

Abstract

Development is, perhaps the world's most critical problem, incorporating most of the world's pressing issues. Though much has been achieved in the development field, and in many places lives of the people have been improved a lot, still for many others little has advanced.

However, the controversial issues on human rights and environment are facing all during the development process. There are human rights threats under the uneven development policy, economic transition, capitalism globalization, modernization projects and technological evolution. As humans are the central subjects of the development, neglecting the human rights will definitely impede the development. There is also the degradation of the earth's capacity to sustain life, which presents short-term problems and critical long-term threats in that no development can take place outside the context of physical environment. So it is undoubted that human rights and environment are the most important factors intertwining with the development and these issues bring global challenges which threaten humanity's ability to meet the needs of both present and future generations.

Globalization and experience have facilitated to transfuse these considerations into the standard of development. The classical aim of development which means pure economic-priority development by modernization to catch up with advanced countries as the overwhelming and ultimate goal seems in question and hardly attractive in view of social conflicts, ecological problems and the consequences of technological innovations, etc. Thus, the single-dimension assessments are not popular anymore and development becomes a field of flux, with rapid change and turnover of alternatives.

As to the developing countries, since they have already faced a lot of inherent and urgent problems such as large population, poverty, starvation and so on, economic prosperity will of course play a decisive role to abate poverty and feed their massive people. In order to catch up with the developed countries, they usually have simple development formulae in minds, namely pursuit of the economic growth by industrialization or urbanization, following the footprint of the developed countries. They pick up the economic fruits and suffer more growing pains during the development process. Internally, unequal development and polarization, increasing population and degrading environment will further the internal conflicts and affect the state's social stability, peace and long-term development. Externally, these countries cast an imputation on their trading-off human rights and environment for economic growth. So developing

countries' situation is between the beetle and the block. The crises are more serious to these vulnerable countries.

Since the significant efforts on economic growth for all has been proven illusive and the world's natural resources and supporting ecosystems are arguably under greater pressure now than ever before, an insatiable race to develop by unconscionable pursuit of profits at any cost should have a halt. The contradictory cause-and-effect relationships between development with environment and human rights have aroused the global concern. United Nations has also paid a close attention and helped in generating responses towards these crucial issues. So this thesis explores the conflicts sparked by the process of development involving human rights and environmental impacts, identify some global significant challenges and analyze the scope of existing international legal measures. In local dimension, China, as the largest developing country, has been studied as the reference to illustrate the domestic efforts to reconcile the conflicts. Notwithstanding the difference in size and other unique situations of countries, there are clearly some common goals for all, especially developing countries, to achieve adequate economic growth, improve standards of living and quality of life. So this local testing can in general have some important implications of the impact of international legal measures and obstacles as well as unique ways in domestic practice to address the development challenges on human rights and environment, especially to the developing countries.

Key Words:

Development; Human Rights; Environment; International Law; Developing Countries; China