



AVOIDING DEVELOPMENT – ENVIRONMENT CONFLICT: A PEOPLE CENTRIC APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

*Development and environment have a very close relationship, development occurs with the help of resources provided by the environment, at the same time development cast its positive as well as negative effect on the sustenance of the environment. Relation between environment and development has been explained by famous **Environment Kuznets curve (EKC)**, also it can be understood with help of **Jeevons paradox**.*

In the paper the impact of development in recent years on the environment of India has also been discussed. Paper explores how various international treaties and national laws such as the Environment protection act, National green tribunal act, etc. and laws that act at regional level have tried to solve the problem of development- environment conflict by involving people: local and indigenous communities to carry out environmentally sustainable development. Other ways such as government consciousness, encouragement of media, educating the people about protection of environment, international cooperation, reduction in income polarization and poverty, encouraging environmental organizations and ecological innovation firms have also been discussed in brief.

KEYWORDS- *Environment, Environment Kuznets curve, Jeevon's paradox, National Green Tribunal, Environment impact assessment, Income polarization, environment and poverty*

INTRODUCTION

Development and environment have a very close relationship, development occurs with the help of resources provided by the environment, at the same time development cast its positive as well as negative effect on the sustenance of the environment. Environment refers to surrounding in which living and non living things live, interact, grow and perish.¹ Development is defined as economic growth, with structural and institutional changes, it is sudden and discontinuous change in the operation of the economy.² Which is all pervasive, that is, Development casts its

shadow on all spheres of life including environment. Regional development refers to solving of problems faced by a region by carrying out developmental activities in that region.³ The following Venn diagram shows relation between environment, development, and regional development.

¹ Khullar D.R. and Rao J.A.C.S (2016), 'Environment', McGraw hill Education (India) Private Limited, 1.1

² Jhingan.M.L. (2007) 'The Economics of development and planning' (39th edition), Vrinda Publications (P) Ltd.

³ <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/the-challenges-of-smart-specialization-strategies-and-the-role-of-entrepreneurial-universities/24865- regional development>.

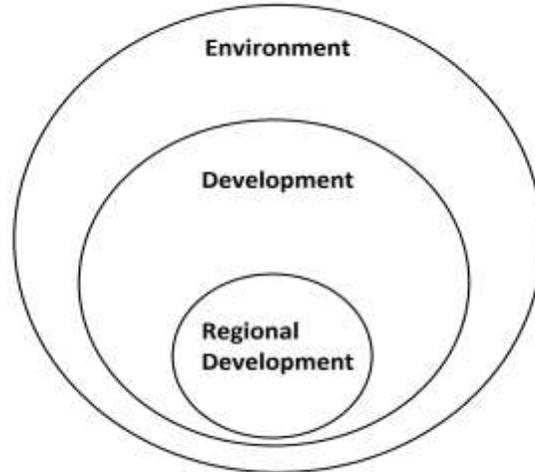


Fig-1

Relation between environment and development has been explained by famous **Environment Kuznets curve (EKC)**, which states economic development initially leads to deterioration

Of environment, but after certain level of economic growth, a society begins to improve its relationship with environment and level of environmental degradation reduces.⁴

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<https://www.economicshelp.org/blog/14337/environment/environmental-kuznets-curve/> - Environment Kuznets curve

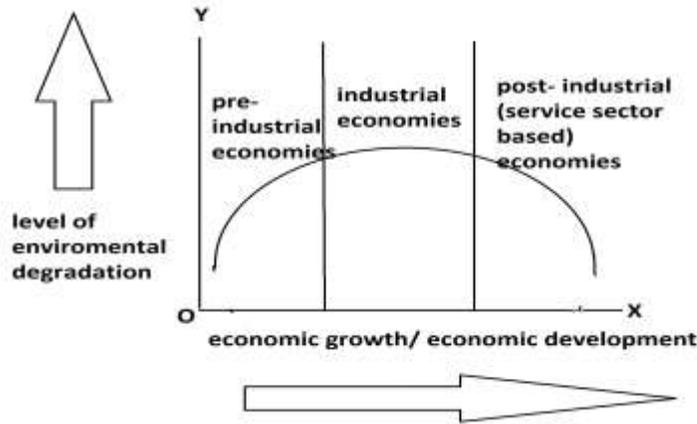


Fig-2

Another theory to deal with the relation between environment and development is given by William Jevons in 19th century which basically stated that as technological development occur in the economy it increases efficiency of natural resource utilization, however instead of reducing dependence on natural resources it enhances the dependence on natural resource thus enhance their exploitation. In general terms it can be understood in manner that as economic development happens in economy there is improvement in technology which instead of reducing the environmental degradation enhances it, this came to be known as the **Jeevons paradox**.⁵

Both of the above mentioned ideologies stresses upon the fact the initially there is conflicting relation between environment and development, India being a developing economy exhibits this kind of relation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

The paper tries to find out, whether the development process in the country has caused environmental degradation, Paper explores how various international treaties and national laws such as the Environment protection act, National green tribunal act, etc. major importance in the paper has been given to discuss laws that act at regional level have tried to solve the problem of development- environment conflict by involving people: local and indigenous communities to carry out environmentally sustainable development.

⁵ <https://grist.org/energy-efficiency/2011-09-04-jevons-paradox-when-doing-more-with-less-isnt-enough/> Jeevon’s paradox

Other ways can be used to counter development-environment conflict have also been discussed in brief.

RESEACH METHODOLOGY

Paper is based on descriptive analysis which make use of secondary data sources from internet via research journals, information websites and published books. For diagram use of ‘paint’ as computer tool has been done.

REVIEW LITERATURE

Paper titled ‘Conflict between Developing Economic and Protecting Environment’ by Guo Longlong and Ma Hongbo was reviewed and following points stood out:

- How developing economies multiplier effect of development accentuates the deterioration of environment: development leads to an increase demand for automobiles, which creates traffic concerns which causes increase in emissions of green house gases, which leads to global rising temperature causing melting of glaciers and rising of sea levels and destruction of wetlands and flooding of coastal regions.
- The importance of creation of capacity for environmental policy i.e. agencies and boards, ecological innovation firms, environmental organizations, such as central pollution control board in India to curb the detrimental effect of development.ion with
- Economic rationalism as a way to ensure environmental protection, internalization of need of environmental protection with idea of private property. The idea is people tend to care more for a



thing if they own that thing, thus providing ownership of environment in hand of people can indeed protect it.

- Poverty creates ecological environment degradation and how by reducing poverty countries can limit amount of environmental loss caused in name of development.
- In short run removal of poverty has contradictory effect on improvement of environment however in long run it will always have positive impact on environment.⁶

IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ON ENVIRONMENT IN INDIA

According to a report by world bank India loses rupee 3.75 trillion (\$80 billion) annually which accounts for 5.7% of GDP due to environmental degradation caused by developmental activities.⁷ India lost more than 8.5% of its GDP in 2013 due to cost of increased welfare and lost labour due to air pollution only.⁸ The benefits arising from development have tended affect and improve life of rich and resourcefull people in the country, however the loss due to deterioration of environment due to developmental process have been borne by marginalized and poor communities in India. Developmental projects.

For example a hydroelectric project in mountain region of India can lead to land slides, dust pollution, land diversion, water scarcity, etc. which reduced agricultural productivity in the region thus causing poor agricultural farmers to give up on their profession and join non agricultural activities for continuation of their livelihood. This has been adequately depicted by the research paper titled 'Impacts of Hydropower Development on Rural Livelihood Sustainability in Sikkim, India: Community Perceptions'⁹

⁶ Guo Longlong and Ma Hongbo (2008), 'Conflict between Developing Economic and Protecting Environment', Journal of Sustainable Development, Vol. 1, No. 3

⁷ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2013/07/17/india-green-growth-necessary-and-affordable-for-india-says-new-world-bank-report> - impact of development on environment

⁸ <https://weather.com/en-IN/india/pollution/news/2018-10-31-economic-impacts-of-pollution>

⁹ Chandy Thomas, Keenan J. Rodney, Petheram R. John, and Shepherd Peter, 'Impacts of Hydropower

LEGISLATIONS TO HARMONIZE ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT International Treaties

In order to harmonize the process of development with environment concept of **sustainable development** popularized by the Brundtland report in 1987 titled 'our common future'.¹⁰ To ensure sustainable development various international treaties have been signed which have also been replicated on the national level to ensure India's commitment to these treaties. One of the first attempt to internalize the issue of environment with development was done at the **Earth summit in 1992 in Rio De Janeiro** where three conventions were signed which included:

- United nations framework convention on climate change,
- United convention on biological diversity,
- convention on desertification.¹¹

Another major international treaty for protection of the environment is the **Kyoto Protocol**, which was adopted in 1997 and enforced in 2005, it was operationalized by UNFCCC by committing industrialized nations to limit their green house gas emissions to pre 1990s level¹²

National law

In India the the most comprehensive law on protection of environment was the **environment protection law of 1986**, it was enacted in the wake of damage caused by the **Bhopal gas tragedy** where industry Union Carbide india limited was set up by Dow chemicals in small town of Bhopal to cause regional development led to environmental disaster which affected around 500,000 people in the town in 1984.¹³ The environment protection law 1986 is an umbrella law to enacted to remove the deficiencies found in similar legislations.

In order to fasten up legislation process involving environment government has enacted

Development on Rural Livelihood Sustainability in Sikkim, India: Community Perceptions', Mountain Research and Development, 32(2):117-125

¹⁰ Khullar D.R. and Rao J.A.C.S (2016), 'Environment', McGraw hill Education (India) Private Limited, 8.5

¹¹ Khullar D.R. and Rao J.A.C.S (2016), 'Environment', McGraw hill Education (India) Private Limited, 4.78

¹² https://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhopal_disaster Bhopal gas tragedy



national green tribunal act in 2010 to ensure that development is carried without harming the environmental interest of the country. NGT was created under the article 21 of constitution to provide right of life and liberty of all the people of the country. some of major decisions by NGT which have now become benchmark for enacting laws by various state government and union government of India:

- Ms. Betty C Alvares vs. State of Goa and Ors. Where Ms. Betty was not being an Indian nation granted right to file case against illegal encroachment along the costal areas owned by Government.
- Almitra H Patel vs. union of India and Ors. where complete ban on open burnig of waste on lands was placed by NGT, which has become benchmark for solid waste management in India.¹⁴
- NGT in a case ordered Andhra Pradesh government to pay rupee 100 cr. as fine for its inability to stop illegagl sand mining in Krishna and Godavari basin.¹⁵
- NGT ordered Meghalaya government to pay rupee 100 cr. as fine for its failure to stop illegagl coal mining in the state.¹⁶
- NGT fined Delhi government with rupee 25 cr. for its inability to curb pollution in the national capital region.¹⁷

¹⁴ <https://blog.ipleaders.in/ngt-judgments/>

¹⁵ <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/national-green-tribunal-imposes-rs-100-crore-penalty-on-andhra-pradesh-govt-over-illegal-sand-mining/articleshow/68763662.cms>

¹⁶ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/ngt-imposes-rs-100-crore-fine-on-meghalaya-govt-for-failing-to-curb-illegal-mining/articleshow/67388122.cms>

¹⁷

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/air-pollution-ngt-slaps-25-cr-fine-on-delhi-govt/article25654117.ece>



Some other legislations in India are

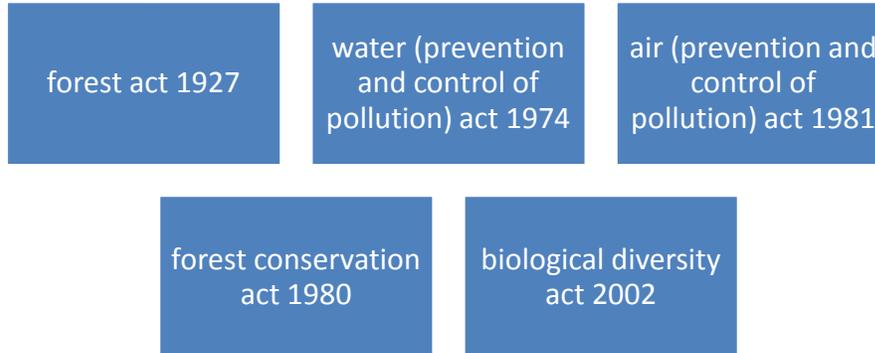


Fig-3

WAYS TO DEAL WITH DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT AT REGIONAL LEVEL

1. Environment impact assessment

An environmental impact assessment is the process to assess the positive and negative impact of a proposed development projects on the environment, considering natural, social and economic aspects.¹⁸ The environment impact assessment involves the viewpoints of the people indigenous to the region so that a more acceptable development project can be developed. In India the environment impact assessment process began in 1970s however it was only in 1994, when a notification under environment protection act 1986 issued making it compulsory for getting environmental clearance for setting up and expansion of new of existing developmental projects.

Objectives of Environment impact assessment

- To understand possible impacts of developmental projects on environment
- To ensure public will be given opportunity to have their viewpoint regarding the developmental project known to the authorities
- To assess the potential loss to biodiversity, natural habitat and cultural heritage of the region
- To propose mitigation plan to minimize damage due to developmental projects
- Design proposal in environment friendly way
- Provide long term safeguard against irreversible and irrevokable damage caused by a developmental projects

¹⁸Khullar D.R. and Rao J.A.C.S (2016), 'Environment', McGraw hill Education (India) Private Limited, 6.1



Components of EIA

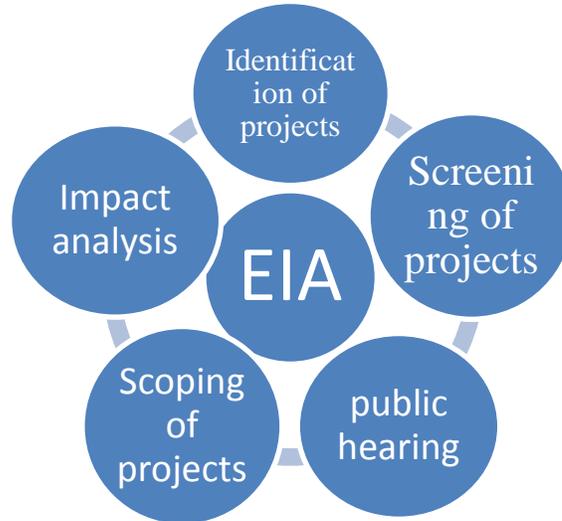


Fig- 4

The Ministry of Environment, forest and Climate change issues the EIA notifications all the major development projects are categorized into 2: category A and category B. Category A projects need to take environmental clearance from the central government where as Category projects required to take clearance from State Environment impact assessment authority.

Some of major projects where environmental impact assessment ensured that interest local communities and regional minorities are protected from the negative effect of development are:

Kakarapalli wetlands in Andhra Pradesh, where wetland area was being developed for setting up of thermal coal based power plant by a private enterprise, through the process of environmental impact assessment this project was scrapped which protected the livelihood of salt farmers and fishermen in the region.

SKS ISPAT and power generation Chattisgarh, it had proposed to set up 1200 MW coal based thermal power generation plant in Raigarh, Chattisgarh, it was to obtain water from the Mahandai river, however it failed to furnish report on ability of river to sustain the project and the project was thus revoked.

2. Role of local communities in sustainable development

To ensure the role of local communities in the developmental projects in the regions to streamline them with the need of the environment government of India started an initiative of **People's biodiversity register**.

It was done under the **Biological diversity act 2002**,¹⁹ which call for setting up of biodiversity management committee in each local body, the committee is given the task to prepare the people's biodiversity register which is record of traditional knowledge and practices of sustainable use of local bioresources.

People's biodiversity register will help in tracing how forest are changing in our country and which forests are in dire need of conservation and how local knowledge can be used to transform forests in India.

One of the legislation enacted in India to provide choice for development of the region to the indigenous dwellers of the region is the Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, this act recognize rights and occupation of forest lands by the traditional forest

¹⁹ <https://www.gktoday.in/gk/peoples-biodiversity-registers/>



dwellers, who have been residing in the forest for several generations.²⁰

OTHER WAYS TO PREVENT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT CONFLICT

- **Educating the population**, one of the most important way to avoid the development and environment conflict is making people realise their responsibility towards the environment, which can be done with the help of education.²¹
- **Governmental consciousness**, towards the protection of environment can ensure that developmental activities are carried out in manner in which they cause no or very little harm to the environment.
- **International cooperation**, with help of cross border exchange of ideas wastage due to duplicacy of efforts can be reduced which can ensure over exploitation in the name of development can be minimised and environment is protected.
- **Reduction of income polarization**, reducing income gaps and making a more equitable society can make development all pervasive rather than concentrating in few areas where after a point of time it leads to dis- economies and environmental degradation.
- **Encouraging environment protection organization and ecological innovation firms** to ensure development carried out accordance with the need of the country sustaining the quality of environment.
- **Encouraging role of media**, media in this age of Information and Technology has become a powerfull means to dessiminate information for environmet protection and role of people in preserving environment against detrimental developmental policies.

CONCLUSION

For an economy to grow and realize its true potential there should be a direct positive relationship between level of development and quality of environment. When development occur with negative impact on the environment, the concept of development becomes flawed, as instaed of causing growth of the country it is taking the country down a viscious path which keeps the developing economy to be perpetually in state of under- development. The need is for the government and people to come together to ensure that development carried out in sustainable manner so as to ensure development is in accordance with need of society to protect its environment.

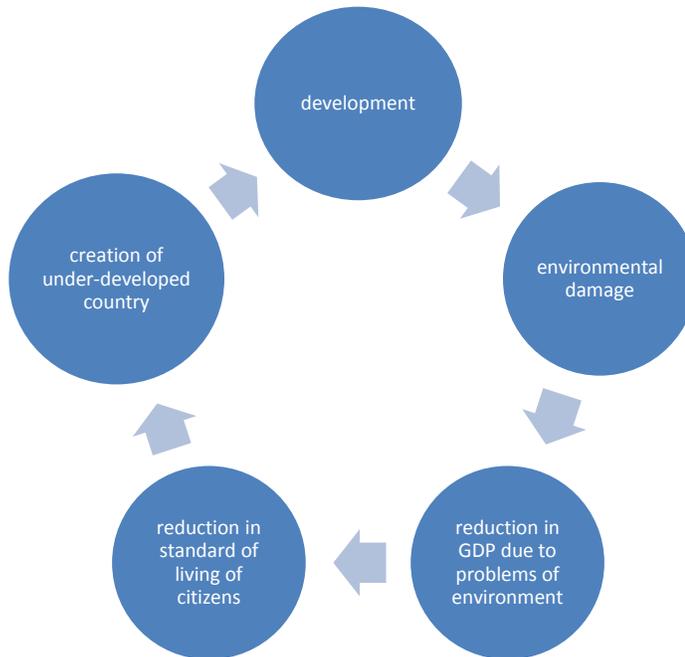
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**Fig- 5**

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