

FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS: AGENT OF SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Some maintain or feel that faith, spiritualism and faith based organizations (FBO) belong to different spheres and play separate role but there are many examples of Faith based institutions and development agencies across 'the World' which work for poor, down trodden section of society. In this regard these Faith Based Organizations have gained a high level of community trust. They have great contribution in various development activities in the field of education, health, environment, peace building and for sustaining the communities. These faith based organization have also contribution in rebuilding, healing process and rehabilitating the communities suffering due to many socio- political reasons. It is seen that these FBOs charges the people to grapple with ethical issues ranging from untouchability, corruption to peace and equity. These FBOs also contributes as the largest distribution system in the world. It plays a vital role in both accentuating and defeating the various stigma related to disease like AIDS and other discriminatory practices.

Keywords: FBO, FPO, Social Sustainability, Civil Society, Humanitarian Development.

INTRODUCTION

It is seen that FBOs were the earliest responder in remobilizing the communities around the world and are continued to be major contributors. There are many examples of FBOs working for the deadly diseases like HIV/AIDS, Leprosy, Tuberculosis, Handicaps etcetera.

FBOs are Organization or government idea or plan based on religious belief which in turn deliver a variety of services to the public, advocating justice for oppressed or playing a vital role as NGOs for humanitarian aid and international developmental efforts for peace and protection of the lives of people. This is the reason these FBOs are also called

Civic Associations which are loosely connected with faith groups.

A WHO study found that about 40% of health care infrastructure across Sub Saharan Africa are operated by FBO groups. They provide assistance like information, encouragement, compassion and hope to people who are Suffering.

These faith based Organizations are also known as NPO i.e. Non-profit Organization. They are mostly religious congregations like (Church, Mosque, Synagogue, Temples or Monasteries). These FBOs have a long and strong history of making a difference in people's lives by delivering crucial services. These FBO provide service delivery network which identify and reach out to those who are in need, often seen during the most crucial times like devastating flood

or landslides in Uttarakhand or during Tsunami in remote areas of Orissa. In fact UNFPA that is a Global forum of Faith organization for population and development Istanbul (2008) brought together hundred faith based organizations and religious leaders from all major faith or regions. Here they discussed the successful practices and ways to move forward in partnership with UNFPA in areas of Reproductive health and Rights, gender equality and population and developmental issues.

The present research surveyed many national and international Faith Based Organizations such YMCA, YWCA, HUD a housing and shelter program in USA, UNESCO that is United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Salvation Army in USA, Soka Gakkai International, a Buddhist Faith Based Organization, American Muslims Civic Leadership Institute, Cecil Murray Centre for Community Engagement (for low income communities) Muhammadiyah in Indonesia, AMC i.e. Association of Muslim Chaplain Service of Virginia.

With reference to India, we know a lot many Faith Based Organizations such as 'Patanjali Haridwar'; 'Shri Sai Baba Sansthanam Trust'; Shirdi; 'Art of Living' by Shri Shri Ravi Shankar an ambassador of peace; Helpage India for elderly people, 'Faith India' (a foundation of Ability improvement and technology for the Handicapped), 'Gurukul Kangdi', 'Shantikunj'(Haridwar) 'Zakah' and AUQAF (FBO), 'Jamati-Islami Hind' in Muslim society, 'ISKON' and 'ISHA Foundation' are meant for improving the socio-economic status of destitute. Various Faith Based schools are educating and providing food to poor and down trodden like Seth M.R. Jaipuria school through its Navsrijan (FBO), and many more.

METHODOLOGY

The research is based on survey and observation method. The data analysis shows that there exists a correlation between these FBOs and successful sustainable development of a civil society. More the active role played by FBOs, more the environmental, economic or social development occur in society. As

these FBOs, are characterized by good governance, so they are more effective tool or agency for sustainable development.

Though Faith Based Organization may face many challenges when they engage in community development but they bring distinctive advantages in developmental activities in society at large. The present sociological study attempts to understand the impact of FBO in bringing about social sustainable development of society.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

- It is found that if the FBOs or religious leaders are involved in the public health program the results were encouraging. So it is suggested that the policy makers should view these FBOs as vital communities institutions that should play a greater role in building stronger communities.
- This study puts forth that if FBOs are taken into consideration or were involved in organizing awareness campaigns for health care such as on Eye Camps etc. The access to prevention, treatment and care is enhanced or increased at a greater level.
- This study shows that FBOs play a major role in preserving the sustainable environment.
- It is found that it help in practicing non-violence or spreading peace as the FBO groups in North East of India work for economic justice and end of poverty by engaging people in various skill development activities and providing assistance.

CONCLUSION

Thus, in modern industrial society the Faith Based Organizations which are distinct from government and private businesses. These NGOs and NPOs are the unique characteristics of organization that

constitutes the civil society. These Faith Based Organizations are the critical actors in the advancement of labor standards, gender equality, universal values and human rights. Even the development institutions also regarded faith groups as legitimate and important players in civil society forum on the full gamut of developmental issues.

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