



SERInews

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*With you in Pursuit of Sustainable
Management of Finite Water Resources*

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Point for discussion this month **Role of Green Economy in country's future**

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Eternal Words

Racial injustice, war, urban blight, and environmental rape have a common denominator in our exploitative economic system.

~Channing E. Phillips, speech, Washington, D.C., 22 April 1970

Today's world is one in which the age-old risks of humankind - the drought, floods, communicable diseases - are less of a problem than ever before. They have been replaced by risks of humanity's own making - the unintended side-effects of beneficial technologies and the intended effects of the technologies of war. Society must hope that the world's ability to assess and manage risks will keep pace with its ability to create them.

~J. Clarence Davies, quoted in Conservation Foundation, State of the Environment: An Assessment at Mid-Decade, 1984

Dear Readers,

Monsoon is on its way in India. Though in many parts of the country it poured heavily in few states, but it has still not blessed in many states especially Punjab, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. So, some part of country is under serious threat of drought and scarcity of drinking water. Conservation and restoration of natural water resources is the only solution for countries like India whose economy is based on rain-fed agriculture. National growth plan shall have prudent employment of agricultural and non-agricultural activities and services with pertinent management of water resources – lentic & lotic water systems.

Rio+20 could not catch the imagination of common man this time. Reasons may be many but there were no widespread discussions on “Green Economy” though India has an economist as Prime Minister. Now public at large is expecting performances from followers of economic revolutions and engineering advances. Its high time governance takes into account resources conservation, restoration in association with free market and trade. Market and trade need to mature by integrating the requirements and compulsions of ecological and pollution issues. Otherwise it may come down to grinding halt claiming numerous victims in economic and other sectors.

Sandeep Joshi, noted ecological planner and river- lake restoration expert in 2009 while presenting before Planning Commission, Government of India was asked about institutionalization of treatment and protection of hydrodynamic and hydrostatic water resources. He expressed the need of involving students of environmental sciences and engineering in planning, designing, maintaining, monitoring and restoration of deteriorated resources. This exclusively new profession has potential to restore the economy while aptly using ecology for growth with thoughtful engineering applications.

All environmental professionals must work devotionally to save not only ecology and economy but humanity also.

Thank you,
Chief Editor

IHER: New Mantra of Development and Environment

- SERI Team

Development has to be in harmony with environment for sustainability of livelihood. Since the “Human Development” conference at Stockholm in 1972, world leaders realised the sanctity and quantity of environment is essential to enjoy the comforts brought by development. Therefore stringent strictures are continuously being evolved to minimize the negative impacts of development.

Urban comforts mean **infrastructure (I)** development. Responsibility of providing urban comforts to the citizens at large has been wowed by administrative and technical governance. In India it is noticed that due to population growth, the deficit of food, shelter, water, education and energy is quite large. Therefore, there is a need of very upfront administration and engineering fraternity to work devotionally for the eradication of poverty of common man.

Health (H) is another important issue which needs highly dedicated professionals. It's a noble job to cure all sorts of illnesses of patients in the society to ensure healthiness throughout the lifespan.

Ensuring the public health is dependent on quality of environment. So, preventing deterioration of **Environment (E)** has the same nobility as health professionals have. Deterioration of environment is directly related to health issues. Instead of treating the symptoms, if root causes are cured then, healthy population progresses and enjoys comforts of life.

Any development whether in urban or rural or industrial or agricultural sectors, has its negative impact on environmental processes. So, just “environment” professional is not enough but the professional having “restoration” capabilities are also essential with noble faculties. These professionals should have in depth knowledge of development processes, their impacts on environmental processes, quantification of stress, process and status indicators and corrective actions at affordable energy, infrastructure and economic inputs.

The “Restoration” (R) professionals have most serious responsibility to ensure the healthy places and habitats for every individual of every nation on the Earth.

Administration and engineering professionals may not work to the fullest extent due to want of systemic standard operating procedures (SOPs). But health, environment and restoration professionals can not protest non-availability of SOPs instead they need to continuously evolve and standardize the curative procedures.

Some welcome initiatives are being taken up by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and National Environmental Engineering and Research Institute (NEERI) to tackle the issues of sewage discharges from villages in Maharashtra state of India. It was needed for a long that Indian institutions take up actual practical for the society at large. It will be interesting to evaluate their success in implementing decentralized waste treatment systems.

SERI's management is thinking to establish a trust for serious professionals to learn the techniques of Environment and Restoration in near future, so that an array of experts will vow to work for society's comfort and healthy environment.

Rio +20

- Pradnyesh Agre

The "Earth Summit 2012" popularly known as Rio+20 was international conference on sustainable development aimed at reconciling the economic and environmental goals of the global community. This was the third Earth Summit since 1992. The themes of this summit were 'Green Economy' for sustainable development and poverty eradication and institutional frame work for sustainable development.

Institutional frame work plays important role in getting benefits from any innovation or solution.

While addressing new and emerging challenges the objective of the conference was also securing political commitments for sustainable development.

This conference was attended by environmental activists, business leaders, and indigenous groups and heads of state from around the world.

The heads of state of the 192 governments in attendance largely restated the renewed political commitment to sustainable development and commitment to the promotion of a sustainable future. The nations agreed that the environmental and social factors should be taken into account as a measurement of wealth instead of GDP. The ecological valuation of environmental services provided by nature should be considered and paid by the polluter.

The stated common vision is eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development through adaptation of green economy. This can be achieved by engaging key stakeholders and strengthening institutional frameworks

working on well-designed actions for food, nutrition, agriculture, water and sanitation, transport, tourism, cities, settlements, and populations' health. There is onus of protecting and managing the forests and biodiversity in various topographical regimes like mountains, plains and coastal areas. There are certain concerns about chemicals and hazardous wastes, land degradation, desertification, droughts and small islands's fear of sea - level rise. There are other issues of landlocked countries in various parts of the world.

Document of 49 pages "The Future We Want," is a primary outcome of the conference - which is not obligatory to anybody. So, Renewal of political commitment to reaffirm previous action plans like Agenda 21 seems to be lacking in giving the new vision for the sustainable development. If Agenda 21 is not achieved in last 20 years, then who will give a new timeline? Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are being suggested in lieu of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which failed to address criticism.

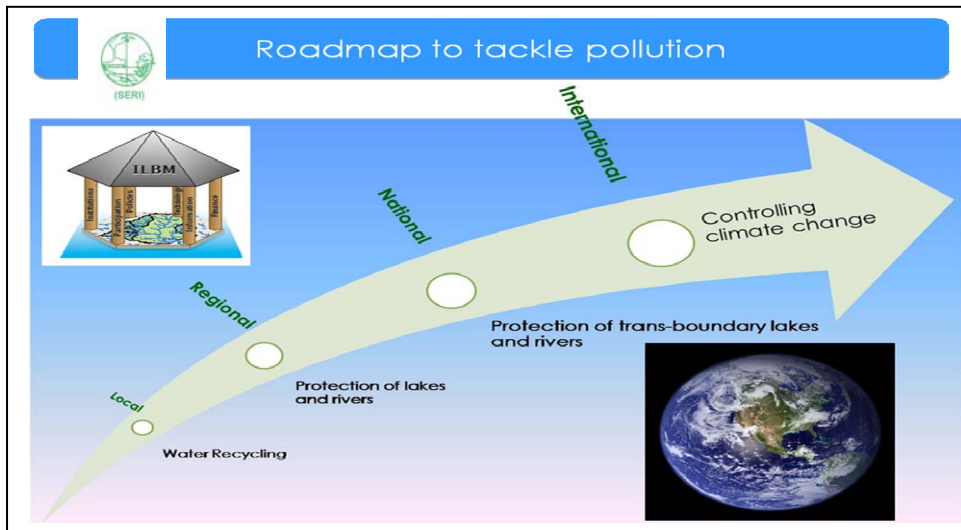
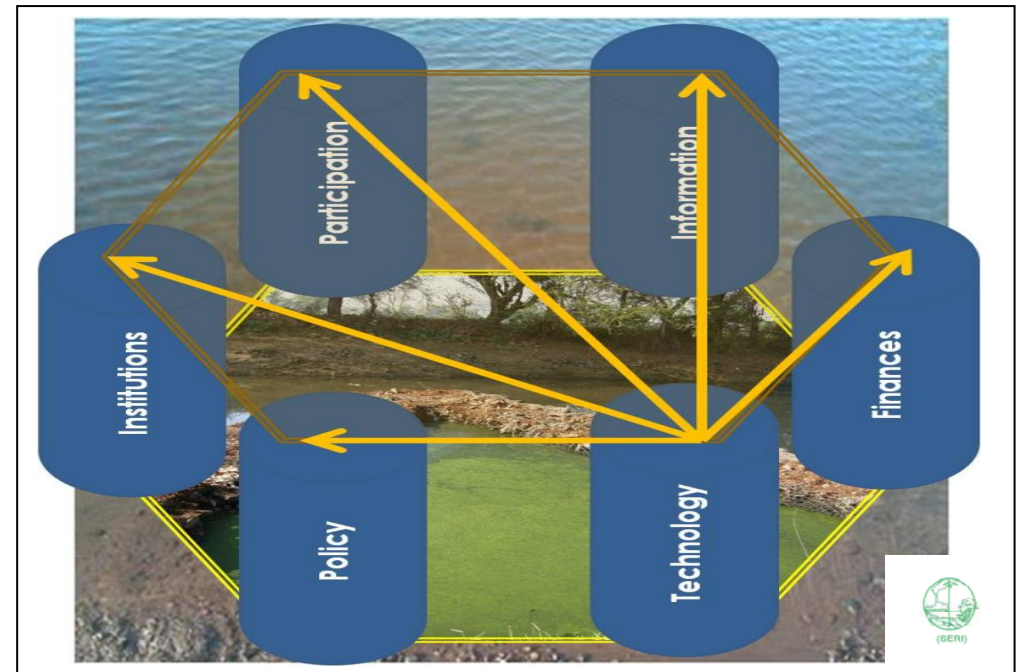
The gap between developed and developing countries should be evaluated not on the basis of resources utilization but on the basis of being wasted and the cost of restoration of deteriorated environmental factors such as reduction of carbon footprint. Estimation of carbon footprint per capita can be a yardstick to define the "development gap" among the countries. But the concept of bridging the gap between developed and developing countries on the basis of poverty eradication, elimination of hunger and preventable diseases needs to consider the sustainable livelihood through conservation of ecological productivity. Transferring the technology to developing countries becomes an issue as integrating the same with local conditions takes long time. For example, UASB digester developed in Europe is still an issue in Kanpur where it was supposed to treat tannery wastewater. But even today, it has failed to deliver expected results. Success of the technology would have resulted in elimination of pollution from Ganga River - a lifeline of 40 million. But even after 2 decades or so, the river remains polluted.

There is an attempt to make UN Environment Programme (UNEP) leading global environmental authority (GEA) by setting forth eight key recommendations including, strengthening its governance through universal membership, increasing its financial resources and strengthening its engagement in key UN coordination bodies. Committed experienced universal intergovernmental high-level political forum is essential to build resources and inclusive participation modalities for the implementation of sustainable development. Overlapping of existing structures, bodies and entities should be avoided in a cost-effective

manner by integrating ecological approach in the developmental goals rather than focusing on “trade”-related technologies and economies.

Rio+20 will also be remembered by the controversies. Activists from different fields and parts of the world were present at the summit to agitate against the exploitation of Mother Earth. Industrialization of the Brazil’s economy was also one of the major issues to protest as this will directly affect the forest ecology and the Amazonian tribes dependent on the forest. There was agitation against Iran as the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant is situated in an area of severe seismic risk. It is located at the intersection of three plates (Arab, African and Eurasian) and experts have argued that an earthquake could cause such damage to the building at Bushehr that there would be an accident on a similar scale to Chernobyl.

Rio+20 started with so many hopes but it couldn’t gather that much of attention as the previous Earth Summits could. The reasons might be the dark shadow of recession or anything. The most important concern is about the action plan suggested and its implementation. Otherwise after 10 more years in another Earth Summit we all have to restate the same commitments and so on. Sustainability in the commitment to nature will surely give a sustainable future to this ever growing world.



Sustainable Management of Water Resources

- Policy to integrate ecology and economy
- Green finance to correct the ecological and environmental aberrations created by developmental finance
- Public participation at policy, regulatory and action levels
- Suitable applicable and affordable technologies

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