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# From “The Silent Spring” to the Globalization of the Environmental Movement<sup>1</sup>

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The world has enough to meet everyone’s need but not everyone’s greed. – Gandhi

The Environment is humanity's first right. - Ken Saro-Wiwa

## **Abstract**

This paper traces the history of environmental movement and the growing awareness of sustainable living in the past half a century. Taking *The Silent Spring* of Rachel Spring (published in 1962) as a point of departure, this paper navigates through the interplay of awareness and consciousness raising, knowledge production, institution building, environmental movement and its globalization. The paper examines the lack of development of a holistic understating of environmental challenges of the world in the face of issue-based social movements. The paper presents the transformation of the conceptualization of development from a narrow “economic development” as measured in income growth to a more inclusive sustainable development where the focus is on quality of life, wellbeing and happiness. The paper provides a brief history of the environmental activism prompted by the growing awareness about environmental and ecological sustainability to the globalization of the environmental movement. In this process environmental activism launched by the civil society, the state and inter-state institutions played an important role. Movements for political rights and economic entitlements need to include environmental rights as an integral part of social movements. In many parts of the Global South such an integrated, thus holistic, movement is still wanting or remains at a rudimentary stage.

Environmental degradation is one of the small numbers of key issues that have been truly global as it has affected the lives of billions of people around the world. The recent (in the middle of year 2013) spate of unusual climatic events, i.e., floods in Alberta, Canada, Northern India, and Europe (Germany, facing the brunt) were warnings about the changes in global climate system for the worse. The non-believers of climate change notwithstanding, the changes in the climate and their far-reaching consequences are not unreal. The gradual and inexorable degradation of the global environmental system is an integral part of the centuries of industrialization rooted in a worldview of unbridled progress; therefore, an appropriate answer to this huge challenge lies in a reconceptualization of “development”. Various nomenclatures of the new mode of development have been proposed. Whether we call it sustainable development, green development, eco-friendly development, inclusive development or development as freedom and / or dignity, the point is, we need to reevaluate our development paradigms in lights of the eco-consciousness or what Frances Lappe calls, eco-mind. The only redeeming phenomenon is that in the last half century we have also witnessed a rise in the awareness of global environmental condition and a growing and incipient environmental movement at the global level. The movement, in order to be successful, must be holistic and global at the same time.

We take the publication of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* in 1962 as a point of departure and try to recount the making of the environmental movement as a global movement in the past half a century. The two important concepts used in this paper that need to be clearly defined at the outset are: globalization and environmental movement. First, we try to provide with a clearer understanding of globalization as a concept and a phenomena. Since the introduction of the concept in sociology in the late 1970s and early 1980s, by Roland Robertson, globalization has become a contentious concept, especially in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet socialism. As the globalization literature has expanded with the diversities of interpretations reaching a new height of complexity, it makes sense to turn to a simple, yet useful, taxonomy provided by Leslie Sklair.

There are three modes of globalization: 1. Generic globalization; 2. Capitalist globalization, and 3. Alternative globalization, according to Sklair (2009:526). The generic globalization incorporates emancipatory potential as it includes electronic revolution creating opportunities for anti-corporatist social movements from below (Sklair, 2009:532). To view globalization as capitalism writ large on a world-scale under the cover of a neo-liberal economic ideology and nothing else presents a highly reductionist view which ignores alternative forms of globalization with critical and emancipatory spaces. When we juxtapose environmental movement with globalization, we emphasize both the generic globalization as well as alternative globalization.

In the present paper, as we explore the globalization of environmental movement we look at globalization as a generic social process, what historians would call a secular movement of history. This view is consistent with the definitions provided by Roland Robertson and others who shared a similar neo-rationalist position. A number of writers on globalization in the 1980s were influenced by the ideas of Roland Robertson and Immanuel Wallerstein. While the former author took a culturalist yet pragmatic position, the latter’s position combined Marxist logic with Braudelian historical reach. Both positions were pragmatic and critical of the dominant and competing ideological positions in sociology in the post- World War II period. In a deeper sense both of them developed a critical yet a realist view of the world as the markers of globalization were clearly visible in the world dominated by the Cold War, a period marked by intellectual

orthodoxy and its reactions, more specifically, the socio-political climate in the 1960s which was marked by assorted social movements that continued into the 1970s against various aspects of global capitalism and the American hegemony. Globalization, we argue is a complex and contingent historical process and should not be reduced to western economic domination (Turner and Khondker, 2010). As we try to look at the complexity of the world and try to understand the predicament human society is faced with, we are compelled to question the taken-for-granted world and its dominant institutions. Social change is mediated by the rising consciousness of the people, which often originate with key ideas. The idea of questioning the status quo with regard to environment was one of the game-changers in recent history. According to a chronicler of the global environmental movement, “Of all the conceptual revolutions of the twentieth century, few have changed so universal or so fundamental a change in human values as the environment” (McCormick, 1993: vii). Other writers too have noticed an unprecedented “awareness of global environmental issues and increase in the number of organizations, including environmental movement organizations” (Rootes, 2002:414). The environmental movement has seen the growing interconnectedness among the groups around the world. Cross-national surveys clearly point to the globalization of environmental concern (Dunlop and York, 2008).

The Platonic idea “knowledge is virtue” or - more germane to the present discussion - Socratic dictum that “knowledge is power”, a view echoed by Sir Francis Bacon, is more valid today than in the past as we claim to live in a much-touted “knowledge society”. But knowledge society based on a consensus view of knowledge is yet to be constructed since there are great debates of epistemological variety as to what counts as knowledge. Knowledge itself is a contested terrain, a battleground, especially with regards to matters related to ecology and environment. Debates continue as to what happened, or how did it happen? Even as we begin to emphasize the idea of evidence-based knowledge, the question as to what constitutes evidence is far from settled. Is “global warming” a fact? Is climate change for real, or a figment of liberal imagination? The political bias in the determination of knowledge vitiates discussions of public policy in most countries, notably in the US (Armitage, 2013). What should we – as citizens – do? What should be the role of the experts? Since understanding the climate or the eco-systems depends on a good grasp of science and expert knowledge, what should be the role of scientists and experts or knowledge-brokers in shaping the opinion of the general public.

We may start with the general Marxist epistemological position that the ruling (dominant) ideas are the ideas of the ruling class, but there is no reason to be contented with this status quo. Having stated the obvious, the ground reality, if you wish – we need to move beyond and develop an argument following another illuminating idea of Marx that it is the social existence that determines social consciousness. If so, then the new circumstances featured by a perilous ecological system and a crisis-ridden economic system must per force produce new consciousness and new knowledge.

Social existence determines (social) knowledge. This broad notion was shared by not only Karl Marx and Karl Mannheim, sociologists of knowledge such as Robert Merton and the contemporary practitioners would add to the view that although there is a material or social basis of knowledge, knowledge does not emerge in a linear fashion. They also emphasize the autonomy of science and the scientific knowledge to avoid the pitfall of economic determinism. The role of experts remains a vexed issue in a democratic society. Social existence is more than the economic structure (base/super structure model); it is the ensemble of ideas, socio-economic-political and ideological conditions, and the conditions of social movements. All these moments reinforce one another. Of the various strands of Marxist reinterpretations, the Frankfurt School

has been the most productive and nuanced, especially in matters of problems of modernity and the problematics of knowledge. The central point of the Frankfurt School was to expose knowledge as control and then to champion the emancipatory potential of knowledge through a sustained critical engagement. The distinction made by Jürgen Habermas (1971) between knowledge and interest is as relevant today as it always has been. One can read in it a reformulation and refinement of the earlier distinction between knowledge and ideology. The central issue, however, is not just interest but the interest of a dominant section of the society who would side with interest-laden knowledge rather than unbiased knowledge for selfish reasons.

The reason for revisiting the subjects of knowledge power linkage and the role of knowledge is because despite strong scientific evidence there are skeptics with vested interests who continue to deny facts such as global warming. I follow the definition of global warming as “the gradual heating of Earth's surface, oceans and atmosphere. The rise in average temperatures worldwide has been documented by scientists since the late 1800s. The Earth's average temperature has risen by 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit (0.8 degrees Celsius) over the past century, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports. Though the existence of global warming was once considered controversial, it is now acknowledged as real by an overwhelming majority of researchers throughout the international scientific community, according to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

(<http://www.livescience.com/37003-global-warming.html#sthash.x7W1av4o.dpuf>)

The contentious nature of knowledge related to environmental issues is illustrated in the fact that as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) was celebrated as a true precursor to the environmental awareness, and subsequently, movement; the Cato Institute, a Washington-based conservative Think Tank came forth with a critique of Carson's contentions. In 2012 many celebrated the half a century of Rachel Spring's *Silent Spring* but also the death of Barry Commoner who devoted a life-long research and activism for environmental protection. The ecological movement gathered momentum in the US in the 1970s following the declaration of the earth Day in April 1970. That was a time of protests, social turbulence, a time of social movements and a time of hope. A variety of social movements emerged in the US, the most prosperous economy of the world at that time. It was a moment of self-reflection and criticism. The Civil Rights movement, the anti-Vietnam war movement, the feminist movement timed with the celebration of the Earth Day in April, 1970.

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* published in 1962 was a trailblazer. The book turned controversial from the very beginning yet the claims could not be readily dismissed, for the author was not only a writer but also a professional having a long career at the department of agriculture. However, some scientists pointed fingers at some of the claims and the book became controversial. President John F. Kennedy, who assumed office in 1960, asked his science advisors to look into the claims made in the book and being convinced of the merits passed laws protecting the environment. A rethinking of environment and ecology, a renewed understanding of what the world is turning out to be grabbed the attention of a new generation. That was the generation of experimentation, innovation of ideas and questioning the everyday taken-for-granted assumptions.

One, however, should not be misled to believe that there was no concern with environment before the 1960s or 1970s (Gottlieb, 2005; Dunlop and Mertig, 1992; and McCormick, 1991). In fact, piece-meal legislations and writings on environment can be traced back far into history. Laws have been passed as early as the fourteenth century England to

prohibit water pollution. In India, Manu's Laws in post Vedic period included guidelines of environmental protection covering air pollution, water pollution, and disposal of waste, quality of food, cleanliness, purity and ethical principles of environment (Padhy, Dash and Mohapatra, 2006). Below we return to outline the history of the environmental movement in America.

We examine in the following how the ecological crisis became global in terms of its understanding and how movements arose worldwide to protect the eco-system. In fact, environment provides us a point of entry to the subject of globalization. Some analysts examine the functioning of the world-wide economic transactions, i.e., international trade, transfer of capital, financial transactions as evidence of economic globalization, others point to the flows of ideas, values and so on as markers of globalization, yet there are others who would look at technology, especially communication technology and its spread from satellite television, to long distance telephony and internet, world wide web as concrete technologies of globalization. Yet, the physical environment that we live in can hardly be bounded in a geographical boundary. Not only weather patterns, rivers, oceans and mountain ranges overlook national borders and are seamless, the recent threats to eco-systems too are unguided by environmental pollutions.

The environmental movement as it unfolded, brought government, scientists, civil society on the same platform although at uneven speed and degrees of enthusiasm. It led to serious questioning of taking for granted assumptions about economic growth. Sustainability brought to clear focus debates about growth that were limited to experts.

"There was a time of optimism and progress in the 1960s, when there was greater hope for a braver new world, and for progressive international ideas. Colonies blessed with natural resources were becoming nations. The locals of co-operation and sharing seemed to be seriously pursued. Paradoxically, the 1970s slid slowly into moods of reaction and isolation while at the same time a series of UN conferences offered hope for greater co-operation on major issues. The 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment brought the industrialized and developing nations together to delineate the "rights" of the human family to a healthy and productive environment. A string of such meetings followed: on the rights of people to adequate food, to sound housing, to safe water, to access to means of choosing the size of their families.

According to the Brundtland Commission Report: "The present decade [the 1980s] has been marked by a retreat from social concerns. Scientists bring to our attention urgent but complex problems bearing on our very survival: a warming globe, threats to the Earth's ozone layer, deserts consuming agricultural land. We respond by demanding more details, and by assigning the problems to institutions ill-equipped to cope with them. Environmental degradation, first seen as mainly a problem of the rich nations and a side effect of industrial wealth, has become a survival issue for developing nations. It is part of the downward spiral of linked ecological and economic decline in which many of the poorest nations are trapped. Despite official hope expressed on all sides, no trends identifiable today, no programmes or policies, offer any real hope of narrowing the growing gap between rich and poor nations. And as part of our "development", we have amassed weapons arsenals capable of diverting the paths that evolution has followed for millions of years and of creating a planet our ancestors would not recognize." (Brundtland, Foreword to *Our Common Future*, 1987). The Report continued: "We live in an era in the history of nations when there is greater need than ever for coordinated political action and responsibility" (Brundtland, Foreword to *Our Common Future*, 1987). Citizens were brought at the center of these debates. The idea of active citizenship took a new meaning. This was also consistent with the idea of participatory or deliberative democracy. But the movement has only begun for changing consciousness and the ways of thinking is a long-

drawn out process. “To this end, we appeal to “citizens” groups, to non-governmental organizations, to educational institutions, and to the scientific community. They have all played indispensable roles in the creation of public awareness and political change in the past. They will play a crucial part in putting the world onto sustainable development paths, in laying the groundwork for Our Common Future.” (Brundtland, Foreword to *Our Common Future*, 1987)

The “modern” notion of sustainability has its origin in the international debate that began in 1972 in Stockholm and was consolidated twenty years later in Rio de Janeiro. (Guimaraes, 2004). The Brundtland report of 1987 was a manifesto for sustainable development.

The report stated: “ The satisfaction of human needs and aspirations in the major objective of development. The essential needs of vast numbers of people in developing countries for food, clothing, shelter, jobs - are not being met, and beyond their basic needs these people have legitimate aspirations for an improved quality of life. A world in which poverty and inequity are endemic will always be prone to ecological and other crises. Sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life” (Report of WECD, 1987).

In 1972 under the stewardship of Maurice Strong and under the sponsorship of the United Nations, a conference on environment was held in Stockholm. The 1972 UN Conference on environment recognized the importance and need for environmental management and paved the way for the formation of a specialized UN Agency, United National Environmental Protection Agency (Johnson, 2013). The publication that followed the Stockholm conference was titled *Only One World* capturing the interdependence between ecology and economy, environment and society. In fact, this can be taken as a manifesto of ecological movement. Ecopolitics is thus a short-hand word for ecological politics of sustainable development. Maurice Strong in a recent book recounted that, “The organizational capacity of the new program was kept weak. A group of countries which supported its establishment, including Britain, the US, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and France, had agreed secretly to ensure that it would not have the support required. The group was concerned that any new environmental regulations would have an impact on trade. They also wanted to ensure that UNEP did not have a large budget as it would then be restricted on what it could do” (Dodds, Staruss and Strong, 2012: 16).

### **A brief history of the environmental movement**

It would be important to recount the genealogy as well as the intellectual context of the environmental movement. Both in Europe and the United States the growth of such organizations as bird watching societies were the precursors to the rise of environmental consciousness. The growing concern with nature and nature conservation in the west in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century foresaw the rise of environmental movement. From nature conservation to the idea of sustainable development has been a meandering course of social and economic developments spanning the last two hundred years or so.

In the late eighteenth century, there were reactions to industrialization in Europe which may have played a role to conservation of a nostalgic past and may account for the rise of romanticism which was in essence an intellectual and artistic movement. More to the point, it was a reaction against scientific rationalization of nature. English romantics, especially poets such as William Wordsworth (1770-1850), Robert Byron (1788 – 1824), P.B. Shelley (1792 - 1822,) and John Keats (1795 – 1821), displayed a growing concern with nature in their creative works. The name of John Ruskin (1819 – 1900) and his work *Unto the Last* (1860) deserves

special mention because the Indian nationalist leader and a champion of conservation of nature, M.K. Gandhi was so impressed that he translated this book into Gujarati in 1908. Ruskin as well as other naturalists left an indelible impression on Gandhi's thoughts.

In Germany, known more for its philosophical than industrial might in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century provided the intellectual milieu for the development of Marxist ideas. Marx was a poet and romantic in his youthful writings, a true legatee of German idealism, which he later criticized. The German idealism and romanticism were rooted in the works of Herder (1744-1803), and Goethe (1749 – 1832), two of the prominent exponents. Following this intellectual heritage, in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century “Life reform” [Lebensreform] social movement emerged in Germany. The Wandervogel movement in 1901 was an archetypical representation. Spiritual alienation of the masses from the land and the nature (nature objectified, commodified) was the theme of the movement with a focus on its rejoining.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Century American writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 – 1882), Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (1851), Henry David Thoreau, (1817 – 1862) *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (1854) Thoreau's writings influenced Tolstoy, Gandhi, Martin Luther King among others. The nineteenth century United States also saw the emergence of associations dedicated to nature appreciation and conservation. In 1883 American Ornithologists' Union was set up. The Audubon Society was established in 1886. In 1892 Sierra Club was established. Rachel Carson was a long-time member of the Audubon Society. Carson's concern arose from and a true heir to the earlier nature conservation.

The environmental movement in the United States began in the context of the 1960s and 1970s. These two decades were truly a season of social movements. What is interesting in the period of the 1960s and 1970s was that several social movements surfaced at the same time. The interlocking and overlapping nature of social movements created a ferment of social change. The policy makers could hardly overlook the rumblings on the ground. New periodicals and journals emerged and a public discussion took the center stage. Environmental movements as Civil Rights movement, Feminist Movement and Anti- Vietnam war movements brought intellectuals, academics, students and various civil society organizations into a sustained conversation that helped to create a favorable public opinion in favor the issues at hand. Environmental Movements came in the wake of such other life-style movements as Alternative life-style, alternative medicine, religion, Back to Nature, Hippie movements and so on. This should not be construed as a movement of and for a certain progressive, non-conformist segments in society.

Environmental movement was predicated upon not only the rise of a new educated, affluent class with interest in leisure and happiness, but there were other objective factors. It was not simply a pastime of the new leisure class. It was predicated upon the rise of a new knowledge society. The diagram would look as follows:

### **Knowledge - Social Movement - Institutional Changes**

Spread of scientific knowledge worldwide was an important factor in generating concern for environmental issues (Taylor, 1992). New scientific knowledge about environment played an important role in setting off environmental movements. In this context it would be important to remember the contributions of writers such as Barry Commoner, a biologist who championed the cause of environment and environmental protection through his research and promotion of public interest. Barry Commoner (1917 – 2012) was “a founder of modern ecology and one of its most provocative thinkers and mobilizers in making environmentalism a people's political cause,



... scientist-activists who recognized the toxic consequences of America's post-World War II technology boom, and one of the first to stir the national debate over the public's right to comprehend the risks and make decisions about them", according to the New York Times (October 1, 2012).

His pioneering research on the environmental impact of nuclear test explosions in the United States of America was an important factor for changes in the public policies in the US. In the late 1950s, Commoner was conducting research on baby tooth to examine the impact of radioactivity due to atmospheric test of nuclear weapons. His research raised a public awareness and played an important role in accomplishing a Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1963.

Barry Commoner in *The Closing Circle* (1971), argued that a sustainable economy, which may include corporations, government, and consumers, needs to be aware of the "four laws of ecology":

1. Everything is connected to everything else.
2. Everything must go somewhere.
3. Nature knows best.
4. There is no such thing as a free lunch.

These four laws that he proposed became the catch phrase of ecological activists and supporters alike. *The Closing Circle* helped introduce the idea of sustainability, a notion that grew in popularity over time and became a mainstream idea. In his time, however, the idea of sustainability was controversial. "Commoner pointed out, there is only one ecosphere for all living things. What affects one, affects all. He also noted that in nature there is no waste. We can't throw things away. Therefore, we need to design and manufacture products that do not upset the delicate balance between humans and nature. We need to utilize alternative forms of energy, such as wind, solar and geothermal power. And we need to change our consumption habits accordingly—to use fewer products with plastics (which are based on oil), aerosol cans (which harm the atmosphere) and industrial-grown food (which is produced with harmful chemicals)." (<http://www.thenation.com/article/170251/remembering-barry-commoner#ixzz2aJ5yma5G>)

Barry Commoner's *Poverty of Power* (1976) was a remarkable achievement linking energy crisis with the environmental and the economic crises. As a scientist with a deep understanding of Marxist political economy, Commoner presented a holistic albeit reformed Marxist framework. For him, even prior to economic base lay ecological base on which economic base and subsequently political and cultural layers stood. Barry Commoner could link global poverty not to so-called "population explosion" a major concern for many of his contemporaries, but to imperialism and capitalist exploitation. Rejecting the Neo-Malthusian explanation in vogue in the 1970s, Commoner argued that poverty is the cause of so-called over population or population explosion. Demographic historians would be more inclined to side with Barry Commoner on that point.

Interestingly in the 1970s a paradigm shift was taking place in the thinking of economic development. Ideas like economic growth without development were getting tractions. Writers such as Dudley Seers (1970) famed for his essay "Meaning of Development" began to influence a new generation of economists who challenged the conventional paradigm of economic growth accepting the Kuznets curve of initial inequality. The idea of holistic development began to emerge.

Following the schema of "Knowledge - Social Movement - Institutional Changes" the new scientific ideas which were at the basis of environmental movements began to spread in

other parts of the world. The newly emerging countries embraced the idea of industrial development equals to economic development. Outside of the so-called Western developed countries, Soviet Union embarked on heavy industrialization since the 1930s. The creed of industrialization at any cost had huge environmental costs in the Socialist countries. Later in the 1970s, when the so-called Tiger economies of East and Southeast Asia (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore) started to emerge, environmental concerns were not at the center-stage. It took some time, for environmental awareness to seep in. The initial cost of environmental degradation in some of these countries was huge. Later in the 1980s and 1990s when the socialist China in the post-Mao era embarked on a catch-up industrialization and became the “factory of the world”, initially environmental fallouts were not issues of central concern for the champions of economic development. Initially, the pressure and critique came from outside China and with the development of local and homegrown concerns, the Chinese leadership paid heed to environmental concerns and now China has come to terms with environmental issues but only after significant damage has been made. No matter, how careful the leaders are in their strategies of environmental protection, if the present consumption patterns remain unchanged, China may not avoid the curse of ecological meltdown. A feeble homegrown environmental movement may not match the rising tide of consumers of private cars and other industrial amenities. The Chinese thirst for energy has taken China to the world over from Africa to Latin America with environmental consequences far beyond China’s shores.

The rise of the so-called BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and the emergence of Indonesia as a rising economic power are celebrated in terms of shifting economic gravity from the west to the rest of the world, heralding a new pluralistic world economic order; the environmental consequences are not always adequately addressed or understood. At the present moment, China with its 1.3 billion people leave a relatively small ecological foot print on a per capita basis, which is neither cause for celebration nor consolation. It will not take long before China matches the American standard of high per-capita foot print if the growing consumption patterns in China remain unchanged. The rise of India as a regional economic power sends mixed signal with regard to ecological fate of this large and populated nation.

In *Ecofeminism* (1993) Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva presented a forceful argument by combining the two emergent paradigms in social sciences: feminism and environmentalism. India even before the rush of neo-liberal economic globalization, Indian civil society and its conscious intellectuals took up the cause of ecology. India has a deep tradition of valorizing nature. The harmonious relationship between the nature and society is entrenched in Indian traditions, religions and world-views. Indian mythology and even cosmology is based on a relationship of respect between human society and nature. The idea of caring for nature in India is a homegrown idea. The new combined and recombined paradigms steeped in [western] scientific knowledge found a sympathetic audience in India. Edward Schumacher’s celebrated contribution, *Small is Beautiful* (1973) was inspired in part by Gandhian philosophy and Buddhist traditions.

As scientists, policy-makers and citizens become more aware of the key issues of social well-being, a redefinition of conventional economic growth will bound to happen. Especially, with a growing understanding of the importance of preserving the ecological balance amidst reckless economic growth, a redefinition of economic growth as sustainable and inclusive economic development is in progress. More and more economists, social scientists and the public would be able to persuade the politicians and leaders to see the world in a new light.

We don’t see things as they are, we see things as we are – Reality is always filtered.

Human knowledge is embedded in the epistemological and ideological presuppositions of a given social and temporal context. It is not always easy to untangle the ideological underpinnings. Even at the 50 years celebration of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, the Washington-based conservative think-tank, Cato Institute published a critique of Carson's book using selective scientific evidence. No one is oblivious to the contentious nature of science and scientific facts, but to deny the trends of global warming and believing that nature will fix its own problem without human interventions is to go against the grain scientific spirit. Those who are in denial of coming intensification of ecological crises are steeped in the ideology of neo-liberal economism with blind trust in market-led solutions to all the problems of human existence.

### **Development: Re-conceptualized**

A number of economists are challenging some of the basic assumptions of economics. Many economists are now inclined to measure progress by establishing a new set of criteria that track well-being and not just economic performance. Economic growth is a means and not an end in itself (Sen, 1984: 1999). Development is a means to achieve wellbeing and happiness. Happiness is seen as a goal, and the new idea of flourishing rooted in Aristotelian philosophy is capturing the imagination of many. The discussion of economic growth is beginning to address not only quantity which is measureable, but also non-measurable quality of economic growth. It is time to focus the discussion less on what is growth and more on why growth and to what cost? Surely, development at any cost is no longer the only dominant paradigm; contesting views are enforcing environmental impact and viability of the development projects. The nurturing of eco-mind is a necessary condition for the development of an inclusive global society. "We need to change the way we think to create the world we want" (Lappe, 2012). Whether we privilege the ideas of Frances Moore Lappe's *EcoMind* (2012) or traverse the path of environmental movement with Arundhati Roy's *The Cost of Living*, remaining neutral to the issues of environment is no longer an option. In mapping the interrelated issues of knowledge creation, social awareness, institutional changes compels us to examine the changing definitions and understandings of "development".

At a talk delivered at Zayed University in 2010, the Crown Prince of Norway Haakon Magnus dealt with the link between development and dignity. Development is not just the goal – it is a means to enhance and retain our dignity as human beings. The Crown prince's point drew on the philosophical question of the meaning of life. A life worth living is an examined life. He began his talk by saying let's think about two things:

1. What are you for?
2. What do you want to do next year to help enhance someone's dignity?

Development can be defined as absence of war, rule of law, democratic governance, etc. However, development can also be seen as a wave. The key question is how to remain stable amidst wave. The world we live in today is highly unequal. The richest 20% of the population have 74% of the wealth. The rest of the 80% have 26% of the wealth. Of them, the bottom 20% (the poorest) has only 2%.

Top 20 % of the rich	74% of wealth	They must share
60% in the middle	24% of wealth	They need better distribution
20% who are the poorest	2% of wealth	They need help

The crown prince's daughter was born in 2004 at that time Norway's Human Development indicators were comparable to those of Singapore.

	Year of Birth	Standard of living in Norway comparable to...
Daughter	2004	Singapore
The Crown prince	1973	Malaysia
His mother	1937	Peru
Grand Mother	1898	Uganda
Great Grand Mother	1868	Mozambique
Great Grand Mother	1831	Burundi

The Crown Prince said: “just because my great grandmother lived in conditions comparable to Mozambique does not mean he is anyhow less than my great grandmother.” Why should we care about people we do not know? The answer: because, we want to enhance our dignity. We enhance the dignity of others so that we can increase our own dignity. We can look back and see what have we achieved. How am I going to navigate my life? Meeting people eye-to-eye helps us challenge our morality; that's how our ethics is formed. True globalization is global emotional interconnectedness.

The United Nations reported that results of achievement of the Millennium Development Goals are mixed. While important gains have been made in a number of goals, achievements in environmental sectors have lagged behind. “The target of reducing extreme poverty by half has been reached five years ahead of the 2015 deadline, as has the target of halving the proportion of people who lack dependable access to improved sources of drinking water. Conditions for more than 200 million people living in slums have been ameliorated — double the 2020 target. Primary school enrollment of girls equaled that of boys, and we have seen accelerating progress in reducing child and maternal mortality . . . biodiversity loss continues apace, and greenhouse gas emissions continue to pose a major threat to people and ecosystems” (UN, MDG Report 2012: 3).

Here we can turn to the philosophy of Peter Singer who has been championing the idea of global ethics which is premised on the notion of obligation and duty to the larger humanity not just citizens of a particular nation. He correctly pointed out that people are more inclined to be moved by the immediate and spectacular and not by the distant and indirect, although the indirect and less visible may be more harmful; for example, the effects of environmental pollution. The idea of true globalization is dependent on the reinstating the idea of a common humanity. Following the call of Ken Saro-Wiwa, a play write and a defender of environment who was executed by the Military regime and echoing the Stockholm Declaration of 1972 we can reaffirm that clean environment is humanity's fundamental right and global institutions must bear the responsibility of ensuring that right.

## Notes

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