

## Towards a Sustainable Environment– Glimpses from the Appalachia

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### **Abstract:**

Appalachian landscape is known to be one of the most unique regions across the world, indigenous in its own kind, flourishing with flora and fauna and mineral resources. Though being a naturally rich landscape, people of Appalachia are impoverished and the depletion of natural resources have been a threat to environmental reserves of the region. To add to the woes of Appalachia, illiteracy and lack of technology also remain the cause for lackadaisical condition of the Appalachia. This paper focuses on overcoming technological hitches in Appalachia and achieving a sustainable development with appropriate and environment technology.

**Keywords:** *Appalachia, environment, technology, sustainable development*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Until a few decades before and even today Appalachia has been identified to the world's most unique bioregion with indigenous species of the earth. The revolutions in the name industry and economy not only crashed the stock markets, but also had its worst blows in the face of Appalachia. Removal of mountain tops in the name of coal mining and industrialization, wood logging industries proliferating like mushrooms and urbanization signposted by realtors marked the exploitation of Appalachian environment. On the other side, the reverse side was the economy was never on the booming side in Appalachia. Appalachia, encompassing 13 states in the heart of the United States, has been looked at one of the rural, poverty-stricken regions across the world.

### **II. METHOD**

The research being done on a regional growth, has been carried based on a textual analysis. Reports from the surveys conducted by Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and Environmental Technology Action Plan (ETAP) have been employed to carry out the study in addition to different texts mentioned in references.

### III. DISCUSSIONS

As per the definition of Appalachian Regional Commission, the Appalachian Region legislates itself as 205,000-square-mile region along the Appalachian Mountains Blue Ridge, Smoky extending from southern New York running through northern Mississippi and on to the Mexican Gulf. The Appalachian landscape embraces in total 13 states, the entire state of West Virginia and counties from the other twelve viz. Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. The region yields to 20% of the country's population and 42% of the Appalachia are rural.

In the millennium two post two decades, one could hardly imagine places sans technology, people poverty-stricken and lacking education. But that is the condition of Appalachia. Though Appalachian regional Commission has been taking enumerate measures to handle this situation, the climate culture and vulnerability and challenges in terms of ecology defy the sustainable development of the bioregion. With 13 states and encompassing over 400 counties, implementing smart goals shall imbibe economy and ecology flourishing in Appalachia. This is where appropriate technology comes into favour.

In the words of Andrew Conteh in *Culture and Transfer of Technology*, appropriate technology is defined as an object, process, idea or a project enhancing fulfilment through the satisfaction of human needs (3). Moreover, such a technology should in compatibility with the locale, culture and economic backdrop. It is known through the survey made by ARC that less than 42% of the Appalachian population use telecommunication in their household. The rest are either illiterate of essentialities of telecommunication or cannot afford to have telecommunication in their routine. (ARC, 2002).

P. D. Dunn enlists the following areas for the sustainable development in a developing nation namely,

1. The provision of employment
2. The production of goods for local environment
3. The substitution of local goods for those previously imported and that are competitive in quality and cost.
4. The use of local resources of labour, materials and finance
5. The provision of community services including health, water, sanitation, roads and Education. (4)

The study made by Texas University proved that the lagging in telecommunication technology affected the rural Appalachian in many a ways. There have been difficulty in understanding the business. Understanding their needs and the choices of new technology, integrating newly bred technologies in to workplace, lack of information to get through the barriers create the edge in competitive advantage across Appalachia. In such a scenario, appropriate technology alongside environmental technology shall be incumbent in the growth of Appalachia.

Environmental Technology Action Plan (ETAP), defines environmental technology as "such products, systems, processes and services which provide clear environmental advantages compared to existing or alternative solutions, seen in a life cycle perspective". In addition to

these, there remain the environmental goals reciprocating the goodness and warmth of mother nature and does not any damage to the ecological balance.

Fritsch mandates makes his observation on appropriate technology imbibed with environmental technology for the sustainable development of Appalachia. He says, "Appropriate technology is a necessity for our planet as well as our country and the Appalachian region. We hope to offer a regional model of what the rest of the country and world could do and be. This is a place where good ecology and good economics could come together. If we are to attract a substantial number of tourists to Appalachia, our naturally beautiful region must divorce itself from its heavy dependence on resource extractive industries such as coal mining and ecologically devastating timbering." (3)

A thought on the economics of permanence suggested by Schumacher can be practised in a yet to develop economy like Appalachia. This philosophy is against the Keynesian economics, an ideology of growth based on non-renewable resources like fossil fuels. . This implies an organic way of sustainable living without harming the available resources and suggest a reorientation of science and technology which would enable scientists, engineers and designers, craft methods and equipment which are not alone made available at low-cost but will also be made usable by all classes.

If given a deep thought one may understand wood logging or coal mining could lead to another zero day in another side of the world; whereas nurturing the resources by means of a sustainable development shall help the region prosper. Obviously as Fritsch comments, trees offer more jobs when they are left standing than when they are logged.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The US Forest Service reports that revenue gained by national forests come from recreation, and only three percent from logging. Hence, keeping the woods intact will allow for a better tourism revenue and will add to the economy of our Appalachia, hand a source of revenue for the Appalachian lot, and will aid to still preserve the unique environment of Appalachia. The challenge is to offer low-priced, people friendly and ecologically sound solutions to problems so that people and land may thrive together. (3)

An approach involving the environmental technology will have a paradigm shift in its foci. It will be change made on the principles of product to system based approach, efficiency in resources and a walk towards a sustainable goal and thereby development.

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