



THE ROLE OF NGO'S IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT: India is a land of villages and the Government of India has been Implementing various rural development programs for the raise of rural Communities. Non-government organizations with their advantage of non- rigid, locality specific, felt need based, Beneficiary oriented and committed nature of service have established multitude of roles which can effect rural development. A number of NGOs have been working in rural area community development, besides government interventions. Realizing that the government alone Was not able to meet the challenges of the massive enormous tasks in the process of rural development, the non-profit, voluntary and non-governmental organizations had to be Involved in different phases and activities at the global, regional and local levels. Thus, in later phases, both the GOs and NGOs have been actively involved in transforming the lives of the rural poor. No doubt, NGOs have been constantly working day-in and day-out to solve various problems concerning children, women, senior citizens, environment etc.

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The NGO sector effectively works towards uplifting the socio-economic status of the poor. However, for a significant impact in the present era of liberalization and globalization wherein market forces adopt a key role, it becomes essential for the NGO sector to take a lead in helping poor fight the challenges posed by the system. NGOs can help the poor by providing access to the system, information on market opportunities, training facilities, and information on sources of credit, etc. in order to meet the aspirations of rural poor, a unique set of training programs are Expected to extend for the officials of for better management of the organization and developmental initiatives. Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) are playing a very critical role in the process of managing 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 Issues unlike the charitable organizations of earlier days. However, despite their good intentions, a large number of NGOs find it difficult to sustain in the long run i.e. sustainability of Organizations as well as sustainability of projects. An attempt has been made to analyze the working of NGOs for the rural poor in this paper.

Introduction:

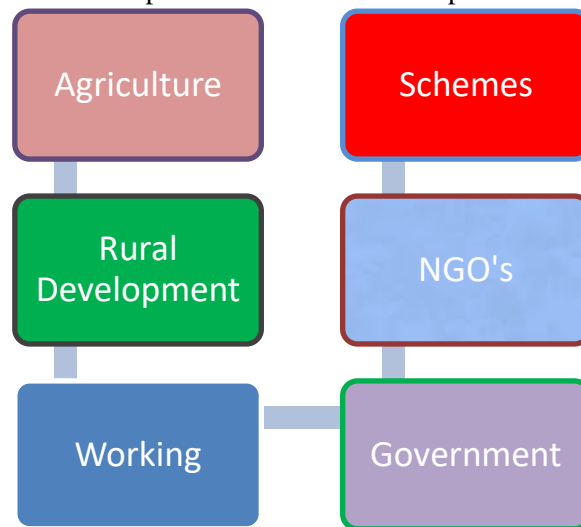
"India lives in its villages" - Mahatma Gandhi.

Literally and from the social, economic and political perspectives the statement is valid even today. Around 65% of the State's population is living in rural areas. People in rural areas should have the same quality of life as is enjoyed by people living in sub urban and urban areas. Further there are cascading effects of poverty, unemployment, poor and inadequate infrastructure in rural areas on urban centers



causing slums and consequential social and economic tensions manifesting in economic deprivation and urban poverty. Hence Rural Development which is concerned with economic growth and social justice, improvement in the living standard of the rural people by providing adequate and quality social services and minimum basic needs becomes essential. The present strategy of rural development mainly focuses on poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes of wage and self-employment. The above goals will be achieved by various programmed support being implemented creating partnership with communities, non-governmental organizations, community based organizations,

Institutions, PRIs and industrial establishments, while the Department of Rural Development will provide logistic support both on technical and administrative side for program implementation. The Government's policy and program have laid emphasis on poverty alleviation, generation of employment and income opportunities and provision of infrastructure and basic facilities to meet the needs of rural poor. For realizing these objectives, self-employment and wage employment program continued to provide in one form or other. As a measure to strengthen the grass root level democracy, the Government is constantly endeavoring to empower Panchayat Raj Institutions in terms of functions, powers and finance. Grama sabha, NGOs , Self-Help Groups and PRIs have been accorded adequate role to make participatory democracy meaningful and effective



History of NGO's:

International non-governmental organizations have a history dating back to at least 1839 It has been estimated that by 1914, there were 1083 NGOs. International NGOs were important in the anti-slavery movement and the movement for women's suffrage, and reached a peak at the time of the World Disarmament Conference. The "non-governmental Organization" only came into popular use with the establishment of the United Nations Organization in 1945 with provisions in Article 71 of Chapter 10 of the United Nations Charter for a consultative role for organizations. The definition of "international NGO" (INGO) is first given in resolution 288 (X) of ECOSOC on February 27, 1950: it is defined as "any international organization that is not founded by an international treaty". The vital role of NGOs and other "major groups" in sustainable development was recognized in Chapter 27 of Agenda 21, leading to intense arrangements for a consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

Globalization during the 20th century gave rise to the importance of NGOs. Many problems could not be solved within a nation. International treaties and international organizations such as the World Trade



Organization(WTO) were centered mainly on the interests of capitalist enterprises. The fifth World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in January 2005 was attended by representatives from more than 1,000 NGOs. In terms of environmental issues and sustainable development, the Earth Summit in 1992 was the first to show the power of international NGOs, when about 2,400 representatives of NGOs came to play a central role in deliberations.

Meaning and definition of NGO:

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a legally constituted organization created by natural or legal persons that operates independently from any form of government. The term originated from the United Nations (UN), and is normally used to refer to organizations that are not a part of the government and are not conventional for-profit business. In the cases in which NGOs are funded totally or partially by governments, the NGO maintains its non-governmental status by excluding government representatives from membership in the organization. The term is usually applied only to organizations that pursue wider social aims that have political aspects. The number of NGOs operating in the United States is estimated at 40,000. International numbers are even higher: Russia has 277,000 NGOs India is estimated to have around 3.8 million NGOs in year 2013, which is just over one NGO per 480 Indians, and many times the number of primary schools and primary health centers in India Some successful NGOs in Rural Development, through their hard work, dedication, commitment combined with professional competency and integrity have made their mark in the field of Rural Development during last three decades. The Government also acknowledged the contribution of such NGOs and supported them both by policy changes and financial assistance. This GO-NGO

partnership in recent years has yielded very good results. In view of such successful partnership, it was expected that more favorable policies towards NGOs would be introduced by the Government. Strangely, instead, reverse has started happening with the Government policies Discouraging the involvement of NGOs. This example of reversal or regression in Government policy is clearly seen in the revised Guidelines for watershed development (revised in 2001) by the Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

Major role seen for NGO's in rural development:

As economic reform and liberalisation saw the Government vacating several areas to let private sector entrepreneurship flourish and contribute to the high growth rate of the economy in recent years, a similar paradigm shift is needed to transform NGOs from their dependence on aid and grants from within and outside for transforming the rural scenario in the country.

This is sought to be achieved for the NGOs through engaging them in micro-finance, microinsurance, and micro-entrepreneurship activities for the overall development of the rural areas and to promote the welfare of the people of rural India,

Better credibility:

As NGOs get finance generated through their own activities, their credibility vastly improves and their service to rural people gets reinforced. CNRI is an apex body with over 2,000 member-NGOs engaged in multifarious activities ranging from self-help group formation, income generation, marketing, agency work for insurance companies for life and non-life products and for banks and financial institutions to



environment protection, watershed management, handicrafts, textiles, traditional medicinal plants and HR development. It is completing one year of its existence. To mark the celebration of one year of its service to NGOs, CNRI is hosting a three-day national meet - 'Advantage Rural India' - from April 17, 2009.

Special sessions:

The meet will feature sessions on NGO/SHG products, finance and marketing, rural Connectivity , energy needs and new technologies, employment opportunities for rural youth, role of NGOs in the field of rural education, experience sharing with the performing NGOs in the field of organic farming, value-added agriculture, food processing, animal husbandry, environment, forests and natural resource management. The Union Minister for Rural Development, Dr Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, will inaugurate the meet; the Union Home Minister, Mr Shirvraj Patil, will address the participants.

India and NGO's:

India has a long tradition of social service, social reform and voluntary agencies. NGOs emerged in India soon after Independence when Mahamata Gandhi made the Indian National Congress (the political party which came into power upon Independence), and transforming it into a Lok Sevak Sangh (Public Service Organization). This plea was, however, rejected; nevertheless, it did not halt the formation of non-governmental organizations in India. Many Gandhi followers established voluntary agencies to work closely with the governmental programs on social and economic issues. These agencies organized handicrafts and village industries, rural development programs, credit cooperatives, educational institutions, etc.

The second stage of growth of NGOs in India was around 1960 when many individuals noticed that the governmental programs seemed to be inadequate to deal with the deprived sections of India. These groups formed organizations that worked on behalf of the poor, the landless, the tribal, the bonded laborers, and many other social groups that were being discriminated against by the policies of the state and social structure. These grass roots organizations work at the micro-level and work with limited resources and lack of coordination Since Independence in 1947 until around 1980 there was little effort on the part of the Indian Government to define the role of a voluntary agency or to recognize its importance. In 1980, however, with the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-1985), the government identified new areas in which NGOs as new actors could participate in development.

These areas included:

1. Optimal utilization and development of renewable source of energy, including forestry through the formation of renewable energy association at the block level
2. Family welfare, health and nutrition, education and relevant community programs in the field
3. Health for all programs
4. Water management and soil conservation
5. Social welfare programs for weaker sections
6. Implementation of minimum needs program



7. Disaster preparedness and management (i.e. for floods, cyclones, etc)
8. Promotion of ecology and tribal development, and
9. Environmental protection and education.

Today, India has a vigorous NGO sector. Although there has been no complete census of NGOs, it is estimated that about 25,000 to 30,000 are active in India. In fact, as of December 31st, 1989, there were 12,313 NGOs registered with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) 1976; furthermore, 726 NGOs are unregistered but under the prior permission category. One problem with NGOs in India, as with NGOs anywhere else in the world, has been the increasing dependency on governmental funds or donations from external (foreign) donors like the World Bank. This dependent relationship has resulted in a lack of flexibility on the part of NGOs to pick their missions and objectives since many are expected to perform certain tasks in return for funding. But, further still, it has also created structures that have become more bureaucratic in nature and, hence, less effective in development.

A new actor has emerged on the international stage, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) are increasingly making their presence felt. A decade ago, NGOs were fairly peripheral to major international diplomacy. Today, however, NGOs participate actively in various political, economic and social matters. NGOs work on their own, in conjunction with individual governments or with international organizations. As former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and other UN officials have noted, the involvement of NGOs in making decisions on the environment, sustainable development, human rights and women have increased the legitimacy and transparency of intergovernmental deliberations. NGOs come in all sizes, shapes, ideologies, nationalities, organizing structures and styles. Some focus on nothing but local issues. Others, address issues that span whole continents, and some like Amnesty International span the entire globe.

Rural Development Schemes and NGO:

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

- ❖ Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREG)
- ❖ Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY)
- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY)
- ❖ Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY)
- ❖ National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)
- ❖ Department of Land Resources-DoLR
- ❖ National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP)
- ❖ Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP)
- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Mission (PMGDISHA)

Conclusion:-



Unless the NGOs are developed, prepared to face the new challenges like shortage of funds, stoppage of funds, it would be difficult for them to sustain. Rural India continues to suffer from lack of employment and self-employment opportunities owing to its narrow economic base. In the recent past, considerable success has been achieved in developing rural poor through entrepreneurship development approach which focuses on selectively utilizing local talent, appropriately developing them through training intervention and linking them with relevant

Business opportunities. EDI implemented Rural Entrepreneurship Development (RED) Approach, in collaboration with NGOs by training their development workers. One of the major hurdles faced in the process is non-availability of required and timely financial support to trained entrepreneurs. It was, therefore, felt that the desired success rate could not be achieved in REDPs despite best possible training inputs, because of non-availability of funds from banks to trainees.

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