

Rights-Based Approach (RBA) and Development in context of CNI-SBSS

“Speak for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

Proverbs 31: 8-9

Basis

God is committed to justice and has a heart for the poor. With the increasing involvement of the Churches in development work, it is becoming clear that the poverty we face is due to the injustice. In order to bring the lasting change, the causes of this injustice need to be tackled. To do so, we often need to work with and also against those - who have the power to bring about change. Therefore on behalf of the poor and needy to address underlying causes of poverty, and to bring in justice and to support good development through influencing the policies and practices of the powerful, becomes one of the most important tasks of SBSS. It is based on political theology.

Our position

In the year 2000, the CNI-SBSS embraced *“Towards Building Communities of Resistance and Hope”* as its theme for the decade. Through the years, CNI has upheld its theological principle of justice and grace. The concept of Rights Based Approach (RBA) streams from the notion of justice and equality. Time and again, it is proved throughout the world that when people advocate and fight for justice, demand dignified life and participate in the decision making process, they succeed. In this regard, the ecumenical family believes that justice comes from God and it underlines the strong bond between the God, human being and His creation.

After intense Bible studies, debates and discussion, the CNI-SBSS affirmed and adopted RBA to its development intervention making it an integral component of the perspective plan and activities. For example, CNI SBSS sees the effective implementation of the nine social security schemes (considered as rights by the Supreme Court’s order) on food security as a development activity but the people having the rights to access and control over the food is a rights initiative. As affirmed in different international and national covenants, that every human being is born with the right to live a dignified live and life in its fullness, SBSS too has tried to voice the issue of human rights and development.

For SBSS, to practice Rights based approach, movement building and political mobilization has been the key strategy where we want to sensitize the community on economic, social, cultural and political rights, so that community has the power to negotiate and bargain with the political authority and form an alternative political force to acquire livelihood means.

The key strategy for development on the other side focuses on building the capabilities and assets of the community in terms of awareness and capacity-building. Development focuses mostly on the relief, rescue and welfare where some people help other people to attain some economic benefit.

Development initiative primarily result pseudo economical incremental development while struggle for rights continues for dignity and participation in decision making process.

Right is an approach for attaining self dignity, social equality and accountability for the community. SBSS considers it as a step towards transformative justice. Rights are primary factors in political process. It transforms social capital into politically potent process.

SBSS strongly believes neo-liberal policies and globalization need to be resisted. For SBSS, rights based approach may be based on 1) good-will approach and non-confrontational way but on the other hand it may also move towards 2) willingness for resistance where people initiate civil disobedience.

'Created in the image of God, all human beings are equal!' being principally aware of this and with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Framework and the Constitution of India as fundamental basis SBSS to adopted RBA. Rights are one of the key approaches for CNI SBSS' involvement with community.

How do we practice RBA?

CNI-SBSS follows the 4-A approach while addressing any of the issues. This four "A" approach consists of Analysis and Research, Assistance, Advocacy and Action. (Not necessarily in a sequence above always but used as per the need or requirement of the communities.) For building movement and an alternative political force, SBSS sees the right-bearers holding the duty bearers accountable as an important factor.

Approach	How we practice
Analysis of the manifestations and root causes that underlies poverty and exclusion	Identifying the issues , undertaking extensive primary and secondary data collection on the issue Analysis of the trends from the data and developing information
Assistance in terms of emancipation and empowerment of people	Sharing the information Awareness generation Giving capacities and assets
Advocacy those who carry responsibility accountable	Forming peoples alliances in terms of peoples organization and organizing peoples centered advocacy and lobbying and networking with like minded individuals
Action more specifically is of political nature, a movement to make the right bearers hold the duty bearers accountable in the process	Organizing rallies, demonstrations, Dharnas

SBSS no longer believes in undertaking any single event but positions itself as an organization conducting series of process-oriented activities under one campaign. All the campaigns lead by SBSS should address towards movement-building and political mobilization

The Process

Adopting RBA with 4 'A's in movement building is easily explained below in a Hindi catchphrase widely popular in the communities:

Abhiyaan se Andolan aur Adhikar mein Hissedari

It can be explained as – Acquiring equal partnership over the rights through the campaigns and movements that would ensure life and livelihood. Here awareness, awakening and sensitization on the economic, social, cultural and political rights enable marginalized communities to negotiate the policy matters with the duty bearers. Further, acquiring political (decision-making) positions and then exercising political authority capacitate and make them capable of developing independent agenda for their better tomorrow.

On various issues, community- based organization (CBO)s are built as People's Organization (PO)s. With due political agenda enhancing spectrum, stakeholders and area, POs are developed to ignite people's movements which in due course of time emerge as an alternative political force to ensure policies and practices in favor of poor.

Conclusion

To fulfill the mission of Christ, the Rights-Based Approach is an empowering intervention process, strategy among the vulnerables/marginalized communities like dalits/ adivasis, women, children, through which social, political, economic and cultural rights of the said communities are ensured. This approach enhances the collective self-confidence of the marginalized communities and encourages them for ensuring their entitlement on resources.

This is a world that views in favour of people/community struggling for acquisition of their rights. None of the activities or programme is detached from the Rights of the People; the Restoration of the Rights is the core component in the whole process!

Infrastructure material development gets backseat as we believe that people themselves are capable enough to build their futures once they are awakened and made aware of their rights. None of the organizations have such resources that would fulfill the needs of the. So this is a collective journey to the land where there is righteousness and justice...