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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### AN ATTAINMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: A CASE STUDY ON SANGAMA

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#### Abstract

**Background/Purpose:** The pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has become a global imperative, requiring greater scrutiny of initiatives and organizations that actively contribute to these goals. In this context, Sangama, a non-profit organization that defends the rights of sexual and gender minorities, emerges as a compelling case. The purpose of this study is to comprehensively analyse the achievement status of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) using the case of Sangama.

**Methodology:** This study uses secondary data analysis using data from Sangama's website, various academic papers, and web articles to explore the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a case study focused on Sangama. It presents a comprehensive analysis.

**Findings/Result:** Sangama plays a pivotal role in advocating for the rights and welfare of sexual minorities, transgender individuals, sex workers, and the urban poor. Sangama's dynamic approach to promoting sustainable development and social justice manifested through grassroots-level initiatives, innovative projects, and advocacy efforts, showcases a noteworthy impact.

**Originality/Value:** By leveraging information available on Sangama's website, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of grassroots organizations in achieving the SDGs. The results are expected to inform policymakers, researchers, and practitioners about the role of community-based initiatives in promoting sustainable development and promoting inclusiveness.

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#### Introduction:-

In recent years, sustainable development has become an important focus around the world. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remains a global imperative to address urgent environmental, social and economic challenges. Non-profit organizations (NGOs) play a crucial role in highlighting key areas of the SDGs. NGOs have many programs, functions and roles that help communities strengthen themselves and ultimately achieve sustainable development [1]. Mainstreaming and institutionalization of the SDGs are very important for the implementation of SDGs in NGO program implementation [2]. This study focuses on the specific case of Sangama,

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an NGO that presents a microcosm for considering the achievement of the SDGs in local environments. Sangama's unique socio-economic and environmental landscape provides an insightful perspective from which to explore the complexities of sustainable development efforts.

### **Objectives of the Study:-**

- a) To assess Sangama's impact on achieving SDGs comprehensively.
- b) To understand the role of NGOs in achieving the SDGs.
- c) To conduct a SWOC analysis of Sangama towards the attainment of SDGs.

### **Methodology:-**

This study uses secondary data analysis using data from Sangama's website, e-newspaper clippings, various academic papers, and web articles to explore the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a case study focused on Sangama. It presents a comprehensive analysis.

### **About the NGO Sangama[3]:**

Sangama is a well-known NGO based in Bengaluru, Karnataka, India. It focuses on advocating for the rights and welfare of sexual minorities, transgender people, sex workers, and the urban poor. They recognize the need to work together not only with sexual minorities but also with their families, friends, colleagues and society as a whole. Sangama is a dynamic NGO working to promote sustainable development and social justice. Sangama is deeply committed to community empowerment, working at the grassroots level to implement innovative projects and advocate for positive change. The organization addresses a wide range of issues, from environmental sustainability to social justice, based on principles of inclusivity and cultural sensitivity. Sangama's impactful initiatives reflect the company's commitment to creating lasting solutions and contributing to achieving the SDGs.

### **Mission and Objectives:**

Sangama's mission is to promote and protect the human rights of sexual minorities and ensure their dignity, equality, and well-being. The organization's mission is to combat social bias, discrimination, and violence marginalised communities face through advocacy, research, and community engagement. Sangama is committed to building an inclusive society that respects and supports the rights of all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Sangama believes that the sexual rights movement is based not only on discourses on sexual identity, sexual orientation, and gender identity but also on discourses on human rights, sexual rights, gender equality, social justice, etc. They believe in an integrationist approach, that is to integrate non-homophobic hetero-sexual and social activists in the movement for sexual rights. They also believe in working with other social movements and building alliances for the greater fight for equality, justice, and freedom.

### **Programs and Initiatives:**

#### **Legal Services:**

Sangama provides legal aid and assistance to individuals from sexual and gender minority communities, including legal assistance, advice and representation in cases of human rights violations or discrimination.

#### **Health and HIV/AIDS:**

This organisation provides health programs, workshops focused on sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention, and access to health services for sexual and gender minorities, health camps and awareness campaigns.

#### **Capacity Development:**

Sangama conducts training programs and workshops to empower marginalized communities and equip them with knowledge and skills to address issues related to rights, advocacy and community development.

#### **Research and Documentation:**

This organization conducts research studies to collect evidence and data on issues affecting sexual and gender minorities. This research provides information useful for advocacy and policy recommendations.

**Community Mobilization:**

Sangama actively engages communities through outreach, support groups, and community-based events to build unity, raise awareness, and promote a sense of belonging and empowerment.

**Policy Advocacy:**

The organization works with policymakers, government agencies, and civil society organizations to influence policy reform, advance inclusive legislation, and support sexual and gender minorities.

**Impact and Achievements:**

Sangama has been at the forefront of defending the rights of sexual and gender minorities in India and has contributed significantly to legal advances and policy changes. The organization has played a key role in landmark cases regarding the decriminalization of homosexuality and transgender rights in India. Sangama's efforts have raised awareness of the issues faced by sexual and gender minorities, challenged social norms and prejudices, and promoted a more inclusive and accepting society. The organization's outreach and support programs have positively impacted the lives of many people by providing legal assistance, medical services, counselling, and community support. Sangama, with funding from the American Jewish World Service (AJWS), educates sexual and gender minorities and sex workers across Karnataka, India, about the importance of financial literacy and planning through a flip book named Financial Literacy. There is also a digital literacy training booklet in Kannada which educates about the usage of mobile phones and their applications. They conduct sanitization workshops and training on diversity, gender and sexuality issues, customize volunteer and CSR initiatives for businesses.

**Collaborations and Networks:**

Sangama collaborates with other NGOs, human rights organizations and activists at local, national and international levels to strengthen advocacy and strengthen the sexual and gender minority rights movement. The organization actively participates in networks such as the National Coalition for Sexual and Gender Minorities and the National Coalition for the Strengthening of Sexual Minorities. Sangama's collaborations and partnerships contribute to broader collective efforts to advance the rights of sexual and gender minorities.

**Sustainable Development Goals and NGOs.**

NGOs play a central role in achieving the SDGs by acting as key actors in implementing, monitoring, and advocating for sustainable development initiatives.[4]. These organizations operate independently of government agencies and are often driven by a commitment to social and environmental issues. It also motivates the community to participate in the project and helps improve their quality of life. Participants are expected to coordinate meetings, plan community activities, and physically participate in community efforts. [1]. In this way, NGOs contribute to sustainable community development. Additionally, NGOs mobilize communities to become self-sufficient. This helps the community discover its potential and rely on its resources [1].

Several key ways in which NGOs contribute to the achievement of SDGs:

**(i) Advocacy and awareness:**

NGOs are helping to raise awareness of the SDGs and promote their importance among communities, businesses, and governments [6]. NGOs help to build a collective understanding of goals and foster a sense of shared responsibility through campaigns, workshops, and educational programs.

**(ii) Implementation of projects and programs:**

NGOs are actively involved in the implementation of projects and programs aimed at specific SDGs. NGOs work on the ground to initiate and sustain projects that directly contribute to SDG goals, [7] such as promoting clean energy, advocating for gender equality, and fighting poverty.

**(iii) Community empowerment:**

NGOs often work closely with local communities, empowering them to actively participate in sustainable development efforts. This integration ensures that projects are culturally sensitive, socially inclusive, and tailored to the specific needs of the communities they serve. [1]

**(iv) Monitoring and evaluation:**

NGOs contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of progress towards achieving the SDGs. NGOs provide valuable information to governments and international organizations through research, data collection, and impact assessments, helping them track progress and identify areas that need attention.

**(v) Policy advocacy:**

NGOs engage at various levels to influence policy decisions that are consistent with the SDGs [8]. They act as watchdogs, holding governments and businesses accountable for their sustainable development efforts, and advocating for policies that support environmental protection, social justice, and economic development [12].

**(vi) Partnerships and collaboration:**

NGOs often foster partnerships and collaboration between governments, businesses, and other stakeholders [9]. These partnerships leverage diverse resources, expertise, and networks to more effectively address complex challenges related to the SDGs.

**(vii) Innovation and Research:**

NGOs contribute to innovation and research by exploring new technologies, methods and approaches that can accelerate progress towards the SDGs. They often serve as incubators for new ideas and solutions to address global challenges [10].

Fundamentally, NGOs act as catalysts for positive change, acting as interfaces between communities, governments, and businesses to promote sustainable development. Their flexibility, grassroots connections, and commitment to social and environmental issues make them valuable partners in the global pursuit of the SDGs [10] [11].

**Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals of Sangama:****Table 1:** -Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals of Sangama [3].

SDGs	Focus areas	Attainment of SDGs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</li> <li>Reduced Inequalities</li> <li>Gender Equality.</li> </ul>	Stronger Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobilizing economically disadvantaged and vulnerable communities – transgender persons, sexual minorities, sex workers and urban poor for their development.</li> <li>Facilitating access to entitlements and social protection schemes like monthly pensions for transgender persons, widows, elderly, and persons with disabilities, Subsidized loans for women sex workers and transgender people to set up small business, benefits from Karnataka Building and other Construction Workers Welfare Board.</li> <li>Strengthening community leadership for better self-representation.</li> <li>Sensitization and networking with government officials, healthcare providers, educational institutions, corporates, civil society organizations and elected representatives.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good Health and Well-being.</li> <li>Clean Water and Sanitation.</li> <li>Sustainable Cities and communities.</li> </ul>	Healthy People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducting health camps.</li> <li>Namma Clinic: Providing general and mental health services in a welcoming and stigma-free environment. Providing preventive and curative health services. Staffed with doctor (part-time), nurse, lab technician, counsellor and community health workers.</li> <li>Working with Primary Health Centres and Government hospitals towards providing quality healthcare.</li> <li>Promoting health-seeking behaviour of individuals and communities.</li> <li>Accompanied referrals and sensitization of private healthcare providers.</li> <li>Support group meetings, nutritional supplements and access to care and support services for persons living with HIV.</li> <li>Strengthening access to sexual and reproductive health services for sex workers.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene).</li> <li>• Improving waste management and delivery of water and sanitation facilities for urban poor.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Poverty.</li> <li>• Decent Work and Economic Growth.</li> </ul>	Decent Livelihood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping transgender persons and sexual minorities to start their businesses. Hand-holding and emotional support as these are first-generation entrepreneurs. Piloting individual and group livelihood projects.</li> <li>• Expanding livelihood options for sex workers. Piloting individual and group livelihood projects.</li> <li>• Financial literacy training and facilitation of services.</li> <li>• Formation of Self-Help Groups to inculcate savings habits.</li> <li>• Job skill upgradation and interface with corporates for job placements.</li> <li>• Working for the implementation of 1% reservation in Karnataka State Government jobs for transgender people.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality Education.</li> <li>• Reduced Inequalities.</li> </ul>	Happy Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational scholarships for children of sex workers</li> <li>• Working with Anganwadi and government schools towards providing quality nutrition and education to children</li> <li>• Post-school tuition classes in slums</li> <li>• Life skills education and aspiration building for children and adolescent girls.</li> </ul>

### SWOC Analysis Towards the Attainment of SDGs:

This SWOC analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the internal and external factors that can influence Sangama's performance and impact[16][17]. The following strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges are identified for Sangama towards the attainment of SDGs [18-20].

#### Strengths:

1. **Expertise and Experience:**Sangama has a wealth of experience in working towards social justice and human rights.The organization has developed expertise in addressing various SDGs related to equality, justice, and inclusivity.
2. **Strong Community Engagement:**Sangama has successfully engaged with local communities and built strong relationships. Community-driven initiatives have been effective in addressing specific SDGs at the grassroots level.
3. **Collaborative Partnerships:**Sangama has established partnerships with other NGOs, government agencies, and international organizations, enhancing its capacity to address a wide range of SDGs.
4. **Innovative Programs:**The NGO has a history of implementing innovative and impactful programs that align with the SDGs.Creative approaches have enabled the organization to tackle complex issues effectively.
5. **Diverse Funding Sources:**Sangama has diversified funding sources, reducing dependence on a single channel. This financial stability has allowed the organization to pursue long-term projects aligned with the SDGs.

#### Weaknesses:

1. **Limited Resources:**Limited financial and human resources may hinder the scalability of programs.This constraint may impact the organization's ability to address a broader spectrum of SDGs simultaneously.
2. **Geographic Constraints:**Sangama's activities may be concentrated in specific geographic areas, limiting the reach of its impact on a global scale.This could potentially affect the organization's influence on certain SDGs that require broader geographical coverage.
3. **Dependency on External Funding:**The organization may be heavily reliant on external funding, making it vulnerable to changes in funding sources or economic downturns.
4. **Communication Challenges:**There may be challenges in effectively communicating Sangama's achievements to a wider audience, potentially limiting its influence on policy changes.

**Opportunities:**

1. **Global Advocacy:** Sangama can leverage its success stories and best practices to engage in global advocacy for SDGs, contributing to international discussions and initiatives.
2. **Technology Integration:** Embracing technology can enhance the organization's outreach and impact, especially in the areas of education, health, and awareness.
3. **Capacity Building:** Investing in the capacity building of staff and local communities can empower them to actively contribute to achieving SDGs independently.
4. **Strategic Alliances:** Forming strategic alliances with like-minded organizations can amplify Sangama's influence and effectiveness in addressing specific SDGs.

**Challenges:**

1. **Policy and Regulatory Challenges:** Adapting to evolving policies and regulations, especially in diverse regions of operation, can pose challenges to Sangama's initiatives.
2. **Changing Socio-Political Landscape:** Shifts in the socio-political landscape may affect the organization's ability to implement certain programs or advocate for specific SDGs.
3. **Climate Change Impact:** The effects of climate change could pose challenges to Sangama's efforts, particularly in regions vulnerable to environmental issues impacting SDGs like clean water, health, and poverty.
4. **Public Awareness:** Raising public awareness about specific SDGs and the organization's role in addressing them may require sustained efforts to overcome misinformation or lack of interest.

**Suggestions / Discussions:-**

The organization possesses significant strengths, including a diverse program portfolio, an experienced team, and successful advocacy efforts. However, it also faces challenges such as funding dependence, limited geographical reach, and legal and cultural obstacles. Sangama can capitalize on opportunities like technology integration, international collaboration, and strategic alliances to enhance its impact. These opportunities, combined with ongoing policy advocacy, can contribute to positive changes for the marginalized communities the organization serves. Nevertheless, Sangama must remain vigilant to challenges such as societal stigma, political shifts, and health crises, which could impede its operations. Addressing weaknesses like resource constraints and limited public awareness is crucial for sustained growth and influence. In navigating these factors, Sangama should continue building on its strengths, actively seeking innovative solutions, and fostering partnerships to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for the communities it serves. Overall, a strategic and adaptive approach will be key for Sangama to navigate the complex landscape and continue making a positive impact on the lives of marginalized individuals.

**Conclusion:-**

This research paper has delved into the case study of Sangama, shedding light on its notable efforts in contributing to the attainment of SDGs. Through a comprehensive examination of Sangama's initiatives, ranging from advocating for the rights of sexual minorities and transgender individuals to addressing the needs of sex workers and the urban poor, it is evident that the organization plays a pivotal role in fostering sustainable development and social justice. Sangama's dynamic approach, community empowerment strategies, and commitment to inclusivity and cultural sensitivity underscore its significance in the pursuit of SDGs. As demonstrated by its impactful projects, Sangama not only addresses immediate challenges but also works towards creating lasting solutions, exemplifying a model for NGOs aspiring to make meaningful contributions towards a more equitable and sustainable future. The SWOC analysis helps Sangama strategically leverage its strengths, address weaknesses, capitalize on opportunities, and navigate challenges in its pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals.

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