

Green Economy-Green Sustainability-Green Ethics

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Abstract

Although the concept ‘environment’ is perceived as a space where people live, it narrates an ecosystem in the broad sense. Ecosystem is described as a raw material store which fulfills the physical and biological needs. However, considering that the resources are scarce and the needs of people are limitless, it is clearly seen that the environmental resources are scarce as well. Within this content, efficient use of environmental resources has a great importance for sustainable development.

Green economy approach brings a new perspective for the sustainable development. Since the degeneration in economic, cultural and historical environment led to development problems, green economy is an important instrument achieving sustainability in environmental values.

In this study, green economy and green sustainability is handled from the point of decreasing the damage that environment and ecosystem are exposed. When it comes to solve the paradox between economic development and environment, the study touches on the green ethics perception which can be defined as getting and adopting the information, attitude and behavior that will preserve the living space and living quality of human beings both individually and globally.

Keywords: Green Economy, Sustainable Development, Green Sustainability, Green Ethics

1. INTRODUCTION

The words ‘green’ and ‘sustainability’ are usually used together. While the word ‘green’ represents the environment, ‘sustainability’ refers to convection of current resources to the next generation without any loss. Sustainable development, which is one of the most popular

development models in the last years, comes to the forefront as an environmental development model. In this regard, sustainable development can be defined as green sustainability.

The aim of sustainability is to improve our living standards without harming the resources that we need to survive. By this way, the green economy will enable to develop environment friendly products and processes and environmental problems will be kept in sight to a large extent.

Besides the fast growing world population, the increasing level of welfare in the countries and increasing world commerce due to the globalization and many other formations have increased the production and correspondingly the resource consumption. This situation has created great problems about resources which are hard to remediate. According to Otegbulu (2011:240), unless we preserve the natural, physical and chemical system of the world, it will be impossible to meet the needs of human beings.

At this point, it is claimed that mankind has less time than hundreds of years to bring the environmental problems under control and abstain from social and ecologic retrogressive situation (Foster, 2008: 12-13). On the other hand, Des Jardin (2006:581) admits that environmental issues must be dealt besides ethic and economic problems while planning and effective social and political future and offers an initiation regarding the issue. After all this initiation will be an important step to determine the direction of future.

This study aims to develop a perspective in green economy, green sustainability and green ethics. Most of all this study searches solutions for the paradox between economic development and environment.

2. GREEN SUSTAINABILITY AND GREEN ECONOMY

This concept, which has taken its place in economy literature as economic sustainability, has reached to its current value as a significant element of competitive power. WTO (1998:20) defines the sustainable development as a development model which enables to fulfill the needs of current generation without jeopardizing the needs of next generations in the Brundtland report. This report mentions about not only the maximum economic growth through the sustainable development but also activating a fair and equitable economic development (Garrod and Fyall, 1998:200)

Starting with the first and second industrial revolution and gained a pace with globalization, the transition period from an agricultural society to an industrial society led to more consumption to be more industrialized. However, the greediness of countries to produce and have a great competitive power triggered environmental crisis. In our day, while the industrialized countries take some precautions to lessen environmental disasters and not to experience environmental problems thanks to their technologic superiority, developing countries are lack of these regulations. The reason of this is generally economic or politic. The low education level of these countries triggers these problems as well.

In Brundlant report, where it is emphasized that sustainable development inheres a period of change, one of the aims of sustainable development is stated as integrating environment and economy during the decision-making (TÇSV, 1991:78). In fact, other aims also have some features serving to this aim.

The over-capitalist policy implementations leading a mass exploitation of environment have confronted great reaction and criticism. The Deep Ecology approach is acquired currency

owing to these reactions. According to this approach likewise the sustainable development approach, not only the mankind must be preserved but also the whole ecosystem. According to Meltzner (1994:28), the main idea of deep ecology is to meet the needs of living creatures other than mankind and develop their life quality. As to Luke (2002:180) the equality on the ecosystem is extremely important and all living creature have to have fair and equal opportunities. Therefore, in order to reach the sustainable development to green sustainability, we should pay attention to the main philosophy of deep ecologic approach.

Ecosystem represents the whole with living and non-living things. Instead of particularizing the whole and attribute different values to every part, talking about green sustainability and green economy would be more rational.

Though the environment is described as the space where we live, it refers to a great ecosystem. This ecosystem offers us many opportunities to meet our physical and biological needs. Economic environment is the main structure providing every kind of resource which is necessary for the production process. It is a raw material store in short. It is the main source of production. Considering that resources are scarce, we can easily say that environmental resources are scarce as well and must be used efficiently. We can say that this is a must for sustainable development.

The new economic order displayed that classic economy theories are not enough for the sustainable development. Within this point, ecologic economy approach came into agenda and tried to fill the gap. As to Daly (2007:86), who is acknowledged as one of the trailblazers of ecologic economy, it is not always possible that the production processes are environment friendly and create positive exteriorities. More importantly, the cost of negative exteriorities due to the production process must not be more than the renovation capacity for the consumed ecosystem resources.

Cultural and historical environment also play an important role on the sustainable development besides the economic environment. Unfortunately, the degeneration in cultural and historical values of the countries leads to irretrievable development problems. Because reparation of loss of the values conveyed from past to present is impossible. And this will lead that the next generations will not know their past and deal with some problems in future.

As to Uslu (1997:43), to provide sustainable development is a must for all economies. However, putting economy into ecologic frames would be more logical rather than assessing the ecologic structure as a component in the economic frame (Uslu, 1997:43).

According to Kumar and Kumar (2011:961) 'Green Economy' is an instrument to achieve a sustainable environmental development. It defines a structure where a sustainable economic development is achieved without giving any harm to the ecosystem. Kumar and Kumar (2011:961) also states that the success of green economy idea depends on the politic reforms. The politic reforms must provide a sustainable economic richness, must ease the issues and enable optimum usage of natural resources. In short, state policy primarily has to aim developing improved technologies to provide clean and recyclable energy.

Barbier (2011:234-236), on the other hand, has a different point of view about green economy. Barbier emphasize that there are two difficulties in front of the green economy. One of them is sustainability and the other is financing. The need for a constant production by consuming resources, which are the components of environment, to provide a sustainable development is a great problem. High costs of precautions that will be taken to preserve the environment are the second dimension of the issue.

In order to remove the deadlock between economic growth and environmental sustainability, the character of the growth must be changed. Therefore, some restrictions must be put into use in order not to use nonrenewable resources and to terminate the use of resource and technologies that lead to environmental pollution (Ertürk, 2011: 161)

3. GREEN ETHICS FOR GREEN SUSTAINABILITY

History shows that the societies are in war with environment for long years and treat nature as if it is a waste grave. It is known that the exploitation of nature sometimes led to the collapse of civilizations. Considering these historical facts, it is claimed that mankind has less time than hundreds of years to bring the environmental problems under control and abstain from social and ecologic retrogressive situation (Foster, 2008: 12-13)

In order not to run short of environmental resources and not to give harm to the environment during production and consumption process, both the companies and individuals must have a green consciousness. Green consciousness refers to environment ethics and consciousness. Green consciousness means that every individual must feel responsible to create a livable environment and to sustain it (Çepel, 2006: 25). The reasons of environmental problems and environmental pollution are the ignorant ideas and attitudes of societies rose from their social and economic activities to achieve an utmost welfare level (Ertürk, 2011: 244).

Though sustainable development idea is put forward due to the future concerns, it has gradually turned into a comprehensive and complete ethical approach (Kılıç, 2008: 217). Ethical principles are really important in terms of identification of environmental issues and the remedy of polluted and damaged environment. (http://www.etik.gov.tr/makaleler/abdulkadir_mahmutoglu.pdf). Green ethics displays the individuals how to relate with nature or in a more comprehensive approach with the outer world. And it emphasizes the moral aspect of human-nature relations. It indicates that mankind must improve responsibility for the natural environment and other living things (http://www.guncelonkal.com/PDF/cevre_etigi_maddesi.pdf).

With another expression, green ethics can be defined as the systemic examination of moral relation between mankind and nature (Des Jardins, 2006: 46) and the responsibilities of individuals (Kılıç, 2008: 32). Green ethics and ecological responsibility target is directly related with each other. The main idea is that natural resources must be used without being consumed completely and destructively and the sustainability of these resources for the next generations must be enabled (Mutlu, 2008: 97). In this regard, green ethics is an approach aiming to preserve all the values and aspects of nature.

In order to realize the improvement and admission of environment oriented green ethics approach and adopt the organic world understanding, which is based on the idea that the nature is a living organism, the education for environment must be widespread (Ertürk, 2011: 144).

Green ethics and sustainability intersects in many points. Environmental dimension of sustainability states that the societies must preserve the natural resources and ecosystems. The self-renewing capacity of ecosystems is limited; therefore, everybody must be conscious about the usage of natural resources such as earth, air and water (Nemli, 2004: 26). In line with this responsibility, the green ethics aims to have mankind adopt the information, attitude and behavior that will preserve the living space and living quality of mankind at individual, social and global level.

4. CONCLUSION

Sustainable growth has a great significance for all economies. However, what is more important for the developing countries is sustainable development. Considering that the concept of development has many more aspects than the concept of growth, it can be said that developing countries are in a much more difficult situation. Moreover it can be said that sustainable development is related with environment and green economy and it depends on the implementation of green ethics.

Green economy and green sustainability is only possible when the green ethics is properly implemented and adopted by all parts of the society. We can outline what can be done within this concept:

Expectations from the State: Green consciousness can be achieved with a comprehensive education system in all parts of the society. Changes in education system must be seen as a direct state policy and never be belonged to a mere government. Otherwise it would not be possible to provide a green sustainability.

Expectations from the Companies: It is really important for companies to reach the green ethics consciousness. Especially, environmental friendly resources that are used in the production will decrease negative exteriority after production. In this regard, corporate companies must set a model and support the idea with social responsibility projects to gain positive results. Moreover, these companies must support the innovative operations with R&D projects about green ethics and green sustainability.

Expectations from the International Institutions: Implementation of green ethics values at a national level will provide a regional effect. For this reason, green ethics implementations must be spread to the whole world. In this regard, environmentalist institutions and companies shaping the economy and commerce must be in solidarity and international institutions that will work for the green sustainability are needed. However, in order to be more successful, power of sanction of these institutions must also be at the highest level.

Last but not least, world trade and world economy under an intense globalization are in need of green production and nature conservation.

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