

**Note for Record**  
(December 12-13, 2018)

**By: Shoaib Sultan Khan**  
**December 20, 2018**

Subject:- UN Human Rights Regional Consultation at Bangkok, Thailand

In April, I was invited to give a presentation on Right to Development at Geneva by Rapporteur Chairman of the Session Ambassador Zamir Akram. I was pleasantly surprised to get another invitation from United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development Mr. Saad Alfaragi to participate in Regional Consultation on the practical implementation of the right to development: Identifying and Promoting good practices at Bangkok, Thailand on December 13-14, 2018.

As the daily flights to Bangkok only take off from Lahore, I drove to take the flight on December 11 reaching Bangkok next morning at 6.30 am and flew back from Bangkok on December 13 arriving Lahore at 11.00 pm and drove to Islamabad reaching 4.00 am in the morning. I did this because my daughter Shelley had arrived on 12<sup>th</sup> morning from London for a fortnight.

However, it was all worthwhile when my recommendation was adopted by the representatives of over 50 countries from the Region attending the Consultation. The recommendation was as follows:

“To operationalize the Right to Development for the poor below the poverty line, the mobilisation of the poor should be the centerpiece of all Right to Development strategies and policies of the Nation States, to enable fostering of Institutions of the People to access Right to Development and empower them to do Social Audit of public sector departments/ministries responsible for delivering Right to Development interventions to the poor”.

The above cited recommendation was based on the basis of the PowerPoint presentation highlighting Whose Right to Development should be the focus of the UN Commission on Human Rights:

20% of the World population consumes 80% of global resources. The poorest 20% only account for 1.3% of global resources.<sup>1</sup> The majority of the deprived live in rural areas of the developing countries. In South Asia the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) set up a Commission for Poverty Alleviation<sup>2</sup>, which made an overarching recommendation that the centerpiece of a policy framework for poverty alleviation has to be the mobilisation of the poor in order to enable them to participate directly in the decisions that affect their lives and prospects.

The Commission argued that the existing Administrative and Political Pillars of the State have no capacity to engage all or overwhelming majority of the people especially the vulnerable or the poor in planning implementing and monitoring their own development.

The Commission recommended fostering of a third Pillar to fulfill Lincoln's dream: Democracy OF the people BY the people and FOR the people. The Administrative and Political Pillars are By the people and For the people but the missing link is institutions OF the people. The Commission recommended to Governments of South Asia which SAARC Summit of 1993 endorsed, that for building institutions of the poor, governments should support financially and administratively the establishment of independent non-governmental and national level support mechanism to catalyse formation of organisations, as social guidance required to achieve this objective, cannot be undertaken by government departments or traditional NGOs. It requires an institutional mechanism which has the resources of the government and flexibility of an NGO and the examples they gave were of Pakistan's Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) and the Government of Pakistan financed National Rural Support Programme (NRSP).

With the support of UNDP and World Bank between Pakistan and India, there are over 3 million organised community institutions of the rural poor comprising nearly 45 million

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<sup>1</sup> Source D+C Journal of the German Ministry of Economic Affairs (2017)

<sup>2</sup> Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation (1991)

population. In 2011 India launched National Rural Livelihoods Mission to organise 70 million households reaching 350 million population.

The South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme launched by UNDP in 1994, as a sequel to SAARC Commission's report set up demonstrations of Support Organisations besides India in Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka also. The Aga Khan Development Network has introduced the concept of the missing pillar in eight countries of Africa and Asia.

Social Mobilisation is a holistic approach including human resources development, credit and savings and an interest free community investment fund, technical assistance in natural resource management, development of local level physical infrastructure and linkage of the institutions of the poor with government departments, local councils, NGOs, commercial and development agencies.

Social Mobilisation is a proven approach to the achievement of Right to Development of the rural poor and speediest investment to the achievement of SDGs as has been demonstrated in India and Pakistan.