

Samagam 2022

Keynote Session: Importance of having winning coalitions for achieving our SDGs

Program Anchor: Mr. Anoop Nautiyal

Panelists:

- 1) Ms. Shoko Noda, UNDP Resident Representative, India
- 2) Mr. S.M. Vijayanand, IAS (Retd.), Former Chief Secretary, Govt. of Kerala
- 3) Mr. Rakesh Ranjan, Senior Consultant, NITI Aayog

Ms. Shoko shared about the tagline “One Nation, One Dream” that the dream needs to come true through partnership. She focussed on ‘listening’ as a key component in coalitions for building a good partnership and understanding each other.

Achieving the SDGs require a joint approach of different sectors and actors especially CSO, private organizations, academia, communities and media. These sectors must work together in an integrated approach by pulling resources, ideas, knowledge, expertise, passion, listening and understanding the community level context. UNDP globally and in India had promoted and encouraged for effective public private sector, partnership of CSO to work for social goals collectively. UNDP as an integrator of SDGs and a connector to bring different partners together is putting in efforts for working collectively to achieve the goals of SDGs.

She drew certain examples of how UNDP had involved CSOs to facilitate for accessing vaccination and social protection skills. UNDP had extended support to communities for minimizing the impact faced during the pandemic. With the collaboration of Govt. of Karnataka, UNDP had launched a support called ‘Akanksha’, an integrated platform for bridging the gap of CSR. The private sector is creating an interest for achieving SDGs. Ms. Noda said, if India succeeds in achieving SDGs, the world will also succeed. Hence, the role of India is salient and CSOs, private sectors, all the partners perform a significant role in the global achievement of SDGs. Corporates, with knowledge in business skills can contribute for development and attainment of SDGs in a diversified way, like, sustainable business practices, investment that responds to government incentives, using CSR funds for development financing and so on. Private sectors can also sustain and strengthen coalitions to financial resources, technical expertise and global work. This is the decade of action for the SDGs demanding mobilization of everyone and everywhere to generate ideas, inventions, applicable solutions, share experience, plan of successes and failures, replicate scalable ideas. We need to address the issues that our communities are facing.

What makes a coalition successful is the common shared goal, participation of stakeholders, listening, contribution to decision making in a non-hierarchical way.

UNDP had realized that well-functioning coalitions have identified new integrated solutions, promoted mutual understanding, and stimulated learning.

The secretary of United Nations had called for “global action, local action and people action.” She ended her speech by saying, “let’s all unite to create an unstoppable movement that transform the entire world.”

Mr. S. M. Vijayanand started his conversation by sharing his experience of working for development of rural areas of the past 36 years.

- **Focus on CSO networking:** Contribution to mainstream and ideas like SHGs, literacy movement, watershed management, System of Rice Intensification (SRI), technology, enterprises and such related aspects have a basic contribution by CSOs which government adopted later.
- **Advocacy NGOs:** Enable government to come up with right based laws for mental health, people with disability and stretching backwards. In the late 70s, Government of India initiated the concept of people’s action for development of India recognizing NGOs having a space. There are partnerships like NRLM, MGNREGS, Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) with agriculture programmer, NGOs partnering with local government and etc.

Apart from partnership, there are issues related to FCRA, CSR (mask expectation of NGOs), declining space of advocacy NGOs.

Mr. Vijayanand stressed on – Identity vs Ego, and mentioned that ‘identity’ can be promoted for partnership whereas ego which would affect collaboration. For building partnership, there are several areas of development like sharing experiences, expertise, geography, looking for new opportunities, working on advocacy for pro-people and pro-government. As Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) spends about 8lakh crores in five years, NGOs must have a focus to facilitate such flexible funds for preparing local plan considering local priority. Localising SDGs with community developing linkages with PRI, CBO, SHG and CSO. Also, partnering with academic institutions in local development for localising SDGs. Community based public health is going to be big challenge in future. Focus should be on migrants, SHGs, FPO to enhance for contributing in development. He shared the example of Amul and how can we organize the farmers on the principles of SHGs and later, be a part of marketing in the larger value chain.

He urged on a request for all CSOs:

- Document critically the CSO achievements.
- People’s register for people’s organizations.
- Coalitions- Knowledge expertise, sharing resources, meetings of all CSOs once in six months at Block level.
- Matured CSOs need to mentor the new/small CSOs in terms of building capacity, system development, networking of CSOs for a constructive study of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY.)

In order to maintain the accountability of NGOs, he suggested having social audit which would enhance the soft power of NGOs, transparency and funding scopes.

He ended his address with a message to all NGOs, “If you can cooperate, you will succeed, if you compete you will perish. Look outwards and not inwards.”

Mr. Rakesh Ranjan mentioned about the active participation of CSOs with the government for outreach. NITI Aayog anchored a programme at the Government of India level called Aspirational District Programme where 112 districts from every state were identified, at least one from each state. The core idea of this programme is how to improve the governance in the districts. There was an identification of key performance indicators focusing mainly on- Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resource Management, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development and Basic Infrastructure. These indicators focused on improving the quality of life and economic productivity of a citizen. The districts weren't given additional fund but provides a method, mechanism, dashboard and monitoring system for understanding the area, measure progress, scope of improvement and rank the district.

Challenges faced-

- There is a chance of unreliable data.
- Certain people remain left behind in the programme.

Although, there are inter-district variations, the effort is to adopt the same process of monitoring, better understanding of people's priority and bring more efficiencies into the government system to improve the performance of the blocks.

He highlighted few aspects of this programme-

- NITI Aayog provides a platform for CSOs, foundations and NGOs to work with government for an integrated approach.
- Involving CSOs and foundations having their own resources, intends to do something which is crucial to have an interface with the district administration.
- Involving with NGOs can improve the performance in block level by taking a saturation approach and partner with government for a level of efficiency.

NITI Aayog had initiated a study and an experiment to develop a model in block level and expects for joint collaboration. Understanding the strengths and an active collaboration of CSOs with district administration can bring transformational change.