

Research Article

The Concept of Civic Sustainability is Need of Hour

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Abstract: This study examines the important challenges related to the sustainability. This study is based on review of the existing literature on sustainable development. However the question is that whether environmental education, awareness and people participation can improve the human life. How can sustainability challenges overcome through creating the awareness about the environmental problems? The objective is also to create a sense of responsibility through education, participation and action as group, individual. This study fills the gap of people's actually sustainable behavior and attitude and provides useful implication for decision maker for public policy. This study suggests that, it is more appropriate and feasible to create a civic sense in the society about the sustainability issues, which are associated with civic citizenship education, civic awareness and civic participation. The concept of civic sustainability (be able to think and act) empowers change in society through civic education, civic awareness and civic participation.

Keywords: Civic awareness, civic citizenship, civic participation, civic sustainability, environmental problems

INTRODUCTION

Public concern towards environmental problems has rapidly developed since 1964 (Dunlap and Catton, 1994). The contemporary determinants of what constitute responsible environmentally or green behavior or consumption has become almost a social cultural norm in all the societies particularly in western society. The underlying philosophy of sustainability is not about doing business as usual, but making sweeping and substantive changes to which sustainability can be achieved. "If sustainability could be manifested at that level, green marketing would be sufficient, but we are becoming increasingly aware that the problems run much deeper. These institutional-level problems that affect the way we think and act in an endangered and increasingly uncertain world" (Kilbourne, 2010). According to James (2008) framed the problem of sustainability and stated, "Working only within the system will, in the end, not succeed when what is needed is transformative change within the system itself". Naustdalslid (2011) pointed out that the knowledge about the environment changing conditions is not same as the knowledge about how the problems abated. Other possible approach for this is to move from the basic knowledge of environmental management practices to adaptation of our knowledge and our actions. Knowledge has reasonable become important for changing interface acting into action".

In return top leadership of the firms should put more focus on development of consumer competencies.

The increasing awareness about the green house gases and their effect on environment, consumers of the developing countries seems hopeless in protecting natural environment as compared with the developed countries. But corporations of developed countries seeking to boost the marketing efforts and compelling consumers through the effective use of the media participate in saving the environment. The firm's commitment and system for managing the environmental efforts has created an opportunity for the companies who are turning into the green. These practices of firms significantly bring change and results in promoting the awareness. Large multinationals have environmental policies as part of their corporate governance whether they are following it or not with true performance spirit. But present the results of their social activities as they have created a value addition process in the company.

The notion of civic science is rather vogue and attempts to cover the various aspects of sustainability related issues to increase the public awareness, knowledge and participation in citizen's democratic societies. The issues of sustainability and role of citizen concern about environmental issues and participation has brought to the fore. What is the scope for such environmental awareness and citizen participation in the validation the production process? Is it possible, or more desirable to include citizen participation in spreading the awareness of environmental challenges? (Bäckstrand, 2003). The question is, how it can be realized which is largely unrealized? While there is lip

service paid to the need of the civic science and sustainability. However, this problem leads to arise the question of how to and balance between the awareness and participation in the society? The purpose of this study is to articulate and mapping the concept of civic sustainability in alleviating the prevailing environmental challenges to the humanity. "This prompts the question of how to and a balance between specialized expert knowledge and public participation in science. In this sense, there is a lack of a coherent social science perspective. While raising critical issues on how to make science more transparent and responsive to the needs of society, the field of sustainability science is still an expert-driven interdisciplinary endeavor. Civic science is ultimately justified by an epistemological argument" (Bäckstrand, 2003).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study purely based on reviewing the existing literature critically. In this type of study researchers make extensive efforts in conducting systematic literature reviews, studying both the negative and positive and contradictory findings. The reasons to choose literature review "is that you want to know what is already known about your area of interest". This study based on the theory and discussion of three important concepts of civic education, civic awareness and civic participation. However the question is that whether environmental education, awareness and people participation can improve the human life. How can sustainability challenges overcome through creating the awareness about the environmental problems? This study fills the gap of people's actually sustainable behavior and attitude and provides useful implication for decision maker for public policy. The purpose of this study is to investigate the and look briefly into the key variables that can tap the environmental issues into a meaningful way. The objective is also to create a sense of responsibility through education, participation and action as group, individual. The aim is to build awareness, knowledge through education and understanding the issues and problems of the environment and its impact on society. Further, the aim of this study is here to review the most common interpretations and challenges associated with this concept and go on to study and explore these interpretations to discover the undiscovered the implicit and explicit. A key requirement for civic sustainability in the development area will be problematical; the concept of the sustainable development to examine the ways in which these issues are framed. This may alter route from issues to solutions by providing a new approach for sustainable development.

The new focus on the sustainable development issue:
The term Civic Literacy is defined as "The ability to let

your life speak" by participating thought fully, responsibly and passionately in the life of the community with concern for the common good" (Putnam, 2000). The idea of sustainable development is "focused on contemporary threats of human life, which generally emerge from growing consumption of natural resources, enlarging of environmental devastation, fast demographic growth, unsatisfied basic needs of immeasurable group of people or deep destabilization of natural and socio-economical systems" (Adam, 2009). Sustainable development issue should be seen with special concern for improvement of human being and encourage them to participate for a better sustainable future (Ghauri *et al.*, 2011).

The concept of sustainable development has been introduced in recent years, to improve he living standards of current generations and meets the needs of the future generation without compromising the needs of the present. An important concept is claim "Living standards that go beyond the basic minimum are sustainable only if consumption standards everywhere have regard for long-term sustainability. Yet many of us live beyond the world's ecological means, for instance in our patterns of energy use" (UNWCED, 1987). This concept central focus is on the promotion of the civic sustainability and needs to be coupled with the theoretical understanding of the institutional, normative and epistemological divisions characterizing the term (Bäckstrand, 2003).

Redclift (1987) explained the limitations of this approach and reveals that "the constant reference to 'sustainability' as a desirable objective has [sometimes] served to obscure the contradictions that 'development' implies for the environment" (Redclif, 1987). According to the Redclift (1987) clearly suggested that making sustainable development in particularly in developing countries is associated with givining power to the workers and set their goals in achieving these standards. In his point of view, environmental alone is not a key factor in developing and making the development sustainable. He concluded that "Sustainable development, if it is not to be devoid of analytical content, means more than seeking a compromise between the natural environment and the pursuit of economic growth. It means a definition of development which recognizes that the limits of sustainability have structural as well as natural origins" (Redclif, 1987). This link can be maintained and achieved if poor people are involved in meeting their aspirations. "Industrial growth needs to be redirected towards meeting the needs of the world's majority; renewable energy resources need to receive a greater share of attention; natural resources and policies need to be shifted from the arms race to the protection of agronomic and biological resource systems" (Redclif, 1987).

Protecting the natural environment is not a new challenge for the world but the corporations needs new strategic vision to cope with this problem. Multinationals companies devised the recycling strategy in disposing off the hazardous material and particularly the managers of the less developed countries seen as an unnecessary activity. The implications for scientific knowledge production and practice are left unanswered, namely, how norms, institutions and procedures in science have to change to enable broader participation (Gallopín *et al.*, 2001). Each corporation is performing certain and specific set of organizational and administrative activities, examples included are operations management, corporate governance, marketing and logistic activities. These different kinds of activities require constant investment to maintain the balance in production and delivery. The corporations, who are investing in the fields of corporate governance and sustainable development, no doubt will increase the efficiency and would set new initiative agenda in investing in sustainable programs. Sustainable development challenges are varies with respect to the company operations and companies should carefully plan to invest in certain type of the development programs which are inevitable for the success of the organizations. Leadership in the organizations can assess the environmental challenges and finding the best practices in responding to these challenges through creating a competitive value advantage. Leaderships provide the potential growth opportunities to their executives for successful implementations of competitiveness strategy and also ensure to locate the advantageous opportunity.

Hope and possibility: conceptualize the civic sustainability: Civic science harbors many ambitious and it has many meanings and aspirations. It is used interchangeably with civil, participatory, citizen, stakeholder participation in environmental related decision with securing an adequate representation from the society. This underlines the importance of increasing the civil participation by increasing the awareness by embarking on participatory practices in the conduct of the business (Weale, 2001). Sustainability science probes interaction between awareness and participation and does not address how the practices of science have to change to accommodate democratic participation (Gallopín *et al.*, 2001).

Li *et al.* (2009) suggested that the people are not satisfied with their living environments and explained most concerned areas of environmental hazardless are water, air and food pollution. All these interface need to set a closet relationship with the society. Education and popularization of eco-environmental knowledge should be emphasized. Onyenechere (2011) Concluded that environment nexus is necessary for adequate economic

development and environmental health. According to Zhang *et al.* (2007) Sustainable consumption can be classified into three categories, purchasing, using it habitually and recycling behaviors, the purchasing activities are habitually buying the green products, or energy efficiency products. The term using it habitually defined as “people daily efforts requiring no or minimal structural changes” (Barr *et al.*, 2005). A stream of research has been focused on determining the individual sustainable behavior and has indicated a number of different variables that could explain and distinguish the sustainable behavior at different level (McMakin *et al.*, 2002). The main findings of the Diamantopoulos *et al.* (2003) included:

- Female show more environmental behavior than their male counterparts
- Older people undertake more recycling activities
- People with Higher education level undertake more recycling activities

Three perspectives on environmental education developed from wave of environmentalism back in the year of 1970. These three approaches termed as education in environment, education about the environment and education for the environment (Huckle, 1996). This critical challenge transition from environmental education to sustainability education that followed the Brundtland Report (UNWCED, 1987) and the United Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (see, in particular, UNESCO, 2004). Education for sustainability “guide the people and encourages to explore the complexity and implications of sustainability and the economic, political, social, cultural, technological and environmental forces that foster or impede it” (Huckle, 1996). Sustainable education improves the quality of living standards at all levels from individual to national level. It is the education that serves for the formation of innovative human resource and develops necessary skills that generates productive and technological activities. “A key learning goal, therefore is the understanding that sustainability and sustainable development focus not only on a responsible relationship with nature, but on questions of values, justice, equity and our relations with each other” (Huckle, 1996).

The research of Ghulam (2013) indicates a significant correlation exist between the urbanization indicators and sustainable development. The purpose of environment awareness, developing and protecting and enhancing the environment is to provide a safe environmental to the future generation can live healthy and safe. It is a need of hour that public awareness must be raised in order to protect this plant from environmental problems There is need of an hour to create awareness among the students, this which will turn to a positive environmental behavior (Awan and Abbasi, 2013). Further should be emphasized to raise

the environmental awareness among the public. These measures of enhancement of awareness about the environmental issues will play a significance role in protection and management of environmental problems (Li *et al.*, 2009).

Consumers' reactions towards the environmental protection programs are less or more predictable based on their purchasing decision. According to Awan *et al.* (2011) stated that that consumers are willing to pay extra for the green energy if they see some visible nature of benefit of their money in terms of good quality, services, taking care of customers and society. The results enable consumers are willing and ready to buy the energy from those companies who are supporting environment and taking care of their own citizens and if the company owes a responsibility towards society no matter the company is producing the green energy or from other sources people will do mild towards them. In Previous research demonstrate that Consumer have positive attitude towards protecting environment and are likely to support green initiatives and purchased the green energy. Consumers (citizens) are aware of the environmental issues and they feel their concern about the environment, particularly the young consumers and to participate for sustainability of the environment (Awan and Abbasi, 2013). This research of Awan and Raza (2011) clearly demonstrate that the key trends that hindrance (barriers) in adaptation of environmentally sustainability program. The following few factors are identified as key barriers in purchasing environmentally friendly energy:

- Poor Quality of Service Performance by electric supplier
- Perception of high price is associated with the adoption of green energy
- Unclear environmental benefits (Lack of Communication by electric suppliers)
- Other electric suppliers of energy alternative are not available (Environmental friendly products required more time and effort to buy)
- Less focused on environmental awareness programs by companies (Increase consumer's interest)

Education is considered as a predictable tool of sustainable behavior which could develop and formulates environmental behavior and attitude Environmental related education plays a significant role in developing better understanding of environmental problems and its affect on human species (Arcury, 2000). To date sustainable development concept have focused on the micromanagement of environmental issues. From the past decade, there has been development and some progressed has been made in development of normative principles and management metrics (Bansal, 2005).

Awan and Raza (2011) concluded in his study that consumers are aware of their environmental problems and have these issues in his subconscious level, which than needs to be uncovered and support green purchasing product not only for their visible environmental benefit but they make trade-off with other products attributes. Media can play an important role in Sweden to make aware the consumers about the adverse affect on environment and can provide action oriented knowledge.

The following attributes are concluded from the study of Awan and Raza (2011) and important for ensuring the participatory participation in saving the environment:

- Low price and Services quality (long term cost savings)
- Social responsiveness behavior of a company (Help their people)
- Environmental communication, green power, eco-labeling (Speak out clear benefits to build knowledge and trust of company)
- Social influence (Other people in society used which make them feel difference from others)
- Willingness to pay more to save environment (Concern for environmental safety)

Further Awan *et al.* (2011) stated that companies can use eco-labeling of their product in communication; this can build trust that the product is greener and company could differentiate themselves from other companies in the market. As we have discussed in our literature review, this type of companies can build knowledge in the consumer about the environmental effects.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study proposes dealing with sustainability problems requires focused positive vision about what to be saved and management policies with special focus on the creating the civic sense.

Central to this concept, an integrated attention on planning and policy implementation across the scales of time now and into the future is needed. Therefore it is concluded that the sustainability refers to as managing own resources (self resources at optimal level) and planning into human activities.

It is more appropriate and feasible to create a civic sense in the society about the sustainability issues, which are associated with citizenship education, awareness and participation. In Civic Sustainability (SC) meant that development of a framework for civic development that enframed sustainability issues differently. The concept of civic sustainability (be able to think and act) empowers change in society through

civic education, civic awareness and civic participation. In this study this concept is referred as civic sustainability.

It is a society obligation to resolve their existing conflicts and help the society on consensus building in their differences that can generate (invigorate) a positive social change. Civic educations meant to understand and own the responsibility to resolve the sustainable problems. Civic awareness recognize the needs of the people and society and suggesting the ways to improve the sustainable problems. The term civic participations means that to manage own behavior, resources and ability to compliance the norms of the society and give the solutions for the community. Civic Sustainable (CS) is a panacea to solve the problems of sustainability and main theme of this study is that there is a need of hour to take action through collaborative participations. The environmental sustainability problems are exists in a more complex and constantly changing interface. Civic sustainable development may be one of the best possible measure and approach to systematically solve and handle the complex interface between awareness to action.

Addressing this need will help in creating the civic development. This concept stimulates the researchers and workers about the directions are appropriate in this area. The idea of CS is to create a strong and meaningful foundation ground for next generation, which needed to prepare citizens for active participations in uplifting the problems associated with sustainable development. The concrete success in the sustainable development can be achieved through adopting civic sustainable development approach. In future, researcher should undertake how organizations and management may apply civic sustainable development initiatives to achieve and improved the long term sustainable performance and minimizing the barrier arises in realizing the conceptual benefits.

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