

Editorial

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Sustainable growth and development are the key buzzwords governing policies and processes world over. Broadly speaking, sustainability refers to integration of development and growth with consideration for the environment. The United Nations drew attention to sustainability by referring to it as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (1980)ⁱ. It is a long term goal which strives towards maintaining balance and equity between the economy and the environment. It factors in economic growth, environmental health as well as social justice, and inclusive practices. It recognises the intersectional ties between the above and reinforces a systemic approach to redress any imbalance. Sustainability is about what we make of the world and more importantly how we leave it for the future generations.

While world leaders and governments took cognisance of this only in the 1980s, India, however, had been sensitive towards this pressing issue much earlier as it integrated it in its ethos of *Karma*, *Dharma*, *Satya*, *Seva*, and more importantly in *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* focusing on the concept of the world being one family and the interconnectedness between one and all fostering inclusivity and sustainability. While *Dharma* reinforces ethical conduct and righteousness, *Karma* nurtures responsible choices and action, *Satya* is the path of truth and *Seva* is inclusiveness in spirit as the individual coalesces with the community, all of them undergird the principle of sustainability be it in the environment, development and prosperity or in lived experience. Indian scriptures such as the *Maha Upanishad*, bring the concept of interconnectedness to the fore as well as the fundamental responsibility of both the individual and society to collectively maintain the fragile ecosystem, to foster inclusivity in diversity, and to focus on holistic development which is not bounded by parochial concerns but factors in the entire cosmos.

Nature worship was and still continues to be practised, be it obeisance to the holy rivers or ritualistic engagements with agricultural cycles during festivals like *Baisakhi* and *Makar Sakranti* amongst several others, it is not unusual to find *diyas* under the *Peepal* or in front of the *Tulsi* plant, all signifying the reverence accorded to nature in India. Quintessentially hoarders, Indians were known to be mindful of waste and recycling at the ground level is still unmatched world over. Be it through *Ayurveda* or *Vastu Shastra*, or *Yoga* or eco-friendly housing, sustainability is not a conscious approach amongst Indians but resourcefulness practised across generations, with wisdom and knowledge percolating as lived realities.

However, the contradictions that are intrinsic to our economy in terms of inequity and resources, are hurtling us towards rampant abuse of what we once worshipped. Fast depleting natural resources and metastasizing pollutants threaten the precarious balance of our existence. Rapid development has overtaken our ethos by leaps and bounds. While the Government of India has initiated a multi-pronged approach to leash the damage done, through several policies and practices such as the National Action Plan on Climate Change, *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*, *Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana* scheme, *Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana* scheme amongst a host of other such programmes, what is required is a concerted effort to change the mindset of the populace, particularly the urban segment. Businesses are increasingly becoming more conscious of their responsibilities to the environment and society and 'sustainable' is becoming a buzz word in tourism, fashion, and other consumer driven industries. Change is gradual and may not immediately be able to offset or mitigate the damage done already, but it has to be entrenched in our mindset and lifestyles. Education and awareness play a huge role in creating shifts of this nature and resurrecting the value systems and ethos our ancient practices and texts espoused is the way forward. The concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* must be integrated right from early schooling to higher education, reinforcing the deep interconnectedness between one and all. Not only will this help erase the barriers that create schisms in our social fabric but nurture a healthy respect for our environment and govern our choices. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has taken a step in this direction as evinced in its vision:

The vision of the Policy is to instil among the learners a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible

commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen. (NEP, 2020, p. 6) ⁱⁱ

It has integrated sensitivity towards the environment and enhanced awareness of sustainable development in the curricula in a phased manner from schools to HEIs. Value based education through field trips, projects and courses will augment class room transactions in the right direction. While we have a long way to go, but we are headed in the right direction and it can be hoped that the future generations don't have to pay a heavy price for our transgressions.

It has been our endeavour to publish articles which give our readers fodder for thought and research and it is gratifying for the Editorial Team of the IJSE to bring the third issue (17.3) for the year 2025 with seven research articles on topics of current interest, varying from Indian economy and polity both past and present, climate change and its impact on the world, the increasing use of AI and smart cities. In the opening article, Dr Kaushalendra Singh, seeks to examine and unfold the continued significance, relevance, and universal applicability of various doctrines of *Rāja Dharma* for any growing civilization. He concludes with pertinent observations on governance and sovereignty. In an attempt to critically examine the rationale for and feasibility of 'One Nation, One Election' model as proposed by the Government of India, Dr S. N. Dubey explores various socio-political, administrative, and other inherent behavioural challenges involved in the continuity of the existing Indian federal governance.

Looking back at our past, it is pertinent to note that nomadic communities have played a significant role in both preserving and carrying forward the ancient wisdom and traditional knowledge of India. Using both text and visual narratives, Dr Anand Saxena's paper makes a case for reciprocal relationship between nomadism and *Viksit Bharat*. A number of policy-implications have also been identified.

Dr Ritu Khanna in her article seeks to explore the opportunities and challenges that AI backed Smart Cities present as also the proactive role of the administration in maximising the potential of this technology in driving future growth. Dr Sonia Sharma explains how leading Indian companies are balancing economic growth with environmental care and the effect of the Indian regulatory framework in standardising ESG practices.

One of the greatest achievements of India, is the idea of a republican polity and Dr Prabira Sethy's paper dwells upon the various republican forms of government which

were prevalent since ancient times, throughout major part of India. It attempts to examine the pervasive nature of the '*gana-rajya*' as also highlight the factors responsible for its downfall. And Dr Riya Parashar's paper seeks to assess the specific initiatives taken to address climate change and endorse sustainable living for the people of Himachal Pradesh and evaluate how far the steps taken by the Government are in consonance with the Paris Agreement.

We hope there is something of interest for our readers and inspires further research in the areas examined. We would also like to place on record our gratitude to our esteemed reviewers for their expertise and time in assessing the papers received for publication and providing relevant suggestions to improve the quality of the papers.

i. <https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/sustainability>

ii. https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf