



A Critical Analysis Of The Role Of Local Self-Government In Achieving The Goal Of Sustainable Consumption And Production.

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Abstract: "Local Government is not the lowest level of governance; it is the closest to the people."¹

One of the most significant international sustainability challenges is the overexploitation of resources and increased pollution levels linked to ever-increasing consumption and production. The production and consumption of goods and services can have a significant global impact on the environment and society. Achieving sustainable development depends on comprehensive approaches that integrate consumption and production initiatives. The function of Local Government (LG) in National development is inextricably linked. In that sense, the question is not whether we feel the Local Government is ready to take on new duties and authority – although some argue that it is not – but how. The importance of sustainable consumption is exaggerated at the expense of the more critical production side. Understanding the role that various levels of Government can play in incentivising sustainable consumption and production is thus vital. We see a minimal emphasis on sustainable consumption in general, or if it is realized at the local level.

Against this backdrop, this paper reviews the latest evidence on the importance, effectiveness, successes, and failures of local governments in advancing sustainable consumption and production. This study attempts to assess responses to the following concerns. The importance of SCP and the definition of sustainable consumption at the local government level? What instruments have been employed in local government intervention to promote sustainable consumption (administrative, economic, informational, research and development, public ownership/investment, or networking tools)? Have these remedies been evaluated, and if so, how effective were they found to be? What have been the hurdles to and the success factors in local governments' adoption of sustainable consumption initiatives? Possible solutions to overcome the obstacles.

¹ Tashi Pem, *The Role of Local Government in Sustainable Development*, the druk journal, (2022).

Key words – Sustainable Consumption, Sustainable Production, Local Self-Government

I. INTRODUCTION

II. By 2050, the world's population is expected to reach 9.5 billion people.² Seventy per cent of them will live in resource-depleted metropolitan regions. By 2040, it is expected that three billion middle-class consumers will join the global economy. 1.2 billion people live in extreme poverty, even though the worldwide poverty threshold of \$1.25 a day in 2010 was less than half of what it was in 1990.³ To address these challenges while staying within the Earth system's carrying capacity, adopting sustainable consumption and production patterns is crucial, as it conserves the foundation for future growth through resource efficiency. One of the most significant international sustainability challenges is the overexploitation of resources and increased pollution levels linked to ever-increasing consumption.⁴

Why is responsible consumption and production important?

Developing sustainable consumption and production patterns ensures efficiency and productivity improvements while remaining within the planet's carrying capacity and honouring future generations' rights.⁵

What exactly is SCP?

Everything we produce and consume has an impact on the economy, the environment, and social development, either positively or negatively. Developing sustainable consumption and production patterns ensures efficiency and productivity improvements while remaining within the planet's carrying capacity and honouring future generations' rights.

The global economy revolves around the interplay of consumption and production. However, unsustainable production and consumption patterns lead to deforestation, water shortages, food waste, excessive carbon emissions, and ecological degradation. Achieving the SCP objective will establish synergies, help implement other food, water, and energy strategies, and contribute to climate change mitigation.⁶

The country's 12th Five-Year Plan's goal is to create a "Just, Harmonious, and Sustainable Society through expanded decentralization." "A society capable of sustaining its social, economic, and environmental development demands" has been classified as a sustainable society. This aligns with the SDGs (Sustainable

² Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision. Vol. I (ST/ESA/SER.A/336) and II (ST/ESA/SER.A/345) (New York, United Nations Publications, 2013).

³ World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, *Global Monitoring Report 2013: Rural-Urban Dynamics and the Millennium Development Goals* (Washington, D.C., 2013), p. xi, 22, 25.

⁴ Dawkins, E., André, K., Axelsson, K., Benoist, L., Swartling, Å. G. and Persson, Å. Advancing sustainable consumption at the local government level: A literature review. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, Vol 231, 1450, 1450–62, (2019).

⁵ <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/goal-12-ensuring-sustainable-consumption-and-production-patterns-essential-requirement->

⁶ <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/goal-12-ensuring-sustainable-consumption-and-production-patterns-essential-requirement-sustainable>

Development Goals), which aim to ensure equitable and sustainable consumption and production that protects our planet now and in the future.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets were adopted by UN member states in September 2015. Local governments play a crucial role in achieving the SDGs. While the objectives are universal, the ramifications and intervention options are specific to each location. The Indian Constitution envisions the Panchayati Raj system as having two primary goals: promoting local economic growth and ensuring social justice. Panchayats are intended to play a significant role in the planning and implementation. 29 subjects are included in the Constitution's Eleventh Schedule. These disciplines are responsible for a large number of SDG objectives.

Role of Gram Panchayats in SDG 12

According to the Eleventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution, water and watershed management, soil conservation, and social forestry must be transferred to the local bodies. While SDG 12 is not directly relevant to the responsibilities of a Gram Panchayat, by being responsible for local economic development, Gram Panchayats may take steps towards SDG 12. Some of the steps could be as follows: 1. Awareness generation amongst the citizens on the importance of reducing wastage, ensuring sustainable production and consumption, and reducing the adverse impact on the environment. 2. Promote measures within the Gram Panchayat to reduce environmental pollution, such as reducing plastics within the Gram Panchayat area 3. Promote sustainable tourism within the Gram Panchayat that creates jobs, local culture, and local produce.

LSG- 73rd and 74th AMENDMENT

LSG are key actors in their role as planners for sustainable development, and also have the responsibility to transform ambitious National and global goals and visions into local practices. Achieving sustainable consumption and production demands a reinterpretation of the role of PANCHAYATS, MUNICIPALITIES AND CORPORATIONS, businesses and citizens, and generates complex challenges and institutional contradictions for governance.

The 11th schedule specifically mentions regulating air, water, noise pollution, and other environmental degradation as a function of LSG. This example demonstrates the decentralization of sustainability roles at different levels of Government. The country's 12th Five-Year Plan's goal is to create a "Just, Harmonious, and Sustainable Society through expanded decentralisation

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What instruments have been employed in local government intervention to promote sustainable consumption and production?

- 1 Self-governing (or governing by example), which relies on the organizational capacity of the LSG to manage its own operations;
2. Governing by provision, which is related to the LSG's role as provider of different goods and services;
3. Governing by authority, which concerns the ability of LSG to make specific behaviours compulsory and impose sanctions if this is not done.
4. Governing by enabling, which refers to the LSG's capacity to persuade and encourage through the use of positive incentives such as subsidies, information campaigns or the facilitation of different types of initiatives.
5. Governing by partnership, this requires network-oriented decision-making processes that are based on an intricate interplay of public, private and non-profit organizations and the coordination of their resources. Horizontal cooperation between a municipality and its partners from communities, industry, interest organizations and local businesses is usually necessary for successful implementation.

DRAWBACKS

1. The local Government does not have legislative functions but can make rules within the framework of National legislation.
2. The central level formulates environment sustainability-related laws; LG formulates rules for their implementation, monitors their application, and imposes sanctions if disregarded.
3. Changing patterns of consumption significantly demand connecting and strengthening both a diversity of activities in the sharing economy and sustainable consumption itself. LSGs have limited budgets and must prioritize. It is important that they do not do this in a way that rejects good ideas and initiatives from the private and voluntary sectors.
4. However, information on what makes a local intervention beneficial is limited. There is little understanding of the responsibilities that local governments now play or should play in encouraging sustainable consumption

CONCLUSION

Although we have numerous laws addressing environmental issues, consumer protection, and other relevant areas, no provision mandates sustainable production and consumption. The Bureau of Indian Standards Act 1986 is the only piece of legislation that addresses these issues. To establish quality, safety, and other standards for various products, ensuring customer safety implicitly addresses environmental problems.

In conclusion, while sustainable consumption is promoted worldwide and discussed academically, variables affecting implementation at the local government level have primarily remained unexplored.

It is impossible to establish what makes an intervention effective and what responsibilities local governments may and should play in encouraging sustainable consumption without this awareness of the process, consequences, impediments, and enabling variables at the local government level.

Local governments have significant challenges in implementing effective, long-term consumption policies, including financing, staff capacity, expertise, and data, lack of flexibility and status quo lock-in, lack of guidance or political will, administrative difficulties, and regulatory powers or instruments

SUGGESTIONS

Local Governments should adopt supply chain regulations to increase the fair distribution of benefits and disadvantages resulting from resource usage, as well as promote human rights protection in ways that assure ecological well-being and social justice. At the local and regional levels, governance institutions must identify and promote existing sustainable practices and nurture the development of more sustainable patterns of resource use and management. This will necessitate the strengthening of tenure rights and the redistribution of power at all levels of decision-making.

“ True Democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be performed from below by the people of every village,” – Mahatma Gandhi⁷



⁷ Harijan, 18-1-48, p. 519