

ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETIES)

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ABSTRACT

The role of civil society in achieving the sustainable development goals needs to be recognized and leveraged for inclusive and green growth. The masses should understand that progress and prosperity should not compromise the lives and livelihoods of the future generations. The article opines that existing beliefs and behavior need to be questioned and there is need to nurture a new cultural of empathy, sharing and resilience by adopting practices in which all collaborate for judicious use of resources. Highlighting that the sustainability has always been rooted in our civilization the paper emphasizes that we need to remind, reawaken and rejuvenate our people to reimagine and resolve to readopt our traditional lifestyles. The potential of civil organizations need to be leveraged for adoption and adaption new belief and practices by the masses. The paper provides a historic and current context of civil society organizations taking up the responsibility of involving masses in global initiatives for harmonious and healthy communities. The article discusses the strategic multidimensional approach the civil societies need to implement by providing a common platform to all stakeholders for collaboration and cooperation for adopting ecofriendly practices and emphatic behavior.

Key words: Inclusive, Adopting, Rooted, Reimagine,

INTRODUCTION

Irresponsible actions and behavior due to ignorance of law of nature have catastrophic consequences and there is existential threat on this planet. Inventions have made growth possible but attaining and nurturing green growth with fruits of growth equally distributed is a challenge which needs global attention otherwise harmonious existence of society shall be in peril. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs has given a clarion call for global partnership for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with 17 Goals (SDGs) having 169 targets for addressing injustice, inequality, poverty, denial of opportunities for basic education and necessities, suboptimal health infrastructure and above all to protect the planet and the people from vagaries of global warming which is of our own making. Global agenda requires global partnerships but execution has to be at local level. Each citizen has to understand and contribute for keeping the planet safe. Here comes the catalytic role for civil society organizations to be a facilitators and also creating platforms for sharing knowledge and resources at the local level to achieve seventeen goals related to minimizing poverty and hunger, quality jobs, quality education, green energy, responsible production and consumption, quality water, gender equality, healthy life style, green cities, collective action for reducing global warming, aquatic cleanliness and to give peace and justice to all through robust institutional mechanisms. Partnership for collaboration and contribution is lynchpin for attainment of Sustainable development goals effectively ushering in universal welfare and this require adopting and nudging others to be active contributor. "Obligation of collective solidarity with those in need" is a United Nations mandate for collaboration and collective endeavor for common goal has been very clearly highlighted by Prime Minister Sh Narendra Modi when he exhorts for Sabaka Saath, Sabaka Vikas, Sabaka Vishvas. The mission LIFE exhorts masses to adopt eco-friendly lifestyles. Taking cue from the message from our

scriptures “Prakriti Rakshati Rakshitah”(Nature protects if she is protected) Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a new initiative LIFE(Life Style for Environment) wherein he emphasizes that community should priorities climate change adaption over mitigation. As two third of Greenhouse gas emission are attributed to household consumption and life style, he has given a clarion call to youth to adopt and mobilize others in Jan Andolan on green life styles . The civil society organizations should enroll volunteers from educational institutions, corporate houses and from the community of eldersto facilitate counselling session to develop Environmental Sense among people and they also deploy “nudges” and gentle persuasion techniques to adopt green practices in everyday life and became partner in the Mission LIFE to save Planet Earth and live in harmony with nature. we are reaping andenjoying the fruits of growth as our ancestore whetherscientist , social reformer or socialentrepreneurs have worked hard for inventions andinovations and the Gen Z and millennial have life full of comforts , convenience and choices.. Belief and behavior on production , consumption , women’s role and potential, ecofriendly life style need reorientation .Mahatma Gandhi ‘s economics favored decentralization and decontrol so as to promote domestic industry as it useslocalresources for local market .Swedish Andolan was in fact addressing sustainability as dependence on foreign makes weakens the country. Modern day economic slogans namelySelf-Reliant India ,Make in India Make for India and One District One Product an epoch making Initiative in Uttar Pradesh by Sh Yogi AdityaNath’s are based on the Mahatma’s views on ensuring the sustainability at micro levels. In the light of above discussion the article shall discuss following issues:

1 To highlight that sustainable practices have been rooted in our civilization

2 To recognize and leverage the role and potential of the Civil Society organizations in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals effectively in time

II LITERATURE REVIEW

The United Nations recognized the importance of partnering with civil society, because doing so advances its ideals and keep support it work and building a better, safer and more sustainable world(United Nations). It will be essential to involve community based organization and NGOs at all levels and civil social organization would have three kinds of roles in this process firstly as member of mentoring committee; secondly as resource group for capacity building and facilitating; and thirdly as agencies helping to carry out independent collection of information (National Health Mission).Our Vedas and Upanishads have always nudges masses to contribute and collaborate for sustainability. This is mine that is his, say the small minded; the wise believe the entire word is family (Maha Upnishad,6 71-75).Their role as an actor in international public arena and is seen as one of the prime movers the issue of gender, climatechange, landmines to name samethose that take the first step in providing global policy debate(PENPUN-CSR-2004).Civil society generally acts as source of expert , information, consultation and in some cases , stakeholders of decision making process(Constanzar, 2005). In civil society people voluntary together to achieve the desired objectives of welfare of the societyor to raise the problems of people before the state, (Om Prakash ,TO1,2019).The civil society refers to a web of autonomous association independent of the sate which bind citizens together in matter of common concern, and by their existence or actioncould have an effect on public policy(Keligman 1940,420).Civilsociety can be defined as’ the sphere of ideas, values, institutions ,organization ,network and individuals located between the family, the state and the market and operating beyond the conference of nation societies, polity and economies and it refers to the non-economic and non-state space of social interaction.(Anheieretal 2001:17). Civil society as a social capital which civil society is supposed to harness (Putnam etal1993). Social capital is described as community

voluntarism, selflessness and public or civil spirit and carries moral tone to the civil society debate (Van Rooy1998). NongovernmentOrganizations (NGOs) now call themselves civil society and so devote themselves to institutionalized initiatives that are geared towards good governess and reforms(Ranjita Mohanty,2002). That NOGs are catalytic in providing skills for empowerment. The role of NGOs can provide two types of training; Entrepreneurial training skills required to set up a small business&technical training in skill requirement (Barbara, Adolph February 2003)

III SDGS ROOTED IN INDIAN CIVILIZATION

For centuries nature has been nurtured, cared and venerated in its myriad forms. The geographical location of mountains, forests and mighty rivers meandering through its catchment areas provided a robust ecosystem for nurturing and balancing the biotic and abiotic component of the environment and also sources of lives andlivelihoods. The round the year availability of pious and pure water,its navigation potential that the river Ganga has been revered as the Ganga Ma(MotherGanga).The three layers of the planet Earth: the crust, the mantle and the core have humongous stock of resources for improving comforts of humans but extraction and use has to be judicious and scientific with reverence we call Her Dharti Ma(Mother Earth).Empowering women through education is lynchpin for healthy and happy childhood that Ma Sarswati embodies the source of knowledge. The evils and demons responsible for atrocities on common people can be crushed if women have power, position and potential to be in leadership position(Ma Durga). Recognizing the medicinal and environmental significance and also source of shade and fruits the tree like Peepal, Banyan , Bali, Ashoka , Mango, Neem, Banana and coconut are nurtured and worshipped as the abode of God justifying the need for forestation for sustainability. Those who are vegetarian and detest animal food are promoting sustainability and longback Lord Buddha perched nonviolence against animal and for ages we revere cow as Mother Cow(Gau Ma) .Sustainability required an inclusive society giving equal opportunities to all to grow and the mandate is leaving no one behind and long back Swami Vivekananda exhorted us to serve poor as they are Daridra Narayan.

IV MAHATMA GANDHI ON SUSTAINABILITY

Mahatma Gandhi understood the need and significance of sustainability and goaded others to adopt such belief and practices which are inclusive, nondiscriminatory, nonviolent and humane so as to form a harmonious and progressive society. Highlighting the relevance of value driven skills he opined that“Literacy in itself is no education” .Emphasizing the rationality and justification in the production and consumption he cautioned that “The Future depends on what you do today”. Practicing rather than preaching the green practices and emphatic behavior shall go a long way in leading by example and he wants that “Be the change that you wish to see in the world”. Natural resources are the nation’s assets but forsustainability over exploitation and wastage should be minimized and he expressed that Earth provides us enough to satisfy every ones’ needs,but not every man's greed” . Those who could not learn and acquire skills for earning are poor. Mahatma said that that very efforts must be made consistently to empower the poor through capacity building at any stage of life and he in fact vouched for lifelong learning and that“A nation’s greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members”.“ Untouchability I hold is a sin, if Bhargava Gita is one of our divine books” These reflects that various SDGs like nopovertry (SDG-1), zero hunger (SDG-2), quality education (SDG-4), Gender equality (SDG-5),reduce inequality (SDG10) and responsible consumption and production (SDG-12) were well enshrined long back in the teachings of the Mahatma Gandhi.

V SHARING RESPONSIBILITIES

Global warming is consequence of per capita emission and hence addressing this should also be the responsibility per person. Collaboration, cooperation and convergence in thoughts and actions and above all the clarity of purpose are prerequisites for achieving the sustainable development goals in time effectively. Responsible institutions and responsible citizenry are two parallel and complimentary forces for attaining common goals. Institutions both public and private shall not only adopt sustainable practices and policies within the institutions but also use their resources to contribute in the programs related to the goals in the local communities. A corporate house or any higher education institution while adopting green practices in their respective campuses may also incentivise the local communities on green practices through incentives and rewards. Adequate and quality infrastructure in the institution should be utilized for skill training and organizing workshops on green and inclusive practices. Involving the masses for being a partners and contributor in mission for sustainable communities require nurturing a new cultural enshrined with our traditional belief, values and ethos. Belief on women's will, skills and contributions in progressive and peaceful communities the society need rethinking as they comprised half of the population

VI THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

The formation and running a civil society organization is a type of social entrepreneurial venture which mobilizes the resources and people with experience for creating and providing platforms for partnerships and collaboration for addressing socioeconomic issues effectively in time. The core mission of civil society organization should be nudging for adoption and adaption new practices based on new beliefs and behavioral changes while doing daily chores and in this way making citizenry understand their respective responsibility for contributions in our collective efforts towards making our life green, clean, harmonious and inclusive and certainly not mitigation as it entails discovering and applying new technology and finances. Nevertheless, the civil society organization which have wherewithal and expertise should promote startups for testing ideas related to mitigation measures. Historically, the civil society organizations have played a reformative and revolutionary role in checking and removing myriad social evils and religious dogmatism. During the colonial period, the civil society organizations provided platforms to debate, discuss and do away with social evils, discriminatory and anti-developmental beliefs and practices. In free India, the role and contributions of civil society organizations (CSOs) and the Nongovernment organizations (NGOs) for various philanthropic causes both at the regional and national level are praiseworthy but it is meagre and has not been addressing the urgent need and the priorities of the communities. During and after the onslaught of COVID-19 pandemic the civil organizations have collaborated with public authorities for providing services to the vulnerable populace. People have will, zeal and zest to share their wealth and wisdom for humanity welfare and the civil society need to collate them for partnerships. The civil society organizations in India at local, regional and national level comprises chambers of commerce and industry, Traders Associations, Corporate Houses, Faith Based Organizations, Charitable Trusts, Educational institutions, Professional Associations, Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), Indian Red Cross, Save LIFE Foundation, Lions club, Rotary club, Alumni Associations, Nongovernment Organizations (NGOs) related to various sectors and so on. The civil society organizations can contribute in all the seventeen sustainable development goals. This article takes up the case of two Sustainable development goals: Sustainable Cities & Communities (SDG-11) and combating climate change (SDG-13) which

can be achieved simultaneously by adopting sustainable transportation. The civil society need to nudge masses for sustainable transportation through multidimensional strategic approach for addressing these two issues simultaneously. There are three tasks which need to be taken up by the volunteers of the concerned civil society namely effective communication on purpose and practice, nudging masse for ecofriendly transportation and involving local authorities for providing infrastructure for smooth transition.

Effective Communication

The purpose of the practice should be well understood and clear to all stakeholders as it shall inspire them to participate with full enthusiasm. The community need to be sensitized on the gravity of the global warming and its consequences and how their contributions at the local level shall have positive global footprints. Further, by addressing these two goals they shall enjoy the fruits of good health and wellbeing (SDG-3). The success stories of nations who by adopting new practices for sustainable transport have made their cities green, clean and having favorable impact on quality of work and productivity should be shared and discussed. Social media platforms digital platforms, expert, experts' talks should keep the people engaged and motivated.

Eco friendly transportation

Community should realize that Individual ownership of fossil fuel driven transportation is detrimental to sustainability as it spur environmental pollution, traffic congestion, chaos and fatalities. Individual ownerships need to be discouraged through two practices: Use of Bicycles and sharing transportation. In the European countries cycling is becoming a popular mode of transportation. Institutional leaderships sand community elders should be lead leaders in adopting this mode as it will inspire others to adopt this ecofriendly lifestyle. Institutions both public and private have to nudge people to adopt sharing transportation and those who adopt this should be incentivized through flexi working hours due recognition and rewards. Through digital apps people living in the same area commuting for destinations everyday should be coaxed for sharing transportation. Hiring bicycles on the web for a meagre payment has been so successful in green cities of the world that cycling to work place is no longer a ultra-din rather green contributions in global mission of sustainable cities and communities (SDG-11) and collectively combating climate change (SDG-13) culminating in good health and well-being (SDG-3).

Involving Local Authorities

The civil society key responsibility is to persuade and pressurize the local governing authorities for creating and maintaining the requisite infrastructure for smooth transition for people adopting sustainable transportation. The local authorities should construct pathways for cyclist and pedestrian along all major intra-city roads so that bicycling riding is safe, smooth and popular. An efficient and effective bus system for intra-city movement is best antidote to pollution and chaos and road congestion and at the same time energy saving with least carbon footprints. People like bus system as it is both economical and safe. People would prefer it to individual modes if it is accessible, reliable and regular

Conclusions

The above illustration highlights the strategic role the civil societies should play in the localization of the SDGs, a clear mandate of the United Nations that involvement and collaboration of local communities are essential for the success of the global mission. Our communities should be made aware and sensitizes that for generation we have been practicing sustainability in our daily life which need to be revived with full vigor with active collaboration and cooperation of all stakeholders. The civil society organization have the crucial role and requisite potential to nudge masses to adopt and adept ecofriendly life styles and also pressurize and convince public authorities that aspirations and efforts of the community for adopting ecofriendly life style require support and guidance.

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