



# SYNOD COLLEGE, SHILLONG

International Webinar on

*"Sustainability towards a Renewing Existence"*

7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>  
April 2022

## Concept Note

Sustainability is perhaps one of the most discussed subject matter these days. The term 'sustainability' may sound simple and perhaps seemingly easy to comprehend as it generally refers to situations that relate to the durability or lasting capability of anything for a stipulated time or even infinitely. For example, one may think of economic sustainability, socio-cultural sustainability, developmental sustainability, environmental sustainability and many others. Hence it is certainly quite difficult to comprehend the full dimension of the term sustainability as it is a rather intricate subject matter that needs understanding of a vast and complex inter-relationship between each and every aspect of the earth sphere (living and non-living) in relation to the entire universe. Hence the concept of sustainability is not and cannot be human centric but it is rather a universal one that requires a sound understanding of all the factors that are constantly inter-related and responsible for the lasting or waning effects resulting from the inter-face between the natural components vis-à-vis amongst themselves including humans.

The serious concern of the idea of sustainability started gaining importance during the 1960's and became one of the most important agenda first raised at the Stockholm Conference in 1972. Attended by Governments of no less than 114 nations, many issues had been discussed during the said conference, and many were agreed upon while many were also disagreed. However, the conference did come out with the 'Principles of the Stockholm Declaration' that asserted the following issues:- *'Human rights must be asserted, apartheid and colonialism condemned. Natural resources must be safeguarded. Wildlife must be safeguarded. The Earth's capacity to produce renewable resources must be maintained. Non-renewable resources must be shared and not exhausted'*.

It was definitely due to the increasing deterioration of these that the global communities felt the urgent need for a comprehensive understanding and means to mitigate such common problems. Thus it was the Brundtland Report, also called 'Our Common Future', published and released in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) that identified the main reasons that primarily caused the serious global environmental problems i.e., the enormous poverty of the South and the non-sustainable patterns of consumption and production in the North. The former Indian Prime Minister Late Mrs Indira Gandhi was right when she pointed out that vehicular pollution was the problem of the developed world on one hand and on the other, the worst polluter in the developing world is poverty. Such situations indeed needed very effective remedies with strong sustainability principles and the Brundtland Report did come out with perhaps a very apt concept of sustainability in the form of a definition for sustainable development which is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Half a century has already passed since the Stockholm Conference and 30 years since the concept of sustainable development came into being, yet the hue and cry that emanate from all across the globe relating to persisting deterioration of the environment, famines, epidemics and the growing societal disparities and inconveniences, certainly question the effectiveness and credibility of the current efforts put forth to maintain sustainability of the natural environment and at the same time boosting the human wellbeing and materialistic aspirations. However as of now, it appears that the concept of sustainability has not been able to keep pace or rather has failed due to the rapid population increase and the multi-dimensional process of economic development in particular that arise mainly because of human competitive and consumeristic behavior. Truly as mentioned above, the concept of sustainable development was rather inclined towards human than the overall wellbeing of the entire global living communities and the environment at large.



The ever increasing global population, the competition amongst nations and the rising trend of consumerism has definitely brought about detrimental environmental degradation and has taken a heavy toll on the natural resources all across the globe. It is apparent by now perhaps that sustainability, development and the entire global wellbeing (that include living, non-living and human) have never correlated as anticipated but instead seems to be heading in the direction of some kind of a disaster. Developmental efforts never seem to consider the importance and relevance of sustainability and the wellbeing of the entire global community. It is perhaps because of these problems that many prominent scientists including Stephen Hawking predicted that within a few hundred years, much of the natural resources would have been depleted and man will have to find alternative ways and means to escape to other planets in search for resources to satisfy his growing needs. For an instant it may sound so wonderful to imagine that man will no longer remain only a globe but instead planets trekker. However, for a fortunate few lots it could be possible but for the rest perhaps it is only wishful thinking.

Hence sustainability is therefore about endurance, co-existing side by side with intense and very complex interfacing between all components of the earth's sphere. Truly the inter-relationships and interactions amongst these components do have countless positive outcomes as it aids development through exploitation of resources resulting in augmentation of economic activities and growth. However, because of various imbalances, very often such interactions have resulted in countless detrimental societal and environmental implications all across the globe.

To understand the vast issues related to the concept of sustainability in relation to the societal-environmental implications is impossible, however in view of the rising problems of the same as reflected above, it would reflect an irresponsible attitude from the part of humans to ignore this very important problem that threaten the very existence of life itself, here on earth. Hence the primary objective of this proposed International Webinar is to revisit and examine some critical issues that perhaps could reflect the pros and cons of the concept of 'Sustainability' in the present day context with special reference to India. The recent outbreak of the disastrous global Covid-19 pandemic has also brought about unprecedented breakdown of many vital societal spheres causing great losses. Such unexpected events have brought the world to its knees that definitely question the very essence of sustainability. These questions are too many and the answers are too little and vague, thus it needs more time and space to come up with desirable explanations and solutions for such calamity that truly is once again one of the factors that threaten the very core of sustainability. Therefore, the webinar will be a very ideal platform to bring in scholars, academicians, policy makers, societal organizations, citizens from all walks of life and students altogether for a thorough deliberation, discussion to understand the various aspects and expectations that the concept of 'Sustainability' could offer. This will definitely enable us to understand more on the important environ-societal issues that determine sustainability. It is expected that the webinar will create a positive awareness and a more enhanced understanding about the vital importance of the idea of sustainability. The webinar will come up with realistic suggestions and ideas that are down to earth, implementable, mindset and habit changing for all concerns including authorities, policy makers and societies at large, in an all-out endeavor to control and mitigate the ever increasing societal and environmental deterioration that occurs all across the globe including here in our very own surrounding.



### *Areas of Concern:*

1. Methodological approaches to comprehend the concept of sustainability through experiences and case studies.
2. Relationship between sustainability and development
  - a) Developmental projects and sustainability
  - b) Natural resource exploitation and sustainability
  - c) Sustainability vis-a-vis population growth
  - d) Economic development and sustainability
  - e) Sustainability vis-à-vis environmental /biological/pandemic/crisis
  - f) Bio-diversity vis-a vis sustainability
  - g) Sustainability and livelihood
  - h) Eco-friendly cum Off Grid living
3. Sustainability and society-economy and polity
  - a) Sustainability and human rights
  - b) Sustainability and rights of the Indigenous peoples
  - c) Sustainability and ethnic identity/culture, etc.
  - d) Sustainability and ethnic conflicts
  - e) Urbanization vis-a-vis sustainability
  - f) Sustainability vis-à-vis consumerism
4. Environmental degradation vis-a-vis sustainability

The above areas of concern are indicative but not exhaustive. Participants can present papers on other areas not indicated above but that are closely connected with the theme of the Seminar.

➔ For Style sheet	: APA 7 <sup>th</sup> Edition
➔ Last date for submission of abstract and Keywords	: 7 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
➔ Date for intimation of accepted Abstracts	: 11 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
➔ Last date for submission of full paper	: 4 <sup>th</sup> April 2022
➔ Last date for submission of edited papers	: 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2022
➔ Email Id for abstract and full paper submission	: <a href="mailto:davidarnoldsync@gmail.com">davidarnoldsync@gmail.com</a>

### *Abstract and full paper submission guidelines:*

- ➔ Abstract should be of about 500 words, indicating the scope of the study, findings, and analysis, along with key-words (5).
- ➔ It should also contain author (s) name, designation, institutional affiliation, contact details and address.
- ➔ Title 14 point Times New Roman, main content 12 point Times New Roman, 1.5 spacing and justified.
- ➔ Full paper not exceeding 4000 words.

***N.B. Submission of full paper is mandatory before the presentation and only then will the certificate be issued.***

***\*Expected output: Publication by a reputed Publisher with ISBN.***

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