

Culture as a Booster of Sustainable Development: A Socio- Economic Analysis.

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The outcome Document of the 2010 Millennium Development Goal Summit, published ten years after the Millennium Declaration, emphasized the importance of culture for development and its contribution to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals. These crucial messages were reiterated in two consecutive ‘ Culture and Development’ UNGA Resolution in 2010 and 2011, which called for mainstreaming of culture in development policies and strategies and underscored culture in intrinsic contribution to sustainable development. Throughout the past decades, statistics, indicators and data on the cultural sector, as well as operational activities have underscored that culture can be a powerful booster as well as driver for development with community-wide social, economic and environmental impacts of particular relevance is the cultural sector’s contribution to the economy and poverty alleviation. Cultural heritage, cultural and creative industries, sustainable cultural tourism and cultural infrastructure can serve as strategic tools for revenue generation, particularly in developing countries given their often rich cultural heritage and substantial labour force. The paper examines culture as a catalyst for sustainable development in terms of how it evolved as a global agenda and how the cultural arena can facilitate by the construct of sustainable development.

[Key Words: Culture, Development, Sustainable Development]

Introduction

Economic growth, as a traditional development policy objective is concerned with raising the level of productivity and employment, in the prospect that this will increase human welfare and reduce the level of poverty. But recently, a shift has taken place in favour of human development where emphasis is placed on increasing individuals capabilities, widening choice and expanding freedom. In fact human development focuses on individuals and pays relatively less attention to social aspects of life. It also be well known that individual human being do not live and work in isolation. By and large they live in groups of different sorts extending from nuclear families to global institutions. Human beings, individually and collectively interacts in many ways. They cooperate and compete with one another, engage in conflict, build harmonious relationships and borrow and adapt attributes of others. These

collective aspects of life called culture with all its diversity and complexity constitutes a people's way of life. So, the question arises what does culture has to do with economic growth and sustainable development. The main objective of this is to probe and find out how culture influence and boost up sustainable development.

There are some forces that influence economic growth through their impact on the core variables of growth. For instance, 'Self Control' that affects saving behaviour and the fertility choice that consequently impacts the investment in physical capital (Lewis, 1995) and population growth rate (Malthus, 1798) respectively; or the desire for self-improvement, which influences the decision to invest in education, which in turn enables people to acquire skills and build human capital (Azariadis and Drazen,1990). However, there are some other factors that have a relatively less clear link with the core variables of growth, but they can be arguably and convincingly regarded as important factors affecting growth and development. Among these are found the moral commitment of one's own that induces work ethics and is one of the main determinants of work efforts and thus of labour productivity, trust and the willingness to cooperate that impact the subjective cost of cooperating with strangers and can have a profound effects of trading networks which help shape and size and the expansion of markets. Similarly, mutual respect and honesty, which are the foundations of business ethics and property rights influence the costs of contracts and minimize distortions such as corruptions, thefts, coercive acts and deceptive information.

It may be mentioned that some of the above mentioned factors and forces- self determination, honesty, cooperation, trust, mutual respect, self-improvement freedom of thought-depend on individual attitudes, which in turn are based on a setoff beliefs, values and norms that change very slowly. It may therefore, be argued that one can devise a series of factors that are defined or influenced by customary beliefs, values and norms of the society, which have important real economic roles and include them in the typical neoclassical growth models whose empirical estimation can show their probable effects on economic growth and development. In 1970's, the structural approach by the school of dependency, gained importance in the literature by overshadowing the cultural approach to economic growth and development, which was proposed first by Weber (1904-1905) and again rediscovered by early development economists such as Rostow (1960 Later), Hoselitz (1960,1963) and Kuznets (1965).

On in 1990's, the cultural approach of estimating economic growth and development salvages the attention in the literature. Significantly contributions of the period, for example by Putnam's (1963) and Fukuyama's (1995) bestsellers have evidently identified that cultural values play a very vital role explaining economic growth and development all around the world. Additional evidences are further suggested that cultural differences are an important part of the story of the economic growth and development. In particular, the effects of

culture on economic growth are thought to be related to the elements of culture that affects production and investment decisions, efficient allocation of resources, technological innovation and openness to trade. Altman (2001), for example, models the impact of culture on economic growth and development by arguing that work effort is maximized when cultural environment stimulate cooperative work, which is positively corrected with labour productivity and work as a booster of sustainable development. Similarly, Ferias and Leon Ledesma (2004) assume that cultural values that emphasize hard work affect labour supply. This idea is modeled by assuming that work is like habit forming. Further, Cozzi(1998) stated that culture affects technological innovations. He assumes that culture bears no utility by itself and its survival is linked to its positive effects on productivity. In this model, technological innovations are generated as an externality by the aggregate investment in the bubbles culture. Likewise, Johnson and Lenartowicz (1998) present a framework for investigating the relationship between cultural factors such as uncertainty avoidance, conservatism and hierarchy economic freedom and economic growth. They found strong and rebuts positive relationship between economic freedom and economic growth and weak uncertainty avoidance and high level of individual autonomy.

So, this paper is a theoretical paper mainly based on secondary sources. It examines how culture work as a booster or catalyst for sustainable development particularly in terms of how it evolved as a global agenda and how the cultural arena can facilitate by construct of sustainable development. In this way paper operates from the methodological and theoretical standpoint that it is the meaning of sustainability in the different context to which it is being applied that should be the central concern.

Meaning of Sustainable Development and its Historical Context

Sustainable development entered the development discourse in the early 1970's in 1972 UN Stockholm Conference on Human Environment was the first international conference that brought the concept of sustainability to the international arena. Sustainable development was further legitimized following the United Nations Conference on Environment and development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. This conference facilitated the globalization of the concept and the establishment of an international consensus of the concept of sustainable development. The popular definition given by the Brundtland Report (WCDE 1987) that, 'Sustainable Development is the development quoted that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. Another often quoted definition of sustainable development is the one provided by caring for the earth; 'improving the quality of human life while living within carrying capacity of supporting ecosystem.'

Until recently, sustainable development was viewed solely through the lens of the environ mentalist but as the concept has matured, increasingly emphasis has been placed on interconnection to social, cultural and economic

dimensions of development (Kadekodi, 1992). Contemporary mainstream notions of sustainable development portray it as a tri-dimensional concept featuring the interface between environment, economic and social sustainability. (Bell, 2003; OECD 2001).

Culture and Sustainable Development

Scientists argued that the area of culture is narrowly defined and thus made irrelevant to narrowly define and thus made irrelevant to the wider development debate. Raymond Williams (1983) points out in his book entitled 'Culture' and given four definitions of culture:

1. A development state of mind- as in a person of culture', 'a cultured person'
2. The processes of this development – as in 'cultural activities'.
3. The means of these processes- as in culture as 'the arts' and 'humane intellectual works'.
4. And lastly, 'whole way of life', a signifying system' through which social Order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explained.

Which we discuss sustainable development it is critical to move beyond talking about preservation of 'the arts' "heritage" and 'cultural identities' to also include the broad civilization notion embodied in culture as a 'whole way of life' because it informs the underlying belief systems, worldviews, epistemologies and cosmologies that shape international relations as well as human interaction with environment.

The notion of cultural activities, such as 'agriculture', which is one of the earliest usage of the word culture, also relates to the sustainable development issue in that some agricultural practices are deemed to be more eco-friendly than others on account of culturally informed patterns such as integrated farming versus slash and burn agriculture. And those whose themselves as being more enlightened on the sustainable development issues issue may view 'others' 'as being less cultured which has implications illustrate how pervasive the concept of culture and how it impacts on notions and practice of sustainable development.

Culture as the central Pillar of Sustainable Development

As the concept of sustainable development mature it has opened up the debate for further reflection. This is a welcomed development and explains why culture is being considered as a key element of the sustainable framework. Culture should be viewed not just as an additional pillar of sustainable development along with environmental, economic and social objectives because people's identities, signifying systems, cosmologies and epistemic frameworks shape how the environment is viewed and live in culture shapes what we mean by development and determines how people act in the world.

In this perspective on incorporation of culture into sustainable development presents a challenge because both words 'culture' and 'development' is complex in usage and interpretation. Raymond Williams (1981) argues, "Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in English language." Wallerstein in 1991 pointed out that sustainable

development is intricately linked to the geo-cultural construct of development. The possibilities for an ecologically sustainable future depend on how 'Production Culture' and 'Consumption Culture' are altered and adapt to the changing ecological, socio-political and technological context. Haque also in 1999 argues the sustainable development is 'threatened by the dominant mode of development thinking that emphasizes growth oriented industrialization.' So, the argument in this paper is that culture must be placed as the booster and as the central pillar which is fully integrated into that of the other pillars of the economy, the social and the ecological. So, it is proposed that an alternative approach to sustainable development prioritize the following values:

- a. Cultural Identities
- b. Self-Reliance
- c. Social Justice
- d. Ecological Balance

Culture a Driver of Sustainable Development

The outcome document of the 2010 MDG Summit published ten years after the Millennium Declaration emphasized the importance of culture development Millennium Development Goals. These crucial messages were reiterated in two consecutive 'Culture and Development'. UNGA Resolutions in 2010 and 2011, which called for the mainstreaming of culture into development policies and strategies and underscored culture's intrinsic contribution to sustainable development. Throughout the past decade, statistics, indicators and data on the culture sectors, as well as operational activities have underscored that culture can be powerful driver of development, with community wide social, economic and environmental impacts of particular relevance is the cultural sectors contribution to the economy and poverty alleviation, cultural heritage, culture and creative industries, sustainable cultural tourism and cultural infrastructure serve as a tools for revenue generation, particularly in developing countries their often rich cultural heritage and substantial labour force. The figures and data prove that cultural and creative industries represent one of the most rapidly expanding sectors in the global economy with a growth rate of 17.6% in the Middle East, 13.9% in Africa, 11.9% in South America, 9.7% in Asia, 6.9% in Oceania and 4.3% in North and Central America. Promoting this sector requires limited capital investment, involves low entry barriers and has a direct impact on vulnerable populations including women. In Ecuador, recent studies show that the formal and private cultural activities contributed 4.6% to the 2014 GDP and in the same year, 2.64% of the total employed population worked in cultural occupations. Almost 60% of the latter were women.

Furthermore, the tourism sector has become one of the world's fastest growing economic sectors. Gross worldwide tourism receipts grew at an average rate of 7% from 1998 to 2008, with 12% for the Least Developed Countries for the same period. Cultural tourism relies on tangible and intangible cultural assets-accounts for 40% of world tourism revenues. Investment in cultural and creativity has proven an excellent means for revitalize the economy of the cities and the nations use cultural heritage and cultural events and

institutions to improve their image, stimulate urban development and attract visitors as well as investments. Most Middle-Income countries are developing vibrant culture sectors and initiatives and request assistance in this area.

Cultural led development also includes a range of non-monetized benefits such as a greater social inclusiveness and rootedness, resilience, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship for individuals and communities and the use of local resources, skills and knowledge. Respecting and supporting cultural expressions contributed to strengthening the social capital of a community and fosters trust in public institutions. Cultural factors also influence lifestyles, individual behaviour, consumption patterns, values related to environmental stewardship and our interaction with the natural environment, local and indigenous knowledge systems and environmental management practices provide valuable insight and tools for tackling ecological challenges, preventing bio-diversity loss, reducing land degradation and mitigating the effects of climate change. The UN Inter-Agency projects, implemented under MDG-F Achievement Fund carried out in recent years have advocated and demonstrated concretely the power of culture to respond to gender issues to health and environment concerns to challenges in the area of education and livelihood – let alone the fact that these projects have generated new jobs, new market opportunities and gender income levels, that they have improved living conditions and fostered community-leaded economic growth and contribute to empowering individuals.

Culture Enables Sustainable Development

Culture-sensitive approaches have demonstrated concretely how one can address both the economic and human rights dimensions of poverty at the same time while providing solutions to complex development issues in innovative and multi sectoral manners. Indeed, culture has a transformative power on existing development approaches, helping to broaden the terms of current development debate and to make development much relevant to the needs of the people.

Development interventions that are responsive to the cultural context and the particularities of a place and community and advance a human centered approach to development are most effective and lively to yield sustainable, inclusive and equitable outcomes. Acknowledging and promoting respect for cultural diversity within a human right based approach, moreover, can facilitate intra-cultural dialogue, prevents conflicts and protects the rights of marginalized groups, within and between nations thus creating optimal conditions for achieving development goals. Thus, culture makes development more sustainable.

Potential of Culture in Sustainable Development

The integration of culture into sustainable development strategies and policies advances a human centered and inclusive approach to development, in addition to serving as powerful socio-economic resources. Culture is transversal and cross-cutting concern and as such affects all dimensions of development.

However, the role of culture in sustainable development requires due attention to processes as well as outcomes.

A better articulation of a shared agenda and guideline towards mainstreaming culture into the distinctive mandates of United Nations beyond 2015 which ensure a more effective response to development needs. The post 2015 development agenda should also recognize the specific contribution that culture as a sector, encompassing tangible and intangible heritage, cultural and creative industries and cultural infrastructure has made towards achieving sustainable development as evidenced in terms of poverty alleviation, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. There is also growing interest for culture as an integral part of the broader development debates at country level. Whereas five years ago culture was mentioned in only less than 30% of UNDAF, but it is now mentioned in 70% of them. As the 2010 UN Secretary General's Report on culture and development has shown 18 UN organizations work in the area of culture or regularly adopt culture sensitive approaches.

Proposed Measures which Enhance Culture's Contribution to Sustainable Development

Following are the proposed measures can build on culture's contribution to sustainable development:

1. Integrating culture in conception, measurement and practice of development with a view to advancing inclusive, equitable and sustainable development.
2. Capitalizing on the Cultural sector's Contribution to Economic Development and Poverty Reduction supporting sustainable cultural tourism, cultural and creative industries, cultural institutions and cultural based urban revitalization as powerful economic sub-sectors that generate decent employment, stimulate local development and foster entrepreneurship, cultural-led economic development should take into account the protection of cultural assets that are often fragile and constitute a unique and non-renewable capital.
3. Capitalizing Traditional Knowledge to foster Environmental Sustainability: Integrating traditional knowledge and practices in sustainable environment schemes and seeking synergies between traditional environmental practices and high technologies.
4. Building on Culture to promote Social Cohesion:
 - (a) Promoting intercultural dialogue to harness social cohesion thereby creating an environment conducive to development.
 - (b) Capitalizing on potential of the arts to promote social cohesion and develop entrepreneurship, especially among youth and post-conflict and post disaster situations.

Conclusion

Thus, this paper argues that culture should be viewed not just the central pillar of sustainable development but also as the booster or catalyst for the sustainable development because it speeds up the process of development in balanced way. The basis for these outcomes comes from the interrogation and

deconstruction of the meaning and practice of development itself. The analysis in this paper also shows that mainstream versions of sustainable development maintain the core features of developmentalism and modernization which considered to be the main cause of environmental and associated global maladies. In this regard the paper outlines a framework for reconstructing the sustainable development for greater coherence with the goals and values such as social justice, self reliance and ecological balance. The arguments are the mainstream notions are embedded with culturally specific frameworks that hold sway over other versions of development for closing the pursuit of more relevant approaches. So, this paper in effects calls for opening up discourse on sustainable development to facilitate greater policy space and choice by developing countries in particular.

Therefore, the paper starts from premise that the value of cultural diversity is equivalent to that of genetic diversity in the sustainable development debate. It identifies both the protection of cultural identities and the promotion of cultural identities as valued transition goals towards sustainable development because of the ways in which cultural content shapes and communicates the identities, values and hopes of a society. In this sense cultural goods and services are not mere commodities, services or bundles of intellectual property. They critical catalyst or booster for identity formation, nation building and reinforces and expands the cultural confidence of former colonial societies and their Diaspora communities. The cultural industries are also worthy of investment because of the returns that it generates in terms of new and indigenous forms of employment, production and exports. It also aids in the diversification of mono-cultural economies and facilitates a more competitive development platform. So, conclusion is that the cultural industries should be viewed as critical strategic resources in the move towards as critical strategic resources in the move towards creating sustainable development.

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