

INFLUENCING NETIZENS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DIGITAL LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

This This paper explores the kind of leadership that is required for the modern world of digital explosion that is suave, fast and often bring winds of change in short span of time as opposed to the person centered Traditional Leadership, that takes years to influence the vast masses that are digital centric today. Not only that the leader communicates a message, but the digital medium(Media) he uses becomes the message and a strong brand. In this paper I argue that to mobilise the support of the modern day citizens who are found in modern digital playgrounds, digital social platforms, and digital political arena, using digital and virtual currencies whom we call netizens, a Digital Development Paradigm is required. The same platforms we accuse of deviant intent, must be put to meticulous use by strong leadership towards sustainable development. We had seen a great expectation with which people elected Narendra Modi following his digital stints in politics. We had seen Jallikattu unifying the netizens of Tamilnadu and Tamils in general. Thus this paper contributes to the debate on Digital Leadership and how much of significance it can have in shaping up sustainable development process that is much required for the ever soaring digital world as opposed to the traditional person centered leadership especially towards an urgent call to bring in sustainability in the modern development process.

KEYWORDS: Leadership, Sustainability, Development, Social Media, Netizens

The last Indian parliamentary election created a great expectation with which people elected Narendra Modi following his digital stints in politics. We had seen Jallikattu unifying the netizens of Tamilnadu and Tamils in general, from all over the world. The same can be said of the meticulous planning for social media campaign with the aim of targeting voters in the case of President Obama during the previous US Presidential election. Thus this paper contributes to the debate on Digital Leadership and how much of significance it (Digital Leadership) can have in shaping up sustainable development process that is much required for the ever soaring digital world as opposed to the traditional person centered leadership especially towards an urgent call to bring in sustainability in the modern development process.

THE PROBLEMS WITH MODERN LEADERSHIP

Nurturing Leadership in a Geopolitical Ecosystem

Developing leadership directly refers to its context as geopolitical ecosystem, where the land, the geographical location, its demographic constitution and the resources that the land is invested with play a vital role to an upcoming leader. It is the leadership that supports the abuse or protects the right use of the local wealth of a geographical area. Studying the industrial support system of a local leader will tell us clearly about the uses or abuses of the natural resources of the area. There is so much of power exercised in using or abusing the resources and wealth. That is why every leader truly operates within a geopolitical system. Therefore nurturing leadership involves the true democratic ideals of participation of all and the. There were huge gaps in our leadership that ... At the same time there were great and pioneering works in this field presented by Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha in describing the broad ecological impacts of economic development in independent India.(Baviskar, 1997).

Leaderships need to be nurtured with the ideals proposed by such stalwarts.

Manager Vs Leader

We truly need leaders who push heavily the agenda that is central to the development of all stakeholders on planet earth and not the mere agenda of the industry leaders who aim to plunder the natural resources without a will to restore equilibrium that will balance the growth equation of all the beings and stakeholders. Digital leadership simply needs a dynamic leader with a lot of intuitive understanding than the skills of mere management. Theoretically all managers are leaders since leadership is one of their functions among four major functions of a manager, including planning, organizing, leading and controlling. Because managers are responsible for carrying out the four functions of management, their primary concern is to accomplish organizational goals. Managers get paid to get things done in organizations.(Hartzell n.d.)

The best way of looking at a leader is that he is not given a management position with hierarchy. "That is, a person can become a leader without a formal title. Any individual can become a leader because the basis of leadership is on the personal qualities of the leader. People are willing to follow the leader because of who he or she is and what the leader stands for, not because they have to due to the authority bestowed onto him or her by the organization".(Hartzell n.d.) Digital leadership for sustainable development requires to influence netizens with his leadership more than his managerial skills. In fact, as an effective leader he can delegate the organizing part of it to a manager.

PERSONALITY OF THE TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP VS MODERN BRANDED LEADERSHIP

The personality of the historical traditional leadership is quite interesting to study. "As a leader he

challenges the status quo... He is visionary, change-savvy, creative, agile and adaptive".(Hartzell n.d.)It must be noted that the power he wields brings about voluntary followers although it might be temporary and limited to one or two great causes. It should also equally noted that the reach he visualizes will be limited to the actual physical reach he has or his followers have with direct meetings. The modern branded leadership has a managerial structure to advertise and create brand awareness of the leader.

Direct Personal Branding Vs Digital Personal Branding

The process involved in creating a unique name and image for a product in the consumers' mind, mainly through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme. Branding aims to establish a significant and differentiated presence in the market that attracts and retains loyal customers. Gandhi's branding could be termed as Direct Personal Branding as opposed to Obama and Narendra Modi which could be called Digital Personal Branding. While the former relied very much on creating personal meetings and direct physical contacts and later using delegated influence through the local leadership which again would emulate and copy the style, habits and belief systems proclaimed by the leader. In a Scenario where it happens through digital branding, like in the case of Narendra Modi and Obama, They did have direct meetings , but that would be again be strengthened by a mediated reach through television, social media exchanges with the help of brand management services and brand managers. Here the delegation works from the background and is delegated to a team that is anonymous largely, whereas, the delegation in direct personal branding is visible and empirical not virtual or digital. For example in many cities the physical presence of Narendra Modi was vicariously presented with outdoor LED screen advertising videos.

Communication Intent Vs Communicated Content

While leaderships are nurtured it is important in today's context that there are considerations and learning from the point of view of its content itself and how the content is perceived by the recipient, in this case the citizens. A value based content that is circulated will bring out a political rhetoric that can be understood by the citizens in various different ways depending on the context and its timing. Similarly the right content will lose its sheen among digital citizens if it is timed wrongly and if it circulated in a wrong context. "A prominent example of negative publicity is the Mitt Romney video in which he said that his job is not to worry about 47% of Americans who will definitely not vote for him. This video went viral days before voting was to take place and many regard this as the turning point in the 2012 presidential election."(Rohan Rodrigues n.d.:6).

Instant Access to Information Vs Delayed Delegated Access to Information

In a digital scenario, the access to information is almost instant for any follower or even to a citizen

who wishes to know. Most of what is spoken or communicated is spread almost instantly. It is also made available for future repeat communication for anyone who wants to use them. Whereas the traditional leadership demands that a citizen to have a first-hand experience directly attends the meeting. For those who cannot attend, it never offered many options other than newspaper reports. You cannot have a feel as if you are directly listening to a speech or watching a demonstration or protest of the leader.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY IN A DIGITAL CONTEXT

Leadership or Politics may be close to a leader. That need not necessarily help him to handle his communications and media intelligently. He may be a master in most leadership qualities. Most leaders are novices in learning to use digital means to achieve their goals. He needs to develop it through planned activities.

Leader as a Student or Learner in Today's Digital Context

The 2103 parliamentary election in India opened up to all political leaders a possibility that was only considered as a hypothetical probability. Until then a distant and yet a much watched example came from the US election in which Obama took to the digital platforms especially social media to exercise his digital leadership by reaching out to his voter population, citizens and even the fence sitters who were not willing to even vote and shown a remarkable result. Learning lessons from US elections, Narendra Modi of the BJP party was willing to become a student in learning digital platforms to reach out to his followers and the voters at large. He had set up a 60-member cell in his campaign unit which worked for 5 months to engage the voters through social media.(Rathi n.d.) He really did capitalize on the gap left by several other parties including the main opposition party, the Congress Party, in using the social media wooing India's young voters, who formed the largest group of new voters in the general elections of 2014. 50% of the 1.25% of the 1.25 billion population of India were in their early 20s!(Rathi n.d.)

It is needless to say that similar attempts were made by Kejriwal of Aam Admi Party and Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi of the Congress Party with good success rates but not with a complete faith in the results that the digital platforms could offer. Looking at the planning, execution and the results brought out by Narendra Modi's digital leadership, one can say that he surrendered himself to believing in the various campaigns his team initiated. Although he himself was not in tune with modern digital leadership platforms, he adopted himself and was willing to learn starting from taking a selfie by himself. "The social media effect was huge for the BJP. ... They really understood that social media is an extended version of the campaign trail": Michael Kugelman, a senior program associate for South and Southeast Asia at the Woodrow WilsonCenter".(Rathi n.d.)

Today more than ever all are exposed to a lot of digital content right at the auspices of his palm and lap and within his house. Today's kids have grown up with all possible new technology. They have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age."(Prensky 2001:1). As the communication tools like desktops, laptops and mobile phones have increased, so also the content in various form as movies, videos, games, and messages, through various platforms like email, SMS, MMS, Audio and Video Messages, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn and the like. "Today's average college grads have spent less than 5,000 hours of their lives reading, but over 10,000 hours playing video games (not to mention 20,000 hours watching TV). Computer games, email, the Internet, cell phones and instant messaging are integral parts of their lives."(Prensky 2001:1).

Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants

This switchover from a direct campaign mode to a viral digital campaign was not easy. Marc Prensky speaks about two such situations from an educational background with the two distinct ideas and contexts of a teacher which very much is relevant for political leaders too. He developed the concepts : 'Digital Natives' and 'Digital Immigrants'. It is exactly similar to the battle between a digitally impoverished teachers and a digitally rich and knowledgeable student.

"Our students have changed radically. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach."(Prensky 2001:1). The surprising statistics that show that India accounts for 91million internet users as of 2014 and by the 2019 general elections in India, social media will have a 60% impact on voters.(Rathi n.d.) This will change the political and digital leadership options drastically. Present day citizens are no longer in a traditional system to be easily led by the traditional and digitally impoverished political leadership.

Today's citizens have changed exponentially from the great cultural past to the most colourful digital present. Their tastes, food, styles, learning habits, entertainment and spending patterns have changed almost in its entirety. A really big discontinuity has taken place. "One might even call it a "singularity" - an event which changes things so fundamentally that there is absolutely no going back. This so-called "singularity" is the arrival and rapid 20th dissemination of digital technology in the last decades of the century."(Prensky 2001).

"What should we call these "new" students of today? Some refer to them as the N-[for Net]-gen or D-[for digital]-gen. But the most useful designation I have found for them is Digital Natives. Our students today are all "native speakers" of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet." (Prensky 2001). "So what does that make the rest of us? Those of us who were not born into the digital world but have, at

some later point in our lives, become fascinated by and adopted many or most aspects of the new technology are, and always will be compared to them, Digital Immigrants."(Prensky 2001)

Making Inroads to the Will of the People

One of the biggest of problems of the present day leaders is their being traditional in their approach to communication and in using the means of communication. In fact, they are not accepted by the suave digital citizens of today who receive information really fast and they like to parallel process and multi-task. They prefer visuals and graphics before seeing text rather than the opposite.(Prensky, 2001). "Digital Immigrants don't believe their students can learn successfully while watching TV or listening to music, because they (the Immigrants) can't."(Prensky, 2001).

It is quite interesting to note how Digital leaderships emerged in the recent past in different parts of the world, especially in US and India. Making inroads into mobilizing people's will depends on how we perceive the underlying problems. "Barack Obama's presidential campaigns recognized that the biggest hurdle for youth voting is registration and hence actively appealed to his supporters to do so. His campaign uploaded videos where he asked voters to commit to voting and directed them to a link on his website where users could both register to vote and commit to vote for him."(Rohan Rodrigues n.d.)

The social media results were huge and they show clearly that BJP and Narendra Modi in particular had made inroads into the will of the general public and especially the voters. "18.1 million Likes on Narendra Modi's Facebook page, second only to Obama at 40 million Likes. Modi, however, has a greater growth rate on Facebook (1.171%) compared to Obama's 0.3%. He became the 6th most popular world leader on Twitter. His victory message: "India has won. Good days ahead," was retweeted 69,000 times. 2.2 million volunteers enlisted for his campaign via social media, and studies estimate that 40% of India's election outcome was impacted by the social media buzz!"(Rathi n.d.)

Digital leadership today has no other option in such social media penetrated world, but to bring out a splendid blending of the much glorified, futuristic technological innovation in communication and the age old values of responsibility towards sustainability for the welfare of the millions of other beings to whom this universe is a home. This aims to bring out a blueprint of development fit for today's development goals without disregarding the responsibility of sustainability. This continuous learning about modern digital communication systems and a profound understanding of the ecosystem will also redefine the real meaning of sustainability, the usefulness of modern gadgets and the use of development communication as a tool in the responsible hands of futuristic leadership. Since the effectiveness of the use of modern means of digital communication has been repeatedly proved great success in various geopolitical instances in the recent years, it is important that we make these powerful tools

to serve the much elevated goals of humankind to live, share and use the resources in utmost altruism .

This is the ultimate way of making inroads into mobilizing the will of the people towards a solid foundations of nature and ecology and the fair and sustainable use of the resources they provide on which will rest the foundations of the planet earth and the universal systems.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP PROCESSES ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Understanding the process of leadership through digital means requires from a leader a great amount of foresight and the willingness to delegate his works through a vicarious digital media solutions.

Direct Communication and Personal Branding for Leadership

Any leadership process for a leader begins with a direct contact and creating an indelible mark on the citizens in general and followers in particular. That direct communication and the personal branding of the leader goes a long way much before entering into a digital branding. The world has never seen someone like Gandhi as the greatest example of exceptional leadership with direct communication and personal branding. He had made a continuous emphasis on spiritual and bodily authenticity in conjunction with all-Indian unity and protest against British rule.(Föllmer 2014:73) As we know, Gandhi's fasts were the greatest expressions of his style of leadership. Gandhi's use of fasting as a tool—or, as he referred to it, a “weapon”—in his broad-based sociopolitical work is well known and has been given careful consideration by a number of close associates and scholars.(Alter 2000)

Long Term Goals Demand Instant and Continuous Communication

Although, I mentioned about the importance of a direct branding before all else, it does demand a instant and continuous communication and social media channel for making the brand go viral. Today's digital leadership needs to handle relevant content to make it go viral among not only the followers also the general fence-sitters, who do not show clear signs of any political affiliation.

"Issues which the urban youth are passionate about are not those being talked about by the current day political leaders."(Rohan Rodrigues n.d.:4) "Each post must be tracked to figure out what worked and did not work in terms of generating engagement. Sentiment analysis on comments could be used to find out what is finding favour among the young voters."(Rohan Rodrigues n.d.:4) The mere fact that the digital leadership aims at a long term and sustainable development goals, demands that a consistent communication flow is strategized to keep the netizens to effect a change in the call to action towards the long terms goals as proposed by the digital leadership.

Inherent Problems of the Present Day Digital Communication

Planning, execution, analytics and automation are some of the most important issues around which the present day communications rest. The reach, call to action, participation, constant interactions are the keywords for success for digital leadership. All these were triggered with the appropriate use of the emotional connect with users. “This helps to push followers to share content from your page and drives visibility, bringing more hits onto the candidate's page.”(Rohan Rodrigues n.d.:4) Although logical considerations are at play when planning digital communications, it is ultimately the clever messaging sent out to evoke emotional response, will pave way for a strong connect with the netizens. And so, the validity of the message sent is not verified by the netizens. He just has an emotional connect. That's what matters on digital platforms.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: AN UNEQUIVOCAL SUPREME AGENDA OF THE MODERNDAY LEADERSHIP

The word Development has become a misnomer in today's High-Tech digital world. The much coveted area of Industrial growth is affecting man's holistic growth and depleting all the natural resources without any responsibility for the future or for sustainability. It seems the ideas of Development and the goals of Sustainable ecology are diametrically opposed to each other from the way the industry plans their development disregarding the responsibility of today's users or abusers of natural resources. The speed with which the manipulation and framing of legal systems are formed says clearly one thing that the industry leaders and the social, political leaders are hand in glove with the mass mismanagement of the natural resources of the earth disowning the responsibility of such users towards the future of the society and their needs.

Developing and Propagating Sustainable Industrialization Models

There seems to be a control over the geopolitical systems by the industry leadership over how the natural resources of the nations should be used, valued and monetized and increase profitability of the industry. The governments of the world are expected to usher in more of industrial growth without assuming proportionate responsibility for its depletion from allowing the use of such perennial sources of life from the future generation and thus justifying the growth without assuming responsibility for sustainable development concerns. In short sustainability is sacrificed for any development initiated almost in all cases . Neither the industry leaders not political leaders claim responsibility for the massive destruction and depletion of natural wealth without accountability.“Ecological Marxists asserted that India's development policies had failed because they had not fundamentally changed the patterns of control over the means of production. The concentration of the

means if production in the hands of the state bureaucracy, the industrial elite and the rich preasants had skewed technological choices, production decisions and income distribution.”(Baviskar 1997)Long Term Goals Demand Instant and Continuous Communication.

Accountability and Transparency Made Digital

“The interests and priorities of these dominant classes created a mindset which saw industrialization and urbanization as the only path to development. The impoverishment of the working class and the impoverishment of the environment were seen to be inter-related.”(Baviskar 1997) “Ecological crises grew out of the inequities of control over, not only industry and land, but also other productive resources such as water, forests and pastures. A model of development based on uncontrolled industrialization was bound to fail because it destroyed both the natural resource base on which material prosperity is founded, as well as sources of livelihood of the poor. Such a model only served the short-term interests of the rich.”(Baviskar 1997) The key parameters for accountability and transparency lies in making the plans, action plans, achievements, failures and limitations digital and made available for the public to know, learn, question and understand. This is happening in many respects in some parts of India, like land registration, banking, and in many of the government projects. Unfortunately, what is made available is the information or data relating to respective citizen’s personal realm. What is required is the actual business deals, the money transacted, the tax levied, action taken, sanctioned announced and future plans of all public services either undertaken by the government or the private players or under Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. It is truly possible to share digitally.

UNDERSTANDING STAKEHOLDERS OF THE MODERN DAY DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM

The modern day sustainable development requires that there exist clearly laid out paradigms. Setting up definite digital development paradigms are the sure ways to bring about good governance among the stakeholders.

Management of Resources Through Digital Leadership

The democratic processes are guided, and used vicariously by the indirect democratic systems that acts on behalf of the people and thrusts their personal financial goals as indirect will of the people. The political, financial, social, legal, communication systems are controlled by individuals and private players whose rights are upheld by various states and governments that we have hardly any leadership that can reinstate balanced development without affecting ecological fabric that sustains us. There have been protests by various movements organized over air, water, traffic pollution and most of these movements have been fighting on a broad ecological agenda fighting for the control of natural resources like land,

soil, water, forests, minerals and air, by the elitist business projects that serve a few.(Patel 1997)

Jallikattu protest that shook the world by surprise is essentially as great example of how one simple expression of a cultural sport, that has deeper cultural significance, had implications on the long term development equations. There were about 20 lakhs protesting students and youth gathered on 20 January, 2017 alone(Janardhanan n.d.) and it was surprising to see how they were all fed and organized using digital solutions. Take for example how the food supply to so many of them were organized without any stampede or confusion itself presents us with a phenomenal research area. This could clearly signal to us how we could manage the resources when it comes to the sharing of natural resources with all legal frameworks and actual data.

Moving Beyond Geographical Boundaries

With the possibilities of social media, a digital leader can exercise his digital skills to reach out to a huge number of supporters even beyond the boundaries of a state or a country. It is possible to have supporters for a leader across continents using the instant reach of the social media today. To reach people across continents you do not need a specific permission or formalities to be fulfilled as you would do in a direct visit to reach out to them to those countries. Above all the issue of sustainable development is as much an Indian concern as much as a European or an American concern. Any imbalance in nature and ecology affects all living under this planet earth. It is possible to go beyond geographical boundaries in organizing since it is possible that the stakeholders are from various parts of the globe. There are many functional organizations provided their policies and strategies are clearly laid out with strict codes of standards. "The proof is out there. Wikipedia is, arguably, one of the most substantively and collaboratively governed websites on the Web, but it is also perceived as a site that fosters a high degree of freedom of expression."(Welchman n.d.)

Digital Global Governance

"Digital governance is a framework for establishing accountability, roles, and decision-making authority for an organization's digital presence—which means its websites, mobile sites, social channels, and any other Internet and Web-enabled products and services."(Welchman n.d.) For Digital governance to be successful we require a digital strategy and clearly laid out digital policies. "Introduction of Digital Governance is a way to ensure that common citizens have equal right to be a part of decision-making processes which affect them directly or indirectly, and influence them in a manner which best improves their conditions and the quality of lives."(Nath n.d.)

Digital governance models are being continuously evolved and it never limits itself to simple operations. As the Information Communication Technologies expand with newer applications and coded solutions, more and more governance models are being introduced through various online digital portals.

Some of the major breakthroughs were the Aadhar, PAN Cards, Buy and sell portals, employment, job portals and Online banking systems. Conflicts removal, Creating Knowledge societies, Financial support systems and Digital Selling and marketing spaces are some of the major areas where digital governance is expected to play a major role. Although this new found digital systems operate and offer plethora of possibilities, they are not devoid of risks and challenges. There are lots of threats on cybersecurity, hacking of the control systems, developing best viable operational models, reducing the cost are some of the issues directly affecting digital governance.

MAKING NETIZENS PARTNERS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The modern day development with sustainability as its focus needs a clearly laid out paradigm needs.

An Ecosystem for All

The digital platforms have been hijacked primarily by politicians at large to claim their stake to get into power and to sustain their political stints. The greatest danger of using these digital platforms can make our political leaders so self conscious that the original brand they project could become a spoiler and could prove to be a dangerous weapon in the hands of his political enemies. But, the same platforms in the hands of a right leader will see a participative, all inclusive tool for diverse things that should form an ecosystem for our common living today.

The planet earth is home to millions of living beings (species) like animals, plants, birds, and tiny organisms. Our use of digital platforms houses only our, human, petty fights for power, financials, business data and anything for personal branding and fame, that does emanate from mere earthly desires. A true leader has the moral obligation to include in his or her thinking, planning and communication of ideas, the vast spectrum of living beings that make our own existence possible. Anything that affects our forests for example affect the rainfall that we receive and the degradation of the soil and sound the death knell of a geographical area that gets completely unusable for the future.

Ecology has to be at the forefront of our development discussions even if the highly focused industrial world is avoiding it irresponsibly. "J.C. Kumarappa, the Gandhian economist who developed the blueprint for an ecologically sustainable village-centred economic order, was sidelined by the prevailing hegemonic ideal of a centralized and resource-intensive path of development." (Baviskar 1997) This happened not only for all those scholars who were vocal on sustainability as the core of developmental thought, but also for all people who inherited a deep sense of responsibility towards what we have inherited in terms of soil, hills, trees and climate, especially tribals and rural farmers practicing the traditional farming methods in order not to rip the earth of its natural riches and wealth.

Informing, Educating and Forming the Minds of the Mass: a Challenge

"The internet today is seen as a vital source of information, and people across the world are waking up to the power of social media in building relationships with their end consumers." (Rohan Rodrigues n.d.:1) Unfortunately, this explosion of information sharing happens not because of the great leadership that we have. It happens in spite of them. "Facebook is the world's largest online community with over a billion active users including 60 million plus in India. Similarly, Twitter has over 500 million active users and is invaluable as a tool to share instant updates." (Rohan Rodrigues n.d.:3). Yet we cannot still claim that the vast majority of the rural India has access to such explosion of information or content sharing. This still remains a challenge. Lack of affordable technology, lack of technology assisted farming, lack of initiatives and training for such population are some of the reasons. It will continue to remain so until the right kind of leadership will initiate the process through participatory and inclusive strategies.

Participatory and Inclusive Leadership for Ecological Sustainability

"The work done by K C Malhotra in collaboration with Madhav Gadgil has attempted to extend some of the insights provided by Irawati Karve on ecological aspects of the caste system. Gadgil and Malhotra seem to suggest that each caste by inheriting an occupational space also acquires an ecological space. The allottees of these ecological spaces develop their own sustainable patterns of use of natural resources. All together the system works to balance the needs of culture with sustainable resource use. They theorize that changes brought by contemporary market forces have destroyed this harmony." (Patel 1997) Unfortunately the market forces for the present day market economy did not take up the leadership of bringing about the sustainable development; nor did they continue the patterns followed by people in such places. They simply destroyed the system without alternatives. That is how, we realize the importance of a digital leadership in such vacuum where neither the old system to preserve ecology exists nor does the exploiters of the natural resources have a system in place.

Responsive, Inclusive, Participatory Decision Making for Sustainable Development: a Democratic Approach

While the people of this modern civilization are drawn towards the virtual realities offered by technological innovation, Digital advancements and make believe media, it is possible for the present day ultra-modern leaders to use the same virtual realities of the digital world, to convincingly draw the citizens who live, play, find their friends, find life partners, are active on the digital world of the internet (Netizens), towards a sustainable development blueprint that cares not only for the future mankind, also for the animal world which is a home of millions of other living organisms.

Global Partnerships: Sharing Knowledge and Expertise, Technology to Conserve Resources

The communities where we live and work are confronting the most complex challenges of our time. We are confronted by issues and concerns over climate change, economic slowdown, social inequality, multicultural debates, geopolitical unrest and other seemingly uncontrollable forces. People are stressed, confused, anxious and on the verge of giving up on life in general and push themselves to lead an uninterested life. (BUCHNER n.d.)

There are people outside the purview of the digital confines who are directly pushed into a slower development models with limited personal resources. And then there are these highly digital citizens. Those without any digital influence need to be introduced without affecting their development tempo. There is still another problem with the existing leadership, that looks for amassing a huge wealth and constantly realize that they need more and more to ensure that they spend more and. 'Despite possessing enormous stockpiles of wealth, today's leaders tend to always believe they need more. Indeed, trying to ensure, through fair means or foul, that they can remain in power as long as possible seems to be the limit of the ambition of many of today's leaders, who often have a greater sense of entitlement than they do of any responsibility to do "the right thing" for their followers.' (Alternative Leadership 2017) Meanwhile, there is never a solution to the widening gap among various strata in the society through this traditional leadership. Hence, we look forward to a participatory style of leadership of global partnership where there is no place for one leader to grow amassing wealth and development opportunities.

During and after the independence era, people got used to think of a single hero like leader or statesman or politician to take a primary role in understanding people's problems and offer solutions with his morally upright position. The present political systems too still continue to offer single leadership that is projected to work out the miracle for the millions of masses "But today's leadership has shifted toward a shared responsibility of key actors in the play, a process shared by passionate and motivated individuals within a social system. There will always be strong individual voices, but success will come from interactions among groups of leaders developing innovative approaches by looking at existing ideas in new and creative ways." (BUCHNER n.d.)

CONCLUSION

In the recent turn of events following globalization, liberalization and privatization scenario the market economy proposed and controlled by few industrial elites, is coming to a close. The desperate situation following the world economic meltdown in 2008, let people look for alternatives. People started looking back for help to their neighbours and local communities. The system that failed the local support systems, traditional medical solutions and traditional financial support systems have now paved way once

again for people to look for alternatives from within. Digital solutions help in this search for solutions and solutions started flowing as shared economy and participatory profit making systems. Although the struggle with the industrial elites will continue, participatory digital leaderships have become the panacea for people for all their woes. The daily digital sharing of ideas, information, education, entertainment and evangelization have started ushering in for the netizens a renewed enthusiasm to rise again with hope.

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