International Agencies and Policy Making

Policies are conditioned by the local and global environment. It is impossible to separate the external environmental factors, as they invariably influence being brought to bear on socio-economic problems of a country by agencies such as the United Nation and its allied agencies (WHO, FAO, UNESCO, UNPFA, ILO, UNEP, UNDP and others), World Bank, International Monetary Fund, European Policy Forum, The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and European Central Bank, etc. is of critical importance in shaping its policies. With a view to carrying out the economic and social mandate, United Nations funds and program have been established which operate under the authority of General Assembly and Economic and Social Council.

The role of the United Nations and its agencies in policy making for the international community is of critical importance in the context of aim and principles of the United Nations. Article 55 of United Nations Charter proclaims:

“With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and wellbeing which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote:

1. Higher standard of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development;
2. Solutions of international economic, social health and related problem, and international cultural and educational cooperation; and
3. Universal respect for and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion”.¹

In 1951 Lasswell argued that policy science should take into account of world trends and forces when considering the context of policy problems. He maintained: “Indeed, one of the major tasks of the policy sciences today is to follow in detail the processes of social invention, diffusion and restriction throughout the globe, for the sake of estimating the significance of specific events”.² Writing in 1968, Lasswell also maintained: “As the globe shrinks into interdependence, relying more fully on science and technology, the policy sciences gain significance… interdependence implies that every participant and every item in the social process is affected by the context in which it occurs.”³

Political system of a country functions within the world system and not immune to outside pressure and influence. Globalization has gained wide attention and recognition. The implications of the notion of globalization are that policy makers must consider agenda formation and problem definition within a global context. The “policy makers in each country share a policy context formed by the International economic cycle of prosperity, recession, depression and recovery”.⁴ In a global context more and more issues will be structured by larger forces outside the nation’s constitutional framework of public policy making. Now international organizations and multinational corporation exercise a great degree of influence and reduce the capacity of national policy maker to

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frame their agenda. With globalization, there is a greater scope of interaction between a nation and more nations. National policy agenda of developing countries open to developed countries global politics has an added role to play in the determination of national policies, particularly developing nations.

**Elementary Education and International Agencies**

Education is important not only for the full development of one's personality, but also for the sustained growth of the nation. Elementary education in India, therefore, is the foundation on which the development of every citizen and the nation as a whole hinges. Elementary education in India means eight years of schooling from the age of six. The Government has made elementary education compulsory and free. But, the goal of universal elementary education in India has been very difficult to achieve till now. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is Government of India's flagship program for achievement of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) in a time bound manner, as mandated by 86th amendment to the Constitution of India making free and compulsory Education to the children of 6-14 years age group, a Fundamental Right. SSA is being implemented in partnership with State Governments to cover the entire country and address the needs of 192 million children in 1.1 million habitations. SSA seeks to provide quality elementary education including life skills. SSA has a special focus on girl's education and children with special needs. SSA also seeks to provide computer education to bridge the digital divide.\(^5\)

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\(^5\) [http://ssa.nic.in/](http://ssa.nic.in/) assessed on 10 March 2011
UNICEF is committed to ensuring all children to have success to quality education and complete their schooling. UNICEF works with its partner to improve children’s developmental readiness to start primary school on time, especially for marginalized children. Countries adopting sector wide approaches to development, with UNICEF participating along with other key development partners in policy and planning processes.\footnote{http://www.unicef.org/mdg/index_education.htm assessed on 11 December 2010.} UNICEF provides key support in collecting and sharing data on children education status, helps establish stronger educational information and management system, and shares good policy making practices and innovations. UNICEF also advocates bold initiatives that can boost enrolments and participation, like abolition of school fee and reducing other costs and devising an essential learning package that can be used in emergency situations.\footnote{Ibid.}

UNICEF provides sustained multi-sectoral support beyond funding. This includes being actively involved in day-to-day decision-making, without being obtrusive or trying to dictate terms, while respecting the vision that a country has set out for its own development and setting cooperation within wider development assistance frameworks. UNICEF supports the Government of India's Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to ensure all children have access to quality education and complete a full course of primary schooling.

- Building on existing initiatives and recent successes, the major thrusts of the current GOI-UNICEF elementary education program rest on: Improving school effectiveness (with emphasis on gender parity) through a
holistic and gender sensitive understanding of good quality education and demonstration of a scale able quality package.

- Developing context-specific strategies to reach out to girls, especially from socially disadvantaged groups - urban poor, tribal, scheduled caste, and working children - in order to eliminate gender and social disparity in access as well as achievement.

- Enhancing the research base to ensure effective analysis, action and advocacy at all levels, UNICEF’s strategy is built around three inter-linked themes: access, quality and equity in primary education. Addressing the needs of out-of-school children is a short-term, yet critical intervention, to provide those who have missed the proverbial school bus another chance.

Improving quality on the other hand is equally critical - a long-term strategy to significantly reduce the number of out-of-school children as well as to improve overall levels of retention and achievement, success is contingent on strong linkages between families/communities and school. Educational research and analysis is the cementing factor and provides critical inputs for effective planning and implementation.

UNICEF works with the Ministry of Human Resource Development, States Governments of identified States, National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and its State counterparts, National Council for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), Non-Government Organizations working with education, Civil Society Organizations and children to ensure that:
1. Policies are developed to ensure greater access to both elementary and secondary education and quality standards, including learning outcomes; and reduction of illiteracy amongst girls, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

2. Policies and programs are strengthened, with budgets increased and fully utilized to improve access and retention as well as improve quality of education in terms of child friendly school environment and learning outcomes.

The main vehicle for UNICEF action is the partnership with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) the flagship elementary education of Government of India. UNICEF’s two critical lines of programmatic action are QUALITY with EQUITY. Higher enrolment rates, and especially those of retention and completion, bear evidence of quality and sustained commitment from Governments and the international community to ensure children’s learning, promoting their cognitive, creative and emotional development. Inclusiveness and respect for cultural values and heritage will be attained through quality schooling, encouraging social commitment, responsibility and open-mindedness. UNICEF’s education programs at the national level as well as with Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal, Assam, Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra on quality and inclusion through the Child Friendly Inclusive Schools and Systems.

UNICEF is closely partnering the Government of India in institutionalizing the concept of Child Friendly Inclusive Schools and Systems
concept (CFISS) with in the SSA. The Child Friendly inclusive Schools and Systems Concept:

- Is a child-seeking school and actively identifies all excluded children to enroll, retain them in schools and supports their effective learning.
- It is a child-centered school and supports realization of the child’s full potential, takes care of the whole child - health, nutritional status, well-being, safety, before they enter school and after they leave school. All this is achieved with the involvement of the children, families, and communities.

The concept ensures equality of opportunity for all children, provides education that is free and compulsory, affordable and accessible, does not exclude, discriminate, or stereotype children and responds to diversity -- meets the differing circumstances and needs of children. These key elements are further broken down into actionable points for implementation on the field. UNICEF is now working to include these within the ongoing teacher training schedules.⁸

UNESCO is the United Nation’s specialized agency for education. UNESCO has worked to improve education worldwide through technical advice, standard setting, innovative projects, capacity building and networking. UNESCO long standing experience in the use of information and communication technologies for education is informing projects on education for a sustainable future. UNESCO provides technical advice on education sector reform and resource management to Government and partners. UNESCO

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supports national decision-makers in developing solid and relevant education policies and strategies and in managing their effective implementation.

According to the context, this support can come in the form of technical assistance in education policy analysis, the design of education sector development plans and donor mobilization in support of national educational priorities.

In other cases, the support can relate to national institutional capacity-building in policy formulation, sector analysis, educational planning, policy stimulation and dialogue, resource projections, sector management, program monitoring and evaluation, development cooperation and donor coordination.9

In the biennium (2007-2008), UNESCO New Delhi worked to ensure that EFA is firmly anchored as an integral part of the cluster countries development agenda. It promotes education as a fundamental right; improve the quality of education; and stimulate experimentation, innovation and policy dialogue. UNESCO New Delhi works with national Governments of the cluster and the development partners to achieve universal free primary education and gender equality by 2015.10

The World Bank has approved a $600 million credit to support the country's ongoing Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a nationwide centrally sponsored education program designed to provide children aged 6 to 14 with quality education. The Second Elementary Education Project aims to improve quality and access to this critical social service. The project also aims to promote equity

by enabling hard-to-reach children to attend school, create better learning conditions for all children and provide capacity building and academic support to State and sub-State education structures.\(^{11}\) With Government's flagship Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) scheme showing encouraging results in expansion of elementary education, the World Bank has come forward with an offer to provide additional funding of USD 500 million for the program. The World Bank has proposed the Government to provide the money as soft loans, to be paid over a period of 35 to 40 years with lesser interest. At present, 99\% of the habitations in the country have got a primary school. Under the SSA, 2.7 lakh schools have already been operationalized in the country since 2000-2001. Similarly, about 9.86 lakh teachers have been recruited by March this year.\(^{12}\)

**Child labor and International Agencies**

UNICEF rightly considers that the child labor is exploitative if it involves the following:

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a)  Full time work at too early an age;  
b)  Too many hours spent on working;  
c)  Work that exerts undue physical, social or psychological stress;  
d)  Work and life on the street in bad condition;  
e)  Inadequate pay;  
f)  Too much responsibility;  
g)  Work that hampers access to education;  
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\(^{12}\) Press Trust of India, 1st January 2010, New Delhi.
h) work that undermines children's dignity and self-esteem such as slavery or bonded labor or sexual exploitation; and
i) work that is detrimental to children’s full social and psychological development.”

UNICEF addresses the issue of child labor through a combination of approaches including a focus on changing prevalent mindsets, forming Self Help Groups, improving the quality of mainstream education, providing transitional schools to return children to learning levels appropriate to their age. But education plays a crucial role in eliminating child labor. UNICEF’s approach therefore focuses on motivating communities to send girls and boys (who have never been to school or who have dropped out) to alternative learning centers.

The GOI/UNICEF partnership on the issue of child labor is shaped around the following main objectives:

1. Promoting children basic right to education. Core to UNICEF program, is the emphasis on children’s entitlement, access and retention in education as a major strategy to eliminate but most importantly to prevent child labor. Initiatives include mass enrolment campaign, support to transitional education programs (bridge schools), community based sensitization programs, education quality package for formal education, as well as initiatives aimed to facilitate and strengthen strategic convergence among key institutional stakeholders.

2. Capacity building of marginalized communities towards the elimination of child labor and towards the protection/promotion of child rights. In order to address the vicious circle of poverty as a major factor surrounding child

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labor, as well as based on a vision of women as key catalysts for change. UNICEF India is supporting the establishment of women Self Help Groups (SHGs) in various project areas of the country. Other initiatives to empower communities towards the protection and promotion of children rights include village planning exercises, the establishing of community level anti-child labor watching Committees, as well as the regular sensitization and support to local systems such as the Panchayati Raj (village council) institutions.

3. Advocacy and social mobilization against child labor addressing existing attitudes towards child labor and facilitate people’s behavioral change towards a more protective environment for children are core components of the present GOI-UNICEF joint child labor intervention. This is addressed in the field through community-centered social mobilization initiatives, implemented in collaboration with local authorities, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and by a number of local motivators operating at village level. Building on field level experiences, at central level UNICEF is also developing a national communication strategy against child labor.

UNICEF and the IKEA Social initiative have partnered to tackle child labor in India by building public awareness about existing laws that forbid it. The country’s child labor law prohibits the hiring of children younger than 14, but enforcement has been difficult since few children understanding their rights.\(^\text{14}\)

International Labor Organization (ILO) takes a broad view and refers to child labor as the “single most important source of child exploitation and child abuse in the world today” and as ‘a future denied.’ ILO defines child labor as “work that deprives children of their childhood and their dignity, which hampers their access to education and the acquisition of skills, and which is performed under deplorable conditions harmful to their health and their development.” ILO’s interest in child labor, young persons and their problems is well known. It has adopted a number of Conventions and recommendations in this regard. In India, within a framework of the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulations) Act, 1986 and through the National Policy on Child Labor, ILO has funded the preparation of certain local and industry specific projects. In two projects, viz. Child Labor Action and Support Programs (CLASP) and International Program on Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC), the ILO is playing a vital role.

The implementation of IPEC programs in India has certainly created a very positive impact towards understanding the problem of child labor and in highlighting the need to elimination child labor as expeditiously as possible. A major contribution of the IPEC program in India is that it has generated a critical consciousness among all the 3 social partners for taking corrective measures to eliminate child labor. ILO through its conventions and recommendations helps nations to draw their own set of labor laws for the better treatment of the working class, and the preservation of their rights. The principal means of action in the ILO is the setting up the International Labor Standards in the form of Conventions and recommendations. Conventions are international treaties and

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are instruments, which create legally binding obligations on the countries that ratify them. Recommendations are non-binding and set out guidelines orienting national policies and actions. The ILO instruments have provided guidelines and useful framework for the evolution of legislative and administrative measures for the protection and advancement of the interest of labor. To that extent the influence of ILO Conventions as a standard for reference for labor legislation and practices in India, rather than as a legally binding norm, has been significant.\textsuperscript{17}

**Environment and International Agencies**

Because of growing global environmental stress there is a sustained pressure on national policy makers to change or modify their policy positions. Looking at the gravity of environmental problem, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) observed: “The traditional form of national sovereignty are increasingly challenged by the realities of ecological and economic interdependence. Nowhere is this truer than in the shared ecosystem and in the global commons –those parts of the planet that fall outside national jurisdiction.”\textsuperscript{18}

Industrial growth places pressure on policy makers to prevent and control pollution. International agreements on ways to control pollution and close ties between environmentalists have provided an exchange of information that shapes policy agenda.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17} http://jurisonline.in/2009/05/impact-of-ilo-on-labour-laws-in-india/assessment on 24 December, 2010


UNEP is the designated authority of the United Nations system in environmental issues at the global and regional level. Its mandate is to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of Governments and the international community for action. UNEP’s responsibilities include:

- Promoting international cooperation in the field of the environment and recommending appropriate policies.
- Catalyzing action to address major environmental threats.
- Monitoring the status of the global environment and gathering and disseminating environmental information.
- Facilitating the coordination of United Nations activities on matters concerned with the environment, and ensuring, through cooperation, liaison and participation, that their activities take environmental considerations into account.
- Helping, upon request, environment ministries and other environmental authorities, in particular in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to formulate and implement environmental policies.
- Helping to develop international environmental law.
- Providing expert advice on the development and use of environmental concepts and instruments.

Developing regional programs for the environment. The major results of UNEP activities should include:

- International arrangements to enhance environmental protection and policy advice to Governments, multilateral organizations and others to strengthen environmental protection and incorporate the environment into the sustainable development process.

- Periodic assessments and scientifically sound forecasts to support decision making and International consensus on the main environmental threats and responses to them.

- More effective coordination of environmental matters within the United Nations System.

- Greater public awareness and capacity for environmental management and effective national and international responses to environmental threats. 21

UNEP helps developing countries to reduce vulnerabilities and build resilience to the impacts of climate change. UNEP builds and strengthens national institutional capacities for vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning, and supports national efforts to integrate climate change adaptation measures into development planning and ecosystem management practices. The work is guided by and contributes to the Nairobi Work Program on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation (program developed by the UNFCC to help countries understand climate change impacts and adapt to climate change).

UNEP also promotes sustainable land-use management and reduced emissions from deforestation and degradation, bridging adaptation and mitigation.\textsuperscript{22}

UNDP in India is committed to protect the environment and to meet the challenges posed by climate change. UNDP works with the Government of India to strengthen policy, legislative and regulatory mechanisms on biodiversity conservation, while addressing land degradation, promoting clean and renewable sources of energy, and phasing out ozone-depleting substances. The program lays emphasis on actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts and on enhancing awareness among marginalized communities for them to manage and reduce disaster and environment related risks. The biodiversity conservation initiatives support communities so they are able to administer their resources in a sustainable manner. This happens through value-addition and marketing of products based on natural resources and through the documentation as well as the sharing of benefits that arise from traditional knowledge. The program furthermore supports efforts towards strategic management of chemicals, which contribute to pollution and the depletion of ozone layer.

UNDP help developing countries to put in place what people need for a decent life because reducing poverty and fighting climate change go hand-in-hand. Unless people have basic access to water, sanitation, food and energy, to institutions that work, and a say in the decisions that affect their lives, then they will not be able to cope with a changing climate.\textsuperscript{23} India is signatory to many Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) such as The Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete the Ozone Layer; Kyoto Protocol to the United

\textsuperscript{22} \url{http://www.unep.org/climatechange/adaption/Introduction/tabid/6704/default.aspx} assessed on 4 January, 2011.

\textsuperscript{23} \url{http://www.undo.org/climatechange/pillar_ccpov.shtml} assessed on 14 January, 2011.
Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. Variants international agencies support the policies and programs of individual countries. These supports could be in the form of financial aid or technical expertise to address the issues of the particular country or the problems of international concerns.

**Voluntary Sector in Policy Process**

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and voluntary action have been part of the historical legacy. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, several voluntary efforts were started in the fields of education and health etc. Voluntary organizations engaged in the social welfare activities have a credible record of achievement in India since British times. The NGO became prominent after independence, especially after 1970s. This was partly because of the limited success of past development policies pursued by the Government lack of the people participation restricted the success of rural development programs. The need for micro level institution to involve the people in formulation, implementation and monitoring of the program is, therefore, stressed in several quarters. Voluntary bodies have a role in creating the welfare State. Their continued action is vitally necessary for its survival and growth. The more the State plans and directs, the more important it is for larger number of people to take an active part in shaping its policy and running its affairs. This they can do through voluntary organization. The more wide spread voluntary activity is, the better it is for society as a whole, not only because there are more people taking

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an active part in making democracy work and fending satisfaction in group activity but also because progress in one branch of national life affects and is affected by others.

A voluntary agency may be defined as “an organizational entity set up by a group of persons on their own initiative or partly by an outside motivation to help the people of locality to undertake activities in a self-reliance manner (partly or wholly) to satisfy needs and also bring them and the public sector extension services closer to one another for more equitable and effective development of the various sections of the rural poor”. 

Voluntary action has been a long tradition in India and plays a significant role in welfare activities. The role of voluntary agencies is well recognized and the policy makers and administrators also recognize its contribution. According to the First Plan Document, “A major responsibility for organizing activities in different fields of social welfare like the welfare of women and children, social education, community organization, etc., falls naturally on private voluntary agencies. These private agencies have long been working in their own humble way and without adequate aid for the achievement of their objectives with their own leadership, organization and resources. Any plan for social and economic regeneration should take into account the services rendered by these agencies and the State should give them maximum cooperation in strengthening their effort. Public cooperation through voluntary social service organization is capable of yielding valuable results in channelising private efforts for the promotion of social welfare”. 

Activities of voluntary agencies in our country can be broadly classified into the following categories:

1. Charity: Giving food, clothing, medicine, land, buildings, etc.
2. Welfare: providing facilities for education, health, drinking water, roads, communication, etc.
3. Relief: Responding to call of duties during natural calamities, like floods, drought, earthquakes, etc., and man-made calamities, like refugee influx etc.
4. Rehabilitation: continuing and follow up of the work in areas struck by calamities and starting activities that are durable in nature.
5. Services: Building up infrastructure in depressed backward areas, such as tractor hiring services, providing or facilitating credit supply or seeds, fertilizers, technical know-how etc.
6. Development of socio-economic environment around human beings: socio-economic transformation on the area basis, covering all the people in a given area or concentrating only on a particular group of neglected people in need of help.
7. Development of human beings: conscious raising, awakening, organizing, recording of priorities to suit social justice, redeeming the past and opening doors of opportunities to the oppressed and exploited.

These agencies are flexible and possess the virtues of human service with dedication. Voluntary action is the soul of democracy as this medium secures the

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active involvement of people from policy making to implementation of social services. Their program covers a diverse range of functions embracing human welfare. The programs of voluntary organization are strictly professional, specialize and technical. These are broad based association of persons organized for forming and promoting information and service activities, educational institutions and associations, social welfare organizations.

**National policy on Voluntary Organization**

A large number of NGOs are registered under the Society’s Registration Act of 1860. Some are registered with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act of 1976. The Central Government (India) declared Planning Commission as the nodal agency to promote the Government voluntary organization interface. A National Policy on Voluntary Organization has been notified by the Central Government in July 2007 which has the following objectives.

1. To create and enabling environment for VOs that stimulate their enterprise and effectiveness and safeguard their autonomy

2. To enable voluntary organizations to legitimately mobilize necessary financial resource from India and abroad.

3. To identify systems by which the Government may work together with voluntary organization on the basis of the principles of mutual trust and respect, and with shared responsibility.
4. To encourage voluntary organizations to adopt transparent and accountable system of Government and management.”

Anil Bhatt has classified the role of voluntary organization into three categories, developmental, mobilizational and political roles. These roles make impact on three different sectors. The developmental role aims to affect the design and delivery systems of Government or those organizations, like national or international funding agencies, which concern themselves with programs aimed at raising the physical quality of life. The mobilizational role attempts to mobilize the intended beneficiaries of development so that they can influence the Government’s delivery system or look after their own development. In the political role, the approach is to influence the political system: either its policies, laws and legislation or its process and programs.

NGOs play an important role in influencing the State policies by advocacy and lobbying through their networks. It is now recognized that a part of the requirement of a successful democracy is a strong civil society. Civil society can counterbalance the interests and actions of the State where it is necessary. NGOs are important organization within civil society adding to its ability to influence and strengthen the process of development in third world countries. NGOs are, therefore, important not just for the fact that they can do development better, but also because they can influence the perception, including that of the State, of what constitutes better development.

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evidence shows that NGOs are playing a significant role in influencing the policies of the State at various levels, and counterbalancing the interests and action of the State.\textsuperscript{31}

NGOs help in organizing communities to influence Government programs that affect them. The NGOs comparative advantage is that they are in greater proximity with target beneficiaries leading to greater trust between the Government and the people. They have greater commitment to improving quality of life of the people and greater flexibility and responsiveness in operations. The NGOs work as a link between people and the Government. They motivate, persuade and popularize programs and projects in bringing about attitudinal change and involving people in community projects. The active participation of the people ensures greater chances of success and cost effectiveness than the total dependence on the Government when people tend to become passive. Their method of mobilization, monitoring awareness, implementation and follow up action in the case of NGOs are comparatively faster than official agencies. The rich experience of voluntary organization should be used for achieving national objective. Therefore there is a need to strengthen the NGOs which are doing good work and setup new ones to achieve result in a time bound manner.

**Voluntary Efforts in Rural Development**

Since Independence some urgency of voluntary action was felt in certain areas where NGOs could work constructively. Attention was thus drawn to reconstruction and development ensuring people's participation. Consequently,

many existing and newly born organization began listing out priorities and strategies towards this end. The policy of the Government to encourage voluntary action in this area further accelerated multiplication of both NGOs and their development oriented programs. In fact, the shift in the policy of the Government explicit in the Seventh Plan document is a landmark in the history of voluntary action in rural development.

Rural development may be defined as a strategy to promote the social life of common villagers and to extend social and economic benefits to the target groups followed by social and political awareness. The NGOs have been playing an important role in organizing people and galvanizing the gap between the local community and the local administration. In such a situation, intervention by voluntary organization could ensure responsiveness of local administration to the needs and aspiration of rural community.

The success of rural development depends upon the active participation of the people through self help organization. The voluntary organizations involve people in the developmental process and relate themselves to working with people. They substantiate the efforts of Government with regard to provision of social welfare through rural development programs planned for this purpose. Voluntary agencies act as a watchdog of legitimate interest of women and guide and cultivate women panchas to bring self-esteem and awareness among men because there is a need to improve their economic status as poverty and economic dependences are roots of their self-degradation and crimes against them. NGOs can ensure responsiveness of local administration to the needs and aspirations of rural poor. NGOs can contribute towards rural development in a
broader sense by making the rural people aware of their needs and by awakening their zeal for protecting their rights. They can also act as voluntary checks on rural Government and local bureaucracy. NGOs can also make the Government delivery system more effective by identifying genuine target groups. The crucial role which only voluntary agencies can play is that of a catalyst in the empowerment of the poor and the role of supplementing the Government efforts in the delivery of different services to people. NGOs enable the people to take rational decision.

The voluntary agencies have been involved in rural development, much before Government’s efforts in this field was started. They were the early catalyst for new thrust in rural transformation and their role was that of pioneer, innovator and scientist.\(^{32}\) Documents of successive five year plan have laid emphasis on the need for involvement of voluntary agencies as a significant aspect of participation of people in various developmental endeavors. Voluntary agencies have, by and large, assisted Governmental efforts in: (1) bringing to the knowledge of Government the difficulties experienced by people in getting the benefit of Government programs to which they are entitled; (2) reporting the irregularities in implementation of programs and see that the program benefit reaches its destination without getting siphoned off enroute; and (3) motivating local communities to generate resources from within the community to meet all their needs which fall outside the Government programs (there are several instances of this taking place).\(^{33}\)

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In view of their increased participation in rural development, the Seventh Plan has given importance to the role of voluntary agencies has been raising the provision of funds for their involvement in rural development programs. The plan document has laid the following criteria for identifying voluntary agencies for enlisting help in relation to rural development:

1. The organization should be a legal entity.

2. It should be based in a rural area, working there for a minimum of three years.

3. It should have broad based objectives serving the social and economic needs of the community as a whole and mainly the weaker sections. It must not work for profit but on ‘no profit and no loss bases.

4. Its activities should be open to all citizens of India, irrespective of religion, caste, creed, sex or race.

5. It should have the necessary flexibility, professional competence and organizational skills to implement programs.

6. Its office bearers should not be elected members of any political party.

7. It must declare that it will adopt constitutional and non-violent means for rural development purposes.

8. It must be committed to secular and democratic concepts and methods of functioning.  

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Voluntary agencies are eminently suitable to undertake rural development works and also help in implementing Governments programs. They can be of immense help to Government in implementing their programs, by helping in identifying the right beneficiaries, since they are closely attached to people. The Seventh Plan document has identified several programs and areas in which participation of voluntary agencies can be of great help in better implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programs.\(^{35}\)

Voluntary organization can play a crucial role in supplementing Government efforts as they are close to the minds and hearts of the rural people. The NGOs need to play crucial role especially to educate, organize and mobilize the local communities around environmental issues in order that the local communication take active part in decision making, planning and implementation. They also need to build people's organization from grass roots upward and local level organization need to be formed into their own federation so that local communities are empowered at the grass root level, and participate in decision making and planning. NGOs can play a vital in facilitating decentralized development. They can act as a vehicle for popular participation and mobilization and the extent to which they are successful in influencing the masses depends on the success of decentralized policies.

At the Central level, the Council for Advancement of Peoples Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) is the agency for providing and assisting voluntary action in the area of rural development. Its funds comprise mainly grants from the Government of India. Programs of the Ministry of Rural

\(^{35}\) Ibid., p. 69.
Development including, IRDP, JRY, DWCRA, TRYSEM, organization of beneficiaries, accelerated rural water supply, central rural sanitation programs etc. are implemented by voluntary agencies through the assistance of CAPART. In addition, CAPART has taken initiatives in promoting a variety of activities for transfer of technology, people’s participation, development of markets for products of rural enterprises and promotion of other developmental non-Government sector.  

NGOs can impart political education and train the common villagers for better functioning of the Panchayati Raj. NGOs could also help the Panchayati Raj Institution in resource utilization in a better manner. The question before the NGOs is how to take full advantage of the environment that the Government has created through formulation of policies and schemes that are helpful to the poor, particularly the rural poor, take advantage of the decentralized institutions created at the grass root levels and work in harmony with such institution so as to empower the poor to take advantage of the resources available to them both as part of the environment in which they live and what the Government provides.

**NGOs and Environment**

NGOs are increasingly contributing efforts towards sustainable development through participation, advocacy, demonstration projects, monitoring and research. NGOs played a crucial role in raising environmental concern, developing awareness of environmental issues and promoting sustainable development. The encouragement of public participation in environmental management through legislation in recent years has also

improved the role of NGOs. NGOs and community based organization using a wide variety of means to raise awareness. The work of NGOs has won considerable credibility and appreciation which can be evidenced by the growing partnership with Government for instance; NGOs have substantially increased their involvement in policy related work, playing a crucial role in assisting Government agencies to meet the requirements of environmental management. The conviction that NGOs and Government agencies can and should work together in a complementary relationship has become stronger and the credibility that NGOs have acquired from successful campaigns has created strong and growing public support for their new advocacies. NGOs play a substantial role in the formation of public opinion. Local, regional and national NGOs have emerged as major players and partners in both development and conservation activities. NGOs that work at the national level focus mainly on policy work, playing dynamic role in the identification of the weakness and gaps in current policy or legal frameworks; in information gathering and educating the public, private sector and Government, and, in certain cases, in activist lobbying and protest movements. Major NGOs works to raise awareness of environmental issues and push for changes in policy and development programs. NGOs carry out environmental awareness raising and campaigning locally, nationally and internationally, with some campaigns operating simultaneously at all levels.

In 2009, Greenpeace NGO started public campaign on fertilizers through their subsidizing food crisis report which got wide attention. Around this time the Government also started talking about changing the subsidy system for chemical fertilizers. Greenpeace continued its lobbying work and organized
public hearings which resulted in the Standing Committee on agreement reviewing the policy.\textsuperscript{37}

Another case can be cited of 2004 when Supreme Court Monitoring Committee on hazardous waste (SCMC) slapped a sum of Rs. 50 crore fine on Hindustan Lever Ltd. The damage caused by the companies Mercury Thermometer factory plant in Kodaikanal had been exposed by Greenpeace and other civil society groups in 2001, forcing them to shut down the factory. The SCMS asked the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) to collect the fine from HLL as a revolving bank guarantee to undertake cleanup operations and to restore damaged and destroyed elements of environment under the “polluter pay” principle. HLL was also asked to set up health clinics to provide necessary facilities to enable genuinely affected people recover from the ill effects of mercury poisoning.\textsuperscript{38}

The success of India’s environmental programs depends greatly on the awareness and consciousness of the people. A national environmental awareness campaign has been launched to sensitize people to the environmental problem through audio-visual programs, seminars, training programs etc. NGOs involving local people to play an active role in preventing, poaching, deforestation and environmental pollution. An Environmental Information System (ENVIS) network has been set up to disseminate information on environmental issues.

Scientific and technical NGOs are assisting in bridging the gap between science, policy makers and citizenry. Their research and education work is

\textsuperscript{37} \url{http://www.greenpeace.org/India/en/about/succss-stories/assessed on 17 December 2010.} \textsuperscript{38} \url{http://www.greenpeace.org/India/en/about/succss-stories/assessed on 16 December, 2010.}
providing a vital addition to the decision and policy making process. The availability of reliable information on the environmental impact of development and economic policies is a critical requirement for robust environment decision making. A number of NGOs are working to present information to influence Government decision making. The participation of these major groups is also being institutionalized through formal representation in decision making and management bodies. To conclude we can say that these groups influences policy making in specific areas significantly by campaigning and raising awareness among citizens.

**Pressure Groups and Policy Making**

Phrases like ‘interest groups’, ‘private organization’, ‘lobbies’ and ‘interest articulators’ are often used interchangeably for pressure groups.\(^{39}\) Pressure groups are free associations and they serve important political ends. They are interest groups that are organized for political actions are thought of as pressure groups and it is these that have direct political significance.\(^{40}\) Pressure groups are non-political groups; though they are engaged in politics, their politics is that policy.\(^ {41}\) They are organized groups which attempts to influence Government decisions without seeking themselves to exercise the formal powers of Government. Such groups are a far more important channel of communication than parties for the transmission of political ideas from the mass of citizenry to their rulers.\(^ {42}\)

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40. Ibid., p. 144.


A pressure group has been defined as “an organized aggregate which seek to influence the context of governmental decisions without attempting to place its members in formal governmental capacities”. Thus, the important aspects of the pressure group activity “are that pressure groups are firmly part of the political process and they attempt to reinforce or change the direction of Government policy, but do not wish, as pressure groups, to become the Government. They range from powerful employer organizations and trade unions operating at the national level to small and relatively weak local civic groups trying to improve local amenities”.

Thus the prime function of a pressure group is to promote the interests of its members and pressurize the Government. They are concerned with the specific issues and self-interest and the basic cause of their formation. Pressure groups play an important role in public policy making, but the extent of influence may vary according to the political system adopted by a country. Gabriel A. Almond has recognized the importance and observed that: “How different are the problems of public policy making in a society where there are no effective mechanism for the articulation of public demands, from one in which there is an elaborate set of structures for the formulation of demands, and the transmission of these demands into the party and governmental system. The kind of interest groups which are present in a society, the specificity or diffusiveness of their demands, their conceptions of the political arena and of the rules of the game, the ethos which they bring with them into the political process

– these are the raw materials of policies – which some set of mechanisms must transform into political personnel and public policy”.45

Pressure groups are required to perform certain functions. These groups articulate demands and each group tries to get the support of other groups even by giving concession to each other. It ensures that group demands become public policies. These provide input material for political parties both in power and in opposition so that policy formulation process become easy. These help in avoiding ideological rigidity of political parties. It is usually on the basis of activities of interest and pressure groups that much of policy making process is influenced because in each political party, political leaders and ordinary members have some interest which they are interested to promote. Political parties and pressure groups resemble each other in a way that both seek to realize their objectives by influencing the decision making agencies in their favor.46

Levels of Pressure Group Activities

Pressure groups acts at different levels with a view to influencing decision making process. These groups will try to have access to all levels but economic group have more access to the Government than the others. Sometime these groups have direct channel of communication with the ministers, who are responsible for policy formulation, pressure groups continue their activities in all the three organs of the Government, namely, legislature, the executive and the judiciary. Their activities start at the time of election. To interest groups,

46 . V.O. Key, Jr., op.cit., p. 154.
Elections are an object of primary concern, for they afford them an opportunity of pushing their ‘favored man’ into the main agency of administrative mechanism. They have a stake in the matters of public appointments for the obvious reason that men occupying high position in the governmental setup make policies and take decision which ultimately affect their interest in varying degrees, these groups concentrate their efforts on the electoral system by helping agencies that may work to their advantage at the times of polls. It is accomplished by creating a strong and favorable public opinion for certain political party and its nominees.

Elections for pressure groups are just a method to capture legislatures. Decision making is the essence of political dynamics and the efficiency of the political system is depending upon the capacity of decision making. The Indian Parliament is the supreme legislative organ of the Union Government and responsible for making, amending modifying of laws regarding those subjects, which are mentioned under Union and Concurrent list. The Constitution of India authorizes Parliament to amend the Constitution under Article 368 of Constitution. Since legislatures are over worked and have not necessary technical expertise to legislate on the subjects which are introduced in every session of Parliament, much work, both in parliamentary and presidential democracies, is dealt with at the Committee stage. Usually what is recommended by the Committee is accepted by the house. Each pressure group tries to have maximum influence in the Committee, because it is far easy to convince few members in the Committee than the house as whole. Interest groups targets parliamentary Committees to influence public policy in their favor. In

47. Article 368, of Constitution of India.
legislative process, sometimes interest groups are consulted and often these
groups have succeeded in modifying the cells in a limited sense.

In parliamentary democracy these groups try to influence the executive
through legislature. Questions, adjournment and call attention motions, and vote
of censure are the various devices through which the legislators induce, threaten
or force the minister to implement or stay a particular policy decision in the light
of the interest of their pressure group. Pressure groups are fully aware that
policies usually are initiated at departmental level and get approved by the
executive heads. The establishment of several Committees and sub Committees
for advice and consultation by the department affords a very convenient channel
for organized group to promote their interests. Now every democratic State relies
on the view that these agencies “form, in brief, a deposit of expertise upon the
different aspects of policy which, effectively used, create an atmosphere of
responsibility about Governmental acts. If the minister acts upon their opinion,
he is at least building upon a foundation of experience; if he rejects then, the
creation of an opposition and, as a consequence, of the discussion that is the life
blood of democratic governance, is adequately assured”.48 It is notable that
administrative boards entrusted with the talk of determination of policy are
generally staffed with an eye on group interests and any possibility of change in
this behavior is inevitably connected with the infiltration of new members and
also to some extent with the adoption of a new policy by the old under forced
circumstances. Pressure groups usually adopt three methods to influence the
executive in their own favor, namely, (a) advice, (b) administration and (c)
propaganda. Advice is made available when technical and complicated affairs

are to be dealt with. For the purpose various consultative and advisory bodies are formed either in pursuance of a legislative measure or of an executive decision whose basic purpose is nothing else than to facilitate acceptance of the agency’s action by the group represented on such bodies. Sometime this device does not work to the desired extent because:

i. Their recommendations are only advisory in nature.

ii. Only few recommendations of the Committees may be accepted, thus keeping important suggestions out of legislation.

iii. If some recommendations are accepted by the executive head, concerned department may raise real problem for implementation.

Device of administration is more useful for group interest. A situation characteristic of the occupational licensing boards and similar independent agencies comes to take place when one homogenous interest group is directly or indirectly charged with the administration of a function. Then we have a more or less complete control of administrative action through the delegation of governmental power, especially rule making power, to the organized interest group. In administration it becomes very difficult to get any decision smoothly implemented when two groups are balanced in influence in administration and when their interests very badly clash with each other.

Device of administrative propaganda employed as a means of protecting the access of one set of interests and restricting that of others by altering their relative strength. Pressure groups use this device to ensure that it leaves an idea

with the executive that it is protecting the interest of not his own group but the society as a whole. But the most effective method of influencing executive still is the legislature of the country. In November 1980, the farmer of Nasik launched under the banner of Shetkari Sangathan an agitation demanding the minimum remunerative price for sugarcane to be fixed at Rs. 300 per tonne, and for onion at 100 per quintal as against the existing price of Rs. 175 and Rs. 60-70 respectively. In view of the reluctance of Government the farmers took to direct action methods of a non-cooperative kind. The agitating farmers were offered support by various political parties, the keenness shown by political parties to through their weight behind farmer’s agitation, however turned out to be major factor for softening the attitude of Government leaders, resulting in the Shetkari Sangathan leaders being invited by the State Government for talks.

Sharad Joshi announced a four point program as the next phase of the agitation where by farmers were to enter all central and State Government offices, Nationalized Banks, District Collector’s offices, Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad offices, set there and not allow the people to work; sugar factories in the State were requested not to give levy sugar to the authorities; the elected representative were to be asked to resign and those who failed to oblige would be gherao; and a million farmers were to Court arrest throughout the State during the next phase of agitation which was to be peaceful. This kept sufficient pressure on the Government.

Talks took place, Shetkari Sangathan was invited to send its delegation to participate, along with the chief minister, in discussion with Prime Minister and the Union Agriculture Minister. The outcome of the talk was quite mixed, in
that, while the center rejected their demands for increasing the price of sugarcane as these had already been fixed for the current session, it promised to examine the question of sugarcane transport charges even though the agriculture prices commission had consulted the Bureau of Industrial Cost and Prices before determining its prices. Farmer’s demand that more onions be purchased by NAFED and the Maharashtra Marketing Federation at a slightly higher price was also accepted. The most significant implication of the agitation, however, lay in its making the issue of remunerative prices for farmers an important part of agriculture policy in future. The manner in which farmers were mobilized by Shetkari Sangathan was the major factor that contributed not only to acceptance of some immediate demands of farmers but also to an increasing role of farmer’s representative in the framing of agriculture policy in future.⁵⁰

Legislative declarations are either very sketchy or controversial and administration is made responsible to convert them into routine affairs. The penetration of influence into the sphere of public services does not occur at immediate level. The first target is the legislature and executive and the groups strive to exercise their influence on them as a matter of policy. Pressure groups approach bureaucracy only when they get frustrated form political organs in getting their demands met. In such situation, bureaucracy tends to be multifunctional by promoting and protecting diverse interests, which cause damage to the neutral and independent nature of bureaucracy.

Interest groups takes part in electoral politics to induct men of their choice into the seat of political executive, their concern with bureaucracy is also

very important. Administrative departments are equipped with ‘experts’ who control their political heads. It is these experts who influence their respective heads at the time of policy making. As such it is they on who interest groups count for an effective realization of their purpose. In a certain respect, even administrative agencies are like pressure groups; they not only administer what is given to them by legislative. Mandates but also act as “originators of proposals for legislation and exert an influence in the making of new policy”.51 It is found that at times they act as representatives of group interests and thereby exert their weight in the matters of management of programs of procurements and expenditure that significantly contribute to the fortunes of great economic concerns. Facts may be furnished to prove that vast aggregations of public servants animated by traditions, aims and interest have a major role in the political process of democratic country.

Sometime interest groups fail to influence public policy through the executive, bureaucracy and legislature, they then to try to achieve them through judiciary. The judiciary is constitutionally kept beyond the influence of either the executive or the legislature. But pressure groups try to influence it in more than one way. In the first instance, they try to see that only committed judges to their view point are nominated by the executive. Judiciary is also influenced by the interest group by organizing the bar. These groups deliberately create division in the bars and help in their organizational setup. The idea is that members of the bar appreciate their view point when matters come up for discussion before the judiciary and feel pleasure, if a favorable decision suited to a pressure group is taken. Sometimes interest groups may influence the judicial process through

51. V.O. Key op.cit., p. 691.
public opinion. Publication of pamphlets, articles and reviews in newspapers and magazine may go to extent of shaping the thinking of judges.