



# INDIGENOUS SOLUTIONS TO ACHIEVE SDGS WITH ACCELERATED ACTIONS

A Report of Side Event of the United Nation's  
High Level Political Forum Session-2020

*Organized by*  
**VAAGDHARA**

Accredited with Special Consultative Status by the United Nations Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC)

**A**lmost two decades have passed, consisting 15 years of MDGs as well, but still the indigenous community remains a group - least served and one of the most excluded sectors of the society which could not reap their benefits as others. The indigenous people are inheritors and practitioners of traditional cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment. Many indigenous communities help mitigate the global challenges like reducing the impacts of climate changes by protecting the natural resources like forests and rivers. They have retained the social, cultural and economic characteristics which are different from those of the developed communities. Many of the Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets are relevant for the development of indigenous community, but still approximately 476 million indigenous people worldwide are exemplified by inequality from majority population in levels of livelihood and socio-economic security. In order to prevent inequitable SDG attainment, actions needed to be implemented with full and effective participation of indigenous people. The world has entered into a new decade and it has been agreed upon globally that much more efforts are required to be done with acceleration to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Gandhian Swaraj, if analyzed and understood in depth, relates very well with the Sustainable Development Goals which the United Nations has set for the humanity and could provide possible indigenous solutions to achieve these goals with accelerated actions.

*The event focused on the situation of the indigenous community who have been least benefitted since decades. The event highlighted the recommendations for the development of this community and contributes in achieving the SDGs with acceleration.*

*This publication will effectively support our advocacy effort around the world to bring indigenous people perspective into discussion, planning and implementation of development strategies to accelerate the SDG achievement by 2030.*

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# Introduction

Since the evolution of human being, the tribal people have been living in the lap of nature having close association with different biodiversities. The tribal communities have the right to dignity and diversity of their culture, traditional knowledge, practices and customs, which makes them distinct from other sections of the society. But today, the indigenous community is seen as the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in the world, but this need to be acknowledged that the distinct culture and the way of living of this community can be proven significant in attaining several sustainable development goals, be it related to eradication of poverty, malnutrition, improved health, quality education, gender equality, water, climate action, etc. For the countries like India, having agriculture based economy, the agriculture practices holds the key to push millions out of poverty by creating fair work opportunities and improve food and nutrition security. Throughout the centuries, this community has developed agriculture practices adapted at extreme environments like in hilly areas, their practices preserve soil, reduce its erosion, conserve water and reduce the risk of disasters, while in plains, cattle grazing and cropping in sustainable ways helps in conserving the biodiversity. The food items grown by using such practices are also particularly nutritious, climate resilient and well adapted to their environment. They often grow local or native species of crops, suitable according to local contexts, and are more resistant to temperature, rainfalls, droughts, altitude, flooding or other climatic conditions.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has considered indigenous people as invaluable partners in eradicating global problems like hunger and climate change. The time has arrived when it has to be realized that the way of living and livelihood of these communities can inculcate us about conserving natural resources, traditional agriculture practices, growing food in sustainable way, live in harmony with nature. They are a source of inspiration, having multiple solutions to the global challenge and hence, without seeking their help, protecting their rights and reducing the increasing levels of inequalities, the achievement of SDGs by 2030 with acceleration cannot be imagined.

1. Article 15 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.
2. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: 6 ways indigenous peoples are helping the world achieve #ZeroHunger

# VAAGDHARA's Approach and Sustainable Development Goals

VAAGDHARA, for more than 2 decades has been working for the holistic development of tribal community, bringing the indigenous community into mainstream development focusing through 3 major themes: True Childhood,

True Farming and True Governance. The strength of these themes is "Sovereignty" which VAAGDHARA believes is the guiding force for achieving the SDGs.

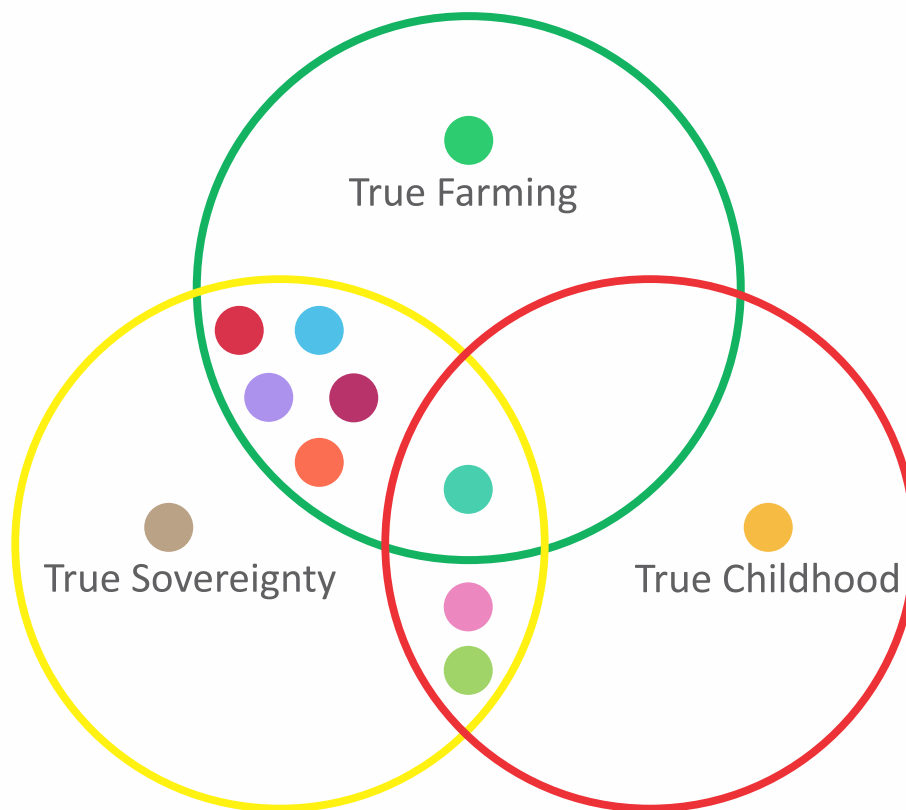


Figure: VAAGDHARA's approaches and linkage with SDGs

- SDG 1: No Poverty.
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 2: Zero Hunger
- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 3: Good Health and well Being
- SDG 13: Climate Action
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 15: Life on Land
- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions
- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth



**True Childhood:** The concept of True Childhood focuses on ensuring the rights of Children by promoting and nurturing vibrant community based institutions like the Bal Panchayat and Village Development-Child Rights Committees. It aims to facilitate community owned child tracking mechanism and solutions to make Child friendly villages besides influencing the policy makers for developing community led child right's realization. These strengthened institutions will work to provide quality education for children without any gender bias and will reduce the gap among the various sections of the society moving ahead towards achieving the SDGs of Quality Education, Gender equality and Reduced Inequalities. The state policies addressing the community child rights issues will ensure that no child remains hungry and malnourished achieving the goal of Zero Hunger.



**True Farming:** VAAGDHARA favours a circular economic approach in the farming system. Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) for sustainable development of natural resources like land, soil, water, vegetation, and livestock following principles of circularity and adapting sovereignty holds the key to sustainable livelihood for the indigenous people. The features of this circular farming are: A nutritive sensitive farming system with community owned seed management system and focus on rain-fed farming; blending of appropriate package of practices in farming for reviving indigenous farming practices and incorporating scientific knowledge; reviving of nutrition pack crops and un-cultivated food items; adaption of diverse perennial crops and vegetations to address vulnerabilities occurring due to climate change. Sustainable livelihood is where there will be no poverty and no hunger. Practicing such type of farming will create a balance in the ecosystem leading to economic growth and the well being of the tribal community.



**True Governance:** Empowering the indigenous self-governance organizations and vibrant community based institutions for leading indigenous community development interventions as well as policy level interventions through bottom-up approach on the community issues form the basis of true governance. Engaging the tribal community in development policies and programmes for protecting, providing and promoting indigenous knowledge and traditional customs and practices upholding the Women based community groups for gender equality are the actions that lead to building of strong institutions and promoting gender equality. It is the involvement of the community in decision making and policy framing process that will build a strong economy providing peace and justice to all ending poverty and hunger. Strengthening of institutions favouring local governance will promote gender equality; provide adequate educational facilities which will result in all round development of the community. Systematic growth will lead to healthier climatic conditions which will develop responsible consumption and production chain to balance the ecosystem.

# Session 01

## Indigenous community perception and relevance in achieving SDGs

Speaker - Jayesh Joshi, Secretary and CEO, VAAGDHARA

HLPF SESSION 2020

Tribal community is the pioneer of Gandhian Swaraj and they have all the solutions to achieve Sustainable Development Goals. Emphasizing the need for community participation in governance the session began with the sharing of experiences and VAAGDHARA's vision on "Indigenous Community Perception and Relevance in Achieving SDGs." The Human Development Indicators pertaining to SDGs for indigenous community in Central-Western India were presented to highlight the problems which have been faced by the community since long and being the most suffered lot.

Degraded land facing soil nutrient losses and soil erosion causing low productivity, families living below poverty line, under nourished children, weather variability hot-spot due to climate change, poorly managed and neglected rain fed farming, prevalence of child labour, gender discrimination, irresponsible consumption and production, increasing resource losses and fast reducing plant & animal biodiversity were highlighted as clear indicators of the lowest development conditions in the tribal region. Increasing commercialization disturbing the indigenous practices added to the inequality and evolved new challenges. Dependency on markets and the current COVID crisis also impacted the

livelihood and economy of these indigenous people badly. The indigenous community has practiced traditional cultures and has retained its distinct socio-economic characteristics but have been the least benefitted since decades.

The session highlighted the recommendations for the development of the tribal community which forms a significant part of the country population. For effective delivery of the best solutions to the problems and issues pertaining to the tribal community a trinity of 'True childhood', 'True Farming' and 'True Democracy' and their linkage with Sustainable Development Goals was presented in the during the session.

Ensuring nutrition & food security can end hunger (SDG 2) and reduce malnutrition especially in children. The idea of VAAGDHARA's true farming, based on the concept of Gandhi's Swaraj can protect the society and the tribal lifestyle from hunger providing sustainable livelihood. Accentuating the traditional practices of the tribal community Mr. Joshi said that the solutions to sustained livelihood lie in the circular lifestyle in the tribal area where soil, seed, water and vegetation are the components which complement each other. Community led action research is a must to identify the problems and



their own solutions like identifying and encouraging uncultivated food reviving their nutrition facts.

VAAGDHARA's research on nutritious value of unnoticed and uncultivated fruits and vegetables could help promote and improve the indigenous food practices of the tribal community. The organization's ideology of 'Food management mechanism' which has been ignored for long can play an important component to sustain life. This practice, developed over the years, should be adopted with the sole perspective of reducing the vulnerability of marginalized sections by promoting livelihood improvements and ensure food and nutrition security. Food security is not possible without farming. Dialogue with the community on indigenous knowledge on farming is necessary to make them self-reliant.

Hands-on-experience of children on farming can help them to sustain and spread the indigenous farming knowledge & practices. Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) for sustainable development of natural resources like land, soil, water, vegetation & livestock; following principles of circularity and adapting sovereignty; adaption of nutrition sensitive farming practices; nutrition garden at school and family level and community owned Seed Management System were the other important factors highlighted during the session which could contribute towards achieving the SDGs.

Mr. Joshi quoted "Inequality" as the most important factor and a major cause of all problems. He added that the community had its own indicators for SDGs rather than decided by the outside world. Quality education (SDG 4) is the key for emancipation of the communities. Ensuring child rights by promoting and nurturing vibrant community based institutions i.e. Bal Panchayat and Village development - Child Rights Committee forms the basis of VAAGDHARA's ideology of True Childhood to achieve the above goals. It aims at

strengthening of local institutions (SDG 16) enhancing community led child right's realization. True childhood is possible only by facilitating community owned child tracking mechanism. Making child friendly villages, along with the networking and liaison with the policy makers, both at the top and the grass root level, to develop policies which address the issues of the indigenous children will help achieving the desired SDGs. He further added that protection, participation, development or survival, investment in children's institutions at the grass root level like schools, anganwadis or health centres hold the key to identification of the problem at the community level and their indigenous solutions. Sustenance of indigenous culture, knowledge and agricultural practices by the children could be inherited by the future generation. Consciousness rising of the community through community based organizations in order to achieve equality and sovereignty and knowledge of Children could enhance the knowledge of parents on scientific lines.

Following the Gandhian Ideology of Swa-Raaj, Empowering Indigenous Self-Governance Organizations of the community- for the initiating dialogue on their issues and solutions for leading indigenous community development interventions and the empowerment of local leadership for effective participation in constitutional institutions can deliver the SDGs with accelerated actions. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development (SDG 16), provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Swaraj is the best solution to achieve SDGs at the global level. Vibrant community based institutions like Village Development Child Right Committee, Tribal Development Forum to mainstream the community and the empowered womens' groups the "Saksham Samuh" should be identified as the change



agents to deliver the community solutions for their indigenous problems (SDG 5). Policy level interventions through bottom-up approach on the indigenous community issues will lead in building accountable institutions from top to bottom thus achieving other goals like decent work and economic growth, innovations and infrastructure and zero hunger and no poverty.

Jayesh Joshi also highlighted the key

achievements of these community interventions: Women are acting as the change-agents creating awareness on nutrition and agriculture among community; Linking of tribal families with SIFS and children with social protection schemes. Increased Food security for children and female heads of households along with the increased diet diversity adds another feather in the cap of the tribal community solutions.

### Concluding his deliberations he suggested 5 key community solutions:

- Engaging the tribal community in developing demand charter to protect, provide and promote indigenous knowledge and practices on true farming, true childhood and true governance leading to achieve the desired SDGs.
- Worshiping of Seeds, Water and Soil for better association of indigenous community with Natural Resources for preserving them for the next generation.
- Promoting Climate resilient integrated farming system to achieve of food security and zero hunger for the tribal community.
- Holistic development of the Children through Model Child Friendly Villages ensuring quality education.
- Empowering women based community groups for gender equality.

## Session 02

# Gandhian Swaraj as a Sustainable Solutions to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals

*Speaker – Prof. Sudarshan Iyengar, Former Vice Chancellor – Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad*

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Prof. Sudarshan started his deliberation by sharing that how community people in the tribal region are themselves taking their decisions and VAAGDHARA is strengthening those processes. It is actually the Gandhian way of looking at and doing things. The concept of Swaraj was explained by Prof. Iyengar in terms of a trinity; like in Indian mythology it is Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh. Mahatma Gandhi's idea of trinity was actually in Vyakti, Samishti and Shrishti, in other words may be called as 'Soil', 'Soul' and 'Society' coined by Satish Kumar, a Jain monk who has founded the Schumacher College in Devon, UK. For focussing on soul, a person needs strong base of Gandhi's concept of 'Swaraj'. If analysed and understood in depth, it relates very well with Sustainable Development Goals which the United Nations has set for the humanity. He shared that in Mahatma Gandhi's time, no one talked about development goals, no one talked about environment and climate change and this was especially true about the tribal societies. However, the growth and economic development resulted from industrialization and urbanization has led to rise in material aspirations of one and all. He further added that people in tribal areas like Banswara may be migrating and sometimes there is pull migration also for improving their prosperities

means getting more and more into the monetised economy. Gandhi's Swaraj is important for the region and the society but the first condition in Gandhiji's Swaraj is for individual. He meant Swaraj as rule over self that is self-governance and discipline. Gandhi always emphasized on the practice of self rule. Professor further deliberated on the 11 vows given by Gandhi in his writing 'Mangal Prabhat' which are Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya, Asangraha, Sharirshrama, Aswada, Sarvatra Bhayavarjana, Sarva Dharma Samantva, Swadeshi and Sparshbhavana. One has to evolve one's character.

Mahatma Gandhi always said urbanization was an illusion but no one listened to him and went forward and this landed us in a soup. Gandhi questioned the concept of civilization. He was against the concept that modernity was civilization. He further shared his experiences that many of his students say that they have aspirations and they want to enjoy their life with a lavish life style. They want to use smart phones, live in big houses and eat delicious food. In today's era we consider the material objects and bodily welfare objects as civilization. When in 1991, the concept of Globalization started, people thought that this is the world. Prof. Iyengar further emphasized thinking and perceiving in Gandhian thought

perspective, non-sustainability was there in the design of modern material development. Gandhi's idea of sustainability was a non-violent society. He highlighted two ideas that are to 'learn about nature' and to 'learn from nature'. Gandhi said that if individuals would have learnt from nature they would have respected the ecosystem, they would consider themselves a part of it and not from outside. Today the fundamental problem is the arrogant human species that believes that it will conquer nature. However, today's crises of COVID 19 have unveiled the reality. May be the humans will develop a vaccine and win over the situation but these viruses will not stop until we stop destroying the nature.

He quoted about an intellectual named Kishor Lal Mashuwala who lived with Gandhiji. He had said that modern civilization was Bhadra Sanskriti - elitist civilization that supported the idea of intelligence, rationality and elitist occupations forming a physical and material world and that becomes a social value. The values of society come from the values of individuals. Gandhi's idea of focus on individual and disciplining individual self would have lead to Maanaveeya Sanskriti – human civilisation.

Professor further explained the concept of fearlessness, one of eleven principles of disciplining self, from the perspective of Gandhi, where he shared about two aspects of fearlessness i.e. "I don't fear anybody and nobody is afraid of me". Today we are afraid of so many things; we do not stand up for truth. Swaraj is a being fearless.

Mahatma's idea of Swadeshi is to be with our neighbourhood first. He explained the first two Sustainable Development Goals i.e. **Eradicate Poverty** and **Eradicate Hunger** by giving examples of villages in Tamil Nadu where some of the panchayats took a resolution that no villager will die of hunger in their village during the COVID crises. This should have been done by other Panchayats also instead of

depending on the corrupt Public Distribution System and Food Corporation of India, which were created by the state for helping the poor. Gandhi said that the poor can be helped from their own villages, so the first and second SDGs could be fulfilled from Swadeshi and Gram Swaraj. Gandhi ji asked to start the concept of Swadeshi with bottom-up-approach having the first focus on individual, then on neighbourhood and then village, district and so on.

He further added that we have to learn about soul force and love force first and then one can practice Swaraj on oneself and once an individual is in that position then he can also do Aparigraha (non-possession). Gandhi knew that people will make money and will start enterprises but he didn't want communism, he talked about trusteeship as that was in the tradition.

Professor Iyengar also spoke about Goal 3 of SDG which talks about healthy lifestyle. He told to understand the causes that why people are unhealthy. If an individual is trained and disciplined, then the society and nature will be prosperous.

He further concluded by saying that to attain SDGs and Swaraj, governance has to start from the basic level and we need to start from self rule and local self rule. If we work on both, then we don't need anyone to decide for us what's good and what's bad. We will decide for us and will raise our own resources making our life easy. The SDGs have to be achieved by people for themselves. The state and market has role but very limited and supplementary. With state, market and technology SDGs will always be achieved partially and temporarily.

## Session 03

# Key policy asks from Government enabling Indigenous Communities to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals

*Speaker – Gagan Sethi, Chair, Revitalizing Rainfed Agriculture Network*

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The key policy asks from the government which could enable the indigenous community to achieve the SDGs were highlighted in the session. Citing the current pandemic situation, Mr. Gagan Sethi, said that it has given an opportunity to amplify the voices of the tribal community after the world witnessed the conditions of the migrant labour going all out to reach to their native places. Disapproving the current model of development which was not helping either of the community he stressed the need to rethink on the development model. The statistical data about the indigenous community, who are a part of our country, was presented in the beginning of this session. About 110 million tribal population is distributed in about 5.5 lakh villages with 01 lakh villages having more than 50% of such population. According to him major poverty landscape of India overlapped the rainfed area with high density of tribal population leaving a large population hungry.

The Zero Hunger goal (SDG 2) relates to poverty reduction strategies which largely depend on agriculture. Investment is being made in large irrigated areas and not in those areas where the tribals are working and what they have been doing. What is being done by a few

people is being imposed on to these communities. The need to invest on provisions to provide seeds of indigenous climate resilient millets as well as pulses and inclusion of millets in the Public Distribution System was stressed upon in the session which would also help achieve the Responsible Consumption and Production goal (SDG 12). The tribal population, nurturing the bio diversity, is being influenced by the market forces which buy the seeds from them at a low price and resell them the same at a higher cost, marketing it as a high yielding variety of seeds. The need to strengthen the community seed bank system at the village level for conservation of seeds preserved by the community was emphasized in order to reduce their dependency on markets. Various agriculture based research institutions were established in away from tribal areas, ignoring their practice area, which should have been established in their spaces also. The practices are there and are legitimized by innovation but not by investment. The question being asked here was 'where is the money going and where it should go?' Similarly, establishment of community managed fodder banks through Sub-Mission on fodder and feed development under the National Livestock Mission need to

be developed to enable the poorest of the farmers to buy fodder for their cattle. Mr. Sethi also focused on the community ask for developing State wide policy promoting organic farming moving towards the SDG 15 – Life of Land.

Under the True Childhood theme, need of holistic approach for quality education of tribal children was highlighted, which could also prevent them from migrating. Revival, development and strengthening of Panchayat Level Child Protection Committee and investment in good education for the children of tribal families was stressed upon as relevant approach in the context of SDG 16. Developing residential schools in proportion to the number of children of migrating families was also the focal area of the theme. For ensuring quality education (SDG4), the requirement and standards of good education for the tribal

community students need to be assessed according to Mr. Sethi.

“Degrading the mineral rich tribal land just to take it over for mining is not a good idea of development.” ‘Our land, our people, our forest’ should be thrust of development by a decentralized government. Besides, investing in the rule of law – investing in trained personnel at the panchayat levels to run their panchayats in an effective manner could help achieve SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)

Mr. Sethi stressed the need for the investment in building the trinity of the “True Childhood, True Farming and True Democracy” to reach the SDGS, being sensitive and allowing these processes and supporting them, governance has to follow bottom-up approach in place of top-down approach. This would help upturn the present governance system.

# Q & A Session

## 1. **Why do we call these people as indigenous people? Are they not Indian Citizens?**

- The community which believes to be the original known inhabitants of a particular area, following a tradition and of their own practiced for generations is called the indigenous community. Yes, they are the Indian Citizens.

## 2. **How can we overcome the existing obstacles for effective protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people?**

- Special measures are needed to protect the institutions, property, labour, cultures and environment of indigenous peoples to ensure that these people enjoy all human rights, in line with everyone else. Careful analysis and amendment of existing laws, policies and programs in all sectors, in consultation with the peoples concerned is the only way to protect the rights of these people. Enactment of new legislation or regulations where necessary, establishment of specific institutions to promote and implement indigenous peoples' rights across sectors and levels of governance; participation in decision-making, including for the planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on implementation measures.

## 3. **What is the difference between Tribals and Indigenous people?**

- Indigenous people are believed to be the

original natives of their own place. They may include various tribes. A tribe, however has marital relationships with members of other tribes and is in continuous mobility or moving from place seeking subsistence economy, basically herding animals.

## 4. **Does self-governance increase the political and management capabilities of indigenous community members?**

- The entity (people/community) which is performing its duties and takes care of its responsibilities on its own is said to be following self governance. Self governance in this scenario increases the productivity and satisfaction especially of indigenous communities because they are close to nature and understand their reality better than anyone else.

## 5. **Indigenous women continue to face discrimination and unequal treatment in many forms. Child marriages are still practiced in tribal areas.**

- The Government is trying to effectively implement strong temporary special measures for women and girls from the community including enrolment in education and employment. Monitoring the availability and efficiency of the legal services authorities, implementing legal literacy programmes, raising the awareness of women and girls are other



measures the government should look into.

**6. What does the dignity of indigenous community mean and how is it correlated with SWARAJ ?**

- Dignity of human being is the belief that all people hold a special value irrespective of their religion, caste, race, gender or any other factor. When everyone is equal, they are all equally deserving of basic respect, rights and also they do have the rights to take decisions of their own, which is the concept of SWARAJ as well. The indigenous community has also the right to dignity, having no discrimination with other sections of the society. As similar to other communities, they do have the rights to practice and promote their culture as well as customs and take their own decisions for their well being, which means self-rule or SWARAJ.

**7. Civil society organizations in India have been facing a worsening crackdown, involving an intensification of judicial harassment, arbitrary arrests and intimidation, particularly those working on accountability in the context of mining, dams and nuclear projects. Many of those projects primarily concern number of indigenous groups in India.**

- A specific law must be enacted for protection of human rights defenders, with particular attention on defenders working for the rights of indigenous community and women. The Government must implement a comprehensive, independent and adequately resourced protection programme for human rights defenders and witnesses with the National and State Human Rights Commission. India must repeal the FCRA, which is been increasingly used to obstruct civil society's access to foreign funding for projects dedicated to the development programmes

for the tribal community, and fails to comply with international human rights norms and standards.

**8. Tribals are facing serious threats are being subjected to forced evictions from their mineral rich land. It is believed that some influential people are deliberately degrading the land to force these community people migrate and then takeover the land for mining.**

- The Government should immediately address the obstacles and gaps in the implementation of the Forest Rights Act so as to increase the effectiveness of the Act to provide recognition of community forest rights claims by tribal communities adequately. The Government must, take steps to stop forced evictions of tribal and other forest dwelling communities occurring in course of conservation projects and redefine and implement those projects with the free, prior and informed consent of and in conjunction with the affected communities.

**9. The indigenous people possess small and uneconomical landholdings because of which their crop yield is less and hence they remain chronically indebted. Only a small percentage of the population participates in occupational activities in the secondary and tertiary sectors. Literacy rate among tribals is very low. Banking facilities in the tribal areas are so inadequate that the tribals have to depend mainly on moneylenders. Tribal government programmes have not significantly helped the tribals in raising their economic status.**

- The First Prime Minister of India Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru gave the idea of



“Panchasheela” for development of the tribal community after independence. (i) Nothing should be imposed on the tribal people. They must be allowed to develop along the lines of their own genius. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture. (ii) Tribal rights in land and forests should be respected. (iii) Attempt must be made to train and build up a team of their own people to the work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside will be of great help for them in the beginning. But too many outsiders must not be sent to the tribal territory. (iv) Over-administering the tribal areas or overwhelming them with too many schemes must be avoided. We should not

work in rivalry to their own social and cultural institutions. (v) The results of the work must be adjudged by the quality of the human character that is evolved and not by statistics or the amount of money spent.

**10. The health services for the indigenous people are very poor due to the non willingness of medical fraternity to work in such areas.**

- The government has taken various measures to step up the health facilities for these people. Negotiating with special packages for those who are posted in tribal areas and partnership with NGOs for such services in remote areas are some of the measures.

# Conclusion and Recommendations

The deliberations from all the speakers of the event led to the single point conclusion that the Gandhian ideology of SWARAJ is the only way to achieve the sustainable development goals with accelerated actions. Swa-Raj or the Swa-Dharm what Mahatma Gandhi preached meant self discipline or self rule. This rule of self governance over the

resources and following the traditional customs by the community people can bring out the solutions to the indigenous problems within their strata. It is all there in their origin which needs to be accentuated with providing them the infra for development. The long practiced customs can accelerate the attainment of SDGs following the Swaraj Model of Gandhian ideology.

## Recommendations:

- Promote Climate resilient, nutri-sensitive farming with a circular economy approach to ensure food and nutrition security of tribal community.
- Strengthen village level democratic institutions to understand and cater to the indigenous development model.
- Involve of the community people, without any gender bias, in the governance with bottoms up approach.
- Investments to be diverted to develop indigenous systems rather than catering to the outer world being driven by the market forces.
- Provide basic education amenities according to the needs of the indigenous people.
- Holistic development of the Children through Model Child Friendly Villages ensuring quality education.
- Empowering women based community groups for gender equality.

*"True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre.  
It has to be worked from below by the people of every village."*

*- Mahatma Gandhi*

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