

The social aspect of sustainable development

Sustainable development is a holistic approach to improving the quality of life. It postulates that there are intrinsic links between economic, social and environmental well-being. Changes in any one domain will have an impact on the other two dimensions.

From a social perspective, in particular, human well-being cannot be sustained without a healthy environment and is equally unlikely in the absence of a vibrant economy. It is not easy to determine precisely which elements to include in the social sphere. Its connections to the economic dimension, such as quality of work and level of income, are more obvious. But its relationship to the environment as well as to the environment and economy together is more difficult to articulate. The social aspect in the context of Sustainable development became more important, when it was realized that the level of poverty in the world is not decreasing. The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development was established by the United Nations in 2015 for the core purpose of development that satisfies the 3 pillars of sustainability: Social Inclusion, Economic Growth, and Environment Protection. These pillars were later derived by the UN to the 5Ps: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership. Although all SDGs are ultimately interconnected and each goal could be linked to all 3 pillars of sustainability, it is very clear that the social aspect is the core of most of these goals with at least half of them directly linked to people and social enhancement. However, people often relate sustainability to environmental protection and economic growth while almost always considering social inclusion to be the least important. The direct linkage between the social aspect (people) and goals such as no poverty, zero hunger, education, health and equality makes it easy for us to understand its importance in sustainable development, but the linkage is much deeper than that and it's very crucial that we understand the risks of social exclusion from sustainable development.

Sustainable development is surely the way for humanity to move forward. Current practices and measures focus more on the economic and environmental aspects despite the criticality of excluding the social aspect. At the end, we will only reach true sustainability through equality in human development and creating people-centered sustainable systems.¹

¹ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/importance-social-aspect-sustainable-development-taqi-almahfoudh>

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