



Towards Sustainable Transition

Holistic Development and Inclusive
Transformation of Indian Society

Prof. Zeba Aqil | Dr. Khurshed Alam



Bharti Publications

Towards Sustainable Transition:
*Holistic Development and Inclusive
Transformation of Indian Society*

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Bharti Publications
New Delhi- 110002 (INDIA)

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Title: Towards Sustainable Transition: Holistic Development and Inclusive Transformation of Indian Society

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First Published, 2025

ISBN: 978-93-48059-01-7

Published by :

Bharti Publications

4819/24, 2nd Floor, Mathur Lane

Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002

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Preface

The journey towards a sustainable future is a shared endeavor, marked by the aspiration to create a harmonious balance between economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity. India, a nation defined by its diversity and dynamic evolution, stands at the cusp of profound transformation as it navigates the intricate pathways of development in a globalized world. This book, *Towards Sustainable Transition: Holistic Development and Inclusive Transformation of Indian Society*, seeks to unravel the multifaceted dimensions of this transformation, offering insights and perspectives to chart a progressive and inclusive course.

The need for sustainable transition has never been more urgent. India faces the twin challenges of rapid urbanization and industrialization alongside the imperative to preserve its ecological heritage and uphold social justice. This book examines these pressing concerns, exploring themes of environmental sustainability, social inclusion, economic resilience, and governance reforms. It aspires to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the interconnectedness of these dimensions, emphasizing that true progress is achievable only when development is equitable, inclusive, and sustainable.

A central premise of this book is the recognition that India's diversity is both its strength and its challenge. From rural hinterlands to bustling metropolises, the narratives of development are as varied as the cultures they emerge from. This diversity necessitates a holistic approach that values local knowledge systems, prioritizes marginalized voices, and fosters community-driven solutions. The chapters herein present a blend of theoretical insights, empirical studies, and case analyses to highlight practical strategies for achieving sustainable development goals tailored to the Indian context.

In addressing these themes, the book also underscores the critical role of governance and policy frameworks. Transparent, accountable, and participatory governance is the cornerstone

of sustainable development. Innovative policy interventions, coupled with the active involvement of civil society and the private sector, are pivotal in bridging gaps and ensuring the fruits of development reach all segments of society.

This book is the culmination of collaborative efforts, drawing on the expertise and experiences of scholars, policymakers, and practitioners. It is my hope that this work will not only contribute to academic discourse but also serve as a guide for decision-makers and change agents striving to create a just and sustainable India.

As we embark on this exploration of India's sustainable transition, I express my heartfelt gratitude to all contributors, colleagues, and mentors who have enriched this endeavor with their knowledge and encouragement. I also extend my deepest thanks to readers, whose engagement and critique will ensure that this work remains a living document, reflective of the evolving realities and aspirations of our society.

Let us collectively work towards a future where development is synonymous with dignity, equity, and sustainability.

Prof. Zeba Aqil
Dr. Khurshed Alam

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>iii-iv</i>
1. Safeguarding Mental Health of India's Youth Today for the Realization of Prospective Sustainability	1-12
<i>Prof. (Dr.) Zeba Aqil</i>	
2. Role of Civil Society to Bring Good Governance in India	13-31
<i>Dr. Khurshed Alam</i>	
3. Handicraft and Social Group Contribution to the Informal Economy in Uttar Pradesh	32-49
<i>Dr. Manjur Ali</i>	
4. Concept, Importance and Redesigning the Welfare State	50-60
<i>Dr. Md. Tarique Anwer</i>	
5. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	61-75
<i>Dr. Vandana Mishra & Dr. Pallavi</i>	
6. Beyond Engagement: Employee Flourishing as the New Frontier in Workplace Well-being	76-84
<i>Dr. Farah Shoaib</i>	
7. Role of Local Governance in Sustainable Rural Development	85-95
<i>Dr. Mohd. Shamsheer Khan</i>	
8. Prime Minister Modi Regime and its Response Towards Life on Land in Amrit Kaal	96-108
<i>Dr. Ram Pratap Yadav & Dr. Arun Kumar Singh</i>	
9. Human Rights in Islamic Perspectives	109-118
<i>Prof. (Dr.) Ghazanfar Ali Khan</i>	

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 10. The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Advancing Unesco's Five Pillars of Education | 119-134 |
| <i>Dr. Vinod Kumar Kanwaria & Ananta Ana Tigga</i> | |
| 11. Role of Social Media in Social Transformation from Ancient to Modern | 135-142 |
| <i>Dr. Smita Srivastava & Mr. Jahangeer Alam</i> | |
| 12. From Vision to Reality: Uttar Pradesh's Successes in Sustainable Urbanization | 143-158 |
| <i>Dr. Utkarsh Mishra</i> | |
| 13. Sustainable Development Goal 8: Economic Growth and Employment Strategies in India | 159-175 |
| <i>Dr. Avinash Kumar</i> | |
| 14. Bridging Divides: Social Justice in the Multicultural Fabric of India | 176-192 |
| <i>Dr. Anas Jameel & Dr. Anshal Tiger</i> | |
| 15. The Politics of Gender & Good Governance in India: A Critical Discourse | 193-203 |
| <i>Dr. Faizan Haque</i> | |
| 16. Zionism: Inception, Transformation and Developments | 204-212 |
| <i>Dr. Khwaja Danish Hameed</i> | |
| 17. Social Transformation of India from Ancient to Modern | 213-222 |
| <i>Dr. Pallavi Sharma</i> | |
| 18. The Role of Positive Psychology for Sustainable Development and Well Being in Education | 223-233 |
| <i>Dr. Pavitra Bajpai</i> | |
| 19. Ensuring a Sustainable Future Through Advancements in Renewable Energy and Environmental Engineering | 234-246 |
| <i>Dr. Priyanshi Gupta</i> | |
| 20. Artificial Intelligence: Boon or Curse for Humanity | 247-261 |
| <i>Dr. Shoaib Hasan</i> | |

21. **The Intersection of Positive Psychology and Sustainability: Fostering Eco-friendly Happiness** 262-269
Renuka Panchal
22. **“Social Innovation in Sustainability Transition: Approaching Sustainable Development through Social Innovations.”** 270-279
Dr. Zia Afroz & Dr. Neha Singh
23. **Investing in Human Capital: An Imperative to Sustainable Organizational Employability in India** 280-289
Aisha Zaheer & Faisal Ansari
24. **Mental Health Interventions for LGBT Populations: Effective Practices and Strategies** 290-302
Neha Roshni Yooshing
25. **Navigating Identity and Equality: Contemporary LGBT+ Issues and Challenges** 303-312
Faisal Ansari & Aisha Zaheer
26. **Status of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Education: A Policy Perspective on Global Trends and Indian Initiatives** 313-325
Dr. Vinod Kumar Kanwaria & Mr. Ritesh Kumar
27. **Cross-Border Socio-Cultural Sustainability: A Case of India and China** 326-337
Roshan Jahan & Dr. Mohd. Shahwaiz

The graphic consists of a grey rectangular banner with the word 'Chapter' written in white, slanted upwards from left to right. To the right of the banner is a black square with a white border, containing the number '2' in white.

Role of Civil Society to Bring Good Governance in India

Dr. Khurshed Alam*

Introduction

This paper offers a comprehensive study of various factors that affect the dynamics of civil society, comparisons and lessons from other countries and ultimately proposes the evolution path for civil society to make good governance a plausible reality. Governance envisages the coordination between and within governmental and non-governmental forces while good governance is the institutional or organizational best practices to ensure participation, equity, responsiveness, consensus orientation, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, transparency and strategic vision. The notion of good governance is being enthralled throughout the world because of its efficacy to ensure the congruous development. Governance, often defined as the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented, is fundamental to the development of any nation. Good governance is characterized by principles such as accountability, transparency, participation, and the rule of law. Civil society, comprised of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community groups, activists, and professional associations, is an essential partner in promoting these principles.

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India, being the largest democracy in the world, presents a complex landscape of governance challenges due to its vast population, socio-economic inequalities, and diverse cultures. Civil society in India has historically been at the forefront of movements for social justice, human rights, and political accountability, playing a crucial role in improving governance. This paper discusses how civil society contributes to good governance in India and identifies key areas where its impact is most profound.

Governance: Theoretical Perspectives

Governance is broader than government, encompassing not just the formal institutions of the state but also the informal practices, networks, and relationships between the state, private sector, and civil society. It can be defined as the structures and processes that ensure the coordination of social, political, and economic activities within a society (Stoker, 1998). Governance focuses on how power is exercised, how citizens engage in the political process, and how public services are delivered. It is concerned with the interactions between various stakeholders, including governments, businesses, and civil society organizations, and their role in shaping public policies and outcomes.

The theoretical perspectives on governance are varied. Traditional Public Administration (TPA), rooted in Max Weber's bureaucratic theory, emphasizes hierarchical structures, legal rationality, and rule-bound procedures. This model sees governance as a top-down process, with the state holding the central authority over decision-making and public administration (Weber, 1947). However, as governance issues became more complex in the late 20th century, traditional models of public administration were seen as inefficient and overly rigid.

In response, the New Public Management (NPM) approach emerged in the 1980s, advocating for the adoption of private sector management techniques in public administration. NPM emphasizes efficiency, accountability, and service delivery, often calling for decentralization, privatization, and market-driven policies (Hood, 1991). This shift highlighted the importance of governance as a multi-stakeholder process, moving away from state-centric models towards collaborative decision-making involving the private sector and civil society.