SDGs AND LIVELIHOOD OF SLUM YOUTH IN CHENNAI: A FRAMEWORK OF IMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract: *While the spirit and intent are visible in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) for the youth, the aspirations of slum youth has not been properly accommodated in India during the initial implementation phase of SDGs. While this article discusses the challenges of implementation of SDGs and livelihood of youth and their aspirations for entrepreneurship in Vyasarpadi Slum in Chennai, a framework has been suggested for the successful implementation of SDGs.[4]*

Keywords*: SDGs, Slum Youth, Livelihood, Entrepreneurship, Youth Resource Centre.*

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[4]The study was conducted by authors between October 2018 and January 2019 with twenty five slum youth who were selected randomly from Vyasarpadi slum, belonging to North Chennai, Tamil Nadu. It is mostly populated by Dalits and located in low lying areas and lacking basic amenities. The respondents were encouraged to participate in the Livelihood Workshop held on Livelihood and Youth: Promoting Sustainable Livelihood for slum youth in Community Development Projects, Organised by RGNIYD and Indo-German Center for Sustainability (IGCS), at RGNIYD during 26th and 27th October, 2018. The data was collected through a direct interview method. The research design adopted for the study was descriptive research design.

In its first ever baseline report on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the end of 2018, the NITI Aayog has reported that the state of Tamil Nadu has been successful in implementing SDGs, especially on poverty reduction, which was agreed in UN in 2015 (NITI Aayog 2018). The spectrum of the 17 SDGs with 169 targets and 306 national indicators range from poverty eradication, human health and sanitation to urban settlements and to safeguarding ecosystems. Among others, over a third of the 169 SDGs targets highlight the role of youth and the importance of their empowerment, participation, and well-being. Nearly 20 targets across six SDGs are strongly focused on youth: Zero Hunger (SDG-2), Quality Education (SDG-3), Gender Equality (SDG-5), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG-8), Reduced Inequalities (SDG-10), and Climate Action (SDG-13), emphasising active participation of youth in sustainable livelihood. While youth are a significant population and their role and active participation are viewed important for societal functioning and nation building, therefore, the role of youth in achieving SDGs by 2030 will be imperative. Besides exclusion of SDGs 12, 13, 14 respectively due to unavailability of data in India and SDG 17 as not included in the national indicator framework, the NITI Aayog's Baseline Report is limited in providing comprehensive achievements of or targets for youth in India up to 2030. Youth, being considered as an active participant of SDGs success, face challenges in achieving these goals particularly slum youth as they deprive of enabling and safe environment, quality of food, education and support system etc.

To understand the problems and challenges of slum youth with regard to SDGs, the study explores the capabilities of slum youth such as education, hands on experience and determination and the challenges in achieving their potential livelihood viz., lack of social capital and financial capital perceived as a threat to their livelihood.

Livelihood issues of Slum Youth
From the UN Habitat definition of slum, it is inferred that the slum

youth live in a condition without basic infrastructure facilities, and prone to health issues and lacking safety and security that deprives them of any moral support to take a leap (UN 2008). Due to their vulnerable situations the slum youth are denied opportunities to acquire decent, dignified and sustainable jobs. Such situations further put them under threat, consequently, they remain in poverty which further leads them to indulge in delinquency, drug addiction, alcoholism, prostitution, crime and anti-social behaviours. Despite many initiatives taken up by the governments at State and Central levels in light of the National Youth Policy (2014) that emphasises on creation of a productive workforce, strong and healthy generation, instilling social values and promoting community services and to facilitate participation in civic engagements, a large number of youth still remain unemployed owing to various reasons.

Rationale of the Vyasarpadi slum in North Chennai
The study analyses the livelihood opportunities of slum youth of Vyasarpadi, North Chennai which is known for risk and deviant behaviours and a place for migrants, Dock labourers and criminal activities. In spite of modern technology development and governance outreach, the study area is under developed and mostly associated with anti-social elements. The Don Bosco Beatitudes School[5] acts as a rehabilitation cum Youth Association centre for the youth around this area. Besides, Ambedkar College of Arts and Science, Government higher secondary schools and NGOs are the various resource centres for the youth in this area. The negative elements present in the community are substance abuse, hide out for gangsters, flood prone area with lack of proper drainage facilities, lack of safe drinking water and shortage of water during summer. These negativity becomes major hurdle for the youth in getting jobs and even getting marriage proposals from outside Vyasarpadi. The area was purposefully chosen to analyse the socio-economic conditions of slum youth and their aspiration

[5]It is a nonprofit organization founded by Fr. Orpheus Mantovani, an Italian Salesian missionary on 8th December in 1964 and since then extending welfare services to the slum dwellers especially to children and youth.

towards entrepreneurship and to determine the potential opportunities and threats for livelihood perceived by youth.

The study area has demonstrated successfully various theoretical concepts on slums such as Maslow's Need Hierarchy (John 2007), social exclusion (Silver 1994), McClelland's need achievement (Royle and Hall 2012) and status withdrawal (Hagen, 1963). Theory of slum growth (Stokes 1962) relates to Vyasarpadi slum as it depicts slum of despair as the inhabitants of the Vyasarpadi got struck with lower standards and lost their hope of inclining to higher standards. The Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory (John 2007) associates the conditions of Vyasarpadi slum youth. The Social Exclusion Theory (Silver 1994) justifies that the slum youth are being excluded in the society because of various factors. McClelland's Need for Achievement suggests that individuals are motivated by three drives like, achievement, motivation and power. In the case of Vyasarpadi, the slum youth despite having motivation, need a support system to strengthen and sharpen their goals. According to withdrawal of status is the instrumental for changes in personality formation. Status withdrawal happens when members of some social group perceive that their purposes and values in life are not respected by the groups in the society they respect, and whose esteem they value. Hagen emphasizes that the creativity of a disadvantaged minority group is the main source of entrepreneurship.

Socio-Economic status of the slum youth in study area
Majority of the youth belong to the age group of 18-22 and a very few were above 26 years of age. It is observed that 18-22 is the age where they need guidance and support to choose the right livelihood choices and career planning. Nearly three fourth of the participants were male and one fourth was female. Majority of the respondents were scheduled caste, one of the weaker sections of the society. In slum areas both male and female engage in the workforce, but when it comes to training, female participation seems to be less enthusiastic in comparison to male participants. Motivation to participate in training programs was found less

among the women as they were not aware of opportunities for livelihood.

Less than half percent of the respondents were students who are yet to decide their career. It is a good indicator that at least one third of the respondents are in formal education and pursuing their graduation from Vyasarpadi slum. Percentage of attendance shows the regularity and the commitment among the slum youth towards participation in education. Though 2/3rd of them have their higher secondary education degrees, they lack employability skills.

Majority of the respondents (92 %) said that they have toilet and drainage facilities. This shows that the slum dwellers have access to toilet and drainage facilities under the Urban Community Development Programme. Majority depends on government water supply through pipelines, and a very few depend on bore well water. It also reveals that 88% of respondents take rice twice a day but there is a lack of awareness of the nutritious level of the food youths are having. Similarly, though it divulges that the majority has access to drinking water and drainage systems, the respondents were not aware of the quality and quantity of water they get.

Aspirations of slum youth towards entrepreneurship:
Generally, McClelland's *Need for Achievement Theory* supports study findings as majority (84%) have strong desire to take up entrepreneurship and are willing to take up moderate risk by limiting the investment to a maximum of 3 lakhs Indian Rupees. They show inclination (72 %) to undergo training to acquire basic skills in the domain field. Most (76%) of them choose to take up service areas such as mobile service shops, gyms, and mechanic shops, especially men. Whereas girls prefer tailoring, tuition centre and old age home. This finding clearly states that the majority of the slum youth have entrepreneurial intentions and are willing to start enterprise at smaller lives and desire to choose the service sector based on their social commitment and observation.

Slum youth perception on opportunities and threats for entrepreneurship:

The National Youth Policy of India-2014, states that SC/ST/OBC youth and women have a considerable number of policies targeted at them to promote equity and inclusion. These policies attempt to mainstream individuals from these groups into society from an early age, with the objective that successive generations will be able to benefit and move out of disadvantage and poverty. There are many Governmental and NGOs functioning like a support system for promoting entrepreneurship through providing finance, skill development, mentoring and capacity building that will address the issues stated by the respondents as threats and challenges. It was also found that the respondents themselves were able to identify the livelihood opportunities in the locality. This shows their keenness for business. As the concept of sustainable Livelihood is to involve the local people to let their knowledge, perceptions, and interests be heard. The slum youth have the ability to express their ideas and able to choose a livelihood by assessing their environment.

Majority (76%) of them are aware of the supportive organisation through the workshop at RGNIYD held at the end of October 2018. Majority (68%) of them specified BYST (Bharatiya Yuva Shakthi Trust)[6] as the supportive organisation for youth entrepreneurship. One third of the respondents felt training as their opportunity as it will provide exposure and mentoring support to them. One fourth of the respondents felt lack of skill and lack of support as their threats respectively. Nearly one fourth of the respondents felt competitors, confidence and domain knowledge as their challenge respectively.

Nearly half of the respondents aim to take up self-employment to become opportunity providers to others.

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[6]A non-profit organisation serving for empowering youth to turn their business ideas into profitable enterprises, with guidance and support of a mentor and one of its chapters is located in Velacheri, Chennai.

Whereas a few of the respondents are interested in services such as running an old age home or taking tuition classes for kids in the neighbourhood. All the participants are ambitious and have set their livelihood goals that need to be nourished. One third of the population (36%) felt training was an opportunity to provide exposure and mentoring support to them. Organizations like Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board and Don Bosco Youth Centres can conduct entrepreneurial training programmes to youth who have identified potential livelihood opportunities in their localities. Thus, nationalised banks may encourage slum youth with flexible funding and repayment support to encourage entrepreneurship in them. It was observed that most of them were able to identify their livelihood opportunities after participation in the livelihood workshop held at RGNIYD which has a positive impact of the training objectives, content and delivery.

One fourth of the respondents (28%) felt lack of skill and lack of support as their threats and a few felt lack of finance and competitors as threats. It was recognized that social identity was acting as a threat to employability in reputed organisations. Nearly one fourth (24%) of the respondents felt competitors, confidence and knowledge as their challenges. Their support system needs to be identified or formed to build their confidence and knowledge to overcome these challenges.

Likewise challenges highlighted by National Youth Policy and the findings also confirm that lack of knowledge on entrepreneurship, and lack of confidence, lack of skill and support as the major challenges and threat to the slum youth. Therefore, a strong support system can be provided to the youth through Government, NGOs, financial and educational institutions to guide, train and fund for their entrepreneurial initiatives to achieve the objectives and goals of National Youth Policy as well as SDGs.

Recommendations of Framework of Implementation
The young entrepreneurs in youth should be mentored and guided continuously. Support systems should be made to function

effectively in addressing issues of youth, especially challenges related to their livelihood. The youth should be encouraged to function as an organised group or youth collective under a youth club or association, irrespective of differences. Setting up of Youth Resource Centres for slum youth will cater to the needs of physical, social, psychological, emotional, informational, occupational and recreational needs. Such centres should be made available in all communities covering youth both in and outside the education system. These centres should be fully equipped and capable to provide business skills training, financial support and mentoring on business development by having a strong network with Government and NGOs. As emphasized by the ILO (2013), nurturing entrepreneurial interest in slum youth on green jobs will pay the way for a sustainable future. Based on the major findings of the present study, a framework (See Table-1) has been developed in line with the National Youth Policy for ensuring meaningful participation of slum youth in the livelihood development programmes as livelihood is not solely dependent on economics and education but also depends on Physical, Social and Psychological development.

Table: 1 Youth Framework of Implementation of SDGs

National Youth Policy 2014 (Objectives)	National Youth Policy 2014 (Priorities)	Perception on threats for livelihood	Means to Overcome Threats	Role of Stakeholders (Govt.,/NGOs/INGOs etc.,)
Create a productive workforce that can make a sustainable contribution to India's economic development	1.Education 2.Employment and Skill development 3.Entrepreneurship	Lack of skill, Lack of moral and family support.	Networking of organisations that provide training on skill. Introducing personalised training as mentoring, and on the job training. Creation of awareness to all youth through mass media	Enhancing efficiency of the skill training institutes Facilitation of outreach of such skill training institutes Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects consider on the job skill training to the youth. CSR may initiate Youth Resource Centres. NGOs can facilitate linking the youth with resources.

Develop a strong and healthy generation equipped to take on future challenges	4. Health and healthy lifestyle 5. Sports	Lack of balanced diet. Lack of interest in sports.	Ensure a healthy lifestyle through education.	Provide the provision of playground and recreation facilities in the slum community. Provide formal training in sports Awareness of low cost nutritious food must reach out to the slum youth. Special care to be provided for youth motivation to engage in purposeful leisure time activities and cultural activities.
Instil social values and promote community service to build national ownership.	6.Promotion of social values 7.Community engagement	Lack of encouragement. Unfulfillment of safety needs. Ineffectiveness of government organisations.	Strengthening the functioning of Youth organisation. Ensuring Enrolment of students in NSS, NCC at school and college levels. Encourage Youth led Organizations.	Involve youth participation by providing safe space for voicing out and deciding for their community. Engage the young people with organizations working for community development and build networks for them within and outside the community.
Facilitate participation and civic engagement at levels of governance	8. Participation in politics and governance 9. Youth engagement	Ineffective youth political groups. Lack of youth parliament.	Promoting youth Parliament and providing exposure to the parliament session for youth like youth parliament in Sri Lanka.	Decentralising power to community level youth organisation to take decision. Promoting Youth Clubs and Youth Led organizations towards civic engagement activities and to facilitate community support for youth.
Support youth at risk and create equitable opportunity for all disadvantaged and marginalised youth.	10. Inclusion 11. Social justice	Voice of marginalised is not heard. Political influence in availing opportunities.	Representation of all youth (inclusive representation) in youth parliament. Dissemination of powers to youth to decide about youth programmes.	Identifying youth workers /volunteers to work with youth at risk. Resource centre for marginalised and disadvantaged in every slum community to avail their privileges and entitlements and rights.

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