Chapter VI

Summary, Conclusion & Recommendations

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ROLE OF NGOS IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN UTTARAKHAND: A CASE STUDY OF A DISTRICT ALMORA OF KUMAUN REGION
6.1. Summary

Way back in the post-Industrialisation era of Europe the concern for environmental degradation took its roots. With the passage of time the role of government in handling environment concerns became more and more legislation based and mostly restricted to policy level decisions. As a result the role of NGOs has become increasingly important in mobilising the human resource in generating awareness about and taking steps to address the environmental issues at various levels. The present work highlights the environmental problems in general, the institutions and legislations already in place at both international and national level, the institution of NGO and its increasing contribution in addressing the environmental issues. The present work analyses the role of NGOs in addressing environmental with particular reference to District Almora of Uttarakhand. These NGOs have consistently worked for sustainable development and environment friendly actions. Except a few sketchy references of NGO’s contribution in environmental conservation and sustainable development, particularly in District Almora, there is a dearth of literature on this subject. The proposed thesis attempts to address this shortcoming and fill this gap.

The second chapter of the present study describes the study area as well as the universe of the present study area. The present study is carried out in Almora which is a hill district of Kumaun region in the state of Uttarakhand. The chapter succinctly describes the geo-physical attributes such as geographical location and demography, climate and vegetation, rainfall etc. and the geographical peculiarities and related environmental issues in the State of Uttarakhand in general and the present study area. The NGOs registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860 and working in the field of environmental conservation and development in the area constitute the universe of the study. The profiling of the selected NGOs have been elaborately described in the chapter fourth of this research work. The chapter also describes the nature of the present study, research methodology employed, tools and techniques utilized for the collection of data, its analysis and assimilation by the researcher for conducting the research work on the topic of present study.
The third chapter of the present study discusses the rise and growth of the non-governmental sector as third sector agencies in the realm of environment governance in the developed and developing world countries.

The fourth chapter of the present study discusses the profile of the non-governmental organizations which are selected by the researcher for the purpose of the present study. These NGOs have been historically involved and currently working in the field of environmental conservation and development in the study area of the present study, i.e. Almora district situated in the hills of Kumaun region of the state of Uttarakhand. This chapter aims to identify the NGOs based in District Almora in the hills of Kumaun region of the state of Uttarakhand as well as the NGOs based outside the study area but are presently running or had previously implemented the environment based projects through other agencies as their ground partners and to understand the role of NGOs and the impact of their work in addressing the environmental concerns particularly in their areas of work and in the hills of Kumaun in general. Henceforth, this chapter evaluates the effectiveness of the NGOs as agencies for environmental conservation and development in Uttarakhand and the level of community participation in the conservation and development of their environment.

The chapter four further discusses and analyses the responses based on to the questionnaires designed for the assessment of the role of NGOs in the field of Environmental conservation and Development in the hill district of Kumaun region in Uttarakhand. The primary data collected from the field sites as per the designed questionnaire, recorded interviews and the secondary data obtained from the websites and publications of the NGOs has been tabulated in this chapter. The given questionnaire on assessment of the role of NGOs comprises of twenty-five questions as provided in the appendix. The officials working in the selected NGOs’ head offices and branch offices and the field co-ordinators handling the projects on the village sites where the NGOS are working or had earlier worked individually or in collaboration with other agencies constitutes the ‘unit of investigation or enquiry’ for the present study.

The Chapter five evaluates the level of community participation in the conservation and development of their environment and the effectiveness of the NGOs as agencies for environmental conservation and development in the study area. The primary data collected from the field sites as per the designed interview schedules has been tabulated in this chapter. The given interview schedule comprises of twenty-one
questions as provided in the appendix. The members of the ‘grassroots communities’ of the rural areas where the NGOs are working or had earlier worked individually or in collaboration with other agencies for the implementation of the environment based project constitutes the ‘unit of investigation or enquiry’ for the present study. The respondents from the communities were either working with the NGOs or were beneficiaries of the projects earlier implemented by the NGOs in their areas. The analysis of primary data assimilated on the basis of the responses to the queries/questions mentioned in the interview schedules and the recorded interviews has been represented in the forms of tables and figures in the chapter.

Chapter Six also summarises the findings of previous chapters and sections of the present study and also provides the recommendations based on the insight gained by the research scholar during the course of the present work.

6.2. Conclusion

The present study is primarily theoretical, exploratory and descriptive in character; hence the nature of data utilized in this study is both ‘Primary’ and ‘Secondary’ and also based on ‘Participatory Rural Appraisal’. The objective of the descriptive study is to describe the observed events, phenomenon and situations precisely as they are while the exploratory nature of the study explores sources to address the limited knowledge of the researcher on the concerned topic of research.

The main reason for taking up ‘Non-Probability Purposive Sampling’ for this study is the fact that no two NGOs can ever be found to be similar. In this method, the minimum number of sampled units that meet the requirements of the study can be specified. Here, the researcher is not concerned with achieving objectivity in the selection of samples or having numbers that match the proportions in the population; instead, to enable the researcher to concentrate the relevant research on a limited group or a small sized group having similar characteristics by employing the method of non-probability purposive sampling. To make generalizations from the sample units to the entire population under study is desirable but of secondary consideration.

The researcher has developed a format of the questionnaire and the interview schedules for the collection of primary data. These tools of primary data collection
have been developed as per requirements of the research and were redesigned during the course of the survey to incorporate necessary changes when found inappropriate or lacking during the field work. One set of questionnaire or schedule was designed to evaluate the impact of the working of NGOs and the level of community participation in the environmental conservation and development through the intervention of NGOs’ environment based projects and the second set was developed to assess the role and effectiveness of the NGOs working as agencies for environmental conservation in the study area. The former was used to assimilate information from the respondents of the communities in the village sites where the selected NGOs had previously implemented or are currently running a project having positive impact environment. And the latter format was employed to record the experiences and achievements of the NGOs and their staff that are working towards environmental conservation in and development of the study area. The format of the set of questionnaires and interview schedules which were developed by the researcher for the present study are provided in the appendix to this thesis.

In order to overcome the shortcomings of the questionnaire survey, the researcher has complemented the questionnaire survey with PRA technique of semi-structured interviews and group discussions with the respondents from the communities where the selected NGOs work. Semi-structured interviews are partly structured interviews conducted in an informal manner. The interview is initiated by the outsider with a few pre-set questions that are required to be open-ended. Further questioning and probing depends upon the answers received and the willingness of the respondents.

The sources of secondary data for the present study mostly included books, journals, magazines, newspapers, published reports and the websites. For the collection of relevant data from secondary sources required for the present study the researcher had visited different libraries, the offices of the selected NGOs and the concerned government departments which are located in the given study area. For library consolation the researcher had visited the Central Library of Kumaun University wherein the researcher had accessed the internet resources at the Central Library of Kumaun University for paid journals and other online publications (books, magazines, research papers etc.); consulted the Library of Political Science department at D.S.B Campus, Kumaun University for the books related to the present study and the Library at ATI (Administrative Training Institute), Nainital.
On the basis of the analysis of the data collected from the pre-designed questionnaires and interview schedules as well as the inputs from the recorded interviews of the respondents, it was observed that almost all the selected NGOs who were assessed for their role and impact in the field of environmental conservation and development were working in all those thrust areas which the researcher has obtained after consulting the NGOs officials, referring to their websites and published reports on the projects implemented by the NGOs in the study area and other relevant secondary sources. The NGOs selected and interviewed were currently running or previously implemented projects on Improving agriculture productivity through promoting green manuring of soil, or preparing of vermin compost, or prevention of diseases and raising nutritive value of crops through techniques of organic farming etc.; Tackling the problem of soil-erosion in the fields by terracing, building check-dams etc.; Combating the water crisis by reviving natural water springs or traditional water harvesting structures, locally known as johads (check-dams), or building structures for rain-water harvesting; Forest conservation by checking tree-felling and encouraging plantation and natural resource management; Addressing the provision and management of proper waste/sewage-disposal by building public utilities like sewage system etc.; Providing alternative sources of energy requirements by solar panels, harnessing wind energy, constructing bio-gas plants, micro-hydel projects etc.; Conducting workshops for equipping the locals with the knowledge of natural resource management, disaster management/environmental emergencies and natural disasters like land-slides etc.; Creating Self-help Groups for community capacity-building or enabling self-sustenance; Conducting Research for identification and conservation of plants of medicinal use; Imparting environmental education at school and colleges through lectures, seminars and demonstrations etc.; Dissemination of information about environment conservation among the locals through brochures, leaflets etc.; Others such as climate change etc.

Hence, it has been established that the NGOs serve as a catalyst for societal change because they are responsive to the needs and problems of the marginalized groups in society, usually the poor, women and children. NGOs are being heralded by their proponents as important vehicles for empowerment, democratization and economic development. Driven by strong values and interests which are geared toward empowering communities that have been traditionally disempowered, the greatest
potential of the NGOs is to build the capacity and financial sustainability of the communities in generating self-help solutions to the problems of poverty and powerlessness in society.

Based on the creativity, flexibility, efficiency, independent and less-bureaucratic nature, grassroots orientation and participatory approach of the NGOs, they have been increasingly acknowledged by the International Donor agencies for having the capacity and commitment to make-up for the shortcomings of the state and market models in contributing to sustainable growth and development of humankind.

In India many national level environmental NGOs are functioning for conservation and sustainable development. The prominent ones are TERI (Tata Energy Research Institute), New Delhi, Kalpavriksha based at Pune, SAFE (South Asian Foundation for Environment), Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), Environment Support Group (ESG), Greenpeace India, LEAD India, and Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) to name a few. Environmental and development NGOs such as Central Himalayan Environment Association (CHEA) of Nainital, Society for Uttaranchal Development & Himalayan Action (SUDHA) and Institute Of Himalayan Environmental Research and Education (INHERE) headquartered at Almora, Sanjeevani Vikas Evam Jan Kalyan Samiti (Sanjeevani), Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan (USNPSS), Himmothan Society are notable for their for their work in the study region of the present study.

Therefore, the findings of the present research work have fully justified the title of the present study, i.e. The Role of NGOs in the Field of Environmental Conservation and Development in Uttarakhand: A Case Study of a District Almora of Kumaun Region.

6.3. Recommendations

Recommendations are outlined in this chapter on the basis of the insight gained by the research scholar during the course of the present work as well as the inputs sought from the NGOs working towards environmental conservation and development in the
study area of the present study. It also incorporates the concerns of the hill communities in the context of environment of their region.

6.3.1. Forest Restoration and Ecosystem Services

The Uttarakhand government needs to take a pro-active approach to the implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2005 and first priority in the direction of green development should be for improving forest cover and enable sustainable livelihood. To redress the issue of distrust between the village community and the Forest Department, the Forest Department (FD) should adopt a facilitative role like the Agriculture Department and help communities to conserve their Gram Van and Panchayat forests on their own. CAMPA funds should be channelled to the Van Panchayats so that they can expand forest cover.¹

Himalayan states deserve adequate payment for providing ecological services to the rest of India. The quantum to be provided by the Fourteenth Finance Commission must be significantly increased. Governments, legislators and people of the Himalayan states have to collectively lobby at the Centre for this change. These payments must directly benefit the people who forego the use of their forests and other environmental resources.²

Environmental or ecosystem services ‘are the conditions and processes through which natural ecosystems, and the species that make them up, sustain and fulfil human life’.³ Specific environmental services associated with preservation and agricultural diversification include carbon sequestration, soil conservation, biodiversity conservation and the preservation of landscape beauty, reduction or avoidance of deforestation, reduction of forest fire risks, watershed management, recuperation of ecosystem hydrological functions.⁴

Payment for environment services involves providing financial rewards to rural landowners and resource users who adopt environmentally friendly practices to either preserve forests or other natural resources intact, and/or to introduce production systems that generate economic surplus and sustain local populations without destroying the resource base upon which people’s livelihoods depend.⁵
There has been a widespread support among NGOs for PES for it has great potential to benefit small farmers who owing to the lack of alternative and viable models or government support continue to practise the Slash-and-burn agriculture and pasture formation as their livelihood strategies.\(^6\)

Indeed this path has already been taken by the State of Amazonia. In the year 2000 rural unions, environmental NGOs and community groups in Brazil’s Amazon region jointly conceived a ‘Programme for the Socio-Environmental Development of Rural Family Production’ (Proambiente). Under this system, such groups are valued and rewarded for their multi-functional contributions to economic production, social inclusion and preservation of the environment whose environmental contribution would otherwise remain unrecognized by mainstream government policy.\(^7\)

Proambiente is Brazil’s incipient attempt to provide a system of PES rendered by small producers who are helping to conserve the Amazon rainforest by adopting more sustainable farming systems, including agroforestry, extractivism, forest and pasture management, among others. Payments schemes such as Proambiente could significantly promote RED to avert global warming as well as protect both the environment and people’s livelihoods from the potentially fatal consequences of current development patterns in Amazonia. Schemes such as Proambiente and other (non-carbon related) programmes have shown that there are viable alternatives to the destructive practices that currently cause high rates of forest loss.\(^8\)

Due to the mounting pressure from developing countries to introduce the notion of ‘avoided deforestation ’as a valid criterion for carbon offsets under the CDM of the Kyoto Protocol after 2012, the World Bank has already initiated to bring together major conservation NGOs and the private sector for a ‘Global Forest Alliance’ (GFA) and has set up a $300 million Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) would pilot test schemes for reducing emissions from deforestation. To make this initiative successful, a greater political commitment as well as the appropriate allocation of financial and human resources is required.\(^9\)
6.3.2. Conserving Bio-diversity in Agricultural Landscapes and Ensuring Remunerative Livelihoods Development

In view to revive the mountain Agriculture in a sustainable manner, the Agro Vision Uttarakhand 2020 plan needs to be reviewed, modified and implemented. An Integrated farming system and community-based tourism needs to be promoted in a big way for the development of sustainable and environment friendly livelihoods. In the face of the growing pressure on land, the classical approaches to conservation which aims to preserve pristine habitats within protected areas, are necessary but insufficient as the natural habitats have come to be increasingly restricted and degraded.

Conserving biodiversity in agricultural landscapes is both an end in itself for the agricultural landscapes can have high levels of biodiversity, and a means of complementing conservation in protected areas. In the face of the growing pressure on land, the classical approaches to conservation which aims to preserve pristine habitats within protected areas, are necessary but insufficient as the natural habitats have come to be increasingly restricted and degraded.

Efforts to enhance and protect biodiversity in agricultural landscapes requires to pay attention to what agricultural practices are eco-friendly as well as most profitable to adopt so that both private and environmental interest are met.

Some profitable bio-diversity friendly practises include integrating high value crop cultivation, basic agro-processing at the farm level, dairying, horticulture and floriculture with adequate market linkages. VOs can provide value chains development support to community based organizations.

The governmental developmental schemes like RKVY, ATMA, NFSM, MGNREGA, NRLM and IWMP need to focus more on promoting integrated farming systems development and enhancing the productivities of common pool resources to ensure food and livelihood security for the village community. In this endeavour the government in collaboration with the non-governmental organizations can provide valuable support to consumer based organizations, establish demonstration and learning and training centres for new livelihood development approaches. A more recent approach which has received widespread support from NGOs is to provide direct benefits for the provision of biodiversity services.
6.3.3. Disaster Preparedness and Sustainable and Safer Infrastructure Development

Ecological sustainable development is the basic prerequisite for disaster mitigation. A Planning Commission Task Force has recommended that, “The balance between natural resource exploitation and conservation should tilt in favour of the latter”. Therefore, Safety and sustainability have to be built into hydropower development, tourism and related activities like roads and building construction in the hills of Uttarakhand for almost the entire region lies in seismic zone V which faces the highest earthquake risk.

The Constitution of India prescribes land use management to be a state subject and the Twelfth Five Year Plan 2012–2017 of the Government of India called for state governments to establish state-level land use plans. Land ownership is one of the issues in land use management. For example, a large portion of forest area of the state is owned and managed by different organizations such as Forest Department, Revenue Department, panchayat, and military. Individual ownership being limited to development and conservation of land depends on the decision of the agencies. However, there is no clear demarcation of responsibility of land use planning, and thus the state land use plan needs to be formulated with inputs from Disaster Management Department. Technology-based approaches like early warning systems, use of Doppler radars, seismographs’ networks, etc. have to be supplemented by community-based disaster preparedness (CBDP). The State Disaster Management Authority should involve VOs in CBDP activities on a programmatic basis. Major infrastructure development projects in the Inner Himalaya region must be prohibited. Other development activities must be regulated. Green development activities must be actively promoted in this region and elsewhere.

Sustainable hydropower: Safe and sustainable hydropower production in Uttarakhand requires a new approach from planning to approvals, construction and regulation so that the rivers in this eco-sensitive zone retain their natural wilderness and risk of catastrophic failure of dams in the event of heavy floods is avoided. Ravi Chopra (2014) in his work “Uttarakhand: Development and Ecological sustainability” outlined following recommendations in the context of hydropower projects (HEPs) in Uttarakhand:
• For a reassessment of the hydropower potential of Uttarakhand, a time bound decommissioning plan must be evolved for all HEPs already existing in this region. In the intervening period safe and sustainable alternate energy sources must be developed.

• A publicly accepted hydropower policy which takes into account demand management and greater reliance on alternative sources of energy has to be evolved. It must accord priority to community-owned micro and mini hydro projects to enhance local benefits.

• Planning should shift from maximum power production to sustainable or optimum power production. The lateral and longitudinal integrity of rivers must be maintained so that aquatic biota on the beds, banks and flood plains of the rivers are sustained. This will require the release of adequate environmental flows downstreams of all HEPs. All existing projects must begin to release e-flows within a specified period, say one to two years. Monitoring of discharges downstream of HEPs must be done by an independent agency in which at least 50 per cent members are from local communities.

• Prior approval for a project should be obtained from the affected Gram Sabhas. Communities should be compensated for the loss of CPRs in addition to compensation for private lands. Resettlement and rehabilitation plans must be approved by Gram Sabhas prior to construction related activities. Resettlement must be completed before commissioning of the projects. Where multiple projects are developed on a single river, basin level impact assessments and management plans must be approved in advance before any construction is started.

• Sanctions and approvals of projects must be done in a transparent manner. An independent state commission should evaluate dams’ proposals and monitor construction activities. At least half the members of the monitoring committees must be from affected communities. The approvals must ensure use of good practices and safe technologies.

• The EIA process needs to be strengthened so that hydropower sustainability, environmental conservation and public acceptance can be achieved. EIAs must be mandatory for all HEPs with installed capacities greater than 1 MW. Project
developers should pay a fee to the Ministry of Environment and Forest which in turn gets the EIAs done by independent, experienced, multidisciplinary institutions and organizations. Involving the potentially affected communities in the assessment process and making public hearings mandatory and honest can enhance public acceptance.

- Compensatory afforestation using CAMPA funds must be done locally through Gram Panchayats or Van Panchayats.
- Use of explosives in the fragile Himalayan terrain for constructing tunnels of HEPs and other infrastructure works should be banned.
- The state must develop a strategy for energy conservation.

**Eco-Tourism:** The development of infrastructure and deforestation is interrelated with the increase of tourists. This has increased the occurrence of disasters at an alarming rate in the State. According to the statistics provided by the Department of Tourism, 31 million of tourists visited the state as compared to 11 million in the year 2000.30

The rampant influx of tourists has adversely affected the land use/cover change pattern and has manifold increased the environmental and socio-economic vulnerability of the people of the hill regions. The unplanned and rapid construction of basic infrastructure such as roads, hotels, electricity transmission lines to accommodate more and more number of visitors do not include the view point of their safety and disaster preparedness and management.31

For accommodating the growth of tourism in the safe manner, the number of tourist to the Shrines should be limited on daily basis as has been successfully exemplified in the case of Gangotri glacier trek at Gaumukh.32 Considering the great scenic beauty and scope of adventure such as trekking, hiking in the wilderness of the hill state of Uttarakhand, Nature tourism must be encouraged taking advantage of scenic locations and tourists can be dispersed throughout the state. So also community-based tourism where local families host visitors and their youth act as guides, introducing the guests to scenic locations, local history, culture and foods can replace massive hotels and resorts. Uttarakhand and other Himalayan states have several functioning models of this approach.
Green Roads: In the direction of promoting safer and sustainable ways of constructing roads in the fragile geography of the state, the institute of (GBPIHED) has proposed guidelines for building safer, green roads in the Himalayan region (GBPIHED, undated). They need to be followed rigorously.33

To make tourism more cost-remunerative and attractive, the safe, multiple, alternative routes, preferably trekking paths through hills and forests should be promoted for the tourists and nature lovers. For instance, ropeways are useful alternatives to roads where the slopes are steep and distances are relatively short.34

Safer Habitations: Keeping in view the risk of riverside construction and the obstruction of natural route of the river flow, the Uttarakhand High Court had ordered a ban on all sorts of construction within 200 m of all rivers in Uttarakhand. The state government must swiftly and stringently comply with the courts order in order to ensure the safety of the people dwelling in the river side and thus, demolish the structures built in dry stream beds and punish the erring officials for the neglecting their duties. Besides this, the Uttarakhand government must effectively promote low cost earthquake safe building construction in the disaster hit areas. In this endeavour the government should take a pro-active approach towards raising awareness of the villagers and building their capacity for disaster preparedness and thus, ensure the necessary involvement of experienced non-government organization which have been engaged in conservational and development activities in the hill region for years.35

The Uttarakhand experiences of disasters has indicated that the study of land use/cover change is important because it helps to understand how the anthropogenic intervention in the area especially land use/cover change due to diversion of forest land to the built-up area has made the damage more intense in the recent disasters of the State. Kala has indicated that 44,868 ha of forest has decreased since 1980. 9500 ha has been converted into roads, 5500 ha is deforested for hydropower projects, and 3100 ha is converted for transmission lines.36 In fact, the 68 % of this conversion has taken place after 2000.37
6.3.4. SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION

The Earth is “Gaia,” a living super-organism in evolution. What is done to it will affect all its children. Paulo Freire has said in his book, “It is urgent that we take upon ourselves the duty of fighting for fundamental ethic principles, such as respect for the life of human beings, the life of other animals, of birds, rivers and forests. I do not believe in lovingness between men and women, among human beings, if we are not capable of loving the world…Ecology has to be present in any educational practices that are radical, critical and liberator.” 38

The United Nations’ Decade of Education for a Sustainable Development, 2002 has affirmed that “education is a vital element in order to achieve a sustainable development” but, without changes in economic policies, it is not decisive. Economy can change if there is social mobilization against the current capitalist unsustainable model.39

The Rio Declaration (1992) as also argued that “all sustainable development programs…must consider the three spheres of sustainability: environment (resources and fragility of the physical environment), society (including culture, participation, public opinion and media), and economy (the economic growth and their impact on society and environment) are the key areas of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).40

Among the example of Europe’s “best practices” is the Hungary’s eco-schools. The Hungarian Network of Eco-Schools are based upon values of sustainability, environmental education, education for a healthier lifestyle and education for democratic participation. Around 272 schools, approximately 6% of the total number of schools in the country, are already part of this environment based pedagogical project.41

Our children need to experience and know their environment, the plants’ and animals’ needs, their habitat, how to reduce, re-use and recycle materials that have been used, how to save energy and keep ecosystems clean and green. In a more advanced level, the need is to discuss biodiversity, environmental conservation, alternatives of energy and global warming, and to produce new knowledge and do research that aim at looking for a new development paradigm.42
6.3.5. Enhancing NGO Management

The emergence of NGOs represents an organized response by civil society especially in those areas in which the state has either failed to reach or done so in adequately. The importance of public awareness and NGOs involvement in environmental protection is acknowledged worldwide.43

The creativity, flexibility, entrepreneurial nature and capacity for vision and long-term thinking of the NGOs are of paramount importance in for building up of a strengthened global environmental governance system.44 In fact, it is the participation of non-governmental groups that makes the process “global” and not simply “international”45

The wariness that governments and others have of NGO involvement might be reduced if baseline standards defined the rights and responsibilities of governmental and non-governmental entities in a clear and consistent manner. For the development of a formalized structure for NGO participation in strengthening and enriching the process of evolving a global environmental governance following elements need to be addressed:46

- Clear articulation of rules, rights, and commitments to consultation with civil society beyond time-limited NGO fora;
- Clearly delineated selection criteria for NGO participation in consultations and advisory groups, placing an emphasis on diversity;
- Establishment of guidelines for the process of NGO contributions;
- Commitment to respectful treatment of NGO documents;
- Support for publication and dissemination of NGO submissions to delegates at relevant international meetings;
- Formalized submission process for NGO recommendations and comments to intergovernmental bodies;
- Provision for feedback and response to NGO submissions by intergovernmental bodies or national governments;
- Mechanism for monitoring the implementation of these components.

By interrelating global and local concerns, NGOs have grown in importance to a point where they act as key arbitrating agents within the field of environmental policy.
Hence, it is necessary to support and encourage genuine national as well as local NGOs which provide the much needed institutional support specific to the needs of the people in different parts of the country. Some of the major limitations faced by environmental NGOs in India are as follows:47

- Shortage of trained personnel in the field of environment protection.
- Lack of research and development facilities.
- Financial constraints.
- Lack of cooperation from the governmental agencies.
- Difficulties in the mobility on account of lack of transport facilities.
- Environmental NGOs are facing a credibility crisis with a number of cases of embezzlement and scandals involving some of them coming to the fore.

Alan Fowler in his book on NGO management, Striking a Balance, highlights the following major challenges faced by NGOs:48

- the need for a coherent link between vision and action under strong leadership and staff commitment;
- the importance of organizational learning for gaining leverage;
- the need for interactive, authentic partnerships for greater impact; and
- the need for reducing dependence on donor funding and increasing quality of financial sources.

In order to ensure coherency from vision to action in the working of the NGOs and to maintain focus on primary stakeholders and mission, Fowler outlines in his book the need of strong leadership, staff commitment and an optimum degree of organizational flexibility to respond to the changing needs, interests and priorities for institutional sustainability.49

Fowler also defines quality funds for NGOs as being free from stringent conditions, allocated on programs rather than projects, not constrained by administrative requirements, predictable and reliable in terms of flow, disbursed timely, and based on demonstrated performance. It is a strategic challenge for NGOs to have multiple donors instead of a single one in order to reduce vulnerability and increase
sustainability and autonomy. Fisher mentions reducing dependency on a single donor as a key factor tied to autonomy.\textsuperscript{50} Raising money domestically is one of the strongest alternatives to remain viable, autonomous and truly indigenous and effective communication tools such as media and Internet provide great opportunity for NGOs to gain support and access domestic funds. The other alternatives to diversify funding as well as raise its sufficient quantity are self-financing (income-generating activities), local fund-raising (public, corporations, national/local governments, local foundations), and external financing (venture capital, revolving loan/credit funds, etc.).\textsuperscript{51}

Interactive, authentic partnerships among NGOs, public and private organizations helps NGOs develop core competencies, get advantage of different expertise, and influence policy actors, increase their scale and impact on sustainable development by sharing of information and documentation of good practices, mobilization of additional resources and greater recognition and legitimacy. For instance, two succeeding evaluations of a combination of subsidized credit from official banks through the government’s IRDP\textsuperscript{19} in southern India showed that the government’s intervention was ineffective to benefit the poor and NGO involvement in later stages improved IRDP’s impact.\textsuperscript{52}

Owing to the costs of investment on learning under limited funds, organizational learning and strategic knowledge which are keys to gain leverage and credibility and increase policy influence, is treated as an optional extra. Fowler in his book also delivers tips for increasing NGOs’ ability to learn which includes a management allocating time for reflection, a management information system with processed primary data, a designated fund for specific learning activities of staff, team-building finance to bring different perspectives, mandatory post-mortems on closed projects, planned thematic studies, and annual review of organizational progress.\textsuperscript{53} NGOs should also provide sufficient transparency through revealing results of performance evaluation and reporting practices and achievements to stakeholders and global community in order to gain support and credibility. Mass communications media has an unprecedented potential for this purpose.\textsuperscript{54} One successful example is of the Autonomous Institute for Environmental Research in Mexico which is educating government and the media on environmental issues participates in negotiations with government to build the first hazardous-waste treatment facility in the Federal District. Also, Argentina government incorporates the NGOs’ criteria in its public housing
policies. Thus, a proper coupling between NGOs micro-actions (e.g. material, social, financial services) and macro tasks (e.g. public advocacy, lobbying, public education and mobilization) is the way to gain leverage.

2 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
16 Ibid.


