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RESEARCH ARTICLE

AN EXPLORATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN PLANNING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS; THE ROLES EXPECTED BY THE COMMON CITIZENS

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Abstract

Sustainability is a philosophy associated with the long-run maintenance or improvement of human welfare and the preservation of natural capital and environmental integrity which public administrator needs to strengthen the Sustainable development goals (SDGs); an action directed by the philosophy of sustainability and is increasingly supported, promoted, and required by government actors and non-government actors to play a crucial role in the development of public beneficial programs by the United Nation. As the SDGs are critically receiving increased attention in public administration theory and practices, it has been accepted and tested to be promoting environmental well-being, while also improving the well-being of citizens. Can sustainable development goals promotes the well-being of the common citizens and citizenry participation in the implementation of SDGs and what be the expected concerns of the public administrators? This paper considers these questions by exploring case studies in which the application and practices of SDGs are integrated into public decision making. It also discusses the role expectations of sustainable development in public risk management and in promoting social justice through the use of UN approaches to life and environmental betterment programs.

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Introduction:-

The world Sustainable development is now the philosophy behind maintenance and improvement of human welfare set by the United Nation for all member countries which was ratified and approved by all member of Nations that constituted the United Nations. It has now become a cognizant planning tools being considered in the reconstruction of States national development programs and planning of quality higher education, public housing projects, health and human services delivery, climate action, community planning, transportation design, and energy, clean water, peace, justice and strong institutions and global partnership for sustainable development.

This United Nations set goals are actions directed for supporting public systems required by public institutions, private and non-profit agencies from the local government administration, to the State, Federal and to the International global levels. Going by the pertinent application of this goals, the challenges of public administrators in providing a world class humanitarian needs and services with limited resources, and sustainable infrastructural development has provided promising solutions for decision making administrators and government.

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As much is expected by the public at implementation of the SDGs to the letters, the goals are expected to eradicate poverty, provide the public with sound health system, well-being of the people, decent work and economic growth which has been described as a tool for building a sustainable environment and world class cities and communities.

Will the SDGs achieved it stated goals using the indicators within the limited time-frame? Are there consequence for lack of implementation by the member States? This paper takes this inquiries into significant awareness and consciousness of SDGs actors by exploring the application and implementation of these goals as an integration into public decision making by the local government, the State, the federal and the global communities of United Nations member States. Finally, the paper explores the understandings of sustainable development goals within the citizen participation, implementation by the State and socio-economic justice, political betterment of the common citizen.

Ethical Values for Sustainable Development Goals

“Corporate Social Responsibility” (CSR) it is generally presumed that we are referring to the operation of a private sector entity in a manner that accounts for the social and environmental impact created by the entity or, business. CSR not only refers to an organization’s commitment to developing and integrating policies (most commonly in the form of social, environmental and economic sustainability) into daily business operations, but to the self-reporting on progress made toward implementing such practices. (Joe, 2014)

The classical model of corporate social responsibility (CSR) includes legal constraints and the neo-classical model incorporates moral limits. The sustainable development approach includes biophysical constraints. While business is free to pursue profits, the "rules of the game must be changed to include the obligation to leave natural ecosystems no worse off in the process." (David and Harrie, 2005). In order to address the global quandary of population growth, poverty reduction and environmental destruction, Desjardins, 1998 advocates a shift from unrestricted material growth to the concept of development. This conceptual evolution from a growth based ethic to qualitative economics is discussed in the context of Sustainable development goals and the roles the citizens should play, hence, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is no longer for the private sector but the entire public administrators, that is, to include all non-profit governmental organizations. Going by this context, public administrators needs to open its governance to social responsibility, transparency and accountability. With this in mind, Sustainable development goals should be understood as development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and standard quality of living.

This should be regarded as part of the "interwoven frameworks of business ethics using the values of corporate social responsibility (CSR)." This posit that all the earth's inhabitants, human and non-human should be sustained for human development. As an ethical issue, SDGS create the greatest good and no harm for all those inhabitants and their offspring. Taking this as a starting point, the paper advance a holistic approach to sustainable development goals identifying the biophysical, organizational and cultural systems upon which communities are dependent with concepts of natural, social and cultural capital. It is unethical to undermine these natural, social and cultural systems; it is ethical to sustain them. By this, using corporate social responsibility can improve the public value advantage and increase the awareness and acceptance of SDGs by the common citizens as machinery for betterment of present generation for human existence.

The Significance of SDGs to the Citizens

The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) characterizes sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". (WCED, 1987, p.43). The sustainable development must therefore be able to maintain and cultivate the trust, relationships and organizational resources necessary for a healthy and robust society.

Taking cognizance of the 17 goals, the citizens of any Nation within diverse groups hope for development that will better their socio-economic and cultural life’s sphere in all ramifications, hence, every generation has an achievement through which they contribute to social development and well-being. With an enabling environment, the sustainable development agenda could use for improving efficiency and effectiveness of public services, foster economic growth and job creation be the achievement of children and young people in our generation.

However, SDGs should be seen by any citizen in respective of their identity as mechanisms used in any society to solve shared problems which are ordinarily cannot be solved by respective Nation State, therefore, the citizens

should adopt SDGs as mechanism to improve the wellbeing of the people at the grass root and beyond. Administration per se, is getting things done, therefore SDGs entails the whole process of decision making at the global level for betterment of the citizenry because part of the whole idea behind SDGs is “Leaving no one behind” which is to ensure that development throughout the world has positive impacts on the poorest and most marginalized members of society. (UN, 2008; Miyazawa, 2012).

Functions of the Citizen in Our Common Future

Since the SDGs are a universal agenda for “transforming our world.” To achieve this transformation, we must rethink the approaches of Government agencies relationships or partnerships with the common citizens, and in particular, identify the government departments, actors or institutions that need to respond to inquiries needed by the common citizens in order to provide remedy to such problems. Moreover, they can ensure that action is taken by the responsible person or department, and if this is not the case, they should also follow up with the relevant government officials or departments. The goal is to ensure that local resources are mobilized for those who are most vulnerable and that their needs are reflected in local development plans and national public policies (Ghaus-Pasha, 2004; Save the Children, 2012; Motala et al., 2014)

To represent the interests of the poorest and most marginalized citizens of any States, the SDGs actors should take critical roles of the followings;

1. Play a critical role as transformers in society by being involved in training and advocacy processes, which build the capacities and knowledge of the general populace towards achieving the SDGs. This will ensure that people become the focus of the SDGs and that the most vulnerable in society are not left behind when these global development goals are localized.
2. Translate the voices of the poorest and most marginalized citizens into rational or strong arguments that are acknowledged and addressed by the local government. The SDGs represent a globally legitimate frame of reference for CSOs, which can introduce issues into policy dialogues. Where possible, CSOs should identify integrated improvements or interventions that could make a significant difference for vulnerable people. CSOs should also reiterate the value of locally tailored solutions in realizing local and global development goals.
3. The Country SDGs actors should play very critical role in the society by being involving the common citizens in training and advocacy processes, which build the capacities and knowledge of the general populace towards achieving the SDGs. This will ensure that the common citizen become the focus of the SDGs and that the most vulnerable in society are not left behind when these global development goals are localized for the benefits of the common people.

SDGs Imitation

Sustainable development does not necessarily lend itself to perfect translation from theory to practice unless active participation of all sectors of society and all types of people, therefore, the government should create an enable environment to stimulating SDGs among the general public. It is also not a simple solution to economic, social, and environmental problems faced by public administrators, but a philosophy of practice that can guide decision making only if meaningfully, consistently, and rigorously applied within its indicators.

It's should serve as social justice and is strengthened by the inclusion of equity and of ethics. In fact, creating sustainable development goals without consideration of equity and social justice in the society will goes against the tenets of exploring citizen participations and intra-realization of the goals but when integrated within the citizen as community development projects, it will strengthens, support and reinforce the voices of the common people as a critical tool in the management of public administration.

People make up governments, international institutions, civil society, the private sector and scientific and academic communities. People are at the center of everything— people need to work together in partnership and peace, at local, national, regional and global levels to eliminate harm and promote the wellbeing of nature and humanity, for current and future generations.

Another way is through collaborative approach between governments, civil society organizations and other stakeholders provides the greatest opportunity to address the challenges to effective, this will ensure public ownership, longevity and sustainability engagement of SDGs by the common people.

Finally, good policy, honorable intentions and plentiful resources produce no results if there are no institutions to implement good policy, convert priorities into action and properly and efficiently utilized financial resources. Lack of effective institutional framework in many a countries has led to little or no improvement in the state of the masses, despite the inflow of resources. The role of civil society need not be limited to local and national initiative, but there is also a need to promote global awareness for the attainment SDGs towards 2030.

Challenges and Problems of Achieving SDGs

The human needs and search for more natural resources and expansion of lives and properties are manifestations of unsustainability based on depletion everywhere such as the effect of greenhouse and climate change, toxic pollution, land degradation, extinction of biological species, deforestation and land degradation are putting the earth and our environment into risk of extinction. The emerging challenges are obstacles to Sustainable Development Goals. Other emerging challenges are;

1. Corruption

The first challenge confronting proper implementation of SDGs is corruption which is endemic and pandemic in all spheres of civil and governmental organizations. It has thrived, progressed and flourished unabated. Corruption has been institutionalized to the point of accepting it as part of our system while the idea of getting rich quickly syndrome is affecting all and sundry, hence, ruling out corrupt practices by SDGs actors is not possible. Corrupt practices are common within NGOs either in inflation of prices of bought items or over estimation of cost of projects.

2. Lack of data and monitoring of poor people within the communities, to realize this ambition, there need to be adaptable tools for data collection, monitoring and evaluation of processes related to the implementation of the SDGs in cognizance to the citizens. As local government in many countries are facing reforms to devolve power from the State and Federal government are under way, technical capacity to plan and manage SDGS service delivery on the scale needed at the grass root level should be outlined and strengthened to realize SDGs for urbanization.

3. Poor financial base and limited revenue

The emerging human development and scarcity of rare natural resources are plunging society into environmental, economic, financial, and social unsustainability which are expected to get more worst as neither pollution control nor technological advancement are sufficient to solve environmental problems.

4. PermittingAutonomy: Autonomy simply refers to freedom, independent, free from external and remote control, within this context, the SDGs can be effectively owned by the common citizen when supported with professional skills and wisdom for implementation.

5. Inadequate and Poor Budgetary Allocation:If SDGs are not fully funded, the actors in the field of public awareness and campaign of these goals will suffer from inadequate and poor funding. This is one of the major reasons why the development of this magnitude are not known to the grassroots level, therefore, UN member States will definitely records poor performance in the implementation of the goals below the indicator lines. With this trend, SDGs are meaningless and lacking the diffidence of values oriented.

Policy Implications and Recommendation

This paper explored the challenges confronting the participation of common citizens in the achievement of SDGs and its failure to meet the basic and social services provisions of the people at the grass root. It also present an appraisal of the grassroots experience at the third tiers of government administration by taking cognizance look on social service delivery most especially at the benefits of the citizens. It also presented an appraisal analysis of the concurrent challenges in ensuring effective and efficient delivery of social services for the common citizens using the SDGs mechanisms most especially in the area of poverty eradication and hunger, food insecurity and lack of improved nutrition and agriculture in all its forms everywhere looking into the facts that common citizens living in the least developed countries are lacking access to basic resources and care. As these basic needs are not met, the entire wisdom and efficacy associated with SDGs will be of unexploited by the inhabitants of least developed countries most especially, **healthy lives and promotion well-being for all at all ages, gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls,** good roads, water, electricity, healthcare services and education for a better administration.

The way forward

SDGs engagement with the common citizens will encourage fulfillment of the various roles discussed earlier: Firstly, Common citizens will stand to benefit from aligning the framework of their programming to that of the SDGs. Looking back, the MDGs became part of the dominant development discourse for many developing countries, as well as donors and other important multilateral institutions (GhausPasha, 2004). By adopting the

framing associated with the SDGs, Citizen will be able to participate in debates on global development, which have local level impacts, and can effectively create an argument for forming partnerships with government. This will open up possibilities for SDGs actors to also engage with governments on the allocation of resources, on facilitating the implementation of the SDGs and on monitoring activities related to this process. In addition, the SDGs can be linked to programs and funding proposals of Citizen oriented NGOs, which could improve the possibilities of international partnerships and other collaborations. This would also increase public awareness of the SDGs. By being aware of and linking with the objectives of the SDGs, Citizens oriented NGOs can take a cross-cutting approach to identifying creative solutions on the ground – solutions that government departments, which tend to operate in silos, may miss. Furthermore, Citizen oriented NGOs need to actively engage with their communities most especially those at the least developed countries so that they are aware of the local issues. This will allow them to choose which areas to focus on, ensuring that they operate effectively in their communities and function as a community's "voice." This engagement would include understanding the relevance of different issues and providing feedback about what is going on in the community's local context, so that communities, thusly informed, have the knowledge and confidence to become more involved. Secondly, Citizen based NGOs need to forge new partnerships with other CSOs as well as with governments, the private sector and other international bodies. Within these partnerships, best practices and other information should be shared and translated into meaningful vehicles for the implementation of the SDGs.

As relationships between Citizen oriented NGOs and the government are often strained, CSOs could also adapt and be flexible, rather than adopting an "always oppose the government" doctrine (DDP roundtable talk, 2015). Ideally, this would create a more effective space for engagement and dialogue. Thirdly, Citizen oriented NGOs need to work in a coordinated fashion with each CSOs – for example, by forming a coalition of CSOs to organize civil society engagement with the SDGs and to enhance their interactions with governments (DDP roundtable talk, 2015). Furthermore, local champions could emerge from these coalitions, which could further enhance and drive the local implementation of the SDGs (ACSC meeting, 2015). Such a model of collaboration is essential for promoting deliberative governance, identifying gaps, facilitating inclusivity and generating collaborative solutions to challenges related to the SDGs. A coalition is likely to have greater power and presence in governance processes than Citizen oriented NGOs attempting to engage with the SDGs on their own. By having power and presence in these processes, the voices of coalitions are more likely to be recognized and considered by governments and the UN General Assembly, which would enhance the impact of CSOs in the localization of the SDGs for the benefit of public administrators and the citizens.

Discussion and Conclusions:-

The citizen roles in globalization more equitably across nations and regions and to achieve the SDGs, all development partners need to play their due role. This paper summaries that the citizen oriented NGOs, public administrators, Civil society sector are instrumental in promoting local economic development, alleviating poverty, advocating policy change, contributing to good governance and campaigning for the total achievement of Sustainable development goals. Their contributions, however, needs to be strengthened. Critical engagement on of SDGs can increasingly become the approach for many Nations, common citizens, CSOs, adapting, extending, updating, and localizing the goals, as appropriate to their own situation. The UN SDGs actors and the local civil society movements i.e. Citizen oriented NGOs can strengthen and reinforce each other both at the local and national level.

Moreover, increased global awareness, dialogue and a true partnership between the North and South will strengthen engagement and set us firmly on the road to 2030 especially from the viewpoint of reducing global poverty by half.

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