Chapter II

Review of Literature
This chapter presents a brief overview of the role, trends of growth, principles, activities, code of ethics, and nature of voluntary agencies as presented in several works by earlier researchers.

Nowadays, a VA is not expected to deliver the benefits directly to the people, but to motivate people, mobilise resources, initiate leadership, and participate in development programmes for self-reliance. A VA is only an enabler/facilitator. When a community is made self-reliant, the VA shifts to another place where its services are required. During relief works, VAs act as direct suppliers. The majority of the development VAs also engage directly in productive activities. The roles of the VAs as enabler or catalyst for self-reliant society and as supplier of direct services are altogether different.

Paul D, Chowdhry (1968), in “Critical Appraisal of Voluntary Effort in Social Welfare,” has made it clear that a state should fulfill its obligation of welfare for a majority of its population below the poverty line. In such a situation the state should activate or augment its endeavours to bring about low infant mortality, high literacy rate, more
number of nutrition programmes and a desirable change in the social, mental, political and psychological handicaps of the people (p. 56).

Louis Kriesberg (1973), in “NGOs,” comments on the flexibility of the NGOs he studied thus:

The puzzling feature of the situation is that they do without any relative increase of the organisational staff which might seem necessary for carrying out these operations. This is because, with the considerable personnel, the staff or an executive secretary often has relatively great power in the organisation’s policy formation. The delegation of such power to staff members is not likely to occur in an organisation where members have many conflicts of interests and each side fears that the staff is in league with the other. (p.46)

In "Role of Voluntary Organisation in Rural Development,” A. Chaturvedi (1987) holds the view that VAs have a crucial role to play in the fight of the poor against corrupt bureaucrats and vested political interests which have given a definite twist to the development process and blocked the flow of benefits to their rightful claimants. He urges VAs not to lean heavily either on the government or on foreign funding, but,
instead, explore ways and means of having more and more of indigenous support (p. 534).

In “VOs and Rural Development in India,” E.A., Narayana (1990) states:

there is an elaborate system of rules in older organisations. They follow these rules in their day to day affairs. However, they are not as rational as the new organisations. The organisational characteristic of age does not seem to have significant association with other bureaucratic characteristics. Size predicts variation in duration of labour, system of rules impersonality only. There is less division of labour in large NGOs. (p. 155)

Narayana adds:

the smaller organisations have a more elaborate system of rules than the larger ones. The former is more impersonal than the latter. Size does not seem to have caused variation in other bureaucratic characteristics either. The older NGOs are more bureaucratized on the bureaucratic dimensions of system of rule-orientation and less bureaucratized on rationality. The larger NGOs are less bureaucratized in
In Rural Development in South Asia, I. India (1991), B,S. Khanna (1991) holds that VAs have a big role to play in supplementing and complementing governmental and non-governmental organisations’ efforts to promote and accelerate development among the rural people, many of whom have been suffering from socio-economic disabilities. At present, not only is the number of VAs interested in rural people small but also many of these have very limited resources, expertise and workers to serve as effective catalysts of development (p.298).

In “NGOs Too Need a Code,” Roy (1993) says:

Our hopes lie with the small village based groups struggling and battling it out and keeping the spirit of volunteerism alive. Today volunteerism needs to be equated with courage and not with the gutless people who give press conferences and live off the experiences of others. Volunteerism is about-promoting self-respect and dignity and equality and there are any number of living examples in villages where partnerships between groups and the community have worked,
That’s happened because they have followed an unwritten code among themselves—live simply; take a living not a market wage; set an example for others to follow, respect and observe laws; treat people as equals and like human beings; practice and adopt non-violent means. However, fee code will only work if there is a sense of security and confidence in the spirit of volunteerism. It’s a sad commentary on volunteerism in this country that if we were to apply this code strictly and honestly 90 per cent of the groups would fail to make the grade, (p.9)

Caroline Sahley’s book *Strengthening the Capacity of NGOs: Cases of Small Enterprise Development NGOs in Africa* (1994) is meant to serve NGOs in exploring the management, policy and human resources issues affecting their own organisational development and in developing more effective programmes of institutional development and cooperation. It is based on a series of workshops held in 1994 to look at the nature of small enterprise development in Africa with focus on the organisational capacity and sustainability of African agencies implementing enterprise development programmes. The book emphasizes that capacity building is not just a tool used to improve organisational performance but that it is
part of new NGO strategies that take the wider processes of institutional development into account.

Vanitha Viswanath (1994), in *NGOs and Women Development in Rural South Indict—A Comparative Analysis*, has critically assessed the effectiveness of two South India based VAs, viz., India Development Service (IDS) and Grama Vikas, in fulfilling their goals of uplifting poor landless agricultural women labourers. She states that these VAs have evolved programmes and activities and implemented them with a view to creating leadership capacity, team spirit and collective goal among the poor segment in Karnataka State. The State Government has also formulated and launched several women welfare schemes. There was optimum collaboration and coordination between the VAs and the Government facilitating smooth functioning. The overall impact of all the programmes on the rural women was, however, minimal.

In “Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in Development,” IC.A. Suresh (1995) states:

One of the major weaknesses of the NGO sector is their action in isolation. Their mutual interaction and even collaboration make the efforts more effective. NGOs can also associate with other organisational alternatives working
in the development scenario, which are in fact more powerful and resourceful. Society at large will be benefited by such networking, which will add to the strength and alleviate weaknesses. One may call it as Vertical and Horizontal integration based on inter and infra organisational linkages. Interaction of NGOs with their environment is also part of the study of linkages, (p. 57)

For any organisation in a developing society, several interfaces with the environment are critical. The major interactions of VAs are with

a) Government and its agencies,

b) Clients or beneficiaries,

c) Suppliers of input, and,

d) Other organisations.

The VAs should take the government into confidence, co-opt clients in decision-making and network with other organisations for accomplishing their mission.

Grabbing the Tiger by (he Tail: NGO kmSmng for International Change by David Kelleher, Kate McLaren and Ronal Bisson (1995) comes out of the recent experience of many Canadian NGOs which have undergone significant cuts in funding and radical changes in the
development world in which they operate. It looks at obstacles to change like bureaucracy, patriarchal ways of working and failure to consider external relationships and at ways to overcome them through a process of organisational learning. The book provides practical suggestions on how to go about the change process, with suggestions for the organisational heads and activities to assist in the process.

In “Rural Development Programmes In India—A Critical Analysis,” S.K. Hussain (1995) says:

any rural development scheme is to improve the quality of life of its rural poor in terms of availability and accessibility to food, clean air and water, freedom from illness, quality of housing and family life, non-discriminatory society', chance of decision-making, basic human rights, equality in distribution of income, opportunities to work and capacity to mould knowledge and skills. VAs should collaborate and co-ordinate with village panchayat bodies to achieve the major objectives of rural development, (p. 56)

In “Organisational Culture in Action,” Harish Kumar (1999) analyses the duration of the existence of an organisation and its efficiency and comments on its philosophy of work thus:
The philosophy explains that swimmers float on the surface and are not able to get valuables, which are lying on the bottom. But divers go deep and collect valuables and enjoy them. People at CORE are required to be a diver rather than a swimmer. Another philosophy is hidden in the following lines:

Be the best in whatever you do,

Be the best whatever you are. (p.57)

fa “NGOs: Need for a Code of Ethics,” R. Sooryamoorthy (1999) describes the proceedings of meetings of several NGOs to deliberate on the proposal- for a NatifmiCouncil of NGOs and a common code of conduct and ethics for NGOs:

The outcome of these meetings was negative with the proposals getting rejected outright. Nearly 40 NGOs from Orissa, 50 from Karnataka^ 55 groups jointly from the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala and 30 groups from West Bengal were among those which opposed the proposals. A meeting convened by the Association of VAs in which 105 groups from different States participated also did not favour the idea. Some
expressed their intention to continue the deliberations on the subjects while others preferred to have a Council but not along the lines of what was proposed in the draft Bill. Another group of 18 NGOs from nine States met in Delhi and rejected the formation of the Council and code of ethics, Ironically, the members in the committee who finalized the code, now covertly and overtly, expressed that they did not endorse the text contained in the proceedings for laying down the code of conduct ethics, (p.25)

Sooryamoorthy goes on to list the allegations leveled against NGOs:

Ever since the NGOs assumed a vital role in the developmental efforts which they earned through appropriate identification of needs and effective implementation of innovative programmes, they have been subjected to criticism. By and large, the criticism mainly centered around Hinds. A large number of NGOs solely rely on assistance from foreign donor agencies. Misutilisation and misappropriation of money are heard quite frequently. Some have, as the allegation goes, maintained links with foreign
donor agencies to finance programmes outside their avowed objectives, some are accused of indulging in establishing activities posing a threat to the unity of the country. Many are reported to be serving a particular community and nurturing sectarian ideals causing harm to the social fabric of the society, (p.25)

Sooryamoorthy also goes on to record the reaction of VAs and their leaders to the proposed code of ethics and to comment thus:

A code of ethics is welcomed by many VAs, as it will help them maintain a standard for themselves and also remove the allegations against them. It is also true that there are NGO leaders who adopt a pompous life style. Apparently the leaders fear that the code of ethics will force them to abstain from such an ostentatious life making them accountable to the community and to the organisation. On the other hand, there are apprehensions about the code which could sound the death-knell of the autonomy of the NGOs and increase the interference of the government in their functioning. Just as self-help which is deemed to be the strength of the VAs, self-discipline in matters related to funds, and commitment
to the people and community for whom they have opted for this field of action should serve as checks if some of them are deviating from the very purpose of their objectives. If the government wants to make sure that the funds and grants it gives are properly utilised by the NGOs, monitoring is necessary, (p.25)

Minar Pimble and Madhuri Kamat (2000), in “Civil Society—A Peripheral Vision,” aver thus:

the ideological underpinning of the emaciated state is . . . the superiority of the market over the state as a means of rapid modernization, leading to the whole philosophy of liberalization and the superiority of the private firm and the voluntary agency over the regular bureaucracy and government departments for providing a flexible innovative and dynamic institutional framework for development.

(p.22)

In “Was Seattle Significant? The Emerging Interest in the Third Sector,” Kathy L. Brock (2000) states:

Citizen organisations worldwide have existed for centuries but it is in the last decade of the twentieth century and the
beginning of the 2000s that non-governmental (NGOs) and non-profit (NPOs) organisations have flourished. Recent articles have conservatively estimated that the number of international NGOs rose from 6,000 in 1990 to over 29,000 in 1999, that over 100,000 NGOs were created in Eastern Europe between 1988 and 1995, that 70 percent of the two million NGOs in the US developed in the past thirty years, and that over 65,000 NGOs have formed in Russia since the demise of communism.

Brock goes on to comment on the current public attitude to VAs thus:

Are agencies, once thought of as altruistic, now viewed as selfinterested organisations with little concern for the broader well-being of society? As organisations strive to meet the greater accountability requirements of governments, will many lose their appeal to locally involved citizens and increasingly be viewed as impersonal bureaucracies? Will standards set by governments replace community bonds and limits that have defined these agencies? Will increasing partnerships between the third sector and government help restore legitimacy to
government or will they just serve to tarnish the third sector and contribute to public cynicism?

In “NGO Intervention in Poverty Alleviation,” D.K. Ghosh (200.1) claims that combating poverty requires the assistance of VAs:

There is no doubt that combating poverty cannot be managed by the government alone. There are many areas where government needs collaboration and cooperation from NGOs particularly in creating opportunity, facilitating empowerment and providing security” to the poor. The pressure of the donor agencies on the recipient government to work through NGOs in development programmes is also a dominant factor in increasing the role of NGOs to fight against poverty, (p.2)

It is observed that while several researchers have shown an interest in the growth trends of VAs, hardly any in-depth empirical study of VAs in a particular area has been attempted. Hence this study of the growth trends of VAs in Tamil Nadu.