

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN WATERBODIES USING ESPA APPROACH:

A CASE FROM AHMEDABAD, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The proportion of world population living in cities has surpassed rural population. Cities are therefore facing major challenges in maintaining and restoring the environmental ecology on which they depend for their functioning and at the same time provide equitable access to natural and manmade resources to all city dwellers. Waterbodies significantly improve the quality of life in urban areas as they have an intrinsic aesthetic and recreational value. However, unplanned and unregulated urbanization has led to large scale degradation of quality and quantity of waterbodies. Communities/Governments over time have tried to find out innovative approaches for development and management of these waterbodies. Ahmedabad, the seventh largest city in India, the largest city in Gujarat and its commercial capital is dotted with a large number of waterbodies of varying sizes. Currently as per records of local body, 48 waterbodies exist within the city limits. This paper presents some of our recent work taken up under the programme “Supporting Urban Sustainability”- a collaborative programme supported by SIDA and SWEDES. The aim of the project is to suggest an alternative model for development of waterbodies that can conserve the ecosystem, help alleviate poverty and contribute to strong sustainability in urban setting. ESPA seeks to tie together various requirements with reference to social and environmental issues in a holistic manner, recognizing the interdependence between human beings and nature.

KEYWORDS: Ecosystem Services, Poverty Alleviation, Sustainability, Urbanization, Waterbodies