



An Anthropological Take On Sustainable Development : Beyond Development And Progress.

Medha Sarkar : UGC Junior Research Fellow, PhD Research Scholar, Gauhati university

Abstract:

Anthropology plays an important role in sustainable development by identifying and addressing social, economic, and cultural factors that leads towards progress. Anthropologists also ensures that people are at the center of development practice, and that they are involved in the creation, management, and decision-making process. The research emphasizes the significance of incorporating sustainability ideas into the education system. In this regard, the paper has adopted a descriptive qualitative research methodology based on primary and secondary literature. The findings indicate the need for increased indigeneity for having a sustainable education system. The implication of this research will be to understand indigeneity and education as a means to complete development and progression. Anthropological approach recognizes that change is a social and cultural process, and that interactions between people and their organizations affect the nature of the change to a great extent.

Key Words: Anthropology, Sustainable Education, Sustainability, Development, progress.

Introduction and Background:

Ethnographic knowledge and anthropological epistemologies have established their relevance and capacity to have a firm grip on the public sphere. The World is living in an era of uncertainties clouded by the onslaught of challenges emanating from an escalation in protracted ethnic violence, religious fundamentalism, militancy and wars across countries and continents over territories and political control (Deloria, V., & Wildcat, D. R. (Eds.), 2001). This infectious hatred between the warring factions has brought untold misery to innocent masses. Unfortunately, innocent populations, especially children, bear the brunt of these conflicts, despite having little involvement in their causes and consequences. The tragedy of war lies in its anthropological construction of “the other” and the process of “othering,” which perpetuates hatred and leads to the annihilation of those perceived as different. Anthropology, since its inception, has played a significant role in the conservation and preservation of indigenous knowledge

systems, which are crucial components of cultural diversity. In line with these principles, this paper aims to explore the relationship between sustainable education and its potential contribution to social justice through an understanding of indigeneity. Additionally, it seeks to highlight how integrating anthropological insights into educational practices can create inclusive learning environments, fostering global peace and bridging cultural divides. By promoting sustainable education that encompasses the values and knowledge of indigenous communities, societies can address historical injustices, empower marginalized groups, and mitigate the root causes of conflicts (Nakata, 2007).

Literature Review:

Role of Anthropology in Sustainable Education and other developments :

Sustainable education plays a crucial role in driving meaningful transitions towards social justice. It equips individuals with critical thinking skills and raises awareness of social inequalities, empowering students to challenge oppressive systems and advocate for equality. Scholars emphasize the importance of sustainable education in addressing social injustices, promoting inclusive societies, and working towards global peace (Jickling, 2004; Sterling, 2010). Collaboration among educators, policymakers, community leaders, and civil society members is crucial for promoting social justice through sustainable education (Gruenewald, 2003). The literature emphasizes the importance of an inclusive education system that embraces diversity and promotes cultural understanding for bridging cultural divides and fostering global peace. Sustainable education plays a pivotal role in fostering intercultural dialogue and challenging stereotypes and prejudices. Through intercultural understanding, students develop empathy, tolerance, and respect for diverse cultures. Scholars argue that this appreciation for cultural diversity contributes to peaceful coexistence, conflict resolution, and the establishment of a more harmonious global society (Banks, 2008; UNESCO, 2015).

The literature underscores the need to integrate anthropological insights into educational practices to create sustainable and inclusive learning environments. Scholars argue that incorporating indigenous knowledge, cultural relativism theory, and intercultural understanding into the curriculum can enhance cultural sensitivity, promote social justice, and contribute to global peace (Smith, 2012). They emphasize the importance of collaboration among educators, policymakers, and community members to effectively integrate anthropological perspectives into sustainable education (Hicks et al., 2016). The Postcolonial Era: 1949 onwards Closely linked to the history of capitalism is, of course, the history of colonialism. The concepts of progress and enlightenment were key to colonial discourse, especially in the late colonial period (e.g. 1850-1950), where the 'natives' were structured as backwards or children, and the colonists were progressives. (Said, 1978: 40). Thus, while economic gain was the driving force behind imperial conquest, colonial rule in the 19th and 20th centuries included the need to transform communities through the introduction of European education, Christianity, and new political and bureaucratic systems. Attempts

were also included. The concept of moral obligation is central to this and was often expressed in relation to the relationship between trustees and minors (Mair, 1984: 2). Development discourse in the 1990s was rarely formulated in such a racist manner, but it often dealt with similar topics. “Good government,” institution building, and gender training are just three of his topics of current trends driving “desirable” social and political change. With these notions coming from such dubious beginnings, it is not surprising that many people today view them with suspicion.

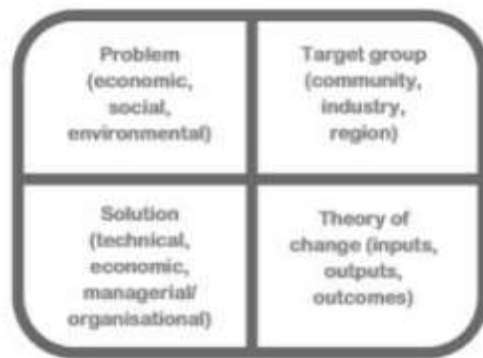


Fig : Dominant practice framework for Development work (source : Anthropology for development from Theory to practice by Robin Eversole)

Methodology:

The methodology adopted for this paper is a descriptive qualitative research approach that draws on primary and secondary literature. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the topic, focusing on the role of sustainable education and collaboration among stakeholders. The researcher collects relevant data from academic journals, conference papers, reports, and other scholarly sources that directly address sustainable education and its impact on transitions. The researcher reviews secondary sources such as books, articles, reports, and policy documents that provide a broader context for sustainable education and highlight the perspectives of different stakeholders the rights and struggles of indigenous peoples, fostering social justice movements and advocating for their recognition, land rights, self-determination, and cultural preservation. Anthropology has also shed light on the impact of globalization, neoliberal policies, and development projects on indigenous communities. By critically examining power dynamics and advocating for the inclusion of indigenous voices, anthropologists have played a crucial role in promoting social justice and challenging oppressive systems (Deloria, V., & Wildcat, D. R. (Eds.), 2001).

Sustainability in Education:

Through ethnographic research in educational settings, anthropologists have examined the cultural dynamics at play, including the role of teachers,

students, and curriculum in shaping educational experiences. They have highlighted the importance of culturally responsive and community-based approaches to education, recognizing diverse ways of knowing and learning. By incorporating anthropological approaches into educational policies and practices, anthropologists have advocated for inclusive and equitable education for all students. This includes promoting multiculturalism, challenging stereotypes, and addressing power imbalances in educational institutions. By fostering a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and social justice, anthropology has helped create more sustainable educational environments (Smith, L. T., 2012).

Anthropology knowledge in Sustainable Education:

Understanding indignity through the lens of anthropology provides profound insights into the lifestyles, cultural practices, and knowledge systems of indigenous communities. By acknowledging and respecting indigenous cultures, educational institutions can integrate sustainable education into their systems. This integration involves incorporating indigenous knowledge, traditions, and perspectives into the curriculum, as well as embracing the principles of cultural relativism theory. By doing so, educational institutions can promote cultural understanding, respect, and inclusivity. Sustainable education, with its emphasis on environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and economic viability, contributes to the preservation of indigenous cultures and fosters global peace (Harrison, F. V., 1997).

rs individuals with critical thinking skills and raises awareness of social inequalities. It equips students with the tools to challenge oppressive systems, advocate for equality, and contribute to the development of inclusive societies. By nurturing a sense of social responsibility, sustainable education becomes a catalyst for social change, leading to a more just and equitable world. Ultimately, social justice is intrinsic to the achievement of global peace (Smith, L. T., 1999).

Anthropology provides valuable insights into indigenous cultures and knowledge systems, shedding light on the challenges faced by indigenous communities and advocating for their rights and well-being. Sustainable education, incorporating indigenous perspectives and cultural relativism theory, contributes to the preservation of indigeneity and fosters social justice (Kagitçibasi, Ç., 2005). By nurturing a sense of social responsibility, sustainable education empowers individuals to challenge oppressive systems and advocate for equality, leading to more inclusive and equitable societies. Moreover, sustainable education promotes intercultural understanding, bridging cultural divides and fostering peace throughout the universe. Sustainable education plays a critical role in achieving social justice by equipping individuals with critical thinking skills and raising awareness of social inequalities. Educational institutions need to embrace inclusive practices that challenge oppressive systems, promote equality, and create inclusive learning environments.

Conclusion:

An anthropological intake in developmental work seeks to understand the actions that different people and organizations are already taking and how these

changes affect their lives to a great extent. Anthropological approaches also recognize that diverse knowledge and institutions already exist in the developing sphere. In a development practice, the way developers see, perceive, and act tends to dominate; it can be difficult to recognize different ways of looking, perceiving, and acting. This research paper highlights the significant contributions of anthropology to sustainability and sustainable development. By integrating anthropological insights into educational practices through sustainable education, inclusive learning environments can be created. The findings indicate the importance of recognizing and respecting indigenous cultures, incorporating indigenous knowledge, and embracing cultural relativism theory within the curriculum. This integration fosters social justice, environmental stewardship, and intercultural understanding, contributing to global peace. The implication of this research is the need for educational institutions, policymakers, and community stakeholders to collaborate and implement sustainable education practices that prioritize cultural diversity, social justice, and environmental sustainability. By doing so, societies can work towards a more equitable, inclusive, and peaceful future for all. The developers can explore diverse ways to reframe problems and solutions in different ways to a great extent.

References:

1. Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. Purich Publishing Limited.
2. Marker, M. (2015). Integrating indigenous knowledge and perspectives in sustainable education: A transformative approach. *Sustainability Science*, 10(1), 11-21.
3. Jickling, B. (2004). Why I don't want my children to be educated for sustainable development. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 36(4), 373-388.
4. Sterling, S. (2010). Learning for resilience, or the resilient learner? Towards a necessary reconciliation in a paradigm of sustainable education. *Environmental Education Research*, 16(5-6), 511-528.
5. Gruenewald, D. A. (2003). The best of both worlds: A critical pedagogy of place. *Educational Researcher*, 32(4), 3-12.
6. Banks, J. A. (2008). Diversity, group identity, and citizenship education in a global age. *Educational Researcher*, 37(3), 129-139.
7. UNESCO. (2015). *Rethinking education: Towards a global common good?* UNESCO Publishing.
8. Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Zed Books.
9. Nakata, M. (2007). The cultural interface. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 36(S1), 7-14.
10. Hicks, D., Holden, C., & Tompkins, P. (2016). Teaching anthropology for sustainability: Developing cultural capital through student-led engagement with place. *Teaching Anthropology*, 6(1), 19-36.
11. Basso, K. (1996). *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. University of New Mexico Press.
12. Deloria, V., & Wildcat, D. R. (Eds.). (2001). *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*. Fulcrum Publishing.
13. Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2nd ed.). Zed Books.
14. Wilson, S. (2008). *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*.

Fernwood Publishing.

15. Wolf, E. R. (1982). Europe and the People Without History. University of California Press.
16. Harrison, F. V. (1997). Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further Toward an Anthropology for Liberation. *American Anthropologist*, 99(4), 670-684.
17. Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books.
18. Kirsch, S. (2006). Anthropology and the study of conflict: Reflections on the future of the field. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 79(2).

