



Vivekananda Rock Memorial & Vivekananda Kendra

RN Phukan memorial lecture-2018

Focusing only on the environment would not help serve the cause of Sustainable Development. Along with it, the economy and society too have to be taken into consideration when we aim for achieving development that also secures the needs of future generations.

This was a view of Prof. M Jagadesh Kumar, Vice Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, while delivering the 11th Vedanta Vachaspati Radha Nath Phukan Memorial Biennial Lecture organised by the Vivekananda Kendra Institute of Culture, Guwahati.

Describing technology as a serious pursuit of craft and techniques, he further mentioned that economic developments which are sustainable is the need of the hour. They ought to be inclusive and should not be wasteful. In the last few decades, South East Asia has witnessed an output of E Waste that is dangerous and has serious consequences. Technology is trying to effect changes by designing of devices with components which can be replaced, thus lengthening the products lifespan.

Economic models have an impact on sustainable development. The reduction of energy use and adapting to solar and wind energy can be a big boon for a country like India. It has been assessed that about 84 percent of the country's energy needs can be secured by a combination of solar and wind power.

About 60 per cent of Indians are in one way or the other dependent on agriculture. Unfortunately farming contributes only 17 per cent of the GDP. In order to achieve growth that is sustainable there is a great need for technological interventions. The Indian Institute of Science has made an apparatus that farmers can easily use to check the soil moisture, a vital task in agriculture. This and other innovations have made an impact on people away from cities and towns.

Society, in his opinion, also has a great role in laying the foundation for sustainable development in India. Since ancient times, Indian philosophy has underlined the concept of the common good. Now sociologists have once again underlined that truism – Self-centred attitude and behaviour does not lead to common good. Citing experts, Prof Kumar said, “We have become pleasure seeking, curiosity driven human animals.”

Self-awareness is, therefore, the need of the hour. If one is serious about achieving sustainable development, then we must practice perennial human values such as love, affection and sharing. All these constitute part of Indian culture.

Urging people to become less materialistic and more responsible in their behaviour, Prof. Kumar said that when that happens society will become more effective in ushering in a type of development that does not endanger future generations. We have to use fewer materials, use less energy, and become socially inclusive if we are keen on devising strategies to reach sustainable development goals, he observed.

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