

BOOK REVIEW

Misra, Suresh and Chadah, Sapna. (Eds.). 2018. *Towards Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyles: Some Insights*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd. [ISBN -13:978-93-86682-28-4(HB)], pp. xii +303. Price INR 1200/-.

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Our planet has abundant but finite natural resources to be judiciously and wisely used by mankind for their survival and existence of humanity. However, the advancement of human civilization followed by modernization, globalization, myopic development activities towards striving for identity and status by unsustainable consumption and lifestyles have led to the careless use, misuse and over exploitation of the planet's existing natural resources. The present production and consumption pattern are the main contributing factors for all anthropogenic stress on natural environment. In other words, consumption pattern is the single most greatest threat to environmental and societal homeostasis. Thus, there is an urgent need to halt the depletion of natural resources, restore damaged ecosystem, conserve biodiversity for its equitable access in order to keep providing food, water and energy for a growing global population. There is a growing realization that while changes in production and distribution is formidable, the proposed solutions may not succeed unless it is possible to persuade individuals and households to change their consumption patterns to make them more sustainable. Sustainable consumption is not necessarily about consuming less; it is about consuming better, i.e. more efficiently, with less risk to health and environment. Many books have been written on sustainable development and environmental restoration including sustainable consumption, but the topic is such that it demands continuous research and dissemination through publication.

The book under review is spread into twenty chapters including the "*Introduction*". All the chapters are mostly based on secondary data and concerned with sustainable consumption and lifestyle. The book opens with the *Preface* where the editors have highlighted the context and rationale of bringing out this edited volume. In the first chapter on "*Introduction*" the editors have set the tone of the subject matter and underlined the concept and definition of sustainable consumption and lifestyle. By using exhaustive literature on

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sustainable consumption for a sustainable world, they have explained the various aspects like – transforming the world through sustainable goals, sustainable consumption and development goals, sustainable consumption – global concerns, strategies of sustainable consumption, role of various stakeholders in sustainable consumption and finally summarized the chapters contributed by various authors in this edited volume.

In the second chapter "*Sustainable Consumption – A Gandhian Perspective*", Sapna Chadah has highlighted the Gandhian Philosophy that offers a practical way to a peaceful social revolution to improve the quality of life and protect environment. Gandhi's common sense approach to technology, production and consumption for environmental protection have been highlighted in this chapter.

In the third chapter "*Challenges of Sustainable Consumption: Indian Context*" Sheetal Kapoor attempts to study the challenges of sustainable consumption in the Indian context. She has attempted to analyze the perspectives of various stakeholders and made certain recommendations based on her findings. According to the author, the Indian middle class has become wealthy and there is a major shift in consumer behavior. An Indian consumer who at one point of time was saving for the rainy day is not hesitant in taking home loans, car loans and does not shy away from spending on a luxurious lifestyle. The author concludes by posing a question: The West which is already facing a consumerist society whereas the governments and the social organizations are educating business and the consumers about ethical consumption, will the Indian consumer with its new found wealth think about sustainable consumption?

In the fourth chapter "*Consumption: Need vs. Greed - A Gandhian Alternative*", Indramohan Jha has highlighted the Gandhian way of living which focused on need-based consumption. The culmination of machine and modernity in the twenty-first century, directing the human action towards physical pleasure, greed, power, and strong positions to dominate have caused an irreparable ecological imbalance threatening environmental stability. The author highlights that the follies of capitalism-communism have brought Gandhism to the fore as a hope for humanity. The author believes that certain initiatives, such as value education and ethical consumerism must be taken to salvage the situation.

Roopa Vajpeyi in the fifth chapter "*Cultural Dimensions of Sustainability*" has explored cultural dimensions of sustainable consumption especially significant from the Indian perspective. The author has tried to focus on the relevant areas of concern in this field for Indian consumers and other stakeholders, and how these can be

used or reconnected with, in their existing modes or reinvented for common use. The chapter also touches upon the role of consumer education, with specific focus on the role of sustainability in the formal education streams. In conclusion, the threats to the Indian model of sustainability due to forces of urbanization, aggressive marketing, lack of connectivity with tradition and culture are highlighted along with suggested solutions.

In chapter six "*Towards Ethical Consumption*", Mamta Pathania has highlighted the increased level of consumption that have accompanied our consumer-oriented culture. It brings out the relationship of consumer attitudes to consumption levels, and how these attitudes impact approaches to consumer behavior. Taking commodity consumption as a field in which the ethics, morality, and politics of responsibility have been problematical, the author argues that existing research on consumption fails to register the full complexity of the practices, motivations and mechanisms through which the working-up of moral selves is undertaken in relation to consumption practices. The author believes that sustainable consumption in a market place cannot be achieved unless the ethical concerns of the market are addressed.

In the seventh chapter "*Consumers and Sustainable Consumption: Towards a Sustainable Global Society*", Jayashree Pillai has tried to present issues facing the society in the context of consumerism. The author concludes that the development in harmony with nature and sustainable consumption will only lead to a better future, and not reckless shopping for unnecessary things just to have the satisfaction of something fashionable or to fulfill our insatiable lust for accumulation.

In the chapter on "*Transforming Unsustainable Lifestyles – Key to Sustainable Consumption*", Shruti Mittal and Suresh Prasad Singh have assessed the ways through which consumers ecological footprint can be minimized. It analyses on how the movement towards sustainable consumption could be strengthened. The authors believe that a holistic approach with active involvement of various stakeholders – the government, producers, CSOs, media, and the people at large – is need of the hour.

In chapter nine "*Rethinking Development: People Centred Approach to Sustainable Consumption*" Rashmi Tripathi makes a systematic effort towards assessing the sustainable consumption initiatives specifically in the areas of recycling programmes, energy efficient living, and organic food systems in terms of what they represent, what they may lead to, where they came from, and whether they are or can be successful. The author concludes with some reflections

on how sustainable consumption initiatives can be made more effective using people centric approach.

K. Shailaja Rao in chapter ten "*Sustainable Consumption or Sustainable Resource Management: Whose Responsibility?*" emphasizes that it is very difficult to get individuals, families, schools, hospitals, companies and government departments to think critically about the impact of their consumption pattern, especially in the days of inflation, low economic progress and overflowing expenses. According to the author, illogical consumerism has become a part of contemporary life, and its effects on social, economic and ecological trends need to be analyzed thoughtfully. If we cannot change our consumption pattern, we have to look at other ways of sustaining the resources.

The next chapter "*Contributory Role of Panchayati Raj in Facilitating Sustainable Economic Development*", by Joseph Benjamin has highlighted the importance of Panchayati Raj Institutions in sustainable development at grassroots level and role of people's participation in preserving the environment not only for today, but also for the future generations. The author has also attempted to study the various governmental schemes launched in rural areas for preserving the natural resources like water, mountains, riverbeds, soil, and land etc. which are to be used by future generation too.

In chapter twelve "*Sustainable Consumption: Consumer Education and Awareness*", Ramaben R. Mavani and Ramjibhai B. Mavani have discussed the ways to achieve the aim of consumer education and awareness and how to give an outreach to the movement so that sustainable consumption patterns are adhered by all. The authors also talk about programmes at urban and rural level, inclusion of subject in the curriculum of schools and colleges, role of government agencies and NGOs in generating awareness through street plays, media, slide shows, seminars, workshops, which are some of the means to achieve the desired results.

In chapter thirteen "*Trend Analysis of Sustainable Consumption in Corporate Reporting*", Anand Acharya and Bansuri Das intend to examine the sustainable consumption in context of social justice in two spheres – society and international community. The chapter has been attempted in the backdrop of the following predominant assumptions: (i) Sustainable consumption needs to be discussed in the interest of half of the world's population that are poor; and (ii) Equity in consumption is a major challenge of the international community that seeks to regulate unsustainable consumption pattern. The authors suggest that there is a need of raising awareness and educating people about marketing campaigns; educating people about management of waste in terms of reduction, reusing, recovery and recycling of the

waste; monitoring on certification and product information; implementing sustainable practices; and provisions for independent testing of products.

Jyoti Marwah in chapter fourteen "*Promoting Business Enabling Medicinal and Aromatic Plants in the Indian Himalayan Region: Role of Government, Non-government and Community based Organizations*" has highlighted some of the measures taken by governmental and non-governmental organizations for maintaining the biodiversity in the Himalayan region. The authors have presented the case study of *Paravatiya Jadi Booti Sansthan*, Mussoorie, a registered NGO which works for the conservation and commercial use of a large number of medicinal and aromatic plants in Mussoorie. The *Sansthan* also promotes the prospects of these plants for economic enhancement among the women and villages in and around Mussoorie by conducting workshops and training programmes for sustainable benefits.

In chapter fifteen "*Role of Organic Farming in Promoting Sustainable Agricultural Produce: A Study with Reference to Goa*", Santosh B. Patkar and Henrique Dsouza have focused on the importance of organic farming, its benefits to farmers in getting higher price and also promoting environmental balance. The study tries to develop relationship between growth of organic farms and environmental issues. The researchers have suggested some measures to create awareness about organic produce and to educate farmers in managing sustainable consumption of agricultural produce.

In chapter sixteen "*Sustainable Eco-Tourism: A Case Study of Beaches in Goa*", Badruddin has highlighted the concept of eco-tourism which is responsible of travelling to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strive to be low in impact and often small in scale. The author has highlighted this through the case study of Goa where Goa Tourism Development Corporation with assistance of Beach Management Support and local NGO's continue to emphasize on enlightening, participatory travel experience and welfare of local villagers near the coast. The author documents that prominent organizations organize workshops, conferences, seminars and public meetings to discuss the ethics of Beach Management and promotion of environmental awareness with the help of integrated holistic approach.

In the seventeenth chapter "*Fungal Biosorbents and Biosorption: A Review Article*", Pawan Kumar Rose and Rani Devi have suggested that there are number of treatment methods for the removal of heavy metals from metal-bearing wastewater as reduction, ion exchange, electro dialysis, electrochemical precipitation, evaporation, solvent extraction, reverse osmosis, chemical precipitation and adsorption.

Most of these methods have their own limitations like high capital and operation cost, incomplete metal removal, low selectivity, high energy consumption and they generate toxic slurries that are difficult to eliminate. A variety of biomaterials exhibit heavy metal removal potential including fungi, algae, bacteria, actinomycetes, yeast, etc. along with some biopolymers and bio-waste materials. In this review, the biosorption abilities of fungal biomass towards metal ions removal are emphasized. Effect of parameters such as pH, contact time, biomass and metal ion concentration, temperature, physical or chemical pre-treatment of biomass, presence of many ligands in solution, are also covered in this study. The authors recommend more advanced research and development of the fungal biosorption technology.

In the next chapter on "*Media and Environmentalism :Coverage, Claims-Making and Framing of Environmental Issues*", D. S. Poornananda and K. G. Vasuki have examined the coverage given to environmental news in daily news papers across time, how claim-makers are represented and how the mainstream media frame key environmental issues. They also analyze whether the treatment of claim-makers and media framers change through time. Based on the content analysis of major national daily newspapers along with a case study of coverage for climate change, an environmental issue has been analyzed by the authors. The authors believe that the study would help in understanding the association between claim-making by environmental and civil society groups and framing of the environmental issues in media.

In chapter nineteen "*Business Approaches to Sustainable Consumption with Reference to Entrepreneurship Development and Innovation Perspective*", Shrikrishna S. Mahajan has discussed the business approaches to sustainable consumption in the context of climate change. He has also tried to cover the entrepreneurship development and innovation perspective of this issue. The sustainable business practices in terms of corporate social responsibility, corporate governance, business ethics, environment management, environmental accounting, etc. have also been analyzed.

Finally, in chapter twenty "*Greening the Marketing Mix: Rethinking Competition during Climate Change*", Praveen Goyal and Zillur Rahman have dealt with the comparison of green marketing mix adopted by the various companies in fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) group. Based on the statistical analysis of a sample of companies that are listed with BSE FMCG Index and CNX FMCG Index, with some adjustments, using CMIE database, the authors have presented the relationship between the four P's in promoting and competing with other companies. The study investigates the marketing

mix adopted by the companies in order to position and promote their products in the competitive markets during climate change. It describes the status of FMCG companies, discusses critical areas of marketing concerns by examining and comparing the marketing mix, and concludes with lessons that the managers can take from this study in order to adopt better green strategy. The authors suggest that it is the right time to adopt the concept of sustainable development in the marketing mix of the companies and integrate them to save the planet from the upcoming risk.

The present volume is well organized and consists of papers contributed by well-known experts that seek to explain the perspectives on sustainable consumption, highlights various issues underpinning sustainable consumption and provides solutions to at least some of the problems if not all. Although the issues covered in this book are widely researched and published nationally as well as internationally but they are still relevant as they provide an answer to the existing problems in the era of global environmental crisis. The maps, tables, figures and boxes in the chapters used for better understanding of the issues/statistical data for the readers are meaningful. However, more recent and updated statistical data on the subject matter in some of the chapters could have made it fresher. The endnotes and references at the end of each chapter provides a rich source of bibliography on the theme. This edited book is interesting, well documented, lucid as well as informative. However, there is a scope to improve the content of the book in terms of inclusion of some chapters on behavioral dimensions of sustainable consumption and environmental sustainability as consumption is related with human behavior also. Nevertheless, this edited book attempts to ignite our thought process on sustainable consumption and lifestyles, and is an important addition to the literature on the topical theme. The book will not only be useful to policy-makers and activists but also to academicians, practitioners, students and all those who are interested in understanding the issues of unsustainable consumption, environmental crisis and consumer welfare.