CHAPTER V

Voluntary Organizations in Rural Development:

The previous chapter have discussed the institutional arrangement of rural development staring from the Ministry of Rural Development, Directorate, Specialized agencies and other institutions as present in India and Mizoram. The chapter highlighted the different rural development programmes operating in Mizoram which includes Boarder Area Development Programme, Backward Region Grant Fund, Indira Awaas Yojana, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Non-Lapsable Centre Pool of Resources, Social Education, Integrated Wasteland Development Programme, Integrated Watershed Management Programme, North Eastern Region Livelihood Project, Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, National Rural Livelihood Mission and New Land Use Policy.

The present chapter discussed the role of Voluntary Organization (VO) in rural development. It discussed the role and nature of voluntary organization and its role in the post-Independence period. The chapter highlighted the voluntary organization that is present in Mizoram with a special focus on the role and functions of the Young Mizo Association, Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkham Pawl and the Mizo Zirlai Pawl.
5.1 Voluntary Organizations in Post-Independence period

The government of India have launched several programmes in different Five Year Plan to promote systematic development with the active involvement of people to wipe out poverty. In order to realize these objectives, the governing elite, the bureaucracy, mass media, voluntary agencies, people’s organizations etc. have to play an active role. Any plan for social and economic regeneration should take into account the services rendered by voluntary agencies and the State should give them maximum cooperation in strengthening their efforts. The VOs can play a major role in mobilizing the people in any government programmes. Realizing this fact the government have been trying to involve the NGOs in all the Five Year Plans.

The efforts and attitude of the government towards NGOs also encouraged their growth in number and activities. The first Five Year Plan (1951-56) recognized the significance of voluntary agencies in social welfare activities. It is clearly stated that 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 voluntary agencies. These 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. Various welfare measures were initiated for the well-being of rural people and hence the importance of voluntary agencies was felt more than ever before. While some of them were directly involved in working with the poor and helping them to get the benefits of many anti-poverty schemes, some trained workers for organizations engaged in rural transformation. The first Five Year Plan earmarked Rs 1.60 crore on social welfare and the spending of the same was entrusted to voluntary agencies. To extend financial aid and to promote efforts of voluntary agencies in rural development, the Government
of India has established a Central Social Welfare Board whose main objective was promotion of voluntary efforts in social welfare. Its establishment marked the beginning of government funding to voluntary sector.

The encouragement of NGO sector was also carried out in the second Five Year Plan (1956-61). The plan extended greater assistance to various voluntary agencies working for social welfare. The programme of rehabilitation of displaced persons was given prominence and the annual allocation was enhanced to 13.40 crores.

The third Five Year Plan (1961-66) also emphasized the need for strengthening the voluntary agencies in development process. It stated “properly organized voluntary efforts may go a long way towards augmenting the facilities available to the community for helping the weakest and the neediest to somewhat better life. The wherewithal for this has to come from time, energy and other sources of millions of people for whom VOs can find constructive channels suited through varying conditions in the country”. During this plan period the expenditure on social welfare programmes has been enhanced to 19.40 crores and the implementation of the programmes were entrusted to voluntary agencies. Thus, the government made efforts to extend various types of assistance, monetary, technical and administrative, to the voluntary agencies. Further, the Central Social Welfare Board has given grants-in aid of Rs. 36.9 lakhs to 14 founding homes and 270 orphanages in the country. Many voluntary agencies were established during the fifties and sixties. Some voluntary agencies were setup by politicians as well to build public support for themselves. Availability of public donations and increasing grants in-aid from government departments and the government-sponsored Central Social

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92 Sheth DL and Harsh Sethi, *NGO sector in India: Historical Context and Current Discourse*, p.293
Welfare Board (1953) and Central Institute of Research and Training in Public Cooperation have acted as an incentive to the rapid growth of voluntary agencies in several parts of the country.

The fourth Five-Year Plan (1969-1974) earmarked an amount of 67.81 crores on social welfares programmes which included the welfare of the disadvantaged sections, family and child welfare of destitute, blind, mentally retarded, physically handicapped etc., and the VOs were encouraged to undertake these activities. The Central Social Welfare Board has given assistance to voluntary agencies which engaged in implementation of programmes for women and child welfare. It has allotted Rs 6 crores for grant in aid to voluntary agencies. A special provision of Rs 2 crores was also earmarked in the plan for assistance to voluntary agencies for welfare of destitute women and children. Thus, the fourth plan also further recognized the role of voluntary agencies in social welfare in the country.

There was a scheme of promotion of voluntary agencies in rural development through the encouragement of pilot projects of public cooperation by providing financial assistance to voluntary agencies during the fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-79). The government have emphasized the role of voluntary agencies as a significant aspect of participation of people in various development efforts. It opined that, these agencies suggest an alternative path of development by involving people and assisting the State in realization of its socio-economic objectives by way of making the State aware of the difficulties people confront in availing the benefits of various programmes, by reporting the irregularities, if any, in the implementation of programmes and motivating the local communities to generate resources from within the community to meet all their needs which fall outside the government programmes.

The sixth Five-Year (1989-85) further encouraged VOs and tried to make them an integral part of development process by earmarking certain
specific activities such as utilization and development of renewable sources of energy, water management and social conservation, implementation of minimum needs programmes, disaster management, environmental protection etc. for carrying out these activities it has made a financial allocation of Rs 175 lakhs. It suggested to the government that people’s participation in the development process should be further strengthened through the support of local groups and associations and VOs. In pursuance of this suggestion, the then Prime Minister of India, Smt. Indira Gandhi has written letters to the Chief Ministers of states in 1982 emphasizing the need for widening the role of voluntary agencies for the implementation of 20 point programme\(^93\). She also suggest to promote cooperative relations between the voluntary agencies and government departments concerned so as to strengthen the role of voluntary agencies to contribute to strengthening of participatory approach to accelerate rural development process. Efforts were made from the government to utilize the services of voluntary agencies in implementation of plan programmes. On the advice of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) the government of India has established a semi-autonomous body called People’s Action for Development India (PADI) to provide general help and training facilities to these voluntary agencies. In addition, the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) Hyderabad is also providing training facilities to nominees of the voluntary agencies. By utilizing these facilities, the voluntary agencies have, over the years, improved their capabilities, skills and adopted the new technique of having direct interaction with the disadvantaged sections of the society and developed professional competence to undertake rural development activities. It is widely accepted that the voluntary agencies have proven abilities in identification of beneficiaries, dissemination of information in respect of anti-poverty and other programmes aimed at benefitting the poor by way of demonstration through pilot projects and organizing the poor for

\(^93\) Hanumantha Rao, As the Planning Commission Views the Concept, Yojana 1984, p.6
better bargaining abilities. The government has also adopted more positive attitude towards voluntary agencies and emphasis is being laid on involving voluntary agencies more actively in rural development. It was also recognized that the magnitude and intensity of the problems of rural development is such that the efforts of government machinery alone would not be sufficient to tackle them.

The seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90) had anticipated that voluntary efforts would be forthcoming in a massive way for better implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes. Because of the magnitude and intensity of the problems of rural areas, the government realized that in spite of its best efforts it could not effectively deal with the problems of rural development. The government wanted the active involvement of the voluntary agencies to act as complementary role to the government. It had relied heavily on the voluntary agencies to implement anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes. Greater emphasis has been laid on the role of VOs in rural development. The Plan documents stated that a nation-wide network will be created and in order to facilitate the working of this network of NGOs will be created. The government of India earmarked an amount of Rs. 250 crores for voluntary agencies for taking up various activities during the Plan period and to extend necessary financial assistance a National Rural Development Fund was created. The seventh Plan not only identified the specific areas to be entrusted to the voluntary agencies for economic support but also codified the criteria for identifying them for economic support.

The Government of India envisioned a more active role to VOs to help in making communities as self-reliant as possible. These organizations were expected to show how village and indigenous resources including human resources, rural and local knowledge, grossly under-civilized at present could be used for their own development. The official recognition to voluntary agencies marked the beginning of a new era by making the
voluntary agencies as an integral part of rural development. The Government of India made certain efforts. PADI which was established to provide finances and to strengthen the voluntary efforts in rural development was reorganized by merging the Council for Advancement of Rural Technology (CART) to form the Council for Advancement of People’s Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) in 1986. CAPART has initiated programmes like promotion of voluntary action in rural development scheme, accelerated rural water supply programme, central rural sanitation programme, JGSY, IAY, IRDP, DWCRA, training of panchayat functionaries, support to NGOs, watershed development etc.

The eighth Five-Year Plan (1982-97) has laid more emphasis on the role of voluntary agencies in rural development. The Plan document has suggested for the creation of nation-wide network of NGOs. In order to facilitate the working of this network, the Planning Commission has worked out three schemes relating to the creation, replication, multiplication and consultancy development. Provisions were also made to provide services to NGOs in rural development. CAPART has been entrusted with the responsibility of providing and assisting voluntary action in the area of rural development. It was also entrusted the responsibility of taking initiative 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 activities and delivery systems in non-governmental sector94. Entrustment of enhanced role to the NGOs by the Planning Commission also reflects the ideas of structural adjustment programmes initiated in India from 1991 onwards. This is also a period where the State started gradually withdraws itself from development sector and the NGO sector started emerging as a model of alternative development strategy to combat poverty, social inequalities, gender discrimination etc.,

and started concentrating on the gaps left over by the State. Thus, the eight Plan further enhanced the role of NGOs in rural development.

The ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) acknowledged the important role played by voluntary agencies in social welfare activities in India. It has recognized its role as effective motivators in bringing the local government and the people together in working towards the well-being of the disadvantaged sections, as an effective implementing force in translating the policies and programmes of the government in action and as an effective animations in generating awareness and to equip the target groups with necessary information about their rights and privileges\textsuperscript{95}. The governmental intervention in social sector is largely operationalized through voluntary agencies. Commenting on the efforts of some voluntary agencies, the Ninth Plan document felt that, they were experimenting successful alternative models in providing certain specialized services for the welfare of some specific groups of people, drug addicts, mentally retarded, physically challenged etc. In recognition of their role in social services, the Government of India has earmarked an amount of Rs 1208.63 crores for the social sector at the centre in the Ninth Plan and another amount of 3348.12 crores in the states sector\textsuperscript{96}. Thus, the Eighth and Ninth Plan document also assigned sufficient role to NGO sector in the context of diminishing role of the state.

The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) recognized the NGOs sector as an important channel for mobilizing resources for social sector development. It felt the need for integrating the Externally Aided Projects (EAP) and direct funding of projects by the NGOs with the planning process\textsuperscript{97}. Further the Planning Commission has suggested delinking the

\textsuperscript{95} Planning Commission, \textit{Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), Social Welfare, Economical India, Info Services, New Delhi.}
\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Ibid}
\textsuperscript{97} Planning Commission, \textit{The approach paper to the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007), Government of India, 2001, p.17}
quantum of external aid from General Budgetary System (GBS) to motivate the Ministries and State Governments to make efforts for more access to external aid. It also felt that an improvement in governance is possible only when countervailing forces in society develop confidence to oppose inefficiency and corruption in government. In addition to promoting genuine civil society organizations, government should relax Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) provisions so that NGOs have easier access to alternative funding\textsuperscript{98}. The Tenth Plan identifies eleven monitor-able activities which provide a focus for intervention of NGOs in plan implementation. They are:

- Reduction of poverty ratio by 5 percentage points by 2007 and by 15 percentage points by 2012
- Providing gainful and high-quality employment to the labour force
- All children in school by 2003, all children to complete 5 years of schooling by 2007
- Reduction of gender gaps in literacy and wage rate by at least 50 per cent by 2007
- Reduction in the decadal rate of population growth between 2001 and 2011 to 16.2 per cent
- Increase in Literacy rate to 75 per cent within the plan period
- Reduction of Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) to 45 per 1000 live births by 2007 and to 28 by 2012
- Reduction of Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) to 45 per 1000 live births by 2007 and to 1 by 2012
- Increase in forest and tree cover to 25 per cent by 2007 and 33 per cent by 2012
- All village to have sustained access to potable drinking water within the plan period

\textsuperscript{98} Ibid
• Cleaning of major polluted rivers by 2007 and other notified stretches by 2012

The Eleventh Plan (2007-2012) has focus on rapid and inclusive development for which the voluntary sector has an important role to play. To strengthen the working of VOs, a Steering Committee on Voluntary Sector for the Eleventh Plan was set up in May 2006. The Steering Committee made recommendations for better collaboration among the voluntary, the public and the private sector in the Eleventh Plan. To facilitate the work of the Steering Committee, three Sub Groups were set up to examine the partnership arrangements between the Private & the Voluntary Sector and recommend appropriate steps to promote Corporate Social Responsibility, to review the procedures for involving VOs in different schemes and suggest simple mechanisms for appraising the work of VOs and to review existing accreditation systems for VOs and provide suggestions for establishing better methodology for enhancing accountability, transparency and good governance.

5.2 VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATION:

Rabindranath Tagore in his Santiniketan experiments showed how rural development could be brought about by integration of education and culture. Gandhiji in his Wardha experiment showed how village industries could bring about the development of the poorest sections of the people in this country. After Independence too, there was a lot of talk about the role of Voluntary Organizations and people’s participation when we started our planning process in the early 50s. The British Government in India spent minimum resources on social welfare programmes and so voluntary agencies played an important role in developing programmes for the poor, the destitute, women and children. In recent years, the VOs have acquired
greater importance and significance than before. Voluntary action stimulated and promoted by VOs engaged in development play a significant role at the grass roots level in the Indian social milieu. The NGOs and Government Departments are also struggling hard to organize the people through social mobilization process for eliciting their participation in the successful implementation of the development programmes. Some have succeeded in the process and some are still struggling in progressive direction. The role of VOs in welfare and developmental activities is felt much during the last two decades of the twentieth century in India. It is felt that the governmental efforts alone are not sufficient to achieve the gigantic task of overall development, particularly in a social setting where a large majority of the population are illiterate, ignorant and poverty stricken masses.

After Independence, the State assumed the role of custodian of the welfare and well-being of a large majority of the people. The constitutional obligation of the establishment of socialistic pattern of society with planned economic growth led to a greater intervention of State in economic and social fields. The responsibility for bringing about the desired economic and political change was entrusted, to a greater extent, to the bureaucracy. Although VOs were functioning in various parts of the country, they have not received the expected support from the State and Bureaucracy. During the Sixth Plan, the governments have not paid adequate attention towards VOs and their role. The State and the Bureaucracy looked at its activities and programmes as sceptical and suspicious. It is only after the Seventh Five Year Plan that the VOs have received open appreciation by the State and bureaucracy and they were asked to participate actively in the rural areas for development. C. Venkataiah (2009), *NGOs and Rural Development*, p. 85

The outlook towards the voluntary agencies has undergone change, from passive to positive attitude. The activities of voluntary agencies have also undergone change from welfare, relief, and rehabilitation
to developmental. The rolling back of the State has created a space for the NGOs to occupy pivotal place in rural development. It has been viewed that VOs are potential instruments for bringing about social transformation and building egalitarian and human society.\(^{100}\)

It is widely recognized that the fruits of developmental activities would reach people only when they participate actively in the programmes meant for them. People’s participation is sine-quo non for development. VOs, known by different nomenclature, have a long history of organizing the rural masses for participation and development. The organizations and individuals working in voluntary sector are known by different names. Such as NGOs Voluntary Agencies, Voluntary Action Groups, Civil Society Organizations, Third Sector etc. however, they are more popularly known as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

VOs have been generally defined as voluntary, autonomous, non-profit organizations or groups of citizens established to address various problems and disadvantages in the society. Voluntary denotes of one’s own free choice. Since voluntary and autonomous also connote non-governmental as they are also characterized as NGOs. VOs or agencies represent private, non-profit organizations dedicated to the design, study and implementation of development projects at the grassroots level.\(^{101}\) S.R Maheshwari (1987) defines it as an agency formed in order to promote some common interests of its members, in which membership is purely optional, not forced or mandatory and exists independent of the State.\(^{102}\) In the Indian context, the term voluntary agency would refer to all formal organizations registered under the society’s registration Act of 1860. Thus, any organization that is not a direct division of national or state government can

\(^{100}\) Dantwala M.L, et al. (ed), Social Change through Voluntary Action, p.9
\(^{102}\) S.R Maheshwari, Voluntary action in rural development, Indian Journal of Public Administration, July-september 1987, p.559
be referred to as an NGO. The NGOs are expected to be non-profit, non-governmental, and non-political. They are non-political in the sense that they do not directly participate in the electoral process, but are political as all social activities are\textsuperscript{103}. They are non-profit in nature because their activities are services oriented. They are non-governmental because strict rules and regulations, hierarchical administrative structure, based on superior-subordinate relations, and external controls do not govern them. Thus, the term non-governmental organizations encompass a broad array of organizations varying in their specific purpose, philosophy, sectoral expertise and scope of activities.\textsuperscript{104}

5.3 Characteristics of Voluntary Organisation:

Voluntary organisation can play a crucial role in rural development by supplementing government efforts as they are close to the minds and hearts of the rural people. They have their roots in the people and can respond to the needs and aspirations of the community very effectively. They can experiment new approaches to rural development\textsuperscript{105}. The success of rural development depends upon the active participation and willing cooperation of the rural people through self-help organizations and voluntary agencies. In recent years, the voluntary small-scale, flexible, innovative and participatory, are more successful in reaching the poor and in poverty alleviating. This consideration has resulted in the rapid growth of NGOs involved in initiating and implementing rural development programmes. India is estimated to have around 3.3 million NGOs in 2009\textsuperscript{106}. A rapid growth took place in the 1980s and the early 1990s. With the SHG linkages

\textsuperscript{103} Shashiranjan Pandey, Op Cit., pp.48-49
\textsuperscript{104} Sajjad Zohir, NGOsector in Bangladesh: An Overview, Economic and Political Weekly, September 2004, p.41
\textsuperscript{105} Dhillon & Hanshra (1995), Role of NGOs in India, p.6
\textsuperscript{106} Wikipedia, Non-Governmental Organization, Retrieved on 12.12.2013
programme introduced in 1989, the NGOs sector has been recognized as a crucial partner, recognizing the strengths of the NGOs in organizing the community and the potential in saving and credit programmes both under the linkage programme and other credit delivery innovations. The concept of NGOs and Social welfare are not new. India has a glorious tradition of Voluntary organisations. The recent revival and strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions – consequent upon the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992- the NGO’s role has become more significant. In order to promote holistic and integrated development with the range of development schemes and programmes, the role of NGOs services and their involvement in the development process will be all the more in demand. Various Role and Functions of NGOs voluntary action stimulated and promoted by voluntary agencies engaged in development play a significant role at the grass roots level in the Indian social milieu. The success of rural development depends upon the active participation of the people through self-help organizations.

The following are the characteristics of VOs.

- It is a group organized by some persons on their own initiatives to pursue common interests of its members
- It is a conglomeration of volunteers joined together with shared values of concern for some specific purpose
- It is spontaneous in nature
- It is initiated and governed by their own members on democratic principles
- It is not subjected to any external control, government or otherwise
- Its activities are organized on non-profit basis
- Its membership is purely optional, members may join or resign at their own will

107 Laxmi R Kulshresth et.al 2002.
• It act as an intermediary between people and the state
• It is registered under an appropriate Act to give a corporate status
• Its staff may be either paid or unpaid or partially paid
• The funds may be received through contributions, donations, government and foreign aid, and
• The organized sector of the economy such as the business establishments, trade unions and peasant unions will not come under the purview of voluntary agencies.

5.4 Role of VOs:

The widespread belief that VOs are more successful in reaching the poor in poverty reduction also resulted in rapid growth of funding for NGOs by government and external donors. As far as the government funding is concerned, there are over 200 government schemes initiated by the central and state governments through which NGOs can have direct access to resources for rural development. In recent times, many NGOs have been concentrating on social mobilization on contemporary issues of importance such as women empowerment, human rights, and implementation of various central and state government development programmes. The NGOs in India have contributed handsomely towards social mobilization and social activism through their intensive campaigns, people’s mobilization programmes and effective networks. The NGO as a social force facilitates collective action and people mobilization for the purpose of achieving the desired objectives. The NGOs are deploying various people-oriented as well as people-centred strategies, and these organizations build rapport with the people and mobilize them.

The roles of NGOs are:
• Catalyse Rural Population
• Build Models and Experiment
• Supplement Government Efforts
• Organizing Rural Poor
• Educate the Rural People
• Provide Training
• Disseminate Information
• Mobilize of Resources
• Promote Rural Leadership
• Represent the Rural People
• Act as Innovators
• Ensure People’s Participation
• Promote Appropriate Technology
• Activate the Rural Delivery System

5.5 Nature of VOs:

India has been famous for its voluntary agencies and voluntary social action. Even voluntary action can be traced in any organized human life. This was seen even before the beginning of civilized society i.e. from food gathering stage of ancient life. The form, content, nature and method of voluntary social service in the beginning was different from that of the present day voluntary service and varied from society to society. Helping fellow human beings in distress or in trouble is the basic nature of human being. With the advent of State, society and civilized life, it has undergone changes in the nature, functions and types of voluntary action. In the olden days voluntary effort was mostly individualistic, small group oriented and emerged out of natural impulse or spontaneous to help the fellow human beings in adversities and natural calamities. But with the growth of society there emerged voluntary agencies performing multifarious activities. The voluntary agencies are found in varying degrees in most areas of the world.
There may be voluntary social organizations, spontaneous in nature, short lived until the purpose is solved and there may be another organization permanent in nature existing at least for specific period performing different types of activities, viz., religions, charitable, welfare and development oriented. The nature, structure and functions of these groups present a great deal of overlap as well as diversity, depending upon their origin, size, geographic location and even political ideology.

The nature of these agencies depends upon their philosophy, policy, program, typology, role, strategy, funding, linkages, management, evaluation, problems etc. So far as the philosophy and purpose of these agencies are concerned they may perform single programme or variety of programmes. Based on their typology, the VOs may be categorized into two broad categories, the Inter-Governmental or National Voluntary agency. Further this may be subdivided into the institutional sector and the people sector. The NGOs that come under the Institutional sector are business houses, religious groups, and local groups. The NGOs that come under the people sector include service oriented, development oriented and action oriented. The action groups are further divided into local people based groups, field staff based and social action based\textsuperscript{108}.

For carrying out the activities, voluntary agencies pool up financial resources either from their own source or from general public, donors and from government. It is but natural that for extending financial assistance the governments both central and state, generally recognize such NGOs which are legal entities, whose activities are open to all citizens irrespective of religion, caste, creed, sex, or race, which are not specially for the benefit of any particular individual or community other than women, Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and backward communities and which are working in

\textsuperscript{108} Shashiranjan Pandey, \textit{Op Cit}, pp.50-51
an area not included under any corporation, municipality, notified area committee of town or panchayat\textsuperscript{109}.

5.6 Voluntary Organizations and Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana:

The guidelines issued by the Government of India on SGSY, strongly emphasized the need for social mobilization for the successful implementation of the SGSY scheme through effective and innovative role of NGOs. The Role of NGOs in Social Mobilization in the context of SGSY has assumed greater significance. Moreover, in recent years, the role of NGOs in Social Mobilization for development programmes particularly in the context of SGSY, are increasingly lauded by development agencies, decision makers, officials etc. Indeed, social mobilization is as an effective intervention with a positive impact on Socio Economic improvement of rural people. There is an emerging need to understand various methods used and adopted by the NGOs in the process of social mobilization for the promotion of SHG and implementation of SGSY. Voluntary effort has always been an important part of our culture and social tradition. The need for organizing people into accredited associations and their involvement and participation in rural development have now been fully recognized. In recent years, they have increased in considerable number, acquired greater importance and significance and put up many new experiments in the field of rural development. The NGOs play in making the people environmentally aware and sensitive to take part in the development process. Role of NGO in Social Mobilization under SHGs and poverty alleviation has persistently been on the agenda of the government. Various programmes with

\footnotesize 109\hspace{1em}Deshpande V.D, \textit{Code of Conduct for Rural Voluntary Agencies}, Economic and Political Weekly, July 1986, p. 1304
contrasting methodologies have been tried whopping funds expended yet the poverty seems indomitable.

SGSY is the poverty alleviation programme integrating six erstwhile rural development programmes, and it has been in operation since 1st April 1999. The very striking feature of this scheme is that it is quite different from earlier programmes in terms of objective, strategy, methodology and sustainability. Obviating the loose ends of the earlier programmes, it intends to overcome poverty through generation of self-employment opportunities with a debatable participation, contribution and initiative of the poor themselves. Doing away with the targeted individual-centric beneficiary approach, the group approach is adopted. The SGSY attempts to address poverty in all its dimensions through multi-pronged strategy. Thus, SGSY scheme focuses on group approach by organizing the poor into SHGs through social mobilization process. Against this backdrop of this programme, the SGSY’s guidelines emphasis on the role of NGOs and their significant participation in mobilizing people and to creating awareness among the people for the successful implementation of the SGSY schemes. The role of NGO in Social Mobilization in the context of SGSY has assumed greater significance as a response to the failure of the Top down, welfare oriented approaches to the rural development programmes. In recent years, development agencies, decision makers, and officials increasingly laud the role of NGOs in social mobilization for any development programmes particularly in the context of SGSY. Indeed, social mobilization has to be termed as an effective intervention with a positive impact on the Socio Economic improvement of rural people.

The NGOs role assumes greater significance in the following process of implementation of SGSY.

- Identification of Swarozgaris
- Formation of Groups
- Groups Stabilization
• Training and Capacity Building
• Linkage with Bank, Officials
• Grading process
• Micro Credit
• Micro enterprises development

The process of social mobilization is done by the NGOs in the above said process and implementing SGSY. SGSY emerged as a major programme aimed at promotion of SHGs and establishing a large number of microenterprises in the rural areas building upon the potential of the rural poor. SGSY is conceived as a holistic programme of micro-enterprises covering all aspects of self-employment. With this single most important objective, the Centre and State Governments are concentrating in promoting large number of micro enterprises across the country. It is high time to understand the various methods used for social mobilization by the NGOs for effective implementation of SGSY so that the same methods and process can be adopted and applied elsewhere in our country while implementing SGSY and promoting the SHGs in the years to come. The goal of social mobilization is to raise the status of the poor in a society through capacity building for self-awareness, self-development and self-realisation.

5.7 Role of NGOs in SGSY:

There are numbers of NGOs working as facilitators of the SGSY programmes in Mizoram. There are NGOs run by the Roman Catholic and the Salvation Army and by the World Vision functioning in different parts of Mizoram. These NGOs are a registered society under societies registration act. The NGOs help communities by assisting the children, families and community as a whole to achieve the basic standard of physical, intellectual, socio-economic and moral well-being. The direct
involvement of some of the renowned NGOs such as YMA, MHIP etc. is not seen in any stage of the programme implementation. However, the service of NGOs has been utilized effectively and has noted a healthy performance with tailoring the services of NGOs in the state. The common inputs sought from them were in the formation of SHGs and their training. They were consulted in selection of group swarozgaris as well. Being the major facilitator, the NGOs were supposed to provide the above services for success of the groups nurtured by them. During the primary study, it was opined by the NGO representatives that the sustainability of project is hampered by unavailability of market potential. Only half of the NGOs felt that the assisted projects under SGSY were sustainable and could help the swarozgaris to cross the poverty line. Hence, it is suggested that the NGOs should render their whole hearted support in all the facets of the program.

Where there is an active presence of NGOs or facilitator, it is observed that the SHGs are more active, vibrant and their group performance is good. The facilitator also plays a very important role in nurturing the groups who have just started, who have been there for many years. The facilitators recommend some of the good performing groups to the bank for loan assistance.

The NGOs has played a very important role in connecting with the people and mobilizing the SHGs to pursue their activities. The guidelines issued by the Government of India on SGSY, strongly emphasized the need for social mobilization for the successful implementation of the SGSY scheme through effective and innovative role of NGOs. The NGO’s role assumes greater significance importance in the implementation of SGSY.

The experience across the country has shown that group formation and development is not a spontaneous process. A facilitator working closely with the communities at grassroots level can play a critical role in the group formation and development. The quality of the groups can be influenced by the capacity of the facilitator.
5.8 Voluntary Organization in Mizoram:

The success of rural development depends upon the active participation and willing cooperation of the rural people through voluntary organizations. VOs play a very important role in the Mizo society. Mizo society being close knitted and classless one, offers a suitable ground for VOs. The social life of a Mizo is moulded through such organization. There are numbers of NGOs in Mizoram. The Young Mizo Association (YMA) and the Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkawm Pawl (MHIP) have played a very significant role in the life of the Mizo people and has been considered by the Government as partners of development. NGOs in the Mizo society play a crucial role by supplementing the role of the government efforts as they are close to the hearts and minds of the people.

➢ The Young Mizo Association (YMA):

YMA is a non-political, voluntary organization established on 15th June, 1935 at Aizawl, Mizoram. YMA is an all India organization with branches at Mizoram, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura. The aims and objective of YMA is

• Useful occupation of leisure time
• All round development of Mizoram
• Promotion of good Christian life

There are many activities performed by the YMA. Some of the activities includes opening and running of the Adult Education Centres all over the state of Mizoram. Afforestation of the state “Green Mizoram” project has been taken up by the YMA since 1974. Tree plantation
programme is taken up by the YMA branches during the month of June every year since then.

YMA constructs houses for the rural poor. In this there are two types of construction the first is that if somebody in a village cannot construct his or her house, the members of YMA and the community would help them construct their house. The other is the houses constructed by YMA on its own or community land. These houses are being maintained by the YMA members and used for accommodating the poor and needy families on a free-rent basis.

YMA plays a very important role in the conservation of Mizo culture and heritage. It also performs the cleanliness drive and campaign on health and sanitation. It also campaign against the evils of drugs and alcohol. The YMA has been very active in opening and running of more than 250 public libraries all over Mizoram.

YMA organize mass participation programmes of sports, social and cultural activities. A highly notable achievement of YMA has been in coordinating all the political parties of Mizoram for a free and fair election, peaceful atmosphere and lowering of election expenditure in the State Assembly and Member of Parliament (MP) elections.

Since its inception, YMA has published a number of leaflets, brochure and books on various issues and topics for the purpose of education, awareness and campaign. A separate sub-committee have been created to oversee the publication and documentation of the various activities and achievement of YMA. A monthly journal with over 10,000 copies is being published since October 1973.

Among the programme and activities of YMA, helping the poor and needy has been one of the principle motives of the organization. In the occurrences of death in the community, YMA members would make all
arrangement in the house so as to accommodate the relatives and friends. Digging of grave and burying of the body are done by the members on a voluntary basis which is in consonant with the custom and tradition of the Mizo.

YMA is currently engaged in a special programme regarding AIDS and HIV. Awareness campaign, seminars, publication and distribution of brochure and leaflets about the dreaded disease is taken up throughout the length and breadth of the state and among the youths. YMA has been committed to the task of providing social service and to the preservation of the cultural heritage of Mizo’s.

YMA has been conferred the following awards:

- Indira Priyadarshini Vrikshamitra Award 1986 by the Government of India\textsuperscript{110}
- Excellence Service Award by the Government of Mizoram for three consecutive year of 1988-90
- Indira Gandhi Paryavaran Puruskar 1993 by the Government of India\textsuperscript{111}

\begin{itemize}
  \item Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhwam Pawl (MHIP):
\end{itemize}

MHIP established on 6\textsuperscript{th} July, 1974 is one of the biggest voluntary organizations in Mizoram. It is devoted solely for the welfare and upliftment of the weaker section of the society, particularly women and children. The basic principles of the MHIP are based on philanthropic social

\textsuperscript{110} Award are given by Ministry of Environment and Forest of the Government of India to individuals and institutions who have done pioneering and exemplary work in the field of afforestation and watershed development

\textsuperscript{111} Award instituted by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India in order to encourage public participation in environment.
work with no expectation of any return benefit. It aims at creating a state of welfare in which every individual is cared for irrespective of Caste or Creed.

The MHIP is a mother of all women, the destitute and downtrodden women, fighting for their rights in all aspects of life. There are several rape and murder cases involving minor girls and adult women. In protest against such inhuman behavior, the MHIP organized a gigantic procession several times in the major towns in Aizawl, Lunglei, Kolasib, Champhai and Saiha. As a result of these strong protests, the State Government took up the appropriate strong action against the accused who were then convicted.

The Mizo Society is by Custom a patriarchal Society. Women and children in this society were generally considered inferior to man. However, in the wake of modernization such consideration has become controversial. But still there are the die-hard who refused any change in customs and traditions. A Mizo man may divorce his wife as he fancy and drive her out empty handed without any means of supporting herself. Women are often left socially and economically neglected such destitute women are compelled to earn their living by any means, helpless to care for either ethic or morality with obvious consequences. Under such circumstances, the MHIP take up the issued strongly as discriminatory and unjust for the destitute women in general. The MHIP would champion the issue to any high authority in the state.

The MHIP involved themselves wherever there is a social injustice in the day to day family life of the Community within their respective branches and jurisdiction. They seek justice for women who are beaten by their drunken husband, a child who is neglected in nutrition or in other family and social life. An unmarried mother would be given the proper guidance and counseling, sometimes even provided monetary or material support to the destitute women and children. In some extraordinary cases where some
families needed medical treatment outside Mizoram, but too poor to proceed are given a helping hand by them in such difficult times of the family.

Activities of the MHIP are concerned in programs to elevate the low status of women. In this regard, the MHIP had been touring the length and breadth of the state covering even the most remote and interior villages. Workshops, seminars and groups discussion are conducted. The major issue was to review the customary law, which provide very little right and protection to the Mizo women. This movement has enlightened many of the younger generation of today, and day by day it is gaining popularity and momentum.

Leadership training is held periodically. These training have made aware of the importance of uplifting the status of the women in Mizo society. The activities of the organization in helping the destitute, the down-trodden and the weaker section of society in the socio-economic and cultural life of the community has been widely appreciated and recognized.

The MHIP take up the major portion of the programmes to the Mizoram State Social Welfare Advisory Board, these are:-

- Crèche Centers
- Condensed Course of Education
- Balwadi centers
- Awareness Generation Projects
- Anganwadi Centers
- Family Counseling Centers
- Piggery Units
- Working Women Hostels
- Vocational Training Courses
Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP):

The MZP was established in 1935 and has since gained pre-eminence as the forum of the youth. It was originally concerned with the interest and welfare of the Mizo students, especially in the endeavour to create understanding and unity among them. In addition, it has now transformed into a non-political pressure groups on various issues affecting not only the students’ community but also Mizoram as a whole.

MZP aims and objective is to safeguard the rights and unity of all Mizo students and to prepare Mizo people to become helpful citizens of Zoram. It strives to prevent and attack corruption, to do its best to unit all Mizo people and to conserve traditional Mizo values.

Human resources are the most important resource and any other resources may never be developed to the maximum if human resource is not adequately developed. Unlike the developed countries, many third world countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America could not develop their resources to the maximum due to lack of potential human resources. As education is the best machinery for building up of potential human resources, these NGOs has taken steps for uplifting educational standards of the area and it initiated different programmes in regards. Emphasizing on skill development training has been conducted from time to time. They are given training for carpentry, masonry works etc. Mizoram has been invaded by the abuse of drugs and other related substances. These NGOs have taken steps to organized rehabilitation camps and free counseling. As constructive measures for identifying the hidden talents of many youths, solo competition, quiz competition, drama competition and different types of training have been
conducted from time to time. They extend their helping hands to those in need by providing free service in the forms of civic action or *Hnatlang*.

Securing peoples participation through voluntary organization is vital to the services of rural development programmes as it increases the sustainability and utilization of the service. It can also function as a watchdog of the people and act as a link between administration and the people. The largest NGOs in Mizoram are the YMA, MHIP and MZP which the government considers them as partners of development. These NGOs are being involved in the selection beneficiaries, selection of BPL families, planning etc. However, rural development is not in the agenda of these NGOs. Their involvement in rural development related activities has been very meager. They have more or less ignored their role in rural development sector. They are not involved in the development of rural infrastructure, in exploiting the local resources and in developing the rural infrastructure. Their role is concerned largely with the social duties and not in economic development.

With the objective of associating voluntary organizations in development and social welfare activities in an appropriate manner, the State Government is providing sizeable monetary assistance to such organizations to enable them to play a notable role in the development process. The target sectors for voluntary organizations are elementary and adult education; vocational training of adolescent girls and women from poor and needy families, Reproductive and Child Health Programme, animal care, National Health Programme, development of women and children in the rural areas and environmental improvement of urban slums and welfare of schedule tribe and schedule castes etc. The emphasis is on encouraging self-employment through skill formation. Leading institutions in specific areas are suitably involved in providing gainful employment to the unemployed/under employed youth. While adopting the neglected segments
of the society, the endeavour is to encourage community participation to the optimal extent both in planning and implementation with the help of mass-based self-reliant organizations and to take up projects to sustain the achievements already made. The aim of the Government is to reach the most needy in the society through innovation and experimentation of the NGOs.

Relevance of the role of voluntary sector has been in focus in India. In fact, the initiatives taken by the United Nations and its agencies in involving the voluntary sector for capacity building and contributing towards the speedier and less expensive processes of development has gained worldwide acceptance. As a consequence, the developed countries in particular and those which are still developing or are less developed have taken the idea of involving the voluntary sector responding to the complex processes of development at various levels. India has a large network of voluntary organizations working in the fields of Health, Education, Rural and Urban spheres. A large number of such organizations are making significant contributions in this direction.

The present chapter discussed the role of Voluntary Organization in rural development. It discussed the role and nature of voluntary organization and its role in the post-Independence period. The chapter highlighted the voluntary organization that is present in Mizoram with a special focus on the role and functions of the Young Mizo Association, Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkawm Pawl and the Mizo Zirlai Pawl. It highlighted the importance of Voluntary Organization as it plays a crucial role in rural development by supplementing government efforts as they are close to the minds and hearts of the rural people. They have their roots in the people and can respond to the needs and aspirations of the community very effectively. They can experiment new approaches to rural development.