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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT, 2005

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Abstract:-Sustainability means meeting the needs of present generation without compromising the abilities and opportunities of future generation. The concept of sustainable development encompasses economic, ecological and social parameters. Sustainable development has economic growth, human development and resources management as its central goals. Any holistic model of sustainable development should take into account the three-fold transformation of human individual, human society and the cosmos. Transformation and regeneration of human individuals is the first and foremost requirement of sustainable development. It stands for development of all dimensions of human personality-physical, mental, intellectual, moral and spiritual. MGNREGA with its inter-sectoral approach opens- up opportunities for convergence with sustainable development.MGNREGA's main features such as strengthening democracy, encouraging natural resource management, preventing migration, transforming rural economic and social relations, potentialities to improve health status etc. All these features of MGNREGA are working as an essential tool for sustainable development.

Keywords:Education, Mgnrega,Sustainable,Transformation,Convergence.

INTRODUCTION :-

Sustainability means meeting the needs of present generation without compromising the abilities and opportunities of future generation.It thus implies both inter-generational and intra-generational equity. Sustainability is an important dimension of human development. Human development is a process of enlarging people's choice. But such enhancement must be for both present and future generations without sacrificing one for the other. Thus, sustainable development is a technique of eating the portion of bread and butter by the present generation in such a way that it must last long so as to enable the future generations to enjoy over it¹.

The concept of sustainable development encompasses economic, ecological and social parameters. The economic approach focuses on generating maximum income/economic growth while maintaining the stock of assets or capital. The ecological view stresses the stability of biological and physical systems and their protection and management for posterity. The social concept is people-oriented and seeks to maintain the stability of social and cultural systems leading to human capital formation. Correspondingly, sustainable development has economic growth, human development and resource management as its central goals.

In the opinion of Gilbert and Braat, sustainable development, can be described as a "Pattern of social and structural transformation which optimizes the economic and social benefits available in the present without jeopardising the likely potential for similar benefits on the future." Furthermore, Gladwin, Kennelly and Krause have examined the concept as "a process of achieving human development in an inclusive, connected, equitable, prudent and secure manner".

The need of 21st century for sustainable development is to stop the mad game of antagonizing nature and to be friend it once again. Here alone lies the sure path to progress and prosperity. For this purpose we shall have to humanize science and technology and make humanities scientific. Education for sustainable development is therefore the call of the day and sooner we realize it the better it is for our survival and quality of life².

PRE-REQUISITE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

Any holistic model of sustainable development should take into account the three-fold transformation of human individual, human society and the cosmos. This should be the end-all and be all of all planning and strategies of development at the global level. Then only it can be a total development which can be really sustainable and enduring.

Transformation and regeneration of human individual is the first and foremost requirement. It stands for development of all dimensions of human personality- physical, mental, intellectual, moral and spiritual. Mere physical or mental or intellectual development is lopsided and can never be sustainable. This requires a value oriented scheme of education a blueprint of which could be prepared by a world body like UNESCO and which could be universally adopted by suitable modification according to the regional needs and aspirations and conditions. The ideal situation is to have a global planning and strategy. This is of course utopian dream but given wisdom and will it is not unreleasable.

Social transformation is another foundation of sustainable development. It is establishment of a social order and organization in a domestic form in which equality is seasoned with justice and freedom is tempered with discipline, where tolerance is a guide to mutual relations and cooperation is the law of interaction, where is practice of anekantavda (a Jain view of life consisting in perspectivism) in thought, words and deeds. But this again requires a proper type of education in social living.

Transformation of nature is the third pre-requisite of sustainable development. It consists of all such policy efforts which enable us to safeguard the natural capital stock of all five material elements of earth, water, fire, air and space, in such a manner that it does not get polluted and depleted. It means that in nature there should be no negative change, no environmental degradation, no agricultural clearance of forests, no housing on agricultural land, no extinction of forest flora and Fauna and natural livestock, etc. On the contrary, there should be positive change by forest resource management, land, water, air and space resource management, etc. simultaneously there should be supporting efforts like check in population growth, revival of traditional sustainable practices, etc. These days there is a growing awareness of all these policies and programmes mostly remain confined to papers only and nothing concrete and practical is being done through statistics may show otherwise.³

MGMGNREGA: SALIENT FEATURES

1. The focus of the Scheme shall be on the following works in their order of priority:-

- (i) water conservation and water harvesting;
- (ii) drought proofing (including afforestation and tree plantation);
- (iii) irrigation canals including micro and minor irrigation works;
- (iv) provision of irrigation facility to land owned by households belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes or to land of beneficiaries of land reforms or that of the beneficiaries under the Indira Awas Yojana of the Government of India;
- (v) renovation of traditional water bodies including desilting of tanks;
- (vi) land development;
- (vii) flood control and protection works including drainage in water logged areas;
- (viii) rural connectivity to provide all-weather access.

2. Creation of durable assets and strengthening the livelihood resource base of the rural poor shall be an important objective of the Scheme.⁴

Leveraging MGMGNREGA for sustainable Development:

MGMGNREGA with its inter-sectoral approach opens up opportunities for convergence with different programmes. The aim of convergence is to optimize public investments made under existing schemes through suggested ways of linking and steering them towards a common shared recipient end, both physical (area, infrastructure, natural resource) and human (person, group, agency).⁵

Strengthening Democracy : MGNREGA visualizes the involvement of local people in every decision whether it be the selection of works and work-sites, the implementation of projects or their social audit. It strengthens the democratic decentralization processes at the grass root-level by incorporating Gram Sabha in the entire planning and decision making process. It also infuses transparency and accountability in grass root democratic processes through social audits.

Encouraging Natural Resource Management: Focusing on strengthening natural resource management such as afforestation, drought proofing, flood proofing, water conservation - the Act has become a significant vehicle for regeneration of India's depleting natural resource base. And it seems that in the long term, MGNREGA might have a huge impact on our countries environment and gross agricultural output as it emphasizes on works that target water conservation, afforestation and drought proofing.

Preventing Migration : By securing livelihood and creating employment opportunities at the village level itself - MGNREGA mitigates seasonal/distress migration which has been a significant source of employment and income for a large proportion of rural population.

Controlling Spread of HIV/AIDS : MGNREGA also has the potential to address other major sociological issues like the

spread of AIDS, stop farmers suicides etc. since migration of rural population is one of the leading causes for the spread of AIDS.

Transforming rural economic and social relations : It is also increasingly recognized that the MGNREGA has the potential to transform rural economic and social relations at many levels. The legislation is having a positive impact on the socio-economic empowerment of women (as the Act mandates at least 33 per cent participation for women). Where the MGNREGA has led to a significant increase in women's paid work, there are likely to be substantial social changes as well. These would be in addition to other changes such as the decline in distress migration and the improvement in food consumption among certain families. Not only does the MGNREGA provide money incomes directly to those women participating in it, in many states the wage delivery mechanism is linked to the opening of post office or bank accounts. This involves the access of a much greater number of women in institutional finance from which they have been largely excluded. Intra-household gender relations are also likely to be affected, but these changes will occur over a longer time and would require more extensive sociological study to identify. Nonetheless, this greater participation of women in the MGNREGA, particularly in some states, is clearly a positive indicator that shows the inclusive potential of the programme in unanticipated ways.

Potentiality to improve Health Status : The village health status of the village is likely to improve through proper implementation of MGNREGA due to (1) regular availability of clean potable drinking water, (2) construction of drainage that will improve the cleanliness in the village, and thereby reduce the chances of occurrence of diseases, (3) construction of toilets will also improve the level of cleanliness in the village and public health status, (4) reduction in unpaid drudgery of women will reduce their time stress and provide them more time to relax or to work and (5) construction of child care centre will improve general health of children, who will receive nutritious food and clean environment. This will reduce their expenditure on health (which is usually private expenditure) and improve their productivity at work. Considering the fact that ill health is one of the major risks that throws people in poverty, the improved status of health will go a long way in reducing vulnerability and poverty of people.

Improvement of Rural Educational Status : Many children in school-going-age in the village are engaged in collection of fodder, fuel wood, water etc. or in animal grazing. Assuring water supply at the door step, regeneration of common lands for fuel and fodder as well as child care centres will reduce unpaid work of children. This will enable them to attend the school regularly. This will particularly be beneficial to girl children, who stay back at home either to take care of younger siblings or to help in collection of water, fodder etc. and other household work. Moreover, improved economic condition will encourage parents to send their children to school.⁶

Capital Formation in Rural Areas-for the poor: An important aspect is the undeniable contribution of the programme to capital formation in agriculture. The Act itself spells out the type of works which are permitted. All relate to asset creation and focus on water conservation. A particular significance of the Act is that many of the assets created under the programme can directly benefit the poor.⁷

CONCLUSION:

The greed for exploitation of natural resources of people has led to different types of disasters-earthquake, pollution, violence, accidents, etc. The frequency of disaster is on the increase. If the people do not use the resources in a balanced way, there is going to be disasters and disasters at a very fast rate. The only answer to prevent these disasters is prevention through sustainable development and MGNREGS is continue to supplement the income of beneficiaries, creating durable assets and bringing long term tangible benefits to rural India by developing economic and social infrastructure in rural areas. It is playing the role of a catalyst in rural economy. It is poised to progress from a mere wage employment to sustainable development programme.

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