CHAPTER II

AN OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE
CONTENTS

CHAPTER II 48 - 85

AN OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

An Overview of Literature 1

Research Gap 84
CHAPTER II

AN OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

The role of the state in the field of production and in various service activities is diminishing in an era of trade liberalization and globalization. Alternatively, the role of the civil society is gaining relevance and importance in social, economic and community development. With the declining role of the state in social welfare and social services, NGOs are increasingly gaining attention and are looked upon as alternative agencies in promoting awareness, change and development in the society. They are extensively involved in alleviating the poverty and promoting sustainable and equitable development. They are in a position to provide social services to different sections of the society where as the state fails to provide such services. NGO approach to development is based on the principle of people’s participation.

The emergence and growth of the NGOs in the recent times is largely attributed to the serious disjunctions and distortions in the development paradigm itself where the poor and the marginalized received the least attention. NGOs are important linkages between the people at the grassroots level, civil society and the state. They have been instrumental in creating awareness and implementing development programmes in agriculture, watershed development, women’s empowerment, education, health and family welfare. They are the representatives of the alternative modes of development.

With the relevance of NGOs in the social sectors rising so fast, several institutions and agencies working in the area of development, including those belonging to UN family, are focusing on how best involve the NGOs in their operations and collaborate with them on a sustainable basis. Presently, national governments and various development agencies
realized that economic, social and community development can be achieved only with the full involvement of the people at the grassroots level and therefore, NGOs, which represent the people at the grassroots and accountable to them, have to be involved in the development activities on a large scale. There were some favourable signals from various international financial institutions for increasing participation of NGOs in development programmes in the developing countries. The NGO initiative was being seriously studied and applauded for their timely and constructive intervention in the development projects in the Third World. Serious efforts are being made to draw on NGO knowledge and the experiences regarding the strategy framing and deciding on prioritization of programmes and projects. Most of the writers on NGO roles concentrate on this aspect.

Despande (1986) studied and highlighted the importance of Voluntary Organizations or NGOs in achieving nation’s economic and community development. It was observed in the study that two totally different opinions have been drawn by the public about the voluntary agencies. Some people praised the contributions of voluntary agencies and found them to be sincere, dedicated and successful in making a dent into the problems of poverty and exploitation, in taking education to hitherto neglected regions and sections of the society, in giving relief to families affected by the natural and social calamities, in releasing the bonded labourers and so on. Some others considered them as the foreign agents, who in the pretext of helping the poor, undermined the process of national integration and social formation. The author found that, though small in number, the presence of NGOs has been strongly felt due to their effectiveness in organizing the downtrodden and enabling to articulate their grievances.
Kothari, (1986) examined the context in which the role of NGOs became important in the economic and community development of the country. In the socio-economic sphere major reversals of policy were underway and the long established and cherished institutions of the state were withdrawing. The crucial segments of the economy were handed over to the private sector through policies of liberalization, and privatization. In such a context, the government truly wanted to involve the NGOs in the development efforts which enabled them to come together on a platform irrespective of ideological and other differences and materializing the motto ‘reaching out to the people’.

The following observations were also made in the study:

* Even though government could do better in heavy investment sector, NGOs could do much better in the small investment interior development programmes.
* The international donor agencies have discovered the NGO model to be the most effective instrument in promoting their interest in the developing countries.
* The government did not succeed in delivering development to the people and therefore there was the preference for more autonomous development agencies like Non-governmental Organizations.
* The UN and other international donor agencies highly distrusted the national government in reaching out to the target population.
* The NGOs could, without inducing a shift in the development strategy, speed up development because of their flexibility, efficiency and amenability to privatized and individualized initiatives.
Franco and Chand, 7 (1991) pointed out that development should mean
* a sustainable increase in the economic independence of the poor
* strengthening the cohesion of the community by reducing rather than increasing the inequality.
* creating the organizational power of the community.

The authors observed that the NGDOs could play a major role in achieving such a development as they were legally constituted non profit organizations working at the local level for the development of the poor. They displayed three characteristics in that they did depend on the government, they played a transformational or developmental role and they undertook unfamiliar tasks.

Sharma, 8 (1992) studied and highlighted the transformation potentialities and limitations of social action groups. The study was focused on social action groups working for the cause of the poor and deprived sections to enable them to be equal partners in development and in radical transformation. They were non-government non party organizations generally labeled as NGOs representing an alternative strategy for development and social transformation and operating at the grassroots levels based on spontaneous initiatives. The author saw three agencies capable of social transformation, namely, the state, organized movements and the grassroots action groups. However, the author found that at present state has turned out to be an ineffective agency of structural transformation, and the organized movements met with little success in initiating the process of restructuring the society. Therefore, the author argued that the emergence of grassroots action groups became very important for social transformation as they have
evolved a distinct methodology for working with the disadvantaged people and it was the methodology of critical intervention, creative action and participatory mobilization.

Galab, (1993) examined the role and relevance of various rural employment generation programmes of the government and suggested that the close participation of the voluntary agencies would enhance their effectiveness. Making the case study of Anantapur district in A P, the author observed that very high levels of unemployment and poverty existed even after the implementation of the rural employment programmes. It was suggested in the study that the full benefits of reasonable wages to the workers and the quality of assets along with the non escalation in the cost of the programmes could be ensured if NGOs are involved in executing the works. Moreover they could motivate the beneficiaries of individual assets and involve them fully in the process of creation of these assets. Further it was noted in the study that there can be the plugging of the leakages if the identification of beneficiaries was made with people’s knowledge and with the help of NGOs as they are non profit organizations.

Arora, (1994) looked into the theoretical and practical aspects of people's participation in various economic and community development programmes exploring the success of the joint forest management systems in eleven states in India promoted with people’s participation. The study pointed out an increasing accent on people’s participation in both official policy discourse at national and international levels and non official political discourse at the level of NGOs and local voluntary agencies and organizations. The study highlighted that people’s participation became a reality in the context of increased interest shown by the NGOs in organizing the
people to assert their rights on forests. Also the author made an apprehension that the people might become indifferent and the state might revert back to its earlier position in case the NGOs leave the scene.

Stephen, 11 (1997) observed that voluntarism was a strategy for development with opportunities for all as its goal. The voluntary organizations, which could be termed as NGOs, were of various types and with much difference in their plans, aims, ideologies and activities. The author highlighted that development was a process where people unitedly and voluntarily struggled to liberate themselves from all forms of enslavement and create better living conditions for themselves and for others. The fundamental role of NGOs was to educate the people to be critically aware of the causes of poverty and to assist them to overcome it by organizing themselves through a participatory and democratic process. The relevance of NGOs was clear from the fact that conscious people and government have accepted and recognized them as more efficient and less expensive means in promoting development.

Sinha and Ghosh, 12 (1997) examined the importance of literacy campaign and land literacy in achieving better community development and highlighted the role played by the NGOs in this field. Literacy Mission launched by the government and the various literacy programmes undertaken by the other agencies especially NGOs were intended to boost the process of empowerment which enabled the people to participate in the process of economic planning and development. In the changing scenario of world economic and trade relations, sustainable development could be achieved only with a basic knowledge of the level of resources possessed by the community and with a
balanced or normal exploitation of resources. In the agricultural sector programmes like watershed development would be very important and for the success of such programmes the full involvement of the local people and NGOs was necessary. The study also cited the panchayat level Resource Mapping programme initiated in Kerala by Kerala Sathra Sahithya Parishad (KSSP) and Center for Earth Service Studies (CESS) with a view to promote community involvement at grass root level planning and development.

Tandon and Ananthakrishnan, 13 (1997) examined and pointed out the voice reflected by NGOs in United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) 14 and also observed that the environment problems and the North South relations sounded more in UNGASS which obstructed the negotiation on major issues. The authors pointed out that the NGOs have played a highly significant role in exposing the unsustainable pattern of contemporary production and consumption. The study also suggested that if NGOs wanted to play a more meaningful role in the future they need to problematise their innocence, do deeper thinking and try to understand the basis of increasing distrust between the North and the South. It is because the NGOs seemed to rotate in a world of their own and they possessed little or no understanding of wider issues.

Suzuki, 15 (1998) pointed out that NGOs have emerged as a distinct organizational type and gained attention as a major alternative to government sponsored development. The author observed that the literature on development swiftly shifted a good deal of its focus to NGOs and attempted to understand the various aspects of their functioning. The term NGO could be used in a very broad meaning and it includes a huge number of organizations with differences in missions, operations and funding schemes. The author
further pointed out that NGOs could undertake two types of activities – organization centered and programme centered. The organization centered activities focused on taking care of the organization by acquiring resources, maintaining the staff and maintaining a safe environment for the organization. The programme centered activities gave focus on accomplishing the goals of the organization. The author further suggested that a balance should be there between these two types of activities undertaken by the NGOs.

Rajasekhar, 16 (1998) analysed the role of NGOs in bringing about more successful rural development in India. The author observed that the rural development programmes of Government of India were not successful in reducing the poverty and unemployment. The reason for this was the lack of involvement of the people for whom the programmes were largely meant. The author suggested that the NGOs, being small scale units and flexible, innovative and participatory, were more successful in reaching the poor and in poverty alleviation. Empowerment of the poor people for the achievement of sustainable development was the mission of most of the NGOs. There were radical changes in the field of economic and political thinking especially after the launching of ‘New Policy Agenda’ in 1991 which gave a prominent role to the NGOs in alleviating poverty and in promoting social welfare.

Mencher, 17 (1999) studied and highlighted the relationship between NGOs and socio-economic and political set up in which they existed at different levels. The study pointed out that NGOs could effectively function as agency of change if they focused on what they were entrusted to do; to help local people in acting for themselves. An NGO could be any organization that is not a direct division of a national government and which
could act as a highly significant vehicle for development. The author observed that NGOs had a striking presence and they expressed their varying perspectives in all the six major international conferences in the recent ten years and subsequently the different national governments had to take a different stance sensing the perspectives of NGOs and hence the state-NGO relationship underwent structural changes. Moreover, NGOs have tried to play a larger role in the formulation of national policy and connect various social issues and problems to the people who worked in the process of framing national policies. With NGOs taking leadership in the developmental roles, the meaning of development to the local people changed altogether. The villagers or the local people recognized the need for alleviation of poverty, acquiring higher education and decent health care, lessening of the cast, social and gender discriminations and getting power and it was what development meant to them. The study also examined the structure, size, organizational pattern and the historical background of NGOs, the sources of NGO funding and the NGO relationship with the state.

Iyengar, (2000) studied and highlighted the role of NGOs in the achievements and failures of the development work of the mankind examining NGO role, achievements and failures in the economic development of Gujarat. The author observed that the NGOs have their experience of resounding success and regrettable failures in the development work in Gujarat. Gandhiji’s call for constructive work for development changed the tenor of the voluntary activity in the country completely. Voluntary action in India has been grounded partly in a Gandhian response to development and partly in a struggle against the large hegemony of micro organizations (political parties, trade unions) which often
discourage the people’s participation. The author found that there was the proliferation of NGOs throughout the country as there was the organization of community development programmes and national extension services in the line of Gandhian rural construction and also due to extensive sponsorship offered to NGOs in the development programmes. The author was of opinion that the state could not succeed in alleviating the status of the disadvantaged and in solving the social problems and tensions to any one’s complete satisfaction. Moreover there has been a conscious decision to reduce the role of the state to remove unnecessary regulations and controls. The NGO initiatives in the area of awareness, mass mobilization and organization around critical issues were to lead towards a better problem identification and solutions that involve the active participation of the local population. The author suggested that the state should give recognition and the sufficient encouragement to NGO initiatives.

Patel, 20 (2001) pointed out that Voluntary Organizations performed a variety of functions in every society similar to those of various economic and political institutions irrespective of the stage of economic development the society has achieved. In India, the voluntary organizations, with diverse functions and purposes, serve a vast and assorted population of informal workers and large sums of money from public and foreign sources are expended by them. The author noted that since the voluntary organizations did not exhibit the characteristics of either public or private sector organizations, the concept of yet another sector - variously called third sector, independent sector, voluntary sector or non profit sector- is necessary to encompass all voluntary associations. NGOs being good partners in development gained much importance in the development process. The author
found the contextual factors like religion and tradition with their influence in a limited manner and factors like Gandhian influence, ideology of the left and systems failure with their influence in a big way contributing to the proliferation of NGOs in India. Moreover government wanted to involve them in implementing various development programmes. Again the philosophy and strategy of international development community began to change and the foreign donors started to focus their attention on NGOs as supplementary vehicles for development. They began to channel large amounts of developmental aid to those organizations which worked directly for the poor and it led to rather mushrooming of voluntary organizations in the different parts of the country.

Aswathi, 21 (2001) pointed out that it was not the investment alone or faithful implementation of the governmental programmes that led to the economic and social development of the society, citing the example of Ralegan Sidhi, a village in Maharashtra. The author observed that social development towards an ethical and egalitarian society preceded as well as accompanied the economic development in Ralegan Sidhi, giving it a special place in the development scene. Ralegan achieved a remarkable progress under the leadership of Anna Hazare, a local resident, who had a great vision and also a lot of capabilities and initiatives. The author attributed the success of Ralegan to four reasons.

* The entire development effort was financed through government loans and assistance which could be normally availed by any village in India and a matching mobilization and voluntary contribution of the local people.

* A strengthening of the moral fabric and bringing of the people together were made under the leadership of Anna Hazare because he felt that the individual morality and the
moral reconstruction of the society were essential for laying foundations of any socio economic development process.

* The guiding principle of economic development was ‘growth with equity’ whereby eradication of social discrimination and achievement of greater economic equality could be materialized.

* ‘Shramdan’ was an essential component in the implementation of every programme in the village. The author further noted that in India when the poor people were deprived in any way socially, economically, politically and culturally with the limited access to the information education, skill and health, the Ralegan experiment could be followed.

Shah and Iyengar, 22 (2001) pointed out that the government systems were too rigid and standardized to evolve and implement plans that would meet the highly varied requirements of the country. A new approach and style of working seemed necessary for evolving programmes and implementing them in a participatory manner to meet the requirements of the local people with more accountability and transparency and better quality of development and service delivery. As a result, many NGOs came to the scene and government and other funding agencies began to insist on the involvement of NGOs in planning and implementing the development projects and programmes. The author observed that there has been conscious efforts on the part of NGOs to ensure the quality, cost effectiveness and accountability. The NGO presence in the development scenario could meet certain other requirements as well.

* NGOs did quality work and it pressurized the government to improve its quality of work and performance.
* The close interaction between NGOs and the government on the financial and procedural matters made the government agencies to modify their own systems and procedures so that they become flexible and locally relevant.

* NGOs worked informally in a friendly manner to meet the needs and priorities of the people with people’s participation and in that it became a supportive role.

* The NGO work promoted sustainability at various levels and positions, namely, institutional sustainability, technical and financial sustainability and the environmental sustainability.

Pulavarti, 23 (2001) observed that the rapid growth in the number of voluntary organizations working in the field of development has generated widespread debate about their roles and their performance. The author made the case study of an NGO, Sumangali Seva Ashram in Bangalore district, with the focus on its contributions to the processes of social change. SSA was a major NGO working primarily with women and sought to formulate and implement various programmes for the economic and social development of women at the grass roots level. It was found in the study that due to SSA activity, the awareness, consciousness, self image and the self confidence could be increased among women. They got better contact with the bureaucracy in the government and they were able to face and answer many problems with confidence and sense of accomplishment. Further, it was highlighted in the study that due to NGO activity two kinds of results could be generated – tangible (in terms of how many people became literate, how many government loans given etc.) and intangible (increased awareness, consciousness, self image and self confidence) which led to the empowerment of the people.
Ramachandran,\textsuperscript{24} (2001) observed that leakages of development funds of the government, the scams, scandals, corruption and misappropriation of resources have led to a gradual erosion of public confidence in the traditional agents of development. It led to an increase in the significance of the role of NGOs in the development process. The author noted that responding to Gandhiji’s call as well as inspired by ideas of socialism, social and religious reforms and communism, many voluntary organizations emerged in the different parts of the country and involved genuinely in voluntary welfare and reform work. There has occurred a change in the face of NGOs in the early 1980’s that they focused more on people’s mobilization instead of development projects. However, by late 1980’s the international development climate and growing professionalism created a demand for organizations that could provide professional support to grass roots groups. Also the donors found it easier to fund a few NGOs rather than a large number of small organizations and consequently NGOs were encouraged to upscale their work. It was further noted that having created a large infrastructure with many workers, voluntary organizations had no options but to take on large development projects which alienated them from the local people and put them under tremendous pressure.

Kothari,\textsuperscript{25} (2001) observed that after fifty years of state sponsored and directed effort in resolving problems, people’s problems remained unsolved. The state lost its capacity and legitimacy which forced the development thinkers to think of voluntary action. Earlier, the government was seen as the key to social change and improving the life chances of the masses of people. However the failure of the government in providing
genuine development to the people gave an image to voluntary action in India. Voluntary action was initiated by diverse individuals and groups with the distinctive features that it was autonomous, relatively independent and self propelled. It was further pointed out in the study that a large part of innovative and creative endeavours in many fields in the country was voluntary in nature and emerging into specific movements. (environment movement, women movement etc.) and macro formations dealing in broader networking issues.

Nair, 26 (2001) examined and highlighted the role of financial markets and services in alleviating poverty through microfinance institutions where NGOs played a major role. Microfinance institutions were defined as those which provide thrift, credit and other financial services and products of very small amounts mainly to the poor in the rural, semi urban and urban areas for enabling them to raise their level of income and improve the living standards. The author found that in microfinance approach to poverty alleviation, NGOs could be the most preferred intermediaries as they were particularly good providers of socially oriented financial services. By the end of 1990’s about 800 NGOs were participating in the SHG - bank linkage programme organized by NABARD. Again, several other NGOs have developed microfinance functions either with assistance from the internal donors or exclusively on the strength of individual savings. The rise of NGOs doing business in microfinance has opened the flood gates of aid in the selected pockets in India. Even the World Bank wanted to involve NGOs as representatives of civil society and allow them a free ride even in matters like of use of financial resources. The author observed that the relevant question was how to enhance the capacity of the
NGOs in carrying out the financial services function and how to best instill in them the best industry standards. It was noted that many NGOs have completely changed their strategy of intermediation from issue based activism to financial delivery and the NGOs were found at varying stages of their evolution as financial intermediaries.

Das,27 (2001) observed that the state lost interest in development and right issues and in its place voluntary sector or civil society organizations have emerged because of their credibility and importance. It has become difficult to think of a World Bank project or a government programme without a very visible NGO component. Similarly, in all national and international deliberations regarding policy formulation, NGOs emerged as a strong voice representing people’s concern. Even the regional and state level consultations on policy and programme matters rarely took place without NGO participation. The author further highlighted that the credibility and acceptance of the NGOs have increased in the development sector and it led to a mushrooming of NGOs in different parts of the country.

Wazir, 28 (2002) pointed out that there was wider and ever widening acceptance of the fact that NGOs acted as far better agents of change and innovation than top heavy government bureaucracies. The author highlighted that even the Government of India acknowledged the above fact as it set up parallel constructions resembling NGOs in order to implement on an experimental basis. The ability of NGOs to respond flexibly and with speed and their innovative, non-bureaucratic and low cost approach made them appealing to international donor agencies and local governments alike. It was further noted that the donor agencies tended to favour NGOs and at the very least they insisted on inclusion of NGOs when funding large scale governmental programmes.
Vysulu,²⁹ (2002) made a comparison between local self governance and the NGOs in bringing about development in the rural areas. It was pointed out in the study that NGOs and the like agencies were not substitutes to government even though NGOs and such organizations have done good work in many parts of the country. The Prognosis of some recent writers on development that government was a failure in bringing about the development and hence the NGOs should take over such a role, was challenged in the study. The author argued that often NGO working went corrupt and local self government bodies were not allowed to blossom. Moreover the NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) did not have the constitutional status and hence they have some constraints while the local self government institutions have a constitutional status. It was suggested in the study that the best way of expanding social opportunities and bringing about sustainable development, was to allow the local self government institutions to function in the relevant areas under their jurisdiction.

Chopra,³⁰ (2002) examined and highlighted the precise nature of creation of social capital and the role it played in furthering the development intervention at the local levels. The author examined the nature of interaction between the new institutions and older formalized networks with a view to bring about enduring development. Social capital was defined as those social organizations such as trusts, norms and network that could improve the efficiency of the society by facilitating coordinated actions. Again, it was described as the networking that helped to create linkages which in turn forged rules, conventions and norms governing the development process. An evolving and increasing stock of social capital was a necessary input in the sustained process of development.
The study identified that the strengthening of informal institutions like NGOs through the inputs of technology and financial and human capital from across the different sectors constituted an essential input in operationalising the concept of sustainable development. The appropriate institutions, that enabled the people to realize their expectations with respect to the quality of life, made development more comprehensive and sustainable and it was made possible by social capital. In the light of evidences from different parts of the country, it was highlighted in the study that the unique sharing mechanisms evolved by the NGOs, have created initiatives and enabled the people to achieve comprehensive and sustainable development. Thus the social capital led to sustainable development and it was the input of grass roots organizations. The author emphasized the role of NGOs in creating social capital which in turn led to comprehensive and sustainable development.

Roy, (2002) identified and highlighted the village community as the natural unit for organizing development. Over the last two decades focus was made on community development and the community participation in development became even more prominent. The author found that the participatory mode of development was the most acceptable one and it actively involved the people it represented in its development planning, monitoring and evaluation. The formulation of integrated programmes that viewed people as agents of change and which have comprehensive vision of social cohesion was critical to realize participatory development. It was further specified in the study that the practice of development, having identified the rural community as the site for intervention, has to mediate through agencies working at that level. Here the role of NGOs was identified as most important. Both the operational NGOs and advocacy NGOs
worked to bring about community development by people’s participation. It was also found that the role of Community Based Organizations (CBOs), an operational category of NGOs, were exclusive in participatory development as they were not self servicing and they put the responsibility of self development and self management up on the initiatives organized from below. CBOs have a special advantage in participatory development as they were membership based and there existed a unity between the members and the beneficiaries.

Mahanty, 32 (2002) looked into the role of NGOs in conservation programmes and also examined how the internal dynamics of governmental agencies and the relationships between NGOs, agencies and donors could influence the conduct of conservation programmes. The author examined these issues through a case study of India Eco-development Project at Rajeev Gandhi National Park based on the field work conducted during 1998 and 1999. It was suggested in the study that there should be community involvement and power sharing in park management as a prerequisite for resolving the conflicts and inequities. The institutional constraints have posed real difficulties in facilitating and power sharing and meaningful local participation. The NGOs should be included in the institutional framework for the management of parks and related activities. It was further found that the NGOs could effectively scrutinize the government policy and promote public debate on contested issues and they have linkages with broader social movements.

Wit, 33 (2002) examined and highlighted the importance of empowerment participation and enabling in poverty alleviation and achieving community development.
It was a case study of poverty alleviation efforts in Bangalore. The study suggested that conditions should be created under which communities and NGOs or private sector organizations could involve themselves in the task of development and in which the communities could identify and prioritize their needs leading to better match between what the people needed and what they actually obtained. The author found that the Bangalore Urban Poverty Alleviation Programme was very successful, the core strategy of which was empowering the poor with special focus on the most vulnerable group including women. Close relationships between governmental and non-governmental organizations and the slum communities was brought up which led to the convergence or merging of various urban poverty alleviation programmes and resources from both governmental agencies and NGOs could perform two types of tasks – on the one hand, set up and guide slum development team and monitor their performance and functioning and on the other, they could perform the role of management and decision making.

Fowler, 34 (2003) pointed out that the NGOs associated with the international development (NGDOs) faced a future scenario where they could no longer rely on a system of concessional aid as reference point for their role, work and continuity. Most of the NGOs worked as intermediaries to promote sustainable development, social justice and enduring improvement in the circumstances of the poor and the excluded groups. The author noted that the basis of operation of most of the NGOs was aid and there was a decreasing volume and distribution of aid finance. Consequently, the role of NGOs changed as explicitly value based agents of personal change, whose major task was to foster cooperation and collaborative spirit on the basis of human relations in an
increasingly interdependent world. This NGDO role is a vital answer to the global trends that shifted power from public to private domains and hence demanded a responsible use of private power for the self-development of all.

Edwards and Fowler, 35 (2003) observed and highlighted that NGOs have become a force for transformation in global politics and economics. With globalization the shifting pattern of poverty and insecurity within and between countries that called for more sophisticated strategies and interventions, increasingly connected across the borders of geography and sector, causes and effects. Hence the NGOs have to play important roles in disbursing the aid and in helping to ensure that the new global rules for trade, human movement, financial and environmental governance were both fair and effective in combating injustice. The authors further observed that NGOs were not only the prime providers of relief, humanitarian assistance and specialized services but also mediators between civilians, government and even the military in complex political emergencies. Most of the NGOs were intermediaries in the sense that they worked between the grassroots or community level and other levels and sectors of the society providing a range of support services.

Sharma, 36 (2003) noted that NGOs have paid attention to the problem of engendering as a part of development. Development should imply not the exclusion but the inclusion of marginalized people, their efforts, experiences, dreams and hopes. For NGOs development signified a concern for the people rather than the projects and focused on training, awareness raising, social organization, capacity building and the institutional development. The NGOs employed a variety of methods to pursue their
goals – protested against and rejected the policies of the state, tried to alter development discourses by raising serious concern about the environment and sustainability in the achievement of development, concern about women, about traditional people and their knowledge base, about cultural diversity and about civil rights, justice and equality. NGOs organized people and adopted simple locally relevant and effective development models. The author noted that the role of NGOs have increased in the recent years on account of three reasons. Firstly, NGOs represented a force towards a democratic and pluralistic society, offering alternative development and empowerment at the grass roots level. Secondly, NGOs possessed particular strengths in the work related to poverty alleviation and sustainable development. Thirdly, NGOs offered a prospect of enhancing the efficiency of the public sector service delivery.

Sarangi,\(^{37}\) (2003) pointed out that in the Indian context, NGOs, as a social and political phenomenon, emerged in the 1970s and early 1980s. This happened at a time when the democratic state which stood for the welfare of the people utterly failed its people in fulfilling their basic minimum needs. The author observed that in the mean while the Indian Economy was relatively open for penetration by IMF/World Bank and loot of natural resources by MNCs. The failure of the national government, IMF / World Bank / WTO devastation and the loot by the MNCs compounded the problem. It was in this context that multinational agencies stepped in through the network of NGOs and these sub contractors propagated the philosophy of grass roots democracy, participatory development, alternative development etc. The author argued that the alternative activity and the collaboration approach not only obfuscated the reality but also hampered the
emergence of people’s initiatives and the funds flowing through the alternative activities created a set of power brokers at the local level.

Narayanan,\(^{38}\) (2003) highlighted that the conventional growth oriented top down development strategy did not succeed in extending the benefits of development to the marginalized. Such development programmes viewed people as objects of the process of development and in it the various agencies provided things and services they could rather than what people needed. Such a failure occurred because the policy makers, administrators and the donor agencies did not understand the local realities. The need for understanding local realities led to the gradual emergence of the concepts of participation and empowerment in the development literature and at present these twin concepts have been positioned at the center of both the radical and the mainstream perspectives of development. The author highlighted that participatory approach to development gave an enhanced role to non state actors in development like NGOs. Voluntary organizations have been mobilizing the participation of marginalized people and it could be successful only with the state assistance. The NGOs have demanded the establishment of a variety of participatory institutions and the state has responded positively establishing such structures and mechanisms to involve the local community in decision making. It was also pointed out that the NGOs functioning in the rural society organized the weaker sections and made them aware of empowerment and participation by conducting training programmes on leadership development and capacity building. The NGOs even tried to alter power relations at the micro level in favour of disadvantaged sections. Thus a
strong NGO presence was desirable in the development scenario to ensure the uplift of marginalized and disadvantaged sections in the society.

Prasad, 39 (2003) observed that for about last fifty years of development, planners and policy makers in India assumed that the state would provide the leading role in formulating and implementing the enabling policies for poverty alleviation. As per the experiences of the country, working of the political and the administrative machineries were having constraints and therefore a new understanding began to emerge and focus shifted to the development activities of locally rooted participatory micro development organizations. This shift was evident in the increasing attention being given to the NGOs or voluntary organizations in asserting positive values of participation of the poor in development and bringing about social changes within a democratic political framework. The author observed that the core elements behind the success of NGOs were people’s participation and participatory development was made possible only through the social mobilization. Social mobilization was defined as the process of dialogue, negotiation and consensus building for action by the people, community organization etc. to identify, address and solve a common problem. The goal of social mobilization was to raise the status of the poor in a society through capacity building for self awareness, development and self realization where the role played by the NGOs was very important.

Ahmad, 40 (2003) pointed out that there should be a systematic change in the country that aimed at generating certain types of developments where governmental agencies and NGOs worked in tandem for a speedier breakthrough in specified areas of rural development while confronting the challenges of a global economy. The author
suggested that there should be the decentralization of economic decision making power so that the delays in the implementation of development projects could be avoided. For sustainable rural transformation, the government should create a conducive economic, social and political environment in which the development of rural areas could take place through a mix of initiatives. The author observed that NGOs could be catalysts of rural economic transformation and therefore the NGO sector should be encouraged to play a greater participatory role in the development of the rural economy. Since the ultimate responsibility of rural development was with the government, the initiative should come from it to include the NGOs right from the stage of planning and policy formulation. The author also made the following observations about the NGO roles in development.

* NGOs could deliver goods more speedily and efficiently as compared to the indifferent bureaucracy.

* People accepted and appreciated the apolitical approaches of the well trained and professional NGOs in delivering goods.

* NGOs could understand the ground realities related to rural economic and social transformation as they were closer to the target groups.

Success Story,\(^{41}\) (2003) highlighted how the involvement of NGOs and Self Help Groups (SHGs) led to the success of various governmental programmes citing the case of success of a similar governmental programme in Tamilnadu. The Credit Cum Subsidy Scheme (CCSS) announced by the government of Tamilnadu aimed at the construction of houses for the people living marginally above the poverty line in the
Kanyakumari district of Tamilnadu, subject to a ceiling. In a situation where banks and other financial institutions were reluctant to give loans to the beneficiaries, some NGOs and self help groups under them entered the scene and extended money and loans to the beneficiaries for constructing the houses. The CCSS worked like a magic and with the help of some NGOs and Nehru Yuva Kendra about 300 houses were constructed in the Kanyakumari district.

Prasad, (2003) observed that the social mobilization was a participatory process where people got educated, organized, motivated and enabled to undertake social enquiry and analysis for understanding their life situations and taking decisions and actions to change it for their well being. In the different phases of social mobilization, it was necessary to identify and study the functioning of NGOs and other development partners and seek their support for possible collaboration. The author suggested that there should be an institutional framework for social mobilization in which the NGOs and the other development partners could be included. The quality, size, resources, expertise, credibility and spread of NGOs were critical at this phase of social mobilization. The basic principle of social mobilization was that whatever output achieved in the society must be consolidated through a better facilitation, supervision and monitoring of the activities of the beneficiaries under the project interventions and here the NGOs and other voluntary agencies had a very important role.

Hebbar and Acharya, (2003) looked in to the direction of change in the existing social institutions and those established in India after independence and also the obstacles to forming effective social institutions in the country. The study classified the
social institutions in to three, namely, those which are intrinsically part of the traditional common society, state sponsored institutions and the modern popular people centered institutions like SHGs, NGO promoted groups and other spontaneously organized groups. Even though a public controlled economic development would distribute the gains evenly and empower the downtrodden politically and socially, the macro level agenda had a lot of contradictions and disagreements with the micro level realities which would require decentralization of decision making power. In the light of this the role of NGOs increased in the government and community endeavors and growing need was felt to strengthen the cooperation and trust between the people and social groups. The authors suggested that there should be the formation of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and NGOs should undertake empowerment through education under various programmes.

Tiwary, (2003) evaluated the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of NGO work making a study of two NGOs in West Bengal and Jharkhand respectively in the field of joint forest management and rural development. The study examined the organizational structure, the funding opportunities and the work philosophy of the two organizations. Some of the constraints faced by the NGOs in their respective areas of work also were highlighted. However, the author argued that the voluntary agencies, with flexible organizational methods and models, were credited with using innovations in experimentation and providing entry points for radical works. NGOs were particularly suited for motivating and organizing the village communities for protection, afforestation and the development of degraded forest land. The author pointed out that the NGOs were expected to perform better than governments in promoting participation and converting
aid money in to development. The study made the following observations also.

* There was often a mismatch between the villagers’ expectations and the NGOs strived to do in the process of development.

* The size and area were very important for the NGOs to be successful. A large and specialized NGO has created a more sustainable presence in the villages.

* The villagers, on involvement with institutions from outside, strongly and heavily demonstrated expectations for multi sector and integrated rural development agendas to be included in the NGO plans.

* For NGOs to have an impact, a mere populist agenda must give way to the readjustments that considered a more strenuous regime and that sought new allies and a legitimacy.

James,45 (2004) remarked that there was rather a proliferation of a large number of organizations which were variously called Voluntary Agencies, Social Action Groups, Grassroots Organizations, NGOs etc. Their activities were centered around participatory development as an alternative to the mainstream growth path followed by the government. The sudden rise of NGOs to international respectability was due to a large number of interpenetrating developments having economic, political, cultural and ideological ramifications at a global level. There was the collapse of the welfare state concept due to the rise of Neo Liberalism since 1970s. Today NGOs have evolved in to an inalienable adjunct of neo liberal globalization projecting themselves as an alternative paradigm to the state led socio-economic development of the past decades.

Pawar, Ambekar and Shrikant,46 (2004) pointed out that with the declining role of the state in social welfare and social services, NGOs were increasingly
gaining attention and prominence and were looked upon as alternative agencies in promoting the awareness change and development in the society. NGOs are important linkages between people at the grassroots, civil society and the state. They have been instrumental in creating the awareness and implementing development programmes in agriculture, watershed development, women’s empowerment, education, health care and family welfare. They were thus the representatives of alternative modes of development.

The authors further noted that the NGOs working in the different fields in the country have an important role in development and their approach to development was based on the principle of people’s participation.

Punalekar,\(^{47}\) (2004) highlighted that a Voluntary Agency or an NGO was a social entity committed to activities and programmes oriented towards change in the prevailing set of conditions – social, economic, political or cultural. In India NGOs have increased in number in the recent years and they have entered increasingly into various fields of development spanning different sectors and social segments, both in the rural and urban areas. The author further noted that the NGOs were essentially conceived as efficient agencies for the management of development activities, even though they were without much say in the core principles of decision making or policy. The emergence and growth of NGOs in the recent times was largely attributed to serious disjunctions and distortions in the development paradigm itself, where the poor and the marginalized received the least attention. NGOs were being conceived as social and cultural catalysts for initiating change in the attitudes and perceptions of the people, for bringing the people
in to the modern stream and empowering them to redesign their own life styles and practices to confront social and economic backwardness.

Gurusamy, 48 (2004) pointed out that in a vast country like India, which is marked by the existence of innumerous socio-cultural, economic, educational, political and religious problems, the development of rural areas and people occupied a significant place in the efforts towards planned and directed social change. The government alone was not able to solve these multidimensional problems. Any meaningful attempt in the direction of rural development should ensure economic growth with equitable and distributive social justice. The real and everlasting development did depend up on the willing cooperation and the wholehearted participation of the people in such endeavors routed through social action groups/self help groups and voluntary organizations. NGOs or Voluntary Agencies could be understood as groups of persons who have organized themselves in to the legal cooperative bodies and they were initiated spontaneously and governed by their own members without any external control.

Durgaprasad and Madhuri, 49 (2004) studied and highlighted the initiatives, successes and challenges relating to partnerships and networking for health development and found that the bottom line of all prosperity and health in future would be vested in a development process and outcome that was essentially facilitated by what was called development partnerships and networks. The burning issues of individual human rights, entitlements and empowerment began to form the core of positive assertion, bargaining, negotiation – all aimed at partnership and network based support for sustainable rural health development. The study pointed out that government, aid agencies, NGOs and
other community based organizations should come together and act for promoting and sustaining achievement oriented societies. The NGOs were found very successful in this field. The authors suggested that while resource sharing, which was an important aspect of partnership and networking, critical care should be taken to ensure that communities, NGOs and government did not end up in an unhealthy competition because of resource scarcity.

Vasan, 50 (2004) observed and highlighted that NGOs have emerged as an important element of contemporary Indian society. The author pointed out that NGOs have employed more women at the field level than many other sectors and the positive impact of this was for women, apart from being a source of income, NGOs provided a space for exposure to new ideas and possibilities outside the traditional restrictive social sphere. However it was observed that the NGOs gave only very low benefits, wages and salaries to their employees. The question of minimum wages, benefits such as insurance and health care, safe and dignified working conditions etc. were very rarely raised in the NGO sector since majority of employees were conveniently classified as volunteers, project staff or part timers and their payments labeled honorarium rather than a wage or salary. At the same time it was noted that NGOs got increasingly professionalized at higher levels where incomes were not restricted by argument of voluntarism and social service. It was suggested in the study that NGOs could bring about radical changes in the society and achieve better economic and community development, if there was much accountability for NGOs and responsibility was assigned to them.
Shamshad,\textsuperscript{51} (2005) observed that at present there has been a great deal of interest in the voluntary sector and its possible role in development. It was because of the complexity of the development problems and the need for reaching out to the poor. The author emphasized the critically significant role of NGOs especially at the grassroots level as they have contacts with the people and respond to their needs effectively. It was noted that NGOs were relatively a new phenomenon and they were groups of persons organized on the basis of voluntary membership without state control for fulfilling some common interests of citizens. The main characteristic of an NGO was the highly needed human touch with encouraging people’s participation and promoting the development of rural entrepreneurship for solving the problems of unemployment and for the uplift of economically weaker sections. The author found that only a few NGOs have succeeded fully in India in imparting skills of income generation and macro entrepreneurship development among the weaker sections of the society, among women, tribal people and the others.

Srivastava and Tandon,\textsuperscript{52} (2005) made a study about the non profit sector in India and highlighted its importance in the social and economic development process in the country. The study observed that the recent years witnessed rather an upsurge of voluntarily established organizations both within and outside the formal sector. These organizations are engaged in a wide spectrum of activities cutting across economic, social cultural and scientific domains. These organizations, which were termed NGOs in a general way were engaged in education, health care activities, loan schemes for providing self employment and macro credit plans for sustaining household enterprises and their
encompassing the issues of larger national concern, governance, advocacy, generating awareness of the various laws and regulations and addressing the basic needs of the marginalized sections of the society. The study pointed out that the number of non-profit organizations in India in the year 2000 was 1.2 million and as much as 51% of their receipts were self-generated rather than from government and foreign sources as grants and loans and the NGOs involved nearly 19.2 million people in the social and economic development process.

Srivastava, 53 (2005) pointed out that the NGOs could bridge the distance between the affected masses and the international decision making carried out at WTO. It was highlighted in the study that the NGOs could bring about some democratic content in the sphere of international policymaking. It was in a context where WTO has come to increasingly play legislative and regulatory functions which were traditionally in the domain of the nation state and where decision making structures were further getting removed from the people whose lives were affected by policies which emerged under the influence of WTO. Many of the intergovernmental agencies gave prominent roles to NGOs even though the nature of these engagements differed from agency to agency. ILO, UNICEF and UNDP worked with the NGOs at the local level to implement their programmes and disburse the funds while the UN agencies like COSOC and UNFPA have granted a contributive role to the NGOs. The author established in the study that the NGOs have become indispensable in the activities of intergovernmental organizations in connection with the implementation role.
Rego, $^{54}$ (2005) observed that the third sector initiatives deploying the concept of civil society was increasingly involved in the process of development. There emerged a consensus that public, private and civic roles have come to be crucial to growth and development. Author found that in India a large number of grassroots level, participatory, problem solving non profit organizations like Panchayat Raj institutions, cooperatives, voluntary organizations and self help groups have been providing valuable services to society with the help of grants and donations received from various sources. It was pointed out in the study that NGOs which came under third sector were in transition, restructuring in to diversified organizational forms and strategies which reflected in their functions, management and resources. The author made the following observations also.

* The role of voluntary agencies was seen as direct benefit background services and social benefits. Their new agenda included programmes on health and in the areas of women empowerment and environment.

* The financial strength of the voluntary agencies with reference to their goal was considerably weak.

* Voluntary agencies are to a large extent depending on government grants.

* There was a wide gap in the financial sources of different voluntary agencies.

* The financial transactions of voluntary agencies were rarely audited.

Kumar, $^{55}$ (2005) studied the different aspects of rural development and pointed out that rural development was based on two fundamental concepts.

* Effective management of existing local resources, both material and human, with the goal of achieving optimum output.
* Active and full participation of the people in the area or the locality without any sort of discrimination.

The above two concepts were not realized in the state policy of development especially in the rural development. The government organizations like Panchayat Raj Institutions have a country wide institutional network but they lack those potential for development. The NGOs are efficient and equipped with these two features but they lack the potential in other dimensions. The last two decades witnessed the tremendous growth of NGOs both at the national level and at the international level. The study pointed out that approximately there were 1.2 million NGOs working in the different fields in India.  

The author found that the NGOs or the Voluntary Agencies could be found in different structural forms like Associations, Organizations, Institutions, and they collectively fall under the category, ‘third sector’. The failure of the state and the corporate sector created a space for the third sector. Panchayat Raj Institutions and the voluntary agencies were the two important agencies in the rural society for local development and both of them together could effectively attain the larger goal of people’s empowerment and the integrated rural development. The author stated that conventional voluntarism was characterized by charity, relief work, philanthropy and social reform and thus was based up on idealism. Modern voluntarism, even though incorporates some of the elements of conventional voluntarism, is based more on ideology. It aimed at the achievement of development and that of social justice rather than mere relief and welfare.
and it strived to change the social, economic and the political position of the poor and weaker sections especially that in the rural society. The author pointed out that it was the modern voluntarism that encompassed the aspect of sustainability in the process of rural development and the utilization of the local resources.

Biswaś,\textsuperscript{57} (2006), studied and pointed out that there was a proliferation of NGOs in India in the 1980s and 1990s because of the domestic and global policy changes and the economic liberalization and integration of the Indian Economy into the market driven global economy. The NGOs were considered as an entrenched part of the socio economic system and an institutionalized force in fighting the socio economic tensions and problems and in achieving the economic and community development of the country.

From the VIII Five Year Plan onwards, the thrust of the Planning Commission has been to open up a space for the NGOs consistent with liberalizing the country’s economy and ushering in the era of public–private partnerships.\textsuperscript{58} The study further noted that as a result of introduction of the New Economic Policy in India, in 1991, massive inflows of aid into the country began especially from international financial institutions like World Bank, IMF and ADB and such funding was tied to structural conditions like market friendly restructuring and privatization of public enterprises and utilities. As a result of the domestic policy changes in the economy and increased flow of international funding into the country, there was a proliferation of NGOs throughout the country and they received foreign funding on a large scale. The study noted that during 2003 – 04, 147000 NGO groups were registered in India with the Ministry of Home Affairs and they received foreign funding worth Rs. 4856 crores.\textsuperscript{59}
By examining the literature on NGO activities spread in various fields and sectors, it could be understood that the majority of writers on NGOs found rather a proliferation of NGOs in the developing countries and particularly in India. The works undertaken by the NGOs were varied encompassing almost all sectors of the economy. Much literature is available on the NGO activity in most of the states in India. The NGOs have taken a leading role in the economic and community development of India in a context in which the traditional agents of development were on the path of withdrawal.

In Kerala also it could be seen that the NGOs have undertaken a lot of works and projects leading to the economic and community development of the state. However, not much literature has forth come on the NGO activity in Kerala. The NGOs in the state have organized and implemented various programmes relating to women empowerment, health care, education, poverty alleviation agricultural development, watershed development etc. leading to the economic and community development of the state. In this study, the researcher wanted to examine and evaluate the interventions made by the NGOs in Kerala, in a context in which much literature has no forth come relating to NGO activity in the state and that the NGOs have taken a leading role in the economic and community development in the different parts of the state.

**RESEARCH GAP**

The NGOs have contributed in a big way to the economic and community development of the state of Kerala. However, no serious study has been observed by the researcher relating to the economic and community development interventions of NGOs in general in the state. There have been several serious and well organized studies made
on the working of NGOs outside the state and many such studies have been reviewed in the present study. Therefore it has been strongly felt that a look into the economic and community development interventions of NGOs in the state became highly desirable. The NGOs in Kerala have much difference among themselves in the pattern of organization, in the style of making development interventions, in providing development services in the locality where development interventions were required and also in the pattern of raising development funds. However, the development interventions of NGOs have been highly required and have become successful in those places where the people have been marginalized and remained the most backward. In the present work, an attempt has been made to make a case study of Peermade Development Society, a major NGO making the development interventions in Peermade Taluk of the backward district of Idukki, for the uplift of the socially and economically marginalized and weaker sections of the society in the locality.
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