CHAPTER ONE

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In contemporary India, a strong emphasis is given on the development of rural sector. In spite of several attempts made by the state and central governments to develop the rural sector, the present achievements are not impressive enough. One of the important contributing factors for the failure of rural development programmes was the absence of involvement of the people for whom the programmes were meant. "The need for micro-level institutional arrangements to involve the people in-terms of formulation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and sustainability of the programmes were stressed in several quarters. Therefore, the government agencies, foreign donors and corporate sectors consider that Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) by virtue of being small scale, flexible, innovative and participatory are more successful in reaching the poor and in helping in alleviation of poverty" [Srivastava 1999]. "The merit of voluntary organizations / NGOs lies in their capacity to understand local needs, problems and resources, their capacity to involve local people and secure their co-operation and participation and their desire to experiment with new programmes, strategies and approaches for rural development without incurring large expenditures" (Sundaram 2000). Further, for fighting corruption, injustice and exposing misdeeds of authorities NGOs have been playing a significant role both in India and abroad. "It is found that the NGOs are performing well because they are guided by three principles : a) charitable b) developmental and c) participative" (Mishra and Mishra 1998). While ensuring peoples’ participation by NGOs in various rural
development projects it merely depends upon three factors. Firstly NGOs claim to be innovative, flexible and not weighed down by bureaucracy. The second is due to independence and autonomy the NGOs remain free from political pressure and by-passes inefficient and corrupt government structures and local elites. A third claim of NGOs is that they are already operating at the grass roots level, close to the poorest of the poor" (Kumar and Reddy 2004). It is also observed that the roles of NGOs are both as agents of delivery and agents of change. However, after 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act the agents of delivery in all sectors of rural development are going to the hands of the Panchayats. At the grass roots level the NGOs and Panchayats are functioning having common goal and same target group for the betterment of rural society. There is a need of mutual co-operation with one another to strengthen rural development projects at the grass roots level and also to deliver the goods and services effectively for the upliftment of rural poor. "It is also seen that in view of economic liberalisation and globalization, local communities and their ecosystems, livelihood and cultures are being increasingly threatened by consumeristic and western market forces which tend to have a homogenization effect on cultures. In such critical cases, NGOs can act as buffer and mediate between the state and the MNCs (Multi National Companies) and international organization such as the World Bank and WTO" (World Trade Organisation) (Pawar, Ambekar and Shrikant 2004).

Initially the NGOs roles were confined to relief measures for the victims of the war and natural calamities, rehabilitation work among lepers, orphans, widows and untouchables. Over the years, due to industrialization,
modernization and urbanization the NGOs shifted their approach as per to their changing needs of the rural sector. The various rural development programmes taken by NGOs are related to health, skill training, agricultural development, organizational development of the poor, child care, education, environment protection etc. This was only possible from the part of NGOs as they are dependent and influenced by the State/National / International funding. There are some NGOs which are not functioning properly due to various reasons i.e. internal rivalry among members, lack of transparency and accountability, corruption, lack of resources and programmes for continued existence, leadership and management problems, problems created by vested interest groups etc. Under such circumstances, there is a need of proper measures to be undertaken by the government agencies regarding misutilisation of resources for the sake of rural development. Considering the growing importance of NGOs, this research study has been undertaken to analyze in depth about NGOs in managing rural development projects, specifically in-terms of planning, implementation, evaluation, impacts upon beneficiaries, sustainability, collaboration with other NGOs, co-ordination with panchayats, problems etc.

**Origin of NGOs**: NGOs in India have long historical legacies as voluntary action has been an integral part of our national life and character. Voluntary action has been in existence through centuries (Punalekar 2004). In India, voluntary action during the Ancient and Medieval Period (upto about 1800) was in an informal stage. The informal voluntary efforts were supported by religion and consequently turned towards social institutional structure. Religion emphasized the value of charity, philanthropy and mutual help.
Giving of alms and feeding and caring for the destitute, old and handicapped were considered as religious merit. Social institutions provided mechanisms which would help to meet the needs of the old, the sick, the destitute and the otherwise helpless section of society (Mukhopadhyay 1995).

The British period (1800-1900) was the hallmark of the beginning of organized voluntary services by individuals, groups, Christian missionaries, social reformers and individual philanthropists. In India, voluntary action got stimulus in the nineteenth century. An attempt has been made to divide the history of this period into seven phases. The first half of the 19th century was emphasized on social reform movements. The charter Act of 1813 removed all restrictions on missionary activities in India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy formed *Atmiya Sabha* in 1815 which later allied with Christian Unitarians in 1821. The spirit of reform movements inspired to do something for the rights of the deprived and marginalized people in this phase.

The second half of the 19th century witnessed the failure of what was known as "first war of independence in 1857 and its implications on the socio-political milieu". This was also the period of British colonial rule over the political and economic life of Indian society. These trends gave rise to institutionalized movements like *Brahmo Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission, Indian National Social Reform Association* (1897) etc. It can be stated that during the second phase (1850 – 1900) there was a popularization of the nationalist consciousness and individual conscience emerged as the primary focus of socio-political movements and influenced the future course of voluntary action.
The third phase influenced the voluntary spirit of political action and mass mobilization for struggle of independence. Mahatma Gandhi withdrew from active politics and concentrated on constructive work activities from 1920 - 1928. In this phase priority was given on welfare of harijans, tribals and industrial workers. This later became a part of the mass national movement and contributed to the growth of number of *Khadi* and *village industries* in the pre-independence era.

The fourth phase was termed as the phase of nation building of ‘Voluntary Actions’ initiated after independence and continued till mid sixties. Reform based voluntary action and constructive work merged with the government’s responsibilities for the task of nation building. The work of missionaries spread over largely in this phase with new institutions of education and health being set up in different parts of the country.

The fifth phase started in between the mid sixties to the early seventies. By the late 1960s, India was caught up in a dual crisis of economic stagnation and political instability. It was at this stage that alternative and integrated rural development began to be experimented by the initiatives taken by a new generation of people in 1968-69. This was also the period when the Naxalite movement surfaced and gained momentum. The new professionally trained youngsters also began to enter in voluntary organizations / NGOs.

Phase six was the period when the circumstances forced a number of people to look back critically at the emerging trends in the country’s political process. The process of politicization of the post independence generation which began during 1967 - 69 period was almost shattered by 1976. This fall out from the political process contributed to the growth in voluntary
action. This was the period when ideas about conscientization and people's participation began to emerge.

Phase seven was the period of eighties which witnessed a growth of voluntary action at various levels giving rise to professionally trained social workers from different academic institutions.

The above description seems to suggest that voluntary action in different parts of India was rooted in a specific socio-political context and was inspired by the emergence and continuity of social reform, social change and political movements in different parts of the country (Srivastava 2003).

**Conceptual Framework of NGOs** : The concepts of NGOs have been defined by different authors differently. "The World Bank defines NGOs as organizations that are both private and non-profit, whether international or local that work for development"(Williams 1990). "Non-profit is not a defining characteristic because it would exclude grass roots self-help groups that seek profits"(Fisher 1993). "It is found that many NGOs do not work at the grass roots level. Thus NGOs function according to their motivation – commercial or commitment – but then allow for hybrids" (Korten 1990). "There are NGOs like big NGOs, government organized NGOs and donor organized NGOs which are closer to the money, less politicized in orientation and more technocratic "(Meyer 1995). Volags (Voluntary agencies) may be defined as NGO "an organizational entity set up by a group of persons on their own initiative or partly by outside motivations to help people of a locality to undertake activities in a self – reliant manner (partly or wholly) to satisfy needs and also to bring them and the public sector extension services closer to one another for more equitable and effective development of various
sections of the rural poor” (Mahipal 1991). “The word Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) is used by those organizations which are functioning outside the government sector. According to Bunker Roy, voluntary organizations are indigenous, decentralized and non-statutory with direct participation of the beneficiaries or target groups in the programme” [Srivastava 1999]. “NGOs have been defined as a non-profit making, voluntary, service - oriented / development oriented organization, either for the benefit of member (a grass- root organization) or of other members of the population (an agency)” (Thomas 2003). “Voluntary organizations / NGOs are voluntary, autonomous, non-profit organization or groups of citizens established to address various problems and disadvantages in the society. What differentiates the voluntary organization from the rest is that whether their workers are paid or unpaid initiated and governed by the members without external control. Voluntary denotes ‘of ones’ own free choice. Since voluntary and autonomous also connote ‘non-governmental’ so they are also characterized as Non-Governmental Organization” (Chakraborty 2004). “Voluntary organization is a social entity committed to activities and programmes oriented towards change in the prevailing set of condition – social, economic, political or cultural. Its commitment to activities is generally governed by a set of objectives or goals (stated or unstated, manifest or latent) concerning the desired changes to be attempted or desired type of society to be actualized” (Punalekar 2004). It is non-governmental, meaning it has freedom to operate, at least in ideal terms on its own principles and programmes. It is for this reason that it is called Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) a term which has gained considerable
currency and respectability in national and international parlance. "The simplest meaning of the term 'voluntary organization' is nothing but a group of persons who have organized themselves as a legal corporate body to render social services or to carry rural development activities through organized efforts. Voluntary organizations are known by their virtues like human touch, dedication, flexibility, self reliance and nearest to the community" (Lalwani 1999).

**Distribution of NGOs**: Considering the data¹ and the population served by the NGOs is a crucial factor. "Table 1.1 depicts the data into state-wise and population-wise distribution of NGOs which are neither uniform nor homogenous in 27 states and 2 union territories. In most of the states in India the number of voluntary organizations / NGOs do not relate to the size of the population. The growth of the voluntary organizations / NGOs in fact, has not been geographically uniform in different parts of the country"(Dhillon and Hansra 1995).

It is evident from the data that highly populated states like Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Bihar have a weak presence of voluntary organizations / NGOs. While states like West Bengal, Orissa and Tamil Nadu are served by large number of voluntary organizations / NGOs though their population is less than the highly populated states.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>No. of Organizations</th>
<th>Population (Million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>77.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>27.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>85.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chattisgarh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujrat</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>51.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>54.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>32.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>62.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>99.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Delhi</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>14.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>37.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>58.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>63.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>170.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttaranchal</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>82.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2241</strong></td>
<td><strong>1052.85</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 1.2

District – Wise and Population – Wise Distribution of NGOs in West Bengal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. of Organizations</th>
<th>Population (Lakhs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bankura</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31,92,695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birbhum</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30,15,422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdwan</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>68,95,514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>45,72,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darjeeling</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16,09,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooghly</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>50,41,976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howrah</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>42,73,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medinipur</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>96,10,788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murshidabad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>58,66,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malda</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32,90,468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalpaiguri</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34,01,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North 24 Parganas</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>89,34,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South 24 Parganas</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>69,06,689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadia</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>46,04,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purulia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25,36,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Dinajpur</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24,41,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakshin Dinajpur</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15,03,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>655</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In view of West Bengal scenario, it is found that highly populated districts i.e. Medinipur, North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas have large number of NGOs. While on the other hand, the less populated districts like
Kolkata and Howrah have also large number of NGOs. Further, in Burdwan and Murshidabad districts the population are greater than Howrah district but the number of voluntary organizations / NGOs is less. Thus it reveals from the above mentioned data that both in the national and state level the distribution of NGOs are unequal (Table 1.2).

**Classification of NGOs:** The classifications of NGOs have been interpreted in different ways by different scholars. Hirway and Chauhan (2000) have mentioned that there are three types of NGOs i.e. grass root organizations, support organizations and network organizations or federation and multiform organizations. There is another classification based on the source of funding. NGOs are divided into GONGO (government oriented NGO), DONGO (donor oriented NGO), CONGO (Co-operative oriented NGO) and PONGO (people oriented NGO). According to Garilao (1987) there are four types of NGOs i.e Grass root NGOs or Peoples' organizations, Professional NGOs or Intermediaries, Grant making NGOs and Support NGOs. Padron (1987) in his study has stated that there are three types of organizations. These are non-governmental development organizations (NGDOS), grass root organizations (GROs) and international development co-operation institution (IDCI). Bratton (1989) has pointed out that NGOs are broadly classified into community level, national level and international relief and development agencies. Thus Shankar (2004) has pointed out that the NGOs are classified according to their operational area. They are local, regional and national level agencies. Local agencies discharge their services in a particular village or local area, regional agencies reach out to a larger population through extension centres and national agencies
maintain linkages with different states. Further, from the Indian perspective there are four categories of Non-Governmental Organizations working in our country. These are given as follows:

i) *Local Level Non-Governmental Organisations* are working at the village level covering small number of villages and undertaking several development programmes in one block.

ii) There are institutions which work at a still higher level viz. Sub-division, two or more blocks, districts, and different parts of the state having number of branch centres or local units in villages. This may be called as *Regional type of NGO*.

iii) *National Level Institutions* operate in 3 or more states having units in different parts of the state. They implement programmes at the village level and support training and consultancy services to various Non-Governmental Organizations and participate in various programmes of the government.

iv) Grant giving organizations which sanction grants to different NGOs for social welfare projects. These are mostly *International agencies*.

Considering the views of different scholars, the NGOs are classified in-terms of their area of operation, sources of funding and also their nature and type of work.
Characteristics of NGOs:

The Non-Governmental Organizations / voluntary agencies must have certain distinctive characteristics. These are as follows:

- It is registered under an appropriate act to give a corporate status to a group of individuals, so that they get a legal personality, and an individual liability which may give place to group liability.
- It has an administrative structure and a duly constituted managing / executive committee.
- It has definite aims and objects and programmes for fulfilling these.
- It is an organization initiated and governed by its own members on democratic principles without any external control (Gangrade 1987).

Chowdhury (1990) has given the following characteristics of a Non-Governmental Organization.

- It is the result of the voluntary effort, which though motivated by different factors, is spontaneous in nature.
- It is an organization initiated and governed by its own members on democratic principles without any external control.
- It is registered under an appropriate act to give a corporate status to a group of individuals so that they get a legal personality and individual liability which may give place to group liability.
- It has a general body and a regularly constituted managing committee, representing all interested, men, women, professionals, public etc.
- It has definite aims and objectives for fulfilling its goal.
- It is known and accepted by the community in which it is formed.
- It has considerable autonomy and flexible planning and management of its programmes and services.
- It has a sense of commitment to human development / welfare.
- It undertakes people's need and help to solve their socio-economic problems.
- It plans and implements its own programmes through its own voluntary and paid workers.
- It raises its funds from the community.
- It maintains its accounts and is accountable to people and the government so far as its received grant is concerned.

Kumar (1993) stated the following features which are true for almost all the NGOs.

- The interest and needs of the people are served by the services of the voluntary organizations / NGOs.
- The voluntary organizations / NGOs do not expect anything in return from the people after whatever service they render.
- The members of voluntary organizations / NGOs have a sense of commitment, dedication and selfless service.
- The Voluntary organizations / NGOs work usually for the poorest among the poor.
- The rationale of voluntarism is based on social consciousness, and
The people are given a chance to be actively involved in programme action, the action is decided by both the members of the voluntary organizations and the people for whom it is meant.

**Government Policies on NGOs:**

The role of NGOs/Voluntary agencies in rural development was recognized when a Planning Commission was first constituted at the behest of the Indian National Congress in 1938. As its first chairman, Subhas Chandra Bose realized the importance of NGOs/Voluntary agencies in India's growth. The idea was carried forward in the aftermath of independence and necessary attempt was made to include NGOs/voluntary agencies in the successive Five Year Plans (Chakraborty 2004). The First Five Year Plan document gave emphasis on public co-operation, public opinion, democracy and planning. Keeping this thing in view the constitution of the Bharat Sevak Samaj and the National Advisory Committee for Public Co-operation was formed in August, 1952 to ensure public co-operation in nation-wide basis (First Five Year Plan document, pg. 150-151). The Second Five Year Plan supported voluntary organizations / NGOs to undertake a comprehensive social welfare programmes i.e. social legislation, welfare for women and children, family welfare, youth welfare, physical and mental fitness, crime and correctional administration and welfare of the physically and mentally handicapped. Prohibition programme was also given additional weightage. Further, Central Social Welfare Board was set up by the central government to assist NGOs/ voluntary agencies in organizing welfare programmes for women, children and the handicapped groups. In-order to
organize welfare programmes throughout the country, the Board in collaboration with state governments established State Social Welfare Boards (Second Five Year Plan, Pg. 601-603). Third Five Year Plan reiterated to extend the existing welfare services and assisted NGOs / voluntary organizations to continue those already established. Therefore, development of new services tends to be limited. Thus Third Plan pertained to social defence, social and moral hygiene, after care services, services for handicapped and special attention was entrusted for the welfare of women and children (Third Plan, Vol. II, Pg. 717-719). While from the Third Plan onwards, the idea gained ground that the state driven development was not adequate for India’s socio-economic growth and hence NGOs / voluntary agencies had a supplementary role to play.

It was earmarked that the role of NGOs / voluntary agencies was acknowledged by various committees dealing with development. The 1957 Balwant Rai Mehta Committee recommended that the three tier Panchayati Raj upheld the importance of voluntary agencies / NGOs by underlining that today in the implementation of the various schemes of community development, more and more emphasis is laid on Non-Governmental [Voluntary] Agencies and workers and on the principle that ultimately people’s own local organization should take over the entire work. In the year 1966 Rural – Urban Relationship Committee was established which showed importance on the role of voluntary agencies in mobilizing community support for local development activities. The report also suggests that “local voluntary organization can be very helpful in mobilising popular support
and assistance of the people in the activities of local body. The 1978 Ashok Mehta Committee Report recognized the role of voluntary agencies / NGOs and also appreciated their contribution in rural development. Identifying them as 'nodal' in micro planning, the Report highlights as follows:

Of the several voluntary organizations engaged in rural welfare, a few have helped the Panchayati Raj Institutions in micro planning. They prepare comprehensive area development plans, conduct feasibility studies and cost benefit analysis, explore ways and means to induce local participation in planning and implementation. (Chakraborty 2004).

In the Fourth Plan the role of voluntary organizations was prioritized in specific areas. These are family and child welfare, special programmes for women, special programmes for children, welfare projects for non-student youths, eradication of beggary, social defence, rehabilitation of handicapped persons, aid to voluntary organizations training, research and administration. Local self governing institutions should work on the basis of complete partnership with voluntary organizations. Alone, neither local self governing institutions nor voluntary organizations can achieve fully the aims of welfare for the community and more specifically for women, children and youths (Fourth Five Year Plan, Pg. 363-365). The Fifth Plan repeated almost the same plans/programmes assigned to the voluntary agencies which was discussed earlier in the Fourth Plan. The various plans/programmes shouldered by the voluntary agencies in the Fifth Plan are child welfare, welfare for women, welfare of the handicapped persons, social defence, prohibition against alcoholism and harmful effects in low income groups,
planning, research, training and evaluation (Draft Fifth Five Year Plan, Vol. II, Pg. 279-280). Considering the Ashok Mehta Committee Report, the Sixth Five Year Plan supported the role of voluntary agencies and earmarked the following areas to play a determining role.

- Optimal utilization and development of renewable source of energy, including forestry through the formation of renewable energy association at the block level;
- Family welfare, health and nutrition, education and relevant community programmes in this field;
- Health for all programmes;
- Water management and soil conservation;
- Social welfare programmes for weaker sections;
- Implementation of minimum needs programme;
- Disaster preparedness and management (floods, cyclones, etc);
- Promotion of ecology and tribal development; and
- Environment protection and education (Chakraborty 2004).

The Seventh Plan included a chapter on involvement of voluntary agencies in rural development. There was a shift in the development paradigm in India’s socio-economic growth. Thus voluntary agencies were recognized to play a significant role in a new paradigm of development. The specific areas identified in the Seventh Plan for the voluntary agencies to play a crucial role in the rural development sector are given as follows:
Integrated rural development / rural landless employment guarantee programme / TRYSEM;

Implementation of land ceiling and distribution of surplus land;

Enforcement of minimum wages to agricultural labourers;

Supply of safe drinking water including repair and maintenance of water supply system with community support;

Afforestation, social forestry, development of bio-gas and alternative energy sources (Solar, wind energy, smokeless chulhas);

Promotion of family planning;

Primary health care; control of leprosy; IB; blindness and preventive health programmes utilizing village sources;

Programmes for women and children in rural areas;

Innovative methods and low cost alternatives in elementary education and middle school education for children, adult education and non-formal and formal education;

Consumer protection and promotion of co-operatives;

Promotion of handicrafts and village and cottage industries.

Promotion of science and technology;

Legal education;

Rural housing improvement;

Environmental ecological improvement; and

Promotion and encouragement of traditional media for dissemination of information;

Thus for the first time in the history of planning in India, the State during the Seventh Plan period had also sanctioned a substantial amount through
voluntary agencies for anti-poverty and minimum needs programme. In this plan certain pre-condition were laid down for identification of 'rural' voluntary agencies which are streamlined as follows:

- The organization should have a legal entity.
- It should be based in a rural area, and be working there for a minimum of three years.
- It should have broad-based objectives serving the social and economic needs of the community as a whole, and mainly the weaker sections. It must not work for profits.
- Its activities should be open to all citizens of India irrespective of religion, caste, creed, sex or race.
- It should have the necessary flexibility, professional competence and organizational skills to implement programmes.
- Its office bearers should not be elected members of any political party.
- It declares that it will adopt constitutional and non-violent means for rural development purposes, and
- It should be, committed to secular and democratic concepts and methods of functioning (Chakraborty 2004).

The Eighth Five Year Plan stressed on people's initiative and participation and played a major role in the process of development. Much importance was given in the areas of education (especially literacy), health, family planning, land improvement, efficient land use, minor irrigation, watershed management, recovery of wastelands, afforestation, animal husbandry,
dairy, fisheries and sericulture etc which can be achieved by creating people's organizations accountable to the community. Therefore, the focus of attention will be on developing multiple options for improving the delivery system by using the vast potential of the voluntary sector.

Decentralised local level planning and people's participation was given top priority in the Eighth Plan in order to ensure success in various rural development projects. In view of this, the Planning Commission has worked on institutional strategies for creating or strengthening various people's institution at the district, block and village levels so that, they can synthesise the purpose of investment envisaged in the plan by relating the programmes to the needs of people. This can be achieved through the collective wisdom of the community which can be undertaken through NGOs with the support of Government (Eighth Five Year Plan, Pg.17 – 18).

The Ninth Five Year Plan recognized that the NGOs have developed their initiatives, innovative experiments and alternative models which are rich and diverse. These efforts have demonstrated successfully the alternative models of empowerment of women and development of children in the areas of welfare and support services, micro-credit, employment and income generation activities, awareness generation / gender sensitization programmes and organizing women into self help groups. Further to activate voluntary action for welfare, development and empowerment of the disadvantaged groups at the grass roots level the Ninth Five Year Plan decided to decentralize the system by setting up State, District and Panchayat level forums so that the NGOs can identify projects of welfare, development and empowerment of the disadvantaged groups.
finance, monitor the implementation of the programme and assess the impact of the projects. Co-ordination and linkage among NGOs working in a particular area is very much essential to ensure wider coverage of target group and effective utilization of the scarce resources available. Finally, the NGOs would develop linkages with panchayats, local bodies and other social welfare departments so that the existing social welfare programmes really reach the rural areas (Mid-Term Appraisal of Ninth Five Year Plan).

In context of Tenth Five Year Plan a Steering Committee on Voluntary Sector was organized for the formulation of Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007). The committee was headed by Dr. D. N. Tewari represented by 43 other members from Union and State Governments and Voluntary Organizations / NGOs and Deputy Advisor, Planning Commission as Member Secretary. This speculative body on voluntary organizations / NGOs has been assigned some important tasks to examine, review and suggest policies, procedures and guidelines of the government and other organizations, partnership in development programme and methods for monitoring and evaluation of schemes / programmes implemented through Vos (voluntary organizations)/ NGOs. Moreover, by the influences of the committee report on voluntary / NGOs sector, the planners for the Tenth Five Year Plan have shown optimism and enthusiasm for promoting Vos/NGOs in India. A careful examination of the plan document reveals that Vos /NGOs during plan period i.e. 2002-2007 are expected to play different role models by executing planners’ missions. The specific areas to be covered by VOs / NGOs are social mobilization, strengthening SHGs capacities, entrepreneurship development training, sharing managerial
experiences with development bureaucracy, ensuring peoples' active involvement in development efforts and independent monitoring and evaluation [Siwach 2003].

Similarly in the Eleventh Five Year Plan policy regarding involvement of voluntary agencies / NGOs was drawn up in consultation with the NGOs working at the national level. The specific areas to be covered by NGOs are social mobilization, SHGs (self help groups), SGSY programme (Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana), empowerment of women, population stabilization , combating HIV/AIDS, managing water resources, elementary education, forest management, sanitation campaign, empowerment of disadvantaged people i.e. SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities etc. Further, they should be encouraged to undertake monitoring and evaluation of the programme in-order to identify whether the benefits of the projects or programmes reached to the real target groups. Such study should be taken on periodical basis covering District, State and National Levels (Planning Commission 2007).

**Review of Literature**

Review of literatures related to Non-Governmental Organizations have been drawn up to develop an in-depth knowledge about these organizations and to study them further. Chakraborty (2004) in his article *Voluntary Association and Development: The Indian Experience* pointed out that India is probably the best example to illustrate the role of voluntary organizations
in development both as instrument as well as a conceptual framework to understand the development process where the role of the state is preeminent. In general, voluntary organizations or NGOs come across two types of roles. On the one hand voluntary organizations/NGOs complement the activities of the state that come under their purview. Voluntary organizations / NGOs on the other hand, undertake activities where the state is either absent or its role is negligible presumably because they are not complementary to the goal of the state. Shankar (2004) in his paper *Voluntary Organisations : Social Change Initiators* reflected that not all programmes undertaken by the voluntary organizations / NGOs are functioning towards empowerment of masses. These voluntary organizations are no more social change initiators because they have become more donor oriented than being people oriented. Mencher (1999) in his article *NGOs : Are they a Force for Change* highlighted that most NGOs from small scale single – village ones to large multileveled national and international ones see their main functions as offering help in one form or another.

Now a days many NGOs are involved in trying to provide loan scheme for self-employment, medical services, funding for small NGOs, social movements etc. which resulted in the positive impact on the society. Mohanty (2004) in his paper *Partners In Development: A Reflection on the Role of NGOs* reveals that NGOs are emerging as agencies of social change and are instrumental in bringing large scale sustainable changes at various levels of society. The emergence, development and importance of these organizations constitute significance and integral aspects of social transformation. In order to make NGOs an effective partners in developmental strategy, they must operate with integrity, efficiency and in
harmony with each other. This will create space for them at micro, macro
and meso level. At the same time they have to acquire necessary intellectual
and technical capability. Townsend, Porter and Mawdsley (2004) in their
article *Creating Spaces of Resistance: Development NGOs and their clients in
Ghana, India and Mexico* state that there are space of resistance within the
developed arena of the NGOs.. Both NGOs and their clients are active
subjects of the neo liberal project, not simply subjugated by hegemonic
forces. Some employ a complex mixture of acquiescence, strategic
subversion and resistance to achieve, in part of their goals and desires.
Moreover, some people in the south, sometimes in pursuit of wider visions
and sometimes seeking individual and material needs make spaces by using
NGOs. This is not true for all NGOs or all clients but some NGOs are making
contributions, however small, to alternative visions of change.

Sundaram (2000) in his article *Volunteerism in the New Millennium* has
briefly discussed some of the important sectors where voluntary agencies /
NGOs can play a vital role. The areas identified are adult literacy, health
sector, skill promotion, monitoring and evaluation, empowerment of women
and organization of the rural poor. However, he has also suggested that
voluntary agencies should observe a code of ethics and a commission would
also set up to act as a bridge between NGOs sector and government agencies
for the benefit of the people. Tiwary (2003) in his research paper *NGOs in
Joint Forest Management and Rural Development*, Case study in Jharkhand
and West Bengal highlights the experience of two NGOs i.e. Ram Krishna
Mission (RKM) and Indian Institute of Bio-Social Research and Development
(IBRAD) about the management of forest resources through
community action. The study was conducted in the states of Jharkhand and West Bengal. He has revealed that these voluntary agencies with flexible organizational models and methods are credited with using innovations in experimentation and providing entry points for radical works. NGOs are expected to perform better than government in promoting participation and converting aid money into development. Hirway and Chauhan (2000) in their published paper *Political Economy of Foreign Funding of NGOs in India* report that foreign funding has created a foreign element in the functioning of NGOs in India which is not favourable to the NGOs movement or the social movement that the NGOs are planning for India. Further, the paper recommends measures to be taken to make foreign funding to NGOs more effective and more efficient. A primary survey was conducted by them in Gujarat covering 25 NGOs and 25 foreign funding agencies operating in India. Thomas (2003) in his article *Strategic Management for NGOs* has stated that several NGOs have undertaken period planning exercises and their dominant role of strategy formulation which are experimental rather than by design. Key to the strategic management of NGOs is the mission and initial directions given by the NGOs' founders and also the strategy for governing financial resources. Human resource and financial constraints become especially important when the organization plans to grow rapidly and achieve significant impact. Masihi (2004) in his article *Voluntary Organization and Social Change: A Note* has suggested that the apolitical stance of voluntary organizations / NGOs be given up and taking up a political roles is a challenge before voluntary organizations / NGOs. Edwards (1999) in his research paper *NGO Performance – What Breeds*
Success! New Evidence from South Asia indicates that NGOs' performance and success depend upon the interaction between external influences (context) and internal influences (organizational choices). Each agency looked at impact in three ways: material living conditions (income and services), organizational skills and capacities (confidence and associational strength) and political empowerment (influence over decision making). The research study was conducted among two intermediary NGOs in India i.e. PREM (Promotion of Rural Education Movement) in Orissa and Urumul Seemant in Rajasthan and two projects implemented by Save The Children Fund – UK in Bangladesh. Deshmukh (2003) in her article Social Welfare and Social Welfare Services observed that the voluntary organizations are playing an important role by supplementing the government efforts. The task to be faced whether in education or health or social welfare is gigantic and urgent. The contribution which private bodies are making in these fields is significant. A new working partnership between government and Non-Governmental Organizations is emerging. Ray (1997) in his article Reconceptualized Rural Development and Revitalized Panchayati Raj: The West Bengal Experience has mentioned the importance and involvement of different sections of the society which includes youths, NGOs and village level institutions to participate in local level projects / schemes launched by the local bodies. This has been included in the new Eleventh schedule of the Constitution which was inserted by the 73rd Amendment Act. He has also given priority on the party functionaries, change agents, communicators, professional trainers and more importantly the Non-Governmental Organizations who could maximize their efforts in motivating the rural
people to develop effective leadership at the panchayat level. Atack (1999) in his paper *Four Criteria of Development: NGO Legitimacy* has pointed out that Non-Governmental Organizations have become increasingly important agents of the development process. The four criteria of legitimacy for their involvement in development process are representativeness and distinctive values (formal procedural) and effectiveness and empowerment (substantive/purposive). He concludes by arguing that NGOs and government each has distinctive role and responsibility in the development process. NGOs and the state can be complementary rather than contradictory agents of development understood as beneficial, social and economic changes. Sooryamoorthy (2002) in his research paper *The NGO Sector: Lessons from Kerala* pinpoints that most of the NGOs maintain NGOs – State Partnership in the development programmes of the state and achieved successful results. He has also mentioned that NGOs are more dependent on state and central grants and they are not keen on generating and mobilizing their own resources. The study was conducted covering 367 NGOs in Kerala state. Alam (1999) in his article *Poverty Alleviation, Welfare, Economic Development and NGOs – Some Observations* states that empowerment and participation by the target groups are essential components and go hand in hand as far as grass roots approach to development is concerned. Riley (2002) in his book *Stakeholders in Rural Development* indicates that NGOs have to play a dual role, they need to collaborate with the government and at the same time they have to oppose those government policies which are detrimental to the poor. Rajasekhar
and Biradar (2004) in his book *Reluctant Partners Coming Together: Interface between People, Government and NGOs* interpret that First, NGOs have to provide information on government resources. Second, they have to build the capacity of the people in accessing the resources within the framework of rights and entitlements and effectively utilizing the same. Third, building organizational strength among the poor not only to question the parameters that determine the question and flow of resources to the poor (policy advocacy), but also to ensure regular flow of resources to the poor (sustainability). In the entire process, NGOs would play an active role in the beginning and subsequently, people would play a dominant role as compared to the NGOs and the government. Uphoff (1993) in his research paper *Grassroots Organisations and NGOs in Rural Development: Opportunities with Diminishing States and Expanding Markets* pointed out that the best linkage between central government and rural communities through a network of local institutions had the best performance in agriculture and in social indicators. He made a comparative study of rural development projects implemented through grass roots level organizations and NGOs in 16 countries of Asia. He identified that collective action among these organizations have performed tangible results in the rural development sector in these countries. He gave many examples like *Malawi*, a rural help programme, *Haiti*, an agro forestry outreach project and also in Bangladesh, the Grameen Bank project etc. In addition, he has also mentioned that these organizations are closer to the people by knowing the local conditions of the people and the organizations are very responsive to
fulfill the local needs. Drabek (1987) in his article Development Alternatives: The Challenge for NGOs – An Overview of the Issues has stated that research can serve as an useful tool for NGOs both in their role as voices for the poor (advocacy research) and in their efforts to counter analyses provided by other institutions. In addition, NGOs need to collaborate more with research institutions which are dealing with relevant policy issues, they should avoid duplication of effort and provide input into each others work.

To sum up, NGOs play a supplementary role in government rural development plans and programmes. They establish both internal and external relationships with governments to undertake such challenging tasks. If such role is not performed from the part of NGOs it would be impossible to implement rural development projects for the upliftment of the rural poor. The NGOs and Panchayat functionaries cannot work in an isolated manner because they are all agents of change and emphasize for the common goal. They must involve all functionaries at the grass roots level which in turn help to mobilize peoples’ participation in development processes and propagate linkages at the local and higher levels i.e. block, district, state etc. It is found that the NGOs maintaining donor oriented approach or top down approach would not be feasible for the upliftment of poor people in the rural sector. They must prioritize their development concerning specific issues prevailing in the rural areas. Further, too much dependency upon foreign and government grants may damage the identity of a NGO. Therefore, there is a need to raise their own resources to a certain extent in order to restore independent status of a NGO. There are many big
NGOs which perform fruitful contributions in the area of rural development but comparatively small NGOs are not functioning effectively. Under such circumstances, big NGOs should share their resources and co-ordinate with the small ones to ensure development in the rural areas. The growth of NGOs is only possible which mainly depends upon two factors i.e. finance and human resources. The NGOs providing additional weightage in these two factors are propagating positive results in the rural development sector.

Now time has come to set up an independent commission or autonomous body comprising the representatives from NGOs in order to bridge the gap between government and NGOs to link them up in various plans / programmes in the government sector and strengthening them in the area of rural development. The NGOs must keep linkages with the research institutions to up date their knowledge, review their weaknesses and to formulate proper plans for the development of the rural people. Besides, there is a need of more researches on NGOs working on specific issues which would help them to activate and strengthen their development work.