

## HEALTH & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: Perceptual Pathways to Sustainability, Salutogenesis and Beyond

**Kitsiri, Ruchira**

Independent Scholar, The Foundation for Civilisational Transformation and Conscious Evolution, Sri Lanka, ruch001@gmail.com

This paper outlines a conceptual framework, through which sustainable development practices could be generated, by synthesizing several concepts of health and drawing perceptual pathways linking personal and planetary health. It also highlights the importance of perceiving health through the salutogenic model, introduced by Aaron Antonovsky in 1979 to achieve this.

Bodily systems function in a cohesive manner for us to be healthy and sufficiently resilient to sustain health. Our planet too is made up of various systems. Some are natural while others are manmade, implemented through development activities. If the latter disrupt the former beyond repair, it may not only threaten the way we live, but the very existence of our species. Therefore it is important that developmental practices ensure the sustenance of a liveable planet. Perceiving the effects of development on the planet in the same way we perceive our health, may allow us to draw many parallels between personal health and planetary health. However we must first change the way we perceive health.

Pathogenesis is the origin and development of diseases. It studies how we become ill. When we treat an illness, we try to correct this process of becoming ill, hoping that health will ensue. Our preventive efforts try to avoid or delay these pathogenic processes. salutogenesis, refers to origin and development of health. It is the study of how we become healthy, independent of the process by which we become ill. It is not the reversal of pathogenesis but a process of its own. There are health promotional models based on salutogenesis that take into account our 'sense of coherence' in determining health. The ultimate aim of salutogenic model is to initiate individuals on a self-actualizing pathway that result in an optimal state of physical mental and social wellbeing while being in harmony with the environment. Adapting such an approach to personal health may result a change in our perception and behaviour, not only towards our own health but the health of our planet too, in a manner that we adapt sustainable ways of living and development.

Furthermore personal genomics is increasingly gaining better understanding of our own biology. Simultaneously we are starting to focus on more personalized approaches to health evidenced by the emerging field of personalized, preventive, predictive and participatory medicine (P4 Medicine). Advancement of technology will make the use of personal genomics more wide spread enabling their interpretation through evolutionary genetics. Soon we will be able to develop salutogenic approaches to personal health based on personal genomics interpreted against the backdrop of evolutionary forces and therefore to find new determinants of health. This understanding could be used to treat and prevent diseases while promoting health; an approach that goes beyond salutogenesis. I call this Salutogenetics: both a new word and a concept. It is the synthesis of the emerging fields of personal and evolutionary genetics with salutogenesis. The ultimate outcome of this synthesis I believe will be a sustainable planet inhabited by a healthy population.

