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(Ashima Patanaik)
Preface

Environment and Sustainable development has become one of the most urgent concerns for humanity. Over the past three decades they have been highlighted in many ways. The United Nations convention on environment and development (UNCED), Held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 became a landmark for global awareness of linkages between environment and development. It was further emphasized through Brundtland commission focusing attention on sustainability in the long run, which was seen from the point of view of the developing countries, by defining Sustainable development.

Application of the UNCED recommendations expressed in Agenda 21 requires the investigation of the local impact of global structures. A comprehensive perspective integrating the local with the global is the need of the hour. And this has developed from globally recognized threats to the environment and peoples’ livelihoods.

Peoples’ relationship with the environment is more than purely biological and rational as socio-cultural systems encompass different perceptions of the environment and influence the patterns and choices in its management.

The focus of this research work is on understanding temperate forest resource management in the Nordic region from the perspective of Political geography. The challenge in this concept has brought environmental research facing today’s problems, which lies, in integrating different areas of knowledge and combining several approaches at different levels. Advanced understanding of various human management systems and their potential to adaptation and change is an urgent research requirement to secure peoples’ betterment for the twenty first century.
Chapter 1 presents a study on the concepts and issues emerging in the field of environment and its management. Here a brief introduction of all the five Nordic countries is given along with the different approaches and models, which go into developing environmental research.

Sustainable forest management is a complex issue, which is highlighted in the Chapter 2. Here the management and social change induced by the different participants like government, non-governmental organizations and the co-operatives are talked about. Here interdependence and independence between culture and environment is discussed with value related aspects of resource management, which are constantly developing in the interplay between humans and environment.

In Chapter 3 the issue of forest certification is discussed with other cultural aspects in the Nordic countries. Here the interplay of politics, economics and geography is very evident. The main goal of forest certification is to improve forest management and enhance multiple values from forests, which makes it very relevant for the present research.

Chapter 4 presents a detailed statistical analysis of forest resource management of the Nordic countries. Individually their geographical extent of forest cover is different, but especially Norway, Sweden and Finland show one similarity and that is a successful sustainable forest management.

The two-way relationship between the worldview and especially the view from the research area about forest management is elaborated from the perspective of India in Chapter 5. The lesson, which Indian forest management can learn from the success of the Nordic countries, is outlined here.
The concluding chapters summarize the existing trends and suggest guidelines to ensure the successful temperate forest management sustainably, that can contribute towards a better and balanced environment.

The study has relied heavily on primary and secondary sources that included governmental reports, books, journals, relevant websites and conference papers. The reports and materials collected during the field trip to the University of California Santa Barbara (USA) also contributed immensely to the study. However there were few limitations in accessing many important documents.

The proposed visit to the Nordic Council member countries could not materialize due to official constraints, which otherwise would have been very helpful in making this study more effective. Nevertheless, a sincere effort has been made to utilize the available information and resources in analysing them in the best possible manner. I own the responsibility of any drawbacks in the study.