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## ROLE OF WOMEN IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Begom Salma Ansary

### INTRODUCTION

“If women were in more productive and decision making roles, we could be moving faster and more assuredly towards sustainability in the economic, social and environmental sense, sustainable development is a political concept because it is about good government, which will be hard to achieve until we get closer to gender parity.”

Now a day's protection of environment is a serious issue for everyone in this world. The need and importance of protecting the environment is now realized and recognized by National Government, inter Governmental and Non-Governmental Agencies.

People are differently affected by development in different

### ABSTRACT

*Sustainable development means environmental friendly development. The world Commission on Environment and development has defined sustainable development as development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs “(Our common future, Oxford University Press New York, 1987). It is therefore encapsulates the needs of both men and women. Experience of women is so much different that man in everyday life. A woman has to play multiple duties and responsibilities in the home at work place and also in the community. As a result women have a unique knowledge of the environment and the importance of sustainability. Women contribution to making the environment a central issue has been significant. Sustainable development can't be achieved without gender equality. Women's Empowerment the key factor for achieving sustainable economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability.*

*Over the past years the environment is being degraded as a result of unsustainable exploitation and unsound agricultural practices, rapid urbanization, increasing transport system, population explosion and deforestation etc. Therefore it is very necessary to protecting the environment that is why it is now recognized by national governments and inter government agencies and also non-governmental agencies. All over the developing countries, women supplies of fuel and water, they interact most closely with the environment women can be considered as the preserve and manager of the natural resource. They have continued to speak out for policies and practices that don't threaten the health and well being of future generation. In this article our main concern is to highlight the role of women in sustainable development and need and importance of women empowerment to enhance the equitable distribution of natural resources.*

**KEYWORDS :**Environment, sustainable development, women empowerment, decision making, Chipko movement.

### Short Profile

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parts of the world – whether they are male or female. Women play prominent role than men in sustainable development. However much more needs to be done to realize the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in this area. Without gender equality it is not possible to achieve the objective of sustainable development. Half of the world's population is comprises by women. In twentieth century an influential movement is rise that is women's movement like environmentalism in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Gender equality is a goal in its own right but also a key factor in sustainable development in all aspects of a nation, equal opportunities should be provide to women

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and men to participate in decision making process and in all kinds of activities a sustainable way of development can be achieved to ensure that men's and women's intents one both taken into account in the allocation of natural resources. Women produce 50% agricultural outputs in Asia and represent nearly 80% of the agricultural labour force in parts of Africa. If women had the same access as men to agricultural resources, production would increase reduce the numbers of hungry people in the world by 12-17% according to research by the UN and Agricultural organization.

### Objectives of the Present Study:

- To evaluate the women's contribution towards sustainable development.
- To highlight the importance of women's empowerment in sustainable development.
- To find out the inter-relationship between women and sustainable development.

### DISCUSSION:

The role of women regarding environment and sustainable development was recognized by the UN and 1875 was declared international women's year, to be followed by the UN decade for women (UNDW), 1975-85. According to the Director of UNFPA, "Dr. Nafis Sadik, "Women are the key to development and are crucial to the goal of sustainable development. Investing in women means widening their choice of strategies and reducing their dependence on children for status and support. Family planning is one of the most important investment because it represents the freedom from which other freedoms flow. Besides this investment in women also include access to health services and education, their rights to land and credit, rewards of employment, as well as personal and political rights." (Taj Haseen, P. 275)

"Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve

sustainable development "This is not just the hope of women in all over world, but is Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration on to, and signed by world governments in June 1992.

Without the full-participation of women in all aspects of society and decision making it is not possible to achieve the objectives of sustainable development. Without the meaningful involvement of women sustainable development have no significance. Gender equality is one of the most important issues in sustainable development. Absence of gender equality is noted in the reports as a whole.

Since 1992, the global community understanding of sustainable development. Which looks at meeting the needs of current and future generations while still preserving and implementing sustainable development however, is a topic that still needs to be addressed.

### Role of Women:

Over the past years women's groups and organization have been very active in promoting environmental awareness, education and protection. All over the world women's play a prominent role in sustainable development? They can be considered as the suppliers of fuel and water, managers and preservers of natural resources the crucial role of women in environmental issues has been recognized over the world. There are some important roles played by women for sustainable development.

1. Family planning and Women: Family planning is one of the most important aspects of sustainable development. And female can be regarded as the best planner of a family. There should be availability of family planning methods for women as these give them the right to choose their size of family.

2. Women as User: In everyday life it is seen that women have direct contact with environment, because they collect their necessary items to fulfill their daily needs from the natural

environment. Though some women consumers have least direct link with environment but whose actions can have a bearing on its future.

3. Women as water collector: Women play a vital role as water collector and supplier. In day to day life women have direct link than men. Water is necessary for a family in different domestic purposes, sanitary arrangement food production, farm, vegetable production, drinking etc. Women have the better knowledge about the use of water than men.

4. Women and Population: Rapidly growing population is a key factor in environmental degradation. A woman can give valuable contribution to reduce birth rate through family planning which leads to reduce environmental degradation.

5. Women and Agriculture: 50% of agricultural output produce by women in Asia and represent nearly 80% of the agricultural labour force in parts of Africa. If women had the same access as men to agricultural resources production would increase by 20-30% and has the potential to reduce the numbers of hungry people in the world by 12-17% according to research by the UN food and Agricultural Organization.

6. Women and Environment: Women play a prominent role in activities relating to natural resources and the degradation of their resources. Their consciousness in ecological issues makes them better managers of natural resources. This association exists because of their social and economic roles, which requires them to provide food, fuel, fodder. Therefore women interact with it for want of survival feel the impact of environmental degradation more actually.

Now a day's women in developing countries over the world already have a greater knowledge of environment and their duties and responsibilities towards sustainable development. They can be regarded as the corner stone of sustainable development programs. But they need up-to-date information and training in some areas such as land use, forestry, vegetable production, silviculture, pisciculture etc.

All over the world women are starting to participate actively to protect and improve the environmental degradation. Participation of women has been increased day by day in the process of sustainable development. Some environmental movements which lead by women are nationally and internationally recognized. Chipko movement is one of the most important environmental movements which was led by women in Reni village of Chamoli district in Uttar Pradesh in 1970s. A group of women peasant acted to prevent the cutting of trees and reclaim their traditional forest rights that were threatened by the contractor system of the state forest department. As well as consuming trees, many women are involved in planting trees in areas where forest were destroyed. (In Sudan women leaders working with local women local extension workers established tree nurseries within their compound and plants trees around their homes.)

Chipk Movement which inspired the villagers of the district of Uttarakannada of Karnataka state. They started a movement in which they hugged the trees to protect them from falling down. The term Appiko means to hug or to embrace. It was initiated by Pandu Ranga Hedge in 1983. In 1983 Mrs. Saruojini Naidu launched Ganga Action Plan to reduce the pollution on the river.

Women are actively involved in ensuring the provision of safe water supply and sanitation. They are taking part in various projects and programs from grass root level. Many of the Mahila Mandal Projects in India helped the environment. Suppose a woman takes a loan for dairy. She must also take a course in how to look after it. Environmental care is not only found in rural area but also urban women actively working to protect their surroundings.

Conclusion: All of us known that prominently women are connected with environment than man. It is very common fact that in any country a child has direct and first

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contact with her mother. They learn their first word from their mother. A woman has hundred times better knowledge about environment than man. In any country now participated fully in different areas such as education sports, politics media, art, music, service sector, science and technology, environmental etc. Half of world's population is comprises by women. So it is very necessary to empower women and trained them how to protect our surround. Childs health, nutrition, education is closely related to their mother not father. The role of women in collecting and using water, firewood, and leaving and clearing the homestead and fields is significant. That is why when we talk about environment and sustainable development the women should be the key figure.

In thus way we can conclude that role of women is very crucial in sustainable development. "Someone said. If you want a message to go out to the whole world there are three way of telling it, that is TELEVISION, TELEPHONE and TELEMEN! Nothing would be truer. It is therefore important that women be used and placed in the correct place it the message concerning our environment and sustaining the same is to be best development and kept" (Taj Haseen P. No. 281).

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