

UNIT 23 – UPSC - Development processes and the development industry- the role of NGOs

Voluntary actions of people are always appreciated and are an important part of human culture and social tradition. The need for organizing people into attributed associations and their participation especially in rural development have now been fully acknowledged. Presently, such voluntary organizations have increased in considerable number, developed greater importance and did many new experiments for the growth of country. Non-governmental organizations, abbreviated as NGOs have great significance and plays vital role for the enhancement of populace at global scale. Non-governmental organizations accelerate growth of any country. A non-governmental organization is an organization that is not a subdivision of a government institutions and was not founded by states. Non-governmental organizations are typically independent of governments.



Non-governmental organizations are basically voluntary organizations and these are called as NGOs because they are unrestricted from governmental control to perform their function. They are self-governing and open to all those wishing to become member of the organization voluntarily and serve the civilisation. These organizations are established for ordinary citizens and may be funded by governments, foundations, businesses, or private persons. NGOs engage in array of activities, and take different forms in different parts of the world. Some may have charitable status, while others may be registered for tax exemption based on recognition of social purposes. Others may be fronts for political, religious, or other interests. Therefore, they have important position in civil society, which is fast emerging presently due to the weakening of the state. NGO is a popular term, which has gained popularity at global level and commands respect in society due to its wellbeing services. The term "non-governmental organization" was first devised in 1945, when the United Nations was created. The UN, itself an inter-governmental organization, made it possible for certain approved specialized international non-state agencies.

Non-governmental organizations does seek financial support from the government but it operates, at least theoretically, on its own principles and programmes (Punalekar, 2004).According to the

World Bank as "private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development". Edwin Masihi composes that "it is wrong to label such organizations as free-for-all in that anyone who seeks admission gets it on demand. In contrast, these organizations have their own rule of suitability for admission and only those who fulfil these eligibility norms are accepted as members, although with the approval of the existing members. In that reference, these organizations are voluntary in relative terms only" (Masihi, 2004). In theoretical studies, many theorists defined the term non-government organization. Turner and Hulme (1997, p. 200) described NGOs as "associations formed from within civil society bringing together individuals who share some common purpose." Hulme (2001) exemplified them (as well as civil society) as "peopled organizations [that] are both not part of the state structures, are not primarily motivated by commercial considerations or profit maximization, are largely self-governing, and rely on voluntary contributions (of finance, labour or materials) to a significant degree." According to Fowler (2000), "for our purpose, business is not included." To support this view, Edwards and Hulme (1995) explicated that "most organizations referred to as NGOs thus belong, analytically, to the private sector, albeit to the service (i.e., not-for-profit) sub-sector thereof."

Non-governmental organizations originated from both internal and external factors. Internally, the gradual retreat of the government in public service delivery has left a vacuum that NGOs try to fill. The retreat is due to governments' incapability to provide high-quality public services to citizens. From after World War II to the late 1970s, the role of governments was mainly to run the public sector, supervise the economy, and treat its peoples as consumers. As a result, citizens could not realize their potential to organize and make optimal use of their human, financial, and natural resources.

As the Commonwealth Secretariat (1996) argues, "the capacity of the public sector to establish the right regulatory frameworks for development, to enforce them, to develop national productive capacity, to attract capital, and to act as producer, are all in question."

Into this gap stridden NGOs, with new approaches to improve effectiveness in providing public services and infrastructure. At the same time, NGOs have crucial role in enabling people to organize themselves and share responsibility for governance. According to Mitlin, Hickey, and Bebbington (2005), "NGOs exist as alternatives" to a governmental, centrally led economy.

NGOs are dynamic and changing. They may conglomerate several roles or activities at any one time, and will need to be understood in terms of their relationships with other development performers, such as states and donors, and their particular historical and cultural contexts. Korten's (1990) generation model is beneficial because it discovers the way that some NGO change and affected by external and internal pressures.

Korten's schema of the four development NGO strategy 'generations' (1990)

Generation			
First (Relief and welfare)	Second (Community development)	Third(Sustainable systems development)	Fourth (People's movements)

Problem definition	Shortage	Local inertia	Institutional and policy constraints	Inadequate mobilizing vision
Time frame	Immediate	Project life	10-20 years	Indefinite future
Scope	Individual family	or Neighbourhood or village	Region or nation	National or global
Main actors	NGO	NGO plus community	All relevant public and private institutions	Loosely defined networks of people and organizations
NGO role	Doer	Mobilizer	Catalyst	Activist/educator

History of NGOs in India:

Non-governmental organizations have existed in India since ancient time. Earlier, people in this country offer help to others who were in trouble. Since centuries, there exists the tradition of voluntary service to the poor and helpless in the country. In the beginning, these services were rendered by people inspired by their religious spirits. People of India believed that service to people would be the service to God and, therefore, would be a means to achieve spiritual salvation and sometimes to compensation for any immoral act. Spirit of charity and self-sacrifice guided the charitable action in the past, which had found expression in diverse forms even outside the formal established religious channels (Punalekar, 2004). Many people including monarchs have stepped the path of charitable service to their fellow beings and adopted it as their life mission. In the worst situations due to floods, fires, earthquakes, epidemic outbreaks and other kinds of disasters, people were motivated to voluntary help those who were trapped in disastrous situations. Community life was very strong and people were guided by the cooperative feeling and selflessness to extend their individual support. The help and support used to be individual, spontaneous and transitory. During late 18th and early 19th century, associations and organizations were being formed to render such activities in a more organized and permanent profile.

The restructuring movements of the 19th century were possibly the first systematized forms of voluntary action in the service of society. This was the period when the caste inflexibilities were strong, untouchability was in practice, and other social evils like child marriage, cursed status of widow's were prevalent in the Indian society against which voluntary organizations came forward to launch transformation. These organizations were liberal and cut across caste and creed lines and worked morally as a liberal and secular entity. "In the beginning of 20th century, the religious passion gave way to more rationalist principles. The birth of the Servants of India Society laid the foundation of secular voluntary action in India"(Punalekar, 2004).

The concept of NGOs and Social welfare in India has a wonderful custom of Voluntary organisations. In the pre-Independence days, Rabindranath Tagore in his Santiniketan experiments displayed how rural development could be brought about by incorporation of education and culture. Gandhiji in his Wardha experiment presented how village industries could bring about the development of the deprived sections of the people in India. (Malik, 1995). Mahatma Gandhiji was strongly concerned with the glitches and evils of societies that affected the

life of common populace. He, along with his war against the British rule, wanted to eradicate the social evils and promote the people of India to come out of the evil traditions like untouchability, caste segregation, and subservience to the landholding castes and general backwardness. To accomplish these goals, numerous voluntary organizations were established under the influence of the principles of Gandhiji. A few of them are Sewa, Eklavya, Disha etc., which were instituted in Gujarat and some others might have been formed in other states also. A significant development of Non-governmental organizations started after the independence of India. Egalitarianism was established and people became aware of freedom of speech, the charm of equality and the value of humanity and brotherhood. Conversely, the government started planning for development and in this effort, launched inter alia the schemes of Community Development Programme and later on the Green Revolution.

Many reports indicated that after independence, India was declared as a welfare state and relevant provisions were included in the Constitution of India. Social welfare was included as part of the Five Year Plans. The major responsibility of organizing social welfare services sustained with the voluntary organizations. Currently, it is the voluntary organizations that are taking care of welfare actions (Basanta Kumar, 1995). In the VII plan (1992-97), more focus was on the role of voluntary organizations in rural development. The plan document represents that "A nation-wide network of NGOs will be created. In order to facilitate the working of this network, three schemes relating to the creation/replication/multiplication and consultancy development have been worked out by the planning commission (Malik, 1995)". With the renewal and strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions, consequent upon the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992- the NGO's role has become more significant. In order to support holistic and integrated development with the effective development schemes and programmes, the role of NGOs services and their involvement in the development process is acknowledged (Malik, 1995).

It has been documented in reports that million NGOs are following their economically lucrative activities. Evaluation of the accomplishments of the schemes were found to be ineffective in offering for the minimum necessary requirements and reducing the gap between the rich and the poor in rural areas, instead rather increasing it. The independence also enhanced the processes of industrialization, urbanization, expansion of education, politicization and democratization and modernization. These processes stimulated people to be sensitive to the existing disparities like economic inequalities (landed inequality in particular), gender inequality, inhuman kind of social segregations like caste inequalities and untouchability, other social evils like child marriage, child labour, restriction on widow marriage and many other stigmas and prohibitions.

Industrialization and urbanization led to the rise of the problems of rural-urban relocation that caused imbalance in the rural division of labour, over-urbanization of many cities with the development of slum and pavement dwellers, urban unemployment, pollution and depletion of natural resources. Consumerism and over-consumption are also other serious issues of development. Most of the cities of the world in general, and those of the less developed countries in particular, have the serious problem of garbage disposal. Thus, there are number of problems which have emerged and sensitized the citizens to organize themselves to work for their solution either by their own personal contribution or by pressurizing the government to solve the problem. Huge number of Non-governmental organizations have appeared in India that made significant contributions for the development of society. "These NGOs believe in the tasks of mobilizing and consentization of the masses or their specific target groups be they women, children, agricultural

labourers, construction workers or the social castaways like widows, devdasis or under trial prisoners. They trust sincerely in educating the people and preparing them for continuing struggle. They believe in social awakening including legal literacy and confidence-building" (Punalekar, 2004).

Role of NGOs in Development:

Voluntary action inspired and promoted by voluntary actions engaged in development has imperative role at basic level in the Indian social structure. NGOs contribute a lot in bringing about social change and development. It has been recognized that NGOs provide robust forces for social, political, and economic development (Edwards, 2005).

The various roles of Non-governmental organizations are as under:

- a. Catalyze Rural Population
- b. Build Models and Experiment
- c. Supplement Government Efforts
- d. Organizing Rural Poor
- e. Educate the Rural People
- f. Provide Training
- g. Disseminate Information
- h. Mobilize of Resources
- i. Promote Rural Leadership
- j. Represent the Rural People
- k. Act as Innovators
- l. Ensure People's Participation
- m. Promote Appropriate Technology
- n. Activate the Rural Delivery System

The major development roles attributed to NGOs are to act as:

- Planner and implementer of development programmers
- Mobiliser of local resources and initiative
- Builder of self-reliant sustainable society
- Mediator of people and government

Supporter and partner of government programme in activating delivery system implementing rural development programmes are

- Agents of information
- Factor of improvement of the poor
- Facilitator of development education, training, professionalization

It is observed that role of NGOs differ over the years as the policy of government changes. NGOs are manly relied on polices of government. Socio economic development is a shared responsibility of both i.e. government and NGOs.

At grass root level, Non-governmental organizations role is to make people for change. They empower the people to manage psychological problem and opposition of oppress.

Some NGOs visualize themselves as winners of the poor, promoting government to give them a better deal. Others play a regulator role, ensuring that governments and utilities remain honest. Still another group of Non-governmental organizations prefer to focus at ground level, finding ways to bring communities together to provide basic services to those in most need. Many Non-governmental organizations look to combine these roles within one organisation. Partnerships can struggle to accommodate these different visions, making it hard to harness the skills, abilities and local contacts that NGOs offer to best effect. NGOs themselves can be uncertain between engaging other stakeholders in order to provoke change from the inside and maintaining their independence from the outside.

Non-governmental organizations are funded by private donors and are also funded by Government Initiatives. Non-Governmental organizations function in the following areas of enhancing the lives of the disadvantaged.

1. Health, Housing and Food - Providing for basic facilities
2. Gender Inequality Issues in Developing countries
3. Care for HIV -AIDS affected children and adults
4. Elder Care: A large proportion of elders are being neglected and many NGOs and private donors have built orphanages for elders and senior citizens
5. Offering for education and vocational training such as Computer Typing.

Non-governmental organizations have done many social reforms. Every fortunate inhabitant of the world should think calmly about charity and upliftment of the subjugated in some aspect or the other. It may not be necessary to own a supporter NGO, but just a thought to donate money, medicines and other assets to the poor is sufficient.

In the context of India, this countries terrain of villages and the Government of India has implemented numerous rural development programmes for the enhancement of rural communities. Non-government organizations with their benefit of non- rigid, locality specific, felt need based, beneficiary oriented and committed nature of service have recognised multitude of roles which can effect rural development. Several Non-governmental organizations have been active in rural community development, besides government involvement. The NGO sector effectively works towards improvement of the socio-economic status of the poor communities. In present scenario of liberalisation and globalisation where market forces adopt major role, it becomes vital for the NGO sector to take a lead to assist poor to fight the challenges posed by the system. Non-governmental organizations can help the poor by offering access to the system, information on market opportunities, training facilities, and information on sources of credit. In order to meet the ambitions of rural poor communities, there is a need of special training programmes to extend for the officials for better management of the organization and developmental initiatives. Non-Government Organizations have critical role to manage development initiatives of various kinds at the rural level. Even the Government of India has recognized the critical role of the NGOs in the Five Year Plans, as they have commitment, credibility with the masses and professional approach to the people's issues unlike the charitable organizations of earlier days. However, despite their good intentions, huge number of NGOs has

difficulty to withstand in the long run such as sustainability of organizations as well as sustainability of developments.

Role of NGOs in Social Mobilization:

Currently, many Non-Governmental organisations are focusing on social mobilization on existing issues such as women empowerment, human rights, and implementation of various central and state government development programmes. The Non-governmental organizations in India have contributed generously towards social mobilization and social activism through their intensive campaigns, people's mobilization programmes and effective networks. The NGO act as a social force and assists collective action and people mobilization for the purpose of achieving the desired objectives. The NGOs are deploying various people-oriented as well as people centred strategies, and these organizations build rapport with the people and mobilize them. The NGOs run environmental awareness campaign to generate wakefulness among populace about environmental issues and sensitive to take part in the development process (Biswambhar Panda et.al, 2003).

It is believed that Non-governmental organizations are more efficacious to reach poor in poverty reduction and also resulted in rapid growth of funding for NGOs by government and external donors. As far as the government funding is concerned, there are approximately 200 government schemes introduced by the central and state governments through which NGOs can have direct access to resources for rural development (Reddy and Rajasekhar, 1996).

Rural Development Schemes and NGO: The important schemes available from Government of India for Rural Development are:

1. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)
2. Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY)
3. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY)
4. Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY)
5. National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)
6. Department of Land Resources-DoLR
7. National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP)
8. Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP)

The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP): The Integrated Rural Development Programme is a rural development program of the Government of India sprang in Financial Year 1978 and extended throughout India by 1980. It is a self-employment program aimed to raise the income-generation capacity of target groups among the poor people. The target group consists of small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans living below the poverty line. This is a major self-employment programme for Poverty Alleviation. The major goal of IRDP is to provide suitable income generating assets through a mix of subsidy and credit to below poverty line families with a view to bring them above the poverty line. Another objective of IRDP is to allow identified rural poor families to cross the poverty line by providing productive assets and inputs to the target groups. The assets which could be in primary, secondary or tertiary sector are provided through financial assistance in the form of subsidy by the government and term credit advanced by financial institutions. The program is implemented in all the blocks in the country as

a centrally sponsored scheme funded on 50:50 basis by the Centre and State. The Scheme is combined with another Scheme named Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) since 01.04.1999.

An assessment of the Role of NGO's in Rural Development: Non- government organizations have active participation in rural development. The rural poor and socially miserable classes are mainly depending upon the operations of NGOs. There is a huge competition among the NGOs to extend the services for the benefit of the poor.

The following are the significant activities should take up for the development of the poor.

1. Agricultural related programs: Several activities can be undertaken under agriculture sector. The jobs/projects like distributing planting materials, cattle, poultry, minor irrigation, free medical care for cattle's, safe drinking water for animals etc.
2. Health programmes for human and non-human beings: NGOS also supervise the works like pit drainage, housing, creation of smokeless environment, good drinking water for animals and human beings, regular health check-ups camps which can improve the health conditions of the human and non-human beings.
3. Community development programs: The community development programs such as adoption of villages for development, moral support during flood and famine period, supply of food and drinking water during flood, common well, training programs for the rural youths, housing projects, repair and renovation of houses will satisfy the basic necessities. The important program like training programs for the rural poor will hold the youths from rural migration.
4. Human Resource Development programs: The personality development programs, skill development programs, educational programs, integrated development projects will empower the rural poor to earn money for survival.
5. Trade and industrial promotion: The important problem is availability of the market for the products of rural enterprises. Therefore, an NGO has a direct link with the government for marketing of the goods. Besides this, NGO can also go for training of the rural youths in fabrication works, woodworks, agarbatti manufacturing, and printing press.
6. Government support: The government (central, state or local) support at all level is expected for rural development. NGOs alone cannot help poor and reform the villages. Therefore, the government should watch and ward the working of NGOs at phase wise manner. Thus, the fund should directly move to beneficiaries. The NGOs should be responsible for the managing funds.

Active role of non-government organizations in following areas:

1. The NGOs are active to encourage education, particularly among that section of population, which has remained un-benefited or less benefited by the measures adopted by the government. The education of girls, and other deprived people, particularly the SCs and STs, has been their target objective.
2. Women are the other susceptible section of society. Gender discrimination is a pervasive cultural reality. Girls are discriminated in the rearing pattern in the family. Larger numbers of the malnourished are from amongst the girls. Retention of girls in schools is

much less as compared to boys. Women are forced to work as housewife and deprived of participation in gainful economic activities outside homes. NGO are also playing active role in this arena.

The role of women voluntary organizations have been wonderful. Sewa, Sathin, Eklavya, Disha, Environmental Action Group and Agrani Foundation are some of the thousands of NGOs recognized for their role in development by generating awareness among people and interventions, if required.

3. The role of NGO is really visible and admirable. Many voluntary organizations are at work to promote people and governments against environmental degradation and depletion of resources.
4. The NGOs also have active role for the cause of people's relocation and are also performing praiseworthy job in this direction. The projects like the construction of dams, road highways and railways have often made some sections of people, particularly in rural areas, vulnerable and are displaced without being properly reimbursed. Voluntary organizations, working at both national and international levels are providing great services in social development. These organizations are creating awareness and enthusiasm for participation in development projects.

Role of NGO in mental health of people:

Non- government organizations are energetic in a range of mental health issues such as child mental health, schizophrenia and psychotic conditions, drug and alcohol abuse, dementia. Their actions have included treatment, rehabilitation, community care, research, training and capacity building, awareness and lobbying. There are range of activities of the mental health NGOs which are categorized in the following sections:

- Treatment: Care and rehabilitation
- Community-based activities and prevention
- Research and training
- Advocacy and empowerment

Treatment: Care and rehabilitation:

Several mental health nongovernmental organization identify treatment and rehabilitation as their priorities, based on the felt and largely unmet needs of the populations they wished to serve. Models of care and rehabilitation have been developed. While most state-run organizations concentrate on medical treatment, psycho-social rehabilitation is miserably ignored though major facet of mental health nongovernmental organization programs. It is due to untrained staff to carry out psycho-social rehabilitation activities. Hence, many NGOs have taken it upon themselves to develop modules of PSR in both urban and rural areas. The programs include a range of activities such as individual and group counselling, vocational rehabilitation and livelihood skills training, cognitive retraining, family support and counselling, self-help groups, recreation and leisure activities. Out-patient clinics, in-patient care, day care programs and long term residential care are services provided by mental health nongovernmental organizations, especially the ones dealing with chronic psychotic conditions.

Community programs and prevention:

Nongovernmental organizations have introduced numerous community-based mental health programs emphasizing on services in a variety of community, including home-based, settings and offer array of PSR activities. These programs range from primary prevention activities such as suicide prevention to provision of treatment in community clinics, increasing awareness and providing community based rehabilitation. Major primary prevention programs include the telephone help lines for depressed and suicidal persons, early intervention for babies born at risk for developmental delay and education programs in schools and workplaces for prevention of substance abuse.

Secondary prevention focuses on lessening the handicaps related with an existing mental disorder such programs include CBR programs for child and adult mental disabilities and school programs to help children with hyperactivity and dyslexia stay in school. CBR is an essential element of community care programs. SCARF, as part of vocational support activities, has distributed livestock, cows and helped expansion of petty shops in rural areas to help persons with schizophrenia. Non-government organizations such as SNEHA (Chennai) provided a range of community based counselling and mental health interventions. NGOs such as Banyan and Anbagam in Chennai, Ashadeep in Guwahati and Samarpan in Indore have developed wide-ranging services for people who are mentally ill.

The Indian Alcohol Policy Alliance, a network of centres and individuals working in de-addiction have released an "Alcohol Atlas of India" as a reference guide for policy makers and professionals. The National Addiction Research Centre (NARC), established in 1985 an active NGO focusing on substance abuse who have sustained their activities, in part due to the growing emphasis on drug users as a target population for HIV/AIDS control.

Research and training:

Mental health nongovernmental organizations were principally concerned with service provision and support related activities. Research was considered as an academic exercise, best reserved for universities and teaching hospitals. This has changed considerably in recent years that today MHNGOs are at the front of revolutionary health research in India. Major research programs in health areas are now conducted under the sponsorship of NGOs. The SCARF studies on schizophrenia are the most extensive research on the subject from any developing countries (Thara and McCreadie, 1998). Many mental health nongovernmental organizations actively invest in the development of skills of their staff and of other stakeholder groups. Participation in workshops, conferences and seminars, and formal training in courses such as rehabilitation are often offered as opportunities for career development. Most of the MHNGOs offer opportunities for training other professionals and health workers in specific areas of mental health, such as counselling skills (Kalyanasundaram and Varghese, 2000).

Advocacy and building awareness: Supporting the needs of underprivileged sections of the populace is major goal of mental health nongovernmental organizations. Currently, there is very low awareness of the medical advancement of the causes and treatment of mental disorders in India. This low awareness, together with the enormous humiliation attached to mental illness, means that the needs and rights of mentally ill persons are largely overlooked. Mental health nongovernmental organizations have generated awareness in different sectors of the community, such as health workers, teachers and lay persons, a priority area.

Role of NGOs in disaster management:

NGOs have become more significant actors than ever before in disaster relief in the region. The role of NGO undertakes significance in view of their broader engagement in public and development initiatives. Several international non-governmental organizations specifically focus to provide humanitarian aid to disaster victims. In India, NGOs have active participation in emergency response and rehabilitation following recent disasters; the 1993 earthquake at Latur, which killed 7601 people, the 1999 Orissa super cyclone which killed 8931 people and the 2001 Gujarat earthquake which killed over 13,000 people (S. L. Goel, 2004).

To summarize, Non-Governmental Organizations are meant for the enhancement of the people and society, and it's their duty also. There are several types of NGOs which have particular area of focus and it works according to their interest area. Presently, Non-governmental organizations have gained immense significance and are increasing rapidly. Though non-governmental organizations are intended for betterment of people but it is observed that many NGOs fail to perform their roles.