CHAPTER 3

Role of NGOs in the Development of Punjab

Having dwelt on the larger perspectives of role of NGOs in developmental process in India, the experiences of Punjab can be appropriately examined now. The present chapter tries to analyse the role played by NGOs in the development of Punjab. Based on a study of 20 NGOs spread out in various districts of the state it gives an insight into the nature of their activities and functions. This chapter also seeks to explore into the reasons behind a visible lack of NGO movement in Punjab.

NGOs in Punjab: Historical Evolution

As is true for India, Punjab too has a long history and tradition of voluntarism. The people of the state are known and respected for their spirit of charity and humanism. This coupled with the influence of religion gives Punjab a truly voluntary nature. Perhaps the deepest impact of voluntarism in Punjab has been that of religion.

The dominant religion of Punjab is Sikhism. Sikhism stands for humanism and the spirit of charity for the less fortunate. All the historic ten Gurus of Sikh religion preached the necessity of doing good deeds as means to attain salvation. There has always been a strong sense of ‘sewa’ and ‘shramdaan’ being performed by the religious institutions in the state. Sikhism propagates humanism as an integral part of its egalitarian philosophy. ‘Daswandh is an integral part of Punjab’s social ethics’.

‘Wand Chhakna’, Kirt Karna and Naam Japna are practices of Sikh religion which

1 The NGOs chosen for the study have been randomly selected from the list provided by SOSVA-P. SOSVA-P is a mother NGO chosen by the Punjab government. 15 NGOs including SOSVA-P have been studied. However, five more NGOs were added during the course of the study since they present an interesting case study about the role that they are playing in the developmental process of Punjab.
2 There are certain assumptions of the study. The NGO movement in Punjab is somehow being missed out by the popular perception due to the rich economic profile of the state. This perception is further strengthened by the argument that the economic condition of a state is instrumental for a flourishing NGO movement as in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, to state a few. These are the assumptions that have been evaluated during the course of the study.
3 Arvinder Nagpal. 2008, ‘NGO Movement in Punjab: Problems and Suggested Solution’, in Towards Participation, (Souvenir) Chandigarh: Centre for Participatory Management and Voluntary Organization. According to the practise of Daswandh, every Sikh has to donate one tenth of his earnings to charity. But the same must be used judiciously otherwise it is not counted as a good deed.
4 Wand chhakna signifies the sikh practice of sharing of earnings with the spirit of love and services, kirt karna means earning of livelihood through the right means of hard work and sincerity whereas naam japna is the recitation of divine name.
inspire all the Sikhs to view the whole world as one family and also make voluntary contributions for construction of Gurdwaras, schools, hospitals for sick and ailing and even kar seva of holy pools. Guru Da Langar is one such practice which is followed in Gurdwaras on a regular basis. Much of the care of the needy sections of the society has been taken care of by the religious institutions like Gurdwaras.

In historical accounts the voluntary efforts in Punjab can be traced to a Sikh of the tenth Guru Gobind Singh’s army - Bhai Ghanayaji. He offered water to the wounded soldiers in the battlefield irrespective of their religion and sides of favour in the war.

However, contrary to this tradition, modern NGO movement in Punjab remains relatively less explored and documented. In the year 1999, the Director of Health and Family Welfare (Punjab) noted that, ‘With such a healthy and positive attitude towards voluntary social work, it is surprising that various schemes for the betterment of people’s health have received only lukewarm response from voluntary organisations of the State’. Not many efforts on the part of NGOs are visible in the developmental process of Punjab. This is however not to suggest that such cases do not exist in the state. In fact, the influence of religion on sewa and acts of civic participation in public works is still visible in the present times. But perhaps the earliest example of such an effort would be the pingalwara set up by Bhagat Puran Singh.

The Pingalwara is one such organisation in Punjab which is secular, voluntary, not for profit in nature and also owes it origin to inspiration of helping the less fortunate in the society. According to Dr Arvinder Singh Nagpal, the Director of Guru Angad Dev Sewa Society (GADSS), ‘The Pingalwara is perhaps the earliest operating secular NGO in Punjab’. True to the tradition of the state, it is an idea inspired by religious and humanitarian factors. Despite this, the NGO is secular in terms of the services it provides. Its beneficiaries cut across all religions and regions.

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5 Based on interview on 10.04.09 with Bhai Amarjit Singh, Head Pathi of Gurdwara Sahib, Sector-40, Chandigarh.
6 The Gurdwaras even today provide many charitable services for the people like homeopathic and other health services, free meals called ‘langars’.
8 Pingalwara here signifies a home for the needy and the destitute.
9 Interview with the researcher on 2.08.07.
Bhagat Puran Singh laid the foundation of Pingalwara in 1924. He conducted the activities of his Pingalwara in its embryonic stage since 1924 under the shade of trees and on the pavements in Lahore. He picked up a cripple child of four years in 1934 from Gurdwara Dehra Sahib. Moved by the fact that there was no place for such people, he tried to set up one for them. He sought people's help and the Pingalwara thus took a tangible shape in 1948. Besides this, he also started a vigorous campaign to make the people sensitive towards this issue and started distributing relevant literature for the same. The Pingalwara caters to mental patients, paralysis, polio, deaf, dumb, old aged, AIDS patients, other terminally ill people, abandoned and orphaned children. 'The organization does not take government funds. The doors of Pingalwara are open for all the destitute, physically and mentally challenged and sick people'.

The more recent example of voluntarism in Punjab is seen in the efforts of Sant Balbir Singh popularly known as Baba Seechewal who restored the polluted Kali Bein River to its pristine glory. The Kali Bein has historical importance. 'Guru Nanak Devji, the first Guru of the Sikhs, is said to have performed his morning ablutions in this river and also meditated here'. However, 'public indifference led to it becoming a cesspool with village, city and industrial wastes from even a railway factory at Kapurthala filling it. Baba Seechewal began cleaning it single handedly and his example and narrations on the history and value of the Kali Bein to Sikh history drew hundreds of followers to task'. He radically redefined the concept of Kar Sewa, channeling public participation for ecologically important community development projects. Baba Seechewal used the importance of the river in the religion and history to influence people. 'When the kar seva began at Sultanpur Lodhi, the Bein was nowhere in sight. Instead, there were heaps of garbage and decaying carcasses of cattle. But the sangat did not lose heart. They continued the cleaning

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10 The Pingalwara (Punjabi for the 'handicap' or 'destitute') (with its head office at Amritsar) was an effort on the part of Bhagat Puran Singh (1904-1992).
11 The Pingalwara has its own printing press which is used as a medium for circulating the ideas and philosophy associated with Pingalwara and also good living in general.
12 Pingalwara. 2007. 'Pingalwara at a Glance', Booklet, 5 August (Released to mark the 15th death anniversary of Bhagat Puran Singh.)
13 Kali Bein is a spring which emerges near Hoshiarpur, flows through Kapurthala and Sultanpur Lodhi in Punjab.
14 www.sikhwiki.org (Accessed on 18.3.09).
work. Their years of toil have borne fruit. Slit-deposits have been cleared. Beautiful ghats have been constructed. Instead of stinking garbage, it’s a riot of colourful flowers on both sides of the Bein’.

‘The rivulet now epitomises an ecological revolution led by Seechewal whose ground breaking initiative has revived the 175 km long channel. Resurrecting the sacred rivulet has been a labour of love that made him widely known as the Beinwala Baba’. Baba Seechewal is thus the most prominent name associated with encouraging voluntary efforts for environment in the state.

‘He is also credited with constructing kuccha roads, opening schools for education of rural children and many such efforts which are based on community participation’.

Both the above mentioned cases of Pingalwara and Baba Seechewal represents a contemporary blend of religion and voluntarism which is inherent and unique to the traditional fabric of the Punjabi history and society. This is a popular aspect of NGOs in Punjab. Though secular in their activities they bear certain inspirational stamp of religion in terms of doing good deeds for the uplift of the society. Both these examples reflect on the peculiar nature of voluntarism in Punjab. These acts have been inspired by the spirit of voluntarism for public service and humanism.

In the present times too the importance and influence of religion on the NGOs in Punjab is very much evident. Religion is used to strike a common chord with the people to influence them for garnering their support.

Besides this, there are a few other documented examples of voluntary associations which exist in Punjab. For instance, ‘the Lions Club established in Jalandhar in 1963 and the Rotary Club which came up in 1951’. Both the clubs have been rendering useful services to the people by organizing free mass immunization camps, vaccination camps, eye-operation camps, and general medical relief camps. They have also been undertaking welfare services like giving scholarships and books to the deserving students, financial assistance to the handicapped, and sewing machines to the poor and needy widows. They have been

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18 Baba Seechewal has been conferred with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Environment-2010 award for setting new milestones in the field of environment, providing green cover and motivating numerous volunteers for the cause of conservation. Hindustan Times. 2010. ‘SAARC honour for Seechewal’, 30 March, p. 4.

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holding declamation contests, variety shows, and music competitions to encourage the youth to reveal their talents’.21 Yet a section of these organizations have been criticized for seeking much publicity for welfare activities.22

Of the 20 NGOs surveyed for this study, the earliest registered one was the Shanti Swaroop Memorial Educational Society (SSMES) founded in village Chamkaur Sahib in Rupnagar in the year 1977 (informally it was formed in the year 1975 but was registered in 1977). The NGO was founded by Prof. R. C. Dhand. He is a retired college professor. Being an educationist himself, he was deeply moved by the fact that there was no school for children in the village. The idea of opening a school and his roots which were embedded in charity, something which he had imbibed from his parents led him to form the organisation. He named his NGO after his brother.23

The second NGO, Manav Sudhar Sabha (MSS) (formed in 1977 at village Sialaba in Mohali) was registered in the year 1979. This NGO was formed by Triloki Nath Sharma who was employed with the Public Health Department in Punjab. He had earlier named his organisation as Mandir Sudhar Sabha.24 According to Sharma it was a chance meeting with a sage during the course of his work in the health department which inspired him to form an organisation to work for the propagation and betterment of religion. Initially, he carried out public development works like construction of roads in the village and other activities in the name of religion. Sharma even confessed to demolishing a mosque and building a mandir instead. It was some personnel of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Punjab who encouraged him to take funds for developmental purpose. The name of the NGO was then changed to Manav Sudhar Sabha to give it a more secular tone. Thus, the organisation gradually shifted from religious based or social work activities to development based programmes.

The above mentioned instances show that religion bears an important impression on NGOs in Punjab. However, the NGOs are slowly drifting away from its

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21 ibid., p. 58.
22 ibid., p. 58. She mentions that the women wings of these clubs work sporadically, and seek much publicity for their welfare activities. She also mentions that they are organizations which ‘remain on the look out for the arrival of a VIP in the city, so that they can make a show of their philanthropy in his presence by distributing blankets, sewing machines or knitting machines to women at a well-orchested function’. She also mentions that the Vidhwa Sahaik Sabha was founded in Jallandhar in 1924 (which is the same year in which the Pingalwara is said to have been founded informally).
23 Based on interactions of R. C. Dhand and other staff workers of SSMES on 22.09.08.
24 Based on interview with researcher on 16.06.07.
social and charitable identity to developmental assertions by implementing governmental programmes. With the changing times this notion is slowly undergoing a change. This is evident from the fact that newer NGOs that are coming up do not portray a penchant for charitable activities. For instance, the state chapters of certain larger NGOs like that of the Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI) i.e. the Voluntary Health Association of Punjab (VHAP), the Punjab section of the All India Women’s Conference (AIWC) and also that of the Society for Service to Voluntary Associations (SOSVA) all work for development oriented activities and do not bear any influence of religion. While VHAP is concerned with the development and awareness generation activities relating to social issues like female foeticide, the AIWC works for the welfare of women and children. SOSVA-Punjab is the main agency appointed by the Punjab Government for implementing the Reproductive and Child Health Programme (RCH) in Punjab. It also undertakes various other developmental programmes concerning education and skill training for mainstreaming school dropouts. These NGOs however came up very recently in Punjab.

**Genesis of NGO Movement in Punjab**

Most of the NGOs in Punjab started coming up during the 1990s. According to Manmohan Sharma, the main person behind the Voluntary Health Association of Punjab (VHAP), the period between 1980 and 1992 were militancy years i.e. disturbing years in Punjab and as such the NGOs did not find a favourable atmosphere.\(^{25}\) He is of the view that the NGOs that are seen in Punjab today are those that were either launched before the period of 1980-1992 or are newer organisations created or formed after 1992.\(^ {26}\) VHAP itself was formed in 1993. A look at the year of

\(^{25}\) The situation on the political scenario of Punjab had an adverse effect on their growth. In Punjab, the period of 1980s and early 1990s was marked by turbulence. Some of the NGOs related their experiences of the times. Parallel to these happenings, in 1986 given the unstable conditions in Punjab, CARE shut down its Punjab branch which was located in Chandigarh. Narendra Francis who worked with CARE as a Field Officer for thirty five years i.e. from 1961-1997 told the researcher that CARE had first set up its office in India at two places in 1961- Tamil Nadu and Punjab. Francis was associated with the Punjab branch from 19o2-1986 when it finally closed its activities due to chaotic conditions in the state. According to him, the American bosses had been very particular about monitoring of the projects and when movement became unsafe, the office was wrapped up.

The SWRDC at Nurpur Bedi was established in 1988. Recalling his experiences Jagtar Singh, the founder of SWRDC, said that during those disturbed times the markets used to be deserted by eight o clock. The workers of the organization had to face lot of problems as there was paucity of transport system and bus service was not frequent. Places of work could only be reached by cycle or foot. Care was taken to be inside houses before it turned dark. The fundamentalists posed a danger to all those who cut their hair, took government grants, any communist or anyone simply with any government link. Since the NGO too received government funding therefore they did receive some threats but nothing beyond that thankfully happened.

As against this SSMES Director R.C. Dhand said that his NGO was by and large unaffected by the 'terrorist activities'. Though a fear psychosis did exist but their work continued without any hassles.

\(^ {26}\) Based on interaction with the researcher on 24.7.07.
origin of the NGOs surveyed shows that most of the NGOs did start coming up since the 1990s.

Table 3 A: Chronological Development of NGOs under Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Name of NGO</th>
<th>Year of Registration</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shanti Swaroop Memorial Educational Society (SSMES)</td>
<td>1977</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Manav Sudhar Sabha (MSS)</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>All India Women’s Conference (AIWC)</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Shaheed Kartar Singh Sarabha (SKSS)</td>
<td>1988 (revived 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Social Work And Rural Development Centre (SWRDC)</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rural Health And Development Centre (RHDC)</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ludhiana Citizens Health Council (LCHC)</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Voluntary Health Association of Punjab (VHAP)</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Adarsh Sewa Samiti (ASS)</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Rural Association For Human Interest (RAHI)</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Guru Angad Dev Sewa Society (GADSS)</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Society for Development of the Poor and Needy (SDPN)</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Support Initiated in Development (SIDIT)</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Progressive Youth Forum (PYF)</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Shiv Saran Welfare Society (SSWS)</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Manav Kalyan Siksha Kendra (MKSK)</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Sehat Education And Welfare Activity (SEWA-P)</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Action Research And Training Institute (ARTI)</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Lok Kalyan Samiti (LKS)</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Society for Service to Voluntary Associations (SOSVA)</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Field Study Notes

The survey conducted during the study showed that most of the NGOs in Punjab mushroomed after the 1980s as was the situation in India and also the rest of the world. In Punjab they seem to have arisen mainly after 1992. Out of the twenty NGOs surveyed- 14 were formed during or after the period of 1991-92. Only two NGOs were formed before 1980 and rest four during the period of 1980s. In this sense, the NGO movement in Punjab is relatively very young. It is also difficult to identify the exact size of NGOs working for development in Punjab.

The confusion about the exact number of NGOs in Punjab arises due to the fact that there is no specific agency which registers them exclusively. These organisations are collectively registered under certain acts specified by the Government of India like Societies Registration Act of 1860 or state amendment thereof, the Trusts Act of 1882 or Charitable and Religious Act 1920. ‘While NGOs are essentially non-government actors, national governments set the context within

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27 For the study, year of registration of the NGO is being considered as the year of its formation due to two reasons- (1) the information provided is more reliable since there is no proof of the organization being formed before it was registered and (2) according to the policy guidelines, the NGO is eligible for taking grants from the government after a certain years (two or three in different cases) from the date of registration of the NGO.
which they must work and be effective, while local governments are far better placed to liaise with, and coordinate, local development initiatives’. The NGOs are registered under two basic acts. One is the Societies Registration Act of 1860 and second is the Foreign Contribution Regulatory Act (FCRA), 1976 under which the NGOs who want to obtain foreign funding are registered. Of the surveyed NGOs, the Societies Registration Act 1860 was found to be the preferred act with which the NGOs register themselves.

The purpose of the Societies Registration Act (SRA) of 1860 is to provide for registration of literary, scientific and charitable societies. The act was brought into effect so that the people could form a society, have a well defined purpose and have enough resources and funds. Seven or more persons are need to form a society as per specified by the act. It applies to charitable societies, military orphans funds or societies, societies established for promotion of science, literature, fine arts, diffusion of useful knowledge, diffusion of political education, foundation or maintenance of libraries or reading rooms for general use among the members or open to the public or public museums and galleries or paintings and other works of art collections of natural history, mechanical and philosophical interventions, instruments or designs.

It is a Central Act which is still in force. However, many states have repealed it and have made their own amended acts. This is so because ‘unincorporated literary, scientific, religious and other societies and associations’ is a state subject (Entry 22 list II of the seventh schedule). Thus, normally there should have been only state laws on the subject. However, SRA was passed in 1860 much before the powers had been bifurcated into centre and the states.

Punjab goes by the central act and has not amended it. 19 out of 20 NGOs were registered under this act. The only NGO not registered under the Societies Act is the SIDT which does not take support from the government as a matter of policy. Different departments have their own specifications concerning the initial time of registration.

29 The only NGO not registered under the Societies Act is the SIDT which does not take support from the government as a matter of policy.
30 Different departments have their own specifications concerning the initial time of registration.
NGO to receive government funding. According to the Director of the Punjab State Planning Department:

The Act is preferred for the registration of the NGO since it is more democratic in nature than the others. A body of certain number of individuals is required for the functioning of the NGO. There is also an element of election involved for the same. Though it is observed that certain individuals manoeuvre in such a way that they keep getting elected again and again to the important posts devoicing others of the chance for the same however, these are the inbuilt weaknesses of the Act and we can not go by them.31

The Act has its share of shortcomings also. ‘It must be remembered that the Registration of Societies Act only needs seven people to start a society-..... These [people in the general body of the NGO] are in a real sense the “owners” of the society’.32 The registration of the NGO under the act does not in itself ensure a fully democratic administrative set up of the organisation but does provide it some semblance of legitimacy.

The Act does not help in identifying the NGOs functional in the state because a variety of establishments or agencies are registered under the societies act and they need not necessarily be concerned about non-profit or development oriented work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of registered societies under Societies Registration Act, 1860.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>1787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>1694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>1584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>Data unavailable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>Data unavailable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Documents of Punjab Registration Society, Chandigarh

33 Uptil 1999, the NGOs were to register themselves at the Punjab Registration Society, Chandigarh but henceforth only those NGOs aiming at national or international field of activity are required to do so. Others are to be registered at the District Industry Centre (DIC), of their respective area of operation.
Another form of registration for the NGO is under the Foreign Contribution Regulatory Act (FCRA) if it wants to obtain foreign funding. However, the NGOs are small organisations and as already mentioned, depend mostly on government funding. All the NGOs that were surveyed depended on government funding for carrying out developmental activities (except the SIDT). The state received a total of 82.93 crores (2006-07) as foreign investment under the FCRA. This is one of the lowest aid as compared to the other states of the country. Also, the number of NGOs registered under the above mentioned act in Punjab is only 81. This number is one of the lowest in the country. It points to the fact that foreign funding is not a dominant source of resource generation in Punjab. The survey results revealed that nine of the twenty chosen NGOs had FCRA registrations. Many others were making repeated attempts for the same. However, even though 45% NGOs had an FCRA, the major source of funding was the government (central as well as the state government).

Thus, besides the absence of any special agency for registering the NGOs there is another factor which poses problem in gauging the actual size of NGO sector in Punjab. Many of the organizations might not actually be registered yet working in the field.

Due to factors such as ignorance of law, lack of information on who should register, disagreement over the definition of an NGO and to some extent cumbersome bureaucratic processes, there are probably more organizations which are not registered but which can qualify to be identified as NGOs.

NGOs in Punjab are small in terms of funding, size as well as scope. They originate as charitable organisations and gradually start taking projects from the government thereby entering the arena of development work. They generally do not have an idea about registering themselves initially and other such activities associated with formal NGO activities.

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35 The number of organisations in Punjab is only above that of Pondicherry (70) and Jammu and Kashmir (67) which have lesser number of NGOs registered under FCRA. As against this Tamil Nadu which has 3009 registered organizations and Delhi which has 1175 registered organizations under FCRA. The funding received by these them is the highest in the country with Tamil Nadu receiving 2244.25 crores and Delhi, an amount of 2186.65 crore.
37 Based on interactions with R. C. Dhand of SSMES on 22.09.08.
Given these reasons the number of NGOs operating in Punjab are at best “guesstimates”\textsuperscript{38}. This is so because there is an absence of a dependable source of information regarding the accurate number of NGOs that exist in Punjab. According to available literature the range of registered NGOs could well be between 300 to 3000. Perhaps, the best source of information about the number of NGOs functional in Punjab is the draft directory issued by the Punjab Planning Board. It lists about 300 NGOs working in Punjab.\textsuperscript{39} On the other hand, NGO functionaries revealed that there are around 3000\textsuperscript{40} NGOs that exist in Punjab. Not all the NGOs that are functional in Punjab have made it to the directory issued by the Planning Department. Some of them are ignorant about it. Also some of the larger NGOs like those of the NRIs (non-resident Indians), which are also doing substantial development work in villages in Punjab may not be mentioned therein as they are not too keen to obtain government funding.\textsuperscript{41} Out of these NGOs that are mentioned in the directory it is not known as to how many of them are actually actively working in the field. There is no dependable source of information for the same. Besides the directory of the planning board, lists are also maintained by various departments, autonomous institutions like Council for Advancement of People’s Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) or National Agriculture and Rural Development Bank (NABARD). One of the NGOs i.e. SOSVA (N) Punjab, also maintains a list of NGOs since it is a nodal agency of the state government for implementing certain

\textsuperscript{38} Sajjad Zohir. 2004. ‘NGO Sector in Bangladesh: An Overview’, Economic and Political Weekly, September 4, p. 4110. Though the term has been used in the context of Bangladesh it does reflect the confusion over the exact estimate of the number of NGO that exists in Punjab. Defining NGOs he says that a small subset of those organizations which appear to have similar work styles and activities are commonly considered as NGOs. They are mostly registered, even though there may always be some who are aspiring to get registered. A formal management structure is generally in place, even though only on paper and one or a few individuals may exercise exclusive authority in practice. The management, as well as the other working staff, are salaried staff, and the works are normally carried out within an (management-) approved annual work plan, which specifies various programmes to be pursued in relation to the targets set under each programme.

\textsuperscript{39} Draft NGO Directory. 2007. Chandigarh: Punjab Planning Department. The directory classifies the NGOs on the basis of the activities undertaken by them. Among the prominent fields are Reproductive and Child Health (RCH), Pulse Polio Programme, blood donation, crematory or funeral services, sanitation, vocational courses for training, computer centers for unemployed youth and so on. Charity and welfare oriented NGOs exist in a large number though not many NGOs working for education are visible (the reason for the same could be that these activities are largely undertaken by the state).

\textsuperscript{40} Anil Jerath. 2006. Punjab lags behind in NGO Movement: Expert, The Tribune, (Chandigarh), May 26. Available at www.tribuneindia.com. The article says that there are around 3000 NGOs working in Punjab.

\textsuperscript{41} Interview with Dr Grover of the Sai Dharam Singh Grover Foundation (SDSGF) located at Dera Bassi, District Patiala, on 30.10.08. His NGO is not mentioned in the Draft Directory.
programmes. Many websites also provide a list of NGOs working in Punjab. These attempts are however, scattered and in this case probably the best illustration is that of the Draft Directory though with some shortcomings. It tries to provide necessary details about the NGOs like their location, phone numbers, contact persons and nature of activities undertaken. However, the information provided is incomplete and in certain cases repeated and prone to inaccuracy. The directory is just an attempt to organise the NGO movement in Punjab and needs much improvement.

Thus, it is evident from the above that there are many NGOs working for development in Punjab, but the information remains largely dissipated. Voluntarism itself is not new to Punjab. In fact, its genesis lies in the formation of religious organisations and charity. It is still visible to a large extent and considerably influences the NGOs in Punjab. However, the size of NGO sector in Punjab remains a question. There could be 300 to 3000 NGOs working in the state. These NGOs are generally registered under the societies registration act as is the specification of the government.

**Classification of NGOs in Punjab**

There are many lines along which the NGOs in Punjab could be classified. Firstly, they could be demarcated into those working with religious or welfare aims and those working for more evolved causes like development, research etc. The NGOs working for religious cause are mostly concerned with the development of their own people. Besides being evident in the regular religious practices of different religions of the state, it is also highlighted in the Dera culture of Punjab. Besides religious and spiritual growth, the Deras have also been taking care of the concerns like education and primary health care of its devotees.

The strong influence of religion on the NGOs is also responsible for a lot of philanthropic work being done by them. The NGOs, in turn use it to gain a common

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42 For instance, www.propoor.com lists out many agencies working in Punjab for various issues.
43 Interview with Jasbir Singh on 21.12.08.
44 For details on how the Deras helps in the development of its followers read Ronki Ram. 2008. ‘Ravidass Deras and Social Protest: Making Sense of Dalit Consciousness in Punjab (India)’, *The Journal of Asian Studies, 67* (4), November, pp. 1341–1364. The author presents a detailed case study of ‘Dera Sach Khand Ballan, one of the most popular Ravidass Deras in Punjab’. The study shows that during the formation of their identity, development works were and are still being undertaken by the Dera, for its followers. These Deras are an integral part of Punjab’s social and religious fabric.
45 Though this is not a documented fact yet the impression has been formed by the researcher by interacting with various government and NGO functionaries and also members of the community during the course of the field work.
standing with the people. References to religion are made to bring different sections on a similar platform. It was observed that the NGOs which had been formed by the local people treated it as an integral part of their activities. For instance, Bhagat Puran Singh of the Pingalwara was inspired by the religious philosophy to work for the welfare of the people. Baba Seechewal also used religious references to influence thousands of volunteers to clean up the Kali Bein River. NGOs like LKS are also working with the same theme. Interestingly, this is treated as a vital part of the same by various NGOs that work at the grassroots level. That religion is one of the ways of relating to people was also evident in a NGO workshop organized by the Centre for Participatory Management and Voluntary Organization (CPMVO).

The workshop was organized for promoting participatory management in governance through involvement of civil society in general and NGOs in particular. There was a fair mix of administrators and NGOs in the workshop. During the introductory round many of the NGOs used religious slogans as means of addressing the gathering which was reciprocated to by the people present with much enthusiasm.

Religion is embedded in the fabric of the society of Punjab and is viewed as a natural consequence of the same. However it was observed that NGOs having links with larger NGOs or those exposed to government funding tend to drift away from the same. For instance, the MSS. The reason for this perhaps lies in the fact that 'since India is secular state, it can not allow its programmes to be implemented by organizations favoring a particular religion'. ‘There are NGOs that work for religious purpose also. They are however, different and do not get government funding since government favors secular NGOs’. As more and more NGOs become conscious of the importance of projecting a secular front, they tend to drift away from the obvious religious acts. This transition is however taking place slowly in Punjab. The process of graduating from a charitable to a development NGO is visible in Punjab in soft degrees. ‘Since NGOs are weak and do not enjoy prestige, they have

Based on personal observation of the researcher.

The workshop was held on 30.10.2008 and was attended by the researcher.

Interview with D.S.Bukkal, former secretary of the Punjab State Social Welfare Board on 17.12.08.

Based on interactions with Major Singh Sekhon, Director, Progressive Youth Forum (PYF), Patiala during June 2008.

It was observed by the researcher that the NGOs which had more exposure did not project religious image of the NGO when representing the NGO at the various intra or inter state levels.
not been able to convert religious charity, which is abundant, into a development resource'.

Another classification of NGOs has been attempted by the SOSVAN (P). It is based on the roles that they perform. According to the classification the typical forms of NGOs are as follows. (a) Advocacy: these NGOs basically work on advocacy or campaigning issues or causes e.g. SOSVA works on advocating the cause of small family norms. (b) Consultancy/Research Organizations: these NGOs work for Social and Developmental Research and Consultancy. (This could include NGOs such as SIDT). (c) Training/Capacity Building Organizations: in the NGO sector, training is usually called as Capacity Building. Some NGOs only work on Capacity Building. (In Punjab, many grassroots NGOs like the PYF have started holding capacity building workshops for smaller NGOs in Punjab). (d) Networking organizations: these NGOs provide vital network opportunities for NGOs in a specified field e.g. SOSVA works on networking of NGOs working in the field of RCH. (Other examples can be of the VHAP and also various NGOs that come together to collaborate on a common platform). (e) Mother NGOs: these NGOs are recipients as well as givers e.g. large NGOs like CRY, Concern India, SOSVA receive funds as well as disburse funds. They have a work focus, but instead of implementing projects, they identify projects and monitor, evaluate and try to build capacities of participating NGOs. (f) Grass-root Organizations: these NGOs work directly with the community. NGOs like the ASS, SWRDC, RHDC, SSMES, MSS and others. (g) Self Help Groups: They are not typically termed as NGOs. These are formed by beneficiary communities, typically women who come together in a group of 10 plus. India is witnessing a great movement of SHGs presently and these women are transforming rural areas in South.

It is difficult to categorize the Punjab NGOs into clear and neat sections. This is so because these NGOs generally undertake many different kinds of activities which spill into more than one of the above listed categories. For instance the NGOs like PYF could be a grassroots organization and a capacity building NGO at the same time. Comparing all the 20 NGOs it can be said that all the surveyed NGOs work directly in the field in some or the other project. Some might undertake a select

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52 Capacity Building of NGOs. 2005. Guide Book, Chandigarh: SOSVA. The material was compiled for a series of workshops aiming at capacity building of NGOs in Punjab.
53 Based on a workshop, ‘Capacity Building Workshop of NGOs’ organized by PYF in Association with CAPART on 27.9.07 and 28.9.07.
number of interventions while others are completely based on such activities. Even
the Mother NGO SOSVA though responsible for coordinating certain state
government programmes undertakes projects for claiming the school drop outs and
acts as a field NGO or a grassroots organization for the same. Similarly VHAP also
acts as a networking and training or capacity building NGO simultaneously. Besides
this another common point is that all the local NGOs (excluding SOSVA, VHAP and
SIDT) started functioning as grassroots organizations and have entered into other
fields gradually after gaining experience.

There can be another type of classification on the basis of which the NGOs in
Punjab can be better understood. ‘At one end of the scale are the larger national
NGOs, such as the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), PROSHIKA
and Association for Social Advancement (ASA), in Bangladesh; Self-Employment
Women’s Association (SEWA) in India; and the international NGOs such as Oxfam,
CARE, ActionAid, and the World Vision. All of these NGOs have their roots and
original remits within a much broader social and economic agenda and have only
become very active in the enterprise support arena within the last decade. As a result,
many have established new sections or divisions within their organizations to focus
specifically on micro and small enterprise (MSE) support services. At the other end of
the scale, there are very small NGOs with an original and primary mission that has
always been more socially oriented and that have added MSE to their existing core
work’.\(^{54}\) It is the latter type of NGOs that are more prevalent in Punjab. All the
grassroots NGOs are small in terms of area covered as it remains limited to one or two
districts. In terms of funding also, these are smaller organizations. However, to
understand their role there is a need to examine the objectives with which they try to
make interventions for development in Punjab.

**Objectives of the NGOs**

Objectives of an organisation reflect the kind of activities that it undertakes.
Therefore to understand the role of NGOs in development of Punjab it is necessary to
understand their objectives. ‘The objectives of the NGOs are the directional goals set
by the NGO which guide the selection of its activities and the strategies. Such choices
as whether the NGO will play a single role or have several objectives, whether it will
be service-oriented or concentrate on client mobilization, depend on its directional
goals’.\(^{55}\) A look at the main objectives of the NGOs understudy shows that they are
quite broad in their scope.

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*54* Pat Richardson and Karen Langdon. 2003. ‘Microenterprise and Microfinance: the New Kids on
the Block’, in David Lewis and Tina Wallace (Eds.). *Development NGOs and the Challenge of

*55* Vanitha Vishwanatha. 1993. *NGOs and Women’s Development in Rural South India: A
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>NGO</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | SSMES     | a) Improve standard of living of rural poor  
|       |           | b) Work for women empowerment  
| 2    | MSS       | a) To take necessary steps for social welfare activities and benefits of the society  
|       |           | b) To infuse spirit of patriotism amongst its members and to do whatever possible within its means to spread the same  
| 3    | AIWC      | a) To work for society based on principles of social justice, personal integrity and equal rights and opportunities for all  
|       |           | b) To secure recognition for inherent right of every human being to work and so essentials of life such as food, clothing, housing, education, social amenities and security in the belief that these should not be determined by accident of birth or sex but by planned social distribution.  
| 4    | SKSS      | a) To provide health services and medical facilities to those in need  
|       |           | b) To provide free meals  
| 5    | SWRDC     | a) Promoting all aspects of voluntary effort in evolving and developing in accordance with the national policy and integrated approach  
|       |           | b) Developing rural communities and other backward areas  
| 6    | RHDC      | a) Welfare of rural people  
|       |           | b) Vocational training to girls  
| 7    | LCHC      | a) To promote health education, family planning, human rights related to the provision and distribution of health and family planning services with a view to improve the quality of life of common citizens.  
|       |           | b) To collaborate with other health agencies working in the area to ensure better results and wider health coverage.  
| 8    | VHAP      | a) Promoting good health for all  
|       |           | b) Promoting good working relation between voluntary sector and cooperation with government  
| 9    | ASS       | a) Rural development  
|       |           | b) Helping the aged  
| 10   | RAHI      | a) To provide education for livelihood  
|       |           | b) To increase awareness about environment  
| 11   | GADSS     | a) To work for migrant and slum dwellers  
|       |           | b) To provide vocational training to girls  
| 12   | SDPN      | a) To promote integrated development through systematic, time bound and result oriented programmes with specific aims, plans, confidence and perseverance of the people helping them to understand their actual situation, capacities, capabilities, rights and responsibilities specially in rural areas.  
|       |           | b) To empower people to take charge of their own development and break into self reliance, facilitating establishment of people organizations, village committees, women associations, youth forums, in view of enabling their active participation in the planning and implementation of all rural development programmes.  
| 13   | SIDT      | a) Providing support to government  
|       |           | b) Consultancy services to NGOs and other related organizations  
| 14   | PYF       | a) To promote education and training programmes for rural youth  
|       |           | b) To promote women empowerment through training and income generating activities and encourage them to participate fully at every level of decision making  
| 15   | SSWS      | a) To undertake programmes for underprivileged people especially women and children  
|       |           | b) Serve for charitable causes for the welfare of mankind  
| 16   | MKSK      | a) To take all necessary steps for social welfare and related activities and benefits of the society  
|       |           | b) To foster the development of social welfare through out the state of Punjab  
| 17   | SEWA      | a) To enable poor girls to learn skills so as to make them financially independent  
|       |           | b) To facilitate the poor women for provision of health services.  
| 18   | ARTI      | a) Creating awareness on the problems being faced by the elderly, their special needs both physical and psychological and their care.  
|       |           | b) Conducting mass-education campaigns on the topics of general health care and cautioning against the dreaded diseases like T.B. and HIV/AIDS.  
| 19   | LKS       | a) Environment conservation  
|       |           | b) Rural development  
| 20   | SOSVA     | a) To assist committed social entrepreneurs to initiate voluntary agencies for development  
|       |           | b) To facilitate formation of community based organizations for development work in areas where this option has to be made feasible.  

Source: Based on Field Study Notes
Based on the objectives of the organizations they were classified as follows:

**Table 3 D: Nature of the NGOs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Type of NGO</th>
<th>No. Of NGOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>General Development Oriented NGO (GDO)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Women Development Oriented NGO (WDO)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rural Development Oriented NGO (RDO)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other Organisations(^{56})</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Field Study Notes

Majority of the NGOs (9) defined themselves as GDO. These NGOs were the ones which were simultaneously engaged in different activities and targeting more than one type of beneficiaries. The SSMES, MSS, LCHC, GADSS, SDPN, PYF, SSWS, MKSK and ARTI were all aiming at development in general. On the other hand, AIWC and SEWA aim at working for the betterment of women. SWRDC, RHDC, ASS, RAHI and LKS all are concerned with rural development. The other NGOs basically include those organisations which may or may not be associated with the activities of the above organisations but are definitely providing certain other services like consultancy or support. These include the VHAP, SOSVA and SIDT. It also includes the SKSS which aims at welfare of the people in general and have started taking up developmental projects like the reproductive and child health programme (RCH) very recently (in 2006).

Thus it is clear that the NGOs in Punjab undertake a variety of programmes and generally have objectives that are wide in scope.\(^{57}\) The objectives of the NGOs can be as broad as ‘to take all necessary suitable steps for social welfare and related activities and benefits from the society’.\(^{58}\) The constitutions of all the NGOs list many generalized objectives as part of their agenda. ‘Wide objectives hamper clarity of the nature of interventions to be undertaken by the NGO’.\(^{59}\) Similarly the NGOs in Punjab have a large number of objectives under the umbrella of development

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\(^{56}\) A similar kind of classification has also been used by R. Sooryamorthy. 2005. ‘Incongruity Between Objectives of NGOs in Kerala’, *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 66 (2), April-June, pp. 253-272.

\(^{57}\) *ibid.*, p. 255. The author also comes to a similar conclusion about the NGOs of Kerala.


\(^{59}\) Sooryamorthy. ‘Incongruity between objectives, programmes and beneficiaries’, p. 255.
programmes, which point towards the same. These broad aims can accommodate practically any scheme or programme.

It was found that the objectives of the NGOs did not actually specify the kind of role they would be undertaking. A point in the case is that of LKS, which was established for spreading environmental awareness and rural development. It has taken up rural development programmes because the NGO feels that rural development and environment education go hand in hand. The NGO has done commendable work in terms of creating awareness among the people for protecting the wetlands of Punjab. In the process it realized that water harvesting techniques had to be taught to the people if they are to save the ponds. Thus, they began to undertake certain projects for this purpose. However, it has also opened a creche. Though not directly connected to rural development or environment the NGO feels that any step for the integrated development of the area is worthwhile. It therefore aims at providing education to the women and children also. Such programmes are meant for 'meeting the holistic needs of the beneficiaries'. The NGO admits that funding is a crucial factor for doing quality work. Therefore activities which help in the overall development of the people should be taken up.60 LKS mirrors the dilemma of many other NGOs for whom funding is an important aspect of doing good work and eventually, their survival.

Both field experiences and funding can cause a shift in their original objectives, programmes and beneficiaries.

...changes in the original objectives are caused mainly by two factors: the changing needs of the community and funding. This NGO began with a modest set of objectives to serve the poor, particularly agricultural laborers. It started issuing small loans to help the villagers who wanted to purchase cattle and fodder. Responding to the needs of the villagers the NGO established cottage industries to generate more employment opportunities.61

'Funds and resources of NGOs are a sensitive issue. NGOs are now being referred to more and more in the context of funds and their utilization'.62 17 of the 20 NGOs in the sample of the study have government as its major donor agency (excluding SIDT, VHAP and SKSS). All of the NGOs (except the SIDT) have

60 Interview with the researcher on 4.09.08.
61 Sooryamoorthy. 'Incongruity between Objectives, Programmes and Beneficiaries', pp. 265-266.
worked with government support for development at one time or the other. Welfarist measures are undertaken by many of the organizations from time to time with their own initiative. To the questions on funds, NGO workers respond that it is not always easy to mobilize funds from within the community and therefore they seek help from external sources. It is the question of survival for many.

In India, however, the effort of NGOs to raise money from the public have met with dismal failure. The reason, it seems, lies in the fact that the Indian mind does not accept that the NGOs are ‘serving the people’. As a result, NGOs fall back on Government funding and merely become Government ‘contractors’.  

Further, ‘It appears that the birth of NGOs is not always closely linked with the needs of the people or community where they start work. Rather they remain as self-employment ventures of the founder or his or her team. Objectives and strategies are, more and more conceived in a haphazard manner. This is quite revealing in the case of recently formed development organizations in West Bengal, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh’. Many a times it appeared that the goals had been set at the time of registering the NGO, as a wide base to include every aspect of development. A member of one of the NGOs said that many of the times the NGOs do not formulate the aims and objectives keeping in view the kind of work they want to do rather they pick up memorandum of associations of a few NGOs and formulate their own objectives to get the NGO registered under the Societies Act of 1860. Though, all the NGOs have the objective of general socioeconomic development rather than any specific objective of development. In some cases it was also observed that it was the availability of the projects and funds which at times compelled them to deviate from the originally designed goals and programmes. NGOs which had been formed for some other purpose were taking up government funding too. This is highlighted by a government official also:

People have registered a society and kept office bearers and that becomes an NGO. This registration means it is an NGO? The concept of voluntarism does not come here. Some have registered their societies for bread and butter and are subsequently applying for government grants. For example, some of the

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64 Sooryamoorthy and Gangrade. NGOs in India. p. 10.
65 Interview with staff member of Human Rights Association of Phagwara (HRAP).
66 However, all the NGOs do mention that they would specifically like to target the vulnerable sections of the society like the women, dalits, children, slum dwellers, rural population and so on.
organizations have formed an educational institute and are parallely implementing government of India schemes. Some have fabricated them only on papers. The voluntarism as it should be which should have participation from the grass root is very less.67

The SKSS is basically an ayurvedic institute and hospital. As an institution providing medical services they have been working for the needy patients. They have now started (since 2006) implementing the RCH programme in the nearby villages. There was no agency doing such a work in those areas and the SKSS ventured into this field because they considered it as an extension of their activities.

This shows that the vagueness about the objectives of NGOs is due to both needs felt while working in the field and also due to financial constraints. Lack of clarity of objectives itself begins at the time of formation. In Punjab rarely any scientific attempt precedes the inception of an NGO and the beneficiaries are targeted according to the demands of the projects that are undertaken.

It is also alleged that the NGOs foray into areas which have a scope for relatively larger amounts of money whether there is a need for the same or not. AIDS project he felt, was one such arena in which the NGOs were largely intervening irrespective of the need. There is a thus a lot of ambiguity about the role that the NGOs perform irrespective of their objectives. The prospects for funds are a major motivation of formation and the initiators spot the areas where there is scope for better funded projects. They might move into areas which are not in their original objectives or programmes depending upon the funds that are available. ‘They begin with smaller projects (such as holding seminars, workshops, training camps for children, youth, women or backward sections or small surveys for donors and government departments) before they get access to big projects’.68

This scenario was also found to be true for NGOs in Punjab. The NGOs are grassroots organizations trying to establish themselves with the help of projects initiated through government funds. Being small they do not have much choice in terms of activities that they want to perform and are thus drifted towards

67 Interview with Mr D.S. Bukkal, former Secretary of the Punjab State Social Welfare Board on 17.12.08. Presently, he is the Secretary of Haryana State Social Welfare Board.
68 Sooryamorthy. ‘Incongruity between objectives, programmes and beneficiaries’, p. 268.
implementing government schemes. They face serious crunches in terms of capacity building and support. However, as they gain experience they are able to channelize their resources in a better way.

There are certain NGOs which do stick to their original objectives. A case for the point is that of the AIWC which targets only women and children. This is in keeping with the provisions of their constitution. They undertake government sponsored schemes targeting women and their children like training programmes, crèche schemes for day care of children and providing shelter and rehabilitation services to the displaced and aged women. However, it needs to be mentioned that the management of this NGO come from relatively affluent sections of the society who look upon their involvement with the NGO as a good cause. Moreover, AIWC has a long history of working for the betterment of women.

There are other NGOs which have demarcated certain areas of interventions for themselves. SIDT for instance is a support NGO. They provide a particular kind of service and need not necessarily rely on government support. However, such an example is quite unique in Punjab. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the management has had a long exposure of working with an international NGO i.e. CARE.

We are not sector specific and our primary intervention is in all possible areas were we can provide support. We are basically a support organization. We provide inputs to government and NGOs; to the government in strengthening the reach of their programmes and to the NGOs to better manage their organization and capacity building support to both in terms of capacity enhancement, documentation and in evaluation of projects.

The kind of role being performed by the SIDT is important. As mentioned above, the NGOs in Punjab lack the capacity to initiate self reliant local level development. The job is even more difficult as the government agencies too are not much exposed to the idea of working with the NGOs. NGOs like SIDT help in

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69 The NGOs are small in terms of their outreach activities as they cover limited geographical area. Most of the NGOs that were surveyed were operating in the state only. Besides these, there exist state chapters of larger NGOs also. Examples of VHAP, SOSVA (N) P and AIWC can be cited here. There exists one NGO which is operational at the regional level. The SIDT has its area of operation in the north western region which includes Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana. The SIDT is basically a support NGO which helps the government and NGOs in implementing its various programmes. The NGO has intervened in the field of health, governance, primary education, forestry, watershed development, rural development and women and child development. This also happens to be the only NGO among those surveyed which is registered under the Public Trust Act.

70 Interview with Ms. Gouri, the Director of the SIDT on 20.10.2008.
synchronizing the different actors responsible for development. ‘Such interventions help to bring the state more actively into community life and, in the process, raise local expectations of the state. The result is that the civil society groups thus nurtured, such as community-based organizations (CBOs) or larger local NGOs, are likely to engage more fully with the state in pursuing development aims, while the state should be able and willing to accept such engagement and also deliver results’. 71

NGOs in Punjab have broad aims which have undergone transformations with the changing times and experiences. Many social work organizations have taken up development works gradually with government support. To further understand their role it is necessary to examine the nature of activities undertaken by them.

**NGO Interventions in Punjab**

**Organization Profile**

As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, this study is based on the information collected from 20 NGOs spread in different districts of Punjab. Of these 17 NGOs were found to be operational only at the state level. In terms of geographical coverage, the NGOs are small organizations covering a few districts. One of the NGOs i.e. Support Initiative in Development (SIDT) is operational at the regional level while two of the NGOs Voluntary Health Association of Punjab (VHAP) and Society for Service to Voluntary Organizations- Punjab (SOSVA-P) are state chapters of national NGOs.

In the current era of vast communication networks, internet has become a basic necessity. It is a powerful tool for the dissemination of information. However, the NGOs in Punjab lag behind in this aspect. Only eight of the surveyed NGOs had an access to internet. Seven had managed to set up an email address while only one of the NGOs, the Shanti Swaroop Memorial Educational Society (SSMES) had a website. Here it should be mentioned that one of the NGOs, the Lok Kalyan Samiti (LKS) has set up its blog to highlight the work being done by it.

Libraries are storehouses of knowledge. The present day libraries are not just associated with books but with a wide variety of both electronic and print mediums of information. The NGOs being simple organizations have still not become the

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professional bodies which intervene in the developmental efforts. This is evident from
the fact that only 7 out of the surveyed 20 NGOs had any library facility. These too
were found to be vague collection of materials comprising at times of government
pamphlets or newspaper articles published on the NGO. None of them had any wide
range of literature pertaining to the issues being tackled by the NGOs. Gathering
information about the NGOs thus becomes a difficult exercise.

The staff pattern of all the NGOs varied according to the projects which were
being undertaken by the NGOs. Only eight NGOs were able to give an approximate
number of the staff members working in their organization.

The NGOs in Punjab have been formed by people from diverse backgrounds.
These include retired government officials, politicians, professionals, educationists
and even common people aiming to work for the development of the people. NGOs
like MSS, MKSK, SOSVA, and SDPN have been formulated by the retired
government officials. LCHC, PYF and SSWS have been formed by politicians.
SEWA- P and GADSS have been formed by professional doctors. ARTI, SKSS and
SSMES have been formed by educationists. SIDT, RAHI, SWRDC, AIWC, VHAP,
RHDC, ASS and LKS have been formed by professional NGO workers.

Nature of programmes and funding pattern

Services provided by the NGOs depend upon the projects being undertaken by
them. They deal with a variety of issues related to health, education and income
generation and other fields like farmer awareness generation, sanitation, animal
husbandry and many more. Distribution of funds of the NGOs are in accordance with
the funding that they receive. Only 7 were able to provide any kind of distribution
based on funding for their programmes.\textsuperscript{72} Largely the NGOs depended on the projects
obtained and had no regular source of funding. The projects undertaken by these
societies come with details of how the money is to be utilised. Majority of the NGOs
(12) were found to be medium in terms of budget i.e. between ten to 90 lacs. Only 2
had a budget more than 90 lac and rest 6 were found to be small NGOs with an annual
budget of less than ten lacs. The main donor agency for the NGOs is the government.
For 17 NGOs their funding had increased over the years. For SOSVA the funding has
largely depended on government budgets. The grant allocated to is further divested by

\textsuperscript{72} Based on field study notes.
SOSVA to other grassroots NGOs. Interestingly, the accountant of AIWC told the researcher that the budget of the NGO had not increased over the years.

In light of the above mentioned profile of the NGOs, their role in the developmental process can be examined now. For the present work, the interventions made by the NGOs in Punjab have been grouped into generations on the basis of their evolving roles in the developmental process.73

The first generation NGO is the typical development NGO which focuses on relief and welfare, and delivers services directly to beneficiaries. The NGO notices immediate needs and responds to them. NGOs in the second generation are oriented towards small-scale, self-reliant local development. At this evolutionary stage, they build the capacities of local communities to meet their needs through 'self reliant local action'.74 At this stage, NGOs try to advance changes in policies and institutions at a local, national and international level; they move away from their operational service providing role towards a catalytic role. Here, the NGO is starting to develop from a relief NGO to a development NGO. Hence, this classification clearly suggests that for a strong and vibrant NGO movement they need to assume the role of bringing about sustainable and long term development. The NGOs should be able to first of all, identify the problems of the people, who have a lesser share in political power and then empower them, through advocacy, to influence those who hold governmental, political and economic power. It is in this perspective that NGOs are viewed as agents of change.

It is against this backdrop that the NGOs were studied. Their programmes were examined in detail and a classification was attempted. 'The word 'programme' means a plan or schedule to be followed, a coordinated group of things to be done or performed. It is also taken to mean a sort of organized activity with a specified objective.'75 In Punjab, the programmes of NGOs cover a wide range of activities dealing with various aspects of human development as given below:

73 This framework for analysing the evolution of NGOs was first put forward by David Korten. For details see David Korten. 1990. Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda, Connecticut: Kumarian Press, pp.113-132.
74 ibid. Korten names the third generation NGOs as 'sustainable systems development'.
Table 3 E: Nature of activities of NGOs in Punjab

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>No. Of NGOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WELFARE ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>Activities based on relief or charity to meet basic needs like food, clothing, housing, distribution of goods (may be in response to disaster or crisis) etc.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>Activities focused on developing the capacities of people to better meet their needs e.g. providing training Self help groups, marketing, etc.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>Activities undertaken with the intention of influencing policy or decision making.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NETWORKING</td>
<td>Activities aimed at promoting a broader social vision and assisting other NGOs and social groups towards that vision.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION</td>
<td>Activities aimed at participatory research and publication that allows for legitimate claims for intervention.</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Field Study Notes

The survey revealed that a substantial number of NGOs (eleven out of twenty) undertook relief and charity activities. All of them undertook developmental activities in one form or the other. Only one-fourth of them were involved in advocacy activities though half of them were trying to build some kind of a network with other agencies. However, only three of the NGOs were found to be involved in research and publication. These have been studied in detail:

1. Welfare Activities

Punjab has a rich legacy rooted in charity and welfare. Infact service to humanity is considered as service to God. In Sikhism, numerous accounts exist where *sewa* is considered as one of the chief ways of attaining *nirvana* or salvation. The Gurdwaras have facilities like learning places, knowledge centers, hospitals, free food (*langars*), services for the downtrodden and rest houses. There are numerous

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76 Of the above mentioned categories- welfare activities are generally associated with philanthropist organizations. Development through providing services is regarded as a conventional role of NGOs. Advocacy has been looked upon as an emerging area of NGO intervention aimed at the larger good of attaining behavioural changes. Networking is seen as an activity which is crucial for forming a consensus regarding the NGO interventions whereas research allows for legitimate and need based development initiatives to be undertaken.

77 The number of NGOs exceeds twenty since the same NGO was found to undertake different categories of activities at the same time.

78 For this read Balkar Singh (Ed.), 1998. *‘Sewa Da Sikh Sankalp’*, Patiala: Punjabi University. The book (in Punjabi) brings together series of articles which trace in detail the perceptions of *sewa* or service to humanity, in Sikh religion over the ages. In contemporary times, it considers Bhagat Puran Singh of Pingalwara, as an ideal example of the spirit of humanism which is considered as service to God himself. It has also been agued that the modern day *Sabhars* and Societies which are undertaking charity and development work are not to be related to Sikhism because they have adopted western ideology of service and have moved away from the true spirit of *sewa* as envisaged in Sikhism.

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organizations formed by the people of Punjab which undertake these charity based activities. Chief among them are activities like helping the poor and needy with provision of free ration and clothes, uniforms to poor children, medical and financial aid to poor people, marriage of poor girls, provision of artificial limbs to the handicapped among other things.80

They indulge in these activities due to the strong spirit of helping fellow beings. They are mainly local organizations bearing strong influence of religion. These indigenous organizations which undertake a myriad of social and religious activities like organizing and participating in religious programmes, Nagar kirtans, repairing of Shamshan ghats (cremation grounds), maintaining Goshalas (places where cows are kept and taken care of), organizing tours to religious places and maintenance of gurdwaras and other religious places like temples.81 These activities are undertaken on a wide scale in the state. Infact this is considered as one of the main reasons for the lack of NGO movement in Punjab. It has been argued that ‘the need for NGOs did not arise in Punjab because organizations promoting the cause of the poor and the downtrodden have always been an integral part of the rural and urban life of the people’.82 The need for NGOs therefore was not felt to a great extent.

Besides carrying on the legacy of the teachings of Holy Scriptures, the motivation for many of the NGO personnel especially the field NGOs (FNGOs) for associating themselves with such activities was the idea of helping people rather than organizing them for any sort of activity for placing demands on the state. NGOs like SSWS were formed with similar purpose. The NGO was formed to help the poor and needy women and for that set up a Family Counseling Centre. Slowly the activities of the NGO spread into other areas like training centre for girls and education for child labor.83

79 Translated by the researcher from Jagir Singh, ‘Sikh Dharam Vich Sewa’ in Singh (Ed.), Sewa Da Sikh Sankalp, p. 103.
81 ibid. The directory also lists out organizations formed with the mission of propagating religious teachings like the Guru Teg Bahadur Foundation, Faridkot which aims at propagating the mission of Guru Teg Bahadur. However, the Directory also lists out a number of NGOs in Punjab undertaking activities like ‘social projects’ though it has not been specified as to what exactly constitutes this category.
82 Translated by the researcher from Towards Participation, 2007. ‘Punjab de lok prashasan which saweichak sangathan raasih mihvaraan prabandh diyayan sambhavanavaan’, Chandigarh: Centre of Participatory Management and Voluntary Organisations (CPMVO).
83 Based on interview with Santosh Aneja, Director of SSWS on 23.08.08.
Another case is of the Manav Sudhar Sabha (MSS). According to its founder Triloki Nath Sharma, the NGO was created initially with the idea of repairing mandirs and helping in community service. Its constitution states that, ‘For dharmic activities the NGO will be known as Mandir Sudhar Sabha’. Today however, the NGO is taking up service delivery projects funded by the government. In this process of conditioning and exposure to developmental programmes, it has moved away from asserting its religious identity to a large extent.

Philanthropic efforts are not synonymous with the nature of work done by NGOs. However, in Punjab efforts of certain motivated individuals have led to the formation of voluntary organizations which are now gradually and slowly with necessary capacity building (that is being provided from different channels like the government or various NGOs themselves) are graduating to what can be termed as the contemporary ‘NGOs’. Shaheed Kartar Singh Sarabha is one such NGO.

SKSS is basically an Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital situated in village Sarabha, Ludhiana. The organization has been involved in various humanitarian acts and is now providing maternal health care services through government initiated scheme of RCH which emphasizes on the involvement of NGOs.

The hospital has, on humanitarian grounds, tried to help the poor and needy patients by giving good medical treatment at concessional rates. According to the Director of the NGO, Col. Deol, the collective discount given to the poor patients comes out to be in thousands. No account of money is kept for such cases. Funds are generated as and when required. The effect of tradition and religion is also visible. ‘Free food is provided to the patients, their attendants and is open for all in GURU KA LANGAR throughout the day in the Gurdwara Sahib of the institution’. The main focus remains on the hospital and its upcoming dental college. The NGO is a subsidiary activity for them. Avtar Singh Grewal, (an NRI and the chairman of the institution) is the man responsible for rejuvenating the institute. Previously it was in a sick state. It is largely due to the efforts of SOSVA that the institution is now engaging in providing the RCH services in the nearby backward areas. Being made

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84 MSS. Constitution Booklet. Saiiba Majri: Ropar, p. 6. Year not mentioned. The society formally became Manav Sudhar Sabha in the year 1979. Previously it has existed as Mandir Sudhar Sabha and was registered so in the year 1968.
85 Interview with the researcher on 3.09.08.
86 Pamphlet issued by the NGO. Year not mentioned.
responsible for government money they have started keeping financial accounts of the same. Otherwise the NGO is a sideline organisation to their hospital and the motivation behind it has been to help those in need. Otherwise the NGO is a sideline organisation to their hospital and the motivation behind it has been to help those in need.

Today they have a medical college with a sprawling campus. This is an organization which is subsequently making a journey of transition from a charitable organization to a development oriented NGO by involving itself in government funded projects. There are other NGOs which besides implementing government schemes are also undertaking welfare oriented activities like distribution of textbooks, notebooks and other such items to needy students, distribution of blankets to poor or old people and many other such activities. SSMES, MKSK, SDPN, SEWA (P), ARTI, RHDC, AIWC are all part of the same set.

This case reflects a typical example of the nature of NGOs functioning in Punjab. This is a distinct situation as compared to the origin of efforts like SEWA which came up to organize people on a common platform and help them raise their voices for a united goal. They do not perform isolated activities of distributing goods. Punjab NGOs are underlined by religion which happens to be a magic word to attain consensus and building a rapport with the people they want to target. Moreover, it is by virtue of undertaking government projects that various institutions are now becoming synonymous to NGOs. In this process they are slowly making a journey of transition from religious to development arenas.

2. Development Activities

On the basis of the survey it was found that all the NGOs intervene in developmental activities in at least one of the following fields.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Field Of Intervention</th>
<th>NGOs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Income Generation</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Any Other</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Field Study Notes

87 Based on interview with the researcher on 3.09.08.
2 a) Health Interventions

‘In Punjab, NGOs have done outstanding work for mass camps for cataract operations and blood donation’. The survey showed that the major intervention areas in the field of health included awareness generation for a range of issues like female foeticide, maternal health, AIDS, drug-addiction, alcoholism, providing reproductive and child health services, safe drinking water and sanitation; setting up of ayurvedic mobile dispensary, free dispensaries for poor, free eye camps, free medical camps, blood donation (camps or rallies), immunisation camps. 19 out of the 20 NGOs surveyed intervened in the field of health either through providing services like capacity building for smaller NGOs or providing door to door services. Only SIDT did not intervene in health related projects. While VHAP, SOSVA are organisations for capacity building rest are grassroots organisations providing services to the people. The Ludhiana Citizen’s Health Council (LCHC) is an advocacy organisation.

LCHC is an awareness generation NGO for health in Ludhiana. It was formed in the year 1992, as a forum to create awareness about the Alma Conference of 1977 which aimed at ‘Health for all by 2000 A.D.’. It aims at making every Indian the custodian or the architect of his health. The LCHC believes that health for all cannot be achieved until all work for health. Health has to come from people themselves. Health can never come from the PGI or the CMC. The LCHC is working for HIV awareness since Ludhiana has a lot of migrant population which is a vulnerable target and also for road safety and related issues like footpath encroachments.

Besides the above mentioned activities NGOs were also popularising the traditional and non-conventional systems of medicines. These include non-allopathy systems. NGOs were creating awareness among the community about the preventive, promotive and curative aspects of AYUSH system. These systems are cost effective. NGOs made efforts to dissipate knowledge about the availability of herbs used for

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89 In interview with Dr S.K.Gupta, the Director of LCHC on 20.8.08.
90 www.indianmedicine.nic.in (Accessed on 2-05-09). AYUSH system stands for Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy. The Department of AYUSH is undertaking a variety of schemes for promotion of the Indian system of medicine. One of the schemes is for providing grant-in-aid to NGOs for its promotion. Objectives of the scheme are to create and increase awareness among the community about the preventive, promotive and curative aspects of ISM&H systems (Indian System of Medicine and Homeopathy), its cost effectiveness, increase availability of herbs and such other things.
prevention and treatment of common ailments and the technique for growing such
herbs and other medicinal plants. The scheme is intended to create an interest
particularly in looking after basic primary health needs through ISM approach.91
Manav Kalyan Siksha Kendra, an NGO active in Mohali, is actively involved with
this programme. The MKSK organises camps for promotion of use of home made
medicines, and trains farmers for planting herbal plants like neem, tulsi, amala and
many more. They try to organise interaction sessions for the same. Private
practitioners of Ayurveda, experts and people are brought together on a common
platform to promote its usage. The NGO also organises Ayurvedic melas for the
same.92 Many of the NGOs associated with SOSVA were making efforts to provide
reproductive and child health services in the state.

2 b) Education

Intervention of NGOs in the field of formal education is not very substantial in
Punjab. According to Dr Arvinder Nagpal of GADSS, ‘There are not many NGOs
working in the field of education in Punjab primarily because state structures of
formal education are quite adequate’.

The most popular educational activities taken up by the NGOs were crèche
programmes, condense courses for girls, efforts for claiming dropouts, adult
education, vocational training like stitching, embroidery, craft, computer training to
girls.

Crèches provide support services for working and ailing mothers. It helps in
providing pre-school education to little children while also acting as day care centres.
They are quite popular programmes of the NGOs.

Training programmes undertaken by NGOs are quite popular especially
among girls. It is seen as fulfilling dual needs of education and skill training for
income generation. Girls prefer such training because it enables them to learn skill or
art while simultaneously helping them to operationalise trade for home thereby adding
to family income and also being available for domestic necessities. These activities
are looked upon as fulfilling dual purposes of education and skill training for income
generation. Hence, a lot of NGOs are providing these skill training activities. Though

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91 This programme is sponsored by the Department of Indian Systems of Medicine, Ministry of
Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. The project is implemented by SOSVA (N) P
through Field NGOs.

92 Based on interview with Renu Sharma, Secretary of Manav Kalyan Siksha Kendra on 17.06.07.
small scale courses are being organised by many of the NGOs a comprehensive vocational cum technical training programme called the Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) was also being implemented in Ludhiana district by GADSS.  

There are other local issues regarding education which are being addressed by the NGOs in Punjab. For example the state faces an acute problem of school dropouts. A large number of children are unable to pursue basic education and even if they do, many gradually drop out. NGOs are making efforts are made to mainstream the children who could not complete their studies. Simultaneously programmes are undertaken for skill development and training of girls and boys to enable them to make a decent living. Condense courses are being run by NGOs to enable the students to acquire skill and education at the same time. MKSS organises condense courses for girls who have not been able to complete formal schooling. They teach the girls some skill like stitching or embroidery besides a small syllabus on completion of which girls are awarded degrees of matriculation or higher secondary. This is a programme organised by the CSWB. To reclaim the dropout children at the primary level, coaching centres have been opened by the SOSVA (N) P with active support from village leaders. Books and nutrition of the students are also taken care of at these centres. Here SOSVA acts as a Field NGO. 

The report mentions that besides Jallandhar (1350), Amritsar (2316) and Ludhiana (2051) are the other two industrial cities with high number of working children. Schools for child labour are also set up by NGOs with government support. In the year 2000, twenty-seven schools were started in Jallandhar district for dealing with child labour. Various NGOs have been involved in this project. Among the NGOs surveyed, such efforts were being made by Shiv Saran Welfare Society (SSWS). It has child labour schools in two slum areas of Ludhiana; Rishi Nagar and Moti Nagar. In each school around 100 children are provided education. The SSWS

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93 Presently, the JSS is being implemented in two districts of Punjab- Mohali and Ludhiana.  
94 *Annual Progress Report*, 2006-07. Chandigarh: SOSVA(N) P. Forty coaching centres were opened in Majri and Kharar blocks of Mohali districts. In 2005-06, 221 students were able to join formal education due to these coaching centres. In 2006-07, 765 students were able to join academic classes. Unlike other projects which the SOSVA (N) P runs through FNGOs, this is being implemented by the NGO itself.  
96 *Annual Progress Report*, 2006-07. Ludhiana: Shiv Saran Welfare Society. This scheme is sponsored by the Labour Department. According to the PHDR, 2004, there are more than 2051 working children in Ludhiana.
also has a Central Social Welfare Board sponsored course for adult education at Threekay in Ludhiana where 25 people are enrolled.97

2 c) Income Generation

For income generation the NGOs in Punjab are making an effort on two fronts. While on one hand micro credit skills are being instilled in the people by forming Self-Help Groups (SHGs) on the other, skill training for capacity building is being provided. This enables the people to enter the bracket of the skilled labour. 17 out of the 20 surveyed NGOs were helping people to generate income. Training for capacity building is a popular activity. There is a great demand for it. Such vocational courses help the students to learn some trade and at the same time add to the family income. Training is also imparted in the self-help groups to help the members for income generation through a host of activities like darri making, food preservation, dona making, stitching and various other easy and small trades.98

2 d) Other Interventions

Besides the interventions mentioned in the fields above, the NGOs undertook a host of other activities for aged persons, social security, various other HelpAge India sponsored programmes, awareness generation programmes on social issues like dowry, legal rights of women. The social security programmes undertaken in collaboration with organisations like the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) are popular in the rural areas.99 These are the interventions of the NGOs with respect to development and service delivery in the field of health, education and income generation. There are newer areas of intervention like advocacy, research and networking which today are looked upon as crucial for increasing the role effectiveness of NGOs. Efforts for NGOs in these emerging areas are examined below.

3. Advocacy Activities

The interventions in development scheme are conventional roles of NGOs. Advocacy is seen as one of the emerging roles of NGOs in the contemporary times. General literature about NGOs has documented that, in every decade since the 1940s,

97 ibid.
98 While art, craft, embroidery, paper plate making and various other such activities appeared popular among girls, for boys such courses are lesser in number though the Jan Sikshan Sansthan (JSS) does take care of such activities for them.
99 As told to researcher during interview with Jagtar Singh of SWRDC, Nurpur Bedi. This programme involves selling insurance policies to the villagers which extends a cover to the vulnerable poor population in case of an emergency like death or accident.
and particularly in the last two decades advocacy has increased worldwide as an NGO activity'. 100 'Advocacy is a tool used to promote improved performance, shift priorities and highlight areas of concern'. 101 It is considered as an important means for mobilizing people to help them organize as a pressure group for sensitizing the people and influencing public policy. NGOs all over the world are today shifting more towards advocacy activities given their supposed effectiveness in sustainable development. 'NGOs have metamorphosed; no longer acting simply as donors of practical assistance to communities in developing nations, they are now active advocates seeking to change national, regional and global policies and structures which perpetuate poverty'. 102 Advocacy at the community level needs awareness generation about the issues that are voiced. Awareness building is an essential part of advocacy as such activities are essential to highlight issues being raised by the NGOs to sensitize a wider audience for the same.

In Punjab, NGOs at the grassroots level, lack the capacity to employ different strategies for creating awareness among the target population. Generally, when an NGO intervenes in any area to begin with it needs to establish a rapport with the people and then spread awareness among them regarding the task it wants to take up. Since NGOs in Punjab generally take government projects, they remain confined to the programme. It seems they lack both vision and financial capacity to integrate a number of issues for the welfare of the people. This is evident from the fact that awareness building by the NGOs is limited to the efforts specified under the projects undertaken by them. They do organize some audio-video shows, debates on relevant themes in schools, training camps and workshops for which funding is provided in the project but awareness generation through more popular mediums like street plays, puppet or cultural shows, support from print and electronic media and building local level popular institutions are largely absent. Implanting of success stories to gain popular co-operation and win support of the people is also not encouraged on a large scale. It is hard to find success stories of development in Punjab. This is not because action is missing at the grassroots level but the documentation capacity of the NGOs

101 Zohir. 'NGO Sector in Bangladesh', p. 4110.
102 Rugendyke. NGOs as Advocates for Development in a Globalising World, p. 43.
that could facilitate the wide spread message of NGO-led development is rather obviously lacking.

Only five NGOs namely The VHAP, SOSVA N (P), LKS, LCHC and the AIWC were undertaking advocacy activities to mobilize people for some issue. The VHAP has done some commendable work for female feticide. It aims at bringing sustainable changes and feels that short term programmes to deal with the issue do not work. ‘It has made both legal and moral interventions against the problem of declining child sex ratio. It filed a PIL for the satisfactory implementation of Pre-natal Diagnostic Technique Act- 1994’. For community mobilization on the issue, VHAP has organized meetings with various religious leaders in order to facilitate the Hukum Nama issued by the Akal Takht. It has also organized state level advocacy workshops for local MLAs and media persons for sensitizing them about the graveness of the issue. Moreover, it is trying to transfer advocacy into action by launching a campaign with Panchayat Members, Mahila Mandals and other grassroots agents.

The AIWC at the national level has been responsible for initiating a number of legislative reforms for the benefit of women and children. Some of the post independent legislative measures include: Monogamy in family law; inter-community marriage; Women’s right to divorce, re-marriage, maintenance from separated husband or son, adoption of child (for single woman), acquire and inherit property and hold it absolutely; maternity benefits act; Equal pay for equal work with men was secured for working women (1958, 1976); the prohibition of giving and taking of dowry (1961); the Suppression of Immoral traffic in Women Act. The Punjab chapter of the AIWC was registered as a separate entity in 1984. It has however not been able to contribute much in terms of organizing people on issues that bring them in conflict with the government though it is making substantial efforts for providing useful services to women.

Here the case of LKS deserves a special mention. The LKS, a young and local level organization, displays a remarkable vision of environmental concerns. It is a

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103 VHAP has also filed a case in the Supreme Court in 2006 for proper and effective implementation of PCPNDT Act and also for sex selection kit.
104 The All India Women’s Conference was founded in 1926 by Margret Cousin, an Irish lady, who made India her home. Her main concern was women’s education but gradually the AIWC took up many related issues concerning women such as purdah, child marriage, divorce and so on. Sarojini Naidu, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur are some of the personalities who were associated with the AIWC.
105 Based on a pamphlet issued by the NGO on 10th August, 1996.
classic example of local initiatives at work for global issues. It is making efforts for major environmental problems which affect the world as well as like wetlands rescue, the Asian Brown Cloud\textsuperscript{106} and the fast depleting reducing water table. The LKS has been trying to sensitize the policy makers on many such issues. It has had some success. Concerned with the ever reducing water table in the region, it advocated sowing of paddy after 15\textsuperscript{th} of June every year. Farmers would sow it before time to reap more profits. This led to depletion in the water table. The NGO tried to create awareness for the same and was able to convince the District Commissioner to intervene.\textsuperscript{107} Presently, the NGO is trying to educate the farmers to bury the waste of paddy rather than burning it because it leads to global warming, pollution, choking among other health hazards.\textsuperscript{108}

Both SOSVA and LCHC are working for spreading awareness among people. While SOSVA is intervening in health as well as education, LCHC is concerned only with health. However, NGOs do not organize people to place demands on the state. Chief reason being that they are small, lack necessary capacity for the same and also require government support for their survival and therefore can not come into conflict with it. Advocacy is a felt need of the NGOs for inducing any attitudinal changes. ‘[E]xperience is almost wasted unless it is used to change the attitudes and practices of decision makers’.\textsuperscript{109} This is easier said than done. Negotiating with the state on policy reform can be any NGOs nightmare. ‘It may be difficult to find time form the project work to develop necessary skills of advocacy. NGOs may be afraid of alienating officials, perhaps because this might lead to the loss of foreign funds- or, in the case of Northern NGOs, to expulsion from the country’.\textsuperscript{110} Moreover, changes at the local level are the most difficult to induce. It involves both institutional changes as

\textsuperscript{106} For much of the year, South Asia languishes under a thick brown haze known as ‘Brown Cloud’. Sarabjit Dhaliwal. 2007. ‘The Poisoning of Punjab- Heavy pollution of land, soil, air and water going on unchecked’, \textit{The Tribune} (Chandigarh), October 15. The burning of paddy waste is responsible for this and the author also says that Punjab has contributed significantly to the thickening of this haze.

\textsuperscript{107} As told to the researcher during interaction on 4.09.08.

\textsuperscript{108} This is a serious problem in Punjab. In the years between 1970 and 2005, Punjab’s temperature has gone up by one degree Celsius and its humidity level during the rainy season remains very high. For details see Sarabjit Dhaliwal. 2007. ‘The Poisoning of Punjab’.


\textsuperscript{110} \textit{ibid.}, p. 156. The author mirrors the ground realities of the NGOs and reasons why NGOs are not very keen on undertaking advocacy exercises.
well as development of new capacities. Developing new capacities involves influencing people who are satisfied with the ways of working of the system.

Unlike adjustment, which concentrates on changes in legislation and central government policies, “micro-policy reform” requires complex institutional changes, the development of new capacities and new institutional roles and, most critically, changes in attitudes. In comparison, macro-policy reforms are easy. They can be achieved by governments taking action in the capital city alone, for example making decisions to devalue the currency, reduce subsidies, increase producer prices, or liberalize markets. Micro-policy reforms may require central government action, but also action by local government officials, changes in local institutions, and careful re-training of all those whose co-operation is required for the reforms to be effective”.  

This entails a deliberate strategy of making time to talk with government servants, aid officials, journalists, academics, and others. …such reforms are not only socially desirable, but they would all contribute to improving economic efficiency.  

Given its inherent peculiarities, advocacy can be an arduous exercise. It might lead to the NGOs coming in direct conflict with the state as it entails the questioning of the status quo. In Punjab, where the NGOs were found to be mostly dependent on the state funding, this attitude would not be very helpful for their cause. Hence, not many cases of such efforts came to light during the study. Besides reflecting on their weak nature, it also shows the need for further enhancing the capacities of the NGOs themselves. For this they need to have more exposure both for the internal management of their organizations, its visions as well as that of the development map they want to chalk out.

4. Networking

Collaborations can help in creating complimentary synergies. ‘Even though there are a lot of NGOs in Punjab, the problem is that they are not organised’.  

Out of the 20 NGOs surveyed, only 10 were aiming at broadening the scope of networking or organized activity. Even then they did not have any formal association with other NGOs undertaking similar programmes. This is not to suggest that there is absolutely no efforts for any joint action but rather towards the fact that such efforts remain

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111 ibid., p. 158.
112 ibid., p. 158.
113 Interview with Arvinder Singh Nagpal, Director of GADSS on 15.08.2008.
diluted and far in between. One such initiation is the Confederation of Rural Industries (CNRI). Of the NGOs surveyed, six were the members of CNRI.\(^{114}\)

CNRI is an Apex Body of NGOs of rural India with the specific objective of strengthening, coordinating and facilitating their working at the grass root level for integrated development of the rural India.\(^{115}\) Besides that it aims to help in formation of think-tank organizations as well as consultative bodies at the national and international level. At the national level, the CNRI has been forwarding the cause of forming state level and district level GO-NGO Committees. On the whole the platform has not gained momentum in Punjab. The meetings of the Punjab state chapter are held once in a while but not much headway has been made. The efforts of the group remain scattered.

Besides this, there are other lesser known examples of collaboration between different NGOs. LKS has formed a Joint Action Committee to address ecological issues.\(^{116}\) However, the impact of such groups is yet to be seen. Many of them disintegrate after a one-time show of strength. The reason for the same is perhaps that the NGOs after coming together are not able to work with a common orientation. This is due to the fact they are greatly involved in individually attaining government projects. They do not either wish to or are unable to organise themselves collectively for forwarding their cause. Most of the NGOs though were in favour of forming networks yet the interest in the follow up of the collective activity remains weak. A few of the NGOs are also involved in rivalries though not in the open. Atmosphere of suspicion is evident inter as well as intra sector\(^{117}\).

However, this scenario is representative of major networks in development sector in India. In India, the NGO sector has historically not been very conducive to fostering collaborations or partnerships either with agencies outside the sector or within the sector itself. Most NGOs have tended to work independently in issues especially at the project level, and on occasions when they have come together on a common platform it has been on very specific short-term initiatives.\(^ {118}\)

The reasons for this are as complex as the sector in India. Given the fact that there are over a million organisations of differing sizes, capacities and

\(^{114}\) GADSS, RAHI, SWRDC, ASS, PYF and LKS.

\(^{115}\) www.cnri.in (Accessed on 15.08.08).


\(^{117}\) Based on personal observations of the researcher.

commitments, working across the country, and with a range of methodologies starting from charity and welfare-oriented activities to strong developmental and empowerment-oriented activities, the problematique of collaborations and partnerships becomes even more complex. Another sociological and cultural factor is that NGOs in India are mainly headed by strong visionary individuals who have created their own specific niche, as well as following within the sector. The result, therefore, is a ‘camp’, and the intense competition between these ‘camps’ is not always conducive to partnerships.  

This scenario is also true for Punjab. The NGOs have a single or a few chief individuals by whom the NGO is identified and there is always a danger of their personal vision being superimposed on that of the organisation. In such conditions personal favours and informal cooperation prevails but formal partnerships for mutual reinforcements and synergy fail to progress. The organizational linkages thus, are not very strong. Collaborations do exist but they fail to function as a constructive platform for experience sharing and meaningful and collective dialogue. The partnerships lack thematic discussions or sharing of information and hence are unable to devise innovative strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of on-going programmes.

5. Research and Publication

In Punjab the number of NGOs undertaking research activities is scarce and hence efforts for publication remain limited. All the NGOs have an annual report but only 10 out of 20 have published any other material. The annual report generally lists the activities undertaken by the NGOs for the year. The other material published includes pamphlets, brochures and other such related material demanded by projects undertaken by the NGO. Efforts made for producing awareness generating literature remain quite limited. Few NGOs have realised their importance. In such a scenario efforts of NGOs like VHAP are mention worthy. This NGO publishes a newsletter in Punjabi ‘Sadhi Chitthi Tishawde Naa’ (Our message for you) in which they try to inform the people about the activities of the NGO and the cause that they are addressing. Others undertake publishing of literature when required. For instance SOSVA (N) P has made an effort to publish the policy guidelines for the FNGOs it works with. Some of the NGOs like AIWC and LCHC have been publishing certain

\[\text{Ibid., pp. 237-238.}\]
souvenirs on special occasions\textsuperscript{120}. However, such efforts are few and far and the work is not research oriented. Some of the NGOs like the VHAP and LKS have been undertaking research activities. Whereas the VHAP is undertaking research on women related subjects like female feticide the efforts of LKS are more empirical in nature\textsuperscript{121}. It is trying to sensitize people on issues concerning environment. It has done some commendable research for wetland preservation\textsuperscript{122}. LKS is trying to educate the people about vanishing wetlands like Harike in Ramsar village. Their modus operandi is to involve people and make them feel emotionally attached with nature. The NGO has identified wetlands in areas around Amritsar which have certain history attached to it and is trying to revive those wells, ponds and tanks.

The chief reason for the less visibility of research efforts is the NGOs lack capacity for documentation of their work and hence subsequent failure to derive lessons from them. This is related to the lack of research based organisations in Punjab. ‘The good efforts and lessons learnt not being captured due to low focus on documentation. The programs are mainly grant based/ donor driven rather than research/need based.’\textsuperscript{123}

One of the chief reasons for the same is the influence of traditional image of the social sector which attributes only social reforms and developmental functions for the NGO. The NGOs are looked upon as ‘bhalai sansthas’\textsuperscript{124} or welfare organisations rather than instruments of inducing sustainable changes. Infact not only the people but the NGO themselves lack capacity for research based activities. Given their weak base they are not oriented towards such activity. Moreover, there remains the omnipresent problem of resources. Government projects aim at direct and visible intervention. Support for activities like research is hard to find. The NGOs being small organisations do not have the necessary funds. Moreover, ‘less of educated and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{120} All India women’s conference published a souvenir on its silver jubilee in the year 2004 to mark 25 years of its formation. The LCHC also publishes it once in five years.
\item \textsuperscript{121} The LKS is trying to develop a model farm by using natural means of developing crops, use of biopesticides, biofertilizers basically using water saving techniques and maintaining eco-friendly activities at village Bhusa, near Pakhna in district Tarn Taran.
\item \textsuperscript{122} For detailed information see www.lokalyansamitiforyou@blogspot.com.
\item \textsuperscript{123} Strategic Plan. 2008. Chandigarh: CPMVO: Unpublished.
\item \textsuperscript{124} Informal talks with the local shopkeepers where the NGO was functioning and also co-passengers with whom the researcher travelled while reaching the NGO location generally identified them as ‘bhalai sansthas’.
\end{itemize}
professional people who might have such capacity also pose a problem in undertaking such activities. In Punjab, though such efforts are not present to a large extent yet awareness for the same is slowly creeping in.

NGOs need not only be the ones which need to physically do the developmental work themselves; rather they could also be a kind of think tanks. In most of the developed countries there are superior thinking groups – involving scientists, professors, administrators and such other people who are not actively involved at the level of implementation but who have innovative ideas. All they do is get together periodically and brainstorm on issues that are ailing the society. They then propagate these ideas further through print or electronic media or through their own literature, which helps in dissemination of ideas. They are a kind of catalysts in development and their contribution of these thinking groups is just to get together (over a cup of tea) to discuss emerging and upcoming ideas which also exist in plenty in India.

It is evident that the NGOs in Punjab are undertaking conventional activities (acting as mechanisms of service delivery and development) but their visibility in more recent roles like advocacy and research is still limited. Since the interventions in conventional development projects is higher therefore to understand the role that these organizations play in Punjab, a detailed study of the more popular programmes is called for.

Programmes Undertaken By the NGOs

The survey showed numerous fields of activities being undertaken by the NGOs. However, the most important of them were as follows:

125 Based on interactions with Major Singh Sekhon, Director of PYF on 3.07.08.
126 Address of Ramesh Chandra, Principal Secretary, Punjab; during the MGCIPA seminar on 30th October, 2008 at Chandigarh. He was commenting on the lack of research oriented NGOs in Punjab.
127 Besides the ones listed in the table other activities includes those like traffic awareness/ road safety (5), computer training to girls (5), workshops and seminars for capacity building (5).
Table 3 G: Major Programmes Undertaken by NGOs in Punjab

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>NGOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reproductive and child health</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Awareness Generation programme</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Training programme¹²⁸</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Special days, seminars or debates for children</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Crèche programme</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>SHGs/Mahila Mandals</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Family Counselling Centre</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Programmes for older persons</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Field Study Notes

1. Reproductive and Child Health Programme (RCH)

During the post-independence period, Punjab witnessed a high level of economic prosperity which however, did not translate into progress of women. The society remained feudal and women’s development abysmal resulting in a low gender development index.

According to the Punjab Human Development Report, 2004, the Gender Development Index (GDI) for the state is 16th. The Human Development Index (HDI) rank for Punjab is sixth. 'This clearly shows that Punjab’s prosperity is not reaching the women and reinforces the fact that gender inequalities can not be linked to income levels alone.'¹²⁹ Punjab has the lowest child sex ratio in the country (793).¹³⁰ Besides this, maternal health of the state is also in a grim condition.

In the context of the Punjabi society and especially the status of women, LCHC, points out to a grim reality. According to them, the male child is still preferred because of prevailing social customs which include many others besides the well highlighted dowry factor. For instance when a woman dies, even after 40 years of marriage, the cost of her last rites as well as for her husband are borne by the her

¹²⁸ Training programmes included activities like training for jewelry making, stuff toys, beauty culture, craft, stitching, embroidery and many others.


¹³⁰ ibid., p. 120. The report further linked this extreme feature to the increasing incidence of female foeticide as well as negligence of the girl child.
parental family. Moreover, child births too are preferred in the parental house.\textsuperscript{131} There is thus a \textquote{demographic fundamentalism}\textsuperscript{132} which prevails in the state.

The Punjab Human Development Report, 2004 makes a point for tackling this problem, \textquote{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}.\textsuperscript{133}

Though the report brought out these facts in 2004, since 1999, the state government has been trying to create awareness about such social maladies and related health issues, by involving NGOs. Realizing the need for a multi-pronged, integrated approach simultaneously and on an urgent basis the Reproductive and Child Health Programme (RCH) was launched on a wide scale in the state.

14 out of the 20 NGOs studied were involved in delivering services and generating awareness on this issue.\textsuperscript{134} The RCH is mainly concerned with maternal and child health, related issues like family planning, female feticide, and adolescent health. It involves a door to door outreach programme involving NGOs so that every case of pregnancy is registered and continuously monitored both to provide better maternal care and discourage acts of female feticide. The impact of such efforts is still not evident yet this programme does help in addressing a crucial issue in a promising way.\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{131} Based on interview with Dr S.K. Gupta of the Ludhiana Citizen\textquotesingle s Health Council (LCHC). He was of the view that a cultural lag has cropped up in our societies due to change in the structures- both social as well as economical. There has been a shift from large to small families but the desire for the male child remains and the girls get eliminated in the process. For tackling such issues, the LCHC has adopted a multi-sector approach which aims at creating widespread awareness among the people regarding female feticide. Dr Gupta also alleged that LCHC had withdrawn from the SOSVA project of RCH as the system was a corrupt one though he refused to divulge the details. The LCHC is working for awareness generation on health issues in both urban and rural areas of Ludhiana.

\textsuperscript{132} Anand Soondas. 2006. \textquote{Killing Fields}, \textit{The Times of India} (New Delhi), 17 April.

\textsuperscript{133} There are cases of religious bodies intervening for the safety of the girl child. From gurdwaras to schools, leaders of various persuasions are making pleas to put an end to female feticide. Even some granthis and school teachers make it a point to insert a soft prayer for the girl child at various meetings.

\textsuperscript{134} Out of the 14 NGOs working for RCH, one is a Mother NGO- Society for Service to Voluntary Agencies (North) Punjab (SOSVA (N) P) and provides funds to 12 of the surveyed NGOs for the RCH. Two other NGOs were also working for maternal and child health namely Voluntary Health Association of Punjab (VHAP) and Social Work and Rural Development Centre (SWRDC), though these interventions are not through the MNGO.

\textsuperscript{135} According to Manjula Sharma, RCH Coordinator at SOSVA, the efforts of the NGO are aimed not at target achievement but at behavioral change. This exercise will take time.
2. **Self Help Groups (SHGs)**

The success of the Green Revolution has pushed women, so far important contributors in the production process, back into the private domain. They lost their economic interdependence and their higher status within their class, because, with increased income and consequent higher social status for the families, women were the first to be withdrawn from the workforce as symbols of newly acquired status.  

Even though Punjab is looked upon as a developed state in economic terms yet its strong feudal structures have prevented women from attaining economic independence. It is in this prevailing situation that the SHGs are picking up substantially in Punjab.  

For sustainable livelihood options for women, the Punjab Human Development Report accentuates the importance of NGOs by recognizing the role that self-help groups play therein:

> Across India, self-help groups have provided small consumption loans for poor small and marginal farmer families. Could self-help begin to lend on a large scale? The experience of mature self-help groups has shown that such groups are able to handle agriculture credit once they have established links with banks. These groups have managed to reduce indebtedness, ensured timely formal credit at reasonable rates, and have a much better repayment record than previous credit based programmes.

NGOs as agents of organised activity through the SHGs have gained a lot of importance in the recent times. The concept of is very new to the state. NGOs have started realising their importance. ‘[It helps] to make the women self reliant and economically independent. [Through SHGs] the NGO creates awareness and educates the women through village meetings, seminars and workshops about functioning of SHGs. They are made aware that small savings by them through SHGs may lead to big amounts within a small period which they can use in case of any emergency and they will not have to spread their hands before others to borrow money at high interest’.  

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137 Today SHGs have become important showcase of what NGOs can do for development. Examples of success in Bangladesh and Southern India show what microcredit can do to pull people away from the clutches of poverty.


In Punjab, the SHG activity gathered pace after NABARD started assisting in SHGs formation in 1996. Over the years, its partners-both the NGOs and the Self-Help Group Promoting Institutions (SHGPIs) have been increasing. It provides an institutional finance medium to the NGOs for forming 50-100 SHGs. The whole exercise is planned systematically. Previous years’ record of the NGOs is taken into account before extending further grant. Grant is withdrawn in case the group formation is not considered satisfactory. Over the years only one NGO has been blacklisted by NABARD\(^{140}\). For the NGOs this is a great support for forming and organising SHGs. It has helped a lot in building their capacities towards the concept in turn helping in further permeation of the exercise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of NGOs funded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NABARD, Chandigarh

The groups are provided training in a number of activities to help them generate income. Attempts are made to link them to the banks so as to encourage micro-credit activities. Besides linkages to bank, attempts are also made to market the products through various means. Various melas, fairs and other avenues are organised for the sale of goods produced by the groups.

3. Awareness Generation Programmes

A host of awareness generation programmes are undertaken by the NGOs to make people aware on various issues and thus empower them. The NGOs realise that awareness is the basic and necessary activity that needs to be undertaken. It is only through awareness that true empowerment of the people is possible. They should be able to identify the problems and only then will they be able to work towards its solutions.\(^{141}\) The AGP are popular in three areas in Punjab:

\(^{140}\) Rural Environmental Enterprises Development Society (REEDS) was derecognized by U.T. and therefore NABARD discontinued grants to it in the year 2006. Based on interview with NABARD officials on 2.07.07.

\(^{141}\) Interview with Bimla Bhatia, the Hony. Secretary of the AIWC on 4.09.08. The AIWC organizes many awareness camps in and around Amritsar like the National Environment Awareness campaigns, AIDS Awareness and Legal Literacy Awareness.
3 a) AIDS Awareness Programme

Another popular area of NGO intervention in Punjab, six out of the surveyed 20 NGOs were undertaking this programme. ‘The modus operandi for sensitive issues like AIDS has to be very soft in terms of interactions with people’. 142 Areas which are to be targeted are first identified by the NGO officials. Then a peer worker helps in the target identification and generates awareness about the issue through repeated field visits. Anita, peer worker of AIWC for Islamabad, Haripura and Chatta field area revealed that repeated visits are undertaken by her to the FSW and once the FSW is comfortable, a team of outreach workers, doctors and the peer worker hold regular meetings with the FSW and make sure that she is fully aware about the issue.143

3 b) Environment Awareness Programme

12 of the 20 NGOs had undertaken or were undertaking these awareness campaigns sponsored by different agencies. The need for such campaigns is urgent as the state is facing an ‘ecological backlash’.144 This is viewed as the result of damage done to the state’s environment and biodiversity during the years of fast economic growth. ‘However, unaware of the adverse consequences to the state’s environment due to applying certain questionable means, farmers continue to make irrational and excessive use of chemicals in the form of fertilisers and pesticides, and have been resorting to over-exploitation of land and water resources to enhance production’.145 Not only is this adversely affecting the environment (depletion of ozone layer, increase in the number of acidic gases like nitrous oxide, ammonia, sulphur dioxide, hydrogen sulphide to name a few) but also the human health.

Besides many unsafe methods of agriculture in the rural areas of the state, sanitation problems persist. For addressing these problems, major environment awareness programmes concerning solid waste management have been undertaken by the NGOs. Many techniques for safe and useful disposal of human waste through

142 Shivnath Singh, outreach worker for the AIDS programme for AIWC. The AIWC has been working for the issue of Female Sex Workers. 13 field areas have been identified in and around the villages and towns of Amritsar district.
143 Based on interview with AIDS workers of AIWC. According to them, cases relating to IUD (Injection cases of AIDS ) have been identified and are being treated at the Swami Vivekananda Hospital located at Islamabad. For the year 2007-08 AIDS project was undertaken by the AIWC with Alliance India and for 2008-09 it is being sponsored by National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO). The programme was started in May 2008.
144 Dhaliwal. ‘The Poisoning of Punjab’.
145 Ibid. The article also highlights various studies which have come out with the findings that deadly chemicals, pesticides and heavy metals are percolating in the soil and water bodies. From soil these are finding their way into plants including vegetables and crops like wheat and paddy.
methods like vermin compost or earthworm induction are the newer challenges for the NGOs in Punjab. For the year 2006-07, vermin-compost was adopted as the theme for the AGPs wherein the NGOs tried to share with the people the use of vermin compost and also how its units could be installed.

3 c) **Awareness Generation Programmes for Women**

Legal literacy awareness programmes for women were found to be highly popular.

AGPs for rural and poor women is meant to provide them with a platform to come together, exchange their experience, ideas and in the process develop an understanding of reality and also a way to tackle their problems and fulfill their needs. The programs also enable women to organize themselves and strengthen their participation in decision-making in the family and in the society and to deal with social issues including atrocities on women and children.\(^1\)

The tables given below show the NGOs under study that took this programme. Generally sponsored by the CSWB, these programmes help in bringing awareness among the people about social problems related to women, their families and children. While the first table shows the NGOs that got grants from the CSWB, the second one lists out the NGO which was sponsored by the PSSWB.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 I: Sanction and Release Position under Awareness Generation Programme Centralised, 2007-08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institution</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEWA-P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VHAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAHI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWRDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PYF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSSWB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.cswb.gov.in and Punjab State Social Welfare Board (PSSWB), Chandigarh

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Table 3 J: Sanction and Release Position under De-Centralised Awareness Generation Programme, 2006-07

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Amount Sanctioned</th>
<th>Amount Released</th>
<th>No. of Camps</th>
<th>No. of Beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSS</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Punjab State Social Welfare Board, Chandigarh

4. Creche Programmes

The creche scheme is mainly a CSWB supported scheme. It was launched in the year 1975. It provides day-care services to children in the age group 0-5 years. A novel scheme, which encourages the NGO intervention for pre-school child care, it aims to care for the children of working women belonging to economically backward sections of casual, agricultural and construction labor in remote, rural and urban slum areas, who due to work compulsions and constraints of resources, given their poor economic status are unable to care for their children. It also includes those women who suffer from some sickness and are hence unable to attribute much attention to their children. Under this scheme, education, playing and developing resources and supplementary nutrition is provided to the young children.

This programme is undertaken by a fairly good number of NGOs in Punjab. Out of the surveyed 20 NGOs, half had undertaken activities for child care of working mothers. ‘The main objective of the programme is to help the working and ailing mothers and to prevent the problem of malnutrition among the children and to make the children habitual for school going’. For the year 2007-08, in Punjab, around 7000 children were targeted by 51 institutions through the programme.

Table 3 K: Total Grant Released by CSWB, 2007-08 for Punjab

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Centralized</th>
<th>Decentralized</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Institutions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Units</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount Sanctioned</td>
<td>8,47,680</td>
<td>106,38,816</td>
<td>114,86,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount Released 2007-08</td>
<td>8,47,680</td>
<td>95,56,790</td>
<td>1,04,04,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Liabilities</td>
<td>3,03,649</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3,03,649</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non Recurring</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.cswb.gov.in

Table 3 L: Sanction and Release Position under ‘Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for the Children of Working Mothers Centralised’, 2007-08

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Institution</th>
<th>No. of Units</th>
<th>No. of Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Amount Sanctioned</th>
<th>Amount Released</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SSMES</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>500 (approx)</td>
<td>847680</td>
<td>1151329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>PSSWB</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>6475</td>
<td>10638816</td>
<td>9556790</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.cswb.gov.in

Out of the NGOs surveyed, the following undertook the programme in the year 2007-08.

Table 3 M: Sanction and Release Position under ‘Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for the Children of Working Mothers de-Centralised’, 2007-08

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Name of the Institution</th>
<th>No. of Units</th>
<th>Amount Sanctioned</th>
<th>Amount Pertaining to the year 2007-08</th>
<th>Past liabilities cleared during 2007-08</th>
<th>Grand total (Release)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amritsar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>AIWC</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>21,1920</td>
<td>19,0848</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>19,1409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>LKS</td>
<td>05</td>
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<td>152582</td>
<td>17116</td>
<td>169698</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ludhiana</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>GADSS</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>211920</td>
<td>190728</td>
<td>62205</td>
<td>252933</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mohali</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>MSS</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>169536</td>
<td>152582</td>
<td>17536</td>
<td>170118</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patiala</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>PYF</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>423840</td>
<td>381456</td>
<td>44150</td>
<td>425606</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>VHAP</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>423840</td>
<td>211920</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>211920</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rupnagar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>RAHI</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>635760</td>
<td>572184</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>572184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>ASS</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>211920</td>
<td>190728</td>
<td>21192</td>
<td>211920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>SWRDC</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>635760</td>
<td>572184</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>572184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PSSWB, Chandigarh

5. Family Counselling Centres (FCCs)

The FCC, also a CSWB sponsored scheme is another popular area of NGO intervention in Punjab. FCC, short stay homes,149 and awareness generation programmes are popular in Punjab. The FCCs are most helpful in the wake of NRI marriages.150 The objective of the FCC is to provide preventive and rehabilitative services to women and children who are victims of atrocities and family

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148 Out of the 51 NGOs SSMES has set up 20 crèches for which it receives a grant directly from the CSWB. All the other units receive grants from PSSWB.

149 The scheme of short stay home was launched by the Government of India in 1969 to provide temporary shelter to women and girls who are forced into prostitution; who as a result of family tension are made to leave their homes without any means of subsistence and have no social protection from exploitation; are facing litigation on account of marital disputes; have been sexually assaulted; are facing the problem of re-adjustment in the family or society; are victims of mental mal-adjustment, emotional disturbances and social ostracism or who escape from their homes due to family problems, mental or physical torture and need shelter. Of the surveyed NGOs, the AIWC is running a short stay home for such women.

150 Interview with Bukkal, former Secretary of PSSWB on 17.12.08.
maladjustments. The scheme is being implemented by CSWB since 1984 through voluntary agencies.\textsuperscript{151}

The need of FCC has also been stressed on by various NGOs. Punjabis have an inherent ego problem and this frequently leads to family dysfunctionality. Disputes between couples can be triggered by something as slight as the mention of the parents of the man or the women by the other. Besides this, interference of in-laws also is a major factor in such disputes.\textsuperscript{152}

‘In modern times rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, resulting in migration from rural to urban areas has given new dimensions to lives of the people. The darker side of globalisation, immigration, and ravenous power of new technologies has terribly victimized the modern families. The breaking up of the joint family system into nuclear families, contributes considerably in creating problems of adjustment for women, cases of marital conflict and emotional insecurity occur’.\textsuperscript{153}

‘The FCC advises distressed families which are on the brink of breaking up due to some social or marital maladjustment’.\textsuperscript{154} It also deals with dowry dispute, extramarital problems and cases concerning drug abuses.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{ |c|c|c|c|c| }
\hline
Name of the institution & Amount Sanctioned & Amount released pertaining year 2007-08 & Past Liabilities cleared during the year 2007-08 & Total Release \\
\hline
All India Women Conference, Chowk Sharifpura, G.T. Road, Amritsar & 1,92,000/- & 1,82,000/- & 14,140/- & 1,96,410/- \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Sanction and Release Position under Family Counselling Centre De-Centralised, 2007-08}
\end{table}

Source: PSSWB, Chandigarh

\textsuperscript{151} Goyal, \textit{Organization and Structure of Women Development and Empowerment}, p. 243. Under the revised scheme, since 1992-93 a maximum of Rs. One lakh per centre is given for continuation of existing FCCs while Rs. 1.15 lakh is given for the establishment of new FCCs. The salaries of two counselors who are either Post-Graduate in Social work or Psychology and Rs 15000 for recurring items are borne fully by the CSWB while the institution is required to contribute 20% towards other recurring expenditure.

The CSWB has also set up FCCs at police headquarters, jails and educational institutions as part of its emerging roles. Besides this pre-marital counselling centres have also been established.

\textsuperscript{152} Based on interactions with the Major Singh Sekhon, Director of PYF on 3.07.08.

\textsuperscript{153} APR. 2007-08. Patiala: PYF.

\textsuperscript{154} APR. 2006-07. Nurpur Bedi: RAHI.
### Table 3 O: Sanction and Release Position under Family Counseling Centre (Centralised), 2007-08

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>District Covered</th>
<th>Amount Sanctioned</th>
<th>Amount released</th>
<th>No. of Beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PYF</td>
<td>Patiala</td>
<td>192000</td>
<td>192000</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAHI</td>
<td>Ropar</td>
<td>192000</td>
<td>192000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSMES</td>
<td>Chamkaur Sahib</td>
<td>192000</td>
<td>192000</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWRDC</td>
<td>Ropar</td>
<td>192000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSWS</td>
<td>Ludhiana</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSSWB</td>
<td></td>
<td>1433000</td>
<td>1236317</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.cswb.gov.in

5. **Programmes for Older Persons**

In the present day ageing has become a global issue. Older persons are prone to face problems relating to health, alienation, elder abuse, crimes against them, financial and social insecurities.

This has led many international and national organisations to intervene for the welfare of the older persons. At the international level, organisations like the Help Age International; International Association of Lions Club; Rotary International are playing the role of service providers as well as donor agencies which are working at the national or grassroots level are Indian Associations of Retired Persons, Help Age India, Age Care India, Agewell Foundation.

‘Ageing population has been marked as target group in national planning and recognizes the non-government sector as constituting an important institutional mechanism in providing services as also complementing the endeavours of the state’. Therefore to boost up the existing spirit, in 1992, the Ministry of Welfare also initiated a scheme called ‘Welfare of the Aged’ to encourage NGOs through grant-in-aid assistance to set up old age homes, day care centres, mobile medicare and many other schemes for older persons’.

NGOs working for older persons in Punjab are providing economical and social support for older persons- those that are neglected by their near and dear ones. The main focus is towards providing a family environment and psychological support. Activities like pilgrimage tours are also undertaken. These programmes are generally sponsored by the HelpAge and also by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

‘Day care centres, sponsor- a grand parent are some of the popular schemes. Attempts are made to keep them occupied by making small libraries equipped with

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readable material like newspapers, magazines, holy books and so on. Entertainment facilities like TV and games like carom, chess are also provided. A day care centre is a place where elderly people get together to meet their mutual needs. It provides them with opportunities to be socially participative, mentally and physically active, and economically productive. It also enables them to pursue their hobbies and interests, religious activities and discourses, recreation and outings/pilgrimages. NGOs try to make arrangements for providing leisure activities like indoor games, periodical get-togethers, cultural and entertainment programmes, festival celebrations and outings to have pleasure time.

However, the NGOs in Punjab have not ventured into upcoming arenas of interventions for older persons. These areas include activities like providing geriatric services of regular check ups, physiotherapy, fitness programmes, occupational therapy and health and nutrition education. Besides these are the psychiatric services which encompass activities such as counselling, taking care of mental health, and special care for dementia sufferers.

6. Training Programmes

‘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’. 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.

Given this scenario, vocational training programmes were found to be immensely popular in Punjab. ‘These programmes aim at training women in the

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138 ibid.
trades which are marketable and also to upgrade the skills in order to meet the
demands of changing work environment. Main objective of training interventions is to
enable and empower the women to access remunerative employment, opportunities,
which will instil self-confidence and enhance their self-esteem.*

These programmes are undertaken by the NGOs in collaboration with a
number of agencies like CSWB, NABARD, SOSVA (N) P to name a few. Girls and
women are provided short term and long term training in a variety of trades like
Phulkari, embroidery, jewellery making, and other technical courses also like
computer training and health related diplomas. These courses are undertaken for men
also generally rural youth. They are given training in skills like repair of electronic
items like fridge or TV and also automobiles besides technical courses for those with
some education.

7. Celebration of Special Days

NGOs celebrate special days like children’s day, women’s day and so on and
festivals like lohri on a regular basis. Besides cultural presentations these occasions
are utilised to organize seminars, debates or stage plays to sensitize the beneficiaries
towards issues of social importance.

These are the major fields of intervention of the NGOs in Punjab. These
programmes appear to be need based since Punjab which is one of the top states from
the economic perspective is still fraught with certain crucial and significant problems
like unemployment, health problems concerning women and children and even the
status of women both socially and financially.

The above programmes also bring to light another striking feature about the
kind of activities being undertaken by the NGOs in Punjab. Except for a few
initiatives (like those by LCHC, SIDT) nearly all the NGOs are acting as service
delivery mechanisms for the state as their developmental activities are majorly funded
by the government. This calls for a need to examine the relationship between the state
and the NGOs.

Beneficiary related information

Since the NGOs undertake different government projects therefore their
beneficiaries vary from project to project. 16 NGOs had rural women as their

beneficiaries and 11 NGOs targeted both rural as well as urban women. No NGO was found to be working exclusively for urban women. Similarly, 16 NGOs were found to be working for rural children and 11 both for rural and urban children. Only 4 targeted rural youth specifically and 3 targeted both rural and urban. 15 of them had other beneficiaries like family members which come up for counselling at the family counselling centre (FCC), students targeted for environment causes. For SOSVA (N) P it can be said that FNGOs are also beneficiaries since they receive funding from it for the RCH programmes. Besides this the NGOs like Adarsh Sewa Samiti were undertaking programmes like sponsor a grandparent and hence older persons becomes its beneficiaries. AIWC also undertakes programmes for older women. NGOs like LKS target rural farmers (for LKS environment and rural development go hand in hand). Regarding the increase in number of beneficiaries, it was difficult for the NGOs to state clearly whether the beneficiaries had increased because in all projects being undertaken by the NGOs beneficiaries are pre-determined.

Community Participation

The NGOs in Punjab are not able to promote community participation to a great extent. 14 NGOs were of the view that they were able to involve people at the level of initiating the project. (LCHC, SOSVA, VHAP, SSMES, PYF, GADSS, RAHI, SWRDC, SIDT, SWRDC, AIWC, SSWS, LKS and RHDC). While it is true that any project being implemented by the NGOs at the grassroots level requires community support, however, projects based on pre-determined rules and regulations do not present a great opportunity for encouraging community participation. The demand for the services do not come from the people rather they are planned at the departmental level or at best, in certain cases by NGOs who might take into account certain grassroots conditions. However, the NGOs themselves are helpless in bringing in any great change to such projects. They thus end up working for the people rather

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160 SSMES, MSS, SWRDC, MKSK, AIWC, SKSS, RHDC, ASS, VHAP, RAHI, SDPN, PYF, SEWA-P, ARTI, LKS and SOSVA.
161 SSMES, MSS, AIWC, LCHC, VHAP, GADSS, ASS, PYF, SSWS, MKSK and SOSVA.
162 SSMES, MSS, SWRDC, MKSK, AIWC, SKSS, RHDC, ASS, VHAP, RAHI, SDPN, PYF, SEWA-P, ARTI, LKS and SOSVA.
163 SSMES, MSS, AIWC, LCHC, VHAP, GADSS, ASS, PYF, SSWS, MKSK and SOSVA.
164 ARTI, LCHC, MSS and MKSK.
165 PYF, LKS, SEWA-P.
166 Based on field study notes.
167 Based on interviews conducted with NGOs during the field study.
than with the people. The NGOs could best hope to involve the people at the stage of the implementation of the project. They have also not been able to set up any popular local level institutions to maintain a follow up on the projects.

**Steps taken for mobilising and empowering the people**

Since nearly all the NGOs are funded by the government, none of them place any demands on the latter in any way. They have not organized any strikes, gheraos or any other such forms of protest. 7 NGOs had undertaken some step for mobilising the people which were limited to peaceful marches organised by the NGOs for instance cycle rallies for awareness generation.

13 of the NGOs which have been studied had tried to encourage beneficiary participation for their empowerment in the projects by undertaking activities like group discussions, seminars and debates. All 20 of them claimed they had a feedback system. Many of the NGOs were aware of the shortcomings in the programmes being undertaken by them but were unable to do anything about it. Half of the NGOs (10) were undertaking activities to develop community based popular institutions at the grassroots level. However, such institutions are not visible.

**Problems faced by the NGOs**

The basic problem faced by the NGOs is that of funding. 11 out of 20 NGOs said that funding was a constraint for their actions. These included NGOs like SSMES, SWRDC, RAHI, ASS, LKS, ARTI, MKSK, MSS, GADSS, PYF, LCHC and RHDC. In fact SWRDC lamented that the government has an attitude of favouring the local bodies like Panchayats and the Block Development Offices rather than NGOs. This discourages the NGOs in their endeavours. Another problem pertains to the lack of capacity of the NGOs to bag these projects. According to ARTI, NGOs in Punjab face dual problems in terms of lack of both support and capacity building. NGOs on one hand, have limited choices in terms of funding making them dependent on government schemes while on the other they do not have the know how of how to apply for these projects. Moreover, the government departments have no central cell where NGOs can come to know about the schemes being implemented by them.

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168 LKS, SSMES, GADSS, PYF, SEWA-P, VHAP and SSWS.
169 Based on interviews conducted with NGOs during the field study.
170 LKS, AIWC, SWRDC, RAHI, ASS, SIDT, SOSVA, SSMES, GADSS, PYF, SEWA-P, VHAP and SSWS.
171 LKS, PYF, GADSS, SWRDC, RAHI, ASS, VHAP, SSMES, SEWA-P and SSWS.
172 Based on interactions with the NGO personnels.
Besides this, the insensitivity of government officials towards the NGO is also a big problem. According to the NGOs, there is a need to orient both the government officials and the NGOs about the role each has to play in development. According to LKS, carrying out one or two projects for a specified time in any area is not enough. People associate themselves with the NGOs only after repeated orientation. Moreover, even though NGOs intervene at the grassroots level, the government does not consult them while formulating their policies. Besides this the drawback of implementing a government project is that is that the members of the opposite political party have a tendency of non-cooperation. LKS had faced such problems. Some of the NGOs also pointed to lack of governance in the government funded projects.

At a more grassroot level, many NGOs complained that people have a suspicious attitude towards the NGOs. They tend to not open the doors when contacted by field workers. But the NGOs do not blame them. According to MKSK, on account of many surveys conducted by the different government departments like election office, census and many more, people are hesitant in disclosing information. In sensitive projects like Reproductive and Child Health Programmes, many pregnant females refuse to divulge any information about themselves. Many a times the field workers are turned away. NGOs like RHDC also mourn that people at times do not gather at a place when asked to do so given one reason or the other. It might be due to internal group dynamics, affiliation to a particular political party or even a family feud.

**Development of NGOs in Punjab: Government Support**

In India, the role of NGOs was acknowledged by the government during the sixth five year plan. It was largely due to the fact that the developmental map of the state had started displaying signs of weariness by then. The issue of a bottom up approach as well as the 1990s retreat of the state from the development arena furthered the case of NGOs who were seen capable of filling this gap. ‘Voluntary action because of its loose structure and flexibility is better suited to people’s participation at the local level, than paternalistic bureaucracies and populist policies’.  

173 There was a steep rise in the number of NGOs mainly during the 1980s

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since they came to be regarded as alternative vehicles for bringing about change. NGOs became highly visible and received a lot of power and appreciation.

During this time, the major issue to be tackled was that of the marginalized. As the newer NGOs came up, took up issues which were felt to have a direct bearing on poverty like education, employment generation and awareness generation regarding various social problems which were responsible for aggravating the situation of poverty as in alcohol and various social taboos. All through the five year plans the government kept encouraging these efforts, at least in policy.

During this period when poverty alleviation was being so much an issue of discussion, Punjab with its developed image was considered as above these problems. A very generalized and popular argument about the slow growth of NGOs in Punjab has been the lack of these conventional issues which created the need for NGO intervention in India and third world too. The rise of NGOs all over India supports the argument.

According to Manmohan Sharma of the VHAP the NGO movement in Punjab has definitely lagged behind due to the rich economic profile of the state. Besides the uncomfortable period in 1980s, the chief reason behind it has been the lack of grants which the various funding agencies preferred to divert to states having a not so strong economic foundation.\footnote{Based on interaction with the researcher on 24.07.07.}

A major aspect of the debate on the NGO sector has been on the need for intervention in Punjab. As mentioned earlier, the lack of conventional issues in the popular visionary of development landscape due to the rich economic profile of the state was a prominent reason for the lack of NGO movement in Punjab. It has been stated that local conditions thus account for differences in NGOs in the same country. Given those the international agencies which had preferred to work with the national governments shied away from Punjab due to its outstanding developed position.\footnote{However, during the survey some NGOs informed the researcher that presently the World Bank was supporting certain sanitation programmes in the state.} In many other states, parallel to this period, civil society based movements had already gained prominent ground. This somehow suggests that the rich economic profile of the state was a major discouragement for the growth of NGO movement. This is a popular belief in Punjab.\footnote{This belief is shared by the government officials and the NGO functionaries too.} Whereas in other states which do not have a strong economic foundation...
economic background small grants and meagre funding has actually led to strong civil society movements, in Punjab small grants would not bear any fruits.\(^{177}\) There is no visible widespread poverty which required intervention. Moreover, the gurdwaras, various clubs and samitis already existed in Punjab which were undertaking welfare work. ‘Punjabis had the tradition of serving the society following the path shown by Bhai Ghanahyaji, the one-man NGO, working for those injured in wars even before the concept of Red Cross was born’.\(^{178}\) Hence the need for NGOs was not felt for a long time because the vacuum created by lack of institutions for the welfare of people did not exist and also the need for interventions in terms of economic weakness did not exist in Punjab.

However, there were NGOs which existed in Punjab even before the 1990s. One of them was the SWRDC located at Nurpur Bedi. The man behind this NGO, Jagtar Singh, was motivated to work for the welfare of the people from a young age and had worked with Bunker Roy (of SWRDC also known as the Barefoot College, Tilonia) at their Bahadurgarh branch in Punjab in the 1980s. After the work finished, he was invited to join the organization in Rajasthan but he preferred to work in Punjab. He was then told that there were no issues which needed intervention by the NGOs.\(^{179}\) However, he was convinced that despite being an economically rich state there were issues which needed to be tackled.\(^{180}\) He always had a desire to work in his own state and started his own NGO in 1988 in Nurpur Bedi (Rupnagar district in Punjab). Discussing various issues that required intervention in the state he stated that ironically people of Punjab do need income especially in rural areas where the actual sections of poverty exist. According to him, Punjabi people have an inherent habit of showing off even in daily life. They try to maintain a lavish lifestyle and also believe in spending grandly on occasions like marriage which drives them in the hands of moneylenders time and again. Therefore, they need income. Also, he felt that there

\(^{177}\) Interview with Kamal Ashwal, the Programme Secretary of the Commonwealth for Youth Foundation, Chandigarh on 25.07.07.
\(^{178}\) Jerath. ‘Punjab Lags Behind In NGO Movement’.
\(^{179}\) An opinion that was also raised during a workshop by MGSIPA on 30.10.08.
\(^{180}\) Based on interview with Jagtar Singh and other field officials of SWRDC on 5.9.07. According to him, development started in Nurpur Bedi once Giani Zail Singh became MLA and later MP from this region. Nurpur Bedi is a Gujjar dominated area- their main activity being loading and unloading of goods. (Mainly a SC/BC dominated area)

The organization has also worked for crematory construction in the area as cremation was a problem. Therefore, with the help of village agencies they helped in building one. According to Jagtar Singh, the cremation pyre designed by the NGO requires three quintal of wood whereas normally a pyre requires around ten quintals.
was another reason why NGOs were needed in Punjab. The existing ones at the time were mainly charity based organizations which did not aim at long term development of the people. For instance, the efforts visible were of societies that would occasionally set up eye camps, blood donation camps or other such activities which did nothing to actually build the capacity of the people or make them self-dependent. This called for necessary initiatives to be taken. Supporting this argument is the Director of SSMES. R.C. Dhand had come to Chamkaur Sahib when he was appointed as a lecturer in Bela College located near the village in 1975. The lack of even basic facilities in the village like a school led to the formation of his NGO. Soon after in 1981 he also opened a crèche for small children in the same village. Gradually the NGO started targeting nearby villages. Today the NGO is recognized for its efforts in the field of health, education and micro finance. AIWC also came up in 1984 to help the poor and needy women and provide them support. The Director of MSS (formed in 1979) also was of the opinion that interventions were needed especially in the rural areas. All the NGOs that came up before the 1990s shared are the view that it is for the NGOs to realize the felt needs of the areas and work towards them by encouraging people to participate in their development. Issues they said were always there and as such also required efforts to deal with them.

It appears from above that not only have the NGOs in Punjab but also the conditions in which they function have been hegemonized in popular perception. The reality remains that beyond the obvious, there exists distinctness in the NGO movement in Punjab which can be related to specific conditions of the state.

The government of India schemes are formulated with a nationalist perspective. Since we (Punjab) are a developed state therefore impact of many of the schemes is not great like the crèche scheme is popular in states like Orissa, Bihar. Also condense courses scheme is popular in states where educational infrastructure is lacking.181

Thus as against the popular perception of lack of issues needing intervention in the state the people actually responsible for bringing about development through NGOs present a different story. According to them, even though Punjab did not share the same set of problems like those which marked the entry point of NGOs in rest of the country however, it did have its own share of challenges in the socio-economic sector. Moreover, the present situation in Punjab presents a picture which is in dire

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181 Interview with D.S. Bukkal, former Secretary of the PSSWB on 17.12.08.
need of such efforts on the part of the civil society. Punjab shot to prominence due to its successful attempts in the agriculture sector. However, during the late 1990s, the economy, which was majorly dependent on agriculture, had started showing signs of weariness. 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. Apart from this the failure of mainstream politics and technological revolution i.e. Green Revolution, to deliver the expected solutions of the developmental problems being faced by the state of Punjab, in a way led to the legitimation crisis. This subsequently speeded up the creation of space for the non-state actors to take up the development agenda of the state. Also, the feudal structure of the society associated with its agrarian roots led to problems in terms of gender issues like female feticide. A whole lot of other problems too originated like that of unemployment, migrant laborers and drug addiction.

The government too is aware of these issues and on its part recognises the need to work in cooperation with the NGOs. It needs to be highlighted here that the efforts of NGOs in development both in initial and present stages have been possible due to government support. The earlier NGOs like SWRDC, AIWC, SSMES and MSS had all been able to launch a few programmes due to support from institutions formed by the Indian government for providing aid to NGOs. In sync with the present times the Punjab government too is trying to involve NGOs in the process of development. The state government came up with its first policy for extending help to NGO sector in Punjab in the year 1999. The government now tried to encourage the NGOs and make them an integral part of the development process.

It is important to identify the causes that have contributed to this situation where even as people are ready to come forward, their enthusiasm and efforts have not been responded to. The policy adopted by the Punjab Government from October, 1999 recognises this need for a pro active role for government and search for various ways of facilitation for speedy and continuing interaction in providing support to NGOs.

With the objective of associating voluntary organizations in development and social welfare activities in an appropriate manner, the State Government is providing

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182 Besides the state government there are other agencies like the CAPART, NABARD and the CSWB which also provide support to the NGOs in Punjab.
183 To mention a few CSWB, NABARD, CAPART and various government departments that are presently encouraging the NGOs.
sizeable monetary assistance\textsuperscript{185} to such organizations to enable them to play a notable role in the development process. The main targets envisioned for the voluntary sector are numerous which cover almost all aspects of development. They are concerned with the upliftment of those rural locations where services provided by the government have not reached and they remain unserved or underserved areas. They are also related to urban slums which need environment improvement on account of lack of basic facilities. The government also provides support for the development of vulnerable population like women and children and the weaker sections like SCs and BCs. Besides these areas other basic needs like health and education have also been included as part of the cooperative chapter between the government and the NGOs. The health programme stresses on Reproductive and Child health to a considerable extent but also includes other health issues such as sanitation, safe drinking water. For education, both elementary and adult education has been emphasised upon. Besides this, considerable leverage is also given to education for capacity building in the form of vocational training of adolescent girls and women from the poor and needy families. All these areas have been outlined by the government for enlisting the active support of the voluntary sector.

Besides assisting them financially the state government is also trying to provide technical and knowledge based inputs. The state government in association with SOSVA had organized ten capacity building workshops in Punjab for the NGOs in the year 2005-06. The Director of the Planning Department points, “It has to be understood that the NGO movement in Punjab has just started rolling but is not catching up fast.”\textsuperscript{186} This does point towards the slow growth of NGOs in Punjab. The CARART Regional Director Anupam Kashyap also highlighted that in 2007 when they advertised for NGOs to come forward with development oriented project proposals, not even a single NGO from Punjab applied. This made them realize the lack of capacity building the NGOs here faced. In fact, that year the CAPART had to ask the neighboring Haryana based NGOs to start working in border areas of the state. But since then the situation has improved since capacity building workshops have been organized for the NGOs that have made the NGOs aware of our schemes and

\textsuperscript{185} Accordingly, an outlay of Rs 1500.00 lac was provided for the scheme PM-6 ‘Assistance to NGOs’ under the sub-head “Secretariat Economic Services” in the 10\textsuperscript{th} Five Year Plan, against which an expenditure of Rs 890.70 lac had been incurred. An outlay of Rs 1500.00 lac had been provided for the 11\textsuperscript{th} Five Year Plan. An amount of Rs. 300.00 lac has been provided in the Annual Plan 2007-08, enhanced to Rs 400.00 lac. An expenditure of Rs 400.00 lac is likely to be incurred during 2007-08. An outlay of Rs 400.00 lac has been provided for the Annual Plan 2008-09.

\textsuperscript{186} Interview with Jasbir Singh, Director, Punjab Planning Department on 21.12.2008.
departmental procedures. Now there is vast improvement in the situation.\footnote{187}{Interview with the researcher on 25.08.08.} The latest initiative of CAPART is the Gramin Vikas Andolan wherein it is encouraging NGOs to come forward and formulate project proposals based on felt needs of the rural people.\footnote{188}{Based on a workshop organised by CAPART and attended by the researcher on 26.09.07.}

The people involved in undertaking these activities share a different view. According to them, there is no dearth of voluntary action in the state but it is the government which has not let them flourish and say that the attitude towards them remains hostile.\footnote{189}{Interactions during the field survey revealed that generally there exists a mutual hostility among the NGOs and the government personnel. It was alleged by the NGOs that the government officials behaved as lords while doling out grant money and also called them as 'contractors' which was highly objectionable to the NGOs. The government officials on their part defend their actions by blaming the NGOs for trying to notch up government grants for personal use and not for welfare. Jasbir Singh of Planning Department did admit to existence of a few NGOs which came up specifically for the purpose of income generation benefits not to the people but to the NGO workers themselves. According to him, NGOs register themselves and then sit around for three years doing nothing and suddenly surface after the minimum time required to receive government grants. (A period of three years have been declared as the minimum number of years for which the NGOs have to actually function as a registered body in the field to be able to build rapport with the people).}

In 2005, a series of capacity building workshops for the NGOs were carried out by the Government and it also voiced the same ideas. ‘The general impression about the status of voluntary movement in Punjab is that it is very weak. In actual reality there is plenty of voluntary initiative but for want of guidance and support it has not gathered into a visible force’.\footnote{190}{Capacity Building of NGOs. Guide Book. The statement highlights a kind of dichotomy with which the NGO sector in Punjab can be identified. Real NGOs are those that are created by a community at the local level to meet local needs primarily with local resources. However, in Punjab the phenomenon appears to be induced from the outside since there is a lot of talk about the need for building their capacity.}

This tussle between the government and the NGOs points towards an attitude of indifference by the government and lack of capacity on the part of NGOs. Friendly coexistence between an NGO and a government occurs, Clark points out that when ‘the NGO requires of the government little more than the freedom to get on with its chosen task and does not seek to influence wider areas of development planning, and where its task is not actually hampered by government actions. A government is happy with such a relationship when it feels neither threatened nor challenged, and when the NGO’s tasks are not incompatible with its own objectives.’\footnote{191}{Clark. ‘Democratizing Development’, p. 151.} This remains a grey area for the development sector in Punjab.
Conclusion

‘NGOs can learn to live with the obstacles, but a bolder approach is to try to remove them’. Despite a rich tradition of self-less service the state can not claim to have a strong NGO movement i.e. organized and formal voluntary activity. The dichotomy of the whole situation is that it is the very fabric of religious institutions in the state which are seen as one of the reasons behind the lack of need of NGOs in Punjab. However, today NGOs have started play meaningful roles with the help of government support.

Regarding the nature of activities undertaken by the NGOs the study showed that the specified aims and objectives are not necessarily followed by them. Each of the NGO has to have a Memorandum of Association which contains its aims. Somehow these aims are rather general in nature. For small NGOs as exist in Punjab, perhaps it would be better if they were to concentrate on one particular activity. ‘The example of SOS Sahel shows the impact that a small NGO can have by concentration on a particular ‘niche’ activity (in this case social forestry development in the Sahel) and by lobbying for change based on this fairly narrow but immediate experience’. In reality the aims of the NGOs are too large in their scope covering any programme that they might decide to undertake. The NGO officials felt that their aims were being followed and did not feel a need to change them. This is so because whatever projects or schemes they decided to follow fitted into them one way or the other. This also makes them stick to regular activities that they are comfortable doing. They are not graduating to newer methods of inducing change. For an average NGO success means being able to implement maximum government programmes and at best being in a position of picking and choosing which programmes they want to implement out of the bouquet of choices offered by the government. The government officials which allotted the projects said that they did so keeping the aims and objectives and also the performance of the NGOs in the previous years in mind. Yet what also follows from this is that even if the nature of the NGOs is different for example if they are a GDO or a RDO or even a WDO they tend to follow the same type of activities. This shows that to a great extent many NGOs follow the same pattern of activity. The study showed that most of the NGOs tend to avail the same schemes not just for RCH but

192 ibid., p. 156.
also in terms of vocational training for women, crèche facility for young children, awareness generation programmes, FCC, self help groups and so on. The government officials too were of the same opinion that certain programmes had more demand in Punjab and most of the NGOs tend to take them up. These activities are generally funded by the government. In the process they tend to act service delivery mechanisms of the state. It has been pointed out that,

...local-service NGOs are defined as organizations providing development services to one or several communities in the district or nearby districts through volunteer members or paid professionals... the local service NGOs have linkage with governments and line agency offices. These are important vehicles to mobilize manpower resources for rural development work and are also an important source of project identification.194

The positive side of these activities is that these are based on felt needs of the people. They help to strengthen the outreach of government activities and hence bring in all round development. These programmes generally cater to those sections of the society where the government had previously been unable to reach. ‘If we are to mainstream them with speed we shall have to invest in them on a much larger scale and arrange innovative interventions suited to their deprived backgrounds. This will not only involve massive investments, hitherto denied them under the old plan priorities but also a manpower that relates to them’.195 Development is a massive and ongoing process. It is thus argued that a complex process like development therefore requires cooperation between the two sectors and the need for them to work in coordination. However, there are certain problems in this inter-sectoral linkage.

There has not been much understanding between the two sectors though efforts for the same are being undertaken now.

It is perhaps implied in the relationship between the NGOs and the government since it is the government which is the contractor of services, and has always functioned from that perspective. This makes the collaboration, a time bound input rather than sustainable or long lasting. Moreover, this

194 As cited in Ravi Shankar Kumar Singh. 2003. Role of NGOs in Developing Countries: Potentials, Constraints and Policies, New Delhi: Deep and Deep, p. 39. The author presents a detailed case study of the NGOs working in Nepal and uses this classification for the NGOs existing there.

195 The traditional manpower belongs to the government sector, pre-empting for itself seventy percent of the budget and yet numerically far too significant, heavily unionized and devoid of the necessary work culture to be interested in delivery of services. These personnel are being managed in an impersonal way and are ill suited to and unaccountable to the specific micro environment of villages and urban slums.
relationship appears more or less forced because it has been influenced by international donor agencies.\(^\text{196}\)

Both have accused each other of being poor in governance skills.\(^\text{197}\)

Another thing that came to the fore is that the NGOs lack the necessary training and capacity building for up-scaling their impacts. The gains from our past development efforts have benefited those who had some resource of their own to take advantage of the development process. Those left behind are the ones who are at the margins. In the case of Punjab even if people below the poverty line are lesser in number,

They remain deprived and therefore underdeveloped- in terms of their education, health, skill development, sanitation and safe drinking water supply. The children of these strata, apart from the educational handicap that their parents suffer from, can not afford schooling without hurting the family income. Add to this the street children who have no way of schooling after working the whole day at dhabas or shops or other miscellaneous employments. The families of migrants and Moslems are another target group.\(^\text{198}\)

Achieving this is not possible without devoiding a larger part of departmental outlays through Field NGOs, training their manpower and making them into viable units of implementation of programmes in the Human Resource Development and Social Services sectors, the magnitude of the problem will be beyond both the government and NGOs as at present funded. That funding was a constraint was a point highlighted by many of the NGOs as well as the government officials.

The NGOs depend mostly on government schemes for the development of the people. They tend to implement the official schemes of the government in areas where the latter find it difficult to reach. Hence, in this sense the NGOs do contribute to the developmental process in a significant way yet for a long-term and sustainable development they need to foray into other activities like advocacy and research. There is a lack of such organizations in Punjab. For an all around development such activities by NGOs need to be encouraged.


\(^{197}\) During the course of the study the researcher encountered many instances where the NGO personnel were highly demotivated due to the rigid attitude of the government officials. One such incidence was with a qualified professional who had tried to undertake development projects but had ended up disillusioned with the same. He felt that the whole space for NGOs in Punjab was at the mercy of the government. However, the government officials on their part blamed the NGOs for the same since they felt that many of the NGOs did not actually have a strong grassroot support and hence the need for greater checks.

\(^{198}\) Vaishnav. ‘Empowering NGOs’. 

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