CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Human development is a pre-requisite for inclusive development. Governments world over are alarmed on declining level of human development. Cernea (1985) explains that the human development paradigm, which puts people at the centre of its concern, is now a universally acknowledged strategy for the development of a nation. The growing consensus among development thinkers is that people are and should be the starting point, the centre and the goal of each development intervention (Bhatia, 2000:42). Gender inequality is one of the harshest realities in declining human development. Without gender equivalence, advancement of the world is unattainable. The status of women in several parts of the world is outrageously worst. Disgraceful, unrewarding and deprived lives of women highlight their numerous susceptibilities. Data banks of various organizations reflect high alert zones in women’s issues.

The real wealth of a nation is its people, both men and women. And the purpose of development is to create an environment to enable them to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. The milieu is harsh for women. In almost all the societies, women do not enjoy similar development opportunities like men. Implementation of socio-economic programmes is in vain without women’s productive participation. Mahbub-ul-haq (2005), has explained four ways to create the desirable links between economic growth and human development, out of which the fourth way is the empowerment of people, particularly women is a sure way to link growth and human development. Infact, empowerment should accompany all aspects of life. If people can exercise their choices in the political, social and economic spheres, there is a good prospect that growth will be strong, democratic, participatory and durable (Parr and Shiva Kumar, 2005). Society has to give an equal status to women. Men have to raise voice for women, and women have to fight for men. As Kamal Bhasin, a very famous social activist asserted boldly in a famous Television show (i.e. Satyamev Jayate) that, “the antonym of patriarchy is equality and not matriarchy”. For egalitarian society, intermediations from diverse representatives of development are required.

Government alone cannot handle the whole show. In context to overall human development, Oomen (2004) asserts that mutual model of state, civil society and
market can be the best model for development. Joint interventions are required, exclusively from civil society. Civil society is the space for free voluntary activity by the citizens. The NGO sector represents the civil society that is why it is also known as ‘Third Sector’. It can be said that NGOs work in the cocoon of civil society. NGOs play the role of activists, mobilizers of opinions, service providers and also of awareness and support to the people. Dharamrajian (2001) puts forward that, it has been realized worldwide that without NGOs' active involvement, the required level of social development is impossible to be attained. At the same time multiple issues like accountability, reliability of NGOs etc. is attached with them. Undoubtedly the field of NGOs requires ample research and exploration. NGO field is enormous and dispersed so is an issue of women empowerment.

The significance of the study lies in the fact that the components of the study i.e. ‘NGOs’ and ‘Women Empowerment’ are the vital themes of society. There is an immense scope for research. This study emphasises the role of NGOs in bringing up change in society. NGOs working for women empowerment in district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh are selected for focussed and in-depth study. This chapter has been divided into different sections. Section one describes conceptual implications, trends, growth, historicity of NGOs. Second section of the chapter focuses upon relationship between social change and Voluntarism. The last part of the chapter discusses the methodology used in present research.

NGOs’ intervention in women empowerment is an area that needs exploration. Research on NGOs, till date cries that NGOs play significant role in bringing change yet the topic has not entered academic world and research available on the topic is inconsistent. Similarly Lewis and Chandran (2008:2), states that the non-governmental sector is a little understood area of institutional life and has so far received very little attention from scholars. NGO field is quite scattered yet there is less information available on the patterns of their growth, working, trends etc. As far as sociological perspective is concerned, NGOs rarely are the topics in sociological journals. Sociological perspective is required to understand the phenomenon of NGOs bringing up alteration in society (Watkins et al., 2012). Students of the sociology of organisation, political sociology, the sociology of social movements, and the sociology of development need to pay greater attention to the phenomenon of NGOs. By and large, sociologists have not given the phenomenal growth of NGOs the critical
attention that it requires (Baviskar, 2001). Recently trends has changed, people started giving importance to civic energies and its intervention in bringing change.

**Figure 1**

**Publications Analysis by Sector Since 1951**

- Non-governmental Action (4%)
- Private Sector (45%)
- Public Sector (51%)

*Source: Lewis and Themudo (2003)*

Lewis and Themudo (2003), highlights some important trends on the research topic of NGOs. The numbers of academic publications, including refereed journal articles, books and reviews, on non-governmental public action saw an enhancement. It was from 82 publications in the period of 1983-87 to a total of 5,457 publications between 1998 and 2002. Very less number of publications on non-governmental action (Figure 1) in comparison with public sector and private sector is available. The lack of academic knowledge on the topic can be clearly seen.

In one way or other, intellectuals underlined that the information available on NGOs is weak and normative. In the arena of NGOs’ intervention in women empowerment, most of the studies published are related to micro-finance / micro-credit as a NGOs’ intervention. The empirical work on NGOs and women empowerment is meagre and the literature is still on accumulative forming field is scattered and so are their zones of working. World over the trends, patterns, working styles, extent of their success and failure is completely diverse. Empirical work previously done on this theme is discussed later in the review of literature. As a relatively new and underdeveloped field of research, there is an obvious need of a further research work to be done that sets the rationale of the study.

I

**NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION: CONCEPTUAL ISSUES**

NGOs (Non-Government Organizations) are the general term used to signify civil society organizations or voluntary organizations. The number of NGOs in
the United States is estimated at 1.5 million. Russia has 2,77,000 NGOs. India is estimated to have had around 2 million NGOs in 2009, just over one NGO per 600 Indians, and many times the number of primary schools and primary health centres in India (www.wikipedia.com). NGOs are normally formed by common citizens of society. They are not under direct jurisdiction of government. However there is a legal procedure for their registration controlled by government.

According to Davies (2014), the term "non-governmental organization" was first coined by UN in 1945. In the Indian context, N.R. Inamdar observes, “A voluntary organization in development has to be of durable use to the community. It has to nurse a strong desire and impulse for community development among its members. And it should possess dedicated and hardworking leadership and command resources of expertise in the functions undertaken” (Lawani, 1999:20). With a sociological point of view, David Sills defines voluntary organization as “a group of persons organized on the basis of voluntary membership without state control, for the furtherance of some common interests of its members” (ibid.).

Intellects explained the term NGO with multiple perspectives. On the basis of characteristics of voluntary organizations, Smith and Freedman (1972), defines voluntary organization as “Structured, formally organized, relatively permanent, secondary groupings as opposed to less structured, informal, ephemeral or primary groupings, identified by the presence of offices filled through some established procedures; periodic, scheduled meetings, qualifying criteria for membership and some formalized division and specialization of labour (c.f. Lawani,1999:19). With an administrative point of view, William (1991), elaborates that, an organization that is administered by an autonomous board which holds meetings, collects funds for its support, chiefly from private sources, and expends money, whether with or without paid workers, in conducting a program directed primarily to furthering the public welfare by providing services or education or by advancing research or legislation or by a combination of these activities” (C.f. Goel and Kumar, 2005:7). Singh (2003) defines NGOs on the basis of functional and structural factors. According to structural factor, NGOs are being explained on institutional basis. On the other hand, the functional criterion is linked to their operational and campaigning activities. Whereas, Kamaldas (1990), emphasizes on widening the view point to analyse NGOs with multi-dimensional approach. He highlights the complimentary working strategies of NGOs with government (C.f. Singh, 2003)
Broadly speaking an NGO is an association of persons and that it can be created by one of the three modes, viz. either by (i) registration under Societies Registration Act, 1860 or (ii) listing under the Indian Trust Act, 1882 (or Charitable Religious Trusts Act, 1920) or by registration with the Registration of Companies, under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 (Goel and Kumar, 2005). The basis to define NGOs is numerous. And the principle of their working also varies widely. These organizations are run by citizens who have individualistic visions, ideologies, and principles. These ideological variances reflect clearly in their organization too.

**Typologies of NGOs**

As far as typologies of NGOs are concerned, again there is a diversity of perspectives. Eldridge (1984) explains that no operationally useful mode of classifying voluntary organizations is available. Different writers have classified them in different ways. They have commonly been classified them in different ways for instance; according to their size, their internal structure, their independence or dependence on outside control, their functions, their sources of support, their location, the class and characteristics of their members, the base of the incentives and the beneficiaries of their activities etc. (C.f. Bhatia, 2000:19).

On the basis of services, linkages and foundations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are also known as CSOs (Civil Society Organization), GRSOs (Grassroots Support Organizations), VOs (Voluntary Organizations), CBOs (Community Based Organizations), GONGO (Government Organised NGOs), BOGOS (Business Oriented NGOs), PINGOs (Political NGOs), FONGOs (Funder Organised NGOs) etc. In U.N. terminology non-governmental organization are also identified as VOLAGS (Voluntary Agencies) and AGs (Action Groups).

As there is always a flip side, it is true in case of NGOs too. Masses often express their distrust to NGOs. Issues like lack of transparency, accountability are linked with NGOs. As Ovasdi (2006), mentions another type of NGOs too i.e. FLINGO (Fly-by-night NGOs). These are also known as briefcase NGOs. These organisations, like many business organisations are bogus. Their only aim is to manage foreign or state grants on the basis of beautifully prepared developmental plans. The sole aim is to draw off the money for self-appropriation rather than for community development works. Those organisations that are run by the members of a
single or extended family for personal welfare also fall in this category. Due to fairly large number of such organisation, NGOs are also nicknamed a "Nothing Going On". These organizations work on paper only. They do not undertake effective community welfare work. CAPART (Council for the Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology) was set up by the Government of India, has been blacklisting thousands of such bogus organisations. Once the NGO falls in the category of blacklisting or FAS (Further Assistance Stopped); it becomes difficult for such NGOs to regain the lost image.

**Historicity of NGOs or Voluntary Action**

Today’s voluntary action is based on deep rooted perspectives, ideologies of religions, civilizations of the world. About two thousand years before the birth of the Christ, a ruler of Babylonia (oldest civilization) named Hammurabi made the protection of widows and orphans an essential part of his code. Voluntary action was one of the features of Greek and Roman society. According to Islamic thoughts, ‘Zakah’ (2.5% of wealth contribution annually or social justice) or ‘Sadaqa’ (charity and one of five pillars of Islam) were amongst the significant codes. Like Islamic tradition, Jewish tradition also gave significance to social justice over charity (White, 2008). Christians were amongst the few who showed social responsibility out of their territorial boundaries. For instance social welfare works of Christian missionaries in India. A world renowned NGO of India “Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity” made our country proud of its rich voluntary culture. And its crusader Mother Teresa also won the ‘Noble Peace Prize’ for her lifelong valuable contribution to the welfare of society. World Young Women’s Christian Association (World YWCA) founded in 1894 in England, World Alliance of Young Men’s Christian Association, (World YMCA), International Conference of Catholic Charities, Catholic International Union for Social Service, Catholic Community Service Council, Church World Services (an organ of the National Council of Churches of Christ of US) are the examples of Christian welfare services. This is the brief indication of history of social welfare practices around the world that includes Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, Islamic, Jewish traditions, Christian etc.

As far as Indian tradition of voluntary action is concerned, in colonial India, the Britishers were hostile to the growth of voluntarism. They thought it as an
evolution of rebellious people. They, therefore permitted and promoted only such organisations which had direct or indirect official patronage. The Scout Movement, the Red Cross, the Rotary Club, the Lion’s Club etc. were the outcomes of official patronage. Wadia (1968) emphasized that, “Today’s voluntary culture is an outcome of reformatory movements of the past” (C.f. Srivstava, 1999). The most illustrious examples are Raja Ram Mohan Rai in Bengal, Dada Bhai Naroji in Maharashtra. Desai (2006) highlights that movements like Brahmo Samaj (1828) in Bengal, Arya Samaj (1875), Theosophical movement (1893), Ramakrishna Mission (1897), and Anjuman-Himayat-i-Jalan (1898) etc. brought reformation in society. These movements set the basis for modern day NGOs. In 1905, Gopal Krishan Gokahale founded “the Servants of Indian Society”, the first secular organisation dedicated to social service in the country.

Institutionalized voluntary movement for women empowerment dated back in 1929. A group of visionary women like Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Smt. Sarojini Naidu, Smt. Aruna Asaf Ali and Lady Dorothy Irwin founded the “All India Women’s Education Fund Association” (AIWEFA). It has the objective of helping women to empower themselves. AIWEFA picked up areas of social development with priority for education. Education was the catalytic agent for social change. A giant step was the establishment of Lady Irwin College in 1932. This has provided platform for women to grow. And it helped women to take off into higher dominions of scientific advancement and productive employment. The establishment of Central Social Welfare Board motivated number of voluntary organizations to start some institutionalized services for destitute widows, deserted and poor women even by separating their children who were placed in children’s institutions. In South India several voluntary organizations like Andhra Mahila Sabha, Ramakrishna Mission, Servants of Indian Society etc., established special schools for girls and women’s homes to begin with.

Then Mahatma Gandhi emerged on the national scene, he gave immense significance to "Voluntary Action". He set up number of national welfare agencies to resolve social problems, the Harijan Sewak Sangh, Adivasi Sewa Mandals and the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust were the most prominent among them. Ovasdi (2006), in the late 1960s, India was caught in a dual crisis of economic stagnation and political instability. It was at this stage, in 1968-69, that alternative and integrative rural development began to be experimented through the initiatives taken
by a new generation of people who were involving themselves in voluntary action. New professionally trained youngsters began to enter voluntary organizations and taking up new initiatives. 

Interestingly, socio-political movements evolved new kind of people who were actually marginalised, distressed and dissatisfied with government. They became first part of these movements and later on awakened society regarding unfair governance. As in case of Naxalite movement in Punjab, Judge (2000), explains that the Naxalite movement was a revolutionary movement which aimed at transforming the Indian society. Various social and economic factors gave it a boost. The discontent among tribal, failure of land reforms and tremendous increase in the number of students in the institutions of higher education, many of whom with brilliant careers were imbued in the passion for radical social change, may be noted as central to the rise of this movement. Then he explains that despite all its failures, the Naxalite movement in Punjab made its impact in various dimensions of the lives of people. It exposed the lawless ways of police operations giving a fillip to a struggle for human rights” (C.f. Judge and Puri, 2000). These socio-political vibrations though were violent in nature but somewhere inspire masses to raise voices against unjust governance. As a result young men frustrated with inability to do something resorted to voluntary action.

During 1970-80, NGOs started attracting the international donor agencies for their transparent, locally effective, and flexible approach. New groups that emerged were different from Gandhian NGOs. During this period, development of NGOs was also influenced by Jai Prakash Narain's (J.P.) so-called 'Total-Revolution'. Chattra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini sprang up in Bihar, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) (Bombay), and Institute of Rural Management (IRMA) (Anand), also came up during this period. Certain NGOs developed with state support, like Council for the Advancement of People's action for Rural Technology (CAPART) and National Wastelands Development Board (NWDB). The ministries of welfare, health and family welfare, urban development, and housing started funding projects through NGOs. The World Bank, UNICEF, and WHO increased their support to NGOs.

During 1980s, NGOs started being considered as an important part of civil society. Community groups and other organisations, unions, councils were also considered as agencies for development and parts of civil society. In the latter half of the 1980s alone, prominent among them were Sanjit Ray’s Social Work and Research Centre
Emergence of NGOs

NGOs do not emerge all of a sudden. Ovasdi (2006) explained significant reasons behind emergence of NGOs. He emphasizes that after second World War, the state shouldered the complete responsibility of the welfare of the nation. The civil society had lost the power of self-governance and self-reliance, and demanded welfare
action from the government. The State, however, could not deliver the welfare services because of a number of reasons i.e. 1) the elected representatives were usually absent after elections, and they did not pay attention to their needs. People therefore, lost assurance in their representatives. 2) the government machinery works slowly. The initiation and implementation of development activities was slow. Skewed development activities benefitted the powerful lobbies only. 3) frontline government proved non-sensitive to the needs of the people, people were not involved in policy making etc. There was a complete lack of “bottom-up” approach. The state has failed to deliver the services to citizens.

To take up such issues, the society needs to build its capacity and to persuade all sections to participate effectively. This is an era, where NGOs entered. Revolutionary ideologies of masses, reformatory movements, new social movements, tyrannical and non-sensitivity of government gave rise to NGOs. They have a special function to perform in society that other establishments cannot perform. Undoubtedly people are at the heart of development. Elevation of billions of people who are living marginalized lives became immensely important. The role of NGOs in human development and in mobilizing resources for the same has attained considerable significance.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have multiplied globally over the last several decades. Increased privatization, the expansion of free market ideology, globalization, and the rise of fundamentalist movement has all contributed to their growth. It is very important to understand the reasons behind fast multiplication of NGOs by two folds or three folds. Iyenagr (2000) says that the exponential growth in the number, scope and activities of NGOs in the 1990s seems to have been driven by a rather extraordinary confluence of wide-ranging domestic and international trends. Similarly, Carapico (2000) explains some of the domestic and international factors that seem to correlate with the growing prominence of NGOs i.e. 1) Political Policies: Political policies gives importance to civic energies, relatively greater license is given to religious, charitable, social, cultural and business associations, ii) Social trends: like the effects of urbanization and education, on the one hand, and anomie and detachment from "roots," on the other; the intellectual and political aspirations of millions of university graduates; the even higher ambitions of many hundreds of holders and the cosmopolitanization of human rights, environmental and feminist concerns, particularly among urban elites etc. played significant role in enhancing the
growth of NGOs. In addition, international development agencies and western advocacy groups have encouraged NGOs to play a greater role in many parts of Africa and Asia, including the Middle East.

The relevant trends in the international arena are i) Economics: Recently traditional donor agencies (such as the World Bank, the United Nations, the European Union and bilateral donors) extended grants and loans to NGOs too besides governments. These agencies provided funds to poor countries by giving small loans to women’s groups, farmers associations, municipal leagues and the like, ii) Politics: First, peace-process-related funds from the US, Canada and European donors, as well as international voluntary associations, are available for various projects in developing and under-developed countries. Second, neo-democratization theory as applied to post-communist polities, where international funds have been available for think-tanks, business lobbies, interest groups and other NGOs, has come to the Middle East as well. iii), the inclusion of NGOs in international conferences on human rights, environmental and feminist concerns has raised consciousness of these issues among world’s elites and has stimulated NGO formation and animation.

Previously, Non-Governmental organizations were not that much in limelight and were taken as charity based organizations in majority. But now social welfare, voluntarism, altruism, philanthropy, equality to all, social justice, social development, sustainable development became objectives or pillars of such organizations that is of great contemporary significance. In context to this, Ghali (2002), in his Agenda for peace, emphasized that, “Peace required not only the UN system of governments, but that ‘non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, parliamentarians, business and professional communities, the media and the public at large must all be involved”’. Peace requires, in other words, a strong civil society (C.f. Watson, 2006:228). Globally an advancement of NGOs is resulted from multi-dimensional factors. The situation is such that governments are joining hands with NGOs in implementation of varied developmental projects

GO-NGO CONVERGENCE

Government alone cannot handle the progressive plans alone. Infact NGOs are capable of taking up politically sensitive issues too. Flexibility in action or freedom of expression enables NGOs to work in harsh conditions too. The importance of NGOs
and its relationship with the state have been hotly debated at the United Nations in the six major international conferences of the past 10 years, the Rio Conference on the Environment, the Population Conference in Cairo, the Social Summit in Copenhagen, the Women’s Conference in Beijing, the Habitat Conference in Turkey and the World Food Summit in Rome. At all of these, NGOs had a striking presence and ran parallel or prior other than official perspectives and pushing governments as much as they could, to change attitudes (Mencher, 1999:2083). Governments have special powers and authorities that make it a strong operative mechanism.

Ovasdi (2006) says that there are certain key functions that only government can perform, and which are beyond the capacity of NGOs. NGOs cannot regulate markets, provide liquidity to the financial system, or correct the market system when it fails. They are unable to tax or collect revenues, NGOs lack the wherewithal to provide services on a national scale. These functions can only be performed by the government, which has the following strengths: (a) Control over physical resources: except than government, no any other authority can claim control over coal, water, mines etc.; (b) Financial and human resources: by virtue of their taxing power, governments have an ability to raise and allot public funds. They also have access to a sizeable number of professionals and technical reasons; (c) Area of operation: no other agency can control and implement uniform policies and programmes throughout the country; (d) Authority: governments can issue authoritative rules and compel agreement. Thus, they bring an element of legitimacy and ensure that partners carry out decisions; (e) Duty as per constitution: according to the constitution of India, it is the duty of the governments to provide welfare services. Thus, there are functions that only government establishments can perform; on the other hand, there are important functions to which NGOs are best suited. The State and NGOs have strengths that are complimentary to each other. Therefore, in the interest of the society, the best strategy for NGOs is to cooperate with government to solve social and economic problems jointly.

GO-NGO partnership is now considered a strong collaboration as far as implementation of development plans is concerned. In India number of ministries/government bodies/departments i.e. Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Department of Higher Education, Department of School Education and Literacy, National AIDS Control
Organization (NACO), Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), Central Social Welfare Board etc. have adopted the NGOs partnership system. Various worthy NGOs work jointly with government agencies in major projects. Oomen (2004) says that just as the state can be democratic or authoritarian, civil society can be a liberating or a coercive agent. Therefore, the issue is not state versus civil society but the type of state and the quality of civil society. The mutual model for development between the three sectors (State, Market and Civil society) can be the best way for shaping up of a good society. The proper blend between the various agents of development is indispensable for human development.

In majority of the cases, NGOs are linked with government for the purpose of getting funds. These funds are important for their survival. Increasing dependence on government funds; eventually makes some NGOs, an extension of that funding department. The voluntary organizations complain about the non-helpful attitude of the government machinery, malaise lies more in the system. It is usually seen that corruption at several levels and non-utilization of funds emerge as big loopholes in the system. NGOs too face criticism while dealing with government departments. A study conducted by Khan and Thomas (1989), reveals that an excessive dependence on grants, opposition from vested interests, a poor image in the eyes of bureaucracy and an insufficient commitment to, and rapport with, the people were the main problems faced by NGOs. (C.f. Bhatia, 2000)

It has been realized that development of NGOs and improvement in their service delivery, may be able to stop growing bureaucratic unresponsiveness. Voluntary organization is the product of the hard work of few individuals who are known for their persistent efforts for social development. Today, large number of NGOs are functioning to supplement the efforts of Government. They are playing positive role in every field of development. Some of them are Ramakrishna Mission, SEWA, Mother Teresa's Missionaries Society, Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA), SAHELI, NIRANTAR, Voluntary Action Network (VANI), ANKUR, People's Rural Education Movement (PREM), LOK SHAKTI, UNNATI, PREPARE, ASMITA, Child in Need Institute (CINI) etc. While many of others are wasting the resources of the government, as there is always a flip side.
II
SOCIAL CHANGE AND VOLUNTARISM

While discussing social change, Judge and Sharma (1988), point out that social change is a consequence of human action, is conditioned by the challenges faced by a society from time to time. The relationship between challenges, human action and change represents a dialectical process and this has been continuing since ages. In recent time, new forces of change, namely advanced information technology, globalization, capitalist production and consumerism, and the proliferation of market economy have accelerated the process of social transformation and caused rapid changes all over the world. Now, very significant question arose i.e. what is the liaison between the voluntary organizations and social change? According to Pimpley, “It has been recently recognized that voluntary efforts at social change are as important as some impersonal processes like industrialization and urbanization” (C.f. Judge and Sharma, 1988:1). The significance of voluntary organizations in bringing social change is enhancing day by day. NGOs play the multiple roles like of advocacy, activists, enablers, facilitators, mobilisers, and educators in society (Desai, 2006). As Ahlawat quotes Rosenthal, Naomi and others (1985), “Social organizations are weapons of the powerless. They create milieu for people or groups with few formal institutional ties and for ideas that are not part of institutional concerns. Social organizations tend to question both accepted relations of power and ideological underpinnings of those relationships. Therefore, innovative ideas often take shape with social organizations as they develop programmes, agendas justifications for pursuing social change. Ultimate success of an insurgent programme is dependent on its broadly supported mobilization. Such organization must find avenues to introduce their agendas into wider discourse. (C.f. Judge and Sharma, 1997:190)

Courville and Piper (2004), says that one way to understand the role of NGOs in social change is as bridges or facilitators, helping to bring the process forward. This may occur incrementally or in a more piecemeal manner. Keeping in touch with the grass roots is one of the key elements in this role as facilitator, and this is also one way in which hope is sustained. NGO activism is bound to challenge the status quo. NGOs are significant drivers of social change. Their role in bringing social change is of immense significance. Present study focuses primarily on the level of change; NGOs are able to bring in the lives of hilly women.
A multi-dimensional perspective is needed to understand problems of women in India. Their very position, that is ascribed to them by birth, somewhere is problematic on their way to achieve quality living. Jiggins (1989), says that women reflects six types of poverty and their effects upon them i.e., poverty by cash, poverty of resources, poverty of labour supply, poverty of health, poverty of range for livestock, poverty of labour demand. She goes further to state that women’s primary concern with these poverty areas is with meeting survival needs, and only thereafter, with security (c.f. Reddy and Vijaya Kumar, 2005).

Women’s stifled position calls for an immediate intervention of NGOs. Dharmrajan (2001:14) quotes that, world conferences on women often asserts that non-governmental and grassroots organizations have a specific role to play in creating a socio-economic, political and intellectual climate based on equality between women and men. NGOs are active in addressing varied issues of women i.e. women and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and the economy, women in power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights of women, women and the media, girl child rights, women and the environment, human rights for women, economic empowerment of women, social empowerment of women, women in difficult circumstances, women and technology, women and governance, women and media, entrepreneurship in women etc. Non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to contribute in the planning and implementation of national plans of action. They should also be encouraged to develop their own programmes to complement government efforts.

Table 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proponents</th>
<th>Key Themes and Elements of Empowerment</th>
<th>Context</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overholt et.al., (1985)</td>
<td>Access to and control over resources and benefits</td>
<td>Control by Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korten (1986)</td>
<td>Control over productive resources and ability to manage productive resources</td>
<td>Control in general</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schuler (1986)</td>
<td>Individual consciousness raising, collective conscious development, and mobilisation of resources for political and social action</td>
<td>Social change in general</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bhatt (1989)</td>
<td>Political activity such as individual resistance, mass mobilisation, etc. for challenging basic power relations in society</td>
<td>Strategies in general</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edna and Bose (1990)</td>
<td>Restructuring of power relations between women and men at domestic and societal level</td>
<td>Gender decolonisation</td>
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<td>Keller and Mbwewe (1991)</td>
<td>Increasing self-reliance , right to choice , control resources</td>
<td>Development focus for women</td>
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<td>Calman (1992)</td>
<td>Empowerment at household level is a pre requisite for entering public life</td>
<td>Hierarchy of empowerment for women</td>
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<td>UNICEF (1993)</td>
<td>Five levels of equality-Welfare, access, conscientization, participation and control</td>
<td>Programme stage of the external agent for women</td>
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<td>Helen (1993)</td>
<td>Economic freedom</td>
<td>Economic power for women</td>
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<td>Samar Singhe (1993)</td>
<td>Access to and control over resources</td>
<td>Control by women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schuler and Hashemi (1993)</td>
<td>Sense of self and vision of a future; mobility and visibility; economic security; status of decision-making power within the household; ability to interact effectively in the public sphere; and participation in non-family groups</td>
<td>Hierarchy of empowerment for women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batliwala (1994)</td>
<td>Process of challenging existing power relations, gaining greater control over the sources of power</td>
<td>Power for Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahmud and Johnsten (1994)</td>
<td>Autonomy, decision making power, alternative power base that is independent of the domination of men</td>
<td>Power for women</td>
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<td>UNDP (1994)</td>
<td>Social, Economic and Political Power</td>
<td>Power for women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holcombe (1995)</td>
<td>Participation sharing control, entitlements, influencing decisions</td>
<td>Successful projects in general</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Karl (1995) | Collective Awareness building, capacity building and skills development, participation and greater control and decision making process and action to bring about gender equality | Primacy of political participation for empowerment of women

Carr et al (1996) | Economic gain, bargaining power | Power for women

Rao (1996) | Improvement in physical and social conditions, equal participation in decision making process, control over resources and sustaining the gains. | Collective mobilisation by women

Beteille (1999) | Change from hierarchical to egalitarian society | Social transformation

*Source: Panda (2000)*

The development of women is of paramount importance and sets the pace for overall development. Without women’s strengthening, it is difficult to achieve a subsistence human development. Women’s empowerment, their capacity building is of immense significance in an era of declining human conscience. Sinha (2005), states that empowerment is a process which helps people to gain control over their lives by raising awareness, taking action and working in order to exercise greater control. In other words empowerment facilitates change and enables a person to do what one

**Table 1.2**

**Broad Perspectives on Empowerment (year 2000 onwards)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kabeer (2001)</td>
<td>Expansion in ability to make strategic life choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narayan (2002)</td>
<td>Control over affective institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alsop and Hensohn (2005)</td>
<td>Capacity to make choices and ability to use the choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabeer (2008)</td>
<td>Capacity to re-question the subordinate status and ability to reshape society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-American Development Bank (2010)</td>
<td>Expansion of the rights, resources and capacity of women to make decisions and act independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WDR (World Development Report) (2012)</td>
<td>Broader notion of agency (addition of the component i.e. freedom from the risk of violence)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity building in general</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control in general</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness in general</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equitable distribution of power to women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social transformation for women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social power in general</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Empowerment is the feeling that activates the psychological energy to accomplish one’s goals. From institutional perspective, empowerment is the process of setting the right environment and structure creating the circumstances where people can use their faculties and abilities to fully actualize their potential. Women should get access to those modes and mediums of expression of their self-actualization. For conceptual understanding and perspectives on empowerment, Table 1.1 and 1.2 are exhibited.


Writers define empowerment of women by localizing the concept within network of some dimensions. Becker and Bayes (1998), split the concept of women’s empowerment into three components: i) Inter-spouse consultation index, reflect women’s decision making in household affairs, ii) Individual autonomy indexes representing mobility and control over financial resources; and iii) the Authority index, that signifies overall decision making process (which is conventionally in the hands of the patriarch of the family). Similar indices are used by Balk in her 1994 study. Some other components of empowerment are used by Hashemi (1996): mobility, economic security, ability to make a small purchases, ability to make larger purchases, involvement in major decisions, relative freedom from domination by the family, political and legal awareness, and involvement in political campaigning and protests (C.f. Handy and kassam, 2004). These dimensions, indicators vary certainly in different societies. Requirement of strengthening one dimension over another is defined by women’s situation in their respective societies.

Different NGOs are active in India that is working for women’s empowerment. SEWA (Self Employed Women’s Association) at Ahmedabad is the finest instance of voluntarism in women’s strengthening. Ela Bhatt’s vision for upliftment of women, is
of a society where six of primary needs: daily staple food, shelter, clothing, primary education, health services and banking services can be found within say a hundred mile radius. SEWA accomplished it by opening their own banks, different self-dependent units etc. Various other NGOs like Nari Chetna Sangthan (Udaipur), Adivasi Mahila Jagriti Samiti (Makadadev), Mata Amritananda Mayi Math (Kerala), PRIA (New Delhi), Rama Krishna Mission, Mother Teresa’s Organisation etc. have been doing tremendous work for the upliftment of women.

Previous work done on interventions of NGOs in women empowerment is discussed ahead. Largely authors discuss and highlight accountability factor of NGOs in women empowerment. For instance, Smith (1995) says that it is not necessary that women participation in NGOs always lead to economic empowerment. More liable the NGOs are more benefits the beneficiaries will attain. Several researchers (Carr et al., 1996 and Viswanath, 1995) find that the best way of achieving women’s empowerment is to organise them under a common income generation programme. These studies show that NGOs in different countries of South Asia have achieved this goal by following multiple development strategies. NGOs generally practice participatory and community development approach, which differs from traditional approaches usually taken up by government institutions. Viswanath (1995) finds positive relation between the development plans of NGOs and their women participants. Haider and Akhtar (1999) also reach at same results in their study and observe positive relation of NGOs’ interventions to women empowerment. NGOs’ role lies in bridging the gaps from powerless to more aware and strengthened women. Basu and Basu (2001) clearly show that the NGOs’ development strategy with more liability to their members achieves higher economic and social empowerment to their women beneficiaries. Some studies throw light on the fact that NGOs’ development programs have contributed more than the GOs’ programs in improvement of socio-economic status of women beneficiaries. NGOs’ bare-foot strategy make their community outreach quite insightful. Participatory and partnership based approach of NGOs marks their functioning effective.

In his study of Nepal, Helvetas (2009) says that the mushrooming trend of NGOs is facing criticism from the people accusing them for not maintaining transparency, ineffective programmes and their long term impact, and nepotism and favouritism. It is claimed that women in Nepal largely face socio-economic, political and physical discrimination, exploitation and marginalization. So, it becomes
pertinent to ask in general, whether various programmes run by these NGOs really empower women in Nepal.

Margaret and Kala (2013), in their study conducted on NGOs of Chennai and women participants, concludes that a moderate level of empowerment was found among the respondents and there was significant difference in the level of empowerment of the respondents before and after joining NGO. The NGOs were able to create a significant impact on the empowerment and development of the women beneficiaries. The study also concludes that the demographic variables age, education, monthly income and years of affiliation influence the level of empowerment of the respondents.

The literature available, in form of empirical studies is in accumulative phase. New dimensions are tallying regularly to the understanding of confluence of NGOs and women empowerment. It is found that fewer studies are available on the topic of NGOs’ intervention covering all the dimensions of women empowerment. Most of the studies either focus on NGOs’ impact on economic dimension or two-three dimensions only. Present study focuses on NGOs’ impact on multiple significant dimensions of women empowerment. The field of NGOs and women empowerment is quite vast and scattered. To understand the various trends, many more perspectives to study this confluence of NGOs and women empowerment are required.

III
METHODOLOGY

The present study looks at the experiences of participation and perceptions of two hundred and fifty women about the interventions of their respective NGOs. This research exhibits the NGOs’ methodologies to empower women; and how hilly women themselves are trying to alter their lives by participation. The study is not only an evaluation of NGOs’ working but an analysis to understand the nature and scope of voluntary action in context to women empowerment in the region and women’s participation in their development.

Objectives of the Study

To understand the nature of voluntarism in district Kangra and impact of NGOs on the lives of hilly women, the following objectives were framed:
I. To examine the structure and objectives of voluntary organizations working for women empowerment.

II. To know the profile of women participants covered under various programmes /schemes /activities by the voluntary organizations.

III. To study the nature of activities/programmes being undertaken by the selected organizations for the overall welfare and empowerment of women.

IV. To determine the extent of participation of women in the activities/programmes of the selected organizations and,

V. To know the extent of change in various aspects of lives of women living in hilly region with hard living conditions after participation in voluntary activities. For instance change in their level of awareness, self-dependence, livelihood, confidence, exposure, learning etc.

**Selection of Universe and Sampling**

The study was conducted in different sub-divisions (i.e. Kangra, Palampur, Dharamshala, Nurpur, Dehra Gopipur, Baijnath, Jwali and Jaisinghpur) of district Kangra. There are specific reasons for selection of the district Kangra as universe of the study. The rationales are discussed in detail in chapter two, as the whole chapter is based on social world of Himachal. The study is based on descriptive research design. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used for the study. The methods employed for the study comprise of case studies, focused group discussions, individual interviews, and observation of different activities of NGOs and women’s participatory levels.

List of NGOs was taken from directories of various departments like Women and Child Welfare Department, NABARD, DRDAs (District Rural Development Agency) etc. Random sampling method was widely used in the selection of NGOs. Most of the NGOs have consolidated their position by accomplishing successfully several projects and activities. All sort of NGOs irrespective of size and ideology were taken for the study. For second set of respondents, a list of women respondents was prepared by accessing NGOs’ project list. Random sampling method was used in selection of women respondents too. During fieldwork in hilly region, because of inaccessibility of respondents at times, snow ball sampling technique was also used to access to the next unit of the sample. Period of association of women beneficiaries
with NGOs was given an immense importance to get accurate responses about the influence of NGOs. Those women were selected who were associated with NGOs for at least more than three years.

**Collection of Data and Interview Schedules**

A pilot study was conducted to see that could respondents respond against the designed interview schedules. The information attained from pre-testing functioned as a framework for the main research work. Written sources like books, research papers/reports, evaluation reports, articles and other writings were used as empirical material. Secondary information was collected through consultation of project reports and library research. Researcher was given documents by the NGOs to aid the study. Information was also collected through direct observation of activities, meetings and project related programmes. Field work took around a period of July, 2012 to May 2013, because of difficult hilly locations. It was done in parts according to the appointments fixed with NGOs and their respective women participants.

Two types of interview schedules (Annexure- I and II) were prepared for the study. One schedule was for the representatives of fourteen NGOs and another one for two hundred and fifty women respondents from the selected NGOs. Each interview with the respondent took about 30-40 minutes. In case of representatives of NGOs, it took multiple visits to complete interview, because of their busy schedules. Interviews were conducted in hindi, english taking into consideration an ease of respondents. An observation study was also conducted parallel to get a reasonable understanding about how these organizations work and how the women participants experience their own situation. Information collected by frequent informed and un-informed visits was of immense significance. In every visit, insight regarding NGOs’ working and women’s participatory level was attained. The research deals with impact of NGOs’ intervention in women strengthening. So, the period spent in spotting varied working procedures of NGOs by the researcher, added significantly to the data.

**Coding**

Editing was done on both the schedules to check the completeness. After data collection categorization of information has been done for assigning codes. A comprehensive and clear code design was formulated after an analysis of responses.
Codes were given to different responses of the interview schedules. Finally the coding cards were prepared.

**Data Analysis**

Further data was interpreted to single tabulation and cross tabulation. Information was also presented by graphical representation (bar diagrams, pie charts etc.). Percentage method was used largely. MS Office programmes like MS Excel, MS Word was applied for all the pictorial analysis. The analysed data were thereafter subjected for interpretation with the help of the secondary data. The findings have been presented in the eight chapters of the thesis.

**Categorization of the Thesis**

The thesis has been divided into eight chapters. First chapter is an introduction that explains significance of the area of study and rationale of the research problem. The chapter further outlines review of literature. Besides the detailed review of literature, research objectives and detailed methodology is also conversed in it. Second chapter illustrates about the universe of the study i.e. district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh. This chapter also exhibits a unique tripartite relationship between state of Himachal Pradesh, its vivacious civil society and its active women agency. Socio-economic profile of the respondents is discussed in detail in the third chapter. An analysis on the range of origins of selected NGOs in district Kangra is offered in fourth chapter. Chapter five elucidates the nature of activities/programmes being undertaken by the selected NGOs for women empowerment. Participation of women in NGOs, inhibitory factors in their participation, level of participation, broader themes of participatory activities and barriers to participation etc. are discussed in chapter six. Chapter seven incorporates the main findings of the thesis. This chapter converses about the impact of NGOs on the lives of hilly women. The change brought by NGOs in various dimensions of women’s lives is conferred in detail in this chapter. The last chapter i.e. eighth concludes the thesis and put forward the broad findings.