

Over the last few decades sustainable development has been a common agenda of global concern. It remains a daunting task for policymakers across the world to ensure the successful implementation of well thought out policies, as the approach towards their implementation are seldom integrated or holistic. The most accepted definition of sustainable development according to the Brundtland's report is, "To meet the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". It advocated the idea of "sustainable growth". According to The World Conservation Strategy report (1980), by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), for development to be sustainable it must take into account the social and economic factors as well as the ecological ones.

India is presently emerging as an economic superpower, but in contrast, there is another profile of India. India constitutes around 17% of the world's population, but accounts for about 35% of the poor and 40% of the illiterates in the world. Experiences from the economic reform indicate that while there have been improvements in economic growth, foreign exchange, IT revolution, export growth, and so on, inequality in income distribution has been growing simultaneously (ratio of urban to rural income is 4.5). Exclusion from benefits of economic revolution has been continued in terms of low agricultural growth (agriculture's share in GDP has been reduced to half, with no decrease in dependent population in the agricultural sector), low quality employment growth, concentration of poverty in certain groups (SC/ST), occupation (agricultural and casual labor) and inadequate development of women and children. All the above factors have resulted in the widening of economic and social disparity, which is a threat to sustainable development. Besides, it is also noted that the economic growth has supported the creation of greater opportunities to the more educated section of the upper and middle class, with a 'trickle-down' effect on a section of the poor.

To meet the challenging situation of widening economic and social disparity, inclusive growth is the best tool with improvement in agricultural growth, employment generation, poverty reduction and involvement of the social sector. The Indian National Development Goals are aligned with Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainable development is significant for building national competitiveness and requires the collaborative efforts of business, government, educationists, sociologists, lawmakers and various other stakeholders to

deliberate and discuss for arriving at sustainable and innovative solutions to shape a better future for humanity.

In this context, the **National Conference titled “Sustainable Development: Accountability towards a better future”** is envisaged to engage various stakeholders to find a more comprehensive and holistic approach to meet the key goals of Sustainable Development for building the national competitiveness for a progressive future.

Objectives:

- To identify areas of critical importance for humanity towards sustainable development
- To explore the impact of an integrated approach towards sustainable development
- To suggest a collaborative framework as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development

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