



Linking between Democracy and Sustainable Development Goals: Specific reference to Goals -16 in India

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Abstract:

Democracy is the most popular form of government. It provides a way of existence for prosperous and most humble life. It cannot be found in other form of government like authoritarian or monarchal etc. India is the largest democratic country of the world. The 17 SDGs goals of United Nations can be achieved through a democratic form of government more actively like in India. It is because, in democratic government free flow of information to the people can be easily available. People understand their rights and duties. The present research may explore Goals-16, that is *Peace, Justice and Inclusive Institution*. It may explore the Lower Suktel Irrigation Project, through which serious violation of human rights and undemocratic way decision were made. It is threat from the national interest of nation at national and international levels. It may also give the answer, how Goal 16 can be achieved through a democratic form of government. Government of India takes many policies to achieve Goals-16. It can also depict different policies and their problems and also provide suggestions for achieving the goals by 2030.

Keywords: Democracy, Development, SDGs-16, Suggestions

1.Introduction:

Development is the third pillar of the society, after peace and justice. It is only possible in such type of government where people can freely predict or think their life as according their own choice. In 21st century the name of word 'Development' is used in a very critical way that is a questions marks for future generations. There is different form of government in our world such as Authoritarian, Totalitarian, Oligarchy, Democracy, Dictatorship, Absolute Monarchy etc. Among them, democracy is only form of government where free flow of information and the rate of people participation is high. It is such type of government which is run by people. 'India is the world's largest democracies country, which follows the principles of justice, liberty and equality enshrined in the Constitution of the country. It is also well known that there is a strong network of institution, which is found at the level of national and state as transparent

and effective' (SDG India Index, 2018). At present time in the name of development, day by day rigours and unethically natural resources are consumed, so it is a question mark for future generation to think and how to utilize the available resources. Democracy is only form of government where people can utilize and think about their resources in accordance of their own choice. Therefore, it is very difficult task to establish peace, justice and equal distribution of resources. According to Abraham Lincoln, 'democracy is a government of the people, by the people and for the people.' It is seen that the democracy of India is only in theoretical point of running by people but in practice it is run by all elite class people. 'It is always threatened by different background such as corruption, apathy, inequality, conflict and manipulations. It is not in a process to make an egalitarian and sustainable model of democratic development' (Mangesh,2014). The present paper may explore the 'Lower Suktel Major Irrigation Project, which is located near village Magurguda in Bolangir district under KBK region of Odisha for the purpose of irrigation, food production and drinking water to the people. It is observed that any development it may be any industry opening or establishment of any dam, it is totally displaced those who are the founder of that place. However, the dam on the Suktel, which displaced lakhs of people as they are the founder but they did not get more benefits from that project. Because of this project numbers of people suffer and it not only affects the democratic rights of people but also human rights. In one side in the name of democracy, development has reached at top level of success but one the other hand, it totally damaged to the whole society. It also brings inequality in society as those who are in dominant class in society who gets more benefits from the project and have-not class always remains in a position of exploitations. Among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of United Nations, Goals 16 explain about establishment of *peace and justice* in the country. The country like India, takes many steps to established and to provide justice to all. But still the rate of corruption, violence, crime, conflict and the rate of exploitations undermine the process of development and because of this factor the elite class people, use it as their means to do corruptions. Therefore, the poorest class are always as hand of exploitations by those in power of government.

2.Methodologies:

The methods of this paper have been adopted the both empirical and normative methods in social science research. Reliable data has been collected both primary and secondary sources. Interview and personal interview have been done on different stakeholder those who are related and faced problems on the Lower Suktel Major Irrigation Project The methods have been done on qualitative study. This paper relies on different secondary sources such -Articles, government reports, different journals. Basically, it reviews on different articles on related

topic and gives an answer on how Democracy and SDGs are interrelated and suitable to achieve Goals-16 *Institution, Peace and Justice* in a democratic form of government.

3.Literature Review:

Mangesh (2014), in his article ‘Democracy and Sustainable Development’ depicted about the violations of the democratic, constructional and human rights of the displaced people. In Sadar Sarovar Project, a number of people were displaced and the benefits directly accrued by privileged section of the society. Here author mentioned that India lacks the social dimensions of development, where politician make a way in their hand to monopolize the economic growth over social growth. Therefore, it can be rightly said that democracy will be meaningless without the importance of social dimension.

Chigudu (2022), explained that for African states both democratic governance and sustainable development are most important for the development of a country. Mentioned that if the absence of one factor, then other are meaningless. Therefore, the country should maintain the balance between democracy and development. It can be rightly said that in a democratic form of government, development should be done in such a way, it may maintain equality in the society.

Christoper David (2018), in his article “Sustainable Development Goals- Challenge for India’ mentioned the name of development and economic growth brings imbalance in the economic development of country and damaged to ecological development of the country. And because of this it brings the global warming and climate change. Therefore, it is very difficult part to think for the safe of life for future generations of the people. Here author said that development should be done in such a way that resources should be utilized in such a way it may maintain for future generation also.

Chima (2021), in his paper explained the twenty years of democratic rule of Niger Delta and its minor relationship between democracy and sustainable development. Again ‘it explains large extent, agrees with other previous findings that, though democracy is important, it is not a prerequisite for sustainable development. Based on this, the paper concludes that the domestication of democracy to suit the people cultural orientation will deepen democratic principles and ensure the attainment of sustainable development faster than expected. Finally, the paper recommends strict adherent to the principles of democracy and good governance in order to trigger off sustainable development, particularly in the Niger Delta region’.

4. Concept of Democracy:

According to Seely, “Democracy is a government where the everyone has a share of participation”. The root of democracy can be traced back to 5th century B.C in ancient Greece. In this country, people used as a ‘city-state’ and divided in to different continent. It was very small city state and was possible to establish equal social, political and economic justice among the citizen. In this form of government, the supreme rights in the hand of people. Here people are the real ruler. It is such type of government, it establishes ‘rule of law, accountability in governance and free fair of election through which the adult can participate in the election’ (Chima, 2019). It is such a governance process where the role of participation and equal distributions of rights and wealth are possible.

5. Concept of Sustainable Development:

Development is the main pillar for upgradation of a society. It is a such pillar; it changes the downfall a society into success path. But development can be in two paths, such as in one side it may reaches without out harming to ecological things and on the other hand without harming to the society or environment it may reach the success path. The most important definition of Bratland commission report (1987), ‘Sustainable development is that development which meets the needs of present generation without compromising for future generations. It means development part should be done in such a way, it may fulfil the needs of the present generation, without compromise for future generations. At present scenario it is seen that in the name development, the natural resources are consuming day by day. Therefore, it is a question mark in front of us. we may take an example that, energy may be produced in two ways such as renewable and non-renewable way. Renewable process is a recycling process and again-again simultaneously can be consumed without harming to environment. On the other hand, non-renewable resources, which is a threat to environment and it makes a questions mark for future generations. At present it is seen that, a huge number of non-renewable resources are used consciously. To make different industry, new project and dam, numbers of people are displaced from their own land and they are not giving their share.

It was in the year 2015, that the members states of United Nations made a combined efforts and agreed on the agenda of 2030 sustainable development. It made 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and 169 targets, tis was made a commitment for achieving by 2030 in its social, economic and environmental dimensions (United Nations,2015). All seventeen goals are interrelated to each other. To achieve these goals, in every country, there is an institution. In India, NITI Aayog is working as a think-tank and gives suggestions to all states the way of achievement. It is the replaced of planning commission and

makes planning for five years. Before Sustainable development Goals are improvement of Millennium development goals and has 8 goals. It covers on the basis of universal education, Health, gender equality and economic growth. These were very slow for achieving the targets and could not control the health issues. Therefore, now all countries are focusing on 17 goals and making different policies to achieve it. On the background of its NITI Aayog is making different plan for states on the achievement of its targets. The United Nations 17 Goals are:

Goal-1 No poverty (Donate what you do not use)

Goal-2 No Hunger (Waste less food and support local farmers)

Goal-3 Good Health and well-being (Vaccinate your Family)

Goal-4 Quality Education (Help to children in your community)

Goal-5 Gender equality (Empower women and girls and ensure their equal rights)

Goal-6 Clean water and Sanitation (Avoid wasting water)

Goal-7 Affordable and Clean Energy (Use only energy-efficient appliances and light bulbs)

Goal-8 Decent work and Economic Growth (Create job opportunity for youth)

Goal-9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (Funds projects that provide basic infrastructure)

Goal-10 Reduced Inequalities (Support the marginalized and disadvantage)

Goal-11 Sustainable Cities and Communities (Use of public Transportation)

Goal-12 Responsible Consumption and Production (Recycle paper, plastic and glass)

Goal-13 Climate Action (Act to stop global warming)

Goal-14 Life below water

Goal-15 Life on land (plant a tree and help to protect environment)

Goal-16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (Stand up for Human rights)

Goal-17 Partnership (Lobby your government to boost development financing)

6. Linking between Democracy and Sustainable Development Goals:

Democracy and Sustainable development are used in different perspective in different meaning. When we used the word development, it can be used in both positive perspective and negative perspective. As in democracy point of view, it establishes through welfare way and make on the interest of people, but if we may take the word 'development' in authoritarian form of government like in China, where development is in high pick but it doesn't give interest the matter of interest of people. In another point, when we may use the word sustainable development, it explains that 'development is in such a way, that it may maintain or fulfil in the present lacunas and also keeps some for future. But, this development in 21st century, it is very difficult to maintain the environment and provide justice to all. In the name of

development, day by day it is seen that natural resources are consumed and the interest of the people are deprived.

It is said that 'democracy form of government, which is related to people's rule, but actually, it is not in the hand of people. The main ruler in this form governed is those who is in the real power like all privileges class, bureaucrats etc. therefore, the rate of corruption, apathy is in top level of crisis. It is the main obstacle for making egalitarian and sustainable mode of democratic development. For making a link between democracy and sustainable development, an example can be observed that, in Odisha the development projects like Lower Suktel Irrigation project in Blangir district was constructed for the purpose of irrigation and to eradicate the problems pure drinking water. It was seen that, the number of indigenous people were displaced from their own home, without being 'adequately rehabilitated or getting any benefit from the project' (Mangesh, 2014). Because of this project a number of people suffered and not only it is the violation of democratic rights but also human rights. After independence of India, in the national interest or for the public purpose, state acquires the land of citizen for making developmental project. It is evaluated that in the name of domination, the state acquires the land of Tribal community for making developmental projects as it is the main store house resource place. And it is asked by people, to sacrifice the land for the developmental project through which nation may get benefits. During fielded visit it was found that, people argument that, state may take land forcefully without much more consent of people which threaten to democratic form of government, where people are the real ruler, but it is only in theoretical form. It was observed that it was totally violated the democratic and constitutional rights of displaced people as only made for the purpose of economic growth without the importance of societal goal. Those got benefits from this project like irrigation and drinking water facility as not same who lost their livelihood and land. It is really great violation for establishment of democratic nature on equality and justice. The reaction of people that, government made forcefully cutting of electrification supply and drinking water supply to make displaced from that place. As Goals 16 of SDGs explains to established peace and justice entire country but in practical point of view it is opposite of democratic justice and equality.

As it is imagined that democracy is such type of form of government, which establishes peace, justice among people and sustainable development its basic goals. It is also mentioned in the Article 21 of Indian constitution to secure life of people. It is only in theoretical form. Another case study can be taken that, Hirakud dam project which is built in 1953 on the River of Mahanadi. A number of people were displaced from their home. No doubt a project is made for the development thinking but those lost from their all, if justice can be made for them, only then it will be possible to achieve goals. After 71 years of displaced from

this project, now people got their own land patta. Number of people lost their employment and lost their honey cultivation land. Therefore, it will be such type of justice and establishment of peace, then displaced people may get benefit from it and then only integrity can be established.

7. Sustainable Development Goals-16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institution)

Crime, violation, conflict and exploitations are main obstacle for the development of a country. It is very high in the democratic form of government and not a single thing that one country can eradicate it. Therefore, 'establishment of perfect peace, security and recognised governance which will be based on rule of law and upholding principles of equality, human rights and justice are the main principles for establishment the concept of sustainable development'. SDG-16 is about eradication of all form of violation and establishment rule of law. Not only in the national level but also in international level also, through which all can get equal justice and their own rights. The aim of this goals is not only to make end point of corruption, trafficking but also make a transparent institution and representative decision making all level' (SDG India Index, 2018).

India is one of the largest democratic countries of the world. Its main is to establish peace, justice, equality and liberty among the people. This strong institution is more transparent and effective in regional, national and international levels. Now the government of India has taken an initiative step to make 'identity of citizen through Unique Identity Number (*Aadhaar*) as well as Right to Information Act,2005 an unique step for effective and non-discriminatory public service for reaching information to citizen. Again, the government of India has been taken initiative for the protection of child abuse and now free legal aid has been given to all vulnerable section of society. To make strengthen of democracy, the decision-making power has been given at grassroot level through the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment act' (*ibid*).

'The targets are to be achieved by 2030, as are follows:

16.1 Everywhere the death rates and violence should be reduced

16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence should be reduced

16.3 Justice is for all, this gospel should be shared everywhere and promote rule of law in both national and international level

16.4 By 2030, all form of illicit financial arms should be reduced

16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms

16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

16.7 Decision making should be made on the basis of responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative at all level

16.8 there should be given importance to developing countries for the participation in the institutions of global governance

16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

16.10 there should be given importance to the ensuring public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels

16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development' (SDG India Index, 2018)

This goal is also interrelated to other goals. As explained below-

1. *No poverty*: Poverty is the main obstacle for the development Path of a county and it chock the throat of success pillar. Government of India is taking different steps for reducing the un-coming problems of poverty, but there is still in the slow process of total eradication. Therefore, it is necessary for equal distribution of resources, production and wealth among the people. Justice should be made impartiality way through which the vulnerable section of society can easily.
2. *Gender equality*: it is also related to Goal-16. Discrimination, violence and sexual exploitation against women and girls should be eradicated. They should also play a major role for achieving the sustainable development goals. They should also give equal participation on the decision making in the field of social, political and public sphere for women. Then only all types of discrimination can be eradicated.
3. *Quality of education*: the main focus of this goal is the cultural peace and non-violence. Education is the main pillar for success of a country. Education should be given to all section of society. The most important things are that, there should be spread of women education in society then only equality can be established.
4. *Decent work and Economic Growth*: There should not be made any forced labour and discrimination among the people on the working process. It is a injustice and makes inequality among the people

Conclusion:

Democracy is the most popular form of government and it requires for the establishment of rule of law for smooth functioning of government. For the perspective of rule of law, it is necessary for the establishment of independent judiciary for ensuring civil, political and economic liberties. Always the short-term political gains dictate the development projects. Therefore, whenever choses any project, it will be made in such a way it may forestall the upcoming failure of democracy in future. It should be also given importance or understand that whenever any mega project or making justice, then it should be given attention for the

challenges that faced by democracy while dealing with development. Development path should always be simultaneous way on the basis of democratization and sustainable development. Whenever any decision is made or any project is going to establish it is more important to take the attention of the people who stay there from a long time. Then only equal participation can be established

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