I, the citizen
unravelling the power of citizen engagement in development

Dr. R Balasubramaniam

Proposal
and
Invitation
for
Financial
Contributions
About the book

I, the citizen is a compilation of narratives and reflections of a development activist, a medical doctor, a leadership consultant and a public policy advocate who has been at the helm of a movement that found expression in the needs and aspirations of communities at the grassroots. The book strings together experiences and perspectives with a view to understand the deeper meaning of development through real life experiences on the one hand and through knowledge acquired from globally recognized schools of policy and development on the other.

The book would be useful to the general reader as well as an audience that is connected to the world of policy making directly and indirectly. That includes students of development studies, public policy and other disciplines under Humanities, activists and policy advocates, bureaucrats and aspiring civil servants, people’s (elected) representatives, researchers and development practitioners at the grassroots. Whether the reader seeks a grounded perspective on development issues or avenues for citizen engagement at a systemic level, there are a range of articles in the book that provide clues.

The book may be categorized under Indian non-fiction writing as well as a reference book under humanities and development studies.
Divided into sections, the volume covers a range of topics from development perspectives and lessons learned from the indigenous communities in South India to development policy at a macro level, from personal and emotional reflections on ground realities to reason and evidence based perspectives on policy. The sections and the articles within the sections flow into each other giving the reader a sense of continuity of thoughts and issues, and yet a look at the broad spectrum of perspectives. Importantly, the belief, experience and the power of citizen engagement reverberates through the articles and the sections giving us the hope & conviction that common people can indeed make a difference.

1. Understanding development
This introductory section contains articles related to the multiple dimensions of development as seen through different lenses and leading to an evolved understanding of the phenomenon of development.

2. Voices from the grassroots
This section comprises articles that brings out the grassroots perspectives of development aspirations and the reality of how far & difficult the last mile actually is. It also gives a glimpse into the fate of development interventions as they translate into action on the ground and the kind of impact they have, if any.

3. Governance, democracy and citizen engagement
This section contains articles that touch upon the concerns and issues related to governance in India and the role of citizen engagement in ensuring that governance embodies democratic principles and values. The power of people’s participation is explored, experienced and elucidated through the narratives of the common man, the author and the author as a common man.

4. Information indeed is power – People and their right to information
This section contains articles of an incredible journey of informing people about information and their right to have it. Information about what the State has in store for them, what they’re getting and what they aren’t. It was a journey of empowering people and feeling empowered about the Right to Information Act – the most powerful act passed in democratic India in recent history.

5. Citizen engagement towards making democracy work
This special section is dedicated to all those citizens who are willing to walk the daunting road to build people’s consciousness on democracy, encourage participation, right to information and give this nation a Government it truly deserves. Comprising events and experiences of working with people to make democracy work, it captures how and why we must have faith in democracy despite the odds.

6. Citizen engagement and the fight against corruption
Citizen engagement goes beyond making key democratic processes function, but also ridding them of corruption so that the motive of development action remains ‘people’. 2012 - India’s momentous year in the history of people’s fight against corruption is captured through the author’s close engagement with the central figures of the struggle as well as the inspired youth on the streets along with reflections on the directions of the movement.

7. Perspectives on policy
Philosophical underpinnings and strategic directions for public policies in India based on a macro understanding of policy as well as consciousness of ground realities constitutes the bulk of this section. Articles on basic development sectors such as health, education, food security and measures to tackle corruption give a view of the paradigm shifts needed for framing relevant public policies for India.
A movement begins

A 30 year old development movement has had its milestones. When the protagonist of the movement - a hard core grassroots practitioner stepped into the world’s leading schools of development and policy, new dimensions are added to the understanding of development. Grassroots experience of more than two decades is placed in the backdrop of globally accepted theories and tenets of public policy and a new movement begins. This section gives the reader how a global world view was instrumental in giving birth to a unique attempt to blend the world of academic research with policy advocacy based on empiricism, the initial promising strides and the challenging but exciting future that lies ahead.

The editing of the articles and sections is being handled by Rohit Shetti

About the author

Dr. R Balasubramaniam (b. 1965), a physician by qualification is a development activist, policy expert, leadership trainer, thinker and writer based in Mysore, India. He is most noted as the founder of Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement, a non-profit organization that started in 1984 with the aim of providing health care to forest based tribal population of Heggadadevanakote Taluk in Mysore District and more recently as Founder and Chairman of a public policy research and advocacy initiative, GRAAM (Grassroots Research And Advocacy Movement). He embodies a unique blend of perspectives having lived and worked among remote underserved communities for over two decades, studying and teaching at the world’s leading schools of policy and development and through experience of engaging with the Govt. at different levels, which is well reflected in the book.

About the publishers

GRAAM (Grassroots Research And Advocacy Movement) is a public policy research and advocacy organization based in Mysore, India that focuses on undertaking research that incorporates grassroots perspectives and advocacy based on empirical evidence using a collaborative approach. This publication is an important milestone in the journey of the organization even as it continues to generate evidence from its research that community participation is a key component of successful development interventions.

Vision India Foundation (VIF) – co publisher of the book is a young research based non-profit organization based in Delhi, committed to building leaders and systems for integral development in India. An initiative of faculty and alumni of various IITs, VIF aims to synergize systems that are in line with India’s ethos and yet meets 21st century requirements.
The contributors to the foreword and blurbs for the book reflect the diversity of stakeholders in development that GRAAM seeks to engage with. The foreword to the book is likely to be written by Former Chief Justice of India, M N Venkatachalaiah. The tentative list of people contributing with blurbs for the book includes economist (Gary Fields of Cornell University), leadership teacher & academician (Dean Williams of Harvard Kennedy School), senior bureaucrat (S K Das of the Indian Administrative Services), development expert (Ricardo Hausman, Director of the Center for International Development, Harvard University USA, tribal chieftain (Mudali Madiah), politician and a fellow development practitioner. The artwork and illustrations are likely to be provided by a young tribal artist from the community that the author lived and worked with.

**Financial support**

GRAAM is undertaking the unique endeavour of publishing this book through crowd sourcing of financial resources. You are welcome to be part of this venture and GRAAM would be happy to receive contributions from interested individuals and groups, who are in alignment with the concept, approach and purpose of the book.

We would like to raise about Rs. 800,000/- towards the cost of designing, printing, marketing and distributing the book and reaching the target would help us keep the unit costs of producing the book low. The number of copies of the first edition would be finalized based on the funds raised.

For contributing towards this initiative, you may use the following channels.

1] **Mail or courier a Cheque / Draft**

FAVOURING  
**Grassroots Research And Advocacy Movement**

TO  
**GRAAM**  
CA-2, KIADB Industrial Housing Area  
Ring Road, Hebbal, Mysore 570016

2] **Drop a Cheque or make an online funds transfer to our bank account**

Account holder:  
**Grassroots Research And Advocacy Movement**

Bank:  
**Canara Bank**

Branch:  
**Jayalakshmipuram, Mysore**

Account No:  
0566101069434

IFSC:  
CNRB0000566

Note: Kindly mention your name and location in the remarks/comments column while making the online funds transfer. A short e-mail to graam@graam.org.in would also be very helpful in tracking your contribution and for issuing receipts.

We value every contribution, regardless of the amount and in keeping in line with the theme of the book, would be glad to have a large number of contributors as part of this effort.
Efforts to reach the book out to the intended audiences have been broadly worked out and these include releasing prior information about the book through websites, social media campaign and during talks by the author. The book would be available in India and the USA and the ordering and distribution of the book would be handled by a network of contacts in addition to promotion by retail book sellers such as Sapna Book House / Crossword / Oxford, etc. Citizen Engagement would also be the theme throughout the year at Dr. Balasubramaniam’s talks and workshops and these are expected to help find more audience for the book.

### Other details

- **Size:** 5.65” x 8.85” - Cover + 230 pages (estimated)
- **Paper**
  - **Cover:** 300 gsm Art Card - matt lamination on one side
  - **Inner Pages:** 80 gsm NS (Natural Shade) Maplitho
- **Print Type**
  - **Cover:** Colours: 4 + 0
  - **Inner Pages:** Black-and-White

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