CHAPTER III

NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF NGOs

INTRODUCTION

A Non-Governmental Organisation by definition is not one of the organs or departments of the government. NGOs are secular in every sense. Their aim is the welfare of the people. Even when they implement the relief or rehabilitation or social welfare programmes of the government, they cease to be government organisations. They fight for the rights of the people.

Voluntary organisations by dimension surpass any unique definition because of their character, composition, function, form, scope, service, geographical area of operation, territorial occupation and target groups.

It is noted that: “A non-profit making, voluntary, service-oriented/development-oriented organisation, either for the benefit of members (a grass-root organisation) or of other members of the population (an agency)” (Manju Latha, 2007). In terms of their organisational and operational framework NGOs are classified as:

- Community Based Organisation (CBO),
- Donor Organised Non-Governmental Organisation (DONGO),
- Government Organised Non-Governmental Organisation (GONGO),
Non-Government Organisation (NGO),
Non-Government Development Organisation (NGDO),
Non-Profit Organisation (NPO),
Private Development Organisation (PDO),
Public Service Organisation (PSO),
Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO),
Quasi Non-Governmental Organisation (QANGO),
Voluntary Agency Organisation (VAO) and
Voluntary Organisations (VO).

Non-government organisations popularly known as NGOs or NGDOs are development-oriented voluntary organisations. The term voluntary means servicing or acting in a specific manner on one’s own accord and without any compulsion or promise of remuneration, arising from natural impulses; acting or doing anything without any legal obligation. Voluntary organisations are known for their virtues of human touch, dedication, great initiatives, self-reliance, contextual innovations, flexibility, togetherness with community and ability to reach the masses in the most effective manner. They are considered as partners of government in its endeavour concerning the needy, the poor, children, women and their environment.
The activities of the NGOs and NGDOs can be considered under three major heads; developmental, political and catalytic. If an NGO delivers benefits directly to the society, it is developmental. If an NGO informs people about the socio-economic-welfare schemes of the state then it is catalytic. If an NGO persuades the government and effects a change in policy of the government, it is political. If an NGO tries to reform the society, then it is catalytic. The scope of social service of the NGOs is unlimited and beyond legal constrains and national boundaries.

Such NGOs are in millions in number, all over the world. In India both dormant and dynamic NGOs range between 50,000 and 1,00,000. Nearly 18 directories of voluntary organisations were compiled by government departments and independent agencies in India. Tamil Nadu has more than 5000 NGOs and in Madurai district i.e., prior to bifurcation we had nearly 212 NGOs. Some of these NGOs are international organisations of religious nature yet but all of them are rendering service to all the people all over the world without any discrimination.

NGOs which are exclusively devoted to protect environment are inadequate both quantitatively and qualitatively.

**ORIGIN OF NGOs**

Man is gregarious by nature. All human associations vindicate this spirit. Associations may be based on caste, creed, religion, language, culture, recreation,
profession, occupation, sports and trade. They were living together and caring for
one another. Historical evidences prove that fear of natural forces is the
foundation of fraternity. Though man lived in groups, since the age of fishing and
hunting, they lived separately. Forest fires, floods, volcanic eruptions earth
quakes, cyclones, tempests, storms, ferocious wild animals and other dangers
compelled man to live together. As civilization, culture and education developed
human perception of life also expanded.

Agricultural age and industrial age helped man to employ human and non-
human factors of production. Interdependence among groups and communities
has become mandatory. Fast growth of transport and communication made this
interdependency possible. International trade and commerce brought the world
closer. World wars and natural calamities demanded the services of the voluntary
organizations be they local or regional or national or international like the
Catholic Church, Red Cross, International Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, UNICEF,
Christophel Mission for the blind and the Mission for the deaf and the dumb.
International organisations supported philanthropic activities and UNO
encourages voluntary organisations.

EMERGENCE OF NGOs

India has 1,00,000 N.G.Os. Tamil Nadu has more than 5000 N.G.Os. Each
NGO varies from the other in size, objective, nature, scope, scale of activity, style
of functioning, strategy, sources of funds, employment generation, scope, range of programmes, target groups etc. They are called the third sector. They are independent, voluntary, non-profit making and have freedom of decision making, and executing their plans, programmes and projects. However they are heterogeneous in nature. They are the harbingers of silent revolution, handmaid of global imperialism, and foot notes in India’s development.

In any form of government and in polity too, voluntary organisations or NGOs have their role in shaping voluntary actions both negatively and positively. No religious preachings, teachings, doctrines, dogmas, rites and rituals are against voluntary organisations. Now-a-days religious faith and belief have no impact on the voluntary sector. The members of the NGOs may be theists or atheists, a democrat or a dictator. But all are single-minded and united while rendering service to the needy.

Hindu traditions, Gandhiji’s influence, the ideologies of the left, and system failure are the causes of the growth of voluntary associations in India. The belief of a life hereafter motivates people to do charitable acts. Such charitable acts are performed for the repose of the soul of the deceased relatives. Pilgrimage to shrines is another source for act of charity. Families perform charitable acts for the good of the members by way of thanks giving to gods and goddesses. All
those ideologies advocate voluntary service to the needy. Gandhi, Marx, Jesus, Budha, Mohamed and others insisted on helping others.

The Hindu tradition, Gandhiji’s influence, the ideologies of the left and system failure are the causes of the growth of voluntary associations in India. Gandhiji distrusted formal powers because authorities cannot fulfill all the needs of the people. Gandhiji exhorted congress members to abjure power and dedicate themselves to pure selfless service to others and he called them to turn into a Lok Sevak Sangh (Puran Chandra, 2007).

Since the communist party started functioning within the framework of Parliamentary democracy, its members disenchanted with the party and began mobilizing and organizing people to fight for their rights and they began to work independently in voluntary organisations. Indian constitution guarantees the rights to form organisations to Indian citizens. The official planning system and the market economy have failed to make significant dent in India’s problems of poverty and inequality. Hence thousands of young men and women became activists,

- because of the motivations of social groupings;
- because of personal inspiration;
- in order to support similar organisations;
- in order to tackle specific issues such as the environment;
- in order to advance technological solution to problems;
- because of political affiliation;
for the promotion in career and
in order to promote particular ideologies.

Christian churches predominate the realm of NGOs and NGDOs by virtue of their ideologies. West being Christian countries, churches venture initiative and enterprises. NGOs should be free from and have to

- Political affiliations;
- The motivations of the social groupings;
- Promote national values;
- Tackle specific issues;
- Advance technological solutions;
- Promote particular ideologies;
- Support similar organisations;
- Personal bias and prejudice
- Help people in poverty, and in distress due to disaster;
- Redress the grievances of the victims of natural calamities;
- Rehabilitate the victims of war; and
- Emancipate people from enslavement of all kinds including religious, dogmatic, indoctrination and superstition.
CHARACTERISTICS OF NGOs

Voluntary Organisations (NGOs) are classified as

- Socio-economic organisation;
- Socio-cultural organisations;
- Socio-religious organisations;
- Rural development societies;
- Service oriented organisations;
- Philanthropic foundations;
- Linguistic societies;
- Social service organisations;
- Medical service organisation and
- Spiritual societies

It is a serious effort. It should be a self-enterprise worthy of purpose wherein the maximum co-operation, involvement, the love and concern of the people, become a prerequisite to produce lasting results. Where this philosophy is forgotten, socio-economic development becomes only a farce and remains just a drama to be enjoyed and forgotten.

There are no clearly defined policies governing voluntary agencies. More over funds allotment of the government sector or private donors may tie the hands of the voluntary organisations.
However it is desirable to satisfy, the following minimum qualifications:

- Registered under proper authority;
- A standing of not less than 5 years;
- Impressive performance;
- Registered membership;
- Sound financial status irrespective of the volume of its funds;
- Free from blemish;
- Recommending authority (district collector) must know it for certain that it is genuine;
- Clear objectives;
- Distinct target group and
- Well defined projects.

**OTHER FACILITATING FACTORS**

If voluntarism was inspired by religious and political ideologies, commitment to normative pluralism facilitated its growth. National elites, already steeped in the indigenous cultural conception of society as autonomous of the State, readily embraced normative pluralism. Their commitment has been manifested in several ways. Formally, the Constitution guarantees the right to form organizations to Indian citizens. In addition to the legal provision, certain practices and norms were developed which promoted voluntary organisation.
First, from the very outset Indian policy-makers had developed a tradition of consulting societal elites and groups. Representative committees were created to secure opinions from various groups in society, and their views were solicited in formulating major domestic policies, even though a centrally planned economic model of development was adapted.

Second, voluntary organizations were involved not only in formulating policies, but their help was also sought in implementing programmes. The Planning Commission itself had realized at the outset that the task of development was so large and so complex that the State alone would not be able to accomplish it. Accordingly, the very First Five Year Plan document had carried a plea to voluntary organisations to become involved in the task of development, mainly by implementing government programmes.

In the Eighth Five Year Plan, Rs.750 crores was allotted to the NGOs. The stance of international aid agencies, has played a conducive role. Since 1970s foreign donors started focusing their attention on voluntary organisations as supplementary delivery vehicles for development.

All voluntary organisations are called NGOs irrespective of their size, scope, function and geographical location. Generally NGOs focus on social service or community building task and relief works or disaster management or
education. Awareness programmes and action plans are their job of prime concern.

Northern NGOs are mostly church oriented and economic development oriented. Industrialised countries demand development oriented schemes. Germany and Denmark have political foundations. The British Anti Slavery Society (1823), Save Children Fund (1919), Oxfam (1942), Black (1992) CARE (Co-operative Agency for Relief Every Where) (1945) War on Want (1953) NOVIB (1956) MISEREOR (1958). During 70s and 80s the specific focus of the NGOs were on sectoral, technical and geographical areas. In Britain, the intermediate technology development groups emerged. Plan international, world vision, Action Aid are all operational. Catholic fund for overseas development and Christian Aid are working to develop the socio-economic status of the people of all nations. Spiritual development is also taken care of by Latin American, South Asian and African NGOs. They continue to be strong interventionists.

In addition to providing financial support for development projects, many NGOs are involved in the development of education and advocacy in their own countries. 2,542 NGOs at present are functioning in 24 countries all over the world. They take care of Water Aid, Health Unlimited and the Intermediate Technology Development. An increased interest in the environment has raised the profile of the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWFFN).
The income of the NGOs is increased because of media exposure and events outside the world of NGOs. Government financial aids to alleviate poverty and to eradicate illiteracy help NGOs. People’s expectation from the NGOs is ever expanding. Unlike the Gos, the NGOs could reach out all the people in the society. Emergency aid and an increasing share in the budget are the major causes of funding sources for the NGOs.

Funds are provided to NGOs through five major mechanisms:

1) Block grants for which no detailed accounting requirements are stipulated,

2) Matching grants for development projects (co-financing),

3) Food aid and disaster relief,

4) Support for voluntary programmes and

5) Grants for development education.

Most NGOs are engaged in promoting self-help activities, service provision, community organisation and poverty alleviation with funds obtained from foreign NGOs and in some cases from the government sources. Private and public funds are utilised by the NGOs

In India small scale rural development and social action are the major tasks of the NGOs. The empowerment approach has a hitch since NGOs are at the
mercy of the government regarding funds. Mostly NGOs are pro-government, though they echo the voice of the people. However NGOs function as pressure groups. Social forestry and soil conservation are prominent among environmental concerns.

Another characteristic feature of the NGOs is innovation. NGOs pride themselves on being innovative, in the sense of introducing new techniques as well as in fostering novel form of social organisation. Appropriate low cost technologies are advocated to the poor. NGOs transfer the recurrent cost to the community in order to avoid depending on an external agency. NGOs have no perennial source of funding. They have to hunt for funds always. Hunting for funds is an endless endeavour of the NGOs. NGOs are at the mercy of the funding agencies, be they native or foreign; individual or institution; private or public. This same state of affair is unavoidable.

There are contradictory views about NGOs’ weakness and strength. There are quasi-denial of NGOs effectiveness and hyperbolic exaggeration of their weakness. NGOs have to fight with famine, environmental pollution, climate change, global warming, ozone depletion, solid waste management, water scarcity, energy crisis, socio-economic inequity, slavery and oppression. The staff of NGOs suffer from hardships and have to sacrifice their personal comforts while working for the welfare of the people.
ACHIEVEMENTS

Peoples’ development and area development can be evaluated and assessed from the following parameters: 1) skill development, 2) entrepreneurial development, 3) attitudinal change, 4) behavioural change, 5) intragroup development and harmony, 6) inter-group development, 7) creation of facilities, 8) betterment of existing facilities, 9) ensuring utilisation of facilities by all, (10) generation of job opportunity and 11) creation of increased infrastructure for business, trade, profession, etc.

From the critical perspective the term agencies does not connote the nature of voluntary organisation or denote an NGO in letter and in spirit because, an agent is one who represents a person or organisation or executes the will of someone or something. In this sense the term voluntary agencies does not convey a holistic meaning. Hence NGOs are not agencies. They are catalytic in their nature, scope and function. They are not directed by any external authority.

Generally NGOs are involved in relief work or emergency service or long term development work or all the three. Strictly speaking service is the only hallmark of identification for an NGO. The classical examples at the International level are Antislavery Society, Save the Earth Movement, Red Cross, Save the Child Fund, Oxfam, CARE (Co-operative Agency for Relief Every Where) War on Want, NOVIB, Misereor, CAFOD (Catholic Fund for Overseas Development)
and Christian Aid, Water Aid, Health Unlimited, World Wide Fund for Nature and at the National and at the regional level are World Vision, Dhan Foundation, C.P.R. Foundation etc. and at the local (Madurai), Cense, Exonora, Centre for Environment Development, Green, Madurai, Seva etc.

**Appraisal of Achievements and Activities**

The appraisal of the NGOs’ activities by the pessimists and optimists do not reflect the reality because of the following reasons: 1) Lack of data 2) Confusion and Suspicion in the eyes of the public and the agencies (3) The role of external factors say government or funding agencies. They inflict stipulations on the NGOs rather than guiding the NGOs (4) Lack of agreed methods of assessing the performance of the NGOs 5) Most of the NGOs have very poor infrastructure and unskilled staff. Really they lack formal formation. 6) Absence of audit system leads to misappropriation of funds (7) No proper planning (8) much depends on the likes and dislikes of the NGOs (9) NGOs are neither guided nor coordinated nor directed by anybody. 10) Lack of relationship or coordination is the main reason for the set backs of the NGOs. 11) Laws are insufficient to regulate the functioning of the NGOs. 12) Absence of a Nodal agency or liaison authority to co-ordinate all the NGOs.

The activities may be developmental, political and catalytic. Developmental activities aim at the poor. Voluntary organisations actually deliver
benefits, and function as mediatory, providing information about relevant government schemes. They may help target groups by their reach out programmes.

**THE ROLE OF NGOs**

The activities of the NGOs may be considered under three heads such as developmental, political and catalytic. Developmental activities aim at the poor directly. The catalytic activities aim at influencing the public. Political activities are directed at a governmental authority. Infact developmental, political and catalytic activities are not mutually exclusive. Indeed voluntary organisations are so bussy transforming the world. Marx was in despair because every one of us was trying so hard to interpret the word, when the point according to him was to change it.

NGOs can reach out people by virtue of their ability, simplicity, popularity, strategy, approach, familiarity, being one with the people, acceptance of the people, and the faith that people have on them. Faithfulness and mutual trust are NGO’s real assets. But GOs’ keep off the people because of their authoritarian approach.
A Civil society plays an important role in contesting the state, the society and its institutions from the perspective of the poor and marginalised to further a discourse of rights in a democracy.

It is engaged in building alternative strategies, mechanism, and vision of development of society and of politics in the country for democratic, decentralised, sustainable and people oriented development.

It plays the critical role of trying to bridge the chasm between institutional and substantive democracy, particularly from the perspective of the poor, the ordinary and the marginalised citizens.

In India more than one billion people are speaking 18 major languages and 1600 minor languages. People practice 6 religions. They belong to 6400 castes. 28 states and 7 union territories with Delhi as the National Capital territory form of the India. India’s plurality and diversity do not stand on the way of its unity, integrity and solidarity.

Certainly, the fruits of India’s economic development have not yet reached the poor, the marginalised and the deprived. Illiteracy, epidemics, malnutrition, insufficient earnings, social exclusion, unemployment and lack of say, in decision making. All must be viewed as a set of bondage constituting poverty inspite of our solemn resolution of the Constitution of India that we the people of India,
having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign socialistic secular
democratic republic. Simultaneously, endeavours were undertaken to create
modern institutions for democratic governance i.e., a parliament, election
commission, autonomous judiciary and executive cabinet with an array of
government servants including army and police force.

The factors responsible for the lack of human, economic, social and
political development are manifold and complex like lack of development of a
democratic policy, state and people’s awareness etc.

All our democratic institutions, right from a village panchayat to the Union
Parliament have been trying to alleviate poverty, to eradicate illiteracy, to do way
with social and gender discrimination, to solve unemployment problem since
1947. Hence the role of NGOs is indispensable.

Thus the philanthropic Christian missionaries established schools, colleges
dispensaries and orphanages. Social reforms like widow-remarriage, abolition of
‘Sathi’ were proposed. Gandhiji gave impetus to voluntary actions and
movements to work on communal harmony and equality of status in the society.
They fought against discrimination. Gandhiji believed that voluntary action and
constructive work leading to self-reliance of villages were essential to free India
of its problems such as poverty, inequality, and exploitation.
Religious organisations focused their attention on health, nutrition, famine relief, relief for refugees and rehabilitation. The Gandhians with the support of the government looked after Khadhi and Village Industries. Gandhians believed that the individual as well as the group action of the social activists can transform the society. Education is the most important tool for social change.

NGO’s role as catalysts for social, economic, political and cultural changes is very vital. Since Congress party was everywhere in India and since Gandhiji appealed to the congress men to do social service, they were doing real service to the society. Another name for voluntary associations, of all types, including the Christian churches, is NGO.

The Centre for Science And Environment was part of the official, government of India delegation at 2002, Global Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg to represent the Country’s Environmental Concerns. The second model of civil state is activities of the NGOs at the gross root level. The third model is one of opposition and negotiation with the state. The fourth model, is civil society to steer the state’s agenda.

The landmark is that the Hegelian concept was accepted by the Government of India. Hence the state has to order, regulate, guide, govern and direct civil societies. Most NGOs and voluntary organisations come under this ideology. As a result we have 1) Societies Registration Act of 1860. 2) Indian

NGOs work in a context of deprivation and poverty of the poor in rural areas. Tribals are treated with contempt. They live in harmony with nature. They depend on forests for food and fuel. They worship trees. The sons of the soil are treated as the slaves of the land by some of the officials of the government. Market dominates the tribals, exploiting them in all possible ways. For example in Orissa one bamboo pole is sold for Rs.20 or Rs.25 but the tribals are given only one or two rupees.

NGOs are active where the State fails to be dynamic. Their roles are gap filling. NGOs train the tribals. They are deprived of education, inspite of government’s reservation policy. They are too poor to educate their children. Rural health and environment programmes are interventions in water and sanitation. The tribals have native skills with which they make water available to the inhabitants.

There should be systematic interventions to develop the enterprise and their approach according to the value that people attach to land, water, animal and other natural resources. These efforts are often curtailed by lopsided policies, which infringe on peoples traditional rights to the resources.
Human rights and environmental violations in the development of mines, harnessing of water bodies, setting up of industries etc. are common place occurrences not just in India, but all over the world.

By mobilising people and building pressure groups the government is forced to acknowledge the rights of the people and ensure social justice and a role which in fact central to its being. The tribals have to pay for building schools, for laying roads, for the telephone lines and for setting up of exchanges and power generation systems whereas city dwellers get all these things free of cost. Subsidies are not given to the tribals. NGOs try hard to get such privileges.

We believe that the Government should be conscious of their social obligations, like ensuring adequate efforts to make essential products and services available to the rural and tribal areas. Economic development at the cost of social equity is undesirable. We need a government that does not consider NGOs as the handmaids of the government or adversaries of the administration.

Where the interest of the poor is at stake the government and NGOs can certainly come together and have a dialogue to ensure that social justice and thus equity is upheld. We need an administration that is vigilant and conscious of the needs of the people and that which works with and for the poor.
The role of NGOs is vital and varied. Like the spectrum of a rainbow, NGO’s role and scope are multifarious in the socio-economic developmental activities; ecological and environment related activities. NGOs as international agencies can extend their services from North Pole to South Pole.

As for environment is concerned it is a subject that encompasses the whole humanity and the living and the non-living of the universe. It is a universal subject, because environment affects every living and non-living, human and non-human being. Nothing is exempted from the impact of environment. It is universal including the galaxy.

WEAKNESSES OF THE NGOs

The major obstacle to the implementation of the successful sustainable developmental activities by NGOs is rooted in the way NGO’s initiatives are generally assessed: They are usually described within a case study framework, rather than being analysed at a broader level with the result that generalisations drawn from one case study are often directly contradicted by the results of the other.

Community projects sponsored by the NGOs have been unable to achieve the self-sustainability and replicability which are considered to be the goal of NGO activities: Such projects typically cannot be continued without funding or
technical support to NGOs. NGOs themselves are highly dependent on outside donors, and the extent of NGO’s reach is determined by the resource made available to them (Ram Prakash (ed.) 1993).

NGOs are thought of, to be more participatory in both planning and implementing their activities than other agencies. Participatory methods are particularly important in conservation-oriented activities because such activities have a history of being technically and socially appropriate. It could be expected that more two-way interaction with the people who are directly involved in resource management, would improve the outcome of environment related activities.

NGOs consider their position as a type of alternative sector within the development of the community. It is commonly believed that NGOs are less bound by political considerations than government agencies, and that they are innovative, and that they fulfil a role that is qualitatively different from other developmental sectors.

The nature of the constraints on rural development by NGOs is such that they cannot hope to reach all the people who would benefit from sustainable development projects. Neither the rural poor nor members of the staff of the NGOs should be expected to come up with new and innovative solutions to sustainable developmental problems which have eluded those with more resources
and power. There are persistent expectations, however, that NGOs should somehow be able to come out with a ‘magic bullet’ – a simple, neat solution to these perplexing problems. (Magic Bullet Syndrome, a learned borrowing from popular medical literature).

**ADVANTAGES (STRENGTH)**

The general advantages that NGOs have over other developmental agencies working on environmental issues are their flexibility, speed of operation, and ability to respond quickly to changing circumstances. Channelisation of additional aid money for sustainable development should go to NGOs rather than to the government. NGOs were considered to waste less time in bureaucratic formalities, to be less tied down by procedures, and to be more efficient overall.

NGOs are likely to be more flexible in their rural activities, than other agencies because their projects are considered ‘extras’ and ‘something’ desired by people but not considered to be theirs by right; while government plans are typically concerned with the political aspects of the distribution of development projects, NGOs need not be so. This gives them greater room for manoeuvre, and would like them to explore new types of projects without the loss of legitimacy that such experimentation would cost the government.
DISADVANTAGES

Notable drawbacks are

- Planning and programming suffered due to very low plan out day.
- Uncertainty in releasing government funds.
- Inordinate delay in approving the projects of the NGOs by the social welfare department, by the Finance Ministry and by the Planning Commission.
- Uncertainty in getting foreign funds and untenable conditions stipulated by the funding agencies.
- Absence of enforcement measures of social legislation.
- The planning and the administrative machinery are weak.
- Absence of coordination in planning and implementation.
- No machinery to monitor the programme.
- Social welfare is virtually a non-existent sector since the central and the state governments are not serious about it.
- There is variation in the development of social welfare.
- The uneveness in the development leads to disparity.
- Lack of inservice training programmes.
- Government officials feel that the NGOs and their social services are unwanted and duplication of the welfare works of the government.
Lack of trust in the integrity of the social welfare organisations of voluntary nature.

There is no set parameter to evaluate the services of the social welfare organisations.

National Sample Survey, Census, UGC, Indian Council of Social Science Research etc help the social welfare department.

However, Heijden argues that the unique features of NGOs or their comparative advantages over this disadvantages are:

- Their ability to deliver emergency relief or development services at low cost, to many people in remote areas;
- Their rapid, innovative and flexible responses to emergency and financial and technical assistance are needed at the gross-root level;
- Their long standing familiarity with social sector development and poverty alleviation.
- Their experience with small scale development projects as well as with those requiring a high degree of involvement;
- And their familiarity with the target groups.
INDIAN PLANNING AND NGOs

Voluntary organizations were involved in formulating policy and in implementing programmes. Indian policy-makers had developed a tradition of consulting societal elites and groups. First five-year plan document had carried a plea to voluntary organizations to become involved in the task of development, mainly by implementing government programmes. The Eighth Plan allotted Rs.750 crores to the NGOs. The stance of international aid agencies, has played a conducive role. Since 1970s foreign donors started focusing their attention on voluntary organizations as supplementary delivery vehicles for development. The failure of the contract theory, negligence of the public servants, lack of state resources, encouraged the voluntary organizations to produce commodities and render services. The weak and vulnerable do not know how to access the merit goods and the voluntary organizations address to such social issues.

“However the state and the political parties are excluded because though they are voluntary, their purpose is to capture the state and use its coercive resources to realize their objectives (Preethi, 2006).”

The subsidy theory argues that non-profit organizations benefit from a variety of implicit and explicit subsidies, such as exemption from paying income and wealth taxes. This theory explains the phenomenal growth in the number of
voluntary organizations as a result of the abundant availability of funds, both foreign and domestic which have to characterise voluntary associations.

The exchange theory offers yet another way of understanding voluntary associations. The members receive the benefit in return. The organisers, as political entrepreneurs receive returns i.e., profit. The benefit exchange perspective also affords a more balanced view of organization and particularly of the organizer who needs to be seen as a pure altruist nor as a crass opportunist, but rather as a rational person.

CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

All states have a tendency to become remote and arrogant, and need to be checked by citizen’s movement and NGOs. As citizens assign more and more functions to them (NGOs) out of inertia, apathy or indolence, they acquire more and more power and legitimacy. They cannot be controlled by any means except by fostering the spirit of self-help among their citizens and encouraging them to undertake as many of them as possible through voluntary associations. The discourse has a built-in bias against non-voluntary associations. Associations based on caste, creed, clan, tribe, ethnic and religious communities are viewed with disfavour. They have rigid norms, oppressive practices, structure of authorities, and limited mutual contacts. They encourage frozen social identities and narrow loyalties.
Government organizations have army, authority, police officials, laws and loyalties. They are identified and accorded the due status. It is true that government organisations have corruption, nepotism and narrow partiality. Voluntary organisations indeed are not free from such blemishes and they are not above the defects, drawbacks, abuses and setbacks. The state plays symbolic, inspirational, educative, facilitative, authoritative and co-ordinating roles. It is truly coercive. Without authority nothing could be done. Ipsofacto, the state has to exercise power. Legislative, executive and judiciary departments of the governments have powers of their own. Government or non-voluntary organisations can not be substituted by any amount of voluntary organisations. The state has its own state of being a supreme sovereign.

In fact civil societies and the state are based on different principles yet they can play complementary and supplementary roles. Neither can be replaced nor should be privileged over the other (Preethi, 2006).\(^5\)

Locke’s and Adam Smith’s reductions of the state to civil society disable it from dealing with corporate capitalism and grave social and economic injustice. Hagel, Marx and Hobbes go beyond the civil society and find an imperative need of the State.

A critical study of the voluntary and non-voluntary associations or government organizations and non-government organizations reveals that the
Non-Voluntary Organisations are mandatory and they represent all the people in the country. There are statutory laws to govern their activities. They have the power to command the people to do something and they have permanent and perennial sources of income. They are permanent in nature and their infrastructure is judicious. They have the guiding principles that no citizen shall be discriminated on the grounds of caste, creed, religion, language and place of birth. Moreover the government has the power to regulate or ban the activities of the NGOs.

But the voluntary organisations are optional. They persuade the people to do something for the betterment of the society. They are functioning with the funds allotted by the government or foreign donors which are subjected to conditions and willingness of donors or funding agencies. There may be partiality, favouritism, disparity, injustice and inequalities in the functioning the NGOs. That too may be partially true with stray cases of non-governmental organisations. NGOs can never exist for ever and may disappear at any one point of time. This is in fact a misnomer.

Freedom, including associative freedom, is an emblem of human dignity and sense of selfworth. All states have a tendency to become remote and arrogant, and need to be checked by citizen’s movement and NGOs. However they also have their strength. They are historical communities with deep bonds based on
shared collective memories of struggles, achievements and failures. They encourage a strong sense of social obligation, mutual commitment and spirit of sacrifice. The evolution of State Government has its origin in voluntary and service–minded groups of primitive societies/communities.

Non-voluntary organisations warrant international cooperation and demand global recognition. Voluntary organisations can be encouraged globally. Government organisations are identified and accorded with the due status. They can control the people. All activities cannot be voluntary. There are ever so many activities which are by nature mandatory eg. military service and civil administrative service. Freedom may be a hindrance to discharge duty. It is true that government organisations have corruption, nepotism and narrow partiality etc. Voluntary organisations indeed are not totally free from such abuses infact they do have the defects, drawbacks and setbacks.

Members of voluntary and non-voluntary organisations form communities and societies. They meet as strangers, colleagues, neighbours, fellow professionals, fellow trade unionists, and citizens. In a community we meet as friends, kins, fellow ethnics and speakers of same language.

We have common religious celebrations. Non-European societies have religious, cultural and communal differences. It should not be held as universal norms, used to mould the rest of the world in the Western image, as it currently is
tried by many enthusiastic governmental and non-governmental champions of civil societies. The limitation is its failure to give an adequate account of the nature and the role of the state.

In fact civil societies and the state are based on different principles yet they can play a complementary and a supplementary role. Neither can be replaced nor should be privileged over the other. The following views are to be considered.

- An NGO which is no more than a brief case carrying a well written proposal.
- An NGO that appears spasmodically is only used by the owners when the NGO pasture looks greener.
- NGOs setup businesses in order to participate in bids, help win contracts, and reduce taxation.
- Some organisations are established for illegal purposes, especially for import-export (i.e. smuggling) which are common in transition economies.
- NGOs are created and owned by donors to do their job while shifting overhead costs outside.
- An NGO is used as a front for something else. It is not uncommon in Eastern Europe.
- Type of GRINGO are used to capture or redirect non-profit funds allocated by the official aid system.
There are variations of QUANGO, with function of countering the actions of real NGDOs. It is common in Africa.

A criminal NGO providing services of the money laundering, enforcement and protection are prevalent in Eastern Europe.

An NGO which is the personal property of an individual, often is dominated by his or her ego.

A person may operate an NGO with out an organisational affiliation.

An aspiring defeated or banned political party or politician is dressed as an NGO. They are functioning in Central Asia and in China.

An NGO is existing only in the mind of the speaker, who is used to bolster an argument.

Established to capture or direct NGO funding to the home constituency as a defence against incursion by opponents is common..

Para- state body set up by government as an NGO, often to enable better conditions of service or create political distance.

CONCLUSION

The activities of the NGOs may be classified as awareness building, motivating the people, executing plans and projects and evaluating the implemented programmes from the point of view of the beneficiaries. There may be set backs and drawbacks due to human weaknesses. NGOs are not free from
blemishes. In an ideal sense political parties social/community welfare associations, trade unions and religious congregations are Non-Governmental Organisations because of their voluntary nature and their common welfare objectives. Yet they do have defects and drawbacks. There is no unmixed blessing in the world. Let us be optimistic, constructive and positive towards NGOs. Keeping the welfare of the people in mind, since the NGOs render selfless service to the people in need, indeed, at times of emergency, calamity and disaster. Let us be grateful to the gratuitous yeoman service to the poor needy, victims of natural and man-made disasters. Let us identify, approve and appreciate the genuine NGOs and their services.
REFERENCES


5. Ibid.