

International Conference
on
Sustainability: An Ancient Indian Approach
Organized by MCHV, IIM Calcutta, 11-12 August 2023

There is hardly any doubt now that climate change is real and tangible, a phenomenon evident from the emergence of record high levels of carbon emissions, the release of phosphorus and nitrogen into water and air, ocean acidification, species extinction, depletion of freshwater bodies and of course the rise of chemical pollution levels. In the fourth report of the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) entitled *Summary of Policy Makers (SPM)*, it is stated that the reality of climate change is also attested by the rise of factors such as: higher levels of water vapor in the atmosphere, lowering of albedo, rise in water levels, uncertainty about cloud cover, and rise of levels of methane in the atmosphere.

The challenge is ever-increasing with the rise of the global population, rising trend of consumption, increasingly constrained natural resources, rising consumer expectations increasing costs in commodities, food, and agriculture. The Anthropocene Epoch (Angus, 2009) describes the most recent period in Earth's history when the human activity started to have a significant impact on the planet's climate and ecosystems that is making the preordained system of the universe unsustainable and close to extinction of life supporting system of mother earth. Global warming is real and harder to ignore (Lanchester, 2007). Climate change will affect the entire planet, and there should be global, concerted efforts to counter it in the form of investment in renewable energy, research and development of 'hydrogen economy', continued scientific investigation into the many unknown facets of the environment and the complexities of the ecosystem and technology and transparency advancements to deal with the impact.

It is high time for businesses to realize that sustainable approaches are the only way to address these global trends. The capitalist mode of production and resource management is often justified in the name of efficiency. Efficient use of resources can no longer mean maximum production of value at the minimum cost; economic efficiency must now factor in sustainability.

It is in this context of our human existence we must not forget to mention the sustainable approaches to human existence in the Vedic and Upanishadic traditions of ancient India. As per the ancient Indian tradition, the Earth is ascribed with divine motherhood and humanity being the most capable and able offspring of the mother, is endowed with the responsibility to protect, preserve, and care for the mother for as much as they are nurtured by the mother if no more or no less. Interestingly, the central doctrines of deep ecology of the mainstream-European tradition ascribed intrinsic value to nature and it has much similarity with the traditional Indian approaches of living and existence (Chatterjee, 2016). Anindo Bhattacharjee (2011) argues that Peter Drucker's modern management paradigms, like MBO can be derived from the ethical and spiritual frameworks of ancient Indian ethos and further argues that companies are struggling to implement MBO frameworks effectively because they are still not aligned to the teachings of ancient Indian scriptures. Ecology is an inherent

part of a spiritual worldview in Hinduism argues Renugadevi (2012). She also argues that the Mahabharata, Ramayana, Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Puranas and Smriti contain the earliest messages for preserving the environment and ecological balance. The Indians were taught to live in harmony with nature, not to conquer or dominate it, and recognize that divinity prevails in all elements of nature. Kumar (2008) points out that forest conservation and sustainable management are ingrained in prehistoric India, where religion is probably used as a tool to protect nature and natural resources by encouraging practices like tree worship. There are numerous such references to the worship of the divine in nature, including trees, rivers, mountains and animals. Jain (2010) argues that Hinduism is a remarkably diverse religious and cultural phenomenon from which important themes emerge that point to nature as mother and man has a duty to care for nature by simple living and the development of sustainable economies.

Sustainable development is not foreign to Indian tradition. For example, the principle of *Aparigraha* refers to the process of keeping only what is necessary and returning rest back to nature/God.

Verse 1 from Isha Upanishad

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् । तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्य स्विद्धनम् ॥ १ ॥

Meaning- everything in the universe belongs to the Supreme God. Therefore, take only what you need and is set aside the rest for you know to whom it belongs.

However, due to the western anthropocentric and material model of human progress as well as for the colonial attitude, the potential role of Vedic and Upanishadic knowledge of sustainable living is not yet fully explored.

The core values of Indian culture and civilization is inclusive, cooperative, considerate and sustainable. Sustainability is at the core of the ancient Indian experience of existence. In contemporary times, India still carries its distinct identity of Spirituality and quest to attain salvation. Less wasteful and more sustainable attitude embedded in the philosophy of Indian ways of living that aims to attain *Puruṣārtha* - the meaning of human existence.

The cultural life of people in ancient, medieval and present India is largely the work of thoughts of individuals (a few examples would be from Veda Vyasa to Kautilya to Mahatma Gandhi) and the nation as a whole and Vedic philosophy and timeless treatises that focuses on the interconnectedness of not only humans with humans but also of humans with nature. Socially in India, people focus on communitarian values with the philosophy of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (The World Is One Family). Sustainable development, though sounds ironical, actually refers to economic prosperity embedded in cultural vitality resulting in social equity and environmental sustainability. Sustainability is a way to address the above global trends by investing in technology and transparency, social justice, equity and welfare measures, and being sensitive to the environment.

So it is time to reiterate the traditional value systems of the world's oldest civilization. The Indian tradition is one of the most celebrated on the world's platform for its distinctive contributions in the areas of Science, Culture and Spirituality. From Albert Einstein to Mark Twain, everyone acknowledged India's contribution to world history. In Mark Twain's words, "*India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend and the great grandmother of tradition. Our most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India only.*"

Submission of manuscript

Interested participants are invited to submit their manuscripts for presentation in the following tracks

Submission Tracks

- Sustainability in different Indian Philosophical systems
- Governance and Institutions & Sustainability
- Morality, Spirituality and its roots in sustainability
- Indian concepts in sustainability
- Technologies and Sustainability
- Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability
- Deep ecology and Indian notion of sustainability
- Responsible consumer behaviour and decision making
- Trust in Business, Ethics and sustainability

References:

Bhattacharjee, A. (2011). Modern management through ancient Indian wisdom: Towards a more sustainable paradigm. *PURUSHARTHA-A journal of Management, Ethics and Spirituality*, 4(1), 14-37.

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Kumar, B. M. (2008). Forestry in ancient India: some literary evidences on productive and protective aspects. *Asian Agri-History*, 12(4), 299-306.

Jain, P. (2010). Ten key Hindu environmental teachings. *GreenFaith.org*.

Angus, Ian (5-09-2019) *Again: Does Anthropocene science blame all humanity equally?*
<https://climateandcapitalism.com/2019/09/05/does-anthropocene-science-blame-all-humanity-2/>

Lanchester, John (22-03-2007) *Warmer, Warmer*, London Review of Books, Vol.29, No.6
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Submission Guidelines

Authors can submit either an extended abstract (between 2000-4000 words, all inclusive) or full paper (3000-10,000 words, all inclusive). All submissions must mention one authors as the corresponding author with contact details including e-mail address. The submission must contain the following (1) title of the paper (2) names of all authors, including contact details of the corresponding author, (3) keywords, (4) abstract (5) Short introduction followed by literature review, model/hypotheses development, method section, results, discussion and implications. (6) All tables and figures must be titled, and included at the end. (7) References in APA style must be also included. Submitted abstract/papers must be checked for similarity using suitable software. Submissions with more than 10% similarity would be rejected. Email your manuscript to: sumantar@iimcal.ac.in with a copy to coordinator.mchv@iimcal.ac.in **“Conference Submission: MCHV” in the subject line**

Submission Deadlines

- Manuscript Submission Deadline: February 28, 2023
- First decision shared with authors: April 30, 2023
- Final accepted manuscripts due from authors: July 31, 2023
- Conference: 11-12 August 2023

Registration Details

Registration starts: April 30, 2023

Last date of Registration: May 31, 2023

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| Industry/ Non-participating Delegates | NR 7,000 (Resident Indians)/ USD 500 (Foreign) |
| Participating Authors / Academics | INR 5,000 (Resident Indians)/ USD 300 (Foreign) |
| Students / PhD Scholars | INR 3,000 (Resident Indians)/ USD 100 (Foreign) |

Publication Opportunities

Extended abstracts of all accepted papers will be published as part of **Conference Proceedings** with ISBN number. In addition, select presented conference papers may be considered with an accelerated review for possible publication in JHV, if the manuscript is successful in the journal's review process.

Journal of Human Values, Sage Journal: <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jhv>

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