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Biocracy: A green model of governance for G20 vision of sustainable development

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Abstract

The following study puts forward the G20 vision of sustainable development unveiling the violence perpetrated by anthropocentric liberal democracies that are harming the ecological integrity of the entire earth. Henceforth, the study proposes to evolve a post-democratic and sustainable political system named 'Biocracy' that caters not only to people (*read as Homo sapiens*) but all living species. It also prescribes the ten fundamental principles of biocracy along with a working biocratic model of governance. The study tries to demonstrate the ability of Biocracy to address ecological imbalances and achieve Sustainable Development Goals faster.

Keywords: Biocracy, post-democracy, deep-ecological, ecological integrity, bio-politics, ecological imbalance, sustainable model of governance

Introduction

We all know that G20 was formed as a platform solution to 1998 Asian Crisis with only finance ministers and governors of central banks. But after its failure to gauge the 2008 economic crisis, regular annual meet-ups of the respective head of the governments started taking place and this is when this organization gathered world-wide attention. G20 organization is unique in its own way. It is the only organization of its sort that brings together all major developed and developing countries at par on the same table, thus providing a platform to discuss all the crucial and burning global issues.

It was a matter of pride for India to host the presidency of G20 in 2023 with the theme of "One Earth, One Family, One Future". We all are aware of the Biodiversity loss, Global Warming and Climate Change. We are also aware that Sustainable Development is the need of the hour not for any particular country but for the whole world. Fortunately, they all have been the hot topics of discussion in G20. But unfortunately, we all have not been able to understand Sustainable development as we should be. We have actually been destroying in terms of development. Let us understand through some facts and data:

- The weight of all 7.6 billion humans makes up just 0.010% of all biomass on Earth. Bacteria make up 13% while plants make the most i.e. 82% of the biomass distribution on Earth. Animals constitute only 0.36% of all biomass out of which livestock population is 0.018% and wild mammals mere 0.001%. 86% of biomass resides on land, 13% on deep surface and mere 1% in oceans.
- Humanity has caused the loss of 83% of wild mammals, 80% of marine mammals and 50% of plants while the livestock kept abounds. Farmed poultry makes up 70% of all birds on the planet, with just 30% being wild. The picture is even more stark for mammals - 60% of all mammals on Earth are livestock, mostly cattle and pigs, 36% are human and just 4% are wild mammals. About half the Earth's animals are thought to have been lost in the last 50 years. This biological annihilation has caused the scientist to name it as sixth wave of mass extinction.
- Forests cover 31 percent of the world's land surface, just over 4 billion hectares. This is down from the pre-industrial area of 5.9 billion hectares. According to data from the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, deforestation was at its highest rate in the 1990s, when each year the world lost on average 16 million hectares of forest. Indonesia, where 82 percent of the land was covered by lush forests in the 1960s. Today less than half of that country is forested, with some 24 million hectares of forest lost between 1990 and 2010.

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- Almost half of Earth's original forest cover is gone, much of it destroyed within the past three decades. Today, just one fifth of the world's original forest cover remains in large tracts of relatively undisturbed forest -- what WRI calls frontier forest. 40 percent of forest on Earth today qualifies as frontier forest. Seventy-six countries assessed have lost all of their frontier forest and eleven are on the verge of losing. Half of today's frontier forest lies in boreal regions within Canada, Russia, and Alaska inhospitable northern zones between temperate forest and tundra. Outside of boreal regions, about 75 percent of the world's frontier forest is threatened.
- The world's population is projected to increase from around 7.6 billion today to close to 10 billion people by 2050. The corresponding global demand for food-estimated to grow by 50 percent during this period.
- The early arrival of overshoot day is also very alarming. Overshoot day is a concept devised by Global Footprint Network. It is the day when yearly consumption of Earth's resources overshoots the yearly regeneration of resources by Earth. In 1970 it fell on 29 December and in 2019 it fell on 29 July. Earth Overshoot Day falling on July 29 means that humanity is currently using 1.75 times Earth.

Rationale

Data shows a terrifying but the true picture. This clearly shows that somewhere we are not going right. Well the United Nations in 1987 for the very first time defined 'sustainable development' as "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

I personally find this definition very flawed and I insist for its timely review. Don't you think that the needs of not only the future generations of humans but also the future generations of other species need to be protected? Now this requires a system of governance that is not only human-centric but eco-centric, catering to the needs of all living beings.

Democracy is an anthropocentric model of governance which is best understood as 'Government of the people, by the people and for the people'. Democracy at its best talks of fundamental rights of humans, human freedom and welfare of the humans alone. Humans have over-exploited the earth in the name of democratic liberalism. Where are the other 8 million species that I call as 'our extended family' in this democratic model of governance?

Objectives

1. To formulate an ecological and sustainable model of governance that helps the G20 nations to address and restore the ecological imbalances.
2. To formulate a green model of governance that helps to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs) faster.

Theory of Biocracy

So, on the lines of the theme of G20 this year i.e. 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' I propose a model of governance called Biocracy that is more green, more inclusive, more sustainable and more ecological. I propose to define Biocracy as "Government of the living, by the living, for the living".

The term Biocracy has been derived from two Greek words 'Bios' meaning life and 'Kratos' meaning rule. Let us understand and define the three components of the definition separately for clear understanding.

Government:

- a) **'Of the living:** It signifies that the Government shall *belong* to all living species.
- b) **'By the living:** It signifies that the Government shall *represent* all living species.
- c) **'For the living:** It signifies that the Government shall *welfare* all living species.

Biocracy requires to be seen as extending the idea of good life to other species also. It talks of extending the idea of 'liberty' and 'natural rights' to all other species.

The greatest criticism that I receive for biocracy is how other species would participate in the political process! But, do every human participate? No. But still they have representation and their voices heard. Similarly, other species grouped say as flora and fauna must have nominated representation by people who can aptly represent them in all the pillars of Government.



Principles of Biocracy & SDGs

Listed below are Ten Principles upon which the entire theory of Biocracy is based. Implementation of each principle fosters the faster realisation of one-to-many Sustainable Development Goals. Each of the following principles of biocracy is mapped against the respective Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) below:

Rights of flora and fauna

SDG:- Good health and Well-being (3), Sustainable Cities and Communities (11), Responsible Consumption and Production (12), Climate Action (13), Life Below Water (14), Life on Land (15), Peace and Justice (16), Partnerships for the Goals (17).

Representation of flora and fauna

SDG:- Good health and Well-being (3), Sustainable Cities and Communities (11), Responsible Consumption and Production (12), Climate Action (13), Life Below Water (14), Life on Land (15), Peace and Justice (16), Partnerships for the Goals (17).

Benchmark for human population

SDG:- No Poverty (1), Zero Hunger (2), Good health and Well-being (3), Quality Education (4), Gender Equality (5), Affordable and Clean Energy (7), Decent Work and Economic Growth (8), Sustainable Cities and Communities

(11), Responsible Consumption and Production (12), Climate Action (13), Life Below Water (14), Life on Land (15), Peace and Justice (16), Partnerships for the Goals (17).

Benchmark for share of Earth under human occupation

SDG:- Good health and Well-being (3), Affordable and Clean Energy (7), Sustainable Cities and Communities (11), Responsible Consumption and Production (12), Climate Action (13), Life Below Water (14), Life on Land (15), Peace and Justice (16), Partnerships for the Goals (17).

Benchmark for exploitation and production of resources

SDG:- Clean Water and Sanitation (6), Affordable and Clean Energy (7), Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (9), Sustainable Cities and Communities (11), Responsible Consumption and Production (12), Climate Action (13), Life Below Water (14), Life on Land (15), Peace and Justice (16), Partnerships for the Goals (17).

Benchmark for wastes and effluents

SDG:- Clean Water and Sanitation (6), Affordable and Clean Energy (7), Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (9), Sustainable Cities and Communities (11), Responsible Consumption and Production (12), Climate Action (13), Life Below Water (14), Life on Land (15), Peace and Justice (16), Partnerships for the Goals (17).

Obligation of organic farming

SDG:- Good health and Well-being (3), Clean Water and Sanitation (6), Sustainable Cities and Communities (11), Responsible Consumption and Production (12), Climate Action (13), Life Below Water (14), Life on Land (15), Peace and Justice (16), Partnerships for the Goals (17).

Inculcation of bio-sensitive attitudes esp. in children

SDG:- Quality Education (4), Gender Equality (5), Reduced Inequalities (10), Sustainable Cities and Communities (11), Responsible Consumption and Production (12), Climate Action (13), Life Below Water (14), Life on Land (15), Peace and Justice (16), Partnerships for the Goals (17).

Bio-friendly development and settlement of habitation

SDG:- Clean Water and Sanitation (6), Reduced Inequalities (10), Sustainable Cities and Communities (11), Responsible Consumption and Production (12), Climate Action (13), Life Below Water (14), Life on Land (15), Peace and Justice (16), Partnerships for the Goals (17).

Delegation of authority to local communities over natural resources

SDG:- No Poverty (1), Zero Hunger (2), Good health and Well-being (3), Decent Work and Economic Growth (8), Reduced Inequalities (10), Sustainable Cities and Communities (11), Responsible Consumption and Production (12), Climate Action (13), Life Below Water (14), Life on Land (15), Peace and Justice (16), Partnerships for the Goals (17).

Biocratic Model of Governance

The biocratic model of governance would be based on the very definition of biocracy i.e. "Government of the living, by the living, for the living". To be a biocracy, the democratic country shall have to pass a legislation bill called the 'bill of biocracy'. This bill shall not only be based

on principles of biocracy, but shall also constitute the 'biocratic model of governance' to be followed subsequently. This bill demands a constitutional mention of adoption of biocratic political system. It shall include the subsequent required changes in all the three tiers of government as mentioned below:

Changes in Legislature

A certain percentage or a fixed number of seats would be kept reserved for the representation of other biotic species in the 'house of representatives'. The representatives of other species shall be humans nominated from respective specialised field viz. ornithology, mammalogy, botany, ichthyology etc. At least two seats, one representing flora and other fauna must be reserved to qualify for biocracy. Such nominated representatives shall not only be the voice of the voiceless but shall also be in charge of bringing legislations concerning their survival and welfare.

Changes in Executive

An exclusively dedicated 'Ministry of Biota' that shall be in charge of not only looking after the 'issues of flora & fauna' but also 'maintaining & sustaining ecological integrity'. Separate dedicated administrative machinery shall be created for administering the welfare of species (viz. veterinary healthcare, authorised pet centres, etc).

Changes in Judiciary

Separate dedicated biota tribunals for the resolution of conflicts between humans and other biotic species. These tribunals shall act as the 'guardian of the rights of flora and fauna'.

Along with these three pillars, the conventional fourth pillar of the governance i.e. media, should not only bring to light the issues concerning flora and fauna but shall also develop and inculcate biobehavioral attitudes in humans. Concept of 'natural sovereignty' shall be proposed that advocates the non-interference of humans in the lives of other bios.

Conclusion

Conclusively, it is the fundamental right of the entire flora and fauna to be guided by natural law. The human intervention needs to be regulated by ecological laws of biocracy. Through the principles of Biocracy, it is demonstrated that Biocracy has the potential to sustain and restore ecological integrity.

Biocracy is the required political order for the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainable development is to prevent severe depreciation in world's natural capital. Anthropogenic activities have already marked the extinction of many species on Earth, let not minerals.

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