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RECALLING ANCIENT WISDOM FOR A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Human kind is threatened by a catastrophic situation of social, economic and environment degradation. The contents of this paper are paraphrased to include the meaning of sustainable development, and wisdom from select ancient thought such as --- rên philosophy, kyosei philosophy, and Jain philosophy. The researcher has done considerable search in the books, journals, newspaper, reports, and web resources to consolidate these ancient thoughts for sustainable development. Contemporary management thinker's states decision are based too much on specific measurable data. But beyond data something more is important which is ignored in the quest for profit. Cumulative effect of Confucian Harmonious order is not merely personal, but collectively social and even cosmic. It is established by Kyosei principles that harmonious relationship with its customers, its supplies, its competition, the Government with which it deals and the natural environment is sustainability. The Jain philosophy believes all souls are equal irrespective of differences in physical forms and mental capability, ranging from the highest human being to the loveliest living microorganism. Therefore drawing knowledge from the above mentioned ancient wisdoms has suggested the a few principles to be considered for application in the organization and in corporate. Today the global landscape has grey shadows of poverty, misery, unscrupulous activities, greed driven by intense materialistic goals, devoid of universal brotherhood. Centuries back these teachings of values and ethics have been written with immense foresight and remain true for application even today

KEYWORDS

ancient wisdom, jain philosophy, kyosei, ren, sustainable development, sustainable principles.

INTRODUCTION

The key theme of twentieth century which requires deep consideration by all alike is freedom, peace, environment and development. Values and ethics are considered utopia, unrealistic ideals to achieve in the current scenario. But for the sustainable development it is worth striving for. Human kind is threatened by a catastrophic situation of social, economic and environment degradation. Every problem faced today is due to lack of tolerance and collaboration. World over from politicians, social gurus, corporate giants and environmentalists are frequently deliberating to find solutions for a sustainable development. Frequently cited Bruntland Commission's brief definition of sustainable development is the "ability to make development sustainable – to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The ethics of mutuality and interdependence is diluted by the greed and the instincts of survival of the human kind.

"Om saha navavatu, sahanau bhunaktu, sahaviryam karavavahai, tejasvi nav adhitam, astu ma vidvishavahai"

May we protect us together, may we nourish us together, may we work diligently, let our learning be brilliant, and may there be no conflicts between us.

This verse evokes the possibilities of sustainable development and ultimately the happiness that we all seek today. With this brief introduction the author of this paper has attempted to recall a few golden words of ancient wisdom on sustainable development. The contents of this paper are paraphrased to include the meaning of sustainable development, and wisdom from select ancient thought such as --- rên philosophy, kyosei philosophy, and Jain philosophy. The researcher has done considerable search in the books, journals, newspaper, reports, and web resources to consolidate these ancient thoughts for sustainable development. The researcher had also subjected these thoughts for deliberation in a couple of conferences on values and ethics and the findings are also consolidated in this article.

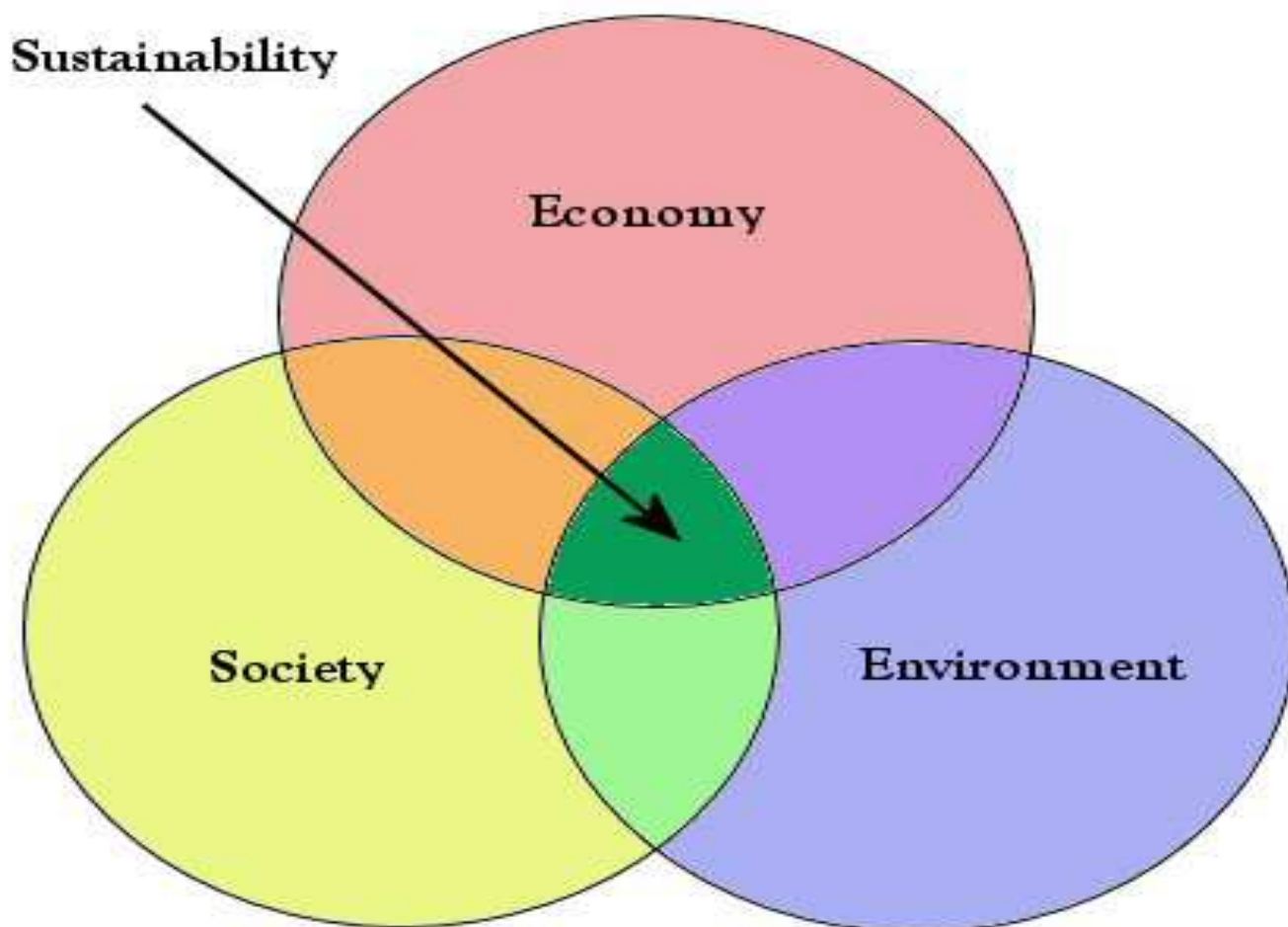
PERSPECTIVES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Johannesburg Declaration states about sustainable development as, "collective responsibility to advance and strengthen the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development and environmental protection – at local, national, regional and global levels."¹ Human needs are basic goods to survive, to realize their dreams with in the culturally defined values and justice to facilitate peaceful coexistence.² According to Sri Sri Ravishankar, "sustainable future of mankind is harmony of the humankind system/ civilization within the system of nature / biosphere of the Planet Earth." Our thoughts, needs and wisdom have no limitation but the available resources in the Planet are limited. Every individual seeks an ecology ensuring clean air, clean water and healthy environment. Sustainable means something is viable and can be continued over a long time. Human vision needs to be broadened for any development to take place. Stressing on the values as the need of the hour Sri Sri ji says, "It is necessary to preserve values (like love, passion and dignity) which are slowly evaporating from urban India. We have diluted our own system due to anger and greediness. There can be no development until and unless certain values are restored." (www.artofliving.org).

Development is interaction of the triple threat of sustainability – economy, environment and the society; changing and improving these threats to an advanced state to offer "good life" to the human kind is sustainable development. Values, ethics and heritage also play a significant role in sustainable development. The proposed sustainability model is presented in the figure below. The shaded portion symbolizes interconnectivity and is the sustainable area.

¹ The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable development, 4th September, 2002

² www.ftp.fao.org



Source: www.google.com/images

Sustainability is anthropocentric emphasizing on human values. Contemporary management thinker's states decision are based too much on specific measurable data. But beyond data something more is important which is ignored in the quest for profit. The "lived experiences" of 'people' is completely ignored to achieve "profit" and thus the degradation of the "planet". The predominant philosophy of all religion and faith is "love, care and kindness." This is fundamental to the existence of any living being. If organizations management philosophy imbibes this in its culture the sustainable development is an automatic result. The researcher attempted to study the Chinese Rèn, Japanese kyosei and Jainism philosophy on sustainable development and the findings are outlined in this paper. The researcher has also identified some core principles for sustainability.

RÈN – GOLDEN RULE OF HARMONIOUS SOCIAL ORDER

"A disciple of Confucius asked, "Is there any one word that could guide a person throughout life?" The Master replied: "How about 'shu' (reciprocity): never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself?" "Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you." He never stated man was born good or evil, but said, "By nature man was similar, by practice man was apart." (Analects XV 24)

Confucius perceived that man or women are all born with intrinsic similarities, but is conditioned and influenced by study and practice. Rèn is composed of two parts representing "persons" and "two" respectively. Rèn relies heavily on the relationships between two people, but at the same time encompassed so much more than that. It represented an inner development towards an altruistic goal, while simultaneously realizing that one was never alone, and that everyone had these relationships to fall back on being a member of a family, the state and the world. The principles of Rèn is used directly to li (ritual) and yi (righteousness) Rèn is innate virtue everyone is born with. Rèn is translated as "benevolence", "perfect virtue", "goodness", or forever with "human heart". Rèn also has a political Confucianism that states, if the ruler lacks Rèn, it is difficult if not impossible for his subjects to behave humanly. This concept believes that an inhuman ruler runs the risk of losing the right to rule.

The maxim of Rèn is best expressed in the following:

(1) One should treat others as one would like others to treat oneself (positive form).

(2) One should not treat others in ways that one would not like to be treated (negative / positive also called Silver Rule).

This is basis of human rights that every individual has a right to just treatment. This philosophy is documented, accepted and signed by 143 respected leaders from across the entire world's major faith including Bahai Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Brahmanism, Judaism, Sikhism, Native American, Taoism, Theosophist and Zoroastrian.

Rèn also includes traits such as: *Hsin* – One's word compliment his actions; *Li* – properly participate in everyday rituals; *Ching* – Seriousness; *Yi* – Right Action. If these qualities are present then one person is identified as *Chiin Tzu* (Superior Man). This fact reveals that Confucius believed and emphasized that Government (organizations) should be run by ethically superior human beings who concentrate on the welfare of the people they govern. Confucius insisted on moral, political, social and even religious activism. In one of his analects he teaches maintenance of three inter-locking kinds of order; (1) Aesthetic, (2) Moral, (3) Social. The instrument for effecting and emulating all three is *li* (ritual propriety).

"Do not look at, do not listen to, do not speak of, do not do whatever is contrary, to ritual propriety" [Analects, 12.1]

In this passage, Confucius emphasizes good manners and taste, morality and social order. By upholding the conventions of elite aesthetic good taste; good manners demonstrate both concern for others and a moral sense of one's place; while rituals are properly performed duplicate ideal social hierarchies of power, whether between ruler and subject, parent and child, or husband and wife. Reverence (*jing*) is considered to be the key quality for harmonious social order. He stresses on filial piety (*Xiao*) as an example of harmonious order.

Confucian order is understood to be both intrinsically moral and profoundly harmonious – when persons and things are in their proper place – relations are smooth, operations are effortless and the good is sought and done voluntarily. A moral ruler will diffuse morality to those under his sway; a moral parent will raise a moral child:

“Let the ruler be a ruler, the subject a subject, a father a father, and a son a son (Analects 12.11). Direct the people with moral force and regulate them with ritual and they will possess shame, and moreover, they will be righteous (Analects 2.3).

“One who rules by moral force may be compared to the North Star – it occupies its place and all the stars pay homage to it (2.1)”

Confucianism order unites aesthetic concerns of harmony and symmetry (*li*) with moral force (*de*) in pursuit of social goals: a well-ordered family, a well-ordered state and a well-ordered world. Such an aesthetic, moral and social program begins at home, with the cultivation of the individual or self-cultivation.

“The profound person understands what is moral. The small person understands, what is profitable? (Analects 4.16) The moral force of the small person is like the grass. “Let the wind blow over the grass and it is sure to bend (Analects 12.19)”.

Thus cumulative effect of Confucian Harmonious order is not merely personal, but collectively social and even cosmic.

KYOSEI – FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

“Kyo” means working together, *“sei”* means life. *Kyosei* is a Japanese word, literally meaning, “Co-existence”, “living together” or “symbiosis”. *Kyosei* is synonym with the fair business practice propagated under the heading Corporate Governance to earn profit by righteous methods. In the modern day business, “*Kyosei*” was applied as a Corporate Philosophy in 1988 by Canon Inc., of Japan. This brilliant concept was re-defined to mean more positive by Canon and defined to mean, “*Living and working together for the common good*”. A detailed definition by Canon of *Kyosei* is “*all people, regardless of race, religion or culture, harmoniously living and working together for many years to come*”. The Chairman of Canon Inc. Mr. Ryu Zabino Kaker advocates it as the new world order.

Kyosei initiative suggested to achieve in Canon was to ultimately achieve customer satisfaction including customer gratitude and respect thereby achieving and sustaining continual prosperity for the company. This initiative dictates activities called Sensitivity Conscious Management (SCM) which rejects the maxim “the end justifies the means” and takes a view point, “choose the right means to the end”. SCM action pattern are: develop original technologies, get patent, respect competitor’s original technologies, strive to exercise segmentation or form partnership; aim at optimum share as opposed to maximum share, avoid wasteful competition as it drops profit, dampens enthusiasm and the benefit to consumers is lost.

Kyosei initiative at Cannon also places importance on the environment and its affect on the humanity. It is interpreted to mean, “Economy, Ecology and Ethics Initiative”. It is believed that this Triple EEE initiative will only help to attain and sustain continual prosperity for the company. In the present millennium it is assumed that everything is limitless, but the reality is earth’s supply of resources, humanities patience is all limited. There consciousness to ecology and ethics play an important role to achieve economic returns. For more than a decade and half Canon cherished *Kyosei* principle to establish harmonious relationship with its customers, its supplies, its competition, the Government with which it deals and the natural environment.

There are also other corporate giants practicing *kyosei*. The researcher has identified a few of them. The Somitomo Group of Company still observe these operational rules in its Article: “*Steadiness and reliability are of the greatest importance for the prosperity and stability of the organization; any action to make speculative profit is strictly forbidden*”. Matsushita Electric to Panasonic still follows the founders Konosuke Matsushita Mission Statement: “*relieve poverty and create wealth, not only for shareholders, but for society*”. Their modern day code of management objective is, “*recognizing our responsibilities as industrialists, we will devote ourselves to the progress and development of society and the well-being of people through our business activities, thereby enhancing the quality of life through the world.*”

The Japanese Federation of Economic Organization applied *Kyosei* while developing its Charter for Good Corporate Behavior which includes:

- Corporation will develop and provide socially useful goods and services giving full consideration of safety;
- Corporations will engage in fair, transparent and free competition;
- Corporation to maintain healthy and sound relation with politics and Government;
- In overseas operation, corporation will respect cultures and customs of hosting society.

The Caux Round Table meeting was held at Caux, Switzerland in 1986, formed by members from business and education from all over the world, particularly Europe, Japan & US adopted *kyosei* ideals in framing their principles for the modern business enterprise. To quote, “*the value of a business to society is the wealth and employment it creates and the marketable products and services to consumers at a reasonable price commensurate with quality survival is not a sufficient goal businesses share a part in shaping the future of those (global) communities*”.

JAIN PHILOSOPHY OF INTERDEPENDENCE

The Holy text of Tattvarha Sutra (5.21) states: “*parasparapagraho jivanam*” meaning “*all life is bound together by mutual support and interdependence*” The dictum is “*life forms render service to one another*”. This offers an alternative to the modern belief of success “*survival of the fittest*”. All life is interconnected. Every soul influences each other through service -- favorable or unfavorable, beneficial or harmful. Together the souls have to share the pleasure and pain. The faith and philosophy of Jainism is described by Shri Arun Kumar Jain as: “*Jainism firmly believes that life is sacred irrespective of caste, color, creed or nationality and thus not only physical or mental injury to life should be avoided, but all possible kindness should be shown towards all living beings.*” In the opinion of Shri Singhvi L M author of Jain Declaration of Nature: “*Jain cosmology recognizes the fundamental natural phenomenon of symbiosis or mutual dependence which forms the basis of modern day science of ecology.*” The philosophy believes all souls are equal irrespective of differences in physical forms and mental capability, ranging from the highest human being to the loveliest living microorganism. Therefore human being must act in a responsible manner and show compassion and forgiveness to all. This highest order of living being (human being) are endowed with all the six senses: seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching an three more elements mind, thinking and ego. Human being must be full of equanimity and act responsible towards all life by being compassionate, ego less, fearless, forgiving and rational.

APPLICATION OF SUSTAINABLE PRINCIPLES

Therefore drawing knowledge from the above mentioned ancient wisdom has suggested the following principles to be considered for application in the organization or society:

	That is	This means	This does not mean
Be Solution minded	Be innovative, add value	--understand everyone's requirements; -- look beyond standards; -- pursue win-win situation; -- understand mutual values	--say yes to everything; -- disregard regulatory measures; -- deliver for free; --we will go beyond the scope of our activities.
Take Ownership	Take responsibility, be proactive and resolve issues)	---take charge; --- get to the root and pursue sustainable solutions; --- actively engage to seek ideas and inspiration; --- take ownership of our mistakes	---ignore issues thinking others will handle; --- pass the problem; --- act beyond authorities; --- disrespecting our near and dear to solve others problems
Be Committed	Set proper expectation, follow up, commitment	----proper expectation and follow up; --- respond as and when promised; ---- explain when you have to say no; ---- be true to your word.	---commit to everything; --- promising something that cannot be delivered; --- not expecting honor from others; --- taking unfair advantage of our resources.
Show Empathy	Be a good listener	----understand others point of view; ---- show genuine concern; ---- communicate in easy words; ---- ask for others idea before important decisions are made.	----accept everything of others; ---- assume we know what is best; ---- expressing frustration of internal system; ---will not enter into tough negotiation.
Be passionate	(Be enthusiastic)	----walk that extra mile; ---- bring positive energy; ---- believe in our roles and ability; ---- strive for excellence.	----being emotional and dramatic; ---- do not assess holistically; --- disregards others reaction; --- overwhelm others

The United Nations Millennium of Declaration values prescribed for sustainable development are: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility. How much time is lost in debating the details of various aspects, sweating the small stuff? Great leaders are able to bring people with diverse perspectives and personalities together to bring about an understanding and consensus. Although each may only experience a certain part of the elephant, it's still an elephant.

CONCLUSION

While summarizing ancient wisdom described in the above paragraph the following emerges: reciprocity should be practiced throughout one's life; virtue, not profit should be the goal of the superior man; there should be a balance between self-interest and altruism; Respect to relations, obedience to and respect for one's own parents is paramount; one should love learning, live the simple life practice what has been learned. All faith reiterates human kind do not exist in isolation; we are a part of a larger and more complex family (literally and figuratively) where harmony can be achieved by acting appropriately with one another. Thus, these Philosophies are treasures of wisdom in having quality life personally and in business / profession. 'Acharya Mahapragya Memorial Lecture on sustainable development through ethics and value-based education' in New Delhi in November agreed that sustainability and spiritual principles go hand-in-hand. "Creation of wealth should be concurrent with inculcation of ethics, values and spirituality. If, in the process of development, we lose our character and culture, it is only a matter of time that we will lose our development as well," says Arun Gupta, president, ISKCON Temple, Idaho, US.³ In Bhagavad Gita Krishna says: "Work for the common good without selfish interests; the rewards of selfless work will take you to a supreme state." Centuries back these teachings of values and ethics have been written with immense foresight and remain true for application even today. Today the global landscape has grey shadows of poverty, misery, unscrupulous activities, greed driven by intense materialistic goals, devoid of universal brotherhood. "On this account, the ruler will first take pains about his own virtue. Possessing virtue will give him the people. Possessing the people will give him the territory. Possessing the territory will give him its wealth. Possessing the wealth, he will have resources for expenditure. Virtue is the root; wealth is the result" (The Great Learning X, 6-7).

Let us all remember and practice: "Sarveh bhavantu sukhinah" — "Let the whole world be in happiness."

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