SYNOPSIS

Voluntary Organizations have played a very important role in development and social welfare services. The term ‘voluntary Agencies’ connote those organizations which are in the welfare activities and are officially registered under the society’s registration Act of 1860.” Hence voluntary organisations can be defined ‘as groups working at the macro levels in a localized Settings for the welfare of poor, marginalized and oppressed section of the society, either Rural or Urban’. In the context of international parlance, voluntary agencies are called Non-Governmental Organization. In fact, the concept of initiating welfare and developmental activities through NGO’s was introduced even before India attained the independence.

In India between 1953-54 around 4000 Non Governmental Agencies were involved in welfare and developmental activities. Their number increased to 6000 in the year 1961-62. By the end of 2000 -2005, more than 30,000 NGOs or voluntary organizations were in operation.

The development thrust of the organization is in four areas, viz. education (non-formal education, alternative education, informal education, occasional education, and vocational educational) health programmes, awareness and income generation activities. In tune with the organization’s developmental perspective, the thrust areas are centered on women and children. NGOs have focused their activities to address the needs of women and children as they belong to most disadvantaged and vulnerable category.
Karnataka has an active and heterogeneous voluntary sector with a large number of rural development oriented NGOs. Though very few NGOs started to function during early 1960’s, there number increased during 1990’s. A study conducted in 1995 show that there were 500 NGOs, at present the number has increased to 800 NGOs.

As compared to other states in India, the Karnataka state has a relatively better net-work of Non-Governmental Organizations. In early eighties there were few non-governmental organizations which are rendering their services to the poor and marginalized members of the society, in particular to women and children, at Mysore. At present the number of organizations functioning have increased from 20 to 45.

Most important among these are MYRADA (Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency) and ODP (Organization for Development of People). MYRADA has contributed significantly in fostering self help groups among the rural poor since 1984 – 85, these groups not only provided credit, but also develop skills and confidence in decision –making. In march 2005 there were 2204 SHGs with 30652 members managing a total common fund of RS. 18.48 crores with Savings of Rs. 7.08 Crores. MYRADA has adopted the SHG strategy for Women’s empowerment and is investing heavily in formal and non formal education for school going children and drop-outs, with a preference to the development of the girl child.

MYRADA invests both in upgrading the existing educational system and in preparing children to cope with its requirements as well as setting up alternative systems. One thousand four hundred and twenty new classrooms
have been constructed, 150 schools provided with drinking water and toilet system. Teacher's skill has been upgraded and over 300 teachers are employed. Systematic awareness programmes are conducted to motivate parents to send children to school. Over 13000 loan have been given in a year from SHG for education, special coaching camps have resulted in a significant increase in percentage of students attendance in the schools and increased number of passes.

In addition, it aims at improving the school environment facilities 570 schools have been provided with 1420 new classrooms and for the welfare of women and children MYRADA has taken the lead in health activities. It also focuses on providing infrastructure support to existing government facilities that are ill equipped, arranging health camps and early detention and referral of chronic diseases and disabilities, intensive school health education and health check up for children from standards 0-6. Every year around 200 health programmes are conducted, AIDS awareness, immunization, sanitation, personal hygiene, reproductive and child health, cancer detention and menstrual hygiene. Around 300 trainings are conducted in Mysore to make the women self-reliant.

O.D.P (Organization for Development of People) is another prominent organization which dedicates their service for women and child welfare. Started in the year 1984-85, aimed at providing nutritious food for women and children. The programmes include women empowerment with the formation of SHG and non-formal education later. At present, there are 1000 women groups with 20000 members. Through the women groups, ODP has given
different training to women on topics like good leadership, importance of unity status of women, preventive and promotive health aspects, socio-economic independence, use of credit and loans. In the area of capacity building every year 150 trainings were given to 37,557 women self help group members. Women are also provided with vocational courses to enable the women, school dropouts, widows as well as the handicapped to get gainful employment or to have self-employment on completion of training. So far, around 60 types of skill training programmes have conducted and 6000 members trained in it. Among the trained 85 percent are gainfully employed.

NGOS are prominently involved to bring development to the persons who are marginalized especially women and children. Since there is no specific data available with regard to the effectiveness of the activities and outcome, the present investigation was undertaken to determine the role played by the NGOs in welfare activities and to analyze the impact of the programme on the target groups.

The present study focuses on NGO activities and its effects on the beneficiaries and their living conditions. The main objectives of the present investigation was to evaluate the functional output of Non Governmental Organisations in Mysore district and to analyze its impact in promoting the welfare of the target group- women and children. Therefore, specific objectives of the study were to determine-

1. The role of NGOs currently operating in Mysore district.

2. The operational strategies used for promoting welfare activities in the target areas.
3. The impact of programme output on the living conditions of the target groups and their families.

4. Effectiveness of the programme inputs as perceived by the women beneficiaries.

5. The extent of participation of women in the welfare activities.

The study was conducted on 20 NGOs involved in women and child welfare programmes spread over seven taluks of Mysore. An in depth study was conducted taking two of the Non Governmental Organization – MYRADA (Mysore resettlement and Development Agency) and ODP (Organisation For the Development of People) women and children were taken as the target group to assess the impact of the programme on their living conditions. Women also served as responders for obtaining their views on the NGO activities.

The thesis covering the above aspect are presented in 6 stages.

Section A.

Introduction: - Out lines the Significance and scope of undertaking the investigation on the topic, A critical analysis on the role of Non Governmental Organisations in promoting women and child welfare in Mysore district.

Section B.

Review of Literature :- It is comprised of literature reviewed on the role of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), development of NGOs, organisational set up, NGOs and their development activities. It also outlines
the Status of women and children and the related issues and welfare programmes.

Section C.

**Methodology:** In the first phase of the study all the NGOs that are working in Mysore were selected to collect the information regarding the objectives of the organisation, target groups, and organisational set up. Further, the sample was selected based on their target group and objectives all the NGOs that were working for women and child welfare. A total of 43 NGOs were functioning on the development aspects targeting the low income groups in Mysore district. Out of these, 20 NGOs were found to be engaged in woman and child welfare activities. Hence, in the first phase of the study all the 20 NGOs involved with woman and child welfare activities were selected and their activities were evaluated. The information collected from the selected 20 NGOs and the selected women under the MYRADA and ODP were consolidated using descriptive analysis. In the second phase, the study was conducted to analyze the impact of the NGO programme on the beneficiaries (200 women from each of the NGO) from the selected two NGO-MYRADA and ODP.

Section D.

**Results:** results of the study along with the discussion are presented in this section. The finding of the study conducted on the selected 20 NGOs and 400 beneficiary women and 50 children representing the beneficiaries of two selected NGOs are presented as follows:-
1. Background information of NGOs and evaluation of their programmes.

It was observed that the selected 20 NGOs were all registered under the societies registration act of 1960 of Karnataka. It was found that among the 20 organisations 13 has good infrastructure. The level of education was found to vary from post graduation to higher secondary. The data revealed that the NGOs had adopted different strategies for their activities, such as developmental model (90%) participatory (80%) followed by social action (70%) and to a lesser extent charity and welfare. The objectives of the organisations included women welfare (100%) and child welfare (80%). It was observed that more number of NGOs was being funded (40%) by the foreign agencies followed by Indian Agencies (20%). The expenditure pattern ranged from 1-15 lakhs (50%), 15-30 lakhs (25%) and the remaining above 30 lakhs.

It was found that NGOs were conducting awareness programmes regarding health education, nutrition education prenatal care, regularly by 13, 11 and 9 of the NGOs respectively. They were also being conducted occasionally by few of the NGOs.

It was observed that almost all the NGOs felt that their (95%) programmes were successful to a greater extent. Success of the programmes were being measured in terms of improvement in economic conditions, education, situation of woman and reduction in child labour.

2. Community situation of families before the implementation of NGO programmes. A retrospective analysis in the situation prior to NGO intervention revealed that there appeared to be differences between the
women under the two NGOs, except for availability of drinking water. In case of MYRADA group, problems related to health and education were found to be significant, followed by child labour, low economic and housing condition. In case of ODP group, it was observed that low economic condition, education and poor health were felt to be significant, followed by child labour and housing condition.

The number of women taking part in social activities were found to be significant regardless of the NGO group even before the intervention of the programme. Decision making pattern and women's involvement in family matters were found to be similar under the two NGO group. The number of women involved in decision-making were not significant.

It was apparent that women under either NGO group were having financial help from the neighbours (65% and 85.5%) and money lenders (21.5 and 22%) . It could be seen most of the woman were not aware about the advantages of obtaining finance either from the cooperatives or banks.

3. General environmental and dietary characteristic of the selected families under the two selected NGOs.

This included the data on the total number of household members, number of persons in different age groups, average size of the family, number of average earners, religion and caste of the families of women. Significant differences were found in the age distribution of women. MYRADA group was having more number of young adults between the age group of 18 to 30
years. Majority of the beneficiaries were belonging to Hindu religion among both the groups.

The data on the socio economic status revealed that more number of the women were literate (MYRADA) and had education up to higher secondary. Most of the families had one earning member and a few two earners. Women gainfully employed were high in ODP. The living conditions of the selected families, household structure was found to be low to medium. The estimated mean annual household income and annual per capita income was low in these families under either NGO group. The families depended on a wide range of sources for their lively hood. The sources of income from salaries, farming and enterprises contributed significantly to the family income except from business sources of both NGO groups. The expenditure on food was above 50 percent in both NGO group. There appeared to be high propensity to spend on education, clothing, recreation and medical care, by the families under MYRADA. In case of families under ODP, higher amount was spent on clothing followed by education, recreation and medical care. The expenditure on undesirable items was similar in both NGO group.

The dietary pattern including the frequency of food use were similar in these groups except for the use of milk and pulses. Dairy products were used in the form of coffee or tea in the daily menu.

Health care practices and use of community health services include the data on the general practices of health care, awareness and use of community health services by the women of both NGO group. It covered the general practices of health care. The availability of community services, place
of delivery, use of coffee, tea, alcohol, tobacco, sleeping pattern and exercises. It was found that all the children had been immunized and were participating in the programmes initiated by the NGOs. All the women preferred hospital delivery. Though the awareness about nutrition and health care was low, they were knowledgeable about the supplementary feeding. Very few women under either group were addicted to alcohol. Higher percent of women under MYRADA were found to be in the habit of using tobacco. The pattern of daily activities indicated that lack of leisure time for there women.

4. Nutritional assessment of selected women from the two NGO group:
The data showed that the anthropometric measurements of women namely, height, weight, waist and hip to be similar between the 2 NGO groups, though these were found to be slightly higher than the height and weight reported in NNMB. Though the body mass index was below normal the mean waist hip ratio was found to be above 0.8 indicating a lower segment or gluteal femoral obesity. Mid upper arm circumference, an indicator of protein status ranged from 23 to 24, which was lower than the reported standard, irrespective of the group. The data revealed that 38.5 percent of women were in the normal range of BMI and others showing (15%) malnutrition, a small percent were over weight and six percent obese. Morbidity status among NGO group were similar. The reported cases of sickness were not significant showing a similar pattern in both groups.

5. Nutrition and Health assessment of children from the two NGO group -
Height/ weight and MUAC were similar in all children in the age group of 1-6
years comparable to the body measurements reported for rural Indian Children. Morbidity status indicated the common sickness that affected the children include respiratory illness like cough, cold and fever with the pattern of sickness affecting children of both NGO groups being similar.

6. Perception of the NGO programmes and activities by the beneficiary women: The information on the time frame of NGO activities, campaigns organized, child welfare programmes, extension programmes, usefulness of the programme the benefits derived from the programmes were obtained from the selected women beneficiaries.

Time frame of NGO intervention with the target group showed that the number of NGOs functioning in the target areas ranged from one organisation to more than three. It was observed that significantly more number of NGOs were functioning in the work areas of MYRADA when compared to ODP. The total period of NGO intervention and interaction with the target group was for a longer period in case of MYRADA as compared to ODP. More than 54 per cent of the beneficiaries were being covered by the ODP programme activities alone.

Responses of women regarding NGO programme/activities revealed that most of the NGO programmes and activities were significantly different between the two NGO groups. Except in the area of education, activities in other areas like social action, conscientization political awareness, material and financial help, community development were significantly different between the groups. The responses indicated the perception of women
regarding NGO programmes and activities were greater in case of MYRADA as compared to ODP.

The highest percent of women from either group of NGOs opined that the programmes were beneficial to "some extent". The percentage of women opining that the programmes were beneficial to "great extent" were found to be within 18 percent for all activities except for awareness and literacy (37 to 39%). Few of the respondents did not offer opinion towards the programme.

**Section E**

**Summary and conclusion:** The different aspects of the study are summarized and concluded with observations in this section. The study is indicative of the fact that the initiatives of the NGOs have brought improvement in some areas of women and children's life situation. With regard to health and nutrition issues, it is found that, the target group still lack proper awareness. On the other hand, improvement in economic self-reliance and employment have been achieved to some extent. In other issues such as education, child labour, NGOs could achieve improvement only to a smaller extent. The finding of the study reinforces the fact that NGO programmes and activities alone cannot bring improvement in the condition of rural communities in general, women in particular. A holistic approach need to be adopted to reach the goal of attaining welfare for the target community group.