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Community Capacity Development to Achieve Sustainable Development in Sri Lanka: Reviewing the concept of 'One Village One Product' in Japan

Dimithri Devinda Jayagoda
Department of Business Management
SLTC Research University
Padukka, Sri Lanka

Buddhini C. Dharmawardhana
Attorney-at-Law & visiting Lectuer in Law
Moartuwa, Sri Lanka
buddhini_chathu@yahoo.com

Abstract—Community Capacity Development (CCD) leads to enhance communities' ability to recognize, plan and implement solutions to the challenges communities face. It includes many facets such as empowering community and institutions, by improving skills, imparting knowledge, providing resources and facilitating for networking. One Village One Product (OVOP) is a rural development approach originated in Japan. Through this process distinctive product or service peculiar to that particular village is identified. OVOP is implemented based on natural resources in that particular area, traditional skills people possess in that area and cultural heritage. Sri Lanka is struggling with achieving sustainable development goals as it faces many challenges due to economic crisis Sri Lankan experience. Sri Lankan economy is suffering from hyperinflation, devalued currency and huge sovereign debts. Not only country's economy but also economy of each individual and family is affected adversely. In this backdrop, this study has been conducted with the view to see the feasibility to implement OVOP techniques in some specific areas in Sri Lanka. Improving production and proper marketing of handicraft and face mask in Ambalangoda area is the main objectives of this study. In this research literature was reviewed to identify economic and social factors in this regard. Desk research has been carried out. In addition, participatory observation method has been adopted. Finally, recommendations have been provided.

Keywords—Community capacity development, one village one product, sustainable development goals

I. INTRODUCTION

Community capacity development (CCD) refers to the process of improving a community's ability to identify, plan, and implement solutions to its own challenges. CCD provides to community members, organizations, and institutions with the skills, knowledge, resources, and it assists to build networks in order to address issues effectively.

A. Literature Review

a) The Key Dimensions of CCD

The key dimensions of CCD are empowerment, participation, asses-based approach, collaboration and networking, enhancing skills and training, local problem solving, ownership and sustainability, building resilience,

advocacy and social change, evaluation and learning and cultural considerations.

Empowering individuals and communities to take charge of their own development is the main focus in this concept. Engaging actively in decision-making processes is also crucial in this regard. Asset-Based Approach means capacity development while identifying present strengths and resources within the community. This approach helps to develop on the unique assets, skills, and talents of their communities.

Collaboration between community members, organizations, governments, and other stakeholders are important too. Capacity development can be done through involves training, workshops, and opening educational opportunities to community members. This encompasses technical skills as well as skills related to leadership, management, and communication.

Through CCD communities are able to address their specific needs and challenges and that is known as Local Problem Solving. When communities are engaged in planning and implementing solutions, their efforts will be last and sustain over the long term. Through CCD resilience of members in the communities can be enhanced to the face the hardship including as natural disasters, economic difficulties and social shifts.

Through CCD communities are advocated for their rights and they will be educated how the policies affect them. Through their successes and failures communities learn and evaluation on regular basis assist them to alter their strategies and learn from the mistakes they did. CCD, always respect the cultural norms in the particular geographical areas. That is essential to achieve sustainable development [1].

a) Sustainable Development

Sustainable development gained global recognition with the publication of the "Brundtland Report" in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development. This report, titled "Our Common Future," laid the foundation for international discussions and agreements on sustainability,

including the United Nations' adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 [2].

Overall, sustainable development seeks to create a world where economic, social, and environmental dimensions thrive harmoniously, fostering a prosperous and equitable future for all while respecting the limits of the planet's resources.

Sustainable development is 'an approach to societal progress that aims to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It involves integrating economic, social, and environmental considerations to achieve balanced and lasting development' [3].

Key aspects of sustainable development include environmental Conservation which emphasizes responsible stewardship of natural resources and ecosystems to prevent environmental degradation and ensure their availability for future generations. The other aspect is economic prosperity. Sustainable development seeks to promote economic growth and prosperity while considering the long-term impacts on communities and society as a whole. It involves fostering inclusive economic systems that benefit everyone. Social equity is another aspect. This approach prioritizes social justice, human rights, and equitable access to opportunities, resources, and services. It aims to reduce inequalities and address the needs of vulnerable populations.

Cultural Preservation aspect recognizes the importance of cultural diversity and heritage, encouraging the protection and preservation of cultural practices, identities, and traditions. Interconnectedness acknowledges the interdependence of environmental, social, and economic systems, advocating for integrated strategies that account for the interactions between these dimensions.

Long-Term Perspective highlights a future-oriented approach, considering the impacts of present decisions on future generations. This involves making choices that ensure the well-being of current and future societies. Precautionary Principle advocates that preventive action in the face of uncertainty to avoid potential harm to the environment or society.

Innovation and Technology encourages the development and adoption of innovative technologies and practices that contribute to environmental protection and societal well-being. Participatory Governance promotes inclusive and participatory decision-making processes that involve various stakeholders, including communities, governments, businesses, and civil society.

a) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and CCD

There is specific SDG's that are aligned to achieve community capacity development of the local community. They are Goal 1; End poverty in all its forms everywhere, Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries and Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

b. One Village One Product (OVOP) in Japan and lessons learnt from their approach

OVOP is a rural development approach that originated in Japan. It aims to promote local economic development by identifying and developing unique products or services from each village or community. The OVOP concept was developed by Professor Morihiko Hiramatsu at the University of Tsukuba in Japan in the late 1970s [6]. It has since been adopted and adapted in various countries around the world as a means of boosting rural economies and preserving local cultures.

The basic idea behind OVOP is to identify a distinctive product or service that a particular village or community can produce, often capitalizing on the area's natural resources, traditional skills, or cultural heritage. The goal is to create a sustainable local economy by nurturing and promoting this product, thereby improving livelihoods and stemming rural migration to urban areas.

Each community engages in a process of identifying a product or service that is unique to their area and has the potential to be developed and marketed.

Then, the identified product is then improved in terms of quality, design, and value. This might involve incorporating modern production techniques, enhancing packaging, and meeting certain quality standards.

The entire process is community-driven. Local residents are actively involved in decision-making, production, and marketing efforts. This sense of ownership fosters community pride and commitment.

OVOP emphasizes the marketing and promotion of the chosen product. This can involve branding, participating in local and national fairs, establishing connections with distributors, and even exploring export opportunities.

Communities often receive support and training to enhance their skills in production, marketing, financial management, and entrepreneurship.

OVOP projects often integrate traditional knowledge, skills, and cultural heritage, thus helping to preserve local traditions and ways of life.

By focusing on local resources and capacities, OVOP aims to create sustainable development that is both economically viable and environmentally responsible.

OVOP projects encourage collaboration between communities, regions, and even countries. This sharing of experiences and expertise can lead to innovative solutions and expanded markets.

In Japan, the OVOP approach has been particularly successful in revitalizing rural communities, boosting local economies, and preserving traditional craftsmanship. The concept has spread to other countries, including Thailand, Laos, and various African nations, where it has been adapted to suit local contexts and needs.

It is important to note that while OVOP can bring significant benefits, successful implementation requires careful planning, community engagement, and ongoing

support to ensure the sustainability of the chosen products and the well-being of the communities involved.

- *Development Goals Relationship*

Asset-Based Approach: Start by identifying the existing strengths, talents, and resources within the community. This could include the skills of individuals, local organizations, cultural assets, and community spaces. Building upon these existing assets forms a strong foundation for capacity development.

Participatory Approach: Involve community members in every step of the development process. Their insights, experiences, and aspirations should guide the planning, implementation, and evaluation of capacity-building initiatives. This not only empowers the community but also ensures that the solutions are tailored to their specific needs.

Skill Enhancement and Training: Provide training workshops and skill-building sessions that cater to the needs of the community. This could involve workshops on financial management, leadership, project management, communication skills, and more. The goal is to equip individuals with the tools they need to take initiative and lead positive changes.

Networking and Collaboration: Encourage networking among community members and organizations. Collaborative efforts often lead to innovative solutions and shared resources. This can be achieved through community events, forums, and online platforms.

Local Project Implementation: Encourage the community to identify and work on projects that directly address their needs. This could be anything from setting up a community garden to launching a literacy program. As community members actively engage in these projects, they learn valuable skills and develop a sense of ownership over their community's development.

Leadership Development: Identify and nurture emerging leaders within the community. Offer mentorship and leadership development opportunities to help them effectively guide community initiatives and inspire others.

Evaluation and Reflection: Regularly assess the impact of capacity-building efforts. What's working well? What could be improved? This ongoing evaluation helps fine-tune strategies and ensures that resources are being used effectively.

Sustainability: Ultimately, the goal is to create lasting change. Work towards ensuring that the capacity developed within the community can be sustained over the long term. This might involve passing on skills to younger generations, establishing mechanisms for ongoing learning, or embedding community capacity development within local institutions.

Advocacy and Empowerment: Equip the community with the knowledge and skills to advocate for their own needs and rights. Empowered communities are more likely to influence policy decisions and create an environment that supports their growth.

Celebration and Recognition: Celebrate achievements and milestones within the community. Recognizing and celebrating progress can boost morale and motivate community members to continue their efforts.

- *The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity [7].

II. METHODOLOGY

This research is conducted using mix methodology approach. Study is conducted as desk research initially. Case study method is adopted with participatory observation method. Observation and participatory research are being conducted in a long period in Oita prefecture of Japan. There are several locations and projects spread throughout Japan. Learnings from successful Japanese case study of One Village One product and it learning can be directly apply to Sri Lanka for community capacity and social development. Continuous training on conducting capacity development programs will be conducted among the selected communities.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The areas which have been selected to conduct the research is Ambalangoda. 'Mask making' is a popular tradition in Ambalangoda area. 'The authentic Masks and Masking Traditions of Sri Lanka are extra ordinary culture phenomenon and a significant contribution Sri Lanka has made to the Asian Cultural spectrum' There are traditional artisans carry out their trade in the South-Western Province in Sri Lanka. Some artisans carried out this trade at a large-scale business whereas some carry out the trade as medium and small level. There is a Ambalangoda Mask Workshop and Museum is Sri Lanka, privately owned Museum managed by an institution named "Ariyapala and Sons, in order to strengthen this particular cultural heritage. There is a museum, workshop and a small library in this museum premises [9]. These masks have a very good market, in this area. Mask are sold to foreigners as well as to local customers. Also, mask dancing shows are organized to make a living by manufacturers. There are different kinds of employment opportunities created by the mask industry. Mask makers and painters, Kaduru tree suppliers, painting material suppliers, craftsmen, sellers, masks dancers, tourist guides and shipping lines are the major jobs created through this trade.

There are many issues identified in this trade by observing and after interviewing the traders and people in the area. Most of the makers do not have knowledge to market their products and earn. They still use traditional methods of selling. There is no value addition created as Japanese production and selling philosophies. Hence, it is evident that by following the CCD this industry can be developed.

The key dimensions of CCD can be employed regarding this. People engaged in the mask industry can be empowered more by providing know how to market them

internationally. The main ingredients or the factors of development and social capacity development will depend on Participation, asses- based approach, collaboration and networking, enhancing skills and training, local problem solving, ownership and sustainability, building resilience, advocacy and social change, evaluation and learning and cultural considerations.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be concluded that mask industry in Ambalangoda can be developed through techniques in the CCD. This research study reveals many obstacles the community faces in engaging this mask trade. Most of the challenges can be overcome or mitigated through implementing CCD.

V. PROSPECTIVE STUDY AND FUTURE WORK

As suggested in order to overcome the hardship and challenges the community faces in the area, methods in CCD can be followed. For that more research should be done and more data should be collected using different data collection techniques.

It is expected to carry out the second phase of this research in order to gather more data and also, the researchers intend to provide solutions through following methods in CCD to address the issues the traders face in engaging in 'mask trade'. For that, it is expected to carry out a funded program in order to implement CCD in Ambalangoda area for Mask Traders in that area.

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