

مؤتمر عجمان
الدولي الخامس للبيئة
Ajman 5th International
Environment Conference



Best Practices in Environmental Governance: The Nordic Experience

Habibul Haque Khondker
Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, UAE



The Take off point

- United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on 25 September 2015. The agenda sets out an ambitious action plan that would improve the lives of people both in the Global North and the Global South
- Can the countries of the Global South (so-called Developing countries) meet the SDGs on their own?
- A global approach of sharing ideas, norms and best practices can help both the countries of the Global North as well as the Global South
- Environmental problems are global, hence, their solutions have to be global as well – A global approach towards environmental governance will strengthen national and local initiatives

No to Methodological Nationalism

- In pursuing viable measures and policies to address the challenges of environmental decline one has to look both within and beyond the national boundaries.
- No country has the monopoly over knowledge
- Scientific knowledge is global
- Methodological nationalism gives a false impression that all the solutions and methods can be found locally, the best ideas are our own ideas
- An open approach by looking at the world as our oyster would lead to methodological cosmopolitanism or methodological globalism by opening the sphere of knowledge of best practices

Why the Nordic Countries?

- The 200 + countries of the world are at different levels of preparedness to deal with the challenges of the environmental crisis.
- The Nordic Europe, especially, Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden have set examples in environmental governance.
- These four Nordic countries have formulated exemplary policies and institutional arrangements to govern their environment effectively by engaging their citizens
- Policies are based on scientific evidence
- Community awareness by means of education
- Public information and involvement of the civic organizations.

What are Best Practices?

- Best practices does not mean simple imitation but refining and constantly improving these policies to best fit their national needs and priorities.
- Best practices are results oriented, generalizable and acceptable to a wider constituency of society
- Best practices are not to serve narrow private interest, but wider public interest
- The art of good governance entails both creating and distributing public good and removing – what I call – “public bad”

Table 1 Basic Country Profiles

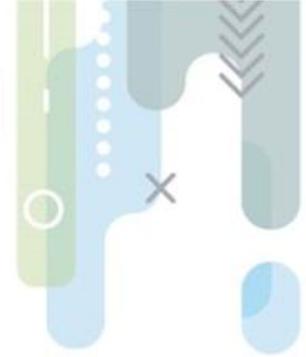
Nordic Four At a Glance

Country	Population	Area km2	Polity type	Per Capita GDP \$	Unemployment Rate
Sweden	9,851,017	447, 435	Constitutional Monarchy	48,905	7
Denmark	5,707,251	43, 561	Constitutional Monarchy	49,021	6.2
Finland	5,487,308	338, 430	Presidential	43,346	8.8
Norway	5,213,985	323, 781	Constitutional Monarchy	58,792	4.7

Table 2 Government Spending and CO2 Emission in the Selected Countries

Country	Tax as % of GDP	Government Spending as % of GDP	Health Spending Per person	Life Expectancy	CO2 Emission in Tonnes per capita
Sweden	13.2	49.5	\$5,488	80.4	3.8
Denmark	24.4	53.6	\$5,205	78.8	5.6
Norway	10.5	50.8	\$6,647	80.5	7.1
Finland	13	57.0	\$4,033	78.7	7.7

Table 3 Social Spending, Education, and R &D in the Selected countries



Country	Social Spending As % of GDP	Education Spending per Student	R & D spending as % of GDP	Internet Access % Household	Road Accident per 1 million
Sweden	27.1	24,072	3.3	94.7	26
Denmark	28.7	16,609	3	97.0	34
Norway	25.1	20,962	1.9	96.7	23
Finland	30.8	17,893	2.9	94.4	49

Why are we in this mess?

- Relativism and Moral Apathy: The challenges we face in the present world are interlocking and rooted in a gradual decline of the moral ecology (Khondker, 2017) of the world vitiated by relativism and moral apathy.
- The problem is rooted deeply in human community's fascination with what Sociologist Goran Therborn calls "the modernist infatuation with development" (Therborn, 2016: 104-105), which is at the root of the threat to our environment.
- Yet, losing hope is not an option.

What is to be Done?

- Achieving development and taking care of our environment are not mutually exclusive. It is not one or the other.
- Economic sustainability relies on environmental sustainability – in the long run
- Fallacy of Lord Keynes: “In the long-run we are all dead”. What does “we” mean (the economists?), we as human race persist – I die, my children and their children live
- Good governance is smart governance is also mindful governance
- Governance has to be understood in a holistic manner.
- The globalized world has created opportunities for all to learn from each other. Learning is the first condition of the smart governance
- The spirit of learning regardless of national barriers is of utmost importance which must not be obstructed by intellectual or methodological nationalism and relativism.
- A cosmopolitan approach to knowledge utilization will help the entire world.