

TITLE

Sustainable development , inclusive growth and world peace

THEME AND SUB-THEME : ACCESS TO JUSTICE , LIFE ,LIBERTY AND ODL

Author : Sqn.Ldr.Dr.P.Ramani

Emeritus Professor & Director,

PRIST University,

Chennai campus.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone will agree with me to pronounce loudly that this world is a beautiful place to live , with all its natural resources in the form of flora and fauna , rivers, mountains , seas and natural minerals including minerals. As everyone knows God Almighty is the creator of all these natural resources. He also facilitates the abundant use of these resources for the well-being of all His creations both humans and animals. Whereas the animals have evolved a kind of a self-dictated code in using the natural resources judiciously and also faithfully followed to adhere the code strictly , the human beings have never seem to have believed that the natural resources are to be shared by all God's creations and indulged in indiscriminate exploitation of all natural resources. Systematic attempts to misuse the natural wealth of the land , water and minerals go unchecked with the patronage of governments world over. However , in the past , our forfathers followed a scientific approach to living and allowed the use of natural wealth by everyone. Efforts were consciously made to minimize the use of natural wealth. Everyone in the past was guided by a self-directed code. There was no official law of the land to keep a check on the people from minimizing or overusing the natural wealth. Everyone understood the need to use the natural wealth to the barest minimum. It was a way of life for the rich and poor alike to recognize the fact that the mother's bounteous gift is not just for their use but for the entire fraternity and posterity.

Liberalisation ! Privatisation! Globalisation ! A word of caution to Indians

The LPG has brought new energy to the economy and there has been an unprecedented growth in every sector. Thanks to the policies of the government, there has been a large flow of money. But there has been a big gap between the haves and the have-nots intranationally and internationally. In a welfare state we believe the peoples of the world should live happily without being ever threatened for their existence. Leave alone the petty wars and other disputes , the world is forced to face a situation when the minimum needs of food , shelter , clothing, education and healthcare of all are hardly ever met. There has been unequal distribuion of wealth , the rich finding their names in the Forbes's list and the poor landing in city slums. More and more cultivable lands are allowed to remain barren as more and more industrial parks and special economic zones appear. There has been a splurge mania amongst the peoples which has resulted vast quantities of wastes. We should be cautious as we find on every other day , we hear the news of electronics wastes , toxic wastes, software and hardware wastes being dumped into the Indian shores through surreptitious means . The gullible or the wicked business men become the agents of such crimes. Added to this is the aftermath of global warming.

Indiscriminate felling of trees , emissions from automobiles and ill- planned industrial growth not aiming at developmental needs of countries but meeting the needs of the greedy have all resulted in massive pollution and consequential problems. It is time everyone sits together to draw a road map so that the environment is protected for the sake of posterity. Another important concern is the total lack of awareness about the ethical concerns and values of any system. Unless we evolve a system to monitor and control the ill-effects jointly, it would have been very late to protect mother earth and its occupants.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT , INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND WORLD PEACE ?

Any nation can boast of sustainable development only when it can meet the needs of the present generation and also can ensure the fulfillment of the requirements of the future generations without any compromise on the quality of values or benefits thus derived. Development should facilitate inclusive growth on all fronts especially, education, healthcare and living conditions of the people. All these developments should have a strong orientation towards preserving the basic characteristic traits of individual nations, cultures, values and the unique ethnicity of each of these nations. A welfare state can boast of inclusive growth only when the governments can assure minimum food , shelter, education and healthcare facilities. In spite of definite efforts initiated by various governments, the goals set still prove to be evasive and even a mirage. However, access to social equity and justice has been achieved through Open and Distance Learning efforts world over to a large extent. In the post-war and post cold war period there have been growing tendency towards the human rights violations in the form of trespass and violent aggressions. There has been a steep erosion of moral values and ethical codes of conduct. Added to these is the terrorism of various brands, national and international. India which has never aggressed any nation and allowed space for every kind of nationality ethnicity, race, religion, etc. stands threatened by the global phenomenon namely, globalised economy and the accompanying terrorism which has been born out of total lack of beliefs in morals and values. It is very strange that India is among the least peaceful of major countries in the world according to the Global Peace Report, 2010 (GPI), an annual publication by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), India's rank was 128, six ranks lower than its 2009 position. Thus arises the need to create an awareness among the citizens of the world on the need to develop an attitude of "live and let live".

Fruits of Progress should reach everyone

A committed, transparent, intelligent and willing political leadership, an accountable and genuine bureaucracy, a bunch of proactive citizens, and a strong band of socially and culturally bound and well-informed members of the society are imperative to address effectively and eradicate totally the problems of hunger, illiteracy and ill-health of the people.

Fruits of progress in terms of GDP growth, rising exports or global recognition had not reached the rural poor dependent only on agriculture for a livelihood.

Even, in India, nearly 65 percent of the population was dependent on agriculture. But the contribution on agriculture sector had come down from 30 percent in 1990 to about 18 percent now. Unless we do something imaginatively to alleviate the conditions of those who depend on agriculture, we cannot realize inclusive growth.

Evolving a form of market driven pricing mechanism for farm products was key to creating revenue pathways for small farmers. Subsidies need to be extended only to the poor.

The country needs to show undivided attention towards agriculture. Farmers' right of land possession opening up of the economy, investment in rural infrastructure and technology production and transfer are some of the proactive efforts that should be addressed immediately. Low profit from rice production and climate change consequences are some of the challenges to food security.

Farming has to be intellectually stimulating and economically rewarding to make youth get interested in agriculture.

The world needs to chalk out a path of inclusive growth that brings benefits to the poor, strengthens social protection measures and phases out poverty and hunger. It is important to understand the livelihood patterns of the poor for effective poverty alleviation measures leading to poverty reduction. At the same time, all government efforts should focus on specific sectors that provided greater opportunities to the less reached out people and to enable them participate in the development process of a nation. Thus arises the need to integrate various dimensions of poverty relating to health, education and related dimensions of other services. The government needs to reverse the history of neglect of agriculture. Also, it is required to protect the farmers from the effects of globalization. Creating wealth is not so important as dividing it.

Interdependence and Knowledge sharing are keys to global food security

The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture(2009) is the only legally binding treaty. 125 countries were signatories to the treaty that allows access to the developments to individuals and corporations.

The treaty provided access and benefit sharing to 64 important crops that were estimated to account 80 percent of all human conception and helped in making genetic diversity and the related information to all.

Anyone who accesses the resources has an obligation to contribute back to the shared pool and this way the knowledge keeps expanding.

At present there were nearly the million plant genetic resources and the system was accessed 600 to 700 times a day globally. The treaty included farmer's rights and allowed individuals to contribute to the gene banks.

Individual countries are not able to develop expertise quickly. Bilateral agreements and co-operation amongst multilateral level institutions through standard Material Transfer Agreement speeds up the pace of development.

Climate change discussions did not focus much on agriculture and the emphasis was on mitigation, the treaty had decided to lead a global initiative to help farmers to adapt keep food crops to climate change. The Benefit Sharing Fund(BSF) of the treaty aims to fund raising support to farmers in developing countries through BSF. In the last 12 months, almost \$15 million has been successfully raised for the BSF.

India is the only country in Asia whose projects were approved for being implemented under the first call for proposals from the BSF. The second call for proposals included projects on food security and climate changes.

Right to food and work

Farmland should not be diverted for non-agricultural use and food crop cultivation land should not be diverted for non-food crops. Food security should be ensured only through a coordinated effort in linking production, procurement storage of food grains and an efficient public distribution system. Access and control over all natural resources should be in the hands of people whose livelihood depended on them, especially in the hands of the most vulnerable groups of people, especially women.

The Supreme Court of India in its order on July 27, 2010 strongly warned against the wastage of food grains. Not a single grain should be wasted and it should be distributed to the hungry and the needy.

Right to education

Rs.2.31 lakh crore would be required over the next three years to implement the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009. The funds would be directed towards building of schools, appointment of teachers and providing infrastructure. The Government of India believes it should be able to release the required funds.

Right to employment

The Rs.70000 crore waiver of loans for farmers and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act would not have been possible without the recent growth witnessed in the economy. Investment had been made on rural infrastructure and social and health sector. "Vision of Inclusive Growth and the Evolution of Indian Economic Policy".

Empowering women with Education

By educating women, we are ensuring the growth of next generation. Incidentally the fruits of a joint family system contributes to a society of tolerant and caring individuals.

An equitable society should allow the benefits of the country's economic growth percolate down to every segment of society and ensure a life of dignity.

MODERNISATION VERSUS WESTERNISATION

Our forefathers have understood the basic principles of living in harmony with nature which includes humans and animals. In the name of modernization and westernization, we have been overusing all natural resources. Industrial growth, urbanization, population growth, the enormous increase in the use of consumer goods and indiscriminate misuse of natural wealth have led to virtually a chaotic situation and stressed our environment beyond repair. For instance, there have been large quantities of solid waste. In turn, the atmosphere has become highly polluted. Air, water, earth and the surrounding atmosphere have become polluted and have already affected a large number of our people who belonged to the large family. The very concept had its roots and origins many years ago. Thus arises a need to create a strong awareness among the people about natural resources.

A COURSE ON "SANATANA DHARMA" AS VALUE ADDITION THROUGH ODL

A course on "SANATANA DHARMA" ("Sustainable development, inclusive growth and world peace") can be designed and offered as a compulsory value added course through ODL efforts. The issues that

will be covered in such a programme shall include social equity and justice , space for everyone with honour , freedom , rights and responsibilities and the problem of terrorism .

“SANATANA DHARMA” is a code of ethics , a way of living through which one may achieve “moksha “ , liberation or enlightenment. “Anadi” means beginningless. “Anantha” means endless and does not cease to be , which is eternal and everlasting . “Dharma” means holding together and sustaining the natural law. Hence Sanatana Dharma shall teach us the natural , ancient and eternal way for a living on the earth. When translated into English , Santana means eternal , perennial , never beginning or ending , abiding , universal , ever-present , unceasing , natural and enduring . Dharma refers to harmony , righteousness , compassion , natural law , truth , tradition , philosophy , order , universal , religious , wisdom , divine conformity , cosmic norm , inherent nature ,law of being and duty . Any spiritual vision that accepts the spiritual freedom of others they will be considered part of Sanatana Dharma. It is the quest for cosmic truth , it is the quest for physical truth.