

Major Groups and Stakeholders

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Environmental Governance



- Governance refers to decision-making and the process by which power is exercised to utilise economic, social and natural resources for development
- Good governance, within each country and at the international level, is essential for sustainable development
- Environmental governance (EG) is a concept in political ecology or environmental policy related to defining the elements needed to achieve sustainability, which comprises the rules, practices, policies and institutions that shape how humans interact with the environment.
- Good environmental governance takes into account the role of all actors that impact the environment

Governing at the global scale



- Governing our planet's rich and diverse natural resources is an increasingly complex challenge.
- Hence it is not enough to confine our environmental governance to the local or national level only.
- Global environmental governance is “the sum of organizations, policy instruments, financing mechanisms, rules, procedures and norms that regulate the processes of global environmental protection”
- The global biosphere behaves as a single system, where the environmental impacts of each nation ultimately affect the whole. That makes a coordinated response from the community of nations, a necessity for reversing the trend today
- Governance includes not only government, but also business and civil society, and emphasizes on whole system management

Key Principles



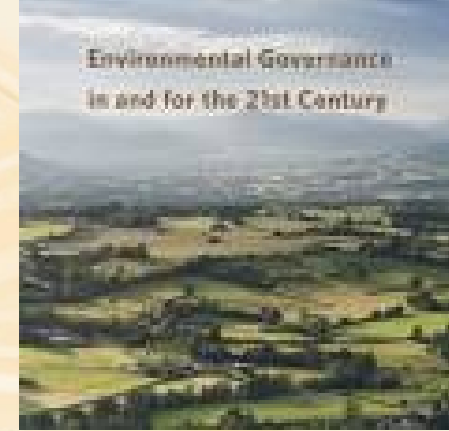
- Embeds the environment in all levels of decision-making and action.
- Conceptualizes cities and communities, economic and political life as a subset of the environment.
- Emphasizes the connection of people to the ecosystems in which they live.
- Promotes the transition from linear systems (like garbage disposal with no recycling) to circular systems (like permaculture and zero waste strategies).

Factors affecting EG



- Fragmented governance within the multi-lateral agencies
- Lack of involvement from financial institutions
- Proliferation of environmental agreements often in conflict with trade measures;
- Divisions among northern countries and the persistent gap between developed and developing countries
- Institutional failures of the current global environmental governance

Present Status of EG



- Environmental governance calls for the adoption of coherent multilateral management by a great variety of stakeholders.
- However, the global community has proved incapable of meeting this challenge and environmental governance is currently victim to a great many conditions.
- Thus, “despite a great awareness of environmental questions from developed and developing countries, there is environmental degradation and the appearance of new environmental problems.”
- This situation is caused by the dangerous state of global environmental governance, wherein current global environmental governance is unable to address environmental issues due to many factors

Present Obstacles and Challenges



- The impossibility of curbing or reversing the trend of harming natural resources.
- At continental and global levels, numerous multilateral agreements have been signed and ratified over the past 30 years, but implementing them poses a serious problem at the national, regional and international levels whilst environmental degradation continues.
- Lack of political will is at the root of the governance crisis. By persistently showing a lack of political will for solving environmental problems and seeking instead to develop policies in favour of the sustainable use of the earth's resources
- Financial resources are limited and direct investment in the environment insufficient. In concrete terms, lack of long-term stable financing hinders its chances of tackling new challenges.



Obstacles and challenges....

- Environmental governance is currently characterized by a stark lack of integration of sector policies, inadequate institutional capacities, ill-defined priorities and unclear operational objectives: in short, bad governance.
- This lack of coordination at various levels without any shared vision or regulation. It also exists in governments, the private sector and civil society.
- There is increasing recognition that environmental issues are interdependent, not only with development and sustainable economic growth, but also with trade, agriculture, health, peace and security.
- Neither the gender perspective nor the interests of equity are included in the management of environmental degradation or
in EG

Key conditions for decentralized EG



- Accessing social capital, including the reassessment of local knowledge on natural resource potentials, legitimate local leaderships, a common vision based on discussions and negotiations, and education and training;
- Participation and information access: ensure democratic access to information and decision-making based on adequate and legitimate information;
- Government presence: on local levels as a creator, promoter or recipient of decentralized environmental governance; as a facilitator of access to natural resources, or as policy maker;
- Institutional framework: the need to establish informal mechanisms that shape a new institutional framework which favours decentralized environmental governance and creates forums for social interaction and definition of agreements acceptable to the stakeholders

EG in South Asia



- Environmental NGOs and movements in South Asian countries evolved primarily from the concern of poverty-related environmental problems, or environmental justice.
- Historically, the Sub-continent has been a biomass-based civilization and till to date the rural poor depends in varying degrees on natural resources for their livelihood support.
- However, with nationalization and privatization of the former common property resources, the poor were deprived of some of their customary rights. The result was a tension between the state and the local communities, which sometimes even turned into violent conflicts.

Kudamkulam: Agitation against Nuclear Plant

Protest against the plant fearing a Fukushima like disaster



Unanswered Questions?



EG need to address how decisions concerning the environment are made and who participates in the decision making process. It seeks to address questions such as:

- Who makes and enforces the rules for using natural resources?
- What are the rules and the penalties for breaking them?
- Who resolves disputes?
- How can the public influence or contest the rules over natural resources?
- Who represents those who use or depend on natural resources when decisions on those resources are made?
- At what level does the authority over resources reside?
- How do those who control and manage natural resources answer for their decisions, and to whom?
- How open to scrutiny is the decision making process?
- Who owns a natural resource or has the legal right to control it?

Biological Management Committees (BMCs) in India: A case of good EG



- National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) was established in 2003 to implement the Biological Diversity Act (2002)
- NBA delivers its mandate at local level through Biological Management Committees (BMCs).
- BMCs are responsible for promoting conservation, sustainable use and documentation of biological diversity including preservation of habitats, conservation of land races, folk varieties, domesticated species, breeds of animals, microorganisms and chronicling of knowledge relating to biological diversity.
- NBA has already initiated more than 30,000 BMCs.
- Details can be seen at: www.nbaindia.org

Thanks

