

17. Sustainable Development with Vedic and Upanishadic Knowledge

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Abstract:

Sustainable development is development where the present generation of people is protected socially, economically, and environmentally, and at the same time, future generations will have a world safe and protected by natural resources where they can meet all their needs. That is, the development of the present generation should not put the future generation in danger in any way, that development is called sustainable development. For the overall development of the state, technological development and economic development are needed, as the world will move at its own pace, it should also focus on environmental protection. Recognizing the need for improvement on all three sides – social, economic, and environmental, and keeping these in mind, this article will focus only on environmental consciousness and environmental protection by following Indian wisdom. Based on the knowledge of ancient Indian texts such as the Vedas and Upanishads, this article will only focus on how to raise awareness about the environment and make it more beautiful and safer. Although the number of Vedas and their mantras is enormous, and on the other hand the number of original Upanishads is 12, this article will focus its discussion on the cognitive interpretation of the Rigveda and the knowledge stored in the knowledge of some of the Upanishads and will also try to provide solutions to how the environment and the earth can be stabilized by all this knowledge.

Keywords:

Sustainable Development, Indian Knowledge, Veda, Upanishad.

17.1 Introduction:

Sustainable development is a planned development process that aims to enhance development by ensuring that actions that meet the needs of the present generation do not harm future generations. That is, the development of the present society should not hinder the normal and overall development of the future society. To achieve this sustainable development, proper development of the environment along with social and economic development is also necessary. Since the beginning of creation, due to the indomitable enthusiasm and efforts of man, man has reached the pinnacle of success in almost all fields today. But today's world must pay the price of this success in the sense that the life force of the world is gradually decreasing. As a result, to keep the world alive and alive, every person will have to adopt some ways from his own boundaries where a developed and stable world will be built and future generations will be protected and developed along with the present

generation. (Richard I. Sikora, 1978). Sustainability is the concept in which the world's society will walk on the path of progress by balancing the environment, economy, and culture with each other. To maintain order and balance between society, environment, economy and culture, some important steps must be adopted by society, state, and individuals, such as the conservation of different types of living beings living in nature, the use and recycling of the resources of the environment according to the principles of justice, less wastage, permanent peace in the society. Development, sustainable technology, etc. Apart from this, it is very important to develop human qualities so that a stable environment and planet can be built.

In the tradition of Indian knowledge, the people of India possess some resources where the overall welfare of society, state, individual and the world was possible and still is. Indian education and culture possess certain resources that not only promote the development of knowledge but are also conducive to the full development of human beings. In today's age of technology, people have neglected the ancient knowledge and ideas so much that although the society is advanced in technology, the absence of permanent peace in the society and in the minds of the people due to the tolerance of human qualities is especially noticeable. Due to the huge demand of human beings, the environment is damaged today, but how it is possible to maintain them and develop man's own human qualities can be seen in ancient texts such as Vedas and Upanishads, Puranas, and other books. These texts contain examples of events where man can constantly beautify the environment and the world along with his own mental development. This is where Indian knowledge is related to sustainability. That is, there are some forces in the storehouse of Indian knowledge with the help of which it is possible to achieve the overall welfare of society, people, and the world even in the present century. Human development is necessary because it is man who is driven by his judgment, intelligence, wisdom and needs to engage in new development works, so the trend of progress continues. If people are enlightened in the light of justice and engage themselves in the development of the society, then that society is more stable. Sustainability cannot be brought about mechanically with some purpose in mind, it also requires honest human effort and the knowledge required for this is recorded in the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, etc., in the scriptures of religion and philosophy, in which it is seen how man protects the environment through the knowledge acquired by his own qualities, it protects justice and protects stability.

17.2 Environmental Awareness in RigVeda:

Evidence of environmental consciousness in ancient India can be found at various places. A study of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas shows that the mind of the people of India is very much related to nature. In fact, Indian knowledge has been developed in the lap of nature and in the forests, because the knowledge of the rishis which is observed in the Vedas, Upanishads, etc., they live in the realm of nature, are nurtured by the touch of nature, and have imparted about nature.

As a result, the advanced patterns of environmental consciousness are recorded in these books. It must be acknowledged that people have benefited greatly from the advancement of technology. In a country with a large population like India, many jobs have been created due to the development of this technology, but it also has some negative aspects, which have resulted in huge damage to the environment.

As a result, with the improvement of technology, it is necessary to keep an eye on how to make the environment cleaner so that its stability is possible. For this, it is necessary to read and practice the books of the Vedas, Upanishads, etc.

In the Vedic period, nature was considered a powerful entity and hence various elements of nature such as earth, water, fire, air, and sky were invoked, and worshipped by divinity. Natural forces were also considered powerful and mysterious and benevolent. It was in the Vedic period that a question first arose in the minds of people was, what is the force behind this moving world? (Goswami, 1977) (Rigveda, 1,164.6) and in the fictitious descriptions of the stories and events given by the people of the Vedic age, sometimes water as the supreme powerful being, sometimes an inexplicable being, sometimes the god Indra has been acknowledged. These elements of nature, sun, water, air, are adorned with the knowledge of God and an attempt has been made to establish friendship with them through prayer by describing their form, strength, and valour. It is also described that they protect the human world and feed and nourish it. That is, the evidence that nature is omnipotent is found in various mantras of the Rigveda. (Vedas, 2019). Also, the mantra written for the dead person in the Rigveda states that after death, the soul of a person dissolves in this nature, merges with different parts of nature such as seas, trees, and air. That is, just as man is born in nature, man's death is also in the part of nature. (Goswami, 1977) (Rigveda, 10.58)

Also, in the Rigveda, when water is considered as the basic element of this world, it is said that Vishwakarma created this water. (Goswami, 1977) (Rigveda, 10.82.1) In the Nasadiya Sukta of the Rigveda, water is recognized as the element. Vedic legend has it that water by severe penance created the Hiranmaya egg from which the butterfly was born and through him the earth, the great Indus and the sky were created. Also found in the Rigveda, the names of the words Dyus, Navas, Yama, Anriksha are found which are divine and which refer to the elements of nature. The earth is also conceived as a mother that protects and nurtures people. (Goswami, 1977) (Rigveda, 10.82.6).

In the Rigveda, Vayu is a generous deity who destroys enemies. At the place of sacrifice, the yajna invokes the wind by prayer so that the yajna can be completed smoothly. There is also an explanation in the Rig Veda that this wind gives us wealth, gives us a long life, and people also evoke fear from the air because it also has a terrible form. As a result, efforts were made to invoke and calm it through prayer and worship.

Accepting the above Vedic knowledge emphasizes nature itself. It is instructive by this knowledge that the maintenance of nature is necessary for the survival of man, because nature gives man a great shelter. Inside him, man artificially builds his separate shelter, but the being above all is nature and this world. Therefore, environmental awareness must be developed in the mind of every person, then it is possible to get its results to a greater extent.

17.3 Environmental Awareness in Upanishad:

The Upanishads are the book of the high spiritual knowledge that is stored in the knowledge of India. The Upanishad is a book that discusses Brahmanvidya. The Upanishads discuss the efforts and results of connecting oneself with the Absolute.

The Upanishads also explain how man can develop himself fully through a change in his heart and thereby make the environment and the earth beautiful and serene. The Upanishad is the book in which some rishis are engaged in deep meditation in the forest in search of the real meaning and purpose of life, completely indifferent to worldly enjoyments, lusts, desires, property, and wealth. It describes how man can be connected to Brahman through knowledge, action, devotion, or love.

The knowledge of the Upanishads makes man a complete human being because of which man is always delighted in the joy of Sat-chit-Ananda and as a result both earth and nature are safe. (Sen, 2018). There is much disagreement about the number of Upanishads, which are related in some way to the four divisions of the Vedas, which can generally be the original Upanishads, which are 12 in number. Of these, 11 books were written by Adi Guru Shankaracharya. All the 12 Upanishads can be termed as Upanishads of the Vedic period.

17.4 Knowledge of Isha Upanishad:

If we look at the first verse of the Isha Upanishad, it says that the universe is dynamic and ever-changing. Behind this changing world there is an unchanging Being, the sustainer of all things and animals. The name of this immutable being is Ishwar or Brahman.

Therefore, man should see God in all things in the world, and when the knowledge of God's presence arises in all things, the person becomes detached, that is, he no longer develops attachment or attachment to anything in the world. When this feeling of dispassion is born, man feels love in all things, all beings and animals, and the feeling of oneness with them also arises. As a result, man does not see the material and animal world of the world in a tempting mentality for his own needs, but sees the world through the eyes of feeling.

As a result, people make the world more developed and stable, so that this world can become enlightened for the present generation as well as future generations where food, resources, and drink will be more secure. Also, in the second line of the same verse of the Isha Upanishad, the sage says that the world is to be consumed through the attitude of renunciation and that it is not desirable to covet property, whether it is one's own or others. If this feeling is born in the mind of every human being, then people will use the resources of the world as little as possible. As a result, there will be no pressure of human greed and demand on nature. The world will emerge towards sustainable development which is the goal of sustainable development. In the second verse of this Isha Upanishad, the rishis say that one should renounce desires and perform proper duties because one becomes subjugated when desires are added, and without desires, one becomes free.

The subjugated person always suffers because of his attachment and is immersed in the legs of the world. The person who is free, that is, without attachment, gets real bliss. What is instructive through this verse is that man is subjected to slavery because of his greed. Without greed, a person will be complete and without slavery. As a result, he will use the world and the world in the eyes of just principles, because if there is no attachment, demand, and greed, one will be accustomed to the consumption of moderate things. As a result, the earth will become habitable for both present and future generations. (Ishavasya Upanishad, 2020).

17.5 Knowledge of Katha Upanishad:

Looking at verse 30 mentioned in the second valli of the first chapter of the Katha Upanishad, it is seen that when there was a conversation between Yama (the lord of death) and Nachiketa (A ten-year-old boy of a sage), where the message of wisdom was poured out to Nachiketa by Yama, it is necessary to understand the difference between Shreya(good) and Preya(pleasant). By virtue, and taking the path of Shreya (the supreme good), one can be liberated from this life and through the pleasant things one can enjoy the temporary worldly pleasures.

If one attains Brahman through self-knowledge without being addicted to the enjoyment of the world, then it is possible to overcome worldly sorrow, and greed and attain liberation. This is called moksha. On the other hand, to be subservient to religion(dharma), money (Artha), lust(kama) is called to adopt the path of preya(the material pleasure), where spiritual knowledge and spiritual progress is never achieved and people indulge in their own enjoyment and consider the world as a thing of human consumption.(Katha Upanishad, 2002).

The lesson that can be learned through this verse of the Katha Upanishad is that even in the present century, if man chooses the path of superiority (supreme good) and neglects the pleasant or material things, then just as he will possess advanced knowledge as a human being, he will never consider the world as a commodity, but he will be disinterested in worldly things and he will use the worldly wealth only for need. In this case, as the environment is protected, the lives of all other people will also be more secure because if every person can control his greed and greed standing in his own boundaries, then he will be the owner of the vast natural resources and abundance of the earth, where both the present generation and the future generation will be protected in a safe shelter. Sustainable development is possible only when people's minds are stable with little need. Thus, through the knowledge of the Upanishads, man can still make himself strong in self-power, where he feels one with the universe.

17.6 Knowledge of Mundaka Upanishad:

Looking at verse 18 of the second volume of the Mundaka Upanishad I Mundaka, it is found that man usually behaves like a senseless child out of his ignorance and manifests himself through those national actions by indulging in all the pleasures of this world and he himself does not know whether any human quality is developing in which he is taking.

Being completely ignorant, man arrogantly thinks himself to be a great doer and separates himself from the world soul and does senseless acts, because of which neither his soul nor the Supreme Soul can know and as a result, he does not improve himself or even does not benefit the world. Because the good of the world is possible largely by the individual. (Gambhirananda, 2017). Understanding the meaning of this verse of Mundaka Upanishad shows that people usually lead their whole life out of ignorance and think themselves to be the best. In this way he only harms the world, because the more ignorant man is, the more he will enjoy the world covered with delusion and degrade the environment and the surrounding conditions.

Man takes the environment and the world to a higher level only when he himself is enlightened by the light of the real Brahman, and only through this kind of knowledge can the sustainable development of the world be possible.

17.7 Knowledge of Svetasvatara Upanishad:

In the first chapter of the Svetasvatara Upanishad, verse 6, it is said that if a man thinks of himself as being detached from this Vishwatma or the Supreme Soul, then he is going on in the cycle of samsara. Instead, if he considers himself to be identical with the Supreme Soul or Brahman, then he is liberated from samsara and attains immortality. (Svetasvatara Upanishad, 2022). Understanding the significance of this verse of the Svetasvatara Upanishad will show that man despises all the natural resources of the world and wants to dominate them because he thinks of himself as the greatest being and detached from the world. As a result, we are fighting for our existence in the current warming environment of the world. But if man can immerse himself in the Supreme Soul, then he will only want to establish peace in the world through his actions. People will observe programs and lifestyles in which they will establish lasting peace in the world and the environment.

17.8 Knowledge of Brihadaranyaka Upanishad:

A special focus on the nine verses from 111 to 119 of the fourth Brahmana part of the second chapter of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad can lead to a profound knowledge of the mysteries of the world, the mysteries of life and the desirable objects. In these verses, the conversation between the sage Yajñavalkya and his wife Maitreyi gives the knowledge of the esoteric meaning of life. The subject of the conversation between the two is that when Yajñavalkya was about to leave his household life and go to another ashram, he addressed his wife Maitreyi and said that before leaving the householder religion, he wanted to divide all his property between his two wives, Maitreyi and Katyayani. In reply, Maitreyi asked Yajñavalkya whether she could attain the immortality of life with wealth and property. Yajñavalkya replied that it is never possible to attain immortality through wealth. After attaining this enlightenment, Maitreyi refused to accept all the wealth of Yajñavalkya and instead expressed her desire to attain the knowledge by which immortality could be attained. Yajñavalkya then explains that all relations in this world, such as husband, son, and relatives, seem to be loved for self-love. It is only because of self-love that people feel compassion for another person. Therefore, the soul itself must listen, contemplate, and meditate without everything, because self-realization is the knowledge through which one can fully know oneself and connect it with the Supreme Soul, and if he can do this, man rises above the petty pleasures received by wealth and wealth and becomes overwhelmed with the happiness of Sat-chit-Ananda, that is, he attains the state of bliss, and then there is no desire to attain anything else. This knowledge is the greatest knowledge. (Gambhirananda, 2018). When this meaning of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is realized, every person can rise above small interests and devote himself to a greater cause, and can connect himself with the Supreme Soul. This connection is not only a Tattvakatha, but a person can also illuminate the world with the pure light of his heart. As a result of these knowledges, the land of India is a holy land because this country is the land of sages by whose words the world can be placed in a peaceful place and the whole world can be considered as a peaceful place, where various natural resources such as water, air, soil will be pure and through these the human body and mind will be nourished.

17.9 Conclusion:

Various approaches to sustainable development have been and are being adopted by the state, yet everyone has some responsibility by which he can add something to nature through which it is possible to maintain sustainability. The Vedas and the Upanishads give us that mental, and spiritual knowledge by which the individual mind rises above attachment, rises above needs, and satisfies his needs in a short time.

To achieve the goal of sustainable development, we need to go back to the old store of knowledge where man is taught to acquire the characteristics of calm, pure, serenity by which he can raise himself, nature, and the whole universe to a safe place. Humans can keep the environment stress-free through various ways by staying in their small environment. For example, if people make some personal changes in their food, clothing, shelter, then the environment can be largely stress-free. For example, if man eats such food in his diet where only his needs will be met and unnecessary pressure will not be created on the environment, if man does not eat extra animals in his food list and meets his needs as much as possible, then other animals are protected as a resource of the environment, so the balance of the environment is maintained. Also, in the selection of clothes, if people choose environmentally friendly clothing only by looking at the environment, then the environment can be a little stress-free because according to the new needs of the people, the clothes that people usually choose are not environmentally friendly, instead, if people limit their clothes, then the environment can be much stress-free. The same applies to housing, if people build their residence only for the purpose of fulfilling their own needs, there are fewer luxurious living items, the more stress-free the environment will be. Apart from this, if people stop the things that are harmful to the environment, such as unnecessary use of plastic, excessive use of vehicles, then the environment can be kept very clean and clean. That is, the purity of the environment depends a lot on the individual's own mentality. If people can integrate these small changes into their daily lives, then we can live in a beautiful world in the present time and leave a safe environment for future generations.

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