

# LIBERATION THEOLOGY: DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DECISION MAKING

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**Abstract:** Liberation Theology offers an alternative vision of development as it does not coincide with trained perception of development. Sustainable decision making may be parametric to comprehend the poverty of the society. The public policy decisions must be looked at in terms of how they impact the poor. The concern for the poor has slipped down while evaluating the decisions only in terms of profit of the organizations or economic growth of the countries as manifestations of prevailing political and economic structures. Based on this concern this paper focuses on Liberation Theology and its first dimension: political and social liberation, the elimination of the immediate causes of poverty and injustices; which may lead to socio-political change and development. The objective of this paper is to find out the capacity of existing Decision Support Systems akin to Liberation Theology. The paper is comprised of understanding, "Liberation Theology" and its application to decision support systems for sustainable decision making.

**Keywords:** Liberation Theology, Development, Sustainable Decision Making

## INTRODUCTION

Poverty of the poor is not a call to generous relief action, but a demand that we go and build a different social order." Gustavo Gutiérrez

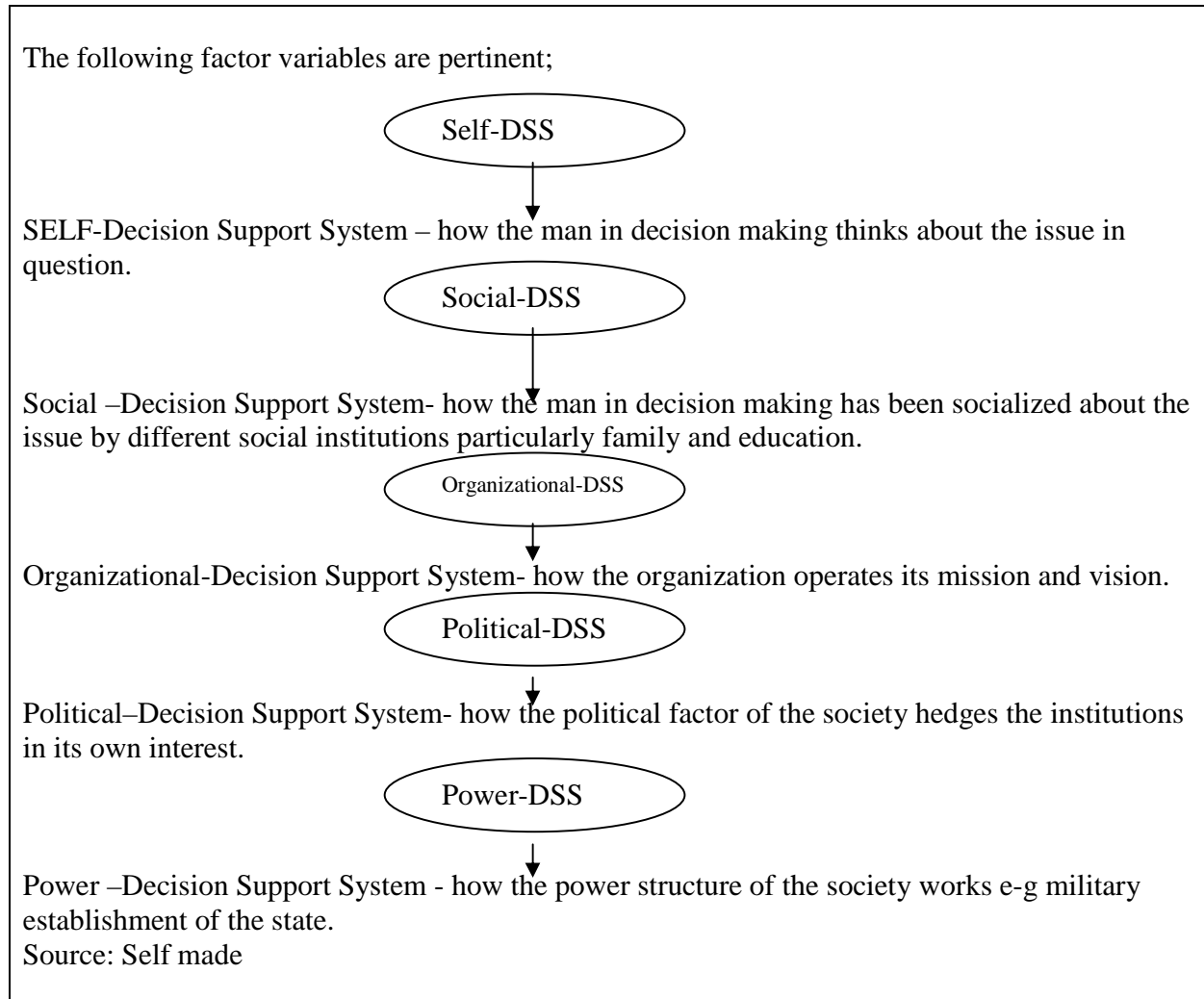
Liberation Theology offers an alternative vision of development as it does not coincide with trained perception of development. Sustainable decision making may be parametric to comprehend the poverty of the society through socio-political

changes. The public policy decisions must be looked at in terms of how they impact the poor. The concern for the poor has slipped down while evaluating the decisions only in terms of profit of the organizations or economic growth of the countries as manifestations of prevailing political and economic structures. Based on this concern this paper focuses on Liberation Theology and its first dimension: *political and social liberation*, the elimination of the immediate causes of poverty and injustices; which may lead to *socio-political change and development*.

The objective of this paper is to find out the capacity of existing Decision Support Systems akin to Liberation Theology. This paper assumes that application of Liberation Theology may help to bring socio-political change to manage poverty. The paper is comprised of understanding, "Liberation Theology" and its application to sustainable decision making. The question of the study is:

What can be the impact of Liberation Theology on decision support systems for sustainable decision making?

The mainstream Western political theory has employed the realist metaphor of the democratic state as the appropriate structural whole for society (Zeitlin, 1997), which gives unwarranted powers to decision makers. The decisions are found unsustainable mainly due to the dependence of decision makers on self, social, organizational, political and power Decision Support Systems. In this paper, we propose to flash Liberation Theology for sustainable decision making. This paper is significant to apply Liberation Theology in Pakistan; specific to its energy sector.

**Table 1:** Decision Support Systems (DSSs)

### Liberation Theology

Liberation theology is a classic ideology in political theology which interprets the teachings of Jesus Christ in terms of liberation from unjust economic, political or social conditions. The author of, “*A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, Salvation*” (1971), Gustavo Gutierrez<sup>1</sup> explains poverty is the result of unjust social structures. Poverty is not fate, it is a condition, it is not a misfortune it is an injustice. It is the result of social

<sup>1</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez said, “I come from a continent in which more than 60% of the population live in state of poverty and 82% of those find themselves in extreme poverty.

structures and cultural categories it is linked to the way in which society has been built, in its various manifestations. Gutierrez reminds us of Gods preferential love for the poor and our own need to side with the poor and oppressed everywhere in their struggle for justice.

According to Gutiérrez “liberation” has three main dimensions: First, it involves political and social liberation, the elimination of the immediate causes of poverty and injustice. Second, liberation involves the emancipation of the poor, the marginalized, the downtrodden and the oppressed from all “those things that limit their capacity to develop themselves freely and in dignity”. Third, liberation theology involves liberation from selfishness and sin, a re-establishment of a relationship with God and with other people (liberationtheology.org, 2012).

### Sustainable decision making

The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation. The public policy decisions must be looked at in terms of how they impact the poor. The goals are first to involve the people in decision making processes, second to structure the society; and third, to infiltrate, cultivate and influence allies, who are well-placed, because they have access to and control over key resources which gives them the political and economic clout to make greater social transformation possible (Katheleen M. Nadeau, 2000). In 1995, Copper mining Bishi Metals, a subsidiary of Mitsubishi Corporation ---prior to the arrival of the company the community has gone through a process of consciousness raising about the causes of their marginalization under the guidance of the priest, Padre Giovanni Paz who had introduced the concept of Liberation Theology and horizontal decision making. The process had produced some grass roots projects of environment and economic diversifications (Mary C. King et al. 2009). The factor variables of decision making are the Decision Support Systems.

### Decision support systems

Typically the top decisions are influenced by five DSSs named Self DSS, Social DSS, Organizational DSS, Political DSS and Power DSS (See Table 1). DSS analysis describes the position of decision maker. Each DSS is viewed in terms of relations to sustainability for social change. The DSSs may contradict one another referred to a decision maker, they may also contradict while judged as what is done and what needs to be done. Liberation Theology may help to manage these contradictions. The intended users are top decision makers.

Specific argument of this paper is that Liberation Theology can build consensus among the DSSs and efficiency in the hierarchy of DSSs with sustainable intent and implications.

### METHODOLOGY

Approximate of decision makers to Liberation Theology was validated in two phases of investigation for this study. The first phase was focused group discussion. There were six discussions each of 8-12 participants comprised of faculty, students, employees in local- provincial- national legislatures and civil-military bureaucracy. On the bases of results the five Decision Making Support Systems were developed: Self Decision Support System, Social-Decision Support System, Organizational- Decision Support System, Political-Decision Support System and Power- Decision Support System (See Table 1). This phase concluded that decision support systems are not akin to Liberation Theology.

The second phase was specific (Energy Sector) survey consisting of a stratified sample of 130 decision makers and delegates from science & technology, academia, civil society and media. 93% of respondents verified the 3 basic dimensions of Liberation Theology as paramount for sustainable decision making. This phase was pertinent to establish the validity of Liberation Theology. Liberation Theology had the highest mean rating (M = 2.23, scale 0-3). This indicated that Liberation Theology was perceived important for sustainable decision making.

The study has certain limitations because of small sample size. The Liberation theology may lead to sustainable decision making was validated by targeting sustainable development discipline/Energy. So the study may be replicated for other areas of sustainable development.

### IMPACT

The impact is that Liberation Theology may lead to sustainable decision making. By using Liberation Theology diverse solutions can be reached to solve the uncertainty and reasoning problems in decision making.

Liberation Theology may bring decision makers to realize the impact of their actions and inactions. Therefore, understanding Liberation Theology may be promoted through specific education programmed for managers, consultants, academia and political decision makers.

Liberation Theology rejects normative practices of inaction, neglect of human and natural resources, and negative impact of decisions. It will be value addition for sustainable decision making.

### CONCLUSION

“The criteria of any theology are its practical consequences, not its theoretical assumptions”  
Gustavo Gutierrez

Liberation Theology is likely to forge into planning and execution to mean sustainable decision making. It is found that mostly the decision makers from business, bureaucracy/military-civilian and politics are not akin to Liberation Theology.

This paper insinuates the paramount of Liberation Theology for sustainable decision making. Liberation Theology leads to acquire the ability to synthesize retrospective, perspective and prospective of certain realms. It makes to establish value questions, fact questions and policy questions. Liberation Theology has become desirable due to globalization; wherein monetary valuation of decisions is over whelming.

### Future Thirst

Liberation Theology seems diverse in the existing practices of decision making. It would have to go through investigations to establish cognizant in management literature. The Liberation Theology should be indexed to benchmark the sustainability of decisions for social change in local and global society.

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