SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

by

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Nearly forty years ago, at the Stockholm Conference Mrs. Indira Gandhi posed the question "are not poverty and need the greatest polluters?" She went on to argue that "the inherent conflict is not between conservation and development" but "between environment and the reckless exploitation of man and earth in the name of efficiency".[i] At that time, nearly forty years ago, she was the only head of government, other than Olaf Palme, the prime minister of the host country Sweden, to attend the Conference. Her participation demonstrated her commitment to environmental protection. The question she posed reflected her faith in social democracy. This paper argues that the two goals are entirely compatible and, in fact reinforce one another.

Conceptual Connections

Environmental problems arise precisely when there is some injustice. An industrial plant spews out noxious pollutants into the atmosphere or water because it does not have to bear the costs of ill health borne by those who have to breath the foul air, drink the polluted water and live with the toxic hazards. The run-offs from fields on which chemical fertilisers and pesticides have been used are also a similar type of injustice. Those who are upstream in a production or consumption process that uses a natural resource can pass on costs and consequences to those who are downstream. In a metaphorical sense the same upstream/downstream relationship holds when one generation passes on costs to those who are not yet born in the form of long term wastes, resource depletion and endangered ecosystems.

Social democracy is an idea that is also rooted in the idea of justice and fairness. But the concern with social justice in social democracy is not just about deprivation, low living standards and income poverty. It is also about

vulnerability when a natural disaster or a severe illness can throw a family that was just about coping into the ranks of the poor.   It is about discrimination on the basis of some accident of birth, be it caste, religion or ethnicity. It is about marginalisation in the political process. Environmental stress connects with every one of these elements of the poverty syndrome.

Deprivation, low productivity and income poverty are more likely in ecologically fragile regions if subsistence agriculture remains the main source of livelihood. Drought-prone and desert areas, coastal areas affected by salinity, hilly regions are typical examples. This may not show up in the statistics like consumption surveys, because the coping strategies of the poor may well include seasonal or long term out migration. The resulting remittances may allow a higher standard of living at the cost of the social anomie of separated families.

Vulnerability is even more directly connected with environmental stresses. The poor who live in ecologically fragile regions are in any case more exposed to the usual variations in weather that lead to storm surges and saline intrusions in coastal areas, droughts in dry areas, landslides caused by heavy rains in hill areas and so on.   Environmental changes like deforestation and climate change increase these risks of instability of livelihoods, vulnerability of habitats and may even threaten survival. The issue of whether these changes are man-made or natural in their origin is of little interest to the people affected. If land in the coastal areas of the Sunderbans is being lost to the sea, those who live on that land have to cope regardless of whether the cause is climate change induced sea-level rise or the normal processes of delta subsidence.

Vulnerability also connects with poverty because in villages and towns the poor are forced to live in flood-plains of rivers, marshy coastal lands exposed to frequent water logging, congested urban slums with inadequate drainage and water supply and shanty towns on the fringes of rail lines.

Discrimination is an important aspect of the forces that push the poor into vulnerable situations. Thus communities who have been at the receiving end of caste discrimination because of the nature of their traditional occupation, for instance scavengers and leather workers, are pushed into areas at the fringe of the village, often far from the better drained central core. This not-in-my backyard attitude also drives them to environmentally stressed areas like Dharavi (in Mumbai). The essential point is that these communities are

driven into vulnerable areas not just because they are poor but also because they are discriminated against in the social system.

The poor are at the receiving end of environmental stress because they wield little influence in the political process at local, provincial or national level. If they were less marginal in the political process and more organised to voice their interests they would be able to secure greater equity in how the burden of environmental stress is distributed. A social democratic political movement that seeks to alleviate their poverty and vulnerability and fight against discrimination is in fact a plus point for environmental ends.

The belief that the two goals of social democracy and environmental protection could come into conflict rests on the way the two connect with the idea of economic growth. The social democratic agenda needs economic growth, because only that can generate the resources needed to provide a good life for the multitudes deprived of it today. Growth also reduces the need for drastic redistribution which is not possible without the type of revolutionary violence that social democracy seeks to avoid because such violence would inevitably threaten democratic freedoms.

Economic growth necessarily involves the exploitation of natural resources and the emission of pollutants that threaten the integrity of the environment. The environmental movement has had a strand of thought that questions the merits of growth and argues for limits to growth. This is based more on the situation in the richer countries where the ecological footprint of consumption is well above the global average, which, now, in turn, is above the earth's bio-capacity.[ii]

The situation in India and other developing countries is radically different. A large proportion of the population lacks access to the basic minimum of goods and services needed for human dignity. The per capita ecological footprint is well below the global average.[iii] It is also clear, that leaving people in a state of poverty and deprivation will not protect the environment. Hence, in a poor society, growth and development are necessary even for environmental protection, a link that is captured in the concept of sustainable development.

There is a certain parallelism between the concept of social democracy and that of sustainable development. Justice is at the core of both concepts with the first focussing on justice here and now and the second on inter-

generational equity. In fact one can capture this connection with a pair of matching definitions:

- Sustainable Development: Meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.[iv]
- Social Democracy: Meeting the needs of the deprived without compromising the freedoms of all.

The formulation of the definitions implies that the first term in each definition, meeting needs of the present generation/ meeting the needs of the deprived, is the objective and the subsequent term is the constraint on how the objective should be met. Clearly the objectives of social democracy and sustainable development are compatible. The difference of emphasis is in the constraint, with one recognising the needs of future generations and the other on the preservation of democratic freedoms.

The two concepts have something else in common. They are an attempt to build a bridge between epistemic communities that are separated by a river of distrust. Thus social democracy seeks to connect those who wish to use the power of the state to correct injustices with those whose primary concern is the protection of democratic freedoms. Sustainable development tries to connect ecologists and environmentalists who wish to protect eco-system integrity with development theorists and practitioners interested in accelerating economic growth and human welfare. Both concepts provide a language which allows a dialogue between these communities of practice. The difficulty sometimes is that, like many bridges, the communities on both shores, treat it as the other shore's attempt to encroach on its territory!

The Political Dimension

The dialogue between the partisans of social democracy and of environmental activism has to take place in the plane of politics as both are essentially movements for the mobilisation of people for change,

Environmental activism comes in many political flavours. When the agenda is about conservation, with a focus on sanctuaries to protect species (pandas, tigers, rare butterflies, orchids, etc), the political flavour is of the right, with many supporters from the ranks of the old aristocracy. This is an agenda that is now largely obsolete and many who started at this end have moved on to a much wider set of concerns.

A broader agenda that attracts support from both sides of the political spectrum is one that seeks to restrain the mining of nature for short term profit. The support from the right often comes from conservationists and from the left from those who are concerned about the impact that such resource mining has on people's livelihood and health. This agenda acquires a more leftist political flavour when it starts talking about people's rights to resources, to good health, to a voice in corporate and governmental decisions.

All of these flavours are present in India. But from the point of view of making common cause with the partisans for social democracy, the most relevant environmentalists are those whose agenda focuses on the impact of environmental stress on livelihoods and health, on the resource rights of poor and marginalised people and the importance of people's participation in resource management.

The anti-poverty and environment agendas can be brought together quite readily on a broad social democratic platform as long as the focus is on national action on immediate problems, on the here and now, so to speak. But this imposes limitations of geography and time frame that have to be addressed.

Social democracy is a political movement and its geography is the geography of political action, which is essentially national and local. But ecosystems do not respect political boundaries. Disease carrying parasites do not need passports. The wind and the flowing waters that carry pollutants do not stop at border check points. Hence the geography of environmental action has to look beyond national and local political boundaries.

The time frame of social democracy will necessarily be defined by the time frame of democratic politics which is often very short term. Many environmental issues require a long view stretching decades ahead. They involve protecting the interests of those who are not yet born and whose voice or vote cannot be heard in today's decision making processes.

The conflict between the compulsions of the here and now and the longer term can be seen in stark relief in the issue of climate change. The threat of climate change is very real; but the most adverse effects will be seen many decades into the future. The costs of mitigating the risk however have to be

borne now. Waiting till the harmful consequences are more imminent will raise enormously the costs of adjustment. In effect the present generation is being called upon to bear certain costs to reduce the risks of a future generation having to bear very much higher costs. A further complication is the global nature of the process so that politically complex questions about historical liability and current responsibility have to be resolved.

It could be argued that the costs of immediate mitigation measures like promoting high cost solar power and in, the medium term, the costs of adaptation to climate change for instance in protecting coastal zones, will eat into resources required for social programmes with more immediate benefits. To place this argument in context the chart below presents an estimate of the costs of carbon mitigation in India prepared by McKinsey & Co. This estimate shows that the initial round of abatement would actually have a negative cost, that is, it would deliver benefits in the form of cost savings that would justify the expenditure even if there were no carbon benefit. Beyond that several of the positive cost measures like afforestation have collateral benefits beyond carbon sequestration that are desirable.
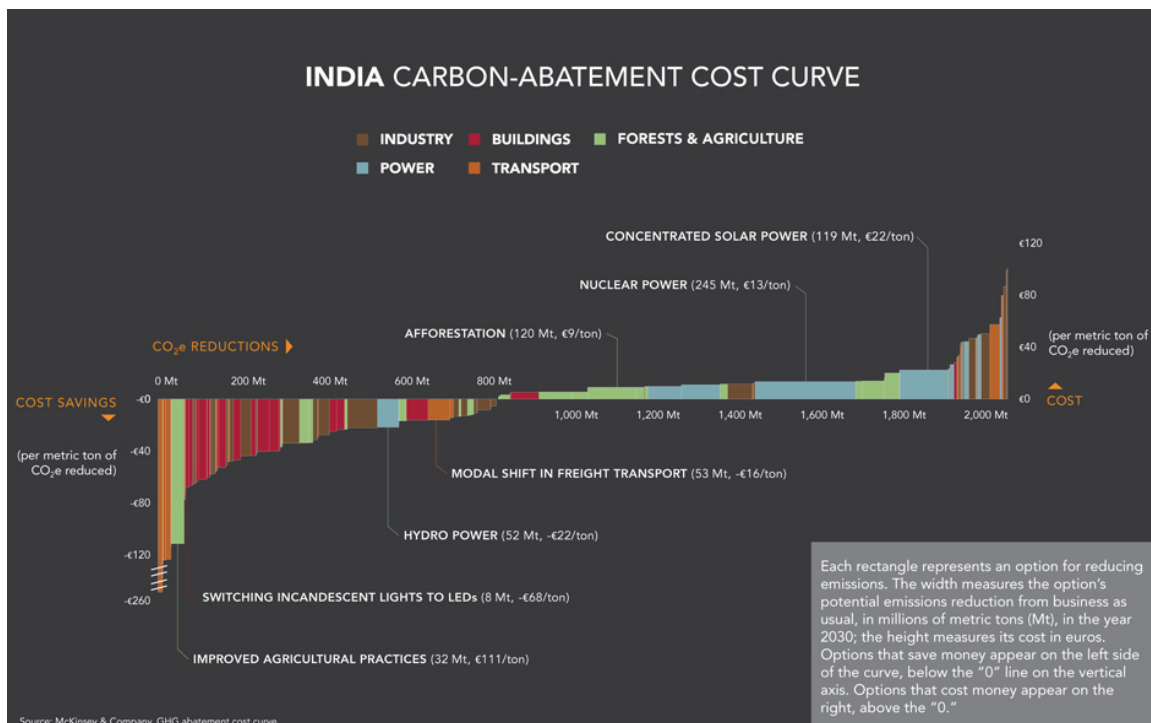
The challenge for social democracy is how to factor in a global and intergenerational dimension including climate change into its current

dynamic. The global or transnational dimension requires a measure of social democracy in global politics. This can come from some extension of the principles of a welfare state to the international level, an idea whose elaboration is beyond the scope of this paper. The longer-term view that environmental activism demands can become a part of social democracy's political platform if it can be integrated into the development agenda which constitutes the core of this platform.

The Development Dimension

The prospects for the integration of the social democratic and environmental agendas can start at either end. The goals and concerns that provide the starting point for programme design for anti-poverty and for environmental programmes do differ as is illustrated in the matrix below:

	Anti-poverty programmes	Environmental Protection
Water/Energy	Access	Ecosystem balance
Mineral Resources	Displacement	Depletion
Forests/Land	Rights of the poor	Conservation/ Rehabilitation

These differences in the starting point does not mean that the two sets of concerns have to remain separated in distinct programmes. Such an approach will merely extend the environment-development clash to the programmatic level. The real challenge is to get each set of actors to recognise the relevance for their agenda of the other's concerns. One could start from the categories that define environmental concerns like climate change, air and water quality, bio diversity and so on and graft development imperatives into programmes designed for these purposes. Or one could start from development concerns and add an environmental dimension to these. The latter is the track chosen here on the ground that public policy in India will start always from development imperatives.

The primary developmental concern from the perspective of social justice is clearly poverty eradication which would cover income generation, access to basic services, improved health and education opportunities. From the perspective of sustainable development and environmental security, the main challenge is to connect these goals with better resource and environmental

management. In what follows this paper spells out what integrating these two sets of concerns means for programme design in four areas. The first is the link between anti poverty and resource management in rural development plans and the second carries this story forward into decentralised environmental management. The third area involves the difficult and contentious issue of land acquisition and mega projects. The fourth shifts the emphasis to urban areas which will increasingly become the space where the challenge of social justice and environmental management will have to be faced.

(a) Linking anti-poverty and area development programmes

In rural areas the most important task is to recognize that poverty eradication and resource conservation can be mutually supportive. In fact sustained improvements in rural living standards and employment requires that the conservation of the natural resources, land, water, forests, fishing grounds, on which people depend for their livelihood. The reverse of this argument is also valid. A resource cannot be protected by denying access to it to people who need it for earning their livelihood. Hence household oriented anti-poverty programmes must include provisions for resource management and, in turn, area oriented resource management programmes must include differential support for poor households.

In India we have both types of programmes. Anti-poverty programmes are largely target group oriented and deliver subsidies in one form or another to BPL households. We also have area oriented resource management programmes for instance for dryland and desert areas, for hill areas and for forests. These two types of programmes need to be brought together. Poverty stricken households may be the target group in both types of programmes, but the planning should be built around the concept of sustainable livelihoods, starting first with the existing activity base of these households. The NREGA is a little different in that it is an area oriented programme that delivers work rather than a subsidy. It can help to link anti-poverty and area development programmes if it is used creatively to provide the local infrastructure needed for supporting sustainable livelihoods.

One dimension of this that is of particular importance both for development and for environmental management is rural energy supply, a matter which rarely receives attention in typical anti-poverty programmes. This acquires a special salience in the light of the concerns about climate change that are

now so large a part of the environmental agenda. In fact, in India certain forms of renewable energy, like bio-gas and even off grid solar, were promoted more to meet rural energy needs than for carbon reduction. This logic remains valid and climate change provides an additional reason for promoting these rural energy options.

Water is another important element in the link between anti-poverty programmes and environmental management. The key goal here is the fair management of emerging scarcities. With rising demands and wasteful use, freshwater shortages, seasonal or endemic, are evident in the lives of the Indians who live in the one-sixth of the country that is prone to chronic droughts. With rising population and increases in industrial and urban demands the experience of scarcity is now much more widespread. Water is becoming a marketable commodity subject to private appropriation and private profit. Efficiency is essential for managing scarcity; but so is equity. That is why water management has to look beyond market principles to social responsibility.

The role of water is also strategic in that in the process of managing water communities are forced to get many other things right as well. If we economise on water use and ensure safe drainage, the environment is protected. If the use of water for irrigation and industrial uses is optimised, economic advancement is promoted. Where water is scarce share it equitably and social justice is ensured. Maintain and improve water quality and good health follows. In this sense water is a strategic resource for development and one could argue that the key to the linkage between antipoverty and resource management that we seek can be secured by getting water management right at the local level.

There is a broader issue of justice that is central to the role of water in development. The water that we use may come from or through our neighbour's property, so also what we dispose off as waste and this is true at the local, regional and national level. Hence we have to cooperate at all levels in managing the use of water and its drainage.

The health dimension of poverty is closely connected to environmental issues like water availability and quality, indoor air quality (closely connected with the issue of rural energy supply mentioned above) and control of communicable diseases, many of which are vector borne and linked to local environmental conditions. Often it is the poorest households

who are most vulnerable because of where they are forced to live or because they lack adequate access to safe water and sanitation. Hence local environmental management has to be seen as part of the drive to improve the quality of life for poor people. Better health, besides being a necessary goal in its own right, also has beneficial effects on the ability to work and on productivity. Improvements in water supply, sanitation, energy availability have been shown to have a beneficial effect on school attendance, particularly by girls.

(b) Decentralisation of programmatic responsibilities

The management of an environmental resource or issue requires a certain coherence between national policies and local implementation. All resource management is ultimately local. But the capacities required for this and the authority necessary for effective action are seldom available at the local level.

Development administration has been decentralised for quite some time now. Local capacities for project and programme formulation, monitoring, coordination around critical development goals have been built up over the six decades of planned development. There could be some doubts about the quality of skills and effectiveness of institutions. But the basic structure is in place. This is not the case for environmental management. Forest and irrigation departments and other offices charged with resource management responsibilities do have a local presence; but the orientation of these is towards production enhancement and not necessarily towards environmental management. In other areas like air and water quality management the tasks are relatively new and much of the capacity available is at higher levels. But action is required at the local level and that is where public capacity needs to be strengthened.

The strengthening of public capacity to manage the environment at the local level can be done through the promotion of local capacity for primary environmental care. This local capacity has to be designed as the first point of a system for
- monitoring the environment (air, water and land quality, local flora and fauna, eco-system integrity, etc.),
- ensuring observance by local enterprises of norms set by legislation (emission and waste management standards, chemical safety standards, etc.),

- providing referral services for environmentally sound technology to local enterprises,
- providing early warning of impending environmental problems, coordinating the relevant local activities of line departments (land and agriculture, forests, fisheries, transport, energy, industry, etc.),
- providing a space for public participation in environmental management and for addressing local environmental disputes.

The primary environmental care centre could perform these functions for the state and central departments that are charged with the responsibility for the implementation of the relevant laws or programmes. The panchayati raj system can provide the structure for this decentralisation. Environmental stress affects people's lives very directly. Natural resources loom large in local politics. Responsibilities for development programmes are already decentralised. Hence the proposal here for local environmental care capacity will strengthen the pressure for a better integration of environment and development at the local level. Episodes like what happened in Nandigram and Niyamgiri, where local sentiments surfaced late in the approval process may well be avoided if the local level plays a role in decision making at the first rather than at the last stage.

Some of the line departments and programmes at the State and Central level may also need reorientation. An important instance of this is the injection of an eco-system management orientation in planning for land use, water resource development, forest management and support systems for agriculture and related activities. Line departments and programmes dealing with these are often organised around schemes for specific crops or products, or inputs, or functional specialisations. An eco-system orientation means that the organising principle should be to group functions, personnel and resources according to eco-systems like dryland, deserts, uplands, etc. and frame all interventions as integrated plans for these.

(c) Land Acquisition, Displacement and Ecological Protection[v]

The reconciliation of land rights and development is perhaps the greatest test for the idea of social democracy in India today. Many cases of large-scale land acquisition for mega-projects end up in agitations and court cases. These conflicts and differences over land acquisition frequently involve both environmental and social concerns as the areas involved are often ecologically fragile and the people displaced, poor and powerless. The

difficulties that have attended some recent projects in forest areas with a large tribal population illustrate how the two sets of concerns come together.

The issue is sometimes seen as the need to avoid the loss of cultivable lands. Cultivable and uncultivable lands coexist side-by-side wherever there is a settled population. Even so-called wastelands are used by local people for firewood or grazing or fodder. Large stretches of uncultivable land would be available only in reserved forests, which, in any case are out of bounds, or in remote desert and mountain areas quite unsuitable for mega projects.

From the perspective of social justice the central issue is not the encroachment on land for agriculture but the displacement of people.[vi] Almost all of these people are involuntary displacees because we relied for far too long on the Land Acquisition Act of 1894. This allows the government to exercise the right of eminent domain for compulsorily acquiring private lands for a public purpose, which, it must be noted, is a major departure from market principles. The Act is silent on what constitutes public purpose and has been used to acquire land for commercial projects on the argument that there would be some collateral generation of public benefit like food security or employment or self reliance. The record of resettlement and rehabilitation of the persons displaced is abysmal.

This colonial procedure is now under review and a new approach is being established that relies more on negotiated purchase of land and substantial improvements in the resettlement and rehabilitation. From the point of view of social justice the important point is to recognise that large scale land acquisition for development will disrupt the life of some functioning community and of all who live in it, not just the land-owners. In fact the ones worst affected will be the share croppers and labourers, the petty traders and service providers. These landless ones do not even have a juridical basis for compensation if the transaction is seen simply as a sale of land, voluntary or compulsory.

Large scale land acquisition, which affects a whole village or more, has to be treated as a transaction between the corporate or public buyer and the community and not just as a transaction with individual land owners. That is the only way we can take into account the interests of those who lose not land but livelihood. It will also allow the community to assert its interest in common properties and heritage which would be lost in a set of individualized transactions.

What we need is a procedure similar to what we have in collective bargaining in labour relations. One possibility is to have Land Purchase Act that would apply to any large scale purchase of land by a commercial entity. The Act would specify a process for negotiation between the buyer and the affected community including a procedure for determining who can speak for and negotiate on behalf of the affected community. It must strike a balance between community and individual land-rights for instance by specifying the minimum proportion of rights holders who have to assent to the terms negotiated. It must include an obligation to provide alternatives to those whose livelihoods are lost. The State will have a role, as it does in labour relations, as an arbiter of last resort.

The essential point is that we move beyond compensation to ensuring that the affected community shares in the gains from development. This can be done in many different ways. For mineral development the answer may lie in providing a share in the royalty to the local community. In other cases the corporate buyer could assign equity in the project or pay for the transfer of development rights. For infrastructure development, the public authorities can use land adjustment schemes that aggregate a large tract of land, say for transport development, use some part for the infrastructure and return the rest in agreed proportion to the original owners, who can then cash the capital gains in any way they wish.[vii]

Mega-projects that involve the use of large tracts of land inevitably lead to large scale changes in land use. This may involve the loss of forest cover, threats to rare species, major disruptions of hydrological regimes and other ecological changes that may threaten livelihood and health and cultural values in the project area and elsewhere. When these broader environmental and social effects are taken into account, many who are not necessarily residents of the project area itself are also in effect stakeholders and their interests have to be taken on board in the procedures for environmental clearance.

These environmental and ecological concerns have usually been articulated by activist NGOs and academics who may not have any formal contractual rights but whose expression of public interest has been recognised as relevant by many courts. The challenge here is to specify an efficient procedure for public hearing and clear rules on the right to information so that there is a greater sensitivity to the ecosystem impact.

In theory the rights of the community to benefit from land use changes and the rights of a wider set of people to environmental protection may clash. It must be noted though that most of the recent cases of large scale land acquisition have involved not a clash but a congruence of interests between the local community and the environmental activists. The theoretical possibility of a clash between the desires of the local community and the compulsions of environmental protection can be handled by a fair system of compensation for denial of development rights.

A broader objection to the approach advocated here is that it would increase the costs of mineral exploitation and industrial and infrastructure development. This is a specious argument. If such developments are unable to bear the costs of compensating local communities fairly or protecting the environment to preserve options for future generations then it is best not to undertake them. In reality these plaints about high costs are arguments for a hidden subsidy from the displaced community and from those who will bear the consequences of environmental deterioration to corporations and other large investors or, to put it more starkly, from the poor and the powerless to the rich and the powerful.

(d) Urban Development

According to the UN population projections the absolute size of the rural population will start declining by 2025-30 and by 2050 it will be 125 million less than now. This reduction in the pressure of people on the habitat will make both development and environment management in rural India an easier task.

The urban population will grow continuously and be 525 million larger in 2050. The numbers would look even larger if we were to include many peri-urban villages that are classified as rural in the census. The counterpart of the declining rural population is the occupational shift from traditional activities which may involve some 200 million people. This will imply a massive change in the urban rural distribution and the pace of urbanization may be even more rapid than the trend projections, particularly in the Northern states of UP, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand. It is in these urban areas that India will face the greatest challenges both for social justice and for environmental management.

The scale of effort required to cope with the projected growth in urban population is quite stupendous. Take for instance the provision of mass transit. Delhi is planning nearly 400km of metro and bus rapid transit corridors. The McKinsey projection[viii] or the country as a whole calls for 7400 km by 2030- a bit like putting up the equivalent of a Delhi Metro per year! We have not yet begun the effort required to cope with three key challenges- the functioning of urban land markets, the financing of massive infrastructure investments and the reform of municipal governance.

In some ways the land management challenge is the crucial one. Our present system is based on large scale public ownership of land and tight planning controls on the operation of private land markets. In practice this, pushes the poor into slums. Private developers are pushed to peri-urban villages on the edge of the controlled leading to an urban sprawl that taxes the infrastructure to breaking point. Urban development requires the assembly of large tracts of land by private or public entities. It also requires transport and infrastructure investments that lead rather than follow the geographical evolution of the city. The vexed issue of land acquisition can be tackled by a wider use of land adjustment schemes. Typically these involve the developer negotiating an agreement with land owners who part with their land for redevelopment and get back some agreed proportion which they can then cash in any way they wish.

The greatest challenge for social justice is for living space and some minimal standards of water supply and sanitation. In urban areas, where living space is commercialised, a poorly functioning land market and inadequate or poorly conceived public interventions in this market, pushes the poor into slums and unauthorized colonies.

The greater part of urban India lives in cities that people have made for themselves rather than in precincts nicely planned by urban authorities or developers. For most of them water supply is already privatized and they buy their requirements from tankers often run by local political bigwigs. Sanitation is what nature provides. This is where we will face the most challenging environmental problems and where we will see the worst of the inequities that bedevil our society. If there is one place the agenda for social democracy and for environment come together it is in the slums and unauthorized colonies of our cities.

We need a programme that guarantees every urban dweller with a package of basic minimum needs that would certainly include living space, water and sanitation. We will not be able to do this with master plans and bureaucratic controls to implement them, which frankly lead not to better cities but to corruption. Planners must learn to work with incoming migrants and other poor city dwellers and work with them to improve water, drainage, health, safety and housing quality.

We also need to look more closely at city form to see how we can reduce the environmental footprint of city transport in terms of carbon and other emissions and in terms of reduced congestion. Many of our cities are a mixture of densely packed old cities, surrounded by cantonment type low density areas and new higher density areas of organised and unorganised development. This generates a huge transport load, particularly for poor people who are pushed to the outer fringes of the city where land is less valuable.

We need to move towards compact cities with high densities and high rise where needed. This will reduce pressure on agricultural land, involve shorter travel distances and can be walking and cycling friendly. There are huge social benefits from proximity of work, residence and leisure, particularly for poor people. The greater localization of services, work places and businesses reduces infrastructure cost. High and well distributed densities will also allow affordable public transport and help to contain high infrastructure costs.

Concluding words

The programmatic areas identified above do not exhaust the substance of either the social democratic or the environmental agenda, which will include many elements that are not covered by the activities envisaged as part of these programmes. Nor are the linkages entirely absent in these excluded activities. Thus, to take an example, environmental action on chemical hazards has an anti-poverty dimension since it is usually the poor who are most exposed because of where they are forced to live. Yet another example is the social democratic agenda on access to education which can be linked to environmental awareness. But inter-connection between the two agendas in these instances is perhaps less compelling than in the four programme areas elaborated above.

The social democratic and environmental agendas have one big thing in common- they challenge existing power structures. Each of them has a capacity to mobilise people around goals and related campaigns. They articulate voices that are not always heard in the corridors of power. A clearer and more explicit link between the two agendas would add strength to each group's political base. Hence the greatest need is for a substantive agenda that can provide a basis for a stronger political coalition of environmental and social activists.

The four areas elaborated in this paper- integrating anti-poverty and area development schemes, decentralising environmental management, linking justice and environment effectively in land acquisition and displacement of people and a change in the pattern of urban development-can provide a basis for combining the political activism of environmentalists and social democrats. The four programme areas provide what could be described as a common minimum programme for social justice and sustainable development. This was implicitly what Mrs. Indira Gandhi asked for in Stockholm and this is what we need if we are to meet that demand.

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[i] Indira Gandhi, 'Man and Environment (Plenary Session of UNCHE, 14 June 1972)' in Department of Environment, *Indira Gandhi on Environment* (New Delhi: Department of Environment, Government of India, 1984) p.23

[ii] This is based on the calculations of ecological footprint published in Worldwide Fund for Nature, *The Living Planet Report 2010*, Gland, Switzerland, 2010. The calculations work out the hectares required to meet the consumption demand for cropland, grazing land, forest land, built-up land and an equivalent for fishing grounds and for carbon absorption. The result is expressed in hectares per capita per year. The calculations for 2007 presented in the 2010 Report indicate that the global average footprint is 2.7 hectares as against the available bio capacity of 1.8 hectares, a deficit of 0.9 hectares per capita. The per capita footprint of the high income countries is 6.1 hectares, of the middle income countries, 2.0 hectares, of the low income countries 1.2 hectares. India's per capita ecological footprint was 0.9 hectares.

[iii] See footnote ii above..

[iv] This is the definition in the World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future,* Oxford University Press, 1987 (The Brundtland Report).

[v] This section draws heavily on the following: Nitin Desai, *Land for Infrastructure,* Business Standard, April 20, 2006 and Nitin Desai, *Land Rights and Development,* Business Standard, January 18,2007

[vi] The numbers displaced by development projects in post independence India are not known because the government has not released any reliable figures on this. Informed estimates put the number at 40 to 50 million persons.

[vii] There is an example near Pune in the Magarpatta development where the land owners themselves got together and planned a development that is becoming a major township.

[viii] *India's urban awakening: Building inclusive cities, sustaining economic growth*, McKinsey Global Institute, April 2010