Voluntary action has been a long tradition in India and occupies a pride place, especially in the field of social welfare. They were the early catalysts for new thrust in rural transformation and their role was that of pioneer, innovator and scientist. However, with the launching of various development programmes, after independence, the voluntary efforts has shifted its focus from welfare activities to the developmental work especially in the field of rural-development. The role of voluntary organisations (VOs) - the present day non-government organisations (NGOs) in rural development has been assuming a greater importance because of their special qualities like innovativeness, commitment among workers for effective implementation, flexibility in approach to suit local conditions, close contacts with local people, and high level of motivation, which are known to be missing among government functionaries. All these concerns together-participation, flexibility, commitment and a social dimensions have led to an examination of the 'NGO-sector' which has considerable advantages over governmental and official agencies in addressing the problems of the rural people. This research provides evidences on the impact and effectiveness of NGOs in alleviating poverty and solving other social problems in the rural areas. While the results may not always read comfortably, it marks a major step in placing the NGO's contribution to rural-development in its proper perspective.