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THE ECOLOGICAL IGNORANCE IN DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES: WHAT NEXT?

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Earth is the cradle of human civilization. The human civilization passed through various ages. Initially, human needs were limited against vast availability of natural resources where they could easily meet their requirements from the Nature. This paradigm of man-nature relationship is broadly described as **'Man in Nature'***where man is considered as an integral part of nature.* Here the philosophy was that nature is supreme and it is feeding us. Thus human beings must respect her.

Slowly and steadily, as human civilization advanced in the historical past with progression in human technological knowledge, human desires to lead a leisure life with more physical comforts and artificiality have stretched. We had entered in a new paradigm of man-nature relationship i.e. **'Man and Nature'**. *Here, man was separated from nature.*Nature was seen as resource pool and emphasis was given on nature's capacity to supply resources.

Later, in the last two-three centuries, the human civilization lengthened through trade, exploration and unending conflicts for resources. Human endeavors in technological revolution areunprecedented in this period. The ability to explore the viability and availability of new materials of the earth increased many fold. Thus, the *list of resources has been expanded enormously.*Now the growing population has reached up to the critical limits of the *carrying capacity of this planet earth*. The exponential population growth and so called modern life style have raised pressure on existing resource base due to excessive increase in thedemands for resources, energy, food, housing, land etc. Side by side another problem has mounted in terms of managingmassive stock of waste by products. In the course of such developments there was a *shift from sustenance use of resources to exploitation of these*. The philosophy of need based use of natural resources now transformed in to greed based over exploitation of the same. It has redefined the man and environment relationship. This paradigm is defined as **'Man versus Nature'** where there is *conflict between these two* and man is instrumental in depleting the earth's environment.

The *agricultural revolution* was a major turning point in human history and this brought about sweeping changes in society and surrounding. The agricultural revolution negatively

altered the natural balance of environment by transforming previously undisturbed land into farm land and further this process was aggravated with advent of green revolution. This led to the encroachment of forest areas by putting those forest lands under the plough. This *infringement of habitats of wild life*stimulated considerable loss of biodiversity and destabilization of the natural balance of ecosystem. The destruction of vegetation cover to make room for farmland and burning of fossil fuel at large scale for meeting the energy needs of so called modernization society raised the magnitude of carbon-di-oxide (CO_2) in the atmosphere. This has also resulted in displacement of forest dwellers that are actively instrumental in preserving and conserving these natural regions. Improper rehabilitation led to the various adjustment problems too for these social groups.

First the western world experienced an agricultural revolution, which also helped to improve living standards and provided *surplus labour available for the non-agricultural activities.* This was resulted in emergence of working class for service sector and later ensured supply of workers for *industrial revolution with technological advancement in this region.* From here this was penetrated in various parts of the globe. The industrial revolution was manifested by new manufacturing processes and marked a turning point in the Earth's ecology and human relationship with their adjacent milieu. It dramatically changed every aspect of human life. Though *economic historians* are in agreement with that the onset of industrial revolution is the most important event in the history of mankind since the domestication of animals and plants. In the long run this has reshuffled the social and economic environment and society moved *from egalitarian to capitalistic socio-economic systems.*

This technological progression has caused many disasters. The so called developmental practices give rise to monoculture farming, deforestation, over-grassing, non-scientific use of water and soil, excessive use of non-renewable energy resources and other natural resources. This has resulted in depletion of resources, contamination of soil and water, degradation of quality of air, loss of biodiversity, periodic flooding, emergence of new barren areas, loss of habitat, displacement of people, chemical warfare and what not?

In the last few centuries, there is appearance of the complex creations of mankind i.e. *the modern cities*. From this point of view, technology cannot be described only in terms of development of simple tools, agricultural advances and technological progresses but the city itself is a technological system. This development also created new threats in terms of polluting social space, rise of crime, urban heat island and altered ecological arrangements, emergence of slums and many more.

Later the cumulative effect of various environmental degrading practices have reflected in alarming global challenges like global warming, ozone depletion and climate change.

It is revealed that we have followed a*skewed development model,* resulting in various kinds of disasters. Here, this is an attempt to touch upon the various aspects of development and how aftermath of development led to disastrous consequence for the mankind. *It is important to understand the nemesis of lopsided development in a systematic and coherent manner to develop strategies regarding what should be the compatible development perspective in the context of recurring disasters.*

Such consequences are intimately connected to the process of human development. The cause of concern is the fact that there is a *phenomenal increase in the frequency and intensity of these visitations.* In recent era, disasters are in a major way nature's reaction to human encroachments and thus are largely manmade. The frequent occurrence of disasters like tsunami and hurricanes in the U.S.A., floods in Mumbai, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Gujarat links precisely with the developmental strategies. It advocates reorientation in our very developmental perspectives. Meeting the development goals is extremely challenged in many parts of the globe by losses from variousdisastrous consequences. The depletion of natural resources, loss of biodiversity, erosion of livelihoods, dislocation of people, damage to the integrity of ecosystems etc. are the aftershocks of unbalanced developmental processes. *Suchdamages derailthe social investment* aiming to ameliorate poverty, hunger, improving access to health services, availability of safe housing, drinking water, sanitation, education and protection to environment.

Development is to be viewed now not merely as an economic progress leading to material improvement. Rather, it is to be seen primarily in the context of sustainability and more significantly, safety of earth and its inhabitants. However, development, follow up consequences and its management are inter-related so much so that human progress is basically an art of **'MANAGING DEVELOPMENT'**. Any other understanding is likely to prove ineffective and it would limit primarily on post-disaster relief and rehabilitation operations. Although managing post-disaster operations is very significant, but undue emphasis on this aspect is bound to address the symptoms rather than causes of the calamity. *For long-term solutions therefore, it is important that the development as a paradigm must be comprehended properly, first at the conceptual level before integrating it within a viable strategy for management of its negative outcomes. The emphasis has to shift from textual to contextual dimensions of human response to so-called man induced disasters.*

It is primarily because of the fact of a *close co-relation between development and degradation of environment* that the role of academics becomes extremely important in providing a new orientation to the development perspective; the role of managers comes next in the process. Conceptualization has to precede implementation.

A re-orientation in our development perspective has become a dire necessity as never before. Today human civilization is at a critical cross road in its monomaniacal obsession

with development, which is often lop-sided.It has compelled nature to relinquish its role. The frequency and intensity of various types ofdisastrous consequences taking place one after another in one part of the globe or the other is a *loud commentary on the process and path of development we have followed.* In the last decade, we have witnessed natural disasters on an unprecedented scale. Reports are overwhelmingly in favour of a real threat of climate change. According to an estimate, the temperature of the earth has increased by an average of 0.6 degree in the 20th century, and projections are that in the 21st century, the further increase would take place. Consequently, glaciers are retreating rapidly, sea level is rising, many species are struggling for existence and many social groups are going to face dislocation challenges. This is certainly an alarming scenario, replete with possibilities of numerous detrimental developments, particularly for our life line i.e. agriculture. The onslaughts of new deadly diseases often caused by population and pollution surges add to the gyre of destruction.

The degree of vulnerability is often determined by the orientation of development. *Distorted development coupled with inefficient leadership and blinkered vision of vested interest is the most unsafe course of human advancement.* The parochialism of the present is potentially dangerous. We have reached a stage where we must bring the experiment under rational control, and guard against present and potential dangers for future. *If civilization is to survive, it must live on the interest, not on the capital, of nature.*

There is need of a *shift in the approach from short term to long term, from immediate to remote, from symptomatic to causal and from textual to contextual.*Today human civilization is facing the problems of uncontrolled urbanization, persistence of widespread urban and rural poverty, the degradation of the environment resulting from the mismanagement of natural resources, inefficient public policies, the lagging and misguided investments in infrastructure and many more. A proactive stance to reduce the toll of negative outcomes of the development in the world requires a *more comprehensive approach that encompasses both pre-disaster risk reduction and post-disaster recovery.* The new focus should place disaster prevention and mitigation at the forefront of the development agenda. The reform that is needed is in humanistic perspective or even deep environmentalist; *technological advancement is required in such a manner that it improves the living quality of the mankind without depleting the natural resources and disturbing the ecological balance. A conscious balance has to be struck between modernization and recklessness between need and greed, between nature and culture.*

Today, there is *need for international collaboration* to overcome this global problem. We need to put aside the trivial issues and there is a strong requirement to take some concrete steps. There is need to spread awareness among countries which are exploiting and damaging the resources incessantly without bothering about the future implications of their short sited developmental practices.Although various concrete steps have been taken by the international community like Paris Climate Meet held in Paris in 2015. Over 190 leaders

participated in the summit. It was made the biggest gathering of the world leaders on climate related concerns in the history. But today we are blaming on each other rather than working on the lines of the Paris agreement.

It is the grace of god that human beings are bestowed with this beautiful planet and it's abundant resources. It is a high time to take a note otherwise we might lose our existence too. We need to make a judicious use of the resources. The next revolution must be **'REVOLUTION OF SUSTAINABILITY'.** This is the principle of environmental unity where a change in one system will cause alteration in others. Certainly the seeds of this revolution will yield some positive results in the long run.

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