

UNIT THREE

MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT OVER RESOURCES

Introduction

The management of land and natural resources is a significant challenge for developing countries. Mismanagement of these resources often leads to conflicts, as the exploitation of high-value resources like oil, minerals, and timber can fuel violence. Additionally, the competition over diminishing renewable resources like land and water is rising, worsened by environmental degradation, population growth, and climate change. Proper management is essential to prevent conflicts and ensure sustainable use.

3.1 The Concept of Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development: A Historical Overview

- The concept of sustainable development emerged as a crucial paradigm for balancing development and environmental protection.
- It gained prominence at several key United Nations conferences:
 - **1972 Stockholm Conference:** Introduced "eco-development" and led to the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
 - **1987 Nairobi Conference:** Introduced the idea of "sustainable development."
 - **1992 Rio de Janeiro (Earth Summit):** Developed "Agenda 21," connecting poverty, underdevelopment, and environmental protection.
 - **2002 Johannesburg Summit:** Emphasized the social and economic aspects of sustainable development.

Definition and Core Concepts

- Sustainable development is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." It focuses on three pillars:
 1. **Economic:** Maintaining economic activities that support continuous production of goods and services.

2. **Environmental:** Preserving the natural resource base and maintaining ecological balance.
3. **Social:** Ensuring fair distribution of resources and opportunities, and providing essential social services.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- The SDGs, adopted by the United Nations in 2015, aim to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030.
- The 17 SDGs are interconnected, addressing various aspects of development, including health, education, equality, and environmental sustainability.

Integration of SDGs in Ethiopia

- Ethiopia has integrated the SDGs into its national development frameworks, such as the Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II), focusing on economic stability, infrastructure, human resource development, and environmental sustainability.
- Progress has been made in areas like education, water and sanitation, and health.

3.2 Resource Use Policies and Related Conflicts

Meanings and Types of Resources

- Resources are elements that satisfy human needs, categorized into:
 1. **Renewable Resources:** Resources that can replenish naturally, like solar energy, water, and forests.
 2. **Non-Renewable Resources:** Resources that do not regenerate naturally, such as fossil fuels and minerals.

Categories of Resource Conflicts

- Conflicts over resources can arise due to ownership disputes, access issues, decision-making control, and distribution of benefits.

Unique Characteristics of Natural Resource Conflicts

- Resource conflicts are complex due to factors like scarcity, uneven distribution, and the involvement of various stakeholders (governments, communities, companies).

- These conflicts can be influenced by power imbalances and often involve both customary and statutory governance systems.

Drivers of Conflict Over Renewable Resources

1. **Competition Over Scarce Resources:** When demand exceeds supply, conflicts can arise over who gets access to limited resources like water or land.
2. **Poor Governance:** Conflicts can stem from unclear resource rights, discriminatory policies, unequal benefit distribution, and lack of public participation in decision-making.
3. **Transboundary Dynamics:** Resources that cross borders can lead to conflicts between countries or regions over their use and management.

In summary, sustainable development requires balancing economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity. Proper governance and management of resources are crucial to prevent conflicts and ensure the well-being of current and future generations.