

Three Pillars of Sustainability: An overview

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ABSTRACT

Sustainability for humans is about the conservation of their wellbeing and the conservation of world nature and resources of that nature. The wellbeing of humans can be achieved through reasonable legal procedures that will avoid environmental degradation, prevent pollution, protect the use of its natural resources while ensuring a sustainable social and economic entity. The sustainable development concept began in the 1980s after the publication of the Brundtland Commission global environment and development report resulting in the development of the three pillars of sustainability; economic, social and environmental. These three diverse pillars of sustainability are related to parts and overlapping, while best addressed independently by different disciplines because each pillar conforms to different method and laws. However, any pillar that weakens the whole management system becomes unsustainable, hence in most cases locally and global problem-solving efforts concentrates on one pillar per time. It seems the environmental sustainability pillar is often considered the most important pillar out of the three. The first pillar is environmental sustainability which originated due to community distresses and it is intended to advance human welfare and socially sustainable development by guarding the raw materials sources used for human needs and making sure the sinks for human wastes are not exceeded while preventing harm to humans and its environment. The second pillar is economic sustainability which inseparably connected to both social and environmental sustainability, is also known as the “capital maintenance” (the ability of companies to remain in business). Economic sustainability can be better defined as the process of

assigning and shielding resources while making sure the social and environmental results are positive. The last pillar but not least is the social sustainability which can be achieved by the community systematic participation and strong public society. That can be done by investing in education, healthcare, and individual nutrition. It is defined as a social sustainability as a condition that enhances life within communities, and a process that can achieve the condition within those communities. These pillars are interrelated equally important in achieving an effective sustainable development. This paper shows that for the sustainability challenges to be best solved, all three pillars simultaneously must be sustainable. The paper also explains how each pillar overlaps with the other pillar; the environmental- social overlap, the environmental- economic overlap, and the social-economic overlap. The co- existence of these pillars carries much more benefits than a pillar existing on its own. This paper aims at educating about importance and complexity while giving benefits of the three fundamental pillars of sustainable development.