



A Seminar on
“Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) and
SDGs – India’s role in its Acceptance
and Propagation”

At 11.00 am on 27th May 2023

Venue:

G. Parthasarathi Conference Hall,
RIS,
Core IV-B, 4th Floor,
India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road,
New Delhi 110 003



Note on LIFE Webinar

The achievement of SDG targets has been seriously debilitated by the Coronavirus pandemic and the resultant economic setback that all countries experienced. Besides the pandemic, the unending conflicts have added an element of uncertainty in economic governance and resulted in retarding the global consensus building process towards meeting SDG targets.

Given the limitations of several countries and the UN bodies, the responsibility for accelerating progress on SDGs seem to be falling on the shoulders of stakeholder communities, households and individuals. This calls for drastic change in attitudes and practices which can in turn catalyse a transformation in the way people live, interact, produce and consume.

This is easier said than done, and certainly will not happen by itself. People need to be aware of concepts like LIFE, circularity and sustainability – and then practice these in everyday life.

While Indian philosophy and value system is very much based on sustainability, we have moved away from such fundamentals since the time we were Colonised and subsequently fated with economic and governance models that were dependent on economic exploitation and social oppression (*Shoshan aadhaarit arthavyavastha evam utpeedan moolak samaaj vyavasthaa*), totally alien to this land and its traditional way of life. But the urge to disassociate with alien parameters and adopt homegrown models of development is growing in the country at all levels, and evidently more pronounced in the last few years.

This metamorphosis has to be institutionalised by building strong, lasting and mutually beneficial partnerships for SDGs (and more importantly for SDG 17 in particular as it incorporates all SDGs). As the late Bharat Ratna, Rashtrarishi Nanaji Deshmukh, founder of the Deendayal Research Institute (DRI) said, “The Indian maxim of *Vasudeva Kutumbakam*, which means ‘The whole world is a family’, and *Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah* (Happiness for All) should be the basis of our International relations, to ensure an equitable and sustainable relationship.”

At the Glasgow Conference of Parties (COP), India gave a clarion call for forging global partnerships on these lines. Global institutions and stronger countries may take time to forge such partnerships due to their domestic and international commitments and constraints. Until then, independent non-governmental institutions may have to take the initiative to share experiences and make money and material available for collective and cooperative efforts towards achieving SDG targets.

Under India’s Presidency of the G-20, and within the rubric of C20/ T20, the dialogue was begun interlinking the SDGs and G20, with a fruitful civil society meeting at Manipal in March 2023. It is now proposed to conduct a webinar in hybrid mode on LiFE from principle to

practice. This conference under the aegis of G20's LiFE vertical is inspired by late Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's credo of Integral Humanism (Ekatma Manav Darshan) and the Chitrakoot Declaration for a World SDG Forum (WSF) as a platform for practitioners.

The hybrid mode webinar will bring together India's thought leaders on SDGs and international partners with a countrywide (and global) audience to discuss practical solutions and pathways for their replication and upscaling.

It is expected that the webinar – the first in a series for the WSF – will trigger online and offline conversations among like-minded people who so far might be working in diverse silos and geographies.

We hope to catalyse a process to create a cadre of committed individual with a complete understanding of LiFE and its centrality across SDGs.

The hybrid mode meeting, to be hosted at Delhi by LiFE vertical of the G20 (as Secretariat), RIS (as anchor for T20) and DRI (as the catalyst for WSF).

The contours of the program, tentatively scheduled for 27 May 2023, could be as follows:
Duration: 90 minutes

Structure/ Sequence: 4 speakers (two Indians to keynote, one UN representative to provide global perspective and one from G20 to provide the way forward under the G20 process) and one moderator.

Each speaker will speak initially for 8-10 minutes, followed by a set of questions for the speakers posed by the moderator and respective responses (5-7 minutes each).

The moderator will then canvas 4-5 questions from the audience (including from online participants) which would be directed at specific speakers for their response (2-3 minutes).

The moderator will then provide a brief summary of the main points and conclude with a note of thanks.

The tentative name of the Seminar is "Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) and SDGs – India's role in its Acceptance and Propagation."

Speaker I: Introduction of LiFE and Bharati Sanskriti. A Macro view.

[Dr. Sachin Chatruvedi]

In this context, the concept of 'Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE) was introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at COP26 in Glasgow on 1st November 2021, calling upon the global community of individuals and institutions to drive LiFE as an international mass movement

towards “mindful and deliberate utilisation, instead of mindless and destructive consumption” to protect and preserve the environment. LiFE puts individual and collective duty on everyone to live a life that is in tune with Earth and does not harm it. Those who practice such a lifestyle are recognised as Pro Planet People under LiFE.

“Realising the inadequacy of the present global economic binaries in the progression towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, it is imperative for India and the global South, to initiate efforts for a new and inclusive world economic order, which will hasten the process of fulfilling SDGs in a cooperative economic architecture.”

Speaker II: The Chitrakoot Declaration and the establishment of the World SDG Forum.

[Dr. Seshadri Chari]

“Recalling the experiences and experiments of institutions such as the Deendayal Research Institute (DRI), especially at Chitrakoot, it will be relevant to delve on a new narrative laying emphasis on family as the fulcrum of solutions in the spirit of ‘Local to Global’— *Gramoday* to *Sarvoday* (village to the universe); from grassroots to global.”

This is to be done with ‘the idea of “Integral Humanism”, based on Bharat’s world view and propounded by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, was translated into action by Rashtrarishi Nanaji Deshmukh, with Chitrakoot as its epicentre.’

Some additional thoughts from Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya and Nanaji Deshmukh:

*An economic system must achieve the production of all the basic things essential for the maintenance and development of the people, as well as the protection and development of the Nation.**

*Having satisfied the basic minimum requirements, the question naturally arises whether there should be more production for greater prosperity and happiness. Western societies consider it most essential, and even desirable, to go on continuously and systematically increasing the desires and needs of man. There is no upper limit in this context. Normally, desire precedes the effort to produce the things desired. But now the position is reverse. People are induced to desire and use the things that have been or are being produced. Instead of producing to meet the demand, the search is on for markets for the goods already produced. If the demand does not exist, systematic efforts are made to create demand.**

Now this economic structure is not merely consumption-oriented, but is clearly leading to destruction. Throw away the old one, and buy a new one! Rather than satisfying the need and demand of the people, to create fresh demand has become the aim of modern economics. Supposing that we need not worry about the limited supply of natural resources, there is yet the question of balance in nature. There is a cyclic relationship in different parts of nature. If one of the three sticks, which stand with mutual support, is removed, the other two will automatically fall. The present economic system and system of production are fast disturbing

*this equilibrium of nature. As a result, on the one hand, new products are manufactured for satisfying ever increasing desires, and on the other hand, new problems arise every day, threatening the very existence of humanity and civilisation.**

It is essential, therefore, to use up that portion of the available natural resources which nature itself will be able to recoup easily. When the fruits are taken, the fruit tree is not injured; it may even be helpful to the tree. However, in the effort to take a greater harvest from the land, chemical fertilisers are used, which in a few years' time, will render the land altogether infertile. Lakhs of acres of land lie barren in America due to this factor. How long can this dance of destruction go on?

*The industrialist provides for a depreciation fund to replace machines when they are worn out. Then how can we neglect the depreciation fund for nature? From this point of view, it must be realised that the object of our economic system should not be to make extravagant use but a well-regulated use of available resources. The physical objects necessary for a purposeful, happy and progressive life must be obtained. The Almighty has provided that much. It will not be wise, however, to engage in a blind rat-race of consumption and production as if man is created for the sole purpose of consumption. Engine needs coal for its proper working, but it has not been produced merely to consume coal. On the contrary, it is only proper, always, to see that with the minimum coal consumption, maximum energy is produced. This is the economic viewpoint. Keeping in view the aim of human life, we must endeavour to see how, with the minimum of fuel, man proceeds to his goal with the maximum speed. Such a system alone can be called civilisation. This system will not think of merely a single aspect of human life, but of all its aspects, including the ultimate aim. This system will be constructive rather than destructive. This system will not thrive on the exploitation of nature, but will sustain nature, and will in turn itself be nourished. Milking, rather than exploitation, should be our aim. The system should be such that overflow from nature is used to sustain our lives.**

*The use of manpower and the employment question will have to be thought of in the context of the human being as a whole, as an integral being.**

*Reaching the pinnacle in productivity and observing restraint in consumption is the true meaning of one's life indicating the prosperity in society.***

* From the 4 Lectures of Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya on Integral Humanism

** From quotes of Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya in Deendayal Park, Deendayal Research Institute, Chitrakoot.

Above are some quotes from Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya that are relevant to this topic.

“Our Indian civilization is unique. It nurtures the capacity for gratitude in humanity. Indian tradition thus venerates all beneficial elements. He reveres the god-like Himalayas, the goddess-like River Ganga, the life-giving Mother Earth and the bountiful cow. The exploitation of nature for man's own selfish ends is thus not a part of Indian tradition. Rather man considers himself a child of nature, who makes his mother happy by growing strong on her

milk. Tradition has imbued the farmer with a deep-rooted love for his land. Nurtured on the treasures he gets from his land, he works hard to maintain its fertility." – Nanaji Deshmukh

"A system has to be evolved, in the context of modern science and technological progress, so that our moral values, education, health, governance, entrepreneurship, literature and arts etc. are reflected in every facet of society. Otherwise, consumerism born out of modern industrial culture would decimate our humanitarian traditions." – Nanaji Deshmukh

For further information, please contact:

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LiFE is Our Responsibility!