

Sustainable Development Through Green Economy

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DOI: 10.46609/IJSSER.2024.v09i06.016 URL: <https://doi.org/10.46609/IJSSER.2024.v09i06.016>

Received: 17 June 2024 / Accepted: 29 June 2024 / Published: 7 July 2024

ABSTRACT

Climate change, biodiversity loss, growing inequality and more are some of the challenges faced by humanity today. These systematic global crises are all interconnected and hence cannot be tackled independently. Our economic systems lack the ability to create a balance and effectively prioritize environmental preservation and social well-being. With this background, this paper attempts to examine the green economy and the four greens of sustainable development. Low carbon, resource efficient, and socially inclusive environment is defined as a green economy. The four greens help prosper within ecological limits. The report highlights the need for sustainable development. It also provides the role and importance of the green economy for sustainable development. Lastly, it includes a case study on Anita Dongre, a reputed Indian Fashion Designer. With the help of her sustainable fashion brand Grassroots she promotes Indian craftsmanship while preserving natural resources.

Keywords : Efficiency, Environment, Four Greens, Green Economy, Sustainability

1. Introduction

Addressing these interconnected global crises requires comprehensive approaches that require both environmental sustainability and social welfare. At its core, economies consist of regulations and norms that incentivize certain behavior while punishing others. As Mahatma Gandhi says, “ Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s need, not every man’s greed.” Currently, our economies encourage overconsumption, degrade communal bonds, and deplete natural resources. But this is not unavoidable; it is how our economies have evolved to operate. In order to solve these issues, a fresh economic perspective is required. In 1987, when used in the Brundtland report “Our common future” of the World Commission for the Environment, the concept of sustainable development started to enjoy immense popularity. The document described sustainable development as satisfaction of present needs without

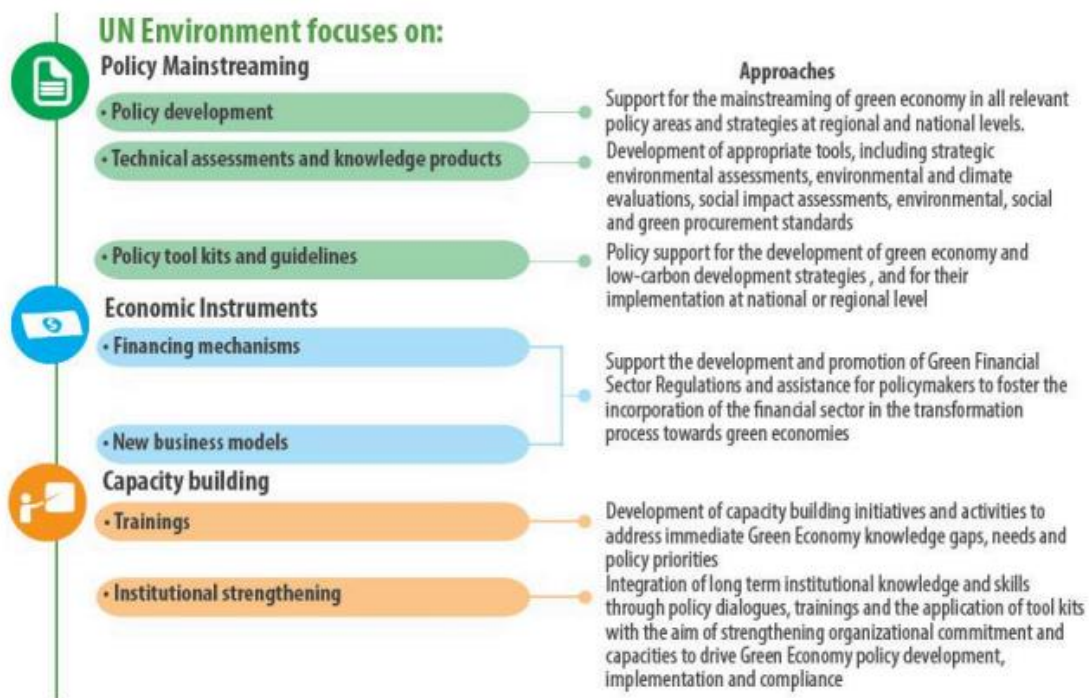
compromising on the needs of the future. Green Savings, Green Opportunities, Green Talent and Green Places are the four greens of sustainable development.

They provide prosperity within ecological limits. The four greens aim to create equality for all so that everyone grows together and no one person is left behind. This entails protection and restoration in nature, promoting sustainable consumption and production, and establishes various institutions that safely serve the interests of society.

2. Green Economy

The characteristics of a green economy are efficient utilization of resources, minimum usage of carbon and social inclusion. Changes in taxation and regulation, alongside policy reforms and targeted public spending, are required to foster and facilitate green investments. The UN Environment advocates for a development route that sees natural capital as an essential economic resource and a source of public benefits, particularly for those who rely on natural resources for their daily sustenance. The idea of green economy spotlights the economy, various skills and employment opportunities, infrastructure and capital as well as, positive impacts environmentally and socially throughout Asia and the Pacific. All though this doesn't mean that the notion of a green economy can replace sustainable development.

Figure 1. Approaches to Green Economy



3. Four Greens of Sustainable Development

Social economic development manifests through four greens :

A) Green Savings, the Demand Side of Green Markets – encouraging businesses, families, communities, and governments to cut costs and save money by efficiently using renewable resources and by reducing and reusing waste, with the goal of all businesses becoming Green Businesses.

A.1 Green Businesses, Public Agencies, and Non-Governmental Organizations: the environmental and financial performance of existing business firms (whether or not they produce an environmental product or service), government agencies, and non-governmental organizations and the potentialities for implementing significant increases in energy conservation, resource efficiency, waste reduction, and financial return.

A.2 Green Building Retrofits: the financial/energy/resource efficiency of existing buildings and building user behavior, and the possibilities for large-scale building retrofits.

A.3 Large-Scale Behavior Change: the level of adoption of Green Savings by households and the opportunities for undertaking large scale citizen mobilizations to encourage households to reduce environmental impacts and adopt green buying practices.

B) Green Opportunities, the Supply Side of Green Markets – growing Cleantech companies, jobs, and incomes through business development and expansion of the markets for products and services that conserve resources and prevent pollution.

B.1 Cleantech Cluster: the status and the potentiality for growth of the businesses included in the Clean Tech business cluster that provide a range of environmental products, services, and processes intended to offer superior performance at lower costs, while reducing negative ecological impacts, and improving the wise and responsible use of natural resources.

B.2 Clean Tech Technology Transfer: the current situation and the opportunities for strengthening of university and institutional research and development (R&D) leading to technology transfer and intellectual property (IP) commercialization that can be utilized by Clean Tech companies to produce new CleanTech products and services.

B.3 Green and Clean Tech Business Support: the economic and social infrastructure that is in place and the opportunities for improvement in relation to business incubation, acceleration, retention, and attraction—creating an optimal place for Clean Tech and green businesses to locate, expand, and grow over the long term.

B.4 Triple Bottom Line Investment: existing and potential investment vehicles—both debt and equity—pursuing financial, social, and environmental returns through investment in CleanTech and green businesses and sustainable real estate developments.

C). Green Talent, the Human Resources Side of Green Markets – investing in the fundamental assets of education, research, technological innovation, and modern entrepreneurial and workforce skills, because people are now the world's most vital green economic resource.

C.1 Green Workforce: established systems and new opportunities for green employment development—including education, training, placement with career pathways, and other forms of assistance—to attract and retain a high quality green workforce that provides the employees, entrepreneurs, and management needed by Cleantech and green businesses, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

C.2 Green Community Engagement: existing and potential programs for the engagement of the talent and creativity of the residents of a place in understanding sustainability, in participating in the process of building a sustainable/green economy, and in making green purchasing decisions.

D). Green Places, the Locations for Green Markets – promoting Eco-Smart Development that features low-impact, mixed-use, resource-efficient design and utilizes multi-modal transportation, sustainable infrastructure, and green energy to protect and enhance the natural and built environment, leading to communities and regions that are more attractive, livable, healthy, vibrant, prosperous, and productive.

D.1 Eco-Smart Real Estate Development: the construction—both infill and Greenfield—of mixed-use, walkable, energy efficient, transit-oriented real estate developments featuring Cleantech and green businesses and the opportunities for new sustainable real estate development projects.

D.2 Green Physical Infrastructure: the financial/energy/resource/information efficiency of water, energy, transportation, waste management, and broadband infrastructure as well as the potentialities for significant increases in overall efficiency and financial performance of the physical infrastructure.

D.3 Sustainable Community Development: existence of Cleantech and green businesses and sustainable real estate developments led and participated in by minorities, women, and underserved communities and opportunities to connect these businesses and developments with the appropriate financial and business acceleration services; as well as the empowerment of low- and moderate-income employees and residents to save money through resource efficiency.

Green Branding and Marketing: existing and potential branding and marketing of a place as an emerging sustainable economy, seeking to promote the growth of Cleantech and green businesses and sustainable real estate developments, as well as to attract these types of businesses and real estate developments.

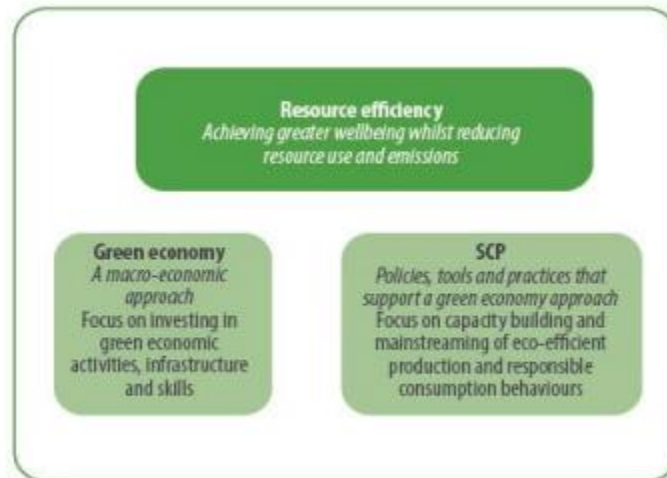
4. Need for Sustainable Development

The things happening in our societies and in various economies are becoming very apparent. Climate change is a problem that is being discussed amongst all continents globally. The Arctic is warming twice as fast as anywhere on earth, and the sea ice there is declining by more than 10% every 10 years. Darker patches of oceans start to merge as ice melts, eliminating the effect of previously cooled poles. This leads to warmer temperatures which in turn disrupts normal patterns of ocean circulation. Governments are feeling the pressure and plan to take steps to help improve the situation. Our natural resources are not being used cautiously and are depleting at an exponential rate. Economic inequality is also becoming very prevalent, and the gap between rich and poor is increasing. Economies are on the verge of collapsing. People are consuming more than they actually require, hence, firms have started to produce more to meet these quenchless wants. This leads to an increase in profits for the firms, making them happy. The profits are making them blind to the fact that they are disturbing our ecological balances. In today's times everyone is extremely greedy and it is each one for themselves. Sustainable growth as a society is not possible. Maximizing their self satisfaction is everyone's main goal. The population is growing and the UN projects approximately 97 billion population by 2050 which is leading to deforestation. If we don't take measures soon, there won't be anything left for future generations, and they will be battling for basic necessities such as food and water.

5. The Role of Green Economy, Sustainable Consumption and Production and Resource Efficiency for Sustainable Development

With a central focus on employment, investment, and skills the Green Economy helps provide a macro-economic approach to sustainable economic growth. The goal of Sustainable Consumption and Production is to enhance methods of production and consumption in order to minimize the use of resources, the creation of waste, and emissions during the whole life cycle of goods and processes. Lastly, Resource Efficiency is the way in which resources are used to deliver value to society. Its main objective is reduction in total amount of resources required, and waste and emissions generated, per unit of survival or product.

Figure 2. Depicts the importance of Resource Efficiency, Green Economy, and SCP for Sustainable Development



6. Importance of Green Economy for Sustainable Development

The Green Economy has been proposed as a means for catalyzing renewed national policy development and international cooperations and support for sustainable development, as governments today are seeking effective ways to lead their nation out of this crisis while also taking into account planetary boundaries. The concept has received significant international attention over the past few years as a tool to address the 2008 financial crisis as well as one of two themes for the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). This resulted in expansion of literature including new publications on the green economy from various international organizations, experts and others. Governments have agreed to frame the green economy as a significant tool for sustainable development as it can drive economic growth, employment, and also helps in the eradication of poverty, all whilst maintaining the ecosystem of our planet. Capacity building, experience sharing, and information exchange is significant for implementing green economy policies according to the outcome document. Developing and developed countries such as Africa, the Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and Europe have started to practice the design and implementation of national green economy strategies. This developing custom can lead to valuable insights and bring clarity about what green economy policy measures involve in terms of sectors, national priorities, institutional barriers, risks and implementation costs. This global experience may help to alleviate concerns about effectively aligning green economy policies with national economic and social priorities and objectives. The transition to a greener and more inclusive economy is opening ways for advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – including SDGs. As a matter of fact, a transition to

Green Economy is exactly what must be done in order to meet multiple SDG's – both targets on climate action but also those regarding economic growth, equality & wellbeing. Creating sustainable and green economies with new jobs and a clean planet for all no person left behind-. The study of the green economy as well as sustainable development is one of the major studies that has been addressed by researchers and scientists because it is very important for society in all its aspects, mainly because it constitutes a driving force of sustainable development and is at the core of growth, evolution and prosperity International Journal (IJ) 2015. The green economy is a vivid and ideal model of sustainable development, especially economic development, which spans all areas in life. This concept has been prevalent in the past several years due to its significance in lessening poverty levels and deprivation, increasing the standard of living for people and also ensuring their welfare. Sustainable development can only be realized through implementation of the green economy program as well as provision of a safe environment. This can only take place by replacing other unhealthy means of economy that have negative effects on peoples' lives, by making use of clean energy sources like thermal energy generated from healthy sources rather than fuel as they are sources of environmental pollution hence affecting even existence itself. An inclusive green economy enhances human well-being and builds social equity while reducing environmental risks and scarcities. An alternative to today's prevailing economic model is an inclusive green economy that aggravates disparities, promotes wastage, initiates resource shortfalls and creates far-reaching dangers to both the environment and people's health. This kind of approach can assist countries, who consider the need for different policies coming from states at various development stages such as developed, developing, emerging or in conflict. It demands for policies that are subtle, consistent with situations and even toned up. Integrated approach is helpful to States in appreciating how individuals can get more of environment health by maximizing, ranking and timing benefits accruing to human welfare.

7. Case Study

ANITA DONGRE a leading fashion designer has a brand grassroots which works on sustainable fashion and promotes Indian crafts and techniques alongside preservation of natural resources. Grassroot was invited to the Ethical Fashion Show in Paris. There she came up with the idea of launching a sustainable luxury fashion brand. The brand has applied for Higgs Index which aims at transparency in supply chain, procurement, working conditions, waste disposal and correcting any inefficiencies if seen. The Brand does not use any leather, fur, skin in any manner. It is an initiative to bring back heirloom fashion into the mainstream by contemporizing the outlook in terms of techniques, mindful usage of resources and proper manipulation of crafts along with waste generation and management. She does economic empowerment programmes in a few villages and ensures employment to tribal women. She has looped in Tencel Fibers in

collaboration with Lenzing group, where fiber originates from renewable raw material wood, under planned plantation by Lenzing group. This helps in bringing steady and sustainable employment back to our heartlands. Grassroot works with various NGO and Self-help groups. She has trained nearly 200 unskilled women through community tailoring units and initiated production in 6 villages in Maharashtra and the number has risen to 550 women in her company. Efforts like this benefit the entire community. Anita Dongre foundation is the CSR arm of the company. Besides training, it also provides them with forward linkages such as assuring them with regular supply of fabrics, raw materials, tools and organized buy-back of tailored garments at fair per-piece rates. This has resulted in profound socio-economic impact among the communities being served. Her brand also uses textiles of recycled polyester fiber made from PET bottles. She even initiated recycling of packaging and post production materials through her brand into polyester fibers. She has reduced energy requirements at her office headquarters in Mumbai. 90% of their outlets have LED lamps. 67% of the wastewater is recycled, segregation of waste and 100% disposal of E-waste in an eco-friendly manner. She was honored with the PETA Humanitarian award for not using leather. The brand neither destroyed nor dumps any of their unsold garments. Inventory volumes are monitored regularly to ensure not to go overboard in demand forecasting. First, it starts from an orientation towards sustainable development. Second, it builds on an extended notion of value that includes ecological as well as social value. Anita Dongre is also part of 'Better Cotton Initiative', where they stress upon the Banarasi weaving and Maheshwari silk weaving and contemporary embroidery. Above all the environmental measures like recycling of PET bottles that the brand has taken single handedly is commendable. The involvement of various rural areas is worth appreciating.

8. Conclusion

The aim of sustainable development is to meet the present demands without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own. A green economy promotes economic growth that is characterized by low carbon, resource efficient, socially inclusive and employment based through investments, skill building and job creation. These four dimensions are known as Green Savings (demand side), Green Opportunities (supply side), Green Talent (human resources) and Green Places (location). The urgent need for sustainable development in the current context stems from dwindling resources, increasing global temperatures and widening economic gaps among people. Through a case study of Anita Dongre's sustainable fashion business, concrete steps to sustainability can be observed. Few examples of her sustainable fashion practices include using recycled materials for packaging, avoiding leather, and recycling PET bottles. As Indigenous culture historically prioritized methods and materials that valued the Earth and environment, sustainability has its roots in the earth's evolutionary journey. It is our combined responsibility to take care of uncertainty and protect animals, resources and communities.

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