

Reviewing the Strategies for Environmental Justice in the Context of Bangladesh

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Abstract:

Humans have always maintained a right of access to the environment in order to search and explore for natural resources which serve to fulfill basic human needs. These rights are affirmed as fundamental human rights by all governments and in the United Nations Charter. To ensure such rights different strategies have been adopted by different nations. For developing countries, population control and economic growth are the two common strategies recommended by the researchers and international organizations. Such strategies have been criticized when environmental protection has become integral part of development thought under the rubric of sustainable development. In this paper three approaches to environmental justice have been discussed. It has been argued that there are considerable limitations accepting economic growth, population control and sustainable development as principles of governance and environmental justice.

Section I

Introduction

Fair access to the environment is commonly considered as natural positive right. Hayward (2005) has argued that such rights should be constitutionalized for human welfare. In the past rights of access to environmental space were unlimited when there was no state boundary. By drawing maps and national boundaries, introducing private and public property rights these limitless accesses have been cut. So the two-third of the total population of the earth are now forced to live in one half of the physical space of the planet. These people are regarded as citizens of developing countries because they do not possess or have no access to many modern facilities of civilization like clean water, fresh air and proper sanitation (UN:2002). They live in an environment which does not meet the standard quality of life that ensures their access to sunlight, fresh food and drinking water, health services, safety, secured and hygienic shelter and minimum level of education for their physical and mental health which is enjoyed by rest of the people of the globe.

These situations have led many scholars, social engineers, and progressive human right activists to raise the issues in different national and international forums. As a result, many theoretical models have emerged for addressing such issues like social justice. Initially, population control and economic growth were adopted as strategic frameworks in many developing countries. Eventually, sustainable development has emerged with the promise to fulfill basic human needs and

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environmental protection. Acceptance of sustainable development as social goal lead researchers to claim that it can be an ethical principle for ecological modernization because it affirms three types of equity related to environmental justice: intergenerational, international and intra-generational equity (Low and Gleeson, 1998).

The purpose of this paper is to examine whether sustainable development can serve as ethical principle of ecological modernization (Hajer 1995, Dryzek 1997, Eckersley, 1992) and for the promotion of ethical governance (Low and Gleeson, 1998) taking environmental justice issues seriously in the context of Bangladesh. This will also help us to comment on the suitability of sustainable development for defining human relationships with environment, relationships with other human beings that include people within the same global space and relationships with future generations. I will do this considering the socio-economic realities of Bangladesh that commits at international levels to bring changes in institutions, develop policies, reform legal systems for good governance which has been accentuated as essential for human development.

First, I would like to focus on some social and environmental justice problems that are encountered by the people of Bangladesh in their everyday life. These problems include local, national international and inter-generational issues which constitute the ground for protection from environmental injustices. Second, I shall discuss, addressing environmental injustices how sustainable development has emerged as a new paradigm to integrate economic growth, human development and right to development.

There is no doubt sustainable development brings out into the forefront three types of equity: intergenerational, international and intra-generational successfully. However, for several reasons it cannot be a social objective and an ethical principle for developing an institutional framework for the protection of rights to access environmental resources, decision-making process, information and legal systems.

I argue that the idea of sustainable development is helpful to explain some of the important aspects of environmental justice by delineating governance structures, putting emphasis on human needs and incorporating the responsibility to future generations. However, it lacks important ethical values that are more important for fair distribution of environmental goods and burdens. It also fails to address the complex, dynamic and diverse social needs, environmental problems, and political goals of developing countries like Bangladesh. Moreover, it fosters top down hegemonic systems ignoring substantially choices and experiences of the minority communities when broad public interest and global causes dominate decisions. Finally, sustainable development fails to recognize environmental needs of non-human species properly.

Section II

The Lack of Environmental Justice in Bangladesh

Human activities create wastes, emit gas, radiation, and contaminate water that harm health as well as health of the planet. These harmful activities also restrict access to environmental benefits by posing different kinds of risks. For example, there are many industries in Bangladesh which are located at the banks of different rivers. These industries release toxic wastes, contaminate water and restrict many people to use water for bathing, cooking and washing. These toxic wastes kill fish which reduces amount of food supply and effect on their income who are dependent on fishing and associated businesses. This contaminated water is utilized for cultivation. So that we can imagine how dreadful situation exists in developing countries like Bangladesh.

It is estimated that water of the Buriganga, a river in Bangladesh, is contaminated by industrial pollutants of Hazaribagh tanneries. The tanneries of Hazaribagh 15 tones of solid toxic wastes daily round the year (The Independent, 15 August 1995 cited in Mahfuzullah, 1999-68). Bangladesh uses chemical fertilizer and pesticide for agriculture. Their residues are carried out by canals and rivers during monsoon. All the 54 rivers originate from India. Indian farmers also use fertilizer and pesticide. Bangladesh has had to borne its harmful effects (Mahfuzullah, 1999).

Most of the people of Bangladesh lack safe sanitation facilities. One the other hand, urban drainage and sewerage systems are not well developed. Therefore, all waste materials are washed out and run though the canals and rivers and contaminate water at mass level during the monsoon. Effects of the flood are very critical. Many people die by drinking contaminated water from diarrheal diseases. Many other diseases spread that cause enormous suffering. People have limited access to the health care system. Flood also takes life, damages houses, crops, businesses, kill pets, cattle's and as well as many people lose their jobs. To mitigate the sufferings of the people flood control measures have been taken by governments with the assistance of development partners. These have further worsened the life of the people in different ways.

The ground water of Bangladesh is contaminated by arsenic. This has posed another threat to human health and reduced the capacity of poor people further by pushing them to more vulnerable situation. It has been claimed that around 80 million people are exposed to such risk who are drinking arsenic contaminated water across the country. The country has limited capacity to provide safe drinking water to the people if really such a situation exists there. Researchers are claiming that dairy milk also contains arsenic (The Daily Star: 2005).

People of Bangladesh are also deprived from their rights of access to water by neighboring country. There are two main rivers Padma and Bramahputra. Indian

government is enjoying the lion share of the water of the Padma by depriving Bangladesh from its due share. On the other hand, they have planned to create new dams that will stop water during dry season. Therefore, there are huge changes of being fertile land into desert. Effect of this will be borne by 50 million people of Bangladesh directly and all people will suffer indirectly.

Bangladesh also borne effects of hazard wastes produced by developed nations. It is evident that the developed countries are involved in exporting hazard wastes and hazard intensive industries in developing nations secretly. The World Bank officials have appeared as negotiators of such unfair trading of hazard wastes to developing nation.¹

In the process of international risk transfer, Bangladesh has become a target. Media report that several attempts have been made to dump hazardous waste in Bangladesh. The New York based IPS Daily Journal reports, Japan exports huge amount of old tyres, used cars and old ships for scrapping. Most of them contain asbestos, aluminum residue and various other toxic wastes. When mixed with water they could produce such harmful gases as ammonia, chlorine and hydrogen sulphur. The Daily Journal noted that Japanese shipbuilders use both Bangladesh and India to scrap their old vessels and quoted Shinsiro Otsubo, a Japanese shipbuilding insider, as admitting the growing export of Japanese toxic wastes to poor Asian countries (Quoted in Mahfuzullah, 1999:61).

Millions of people have no access to many non-renewable environmental resources that has substantial stock in Bangladesh. Only, some urban dwellers have access to those resources. The natural gas of Bangladesh is one of them. Recently, a wave of propaganda has captured the media. Bangladesh is suggested to export this natural gas while most of the people use fuel wood for cooking and produce pollution. The World Bank is advertising that it supports to enlarge the choices of people for development at the same time it favors unsustainable trade policies. Researchers have invented a relation between access to environmental resources and distribution of environmental harms. The inverse relationship obtains, that greater poverty is related to a lessened enjoyment of environmental benefits. These unequal distributions of environmental goods and burdens have posed such a serious problem that frightened, affected, victimized and socially knowledgeable people have voiced protests, developed many movements which has direct impact on political unrest, social instability, terrorist activities and lead researchers to investigations.

¹ Lawrence Summers, the then chief economist of the World Bank, shocked the world and touched off an international scandal when his confidential memorandum on waste trade was leaked. Summers' memorandum states: "Dirty" industries Just between you and me, shouldn't the World Bank be encouraging MORE migration of the dirty industries to the LDCs (Bullard, 2000: 12)

Section III

Strategies for Environmental Justice

Initially, social scientists, politicians, and economists have concluded that many social inequalities and environmental justice problems could be addressed if the alleviation of poverty is targeted as the main objective. They have not only proposed the alleviation of poverty as primary goal but also devised tools to achieve this goal. Many of them have argued that to enhance the capacity of the poor people, rapid economic growth should be the correct strategy. This will give them extra resources and enable governments to solve social justice problems. This approach has been further modified in the name of development by integrating economic growth with the idea of qualitative changes in life style, improved methods of production, and some other social objectives.

However, it has been argued that it is impossible to secure development through economic growth because population is growing exponentially in most of the developing nations. They do believe that meeting their basic needs and bring qualitative change in the life style of poor people of developing nations like Bangladesh, the unplanned growth of the population is a great threat. This problem should be addressed immediately prior of focusing attention on other control measures. The interplay of the population growth and economic development with other social objectives when reached at peak, the problem of pollution and environmental degradation had emerged as new crisis in world politics.

In response to the new crisis, expert have come forward with different policy intervention. It reflects from their discussions that unplanned population growth is not only escalating risk, causing environmental degradation and contributing for non-renewable natural resource depletion but also threatening the safe existence of life in the planet. They also identified population growth is not only a major factor of environmental degradation and social inequalities, but also contribute to develop unjust practices in social life. If people of the globe are ready to save themselves from the dangerous consequences, then they should shape their development activities putting sustainability on top of the agenda. Eventually, sustainable development has emerged as new paradigm that promises to protect environment form human intervention. Such a policy response has increase concerned among the citizens of developing nations. They have treated such an advicc undermine their right to development. To make acceptable to the people of developing nations advocates of sustainable development then tries to incorporate right to development.

Economic Growth Approaches

Resolving environmental justice problems, researchers have proposed different method and approaches. One of the prominent method is economic growth. This method is popularized mainly by economists. However, the cost of economic growth has raised serious concern. Apparently economic growth seems very simple and easy solution for equitable distribution of environmental benefits and harms; however, in practice it sometimes undermines human dignity, distorts justice and above all endangers human life. Nevertheless, the idea is still remaining a popular instrument among economists, political actors and social planner. Paul Ekins (2000) is among one of them. He sees challenges of development, i.e. environmental degradation, and population problem are not incompatible with economic growth. Ekins's view implies if environmental justice is our agenda then economic growth is the real solution. This leads us to ask what economic growth is and what type of development he is proposing to redress and what kind of remedy he has mind in response to existing human and environmental injury and damage.

If we look at the map we will find the tallest tower is in Malaysia, many cars are running on the streets of India, huge refrigerators in Chinese kitchen, color television in the drawing room of Bangladesh, many children of Somalia chart on the internet. Should we consider these as the sign of development and symbol of progress? What is the actual meaning of the term development? When we are talking about right to development do we perceive development in the same sense as constructed by western politicians? Is it the fact that the 'right to development' entails that every citizen and every nation have equal access to these facilities without any qualifications?

Daly (in Dryzek and Scholbergs, 1998) also contested the growth model by saying that the idea growth is still possible and desirable 'is deceptive'. Daly suggests that instead of greening growth or sustainable we require adopting policies that put emphasis on population control and redistribution of wealth (Dryzek & Scholberg, 1998:287). Daly's argument is based on the scientific evidence that has been put forward by Brundtland Commission which stated that the present scale of the economy shows clear signs of unsustainability.

The above statements indicate that our irresponsible and irreversible courses of actions are causing irreparable damage to the environment. As a result, the earth is experiencing climatic changes and millions of people are exposed to risk. If such a situation persists a long time and people of the planet fail to address such problem by taking preventive measures then a natural disaster may finish our all expectation and aspiration. The dilemma, that environment has limited capacity to absorb pressures created by rising level of pollution and to provide nutrition to flourish human development, has raised further concern and deepened the crisis of justice.

If we prefer to address basic human needs, and if we consequently think about the rights of other species should we not trade off values, dignity and rights of individuals linking growth with development? It seems to me growth is not only the candidate for development. It signifies both qualitative and quantitative changes which is physically smooth, ethically desirable and aesthetically serenity. Again we encounter the question whether it is a starting point, a process or an end? The growth model fails to specify its position in this regard.

Population Control Approaches

When planners are admonished to determine possible production frontier, some researchers appeared with the problem of rapid population growth. It has been noted that the present growth rate in "Guatemala Nigeria Ecuador, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Ghana, Zimbabwe, and Thailand is 3.3% per annum, means a doubling time of about 21 years. Jordan's and Syria's growth rate is 3.8% while Kenya's is 4.2%, a doubling time of 17 years. Rwanda in East Africa has growth rate of over 8% which means its doubling time is less than 8.5 years" (Pojman, 2001:299; Vig, 2000). By producing the above statistics advocates of population control, policy scientists, political leaders argue that rapid population growth is the main cause of all sufferings, injustices and inequalities in developing nations like Bangladesh. They further argue that the more people there are, the more food, water, and energy is needed, and more pollution is produced. In response to the population growth problem, they have proposed strict control measures, policy integration, and education. Scholars have seen government control as one of the simplest solution.

By recommending population control measures through government interventions, I think these scholars have not only overstated the problem but also failed to recognize the capacity of the government as well. For example, the Universal Declaration on Human Right describes that the family as the natural and fundamental unit of the society. It follows from this that any choice with regard to the size of the family must irrevocably rest with the family itself, and cannot be made anyone else (Pojman, 2001-299). If we want to maximize human freedom then it is reasonable to support Pojman's argument that size of the family should be independently determined by family members at family level. If state or any other agency imposes any sanction or attaches any condition, for example, aid from first-world countries, notably the US, has often come in to fund sterilization programs; this will ultimately affect us negatively by reducing human freedom. If any policy or law without sufficient reason reduces human freedom then from ethical point of view such law or policy would be wrong.

The idea of population control is not feasible for some other reasons. First, it requires motivation or governmental intervention that is very difficult for implementation unless correct method is applied. Although many poor countries

like Bangladesh have taken measures implementing population control instruments and claiming success but the success is questionable because it has been achieved at the expense of women health and freedom. Secondly and most importantly, I agree with the statement that problems of environmental justice are moral and political (Pojman, 2001:299). The unique characteristics of environmental problems are creating special types of inequalities. To serve justice in response to these new types of inequalities require "just distribution" and "external support". The terms just distribution and external support are expandable terms which require further elucidation.

Many other forceful arguments have been advanced from different corners of the globe in favour of population control instruments. On the other hand, critics have also either rejected or developed alternative models for addressing the problem of rapid population growth. In this context, I think, Tobin (in Vig, 2000:333) is correct by saying that "the appropriateness of different population size is debatable. There is no clear answer to whether growth by itself is good or bad." He also raises questions but at this stage we do not have satisfactory answer whether developing nations have carrying capacity or capable of ensuring its population a reasonable standard of living. The standard of living also varies from society to society. Every human being is different in this regards.

The population problem of Bangladesh has been complicated in many ways. It seems to me past researchers have failed to identify the real causes of the population growth. Even they did not notice that deep rooted cultural values of the society have immediate impact on the growth of population. The present purpose of the discussion is to explore the capacity of sustainable development as an environmental justice.

There is reasonable ground to believe that in many cases government of Bangladesh have failed to serve justice to women in relation to population control measures. The women of Bangladesh are being exploited and used as means, which is unethical, to achieve greater interest of the society. For example, Norplant has been tested on Bangladesh women ignoring the effect of it. As a result, many women had suffered pain due to this. (<http://www.cluw.org.docpages/newmethods.htm/8/1/2010>). I support the claim that current population control mechanisms, which have been practiced in many parts of the world, in general reduce human freedom. Secondly, not only the population problem but also the consumption patterns of affluent societies deserve full consideration if we prefer to project environmental equity issues.

Sustainable Development

Beside economic growth, population size, environmental degradation, the concept 'right to development'² has played a crucial in shaping ideas that try to address

² The concept of development evolved throughout the history and accrued different meanings at the hand of its user. The term development is used to refer both micro-level and macro-level

human sufferings. As human beings we have some basic needs. For example, we want food for nutrition, energy for work, movement, shelter for living, protection, security and recreation; avoid injuries, prevent disease, cure health; water for drink, wash, cultivation; air for breathing; sunlight for warm; wood for cooking making shelter, school, hospital and paper for writing etc. To ensure these basic things we involve ourselves in many activities. We cultivate, process yielding, cook, build houses, road, dig pond, cannel print books, weaves clothes, etc. These needs are driving forces of our activities. Right to participate these activities are considered basic human rights. Considering basic needs of human beings as human rights critics of economic growth, independent researchers, leaders of developing nations and NGOs human rights activists and many others have come forward with the idea of right to development. They have argued that rich people of the globe consume lion share of the production and enjoy benefits of environment quality by depriving poor faces of the world. The environmental crisis is a product of their unchecked patterns of consumptions. In this situation emphasis on environmental protection will increase the degree of suffering and push the poor people to more vulnerable conditions by deccasing access to resources and decision making process. If their right to development is not addressed then the human civilization will proceed to undignified confitions. Such a perception has considerably influenced the United Nations. Therefore UN has come forward with the idea of sustainable development. The idca has been revised in different times. Thereafter several attempts have been made to integrate economic development, population control and environmental protection. In that process United Nations has made declaration in 1992 at Rio that human beings are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature. In that decllaration Principle 2 states: "states have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources, pursue their own environmental and development policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or

changes, it is considered the key to success of all national activities. Both advocates and critics have viewed development from their own perspectives. It is also correlated with the improvement of the quality of the Policy planner, economists, leaders of the different levels develop instrument, advocate action plans, accumulate resource, integrate functional organs, ensue production monitor production process, measure output and justify the whole process and failure.

According to Mahbub ul Haq, the basic purpose of development is to enlarge people's choiccs. In principle, these choices can be infinite and can change over time . People often values achievements that do not show up at all, or not immediately, in income or growth figures: greater access to knowledge, better nutrition and health services, more secure livelihoods, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, political and cultural freedoms and sense of participation in community activities. The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives (World Bank Human Development Report, 2002:1)

control do not cause damage to the environment of other states or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction (United Nations, 1992:2).

Principle 3 also states that "the right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet development and environmental needs of present and future generations. In these three principles the UN position is clearly defined. It assumes that development is a process of change which helps us to meet our basic needs in an appropriate manner and empower us to access to the environment. But it also imposes responsibilities on us. Our right to access should not undermine the needs of others i.e., citizen. Gleeson (1998) go further and argue for meeting needs of others.

First, the concept of right to development require defining needs of present generations. Second, it tries to fix the degree and level of responsibilities to others which includes other nations and future generations. It implies that we should not only define our needs but also capable to understand and choose others needs. This is no doubt a very complex task. However one thing is clear that the idea of environmental justice is at the core of UN formulation for which a new set of rules require. Setting environmental justice at the core UN has proposed a new framework for development which is labeled as sustainable development. It is the framework for development which is labeled as sustainable development. It is the framework which tries to mould perspectives of different stakeholders of the societies playing signifiacnt role at local, national and global political space. But is it beyond reasonable doubt that rights to development and justice are the core objectives of sustainable development?

The official doctrine of sustainable development came into being when world leaders met at Stockholm Conference in 1972. The issue gains momentum after the publication of Brundtland Report in the name of Our Common Future. The issue received overwhelming support from Head of the States who met at Rio and signed a declaration in 1992. The Rio declaration helped to conclude Kyoto protocol on Climatic Change in 1997, and UN Millennium Declaration in 2000. World leaders agian met in August-September, 2002 at Johanneshburg and made a new declaration.

Through out these meetings and summits advocates of sustainable development try to accommodate human rights, right to development of poor nations and pass the message to the suffering faces that their needs should materialize by creating opportunities for the improvement of their living conditions. Sustainable development also pass signals simultaneously to them how to address the environmental issues that has caused enormous sufferings in their life and pose therat to safe existence of life. Sustainable development also tries to draw an environmental justice frontier beyond that line there exists grave danger. It is so sharp and delicate that if we cross the limit we negate our responsibility, defeat

our reason and risk everyone's existence. This tells us how to avoid the path of disaster, guide to use environmental resources and distribute burdens, shape our propensity of building tower of wealth and teach us how to responses in need of others.

According to the Brundtland report "sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland, 1990-87). The above statement has become official definition of sustainable development and accepted as ethical criterion of judging activities of individuals, organization and nations. Therefore, researchers have focused their attention on the idea of needs of the present generation and future generation's rights. The idea of future generations and their rights are the most important aspects of sustainable development and have drawn the attention of people across the globe. It implicates that environmental needs of the present generation as well as future generations are equally important. It also implies that we have obligation to the future generations because just distribution of environmental goods and harms cannot be achieved without recognizing the equity of future generations.

Role of Needs in Sustainable Development

Sustainable development recognizes that the satisfaction of human needs and aspirations is a major objective of development. It does not deny the desire for an improved quality of life. It also accords with the idea that poverty elimination, distribution of cost and benefits of development should receive due importance in setting objectives, achieving goals, developing tools for good governance. It also recommends increasing productive potential and ensuring opportunities for the fulfillment of needs. But questions remain unanswered. Who will define needs? Is there any scope for any nation to define their needs? If so, then how we can find the upper limit of our needs. For developing nations needs are defined in terms of demand for food, shelter, cure from diseases, education for children. Within the same geographic location needs of the wealthy citizen is the quality of environment. The popular definition also includes needs of the future generations. Is it possible to imagine what would be their needs? Should we consider their choices will be similar to ours? There is no such reason to believe that the principle of the uniformity of nature determine future choices. These philosophical doubts have substantial force to convince many people. Therefore, sustainable development fails to evoke a clear vision in our mind that should be used to shape our activities to ensure environmental justice.

In the Universal Declarations on Human Rights it has been declared that everyone has the rights to access environment for food, shelter, education health services etc. Sustainable development also recognizes those rights as needs. This has lead researchers to as whether rights are replaced by needs. Or how are these two

concepts related each other? Illich³ (in Sachs, 1993), Galtung (1994) in Low and Gleeson, 1998), Low and Gleeson (1998), and Sen (1999) have discussed the meaning of need and tried to identify human needs. Their discussions give us the impression that though needs and rights are two different terms used for labeling some common issues. Needs and rights could be used interchangeably; though some needs which are not covered by the idea of rights and vice-versa. Galtung (1994) has shown that some needs are functioning as bases of rights. But some needs are not needs are not addressed properly in the list of right. Galtung (1994) concludes these undressed needs were not at that time in the agenda of the framer of the universal Human Rights Declaration. Sen (1999) has tried to identify needs of developing nations like Bangladesh. He sees that lack of different types of freedom is needed to be address if we are concerned with sustainable development, removing barriers of injustices and upholding human rights. However, all these interpretations are unable to capture one of the basic elements of needs. The interpretation of needs advanced by the advocates of sustainable development and above authors has some link with Bentham's interpretation of happiness. We as human beings posses dignity and have nobler feelings as well. So, we can not have the satisfaction of material needs could be treated developmient. Advocates of sustainable development and the above authors' argument give us impression that as human being we will be havppy if our material needs are satisfied. By doing trade off between material needs and dignity one can not claim that we have done just thing. It seems to me the conception of need is not suitable as social goal though billions of people lack some basic needs. It creates the opportunity for the government to escape from other responsibilities. Just environmental human rights protection that is the goal of environmental justice is more than basic human needs. Need implied quantitative changes. However, just environmental human rights protection has different connotation. It implies qualitative changes in life which cannot be understand simply by appealing only to experience. In this regard, we have to apply our higher faculties': reason and intuition. A large number of people in Bangladesh lack basic needs. However, they would not feel that they are being protected from environmental injustices unless their dignity as human being is honored. They place their dignity on top of their needs. In this respect they are ready to sacrifice their comfort and basic needs. Sustainable development tries to solve the problem compromising the quality of life by putting emphasis on basic needs. Poor people of Bangladesh lack basic needs. Nevertheless, they are ready to sacrifice their basic needs for their future generations and welfare of the world community.

³ Illich (in Sacha: 1993) has shown that development discourse tries to give meaning of this term by being convinced by American politicians. They borrow the meaning from Truman speech.

The people of Bangladesh favour development not in the direction of economic growth rather support human freedom, dignity quality of life etc. Their political and cultural history provides evidence against my claim. They fight against the unjust rules, external military interventions and other evil forces for their cultural integrity, freedom and dignity. Loss of any of these meant for them unjust. In the 18th century the business circle forced them to produce washing blue (Wolper, 2000:236). As a result of this the people of the country lost their right to cultivate their land as they wished. They are also forced to pay tax whether they have produced anything or not. This is not doubt a form of environmental injustice. they united and altered their life to fight against these injustices. Their for representing in a moral community is an important aspect of their behavior. Sustainable development does not implicate such rights and dignity as need and cannot serve as social objective.

The idea 'need' is void of ethical constituent. The fulfillment of basic needs do not implicate that moral duty to others have been observed. Let us imagine a person in the prison without any offence may receive food, shelter, medicine as he or she enjoy in the same standard⁴ when he or she was free. The person is in the prison because he or she is on of the organizer of the movement for fair distribution of environmental goods and burdens. The person teaches environmental justice to the ethnic minority community who have no access to decision-making process of the state. The person also provides legal advice to the community when government or any individual violate any right to fair access to environment decision making, information and access to justice. The person is from the government perspective a threat to the main stream population. Because the government is planning to set up a dam that will generate electricity for the benefits of the country by using the water resources and vacant land. This will help to create opportunity for new jobs, increase food production, pave the way to industrialization and relive foreign debt. The government thinks that they should promote public good and reduce pressure on non-renewable resources for the benefit of the future generations and to fulfill the commitment to the international community. Therefore, activities of the person are anti-state. The person should not be allowed to mislead the community. The government may claim that it are doing their duties by fulfilling the person basic human needs. But it does not guarantee that the person is happy or happiness of the community that are impacted by the dam.

The person's happiness lies in free movement, free speech, and free association. It is unethical if people are left without food, shelter, medicine. And it is a part of the duty to see whether basic human needs are fulfilled or not. Therefore, the government is correct by holding the person in the prison. On the other hand, a

⁴ In terms of material benefits

community interest is overlooked and the person in our discussion is deprived from the enjoyment of his or her rights⁵. It implies that fulfillment of basic needs are not enough for happiness.

The person in prison feels that it is the moral duty to provide advice to the community that lack knowledge and political power, and mobilize support for the benefits of others. It is his or moral rights that he or she should enjoy those rights without any obstruction. It helps the person to represent in the moral community. The person's feeling is not merely feeling for others. It is the feeling that emerges after critical reflection or reasoning. It is justified by moral standards that are use to judge action of a person in the society. It is not evident to the person that it seems or appears to the person that is right to work for the protection of other rights. On the contrary, it is unjust for the government if he government tries to promote happiness of the other people by distributing risk among the people who are not responsible for those problems that leads the government for the action.

The decision of the government that leads the government to construct the dam is not resolved by the people of the region. It is not the decision of the people that for the benefits of the community the person who is in the prison for leading the environmental justice movement should be kept in the prison. If decision of the government to take into the custody may lead the affected community to violent action, and if the violent action damages property and the life of the innocent person or if the decision affect the flow of the loan, aid packages, and political support of the other nations then there is no justification of the government action that the project for dam has been accepted for the benefits of the nation.

Conclusions

Different strategies for achieving environmental justice as a goal of the society have been examined. There are three main strategies appeared as potential candidates. These are economic growth, population control and sustainable development. Bangladesh has adopted sustainable development with the promise to fulfill environmental needs of the citizens. However, such promise are fulfilled by destroying richness of eco-system, leveling cultural diversity, providing genetically modified food and damaging the health of workers and addressing interest of the global business. Bangladesh also considered sustainable development to fulfill the obligation to future generations. The descriptions of environmental injustices that has been raised in this paper provide evidence that sustainable development as official goal has failed to bring meaningful changes in Bangladesh society. Any one who has minimum level of consciousness can discover how participation values are overlooked by governments, and access to information, access to legal systems and decision makings are inverted.

⁵ According to Sen (1999) lack of such rights are lack of freedom.

In this paper, the meaning of the term 'need' has been used to define the notion of sustainable development. The analysis indicates that sustainable development is an unclear goal. It has also been mentioned that the economic notion of sustainable development has failed to accommodate views of other philosophical traditions that all living entities have right to flourishing their live. There are enormous criticisms available in the literatures in relation to its commitment for future generations (See Golding, 1972). Some of those criticisms are mentioned briefly. Beside these criticisms meaning of the term, contribution of poor nations like Bangladesh for the fulfillment of international equity obligation requires further explication. Sustainable development, in many respect, is an incompatible goal of social change, human welfare and cannot serve as the principle of environmental justice unless it is clearly interpreted (Dobson, 2003).

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