INDUSTRIES and VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS
: Partners in Community Development
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Several industries are already involved in developmental programmes. Many others are showing interest. The Confederation of Indian Industry has endorsed the idea of involvement of the Corporate Sector in Development.

It is significant that you are considering Community Development. People used to consider Economic Development as more important and Social Development as a junior partner. People had to be educated so that they could use the resources more effectively to spur production and growth. People should be healthy so that absenteeism will be reduced and they will be more productive. Economic development was the end and social development merely a means towards it. From that position, we have moved towards a human-centred, community development.

* Involvement of industries has been considered as a Social Responsibility.

* Some consider it an atoning ritual, compensating in a small way for the gains received by way of profit from the people.

* Some consider it as helping to improve the image of the Corporate Body and to promote business.

* Yet others get involved because, with the tax relief available, it does not affect very much the final profit.

Involvement in development should be considered as much more than a social responsibility. Concern for the Welfare and Development of the people is a great Human Value. The involvement in such endeavours should be motivated by a commitment for the poor and the disadvantaged.

Approaches

Industries can

Direct involvement

* take up the development tasks directly. The industry designs and implements its own projects and programmes. The industry can employ development specialists. It can create a new cell or division, either independently or along with other industries with similar motivation.

  Such activity can bring prestige and give control over the programme. But it can also lead to problems. The work of the cell or division will be very different from the usual activities of the industry. There will be two separate work cultures within the same organization. The personnel in industry have a district life style and a set of attitudes and values. These are different from the style of functioning of development workers and the communities to be served.

  The overheads will be high.

  The community being served might develop expectations of employment in the industry, even if they are not skilled or qualified.

  One way to reduce the problems would be to set up an independent Society or Trust or Foundation : While it will reduce the problems to some extent, it also reduces the control over the programmes.

* ## Support government or quasi-government activities.

  Government has the responsibility of improving the quality of life of the people. They are always short of funds. Industries can provide additional funds. But it does not make an impact. Also governmental activities are not known for their efficiency or effectiveness. Government policies are decided by persons and committees far removed from the people. They are implemented oftenby people who may not have the right motivation and commitment for development of the people. There is also a sense of patronage and condescension.

  There is very little people's participation, which is essential for the success of any developmental work. Our community development work taken up immediately after Independence perished because of the lack of people's participation in the programmes.

* <u>fund academic/research institutions.</u>

This is useful and must be encouraged. We have to be aware that often the results may not be direct and impact on development may not be visible. The outcome cannot be foreseen. The results may not always be positive. Fairly large percentage of wastage must be anticipated.

* <u>support voluntary, not-for-profit organizations.</u>

This can be done through the provision of funds, appropriate technology, use of the marketing facilities of the industry and management expertise, judiciously applied.

<u>Voluntary Organisations</u>

Voluntary organizations are capable of providing

> ⇒ motivation and people's participation
> ⇒ grass roots action, and
> ⇒ leadership, appropriate for human development.

Such collaboration seems to be best choice, pooling together the resources.

Voluntary organizations have certain strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths of voluntary organizations

◊ They are committed to change - social and economic.

◊ Voluntary Organizations have commitment to achieve the goals in the short term and work towards achieving the Vision.

◊ Voluntary Organizations are small, autonomous and work with the people. Planning and decision making are done with the people, keeping in view the needs of the people. Implementation of the plans is easy. They can mobilize the community's resources.

◊ Their work culture is easily understood by the people and they acclimatize themselves to the local milieu.

◊ There is flexibility of approach and in the activities.

◊ They are in favour of the weaker sections.

Weaknesses of Voluntary Organizations:

◊ Lack of funds. This sometimes makes the voluntary organizations focus not on priority issues, but on problems which may bring funds.

◊ The programmes may not be worked out fully, with the objectives, plan of action, resources, monitoring and evaluation.

◊ Sometimes, the organizations are paternalistic : 'people are ignorant', 'we know what is best for you'.

◊ Domination by a few. Sometimes, the organization is started by a charismatic person, who may not nurture or even tolerate a second line. The organization may become stagnant.

◊ In course of time, the organization may become too big, institutionalised, hierarchical and semi-bureaucratic, losing all the advantages.

◊ There may be lack of training and technical competence. There is need for professionalism with a human touch.

◊ Many voluntary organizations do not pay sufficient attention to the maintenance of records and accounts.

◊ Sustainability of programme is a big question mark.

Strength of industrial houses

◊ Availability of funds
◊ Technology
◊ Competence
◊ Management expertise
◊ Entrepreneurship

Weaknesses

◊ Inadequate knowledge of the local environment, its complexities, problems and potentials.

◊ Industry is must often highly centralised, whereas development process requires a decentralised approach.

◊ Profit motive not always compatible with human development goals.

A combination of the strengths of the industries and voluntary organizations can enhance the potentials and reduce the risks.

If it is decided that the industry will collaborate with the Voluntary Organization, selection of an appropriate organization becomes important.

How to choose an appropriate Voluntary organization?

There are many Voluntary Organizations working in the field. These organizations have different motivations : Sarvoday, Christian, Gandhian and others.

Questions to be asked:

* Do they have credibility?

* Do they have a yearning to help the people help themselves?
* Do they have an empowerment approach (rather than merely providing services)?

* Do they have the appropriate professional, technological, scientific and supportive personnel?

* Are they willing and able to tackle the problems and make use of opportunities? How efficient and effective are they?

If the answers to these questions are satisfactory, we may choose the organization.

The Process of collaboration

* Identify areas of interest and develop areas of mutual co-operation and understanding. The objectives of the partners must be congruent. There has to be transparency.

* Study developmental potentials of local resources.

* Develop linkages, respecting each other.

* Determine priorities in the collaborative work, along with the people.

* Make arrangements for exchange of ideas, experiences and expertise.
* Have an independent budget for the project/programme.

4

* Ensure people's participation at every stage.

* Develop indicators for monitoring and evaluation; have continuous feedback and feedforward and take appropriate action.

* Work out sustainability and strategies for withdrawal.

Trust or Consortium

It is possible to have linkages between a single industry and a Voluntary Organization. Sometimes, it is advantageous to have a trust or consortium of industrial houses. It helps in pooling together the financial, technical and management support.

Activities to be taken up : some guiding principles.

Any development activity can be taken up. It may be wiser to take up simpler ones to start with programmes, where there is no conflict of interest and benefits are visible fairly quickly. These usually include health (including water supply, sanitation and shelter), and education (including vocational training). Later, income generation schemes, artisan industries, adopting a village, a cluster of villages or even a whole block, dairy development or water management can be taken up.

While taking up these activities, co-operation with other developmental agencies and governmental efforts is necessary. Ensure that it becomes a people's effort with participation by the Voluntary Organization, industry, and government.

The project must have linkages with other sectoral projects in the area. It should not remain as an island.

Involvement of the partners (industry and Voluntary Organization) must be on a continuing basis for a fair amount of time and withdrawal must be planned from the very beginning and should be in phases. The people should not become perpetually dependent. The aim must be to make the community self-reliant.

Mallur Health Co-operative

An example of sustainability and self reliance is the Mallur Health Co-operative. There was a successful milk co-operative. The numbers of the co-operative wanted to add on a health functions. A tripartite agreement was entered into between the Government of Karnataka (Dairy Development Department), Mallur Milk Co-operative and St.John's Medical College. The Government Department withdrew soon after. The Milk Co-operative decided to continue the programme without Government support, who had earlier agreed to put in 2 paise per litre of milk. The milk co-operative put in 5 paise (instead of the 3 paise agreed to) per litre of milk; St.John's provided the interns and the expertise. The health co-operative was successful.

Unfortunately, foot and mouth disease affected the cattle. Milk yield was reduced drastically. But the people did not give up. The switched to sericulture and continued the health co-operative. There was sufficient funds. Infrastructure had been built up. At the end of 7 years, the programme became self-sufficient and St.John's Medical College withdrew, except for periodical meetings.

Learning points:

1. A successful health co-operative can be grafted on to a successful co-operative of different kinds.

2. The co-operative provided the local leadership. It worked even through the President and Secretary belonged to different political parties.

3. Genuine partnership with transparency succeeds in bringing about development.

National / Regional Consultation

If it is decided to have partnership between industries and Voluntary Organizations, it would be a good idea to have a national /regional consultation. The participants may be drawn from the interested industries, willing organizations and others, including Government representatives. From such a consultation should come a core group of collaborating industries and voluntary organizations.

GOAL :

⇒ To create an on-going process of dialogue and working relationships between voluntary organizations and industries for community development.

OBJECTIVES:

⇒ To evolve an effective role for voluntary organizations in the design, planning, and implementation of development programmes, with the support of industries and community participation.

⇒ To develop a common 'language', a common 'conceptualization' and 'diagnosis' of community development issues.

⇒ To take steps for capacity building of voluntary organizations and the community for community development

⇒ To identify and co-ordinate programmes for development programmes that would effectively serve the people most in need.

The core group will be available to help the partnerships (large, medium and small), wherever they may be, between voluntary organizations and industries.

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