CHAPTER 1

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in Development: A Theoretical Perspective

Every few hundred years (in recent times, every few decades) man is faced by a changed reality when earlier models and institutional structures- as well as conceptual paradigms and their underlying metaphysics- which were evolved to meet a different kind of reality are found not to work any longer. The need is to seek for alternatives to meet new situations.1

The search for new alternatives of development brought the NGOs into prominence in the 1980s. As far as development was concerned, 1980s was a time of growing realization. During this period the world faced a profound crisis – dehumanizing poverty, collapsing ecological systems and ever increasing gap between the rich and the poor. The much professed earlier models of development had failed to cure the world of these persisting problems of ‘underdevelopment’. It was against this backdrop of ever growing misery in the world that a new search for alternatives of development began emerging. ‘Within development geography, the search for new ways of thinking beyond the development impasse has become a central concern’.2 3 This concern led to the emergence of NGOs as the new vehicles of change. Since that time these organizations have gained so much importance that it has triggered an ‘associational revolution’.3 However, the NGOs were not fresh creations in the field of development. Some NGOs such as church organizations were active long before the development era. Many of these organizations were already assisting the poor in certain underdeveloped countries.

Even before the 1980s, the NGOs were active in some ways in addressing the ‘need based local-level development’ in helping the lives of the people. However, their rise during this time was primarily due to the reason that they could induce

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3 Gerard Clarke. 1998. ‘Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Politics in the Developing World’, Political Studies (Sheffield), 46, p. 36.
development at the local or the grassroots level. Their approach to development was different from the prevalent macro-oriented state led target based development. Many public sector programmes have encouraged dependence and made little lasting impact after government support is withdrawn. In contrast to this, the NGOs were seen as being able to carry out need based development. Their interventions had shown that they were capable to do so due to their inclusive policies and simultaneous outreach programmes. According to the rhetoric that surrounded them, they had the capacity to empower people by enabling the ‘poorest to articulate their political and social needs which could lead to the emergence of a stronger ‘civil society’’. Thus, with the changing orientations of the times, NGOs became a prominent component of the development industry. Their recent global growth is attributed to a variety of interconnected reasons. It ‘is inherently associated with the rise of an influential consensus, spearheaded by the World Bank and IMF, over the need for political democracy and good governance on the one hand, and economic liberalization, the rolling back of the state and the encouragement of the private sector to step into the gap, on the other.’

It is however, not to suggest that NGOs can be regarded as a panacea for all the evils of the development. On the other side of the optimism, in alternative development thinking, civil society, social movements and NGOs are all considered a mixed bag. They are seen as associations with no or very less accountability. They have mushroomed amidst the breakdown of regulation (or informalization) but have themselves remained unregulated. They are also known to suffer from similar problems as any other organization like – bureaucratization, hierarchy, corruption or dependence. ‘Development NGOs have been denounced as ‘new missionaries’ engaged in recolonization, as ‘unguided missiles’ or as ‘the new East India Company’. However, despite these criticisms they occupy a dominant position in the development debate. ‘Within alternative development differences exist though there is a general tendency to gloss over them. The dominant tendency is still to look at them (different actors of development) as vehicles of development

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6 *ibid.*, p. 247.
alternative(s)....based on collective aspirations'. Moreover, over the past few decades their position has further strengthened. Earlier clear distinctions were made with respect to their relationship with the state yet in reality this vision has become blurred. It is felt that the NGOs can function as parastatal subcontractors of the state or Governmental NGOs. However, not withstanding the criticisms, it is felt that 'if they are sites of power outside the state they are within the reach of the donors, who in turn move within the orbit of their funders, state or private, and their cultural and discursive agendas'. Thus, whether NGOs are accepted or rejected as important constituents of the development process, yet it is now an established fact that they are much discussed. Development is a very broad based term and NGOs are today considered as one of the ‘buzzwords’ used to attain a synchronization between different actors of development. Infact, it can be said that the NGOs today are no more the alternatives of development, rather they have increasingly becoming the mainstream themselves. How did NGOs become a much discussed aspect of the development debate? To understand this, they need to be studied against the backdrop of development crisis which led to their emergence all over the world.

The Development Debate

Development has been an evolving concept which has been undertaking newer meanings with time. Development is a loaded term and ‘in saying “development”, most people are now saying the opposite of what they want to convey. Everyone gets confused’. ‘In common parlance, development describes a process through which the potentialities of an object or organism are released, until it reaches its natural, complete, full-fledged form’.

The development era, was first launched by the Americans in 1949. For the first time, President Truman had used it in the context of underdevelopment thereby packaging it American style. It was projected as a struggle against communism in favor of democratic values:

8 A. J. Bebbington and D. H. Bebbington. 2001. ‘Development Alternatives: Practice, Dilemmas and Theory’, Area, 33 (1), March, p. 8. They argue that it is thus necessary to distinguish among different actors.
9 Pieterse. Development Theory, p. 84.
11 ibid., p. 11.
12 ibid., p. 9.
We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. The old imperialism—exploitation for forging profit has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair dealing.¹³

Development as a western construct, urged for the consolidation of the American hegemony. For this, a political campaign was set into motion on a global scale. It created a perception of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ and in the process made two billion people underdeveloped who ‘ceased being what they were, in all their diversity, and were transmogrified into an inverted mirror of others’ reality’.¹⁴ ‘Its general ethos was one of inevitable progress definable broadly as a movement from tradition to modernity, status to contract, ascription to achievement.’¹⁵ Wherever underdevelopment was experienced, it was believed that it was due to the obstruction of this natural movement.

The way out of this underdevelopment was to identify the barriers and then removing them. ‘The heuristic tool used for such identification was the historical experience of the West which was understood as the quintessence and embodiment of “progress”’.¹⁶ This dynamic was seen as intrinsic to all societies irrespective of their internal differences. ‘The development project took the fork that led toward a common future, defined by the standards of the Western experience and bundled up in the idea of national economic growth. It rejected the other fork, the one of empowering local cultures— or at least allowing them to be replenished after the ravages of colonialism’.¹⁷ Economic rationalism and a consumer mentality were encouraged at the expense of deepening the understanding and appreciation of local cultures and local ecologies. The first promoters of the term development had thus reduced it to signify economic growth. ‘For these men, development simply consisted

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¹³ ibid., p. 9.
¹⁴ ibid., p. 9.
¹⁵ Kothari. Rethinking Development, p. 121.
¹⁶ ibid., p. 121.
of growth in the income per person in economically underdeveloped areas'.

For them, economic growth was the only hope for the poor.

By the late sixties and the early seventies, the ground realities, however, pointed to something contradictory to the projected economic aspirations. The initial certainties and optimism of developmental theory, based on the understanding of the developed West, began to fade in the light of the newer experiences which the world faced. Though the fundamental economism of the development project bore fruit, it was however of an unexpected kind. This was so because as the capitalist form of economy prospered, its fruits were distributed unevenly. There was growing evidence that economic growth by itself was profoundly inadequate. The world faced declining food security, increasing poverty, fundamental threats to environment, marginalization and mass unemployment. This gave birth to an increased sensitivity to the specifics of societies which had been ignored previously. At the same time it also led to the loss of confidence in the unilinear and universal model of development as propagated by the developed western countries.

We have become prisoners of an obsolete vision of our global reality and the nature of human progress. This vision equates human progress with growth in the market value of economic output and subordinates both human and environmental considerations of the world’s resources by a favored few with little recognition of the social and environmental costs borne by the many. These costs have now accumulated to the point of endangering the continued well-being of everyone on planet earth.

"As it became increasingly clear that some of the major constraints on such growth were non-economic, the focus broadened to include the social and cultural transformation as well". In 1962 Proposals for Action of first United Nations (UN) Development Decade (1960-70) established that:

The problem of the underdeveloped countries is not just growth, but development... development is growth plus change.... change, in turn, is

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18 Esteva. ‘Development’, p. 16.
social and cultural as well as economic, and qualitative as well as quantitative... the key concept must be improved quality of people’s life.21

Thus, the concept of development was now broadened to include economic, social and cultural progress as well. The modernization paradigm was essentially a Western construct and it ‘broke down under increasing local criticism and the demand for more indigenous models of development. The trickle down effect of the conventional wisdom had proved to be an illusory myth. In the face of a new set of problems, the debate began to shift from a preoccupation with the growth to a concern with equity’.22 ‘In the developing countries, the state of economic development called for a ‘reconceptualisation of current strategies, demanding a new vision’.23 A whole lot of problems like poverty, erosion of natural resources, increase in external dependence continued to persist, raising questions on the relevance of the ‘techno-economic’ approach. Development now came to be seen as a more basic need for structural change in society. The capitalists had failed to improve the lot of the poorest citizens of their country. Deficiencies were traced not just in indigenous structures but in international order of world capitalism. Rapid economic growth in developing countries through central planning and regulation of the economy with emphasis on industrialization, modernization and urbanization failed to achieve the purpose of development. Marginal reform attempts at welfare showed limited effects. Environmental considerations also came to the forefront. These concerns now began to set up limits to economic growth:

Ecological imperatives have now begun to break down the old ideological divide and refocus the development debate towards a search for new alternatives, towards a redefinition of the goal of development and a reordering of the means to pursue it......this search for alternatives in ‘another development’ popularized by the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld report “What Now?” , represents the new developmental thinking. It emphasizes process

22 Heredia, Voluntary Action and Development, p. 18.

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more than results, content over form, in sum ‘self-reliance, need-orientation, ecologically sound development’.\textsuperscript{24}

As these ideas gained ground, the search for new alternate methods of development began. The search for alternatives was not only because the dominant techno-economic model was inadequate for the third world but also because it was inadequate for the other two worlds also. This led to the focus of development to shift to the ‘reconfigurations of state-society relationships, with the result that new social movements (NSMs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and ‘civil society’ became important players on the alternative development stage’.\textsuperscript{25} In the third world, this quest for the alternative solutions became a question of no longer looking at the highly industrialized ‘other’ countries but in the ecology and culture of the ‘self’. From a macro aspect development now took on a micro form which was spelt out in the active participation of the people at the grassroots in the process of ‘their’ development i.e. sustainable and self-achieved. In this development scenario values and ethics became important. It was argued that there was a need to understand development as the development of the human person, his or her freely determined needs and capacities. ‘So far it [growth] has been a jobless growth, a voiceless growth not accompanied by an extension of democracy. It is a futureless growth with unsustainable reckless exploitation of natural resources and a ruthless growth which has caused ever widening disparities’.\textsuperscript{26} Human development was now defined as the development of the capacities of the human person, that must be freely determined. They must be free to choose what development they want, both as individuals and as communities. ‘It should be remembered that the human person- the starting point and also the subject of human development- creates him- or herself as a person in society, in relationships with others, in and with the community. Hence human development also means the development of the society’.\textsuperscript{27} Thus, it called for the human person and the society to be treated as the subject of development and not mere reference point in the analysis and evaluation of different approaches to development. The free determination of capacities implies that no one can decide what human development

\textsuperscript{24} Heredia. \textit{Voluntary Action and Development}, pp. 20-21.
\textsuperscript{25} Mercer. ‘Reconceptualising State-Society Relations in Tanzania’, pp. 247-258.
\textsuperscript{26} Najina Heptulla as quoted in Shakuntala Balaraman and Visa Ravindran. 1998. ‘Changing face of Voluntarism’, \textit{The Hindu} (Chennai), 29 November.
should mean for someone else be it an individual or a community. ‘People’s role should not be limited just to participating in decisions about how to address the effects of a given model but they should be free to choose what development they want, both as individuals and as communities, two dimensions of our identities that are in constant interaction and tension’.28

One of the most interesting facets of the ongoing regeneration in the new commons being created by ordinary men and women is precisely the recovery of their own definition of needs, dismantled by development in perception or in practice. By strengthening forms of interaction embedded in the social fabric and by breaking the economic principle of the exchange of equivalents, they are recovering their autonomous ways of living. By reinstalling or regenerating forms of trade operating outside the rules of the market of the plan, they are both enriching their daily lives and limiting the impact and scope of the commercial operations they still have to maintain, and also reducing the commodification of their time and the fruits of their efforts.29

All these new advancements in the field of development brought a variety of new actors to act for development. Development could no longer be seen as the perverse of the government alone. Governments could create laws and reallocate a country’s resources. Though these were important functions, but they fulfilled only partial requirements for any development strategy. It was realized that wealth creation and entrepreneurship are also vital ingredients and that the business sector too had an important role to play. Similarly, social innovation and voluntary organizations are required to attune the State and the private sector. They were needed to highlight people’s concerns, to make the State and its institutions more accountable, to limit the authority and power of the elite, and to ‘fill in such gaps’. ‘An effective civil society is needed (some call it the “Third Sector”), and it should include strong voluntary organizations. In contemporary times, it is felt that healthy development requires the combined and concerted effort of all three sectors, each contributing its share, and each influencing and being influenced by the other.’30 If in addition to bringing about

28 ibid., pp. 394-395.
change in policy from above we also manage to adapt development strategy to present
day realities, growth can have its voluntarism and its future. Further,

If strong, vibrant and lively civil society is the foundation of modern open
democratic polity, NGOs are the very life-force for the civil society. Civil
society and NGOs seem to go together. One cannot exist without the other.
Civil society, when it is not used as a synonym for society in general, is used
to refer to ‘that segment of society that interacts with the state, influences the
state and yet is distinct from the state’.31

At the core of this enthusiasm with the civil society exists the fascination with
the NGOs? This coming of NGOs into prominence in the field of development has
been partly due to the declining legitimacy of the state and partly because NGOs seem
to have it in them to fit better, at least presently, in the idea of bringing about a people
centric development.

Since the least organized and marginalized sections of the society have little
opportunity to influence government, their interests are not likely to be served
by state involvement in community participation. Non-governmental
organizations are not only more likely to serve the interests of the poor but
they are capable of initiating schemes that increase the organizational power
and consequently the political pressures that can be exerted by the poor
people.32

This raises an important issue about what exactly the characteristics are, that
are available exclusively to the NGOs which have helped them gain such an eminent
position in the development debate.

Defining NGOs

NGOs or Voluntary Agencies today are an inseparable part of the
development process. In the proposed alternatives of bringing about development, the
participation of NGOs and their potential for bringing about change are considered
very significant. Broadly, ‘Non-governmental organization (NGO) is a term that has

31 B.S. Baviskar. 2001. ‘NGOs and Civil Society in India’, Sociological Bulletin (New Delhi), 50 (1),
March, p. 7.
32 James Midgley, as cited in Alan Whaites. 1998. ‘NGOs, Civil Society and the State: Avoiding
become widely accepted as referring to a legally constituted, non-governmental organization created by natural or legal persons with no participation or representation of any government. In the cases in which NGOs are funded totally or partially by governments, the NGO maintains its non-governmental status and excludes government representatives from membership in the organization.\textsuperscript{33}

The origin of the term NGOs as used in the present sense can be traced to the United Nations’ Charter of 1947, which under Article 71 first used the phrase ‘Non-Government Organization’ and brought it in common English usage. It refers to NGOs as ‘any international organization, which is not established by the intergovernmental agreement including organizations which accept members designated by government authorities, provided that such membership does not interfere with the free expression of views of the organizations’.\textsuperscript{34}

‘The terms Voluntary Organizations (VO) or Voluntary Associations (VA), Action Groups (AG), Voluntary Agencies (Volgas) and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) are generally used interchangeably. The UN regards all these under the generic name NGOs. Because the label ‘NGO’ is considered too broad by some, as it might cover anything that is non-governmental, many NGOs now prefer the term Private Voluntary Organization (PVO) or Private Development Organization (PDO)’.\textsuperscript{35} However, a majority of the NGOs prefer to identify themselves as Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The reason for such a premise lies on the fact that the term NGOs encompass a wide gamut, which need not necessarily manage development initiatives.

A plethora of institutions today describe themselves as NGOs. Mercer uses the term as a ‘catch-all phase to refer to all those types of organizations set up independently of government for a developmental purpose’.\textsuperscript{36} They are used to refer to organizations helping in opening up ‘public spaces’ for the marginalized. ‘We are talking about the institutions [NGOs] that came into being during the last 30 years, and were born in the search for ways to work alongside and support the most disadvantaged members of society: the poor and their organizations’.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{33} www.wikipedia.com. (Accessed on 17.03.10).
\textsuperscript{34} The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution 288(X) of 22 February 1950.
\textsuperscript{35} According to the Wikipedia Encyclopedia these are some of the names used by a host of institutions which can be labelled as NGOs. Available at www.wikipedia.com. (Accessed on 17.03.10).
\textsuperscript{36} Mercer. ‘Reconceptualising State-Society Relations In Tanzania’, p. 255.
\textsuperscript{37} Joseph A. ‘NGOs: Fragmented Dreams’, p. 391. The poor have been defined as the exploited, the oppressed or the subaltern.
With changing times the definitions and roles of NGOs have been evolving. Their abundant growth on a global scale since the 1980s with conflicting ideologies and a perplexing difference of the nature of interventions undertaken by the NGOs along with variations at local levels in size, objectives, contexts, circumstances and also type of functioning has made it difficult to arrive at a single definition of NGOs within the broad spectrum of activities that they undertake but also “in identifying their essence to major dimensions and aspects relating to the classifications of these institutions in multifacet lines of objectives as well as activities”. As against the conventional aptitude of looking at NGO from a singular “welfare lens”, the modern functional definition had adopted a broad and multidimensional approach to define and interpret NGO as a development-oriented institution embedded with the capacity to function as ‘supplementary’ and ‘complementary’ entities in addressing the diversified needs of the community otherwise unreached by governmental agencies.

With respect to distinction from governmental agencies ‘Non-Government implies that the organization not be accountable to or receive operational finances, such as staff salaries, from a government department. This does not mean that it collaborate with the government plan and implement programmes’. In the Western countries NGOs were formed in the face of complex modern social processes such as industrialization, urbanization and immigration. They rose to assist the victims of these phenomenon by rendering essential services through programmes, experimentation and efforts in order to fill the lacuna created by governmental agencies. Therefore, here NGOs gained recognition as welfare agencies. ‘Development NGOs came into being even more recently, though many of

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38 For details refer to Singh. Role of NGOs in Developing Countries. The author argues that NGOs have experienced an explosion in numbers since the 1980s by identifying interest in realistic answers to problems over a kind of neglected issues related to ecological degradation, rights of people over forests and other common property resources, appropriate technologies, occupation, health and safety, waste land development, gender and equity, and environment despite their involvement in the implementation of anti-poverty schemes for nurturing and supporting a more holistic and sustainable long-term development.


41 Vanita Vishwanathan. 1993. NGOs and Women’s Development in Rural South India: A Comparative Analysis, New Delhi: Vistaar, p. 5. In India, however, the term NGO is often used interchangeably with “voluntary organization”. Many “VOs” in India are initiated by government-employed functionaries and funded by the government.
today’s familiar names—Save the Children Fund, CARE, Oxfam—began their lives as welfare or relief agencies and converted to development in the 1960s and 1970s.  

Role of NGOs in Development

What gives NGOs such an exclusive position in the developmental process? More importantly, how do NGOs actually intervene in the development process?

Voluntarism has always been associated with charity and welfare services. But the philanthropic notions of self-help underwent a change with the evolving meaning of development. ‘Development NGOs began to be noticed in the 1970s, it was for what was beginning to be called an alternative development paradigm. This identification of the NGOs with the alternative development paradigm grew stronger over the next decade or so’. According to the World Bank, till the 1970s, the NGOs were generally identified with humanitarian and relief work. But as the 1980s saw the rejection of government as the sole legitimate agent in charge of development decision making and the allocation of resources, civil society was seen as having an essential role in both. Donors as well as governments began to appreciate the importance and distinctive developmental roles that the NGOs were capable of playing. ‘NGOs in turn began to take themselves more seriously, making commitments to strengthen their capacities to provide leadership on important policy issues’.  

Since then attention has been focused on the broader—often pivotal—roles NGOs can play in participatory development, including targeting the poor and vulnerable minorities, giving voice to women at all levels of society, working with vulnerable children, stakeholder consultations, local-level research, micro-credit, conflict resolution, post-conflict resolution, tackling urban or domestic violence, strengthening mechanisms of governance, legal and human rights, and a variety of other functions.  

The voluntary sector diversified immensely and evolved to include itself in new arenas which are non-traditional. The reasons behind such increased activity can be attributed to certain developments. ‘(a) growing interest among donors and national governments in strengthening the developmental roles of institutions outside

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44 Korten. Getting to the 21st Century, p. 28.
the public sector, (b) the demonstrated capacity of some NGOs to reach the poor more effectively than public agencies, (c) a sharp decline in public development resources, necessitating a search by government for more cost effective alternatives to conventional public services and development programmes, (d) the mobilizing capacity of NGOs particularly of the industrially advance countries to manage development resources from private sources, and (e) ability to carry out programmes on a national scale and to influence national policies and institutions 46.

The critical development issue for the 1990s was not growth rather it called for transformation. ‘Our collective future depends on achieving a transformation of our institutions, our technology, our values, and our behavior consistent with our ecological and social realities’. 47 NGOs around the world were seen as giving attention to a people-centered vision which in turn embraces the transformation agenda. They gained such attention because they are seen to work for those who were previously left out of the development fold. It was felt that the NGOs were nearer to the people than the officials of bureaucracy caught in massive hierarchical structures. It was pointed out:

People are their subject matter
People’s development is their objective
People’s involvement is their primary concern
People’s management is their destination. 48

In the wake of the structural adjustment programmes undertaken by the state and its subsequent withdrawal from the welfare arena, NGOs were seen as assuming the responsibility of providing security to the poor. ‘NGOs recognize that in the face of globalization they have an ongoing mission to provide alternative modes of subsistence and participation to the poorest’. 49 NGOs posses certain specialties which

46 Singh. Role Of NGOs in Developing Countries, p. 13.
47 Korten. Getting to the 21st Century, p. 4. Korten argues that transformation must address three basic needs of the society: justice in terms of overcoming the extreme imbalance between the over and underconsumers of the world’s resources; sustainability so that each generation recognises its obligation for use of earth’s resources in such a way so as to ensure the rights of future generations; and inclusiveness so that any one who chooses to be a productive, contributing community member has a right to the opportunity to do so and to be recognised and respected for these contributions.
help them in being physically nearer, mentally closer and socially accessible to the people. Hence they are able to identify their felt needs ‘Development scholars have discussed their comparative advantage in among other things, outreach to remote areas and capacity for innovation’. The NGOs try to build the hopes of the people. They engage in dialogues with the local people and try to draw their participation. They tend to expose the people to whatever objectives they (the NGOs) are working towards. This participation facilitation involves learning from people and it is generally achieved through community organizations. They are seen to posses qualities such as management flexibility (as against administrative rigidity of government agencies), a greater responsiveness to local needs and committed leadership. ‘This vision looks to justice, sustainability and inclusiveness as the defining principle of authentic development’.51

There are various issues in real development which need immediate attention. Poverty is one of most harsh realities which development has failed to do cure. The possibility of NGOs in terms of poverty reduction is immense. Here too they have an immense role to play. Today, ‘most development agencies- both official and nongovernmental- are making poverty reduction the central objective of their activities’.52 ‘Following the successes of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and other well-known “success stories” in the microcredit field, such as the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee and the Self-Employed Women’s Association in India, a wide range of national and international NGOs- with varying degrees of experience- began offering financial services’.53

NGOs are seen to have characteristics much more in line with the attributes of small business in that they are flexible, are customer focused and tend to adopt a holistic and grounded approach. Many of them ‘establish themselves in the same localities in which they work, or at least have local offices that employ local or national staff. This identification with and grounding in the community is often a critical attribute for effective community economic development activities and a great strength of NGOs.54

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51 Singh. Role Of NGOs in Developing Countries, p. 16.
53 ibid., p. 154.
They are part of alternative development paradigm which implies local-level development having local priorities which emphasized ‘need to look at development itself as a problem of human development that can be understood, managed and monitored by small collectives of human beings through and integrated approach ‘bringing together various development inputs to converge in an integrated fashion so that individuals, their families, and their communities could all benefit’.  

NGOs can bring together small groups not only in exerting social pressure as well as minimize social diversity but also in maintaining balance of power between the state and people in respect of providing leadership a self-mobilizing, self-directing human energy outside the reach of the government. This viewpoint contends that as partners in development, NGOs and government can strengthen and enhance one another by minimizing duplication of efforts, concerning and stretching limited resources, and addressing needs in different ways as appropriate.

NGOs have helped the poor and people in distant areas to gain access to credit, helped in social intermediation and empowerment of the poor, acted as channels of service delivery and also as entrepreneurs in commercial activities.

Besides poverty reduction, one of the most significant functions of an NGO is building awareness or mobilizing people because this can help in bringing about attitudinal changes among masses. The newer involvement of NGO envisages their role as a partner with the government. For any government to provide welfare for its citizens become easier if their interests are represented in an organized manner and public life is based on cohesion and cooperation. Awareness means sensitizing people about their living situation. NGOs are specialized in awareness creation using indigenous methods. Awareness programs may deal with a wide range of issues such as functional literacy, gender-sensitization, political awareness, among other things. In fact, many reputed NGOs have minimized the role of the service provider but widened their action on awareness generation.

Besides generating awareness, NGOs try to build capacities of the people. The purpose of development is to equip people to do things on their own which means building capacities. ‘In fact, all development programs revolve around human potentials. NGOs attempt to build capacities of the people based on “what they

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55 Tandon. ‘Riding High or nosediving’, p. 45.
56 Singh. Role of NGOs in Developing Countries, pp. 28-29.
57 Bose. NGOs and Rural Development, p. 94.
NGOs try to encourage people to determine, manage, restructure and sustain their development by encouraging training, exposure through people to people learning processes and participatory training. Capacity Building has long term benefits. It is a collective exercise which can reduce the dependency of the people on any other organization be it an NGO or any other agency- governmental or otherwise. This also helps in achieving the true goal of an NGO- providing internal self awareness among individuals and thus ensure sustainability of their efforts.

The NGOs through facilitating participation, awareness generation and building capacities try to empower people which remain their ultimate goal to ensure a sustainable development. Empowerment means giving power and authority to the people. NGOs build people’s organization which are being looked upon as important vehicles for the same. It is a process which helps people to understand the reality of their environment and take necessary measures to effect changes to improve the situation. ‘In important aspects, NGOs efforts are not only focused on the state, but aim to empower the beneficiary communities, and build institutions that challenge local, religious and commercial elites’.  

This however, does not mean that NGOs can provide solutions to all the developmental problems. Even today, there are a sizeable number of people who remain poor and out of the folds of development. There is skepticism regarding the ‘fashionable concepts’ or ‘buzzwords’ like empowerment and participation. Scholars fear that they might be nothing more than ‘exotic superficial concepts’ used by vested interests to make everyone concerned with development to tow their line. ‘Although these principles have been adopted in the development policies of the major actors, it is only the discourse that has changed: the practice needs much more improvement’. ‘The central debate focuses on whether NGOs can indeed foster participatory and empowering development among the poorest sectors of the society’. Though development theory now stresses upon people’s participation, facilitated by NGOs as a possible solution yet it is known that the concept itself means several things to

58 ibid., p. 96.
59 Clarke. ‘Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Politics in the Developing World’, p. 44.
several people given the different contexts in which the different actors of development function.

Leadership among NGOs is mostly in the hands of gifted entrepreneurs or charismatic individuals. Little networking exists in reality. Occasional grand NGO conclaves produce little more than ego clashes. At the same time, NGO policies seem to be driven by foreign donors which in turn are influenced by the development perspectives shaped by First World institutes. These perspectives are not unrelated to First World national interests or interests of dominance. It is in this realpolitik setting that a few courageous activists could experiment with ‘participation’.\(^{61}\)

It is given such background that all new development initiatives must be made. ‘The time may not be now to think of great deeds, of leaving our imprint on one and all, but to let the humble and the dispossessed have their time and space’.\(^{62}\) The NGOs can play an important role here by helping in the creation of a social space wherein different actors of development like the officials, the business managers, academicians and grassroots activists need to be brought on a common platform for dialogue as well as the very crucial decision making to accommodate the diverse interests and viewpoints for helping the poor and the disadvantaged. ‘A dialogue that will have “participative formats that facilitate listening, inquiry, and exploration: not speeches from a panel with perfunctory questions-and-answers”.\(^{63}\) The emerging role of NGOs is thus, more in line with advocacy. It is so because any attempt on the part of the NGOs to bring about development of the poor and marginalized would be incomplete unless policies are made in their favor. Macro level forces have a big influence on micro level realities. Thus, there is a need to highlight the issues in an organized fashion which is a challenging role for the NGOs and also the need of the hour. This task requires more skill than the conventional services being provided by the NGOs. Since NGOs are organizations sensitive to the interests of the people therefore they have the potential to act as channels for inclusive dialogue in case of any dispute and later to resort to confrontations in case the interests fail to converge.


\(^{62}\) ibid., p. 267.

\(^{63}\) ibid., p. 268.
‘Why NGOs? Because most of them could have their ear close to the ground and they might hear better if they remembered to keep their big mouths shut’.  

It is clear that the NGOs have imparted a new direction to the development discourse. The most significant achievement for the NGOs is that they can claim to have influenced national and international development policies. ‘The most significant outcome of this period (two decades of alternative development from mid seventies to mid-1990s) perhaps was the slow but significant transformation of the development agenda itself… The mainstream discourse had ‘absorbed’ the principles of the alternative development paradigm that were being promoted by the NGOs in the 1970s’. The present features of development are participation and empowerment of the people and that too through their own efforts. The stress is in fact on whether the ordinary people can go about bringing their own development. It is now a matter of looking ‘within’ and not looking ‘upon’ someone else’s notion or idea of development.

**Contextualizing the Problem: NGO Intervention in Punjab**

The meaning of the label NGO, as an organization that does good for the development of others, is not universal and is contested by two other views of NGOs. One of these is political, seeing NGOs as extensions of depoliticized neoliberal development discourse. It criticizes the political role of NGOs and is found in particular among People’s Organizations or social movements that object to being included in ‘the NGO community’… The other view comes from within the development bureaucracies and has recently gained ground among public at large. It is a generalized view of NGOs as unaccountable organizations that are primarily concerned with advancing the material well-being of their own staff.

In the broad arena of development, NGOs have received marked attention and this creates a need to understand the dynamics of the NGOs. For this,

NGOs have to be analyzed as an outcome of complicated processes where factors like international ideological trends, donor policies and agendas interact with national historical and cultural conditions in complex

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64 ibid., p. 268.
65 Tandon. ‘Riding High or nosediving’, p. 49.
ways.......this explains why, on the one hand, so many NGOs in developing
countries take the same shape, goals and method of working, and how, on the
other, variations in national conditions account for different NGO histories
and practices in each of these countries. However, it cannot explain diversity
among NGOs in countries.......67

This calls for a regional mapping of the process. It is with the aim of giving an insight
into the role that NGOs play in development of Punjab that the study is being
undertaken.

The phenomenon of NGOs is visibly dormant in Punjab. It highlights a kind of
discontinuity in the global NGO sector. Whether the developed or the developing
societies, NGOs are prominent actors in their development scenario. In the alternative
development debate, the NGO perspective is a dominant one. ‘In this era of
globalization NGOs are considered as platforms which enable all voices to be heard
when individuals form a group with others who have similar values and interests. In this
attempt they generally promote understanding between the citizens and the state. NGOs
contribute to civil society by providing a means for expressing and actively addressing
the varied and complex needs of society’.

If this is the case then why does the movement remain submerged in Punjab?
There is a particular dearth of literature on the present condition of the NGOs in the
state. It is intriguing that Punjab is not in sync with how NGOs have blossomed with
respect to the contemporary position of prominent actors that they have been allotted
through out India. This becomes even more pronounced due to the fact that in
contemporary time it is well known that there is no escape from globalization68. As a
direct consequence from the global trends the conspicuous absence of NGO activity in
Punjab needs to be addressed for without this shade the landscape of NGOs in India
remains incomplete.

67 ibid., pp. 3,5.
69 For this line of thought read Pritam Singh and S. S. Thandi (Eds). 1999. Punjabi Identity in a
Global Context, New Delhi: Oxford. They say that the process of globalization is inevitable and
this raises a necessity of a critical dialogue. The potential threats are of homogenization and
hegemonisation. But contrary to it, Punjab neither seems to be homogenized nor hegemonized as
far as the NGO sector is concerned.
There is an increasing space for NGOs at the national level. However, ‘despite such a huge upsurge in non-governmental activity (which might suggest the development of a strong and vibrant ‘civil society’), it is important to question some aspects of this space, and how it is negotiated with the state’. While there is burgeoning literature on the NGO experiments in development process in other states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Jharkhand it is scant vis-à-vis Punjab. The reason for this perhaps can be linked to the absence of visible NGO activism in the state despite its share of challenges in socio-economic sector. This study therefore, intends to study and document the function that NGOs perform in the development of the state.

The present study concentrates on the role that the NGOs are undertaking in bringing about development in Punjab. The NGO movement has not come here as it has in many other states of the country. Many a times the relatively well off condition of Punjab in economic terms has been cited as the reason for the same. It is true that Punjab does not face mass poverty as many of the other states in India. Infact Punjab has the distinction of being one of the most prosperous states in the country. The Green Revolution which was spearheaded by Punjab was responsible for India’s transition from a food importing to not only a self-sufficient but also a food exporting country. In terms of Gross Domestic Product, it is one of the richest states of the country. In the fields of education and literacy Punjab is ahead of many other states.

Economic development in Punjab has been led by agriculture. In addition, thousands of small manufacturing units across the state have led to fairly high income levels. Investments in roads, rural electrification, safe drinking water as well as schools and health centers, have provided the people of Punjab with the basic amenities of life still unavailable in large parts of the country. However, amidst prosperity, pockets of deprivation remain.

Thus, it is obvious that in terms of socio economic development Punjab is fairly developed. However, this scenario has been changing since the last decade.

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The rate of growth of the Punjab economy is sliding— it was 1.80 per cent against the national average of 4.37 per cent during 2002-2003. Punjab had in the past witnessed a rate of growth in the vicinity of 5 per cent.\(^7^2\)

The main reason for the same is that for the upward mobility of its economy, Punjab relied mainly on agriculture. However, with its deceleration the overall growth of economy also began to decline.

Development experience across the globe suggests that agriculture alone cannot sustain the tempo of development in the long run. The development story of Punjab confirms this.....with the deceleration in the growth of agriculture, a deceleration in the overall growth of the economy has set in motion.....there is a fractured development experience in the state.\(^7^3\)

As is the situation world over, Punjab has been facing an uneven graph of development. The gains of development have not benefited all the sections of the society equally. Disparities exist in the levels of achievements among various sections of society. The World Bank Report, 2004 describes development in Punjab as ‘Paradoxical’. It confirms that the finances of the state are now bordering on the verge of bankruptcy. Poor governance is writ large. The state has one of the most overstaffed and over-paid civil services in the country. Punjab’s political and administrative style has been referred to as ‘profligate’. ‘Everything has either faltered or failed, from the economy to governance’. The fiscal situation in the state has deteriorated since the mid-1980s due to militancy, myopic vision of the bureaucrats and over dependence on agriculture.

Besides the problems of an unhealthy economy many other decadal statistics have a look of desperation. In terms of literacy, the state has sixty-four lakh illiterates plus uncounted lakhs too unschooled to do anything except manual labour. Only 8 per cent students out of every 100 enrolled annually in the primary classes enter the portals of colleges. The rest, 92 per cent drop out on the way up to 10+2.\(^7^4\) The World Bank Report, ‘Resuming Punjab’s Prosperity’ makes a startling revelation on the condition of government schools in the state; on any given day 36 per cent of...

\(^7^2\) B.S. Ghuman. 2005. ‘Growth Model for Punjab, The Tribune (Chandigarh), 17 August.
\(^7^3\) ibid.
\(^7^4\) P.P.S.Gill. 2004. ‘Trauma of Punjab’s Jobless-The Cause of Rising Social Tensions’, The Tribune (Chandigarh), 7 January.
Punjab’s government primary school teachers are absent. Government school institutions are the least preferred institutions where parents want to send their child to study. Only the poorest of the poor are sending their children to these schools. Given this situation certain civil society initiatives have come to the forefront. ‘In many villages the village panchayats are keeping a tab on what happens in the village school and have ‘employed’ a fresh college graduate from the village for teaching in the school’. This is an entirely informal and alternative arrangement which is working rather well in many villages. However, given the acuteness of the problem such efforts are not very prevalent in the state. Moreover, in contrast to its image of a ‘developed state’ the newspapers often highlight various issues which belie this position. The government is unable to implement basic schemes like the mid-day meal scheme in the primary schools of the state because of paucity of funds. ‘This is in sharp contrast to initiatives taken by the states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Orissa and Rajasthan to realize the cherished goals of the scheme. Most of these states have roped in panchayati raj institutions, philanthropists and NGOs for making the scheme a success’.

Besides the surfacing problems in the education system, Punjab faces another gigantic challenge. There are 30 lakh unemployed youth in the state. Several contributory factors have accentuated the problem of unemployment over a period of time. These are rise in population, stagnant economy, poor quality of education, high percentage of school dropouts between primary and 10+2 levels, the failure of the state to introduce new courses, concepts, technological skills and training modules in sunrise disciplines or vocations in step with the changing times and needs. ‘Punjab has ignored the changing job profiles, as competition, commerce and quality consciousness that influenced the market-driven economy and overshadowed the job bazaar’. The Punjab economy has witnessed two divergent trends. While the initial driving force was employment oriented, which was led by the high-yielding varieties of food crops and the small-scale industries, mechanization of agriculture and medium scale industry decelerated the growth in job opportunities. It has attracted migratory

labour from poor states like UP and Bihar but failed to involve the local youth. This also raises a question if NGOs in the state are actually helping people to build their capacities in some way.

Besides these issues, there are more grave social issues which need immediate attention. The north Indian states including Punjab have become infamous for its plunging sex-ratio. The Punjab Human Development report, 2004 highlighted that the all India ratio of girls to boys (age zero to six) is 927 to 1000; Punjab has just 793 little girls for every 1000 boys. ‘There is a region that has become famous as kuri mar (girl killer) region i.e. Malwa. So deadly has the scourge become that there are no brides in scores of villages in the region forcing the burly Sikhs and Jats to marry petite girls from Tripura and Assam and even tribal girls from Jharkhand. With the introduction of new technologies facilitating sex-determination tests, many Punjabi women are harassed into numerous sex-tests and abortions’.78 This is one of the most lugubrious features of the gender status in Punjab. Infact the Punjab Human Development Report, 2004 also makes a point for this case, ‘NGOs, religious bodies and other organizations must be pressed into service to tackle the problem of declining sex-ratios because the government alone cannot provide solutions to this terribly disturbing social trend’. Also, the state health services are going the same way: private clinics flourish mainly because public services are in poor shape. The wretched condition of dispensaries with virtually no medicines and absenteeism of doctors and para medical men have pushed the statistics further below.

‘Both the Punjab Development Report, 2004 by the World Bank and the Punjab Development Report, 2002 comment on the lack of political will, indifference of bureaucracy, absence of accountability and transparency, non-implementation of reforms and non-involvement of people in governance’.79 However, as experience world over shows, no macro policy based on market led growth will be successful in dealing with either poverty or unemployment. Local aspects of the society need to be looked at and this is where the NGOs can help.

World over, NGOs are given a prominent place in the development scheme because of their ability to help people to look within. There is a need to formulate an employment generation and anti-poverty strategy that is fiscally sustainable and more

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finely targeted to those who cannot benefit from the opportunities offered by growth. There is an immediate need for remedial measures in the form of a new model of development. However, the new model if left to the market forces alone, would meet the fate of the existing model. Therefore, there is a need to revamp the existing model of governance. The concerned people have to be convinced and taken along before the launching of any new system. One of the ways of doing so could be by involving the civil society institutions in the form of NGOs. All these features require an analysis on the role of NGOs with respect to health, education and income generation in Punjab vis-à-vis the idea of bringing about people-centric development.

Given the above stated problems, the NGO activity should be more pronounced in this state. In the last few decades, Punjab has been facing a crisis in voluntary action. This is not to deny that there has been absence of voluntarism in the state. On the contrary there has been a strong tradition of ‘sewa’, ‘shramdaan’ being performed by the religious institutions in the state.

Though the government has started recognizing the importance of the NGOs and formulated a Policy for support to NGOs in the year 1999, yet the voluntary movement in Punjab is generally considered as weak. Large scale philanthropic and welfare measures from the civil society have been forthcoming from time-to-time but the NGO culture has not gained popularity in Punjab. Punjab has not been a witness to the development of any NGO into a literal brand organization such as the SEWA (Gujarat) or the Sewa Mandir (Rajasthan). None of the successful NGOs have preferred Punjab as an area to expand their activities in their inter-state projects. This is however, not to suggest that there are no NGOs in Punjab but their activities remain submerged and their efforts remain undocumented. Many voluntary initiatives in terms of charity and welfare are visible yet their position with respect to the newer roles are not known.

Against the above stated background, this study focuses on the role that NGOs play in bringing about development in the state of Punjab. In this sense the study deals neither with development nor NGOs per se, rather with, how the NGOs facilitate the process of development. It tries to locate the nature of functions being performed by the NGOs. The study is confined to the NGOs that are working in Punjab.

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Development is a very complex and broad concept. From growth-centered connotations today it has acquired a people-centric vision. For this study, the essential focus of development is on personal and institutional capacity.

Development is a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations.

It should encourage growth as well as change while being people-centric. The initiatives of the NGOs can be viewed either outside the state-led development or in partnership with the state. These efforts may enable the people to highlight their demands and needs which previously they were unable to. At a more successful level these efforts could also have certain effects on policy formulations.

NGOs in Punjab undertake development projects in a wide number of areas. They generally have broad objectives and do not necessarily concentrate on a single activity. Therefore, for this study three basic sectors have been chosen as the prime indicators of development. These are:

I. Improvement in health status: through the Reproductive and child health programme (RCH).

II. Improvement in the education status: by looking into crèche programme and Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS).

III. Income generation: for increasing credit access of the poor through Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

This study looks into the above-mentioned areas by pairing it up with the empirical study of the following three NGOs in Punjab:

I. Shanti Swaroop Memorial Educational Society (SSMES). This society is based in Chamkaur Sahib village which is situated in Rupnagar (Ropar) district of Punjab. This organization aims to work for the upliftment of rural people especially women and children through awareness, literacy, training in cottage industries and formation of self-help groups.

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According to Korten, the term institutions in this definition refers to the enduring systems of structures, rules, customs and values that shape the behaviours and relationships of people within a society.


Based on field observations of the researcher.

Mahila Samaj Kalyan Samiti, Chamkaur Sahib, Rupnagar (Ropar) was registered with the Punjab Registration Society, Chandigarh in 1975 via no. 90.
II. **Guru Angad Dev Sewa Society (GADSS)**[^85] is an NGO situated in Ludhiana district of Punjab. It chiefly aims at increasing awareness about health issues among the masses and provides vocational training to girls and conducts income generation programmes for women.

III. **Progressive Youth Forum (PYF)**[^86] is situated in Patiala district of Punjab and it aims at women empowerment and youth empowerment through economic activities like organic farming by using low cost technology and increasing awareness about major health issues concerning the people especially in areas of reproductive and child health. It also undertakes literacy programmes in the self-help groups organized by them.

Criteria for the selection of NGOs have been as follows:

I. They have been duly registered in accordance with the procedures laid down by the government of Punjab.

II. For a reasonable and fair assessment of the function that the NGOs perform and the activities that they undertake, they have to be operating for at least three years in Project areas.

III. They have to be concerned with the development of the target population in accordance with the parameters chosen for the study.

Two projects of each of the above mentioned NGOs have been studied at the following levels:

I. **Project profile and their implementation:** To analyze how these NGOs intervene in the process of development actual projects undertaken by them with respect to health, education and income generation will be studied. The basis of their criteria for project area identification and operational strategies and source of funding will be examined. Consequently, for health the RCH programme of GADSS and PYF have been studied. For education, creche programme of SSMES and JSS of GADSS have been looked into. For income generation, SHG activities undertaken by PYF and SSMES have been analyzed.

[^85]: Guru Angad Dev Sewa Society, Ludhiana was registered with the Punjab Registration Society, Chandigarh in 1997 via no. 1300.

[^86]: Progressive Youth Forum, Patiala was registered with the Punjab Registration Society, Chandigarh in 1998 via no. 256.
II. Outcome: the outcome will be evaluated in terms of what the beneficiaries feel about the NGO initiatives. It will be seen whether the NGOs have been able to provide a platform for the aspirations of the beneficiaries and brought diverse interests on a common platform.

Review of Literature

Lewis and Ravichandran (2008) in the book *NGOs and Social Welfare: New Research Approaches* establish the case for non-governmental sector and say that it is a little-understood area of institutional life, and has so far received very little attention from scholars. Its increasing roles within a range of public services - health, education and rural development - have also been accompanied by a growing non-governmental ‘voice’ in the form of campaigning and advocacy within public policy at local and international levels. Yet, our understanding of the implications of the growth of the non-governmental sector, and of the trends and changes within the sector itself remains quite limited. There is a need to consider factors like the quality of the services provided by these organizations and perceptions of service users; the implications of the growth of a set of non-profit yet commercialized service providers; the differences in the management of non-governmental organizations from other types of organizations; the changed accountability relationships between citizens and government implied by the growth of NGOs; the international dimensions of the growth of the non-governmental sector; and the wider role of NGOs as actors within wider neo-liberal economic processes. The growing profile of NGOs has both its supporters and critics. Nonetheless, this book addresses towards a set of exciting and important issues in relation to the non-governmental sector, such as the question of funding, issues relating to democratization and governance, and the management challenges in terms of building improved sustainability and more accountable public policy.

SU (2007) in the article ‘From Marginal Tinkering to Major Changes’ puts forward the view that microfinance is a feature that has become stereotypical in its connotations. It is assumed that for microfinance, commercial banks need special support as, government sponsored initiatives like subsidiaries and building forward linkages which is due to the targets of microfinance being poor households with little
assets. According to the article, the attitude of the banking community is responsible for the exclusion of the poor households from the formal credit network which does not fit the needs of the poor. To alter this, the whole network has to be trained accordingly right from the policy makers who lay down the formal procedures to the rural branch members who deal directly with the smaller clients. Skills need to be imparted for assessing the viability of small rural projects. Finally, the multiplication of the intermediary levels in the lending process has to be checked since the cost of credit is as important as its availability. Here, NGOs should operate as facilitators at a fixed cost without contributing to increasing the onlending rate for the ultimate borrower.

Rajan (2006) in the article ‘NGOs as partners in the process of “Reform”: Are they the Yogis or the Bhogis of development?’ opines that despite Gandhian influence, development process in India continues to be designed and controlled by the ruling elites. Participation as a concept of development is the new mantra which is currently in vogue. Liberalization has induced evaporation of securities of the rich. Reflecting on the unfinished agenda of the NGOs he caustically remarks that they are the Bhogis of development and not the Yogis. NGOs till now, have not been able to achieve the purpose with which they came up. They are today fashionably involved in the development decision making and have certain micro level success stories to brag about but the replication of such efforts on the macro level remains questionable. ‘Realistic prognostications remain pessimistic’. Market remains uncompetitive and bureaucracy arrogant.

Punjab Human Development Report (2004) is an important research-cum-policy document, which focuses on the current levels of achievement, as well as areas of concern and possible ways of progress with reference to crucial socio-economic indicators. Punjab is at a more advanced stage of development than most other Indian states. However, the remarkable achievements of the state have not been equitable. Amidst prosperity, pockets of deprivation remain among sections and areas.

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K.S. Singh et al (2003)\textsuperscript{89} in the book People of India: Punjab as the title also suggests put forward a detailed study of the inhabitants Punjab. ‘Punjab earlier known as Sapta Sindhu, has been traditionally a land of peasantry, who believe in hard work. Punjab is no longer the land of five rivers, but its identity defined by culture and history remains intact’. Punjab has one of the most dynamic regions in India’s history and its people have been one of the most mobile, pragmatic and progressive. The state has a multilingual and multi-religious profile. The Jats (who are the ancient people of Punjab) converted from pastoral to peasantry and established a most elaborate system of relationship based on family, kinship and a set of patriarchal norms. It is basically an agricultural dominant region with strong traditional and patriarchal structures. Unlike other states in India where Brahmans enjoy a prominent position, in Punjab it is the Jats who occupy the predominant position and stand at the centre of complex economic and ritual relationship. There is a tendency of agriculturist Jats to consider themselves superior to other castes by virtue of their being the masters of the land and some of them even belong to ex-ruling families. Sikh Jats have emerged as dominant element in politics, administration and professions. Traders are considered lower than agriculturists. Language also plays an important part in defining Punjabi identity. The state witnessed periods of turmoil at the time of partition in 1947 and during the decades of 1980s which had negative repercussions for the state. Partition saw the agriculturally more prosperous areas going to Pakistan and its reorganization in 1966 deprived it of its skeletal industrial base around Delhi and tourist attractions of Himachal. However, despite these uncomfortable phases, Punjab has managed to maintain its tempo in agriculture and industry.

Ovasdi (2006)\textsuperscript{90} in the book Management of Non-Government Organizations: Towards A Developed Civil Society discusses the role that twenty-first century NGOs play in the civil society and highlights human security (health, education, economic development and peace building) as an important issue in which the government is the most able and most appropriate of all actors that can make a positive contribution. Yet at times it is unable to do so. And the possibility of NGOs filling all these left out places is remote. For Ovasdi, the solution lies in every member of the civil society


being a volunteer for multiple causes. According to the author, ‘Societies survive and thrive on the positive collective efforts of its members’. Wherever people’s efforts as NGOs, are substantial, there the civil society is found to be developed and vibrant. The author cites President Kalam and highlights importance of NGOs, “........not merely conscience keepers but responsible for creating a mood to think ahead and create a climate for a developed India”.

Presently, NGOs are performing the role of Voluntary Organizations (VOs) from outside the community with involvement of local beneficiaries. If they are able to provide organized advocacy for extending effective services to the marginalized section then it becomes an efficient way of securing effective implementation of the policies and procedures that have been formulated by the government. However the author observes that the NGOs are not involved in the formulation and reform of these policies.

Biswas (2006) in the article ‘On Funding and the NGO Sector’ laments that the neutrality of the autonomous women’s groups is at present being threatened by the proliferation and increasing involvement of NGOs in their affairs. According to the author, initially these groups maintained a distance from institutionalized funding as part of larger politics of autonomy. Funding is becoming a highly polarized and charged affair. NGOs are seen as extensions of neo-imperialist agenda of financial institutions like the IMF, WB and ADB used to present a humane face of development by using terms like ‘beneficiary participation’ and ‘capacity building’. These NGOs function to mediate and diffuse the tensions of the social and political cleavages which are the outcome of the global development agenda initiated by these financial institutions. The author calls upon the need for critically and intelligently engaging with the NGOs as they are fast becoming an institutionalized force.

Ravi and Raj (2006) in their article ‘Decentralisation and Development in India’, highlight the importance of people’s participation in development and states that participatory planning predominantly includes those self help activities which are possible in any given environment. For this kind of development to come about, an

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important linkage exists between the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and the Community Building Organizations (CBOs). PRIs, are, on one hand, institutional vehicles to encourage participation which work as local self-government for matters related to the welfare and development of village level and on the other hand, organizations such as the CBOs, NGOs exist parallelly to PRIs, as their involvement in projects ensures sustainability of development. These organizations, according to the authors, create opportunities for the participatory development by organizing people for collective action and effectively utilizing the available resources. These NGOs are used by the government as Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs). However, these organizations do face certain limiting factors in terms of scant numerical strengths in vast geographical areas, lack of professionalism in line departments and their role with respect to multiple organizations working at the grassroots level for rural development.

Eade (2005) in the book Development, NGOs and Civil Society, tries to examine whether NGOs truly stand for anything fundamentally different from the agencies on whom they depend. In the post-liberal era, NGOs have sprung up like mushrooms, offering a channel both to strengthen civil society and as civil society organizations. They are almost thought of as being divinely ordained to speak on behalf of civil society at large. All this accommodation with the NGOs is because of a single factor - ability to mobilize resources from their ‘home constituency’.

The NGO sector, according to the book, has benefited from two angles; first as public spending has declined, the NGO sector has benefited very significantly from taking on service delivery role and second, as representatives of civil society, they are a convenient medium through which official agencies can promote political pluralism. The current debate is about the ability of the NGOs to balance and perform these roles with grace, simultaneously.

Nayar (2005) in the article ‘Bill to Control NGOs’, stresses that there is a need to reconsider the proposed Foreign Contribution (Management and Control) Act, 2005. According to him, the bill aims at controlling the NGO activity. It is trying to equate the genuine NGOs with the spurious ones. Personally for the author, a

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condition where NGOs are able to evoke responses strong enough to generate funds for themselves would be ideal. It would provide the NGOs with the much needed autonomy to function properly. The writer says that the NGOs have time and again proved to be useful agencies in recent times of disasters and calamities. The government should therefore try to construct a congenial atmosphere for the NGOs rather than policing them through legislations based on suspicions. Such doubts should be cleared through dialogue between the government and the NGOs.

Patil (2005)\textsuperscript{95} in the article ‘State, Civil Society and Democracy: The Role of NGOs in India’, attempts to problematise the role being played by the NGOs in democratizing development. Civil society is both a source of legitimacy for the democratic state and a source of resistance against it. The emergence of organizations such as NGOs in civil society has become important due to the space vacated by ‘political parties as the torch-bearers of social and economic transformation’. Infact the author describes civil society as a realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, self-supporting, autonomous form the state and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules…’ The author argues that development must come through changing democratic attitude and behavior that support democracy.

Shamshad (2005)\textsuperscript{96} in the article ‘NGOs and the Development of Rural Entrepreneurship’ asserts that rural entrepreneurship as a form of indigenous entrepreneurship is imperative for country’s socio-economic development. This is turn is dependent on individual entrepreneurship. Individual entreprenuership is largely influenced by the social, economic religious and psychological variables. According to the author, rural entrepreneurship has gained the status of a national movement leading to a ‘spirit of enterprise’ among target population mainly due to failure of the state led models of solving the problem of unemployment and upliftment of economically weaker section. NGOs have been roped in by the government mainly due to the immense magnitude of such activities and the ability of the NGOs to reach till the grassroot level of society.


\textsuperscript{96} Ahmad Shamshad. 2005. ‘NGOs and the Development of Rural Entrepreneurship’, \emph{Kurukshetra} (New Delhi), 53 (5), March, pp. 27-29.
Srivastava, Tandon (2005) in their article ‘How Large is India’s Non-profit Sector?’, provide an insight into the contours of the Indian non-profit sector based on a collaborative project of the Institute of Policy Studies at the John Hopkins University, Baltimore and Society for Participatory Research (PRIA), New Delhi (1998). According to the study, this sector has an enormous size to the tune of nearly 1.2 million. More than half of these are rural based organizations, with nearly half of them being unregistered. Strangely in a country were large scale health problems exist, the number of institutions engaged in health care delivery is rather small. The civil society organizations in India are diverse, reflecting the cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of the Indian society. This lack of a uniform civil sector in a way hampers the growth of a consistent public policy to clarify and normalize its relationship with the government as well as the foreign donor agencies. There is also a need to develop and enforce codes of conduct by the members of the non-profit organizations. The article also stresses the need for sustained efforts to produce reliable information on the important parameters of the sector on a regular basis.

Chakrabarty (2004) in the article ‘Voluntary Associations and Development: The Indian Experience’, tries to study the role of voluntarism in development in contrast with the state led development in India. ‘The growing importance of voluntary organizations is both an outcome and a challenge to what is construed as development in today’s parlance’. They help in identifying the limitations of state-centered development. Voluntarism as a concept strengthened in various five-year plans. The Seventh Plan was a benchmark as it termed voluntary organizations as ‘the eyes and ears of the beneficiaries’. It was with this plan that for the first time an attempt was made to conceptualize the role of voluntary organizations as complementary to that of the state for bringing about development. However, conceptualizations also suggest a different path of development in view of conditionalities that follow the financial assistance provided to the NGOs.


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Mohanty (2004) in the article ‘Partners In Development: A Reflection On The Role of NGOs’, puts forward the view that the modern conceptualization of development has been brought about by the NGOs in the form of empowerment and participation. For sustainable development public participation has to be ensured. NGOs are viewed as ‘change agents’. ‘The emergence, development and importance of these organizations constitute a significant and integral aspect of social transformation’. But in order to make a successful and meaningful intervention, the NGOs need to tide over the lacunas and bottlenecks relating to issues as finances, accountability and transparency. This requires a sustained dialogue with academic world and civil society for which it has to acquire the necessary skills.

Pal (2004) in the article ‘Voluntary Sector and Credibility Issues’, and Sethi (1998) in ‘Evolving Accountability of Voluntary Organizations’, discuss the accountability issues of voluntary organizations. Both the articles point out that a moral code of conduct has not been properly formulated for the NGOs. It is important for the voluntary organizations to work in a transparent and accountable manner in order to win the confidence of the people among whom they work. Mahi Pal questions the role of the government in the process of credibility building for the NGOs. Also, another important question raised is that whether voluntarism in NGOs is an example of exploitation. As NGOs started offering a viable career option it required professionals. The talk of governance issues with regard to NGOs in the academia circle, surmises in subtle terms that the NGOs ought to come to power with the government and establish its credibility on the very parameters set up for the prime actor- the government.

Pawar, et al. (2004) in their book NGOs and Development: The Indian Scenario, attempt to draw attention to the fact that both the NGOs and government are interdependent, one being unable to exist without the other. NGOs form an inseparable part of civil society and development is seen to include socio-economic

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102 S.N. Pawar et al. (Eds.) 2004. NGOs and Development: The Indian Scenario, New Delhi: Rawat.
change as well as attitudinal changes. An attempt has been made to locate the NGOs in terms of their linkages with the state and neo-liberal global economic regime. In liberalized neo-economic states, NGOs have been portrayed as a ‘buffer’ between the marginalized and the liberalized. A new viewpoint has been thrown up- NGOs have occupied a space left by not only the state and the political parties but also left orientations. The NGOs need to address the power structures to bring about long-term development and ‘problems have to be converted into questions for critique and dialogue’. Moreover, social transformation has to be made the agenda of the people themselves.

Arora (2003) in the article ‘State, Civil Society and the “Voluntariat”: Institutional, Dimensions and Dynamics’, offers a perspective that ‘emergence of grassroots movements need to be located within the larger retreat of institutional politics’. ‘Institutions matter in public life’ and voluntary sector institutions are a ‘key component’ of the civil society. Initially the civil society institutions were considered as part of alternative developmental framework. There is a need to study how these institutions are evolving under the impact of globalization. ‘Different kinds of voluntarism are constantly being invented’. The voluntary organizations have been cast in the role of a new ‘voluntariat’ i.e. of protecting the interests of the poor.

Crowell (2003) in the book The SEWA Movement and Rural Development: The Banaskantha And Kutch Experience, argues that the SEWA “movement” is one of the most successful attempts of intervention by NGOs in the field of development. Ela Bhatt had started the movement by writing an article about the plight of the self employed poor women in Ahmadabad who were often exploited at the hands of the merchants. It was the response of the merchants to this article wherein they claimed fair play in the whole process that was used by the women as ammunition in the form of cards, in the ensuing struggle. These cards were presented to the merchants anytime they went back on their word. From this simple initiative for the empowerment of the women, SEWA gradually went on to achieve unthinkable and

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105 According to Ela Bhatt, SEWA is a ‘movement’ as NGO is a word which is too official-sounding.
unprecedented enterprises like the SEWA bank. The present book traces the journey of SEWA into its first rural venture in the Banaskantha (1989) and later Kutch (1993). Before this experiment, SEWA had been an urban based movement.

The success of SEWA is due to its clear goals of organization, capacity building, asset building and empowerment besides the staff which is poor and has little time for anything except meeting demands of survival. The author writes, ‘There can be no question about the responsiveness of SEWA to the community: they are one and the same’. There have been marvelous micro efforts for providing security covers to the poor right from insurance to maternity benefits. It has been based on certain simple practices like avoiding establishing of parallel structures in an area if government programs exist.

Yet the book also states that even though the there has been much optimism with the initiatives of SEWA yet it has its limitations. The credit programme of SEWA for instance, had been able to spread knowledge about other financial resources. It had increased the saving trend but had been unable to replace the traditional methods like the money lenders.

Hilhorst (2003) in the ethnography The Real World of NGOs: Discourses, Diversity And Development, elucidates that for understanding the political dynamics of contemporary social movements there is a need to treat them as open-ended processes. These processes are shaped by the practices and discourses of various actors involved with these civic institutions. There actors range from the basic and crucial level of grassroots activists to the specialised foreign-based funding agencies. Hilhorst goes beyond the usual assumptions about the functionalist third sector view of the role of NGOs which ‘fills the gaps created by the withdrawal of government control under pressure of neoliberal reform policies. They are complicated processes where various factors interact with national, historical and cultural conditions in complex ways’. Often contrary to their appearance, NGOs make ideological choices and play political roles. They constitute multiple realities- NGOs are not things but processes.

Bhattacharya (2003) in the article ‘Conceptualising Voluntarism and Social Action’, traces the different debates surrounding the development of ‘civil society’. Civil society today has emerged as a third sector alongside state and private sector. The enthusiasm with civil society can be traced to downsizing of government overload, good governance and bottom-up decentralized approach. ‘The current discourse on voluntarism is partly ‘instrumental’ and partly ‘post-modern’. Civil Society is seen as an agency that can discipline the state and through greater participation, both social and political, can safeguard the interests of the citizens. For this voluntarism should not be hindered by social-structural conditions and political ideological forces. But the article is skeptical about its applicability in a class and caste ridden society as India where ‘social conditions of trust and cooperation are often found absent’.

Panda and Pattnaik (2003) in the article ‘Role of Grassroots NGOs: A Social Activists’ Perspective’, discuss the people-oriented and people-centred strategies with which the NGOs build rapport with the people and mobilize them. In recent times, many grassroots micro movements also known as new social movements (NSMs) have been taking place centering on contemporary issues of importance such as ecology, women empowerment, human rights, sharing of natural resources and the like. The NGOs in India have contributed handsomely toward social activism through their intense campaigns, people’s mobilization programmes and effective networks. In this light, the article posits NGOs as a social force that facilitates collective action and people’s mobilization.

Srivastava (2003) in the article ‘Post-liberalisation Development: The Need to Harness NGO Power’, stresses the need to reconsider the relationship between the different actors in development and favors an intelligent use of governmental agencies, Panchayati Raj institutions and NGOs for the success of such programmes. Failure of poverty development programmes which were centralized in nature brought in the 1970s voluntary efforts made by people themselves with the objective of

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improving their socio-economic conditions. One of the earliest example being SEWA (Self Employed Women’s Movement) which was set up in 1972 by the women of Gujarat. Such organizations were subsequently termed as NGOs. Committed members, missing government action, personalized knowledge of local problems, use of local resources to tackle them and a genuine desire to bring about a new order have imparted great credit to the NGOs.

Singh (2003)\textsuperscript{110} in the book *Role of NGOs in Socio-Economic Development*, explains that the NGO explosion in the recent years is a proof of their usefulness both for the government and the donor agencies, to operate at the ground level. ‘NGOs are the product of perceived and demonstrated developmental partnership’. It is recognized that NGOs can have a greater potential impact on public policy by interacting with their governments. Indeed, the NGO activity has spread over a broad spectrum from traditional roles in welfare and service programmes to developmental activities of contemporary times. In terms of these changing roles, the NGOs need to have a clear strategic focus, adequate technical capability and an attitude of cooperating with other organizations. The challenge therefore, for the NGOs is to fill the gap between the current crisis and sustainable development. But perhaps the most important question raised by the book is-“Where do NGOs fit in the changed political context?” if development is to be the goal, then the NGOs should be provided development functions rather than mere service functions.

Baviskar (2001)\textsuperscript{111} in the article ‘NGOs and Civil Society in India’, emphasises that the decline of state has increased the attention being imparted to civil society institutions. Among such institutions NGOs have specifically become important during the last two decades. Their importance can be assessed by the fact that they are being looked upon as capable of performing the developmental roles previously allotted to the state. The article discusses how NGOs have become such an important part of civil society. However, the cases of success with the NGOs have been far and few. Whereas the NGOs espouse democratic decentralization, the working of their own organizations is vested in an important person. Thus, the NGOs are often found to indulge in double standards. The article highlights a lack of

\textsuperscript{111} B.S. Baviskar. 2001. ‘NGOs and Civil Society in India’, *Sociological Bulletin* (New Delhi), 50 (1), March, pp. 3-13.
systematic literature for understanding the real nature of NGOs. For this a regional mapping of NGOs has been recommended.

_Bebbington (2001)\textsuperscript{112}_ in the article ‘Development Alternatives: Practice, Dilemmas and Theory’ tries to draw attention towards the idea that the whole concept of alternatives tend to gloss over divergent interests that exist in civil society. It is important to make such distinctions. Discussing Latin American society they cite a simple intra-difference in civil society actors that of formal and non-formal civil society organizations. While informal organizations as the neighborhood groups are bottom-up, those that are formal are more top-down. They include NGOs in the more formal of the two and point out that such distinctions are necessary since they help in developing a more ‘nuanced view of the capacities and limitations of NGOs as agents of more inclusive forms of development’. Though civil society organizations are the ‘new narratives of life and culture’ or source of alternative development yet too little attention has been paid to them. These tensions and heterogeneity among social and popular movements they say have emerged very recently. The dominant tendency is still to look at them as vehicles of ‘development alternative(s)…… based on collective aspirations’.\textsuperscript{113} Also though at times the boundary between the civil society and the state becomes blurred… there is still a trend to underestimate the importance of the state in any project of alternative development and to counter pose ‘liberating’ social movements against a ‘dominating’ state that imposes modernizing development. Further, they argue that technical and economic foundations of alternative development have received limited attention in literature even though these are critical to its viability. This could be due to the general assertions that alternative rural livelihoods can be found in indigenous natural resource management practices. However, “rural people base much of their choice of crops and crop varieties not on whether they are ‘indigenous’, ‘alternative’ or ‘modern’, but rather on how well suited they are to market conditions, to the non-agricultural dimensions of farm families’ livelihood strategies, to farmers’ migration calendars etc”.\textsuperscript{114} They call for an active engagement between critical theory development and practical challenges.

\textsuperscript{113} ibid., p. 8.
\textsuperscript{114} ibid., p. 9.
Esteva (2000)\textsuperscript{115} in the article ‘Development’, opines that, ‘In saying development, most people are now saying opposite of what they want to convey’. The term development is more of a brand and is potentially loaded to spread confusion. The article traces the evolution of the term to the speech of President Truman who used it in context of ‘underdevelopment’ on 20 January 1949 and ‘made two billion people underdeveloped that day’. Since then though the term has acquired various hues and colors but it signifies at least one thing- ‘to escape from the undignified condition called underdevelopment’. The 1990s gave birth to two new developments—one, redevelopment for North and for South economic liberalization of informal sector. This redevelopment is now both conceptually and politically taking the shape of ‘sustainable development’ (also green and democratic redevelopment). The second, human development (enlargement of relevant human choices). In present times, according to the author, the people are now breaking the notions embedded in the social fabric about development and are recovering their autonomous ways of living which are surfacing as they recover their own definition of needs which had been distorted by development at one point or another.

Joseph A. (2000)\textsuperscript{116} in the article NGOs: Fragmented Dreams’, suggests that there is an overwhelming negative situation engulfing development NGOs today. They seem to be swimming against the tide- with no particular direction to move towards and surrounded by a feeling of loosing ground. Discussing this the author says that local conditions too are responsible for it and gives the example of Peru where the NGOs are seemingly caught between terrorism and state repression. NGOs he points out, today are loosing ‘their role as radical social critics, their capacity to put forward broad alternatives and also loosing their capacity to respond to and take political initiatives’. Besides this, there is also a loss of flexibility and audacity that add to the problems. Placing this crisis in a global context he says that, ‘the advancing tide of globalization has brought with it what has been called the ‘pensamiento unico’ or the one thought world.’\textsuperscript{117} This has led to crumbling of interceptive codes as a result

\textsuperscript{117}ibid., p. 392.
of which we perceive reality as a disorder on a large scale'. Indeed he accuses the state of resorting to authoritarianism in various guises after having retreated form social responsibilities and weakened the mechanisms and institutions of democratic politics. On their part, the NGOs too have championed fashionable concepts of development but have failed to establish links with them in a global strategy of change which therefore stands distorted and neutralized. In this one thought world there have been thinkers who have prompted changes like Amartya Sen who argued in terms of ethics and values of human choices for development. Inspired by human suffering, such views led to the emergence of social movements worldwide. However, the irony lies in the fact that attempts are being made to correct the defects of the neo-liberal model through ethical and human considerations but the model itself is not criticized. ‘We are still caught in terms in which the crisis is defined’. The author tries to establish a theoretical and practical relation between human development and democratic politics, arguing that human, freely determined development can only be arrived at through democratic political activity. He suggests that a way out of the crisis is by developing a better relationship between three categories-individual/community, development and democracy. There is a crucial need to reflect upon issues and discuss them.

Rahnema (2000)\(^{119}\) in the article ‘Participation’ attempts to analyse the word ‘participation’ and it acquired importance once development experts agreed that development projects had failed because people had been left out. Moreover, it was observed that where people had been involved the projects had been huge success even in financial terms also. Thus, ECOSOC recommended ‘adoption of participation as a basic policy measure in national development strategies’. So, participation became the most accepted concept of development. Presently it has acquired a refined meaning i.e. popular participation (organized effort to increase control over the resources and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control). This has provided a new source of legitimation to development, that of empowering the voiceless and the powerless. In recent times grassroot movements have brought out new forms of leadership and vernacular ways of interaction through participation. Macro changes are now seen as being the indirect result of millions of individual

\(^{118}\) Norbert Lechner as cited by Joseph A. ‘NGOs: Fragmented Dreams’.

micro changes than of programmes planned from above. However, according to the book, sooner or later the authors of the revolution are robbed of the changes that they provoke and ultimately victimized by the professional ideologues acting on their behalf. With this doubt the author raises a question on the future of such movements to remain free from vested interests.

Clarke (1998)\textsuperscript{120} in the article, ‘Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Politics in the Developing World’, says that the proliferation of NGOs in the world has ushered in a kind of ‘associational revolution’. However, there is a ‘weak political dimension to the NGO literature’. NGOs are not being accorded their rightful place as that of important institutional vehicles in shaping political discourses and mobilizing collective interests. The research literature on NGOs is largely ‘donor driven’ that ignores the dynamics of NGOs and their political complexities. The second and third generation NGOs are political since they exert significant influence over legislation and public policy. In India, according to the author, NGOs influence legislation in terms of minimum wages, feudalism and bonded labour. NGOs can duplicate the role of political parties also. In light of such different roles being played by the NGOs they have become important new arenas of political contestation. ‘Political scientists in years to come therefore face an interesting challenge in documenting and conceptualizing the role of NGOs in the ‘associational revolution’, a revolution which is fast becoming one of the most significant political developments in the late twentieth century’.

Kothari (1998)\textsuperscript{121} in his article ‘The Future of Voluntarism’, points out that Voluntary action is not merely another form of social action, rather a way of life. Voluntary efforts constitute diverse groups engaged in a variety of activity. The dichotomy between the state and voluntary efforts emerged only after the modern state began to impede the voluntary ethos of Indian society or forced themselves on what people did on their own. Voluntarism as movements has taken the form of NGOs. There has been the rise of new form of voluntarism not non-political but political in the sense that they are redefining the definition of politics, which is multidimensional covering not only political or economic spheres but also the likes of ecological, feminists and cultural aspects. However, if the new voluntarism is to

\textsuperscript{120}Gerald Clarke. 1998. ‘Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Politics in the Developing World’, \textit{Political Studies} (Sheffield), 46, pp. 36-52.

empower the people in the true sense it will need an eternal vigilance on the part of all.

Lewis and Wallace (2003) with the collection of essays in their book *Development NGOs and the Challenge of Change- New Roles and Relevance*, take the debate of role of NGOs a step further. They deal with certain issues that have been surfacing in the NGO debate but have not been dealt with in detail. They explore the role of NGOs with respect to three main development themes:

1. NGOs as contributors to alternative thinking about development concepts and ideas.
2. The experience of NGOs in developing new approaches to influencing policy.
3. Role of NGOs in bringing innovations to development practice.

They basically argue that ‘it is only through effective engagement with the local as well as the global, with learning, reflection, and informed change in development policy and practice, that NGOs will find ways to address poverty reduction and social justice agendas that are relevant to poor women and men, local institutions, and partners, as well as pertinent to international and more influential global actors’.

Allan Kaplan (2003) in the article ‘Understanding Development as a Living Process’, apprehends that, ‘The concept of development has become bastardized’. Development theory has undergone many transformations over the years, and today there is a growing body of thought that is beginning to question not only the various theories but the very validity of the development concept itself, and even the integrity of those who promote development. Questions abound, but there is little change in development practice because underlying this practice are certain paradigmatic assumptions that, although largely unconscious, hold practitioners captive.

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124 ibid., p. 29. Kaplan says that “conventional” development approach is fundamentally about the delivery of resources- finances, equipment, technical skills, political clout, even a particular approach to life- from those who have to those that do not and lists certain assumptions which have limited the “Conventional” development thinking. First that development can be created and engineered. Second that development is brought by others who presumably are more developed. Third, development is linear and predictable. Fourth, development presumes that understanding will generate change thereby ignoring the unconscious factors, processed of change, culture, tradition or the human heart. Fifth, development assumes a preferred culture or value system. Finally, development practitioners are not required to pay attention to their own development as part of effective practice.
Development is non-linear. It does not progress along a smooth line; at critical points in the process, there are periods of crisis and turmoil, when conventional thinking (which provided stability) is questioned and challenged and conflict is often symptomatic. There appears to be contradictions in the process—since its non-linear, unpredictable and even anarchic yet there are natural phases in it, sequences and modalities that can be said to characterize the progress as a pattern. This is inherent and causes a constant interplay between order and chaos, between form and flow.

Development can not be imposed. “Development interventions are not “expert products” or “packages of resources”. Rather, they are designed to help people gain an understanding of themselves so that, in time, they are better able to take control of their own future and to arrive at effective solutions to problems, including economic and political marginalization. This is not to say that the development practitioner should not play an activist role—on the contrary, solidarity is vital, as in the creation of enabling environments in which people are more in control of their circumstances and freer to pursue their processes of development.125

Development, he says, has little to do with transfer of resources rather is concerned with facilitating resourcefulness. “real and honest development can not be done by third parties”. Intervention specifications that are “predetermined” and that do not respond to accurate and sensitive readings of the particular situation will wrap and destroy the development process because development can not be predictable as its not linear. Since processes of development are beset with unconscious factors; which might not be always tangible-like-realities of tradition, culture and motivation and resistance to change. Thus, attempts at replicate models should be refrained from since every situation is unique. He argues that there has to be only guidelines which can be set but these have to be compatible with continuous monitoring, learning and adaptation of intervention processes—on the part of practitioner, client and donor.

Development is a continuous process that has no end; the effective development intervention opens things up, rather than closes them down. Equally, development does not begin when we decide to intervene, because it had already begun. The concept of the development project is anathema to the concept of development. It is a figment of an engineering mindset; at best a managerial tool used by a form of management inimical to development work, at worst a donor

125 ibid., p. 32.
requirement to fulfill inappropriate financial control systems. Given its place at the very heart of the development system, it demonstrates the misguidedness at the core of that system as well as the system’s intractability. It is the repository of all that is wrong with conventional development practice and the greatest stumbling block to effective development interventions.  

Participation is an end, and not simply a means; the central point of development is to enable people to participate in the governance of their own lives. Certain elements which are regarded as important for any organization to be effective or have capacity have been listed by the author:

- A conceptual framework that reflects the organization’s understanding of the world.
- An organizational “attitude” that incorporates the confidence to act in and on the world in a way that the organization believes can be effective and have an impact, and an acceptance of responsibility for the social and physical conditions “out there”.
- Clear organizational vision and strategy, and sense of purpose and will, that flow out of the understanding and responsibility mentioned previously
- Defined and differentiated organizational structures and procedures that reflect and support vision and strategy
- Relevant individual skills, abilities, and competencies.
- Sufficient and appropriate material resources

**Simbi, Thom (2003)** In the article “Implementation by Proxy”: The Next Step In Power Relationships between the Northern and Southern NGOs?’, argue that accountability on the part of NGOs is more important than just credibility issue. They are actually a necessary part of ‘legitimacy’ for the NGO. All along, government agencies have been seen to be legitimate to have power. The authors make a bold and deeply thorough attempt of tackling issues which have always been shied away from in popular debates. They discuss the power structures that operate between the Northern ‘all knowing’ NGOs and Southern ‘needing to learn’ NGOs. Power

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126 ibid., pp. 33-34.
127 ibid., p. 34.
relationships, they say, ‘are the sea in which we all swim, whether we realize it or not’. Accountability is a much debated topic today, as far as the NGOs are concerned. They argue that accountability can not and should not be enforced from above. It can not be imposed from above because in doing so the donor agencies run the risk of ‘ruling by proxy’ in which the southern NGOs ‘become de facto subcontractors of the Northern NGOs under the mask of partnership’ and it should not be imposed from above as the NGO should be responsible to people or beneficiaries, whomsoever they serve. Further, it is ‘the emergence and increased use of a range of new management tools and language [that] are facilitating the shift to implementation by proxy. They basically argue that three ingredients- pressures on Northern NGOs; unequal relationships and new management tools- can lead to a new form of relationship that is disempowering and ineffective. There is thus a ‘strategic imperative to find ways to enable rather than to control’. Many a times donor agencies interfere unknowingly thinking that they are adding value but net effect is confusion and disempowerment. What they perceive as the silver lining is that ‘the debates are still open, and there are futures other than implementation by proxy’.

Pieterse (2001), in the book Development Theory- Deconstructions and Reconstructions says that alternative development has multi-angles than just a paradigmatic approach. For this, three logical positions have been outlined: (a) alternative development as a loose profile (b) as a paradigm (c) post-paradigmatic way of thinking. He specifies, “During this stroll past alternative development positions my views shifts from critical to supportive to revisionist”. Alternative development has been concerned with introducing alternative practices and redefining the goals of development. In the process these alternatives continuously are being absorbed into mainstream development thereby blurring the distinction between the two. For instance, even if not consistently practiced it is now generally accepted that development efforts are more successful if the community participates. NGOs now play key roles on the ground and in development cooperation. This success reflects not only the strength of NGOs and grassroots politics but also the roll back of the state, advance of market forces and the breakdown of regulation. Alternative development shifts position as mainstream development shifts. As an alternative

development paradigm, it would represent a clear break in theory from conventional development. Certain trends at the global level aid the process like the enormous growth in the number of NGOs or the prominent importance of environmental concerns. Yet the theoretical claims remain rather uneven. However, one constraint in theory building arises from the fact that alternative development tends to be practice oriented rather than theoretically inclined. Though this also does not imply that it is anti-theoretical rather is intellectually segmented. It has thus failed to develop a clear perspective on micro-macro relations, an alternative macro approach, and a coherent theoretical position, although it is often claimed that there is an alternative development paradigm. A much discussed perspective of alternative development has been the reference to local development, with alternative practices on the ground, or as an overall challenge to the mainstream and part of a global alternative.

Howell, Pearce (2003) in the article ‘Civil Society: Technical Instrument or Social Force for Change?’ , written in the context of development say that for much of the history of development studies, the major actors were state and market, which also dominated the theoretical debates on development. However, with the collapse of socialism in the 1980s and gradual recognition to the social costs of structural adjustments, there has been a growing intellectual and ideological acceptance of the need to move away from either-or positions towards more creative and constructive thinking about the complementary roles of different actors in the development process. In the 1990s the civil society has come to occupy centre stage in development discourse and practice, reflected in the new triadic conceptual unity of the state, market and civil society. Civil society was not only perceived as an antidote to repressive government but also a way of resolving the seemingly intractable tension between the state and market. Thus, civil society was looked upon as a mediator of irreconcilable differences and to offer an alternate vision of development process. NGO units soon became civil society units, the neat equation leading later to conceptual confusion around the scope of the civil society. Donor enthusiasm for civil society soon translated into a series of programs and projects aimed at strengthening the components of civil society.131

131 ibid., p. 75.
These attempts to strengthen civil society run the risk of making a civil society a technical instrument rather than a social force for change. Although donor funding for civil society in poorest countries can protect a fragile public political space, it can also distort the agenda for social change and development of the poor majority.

The enthusiasm for this new conceptual vision led donor agencies such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the World Bank to set up new programs to strengthen civil society, establish civil society posts, appoint new staff, and create special sources of funding.132

Finally, there is an implicit assumption that external donor agencies can create, nurture and strengthen civil society in aid-recipient countries through three forms;

1. Institution and capacity building: range of activities like fostering the emergence of new non state, non profit associations supporting local NGOs with funding technical advice, training, encouraging establishment of legal frameworks of conducive to development of non state organizations.

2. Partnerships and Coalitions: joint initiatives between NGOs, local governments, businesses to development of local communities.

3. Funding for civil society organizations: fostering local philanthropic foundations.133

The triadic unity of state, market, and civil society also assumes neat boundaries between the three elements, discrete functions and actors, and an organic harmony and balance. Yet many organizations within civil society receive funding to varying degrees from both state and private sponsorship. In some countries, government officials have set up their own NGOs as a way to work more creatively, access different resources, and gain new opportunities. Similarly, some development NGOs amount no more than “briefcase companies” founded for the purpose of tax evasion and private gain.134

This vision of a harmonious, functional unity, though somewhat caricatured here, glosses over the contradictions and tensions between the state, market, and civil society. Although the state might welcome charities and welfare bodies providing for the homeless, elderly, sick, not least because this reduces state expenditure, it may

132 ibid., p. 76.
133 ibid., p. 77.
134 ibid., p. 78.
take less kindly to advocacy groups that promote causes contrary to the government policy or organizations that challenge the legitimacy of the state; hence, the considerable variation in the legal environment framing civil society organization and activity. Similarly, businesses may sponsor community development, but they may be less receptive to challenges from labour organizations or environmental groups for minimum labor and environmental standards. Thus the interactions of state, market, and civil society are overlaid by contradictory purposes and values, the resolution of which may not necessarily favor the sustenance of civil society nor guarantee stability. The alliances and coalitions are neither always self-evident nor conducive to redistribution of power and wealth.  

Chapman (2003) in the article ‘The Importance of People on the Ground in International Campaigns’, says that there is multiplicity of targets involved at every stage of work and for a successful intervention; work at all levels is needed. The grassroots are crucial, but in themselves are not sufficient. And the northern NGOs lack influence over changes on the ground. They do have a role to play, including providing resources, access to international experience, organizations, and media; encouraging consumer action; and promoting codes and legislation. In recent years, Northern NGOs have moved away from direct implementation on the ground toward policy and lobbying work.

From the review given above it can be seen that there is a dearth of literature which refers to the role that NGOs are playing to bring about development in Punjab. The present study is an attempt to fill this gap.

Objectives of the Study

1. To critically examine the role that NGOs play in bringing about development in Punjab.

2. To study the so-called flexible approaches of the NGOs like exposure of people through collective learning processes and participatory training at the local level by which they encourage people for their self-development.

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115 ibid., p. 78.
3. To analyze the role of NGOs with respect to health, education and income generation in Punjab vis-à-vis the idea of bringing about people-centric development.

4. To examine the role played by the NGOs in building capacities of the people thereby encouraging them to determine, manage, restructure and sustain their development.

5. To analyze the perceptions of the shareholders about the services provided by the NGOs.

6. To evaluate the place of NGOs in the societal structure of Punjab with respect to various linkages of the NGOs with other social and political groups and funding agencies.

7. To scrutinize operational collaborations of the NGOs with other agencies.

8. To highlight and analyze the problems that the NGOs face in furthering their programmes.

**Key Questions**

1. How do NGOs help in furthering the process of development through people’s participation in Punjab?

2. Are the NGOs able to identify the needs and problems of the people? How do they sensitize, organize and mobilize the people for their self-development in terms of capacity building?

3. What are their areas and modes of operation in the field of health, education and income generation for bringing about people-centric development?

4. How does people’s participation add to the success of the efforts of the NGOs?

5. Do the NGOs collaborate with other agencies for furthering their operations?

6. Do their efforts help to strengthen service responsiveness of the state especially in delivery of services to the local people? What contribution have the NGOs made to policy processes and policy development in the context of Punjab?

7. Have the efforts of the NGOs made any positive difference to the lives of the people? What kind of legitimacy and acceptance do the NGOs receive from the masses?
8. How are the linkages of the NGOs with other social groups based on class-caste or religion and interaction with other political groups? What are the various problems faced by the NGOs both from the external and internal environment?

9. What are the strategies adopted by the NGOs to deal with these problems?

Methodology

The present study is exploratory by nature. The content of the research is both qualitative and quantitative. The study employed both empirical and descriptive methods for probing the dimensions of NGO activity for furthering development in Punjab.

Primary as well as secondary data has been collected for the study. Primary data was collected mainly by administering different tools of research to the sample population. Secondary data has been gathered from policy guidelines, government orders, evaluation studies, government reports, NGO reports, pamphlets issued by government as well as NGOs, unpublished thesis, books, articles from journals and newspapers, internet sources and other concerned documents.

Selection of Sample

The Universe of the study initially comprised of 45 grassroots NGOs working with the Mother NGO (MNGO) i.e. Society for Service to Voluntary Organizations (Punjab) [SOSVA]. Out of these, 14 NGOs were studied. However, during the study the researcher came across certain NGOs which reflected on the nature of the NGO movement in Punjab and thus, five more NGOs were included. The total sample of NGOs thus comprised of 20 NGOs (including the MNGO SOSVA). The present study was carried out at two levels. In the first level, data was collected from the above mentioned 20 NGOs and at second level, three case studies were conducted mostly to obtain qualitative data. 163 beneficiaries of these three NGOs were interviewed.

Tools of the Study

These consisted mainly of semi-structured questionnaires, structured interviews and open-ended interviews.

For level one of the study, a semi-structured questionnaire was used. It needs to be mentioned that though questionnaires had been sent by post to many of the
NGOs but none of the replies was received. In most cases formal interviews thus had to be conducted as many a times NGO functionaries did not have time or inclination to be a part of any research activity. Many were found reluctant to provide information in writing.

Interviews were conducted with the staff, field workers and chief NGO functionaries for level two of the study. Two projects of each of the NGO were studied. The six programmes studied thus, constitute of two Reproductive and child health programmes, one Jan Sikshan Sansthan, one crèche and two self-help groups. The distribution is as provided below in the table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>NGO Studied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Reproductive and Child Health Programme (RCH)</td>
<td>Progressive Youth Forum (PYF) and Guru Angad Dev Sewa Society (GADSS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (a)</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Jan Sikshan Sansthan (JSS)</td>
<td>GADSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (b)</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Crèche</td>
<td>Shanti Swaroop Memorial Educational Society (SSMES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Income generation</td>
<td>Self-Help Groups (SHGs)</td>
<td>PYF and SSMES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of each project following number of beneficiaries were taken:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Number of beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Reproductive and Child Health Programme (RCH)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Jan Sikshan Sansthan Crèche</td>
<td>40 + 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Income generation</td>
<td>Self-Help Groups (SHGs)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structured interview was administered to the 163 beneficiaries in camps, houses, crèche, classes or meetings, wherever the researcher was able to locate them. They were interviewed keeping as much privacy as possible. Interviews were conducted during day time and by the researcher alone.

The above mentioned beneficiaries however, do not include the six inmates of a brostral home in Ludhiana who were being given training under the JSS programme.

In addition to the questionnaires and interview schedules, observation as a tool of research has been incorporated to form overall impression and opinions by the researcher. Observation determines the direction for study along with providing a great help in analyzing the responses from the sample. It enables to correct,
substantiate or modify the scenario obtained from the data collected through other schedules. Various seminars, camps and other meetings organized both by NGOs as well as government departments were attended by the researcher.

**Time Frame**

The field work was undertaken from June 2007 to November 2007 and again from April 2008 to October 2008. However, interviews with government officials spilled out of this frame because of their availability. Sometimes more than one visit was required to get necessary information due to their various engagements.

**Performance Evaluation**

‘Performance evaluation based on some quantifiable indicators has its limitations. All aspects of the functioning can not be quantified’. However, this study tries to make an analysis of the performance of the NGOs. The outcomes have been evaluated in terms of:

1. Role of NGOs at the implementation level for service delivery and sustainability.
2. Impact analysis concerning beneficiaries.

**Chapterisation Scheme**

1. **NGOs and Development: A Theoretical Perspective**

   The introductory chapter discusses the emergence of NGOs as alternative anchor of development and the fillers of the vacuum created by the withdrawal of state from its welfarist function. It aims to highlight the debate surrounding the NGOs and their role in the developmental process. It also lists out the objectives for which the study has been undertaken, the research questions it attempts to find answers to and the methodology adopted for the quest. Besides this, it also sums up the literature which has been reviewed for this study.

2. **Development and NGOs: the Indian Context**

   This chapter attempts to outline the growth of NGOs in the country with respect to the development process being undertaken by the state. It tries to examine the effect of various five year plans on the voluntary sector and the kind of

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relationship it shared with the government after independence. In the process, it also elaborates on various institutions that were set up for the NGO sector.

3. **NGO Intervention in Developmental Process of Punjab: Critical Evaluation**

Based on a survey of 20 NGOs spread across various districts of Punjab, this chapter first tries to dwell on the nature of existing NGOs in the state. It then, attempts to trace their evolution, objectives and missions. It further attempts to classify them on the basis of the nature of their activities. Are the NGOs service delivery organizations? Do they undertake research activities? What kind of issues do they advocate? Or are they mainly concerned with charity and welfare? Do the NGOs have a single focus or they have mixed objectives? Thus, the chapter tries to give a generalized picture of the nature of developmental NGOs working in the state. From this generalized picture the chapter further attempts to sketch out the major programmes being undertaken by the NGOs in the state. What is the main focus of the NGOs in Punjab? What kind of activities do they undertake? Are the initiatives state sponsored or self-sponsored by the NGOs? The chapter would seek answers to such questions.

4. **Interventions in the Developmental Process of Punjab: Insights from Individual NGOs**

This chapter tries to study in detail, the contribution of the NGOs in bringing about development in Punjab. The previous chapter highlighted the major interventional areas of the NGOs in Punjab. On that basis this chapter further elaborates the major programmes undertaken by the NGOs in chosen fields of health, education and income generation. For this, three NGOs have been studied in detail. Two projects of each NGO were studied. An attempt is made to study and analyze the approaches of the NGOs in the designs of their programs. What kind of role do the NGOs perform in aiding for development? Do they envisage a fairly extensive role for themselves and their ongoing involvement in providing management and technical assistance? Or do they aim at minimal involvement in the program operations and limit their intervention mainly to supervision? These are some of the questions that the chapter tries to answer.
5. People and the NGOs: Perceptions of the beneficiaries

One of the main objectives of the study is to understand how NGOs help the people in their development. Efforts made by NGOs are crucial in a space where someone has been deprived of certain services. The NGOs are required to fill this gap. The previous chapters discussed how NGOs help in the process. This chapter tries to capture the perceptions of the people about the NGO interventions. What do the people feel about the work being done by the NGOs? In what way and to what extent can the beneficiaries expect to receive better facilities by participating in the NGO initiatives? What difference do such activities make to the lives of the beneficiaries? Have they been able to increase both mental and material assets? What opportunities have the coming of the NGO brought with them?

In view of the above the chapter will further make an attempt to discuss the external and internal conditions that pose a problem for the NGOs and limit their organizing and implementing capacity. What difficulties do the NGOs encounter in furthering their efforts? What efforts are made by the NGO to deal with these situations?

6. Conclusion

The concluding chapter sums up the findings of the study and tries to highlight certain critical issues which need to be looked into meanwhile putting forward observations for future references.