

FORESTS FOR LIVELIHOOD, ECONOMIC SECURITY AND ERADICATION OF POVERTY

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable Development Goals were adopted encompassing universal aspirations centred on people, planet, peace and partnership with endeavour to achieve sustainability and leaving no one behind in the progress of development. Progress has bypassed groups, communities, societies and people have been left out and new challenges have emerged for ending poverty, hunger, inequality, climate change, conflicts and violent extremism. Increasingly perceptible resource depletion (deforestation and forest degradation) and climate change highlight the importance of integrating environmental sustainability into development strategies (such as 'green economy', 'green growth' and 'carbon' neutral development) for the good of present and future generations.

Key words: Sustainable development goals, Climate change, Poverty, Hunger, Green growth.

Introduction

A healthy and stable environment is vital for survival of humanity. Sustainable development is an issue of social justice. It is not by chance but choice that world leaders in 2015, committed to a development journey that leaves no one behind. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted encompassing universal aspirations centered on people – planet - peace and partnership to reach the furthest behind first. The historic Paris Agreement on climate change would oblige the global community to counter it. The UN Summit for refugees, made world commitments to address issues faced by refugees, and migrants. It is daunting task to honour, implement and monitor these agreements but now is not the time to falter. For enjoying progress in human development we have to empower vulnerables by upholding human rights, ensuring access to justice, promoting inclusion and ensuring accountability. There needs to be a balance between people and the planet. Broader peace, stability and security are linked not only to the end of wars and conflicts but also to the end of violence within societies and human security in personal and community life. Sustainability is imperative not a choice. Let's not squander this momentum (Banu, 2016).

Progress has bypassed groups, communities, societies and people have been left out, The poor, marginalized and vulnerable groups - including ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, refugees and migrants - are being left further behind. The barriers in development, include, among others, deprivation and inequalities,

discrimination and exclusion, social norms and values, and prejudice and intolerance (Tewari, 2008).

Land degradation, desertification, deforestation, biodiversity erosion, loss of ecosystem services, epidemic, violence, climate change and natural disasters can quickly undermine progress in human development. Poor people and environmental damage are often caught in a downward spiral. Past resource degradation deepens today's poverty, which forces poor people to deplete resources to survive.

Poverty in many forest areas in geographically and demographically clustered and stubbornly resistant to local and national policy measures. Now governments are committed for improving livelihoods of people and communities by creating conditions needed for them to promote sustainable forest management.

The need to manage sustainable forests is clearly stated in SDG 15, and in the SDG 6 target on protecting and restoring water related ecosystems. Moreover, due to their multifunctionality, forests have a role in achieving other SDGs such as ending poverty (SDG 1), achieving food security (SDG 2), clean energy (SDG 7), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11) and combating climate change (SDG 13) (Tewari, 2017).

National forest policies, stakeholder stewardship and international cooperation need to be designed, developed and delivered for ensuring sustainable forest management (SFM) to eradicate poverty and hunger from forest areas. We must organize resources, technology,

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expertise, policies and institutions in a way, that enable people and forests to grow together with sustainability.

Defining livelihood, Economic security and Poverty

Livelihood comprises the abilities, assets (store, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefit to other livelihoods of the local and global levels and in short and long term.

- Chamber and convey – 1992.

The livelihoods of millions of smallholders and rural people depend directly on their ability to grow, harvest, process and market crops, livestock, fish, tree and forest products.

Economic security or financial security is the condition of having stable income or other resources to support a standard of living now and in the foreseeable future. it includes:

- Probable continued solvency;
- Predictability of the future cash flow of a person or other economic entity, such as a country;
- Employment security or job security.

Poverty is pronounced deprivation of well-being related to lack of material income of consumption, low levels of education and health vulnerability and exposure to risk, and voicelessness and powerlessness.

- World Bank (2001 - a).

Poverty not only deprives people of food, shelter, sanitation, health, income, assets and education, it also deprives them of their fundamental rights, social protection and basic dignity. Poverty also looks different at different places. Individuals born into communities that are geographically isolated, predominantly home to politically and socially excluded minorities or disproportionately exposed to environmental pressures have fewer opportunities.

Fulfilling basic needs is an essential part of expanding capabilities but is insufficient to enable people to reach their full potential. Financial services can be a bridge out of poverty and vulnerability. Sustainable forest management should facilitate growth with decent jobs and enhance small and medium sized enterprises development, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

Sustainable Forest Management

Forests currently cover nearly one third of earth's

surface and are the most biologically-diverse ecosystems on land, home of more than 75% of terrestrial species of animals, plants and insects. They store an estimated 296 Ggaton (GT) of carbon in both above and below ground biomass to counter climate change. They conserve soil, fix nitrogen and add humus to improve soil fertility. Forested watersheds and wetland supply 75% of fresh water. They clean air and water, provide critical wildlife habitat, and make the planet a healthier place to live.

Biologically rich forest ecosystems provide shelter, food, fodder, fibre, energy (Wood fuel and biofuels) water, herbal medicine, jobs and economic security to the people. Forests are an important source of livelihoods for 1.6 billion people, of whom at least 370 million indigenous peoples entirely depend on them for their subsistence and survival. Forests and agroforests offer a highly diverse array of income-earning opportunities for gatherers, hunters, traders, producer and processors.

Forests are essential to all life on Earth. They provide the air we breathe and keep our planet healthy. The greatest threat to the world's forest is people, and one of the major threats to the world's people is the loss or degradation of forests. People and forests are inextricably linked.

Deforestation and forest degradation are affecting production, livelihood, climate change, ecosystem health and environmental sustainability. Halting the loss of forests will benefit hundreds of millions of people, including many of poorest people, whose livelihood depend on forest goods and environmental services.

Innovative investment in forests can help achieve wider social and environmental public policy goals; examples include major afforestation and landscape-scale forest rehabilitation programmes and the integration of forestry into poverty reduction and rural development strategies. Many countries have created successful enabling environments for private sector investment in forestry and pioneered innovative funding mechanisms, such as PES (Payment for Environmental Services) including REDD+ programme.

A multipronged approach is needed to achieve multiple land – use and natural – resource goals involving coordinated policy development and land – use planning; the effective legal protection of forests; greater tenure security; strong stakeholder engagement, improved monitoring of deforestation, strong cooperation with the private sector and civil society on voluntary initiatives; and the use of well designed and targeted financial instruments (Tewari, 2012).

Following schemes in forestry sector have helped in

achieving livelihood, economic security and eradication of poverty:-

- For restoration of degraded forests, started sustainable community forestry programme. It restored forest resources and associated biodiversity; improved local livelihood of all indigenous peoples. By universalizing this programme increased resilience to climate change and provided more eco-benefits, building beautiful home with bluer sky, greener land and cleaner air and water.
- Empowered indigenous communities by recognizing their rights on Non-wood forest produce (NWFP). Formation of cooperative/societies and their affiliation with Minor forest produce (MFP) Federations or Tribal Cooperative Development Federation, optimized collection, value addition and marketing of NWFPs, removed conflicts in NWFP collection and improved economy of indigenous communities.
- Encouraged establishment and growth of micro, small and medium sized forest enterprises through access to financial services and micro-finance and helped people to create their own solutions to poverty eradication.
- Achieved higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation with a focus on high-value added and labour intensive sectors.
- Swiden farming was responsible for deforestation, land degradation, climate change, biodiversity erosion and water scarcity. Special schemes such as Rubber Plantation, Medicinal Plants cultivation, Settlement and Rehabilitation of people, reduced forest burning and environmental hazards.
- For making villages inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, developed 10,000 Forest villages as Eco-villages. Ensured access to adequate, safe and affordable housing, connectivity, and basic services and upgraded unsafe human settlements. Supported positive, economic, social and environmental links between Urban, Peri-urban and Rural areas by strengthening development planning for holistic disaster risk management at all levels.
- For achieving lasting peace, ensured internationally guaranteed human rights – the rights to food, water, sanitation, clean air, health and education for millions of poor people. Due to poverty eradication, people are able to fulfil their basic needs, and enjoy equal opportunity.
- Helped Govt. of India to enact “Forest Right Act” and restored alienated lands of indigenous peoples. They were provided inputs, technology, financial services and markets for raising sustainable agriculture and agroforests. It helped more than 10 million families to come out of poverty, hunger and inequality.
- REDD+ fundings are a major boost to curb deforestation which is a significant contributor to climate change. It increases the income of participating people in implementation of the project.
- Assisted poor people to increase their benefits from forest resources by helping them to access markets, acquire processing skills, obtain improved varieties of germplasms, adopt agroforestry, and formed associations to jointly manage resources, strengthen negotiating power and market products.
- Creating enabling environments to encourage investment and inspiring people to bring forth a thriving, just and sustainable world.
- Promoting efficient production and processing of agricultural and forest products, and related waste reduction and recycling.
- There is a need to stimulate growth in the forest based industry sector. This sector being labour intensive can create green jobs while mitigating climate change. The forest based industries face constraints in ensuring an assured supply of raw material along with licensing issues and as a consequence imports of timber logs are on the rise. The forest corporations and industrial units need to step up forestry plantations for meeting the demand of raw material without directly competing with farmers. They also need to induct young professionals in their workforce to mainstream new technical and management advancements. Forest based industries have already established captive plantations in partnership with the farmers. This partnership needs to be further expanded to ensure an assured supply of raw material to the industries with mutually beneficial arrangements.
- Measures to enhance and promote recreation and ecotourism to improve livelihoods of forest-dwellers. Tourism offers the potential to provide economic development and plays an important role, through the provision of increased income and employment in conserving nature and generating fund for the maintenance of the area.
- Payments for ecosystem services (PES), *ab-initio*, have been focused on maintaining or restoring ecosystem and environmental services. However, efforts to link PES and poverty reduction have evolved during the recent 20 years. The understanding and

practices of implementation of PES have developed as a compensatory incentive for the ownership and stewardship of local communities to protect and plant trees, say for watershed management, rainwater harvesting and to balance conservation objectives and socio-economic imperatives. Involving local residents or users of natural resources in conservation efforts and providing incentives to local communities to support and participate in conservation efforts is now a cost-effective practical option. Under a typical PES scheme, the party supplying the environmental services agrees to manage the corresponding resource or the service that provides a flow of benefits to another party according to certain requirements, in return for compensation. An example is improving watershed management and providing hydrological resource for remunerative power plants. Majority of existing schemes operate in the areas of watershed services and biodiversity conservation. The precise design of the payments systems influences the distribution of the payments across participating and non-participating groups; hence, PES can serve those furthest behind. In other words, carefully designed PES schemes can become more focused on those left behind, i.e., the poorest and those unable to cross above the poverty line and on critical environmental issues of climate change and water vagaries.

- Building a better future with forests. There is growing interest in using wood products in green buildings. Because of their reduced impact and the contribution that this makes to improve quality of life. Similarly the benefits of forests for health are being increasingly recognised, with rising demand for medicinal plants and natural organic food, not to mention growing numbers of people visiting forests for exercise, recreation and entertainment.
- Agroforestry has the potential to sequester nearly 600 million metric tons of carbon a year by 2040, compared with about 120 million metric tons for cropland. Given that deforestation and agriculture together account for about 25 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, farmers in the South, who are at risk from climate change, should be able to improve their livelihoods through carbon emissions trading. Carbon payments to farmers could encourage them to change their practices in ways that benefit the globe while also helping to enhance their incomes. But to achieve these goals, agroforestry and agricultural land use change should be inclusive and coordinated as eligible activities, procedures for gaining payments for afforestation and reforestation. Agro-foresters,

farm foresters and related communities and societies need to be aware and supported as to how do they get more value from their trees crop -not only for food, fuel or fibre, but inter-alia as carbon assets. That should encourage local processes to clarify and strengthen tenure, property, and carbon right with substantial additional funding and resource mobilization (Tewari, 2000).

Conclusion

Forests are essential to our future. They provide wide range of products and services and create opportunities to address many of the pressing sustainable development challenges. Having regard to the symbiotic relationship between indigenous peoples and forests, a primary task of all agencies responsible for forest management should be to associate them in the protection, regeneration, plantation and management of forests, ensuring livelihoods and economic security.

United Nations notes that, "Indigenous peoples face systematic discrimination and exclusion from political and economic powers; they continue to be over represented among the poorest; the illiterate, the destitute, dispossessed of their ancestral lands and deprived of their resources for survival, both physical and cultural; and they are robbed of their right to life."

Conservation and development of forest and related ecosystem cannot succeed without willing support, involvement and cooperation of forest – dwellers. We have to commit to improving the livelihoods of people and communities by creating the conditions needed for them to sustainably manage forests, including through strengthening cooperation arrangement in the areas of finance, trade, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, capacity – building and governance, as well as by promoting secure land tenure, particularly decision – making and benefit – sharing in accordance with national legislation and priorities (UN, 2016).

According to the report of International Union of Forest Research Organisations, 42% of the total roundwood and sawnwood traded globally with an annual value of ` 427 billion is harvested illegally. It is one of the key drivers of deforestation across the world, harming the environment and causing losses to government exchequers.

Circumstances warrant to secure respect for the rights of forest dependent indigenous peoples, while promoting their participation and that of local communities in decision – making. Poverty is an injustice that can and should be remedied by making investment and institutional arrangement.

We hope to achieve green economy, healthy ecosystem and Sustainable Development Goals to enable everyone to live a life of dignity with peace and prosperity (IWGIA, 2016).

आजीविका, आर्थिक सुरक्षा और गरीबी के उन्मूलन हेतु वन

दीना नाथ तिवारी

सारांश

विकास की प्रगति में किसी को भी पीछे नहीं छोड़ते हुए और पोषणीयता हासिल करने हेतु प्रयासों के साथ लोगों, ग्रह, शान्ति और साझेदारी पर केन्द्रित सार्वभौमिक आकांक्षाओं को सम्मिलित करके पोषणीय विकास लक्ष्य अपनाया गया। प्रगति समूहों, समुदायों, समाजों से आगे निकल गई है तथा लोग छूट गए हैं और गरीबी, भूख, असमानता, जलवायु परिवर्तन, संघर्षों तथा उग्र अतिवाद के समापन के लिए नई चुनौतियां उठ खड़ी हुई हैं। वर्धमान अवगम्य संसाधन क्षीणता (निर्वनीकरण एवं वन निम्नीकरण) और जलवायु परिवर्तन ने वर्तमान तथा भावी पीढ़ियों की भलाई के लिए विकास रणनीतियों (यथा-‘हरित अर्थव्यवस्था’, ‘हरित वृद्धि’ एवं ‘कार्बन-मध्यम विकास’) में पर्यावरणीय पोषणीयता के एकीकरण के महत्व को उजागर किया है।

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