

# **Sustainable Development Seen as Human Evolution: A Modern Approach with Discussion in Tourism**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Sustainable development is and will be an act of humanity and intelligence for present and future activities it is engaged.

Human development is needed to achieve truly sustainable activities, so it becomes more a matter of morality and inner value than one that involves material benefits. True revolutions always starting from the radical changes within each person as a way to feel, think and act consciously.

Purpose for this paper is to present a new approach to sustainable development by presenting a model of human evolution versus sustainable development and analyzing the stages of these two dimensions. It will also be shown the society evolution through the visionary approach on consciousness society.

**Keywords**—Sustainable Development, Consciousness Society, Awareness, Human Development, Tourism.

**JEL Classification:** Q01, Q56, Z13

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Human development seen as reality and phenomenon started from the human apparition on Terra and it is in full development. The current tendencies are in the direction of the increase of the population awareness degree according to the external events which surround us, such as: social and economic crisis, massive pollution of the environment, rapid development of technique and technology, irrational and irresponsible exploitation of natural resources, decrease of the interest in education and culture etc. All these are the signs of the population need to reassess the way of feeling and thinking about all these situations and of understanding how deep the consequences of their undertaken acts are.

At the beginning, the thinkers of the concept, designated as sustainable development, asserted that the environmental recovery was represented by a system which must be separately approached, with its own laws and recovery mechanisms, with no involvements in the economic or social environment. Going to the true significance of this issue, it was discovered and understood the cause-effect relationship of the three sizes forming what we call today *sustainable development*, and they are: economic, ambient and social. The moment was important to discover the first preoccupations in this area, firstly by making personal reflections about what should mean the environmental wealth and externalisation of them at the groups level by meetings and debates where the solutions were searched for in order to define what is moral, right and ethic within this approach.

It may be said that this process was based on changes at human level which led very subtly, step by step, at the incipient concretisation regarding sustainable development concerns. But on this road of the knowledge and of the human evolution, there were also stages which caused major disequilibrium at global level, being consigned in the human history. The past and so the history is a form of representation of the present and constitutes incontestably the causes more or less obvious of what exists and manifests into the world from any point of view, a fact noticed by the association itself of the two terms of *sustainable* and *development*. The past – present – future includes, on the one hand, all the answers to adjust, re-establish or ennoble the individual values concerning the acknowledgement of the vital importance of rationalising the consumption and developing a certain feelings guided by long term thinking.

These values were discretely inserted in what seems to be delineated as the economic consciousness, being the first effects of an incipient human (re)development after a long time of regression. Keeping this idea, we may continue with beneficial changes in the area of tourism, which led to the apparition of sustainable tourism and of the desire to explore the world and the nature by simple but reach of emotional and authentic experiences, the presence of man within these realms being characterised by moral common sense and discretion.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The sustainable development is an essential concept in the analysis of the aspects relating to the issue of environmental damage and its effects firstly on life quality, but also on the availability of natural resources, with strong involvements in the economic, political, technical and social environments.

One of the most known definitions adopted today concerning the sustainable development was created since 1987, when the World Commission on Environment and Development launched the Brundtland Report (after Gro Harlem Brundland – at that time the prime minister of Norway) entitled *Notre avenir à tous (Our common future)*, within the United Nations. Thus, *the sustainable development is the development meeting the present needs without compromising the possibility of future generations to achieve their own requirements*. In this report, it is highlighted the idea of not intervening in stopping the evolution of the economic development, but it is necessary the adaptation of the measures taken at the current ecological conditions, but also at the economic progress for obtaining the best results.

Moreover, the report mentions: *The development concept involves limits, but not absolute limits, but the limitations imposed by the actual stage of the technology and of social organisations on environmental resources and by the biosphere capacity to absorb the effects of human activities. Nevertheless, the social technology and organisation may be managed and improved in order to make a way for a new era of economic development.*

*Sustainable development is associated with quality of life[...] Sustainable development is the upper stage of the evolutionary and accumulative process "Growth- Development – Progress" (Stănciulescu, Bulin, 2012).*

But at the moment when the delineation of the concept of sustainable development and of the preoccupations in this direction began was the presentation in 1970 of a pattern of economic development by Professor Jay Forrester of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA), who expressed for the first time the world issues concerning the economic progress, with a multiple size vision (Costică Mihai, Mioara Borza, 2009). Thus, within the *Club of Rome*, it was created, having the previous pattern as point of departure, a first report named *The limits of development*, where it is presented the relationship between the factors influencing the economic development. According to the level of preoccupation for the economic future, they were simplified by *positive loops* (population development and industrial production development) and by *negative loops* (pollution, termination of natural resources and insufficiency of agricultural production). Nevertheless, first comes the economy, as results from the separation of the positive from the negative, the consumption and occupation of several additional geographical territories, the environment being positioned lower in attention of the specialists.

The definition of this concept was the first step, but the evolution and interest more and more accentuated in this issue are highlighted by its complexity, so in order to be able to speak about sustainable development, it is necessary to consider the three component parts: economic development, social development and environmental development, but also to consider the interdependency existing between them. The highlighting of this fact is made also by Hasna Vancock, (2007) who asserts that the *sustainable development involves the simultaneous exercise of the economic prosperity, of environmental quality and of social equity* known as being the three sizes. It is also asserted the idea that the *durability is a process involving a development of all the aspects of human life, which affects subsistence.*

While highlighting this term, there were several previous steps before this idea of environmental protection, so the first preoccupations and debates in this area started 40 years ago, caused by the need to find answers to the situation of the crisis of natural resources, especially those ensuring energy (*Conference on Environment from Stockholm 1972*). The massive exploitation of this period determined the acknowledgement of the consequences on the natural environment in that of losing the vital qualities in order to conserve life. If initially this initiative was supposed to be a solution to improve the situation of the crisis of massive exploitation of resources and of environmental damaging, at present it became more complex, including also other areas which are in interdependency relationship, represented by economic, social and political aspects – justice and equity between the States. In the evolution to delineate this idea, a series of events following the next years had a special impact. Thus, the discovery of 1985 of an ozone hole above the Antarctica, but also the tragic event of Chernobyl contributed to drawing an alarm signal about the precarious condition of the environment.

At the level of the European Union, it was discussed and performed the 5<sup>th</sup> *Ecologic programme for sustainability*, containing three essential principles, serving as a guide in the thinking of the environmental protection policies (Costică Mihai, Mioara Borza, 2009):

- *Protection of human health;*
- *Rational exploitation of natural resources;*
- *Proposal of global measures prefiguring solutions to regional issues.*

The principles are found in the main lines traced globally within the great debates where it was involved the issue of ensuring and maintaining a sustainable development. It may be noticed that it was chosen both the adoption of a proactive attitude (protection of human health and rational exploitation of natural resources) by acting for sustainability before producing some adverse events, but also reactive as a reaction to possible situations where it is necessary the intervention to re-establish within normal parameters the durability of the processes undertaken.

In a natural enchainment of events, at the same period (1968 - 1972), the technique also climbed a new step, by the existence of a system of interconnected computers, named ARPAnet, used by the US Defence Department in order to transmit on analogical telephonic lines data files. This discovery marked the beginning of the information era, which took exponential amplitude since then, influencing the life of millions of people all over the world by the globalisation effects it established.

If we go back in time, respecting the line of key events, the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were marked by the industrial revolution – symbolic for the multiple size progress which followed and definitely changed human life by creating material facilities with particular importance in the development of the standard of living and of the everyday life comfort. Thus developed the chemical industry by inventing drugs, perfumes, plastic masses, colorants, it began the exploitation of the new non-renewable natural resources, such as natural gases and oil, there appeared new types of industry (electrical engineering and automotive), biologic sciences, physics, as well as technique passed to another level of knowledge. Beyond the obvious benefits, all these deep changes moved the attention centre from nature and traditions to what is *modern*, new and synthetic, changing step by step and surely the manner of thinking and the life style, the man losing the essence itself of things. These influences created until now, the dependency on material and the larges and larger needs to produce material goods in order to meet certain continuously growing requirements. The increased multitude of the choices of each man in different consumption situations is only a cause of the disequilibrium where the society is today.

Seen from another angle, the effervescence of the technological progress is the man research itself to validate and recognise the natural tendency of connexion with the other, to understand and to work with a very large amount of information, to surpass the limits of universe knowledge. Thus, the informatics purpose is a noble one, which reminds that we are already connected with all that is alive and that we have at disposal an entire knowledge network that we may access anytime by the power of will. Mihai Drăgănescu asserted: *from deepness to the man conscience it is exactly such an immanent conception of things, to a deeper and deeper reality to which the man is more the one that "cries" for in order to know it.* It is

necessary to delimitate the two terms of *consciousness* and *awareness*, the last one being the effect of the first one, by all that the individual externalises by its behaviour with himself, with the others, with the society and with the environment. As Alexander Spirkin (1983) asserts *awareness, understood as the evaluative aspect of consciousness, is the highest level of regulation of human activity on the basis of accepted values, moral and other social standards. Awareness also presupposes a person's ability to analyse the motives of his own behavior and choose the most rational means of achieving his aims in accordance with the moral standards accepted in society.*

On the society of awareness, Mihai Drăgănescu (2007) explains: *"The society of awareness will be a spiritual society. It does not mean that it will be a purely meditative society, but a society where spirituality prevails, being at the same time an active society from the informational, scientific, technological, industrial, agricultural and sustainable point of views and with a protected environment."*<sup>1</sup>

The information era was only the beginning of manifestation of material progresses, this becoming later in the 90s, the basis of the *information society*.

The desire to deepen in the life mysteries and to understand its general image, to have a panoramic vision, favoured penetrations into unknown territories, where curiosity met the science and it means that the man was prepared to find out a part of its fascinating secrets. The conquest of these areas continued by important revolutions, an example being the biotechnology revolution Linda Groff (2007), by reemerging the DNA, the research of curing the diseases by means of the stem cells, the change of the configuration at molecular level, the creation of nanorobots. The revolution concerning the Solar System and Universe exploration, where ideas such the existence of intelligent life on other planets or the habitation within the extraterrestrial space start to make room in the human subconscious. On the same nuance of great discoveries, it is also recognised the revolution of *internal space* and of awareness, which leads the individual to its spiritual nature, to introspection and to the research of the microcosm inside it.

From the point of view of tourism, the e-commerce services and the online booking system represented a launching anchor of some new affairs and to support or develop the existent ones, facilitating the communication and contact with tourism agencies, all becoming very easy and comfortable for the tourist. The virtual tours also brought closer by the customer the units of tourism reception, the hotels, in order to meet the need to know the conditions of a possible tourism choice.

All these achievements prepared the establishment of the *knowledge society*, which step by step will initiate and complete *the society of consciousness*. (Mihai Drăgănescu, 2002). One may reflect the moral and ethic involvements of the events reminded, causing the question: *which is the limit of the material based scientific growth and where do we start to see life and act in society from the spiritual perspective?*

Religion may condemn this need of man to *know*, to prove and to verify, being known the expression "believe and shall not doubt". The revelations and the most important discoveries remain those where the man meditates and listen to his own wisdom, letting himself guided by this voice. This idea is also present in Descartes' conception (*Discourse on the Method*, 1637): *"Dubito, ergo cogito, Cogito ergo sum"*. *Doubting everything and all, Descartes*

*notices the fact that he, the one who thinks that he doubts, insists on the intuitive and deductive character of knowledge.*

According to the oriental culture, touching the condition of normality, condition which cannot be negotiated, is a reality still hidden to the majority of people, but accessible to all those who truly search for it. In the present age, the Universe laws have been lost in the mists of time between the fight for survival and the establishment of the purpose of a material achievement as great as possible, by creating a false dependency on a lot of goods creating comfort and the getting away from man's direct experience with the environment and the acknowledgement of his role within the Universe.

### **III. MAN'S CONNECTION TO NATURE AND THE EFFECTS OF HIS ACTIONS**

From the religious point of view, the man is the *master* of the world, as he is imagined in the Christian Bible, and *God blessed him, muttering: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Genesis 1:26, 28)*. Analysing this citation, the man constitutes the crown of creation, and the biblical urge is an appeal to the native intelligence of man who understands that the nature is his home and that his future depends on the health of this habitat, being meant to protect and care this fragile environment where he lives. The reality shows us nevertheless that this idea was differently assimilated; words such as "*subdue*" and "*have dominion*" may be understood in their own meaning, helping to create some unsustainable attitudes and behaviours for the environment, which lead to the idea that the man is the owner of the Earth, in other words, it may be considered that he undertakes any action. Mankind should only *borrow* from the resources provided by nature and appreciate its beauty just for the reason of its sensitivity and possibility of damage and, consequently, of its non-permanent character. The respect for the environment is also reflected in the man's quality of not brutally intervening in the environmental adaptation to its needs, but this alteration should be minimal. But all these positive qualities are included in a complex of human values named Morality.

The man is closely linked to the Earth and to the nature where he lives, forming the Environment which he will always relate to, even unconsciously. At the beginning, nature was the one who used to mainly influence man's life by the existence of the resources available without which any being could survive. The time passing by showed us that nature is now controlled by the man by the intensive exploitation of everything that may be used without providing a compensatory solution. The men used to cultivate an ethic relationship with nature, feeling its need of being protected, having simple traditional solutions. Moreover, the relationship with the environment was shown by the fact that they adjusted the daily actions according to the Sun, Moon and stars' activity, that they practically used as maritime and building guide point tools (for example, building Giza Pyramid). Considering the direct influence of nature on us, there are already known the physical effects of Sun activity, for persons with arterial hypertension, arteriosclerosis or myocardium infarct, it can be a certain problems with the nervous system. Electromagnetic field also influences the growth; the climate, altitude and



all the environmental conditions change the physiognomy and subsequently the inhabitants' body of different geographic areas, taking place an adaptation to temperature, to food resources specific to the area, to atmospheric pressure, to seasonality provided by the seasons etc.

The issues faced by the present society relating to the environment are linked to the saturation registered in the amount of pollution issued, determining ecologic consequences at global level, existing the real risk of the impossibility to recover the nature by the same rhythm with the more and more diverse and big needs of the society.

The tourism effects are direct, this being the activity which addresses the individual and his need to recreate in nature, to discover and to explore new territories, including natural landscapes and sights.

The new tendencies of tourism exist in the spirit of sustainable development and of the need to assimilate nature as a part of the man's structure. We are a society of knowledge, leading to a society of consciousness, and this reality is reflected also in the desires and preferences of a number as big as possible of people concerning the choice of the form of tourism.

Some of the innovations of interest in this regard are given by:

- **3D Corporate Tourism** as Gebeshuber and Burhanuddin in 2011 reveal. *It can be said that this type of tourism is the scientists' tourism that set the main goal to learn and be inspired by the wisdom of nature, participating to meetings in nature to observe the mechanisms and solutions it offers to a problem. Participants come from different countries, giving diversity in the way of thinking and a heterogeneous network of people that creates solutions and most varied opinions. The project team participate in various sessions, following a program of free talks and creative ways to find new approaches (eg. brainstorming). First, nature is viewed from the angle of functionality, how it works in relation to human needs. In the second stage natural solutions are transposed in technical structures made by the team. The last stage is the period when the models created are adapting again seeking to find out the way of functioning system of natural elements. Benefits can be numerous - inspiration by sharing experience that comes with the sense of sustainable development, listening nature and raising awareness, gaining a high level of environmental education.*

- **Slow travel** arose from the need to truly know visited tourist destination, choosing to spend more time discovering the less commercial places for tourists, but part of the unique character of places and of their untold story, helping tourists to reach a high level of understanding of the tourist experience. *The goal is not to see as many sights within a limited time, but to explore an area in close proximity giving patience to absorb the atmosphere played by it, which is not possible by conventional tourist trip. There is a difference between visiting a place and living in an environment; in this kind of tourism, those who choose this form of holiday want to live there, to see how people live, to gain an authentic experience.*

Nistoreanu, Dorobanțu and Țuclea (2011), approach the matter of slow-travel tourism principles:

- "The trip is seen more as a goal than a way to achieve the purpose of an agenda, journey itself is the only motivation for the one who initiates it;



- Sites should have an authentic character, picturesque, revealing the unspoiled natural and cultural values they are looking for;
- Away from the city agitation and life lived in speed, bring a change of pace, which is beneficial physically and mentally;
- It is a spiritual journey.”

*Giving time and patience to this trip, the land is more difficult to access and retain the opportunity to preserve and recover after tourist exploitation, accessing areas being made gradually over several days in adjacent areas. It is also suitable for wildlife lovers, who know how to respect and protect nature, having the culture of ecotourism. Enable local people to contribute to enriching travel experience by providing accommodation, which integrates the traveler in the uniqueness of landscape (Diaconescu, 2013).*




#### IV. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT MODEL SEEN AS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In designing the model of sustainable development in terms of human development (Figure 1) we focused on describing the natural unfolding stages of development characterized in mirror, named *Spiritual Intelligence (Human Development)* and *Sustainable Development*, starting always from within, from the nature of the individual where there is real motivation to change himself and consequently his environment as a result of this change. The five levels show the spiritual evolution of man in parallel with that of the society by creating a set of attributes that determine specific relevant actions (Table no. 1 – *Left Hemisphere Qualities and Right Hemisphere Actions*)

**Tabel No. 1 The sustainable development seen as human development**

Left Hemisphere Qualities (Human Development)	Levels	Right Hemisphere Actions (Sustainable Development)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inner strength</li> <li>- Synchronicity in action</li> <li>- The commitment to contribute to the spiritual development of the individual and society</li> <li>- Altruism</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level 5</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Application of the concept of lifelong self learning and enlightenment</li> <li>- Initiating groups / associations for quality and sustainable development of society</li> <li>- Restoration and constant remodeling of economic models for sustainable progress</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attitude guided by love for nature, beauty and truth</li> <li>- Selection of what is authentic and valuable</li> <li>- Knowledge of latent potential and creating opportunities for its manifestation</li> <li>- High level of global awareness</li> <li>- Personal example of good practice</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level 4</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keeping a culture of good offered, of moral support and information for society</li> <li>- Leadership and influence of the masses</li> <li>- Dynamism and responsibility by demonstrating a proactive approach</li> <li>- Emotional motivation the same with rational motivation, both being at the base of business development</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creativity, initiative, innovation</li> <li>- Empathy, open minded</li> <li>- Divergent thinking</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level 3</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Products and services that meet the needs of sustainable development</li> <li>- Attracting investors</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive intrinsic motivation</li> <li>- Emotional refinement</li> <li>- Strong will guided by personal values</li> <li>- Intuitive understanding of the essence of things</li> <li>- Inspired and productive creativity</li> <li>- Mental clarity</li> <li>- Individual awareness spread in society</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level 2</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cooperation with institutions or persons who believe in the same values</li> <li>- Creating professional and personal alliances to support the chosen purpose</li> <li>- Development of hierarchical structures based on knowledge, innovation, competence and morality</li> <li>- Investing in human capital through training</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding human biological and mental needs - keeping optimal levels of physical and mental health</li> <li>- Awareness of man's place in the global environment as part of nature</li> <li>- Balancing the ego</li> </ul>	<p><b>Level 1</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifying and processing ideas according to sustainable development principles</li> <li>- Discovery of the vocation and mission</li> <li>- Establishment of the industry in which they will be applied</li> </ul>

Source: author

The dynamic process of human development begins at the base or with the step called *Incipient Awareness*, it continues upward to the point named Spiritual Intelligence descending from Sustainable Development to the base, this time represented by the Basic Education; throughout the rotations the horizontal level correspondence being kept.

Looking at the first level, we conclude that it refers to the need to take care of ones physical and mental health, to achieve a satisfactory level of quality of life by knowing the connections between systems and understanding the inside nature - the ego and the exterior nature - natural environment. All this forms are the basics for a person to be actively involved in the society in the sustainable development field.

Levels 2 and 3 refers to the creative processes that have their predominant source in inspiration and intuition, balanced mental and emotional development to build ideas, concepts, products, fair professional relationships, and legal and institutional framework for action.

Level 4 is the greater detachment from material success of a project or business.

Level 5 is the provision of professional support by performing consulting services, but also personally, it makes the transition from ego dominated only by personal welfare to the integration of the altruism and winning a strong spiritually and professionally posture, as following the steps taken.



Figure No. 1 Sustainable development seen as personal development

Source: author

## CONCLUSIONS

Both aspects of the development completed each other and I believe that human development is the only one that can provide a real and authentic model of a sustainable society. Society needs to change from within, from each individual in order to achieve *sustainable* development.

All five stages of development are personal, professional and at the global society level, and culminates with a raise of human consciousness through ancient wisdom recall, and this

will naturally lead to positive effects on sustainable development of each economic sector, especially in tourism where natural environment is needed and the better understand of the mechanisms of life.

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