



South Asian People's Solidarity can't be made without Civil Society participation in SAARC

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Who are the Civil Society?

There are different conceptual meaning might be stand of the terms "Civil". The meaning of the word "Civil" is a counterpart against military system and again Civil means the citizen characterized as social and general people those are exist out of state political and administrative power. But if we want to define the terms "Civil Society", means a specific group of people or citizen those are playing a significant role in different political and socio-economic issues keeping themselves out of state political and administrative power structure. The civil society position would be always an indifference and non partisan role and recommendation & views also very fair and substantive. That's why it's assumed that, a responsive and patriotic civil society is very indispensable for state to uphold the culture & values.

So the above point of view the civil society role is important for economic development also of any developing state.

If we analyze the role of the government of developing countries can see that, they have been made as puppet of developed countries. That's why the developed countries are able to play a vested role which causing deprivation the interest of poor people.

- a. The developed countries control the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) according their own interest in developing countries. As result the valuable foreign currencies (those are earned through export and getting remittance from overseas wage earners) going back as profit to their own pocket. The poor countries are not bale to absorb the benefit of such FDI.
- b. In the name trade liberalization through IFI's (International Financial Institutions), the native industry, foreign trade and service sectors have been privatization and hand over to the Multinational Companies for giving chance to make profit and repatriation the asset.
- c. The rich countries also privileges indirectly to different racial and communal conflict in South Asia region and try to grief the government of developing countries.
- d. Having the chance of above so called insurgency the rich countries persuade the government to increase their military expenditure which is ensuring the escalation of arms sale in South Asia.

But South Asia has a long history and heritage of living coexistence with solidarity and common culture. This solidarity was remained stable in this region before coming of British and people were living with peace. The civil society can bring this "peace issue" in front of people and try to build up opinion for pressurizing to government. As a result the government might change their role and behavior towards poor.

Secondly this is fact that, the agenda to be discussed in SAARC summit have been set up and finalized through the meeting of respective ministerial. But this process of finalizing the agenda people participation is always ignored. That's why the SAARC leaders are not able to focus the real situation of

400 million poor livelihoods along with expected future and sustainable direction.

In this context the civil society are working together to build up peoples view on SAARC future and possible direction for facing global challenge. We think that this people's view should reflect in SAARC summit to take appropriate decision for participated leaders.

There are having common systems of civil society participation in different meeting or summit of international organization like IMF, WB and ADB. In case of European Union is mandatory to facilitate the civil society participation in their parliamentary meeting. In that meeting civil society recommendations are received actively and implemented in many cases. But there is no pave in case of SAARC summit.

So we demand to South Asian leaders for facilitating the civil society as participant and panel discussant in SAARC summit.

Our Demands

Poverty Alleviation: MDG & SDG

- Building up SAARC Poverty Alleviation Fund and its proper implementation. Formation of SAARC Development Bank to be free from WB, IMF dependency.
- Building up SAARC Economic Union, Free Trade Area, Customs Union and Common Market with giving preference and technical assistance to the LDCs.
- Visa Free Movement for Unskilled and Semi-Skilled Workers within SAARC Countries. Developing a common position in SAARC on free movement of unskilled and semi-skilled workers all over the globe under Mode-4 of GATS.
- SAARC countries commitment on not to liberalize the service sector like Education, Health, Water etc.

Environment, Agriculture and Climate Change

- Protecting traditional agricultural system and seed preservation.
- Agreement among SAARC countries to protect natural forest & wet-land and agreement to reduce air and water pollution and CO2 emission.
- Declaration to stop dumping of hazardous, toxic and atomic wastes at SAARC region.
- Enacting the Risk management issues for Climate change in development programs.
- Setting up a regional research and monitoring cell on climate change.
- Commitment on to stop commercialization of agriculture and GMO at SAARC region.
- Commitment to protect indigenous knowledge and agriculture.
- Protecting Organic resources by listing the organic

resources under Sui Genesis of WTO. Setting up regional Gene Bank.

- Commitment to reserve environment friendly agriculture with appropriate subsidy and balancing agricultural subsidy among the SAARC countries.
- Setting up South Asian Share market for Carbon Trading.

SAFTA

- Effective cooperation has to be provided by NLDCs for export diversification.
- State will provide and ensure the possible trade facilitation to develop the entrepreneurship.
- State will reform their tax and revenue collection system and income distribution policy which will remove income disparity.
- State will adopt the investment policy on how to invest foreign direct investment in productive sectors
- The labor law and working environment have to ensure in their respective countries.
- SAARC will be declared as free from GM food. MNCs be band for investment those are proved as environmentally degraded.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

- State will have authority to amend the terms and conditions as and when necessary basis and it will work as owner of the investment so that either state can easily accept or reject any proposal.
- All foreign investment should have share in local stock exchange.
- FDI related financial and other report should be publicized in the newspaper and will have transparency and accountability to the civil society.
- Reviewing Investment policy of South Asian Countries, it is found that FDI get much access compared to National Direct Investment (NDI). NDI will be given priority and treated with the same criteria of FDI.
- Major portion of FDI in SAARC countries including Bangladesh has come into service sector where profit margin is much higher. In 2004, out of total \$660.8 million foreign investment, \$237 invested in the telecommunication sector, a share of 35.93% of the total FDI in Bangladesh. FDI should come into heavy industry.
- South Asian countries should not allow any sort of FDI which exploit natural resources, environment and ecology.
- FDI in this region should be labour intensive.

Militarization

- To build up a SAARC cooperative security council to protect the Non state Terrorist Factor.
- To discourage religion based fundamentalist education and to promote scientific and secular education.
- To originate a common curriculum to promote South Asian Culture.
- Decentralized employment should be created for the young.
- To demolish religious fanatic politics and to promote culture of tolerance through public media.
- To increase budget in Poverty Reduction, Education, Human Development etc. and reduce military expenditure gradually.
- Let civil society participate and speak in the formal SAARC Summit.