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Role of Art and Culture in Sustainability

Deepali Singh

ABSTRACT

Art and culture are determinant factors to guide our behaviour and its relationship with the environment. It determines our perception that how we observe natural resources, how we use them, and treat them. According to UNESCO both are very essential for achieving sustainable development goals. They provide the skill for challenges we face in today's materialistic world. Art and culture help in spreading awareness about environmental issues and inspires people to take some action. Art reflects the cultural attitude towards the environment. It promotes equity and inclusion in society. Art and culture are those powerful tools through which we can promote sustainability by bringing changes in people's behaviour, habits and attitudes. With the help of creativity and innovative thinking we can develop more efficient ways to use the resources and reduce the carbon footprints. We can adopt lifestyles with sustainability but also improve our mental and physical health. We must understand that sustainable practices are in our favour in the long run. Through marketing strategies and influencing advertising we can make such practices and products more appealing to society.

Keywords: Art, Culture, Sustainability, Sustainable Development.

Art

Apart from the expression of ideas and emotions in the form of art

Associate Professor Department of Psychology Agra College, Agra

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we can define Art as a social phenomenon that results in aesthetic production having values, beliefs, attitude and culture of society. Art serves as a mirror, as a reflection of our behaviour and thoughts. It is the result of the creator's imagination, creativity and his school to express all his ideas on canvas or whatever platform he chooses to deliver his emotions. The feelings of humans find their way to come out through different mediums of art since the evolution of humankind. Interpretation and medium of art can be varied, it could be visual art, performing arts, literature, crafts etc. But the common fact lies in its expression of imagination and creativity by using skills. Art doesn't know the boundaries of language and time. Art is beautiful, it conveys the long story, the whole meaning without words so sometimes it proved comparatively more influential, effective in bringing changes in the prevailing thought system of the people. As we know where words fail, art fills the gap. Through art we can interact with one another without words and understand the expression that the creator wants to express. It has a stimulating impact on our thinking process and provides an analytical perspective for an issue or situation.

Art and Sustainability

The concept of sustainable art refers to the role played by art in sustainable development. Through art artists illustrate the problems, situations that promote a sense of comprehension and responsibility among the viewers. It encourages people to adopt sustainable practices, to change their choices according to the effects they create for the environment. We must establish a balance between nature and development. We want to see the beauty and innocence of nature but at the same time we destroy and disturb ourselves. We must understand that we do not need to run in a blind race of modernity and follow every trend. Despite this, we must think that every action taken by us has had its effect and that must be for betterment whether small or huge. Observing the speedy rate of deterioration of nature, we cannot wait or look others to take action to stop this. At society and community level we can take initiations for sustainable activities ourselves and establish a sense of 'Vasudhev Kutumbakam'. If we save nature, make efforts to save earth only then it could repay us the form of several fruitful things. Sustainable art motivates people to engage in solutions by embracing changes in their actions.

Culture

Cultural comprises of beliefs, values, customs, norms, practices,

knowledge, art, literature, and technology prevailing in society. It is specific for a group of people, not homogeneous all over the world. Different parts on a globe have a different culture. Culture has an important role in shaping our identity and personality. Like every other thing culture also evolves over time. It is influenced by several internal and external factors, simultaneously it also has an influence on other cultures and people. So, we can observe an interaction between cultures across the world on different levels. We have cultural diversity on different levels in a state, country or worldwide. Cultural diversity reveals how people coexist and how important it is for society. Similar, homogeneous class of people cannot lead a life that demands different types of tasks. Every culture has something specific, unique, positive in it that should be spread among all others. While we observe that with increasing globalization and urbanization cultural diversity decreases day by day.

Culture and Sustainability

Sustainable development could only take place within cultural boundaries, where natural resources, Mother Earth has not been seen only as resources but as serene, holy, divine subjects. Materialistic approach limits this kind of relationship between people and environment. In a fast-developing materialistic world people use natural resources only to earn more and more money. They focus only on the current situation and neglecting the impact and requirements of the upcoming generation. Culture is a facilitator of sustainable development as it promotes the values people have for nature. Through cultural diversity we can exchange some good attitudes and behaviour regarding nature that would be helpful for achieving the goal of sustainable development. By maintaining cultural identity, we can create a more sustainable future. Culture is an important factor in guiding our behaviour and its relationship with the environment. It affects our perception that we observe natural resources, how we use them.

Sustainability

The concept of sustainable development was first described in 1987 as the “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. In other words, avoidance of the exploitation of natural resources in the direction to establish ecological balance. Based on this sustainable development is the approach that balances development with our society’s environmental, social and economic limitations.

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We can define Sustainable development from the perspective of three interrelated dimensions, the economic, social and environment (Foster 2017; Sachs 2015).

Sustainable development demands to change the priorities according to our values system for optimal use of resources for the present and upcoming generations.

We can adopt changes in our lifestyle, embracing them; 3C's- conservation, community, and circular economy is a way to heading towards the goal of sustainability.

Dimensions of sustainable development—

According to UNESCO there are 4 dimensions of sustainable development:

1. Society
2. Environment
3. Economy
4. Culture

Culture is one among the four vital aspects of Sustainable development and therefore cultural aspects cannot be ignored from any strategy we made for sustainable development. We need to incorporate cultural dimensions culture into action into the concept of Sustainable development as a 4th dimension due to interdependence of Sustainable development and culture plays an important role in promoting and achieving sustainability by shipping values behaviours and practices that support long term environmental social and economic well-being.

- Guiding values and worldviews
- Preserving traditional knowledge
- Shaping behaviours and lifestyles
- Supporting community cohesion
- Fostering creative solutions
- Promoting equity and inclusion
- Driving policy and innovation

Culture is the need of time to achieve sustainable development

goals as they open new opportunities new ideas meet community is self-sufficient and courage economic growth and improve the quality of life even for the lower class. It helps in new innovations and promotes the development of green technology that serves people and nature at the same time.

Role of Art and Culture in Promoting Sustainability

Art has the capacity to bring changes that shape the future as we want. Art is not only about creativity, beauty or imagination; all these aspects include sustainability as a basic requirement. As our culture allows us to achieve our goals but that must not impair the ability of future generations to fulfill their needs from resources. Our culture leaves us free, independent but with a sense of responsibility. We can't leave empty vessels for our future generations. So, our efforts must be in the direction of establishing a balance between development and environmental preservation. As only development without nature makes no sense of living like machines, that too no longer sustains. It is nature that provides us with the feeling of compassion, calmness, satisfaction, peace, gratitude and so on.

The relationship between art, culture and sustainability became the subject of importance, as we think about global concerns regarding problems faced by the whole world in the race of development. Responsible resource use must be adopted by all the countries whether developed or developing with a sense of equity and justice. Art and culture with the aim of sustainability can be very effective in spreading awareness and bring changes in consumer behaviour. New forms of art emerge when we start thinking in a creative manner, keeping sustainability in mind. Apart from this art, creative work and our cultural legacy (dance performance, plays, literature work) make long-lasting impressions on our thought process, it could change our behaviour in the direction of sustainability. Even celebrities of any field can encourage people to adopt nature-friendly behaviour.

We can transform our world through reduce, reuse and recycle. It is a matter of adjustment and resilience, which can redefine our relationship with the environment. Sustainability in art and culture serves for higher purposes, it makes us aware of our contributions, our consumption habits for a better world. We are solely responsible for the impact we have on the environment. Creators and consumers, we all must come together for the purpose of sustainability. Communication on this issue will create awareness and we could see

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new platforms for such goods and services. We talked about the emerging lifestyle of minimalism, and we praise the bearers. We ourselves must adopt such a lifestyle and if not possible; we can reduce at least. This will save money for some meaningful objectives and will leave our mind and cupboards clutter free. This will lead towards a future with fairness, equality and economic progress along with environmental preservation for all species, not only humans. Art and culture contribute significantly to sustainable development and associate goals with it. It promotes positive changes, contributes to social inclusion of marginalized groups, their empowerment, motivates new innovations, preserves heritage. Some of the studies clearly reflect this positive impact of art and culture on the attainment of these goals. India's culture, folk music, traditional dance forms, handicrafts, tourism etc are such tools which directly or indirectly contributes to sustainable development. We can motivate travel and tourism, that include photography in ethnic local costumes, crafts, handlooms, homestays rather than hotels, local cuisine etc. We do not need to adopt culture of west or modernization, specifically in the field of consumerism. Our cultural heritage itself is enough to ensure that our future generations will get their part.

“Vocal for local” and “Make in India” are examples of campaigns initiated by government to promote manufacturing and entrepreneurship by incorporating Indian traditional crafts techniques on new platform. By-back policy adopted by some brands also encourages the habit of minimalism. Apart from it we also must change our attitude towards fashion and clothing and must learn strategies to face peer pressure or false comparison criterion among society.

Art and culture shape our values, beliefs and behaviours thus very important in achieving sustainable goals. It can make impacts in the following ways:

- Raising awareness in which figure and facts fail.
- Inspiring actions, to take some concrete step towards sustainability.
- Shaping culture by fixing priorities, sustainability over materialism.
- Increasing community engagement.

Conclusion

There are different kinds of challenges faced with the integration

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of art and culture in the goal of achieving sustainability. People's awareness, priority of policy makers and finally our greed that continuously restrict the role of art and culture in endorsing the goal of sustainable development. For promoting the local handicrafts, handlooms etc. We need the proper finding also, as sometimes products prepared by artisans are costly in comparison to factory-made products. We must adopt a resilient attitude by supporting sustainable practices not only in conferences, meetings, on paper, in our communication only; but it must be in our actions. Even a single person can make changes, so we must change our attitude that effort of one person can't change anything. Now we must change our role to an action-taker from a passive observer. We must give voice to our thoughts. This holistic approach does not only provide the goal of development but also the peace of mind and society full of values.

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