the measures to change the scenario. Many reasons like irrational and over exploitation of the natural resources and the environment, market driven consumerist lifestyle, greed of man and unsustainable development (unorganized pattern of development) are responsible for this situation.[2] This paper focuses mainly on unsustainable development.

Introduction

Man is a creation of nature which came into existence due to the sudden and large scale environmental changes that took place about one or two million years ago. Nature has indeed been generous to mankind by providing unlimited bounties like landscapes and forests, mountain and beaches, birds and wild life and above all air and water without which no organism or even a man can survive. All organisms in the natural environment are dependnt on one another and each in turn, depends on the physical environment of the area in which it lives.[3]

Environment and Sustainable Development

‘Environment’ refers: what is around something. It can be living or non-living things. Further, it includes physical, Chemical and other natural forces living things live in their environment. By nature, they constantly interact with it and undergo changes in response to conditions in their environment. In the environment, there are interaction between animals, plants, soil, water and other living and non-living things. The circumstances, objects, or conditions by which one is surrounded. Now why the question of environment has come into limelight?[4] It is because of the fact of environmental pollution. The factors responsible for environmental pollutions are mainly industries, solid waters, vehicles, urbanization and industrialization.[5]

As a result of environmental pollution, the life of both human beings and animals has been greatly affected. The gains of science and technology in the field of industrial progress have brought with it several hazards to the entire mankind. Even our flora and fauna were found to be threatened with extinction. The smoke left behind the automobiles and other vehicular traffic, the increasing use of synthetic detergents, nitrogen fertilizers and insecticides contaminate both air and water. All these are greatly responsible for environmental pollution.[6]

Sustainable Development:-

The need for sustainable development is a key to the future of environmental security.[7] In the very simple words sustainable means something that has a longer life or pertaining to a system that maintains its our viability and that can be carried forward. In the today's world the concept of development has been replaced by the terms "sustainable development." According to Brundtland commission 1987- "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Sustainable development respects the limited capacity of an ecosystem to absorb the impact of human activities. It refers to achieving economic and social development economic and social development in such a way that don't exhaust as country's natural resources.[8]

It is because we all have realized that we are chasing the wrong goals on the name of development. Today, even a breath of fresh air pure drinking water is becoming a luxury because of over exploitation of resources and unorganized pattern of development, market driven consumerist life style and the greed of man are in itself destructive. So to save our planet, human race and non-human species, it is much required to make a head in the sustainable manner with applying Gandhian Philosophy of development.[9]

Relationship between environment and Security:-

The relationship between environment and security has been under consideration almost two decades in both the scientific and policy communities. Environmental and security issues are multifaceted and complex, in cultural, political and scientific sense. In a fundamental way, the environment must be viewed as a strategic factor to be weighed in which many other variables affecting a global or homeland security.

The global integration of human activities and the realization of the importance of environmental factors in achieving and sustaining a desirable quality of life, have added the complexity to this picture.[10]

Environmental security examines threats posed by environmental events and trends to individuals, communities or nations. It may focus on the impact of human conflict and international relations on the environment, or on how environmental problems cross state borders.[11]

Impact of Environment on National security:-

New definition of national security has emerged.[12] Non-military threats, such as environmental mismanagement, natural resource depletion, overpopulation and the environmental decline, social and political instability, ethnic rivalries and territorial disputes, international terrorism and drugs have been included into the definition of national security.[13] Even though environmental degradation and climate change sometimes cause and between countries and other times not, it can weaken the national security of the state in number of profound ways Environmental change can undermine the economic prosperity which plays big role in country's military capacity and material power.

In some developed countries, and in most developing countries, natural resources and environmental services tend to be important factors for economic growth and employment rate. Income form and employment in primary sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining, and from environmentally dependent services like for us, may all be adversely affected by environmental change. Climate change also could, through extreme weather events, have a more direct impact on national security by damaging critical infrastructures such as military bases, naval yards and training ground there by severely threatening essential national defense resources.

Conclusion:-

At the end it should be stated that sustainable development is a process in which economics, finance, trade, energy, agriculture, industry and all other decisions are implemented in such a manner so that it becomes an important tool to usher into a society which is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable in all

respects. Therefore, the prime objective of sustainable development is to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their needs by properly maintaining the balance.[14] The efforts are being made all over the world in the form of academic debates and discussions but they were promises and agreements are not enough to produce a desirable control over the threat. The issue is in need of less words and more action that alone can have the way for a better National Security.[15]

It is therefore sine qua non that all should join their hand for a balanced sustainable development so that the future generation do not suffer and can lead a better life.[16]

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