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Course Name
Strategic Communication for
Sustainable Development

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Lecture 01: Introduction

Welcome to the course titled strategic communication for sustainable development. My name is Aradhna Malik.

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I am an assistant professor with Vinod Gupta School of Management at the Indian Institute of Technology in Kharagpur, West Bengal, India and I am going to be helping you with this course. So in the very first session we will talk about some basic concepts, you know let us talk about what sustainability means, what development means, what communication is in, how all of these things come together.

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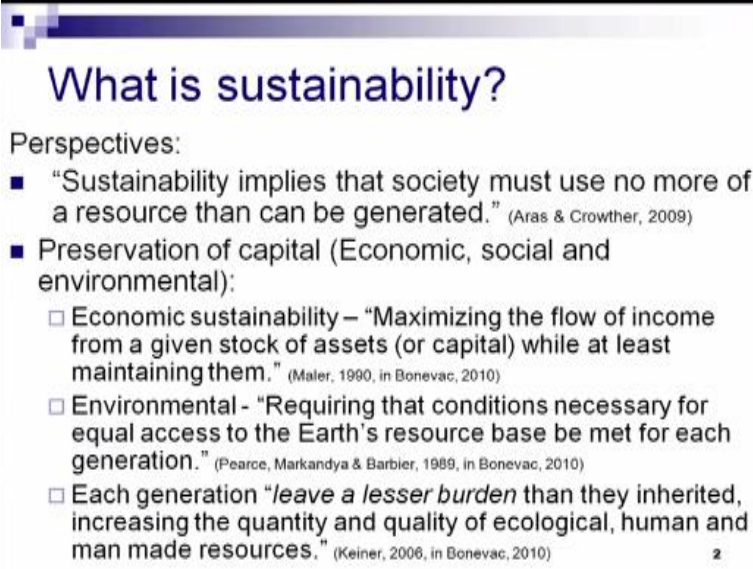


Strategic Communication for Sustainable Development

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What is sustainability?

Perspectives:

- “Sustainability implies that society must use no more of a resource than can be generated.” (Aras & Crowther, 2009)
- Preservation of capital (Economic, social and environmental):
 - Economic sustainability – “Maximizing the flow of income from a given stock of assets (or capital) while at least maintaining them.” (Maler, 1990, in Bonevac, 2010)
 - Environmental - “Requiring that conditions necessary for equal access to the Earth's resource base be met for each generation.” (Pearce, Markandya & Barbier, 1989, in Bonevac, 2010)
 - Each generation “*leave a lesser burden* than they inherited, increasing the quantity and quality of ecological, human and man made resources.” (Keiner, 2006, in Bonevac, 2010)

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Okay, what is sustainability? The dictionary definition of sustainability is stasis, a state of stability, a state in which there is very little input and, you know there is a balance between the input and output, and the mass or the capital or the base is not affected, whatever comes in is not utilized, and without any damage to the route that it is working on.

So that is a very, very basic very rudimentary definition of sustainability. Some perspectives here, sustainability implies especially in the social development context, sustainability implies that society must use no more of a resource that can be generated. So this means that whatever is generated by the environment is then used up by the environment, we should generate as much as we need to use, that is the definition of sustainability.

Now you would realize as we go along that the discourse, the discussions regarding sustainability have taken place primarily on you know the environment issue. So all these discussions started with issues related to the environment and then moved on to profitability, and eventually everybody realized that all of this is going on for the betterment of humanity, betterment of human beings.

So everything is happening so that our lives as individuals as human beings can become better. Now when we, another perspective is the preservation of capital, it is the same thing said in another manner. And this is from a paper by Bonevac and in this paper Bonevac discusses the three perspectives, the three ways in which capital can be preserved and those are economic, social, and environmental. So we preserve whatever assets we have and we eat off of the profits that we make or whatever we generate is then used, but the basic capital the assets that we have remains the same.

And this is again, you know in three we look at it from three different angles, the first is economic sustainability; economic sustainability refers to maximizing the flow of income from a given stock of assets or capital while at least maintaining the assets themselves. So we take the income and we use up only the income, we do not begin to the capital. From the environmental perspective sustainability requires that conditions necessary for equal access to the earth's resource base be met for each generation.

So every generation leaves the next generation with at least as much resource as they got when they received these resources. So in very, very simple very basic terms if your family leaves you a field that produces a certain amount of wheat you leave your children with the same, you know you are and you have say maybe 50 trees planted in that orchard where you are doing farming and you are planting fruit trees also.

So, you know you have at least 50 trees in that orchard and you are able to cultivate whatever your ancestors were cultivating at the very least. So that is a very rudimentary, very basic understanding of the environmental aspect of sustainability, or in the region that you live if there were hundred trees when you were growing up, when you were born, when you grew up, when you die the next generation should also find at least hundred trees in that patch of land.

So some old trees will die, some new ones will be planted, but then if you cut one tree you plant one more tree okay. So that is what in very rudimentary terms that is the way we understand sustainable or sustainability in the environment. The idea is that every generation leaves a lesser burden than they inherited increasing the quantity and quality of ecological human and man-

made resources, now you will say this is but here the balance is disturbed. You leave some more for the next generation so they have more things to use but you do not touch the capital, we do not leave them with a bigger burden than we had when we started using these resources, we use whatever we have okay, so that is without really harming whatever was there to begin.

So we earn and we spend only what we can earn, we do not spend from our kitty, we do not spend from our savings in terms of environment or money or even personal relationships, in terms of the social fabric okay, so that is what sustainability refers to, stability, balance, equilibrium.

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What is development?

- Betterment of human life
- People centric
- "[Development may be understood as] a process that must lead to the expansion of people's freedoms." (Amartya Sen, 1998, in Saez, 2013)
- Development is about choices: Video: <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2016/8/1/Development-in-2-minutes-It-s-about-expanding-choices/>
- Human Development is "...the process that allows the expansion and amplification of people's capabilities and life choices." (Saez, 2013)

Characteristics of human development (Hamelink, 2000, in Saez, 2013):

- ☐ "Equitable access to resources.
- ☐ Sustainable resources and institutions.
- ☐ The procurement and dissemination of knowledge aimed at rendering human beings responsible.
- ☐ Participation."

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Okay, what is development, development in very basic terms refers to the betterment of human life, moving on, doing something, changing the state of something, so you will say sustainability is maintaining it and development is moving on, how do we do that, and then we talk about sustainable development, development means moving from point A to point B, so that the state of point A is improved.

So that the condition of point A is improved and here in this course we will be focusing specifically on development in a, an environmental context in a community context, development for the people okay, so we are not going to talk about technological development, we are not going to talk about economic development, we are going to focus solely on the development as in terms of the world at large, in a very general context, development is people centric, why do we want to change something?

So that our lives become better, so that our lives become more comfortable, so that we have more energy to do things okay, so we remove anything that hampers our growth, our progress, our current or that, that affects negatively affects our current state and that is known as development in very basic terms, so it is everything that we do is to improve human life, it is to improve human living, how we live, how we do things.

Okay, development may be understood and again this is by Prof. Marcus a Nobel Prize winner in economics and he says that development may be understood as a process that must lead to the expansion of people's freedoms. How we do things is limited by the resources we have, by the knowledge we have regarding how to use those resources so Dr. Sen says or Prof. Sen says that that we need to increase our knowledge, we need to know more than we do.

So that we are able to use our resources in such a way that our lives become more comfortable, that means that we need to have more choices than we currently have in order to be more developed. If I have more choices I will know more I will be able to use these choices these available opportunities will be more so I will be able to pick the choice that suits my state more, and how do these choices increase, through development, through creating more opportunities, through moving from point A to point 1 you know a_1 , a_2 , a_3 .

And then eventually to point B which is an accumulation of all of these okay, so we move on. Now I will just show you a very nice video and that has been developed by the United Nations development program about how development is viewed in the social context, so let us go to that video.

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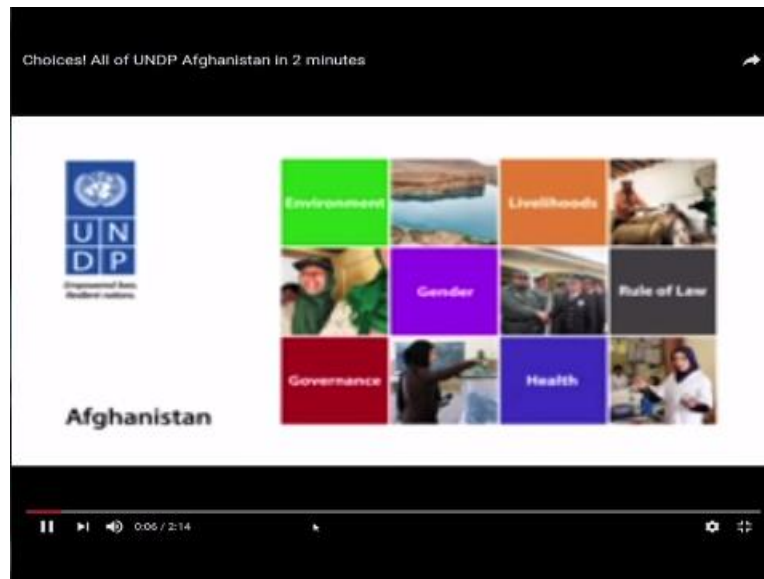
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This video has been very aptly named as choices. Life is all about choices, choosing to keep your family healthy, choosing how you earn a living, how you spend your money, how you raise your Family, and how you plan for the future. It is about the friends you choose along the way and what kind of society you build together, it is about choosing to do the right thing for your neighbors, your country, and generations to come. Lovely, so this video shows us how choices can lead to empowerment.

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Choices, it is about giving people more choices, how do we improve the quality of our lives, by having more choices to do different things and different choices lead to empowerment, it, they give us more psychic energy, more mental energy to do the things that we may never have dreamed of doing and that is what development does.

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3

So it is people centric, everything that takes place in the arena of development is for betterment of human life, it is community centric, it is people centric, okay. Human development is the process that allows the expansion and amplification of people's capabilities and life choices, the characteristics of human development are equitable access to resources, we should have a fair and just access to resources, sustainable resources and institution.

So there should be and I told you what sustainability means, so sustainable resources and institutions, the resources we have are there and we earn of what we use only whatever we can generate, the procurement and dissemination of knowledge aimed at rendering human beings responsible, when we talk about human development we are talking about getting the knowledge that enhances our responsibility, our feeling of being committed to and being responsible for and being answerable to the resources.

The resource base that we use from and everybody who is connected to that resource base and eventually participation, and I am going to go back and forth on this. Community is the most important aspect of development, we cannot talk about development, we cannot discuss development till we ensure a commitment to the community that we are talking about, till we

understand the commune community that we are talking about. Commitment will come if we understand the community, if we are connected to them. So the first thing we need to do is establish a rapport with the community, understand the community, become immersed in the community and then we can talk about developing the community.

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Approaches to development (Fair & Shah, 2012)

- **Westernization:** The promise of rationality and objectivity brought in by the movement of Western cultures into the developing world, possibly during colonization. The propagation of the thought that the West lived a more comfortable life, a more cultured and sophisticated life.
- **Modernization:** "Helping 'primitive', 'backward' people and societies come into the modern present."
- **Globalization:** International collaboration with purpose of helping all connected to better themselves.

Some approaches to development that have taken place over the years are the first is westernization, so the Western world brought in with it the promise of rationality and objectivity by the movement of Western cultures into the developing world probably during the time that colonization was taking place. So people who had seemingly better or more comfortable lives, then when they took over the other countries that seemed more rudimentary or that seemed to be living more rudimentary type of life than these cultures were.

They brought in with them the promise of more comfortable lives and then they said if you do things the way we do them you will be more comfortable. So the direction that took that development took was that of the Western world, it is done like this there and people there are more comfortable so we should also do this, that was one way of looking at development. Then came modernization, modernization focused on helping primitive or backward people and

societies come into the present. We could not say that if you do this, if you do what we are doing, if you follow our example you will become more comfortable, what was said was that you know in the modern world, the more comfortable world has some examples.

So you can follow the same examples or to be as comfortable as them you need to change, you need to move in some direction and the easiest choice was to follow them, but it was not really imposed on them. Then came the era of globalization in where you know the focus was on International collaboration with the purpose of helping all connected to better themselves so all over, all around the world development was taking place through collaboration. Let us all get together and through this collaboration, through pulling in our resources together we will enhance the quality of life of our communities, and then we started.

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Approaches to development (Contd.)
(Fair & Shah, 2012)

- Post-modern view of development proposes that development is:
 - *Need oriented*: "Geared to meeting human needs, both material & non-material."
 - *Endogenous*: "Stemming from the heart of each society, which defines its sovereignty, values, vision of the future."
 - *Self-reliant*: "Implying each society relies primarily on its own strengths & resources in terms of its members' energies & its natural & cultural environment."
 - *Ecologically sound*: "Rationally utilizing the resources of the biosphere in full awareness of the potential of the local ecosystems as well as the global limits imposed on present & future generations."
 - *Based on structural transformations* – in social relations, in economic activities, in the spatial distribution of these activities, & in the power structure."

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Around the same time we started talking about the, you know came in the post-modern view of development which proposes that development is need oriented. How do we decide that we need to better something that we need to do something differently, when there is a need, so it is geared to meeting human needs both material and non-material and I do not have freedom of choice I may have all the modern amenities but I cannot think on my own, so I need the freedom to think I have a brain and I would like to use it, and when that feeling comes in it is a non-material need

but it is a very, very potent need, so when that comes then we move from autocracy to democracy.

And so we, we move from you know we move towards democracy we move towards peoples participation. Endogenous stemming from VPS say postmodern view of development proposals that development is endogenous it stems from the heart of each society which defines its sovereignty, values and vision for the future and again back to community, community decides what development means for it? The community decides how development is perceived which direction development will take, nobody else can impose development on a community.

The community the need has to be generated within the community and within the framework the cultural social fabric of the community thinks then move forward. Self-reliant so this view proposes that development is self-reliant people themselves become empowered they change, they rely on their own strengths and resources in terms of the members in the community and in terms of the members energies and the natural and cultural environment and within that environment then people start moving towards bettering their own lives.

So it is very, very community centric it has to be ecologically sound which means the environment the stability the equilibrium in the environment needs to be maintained, so there are resources of the biosphere need to be used in a rational manner in full awareness of the potential of the local ecosystems as well as the global limits imposed on the present and future generation. So we need to understand what our local biosphere can give us and within itself and in relation to the global environment that it fits into.

So it has to be ecologically sound and balanced and this view also proposes that development is based on structural transformations in social relations in economic activities in the spatial distribution of activities and in the power structure. So development inherently talks about movement, it talks about a change it talks about enhancement of the current state towards the betterment of human life but it is and that movement takes place that change takes place in the resource base we have that change takes place in the way we do things in the cultural structure and the power structure in how the activities are structured around each other.

So all of that is part of development again going back to this whole dilemma you will say stability, sustainability, stability and development is movement, so how do the two come together.

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What is sustainable development?

- Continuing environmental and economic development towards the betterment of human life. – Discussion started with environment, moved on to economic prosperity & then its contribution to the betterment of human life.
- “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (Our Common Future – 1987 Report of World Commission on Environment & Development)
- “Societal process of *exploration, learning and transformation*.” (Godemann & Michelsen, 2011, in Fischer et al, 2016)
- “In order for development to continue indefinitely, it should balance the interests of different groups of people, within the same generation and among generations, and do so simultaneously in three major interrelated areas—economic, social, and environmental.” (Soubbotina & Sheram, 2000)

What is sustainable development and then the confusion starts, so sustainable development is continuing environment, environmental and economic development towards the betterment of human life. When we talk about sustainability we are not talking about a stable non-moving stationary kind of state, we are talking about a state where the, the base of development is more or less constant or it takes place in such a way that whatever we have is not taken from us so the movement is part of sustainability. Everything sustainability cannot just go on forever, you know that is again another point of confusion and we will talk about that in one of the future lectures.

But when we talk about sustainable development the discussion started with environment and then moved on to profitability and then we realized through these discussions that everything we were talking about was being discussed, was being talked about with the purpose of bettering human life. when we talk about sustainability we are not talking about a stable non-moving stationary kind of state we are talking about a state where the base of development is more or

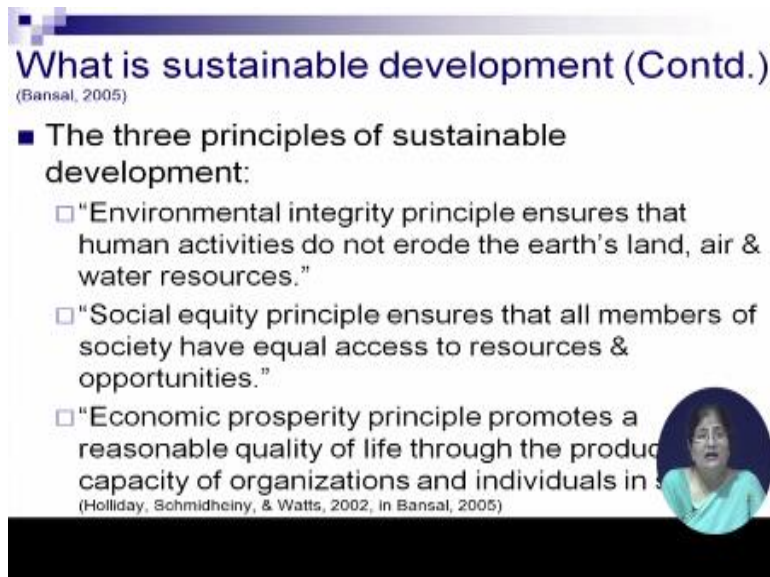
less constant or it takes place in such a way that whatever we have is not taken from us so the movement is part of sustainability everything sustainability cannot just go on forever you know that is again another point of confusion and we will talk about that in one of the future lecture but when we talk about sustainable development the discussion started with environment and then moved on to profitability.

And then we realized through these discussions that everything we were talking about was being discussed was being talked about with the purpose of bettering human life so that is what sustainable development is okay, it is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs it is a societal plot process of exploration learning and transformation learning is a part of sustainable development we learn to do new things we learned to move we learn to move in new directions but and with the with these sole purpose of transforming ourselves our communities into something that will be more comfortable for us that will help us in the long run so it is a process of exploration societal process.

I do not do it individually the community the group of people does it together people who are connected to each other do it together they do it in tandem with each other so we learn together we explore we find out what there is for us what kinds of resources we have what can we learn what do we need to learn how can we utilize the resources then we learn whatever it is that we need to learn and then we transform our current state into something that makes our lives better the processes are changed the way the resources I utilize this changed it and so on in order for development to continue indefinitely nothing can continue indefinitely but more or less indefinitely.

It should balance the interests of different groups of people within the same and among generations and do so simultaneously in three major interrelated areas economic social and environmental for development to take place if people need to be kept in mind the environment needs to be kept in mind and the economic aspect needs to be kept in mind and all three needs to be working in tandem with each other so that is what sustainable development is and the three basic principles of sustainable development.

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What is sustainable development (Contd.)

(Bansal, 2005)

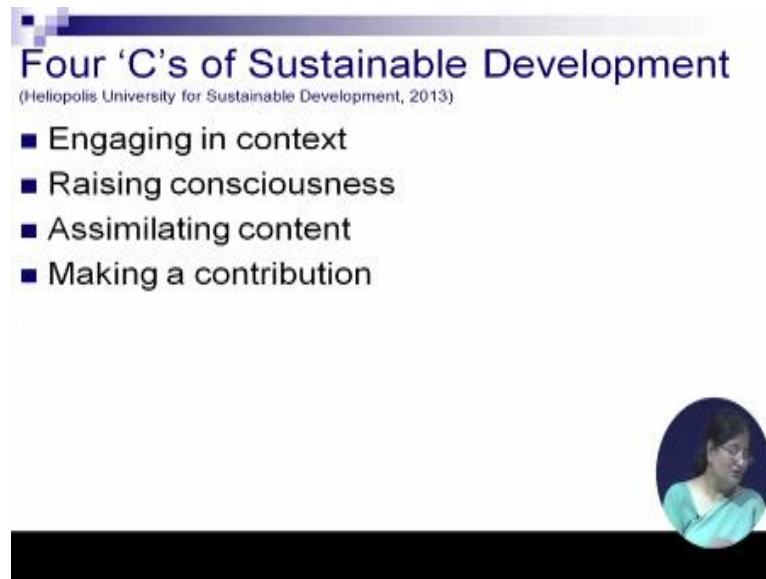
- The three principles of sustainable development:
 - "Environmental integrity principle ensures that human activities do not erode the earth's land, air & water resources."
 - "Social equity principle ensures that all members of society have equal access to resources & opportunities."
 - "Economic prosperity principle promotes a reasonable quality of life through the productive capacity of organizations and individuals in society."

(Holliday, Schmidheiny, & Watts, 2002, in Bansal, 2005)

That have been proposed time and again by scholars and sustainable development are environmental integrity principle which ensures that human activities do not erode the Earth's land, air, and water resources so whatever we do does not eat into what our dear mother earth has given us the social equity principle which ensures that all members of the society have equal access to resources and opportunities so we make sure that every other human being who we are connected to is as comfortable or more comfortable than us and everybody around us within the community outside the community has an equal access to resources and opportunities the economic prosperity principle.

Which promotes a reasonable quality of life through the productive capacity of organizations and individuals in society so whatever we produce is giving us some sort of profit and these are the three principles of sustainable development.

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The four C's of sustainable development as proposed by the Heliopolis University for sustainable development, in 2013 are engaging in context again back to community we need to understand the community that we are coming from we need to be sensitive to the community we need to be connected to the community we need to engage with the community we need to communicate with the community and find out what they want raising consciousness making helping the community become alert to what it has many times we take a lot of things for granted many times we do not really you know think twice about using our resources.

So just enhancing consciousness helping the community understand that whatever it is taking for granted could be a resource and could be depleted now we as Outsiders can do that or nature itself does that okay so the various ways you know we have natural calamities that help us realize that if we had done something differently the calamity may not have occurred etc raising consciousness we try and understand what the community how the environment is communicating with us and what how we need to communicate with the environment.

assimilating content so when we talk about sustainable development efforts we also need to get into the context and get the information from the context and then after we have understood all

these things we have raised the consciousness we have interacted with the context we then make a contribution and that is when we start going back and giving back to the community.

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Building blocks of sustainable development (du Plessis, 1999)

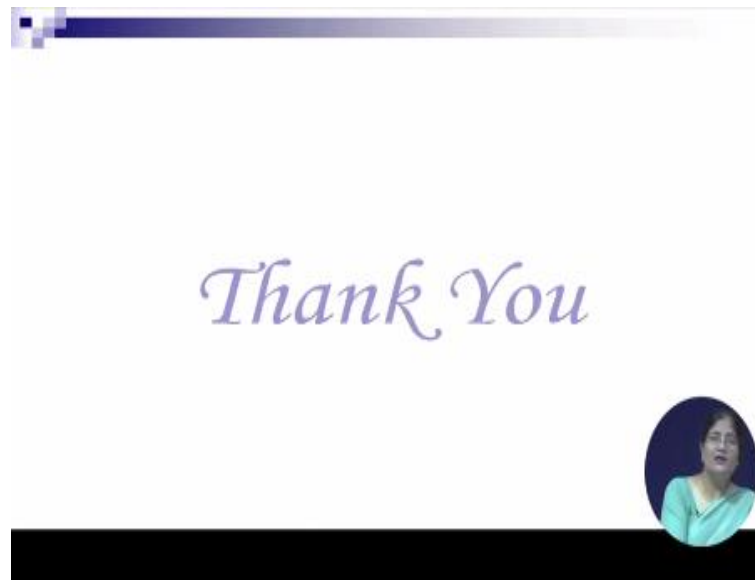
- **Environment:** "Balance between conserving and protecting the environment and using renewable resources"
- **Economy:** "Creat[ing] equitable but viable economic systems with an ethical basis."
- **Society:** "Encourag[ing] equitability and responsibility within social and cultural systems and values." (Barbier, 1987, in du Plessis, 1999)
- **Adaptability:** "Continual adjustment according to feedback loops." (du Plessis, 1999)

Some building blocks of sustainable development a large amount of literature talks about the three pillars of sustainable development which is people planet and profit the society the corner the environment and the economy society you know consists of people the planet is the environment people planet and profit profits relate to the economic state of the environment that we function in now this paper very nice paper by do places and I will give you the full reference of this paper talks about adaptability, adaptability between these three pillars continual adjustment between these three perspectives of sustainable development through the feedback loops and how does that take place in and through communication which is the purpose of offering this course.

Okay so there is continual adjustment there is we constantly try to balance where our focus should be should it be on the society at this point you will be on the environment at this point should be on the economy how do we create a balance between these three pillars of sustainable

development that takes place through listening to what the environment is telling us and then helping the or then communicating with the environment so obeys feedback loops then help us form or create a balance between these things.

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So that is where we will stop for this lecture and we will take it up from here in the next lecture, thank you very much for listening.