Smooth Functioning of Politics and Governance in Ensuring Sustainable Development: Academic and Procedural Review

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*Abstract:-*Sustainable development not only meets the needs of the present generation but also sees that of future generations. The United Nations adopted sustainable development goals for the world in 2015 that contains 17 goals with list of targets to achieve. It not only deals with environmental issues, but economic, social and cultural issues as well. Thus, it can be said that sustainable development therefore, have multiple contexts; involve multiple and often diametrically opposed values; demand an unprecedented interface between academic research and public policy; and there is none as sustainable development expertise, but rather a multiplicity of expertise. But the more pragmatic and policy-focused argument about how to put sustainable development into effect has been just in the center stage in contemporary debates in the social sciences. Among other, one of the most important preconditions for sustainable development is the state capacity to form and implement policy across the whole of their territory. A plenty of studies have demonstrated the importance of state capacity. For example, there is a causal link between the quality of public administration and economic growth. However, this paper based on secondary data attempts to define Sustainable development as well as discuss politics and governance in the sustainable development in its theoretical features.

*Keywords:-*Politics, Governance, Sustainable Development

I. INTRODUCTION

'Inequality and poverty are not accidents of fate. They are the results of policy decisions and power relationships which are discriminatory, exclusionary and unjust'.

-Participant in the global consultations on governance

Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987). The intellectual debate about whether sustainable development-a new paradigm in the development; is a well-improved principle, a concept, a normative idea, a 'meta fix', a positive vision, (Dryzek, 2005) or a matter of attention remains as lively as ever. Besides, the link between achieving sustainable development and the principles of governance is gaining increasing acceptance. However, in some aspects it is hardly surprising that the world is still in the fighting position to solve the mystery of

sustainability even if it passed twenty years of the landmark Brundtland report (Jordan, 2007). Moreover, the anxious relationship between the two fundamental themes of sustainable development-the coinciding desire for economic prosperity and environmental protection has lain at the heart of environmental politics and policy making (Carter, 2007).

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data were collected from secondary sources through content analysis such as reviewing various national and international publications like books, journals, newspapers and related websites. However, this is more likely a descriptive research.

Sustainable Development: Defining the Contemporary Paradigm

At first, World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) presented it in their 1987 report, "*Our Common Future,* "to address the problem of conflicts between environment and development goals by formulating a definition of sustainable development:

Sustainable development is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

In the broad discussion of this definition, there has normally been recognition of three facets of sustainable development like:

- *Environmental:* It includes maintaining a stable resource base, avoiding over-exploitation of renewable resource systems or environmental sink functions, and diminishing non-renewable resources only to the extent that investment is made in adequate substitutes. This also covers maintenance of biodiversity, atmospheric stability, and other ecosystem functions not ordinarily classed as economic resources.
- *Economic:* An economically sustainable system is to produce goods and services on a continuing basis, to maintain manageable levels of government and external debt, and to avoid extreme sectorial

imbalances which damage agricultural or industrial production.

- ▪ *Social:* Achieving distributional equity, adequate provision of social services including health and education, gender equity, and political accountability and participation is included in this type (Jordan, 2007).

Noticeably, these three elements of sustainability identify many potential difficulties to the original simple definition. The goals expressed are multidimensional thus; it becomes very tough to implement the right thing at the right time (Harris, 2000). For instance, what if provision of adequate

food and water supplies appears to require changes in land use which will decrease biodiversity? What if non-polluting energy sources are more expensive, thus increasing the burden on the poor, for whom they represent a larger proportion of daily expenditure? Which goal will take precedence? What will be done then? And in practically, we can rarely avoid trade-offs, and as Richard Norgaard points out, we can "maximize" only one objective at a time. Norgaard concludes that "it is impossible to define sustainable development in an operational manner in the detail and with the level of control presumed in the logic of modernity. The strongly normative nature of the sustainable development concept makes it difficult to pin down analytically (Norgaard, 1994)."
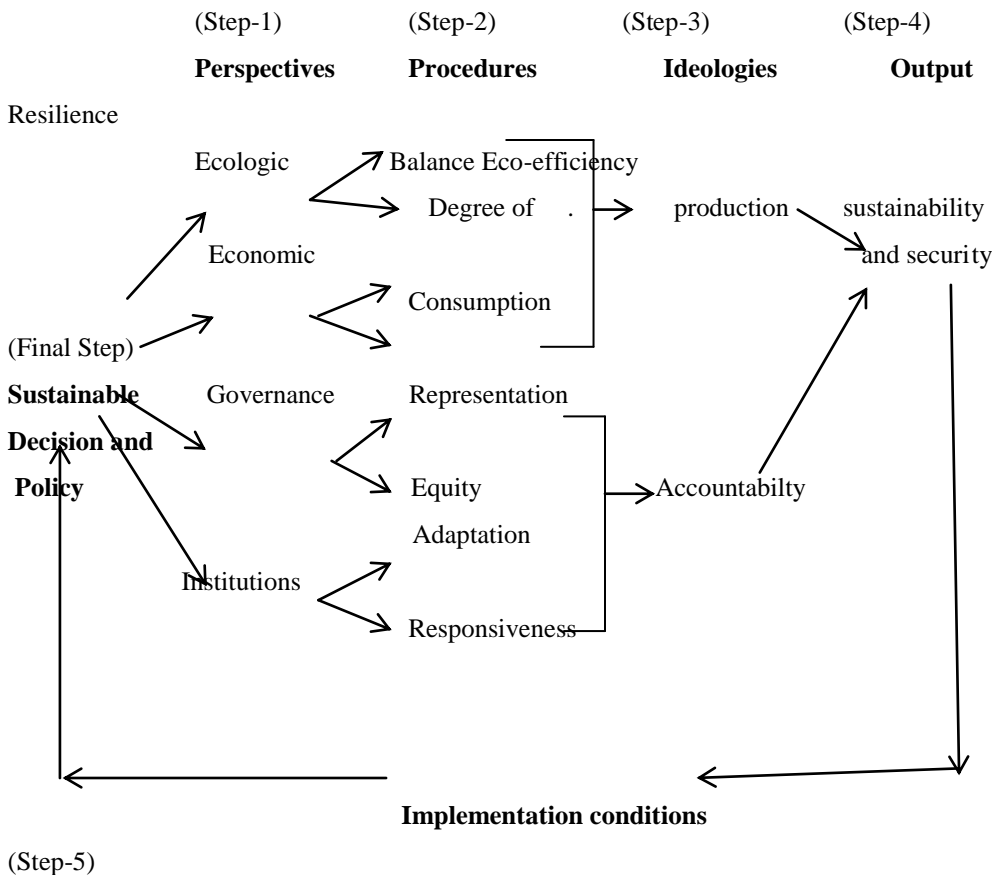

Figure 1: Sustainable development as an integrated dynamic process (Nazli Choucri, 1999).

From the above figure it can be revealed that since, it includes multidiscipline it is necessary to examine the problem from different disciplinary perspective. Economists tend to give greater weight to the economic objectives, ecologists to the environmental dimension, and social theorists to the social issues. So before attempting to balance these different perspectives, we need to understand them and explore their internal logics. In addition, each of the three areas is commonly referred to as a system namely; economic, environmental and social systems which have their own logic. The total system of which human society is a part, and on which it depends for support, is made up of a large number of

component systems. If individual component systems cannot function properly the total system cannot function properly and is not viable and sustainable. Sustainable development is possible only if component systems as well as the total system are workable.

The Politics of Sustainable Development

Every human problem on earth is nested in consciousness especially major social problems such as energy shortages, over population, pollution, war and so on. The main weakness of our common future is the failure to deal in a straightforward manner with the huge social and political

barriers to any transition to more sustainable forms of development. The extreme weakness of sustainable development is that we have not yet started to invent a politics to go with the concept. This question as with all sustainable development issues has many facets. The current situation is driven with large part by the "politics of more" and the "politics of react-and-cure". Whatever the issue, politicians will avoid it until they discover a way of dealing with it by promising "more." They never promise less. We have the politics of more. We have no politics of less (The politics of sustainable development, Ann Dale). As a result, we see; political parties, governments, institutions like the OECD and the World Bank have the genetic aversion to the notion of "limits."

Environmental protection politics is the standard politics of react-and-cure. So, politicians love first generation type issues like river pollution or Lake Eutrophication. These are politically easy and because of this, politicians can be heroes. Even they can react with passion, mount a white charger and promise to slay the dragons and cure the problems, while offering more, not only more clean air and clean water, but also more direct grants, tax breaks and subsidies for remedial measures and create far more jobs and income. How, then do we learn to package the politics and prevent- the politics of sustainable development- in ways that politicians would find equally attractive. For example, global warming- a third generation issue. Are we able enough to package the policies needed to hold up the global warming in ways that make them vote winners rather than vote losers? Creating a sustainable society is a political task, requiring a political party with a platform. Can ways be found to translate the measures needed to limit global warming into political benefits for leaders who not only advocate them but also implement them(The politics of sustainable development, Ann Dale, n.d.)?

Existing Political Situation: The fundamental problem for governance for sustainable development is that it has inherited from the nineteenth century- a model organization, structured around functions and services, rather than solving problems. Ourup-to-datesituation demands new ways of organizing around the problems of sustainable development. The characteristics of sustainable development problems can be cited below. They-

- are more complex and interactive than is generally assumed;
- transcend man-made political boundaries;
- are scale, place and time dependent, and must be defined according to the type, intensity and frequency of use;
- have highly diffused contexts, involving a multiplicity of actors;
- are ones that emerge in several places and suddenly, for example, the hole in the ozone layer, rather than ones that emerge only locally at a speed that is rapid enough to be noticed;

- move both human and natural systems into such novel and unfamiliar territory that aspects of the future are not only uncertain but are inherently unpredictable; and
- are ones where knowledge will always be uncertain and information incomplete(The politics of sustainable development, Ann Dale, n,d.).

Thus, with a view to effective respond to sustainable development necessities, the requirements are:

a) multiple ways of organizing around specific issues, depending upon contexts;
b) multiple tools;
c) multiple research methodologies, and finally
d) interdisciplinary networks of collaborations.

For example, the increasing domestic and international emphasis we have now on climate change would not have been achieved without the scientific consensus of the International panel on Climate Change, beginning in 1995.

Responsibilities of the Parliament: Although frequently overlooked it is self-evident that the sustainable development goals (SDGs)cannot be successful without strong political will (Governance for Sustainable Development, 2015). The first problem to sustainable development is that too much of the political process is dominated by particular interests that overlook the common good and ultimately spoil the legislative and regulatory process. A second problem is the natural tendency of politicians to sacrifice the long-term perspective that sustainable development requires to the short-term pressure of the electoral cycle. So, parliaments need to be better equipped politically to move the agenda forward, engage people from all constituencies, and create the conditions for a new era of consensus politics for the successful implementation of the SDGs.

Committee Structures Review: It is well-known that there is a ministry or parliamentary committee for the economy, one for the environment, one for trade etc., with too little coordination to effectively integrate all three pillars of sustainable development into a single policy approach. Very clearly it will not be sufficient to parcel out each goal to a specific ministry or parliamentary committee given that the goals will all be interlinked in one way or another. Similarly, there is a continuing need to promote greater policy coherence between ostensibly unrelated policy areas (trade, finance, development cooperation, monetary policy etc.). Any SDG committee relating to the budget process that may be constituted would ideally require a three-part mandate. Firstly, to help determine a full costing of the SDGs at the country level, identifying the financing requirements and corresponding funding sources. Secondly, to take the lead in ensuring that adequate provisions for the SDGs will be made in the national budget. Thirdly, to monitor budget expenditures for the SDGs and to evaluate their impact. A committee structure review within each parliament should pay particular attention to other cross-cutting issues such as gender and human rights. Specialized

committees for gender and human rights exist in many parliaments and have long shown their effectiveness. For parliaments to exercise oversight of the national plan may come from the international arena, through the peer review process that will be set up within the new High Level Political Forum (HLPF)(Governance for Sustainable Development, 2015).

Strengthen Capacities: To support the legislative and oversight process parliamentary capacities remain generally lacking. There is an obvious tension between governments and parliaments when it comes to the allocation of resources between the two branches: governments want to be in control of the policy process and so tend to allocate more of their limited resources to strengthen their own structures and processes. Few governments recognize the long-term benefit of strengthening the legislative and oversight functions of their parliament. For their part, donor agencies remain reluctant to invest in the capacities of parliaments for at least two reasons. First, the high risk and long-term commitment required in parliamentary strengthening does not fit snugly within the short-term, results--based outlook of their technical assistance programs; and second, donors fear being meddling in internal national politics. Investing in parliamentary capacities is perhaps the best catalytic use of official assistance that governments can make. With respect to the capacities of parliaments to perform their legislative and oversight functions effectively, the picture varies dramatically from country to country but the common denominator is that almost everywhere more should be done. For example, although more and more parliamentary budget offices are being established around the world, most of them have only limited capacities to provide long-term revenue projections, cost-benefit evaluations of public expenditures, and other such analysis to support parliamentary scrutiny of government policy.

Impediments to Politics: The main reason for not developing the politics of sustainable development, as a cohesive constituency, is simply because of the fragmentation of the key sectors involved in its promulgation- the development, environmental, health, peace and women's movements (The politics of sustainable development, Ann Dale). Besides, problem solving and decision making in this domain is difficult precisely because solutions are not clear cut and future consequences of alternative actions are uncertain, and issues are not often rationally bounded. In addition, the stakes and values are high, and thus this very diversity may be dysfunctional in that it leads to intense fragmentation.

In the word of Nazli Choucri (1999), at least five types of obstacles hinder effective analysis and policy responses. These are:

  a) Conceptual ambiguities: reflecting uncertainties and disagreements with regard to the ideas of sustainability, the underlying theories, the processes, and actions required and the outcome expected;

  b) Explosion of information: illustrated by the proliferation of numbers, data, documents, assessments, events, organizations, networks etc. addressing aspects of the sustainability dilemmas;

  c) Obstacles in tracking: creating uneven content and quality of information, evaluation and assessments etc. in different parts of the world;

  d) Absence of knowledge networking;

  e) Disconnects and limited feedback among critical stakeholders mainly between (a) science and technology, (b) business and industry, and (c) governance and governments.

Meaning of Governance: Even though it is often used in practice for different things governance is certainly a term in good currency. However, the first and most important thing is that governance is not the same as governing. 'Governing' refers to those social activities which make a "purposeful effort to guide, steer, control, or manage societies" (Kooiman, 2003). 'Governance' on the other hand describes "the patterns that emerge from the governing activities of social, political and administrative actors". The second is that governance is not the same as government: while government centres on the institutions and actions of the state, the term governance allows nonstate actors such as businesses and nongovernmental organisations to be brought into any analysis of societal steering (Lemos and Agrawal, 2006).

The Importance of Governance: Governance plays a crucial role in shaping the SDGs and thus provides an opportunity to go beyond the Millennium Development Goals, which did not include significant governance aspects. The centrality of governance in sustainable development has been emphasized repeatedly. For example, in a comprehensive Foresight Process organized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the authors identified "aligning governance to the challenges of global sustainability" as the most urgent emerging issue related to the global environment (UNEP, 2012). Similarly, a 2014 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report argued that "the quality of governance plays a defining role in supporting the [economic, social, and environmental] pillars" of the SDGs (UNDP, 2014).

Governances identified here as determined and authoritative steering of social processes. It includes activities of governmental and non-governmental actors- civil societies, action networks, partners, and private-sector entities, which occur at multiple levels. For the SDGs, implementation at national and local levels will be crucial to shaping the success or failure of the development agenda. While governance is essential to achieving successful outcomes, it is unclear how it can or should be integrated into the SDGs. The UN High Level Panel of Eminent Persons argued that governance is best positioned as a stand-alone goal that would help accomplish "a fundamental shift—to recognize peace and good governance as core elements of wellbeing, not optional extras" (United Nations, 2013).

Governance and Sustainable Development: A Critical Analysis: The first and the most important point is that the literature covering these two terms has certainly multiplied in the last five to ten years, very much paralleling the enormous growth in the governance literature. The second is that the vast majority of contributions are either empirical or normative, or some combination of the two. Some authors have deliberately highlighted the differences between these two interpretations, by distinguishing between "governance and sustainable development" and "governance for sustainable development" (Farrell et al, 2005). The third point is that like the broader field of governance research very few attempts have been made to produce a dedicated `theory of sustainable development governance'. On the other hand, the vast majority of empirical accounts of how sustainable development has been governed make little or no reference to what currently passes for `governance theory', or simply import what theory or theories they need from the broader field of social science research on policy and political systems. Therefore, common action proposals made by the Brundtland Commission for institutional and legal change for sustainable development (WCED, 1987) are:

- Assessing global risks: identifying, assessing, and reporting of risks of irreversible damage to natural systems and threats to human well-being.
- Making informed choices: supporting the involvement of informed public, nongovernmental organizations, and the scientific community; increasing cooperation with industry.
- Investing in the future: ensuring that multilateral financial institutions make a fundamental commitment to sustainable development; exploiting new and additional sources of revenue to support development in the South.
- Getting at the source: supporting development that is economically and ecologically sustainable.
- Integrating institutions: ensuring that environmental protection and sustainable development are integrated into the remit of all sectors and levels of government.
- Strengthening international frameworks: ensuring that national and international law keeps up with the scale of environmental and human development.
- Dealing with the effects: enforcing environmental-protection measures and resource management; strengthening the UNEP.

Progressing governance in the real world requires action in a wide range of areas, not all of which can be addressed at once, and not all can be the subject of a global consensus. These are discussed below:

Accountable, effective as well as responsive state institutions: Capacity for sustainable development is not just about efficient administration rather it also requires states to be responsive to the needs and demands of the citizens. Moreover, multi-stakeholder engagement with institutions including parliaments, courts, auditor-generals, ombudsmen, anti-corruption agencies, human rights commissions, civil society, media, and representatives of women's groups, is required ensure accountability and hold state institutions to account for their performance and the quality of services delivered with a view to making policies.

Openness and transparency: access to information: Evidence showed that informed citizens and the private sectors are better able to engage in developing policy; they are better collaborators and partners with government on service delivery, and also better able to hold governments to account, providing a better impact (Sen & Dreze, 1989). As seen in the commitment from a number of governments who have signed up to the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), there is a degree of consensus emerging on the importance of openness and transparency, and a number of proposals for goals and targets for post-2015 have been made.

Justice and the Rule of Law: Countries adhering to the rule of law have higher levels of growth and investment through the protection of property rights (UNDP, 2013). In addition, it can promote equity, gender equality, and inclusion through, for example, the protection of legal identity and more equitable access to resources for both women and men.

Participation in decision-making: Participation- a right and a means, is much needed to sustainable development. If communities are actively engaged in the development processes, project outcomes will be better targeted to local needs and results will be more sustainable. Socio-economic well-being will be improved, and so too will the legitimacy of the development process itself (Governance for Sustainable Development, 2014). Participation in policy development and the design of development interventions by the society enhances trust between those who decide, those who implement the decisions, and the population at large.

Addressing corruption and curbing illicit financial flows: Corruption is a major hindrance to sustainable development, with a disproportionate impact on the poor and marginalized populations. Transparency International, for example, finds that good performance on anti-corruption initiatives and the rule of law is linked with higher youth literacy rates and lower maternal mortality rates (TI, 2013).

Combating transnational organized crime and curbing violence: Due to globalization, unprecedented growth in the volume of trade and movement of goods, persons and money across boundaries and borders has increased enormously. Human trafficking has become a global business, disproportionally affecting women. Illicit flows present colossal challenges for sustainable human development, as well as peace and personal safety, through exacerbating already profound issues like poverty, corruption, violence, exploitation and conflict. Tackling these complex development challenges requires simultaneous attention to the demand.

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Since, the goals expressed are multidimensional; it is impossible to define sustainable development in an operational manner in the detail and with the level of control supposed in the logic of modernity thus; it becomes very tough to implement the right thing at the right time. Although, it is inevitable that the SDGs cannot be successful without strong political will, yet we have not even started to invent a politics to go with the concept. Creating a sustainable society is a political task, requiring a political party with a platform. However, while governance is essential to achieving successful outcomes, it is unclear how it can or should be integrated into the SDGs.

IV.CONCLUSION

Every Government must play a key role in ensuring that the relevant SDGs are implemented in accordance with its country's circumstances and policy priorities (The politics of sustainable development, Ann Dale, n.d.).To be most effective and legitimate, the governance of sustainable development requires the participation of a diverse set of actors ranging from transnational civil society groups to indigenous people (The Politics of Participation, 1996). From creating new institutions to reforming old ones, the process must live up to this standard and its mechanisms should be geared towards fostering the new international environment and cooperation for sustainable development (Governance for sustainable development, 2015). Even the most sophisticated implementation infrastructure will fail if the political environment is not conducive to progressive reforms that will result in stronger democratic governance at all levels and in all countries. Furthermore, research on governance for sustainable development is needed not only to the large number of academics working on sustainability issues from diverse disciplinary perspectives, but also to the many policy practitioners who are responsible for putting sustainability into practice (Jordan et al, 2005).

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