Sustainable Cities

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Abstract—*We live in time where population is rapidly growing with an increased level of consumption and waste generation. Growing economy has created a heavy demand on our resources at all its levels. This growth trend and demand, negatively impacts the environment and has created an acute desire for sustainability. Sustainable development within cities will form sustainable cities. Sustainable cities are of extreme social benefits as it will enhance the life condition and living standards, as well as prove beneficial for environmental up-gradation. Urban areas are now highly complex, as cities are spreading and engulfing vast expands of areas which is giving rise to urban spirits due to local and global forces. This highly versatile nature of cities are beyond the control of development authorities and planners. This paper has limitations as it shows the poor health condition of the developing countries which is proving detrimental for the growth of sustainable cities. Building Sustainable city for any developing country is a struggle and this can be won only when the public is supportive and interested in this struggle. Some Indian cities have already attained a few milestones towards sustainability. These cities should keep stepping up, and other cities should start building their base. My work is about developing a framework that can be used to develop indices to assess sustainability. It talks about initiatives that should be taken during planning for sustainable development of all cities in India.*

Key words: *Sustainability, Environment, Health, Urbanization*

1. SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is a broad term which defines continuous improvement of social, environmental and economic quality of life within the means of what the earth can provide over a long period of time.

Sustainable Development is adopted to enhance resources, prevent harm to the natural environment and human health and benefit the social and economic well-being of community for sake of current and future generation.

2. CITIES AND SUSTAINABILITY

According to UN, in 2008 for the first time in history, over half of the world's population lived in urban areas and by 2050, this will rise up to 70 percent.

Tackling this huge rise in urban population would be very difficult especially for the developing countries. The present condition of unplanned city growth and evolution of urban sprawls have given rise to a very poor quality of life to the urban poor.

The major challenges of the 21st century are rapid urbanization, climate change and resource shortages. Achieving urban sustainability with respect to environment up gradation, fulfilment of needs of the society and economic development all at the same time is a real challenge.

Therefore sustainable urban development should aim at achieving social and environmental equity while improving the lives of the people.

In sustainable society there should be economic stability, environmental stability and social equity.

For development of sustainable cities, integrating environmentally sustainable practice in policies and procedures is a must and this will work to protect and enhance the quality of life for the present and future generation.

According to UN, the major factors shaping 21st century cities that the future urban planning must address are: Firstly, the environmental challenges of climate change and cities excessive dependence on fossil fuels. Secondly, the demographic challenges of rapid urbanization and increasing multicultural composition of cities. Thirdly, the economic challenges of uncertain future growth and fundamental doubts about the market led approaches that the current global financial crisis have engendered, as well as increasing informality in urban activities. Fourthly, increasing socio-spatial challenges especially inequalities, urban sprawls, unplanned peri-urbanization and increasing spatial scale of cities. Fifthly, institutional challenge related to governance and changing roles of local government.[5]

So sustainable city development will have to maintain a balance between the development of urban areas and protection of environment. Concerns are raised at environmental damages and depletion of non-renewable resources and rising level of pollution. This has given rise to wide awareness about minimizing the environmental cost of

urbanization. The major pull factors that hampers the sustainable growth is climate change, as it increases the pressure on natural resources and environment. As, countries urbanize, the issues of sustainable urbanization become crucial. Urban planning can play vital role in ensuring sustainable urbanization. Achieving sustainable cities and contributing to climate protection requires planned change in the way cities are spatially configured. The World Wide initiative of sustainability has common interest; they increase efficiency and promote a healthier living environment. Principle I of the Rio Declaration on Environment and development states that "Human being are the center of concern for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature." Health is the key to production and economic development.

3. MODERNIZATION AND HUMAN HEALTH

In the 21st century the exponential growth of science and technology has taken us to the zeniths heights, but somewhere the difference between the developed and developing country is still prevalent.

The three pillars, i.e. environment, social and economic balances a sustainable growth. Social basically means society or the people that is us. If people are taken care of and kept in best of health and mind condition, they can maintain and upgrade environment as well as generate economy. But mostly economy generation and environment becomes our concern and humans are being neglected.

Now the question that will arise is, with so much development in medical science and drugs, where is the negligence?

It is our lack of knowledge and general awareness among public.

Over the past two decades average life expectancy has increased and infant mortality rate has decreased. Notable progress towards elimination of various infectious diseases has been made. In spite of various health advances, poor health continues to a constraint on sustainable development.

The increased life expectancy has been reversed by AIDS/HIV. Millions of people are dying of AIDS annually. Developing countries are suffering as they are unaware of the protections and this disease has no cure. Knowledge about AIDS should be given to people in their own dialect and language at community level. Sexual literacy should be given in school, so that children learn as they grow. Sex is still considered a taboo thing and people don't discuss, which keeps them unaware. The necessity to use a condom should be clearly taught to people at grass root level not only to men but to the women as well. Prostitution is the biggest carriers and victims of AIDS. It may not be legalized in developing or developed countries, but as it is very much prevalent,

prostitutes must be aware of safe sex. The inequalities in access to information and health, prevalent high risk sexual behavior and low social status of women should be completely eradicated from the society. This way we will be able to control this monstrous disease.

Pneumonia and malnutrition is taking a toll on human health. Many are affected by Tuberculosis Bacteria and are suffering from TB due to malnutrition. In most countries treatment of TB is free of cost under certain health schemes of government. But in many developing countries, medicines are sometimes unavailable due to which people discontinue their treatment. This negligence from the side of government and helplessness of the people has given rise to a very deadly form of TB. Due to incomplete treatment, the bacteria became drug resistant giving rise to Multiple Drug Resistant(MDR) TB and Totally Drug Resistant(TBR) TB which is very difficult to cure and impossible to cure respectively. TB is highly communicable, if a person acquires TB from a MDR or a TDR TB patient, he will also carry the same infection not the general TB. Treatment of MDR TB and TDR TB is not available in the government schemes. It's a drawback in the process of development. If not treated in the right time it will spread like epidemic and will become uncontrollable.

Unavailability and unaffordability of vaccines and drugs for measles, typhoid and jaundice is taking uncountable lives in developing countries.

One of the most important goals of Millennium Development (2000) is to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, typhoid etc. and reduce child mortality rate and improve maternal health. Principle I of the Rio Declaration on Environment and development states that "Human being are the center of concern for sustainable development." This clearly defines how important human health is for sustainable city development.

4. IDEAS AND INNOVATIONS

India is one of the most advanced developing country. Many Indian cities have potential to become sustainable. Sustainability is new term and people are quite curious about it.

Cities like Gurgaon and Delhi have come up with an extremely innovative idea of environment up gradation that is "Rahagiri". In this the general public make a certain stretch of road absolutely traffic free and they carry out various health activities like exercise, yoga, cycling and other cultural activities. This is not to harm or disturb the traffic flow but this reduces air pollution to a great level. This way people consciously or unconsciously upgrades the environment, hence maintaining a balance. That day should not come when our future generations are forced to have pods to breath. It's a very good example of public involvement towards

sustainability which is contributing good health and good environment at the same time

In an ideal sustainable city needs of all section of people will be catered and local economy will be enhanced due to multiple activities. These cities will use their resources judiciously. With judicious use of resources, the first that comes in our mind is "How to do it?" Managing a cities resource is not an easy job for the development authorities as mostly financial aids are not available and expert know how is also absent. But managing resources at individual level isn't that difficult. Not only management of renewable and non-renewable resources, human resource is also to be managed. Till date sustainability is a domain where environment plays the major role, but to maintain a balanced ecosystem human resource share an equal percentage at par with environment. Modernization and intense human activity have harmed the environment and in return this deteriorated environment have harmed human but simple steps like "Rahagiri" benefits the environment and human together. It is equally important to plant trees, both benefiting the environment and us. For developing a sustainable city the health care facilities of the city is to be developed from the grass root level. Government have different scheme and facility for rural and urban areas but mostly monitoring and supervision of whether the facility are been executed and function is not done. This is leading to corruption at different levels and people are suffering.

Not only provision of health care facility, knowledge of health is to be imported in every individuals. Mostly we have very less knowledge about our own body and mind. Targeting women and children for health education will be a smart act. Children are closet to their mother, so educating women will help us to pass on the knowledge to her children, this way generation by generation will be benefited with health care, food care or food security should also be given to individuals.

The main approach to build a sustainable city should be healthy society, this could be attained by at individual level only. As we know wealth is unequal divided, the people with larger share should help others maintain a good health as health is the biggest wealth for the society

Sustainable city development will be like a revolution, where each and every individual will accept the need for change, execute the change and be the change. This way we will have no one to blame.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Planned Urban Development can unite the three pillars of sustainability, by protecting the needs of society, not harming the environment and developing the economy, all at the same time. Top-Down method of development should be drastically changed to Bottom-Up method, so as sustainable development forms from the grass root level. Health should be the concern of all sectors. Immediate short term solutions and later long term solutions are to be made for every health related concerns. Access to safe drinking water, toilets and proper solid waste disposal should be the fundamental rights of all. Relationship between health and the state of the environment in developing countries is becoming increasingly evident, for this the basic health care facilities are to be strengthened. People should be empowered through education and awareness to participate in managing preventive health care related to environmental sanitation and hygiene.[11] Health and environment should be an integral part of planning. Sustainability should be incorporated in human culture for healthy life and environment.

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