

**STATE, NGOs AND
THE DISCOURSE OF DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA:
A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled "*State, NGOs and the Discourse of Development in India: A Sociological Analysis*", submitted by Mr. Sarbeswar Sahoo, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of *Master of Philosophy* of this University has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University. This is his original work.

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*Dedicated to my Grandmother who taught
me the art of Love.....*

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Preface

For many developmental States and societies, globalization is a powerful force of radical change. In the age of LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization), the rolling back of the State in the socio-economic sphere of the individual and public life has not only created a social and political space for the civil society organizations but also changed the dominant paradigm of thinking in the State-society relationship in India and all over the World. The traditional functional role of the State is shrinking and the State-society relations are getting redefined. A variety of forces like Non-Governmental Organizations influence the State policies, constrain its behaviour and rejuvenate the civil society and citizenry to assume its rightful role. They have emerged as the 'new circles of power' in the democratization and development discourse. In the conventional social science literature the State and civil society are seen through domination and subordination. It is believed the presence of a weak State has given rise to the creation of a vibrant civil society, where the people are no more the passive recipients of the government welfare programmes and benefits but are active citizenry putting the government and State machinery under constant watch, and acting as what Toqueville says the 'watchdog of democracy'.

The civil society, thus, now is seen as the trust building associational life created in interaction with rather than subordination to the State. It is created to keep the government agencies and bureaucracy accountable before the general public and increase the process of democratization by bringing a shift from the process of representative democracy to participatory democracy where, the common people, not indirectly through their representatives but directly participate not only in the decision making process but also in the process of identification of the grassroots problem, programmes designing, plan implementation, sharing the benefits and evaluation of the developmental project. Thus the dissertation tries to explore the various issues on civil society and the process of governance and the role of NGOs and the State in development and democratization in India.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AGF	Aga Khan Foundation
AGs	Action Groups
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANGOC	Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reforms and Rural Development
APD	Alternative Perspectives on Development
BIMARU	Bihar Madhya Pradesh Rajasthan Uttar Pradesh
CAPART	Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology
CART	Council for Advancement of Rural Technology
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CHC	Community Health Center
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CPRC	Chronic Poverty Research Centre
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSWB	Central Social Welfare Boards
DWCD	Department of Women and Child Development
FCRA	Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act
GAs	Government Agencies
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFs	Gap Fillers
GNP	Gross National Product
GNW	Gross National Welfare
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
GO-NGOs	Government Organized Non-Governmental Organizations
GOs	Government Organizations
GROs	Grassroots Organizations
H & FW	Health and Family Welfare
HDI	Human Development Index
HRD	Human Resource Development
IAs.	Interest Associations
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
IOs	Intermediate Organizations
KVIC	Khadi and Village Industries Corporation
LDIs	Local Development Institutions
LPG	Liberalization Privatization and Globalization

MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MP	Madhya Pradesh
MPD	Mainstream Perspectives on Development
NCRB	National Crime Record Bureau
NGAs	Non-Governmental Agencies
NGDOs	Non-Governmental Developmental Organizations
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NNGOs	Northern Non-Governmental Organizations
NPA	New Policy Agenda
NPOs	Non-Profit Organizations
NWDB	National Watershed Development Board
PADI	People's Action for Development India
PDP	Post Development Perspectives
PG	Post Graduate
PHC	Primary health Center
POs	People's Organizations
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRIA	Participatory Research in Asia
PRIs	Panchayati Raj Institutions
PSCs	Public Service Contractors
PVOs	Private Voluntary Organizations
RD	Rural Development
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SCs	Scheduled Castes
SJ & E	Social Justice and Empowerment
SNGOs	Southern Non-Governmental Organizations
SRA	Societies Registration Act
SSWAB	State Social Welfare Advisory Board
SSWB	State Social Welfare Boards
STs	Scheduled Tribes
TUA	Trade Union Act
UG	Under Graduate
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UP	Uttar Pradesh
UP	Upper Primary
US	United States
Volags	Voluntary Agencies
VOs	Voluntary Organizations
YA & S	Youth Affairs and Sports

Introduction

Introduction

The recent years have witnessed emergence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs)¹ as a major collective actor in developmental activities and on the public agenda in general. This is a significant political, social and economic trend. Within the traditional areas of encounter between the state and citizen this actor has begun to assert itself increasingly.

Since the late 1980s civil society² in India has been rejuvenated, transforming the nature of social organization in the region and with it, the nature of Indian socio-political roadmap. Economic recession in the mid 1980s forced states to reduce their intervention in the economy and to cede significant autonomy to a range of institutions. NGOs, however, have also emerged important new institutional actors and their rapid proliferation since the mid 1980s has echoed the “associational revolutions” evident in the other part of the developing world, posing a major challenge to traditional conceptions of the voluntary sector in the regional political science literature. NGOs have become significant force not just on account of their rapid proliferation or their sheer numbers today, but also for the way in which they have insinuated themselves deep within the economic, social, and political life of Indian social structure.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in economics and social development have prospered with the ‘associational revolution’ sweeping the globe in the late twentieth century.³ The decade of seventies saw the mushrooming of grassroots

¹ The term ‘NGO’ was first coined by the United Nations Charter of 1945 mainly to indicate the difference between the sovereign nation-states which are its direct members, and the organizations that collaborate with or receive grants from its agencies to implement development programmes. This can be defined as *private, non-profit, professional organizations with a distinctive legal character, concerned with public welfare goals*. Throughout this dissertation, I have used the term NGOs interchangeably with voluntary organizations, action groups, community based organizations, grassroots organizations, intermediary organizations etc., although there exists some distinctions.

² Civil society is situated in three contexts. First, it is the associations that are posited between the family and State. Second, it is an agency which interrogated the tyrannical States and thirdly it is the space between State and market. The concept is analyzed here because NGOs constitute an active agent of it.

³ Hume, D and Michael Edwards, eds. (1997) *NGOs, States and Donors: Too Close for Comfort*, London: Mac Millan Press Ltd. with Save the Children, p. 3

organizations and movements, which by nature are heterogeneous and diverse in size, approach, strategy, and ideology. According to a study conducted by Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) in collaboration with John Hopkins University, revealed that there are nearly 1.2 million non-profit organizations (NPOs) in India which employ almost 20 million persons as paid or voluntary workers. The study further discovered that the nationwide share of NPO contribution (based on paid employment) to gross product at current prices stands at 14.8 percent. This shows the widespread presence and immense contribution of this sector.⁴ One thing is common to all is that they are formally independent of government (though many collaborate with or take funds from government) and political parties (though some indirectly support political groups or individual politicians). This is because there has been an increasing realization since mid-seventies that conventional governmental programmes, political institutions and political organizations have failed to contribute towards the reduction of poverty, inequality and injustice.⁵

With the declining of the state in social welfare and social services, non-governmental organizations are increasingly gaining attention and prominence and are looked upon as alternative agencies in promoting awareness, change and development in society. Under the broad umbrella term 'voluntary action' we find synonymous terms, NGOs, Voluntary Organizations (VOs), Grassroots Organizations (GROs), and Action Groups (AGs), etc. If strong, vibrant and lively civil society is the foundation of modern, open, democratic polity, NGOs are the very life force for the civil society. One can't exist without the other. Informal structure and function and closeness to the people at the grassroots are their distinctive characteristics. In other words, NGOs approach to development is based on the important principle of people's participation. In contrast to the top-down approach of the government, their approach to development is based on people's needs and analysis of priorities, issues and needs. The approach adopted by NGOs treat people not as objects but as subjects who possess cultural knowledge as well

⁴ Mahi Pal (2004) "Voluntary Sector and Credibility Issues", *Economic and Political Weekly*, June 26- July 2, Vol. XXXIX, No. 26, p. 2677

⁵ Bhatt, Anil (1989) *Development and Social Justice: Micro Action by Weaker Sections*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p. 17

as abilities to take their own independent decisions, which can collectively implemented in bringing about change in desired directions.⁶

Development is almost a synonym for modernization in developing countries. The first development decade was inspired by somewhat wholly charitableness of the developed countries towards the less enlightened countries in Africa and Asia, which had recently thrown the foreign yoke. The main objective was to achieve economic growth at a fast pace. It was only in the second development decade that there was reassessment of priorities and a deeper understanding of the needs of the Third World countries. The greatest hazard in capital-intensive development is its potential to oppress the powerless by overwhelming them and the experience of the development process revealed that the pattern pursued has depended upon dominances and exploitation and resulted in income inequalities. Although economic growth has been registered in terms of the per capita income and gross national product; social and economic justice had been sidelined. By far greater effort in development is and must be the effort of the powerless and the hungry. As it is observed from the past years of planning that development has only made things worse for the poor. Hundreds and million of desperately poor through out the world have been hurt rather than helped by economic development.⁷

Development is not a gift from haves to the have-nots. It is a right generated by conscientisation. Development has to be self-generated rather than imposed. Only then it can shake off dependency; local regional or national.⁸

Objectives of the Study

The proliferation of civil society organizations have brought a shift in the pattern of governance and development in India in the post 1980s. The state approach has been challenged on the ground that it is very centralized, bureaucratic and unaccountable to the

⁶ Pawar, S. N, Ambedkar, J. B, and Shrikant, D (2004) *NGOs and Development: The Indian Scenario*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications.

⁷ Sachchidananda (1998) "Development: Concept, Promise and Performance" in H.K Sinha (ed) *Challenges in Rural Development*, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, p. 11

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 12

general public. Taking into account both the claims, the study tries to explore the issues on civil society, the discourse of development and pattern of governance in India after the post independence period in general and 1980s in particular. The objectives of the study are:

- To understand developmental NGOs in the conceptual framework of civil society and their contribution to the strengthening of the process of democratization and development.
- To understand the role of the post-independent state and the existing state model of development planning in India.
- To understand the methodology, and working pattern of the third sector especially NGOs in the development activities and the dynamics of their proliferation after the 1980s which have created a socio-political space in the development discourse and brought an associational revolution in the state.
- To explore an appropriate development discourse in case of India where the participation of the people in the central decision-making and planning process gets priority. It also seeks to understand the political sustainability of the pattern of collaboration and partnership building between the government and people's organizations in increasing governmental responsiveness and accountability at the local and national levels

Methodology of the Study

The limitation of time – one year and departmental requirement of a *secondary sources* based study has made this research completely dependent on review of relevant literature like academic books, journals, articles from magazines, project reports, newspaper and internet. The methodology adopted is qualitative and the research design is *exploratory* and *analytical* which tries to explore and describe the conceptual and theoretical foundations of non-governmental organizations and puts them into the

framework of civil society. It also tries to explain the role of NGOs in strengthening civil society, process of democratization, development and governance in India. As it moves ahead, it tries to analyze critically the state model of development in India and the alternative approaches provided by the non-governmental organizations. Finally the analytical framework suggests that neither the state nor the NGOs alone can bring development in a country and society like India. Both of them have their structural and inherent problems. So it calls for the collaboration and power sharing between the two that can bring just and egalitarian development where the participation of the people gets priority in the democratic planning system.

Chapterization

In the "*Introduction*" the topic has been introduced and the objectives, methodology and the significance of the study have been outlined.

The chapter one, which is on "*Civil Society, NGOs and Democratization*", looks into the concept, characterization and the theoretical foundations of civil society as analyzed by Toqueville and Habermas. An attempt has been made to understand the development and essence of civil society and the relationship between state and civil society in the social science literature. The three sectors of society i.e. state, market and civil society which are the prime actors of development and especially the role of NGOs in strengthening the civil society have been discussed. It also analyzes how the civil society plays an important role in the process of democratization in India and explains the essence of micro democratic framework in the development discourse in India.

The second chapter under the title of "*Development and NGOs: A Conceptual Understanding*" tries to discuss the various conceptual issues and theoretical traditions of development and NGOs. At the outset it defines the concept of development and then distinguishes it from economic growth by debating on the issue whether development is political and moves forward with the various trajectories and forms of development. The second part of the chapter discusses the meaning and definition of NGOs, their virtues

and theoretical basis, emergence, typology and function in the contemporary Indian society.

The chapter three on “*State and Development Planning in India: A Critique*” critically analyzes the existing state model of development in the post-independent India. It looks into the functioning of the state and its contribution in grassroots development. It analysis how the state centered development has been failure in trickling down the benefits to the grassroots due to its centralized planning, rigid, unaccountable and irresponsible bureaucracy and administration, and lack of transparency in the government and governance.

The chapter four on “*Alternatives to the State Model of Development*” discusses scope for and characteristics of the alternative approaches to the state as evolved and advocated by the NGOs in the development discourse. It emphasizes on the recent shift from government to governance and infrastructure to individual where the NGOs promotes a more participatory and people centered approach to development. It also deals with the significance of NGOs, their strengths and advantages in the alternative paradigm.

The fifth chapter on “*Striking the Balance: Making of a New Development Discourse*” deals with the making of a new development discourse where neither the state nor the NGOs alone can bring development in a state and society like India. It points out the problems of NGOs sector and calls for the collaboration between the state and the NGOs based on mutual respect, dignity and autonomy. This chapter has been divided into three parts: the first section discusses the weaknesses and limitations of the NGOs sector and problems faced by them; the second section deals with the advantages of the state led development in India and the final section suggests and calls for the collaboration and coexistence rather than co-optation as the foundation of the new development discourse.

In the “*Conclusion*” findings of the study have been discussed and some suggestions have been given.

Significance of the Study

The topic has theoretical relevance and practical potential, basically in the context of the rolling back of the state in the socio-economic sphere, for having a thorough understanding of the NGOs in development and democratization process in India. It has immense importance in the age of globalization where integration, interdependence and global interaction have created a social and political space for the NGOs and civil society organizations, as a result of which they have emerged as new circles of power in the development paradigm. This rejects the monolithic patterns of development paradigm and advocates for institutional pluralism and multiple, heterogeneous and diverse development paradigms where there is a close interaction between the state, market forces and civil society organizations. It is also important in the sense that it looks into the contribution of civil society organizations towards the patterning of political development and nature of political regime in India. It is significant in the current Indian situation where the Indian democracy is facing various challenges like poverty, growing inequality, violence against the weaker sections, crime politics nexus, crisis of communalism, caste based electoral politics, patronage based democracy, exclusion of the rural poor from the public sphere and decision-making and lack of accountability and transparency on the part of local government and administration. This will help to have a thorough understanding of the civil society, their legitimacy and accountability, working pattern, strategies, institutional framework, developmental activities and the pattern of collaboration with government, common people and the donor agencies. It also examines the success and failures of NGOs and their role in holding the government bureaucracy accountable to the public and forcing the government to include the hitherto excluded and marginalized sections in the process of democratization, development and governance. Above all, this study makes an endeavour to contribute towards better understanding of the processes and patterns in the context of development, democratization, governance, civil society and changing state-society relations in the era of globalization.

Chapter. 1

Civil Society, NGOs and Democratization

Chapter. 1

Civil Society, NGOs and Democratization

We are living in era characterized by the decline or retreat of the state. The decline of the state is accompanied by the increasing attention towards civil society institutions¹. Civil society is a term used to distinguish the whole set of organizations, institutions, or entities which are neither government nor statutory bodies. It is the entirety of social life out side state institutions (Joshi: 2002:48). In an era of retreating government, privatization, free-market, contracting out work, structural adjustment, decentralization, restructuring, deregulation, empowerment, etc., formulation and implementation of public policy appears to be gradually taken over by non-government organizations. Civil society has a wide coverage but here it is restricted to voluntary agencies or those institutions or bodies that are free associations of free people, having the objective of bringing about social and economic change, particularly for those belonging to the marginalized sections. They are neither profit-making nor political in character.²

The role of civil society has grown in volume and depth in the past decade as agents of change to cure the range of social and economic ills left by failures in government or market place. The discovery of civil society has promised a solution to the enduring problems of development and democracy.³ What do we mean when we use the term ‘civil society’? Civil society is perhaps most succinctly described by Diamond as:

¹ Baviskar, B.S (2001) “NGOs and Civil Society in India”, *Sociological Bulletin*, March, Vol-50 (1), p. 3

² PRIA (2003) “Role of Civil Society in Strengthening PRIs” in Ajay K. Mehra, Anil K. Singh, and Gert, W. Kueck, (eds.) *Society, Politics and the Voluntary Sector*, New Delhi: Centre for Public Affairs, Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Voluntary Health Association of India, p. 274

³ Rooy, Alison V (2002). “Strengthening Civil Society in Developing Countries”, Vandana, Desai and R.B Potter (eds.) *The Companion to Development Studies*, London: ARNOLD, p. 489

...the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating (largely), self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules... It is distinct from society in general in that it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, passions, and ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state and hold state officials accountable (Dicklitch: 1998: 10).

Indian scholars have turned to the Toquevillian meaning of civil society to describe the assertion of society against the state. Civil society represents in much of Indian thinking a non-state domain of protest and challenge. Against the centralizing tendencies of the Indian state, the conceptualization of civil society as a plural sphere of social and political forms cultivates the soil for democracy.⁴

Political theorists have assumed that civil societies are forged and shaped through (a) social and political transactions between the inhabitants of the sphere and (b) the relationship between the inhabitants and the state. These two sets of transactions are mediated and moderated through social associations. A plurality of associations facilitates these transactions and allows for a vibrant and active civil society. Social associations are valuable only because they represent the interest of their members. NGOs have stepped into deliver where the state has failed and the voluntary groups have linked up with political struggles to emancipate people from exploitative conditions⁵

Characterizing Civil Society

Rooy (2002), Heredia (2002), Yassary (2001) and Tondon (2003) characterize civil society as:

- A set of organizations (collective noun) synonymous with the voluntary sector (or the third sector), and with the advocacy groups, NGOs, social movement agents, human rights organizations and other actors explicitly involved in change work. It excludes groups belonging to state and market,

⁴ Chandhoke, Neera (1995) *State and Civil Society: Explorations in Political Theory*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p. 29

⁵ Chandokhe, Neera (2003) *The Concepts of Civil Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 70

- A space that is free, open and accessible for ideas, action, discussion, debate and contestation. It also represents a space where subaltern, hitherto inaudible and unarticulated views can be expressed.
- A movement against powerful institutions and advocate for advancing various causes like women's rights, tribal rights,
- The idea of non-state actor autonomous sphere,
- Non-governmental in that it is formed by citizens voluntarily and regulated independent of governments,
- Non-profit oriented,
- Institutional in that its agents are non-governmental organizations or associations,
- Values and behavioral codes for tolerating and accepting, 'others' and commitment to the perpetual management of differences among individuals and communities sharing the same public space,
- Empowerment of citizens,
- Trust building associational life,
- Interaction with rather than subordination to the state,
- As anti-hegemony,
- As an heterogeneous and diverse sector

State-Civil Society Debate

The kernel of the debate about civil society versus the state is around the central question of whether a civil society be rightly called an implementing agency of people's aspirations and democratic rights, outside the state or can it exist and discharge its duties independent of the state? Should it be a subsidiary agency of the state? One school of political thinkers argues that 'the civil society can never be separated from the state'. They argue that without state rights new forms of inequality of power, wealth and status could systematically disrupt the implementation of social and economic liberties. So the

state and civil society must then become the condition for each other's democratic development.⁶

The other school rejecting the role of the state in the functioning of the civil society argues that the state does not create and guarantee a comprehensive organizational force that can adequately regulate civil power centres. They say that the associations of civil society provide many goods and services outside the framework of the state or profit oriented economy. So the civil society is more significant than the state as a means for citizens to pursue democracy, social justice and well being (Joshi: 2002:48).

Rajani Kothari (1988) argues that the crisis of governance in contemporary India has come about because the state is insensitive to the myriad diversities of the sub-continent. Instead of being alert to these differences the state tries to stifle them in the name of political unity. But it is not unity that it really wishes to bring about. The state's real project is homogenization – cultural, political and social. These homogenization efforts by the state negate the culture and talent of the people and foist instead a techno-managerial structure on them.⁷ Kothari repose confidence in non-governmental organizations, as they are closer to the marginal and subjugated people and hence better turned the stirrings of civil society. D.L Seth too delves into the merits of non-governmental organizations for they are free from the power seeking homogenizing logic of the state.⁸

T.K Oommen (1996: 199) says that the elements of civil society in India are not always and necessarily anti-state. Sometimes they are neutral and occasionally they are even pro-state. The state is also not always against all the elements of civil society. While the state selectively attempts to foster civil society, occasionally it intervenes to stop what it perceives as the excesses of civil society, be they political secessionists, party

⁶ Joshi, R.S (2002) "Media, Civil Society and Current Challenges", *Mainstream*, Jan-26, p. 48

⁷ Gupta, D. (1999) "Civil Society or the State: What Happened to Citizenship?" in Ramachandra Guha and Jonathan Parry (eds.) *Institutions and Inequalities*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 238

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 239

extremists or religious nationalists. Such interventions were necessitated by the fact that civil society in India did not always function within a democratic framework.⁹ There is also another consensus among the political scientists on the complementary role of the state and civil society. In fact, citizens can't be left at the mercy of the octopus state machinery and the powerful economic players. It is equally true that a civil society cannot function in the absence of the state. The law and regulatory machinery provided by the state extend protection to the associations of civil society against the visible and invisible attacks by the profit-oriented economic forces.¹⁰

Tocqueville: Limiting the State through Civil Society

The notion of civil society and the process of democratisation are strictly associated with French social thought, and particularly with the work of Tocqueville. He argues that absolute power should not be vested in any single authority, which is why checks and balances are required. As democratic states tend to give the legislature too much power, democratic associations and voluntary organizations (*corps intermediaries*) are necessary to exercise countervailing pressure.¹¹ For Tocqueville, the bastions against despotism and unbridled individualism were the secondary associations of civil society (Baccaro: 2001). Intermediate institutions not only make it possible for the modern state to realize itself, they also help individuals to realize their essential freedoms.¹² For Tocqueville, secondary associations were important for essentially three reasons:

- 1) By creating areas of self-governance autonomous from (and capable of resisting to) governmental intervention in private affairs, groups tempered the tendency (inherent in modern democracies) towards the concentration and centralization of

⁹ Oommen, T.K (1996) "State, Civil Society and Market in India: The Context of Mobilization", *Mobilization*, Vol. 1, No. 2, p.199

¹⁰ Joshi, R.S (2002), *op. cit*

¹¹ Gupta, D. (1999), *op. cit*, Pp. 237- 238

¹² *Ibid*, p. 244

governmental power and thus, provided a much-needed safeguard of liberty against despotism.¹³

- 2) Groups were also important because they tempered the tendency towards rampant individualism (which, according to Tocqueville, is implicit in democratic societies) and socialized individuals into setting aside the staunch pursuit of individual self-interest and embrace instead “self-interest rightly understood,” i.e. “an enlightened regard for themselves” which “constantly prompts [individuals] to sacrifice a portion of their time and property to the welfare of the state” (Tocqueville, 1956, Vol. 2: 130).
- 3) Associations were necessary to provide a bulwark against the “tyranny of the majority.”¹⁴

Toqueville argues that by creating a sphere of autonomous private associations that would be impermeable to state power the individuals develop a generalized attitude towards cooperation within their members. In other words, individuals are more willing to spontaneously engage in cooperation with others for the provision of various collective goods that are otherwise unattainable through individual action when they are socialized in particular contexts (Putnam, 1993: 167, 177). This is how they develop the social capital of the associations.¹⁵

¹³ In other words, groups provided a functional equivalent to the intermediary associations of the aristocratic regimes, which held monarchic power in check.

¹⁴ This “tyranny of the majority” is a familiar theme in American political theory. In fact, it can be found in James Madison’s work as well, i.e. in the work of one of the fathers of the American constitution (Federalist Papers, 1961). The “tyranny of the majority” expresses the preoccupation of the propertied classes that democracy could generate negative redistributive consequences for them. In fact, the majority of propertyless could use political power, acquired democratically, to infringe on their rights, i.e., more specifically, to take their property away from them or implement redistributive reforms of other kind.

¹⁵ Baccaro, L (2001) “Civil Society, NGOs, and Decent Work Policies: Sorting out the Issues”, Geneva, *International Institute for Labour Studies*, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inst/download/dp12701.pdf>

Habermas: Revitalizing the State through Communication

The more recent, intellectual line of thinking on civil society, associated with the work of Jurgen Habermas, is not concerned with limiting state power (as Toqueville mentions) but rather with revitalizing it. In the Habermasian tradition, civil society is the sphere in which a process of unconstrained communication, i.e. communication aimed not at influencing or gaining power but at reaching understanding with others on issues of common concern, takes place. Unconstrained communication taking place within civil society organizations (typically, social movements) periodically renews the political debate and forces the official circuits of power, i.e. government and political parties, to be attentive and responsive to new issues arising at the periphery of the system.¹⁶

Unconstrained communication or deliberation takes place at the periphery of the political system among the associations of civil society. On the one hand, these associations contribute to identify new problems and then pass them along to the actors of institutional politics (i.e. political parties, parliaments, and courts) which process and transform them into policies (see also Habermas, 1992; Cohen and Arato, 1992). On the other hand, they discuss and critically evaluate the results of governmental action and thus, contribute to keep alive the ideal of democratic legitimacy, i.e. that collective decisions are formulated as if all those affected could rationally consent with them.¹⁷

Development and Essence of Civil Society

Rajesh Tondon and Ranjita Mohanty (2003) observe that the recent upsurge of interest in the idea of civil society can be attributed to the aspirations of ordinary men and women to carve out for themselves an autonomous space for collective action and act as a counter to state power. These aspirations drove home two messages – they affirmed the desire and competency of ordinary people to define both political and social good and their terms of engagement with the state in pursuing these; and the second, they affirmed

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Gupta, D (1999), *op. cit.*, Pp. 245-247

the strength of collective action in achieving their desired political and social goals. Thus the struggle, which began with craving out a space away from the prying eyes of the state, where people could discuss the essence of freedom, autonomy and dignity of human existence, in due course of time became a politically volatile to bring down the most authoritative regimes.¹⁸ The rise of NGOs and civil society (see fig.1.1) in the third world can be attributed to:

- Demise (rolling back) of the development State
- State's incapacity to extract sufficient resources in order to maintain its system of political control which consists of clientelistic relations of patronage to all competing social classes
- Inefficiency, corruption, lack of accountability in bureaucratic machinery

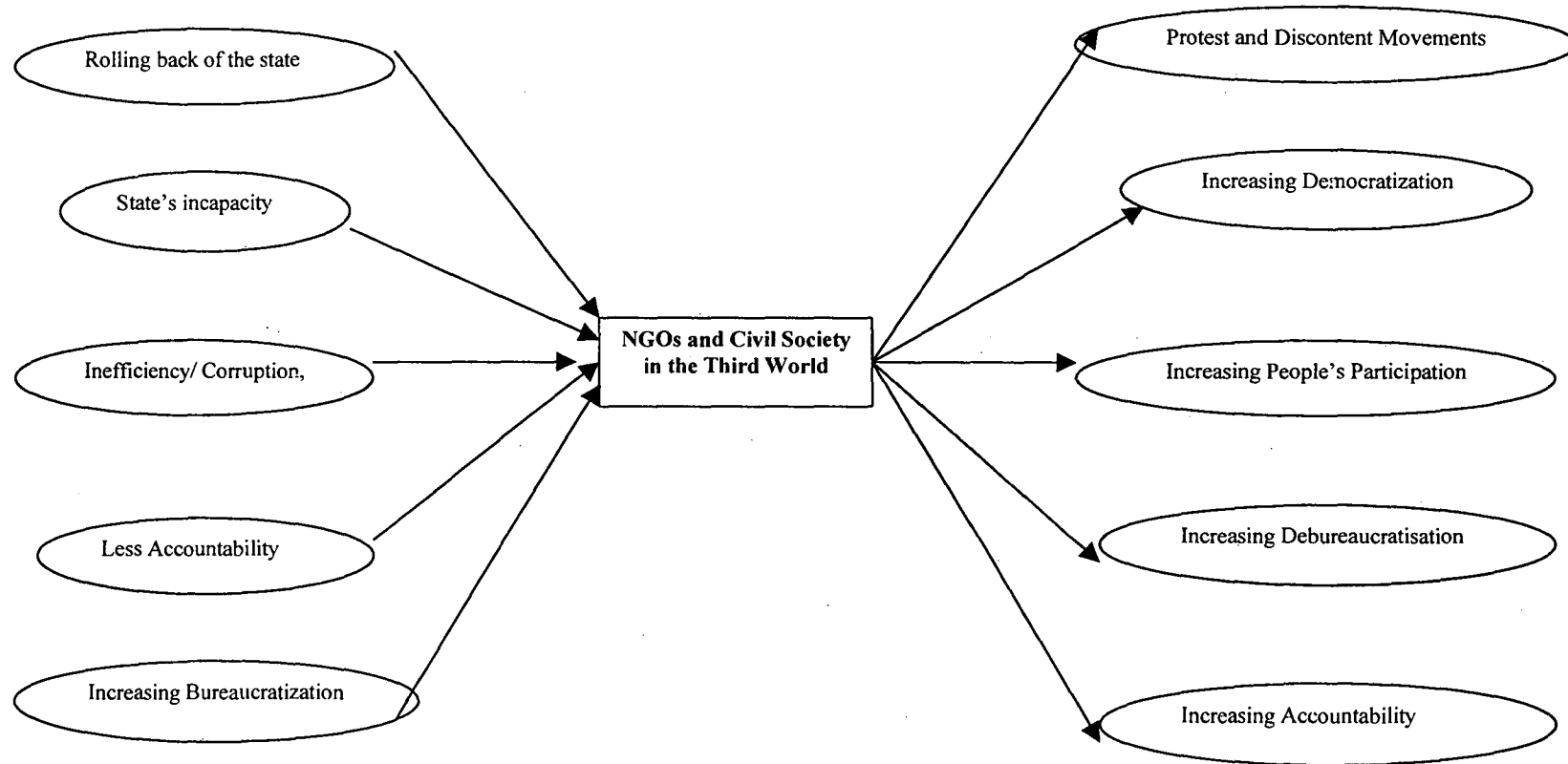
(Bava: 1997: 13)

And the rise of NGOs and civil society has resulted:

- Rise of protest and discontent movements against the lacunas of the state.
- More democratization and decentralization
- Accelerate people's participation
- Increasing debureaucratization
- Emphasis upon accountability of the state machinery to the citizens or peoples.

¹⁸ Tondon, R and Ranjita Mohanty (2003) *Does Civil Society Matter: Governance in Contemporary India*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, Pp-9-10

Fig. 1.1: Rise of Civil Society in the Third World



Note: The figure represents the causes and the factors and the consequences of the rise and development of NGOs and civil society in third world.

Civil society has been fitted into the framework of development in three important ways:

1. They have been targeted as effective via media to channel aid for development to poor countries, so that the gap opened by the rolling back of the state is filled through the delivery of development directly to the poor.
2. As the recipients of aid, civil society organizations are under obligation to fulfill their funder's agenda of furthering neo-liberalism by providing safeguards to people who are adversely affected by the onslaught of market.
3. Following the tradition of Toqueville and Putnam, civil society is viewed as an effective watchdog that can curb any authoritarian tendencies of the democratic state.¹⁹

Three Sectors of Society

A balanced, democratic, pluralistic society has three sectors (see table. 1.1)– the government, the private for-profit sector, and the private non-profit sector. There is very little difficulty in understanding the first two sectors –the government and the commercial (for-profit world). NGOs as they are understood, are only one part of this third (non-profit) sector. First, we have to define what the third sector is *not* – it is not government, and it is not for-profit. Since it is not government it is neither the expression of the will of a political party, nor is it the expression state's established bureaucracy. Since it is not for-profit, it is not the expression of person's, or family's desire for personal profit. Secondly we have to define what it is. It can be divided into two: (a) those organization who benefit their own members (trade unions religious mission) and (b) those organizations who work to benefit other people (voluntary development organizations, welfare institutions etc.). The common element in all these is that they are driven by a vision or values for an improved society either for their members or for others. They are

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 13

not driven by the desire to control (government) nor by the desire to get rich (commerce); they are driven by the desire to improve society.²⁰

Marc Nerfin says that the Prince, who represents the first sector – the government mobilises resources that he needs by command and coercion. The Merchant, who represents the second sector – business mobilises the resources that s/he needs through producing goods and services for sale and making profit. The Citizen, who represents the third sector – civil society mobilises the resources that s/he needs through voluntary action – by persuading people who share a vision of how the world, should be, to contribute their time and money. The third sector mobilises voluntary social energy.²¹

Table. 1.1

The Three Sectors of Society

Sectors	Name	Symbol	Resource	Primary Resource Mobilization
First	The Government (Armed Forces)	The Prince	State property	Law, Command, Coercion
Second	The Business Sector (Private for-profit)	The Merchant	Private property	Trade and Exchange
Third	Civil society (Private non-profit)	The Citizen	Own time, energy and personal resources	Shared values and commitment to action with other citizens

Source: Holloway, R (1998), Pp. 39, 82

For much of the history of the development studies, the state-market axis has dominated theoretical debates on development. In the 1990s the concept of civil society has come to occupy centre stage in development discourse and practice, reflected the new triadic conceptual unity of the state, market, and civil society. Civil society was not only

²⁰ Holloway, R (1998) *Supporting Citizens' Initiatives: Bangladesh's NGOs and Society*, London: Intermediate Technology Publications, Pp. 17-18

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 38

perceived as an antidote to repressive government but also as a way of resolving the seemingly intractable tension between the state and market.²²

Concerning the role and growing importance of civil society in general and the NGOs in particular in the political development of Third World Countries, Rifkin (2003)²³ rejected the traditional division of society into a polar spectrum running from the market place, on the right, to the government, on the left and advocated to think of society as a three-legged stool made up market sector, government sector and the civil sector. He says that the first leg creates the market capital, the second leg creates the public capital, and third leg creates social capital and finding a proper balance between the three opens up new opportunities for reconceptualising both social contract and the meaning of work in the coming era. But Tondon (1991)²⁴ puts the government as the first sector, the corporations or the business the second sector and the civil society as representing the third sector.

The First Sector: State

The post-independent state in India has become a dominant actor in social welfare and development activities. It is not only regulating macro, political and global relations but also determining the manner in which the relationships across families, communities and institutions will be managed. Thus the State represents as the primary

²² Howell, J and Jenny, Pearce (2003). "Civil Society: Technical Instrument or Social Force for Change?" *Development NGOs and the Challenge of Change: New Roles and Relevance*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications, p-75

²³ Rifkin in his foreword to the book written by Fisher (2003) entitled *Non-Governments: NGOs and the Political Development of the Third World*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications, p-viii gives a detail description of the three sectors of the society i.e. the market, state and the civil society. In his classification he puts the market sector as the first leg of the society and the government and civil sector as the second and third. But Tondon (1991) puts the government as the first and market and civil society as the second and third sector of the society. He also questions the validity of their position as the first, second and third, in the society. Here I have not explained Tondon's argument of the validity of three sectors, I simply mentioned the three sectors, the reason that I just wanted to show how the civil society has emerged as an important and inevitable sector by rejecting the polarised division of society into state and market and to show the continuity of NGDOs in the fourth position of development debate.

²⁴ For more about the arguments and validity of the three sectors of society whether state constitutes the primary and the market as the secondary of the sectors see Tondon, R. (1991) "Civil Society, The State and Role of NGOs", *IDR Reports*, Volume 8, No. 3. <http://www.jsi.com/idr/web%20reports/html/8-3.html>.

actor in the contemporary societies. But the other side of the story explains that large sections of people and many segments of society continue to remain outside the purview of the State. Its policies, agencies and agents have lost legitimacy with large sections of society.

The Second Sector: Market

In the era of globalization and free market system the private-business or the corporate world, or the market economy is characterized as the second sector in our societies. Although, the corporate institutions, and multi-national corporations, do not necessarily represent the totality of the economic activities carried out in most countries of the South, and increasingly in the countries of the North but they have become the dominant stakeholder in the economic and development activities of the developing world.

The Third Sector: Civil Society

The State as the first sector, and business as the second, and the "residual" or "left-over" (whatever is not State and not business) is characterized as the third sector. The third sector which is generally referred as the civil society is composed of voluntary organizations or NGOs, development institutions, community organizations, neighborhood groups, citizen's initiatives and associations, etc. in strengthening a variety of democratic practices, values and traditions in the society. The NGO is separate from the state because it is a 'non-governmental organization'; it is separate from the market because it is a 'non-profit organization'²⁵.

Three Dimensions of the Civil Sector: Parties, People's Movement and NGOs

There are three forms of political organizations: parties, people's movements and NGOs. Common to all three is that they arise from and bring together people in political action. In societies, which have adopted some vibrant of modern western

²⁵ Beteille, A (2001) "Civil Society and the Good Society", *Sociological Bulletin*, September, Vo.50, No. 2, p. 301

democracies, *parties* elect the candidates and give them the right to use state power (to legislate and to direct the action of bureaucracies). *People's movements* are when several people at the same time for similar reasons and with similar objectives undertake action which aims at influencing states, markets and social life. *NGOs* can probably best be understood as political action which is not party action but which is organized according to formal regulations defined by the state or other agencies which exercise public power. When we refer to both NGOs and people's movements but not to parties, we use the term civic activities. We may take note of some typical differences between NGOs and people's movements simply by listing traits that NGOs have and movements are lacking: (i) legal recognition by the state (ii) written statutes (iii) formal procedures for decision-making and the distribution of executive powers (iv) explicitly defined objectives (v) explicit membership.²⁶

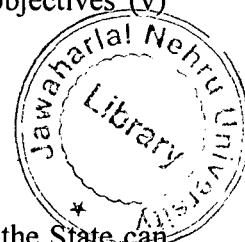
Civil Society and the State: Consent vs. Domination

Viewed in such a way, and following the Gramscian perspective, the State can be seen to represent the "politics of domination," as civil society represents the "politics of consent." Thus, the State and civil society are both simultaneously needed to complete the process of governance of society. The State represents the structures of governance and civil society creates the values and normative framework for governance.²⁷

Civil society is an evolving network of associations and institutions of family and community, of production and trade, and of piety and compassion. Individuals enter into these relationships as much by consent as by obligation but never under coercion. Civil society is premised on individual freedom and responsibility, and on limited and accountable government. It protects the individual from the intrusive state, and connects the individual to the larger social and economic order. Civil society is what keeps individualism from becoming atomistic and communitarianism from becoming collectivist. Political society, on the other hand, is distinguished by its legalized power of

²⁶ Pratap, Vijay and Thomas Wallgren (2000) "Understanding Civic Action for Global Responsibility" Farhad, Hossain (et. al.) *Learning NGOs and the Dynamics of Development Partnership*, Dhaka: Ahsania Books, p. 29

²⁷ Tondon, R (1991), *op. cit.*



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coercion. Its primary purpose should be to protect, and not to undermine, civil society by upholding individual rights and the rule of law.²⁸

Society is thus comprised of three elements (Bratton, 1991): (a) material base of resources for productive utilization; (b) institutional base of associations, groups, and initiatives for conducting the affairs of civil society; and (c) ideological base of values, norms and ideals that provide the legitimacy for governance. Thus, institutions of civil society -- family, clan, community, neighborhood associations, productive enterprises, service mechanisms - historically utilized the material resources of civil society in pursuit of its ideals and values.²⁹

The dominance of the State has significantly stripped the material base of civil society. In some instances, the State has taken over the material base (like all land, forest and water is State "property"); in some others, it has facilitated the growth of concentration of ownership of and control over the material base in a few private hands. As discussed earlier, the State has, with destruction of the material base of civil society, also destroyed or delegitimized the institutional base of civil society. And the State has continuously attempted to appropriate the ideological base from civil society. As "alien" State, its public functions in many countries of the South did not become rooted in the moral and ideological base of civil society, but remained cut-off or disconnected from it. The Gramscian notion of "hegemony" is rooted in civil society. Yet, the State and the ruling elites, attempt to control the intellectual base of civil society, along with its material base in order to perpetuate their hegemony over civil society.

In Western capitalist societies, such ideological hegemony of the State and existing ruling order is attempted to be established through private mechanisms of media, education and culture. The single party Marxist States attempted it through public institutions and propaganda. The countries of the South seem to be using a combination of both (State control over TV/Radio and privatized education, for example). It is this process which constricts citizenship and restricts the participation of people in

²⁸ For more see the website of centre for civil society. This was borrowed from the home page of the organization.

²⁹ Tondon, R (1991), *op. cit.*

governance of their communities and lives. The State and its ruling/controlling elites become supreme; civil society becomes subservient to, dominated and ruled by the State and ruling elites.³⁰

Civil Society, State and Democratization

The conceptualizations of civil society that vest it the task of democratization are rooted in two traditions (Tondon and Mohanty: 2003: 11):

1. The revolutionary imagery of civil society makes it a site for contestation, where people counterpose themselves against state power and in the process either replace or reform it.
2. A second stream of conceptualization, which links civil society to the state, is the Toquevillean interpretation of civic associations performing the role of watchdogs in democracy.

The features of civil society should be thought of for the development of democracy and its consolidation.³¹

- Civil society is an intermediary entity standing between the private sphere and the state. Civil society emphasizes on the public ends rather than the private. Winning formal power of the state is not the objective of civil society rather civil society expects concessions, benefits, policy changes, relief, redress, or accountability from the state. Thus peaceful movement for democratic transition springs from civil society.
- Civil society concentrates much more on plurality and diversity. Civil society provides the basis for the limitation of state power, hence for the control of the state by society, and hence for democratic political institutions as most effective means for exercising that control.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Majumdar, Shantanu (1998) "Role of Civil Society in Bangladesh: An Overview", *Journal of Social Science Review*, Vol. XV, No. 2, p. 135

- Mobilization of civil society can reveal the abuses prevailing in undemocratic regimes and weaken the legitimacy of these regimes.
- Civil society is inevitably essential for containing the power of democratic government, protecting power abuses and violation of laws and subjecting the government to public scrutiny. Basically civil society is more essential for consolidating and maintaining a democratic set up rather than initiating it.
- Civil society can create access to power for the marginal and vulnerable sections of society who are traditionally considered as excluded groups in the 'upper institutional echelons' of power.
- Civil society by creating a sustainable and organized pressure from the grassroots level can help the development of political and social equalities and if it is possible, the quality responsiveness and legitimacy of democracy are deepened. The development of civil society is related to the deepening of democracy, transition from clientilism to citizenship and the democratization of local government.

According to Mark Robinson (1996) NGOs play a major role in contributing towards the strengthening of civil society and democracy in various ways. They are:

- To strengthen the pluralistic foundations of civil society and democracy,
- To improve the ability of groups and communities to negotiate with institutions and bureaucracies,
- To defend collective interest against encroachment by State or market actors,
- To create representative institutions for the poor and disadvantaged,
- To uphold human rights and fundamental freedom,
- To criticize or redress unjust or inefficient State policies,
- To mitigate or redress the causes of societal conflict,
- To create the basis for an efficient and sustainable economy.³²

³² In the last point Robinson has pointed out for the creation of a sustainable market economy. I have consciously omitted the word 'market' because it may give the impression of the dominant of the market forces where the profit-oriented multinationals dominate the all the aspects of public and private life. For more see. Robinson, Mark (1996) "The Role of Aid Donors in strengthening Civil Society" in Andrew Clayton (ed) *NGOs, Civil Society and the State: Building Democracy in Transitional Societies*, UK: INTRAC Publication, p. 211

Giddens (1998) in emphasizing the importance of state in *democratizing democracy*³³ says that the neoliberals want to shrink the state; the social democrats have been keen to expand it. The third way argues that what is necessary is to reconstruct it – to go beyond those on the right ‘who say government is the enemy’, and those on the left ‘who say government is the answer’. Giddens suggests some of the ways to democratize democracy:

- Democratizing democracy implies decentralization – but not as a one-way process. It is not only the downward devolution of power but also to upward devolution. Rather than merely weakening the authority of the nation-state, this double movement – a movement of *double democratization* – is the condition of reasserting that authority and make the state more responsive,
- The state should expand the role of the public sphere which increases transparency and openness against corruption,
- To regain legitimacy states should elevate their administrative efficiency which leads to flexible decision structures and increased participation,
- Government to re-establish more direct contact with the citizens and the citizens with government – local direct democracy,
- Government should act as risk manager (Giddens: 1998: 70-78).

The conceptualization of civil society is situated squarely within a liberal-democratic framework, where the state, civil society and market are seen as separate, and autonomous spheres. The growth of civil society is assumed to be part of, and conducive to the process of economic liberalization. In serving as a check upon the state and market and as an arena for active, citizen participation in public affairs, civil society plays a key role in bringing about and consolidating democratic change.³⁴ Perhaps the most important question raised by the proliferation of NGOs concerns their contribution to political

³³ Giddens, A (1998) *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, UK: Polity Press, Pp. 70-78

³⁴ Howell, Jude (2000) “Making Civil Society from the Outside Challenges for Donors”, *The European Journal Development Research*, June, Vol. 12, No. 1, p. 8

change and to democratization.³⁵ Civil society is seen as key to the democratization process in two ways³⁶:

1. The work within the civil society organizations leads to increased participation and civic skills;
2. Civil society relates demands and ideas to the larger political context. A civil 'that can articulate demands' on behalf of the population at large is considered essential for the consolidation of democracy.

The linkage of civic associations with democracy is further supported by Putnam's idea of social capital. The concept of social capital has been used by the NGOs sector to understand collective functioning based upon trust within a society. Social capital refers to a "set of resources that inhere in family relations and community social organizations" and to features such as "trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated actions".

Democratic institutions essentially imply institutions of civil society, which are capable of governing public concerns, without dependence on, or abdication to, the State and its agencies. It is in this sense that the State needs to "pull back." It does not mean that the State provision of services in health, education, etc. should be completely dismantled. It means that the State responsibility for the provision of those services needs to be re-defined. The State's responsibility is not necessarily to render those services on its own, but to foster conditions and mechanisms that are conducive to enabling to the institutions of civil society to meet the specific needs of their communities. The State becomes an enabler, and not a provider. The institutions of civil society are strengthened to ensure provision of services.³⁷

This does not imply de-centralization, because de-centralization then means that institutions of the government and the State continue to play similar roles at the local

³⁵ Clark, G (1998) *The Politics of NGOs in South East Asia: Participation and Protest in the Philippines*, London: Routledge Publications, p. 14

³⁶ Choup, Anne Marie (2003) "Limits to Democratic Development in Civil Society and the State: The Case of Santo Domingo", *Development and Change*, January, Vol. 34, No. 1, Pp. 27-28

³⁷ Tondon, R (1991), *op. cit*

level as well. This implies a re-definition of the "public" – all that is public need not be the exclusive preserve of the government. In fact, it is civil society which should be responsible for governing public arenas, with the State playing enabling and supporting roles. It is in this sense that voluntary institutions, NGOs, neighborhood groups and citizen initiatives need to strengthen the capacities of civil society to govern the public arena.³⁸

Civil society and NGOs within civil society play an important role in both the transition to and consolidation of democracy. Susan Dicklitch (1998) while explaining the role of civil society in the process of democratization says that within the neo-liberal paradigm, there are several key democratic functions that civil society, or more specifically, organizations and associations within civil society can perform. These include empowering, educative, watchdog, and advocacy roles.³⁹

1. Empowerment

The greatest capacity of NGOs lies in their capacity to generate self-help initiative. It is in this vein that NGOs are viewed as vehicles for development and democracy, and more specifically as vehicles for democratizing development. They have the potential to be significant vehicles of empowerment because of their ability to reach at the grassroots. There are two key components of empowerment

- development of a sense of efficacy in the individual, and
- a group's ability to influence political and personal decisions of government or powerful institutions.

As Halfani says that to change power relations entails equipping communities not only to develop themselves but also to become effective participants in public policy formulation. NGOs are thought to... enhance the access of the poor to public services and argument their political power through organization.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Dicklitch, Susan (1998) *The Elusive Promise of NGOs in Africa: Lessons from Uganda*, Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, Pp. 10-12

2. Schools of Democracy

NGOs are heralded for their ability to ‘provide training ground for democracy’. More broadly, civil society can be characterized as a key arena for the development of democratic virtues such as ‘...tolerance, moderation, willingness to compromise and respect for opposing viewpoints. NGOs also help to stimulate political participation, elevate the skills of democratic citizens, and promote an ... appreciation of the obligations as well as the rights of democratic citizenship.

The civil society performs some crucial role in strengthening the democracy and citizenship in the country:

- Play a crucial role in making democracy work by bringing people’s issues and the voices of the marginalized to the social and political arenas.
- Contribute towards delivering public services and facilitating democracy and development at the grassroots.
- Have a role to play in shaping public agenda and influencing public policies.
- Promote the values of human rights, social justice, participation, accountability and pluralism that make democracy and development meaningful.
- Hold government and multi-lateral organisations to account on their policies, programmes and actions⁴⁰

3. Advocacy Role

Linked to their educative role is the advocacy role of NGOs. They can also become advocates for social change, organize to create power centres out side of the state which can pressure for structural change, and provide leadership development of third worlds who can leave the NGOs sector and move government. NGOs are capable of pluralizing the institutional environment and of thus providing ‘...alternative structures to the monopolies of the state’.

⁴⁰ www.commonwealthpeople.com/Assets/documents/statement_asia.pdf

4. *Watchdog Role*

Closely related to the advocacy role, NGOs also perform what Toqueville says a watchdog role, usually in connection with other political actors such as political parties, lawyers' associations and media. NGOs can help put checks on the '...powerful tendency of the state to centralize power and evade accountability and control'.

Associative Democracy in the Developing World

In the nineteenth century guise, *associative democracy*⁴¹ had two key features as a social doctrine. The first, Hirst writes, was the advocacy of a decentralized economy based on the non-capitalistic principles of cooperation and mutuality. The second was the criticism of the centralized and sovereign state, with radical federalist and political pluralist ideas advanced as a substitute. Hirst (1994) says that associative democracy rebuilds associations from below by political campaigning and voluntary action in civil society and revitalizes the economy of the society. Cohen and Rogers suggest four key roles⁴² that independent associations such as NGOs play within the associative democracy scheme.

- They provide otherwise inaccessible information to policy makers
- They equalize representation by enabling individuals with low per capita resources to pull their efforts through organizations, thus (partially) correcting the imbalance in power that stems from the unequal distribution of wealth,
- They promote citizen education, undermining civic inertia among those most marginalized from the political system,
- They provide a system of alternative governance, remedying deficiencies in the market and public hierarchies from which large section of population are engaged. Secondary associations have a distinctive capacity to gather local information monitor behavior and promote cooperation among private actors (Clark: 1998: 21).

⁴¹ Clark, Gerard (1998), *Opcit*, p-20

⁴² *Ibid*, p-21

Democracy and New Social Movements

The new social movements oppose overbearing and unresponsive governments in power; they have no desire to question the legitimacy of the modern state, or to directly takeover state power. They remain firmly rooted within these intermediate institutions and work to keep them active so that they do not fall into disuse from either complacency or neglect.⁴³

Intermediate Institutions and the State

We call them intermediary institutions because they are neither enmeshed by the compromises of politics that the state is encumbered with, nor are they compelled to give into archaic demands and obligations of traditional associations, which is characteristic of Indians in 'their state of nature'. They are intermediate not because they link the state with the citizens – with the public, but rather because they fall conceptually, in between. In a manner reminiscent of de Toqueville Beteille argues that the well being of modern institutions can be guaranteed only if civil societies are understood as comprising truly autonomous bodies. The Indian state, Beteille believes, has given in to mass political pressures and to sectarian and communitarian forces. Such a state would necessarily undermine the well being of intermediate institutions, which is where civil society lies. In order to protect civil society it is important to keep these institutions autonomous and independent of state control.⁴⁴

Role of NGOs in Strengthening Civil Society

A central premise of the NGO literature is that NGO proliferation strengthens civil society by advocating and supporting the reform of the state, by organizing and mobilizing disempowered social strata, and by supplementing the traditional institutions of democracy such as political parties, trade unions and the media. Liberals see NGOs as the 'third sector', remedying the institutional weaknesses of both the state and private

⁴³ Gupta, D. (1999), *op. cit.*, Pp. 237- 238

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, Pp. 245-247

sector promoting socio-economic development and the Neo-liberals see NGOs as a part of the private sector, of socio-economic significance mainly, delivering services to the poor cheaply, equitably and efficiently.⁴⁵

The development NGOs have emerged as a reckoning force owing to their involvement in contemporary socio-economic development process and also for filling in the void created by the apathy and recalcitrance of two prime sectors i.e., public and private. The non-governmental institutions are part of civil society, but obviously not the whole of it. They constitute, however, a key component of civil society institutions. The reformulation of civil society-State relationship puts primacy on strengthening civil society. NGOs are one set of institutions within civil society. They are, therefore, part of the public domain of governance by civil society. This implies that NGOs need to be seen as public institutions, of civil society, engaged in the process of strengthening civil society in its relationship vis-a-vis the State and the ruling elites.

NGOs have become the active agents of the civil society. They have acquired both grassroots level reach through community participation and expertise in their activities. They have been fairly successful providing a flexible, efficient, local delivery system and effective programme implementation mechanisms in addition to mobilizing citizens for developmental efforts. NGOs contributed to the strengthening of the civil society by bringing about a diversity of structures and a deepening of political participation.⁴⁶

Strengthening civil society in contemporary context implies strengthening its material, institutional and ideological bases. It further implies new approaches to governance and politics. It implies strengthening "citizenship." The development NGOs can play strategic roles in this context through their programmes and activities. They can (as many do already) address the issue of recovering the material base of civil society

⁴⁵ Clark, Gerard (1998) *The Politics of NGOs in South East Asia: Participation and Protest in the Philippines*, London: Routledge Publications, p. 9

⁴⁶ Srivastava, Jayati (2002) "Non-Governmental Organizations as Negotiators at the World Trade Organization: A Perspective from the South", *International Studies*, July-Sep, Vol-39.

through greater access to and control over the resources by the local communities and people's organizations. They can facilitate the process of generating informed public judgement and of becoming active citizenry. Interventions aimed at strengthening the capacity of its own, and other, institutions of civil society, to critique the existing development paradigm and to evolve an alternative people-centered, community-based, citizen-governed development paradigm can be useful in this regard. Facilitating increased citizen access to and engagement with public policy issues can help to alter the practice of governance.

The role of NGOs in strengthening civil society to regain and retain hegemony over the State and private enterprise is another critical strategic function. Challenging the continuous attempts to control the minds of people, expanding and systematizing popular knowledge, expanding social control over education and science, strengthening mechanisms for democratization of knowledge, promoting philosophical and normative debate around issues of public concern, encouraging civic articulation of parameters of governance, facilitating promotion of ideas related to social distribution of power and accountability of the State to civil society, etc. are some of the strategic roles that development NGOs can (and sometimes do) play in support of strengthening the ideological base of civil society. Civil society needs to be enabled to articulate its framework and values of unity within diversity - a task that NGOs can facilitate. NGOs can strengthen the practice of citizenship by encouraging the people to view themselves as producers of culture, ideas and values.

The institutions of civil society, development NGOs themselves need a stronger institutional base. Instead of getting bogged down with the "supposedly" temporary and transitory nature of their existence, development NGOs need to strengthen their institutional capacities to perform the strategic roles described before.

This raises the question about the need for elaborating mechanisms for ensuring accountability of NGOs to civil society. Development NGOs can help strengthen (or rebuild) institutional mechanisms within civil society to provide for services to families and communities. As the State shifts its role from "provider" of services to "enabler,"

there is a risk towards "privatization" of services (like education, healthcare, etc.). While resisting the current pressures for and temptations of becoming service-providers themselves, development NGOs can help contribute to the strengthening of institutional arrangements within civil society for "public" provision of such services.

Depending on the political and institutional set-up in each Third World country, the extent to which NGOs can play role in promoting civil society varies with six⁴⁷ major ways: (1) development of their communities (increasing number of intermediary organizations) and promote social change; (2) nurture sustainable development and viable civil societies; (3) promote political rights and civil liberties; (4) focus on bottom-up democratisation;⁴⁸ (5) influence other voluntary organisations; and (6) promote relationship between the for-profit and independent or non-profit sectors of civil society.⁴⁹ (Fisher 1998: 16)

Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Hirschman's Model of NGO and Civil Society Relation

If NGOs are to strengthen civil society in the course of their interaction with the grassroots groups, then part of this process entail either articulating interests on behalf of grassroots groups or, more appropriately empowering grassroots groups to articulate their own interests. What role can Southern NGOs play in supporting civil society if, as Chazan has said, "associational autonomy" is more central to the validity of civil society than the availability of adequate means?⁵⁰

While Southern NGOs (SNGOs) contribution to civil society is predicated on their forming strong relationship with grassroots group, it is equally important that they

⁴⁷ Quoted from Bach, Tan Sinh (2002) "Civil Society and NGOs in Vietnam: Some Initial Thoughts on Developments and Obstacles", *Paper presented at the Meeting with the Delegation of the Swedish Parliamentary Commission on Swedish Policy for Global Development to Vietnam*, www.un.org.vn/donor/civil/CSandNGOs%20in%20Vietnam.rtf For details refer to Fisher, Julie. (2003) *Non-governments – NGOs and Political Development of the Third World*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications, Pp. 12-17

⁴⁸ It helps, as Ndegwa's (1996) study reveals that, to empower local communities and allows grassroots clients to confront the state.

⁴⁹ By focusing on micro-enterprise development, NGOs broaden the ownership of capital, a connection that has the potential to challenge governments

⁵⁰ Hudock, Ann. C (1999) *NGOs and Civil Society: Democracy by Proxy*, UK: Polity Press, p. 87

be able to disengage from these groups to avoid dependency. The dynamics between Southern NGOs and grassroots groups as it relates to civil society development can be analysed using Hirschman's (1970) concept of "exit, voice and loyalty". In short, strengthening civil society entails strengthening the 'exit' option for grassroots groups. This includes the opportunity to include exit from state-provided services or Southern NGO programmes when they prove inadequate. Competition between service providers and plurality of associational forms affords grassroots groups the opportunity to be selective in forming relationships with Southern NGOs.⁵¹

Where the 'exit' option does not exist – and in so many rural areas it doesn't, given the absence of state services or capable Southern NGOs with access to resources – grassroots groups have the 'voice' option. This is a residual category which in a sense can be equated with interest articulation. Grassroots groups can use their voices to let Northern and Southern NGOs to know what it is they like or dislike about the Southern NGOs which provide them with services. This voice will help to increase grassroots groups' commitment to development efforts and ensure their sustainability as a result.⁵²

'Loyalty' is the final factor which figures in Hirschman's schema and this makes exit less likely while at the same time giving scope to voice. Southern NGOs need to create loyalty among the grassroots groups with which they work. Where there is loyalty, the likelihood of voice increases and the desire for exit decreases, since people have an attachment, which prompts them to express their concerns rather than exit altogether.⁵³

Democratic Process and Voluntary Agencies

The role is emphasized in this context by virtue of their existence as autonomous actors, NGOs are said to pluralize and therefore to strengthen and expand the institutional arena and bring more democratic actors into the political sphere. More civic actors mean more opportunities for a wider range of interest groups to have 'voice', more autonomous

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 87

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

organizations to act in a 'watchdog' role *vis-a-vis* the state, and more opportunities for networking and creating alliances of civic actors to place pressure on the state⁵⁴.

Democracy is usually considered as the process where by the citizens freely elect representatives of their choosing to govern them. However the citizen in a functioning democracy does not sit back between elections and expect the government to do everything for him or her. A vigorous and active voluntary sector gives citizens the opportunity to get involved in all sorts of self-help activities independent of government and business. This trains citizens in leadership and democratic norms, gives a place for the variety of opinions, and offers an opportunity for action to those individuals who are not motivated by personal monetary or public gain.⁵⁵

Voluntary agencies are both an outcome and facilitator of the democratic process. Operating in a variety of areas, particularly on the periphery of society, the non-GONGOs⁵⁶ take on issues and problems affecting the mass of people at the grassroots. The inability of the government to 'deliver goods' to all irrespective of caste, class, creed or religion is undoubtedly an important factor for the growth of a large number of non-GONGOs, their growing importance in development in those areas where they are active clearly suggest a failure of the state-sponsored democratic process to strike roots. Kothari (1997) therefore argues that it is this convergence of despair with the system of governance (largely apolitical) and faith in the democratic process (fundamentally political) that is increasingly making the poor draw upon their own resources (both psychic and environmental) and their traditional institutional/ organizational and socio-economic wherewithal.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Desai, Vandana (2003), *op. cit.*, p. 497

⁵⁵ Holloway, R (1998), *op. cit.*, p. 72

⁵⁶ There is a distinction between GONGO and non-GONGO. The former is wholly government created and largely state sponsored agency, the later has its origin in people's effort. This refers to the NGOs created out of social concern but not by the government to implement its programmes and operate according to the government instruments. For more see Chakrabarty, Bidyut (2003), "Voluntary Association and Development Imperative: The Indian Experience" in *Society, Politics and the Voluntary Sector*, Mehra, Ajay K, Singh, Anil K and Kueck, Gert, W (ed) Centre for Public Affairs, Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Voluntary Health Association of India, New Delhi,

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 150

The voluntary organizations basically perform two kinds of roles in the process of democratization and development in India.

- One is articulated in different forms of opposition *vis-a-vis* state-directed development. Hence, the centre of gravity has shifted from the government-nurtured institutions to socio-political institutions which are located and flourish outside the formal structure of governance.
- The other is structured around concerns for reviving Panchayat units that have gradually declined, due to indifference of those in power for obvious political consequences. In fact, the Eighth Plan proclaims that:

“It is necessary to make development a people’s movement. People’s initiative and participation must become the key element in the whole process of development. A lot in the area of education, health, family planning, land improvement, efficient land use, minor irrigation, watershed management, recovery of wastelands, afforestation, animal husbandry, dairies, fisheries, and sericulture etc., can be achieved by creating people’s institutions accountable to the community.”⁵⁸

In consonance with the above objective, the Seventy-Third Amendment – 1992 is probably the most dramatic intervention in the political process to extend and strengthen the traditional Panchayati Raj system of village self-government. The aim is to reduce the margin of political and administrative discretion and ‘to allow the decentralized institutions to gather strength on the basis of people’s involvement’. Revamping the Panchayat system of self-government requires “credible community-based institutions” that command local trust and local presence. This is where the role of voluntary agencies assumes tremendous significance. So they perform two types of functions:⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Quoted from Chakrabarty (2003), *Op cit*, p-151

⁵⁹ *ibid*, p-152

- On the one hand, they play significant role in translating the demands of the people at the grassroots into specific policy directions for the state to consider; with their involvement in the activities at the grassroots, they also sustain,
- On the other, the momentum, gained as a result of continuous interaction with the people.

What is evident is that voluntary agencies have now become a significant influence in development planning and its realization due to both radical changes at the grassroots and also the failure of the state to reach out to those for whom the welfare schemes are recommended. In relation to the government, NGOs as part of the products of the existing political system began to challenge the governance of the system. The failure of the government in the Third World countries to "meet the escalating challenges of sustainable development has opened up unprecedented opportunities for NGOs not just replace government but to protest against them, influence them, and collaborate with them"⁶⁰. The strategies of NGOs toward relationship with the government varies from (1) isolate themselves almost completely from the state to (2) engage the state through advocacy, which may or may not be confrontational; and to (3) cooperate with the state through parallel or collaborative field projects.⁶¹

Democratic Development and Marginalized Groups

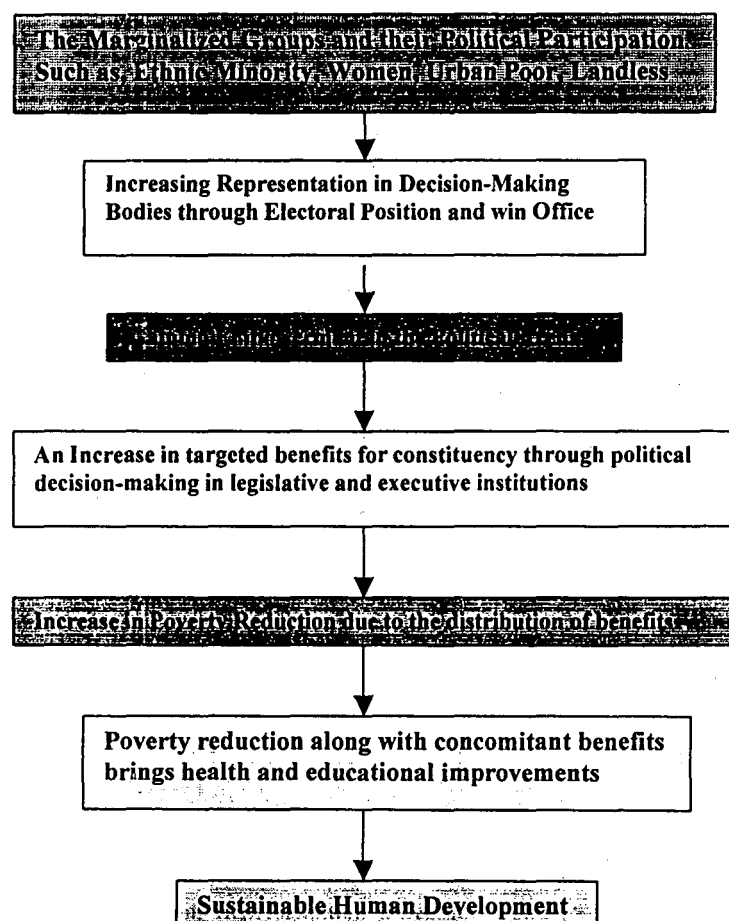
Harry Blair (2003) putting forward the developmental model, which assumes that the basic micro-democratic framework (see fig.1.2) has been set into place. From this, a number of logical steps unfold, beginning with increasing political *participation* on the part of elements previously out side the mainstream, such as minority ethnic groups, women, urban poor and landless agricultural workers. In the process of becoming political participants, these elements are mobilized to enter the political arena, contest electoral positions, and win office, there by gaining *representation* in decision-making

⁶⁰ Fisher, J (2003), *op. cit*, p. 30

⁶¹ *Ibid*, Pp. 105-106

bodies. In this series of steps they are motivated and enabled to become actors in their own right in the political arena; in short they *empowerment*. Once empowered these new players will be able to influence political decision-making in legislative and executive institutions to direct programmatic *benefits* to their constituencies, which over time will lead to *poverty reduction*. And in turn, poverty reduction, along with the concomitant benefits it brings in terms of health and educational improvements, will lead to *sustainable development*.⁶²

Fig.1.2: The Micro-Democratic Framework of Development



⁶² Blair, Harry (2003) "Civil Society, Empowerment, Democratic Pluralism, and Poverty Reduction: Delivering the Goods at National and Local levels" in Lewis, D and Wallace, T (eds.) *Development NGOs and the Challenge of Change: New Roles and Relevance*, Jaipur: Rawat Publication, Pp-109-110

NGOs and Civil Society in India

Among the social groups and associations of various kinds that are considered to make up civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become especially prominent in the last two decades. The rise of NGOs is one of the central processes in the sphere of development since 1980s. This period also coincides with the demise of developmentalism as a project of the nation-state and the rise of post-developmental neo-liberal political economy (or what has been described as market triumphalism). In what is often described as a move from inefficient state to efficient markets, NGOs hold a distinctive mediating position.⁶³

NGOs or civil society organizations are being projected as an alternative to over-centralized state system in India. Their growing prominence in the field of development is strongly related to the declining legitimacy of the state. It is considered to be corrupt, oppressive, anti-poor and state structures are criticized as being rigidly bureaucratic and thus unsuited for performing either welfare or resource management functions, where as NGOs are seen as 'civil society' actors that are more accountable, responsive and committed to bringing about social change.⁶⁴

Nayar (2001) argues that India has a well-developed civil society and some of its CSOs (civil society organizations) have made commendable contribution both to the cause of democracy and to national development. The performance of civil society is conditioned by certain pre-requisites⁶⁵:

- A political system with neutral state and a liberal democratic set-up: Toleration of opposing ideologies and groups, respect for the rule of law, and protection of the fundamental freedom of the citizens are basic to the system.
- An economic system guaranteeing economic justice to all citizens: Welfare provisions, and meeting the minimum needs of citizens are *sine-qua-non* of this system.

⁶³ Baviskar, B.S (2001), *op. cit*, Pp. 3-4

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p-7

⁶⁵ Nayar, PKB (2001). "Civil Society, State and Democracy: Lessons from India" in Sociological Bulletin, Vol.50, No.2, September, p-215

- A socio-cultural system based on universalistic values: Affective neutrality must have precedence over affectivity orientation of the citizenry (Nayar: 2001: 215).

Kothari (1989) advocates the positive role of civil society stating that the relationship between state and the democratic process has broken down in India and the dominant castes have been successful in making the state increasingly insensitive to democratic politics. State has now become an agent of the ruling class. A weak state can become 'hostage to the powerful groups in the society creating a real obstacle to development (Jain, 1995). Kothari (1987) holds that voluntary organizations can help to bring transformation among the people themselves, which the state can't or will not do.⁶⁶

Voluntary organizations have the responsibility towards restoring the space of civil society encroached upon by the state. Chandokhe (1995) opines that the actual struggle in the way of NGO sector lies in maintaining their political nature, as only through this the disadvantaged can be empowered to challenge the existing power structures in the society and thus, modify the contours of development according to their own needs. The idea that NGOs should act as an agency to increase the efficiency and responsiveness of the state has also received much currency.⁶⁷

It is noted that the NGOs are far less constrained by bureaucratic procedures and administrative inefficiencies. This results much greater share of benefits reaching the targeted groups than is likely to happen while working through the state machinery. If strong, vibrant civil society is the foundation of modern open democratic polity, NGOs are the very life-force for the civil society. Civil society and the NGOs seem to go together. One can't exist without the other. Civil society, when it is not used as a synonym for society in general, is used to refer to 'that segment of society that interacts with the state, influences the state and yet is distinct from the state' (Baviskar: 2001: 7).

⁶⁶ Banu, Shareena C.P (2003) "The Substantive Democracy: Role of Civil Society in Rural Karnataka", *Indian Anthropologist*, December, Vol.33, No.2, p. 58

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, Pp. 58-59

Chapter. 2

Development and NGOs: A Conceptual Understanding

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Development and NGOs: A Conceptual Understanding

NGOs, an actor of the civil society, have been found to be playing a significant role in the development process after the 1980s. The failure of the state to reach at the people and understand the grassroots reality has left a socio-political space for the civil society organizations to provide a complementary and in some cases an alternative discourse of development and democratization in the society and polity. Due to their participatory and people centered approach the NGOs have been some way successful in understanding the socio-economic problems of the rural poor and included them in different stages of development starting from the identification of the rural problems to the planning process, decision-making, implementation programme sharing the benefits and evaluating the project. Thus non-governmental organizations, after the rolling back of the state in the socio-economic sphere in the age of globalization, have become vital agencies and new circles of power in the development discourse. This chapter is trying to understand the conceptual issues and theoretical foundations of the notion of voluntary and non-governmental organizations, their origin, history, typology and development. It also looks at the concepts, ideas and theoretical models associated with the perspective of development.

Understanding Development

The most used and yet misunderstood concept in social sciences is perhaps 'development'. Development thought has dominated social science literature since its inception. Introduced as a strategy to provide economic growth and social progress the term has assumed prodigious significance in contemporary debate. Development assumes

critical significance as it helps to understand the content and pace of change in social structure.

In the area of development, there is almost a complete lack of a well articulated and, by and large, acceptable theoretical perspective. However, a minimum understanding of development is that basically it is a change process¹ induced by planned programs aimed at improving the condition and conduct of every human life² and that has important consequences to the social structure. Gunnar Myrdal treats development as an upward movement of the whole social system by providing better living conditions viz. adequate food, better housing, improved facilities for health, education and training, and general improvement of cultural facilities which are all desirable to a fuller development of the human personality.³

Development has been conceptualized as a process of economic growth fostered by industrial investment and a competitive culture of enterprise and profit maximization. It has been defined a liberation from the structures of colonial and imperial domination in which the state secured the right to self-determination and self-reliance. It has also been viewed as a state of welfare in which ordinary people enjoy freedom from want, disease, exploitation, ignorance, insecurity and oppression. In other words development aims at an equitable distribution of natural resources, income and political freedom, equality of opportunity, improvement of quality of life, social justice and motivation towards a rational understanding of society. Although more often than not development is equated with economic progress, in the ultimate sense it encompasses more than the material and financial side of people's lives. Development is a multi-dimensional process involving the realization and reorientation of the entire economic and social systems. In additions to improvements in income and output, it also includes radical changes in institutional,

¹ Krishnamurthy, J (2000) *Rural Development: Challenges and Opportunities*, Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawat Publications, p. 25

² Shah, D and Rahim, S (2000) *Cultural Factors in Rural Development*, Jaipur and New Delhi, Rawat Publications, p. 35

³ Mohanty T (2002) "Dissecting Development: An Enquiry into Anchorage and Aspersions", *IASSI Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 6

social and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes, and in many cases, even in customs and beliefs.⁴

Development refers to *dynamic efforts by the people*, both individually and collectively, to improve their physical, economic, intellectual, moral and social conditions. It aims at bringing an all round growth resulting in betterment of *quality of life* of fellow citizens. Moreover, this developmental process should take full cognizance of social justice as well as distributive justice. In a democracy like India, the major onus of this developmental activity comes on the state. The constitution of India under the Article 38 directs the state to “strive to promote welfare of the people by securing and protecting, as effectively as it may, a social order in which justice – social, economic and political – shall inform the institutions of national life. However government alone cannot be expected to touch upon all the needs of every aspect of man. The working group in Block level planning remarked that the country’s social and economic problems are so vast and multifarious that the government’s administrative machinery alone cannot tackle them. The establishment of a self-reliant society implies progressive curtailment of people’s dependence on the government. There lies the need for “sincere, dedicated and competent voluntary organizations or NGOs for concrete, constructive developmental activities with social action as their main strategy based on social justice for all.”⁵

Thus the need for voluntary action arises because of the inherent inadequacies of the government to supervise and act for detailed needs of the community and the individuals. In every community, there are unmet economic and social needs and many of these can best be handled by Non-Governmental Agencies (NGAs) as compared to government or private business interventions. Because the autonomous character of the voluntary agencies provide them flexibility to adopt their programmes according to the needs and aspirations of the people⁶.

⁴ *Ibid*, Pp. 5-7

⁵ Verma, M M (1996) “Social Work and NGOs: Should they Collaborate?” in Bhanti, Raj (ed) *Social Policy and Development in Rajasthan*, Udaipur: Himansu Publication, p. 177

⁶ *Ibid*.

Development More than Economic Growth

M.S Gore pointed out that development cannot be a mere economic phenomenon. Economic growth cannot be achieved unilaterally without corresponding changes in the social, political facets of the life of a society. Social, political and cultural factors enter the developmental process at all stages⁷. Economic growth of countries refers to the increase in output of goods and services that a country produces over an accounting period, normally 1 year. Economic growth is not the same as economic development. The process of economic (and social) development must imply a growth in living standards, but it is a much wider concept than the growth of per capita income alone. Growth, it might be said, is a necessary condition for the economic and social development of nations, but it is not sufficient condition because an aggregate measure of growth or per capita income pays no attention to how that out put is distributed amongst the population; it says nothing about the composition of out put (whether the goods are consumption goods, investment goods, or public goods such as education and health provision) and it gives no indication of physical, social and economic environment in which the output is produced. In short, the growth rates of nations can't be taken as measures of the increase in the welfare of the societies because the well being of people is much more inclusive concept than the level of income alone.⁸

Sen (1999) argues that economic growth should not be viewed as an end in itself, but as the means to the achievement of a much wider set of objectives by which economic and social development should be measured. Development should focus on and be judged by, the expansion of people's 'entitlements' and the 'capabilities' that these entitlements generate, and income is not always a good measure of entitlements. Sen defines entitlements as 'the set of alternative commodity bundles that a person can command in society using the totality of rights and opportunities that he or she faces'. Entitlements also depend on such factors as what individuals can extract from the state

⁷ Sharma, SL (1986) *Development: Socio-Cultural Dimensions*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications, Pp. xi-xii

⁸ Thirlwall, A.P (2002) "Development as Economic Growth" in Vandana, Desai and R.B Potter (eds.) *The Companion to Development Studies*, London: ARNOLD Publishers, p. 42

(in the form of welfare provision); the spatial distribution of resource and opportunities, and power relations in society.⁹

The concept of 'growth' connotes only an increment to the gross national product. On the other hand, development connotes a qualitative and structural change. The structure of an underdeveloped country is characterised by a 'dual economy' and a 'dual society'. While there are manifestations of development in a few metropolitan centres in the shape of modern industrial and commercial establishments, large bulk of the country, the vast hinterland of rural areas, is under-developed in every sense of the term. Life there is short, poor and isolated. Thus metropolitan centres are only enclaves in vast areas of darkness and backwardness.¹⁰

Definitions of Development

Development is referred to process of continuous progress, unyoking the people from the stages of dependency towards self-reliance, assuring equitable distribution of opportunities and resources and ensuring socio-economic justice and harmony among all sections of the society.¹¹ Porter (1985) defined development as a complex of three important criteria:

- i. Economically, sharp and sustained increase in national product.
- ii. Socially, redistribution of national income on an egalitarian basis and incorporation of marginal masses into the money-economy.
- iii. Culturally, emergence of a new social image.

Development is a process by which a society transforms its institutions in ways that enhance the ability of its people to mobilise and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed benefits consistent with their own aspirations.¹²

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 43

¹⁰ Dubhashi, P.R (1987) *Essays in Development Administration*, New Delhi, Archives Publishers, p. 11

¹¹ Bhoose, Joel S.G.R (2004) *NGOs and Rural Development: Theory and Practice*, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, Pp. 56-57

¹² *Ibid*, p. 57

At its broadest, “development” means quite simply “improving the society”. Since the society comprises no more than the people it is made up of, development therefore means, “enabling people to achieve their aspirations”. This may appear a rather tautological argument, but it has three virtues. Firstly, it indicates the fundamental necessity to build any development model on a foundation of democratic processes. How else can we judge what people’s aspirations are? Secondly, it reveals the need to make political choices – it goes without saying that it is impossible to satisfy *all* the ambitions of *all* the people *all* of the time. Choices must be made by those who wield the power about which group’s aspirations are to be prioritised. And Thirdly, it speaks of “enabling” rather than “providing” – hinting that true development is done *by* people not *to* people, that development might be coordinated by the governments and official aid agencies in their provision of institutions, infrastructure, services and support, but that it is *achieved* by the people themselves.¹³

Development is not a commodity to be weighed or measured by GNP statistics. It is a process of change that enables people to take charge of their own destinies and realize their full potential. It requires building up in the people the confidence, skills, assets and freedoms necessary to achieve this goal.¹⁴

Features of Development

The features of development can be classified into the following points:

- Increase in material welfare through increased productivity;
- Improvement in social welfare programmes like education, health care practices and so on;
- Improvement in the social content of human life: rich family life, community feeling, and music and so on, depending individual interests and preferences;

¹³ Clark, John (1991) *Democratizing Development*, London: Earthscan Publications, p. 26

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

- Increased safety, freedom and opportunity; and also a sense of participation in local, regional and national affairs; and
- An equitable distribution of the fruits of development among different groups of people among various regions of the country.

Trajectory of Development

According to T.K Oommen (2002) the career of development has undergone numerous twists and turns. He identifies three major perspectives, such as mainstream, alternative and post, in the trajectory of development. The mainstream perspective on development (MPD) could be traced back to colonialism and its civilising mission. As a result of anti-colonial movements colonialism was replaced by modernization. Capitalism and socialism invoked industrialization as the primary tool of development, the former combined it with political democracy and the later with one-party democracy. This gave birth to two models of modernization. The ‘natural’ modernity of the capitalist democracies initiated the process of economic growth *with* equality through its welfare states giving birth to the First World. The state was central but adequate space was conceded to market and civil society under this regime. In contrast, the ‘enlightened’ modernity of socialist states rolled up the state, civil society and market into one entity and pursued economic growth for equality. The Second World was produced in this process. Those who were left out, the Third World countries opted for one of these but India tried to combine multi party democracy of the First World and planned economic development of the Second World, creating a new model of development, christened as the Third Way.¹⁵

However, all the three worlds had industrialization as their aim. But the devastation wrought by industrialization on environment (ecological hazards, pollution) produced a new trend of development thinking. Understandably sustainable development became the new refrain. The alternative perspective on development (APD), a critique of

¹⁵ Oommen, T K (2000) “Development Theory: Rhetoric and Reality” in *IASSI Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4, Pp. 54-55

mainstream perspective, is participatory and people centred. Here the agency of development becomes crucial, a shift from state and/ or market to civil society is emphasised. APD incarnates as anti-capitalism, green thinking, feminism, eco-feminism, and new social movements. Alternative development then is development from below, that is, community centred and NGO initiated. APD generally refers to three spheres – agents (NGOs), methodology (participatory, self-reliant, endogenous) and objectives (geared to basic needs).¹⁶

Post Development Perspective (PDP) rejects development and emerged with the western critique of modernity and techno-scientific progress such as critical theory, post structuralism and green movements. The distinction between APD and PDP is that APD rejects the idea of development equals modernization equals westernisation, which is often the refrain of MPD. APD refuses to be a mere consumer of western model of development, it rejects the model of singular modernity. But it does not reject the notion of modernity as such, it pleads for multiple modernity, the non-west being creators of their versions of alternative modernity. But PDP rejects the very idea of modernity and hence development.¹⁷

Just Development

“Just development”¹⁸ is about attacking the web of forces which cause poverty. This demands that equity, democracy and social justice be paramount objectives, alongside the need for economic growth. It must enable the weaker members of society to improve their situation by providing the social services they need and by enabling them acquire the assets and to improve the productivity of those assets. It must combat vulnerability and isolation. It must ensure the sustainable use of natural resources and combat exploitation, particularly the oppression of women. And it must make the institutions of society accountable to the people. The ingredients of just development combine to make the acronym DEPENDS:

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 58

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 60

¹⁸ Clark, John (1991), *op. cit*, Pp. 26-30

Development of infrastructure
Economic growth
Poverty alleviation
Equity
Natural resource base protection
Democracy
Social justice

Sustainable and Participatory Development

Development refers to the improvement in the quality of life. It is a comprehensive concept, which implies major structural changes – political, economic, cultural, which are introduced as part of deliberate action and transform society. It accentuates on the removal of rural-urban and regional imbalances. Mega crisis faced in the mid 1970s due to rapid industrialization, urbanization and modernization, development now looks for a more participatory and sustainable path of human progress which meets the needs and aspirations of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It demands the genuine participation of the people in development programme. Everyone has the right to express opinion regarding consumption preferences, education, political preferences and so on. Here the individuals are *the means* of development as they provide labour and also *the ends* since they become ultimate beneficiaries in the process.

Is Development Non-Political? Dimensions of Development

For many years it is used to be said that social development is an apolitical or perhaps non-political concept. Social development is defined as a process of upgrading

the quality of life of millions of people who have been denied the opportunities and qualifications. Social development¹⁹ consists of:

1. Welfare services are for needy individuals and groups which are deprived;
2. Social services include education, health, housing and communications;
3. Social security provides protection and safety-net; and
4. Social well being is a philosophical concept, beyond physical context of quality of life.

If we critically analyse, the social development issues are at once social, economic and political. They just can't be apolitical or non-political. The ideological context of any political system has a direct impact on and linkages with the concepts of development. The experience in recent years has, however, brought home the fact that 'development' can't be considered to be synonymous with economic development. Development has political and social dimensions as well. Political development could be assessed in terms and the stabilisation and consolidation of participatory political institutions. Political authority is responsive to the people and conversely people have faith in political authority and indeed have opportunity participate in the political process. Social development may be conceived in terms of progressive social integration. Where society is fragmented into different warring groups or sectoral cleavages, where there is social discrimination against minority groups, where one sections of society dominates over another, or where one social group has privileges another has social disabilities, development can't take place in a smooth and harmonious manner. Social homogenisation is integral to development. Without it there can be no unity and social solidarity and without them no society can develop. That is why it has to be affirmed that development is not only economic development but also social and political development.²⁰ There are four key points in political developments.²¹

¹⁹Gokhale, S.D (1998) "Role of NGOs on Social Development: Opportunities and Challenges" in Macpherson, S and Uong, H.K (eds.) *Social Development and Societies in Transition*, USA: Ashgate, Pp. 121-122

²⁰ Dubhasi, P.R (1987) *Essays in Development Administration*, New Delhi, Archives Publishers, Pp. 1-2

²¹ Cox, David (1998), "Overview" in Macpherson, S and H.K. Uong (eds.), *op. cit*, p. xxii

- The protection of human rights is the fundamental issue.
- Democratisation of political process, in terms of maximising participation, is vital to human progress.
- Good governance (just and efficient) is crucial to people's well being.
- Peace is essentially a political process and indispensable for social development.²²

Julie Fisher (2003: 21) says that political development as an interactive, public decision-making and learning process, within and between government and civil society, based on power creation and dispersion. This process leads to increasing individual and group autonomy from below and more responsiveness from above.

Michael P. Todaro²³ (1985:61) writes that development is not purely an economic phenomenon. In an ultimate sense, it must encompass more than the material and financial side of people's lives. Development should, therefore, be perceived as a multidimensional process involving the reorganization and reorientation of entire economic and social systems. The multidimensional character of development is further elaborated by the assertion that development involves a changing complex of factors where the different factors change at different rates. Thus, it is pointed out that development does not imply a simple linear process of change.²⁴

Dilemmas of Development

Dube, S.C (1988) points out that the notion of development in early economics was simple and uninvolved. Development meant the capacity of static national economies to generate and sustain an annual increase in their Gross National Product at the rates of 5% to 7% or more. The decade of the 1960s and 1970s was designated by the UN as the "Development Decade"; the target laid down for the period was the attainment of 6% annual growth rate of GNP. Another indicator used by economists was the relationship

²² *Ibid*, p. xxii

²³ Quoted from Krishnamurthy, J (2000), *op. cit*, p. 29. Todaro was one of the most influential scholars who emphasized on the multidimensional and interdependent character of development and change process.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

between the growth of per capita GNP and the ability of a nation to expand its output at a rate faster than the growth rate of its population.

At one stage it is believed that economic development is the key to total development and if the per capita income or gross national product – GNP is increased, development will percolate from above, down to the masses to the grassroots embracing all levels of living. This theory of percolation was the pet theory of the British imperialists (Gokhale: 1998:123). The trickle down effect of overall per capita GNP was expected to provide more jobs and economic opportunities, ensuring wider diffusion of the benefits of growth. But in the developing countries things did not work out the way economists had predicted. The “invisible hand”²⁵ did not wave a magic wand. The social benefits of growth remained confined to small sections of the population, without reaching down to the person in the street.²⁶

This theory of percolation failed in all fields of development, leading the planners to re-think about development methodology of planning from below. Development is not merely economic growth or mere increase in per capita income. Rise in GNP does not automatically upgrade the quality of life. So, it is thought that integrated development ought to be the goal for democratic planning.²⁷

Dual Commitment in Development

In the field of development, one has to face a kind of an ethical dilemma. Whether one solves the problem of the suffering individual or one works for restructuring social order and indulge in social reforms. What should be our priority? Solving welfare issue is a kind of fire brigade function of solving the problems that need most urgent attention. At the same time social workers and volunteers must be concerned about a long-term goal to create a society where injustice does not have a place and where deprivation and neglect

²⁵ A term originating in Adam Smith's *Wealth of the Nations*, 1776

²⁶ Dube, S.C (1988) *Modernization and Development: The Search for Alternative Paradigms*, New Delhi: Vistaar Publications, Pp. 2-3

²⁷ Gokhale (1998), *op. cit.*, p. 123

do not exist. So the volunteers will have to work with dual commitment. They are not to work as mere technicians to solve one single problem of a delinquent child or a disabled person. They have to act as architects of social change or social engineers to rebuild human relationships.²⁸

Agent Centered Analysis of Development

The critics of structural analysis within development theory have made three broad points (Preston: 2000: 296):

- i. that development theory must pay attention to the micro-scale detail of the social processes of the construction of the patterns of life,
- ii. that the development theory must deconstruct notions of intervention and shift away from untenable rational models of plan-making followed by plan execution, and grant that the intervention itself is a complex social process involving many agents, and
- iii. that the further theoretical elucidation of these matters requires the supersession of the distinction between structure and agency.

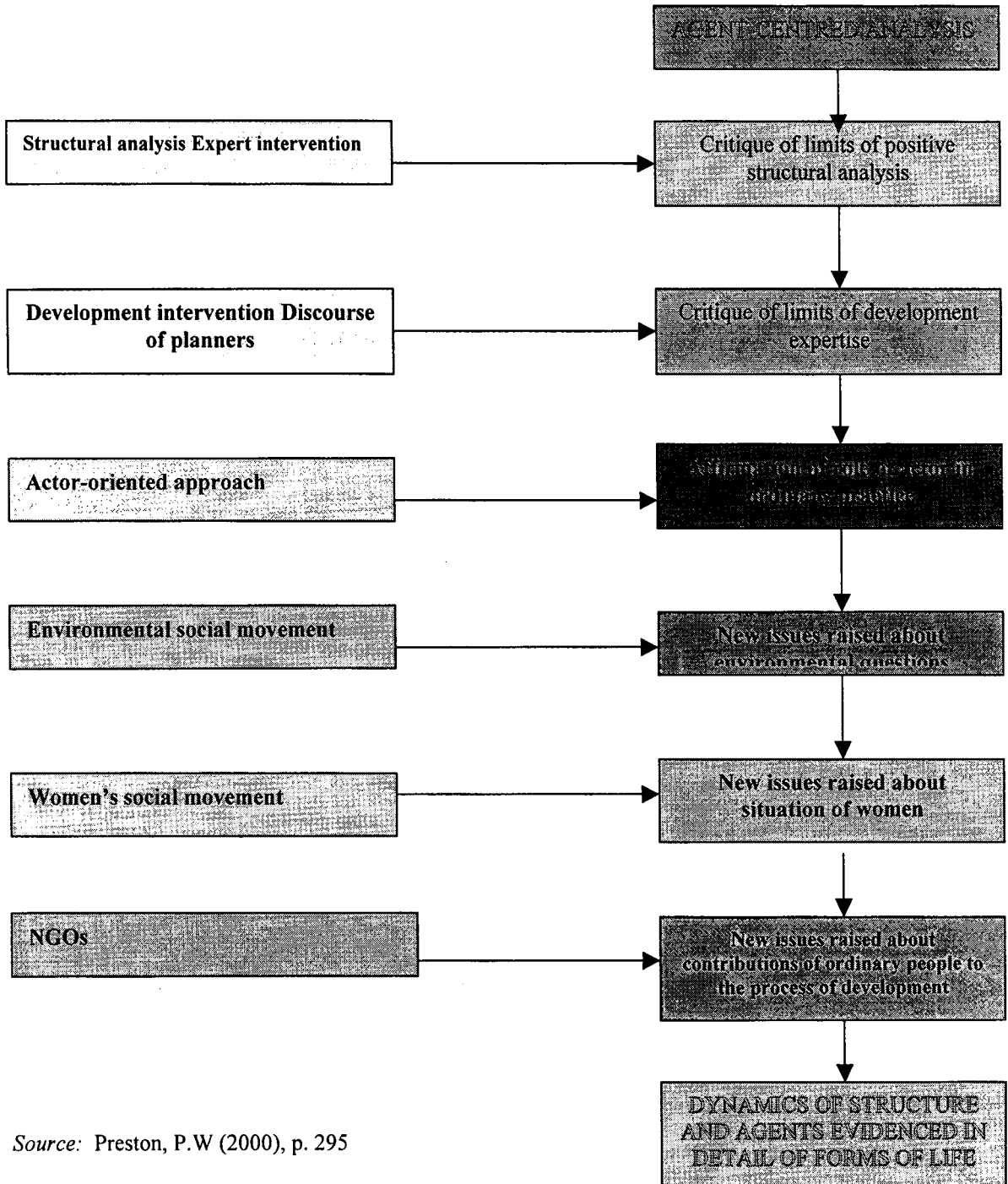
It suggested that as development plans are always translated into practice at the local level then knowledge of local-level cultural patterns is seen as a logical precondition of the success of planning²⁹. The actor-oriented approach (see fig.2.1) claimed that those involved must be seen as agents, as having their own understanding of the situations, their own expectations of change, and their own strategies for securing such objectives. The NGOs were taken to embody precisely the grassroots activism oriented to the empowerment of the poor. The work of NGO group has typically been small scale, local and concerned to empower the ordinary people of the community.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 128

²⁹ Preston, PW (2000) *Development Theory: An Introduction*, UK, Blackwell Publishers, p-296

Overall, the burgeoning sphere of NGOs does constitute a distinctive arena of the local-level action for change³⁰.

Fig. 2.1: Agent-Centered Analysis



Source: Preston, P.W (2000), p. 295

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 313

Understanding NGOs

At the out set, the question arises in one's mind that what is this voluntary organizations or non-governmental organizations (NGOs)? Why do we call them non-governmental organizations? How are they distinct from the governmental and other institutions? Acronyms, lexicons and varying imprecise definitions convolute an already complex area of investigation, so that it is necessary to spell out as clearly as possible the definition of NGOs. The term NGOs is used to denote/ specify those organizations which undertake voluntary action, social action and social movements. Answering this question Hudock (1999) says that NGOs are those organizations that remain outside the realm of government, and distinct from the business community. Often referred to as the "third sector", NGOs are characterized by their non-profit status and, in some cases, a value based orientation or a cadre of volunteers carrying out the organization's mandate.³¹

The acronym 'NGO' only denotes what an organization is not instead of saying what it is. Under this definition, anything that is not part of the governmental process becomes an NGO. It is like a man declaring 'I am not a woman' instead of saying 'I am a man'. Because of the inadequacy and vagueness the expression 'NGO', attempts have been made to use other expressions such as "Private Voluntary Organization" (PVO), "Non-governmental Development Organizations" (NGO), etc. Despite these well-meaning efforts, the acronym NGO continues to be the most widely used, almost as if it is going to remain forever.³²

Allan Flower in "NGOs in Africa, naming them by what they are" argues that NGOs cannot be defined as simply *not* being governmental. That is not enough – there must be criteria which an organization must meet to qualify as an NGO and to distinguish itself from other organizations.³³ Rajasekhar³⁴ says that the term is negative in the sense it

³¹ Hudock, Ann C. (1999) *NGOs and Civil Society: Democracy by Proxy*, UK: Polity Press.

³² Kuriakose, P.J (1989) *In Quest of Development: Role of Non-Governmental Organizations*, New Delhi: Vishwa Yuvak Kendra.

³³ Aubrey, Lisa. (1997) *The Politics of Development Cooperation: NGOs, Gender and Partnership in Kenya*, London: Routledge Publications, p. 20

³⁴ Rajasekhar, D. (2000) "Non-governmental Organisations in India: Opportunities and Challenges", *Journal of Rural Development*, Vol. 19 (2), p. 250

seeks to give a meaning that NGOs possess the characteristics/ features *not* possessed by the government, such as (i) voluntary formation, (ii) working towards development and amelioration of suffering, (iii) working with non-self serving aims, and (iv) relative independence, and undertaken activities otherwise normally *not* undertaken by the government.

NGOs are voluntarily formed in the sense that there is no compulsion from government or others which leads to their formation. There is also an element of sacrifice in the fact that the staffs work at salaries below what they can draw in the government or private sector. They are development oriented in the sense that they are concerned with improving the condition and position of oppressed sections of society. Finally they are relatively independent from the government in the sense that their policies are determined by their Board of Directors or Trustees. However, the NGOs have to work within the parameters of government legislations and policies formulated for NGOs.³⁵

The term 'non-governmental organization' or NGO refers to a wide range of organizations in the more developed and developing worlds alike and the term is subject to considerable conceptual ambiguity. Adding to the confusion, a variety of labels are often used to describe similar organizations: Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs), Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) or Intermediate Organizations (IOs) in the United States; Voluntary Organizations (VOs) or Charities in the United Kingdom; or Voluntary Agencies (Volags) in India. Officially, the term 'NGO' first appeared in the United Nations Charter of 1945 and the role of NGOs in the emerging United Nations system was explicitly recognized in Article 71 of the Charter.³⁶

Salamon and Anheier (1997) use a seven-fold test to distinguish NGOs from a variety of other organizational forms. NGOs they argue are:

- i. *Organized or Formal*, i.e., institutionalized to some extent.
- ii. *Private*, i.e., institutionally separate from the state or Government.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 251

³⁶ Clarke, G (1998) *The Politics of NGOs in South-East Asia: Participation and Protest in the Philippines*, London: Routledge Publications, Pp. 2- 4

- iii. *Non-profit Distributing*, i.e., not returning any profits generated to their owners or directors.
- iv. *Self-governing*, i.e., equipped to control their own activities.
- v. *Voluntary*, i.e., involving some meaningful degree of voluntary participation, either in actual conduct of the agency's activities or the management of its affairs.³⁷
- vi. *Non-religious*, i.e., non-proselytizing
- vii. *Non-political*, i.e., not primarily engaged in promoting candidates for electoral office (Clarke: 1998: 2)

Structural deficits of market and state have led to the discussion in the field of political and social sciences to a third sector, which comprises all imaginable forms of social self-control. As a part of the third sector, NGOs find their position – depending on the specific point of view – between, beside or beyond the state. While the state transmits itself by means of hierarchy and for the market the exchange deal is a constitutive factor, NGOs get in contact with society by means of the control instrument-solidarity. According to Reichard (1988), however, the control instrument, solidarity cannot be considered as the only and sufficiently explainable selection criterion, but has to be complemented by the following:³⁸

- Sufficient autonomy of external influences (e.g. of the state),
- Non-profit orientation, based on the achievement of certain aims of an obvious public interest (public welfare),
- Relative informal structures of membership, which are characterized by voluntariness and services on an honorary basis of most of the members,
- Showing solidarity to members and clients, and no indirect acting through an anonymous market but a reciprocal direct relationship to the customers.

³⁷ Ahmed, M.M. (2002) *NGO Field Workers in Bangladesh*, England, Ashgate Publication, p. 7

³⁸ Pitschas, Rainer. (1995) "The Role of NGOs in the Modern State: A Challenge to Institutional Policy and Institutional Development in the South" in Jain, R. B (1995) *NGOs in Development Perspective*, New Delhi, Vivek Prakashan.

Summing up, Pitschas says that NGOs can be characterized as formalized organizations beyond the market and state receiving their resources from voluntary contributions of the society and on the basis of voluntariness to transform them into collective goods to solve social problems.³⁹

NGOs in Development Theory

The growing popularity of the NGOs in the development field seems to be strictly associated with the emergence in the last twenty years of a so-called “New Policy” Agenda (Robinson, 1993; Moore, 1993; Clayton et al., 2000). This agenda is, in turn, motivated by growing skepticism about the role of the state in development (Sanyal, 1994) and by concerns with the negative consequences of the “rent-seeking” behaviour of state bureaucrats (see Buchanan and Tullock, 1962; Buchanan, 1980). Underlining the New Policy Agenda - an agenda which has deeply influenced both bilateral and multilateral actors - is the idea that private sector initiatives are intrinsically more efficient than public initiatives, so that private forms of intervention should be seen as the preferred carriers of policies aimed at increasing social welfare (Edwards and Hulme, 1996a: 961). Not only are NGOs regarded as more efficient, innovative, and dynamic than state bureaucracies, they are also seen as important for the institutionalization of mechanisms of democratic accountability similar to those which emerged in the liberal democracies of the West about one century ago. Democracy, it is argued, flourishes if it is sustained from below by a vibrant civil society (Putnam, 1993). NGOs contribute to keep elected officials “on their toes” and are therefore key ingredients in the process of democratic development in developing countries.⁴⁰

NGOs and Grassroots Organizations (GROs)

NGOs are any group or institution that is independent from government, and that has humanitarian or cooperative rather than commercial, objectives. They work in the

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 10

⁴⁰ Baccaro, Lucio. “Civil Society, NGOs, and Decent Work Policies: Sorting out the Issues”, Geneva: *International Institute for Labour Studies*, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inst/download/dp12701.pdf>

areas of development, relief or environmental protection, or represent poor or vulnerable groups. But grassroots organizations are membership organizations that work to improve and develop their own communities; also called people's organizations (POs) (Fisher: 2003:191) or Community Based Organizations (CBOs). The most important difference between GROs and NGOs lies in their accountability structures: GROs are formally accountable to their members, while NGOs are not.⁴¹ There are three major types of GROs in most countries.⁴²

1. *Local Development Institutions* (LDIs), such as village councils or neighborhood associations, work on many development issues that concern the entire community.
2. *Interest Associations* (IAs) are more limited in membership and tend to work on particular issues. These include women's groups, water users association and shared work groups.
3. Pre-cooperatives, Cooperatives and Other Community based enterprises are the third type of GROs.

NGOs and Voluntary Organizations (VOs)

NGOs, apart from having a negative description of not being a part of the governmental establishment, is also bland and does not say much about the nature of the organizations, their ideology, goals, functions or jurisdiction. Many, hence, would prefer to call themselves "voluntary organizations" as it indicates the commitment and aims of the organizers and the nature of their purpose. The legacy of Gandhian philosophy (trusteeship, social services and sacrifice) and action make Indians feel at ease with "voluntary organizations" and "social work" than the non-descript nomenclature "NGOs". Thus the concept of voluntary organizations working for community welfare

⁴¹ Ahmed, M. M. (2002), *op. cit.*

⁴² Fisher, Julie. (2003) *Non-governments: NGOs and the Political Development in the Third World*, Jaipur: Rawat Publication, p.191

and development, helping the weaker sections to bring themselves to the positions of equality, to avail of their rights and improve the quality of their rights, is quite old.⁴³

NGOs and GOs

Today most of these NGOs are indistinguishable from “GOs”, because the linkage by way of programme designing, methodology and funding procedures. Once again the policies, programmes, schemes and methodologies are worked out even before. The NGOs have to merely carry them out with little or no scope for changing/ improving or maneuvering within, though of late, the government is recognizing the need to allow more flexibility in the same.⁴⁴

The Bureaucracy and NGOs

Red-tapism and bureaucratic procedures are necessary evils in a developing country where the bureaucrats, even if development oriented, create unnecessary hurdles, giving rise to suspicions of corruption and nepotism. The Administration, on its part has come to suspect the NGOs as being more self-centered and self-perpetuating than people oriented and committed to goals. This has led to a strained, love-hate relationship between NGOs and government departments. Only a few officials, more because of their individual values, perceptions and commitment, seem to have been able to work out a cordial relationship with activists and voluntary organizations.⁴⁵

The bureaucratic procedures and lack of training and commitment, on the part of the officials often make the implementation machineries of the government smack of a colonial rule rather than democratic and self-government. The participation of people in designing and planning, implementing and monitoring, reviewing and reversing the policies, etc becomes impossible and gets ruled out in the governmental mechanisms.

⁴³ Kaushik, Susheela (1998) “The Voluntary Movement in India Since independence: A Critique” in Sebesti. L. Raj (ed) *Fifty Years after freedom: New Opportunities and Challenges for Voluntary Action in India*, New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, Pp. 64-65

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 66

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 67

Hence, the more enlightened government servants, as well as the state itself, opted for the involvement of voluntary organizations in the state bodies like Central Social Welfare Board or State Social Welfare Advisory Board (SSWAB), as early as 1956.⁴⁶

NGOs and Panchayats

The NGOs and the newly elected members of the Panchayats is also getting somewhat strained. Following the 73rd Amendment of local governments are sought to be strengthened with many developmental functions and resources, including social forestry, environment, women and child development, etc in which many NGOs are involved. Though not much taken place by way of decentralization and devaluation of powers, many NGOs are already feeling threatened. NGOs will need to reorient themselves, gradually wean themselves away as the implementing agencies, and take on the role of catalyst and offer guidance and information to the panchayats, if the experiment with local self-government has to succeed and the rural people become their own decision-makers.⁴⁷

NGOs: Virtues and Theoretical Basis

The quintessence of NGOs is 'voluntarism'.⁴⁸ The voluntarism, derived from Latin word 'voluntas', means 'will' or 'freedom'. For Lord Beveridge, a voluntary organization is an organization in which whether its workers are paid or unpaid, is initiated and governed by its own members without external control. The NGOs are known for their virtues of human touch, dedication, flexibility, self-reliance and nearness to the community. The characteristics of NGOs are:⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 68

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 69

⁴⁸ Gangrade, K. D and Sooryamoorthy, R (1995). "NGOs: Retrospect and Prospect" in R. B Jain (ed), *op. cit.*, p. 29

⁴⁹ Lawani, B.T (1999) *NGOs in Development*, Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawat Publications.

- The main characteristic of a voluntary agency is human touch. Human touch is a quality which is innate in a human being and cannot be developed with any amount of training or incentive.
- The second characteristic of voluntary action is dedication. The sense of dedication is more important to volunteers whether they work individually or through voluntary agency. Without any sense of commitment and dedication no voluntary agency could meet its destiny.
- The need of flexibility in the work style of voluntary agency is the next characteristics. This is necessary because the essence of voluntary organizations is to be open and non-bureaucratic.
- The fourth important virtue of voluntary organization is that it should be close to the community. Voluntary organizations should know the needs and problems of the community in which they are working. These organizations are not only familiar to such needs and problems but also sensitive to them. The Voluntary agencies, particularly at the community level are more close to people than governmental agencies.
- The fifth important characteristic is their innovation and self-reliance in their programmes and services. This is more often lacking in the governmental agencies. Innovation is the utmost importance of voluntary action.

According to Oommen (1995: 76) the current theory of voluntary associations has two dimensions and these are developed in two specific contexts. The first of these dimensions is discussed in the context of the problem of 'dehumanization' occasioned by industrial-urbanization, as manifested in the presumed disappearance of primary groups and the resultant creation of emotionally starved and socially uprooted individuals. The second aspect of the theory of voluntary associations is dealt within the context of increasing concentration of power in the hands of a central state authority with its

monopoly of the press and other propaganda apparatus, creating a vacuum between the state and citizen, and thus offering a fertile ground for demagogues and ideologues to manipulate the masses, paving the way for a 'totalitarian' regime.⁵⁰

Voluntary associations emerged as a response to the first challenge, taking over the functions of traditional institutions. The second dimension found its beginning in the writings of Toqueville (1944). According to him, societies in which there was an unmediated relationship between the central state and the mass of citizenry, the later would be unable to resist the power of the state authority. Toqueville was in search of the conditions which facilitated the working of democracy in the United States of America. He found that there exist a number of 'secondary powers', that is, voluntary associations which are independent of the state. These associations, along with the autonomy of local authorities, served to prevent the authoritarianism of the central state and helped to stabilize democracy. Thus today voluntary associations are believed to be essential instruments of pluralism as they play a critical role in a democratic system by facilitating citizens' influence on governments.⁵¹

The NGOs have grown in the background of the theory of 'voluntarism' and 'self-help approach' applied to the process of development. While the thrust of voluntarism has been to alter deeply entrenched structures of power in the direction of greater egalitarianism, its very role requires it to be in the field of action – rules and regulation being only instruments to subserve the larger purpose. Much of their efforts revolve around a systematic process of awareness building through education, training in areas of social and economic issues, organization through collectivities and mobilization of action through these activities.⁵² The spirit of voluntarism stems from varied sources.

- The self-help idea had emerged as a synthesis to basic needs approach to development strategy in the 1970s with the central concepts such as

⁵⁰ Oommen, T. K (1995) "The Theory of Voluntary Associations in a Cross-Cultural Perspective", *Alien Concepts and South Asian Reality: Responses and Reformulations*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p. 76

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 77

⁵² Jain, R. B (1995) "Introduction", *op. cit.*, p. 2

'development from below', 'social education', 'target group oriented development', 'appropriate technology', or 'small is beautiful school of thinking' etc.

- Voluntarism may arise out of the love of humanity, the belief that the neglected sections need to be helped and a conviction that social justice is to be distributed in a more equitable manner in the given social circumstances.
- Voluntary work has a religious basis too. All religion, needless to say, extols voluntary action and charity. Compassion, charity and duty are common core elements of religions. Giving alms to the poor, feeding the hungry, caring for the disabled, providing shelter to the homeless and extending help in exigency all constitutes different facets of religious tenets.
- The craving for voluntary service springs from the social instinct of man. Vilfredo Pareto explained in terms of social instinct that comprises one of the most important residues inherent in man. The urge to associate with like-minded people for a common purpose and cherished ideals is the beginning of voluntary action at the individual level.
- The urge to act in groups is fundamental to man. The driving force remains the commitment to some social cause, service-mindedness and sacrifice. The motive is seldom profit intention.

Emergence of NGOs in India

After independence, a change in the perception on development and also the role of NGOs in rural development took place. In the 1950s and 1960s, it was assumed that the economic growth through state investment was the answer to poverty. This was to be accompanied by welfare programmes for the groups of poor, poorest, women, etc., which were thought to be incapable of participating in programmes aimed at economic growth.

The Ministries of agriculture and Rural Development initiated community development efforts in rural areas to enable people to participate in economic growth programmes. On the other hand, the responsibility of the welfare programmes was vested with Welfare Ministries of the State Governments. NGOs were approached by the national governments and Aid agencies to assist in implementation of these community development and welfare programmes, especially in rural areas.⁵³

One of the reasons behind the emergence and growth of NGOs in the developing countries could be the growing realization in these countries that the massive task of development cannot be handled by the governments alone. In addition to the enormity of the problems faced by the governments, the unsatisfactory performance of so many state agencies has also contributed to the new understanding of the role of NGOs. Fortunately the demonstrated success of a number of NGOs in their own fields of work has strengthened the credibility of NGOs the world over. However, this increased attention given to NGOs is more of a pragmatic response to an unsatisfactory situation rather than the result of an objective analysis of the role and potential of NGOs as agents of development in their countries.⁵⁴

The NGOs became prominent after independence, especially after 1970s. This was partly because of the limited success of past development policies pursued by the government. Even after half-a-century of development effort initiated by the state, the problems of largest concentration of the poor, hunger, malnutrition, unemployment, gender inequality, illiteracy, etc. continue to plague Indian society. One of the contributing factors for the limited success of rural development programmes was the absence of involvement of the people in formulation, implementation and monitoring of the programmes is, therefore, stressed in several quarters. Development practitioners, government officials and foreign donors consider that NGOs, by virtue of being small scale, flexible, innovative and participatory, are more successful in reaching the poor and poverty alleviation (Rajasekhar: 2000:250).

⁵³ Rajasekhar, D (2000), *op. cit*, p. 255

⁵⁴ Kuriakose, P.J (1989) *In Quest of Development: Role of Non-Governmental Organizations*, New Delhi: Vishwa Yuvak Kendra.

The iniquitous nature of the state and the inability of the government programmes to benefit the deprived sections, led to the realization that mere implementation of government schemes by the government sponsored agencies was not enough, and could in fact be counter-productive. This led to the emergence of new set of struggle-oriented groups. Today there are a large number of such organizations struggling on behalf of the poor, the landless, the tribals, the bonded labourers, and many other social strata, that were being discriminated against both by the policies of the state and the dominant element in social structure. These NGOs constitute a whole spectrum of different kinds of voluntary groups.⁵⁵

The need to improve the life situation of the poor made the activists from different backgrounds to talk of development. The fragmented and compartmentalized development models which still had charity and welfare components were replaced by integrated development models. The gender justice, environmental concerns and human rights were understood as part and parcel of structural aspects of the society which together with class, caste and ethnicity were responsible for the exploitation of the marginalized sections within the society. The priorities and agenda of donor agencies also influenced the development perspective and programmes at the grass root level.⁵⁶

The development NGOs called upon by international aid agencies and the Indian government to supplement the micro-level poverty alleviation and basic needs programme in spheres where development NGOs were perceived to have comparative advantages. For the first time the Planning commission included a separate sub-section on 'Involvement of Voluntary Agencies' in the Seventh Five Year Plan Document (1985-90) under the chapter on rural development and poverty alleviation programmes. Plan expenditure of 100-150 crores was earmarked towards the collaboration between the government and NGOs. To channel these resources for NGOs involved in poverty alleviation and rural development programmes, the Council for Advancement of People's

⁵⁵Jain, R.B (1995), *op.cit*, p. 55

⁵⁶ Kuriakose, P.J (1989), *op. cit*, p. 257

Action and Rural Technology (CAPART)⁵⁷ was established in 1986. This agency was also entrusted with the responsibility of providing support to the NGOs⁵⁸

By the 1990s, the development policy of the World Bank, bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies, and aid transfers from them, have come to be dominated by what is referred to as 'New Policy Agenda' (NPA) which gives prominent role to NGOs in poverty alleviation and the development of civil society.

Typology of NGOs

According to Oommen (1995) there are two types of voluntary associations in contemporary India, viewed from the angle of their origin: those which are extension of traditional structures, such as religious and caste associations and those which are newly inducted into the system, such as youth clubs, co-operatives and trade unions. While the first type tends to modernize or secularize traditional structures, the later gets traditionalized while performing modern functions.⁵⁹

Rose (1954) evolved a typology of voluntary associations based on their structural features and functional variations – 'social influence' and 'expressive' types. Social influence types of associations are those which are designed to act as interest or pressure groups and offer a platform for community influentials to further their goals, including political interests. Thus this type of voluntary association acts as a facilitating mechanism for the dispersion of power in society. On the other hand, the expressive type caters to the emotional needs of its members by performing the role of primary groups.⁶⁰

Susan Dicklitch says that this broad categorization encompasses many diverse organizations with diverse agendas, objectives, affiliations, methods of action, and

⁵⁷ CAPART was created in 1986 by merging PADI and CART. It was set up to improve conditions in rural areas through diffusion and innovation of technology with the help of voluntary organizations. It has emerged as the largest single funding body for voluntary organizations in the country.

⁵⁸ Rajasekhar, D (2000), *op. cit.*, p. 257

⁵⁹ Oommen, T. K (1995), *op. cit.*, p. 85

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, Pp. 79-80

internal structures making it difficult for theoretical and practical simplification of NGO activities and potentials. NGOs can be categorized on the basis of the functions they perform as well as the constituency that they target. In addition obvious distinction between international or Northern NGOs (NNGOs), and indigenous or southern NGOs (SNGOs), NGOs can be categorized on the basis of whether they are Voluntary Organizations (VOs), Gap-fillers (GFs) or service-provision organizations, People's Organizations (POs), or Briefcase NGOs.⁶¹

POs, VOs and GFs: the Distinction

The main difference between POs and VOs is that POs fundamentally exist to serve their members, where as VOs are generally '...committed to values that transcend its members' immediate interests. Gap-fillers in contrast to VOs and POs (see table. 2.1) are market driven rather than value driven NGOs. This conceptual distinction, however, is not that clear-cut in reality, especially many VOs are dependent on and in competition for foreign funding, and consequently submit project proposals that they know the donors will fund. Further, more with economic restructuring and liberalization, increasingly, many NGOs are becoming more like gap-filler NGOs rather than POs or VOs (Dicklitch: 1998:5).

The Gap-filler NGOs

They are gap-filling NGOs in the sense that they have moved into service-provision where the state has often moved out. Failure of the state to provide the basic services has led many official donors to use NGOs rather than the local state to provide services. They are the crucial actors in the provision of services and goods to devastated or depressed areas. Gap-fillers tend to be apolitical and narrowly focused certain practical activities, such as the provision of education, safe water, the formation of income generation groups and AIDS services. They fill in the gaps left by the withdrawal of

⁶¹ Dicklitch, Susan (1998) *The Elusive Promise of NGOs in Africa: Lessons from Uganda*, Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, Pp. 4-5

regime provision of essential services and goods, they tend to buttress the legitimacy of the regime. This legitimacy arises from the cooperation of the NGOs with the regime in national development schemes. Although they are often crucial in providing basic services and goods to the general public, Gap-filling NGOs do not necessarily create the foundation for the development of a democratic civil society or polity.

Voluntary Organizations

Voluntary organizations tend to engage the regime on a political level. They promote education and awareness of rights and abuses of rights to the general public. Some examples of VOs include human rights organizations, environmental groups dedicated to justice and peace or human rights and regime monitoring organizations such as election monitoring and civic education groups. These organizations generally perform a watchdog role in civil society.

Table: 2.1: Typology of NGOs

<i>NGO Type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Voluntary Organization (VOs)	Can be intermediary between grass root NGOs and the state, value-driven, assumed accountability of leaders.	Human rights and legal aid associations, public information and popular theatre groups, and umbrella association of national NGOs, the 'civic organizations'.
People's Organization (POs), Grassroots NGOs	Value-driven, self-reliant, relatively independent of outside funding or initiative, serves its members, democratic participation and accountability of leaders.	Burial associations, credit clubs, labour unions, womens' organizations and rural based development associations.
Gap-fillers (GFs); Public Service Contractors (PSCs)	Market-driven, programme adjusted to fit funding availability rather than social mission, relief organization.	Charitable organizations, AIDS support organizations, relief organizations.

Source: Dicklitch, Susan (1998), p. 6

People's Organizations

POs are closely related to VOs, and give voice to popular demands and engage in collective action. They differ from VOs in the sense that they are usually more narrowly focused on a particular constituency like women and aim to empower not only their membership but also the wider community. They are often driven by strong values and member interests, usually geared, among other things, toward empowering communities that have been traditionally dis-empowered. This type of NGO provides important forums for civic education or schools of democracy as well as for public policy advocacy.

Types of Voluntary Agencies and their Functions

Rajasekhar (2000) in his article "*Non-governmental Organizations: Challenges and Opportunities*" classified NGOs, on the basis of their functions, under four broad categories (see fig. 2.2):

1. Operational or Grassroots NGOs
2. Support NGOs
3. Network NGOs, and
4. Funding NGOs.

1. Operational or Grassroots NGOs

Grassroots NGOs directly work with the oppressed sections of the society. Grassroots NGOs could either be local based, working in a single and small project location, or be working in multiple project areas in different districts, states and regions covering a larger population. Based on the 'approach and orientations' of the grassroots NGOs they can further be categorized as:

- i. *Charity and welfare NGOs*
 - Charity (giving food, clothing, medicine, alms in cash and kind, etc.),

- Welfare (providing facilities for education, health, drinking water, etc),
- Relief (responding to natural calamities like floods, drought, earthquakes, and man-made calamities like refugee influx, ravages of war, etc), and
- Rehabilitation (undertaking work in areas struck by calamities and starting activities durable in nature).
- A large number of church based NGOs operating in south and northeast India still have charity and welfare component in their programme.

ii. *Development NGOs*

- They may be involved in providing (facilitating the service provision) development services such as credit, seeds, fertilizers, technical know-how, etc. Such NGOs concentrate on development of socio-economic environment of human beings.

iii. *Social Action Groups*

- Mobilizing marginalized sections around specific issues, which challenge the distribution of power and resources in a society.
- They are involved in raising the consciousness of the people, awakening, organizing, recording of priorities to suit social justice, redeeming the past and opening doors to opportunities to the oppressed and the exploited.
- They also enable the poor to stage dharnas, protest to obtain government programmes, etc.

iv. *Empowerment NGOs*

- They combine development activities with issue-based struggles.

- They may be involved in the provision of services such as savings and credit; but they utilize such activities for social, economic, political and cultural empowerment of the poor.

The main difference between social action groups and empowerment NGOs is that the former do not normally undertake development activities, as they believe in addressing the root causes of poverty. On the other hand, empowerment NGOs undertake development activities because the people cannot undertake the struggles with 'empty stomachs'. They believe that empowerment of the people is an essential pre-requisite for development. Hence, they strive hard to enable the people to become free from all the exploitative structures. The approaches followed and activities undertaken by the first two types (charity and welfare, and developmental) are related to delivery system but the last two types (social action groups and empowerment) are basically related to development of target group communities and the approach to development is political.

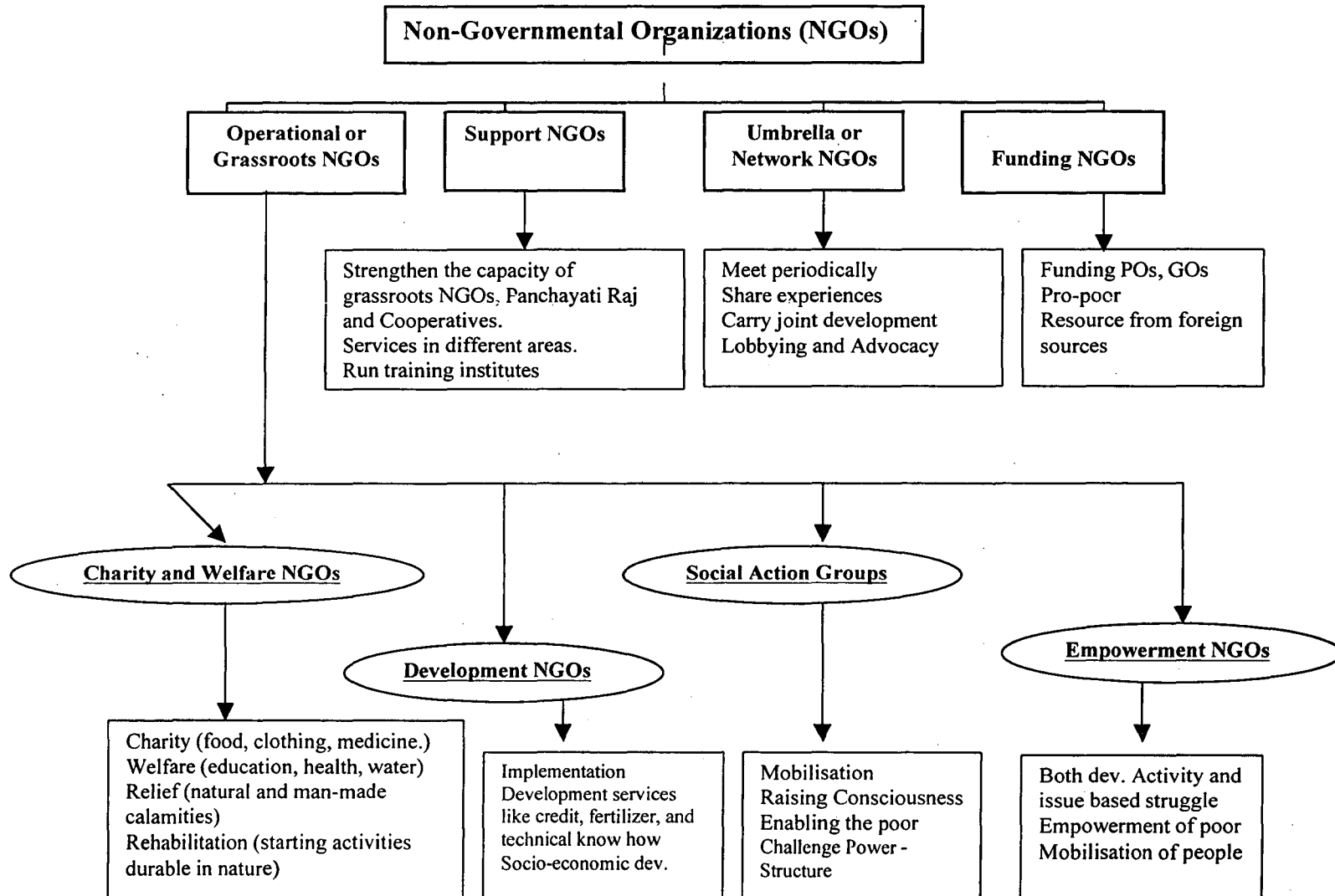
2. Support NGOs

Support NGOs provide services that would strengthen the capacities of grassroots NGOs, Panchayati Raj Institutions, cooperatives and others to function more effectively. Some do not engage in grassroots action while others do have field projects but grassroots action is not their primary task. Some of the support NGOs render support in specific thematic areas such as health, education and environment while others provide support in generic issues such as perspectives, leadership, human resource development, management, etc. they also bring out periodicals and run training programmes for the activities involved in NGOs, Panchayati Raj Institutions, etc.

3. Umbrella or Network NGOs

Network NGOs are formal associations or informal groups of grassroots and /or support NGOs which meet periodically on particular concerns. They act as a forum to share experiences, carry out joint development endeavours as well as engage in lobbying and advocacy.

Figure.2.2: Typology of NGOs and their Functions



Source: This Figure was drawn on the basis of Rajasekhar's (2000) classification.

4. Funding NGOs

The primary activity of these NGOs is funding grassroots NGOs, support NGOs or people's organizations. Most funding NGOs in India generate a major part of their resources from foreign sources, though there is an effort by some to raise funds from within India. The organizations such as Aga Khan Foundation (AGF) in India provide funds to NGOs and foreign NGOs like Action Aid, CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency), Oxfam, etc with headquarters in developed western countries, mobilize resources from both the public and governments in their respective countries to help grassroots NGOs in their efforts to initiate and implement pro-poor rural development activities.

Development in NGOs Perspective

- Development is not a product but a process.
- It is not gathering people but organizing the communities.
- It is not constructing big-big buildings but capacity building among the oppressed.
- It is not a showpiece work but a social action.
- It is not a mere benefit distribution but people's collective action.
- It is not giving but empowering.
- Development is not a piece rate contract. It is a strategic endeavour.
- It can't be fully achieved with an isolated approach but through a unified, holistic and integrated approach.
- It is not a mono-dimensional act but a multi-dimensional action.
- It is not an NGO-oriented intervention but people-centred.
- It is not NGO itinerary but people's agenda.
- It does not deal with inanimate things but with vulnerable human beings who require sensible facilitation.
- It is not enticing donors but conscientising people.
- It is not a superficial intervention but a sustainable endeavour.

- It is not a 9 a.m to 5 p.m job but it is a long process that requires commitment, conviction and sacrifice on the part of the community workers.⁶²

Gokhale⁶³ (1998:124) says that social development is a process that directly involves the people at local community level, and the best agent for social development is the community itself. NGOs arise out of the will of the community. NGOs are a manifestation of the people's desire to put their energy to work for the common good and NGOs are a most important channel for the delivery of social services that address the grassroots, focus on the people's participation and self-sustainable development, and concern the disadvantaged sections of society. An NGO can therefore be one of any number of organizations ranging from service delivery agencies 'development-catalyst' organizations, public service contractors and people's organizations. They are envisioned as dynamic, privatized vehicles of development, democracy and empowerment. They allegedly play key role in creating a civic culture, pluralizing the political, economic and social arena and bridging the gap between the masses and the state. NGOs and wider civil society thus act as intermediaries between the unorganized masses and the state.⁶⁴

Concluding Remarks

This chapter gives a broad outline and discusses the conceptual and theoretical issues on development and non-governmental organizations in India. It broadly explains the meaning, historical background, trajectories, typology; and the process of development of NGOs and gives an understanding of the various issues relating to it. After having a conceptual understanding in this chapter the next chapter tries to discuss the trajectories of State led development in the post-independent India and how the democratic State has been acting as an agent of development?

⁶² Bhose, Joel S.G.R (2004), *op. cit*, Pp-55-56

⁶³ Gokhale in this article also explains the role of Government Agencies and NGOs in development. He says that GAs are responsible for planning and complementary programmes of national coverage with legislation context, the NGOs have a special role in innovation, advocacy and grassroots level work. He suggests the need for collaboration between the two as partners of progress.

⁶⁴ Dicklitch, S (1998), *op. cit*, Pp. 3-5

Chapter. 3

State and Development Planning in India: A Critique

Chapter. 3

State and Development Planning in India: A Critique

With the dawn of political independence, India and the Third World countries ceased to be 'imperial appendages of Western powers' and their government assumed the responsibility for economic progress, most of them took for granted that the Western sophisticated technology-based economic growth model was the only one available to them. India, like most countries, took for granted that the growth of GNP was the real criterion of national development.¹ Given this approach, the inception of planning in India was to accelerate economic and social development, alleviate poverty and unemployment, raise the standards of living and quality of life; and build a just, equitable and egalitarian society. The chief goal of all this was to provide full opportunity for the development of every individual in the country.²

Liberation from colonialism in India brought for the first time the state apparatus and the instrument of state power into the hands of the nationalist leadership bounded to development as political programme. In the aftermath of colonialism, therefore, they promptly gave a tangible shape to their aspirations in terms of a welfare state, the logical epitomization of a democracy.³

Economic development in India, without doubt has been consciously pursued as a state objective and not just left as a sui-generis process of growth. In course of time economic development and its objectives have grown in importance as a matter of vital concern to the state. The model of development that India opted for has been described as a model of 'mixed economy' – an economy which provides for private ownership of

¹ Fernandes, Walter (1985) *Development with People: Experiments with Participation and Non-formal Education*, New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, p. 3

² Dubey, K.N (1990) *Planning and Development in India*, New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House

³ Mohanty T (2002) "Dissecting Development: An Enquiry into Anchorage and Aspersions", *IASSI Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 21

capital, for an open market and yet for state enterprise and state intervention in regulating the economy. The intervention of the state was expected to ensure that the social justice aspects of development were not lost sight of in the pursuit of the goals of economic growth.⁴

Five-Year Plans and Development through Phases

The foremost achievement of independent India is that country evolved a democratic planning agency that stood the test of time. In order to achieve the avowed aims and goals, planning strategies and programmes were adjusted to the need of time and situation within the democratic set up. The First Plan (1951-56) placed highest priority on agriculture including major irrigation schemes and power generation for solving food problems of the country. Second Plan (1956-61) gave top priority to heavy industries and building of sound base for comprehensive development. Third Plan (1961-66) accorded equal priority to agricultural and industrial development. Highest priority in Fourth Plan (1969-74) was placed on the enhancement of quality of life. It was realized that each backward area of the country has a unique combination of factors. A uniform policy based on macro experience will not be applicable to all areas. Hence, area-oriented programmes were launched. Then Fifth Plan (1974-79) addressed to self-reliance and poverty alleviation, which were more vigorously produced in Sixth Plan (1980-85). Seventh Plan (1985-90) adopted food, employment and productivity as major objectives and Eighth Plan addressed conservation and enhancement of resource base for development with a special emphasis on afforestation and optimum land and water use as major planks of development strategy.⁵ The Ninth plan aimed at ensuring a sustainable and stable growth in agriculture and rural economy as a whole. It also emphasized on the construction of the infrastructure and basic industries to bring national economic development.⁶ So also the Tenth Plan placed highest emphasis on increasing the GDP, and expand the avenues of employment, increase in income of urban and rural residents, improve people's material and cultural standard of living, improve the ecological

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Dubey, K N (1990) *op. cit.*, Pp. xix-xx

⁶ <http://ce.cei.gov.cn/efor/a3100e01.htm>

conservation and environmental protection, accelerate the development in science, technology, and education to improve the quality of people and achieve marked progress in democracy and legal system.⁷

Deconstructing the Discourse: A Critique of the State Centred Development

India is the largest democracy of the world. It has passed fifty-five long years in its democratic journey. Although today India can boast of its representative democracy, electoral politics, adult franchise, grassroots democracy through Pachayati Raj, centralized planning, comprehensive constitutional measures, the other side of the story tells the plight of Indian democracy. After its long journey it has been failed in fulfilling its constitutional promises like equality of opportunity, individual dignity, right to survival and security. Everyday we see the violation of fundamental human rights and violence against the weaker sections of the society. More than one-fourth of the population are living below the poverty line and excluded from the economic sphere of public life. Most of the people are illiterate and do not have any information about the governance at the local level. They lack the entitlements capacities to participate in the activities of public sphere and broader decision-making process. Indian democracy calls for the representation of the people but not the direct participation of the people in the decision-making process which ultimately leads to democracy based on patronage and corruption. It has also given birth to bureaucratic corruption which the common man finds difficult to access. Instead of increasing the direct participation of the people it is distancing itself from the common masses (the representatives of Indian democracy never visit their constituencies) and the citizens are getting alienated from the system.

India is a planned economy in which the state is pre-eminent. The planning commission plays a crucial role in charting out the course of development in the country. The planning commission generally represents the state-directed formula of top-down strategy of development. The conventional growth-oriented top-down development strategy has not accomplished the desired trickling down of the benefits of development

⁷ <http://www1.china.org.cn/english/MATERIAL/8724.htm>

to the marginalized sections. The programmes administered by the outsiders' (who include government) view people as 'object' of development and agencies make provisions of things and services of 'what they can' rather than 'what the people need'. The neo-liberal market oriented approach has replaced the now outdated development logic of the 1970s, which often justified authoritarian rule as necessary evil to bring about economic growth and long term development. This top-down approach of development is considered as dis-empowering. In this era of neo-liberalism, the top-down statist models are thus largely discredited, with state implicated as the cause of the crisis.

Rajni Kothari, Rajesh Tondon, Harsh Sethi and others criticise state led development and the model it is based on the grounds that the trickling down that was anticipated has not occurred and development has resulted in a large scale displacement of tribals and forest dwellers due to environmental degradation; rural poor have been displaced due to farm mechanisation, and unavailability of opportunity in the country side; urban poor who are mostly migrants in search of greener pastures have been relegated to the slums and gave rise to Dharavi - the world's largest slum in India. This is the result of the pursuit of a model of development, which has no roots or relevance in the Indian context. Moreover its primary focus is infrastructure and not the individual.⁸

Five decades of our planned development experience thus reveal that the popular participation in development planning remained a distant dream. Our state sponsored top-down planning model gradually witnessed a highly centralized system of development with ever increasing administrative controls and there was a wide spread realisation that the government systems were too rigid and standardise to evolve plans that would meet the varied requirements of the vast country. The centralised model of planning has resulted in neglecting local needs of diverse communities, and has failed to harness local energies and resources. The bureaucratic channel through which policy is formulated and implemented has resulted in considerable wastage of plan funds through inappropriate

⁸ Padmaja, Enjeti (1996) *State and Developmental NGOs: A Study of Institutional Linkages*, Unpublished Dissertation to Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. P. 26

funding and corruption⁹ and it was too self-centred to attend to people's needs. According to Transparency International India is the eighty-third most corrupt country with a rating of 2.8 in a list of 133 countries of the world (see Table 3.1).¹⁰

Table 3.1: India's Rank in Corruption Perception Index, 1995 – 2003

Year	No. of Countries	Corruption Perception Index (CPI)	Rank
1995	41	2.78	35
1996	54	2.63	46
1997	52	2.75	45
1998	85	2.9	66
1999	99	2.9	72
2000	90	2.8	69
2001	91	2.7	71
2002	102	2.7	71
2003	133	2.8	83

Source: Mehra, Ajay. K (2003) "Corruption and Development in India", *Think, India*, Oct-Dec, Vol. 6, No. 4, p. 11, The Times of India, New Delhi, Dec 1, 2003

The reason for this pervasive political corruption, in spite of five decades of democracy, is because we, in India, do not elect representatives but patrons. Both the rich and the avaricious as well as the poor and the stricken, vote on this principle.¹¹ Lack of transparency within the bureaucracy is also another important factor responsible for promoting public corruption.¹²

Both the higher echelons of government and the observer's of ground reality felt that the government in India was emerging as monolithic, urban-biased, inefficient, inflexible, highly bureaucratic, corrupt and more and more unaccountable. A new approach and style of working seemed necessary to help in evolving programmes and

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ The Times of India: Dec.1, 2003

¹¹ Gupta, Dipankar (2000) *Mistaken Modernity: India Between Worlds*, New Delhi: Harper Collins Publication, p. 144

¹² Mander, Harsh (2003) "Corruption and the Right to Information" in Tondon, R and Mohanty, R (eds) *Does Civil Society Matter: Governance in Contemporary India*, New Delhi: SAGE Publication, p. 145

implementing them in a participatory manner to meet the requirements of the local people with more accountability and transparency and better quality of development and service delivery. Though the government was committed to people's participation from the beginning of planning in India, such participation had remained confined only to rhetoric.

The state directed development has largely failed in the 'Third World' context. The growing importance of the voluntary sector is but an aspect of the decline of the development state that drew significantly on the model, which the colonial power had bequeathed. It is true that the post-colonial state expanded its activities to reach out to those in the periphery. But what was undertaken as the development of the people was, in most cases, appropriated by a powerful minority, and those who were underprivileged continued to remain so. The lower castes in India remained in the lowest rungs of the social order despite the state intervention through reservations. They are not only socially discriminated but also economically and educationally continued to be excluded from their rights and opportunities. The data below show the enrolment of scheduled castes in the undergraduate and post-graduate levels in Indian educational institutions (see Table 3.2). One of the reasons for distortions in development has to be located in the failures of the state-driven programmes for the people which were, by definition, formulated by those at the top of state bureaucracy.

Table 3.2: Percentage of Scheduled Castes Enrollment to Total Enrollment

Group	% of SCs Enrollment to Total Enrollment				Growth of Enrollment	
	1978 - 79		1996 - 97		UG	PG
	UG	PG	UG	PG		
Arts	9.85	10.54	10.65	13.62	0.8	3.08
Science	4.44	2.93	6.94	7.35	2.5	4.42
Commerce	4.76	5.42	4.97	7.09	0.21	1.67
Education	6.24	3.42	11.67	NA	5.43	NA
Engineering and Technology	6.16	1.92	7.31	NA	1.15	NA
Medicine	9.98	3.69	8.82	NA	-1.16	NA

Source: Wankhede, G.G (2003) "The Scheduled Castes and Higher Education in India: Retrospects and prospects", *Think India*, July- Sep, Vol. 6, No. 3, p. 39

Not only in educational sphere but also in every aspect of socio-political life, the marginalized sections like women, lower castes and tribal people have been subject to violence and exploitation. The question comes to one's mind that how can a democracy be established when around 50 percent of its population still live in the Dark Ages and are discriminated on the basis of gender. They are considered as the second sex. Not only discrimination but also crimes against women are increasing day by day. The birth a girl child is considered as a burden; so to exempt from the burden people prefer to abort the foetus in the very beginning. The sex ratio in India according to 2001 Census is 933 (see Table 3.14). According to the National Crime Record Bureau: 2000, there is a 4.1 percent increase in the crimes against women in 2000 (see Table 3.3).

Table. 3.3: Crimes against Women in India

Sl.	Crime Head	1999	2000	% Variation
1	Total crimes against women	135771	141373	4.1
2	Rape	15468	16496	6.6
3	Dowry Death	6699	6995	4.4
4	Sexual Harassment	8858	11024	24.5
5	Molestation	32311	32940	1.9
6	Torture	43823	45778	4.5
7	Cruelty by Husbands & Relatives	--	45778	--

Source: National Crime Record Bureau: 2000, p- 116,196

The above data show the vulnerability of women's life not only outside the four walls of the house in the public sphere but also in the private family life. Women are deprived of their equal rights and access to opportunities, freedom of movement, human dignity, justice, and human rights all of which are the corner stone of democracy. Crimes against the scheduled castes (see Table 3.4) have also shown an increase in their incidence and intensity. Although there is a slight decline in the total number of crimes against the scheduled tribes (see Table 3.5) still it reflects the idea that how the democratic State in India after 55 years of its Independence, it has not been able to maintain the law and order in society and protect the rights and freedom of its citizens.

Table. 3.4: Crimes against the Scheduled Castes

Sl.	Crime Head	1999	2000	%Variation
1	Total crimes against Scheduled Castes	25093	25455	1.4
2	Rape	1000	1083	8.3
3	Murder	506	526	4.0
4	SC/ ST (Prevention and Atrocities) Act	7301	7386	1.2

Source: National Crime Record Bureau-2000

Table.3.5: Crimes against the Scheduled Tribes

Sl.	Crime Head	1999	2000	%Variation
1	Total crimes against Scheduled Tribes	4450	4190	-5.8
2	Rape	384	403	4.9
3	SC/ ST (Prevention and Atrocities) Act	574	502	-12.5

Source: National Crime Record Bureau-2000

All these show that the failure of the State in fulfilling and protecting the constitutional mandates and opportunities, and human rights of the marginalized sections and maintaining the law and social order in the society.

Lack of participation of people in the development strategy not only at the implementation level but also at the planning and decision-making processes at the grass roots level is the major cause of failure of the development programmes. The agents carrying out development and other related activities within the administrative system try to deliver development to the people who remain as the recipients, which in fact, is the 'negation of the whole idea of development'. The decision makers worked on the assumption that making services available would solve the problem. They did not realize that availability does not necessarily ensure accessibility. In order to ensure development,

during the first decades the country's planners thought in terms of building infrastructure. But not all can use the infrastructure in the same way.¹³

As rightly pointed out by the analysts that 'the upward shift of functions from the district to the state and from the state to the union has not contributed either to strengthening the center or to making planning more effective. Indeed, it has had the opposite effect on both counts. The machinery of the government became excessively flabby, at the center as well as the states. Planning has become so out of touch with ground reality that it is in danger of losing credibility. The strategy followed in the first four decades of planning, in fact, is now being squarely blamed for our relatively poor growth and mounting balance of payments problems, which finally led to the adoption of structural adjustment programmes with wide ranging packages from trade, industry, finance, and other important sectors of the economy. It is now clearly realized that the development performance of India have been much better and distribution of benefits more equitable, if only we had effective planning at the sub-state, particularly at the grassroots level.

Development, Planning and Disparity

Planning has been considered as an organized intelligent attempt to select the best possible alternative to achieve specific goals. The goal of development planning is growth plus change. Accelerated economic growth and structural change are the two main aims of planning. Development planning may be defined as an organized action by the state to raise the rate of socio-economic growth in order to provide better living conditions for its citizens. The main components of development planning are: (1) objectives, goals and targets, (2) resources, (3) selection of means to mobilize resources, (4) formulation of specific programme, and (5) provision of its implementation. In the

¹³ Fernandes, W (1985) *op. cit*, p. 11

Indian development process the planning authorities are engaged mostly in the ‘top-down process’¹⁴.

The spectacular socio-economic achievements of Indian planning were diluted by the huge and expanding population base. The population of India has grown almost three times during the past fifty years which has created many problems in the socio-economic development of the State. The growing population base reflects the failure of the State to put a check on it (see Table 3.6).

Table. 3.6: Growth of Population in India

Census Year	Rural	Urban	Total	Growth rate
1901	212544454	25851873	238396327	-
1911	226151757	25941633	252093390	0.56
1921	223235043	28086170	251321213	(-)0.03
1931	245521249	33455989	278977238	1.05
1941	274507283	44153297	318660580	1.34
1951	298644381	62443709	361088090	1.26
1961	360298168	78936603	439234771	1.98
1971	439045675	109113977	548159652	2.24
1981	523866550	159462547	683329097	2.23
1991	628691676	217611012	846302688	2.16
2001	741,660,293	285,354,954	1,027,015,247	

Source: <http://www.education.nic.in/htmlweb/stat1.htm>
<http://www.censusindia.net/results/rudist.html>

¹⁴ Mehta, S.R (1986) “Development, Planning and Social Theory” in Sharma, SL (ed) *Development: Socio-Cultural Dimensions*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications, Pp. 39-40

Poverty and hunger has kept a large chunk of population out side the mainstream of politics and economy. The country is reckoned as one of the most underdeveloped countries of the world. More than 26 percent (260.3 million) population was below poverty line living on the verge of physical survival (see Table 3.7) and 75 million people are jobless. Recognizing the access to food, the Prime Minister noted that 268 million people are still considered food insecure in India, almost half of the women in the age group of 15-49 and three-fourths of children are anaemic and “a hungry stomach questions and censures the system’s failure to meet what is a basic biological need of every human being.”¹⁵ Although the data show a continuous decrease in the poverty ratio, still the number is very huge. The concentration of the poor people in the rural areas is 193.2 million as against 67.1 million in the urban areas.

Table. 3.7: Poverty Ratio in India

Year	Poverty Ratio in Percent			Number in Millions		
	Rural	Urban	Combined	Rural	Urban	Combined
1957-58	52.2	47.8	53.9	186.8	33.8	220.6
1973-74	56.4	49.0	54.9	361.3	60.0	321.3
1977-78	53.1	45.2	51.3	264.3	64.6	328.9
1983	45.7	40.8	44.5	252.0	70.9	322.9
1987-88	39.1	38.8	38.9	231.9	75.2	307.1
1993-94	37.3	32.4	36.0	244.0	76.3	320.3
1999-00	27.1	23.6	26.1	193.2	67.1	260.3

Source: Anand Kumar (2003) “Political Sociology of Poverty in India: Between politics of poverty and poverty of politics” in Aasha Kapur Mehta, et. al. *Chronic Poverty in India*, New Delhi: CPRC, IIPA, p. 149

The poor suffer deprivation in multiple ways: low levels of income, illiteracy, relatively high levels of mortality, poor infrastructure, lack of voice, and poor access to resources such as credit, land, water and forests. Although the infrastructure facilities for

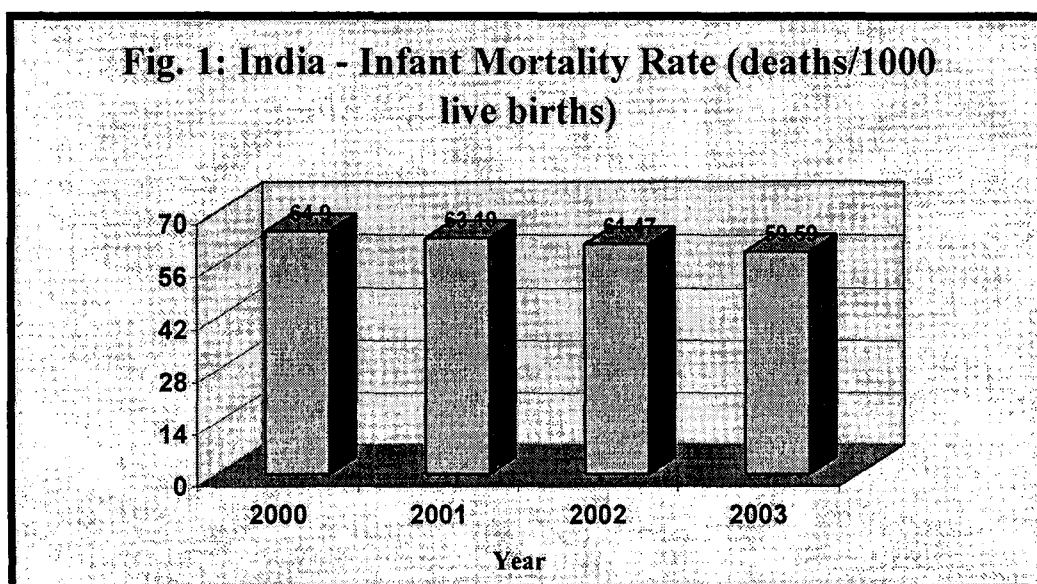
¹⁵ Mehta, A. K and Shah Amita (2004) *Chronic Poverty in India: An Overview*, Chronic Poverty Research Centre, IIPA, Working Paper-2, p. 19

the improvement of health services have been increased over the years (see Table 3.8), the quality and provision of health care services for the rural poor have not shown any satisfactory results. The infant mortality rate (see Fig. 3.1) and the maternal mortality rate (see Table 3.9) has remained almost the same over the past few years, which show the failure on the part of the State to provide health care facilities to its entire people and the slogan 'Health for all' remains a distant dream.

Table. 3.8: Expansion of Health Services

Item	1992	1996	1997
Medical Colleges	142	165	165
Hospitals	13692	15097	NA
Dispensaries	27403	28225	NA
Community Health Centre	2186	2572	2628
Sub-centers	131370	134931	136379
Hospital Beds (all types)	834650	870161	NA
Doctors	395851	375291	484401
Dentists	11300	23953	NA
Nurses	385410	565696	NA

Source: India -2004: Observer Statistical Handbook, p.245



Source: <http://www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?c=in&v=29>

Table 3.9: Maternal Mortality Ratio¹⁶ in India

States/UTs	1997	1998
Andhra Pradesh	154	159
Assam	401	409
Bihar	451	452
Haryana	105	103
Karnataka	195	195
Kerala	195	198
Madhya Pradesh	498	498
Orissa	361	367
Punjab	196	199
West Bengal	264	266
INDIA	408	407

Source: India –2004: Observer Statistical Handbook, p. 253

Deepak Nayyar points out that the poor people carry the burden of humiliation, shame, inhumane treatment and exploitation at the hands of the institutions of State and society.¹⁷ Despite an increase in the number of primary schools from 209671 in 1951 to 664041 in 2002 (see Table 3.10) and despite an increase in government expenditure on education from 64.46 crore to 84179.46 crore in 2002 (see Table 3.11), the intensity of Illiteracy is very rampant and the male female gap in literacy is very high (see Table 3.12). Although education is considered as the vital force of social transformation and enlightenment of the people, it is evident from the data that only 4 percent of the GDP is allocated to be spent in this sector. The marginalized sections, due to the lack of educational opportunities, have remained outside the decision making process and thus, the governance system of Indian democracy is controlled and regulated by a chosen few. Representation, rather than active participation of the common people have kept majority of the people out side the domain of power and authority, leading to an imbalance in the equations of power.

¹⁶ Maternal Mortality Ratio is number of Maternal Deaths in the age group 15-49 years per 1,00,000 live births.

¹⁷ This is quoted from Prof. Deepak Nayyar's inaugural address from the report on the conference on "Equality, Employment and Economic Order in South Asia", New Delhi: Viswa Yuvak Kendra and Konrad Adenauer Foundation, p. 17

**Table. 3.10: Growth of Recognized Educational Institutions
From 1950 – 51 to 2001 –2002**

Years	Primary	Upper Primary	High/Hr. Sec/ Inter /Pre. Jr. Colleges	Colleges for General Education	Colleges for Professional Education (Engg., Tech., Arch., Medical & Education colleges)	Universities/ Deemed Univ./ Instt. of National Importance
1950-51	209671	13596	7416	370	208	27
1975-76	454270	106571	43054	3667	** 3276	101
1995-96	593410	174145	99274	6569	1354	226
1996-97	603646	180293	103241	6759	1770	228
1997-98	619222	185961	107140	7199	2075	229
1998-99*	626737	190166	112438	7494	2113	237
1999-2000*	641695	198004	116820	7782	2124	244
2000-2001*	638738	206269	126047	7929	2223	254
2001-2002*	664041	219626	133492	8737	2409	272

Source: [http://www.education.nic.in/htmlweb/edusta.htm#Educational Institutions](http://www.education.nic.in/htmlweb/edusta.htm#Educational%20Institutions)

Table. 3.11: Public Expenditure on Education in India

(In crore)

Year	Govt. expenditure on education (Trg. & Rev) by education and other Deptts. (Center+ state)	Total Govt. expenditure on all sectors (Rev)	% of Expenditure on Education to Expenditure on all sectors	% of Education Expenditure to GDP
1951-52	64.46	814.13	7.92	0.64
1975-76	1849.47	17958.99	10.30	2.44
1995-96	38178.09	286194.55	13.34	3.56
1996-97	43896.48	329389.92	13.33	3.53
1997-98	48552.14	380728.45	12.75	3.49
1998-99	61578.91	439768.11	14.00	3.85
1999-2000	74816.09	512519.33	14.60	4.25
2000-2001	82486.43	572160.14	14.42	4.30
2001-2002	84179.46(R.E)	639048.06	13.17	4.02

Source: [http://www.education.nic.in/htmlweb/edusta.htm#Educational Institutions](http://www.education.nic.in/htmlweb/edusta.htm#Educational%20Institutions)

Table. 3.12: Literacy Rate in India: 1951 – 2001

Census Year	Persons (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)	Male-female gap in literacy Rate (%)
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.30
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35	25.05
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	23.98
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	65.38	75.85	54.16	21.70

Source: India Development Report: 2002, p.4

In the past few years India has slipped from rank 124 to 127 in a list of 175 countries in the Human Development Index (HDI) of the United Nations Development Programme. It ranks nations according to their citizen's quality of life, which includes life expectancy, educational attainment and adjusted real income, rather than by a nation's traditional economic figures.¹⁸ The SAARC countries like Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and others show an increase in their HDI and Gender Development Index (GDI) while India reports a decline in the value, although the population base in India is very high in comparison with SAARC countries (see Table 3.13). It is also clearly evident from the data that India is lagging behind Maldives and Sri Lanka not only in economic aspects but also in the life expectancy of its people and adult literacy rate. The GDP per capita for Maldives is US \$ 4, 798 and Sri Lanka is US \$ 3,570 where as in case of India it is only US \$ 2,670 in 2002 (see Table.3.13). Although India boasts of being ahead of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Pakistan, it has shown a very miserable performance in the other two aspects of Human Development Index. For Maldives, the adult literacy rate is 97.2 percent and the life expectancy is 67.2 years where as in case of India it is 61.3 percent and 63.7 years respectively (see Table 3.13). All these show the failure of the State in achieving the desired level of development over the past fifty years.

¹⁸ The Times of India: 29th Nov, 2003

Table. 3.13: India and other SAARC Countries: A Comparison of HDI and GDI

Country	HDI Rank and Value		Life expectancy at birth (2002)	Adult literacy rate (2002)	GDP per capita (PPP US\$) (2002)	GDI Rank and Value	
	2001	2002				2001	2002
Maldives	86 (0.751)	84 (0.752)	67.2	97.2	4,798	--	--
Sri Lanka	99 (0.730)	96 (0.740)	72.5	92.1	3,570	80 (0.726)	73 (0.738)
INDIA	127 (0.590)	127 (0.595)	63.7	61.3	2,670	103 (0.574)	103 (0.572)
Bhutan	136 (0.511)	134 (0.536)	63.0	47.0	1,969	--	--
Bangladesh	139 (0.502)	138 (0.509)	61.1	41.1	1,700	112 (0.495)	110 (0.499)
Nepal	143 (0.499)	140 (0.504)	59.6	44.0	1,370	119 (0.479)	116 (0.484)
Pakistan	144 (0.499)	142 (0.497)	60.8	41.5	1,940	120 (0.469)	120 (0.471)

Source: Human Development Report – 2004, 2003, and 2002

The adverse macro development situation was aggravated by high structural inequalities and regional disparities (see Table 3.13). In some of the States the incidence of poor and illiterates are very high and in other States it is low. The states like Kerala and Punjab are placed on the top of the HDI where as Bihar and Assam are ranked as having very low Human Development Index. Most of the planning and development programmes benefited only better off section and better off areas of the country. A number of big industrial projects established in backward regions with the expectations to work as a catalytic agent of development did not show sign of trickling down impact. The fruit of much talked Green Revolution remained confined to assured canal irrigated tracts and to large farmers of the areas. There may be controversy as to what extent poor people

and poor regions gained in planning process. But there may be no denial of the fact that both rich people and better off regions gained in the process of development.¹⁹

Table 3.14: Regional Disparity in India

HDI Rank (2001)	States	Population 2001	Poverty Ratio 1999-00	Literacy (2001) In %	Sex Ratio 2001
1	Kerala	31,838,619	12.72	90.92	1,058
2	Punjab	24,289,296	6.16	69.95	874
3	Tamil Nadu	62,110,839	21.12	73.47	986
4	Maharashtra	96,752,247	25.02	77.27	922
5	Haryana	21,082,989	8.74	68.59	861
6	Gujarat	50,596,992	14.07	69.97	921
7	Karnataka	52,733,958	20.04	67.04	964
8	West Bengal	80,221,171	27.02	69.22	934
9	Rajasthan	56,473,122	15.28	61.03	922
10	Andhra Pradesh	75,727,541	15.77	61.11	978
11	Orissa	36,706,920	47.15	63.61	972
12	Madhya Pradesh	60,385,118	37.43	64.11	920
13	Uttar Pradesh	166,052,859	31.15	57.36	898
14	Assam	26,638,407	36.09	64.28	932
15	Bihar	82,878,796	42.60	47.53	921
	INDIA	1,027,015,247	26.10	65.38	933

Source: Mehta, AK, Panigrahi, R, Sivaramakrishna, S (2004), CPRC, W.P – 18, p. 6
 Thomas, P.V (2004), CPRC, W.P – 16, Pp. 9-10
 Census of India – 2001, <http://www.censusindia.net/results/>

¹⁹ Dubey, K.N (1990), *op. cit*, p-xxi

People's Participation and Development

There is people's participation in this development dynamics but the modes are different for the elite and the masses. The elites are the ones closest to, and in command of, the instruments of state – including for development – and have the greatest interest in these. The masses are the ones with the greatest distance from, and the least stake in the state power. As an institution, the state is a creation of people like their tools and technology. However, the tools and technology once created have grown and come to control and dominate its creator. Over grown technology and megalithic state apparatus set serious limits to people's participation in the development which is carried on in the framework of this arrangements.²⁰

Thus social and political alienation of people that resulted from the impact of imperialism has not been ameliorated by the statist and centralized approach to development, even when full adult franchise and state-sponsored people's institutions were provided. As has been clear over the last few years, there has been increased destitution of masses and the widening of the gulf between rich and poor, the educated and the illiterate and the urban and the rural. This approach has create serious imbalances between regions and through wasteful consumerism has led to serious depletion of resources in some areas while causing environmental hazards in others. As the UNDP's Human Development Report -2004 shows that India leaves 4.4 percent (1.1 per capita metric ton) of world's carbon dioxide to the environment in 2000. It has brought into being narrowly self-interest oriented and cynical elites and marginalized, pauperized and despairing masses who are at each other's throats for survival.²¹

The Established Government Development Paradigm

The established paradigm is to increase production and create growth, and to do this against a background of increased national security. Government efforts to achieve growth have been directed towards those on whose loyalty they can count, and whose

²⁰ Fernandes, Walter (1985), *op. cit.*, Pp. 40-41

²¹ *Ibid*, Pp. 41-42

resources can be mobilized. Thus government policies have been intended to develop those with land, collateral and resources to invest, and with the assumption that their greater wealth will benefit the whole society. Many government programmes have been successful in these aims and the richer peasants and middle classes have indeed grown wealthier, but at the expense of those who are already poor. The rural surpluses have been extracted by rural elites and townspeople while objections of the poor to this process have been contained or controlled in the name of 'security'.²²

Those who start off by being 'resource poor' have had very little involvement in development planning and planned growth. Not surprisingly, the growth oriented policies and programmes have not impinged on their lives very much. In some cases such programmes have actually been harmful to them and may have even taken away the small amount of resources they had – such as land. Within the official paradigm of production, growth and security have been some programmes, which have had the express intention of helping the poor. Such programmes have been based on the following assumption²³:

1. The poor are homogeneous group, all the members of which can respond equally well to the opportunities offered by development programmes, and all of whom have the same economic and social constraints.
2. Planning for rural development programmes is best done by urban-based experts, usually male.
3. The most suitable development programmes are those, which will involve agro-based business (and cash crops for export) and will include the introduction of technologies, ideas and structures from more developed countries.
4. The participation of rural poor in the development plans is necessary, but is to be limited to their collaboration in the plans produced by outside experts.

²² Holloway, Richard (1989) *Doing Development—Governments, NGOs and the Rural Poor in Asia*, London: Earthscan Publication, Pp. 2-3

²³ *Ibid*, p. 3

5. The governments (and their advisors) know best about development programmes and the rural poor will be best advised to participate in the plans their government makes for them.

The rural poor thus become the “objects” of development programmes devised by others, and are not given the opportunity to contribute their knowledge and skills to the process. Indeed their knowledge and skills are rarely recognised. Not surprisingly, therefore, programmes with these assumptions have rarely managed to empower or enrich the rural poor in the long term.²⁴ The tragedy of the situation is not that the rich has become richer but above all, that the situation of the weaker sections has deteriorated. The trend of strengthening of a few groups at the cost of others can be seen in all sectors.²⁵

Holloway (1989) says that Asia has long been characterized by nation states ruled autocratically by people who are not themselves from the poorest classes; government programmes are carried out by officials within centralized and hierarchical structures; elites control the social and economic world of the poor, and have close connections with government officials whose programmes have enriched them; and the elites and government officials are both disdainful of the knowledge and capabilities of the poor. In these circumstances it is not surprising that, in many cases, the programmes devised simply do not fit the economic, political and social situation of the rural poor and the benefits are not “*trickling down*” but are “*filtered out*” by the rural elites.

The bureaucracy and technocracy are the main vehicles for carrying out development tasks and projects. Development, in whatever form and whichever ‘ism’, bears imprint of the command ideology of the state system. Directly or indirectly it serves the interests of the ruling formation in the state. Development is the major responsibility a Third World state takes upon itself. For the sake of or in the name of development it

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Fernandes, Walter (1985), *op. cit.*, p-13

increases the scope of its power and the range of instrument for its exercise. Development is still primarily an economic concept concerned with the production and distribution of goods and provision of services related to these functions. The implicit view of man in present day development is that of a producer-consumer in a more or less integrated system controlled by various oligarchies or corporations that are partners in the exercise of state power.²⁶

Debate in Disarray

The gap between the promise and performance of development and modernization during the last three decades has caused acute disappointment, which, in its turn, has led to heart searching. Not only development, but the debate on development is in disarray. Some of the dilemmas²⁷ of development are:

- ***Development vs. Non-development:*** The disenchantment with the outcome of development effort of the last thirty years is so great that many serious thinkers in the third world have begun to regard development as Enemy Number. It is true that the promised pay-off of development has not come about and the phenomenal population explosion; acute shortage of food, energy and other natural resources and their mal-distribution; and the serious threats to the environment are problems that pose a challenge and call for a conscious and determined intervention in the process of history.
- ***Endogenous vs. Exogenous:*** One of the paradoxes of the modern world is that while its constituent societies are getting potentially closer to one another, this centripetal tendency is obstructed by the simultaneous operation of centrifugal forces rooted in ethnicity, religion, culture and language. The world is currently witnessing 370 movements of varied strengths rooted in diverse interpretations of the concept of ethnicity. The cultural realities of the developing societies cannot

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 40

²⁷ Dube, S.C (1988) *Modernization and Development: The Search for Alternative Paradigms*, New Delhi: Vistaar Publications, Pp.6-10

be brushed aside; all efforts at development have to be sensitive and responsive to it. At the same time, the realities of the diffusion of ideas and innovations as a force in humanity's cultural development can't be denied.

- ***Self-reliance vs. Interdependence:*** Self-reliant and inward-looking approach to development has some advantages; no society can afford to become insular. Pattern of interdependence – sub-regional, regional and global- have to be developed. What has to be guarded against is this interdependence turning into a patron-client relationship, which results in the subordination and dependency of the Third World country.
- ***Growth vs. Distribution:*** In contemporary development GNP has been dethroned because it has proved inadequate to produce equity and justice. The current emphasis is on redistribution aimed at meeting basic needs, providing employment and improving social services. The central question, however, still remains unanswered: without growth, what will the societies have to distribute? The growth factor can't be ignored, although its distributional dimension must constantly be emphasized.
- ***Dimensions of Centralized Planning:***
 - The first dilemma is the centralized planning vs. the operation of the market. Should the targets be decided by a central planning agency? Or should market mechanisms and price signals be left free to shape and reshape them?
 - The second dilemma is intra-national centralization vs. the decentralization of planning; closely related to it is the dilemma of mass participation vs. professionalism. The conditions prevailing in most Third World countries require a strong centre but this argument does not even remotely imply segregation of the planners from those for whom planning

is carried out. It is necessary to allow the people access to planning decentralization. This along with mass participation would reflect local and regional needs better and would ensure greater and more effective mobilization of human resources. A high degree of professionalism is necessary, but it is well to remember that bureaucracy and professional planners have both trained incompetence as well as trained competence. People must remain the masters.

- ***Industrialization vs. Environment:*** The environmental threat posed by the developed societies is greater than that posed by less developed societies. Pollution as well as pollution increasing technology is exported by developed societies to the less developed. The more industrialized societies will, therefore, need to give serious consideration to earmarking part of their GNP for the research and development that will ensure a technology that produces minimal pollution, no wasteful consumption scarce resources and conservation and improvement of the environment. Removal poverty will significantly contribute to improvements in the quality of environment in the less developed countries.
- ***Industry vs. Agriculture:*** Agricultural production has to be emphasized; but experience suggests that in many Third World countries production is maintained at satisfactory levels – it is the system of distribution that goes wrong. There is even more food to go round, the majority have such low purchasing power that they cannot obtain sufficient food to meet their nutritional needs. Third World countries will have to adopt a policy of import substitution.
- ***Aid vs. Trade:*** Aid rarely comes without stringent conditions attached to it. Much of it is in support of projects and the package deal is often as, if not more, advantageous to the aid giver than it is to the aid receiver. It is undeniable that many forms of aids are exploitative; some are barely disguised imperialism. The entire question of trade between the more developed and less developed countries requires a careful review and urgent measures of rectification.

- ***Physical Investment vs. Investment in Human Capital:*** Physical input is necessary but much of it will go to waste if the human capital for its proper utilization is not there. Thus investment in human capital has an edge over physical investment. It can be argued that human resources alone can achieve little if the necessary physical inputs for development are absent.
- ***Latest Technology vs. Intermediate/ Appropriate Technology:*** This impinges both on physical investment and investment in human capital. The type of technology a country adopts should not be a matter of prestige; technology should be need-specific. In the initial stage it should be labour intensive and not capital intensive, but there are certain areas where adopting the latest technology is unavoidable. Small may be beautiful, but it does not always work and it does not solve all problems.
- ***Evolutionary vs. Revolutionary Development:*** Revolution as a means of last resort should not be ruled out if societies fail to resolve their inner contradiction and fail to evolve an equitable redistribution pattern. At the same time it should be borne in mind that revolutions is not magic and it has its social costs and injuries. It involves careful planning, successful mobilisation and dedicated hard work.
- ***One Development vs. Many Development:*** Is development a unilinear process leading humanity to a common destiny? Or are several developments following multilinear paths, each with a different set of objectives and strategies, possible? Depending upon cultural specificities several developments, each informed and inspired by endogenous creativity, are possible. Cultural diversity will always exist. Rather than thinking in terms of one universal development design, it is useful to contemplate the possibility of several possible futures and designs for living.

Dominance of the State

The State, so conceptualized, plays an increasingly dominant role in determining every aspect of existence of the families and the individuals in contemporary societies. The State makes macro-economic policies; it determines law and order; it has taken over functions of education and health care; it focuses on issues of agricultural development; it has performed tasks of industrial development. In many situations, as the State begins to acquire greater role, it begins to take over economic, political, cultural and social functions which were till then played within civil society. It began to regulate markets, fix prices and costs; it began to define incomes; it began to provide employment and jobs; it regulated currencies, money supply, capital, etc.; it took over functions of art, music and culture; it took over education; it took over health care; it began to play an increasingly overpowering and overarching role in contemporary societies. This is symptomatic of the growing dominance of the State in defining the paradigms of development and the frameworks of relationships in contemporary societies. Post-colonial ruling elites of these countries then attempted to consolidate State power. But the gap between the State and the people continued. Several consequences occurred with this predominance of the State.²⁸

Consequences of State Dominance

The State domination in the development paradigm has resulted two kinds of response. One kind of response is forwarded by Tondon (1991) and others where they see the domination has dismantled the structure of civil society, delegitimised the old institutions of society and homogenized the policies and programmes. Historically rooted associations, neighborhood organizations, citizen initiatives, voluntary organizations disappeared systematically and were slowly replaced by various agencies and departments of the State intending to perform similar functions. But the power of the

²⁸ Tondon, R (1991) "Civil Society, The State and Role of NGOs" *IDR Reports*, Volume 8, Number 3, <http://www.jsi.com/idr/web%20reports/html/8-3.html>

State and its reach did not go up to the grassroots; so the institutions within civil society continued to play the role of providing education or health care or governance.

Tondon (1991) argues that homogenization of educational approaches, health programmes, economic models, dress, language, and music, etc., has *de-legitimized and dismantled the social diversity and pluralism from our societies*. The ordinary *citizens began to be viewed as, and become, mere "consumers."* Instead of continuing their role as citizens, with engagement in governance and community life, with being actors in and producers of culture, economy, society, people became mere "consumers" of culture, products and policies. The active citizen was socialized into a passive consumer and lost the civic and political role of citizenship. The State bureaucracy then treats citizens as "clients," passively receiving development produced by the State and the State is enjoying the growing role of the power of bureaucracy to control, to regulate the socio-economic structure in society.

I personally do not agree with the arguments put forward by Tondon. The arguments look self-contradictory. On the one hand he says that the State has delegitimised the pluralistic and diverse institutional base of the society and on the other hand he argues that the institutions of civil society especially the voluntary organizations came forward to play a major role in the socio-economic transformation. The obvious question comes to one's mind is that if the State delegitimised the voluntary associations, then how did they come to play a major role in the process of social development? In India the voluntary organization came into existence with the formal recognition of the State through various Acts like Societies Registration Act - 1860, The Trade Union Act, etc. The other point, which he makes, is that the State tried to homogenize and destroyed the plurality and diversity of the society. I do not agree with him because the idea of civil society, which Tondon argues was emerged to bring developmental activities due to the failure of the State, itself is plural and diverse.

The rise of associational revolution in the 1980s in India also represents the development of a pluralistic and diverse social structure, which gives birth to the second strand. The second strand argues that there has been an increasing response from the

grassroots level and rural areas. The voluntary organizations are heterogeneous in nature because they address various issues of society and they differ from each other on the basis of their ideology and objectives. Although the State has been dominating almost every aspects of the social life, it is not subduing the voice and freedom of the common people. The people are no more acting like passive citizens, and the mere beneficiaries and recipients of the government development programmes. India is experiencing a 'silent revolution'²⁹ which has changed the balance of power and made the lower castes more active and vibrant in the socio-political process. Since the 1960s a new assertiveness has characterized India's formerly silent majority, the lower castes that comprise more than two-thirds of the country's population. The lower castes and the marginalized sections of the society are mobilizing themselves against the oppressive social order and the exploitative government machinery.

Tondon's idea of homogenization by the State, which he claims started after independence, can be traced back to and analyzed through the process of colonization. It can be argued that the British, during the 18th century tried to unite the social structure of the Indian society and ignored the social diversity and heterogeneity. They destroyed the structure of Indian social life. As Shashi Tharoor (2000) points out that India can recover from the physical assaults against it. It is a land of great resilience that has learned, over arduous millennia, to cope with tragedy. Bombs alone cannot destroy India, because the Indians will pick their way through the rubble and carry on as they have done through out history. But, what *can* destroy India is a change in the spirit of its people, away from the pluralism and coexistence that has been our greatest strength. Equally, there are vital areas of life, political and economic, in which India cannot afford *not* to change. The country is undergoing a period of ferment in which profound challenges have arisen to

²⁹ The concept is used in social science literature for the first time by Christophe Jaffrelot (2003) in his book *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Low Castes in North Indian Politics*, Delhi: Permanent Black. Jaffrelot argues that today India's most populous State Uttar Pradesh, is controlled by lower caste politicians, as is Bihar, and lower caste representation in National politics is growing inexorably. He argues that this trend continues genuine 'democratisation' of India, and that the social and economic effects of this 'Silent Revolution' are bound to multiply in the years to come.

the secular assumptions of Indian politics, to the caste structures underpinning society, and to the socialist consensus driving economic policy.³⁰

Voices of Dissent

The voices of dissent³¹ that began to acquire strength and assertiveness against the much-established conventional development paradigm. Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq suggests that:

1. Growth in GNP often does not filter down: what is needed is a direct attack on mass poverty.
2. The market mechanism is often distorted by the existing distribution of income and wealth: it is generally an unreliable guide to setting national objectives.
3. Institutional reforms are generally more decisive than appropriate price signals for fashioning relevant development strategies.
4. New development strategies must be based on the satisfaction of basic human needs rather than on market demand.
5. Development style should be such as to build development around people rather than people around development.
6. Distribution and employment policies must be an integral part of any production plan: it is generally impossible to produce first and distribute later.
7. A vital element in distribution policies is to increase the productivity of the poor by a radical change in the direction of investment towards the poorest sections of the society.
8. A drastic restructuring of political and economic power relationships is often required if development is to spread to the vast majority of the population.

³⁰ Tharoor, Shashi (2000) *INDIA: From Midnight to Millennium*, Delhi: Penguin, Pp. 323-324. It discusses the challenges to Indian democracy and the importance of India to the future of the industrialised world.

³¹ Dube, S.C (1988), *op. cit*, Pp. 40-41

Paradigms of Modernization and Development: A Critique

The reigning paradigms of modernization and development no longer inspire the confidence, which they did three decades back. Critical assessment of results and fresh endogenous reflection, have led to serious doubts and questions. This has faced severe criticism in the recent debate on development, because of its lack of humanistic content. Dube (1988) in advocates for an alternative development paradigm by criticizing the conventional approach to development.

- While economic growth is necessary, *per se* it does not constitute development. It has to be linked to a set of well-defined human – social and cultural – objectives. Economic growth has to be understood as an instrument of human development. It should first be able to meet the basic needs of the people at large and then move on to improving and enriching their quality of life.
- Economic growth can no longer be defined merely as raising the GNP and per capita income. Both are necessary, but without purposive orientation they can defeat the objectives of development. A major share of the benefits of growth is invariably cornered by the thin upper crust of society, leaving the masses where they were or worse off. The focus of development has to be people and society coupled with distributive justice. The investment must not lead only to individual betterment, but to enlarging and sharpening society's capability to come grips with its problems and find effective solutions.
- The development process, almost globally, has shown a lack of sensitivity to the environment.
- An important element that is missing from most of the planning and development is sustainability. Most developing countries are consciously or unconsciously trying to copy the West without any awareness of their resources and limits.
- It has created a dependency and patron-client relationship with the more developed countries.

Yogendra Singh (1986), in his book *Modernization of Indian Tradition: A Systemic Study of Social Change*, argues that the process of modernization in India

started mainly with the Western contact and especially through the establishment of British rule. As an integral part development strategy now modernization has been envisaged for all levels of cultural and structural systems. Discontinuity in modernization between micro-structures and macro-structures and between the Little and Great traditions, as during British regime, has now been consciously abolished. As the process of modernization becomes all encompassing, it also generates inter-structural tensions and conflict between traditions (past and contemporary) and many countries contributed to a structural and cultural break down in society. Modernization, in its initial stages in India, according to Eisenstadt, did not lead to any serious breakdown because of the peculiar structural characteristics of Indian society. Here, the cultural system was fairly independent of political system. So modernity mainly developed as a sub-culture and sub-culture without pervasive expansion in all sectors of life.³²

Singh further explains that the modernization in India brought many structural changes in the Great Traditions but the micro-structures like caste, family and village community retained their traditional character. There is also evident that, in the course of three five- year plans additional incomes generated by economic investments has gone in favour of only the well-to-do classes to the detriment of poor sections. Planning has thus accentuated and sharpened the gaps in social stratification. This along with slow economic rate of growth and rapid increase in population creates additional intensities for structural tensions. Despite the years of effort at industrialization, India continues to be a rural-peasant dominated society with poverty of living standards. Thus, major potential sources of breakdown in the Indian process of modernization may, in one form or another, be attributed to the structural inconsistencies, such as: democratization without spread of civic culture (education) bureaucratization without commitment to universalistic norms, rise in media participation (communication) and aspiration without proportionate increase in resources and distributive justices, verbalization of a welfare ideology without its diffusion in social structure and its implementation as a social policy,

³² Singh, Yogendra (1986) *Modernization of Indian Tradition: A Systemic Study of Social Change*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications, Pp. 202- 209

over urbanization without industrialization and finally modernization without meaningful changes in the stratification system.³³

Gunnar Myrdal further adds that India's 'soft-state' policy after independence inhibited its leadership from going to the roots of the problem, that is, introduction of basic changes in the institutional structure of society. Consequently, the inegalitarian structure of society continued to grow and consolidate itself, there developed a long gap between verbalization (even enactment) and implementation of policies of reform, the decentralization of power in rural sectors led to the concentration of power in the hands of a petty plutocracy. Also the leadership of the country as a whole remained with those who are opponents of real economic and social change.³⁴

In proposing an alternative Modernity Avijit Pathak (2004) argues that modernity emerged in the West and rooted in the eventful *Enlightenment Project*. It sought to become hegemonic/ universal in the name of linear historical progress and separated the phenomena from the transcendental, called for the secularization of polity and culture and its epistemology centered on science and technology, Kingdom of Reason, and the spread of urban/ industrial form of living. This modernity is not free from its darker sides. In a way it leads to Occidentalism, the West seeks to shape the destiny of humankind in the way it considers desirable. Cultural differences are, therefore, seen as obstacles that need to be overcome in order to embrace what the West projects as universal modernity. No wonder, colonialism – the urge to invade/ marginalize other cultures and annihilate differences – becomes inseparable from this Eurocentric modernity. He further argues that while we think of alternative modernity, we should not remain mindlessly blind to everything Western. We should explore the possibilities that are alive. Our task is not to negate modernity, but decolonise it, free it from the Eurocentric ambition, make it humble and allow it to learn from alternative cultural traditions.³⁵

³³ *Ibid*, Pp. 208-210

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 211

³⁵ Pathak, Avijit (2004) "Teaching/Learning Sociology: A Critical Engagement with Modernity", *Sociological Bulletin*, Jan-Apr, Vol. 53, No. 1, p. 34

Failures and Limitations Of Conventional Development Paradigm

The dominant development paradigm is made up of several key assumptions and practices. The first is the development can be created and engineered. Interventions and projects are designed specifically to “bring” development to those among whom it is lacking. A second assumption is that development is brought by others who presumably are more developed. This constrains the development practitioners to work from the specifications of the world from which he/ she has been sent rather than out of an accurate and sensitive reading of the particular situation with which he or she actually faced. A third assumption is that development is linear and predictable; so long as the assumptions are correct, out puts can be predicted, based on input. A fourth assumption is that development presumes that understanding will generate change. It does not take much account of unconscious factors, processes of change, culture, tradition or human heart. Development places far more emphasis on technical experts and ‘advisors’ and on trainers than it does on change facilitators. A fifth assumption is that development assumes a preferred culture or value system. Most development pundits deny this, yet the presumption continues that there is something wrong and we must intervene to change it, judging the results according to our own norms. Finally, development practitioners are not required to pay attention to their own development as part of effective practice; there is little or no reciprocity in the relationship between “developer” and “developee”. A “conventional” development approach is fundamentally about *the delivery of resources* – finances, equipment, technical skills, political clout, even a particular approach to life – from those who have to those who have not.³⁶

There are two consequences which follow from the pattern of development. The first is further impoverishment of weaker sections. The second is the destruction of centuries old techniques and knowledge systems on which people have survived, in favour of technologies that destroy the natural resources in order to get quick profits. The poor are the ones who suffer the most. As we have noticed, it has happened in

³⁶ Smillie, Ian (2003) “Relief and Development: Disjuncture and Dissonance” in David Lewis and Tina Wallace (eds), *Development NGOs and the Challenge of Change: New Roles and Relevance*, Jaipur and New Delhi, Rawat Publications, p. 30

agriculture, it is happening in health, in housing and in other natural resources. In health, allopathy is today accepted as the 'scientific' system and local medicines, which the people have used for centuries, are either devalued or their knowledge disappears.³⁷

Conventional economics equates development with economic development, and economic development with large-scale industrialization. It measures the pace of development in terms of the rate of growth of national income.³⁸

1. The Pre-Eminent Role of GNP Growth Rate

The conventional developmental paradigm has enthroned the GNP growth rate as the single most important measure of performance of the economy. Clearly, the India Planning Commission, in fixing targets and formulating policies, has subscribed to this in no unmistakable terms. This obsession with the growth rate is a near universal phenomenon, and everywhere has had the effect of shifting attention away from the other goals of planning such as increase in employment, reduction of inequalities of incomes and wealth and the eradication of poverty.

2. Elitist Character of Development

Development strategies based on conventional view of development inevitably result in an elitist form of development. The rich and the super-rich are the major beneficiaries of the form of development while the wretched of the earth remain in poverty and degradation. It enriches the small class at the top that owns the means of production and resources. It emphasizes consumption and accumulation. Elitist development neglects a large section of society consisting of women, poor and the downtrodden. It is the development as if people do not matter³⁹.

³⁷ Fernandes, W (1985), *op. cit.*, p. 15

³⁸ George, K.K, Sankaran Nair, V and Jacob, Jose, eds. (1997) *Economics, Development and the Quest for Alternatives: Essays in Honour of Professor M.A. Oommen*, New Delhi: Vedams Books, Pp. 40-48

³⁹ Mohanty, T. R (2002), *op. cit.*, p. 23

3. Stress on Quantity and Neglect of Quality

When development is equated with the rate of growth of national income, it inevitably acquires a quantitative character and qualitative considerations tend to be neglected. The planners and the public tend to regard quantitative improvements as important because they can be measured and to neglect qualitative losses because they cannot be quantified. In the course of economic development there is a measurable improvement in the quantity of capital equipment and material goods. But this entails considerable human misery, crime, congestion, pollution and environmental degradation. Obsession with growth rate of national income causes us to neglect essential "non-development" expenditures such as health, education, housing and social welfare. As a result, while India is in the fore front of nuclear and space research, she has stubbornly high rates of illiteracy and infant mortality, and persistent incidence of cholera, tuberculosis, malaria and leprosy and more than 30 percent population live below the poverty line.

4. Domination by Technical Experts

Development becomes a process through which a poor country catches up with the rich country through the transfer of technology and capital from the developed country to the underdeveloped country mediated through development experts and foreign capital. Multinationals are seen as the vehicles for the transfer of technology and capital. The economy of the poor country comes to be dominated by multinational corporations and its self-reliance and independence lost. The local people gradually lose their sense of independence and become dependent on him (technical expert) as the source of their knowledge. They do not think of themselves as long as the expert is there to give them all the answers. The expert has been able to convince the policy makers and the public that the green revolution is an effective surrogate and much-needed agrarian reform. The imposition of such a package on our inequitable social order greatly accentuated rural inequalities and increased the size and sufferings of the class of landless labourers. People are the passive recipient of information, knowledge and other essential inputs from the so-called agricultural experts.

5. Devaluation of Indigenous Knowledge

When the process of development is viewed as the transfer of technology from the developed countries to the developing countries, indigenous knowledge is automatically devalued. Our technological dependence on the West has caused us to neglect local research to solve local problems with local resources.

6. Stress on Export-Driven, Free Trade and market Solutions

The conventional development paradigm stresses international trade as a powerful engine of economic growth. In order to drive the benefits of international trade, developing countries are urged to open up their borders to increased trade and foreign capital. To remain competitive and increase its exports, a developing country is encouraged to expenditure on social welfare programmes and keep wages low. The greater role of foreign capital in the economy and the increased reliance on market forces have the effect of increasing external indebtedness and accentuating the inequalities of incomes and wealth. The developing country enters into close economic relations with rich countries; there is an increased craze for material goods and gadgets (consumerism) in the developing country. It loses its economic independence and self-reliance, and becomes closely integrated with the world capitalist system at its periphery.

7. Militarisation of the Third World

In the view of limited nature of the resources of our planet and their uneven distribution, it necessarily breeds conflicts among nations. Militarisation is the inexorable logical consequence. The drive for foreign markets and the search for increased economic power, political influence, and security are the hallmarks of a country embarked on economic development on conventional lines. As more and more of the developing economy's resources are devoted to defense, less is available for meeting the basic needs of the wretched of the earth, for which they pay dearly through hunger, malnutrition, ill-health and illiteracy. Military budget would be sufficient to cover the cost of a comprehensive social development programme, including education, literacy and community medical care.

Ecological Critique to Development

According to Oommen (2000) not only the capitalist developed First World but also the developing Third World adopted industrialization as the primary tool of development and economic growth. Development produced the 'risk society' as the whole world is exposed to ecological problems. Globalization of risk through global ecological hazards, export of polluting industries and waste materials, the risk of biogenetic engineering etc. are fast spreading.⁴⁰ Ecological critiques of development are a response to various to ecological hazards that have occurred in recent times and whose roots lie in myriad of development projects. The dominant development paradigm disregards the complexity of the process of life on earth and sees the planet mainly in terms of resources, raw materials to be exploited, 'developed', thereby 'adding value', and exchanged for money on the world market. This approach aims at the maximization of the production, and disregards the principles of conservation and respect associated with nature. Vandana Shiva (1988) observes that the "act of living and of celebrating and conserving life in all its diversity – in people and in nature seems to have been sacrificed to progress".⁴¹

Economic development has been measured by some indicators, which are neither holistic nor sensitive to human needs. A broad range of indicators of economic well being cannot simply be explained in terms of incomes, GNP and other criteria have to be employed to take into account the quality of life. The general development design has been criticized for its lack of human face and disrespect for nature as is evident in environmental degradation⁴² and understandably sustainable development became the new refrain.⁴³

⁴⁰ Oommen, T K (2000) "Development Theory: Rhetoric and Reality" in *IASSI Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4, p. 55

⁴¹ Quoted in Mohanty, T.R (2002), *op. cit*, Pp. 24-25

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 25

⁴³ Oommen, TK (2000), *op. cit*, p. 55

Concluding Remarks

This chapter discussed the State led development approach that has been followed in Indian society since the dawn of its Independence. This chapter argued that the State led development paradigm and basically the Indian democracy has been failed to bring the desired development in the rural and grassroots level. The democratic State has not been able to alleviate the basic problems of poverty, illiteracy, problems of population growth, etc. It also failed to maintain the law and order in the society, for which the crime rate against the marginalized sections are on the rise. The mortality rate has also shown an increase despite the increase in infrastructure in the health care services. So T.K Oommen argues that development has to be human centric rather than commodity centric. Hence the demand to include civil society as an inalienable partner in the development process. Once an inclusive and broad based partnership is created between the state, civil society and communities and then development strategies are chalked out in consonance with local needs and in cooperation with agencies working at micro, macro and meso level, real sustainability can be guaranteed. These policies and strategies would not only be sustainable but also substantive. Keeping this in mind, the next chapter discusses the need for an alternative approach as provided by the civil society organizations.

Chapter. 4

Alternatives to the State Model of Development

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Alternatives to the State Model of Development

*People are their subject matter
People's development is their objective
People's involvement is their prime concern
People's management is their destination*

(Quoted in Bhose, S.G.R. Joel: 2003)

The recent shift in emphasis from government to governance indicates that addressing the concerns of society can't be left only to the goodwill of the state; it must include other actors, including the people, who can together ensure that managing the affairs of civil society reflects the fulfilling the needs and aspirations of ordinary people.¹ Any alternative system should tackle the three elements that have enabled the dominating classes to continue their hold over the weaker sections viz. unjust distribution of national wealth through unequal ownership of the means of production, monopoly of knowledge through professionalism, and the scope only a few groups have, of organizing themselves in order to safeguard their vested interests against competition from other dominant groups or the awakening of the oppressed masses.²

Shifting in Priority and Goals

Fernandes (1985) says that whatever their approach, all of them agree on two main issues.

¹ Tondon, R and Ranjita, Mohanty (2003) *Does Civil Society Matter: Governance in Contemporary India*, New Delhi: SAGE, p. 12. The book consists of articles on theoretical as well as empirical issues related to the role of civil society in bringing good governance in society.

² Fernandes, Walter (1985) *Development with People: Experiments with Participation and Non-formal Education*, New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, p. 20

- The first is the need of a countervailing power of the marginalized sections if they are to counteract the elements that strengthen the dominant classes at the cost of the weaker sections. Some may call it community organisation, and others may think of it as people's movement, mass upsurge or mobilisation. Marginalized masses have to organize themselves if they are to counteract the factors that oppress them. Voluntary organizations should experiment with new approaches to development, if they are to use external inputs as tools for awareness building and organisation of what are usually considered 'ignorant masses'.
- The second point is that there has to be collaboration between various groups that are experimenting with new approaches and that no one can change the system in isolation.

The progressive replacement of the more conventional "economic development" by "social development" and the linking of it to notions of "human needs" and "quality of life", however, is not indicative only of a change in fashion; it represents a paradigm shift. It has been observed that economic development, while undeniably necessary, can lead to certain undesirable consequences. Growth rates, GNP and per capita income figures are often deceptive; their façade hides the ugly realities of the impoverishment and degradation of sizable groups. Thus, it is time that instead of GNP we start thinking in terms of GNW (Gross National Welfare) and social development (Dube: 1999: 48). The new objectives call for:

1. a shift in emphasis from the individual to larger collectivities, encompassing the poor majority.
2. the redefinition of social groups in terms of the satisfaction of human needs and improvements in the quality of life.
3. the modification in strategies of planning and implementation to take account of the interface between economic and cultural objectives.

4. the creation of redistributive institutional structure for the attainment of new social objectives, and evolving a broad strategy for organisational and value change to ensure speedy attainment of the redefined social goals.
5. the formulation of indicators to evaluate social progress and to access emerging social trends.
6. the setting up of monitoring mechanisms to ensure that growth levels are sustainable and at no point exceed the outer limits.
7. the anticipation of the growth-related issues and other problems and preparedness to handle them quickly and effectively, and
8. the creation of an ethos where it is possible to question and rethink appropriateness and adequacy of existing social formations and to work towards their restructuring (ibid, 49).

Why NGOs Matter and What do they Offer

Citizen's lack of ability to resist the hegemonic power play of the state paves the way for other conscience-keeping agents to combat the state monopoly. This is known as the 'secondary power' that falls within the ambit of the civil society and voluntary association can be seen as the manifestation of this 'secondary power'. The poor cannot achieve development in isolation and they must interact with other local agencies.³ These voluntary organisations mobilise people to get organised and form an alternative force to keep the state machinery on track. Beteille (2001) says that the 20th century can be called the 'decade of NGO'. The literature of third sector refers that the NGOs are bestowed with some noble features like⁴

- less bureaucratic
- spirit of voluntarism

³ Collier, Christopher (2000) "NGOs, the poor and local government" in Jenny Pearce (ed.) *Development, NGOs and Civil Society*, Great Britain: Oxfam GB Publication, p.121

⁴ Panda, B and B.K Pattnaik (2003) "Role of Grassroots NGOs: A Social Activists' Perspective", NIRD, Hyderabad: *Journal of Rural Development*, Vol-22 (1), Pp. 24-25 explains some of the special and noble features of the NGO (third) sector which places them in an advantageous position in comparison with the government (first) and the private profit oriented organizations (second sector).

- non-profit making
- effective in reaching out the masses
- possessing ability to operate in remote and inaccessible areas
- bring in the forefront during natural calamities and
- above all effective in delivering goods at the grassroots level.

NGOs can offer essential ‘local knowledge’ about local conditions and the poor. They can deliver services to vulnerable and difficult to reach population groups. Through social assessments and participatory research, NGOs can point out how the programme can better serve different communities....By sensitising authorities about the ideas and preferences of the poor, they can help attune the project to their real needs. Through social mobilization they can help poor organise themselves, either to form co-operatives, demand changes, or ensure the accountability and probity of the programme’s officers.⁵

The non-profit sector also provide a source of employment to numerous people including middle class, educated men and women, some retired people who have a great deal of energy and expertise to offer and some slightly better educated villagers.⁶ According to a study conducted by PRIA in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University (Dec: 2002) that nearly 20 million persons work on paid or volunteer basis in the NPOs (see table.4.1 and box. 4.1). This is 3.4 percent of total adult population. Nationwide share of NPO contribution (based on paid employment only to the gross product other services – community, social, personal service sector) at current prices stands at 14.8 percent. In Delhi one out of eight adult person is working in NPOs. In West Bengal 90 percent of all persons working in NPO are volunteers. Overall volunteers are nearly five and half times more than the paid staff in NPO nationwide.

⁵ Clark, John D (2002) “NGOs and the State” in Vandana, Desai and R.B Potter (eds.), *The Companion to Development Studies*, London: ARNOLD, p. 505

⁶ Mencher, John (1999) “NGOs: Are They a Force for Change? *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 24, p. 2082.

Table.4.1: Employment in the NPO Sector

States	Paid Employees	Volunteers	Total Number
Delhi	20%	80%	1.03 million
Meghalaya	17%	83%	0.12 million
West Bengal	10%	90%	1.52 million
Tamil Nadu	28%	72%	1.49 million
Maharashtra	11%	89%	0.77 million
INDIA	15%	85%	19.40 million

Source: Invisible, yet wide spread: The Non-profit sector in India, PRIA Report, Dec: 2002

Box.4.1

Notes.

1. Data show that every eighth adult person in Delhi is working with NPOs.
2. Nationwide, NPOs have nearly 27 lakh (2.7 million) fulltime equivalent paid employees.
3. NPO paid employees (fulltime equivalent) are nearly:
 - Four-fifth (82%) of all central government employees.
 - One quarter (25%) of all central and state employees taken together.
 - One seventh (14%) of all public sector employees.
 - One-third (31%) of all employees in the organised private sector.
 - One twelfth of all employees in community, social and personal services (which means that every twelfth employee in services like health, education, welfare, community, development etc. taken together is working in a NPO).

Bhose (2003: 88-103) says that in all contexts NGOs keep “*people*” (emphasis added) as their primary concern. He highlights certain specialities of NGOs⁷ in the process of their development intervention with rural communities.

⁷ All the special functions written here are from Bhose, SGR Joel (2003) *NGOs and Rural Development: Theory and Practice*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing House, Pp. 88-103

- ***Reaching the Unreached:*** The NGOs go to the people and live with them. They work for and with the unprivileged and underprivileged. They are physically nearer, mentally closer and socially accessible to the people. Hence they are able to identify their felt and focussed needs.
- ***Building Hopes:*** The rural poor had been chronically powerless and suppressed; they justify their living conditions as an out come of their previous birth and not out of the manipulations of the power structure. They live amidst backwardness and poverty. The NGOs motivate the people and involve them in development process. Social education, training programmes and community organizational activities carried out by do surely and slowly build hopes among the communities.
- ***Facilitating the Element of Protest:*** Protest means the critical psyche of the people against their deprivation, denial, unprivilegedness, oppression, suppression etc. NGOs identify 'the element of protest' among the people awake them and enable them to articulate the same in the development process.
- ***Building Awareness:*** Awareness means sensitising people about their living situation. Awareness is created through social education programmes, dramas, street plays, exposure, trainings, village meetings, demonstrations, group discussions, PRA, information sharing, people to people learning etc.
- ***Gender Awareness:*** NGOs conduct many gender awareness and sensitisation programmes at various levels. They positively interpret the 73rd Amendment to become a reality by giving trainings to women representatives perform their roles justly and independently.
- ***Political Awareness:*** Democracy is determined by masses and it is the duty of the state to fulfil the needs of the citizens. But the majority of the masses are exploited by politicians, bureaucrats and elites. NGOs motivate people to fight for their rights and privileges.

- ***Facilitating Panchayati Raj:*** NGOs play an active role to fulfil the dream of peoples' democracy a reality. They have motivated the women candidates to participate in panchayat elections and organise trainings and capacity building programmes to promote the competence of the elected representatives discharge their duties and functions effectively.
- ***Liberation Education:*** NGOs educate people who are caught in a never ending struggle for survival – with unsafe water, too little food, little education, and no voice or power in decision making and sensitise them to get rid of vested interests and systemic forces.
- ***Capacity Building:*** NGOs equip the people to do things of their own. They attempt to build capacities of the people based on 'what they know', 'what they have', 'what they are capable of', and 'what they can do'.
- ***Involving People Through PRA⁸:*** NGOs are adopting PRA technique in the process of planning, community organisation and development. Irwing Wallance stated, "unlearn what you have learnt and learn things from the people". PRA is used in the entire process of community organisation and development (i.e.) from planning to implementation.
- ***Community Organisation:*** Two major dimensions are: 1) Why should the communities be organised? 2) How the communities are being organised? In human society there is the prevalence of powerful minority and powerless majority. Elites are endowed with power and authority, be it money power, political power, police power, bargaining power, controlling power etc., while the poor masses struggle to survive. Down-trodden remain powerless, helpless,

⁸ PRA is the abbreviation of Participatory Rural Appraisal. PRA is that process of learning from the people takes place in an informal way, giving them a chance to share their feelings. This can be extended as feedback to the implementing organisations. This helps the organisation monitor its activities and draw up people-centred plans, keeping in mind their needs.

uncared, denied, oppressed, suppressed and hence they are invariably *ignored* (emphasis added) as a consequence of which these powerless masses need to depend more and more upon the powerful. Due to economic backwardness and socio-political exploitation these masses are looked down as mean subjects. They, by and large, remain scattered, fragmented, and unorganised owing to various socio-cultural impediments. At this juncture the involvement of voluntary organisations becomes more crucial and inevitable.

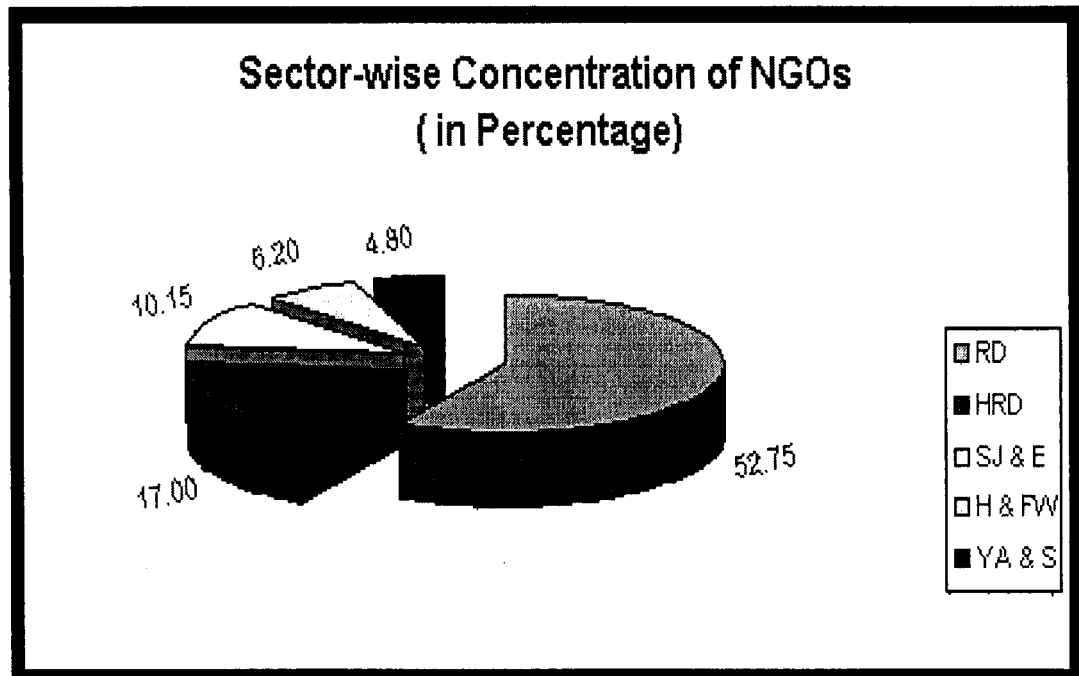
The second question in this context may be that 'how' community organisation is being done by the NGOs. NGOs, with their commitment, find a place in the heart in the course of their involvement. It is apparently true that in the beginning stages people may not happily welcome but rather suspect them as strangers or another group of vested interests. But once the objectives of NGOs are understood by the people a rapport is established. The NGO sector differentiates itself from government and corporate enterprises in terms of its purpose, which is said to be driven by values like altruism, philanthropy and voluntarism where as the primary objectives of government and private sectors remains to govern and make profits respectively. Thus it placed in advantageous position in comparison to other formal bureaucratic organizations as far as objectives are concerned.⁹

NGOs (Sector-wise) in India

As per data available with the Planning Commission (see fig. 4.1), there are 12265 NGOs in the country of which 91% are involved in social sector activities- 52.75% in Rural Development (RD), 17% in Human Resource Development (HRD), 10.15% Social Justice & Empowerment (SJ & E), 6.2% in Health & Family Welfare (H & FW), and 4.8% in Youth Affairs & Sports (YA & S).

⁹ Panda, B and B.K Pattnaik (2003), *op. cit*, p. 25

Fig.4.1



Source: <http://populationcommission.nic.in/ngo.htm>

All India (Region-wise) NGOs¹⁰

About 25% NGOs are working in the southern States of which 10.4% in Andhra Pradesh, 4.15% in Karnataka, 2.84% in Kerala and 7.85% in Tamil Nadu.

About 36% NGOs are working in the demographically weak States including newly formed States – 15.84% in U.P., 4.5% in M.P., 9.33% in Bihar, 2.9% in Rajasthan, 1.7% in Jharkhand, 1.3% in Uttaranchal and 0.35% in Chhattisgarh.

About 30% NGOs are working in other major States – West Bengal (9.73%), Orissa (6.78%), Maharashtra (4.95%), Delhi (4.08%), Gujarat (2.59%), Haryana (1.5%) and Punjab (0.36%).

¹⁰ <http://populationcommission.nic.in/ngo.htm>

And about 7.35% NGOs are working in North Eastern States – Assam (2.1%), Manipur (2.9%), Maghalaya (0.18%), Mizoram (0.28%), Nagaland (0.47%), Arunachal Pradesh (0.2%) and Tripura (0.37%) (see table.4.2, table. 4.3 and fig.4.2)

Fig. 4.2: NGOs (Region-wise) in India

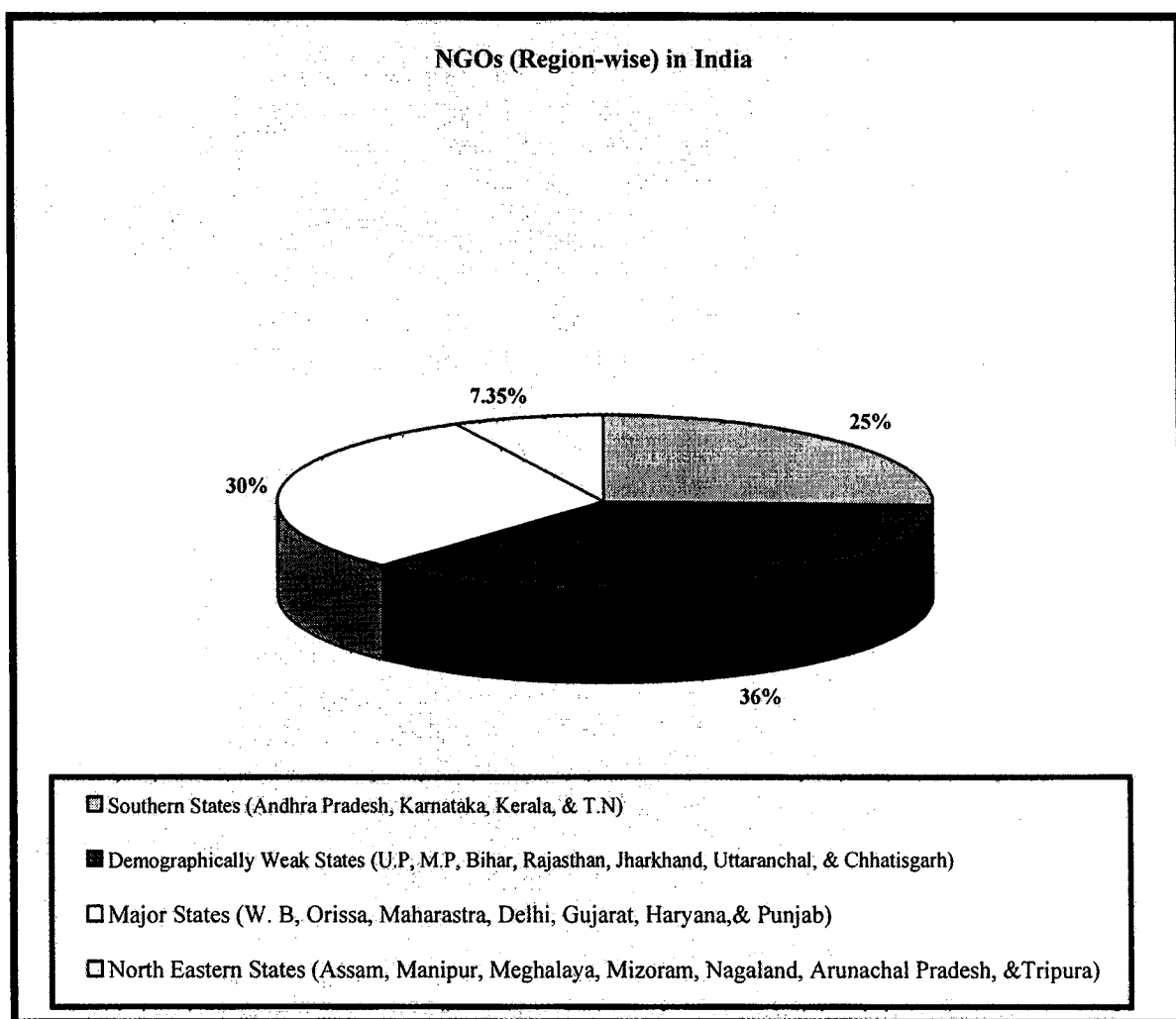


Table. 4.2: Number of NGOs in the Seven Demographically Sensitive States

State	M/O RD	M/O HRD	H & FW	YA & S	Others	Total No. NGOs in the State (all Sector)	NGOs in the 7 state as a % to total NGOs in the Country
As on	July, 2000	Oct, 2000	Sep, 1998	May, 2000			
BIHAR	663	111	98	53	219	1144	9.33
JHARKHAND	110	30	4	15	45	204	1.66
MADHYA PRADESH	193	164	52	50	92	551	4.49
CHHATISGARH	25	5	1	0	12	43	0.35
RAJASTHAN	206	60	9	16	62	353	2.88
UTTAR PRADESH	1115	218	143	125	342	1943	15.84
UTTARANCHAL	94	11	4	5	45	159	1.30
Total no of NGOs in the Seven States	2406	599	311	264	817	4397	
Total (INDIA)	6470	2082	761	592	2360	12265	100
7 States NGOs as a % of total NGO in Each Sector	37.19	28.77	40.87	44.59	34.62	35.85	
Others include NGOs from sectors SJ&E, M/O E&F, Labour, Non Conven., Textile. M/o RD – Ministry of Rural development, M/o HRD – Ministry of Human Resources Development, H & FW –Health and Family Welfare, YA & S – Youth Affairs and Sports							
Source: http://populationcommission.nic.in/ngo.htm							

Table. 4.3: All India Distribution of NGOs

Sl.	States /	Population	Percentage of Population	Percentage of NGOs	No. of NGOs
1	Andhra Pradesh	75,727,541	7.37	10.4	1276
2	Karnataka	52,733,958	5.13	4.15	509
3	Kerala	31,838,619	3.10	2.84	348
4	Tamil Nadu	62,110,839	6.04	7.85	963
5	Uttar Pradesh	166,052,859	16.16	15.84	1943
6	Madhya Pradesh	60,385,118	5.87	4.5	552
7	Bihar	82,878,796	8.06	9.33	1144
8	Rajasthan	56,473,122	5.49	2.9	356
9	Jharkhand	26,909,428	2.62	1.7	208
10	Uttaranchal	8,479,562	0.82	1.3	159
11	Chhatisgarh	20,795,956	2.02	0.35	43
12	West Bengal	80,221,171	7.9	9.73	1193
13	Orissa	36,706,920	3.6	6.78	832
14	Maharastra	96,752,247	9.42	4.95	607
15	Delhi	13,782,976	1.34	4.08	500
16	Gujarat	50,596,992	5.0	2.59	318
17	Haryana	21,082,989	2.05	1.5	184
18	Punjab	24,289,296	2.36	0.36	44
19	Assam	26,638,407	2.59	2.1	258
20	Manipur	2,388,634	0.23	2.9	356
21	Meghalaya	2,306,069	0.22	0.18	22
22	Mizoram	891,058	0.08	0.28	34
23	Nagaland	1,988,636	0.19	0.47	58
24	Arunachal Pradesh	1,091,117	0.10	0.2	25
25	Tripura	3,191,168	0.31	0.37	45
26	TOTAL			97.65	11977
27	All INDIA TOTAL	1,027,015,247		100	12265

N. B: This Table has been calculated on the basis of Percentage given in the report on National Commission on Population. <http://populationcommission.nic.in/ngo.htm> and Census -2001: <http://www.censusindia.net/results/provincial.html>

According to a study conducted by PRIA in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University reveals the fact that a total of nearly 1.2 million (12 lakh) non-profit organizations in India today (see table.4.4). In their study they have included school, clinic, orphanage, sports club, cultural organization, social service providers, research and training institutes and development organizations under the category of NPOs and

excluded self-help groups, political parties, and only religious worship establishments. The NPO sector in India is predominantly rural based and more than half of the NPOs in the country are based in rural areas. The data also show that half of the NPOs are unregistered and the percentage of registered NPOs is highest in Maharashtra (74%) and lowest in Tamil Nadu (47%). An overwhelming majority of these registered NPOs are registered under Societies Registration Acts.

Table. 4.4: How Large is the Non-Profit Sector in India?

States	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Total Number	Unregistered (%)
Delhi	9%	91%	20,619	30%
Meghalaya	96%	4%	8,757	41%
West Bengal	63%	37%	87,086	52%
Tamil Nadu	52%	48%	88,689	53%
Maharashtra	51%	49%	96,002	26%
INDIA	53%	47%	1.18 million	49.6%

Source: Invisible, yet wide spread: The Non-profit sector in India, PRIA Report, Dec: 2002

NGO Strategies for Promoting Development

Even within the NGO community itself, at least five distinct perspectives¹¹ exist on how NGOs should proceed in promoting development.

1. *Autonomous Development:* NGOs represent the most appropriate vehicle for promoting 'autonomous development', that is, development, which is independent of the central government.

¹¹ Riker, James. V. (1995) "Contending Perspectives for Interpreting Government-NGO Relations in South and South-east Asia: Constraints, Challenges and the Search for Common Ground in Rural Development" in Heyzer, N (et. al) *Government-NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People Centered Development*, Kuala Lumpur : Asia Pacific Development Centre Pp. 20-22

2. *Partners in Development*: NGOs and government can strengthen and enhance one another by minimising duplication of efforts, conserving and stretching limited resources, and addressing needs in different ways as appropriate.
3. *Competitors in Development*: Rivalry exists between government and NGOs in rural development activities, especially at local levels. Conflict occurs when both local government's and NGO's emphasis is more on building local bases of support through various development activities than on building local capacities for carrying out development.
4. *NGOs as Advocates for Government Accountability*: with their roots in rural areas and their knowledge of the condition of people's lives out side major cities, NGOs are in a unique position to address issues of government accountability and can serve as the watchdogs of government programmes.
5. *Bypassing the State*: Excessive government interventions in the development process have argued for circumventing or bypassing the state to get to the people (Riker: 1995: 20-22).

Role of NGOs in Indian Development

What is the nature of these NPOs and what kind of activities are they engaged in? The contribution of NGOs in India has been substantial in the areas of education – both formal and non-formal – health and medical services, social welfare services, youth development etc. According to the report published by PRIA (Dec: 2002), the NPOs in India are basically engaged in five activities such as religious, community and social service, education, sports and culture, and health (see table.4.4, fig.4.3 and box.4.2). The NGOs have been known for their virtues of human touch, dedication, flexibility, self-reliance and nearness to the community¹². Indispensability of NGOs in development is

¹² Jain, RB (1995) "Influencing Public Policies: Challenges to NGOs in India" in R.B Jain (ed) *NGOs in Development Perspective*, Delhi: Vivek Prakashan, p. 61

mainly due to their ability for innovation, flexibility and appropriate of programmes. No statutory body engulfed in bureaucratic labyrinth could serve the people more effectively than the NGOs. The programmes of NGOs are more innovative and adaptive, the creative talent in NGOs is not so obstructed by formalities thus enabling the organisation to identify needs and introduce appropriate programmes in the community. The programmes are closely monitored and modifications are made according to the needs of the people. The advantage of NGOs, above all, is their proximity to the people¹³.

The NGOs are relatively more sensitive to the needs of the community, which places them in advantageous position as against the official agencies. Closeness to the immediate needs of the people determine the programmes and policies. Areas are identified, priorities are chosen and programmes are conceived deliberately with the involvement of the beneficiaries concerned in the decision-making process. NGOs, in principle aim at long-term benefits and so the programmes are conceived not merely for its short-term benefits. This may in turn, help the community to become self-reliant.¹⁴ Government agencies cannot be successful as NGOs in eliciting local participation and mobilising local resources. It is argued that radical community action is unlikely emerge within the financial arrangements of government bodies as the state has vested interest to in maintaining the status quo. Government agencies are more responsive to the pressures exerted on them by the organised groups. As the unorganised and the marginalized sections have little chance to influence the government, their interests are never protected nor their demands are made adequately.¹⁵

¹³ Gangrade, KD and Sooryamoorthy, R (1995) "NGOs: Retrospect and Prospect" in Jain, RB (ed), *op. cit*, p. 41

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 41

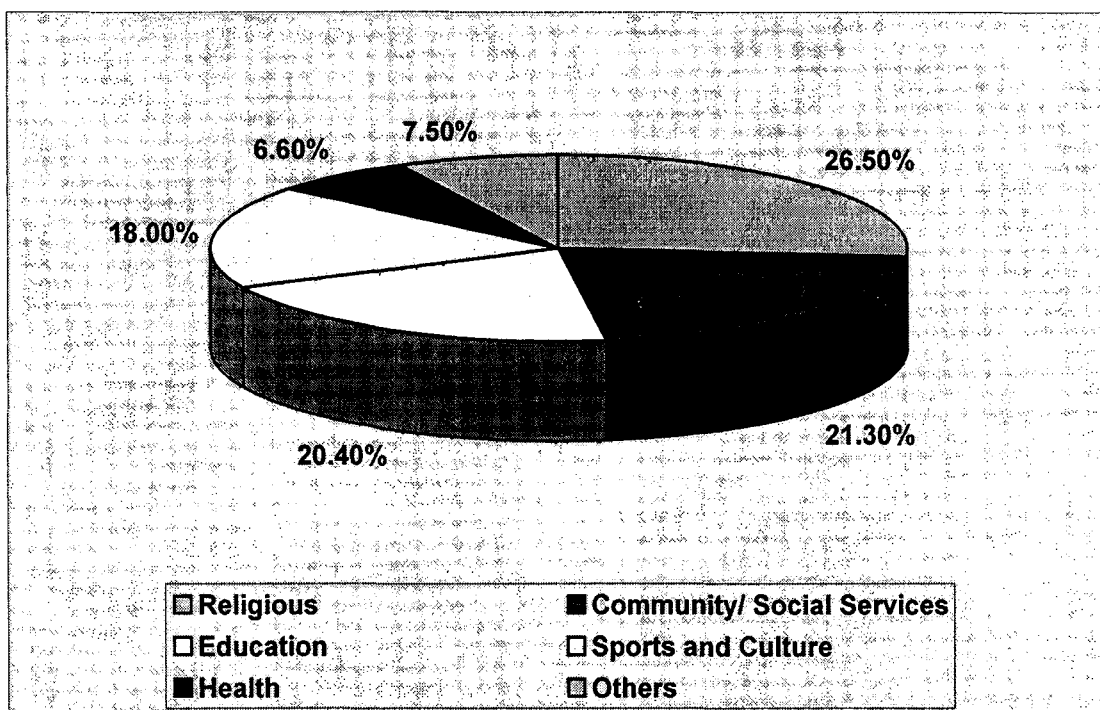
¹⁵ *Ibid*, p-42

Table.4.5: What Kind of Activities NPOs in India are engaged in?

Sl.	Activities	% of NPO concentration	
1	Religious (engaged in social development primary identity is a religious institution)	26.5%	Every Fourth NPO
2	Community/ Social Services	21.3%	Every Fifth NPO
3	Education	20.4%	Every Fifth NPO
4	Sports and Culture	18.0%	Every Sixth NPO
5	Health	6.6%	Every Fifteenth NPO
6	Others	7.5%	

Source: Invisible, yet wide spread: The Non-profit sector in India, PRIA Report, Dec: 2002

Fig.4.3: Concentration of NPOs in Different Activities



Box.4.2

Notes.

1. More than *half* of the NPOs in Delhi have primary activity as religious affiliation services: highest in the country.
2. In Meghalaya nearly *half* of the NPOs are engaged in education.
3. In West Bengal more than *a third* NPO have primary activity as sports and culture.
4. In Tamil Nadu community/ social service and education account for nearly *one-third* of NPOs.
5. In Maharashtra nearly *one-third* NPOs have religious affiliation services as primary activity.

People's development has always been a major concern with NGOs. The idea of alternative development, meaning an alternative to the present market oriented growth economies has been voiced by a wide range of NGOs over a number of years. They also need to challenge the inequitable, profit-motivated and materialistic development presently promoted across the globe in an era of neo-liberal ascendancy¹⁶. Heyzer (1995) mentions a three-fold role of NGOs:

1. to support and empower local communities at the 'grassroots' which is essential for achieving sustainable development
2. to develop greater political influence through networking within and across national boundaries
3. to participate in shaping the direction of development agenda (Heyzer: 1995: 8).

Past Assessment of NGOs Sector in India

A critical analysis of the roles and responsibility of NGOs explains that the past five decades of exciting, diverse, widespread work of voluntary sector has left its signature in the development literature in many ways.

¹⁶ Heyzer, Neoleen (1995). "Towards a New Government -NGO Relations for Sustainable and People Centered Development" in Heyzer, N (et. al) *Government-NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People Centered Development*, Kuala Lumpur: Asia Pacific Development Centre, Pp7-8

1. *Responsiveness*: the NGOs in the past five decades have initiated various responses to emerging problems and crises, in order to provide service, help and assistance to various sections of population.
2. *Innovation*: they have experimented with a wide range of interventions, processes, models, methods, and tools. They generated innovation in the areas of primary health care, education, drinking water, sanitation and sustainable approaches to income generation and livelihood and preservation of natural resources, etc.
3. *Perspectives*: in the broad field of human rights, with a concern for the rights of different sections of our people, like child labour, women workers, informal sector workers, voluntary activists and organisations have persistently been raising the issues, pushing for policies and organisations, presenting analyses to enhance our perspectives.
4. *Perseverance*: with the changing time the methods and approaches of their work and the scope have been changed. But the organisations which have survived the trial and tribulations of our times and continued with commitment, with enthusiasm, with hope to carry on their work of 'providing public good'. Due to this perseverance they have been serving the whole community and society.
5. *Plurality*: they have been practicing plurality of roles like working with the street children, women, marginalized, health and basic education services to the poor, and the systematic ways of building capacity and wider networking among voluntary action.¹⁷

¹⁷ For more see Tondon, R (1998) "The Voluntary Sector in India: Past Assessment and Future Prospects" in Sebsti L Raj (ed) *Fifty Years After Freedom: New Opportunities and Challenges for Voluntary Action in India*, New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, Pp. 49-53. Here he examines the contribution and impact of the voluntary sector in India during the past fifty years since independence. He also looks at the prospects for its contributions towards addressing the pressing problems of our times in the next fifty years.

What are the Strengths of the NGO Sector

The NGO sector possesses certain unique characteristics, which put them comparatively in an advantageous position than the state and market. Its only due to the following strengths and multiple roles performed; they have been some way successful in projecting an alternative approach to the centralised state and profit oriented market system of development. Bhose (2003: 176-179) in his book *NGOs and Rural Development: Theory and Practice* lists out extensively the roles, advantages and strengths of NGOs in India.

- NGOs are known for their commitment to serve the poor voluntarily
- NGO workers are endowed with missionary zeal and commitment
- They reach the unreached
- They are pro-poor and marginalized
- They live with the people
- They work for and with the people
- They work for people's cause altruistically and untiringly. Their work is not clock-bound
- They are the spokesmen of the marginalized, oppressed, Dalits and women
- They are the social psychologist to look into the pains and sufferings of the disadvantaged
- NGO leaders are visionaries of social change
- They serve the down-trodden unmindful of their pains and inconveniences
- Upliftment of the poor is their prime motto
- People are their prime subject matter
People's development is their prime objective
People's involvement is their paramount concern, and
People's management is their ultimate destination
- Their plans and programmes are people-centred
- Their interventions are based on 'caste, class and gender - perspectives'

- NGOs are specialists in community organisation
- They effectively motivate people to take up their community roles
- People's participation is the quintessence of NGOs work
- Target is not their target but the process involved in any programme does matter to them
- They are quicker in decision-making
- They are timely in action
- NGOs encourage the people that people's development is people's business and facilitate them to do things by themselves
- Capacity-building is the priority of many NGOs
- They build people on 'what they know', 'what they have', 'what they are capable of', and 'what they can do'
- They build leadership qualities even among the nullified sections of the society including women
- They adopt 'bottom-up' approach in their intervention
- They sensitise, create awareness and mobilise people
- They organise the unorganised and reorganise the disorganised communities
- They work to change policies in favour of the poor
- They are non-bureaucratic, non-hierarchic and micro-action oriented groups.

Making of an Alternative (NGOs) Discourse

Groups out side the government have tried a number of initiatives intended specifically to help the poor and the powerless change their lives. These deal more realistically with their situation than government programmes. An analysis of the experience and achievements of such groups gives us the following 'alternative'

assumptions¹⁸ about programmes for the rural poor, based on different development paradigm:

1. The poor and the powerless are kept that way by social and economic structures, which dominate rural society. Any assistance which does not specifically address the conditions which kept people poor and powerless will end up by being filtered out by the rural elites. Similarly, assistance which does not specifically address the particular problems of women is likely to be filtered out by men.
2. The poor know what structures dominate their economic and social lives, but are only willing to talk about them if they are convinced that such openness will not prove harmful. Special efforts are needed to persuade poor people that they can initiate and organise their own development, and participate in decisions about their own livelihood. Special efforts are also needed to protect them if their initiatives make them vulnerable.
3. Most rural poor are subsistence farmers who sell any surplus. Their access to cash and capital necessary for participating in technological advances only comes by means of exploitative structures (usually money-lenders), and so their ability to benefit in long term from the introduction of technology is limited. While centrally planned economies do not have the same problems, it is interesting that they share the capitalist countries, the same heavy-handed approach to 'top-down' programmes for the poor (Holloway: 1989: 5-6).

Holloway (1989) says that the Asian NGOs are pertinent to changing the lives of the poor and the powerless for the better and it is much more use to the poor to ensure that their own skills, knowledge and resources are employed and the outsiders should recognise the value of indigenous knowledge, to collect it systematically and to incorporate it in development programmes.

¹⁸ Holloway, Richard (1989) *Doing Development- Governments, NGOs and the Rural Poor in Asia* London: EARTHSCAN, Pp. 5-6

Voluntary organisations contribute society in many levels. As their role and influence grow, so does interest in their accountability and effectiveness. Openness and clarity are the two key qualities that underpin both accountability and effectiveness of the whole structure of voluntary sector. The voluntary sector is noted for its independence and diversity. At the *macro-level*, the sector has an increasing role in the provision of human services with the direct or indirect support of the public purse. This places on it an increasing obligation to be both effective and accountable. At a *micro-level* the sector is the arena for voluntary action, user involvement, campaigning and advocacy that contributes to civil society. Sustaining public confidence in many and varied roles and institutions of voluntary sector is key to its future.¹⁹

NGOs sector is bound up in three dimensions –economic, social and political. NGOs are increasingly being drawn into welfare state service provision as a means of reducing state fiscal crises and institutional constraints. The NGOs sector is being transformed into a shadow state apparatus, filling the gaps by the state. ‘The local’ has emerged *the* site of empowerment and hence as a locus of knowledge generation and development intervention. Some development practitioners believe that NGOs should strengthen the capacity of the state as part of their localised grass roots work, rather than creating parallel or alternative welfare delivery systems.²⁰

Development is a process of mutual endeavour, which calls for the participation of all segments of the society. But due to the limited capability of the national government in most of the third world countries, it has become increasingly difficult to respond effectively to the growing and diversified needs of the vast majority of population at the grass roots. This has necessitated the emergence of the institutions, which may function as a catalyst between the government and the community but still may remain independent from direct government intervention. These institutions from the

¹⁹ Ashby Julian (1997) Towards Voluntary Sector Codes of Practice: A Starting Point for VOs, Funders and Intermediaries, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

²⁰ Parpart, J L, et. al. (2002) *Re-thinking Empowerment: Gender and Development in a Global/ Local World*, London: Routledge.

present day world are being universally termed as the Non-Governmental Organisations. NGOs, thus, represent an alternative institutional approach to spurring rural development in developing countries, which may possess comparative advantage over government institutions at the grass roots.

Characteristics of the Alternative Development Paradigm

When development NGOs began to be noticed in the 1970s, it was for what was beginning to be called an alternative development paradigm. What were the characteristics of this paradigm, which distinguished NGOs from mainstream development actors? Several significant characteristics can be identified:

Harmony vs. Domination

The Western paradigm of development have an itching for domination whether it is nature or other people and nations but the new paradigm do not have to conquer or dominate nature or people but to live in harmony with it.

Co-operation vs. Competition

The present worldview and value system worships competition as a means to dominate and rule over others. The alternative paradigm of community-oriented development considers competition as a negative value and looks for cooperation for the welfare and betterment of all.

Egalitarian vs. Hierarchical

In egalitarian society everyone will have equal dignity and honour irrespective of possession, position, status and appearances. Every job has equal status. There will be no high or low jobs.

Communitarianism vs. Individualism

The basic units of development in this new paradigm will be viable small communities or small group families. It will mean that development will not aim at

individual level but at the community level. Planning, decision-making and execution will be at the level of the small community itself. Thus it will be bottom up or 'from below' processes rather than a top-down process at the present.

Interdependence vs. Rivalry

The small communities however, though autonomous, are not introvert. They have to be interdependent and interlinked with other such small communities in mutual cooperation and collaboration. There will not be unhealthy rivalries between the basic communities.²¹

The Goals of Alternative Development Paradigm

The alternative development approach aims at effecting a new social order where all people have their basic needs fulfilled and lead a life becoming of human dignity. Besides it represent a social order where, in autonomous and self-sufficient as well as interdependent communities, people will live in harmony with nature and with fellow persons. Thus it has a world vision, value system and development approach, quite different from the values, vision, approach and outlook of the present social order. The basic attitude and spirit behind this approach is cooperation.²² A consensus about the new paradigm appears to be emerging²³:

- Economic growth has to be linked to a set of well-defined human – social and cultural – objectives. It should first be able to meet the basic needs of the people at large and then move on to improving and enriching their quality of life.
- Economic growth can no longer be defined as merely as raising the GNP and per capita income. The development paths should focus on people and society. It implies more equitable distribution of goods and services. Investment must not

²¹ Meloo, Sevanavel (1995) "Basic Community Oriented Development: An Alternative to the Present Mode of Development", *Social Action: A Quarterly Journal of Social Trends*, Jan- Mar, Vol. 45, No. 1, p. 62

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Dube, SC (1988) *Modernisation and Development: The Search for Alternative Paradigms*, New Delhi: Vistaar Publications, Pp. 62-65

lead only to individual betterment, but to enlarging and sharpening society's capability to come to grips with its problems and find effective solutions.

- It needs fundamental structural changes and advocates that the structure of economic opportunities has to be opened up and a conscious policy of positive discrimination and conscientization of the masses has to be adopted.
- A small elite –often with Western orientation - has taken the major decisions and the people themselves having little say in them. The institutional structure of society permits them limited freedom to shape their own destinies. To ensure endogenous growth a new institutional framework, assigning more decisive roles to the people and their associations, is necessary.
- Make the development process genuinely participative. And the people should have an upper hand in implementing the development programmes.
- The development process should be sensitive to the environment. Environment consciousness has to be promoted and steps should be taken to improve it.
- Development should be sustainable. It does not mean that we should accord low priority to science and technology. Scientific and technological progress can be major determinants of sustainable development.
- Development should be as self-reliant as possible. We should break the barrier of patron-client relationship with the more developed countries.
- Another feature of Third World planning and development is their excessive concern with the present and lack of planning for the future. So it is essential to build into the development process orientation towards the future.

The rise and growth of popular grass root initiatives, often engineered by the grassroots NGOs and the subsequent emergence of a new strategy particularly the bottom-up approach (putting people first) unleashed by them seem to have augured well for the society. The NGOs sector differentiates from government and corporate enterprises in terms of its purpose, which is said to be driven by values like altruism, philanthropy and voluntarism where as the government and private sectors remain to govern and make profits respectively. There are some strategies which the development NGOs have been practicing as a part of the alternative discourse are:

From Top Down to Bottom Up: Participation of the Common People

The present system of top-down approach where programmes were planned without much involvement of people's needs to be changed to bottom-up approach where people are consulted and involved right from the stage of identification of their needs to the implementation and evaluation of the programme. In this approach the decision making flows from the local levels to the 'top' and the system of planning and implementation changes radically from 'top' to 'bottom'²⁴.

The conventional growth oriented top-down development strategy has not accomplished the desired trickling down of the benefits of the development to the marginalized sections. The programmes, administer by the outsiders (who include government) view people as 'object' of development and the agencies make provisions of things and services of 'what they can' rather than 'what people need'²⁵. Dhillon and Hansra (1995) says that in the top-down approach of the state sponsored planned development, responsibility of bringing about desired change is vested in the development bureaucracy, who operates within the administrative systems of the government. The agents carrying out development and other related activities within the administrative system tries to deliver development to the people who remain at the

²⁴ Dharmarajan, Shivani (1998) *NGO Development Initiative and Public Policy*, New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, p. 61.

²⁵ Narayanan, Pradeep (2003) "Empowerment through Participation: How Effective is this Approach?" *Economic and Political Weekly*, June 21-27.

recipients, which in fact, is the 'negation of the whole idea of development' and major cause of the failure of the developmental programmes. So the government programmes have not been able to reach the people particularly the rural poor in regard to rural development at the desired level. Although huge amount of money has been allocated and spend on different schemes of rural development over the years yet the benefits have not reached the rural poor.²⁶

In a democratic society participation cannot be imposed on the people. Participation should be voluntary and should be based on the wills of people who participate. Participation we mean direct involvement of the people and not indirect involvement through their representatives. It evolved on the basis of helping people to come in and to join in the mainstream of development.²⁷ This is because given the socio-economic, political structure of the society in most of the developing countries the so called 'representatives' of the people are most likely to represent the rich rather than the interest of the poor majority. However, in a large country like ours, direct participation of rural people is possible only at the grassroots level.²⁸ NGOs consider that participation of the clients in the following areas is essential for the success of any development effort.

- Participation in Decision-making
- Participation in Implementation
- Participation in Sharing the Benefits
- Participation in Evaluation

By doing so people can influence the decisions at higher levels through their joint efforts and common voice. This is called the bottom-up approach to integrated development.

²⁶ Dhillon, DS and Hansra, B.S (1995) "Role of Voluntary Organisations in Rural Development", Kurukshetra, February.

²⁷ Saint, Kishore (1985) "Development and People's Participation" in Fernandes, Walter (ed) *Development with People: Experiments with Participation and Non-Formal Education*, New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, p.47

²⁸ Thomas Gracious (1992) *People's Participation in Community Development*, New Delhi: Uppal Publishing House, Pp. 45-46

Participatory Nature of Development

The question here is that why do we need people's participation? How does it help in the process of development? Bhose (2003: 132) explains that development is people's business and the essence of development is people's participation. Participation presupposes belongingness and culminates in control and ownership. Shivani Dharmarajan (1998: 61)²⁹ and Plummer (1999)³⁰ say that the objectives behind people's participation are:

- (i) to provide infrastructure which is relevant to poor people's needs and priorities,
- (ii) to ensure infrastructure meets the needs of women and other marginalized groups,
- (iii) the rural people are capable of planning for themselves and they have the indigenous (local) knowledge which needs be utilised,
- (iv) the rural people have information about their (human) resources, capabilities and local conditions, and
- (v) to improve the quality of construction,
- (vi) to establish cost-sharing arrangements,
- (vii) to increase people's 'ownership' of services
- (viii) the rural people can ensure proper implementation and monitoring of development programmes directed towards them because they are inherently interested in their own welfare,
- (ix) to improve the maintenance of infrastructure and services and decrease government responsibility for maintenance.

²⁹ Dharmarajan, Shivani (1998) *NGO Development Initiative and Public Policy*, New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, p. 61

³⁰ Plummer, J (1999) *Municipal and Community Participation: A Source Book for Capacity Building*, London: Earthscan

People's participation contributes to correct identification of beneficiaries, their needs and to proper planning and management of various segments of a programme. There are six modes of participation³¹:

1. the first mode involved only educated and moneyed people in the community without participation of the grassroots or the beneficiaries,
2. the second mode one in which people or beneficiaries are asked to legitimise or ratify projects identified and formulated by the government,
3. in the third mode of participation, people are consulted about the project but they do not actually participate in the planning and management of the projects,
4. in the fourth mode, people are consulted from the very start and they actively participate in the planning and management of the projects,
5. in the fifth mode, people or the beneficiaries are represented in the highest policy-making body of the agency, and
6. in the sixth mode, representatives of the people control the highest policy-making body of the agency.

The most distinguishing feature among the six modes of participation by the beneficiaries of a programme, the extent of participation in terms of policy-making, planning and management of projects increasing as one moves from the first mode to the last. Peter Oakley interprets³² participation in different ways.

³¹ Quoted from Dharmarajan, Shivani (1998), *op. cit*, Pp. 41-42

³² Quoted from Bhose, Joel SGR (2003), *op. cit*, Pp. 138-139. He explains extensively on people's participation and participatory nature of development in this book.

- i. *Participation as Collaboration*: people may participate in project through their collaboration.
- ii. *Participation as specific targetting of project beneficiaries*: participation is seen as inclusion of previously excluded groups by targetting the benefits directly at them.
- iii. *Participation as Organisation*: rural people are unable to participate in development activities due to lack of organisation.
- iv. *Participation as Empowering*: participation as a means of empowering people and empowerment is more fundamentally political and concerned with enabling people to decide upon and to take actions they believe to be essential for their own development.

The most dynamic characteristic of the alternative development paradigm was its participatory nature. In the normal development discourse the recipients of development were treated as passive, or more often, conservative and obstructive. But the participatory paradigm believed that development cannot be delivered from out side, that people can develop themselves, and that their own involvement, engagement and contribution are an essential foundation for sustainable development. Participatory paradigm of development is defined to include people, their indigenous way of problem solving, their expertise and their institution. "It is an inward looking strategy of progress for installing a process of free-flow of power and resources, building on one's own success and failures, developing an environment of mutual trust and confidence". This involves planning with people, which endorses gradual enablement, empowerment, enlightenment and enfranchisement of the people.³³ People's own participation can be enabled through drawing on local knowledge and local resources, and it can be enhanced through a series of interventions leading to their collective empowerment. As Chambers explains:

³³ Chand Diwakar (1998) "The Role of Civil Society in Democratization" in Ananda Shrestha (ed) *The Role of Civil Society in Nepal*, Kathmandu: NEFAS and FES, p. 52.

"In Participatory Rural Appraisal... outsiders do not dominate and lecture; they facilitate, sit down, listen and learn. Outsiders do not transfer technology; they share methods, which local people can use for their own appraisal, analysis, planning, action, monitoring and evaluation. Outsiders do not impose their reality; they encourage and enable local people to express their own".

This dimension was nicely juxtaposed against the externally determined, government-led, functionary-delivered development programmes that characterise many State efforts in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1970s people's participation was not on the agenda of most of the governments, nor was it considered relevant or in any case appropriate.

Empowerment and People-Centred Development

The core issue in the debate on development today is about enabling and empowering the people, more specially those who were at the receiving end, to obtain fully and fruitfully what is intended and planned for them. There is a proverb that "give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime"; it seemed a profound statement on the need for development and self-reliance, not hand-outs.³⁴ This requires a well-planned strategy of social mobilisation and engineering, which can effectively be materialised through the agencies, which are non-bureaucratic and committed to specific goals. Needless to say that NGOs have rightly emerged as the agency of social mobilisation and their role as agents of delivery and change has come to be appreciated through out the world, with the declines of the roles of the governments in the era of liberalisation.

The transformation towards a people-centred development involves questioning the use of political and economic resources by the state and the state institutions and by

³⁴ Clark, John D (2002), *op. cit*, p. 504

trans-national corporations. It means advocating economic growth with social equity, social justice and ecological sustainability and renewability.³⁵

NGOs in India have also come to occupy a significant place in the arena of development through voluntarism. It is now being increasingly realised that government structures are not conducive for integrated development like agriculture, environment, energy, soil conservation, forestry, social justice and equity. Since NGOs operate at the grassroots level and are funded on the basic principles of equity and social justice, they can prove to be more dynamic and responsive in bringing about the much needed transformation in Indian society and provide a suitable alternative policies and plans of the government of India as well as different state governments are proving the thesis that voluntarism is the best answer to the demands and dilemmas of development afflicted with resource crunch and mobilisation.³⁶

New approaches to development thinking advocates that development should not be understood as sustained profits for private and public sector interests, at the expense of people, especially women, the poor and indigenous communities. It should mean sustainable livelihoods in a self-renewing environment for all people. People-centred development is based on the needs and rights of people, with accountability to the poorest, the most powerless, and the indigenous in the society³⁷. As Bhose (2003) rightly points out that people must be at the centre of human development. Development has to be woven around people, not people around development. Development is no longer a favour or a privilege to the people. They cannot be treated as mute observers or objects or passive input receivers as they are powerless and unendowed. They are supposed to be the prime movers of development at any given point of time³⁸.

³⁵ Heyzer, N. et. al. (1995) "Towards New Government-NGO Relations for Sustainable and People Centred Development" in Heyzer, N (et.al) *Government – NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People Centred Development*, Asian and Pacific Development Centre, Kuala Lumpur, p. 10

³⁶ Joshi, R P and Narwani, G S (2002) *Panchayati Raj in India: Emerging Trends across the States*, Jaipur: Rawat Publication, p. 204-5

³⁷ Heyzer, N (1995), *op. cit*, Pp. 4-5

³⁸ Bhose, Joel SGR (2003), *Opcit*, p-133

Riker (1995) presents three distinct visions of people centred development (see Table below) being put forward by proponents ranging from the South Commission, David Korten and Associates, to the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reforms and Rural Development (ANGOC). The South Commission begins from a state centred view of development and the main actors are central governments, state agencies and enterprises and private business organisations. It assumes that the governments are: (i) politically willing (ii) capable and (iii) able to define and carry out development initiatives. The Second vision articulated by the David Korten and his associates see development as equity-led sustainable growth. It emphasises on improving the process of governance by developing accountable institutions which actively include people in the decision making processes determining the course of development while ANGOC based on Gandhi's conception of *Sarvodaya* proposes empowering people in all aspects. This empowerment process can only occur if the government devolves authority to the local-people based institutions, and if citizen's groups within civil society create a viable people's sector or movement.³⁹

Local Level Development

The alternative development paradigm⁴⁰ implied local-level development, which was seen to be in contrast to the agenda of national-level development of newly liberated post-colonial nation states after the Second World War. These states tried to establish certain national priorities that were to be uniformly addressed through a series of development interventions by national governments. The local agenda had local priorities, and looked at the individual village or a slum as a space improving people's socio-economic situation. The disillusionment with failure of plans and programmes sensitised policy-makers, administrators, and donor agencies to the need for

³⁹ Riker, James V (1995). "From Cooptation to Cooperation and Collaboration in Government – NGO Relations: Towards an Enabling Policy Environment for People Centred Development in Asia" in Heyzer, N (et.al), Pp- 95-100.

⁴⁰ Tondon, Rajesh (2001) "Riding High or Nosedividing: Development NGOs in the New Millennium" in Dborah Eade & Ernst Ligteringen (eds.) *Debating Development*, Oxfam GB Publication, p. 44-47

understanding the local realities. The need for understanding local realities saw the gradual emergence of the concepts of participation and empowerment in development literature. In recent years these twin concepts have been positioned at the centre of both the radical and mainstream perspectives of development.⁴¹

Small Scale Development Strategy

A related characteristic was the small-scale nature of these development efforts, something reinforced by Schumacher's proclamation that 'small is beautiful'. This alternative approach emphasised the need to look at development itself as a problem of human development that can be understood, managed and monitored by small collectives of human beings. Small-scale development contrasted with large-scale macro-level development programmes which were then being launched with a great deal of vigour and pride – such as the construction of major dams, hydro-electric power stations, roads and mines.

Integrated Development Approach

Another dimension of the alternative development paradigm was integrated approach, which implied looking at the individual, his or her own family, and the community as a coherent whole, and bringing together various development inputs to converge in an integrated fashion so that individuals, their families, and their communities could all benefit. This approach contrasted with the fragmented, sectoral development schemes run by most national governments, in which each scheme addressed one scheme of human existence – education, health, drinking water, sanitation, agriculture, rural development, roads, communication, or electricity, for example. These schemes were at times mutually conflicting or even contradictory, and to integrate them required enormous efforts on the part of individuals, families and communities.

⁴¹ Narayanan, Pradeep (2003) *op. cit.*, p. 2484

Target Group Orientation

Another dimension of this alternative discourse, which looked at the needs of the target groups in the context of social and economic transformation. Inspired largely by the suffering and deprivations of the marginalized sections of society and committed to bringing about socio-economic equality and justice, the alternative development approach relied substantially on conscientisation and the collective mobilisation of the marginalized themselves. Non-formal education, community organisation and local leadership building were the kinds of intervention that this alternative development approach of NGOs signified. This contrasted with the mainstream development paradigm, which focussed on growth in gross national product and macro-economic development.

Accountability of the NGO Sector

In spite of all their efforts because of the misdoings of few NGOs the entire credibility of NGOs in the social development sector is being questioned. The NGOs are being questioned of their accountability and transparency by the Government, by the people's representatives and by the community at large. This has not only affected the credibility of operational NGOs but also led to demoralisation of the NGO sector in general⁴².

Lewis (2002) explains that there are two main strands in the literature in the analysis of NGO accountability. The first approach following from Max Weber's analysis of bureaucratic structures, sees accountability primarily in terms of rule bound responses by organisations and individuals who must report to recognised authorities such as government agencies or donor organisations in order to ensure that the resources they receive are used properly and that the work they undertake is done effectively. The second strand of thinking is more open-ended and draws upon the idea that organisations are socially constructed entities. In this view, accountability can be understood as the maintenance of organisational integrity through dialogues among and between different

⁴² Shrestha, Ananda (1998) *op. cit.*, p. 55

stakeholders such as staff, clients, governors or funders – which seek to enhance the effectiveness of the NGO. It is not simply a set of controls be imposed upon an organisation from the out side, but a set of ‘felt responsibilities’ derived from an organisation’s own values, mission and culture.⁴³

Accountability is generally is understood as a means by which individuals and organizations report to the authority. However, in development programme at the grass root level, accountability relates to the wider process of information exchange, decision-making, management, negotiation and bargaining that take place between different stakeholders. In the past accountability has been used to introduce control mechanisms kinked to hierarchy and authority. In contrast, accountability is a reciprocal process in which multiple actors are accountable to each other. Accountability does not mean reporting; it means a process of information exchange, consultation and joint decision-making. Participatory methods adopted by the NGOs provide fertile grounds for increasing their accountability to the people at the grassroots.

Most of the writers on NGO accountability emphasise it complex, multi-dimensional character. Najam (1996) shows how an NGO is simultaneously accountable to its *patrons* such as donors (whose concerns are usually centred upon whether funds are used for designated purposes), to *clients* such as its users in the community (who are concerned with ensuring that the NGOs act in their interests, but have no clear means of ensuring this) or the government (which may contract an NGO to carry out particular task) and finally to *itself* (in the sense that each NGO has a vision which it seeks to actualise, and staff for it is responsible)⁴⁴.

Democratising Development

The greatest potential of NGOs lies in their capacity to generate self-help initiative. It is in this vein that NGOs are viewed as vehicles for development and

⁴³ Lewis, David (2002) in Vandana, Desai and R. B Potter (eds.), *op. cit*, p. 520

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

democracy, and more specifically as vehicles for 'democratising development'. Indigenous NGOs have the potential of giving voice to popular demands, which may subsequently empower like-minded members to... articulate a collective interest and to take collective action. NGOs have the potential to be significant vehicles of empowerment because of their ability to reach the grassroots.⁴⁵ Empowerment is thus '...a multifaceted process.... (which)...involves transforming the economic, social, psychological, political and legal circumstances of the currently powerless. The NGOs working with at the grassroots empowers the people and the community through the development of a sense of efficacy in the individual and a group's ability to influence political and personnel decisions of government or powerful institutions.⁴⁶

Formation of Social Capital in Development

The concept of social capital has been used by the NGOs sector to understand collective functioning based upon trust within a society. Social capital refers to a "set of resources that inhere in family relations and community social organisations" and to features such as "trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated actions". Coleman describes that it is an important social structural 'resource' or capital asset for the individual, which is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence. The voluntary organisations inspire people to get organised and form an alternative force to keep the state machinery on track. The NGOs play a significant role in mobilising people and by creating awareness among them to stage protests against the systemic fallout, hegemonic power play of the state and discriminatory policies of the decision-making state/ corporate bodies.

⁴⁵ Dicklitch, S (1998), *op. cit.*, p. 11

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Concluding Remarks

The greatest strength of NGOs is their approach and method for enlisting people's participation. Working informally in a friendly manner, they do not undertake development as government agencies generally do, with the primary concern being the achievement of a certain target irrespective of the needs and priorities of the people. They do not confine themselves merely to consultation as government agencies sometimes do; they work for popular participation in planning, implementation and management of local resources. NGOs increasingly play a supportive role rather than become implementing bodies themselves.⁴⁷ The NGOs are generally in a better position to both comprehend people's perspective at the local level and share with people the changing perspectives at the global level. In this sense they "*act locally and think globally*".

⁴⁷ Shah, Anil C and Iyengar, Sudarshan (1998) "The Contribution of NGOs to Development: Some Issues and a Case Study" in Dantwala, M L (et. al) *Social Change through Voluntary Action*, New Delhi: Sage Publication, p. 97

Chapter. 5

*Striking the Balance
Making of a New Development
Discourse*

Chapter. 5

Striking the Balance

Making of a New Development Discourse

This chapter strikes the balance between two different approaches; one is advocated by the state while the other by the NGOs, to development. These two different approaches have been discussed earlier in two different chapters. Although the previous chapters give an impression of the dominance of NGOs in the development discourse by criticizing the centralized and bureaucratic state centered development planning. Here I have tried to look at the other side of the development NGOs and the State that has not been discussed in earlier chapters and by taking into account both the approaches as they have been conceived i.e. on the one hand state centered macro, rigid bureaucratic and centralized planning and on the other hand the participatory and people centered micro level development and empowerment strategy, I have moved towards their collaboration and partnership in the development industry.

The chapter is basically based on three central themes. The first theme gives a clear picture of the weaknesses and limitations of the NGOs movement and the reality and myth associated with the NGOs in India; the second theme explains the positive aspects of the state approach to development which talks about a macro level and structural changes in the society; and the last theme, striking a balance, advocated for a new development paradigm where the development NGOs should walk together along the state agencies in the journey of development. It calls for the collaboration between the NGOs and the state mechanisms, where the NGOs will help in bringing participatory and people centered development, grassroots understanding of the problems and implementation, mass mobilization, citizen's initiative; while the state act in developing macro-development strategy, structural changes in the society, and a decentralized planning system along with collaboration between Panchayats and voluntary organizations at the grassroots.

I

Critique of the Discourse of NGO Paradigm

The Myths about NGOs

NGOs have come to occupy an important place in India. The spread of NGO activities in the country, as in many other parts of the world, is manifest in a number of spheres and in a wide spectrum of programmes. In welfare programmes, development-oriented initiatives, conscientising people, empowering women and weaker sections, protecting the rights of the marginalized segments and environment, spreading literacy and education, information technology, to name a few, the participation of the NGO sector has been impressive particularly since independence. There is a high degree of diversity and heterogeneity in the activities too.¹

Many myths have grown about NGOs. The common perception is that NGOs are by their very nature participatory, democratic, transparent and flexible, while government carries the baggage tack of red-tapism and rigidity. The NGO views about themselves seem to have perpetrated many of these myths. NGOs tend to view themselves as pursuing a participatory approach that is uniquely their own, giving them particular strengths which the government agencies are believed to lack. It is because of these distinct advantages they possess that, in comparison with government agencies, NGOs are better able to: (1) reach the poor; (2) obtain true, meaningful participation of intended beneficiaries; (3) be flexible and responsive in their work; (4) strengthen local level institutions; (5) achieve outcomes at less cost; (6) experiment with alternative ideas and practices; (7) utilize indigenous knowledge and other local resources. (Fowler 1990:11).²

How far this depiction of their self-image is a true account of the NGO strengths remains debatable. Amidst these commendable credentials of NGOs, the recent trends in

¹ Sooryamoorthy, R (1998) "Entering the New Millennium: NGOs in India", *IASSI Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 2, p. 21

² Mathur, Hari Mohan (2000) "Involuntary Resettlement and Voluntary Organizations: A View from India", *International Society for Third-Sector Research*, Fourth International Conference, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, <http://www.jhu.edu/~istr/conferences/dublin/workingpapers/mathur.pdf>

their activities in the country are matter of dispute and debate.³ Experience has shown that there is a great variation among NGOs themselves and within government. Government is not a monolith. Some government programmes function with remarkable sensitivity, transparency and accountability and the instances of rigidity in NGO operations are not unknown (Ramachandran: 1996). As participants at a Royal Tropical Institute seminar held in Amsterdam observed: "The stereotyped way of thinking often encountered - that NGOs 'can do' and government departments 'cannot' - is an oversimplification' (Jaeger: 1986).⁴

There are certain disadvantages, which limit their activities in the development discourse. Apprehensions are common over the loosing charm and reputations of NGOs which they have been enjoying over the past few decades. The term NGOs itself has acquired a pejorative connotation rendering a sort of negative meaning. Voluntarism is now likened to comfortable living, money and secure job. NGO leaders, as often heard, are becoming ostentatious not only in their personal behaviour but also in their work which usually aims at the downtrodden. The leaders live in palatial houses and have become jet setters. The hallmark of voluntarism namely, austerity and simplicity, are jettisoned.⁵

The paradox with the NGOs is that they gain their ability to represent opinions and values of the educated middle class, and to play an important role in the strengthening of the civil society at the macro political level, by making use of political leverage which they gain by their claim to represent the poor who in fact do not share the moral attitudes and development approaches which NGOs claim to have. NGOs, in some cases, have offered a small section of the village society, 'their people' an option to improve their living standards through participation in development activities. However, the contribution of NGOs to the 'emancipation of the poorest' at the local level remains very limited because they select their beneficiaries according to their own priorities who reflect the values of the educated middle class. This approach doesn't enable the poorest,

³ Sooryamoorthy, R (1998), *op. cit*, p. 25

⁴ Mathur, H. M (2000), *op. cit*.

⁵ Sooryamoorthy, R (1998), *op. cit*, p. 25

who lack bargaining powers vis-à-vis NGOs, to escape from the mechanism of patron-client relationship.⁶

The swelling number of organizations or the multiplication of programmes in geometrical progression does not presuppose that the NGO sector is devoid of problems. A glance into the history of the organizations, since independence, makes it clear that the panorama has not been rosy altogether for the sector in India. A considerable number of them have already withered away as they could not survive. Many have failed in their mission. Sometimes new organizations surface in their place.⁷

Weaknesses and Limitations of NGO Movement

Rajasekhar⁸, Kuriakose⁹, Mathur¹⁰ and Sooryamoorthy¹¹ explain some of the limitations and weaknesses of the NGOs activity in the developmental programmes.

1. Spatial Limitation

The territorial space under the NGO, is defined by a number of factors; these include the obvious such as the amount of finance available, the physical characteristics of the project, the organizational size and structure of the NGOs. The poor people located beyond the project area of NGOs are not provided with any development assistance. They are basically target group oriented and provide the basic services and development initiative, which is limited to a particular group of people living in a particular geographical locality, which suits their own benefit. Not all poor or marginalized groups will be covered within the territorial location.

⁶ Kuhn, Berthold (1998) *Participatory Development in Rural India*, New Delhi: Radiant, Pp. 273-274

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 26

⁸ Rajasekhar (2000) in his article "Non-governmental Organisations in India: Opportunities and Challenges", *Journal of Rural Development*, Vol. 19 (2) gives a complete picture of the NGOs and their functioning in India. He has not only explained the definition, emergence, and typology of NGOs according to their functions and the advantages but also the weaknesses and disadvantages that limits the activities and working of NGOs. He neatly describes the challenges and opportunities before the Voluntary Sector in India.

⁹ Kuriakose, P.J (1989) *In Quest of Development: Role of Non-Governmental Organizations*, New Delhi: Vishwa Yuvak Kendra.

¹⁰ Mathur, H. M (2000), *op. cit.*

¹¹ Sooryamoorthy, R (1998), *op. cit*

2. Lack of good governance, hierarchy and transparency

In majority of NGOs there is no transparency budgets proposal, sanction and utilization. As the NGO expands, it become semi-bureaucratic and hierarchical where initiative and decision-making gets confined to the leaders. This has adverse impact not only on flexible functioning but also on the development of new leadership. Often the views and concerns of the young staff members in the organization are overlooked, or even suppressed.

3. Patchwork-quilt phenomenon

The phenomenon of 'patchwork-quilt' has implications on the provision of services to all the needy in all the regions. The large, influential and well-funded NGOs do not concentrate resources in regions and sectors that are most important for national development. Although the economic and human development indicators are better in south India but the fact is that out of 12,136 organizations receiving foreign funding and reporting to the Home Ministry in 1996-97, there were 5,721 organizations in South India, while the number was only 1,779 in the BIMARU region.

4. Antagonistic attitude towards the state

Development and Charity NGOs often seek to supplant the state as the provider of basic services and development programmes and thereby weaken political relationship between people and their government.

5. Limited ability to influence macro-policies

Individual NGOs are rarely in a position to influence government policies at various levels. They fail to emerge as genuine macro actors at regional or national levels, seeking to represent their members' interests in the political process of governance and more general development.

6. Lack of accountability and the need for reverse accountability

Accountability should not be equated with accountancy. The term accountability implies the extent to which NGO activities and programmes seek to fulfill the objectives

with which NGOs were started. Accountability can be upwards (i.e. to the government, donors and governing board), sideways (to the interested public, media, etc) and downwards (the people, staff, etc). It has been observed that the NGOs are more accountable to the northern donor agencies (upward accountability) and less accountable to the people. There is the need of reverse accountability i.e. downward accountability to the general public and the beneficiaries of the community.

7. *Scarcity of resources*

Traditionally NGOs have tended to be perceived as groups of 'do-gooders'. This may have something to do with the fact that until recent past most NGOs were related to religious groups. Membership often called for personal sacrifices in the form of financial contributions, allocation of time, etc. Consequently, very few people considered NGOs as instruments of development but rather as vehicles for service. Hardly anyone thought of NGOs as development agents, which ought to receive support to undertake development work.

A major criticism against the NGOs is their reliance on government funding support. Very few people considered NGOs as instruments of development but rather as vehicles of service. In a situation where development NGOs have to depend on charity; scarcity of resources is inevitable. The existence of large numbers of NGOs, each trying to obtain as much support as possible, from the limited support base, adds to the problem. NGOs are becoming mere contractors for government agencies, middlemen who take money for a job and do it indifferently. As Slim remarked: "Increasingly dependent on government funding, it is becoming commonplace to question the appropriateness of the 'N' in the NGO acronym" (Slim: 1997).¹²

PRIA's study show that all India estimates of total receipts of NPO for 1999 – 2000 were 17,922 crores. Grants and donations taken together constitute *two-fifth* (41.9%) of total NPO receipts in India. The government funds are less than a third for Indian NPO while such funds are *two-fifth* for other countries (see fig.5.1 and 5.2). Private funds in India include private Indian and foreign contributions.

¹² Mathur, H.M (2000), *op. cit.*

Fig. 5. 1: International NPO Resources

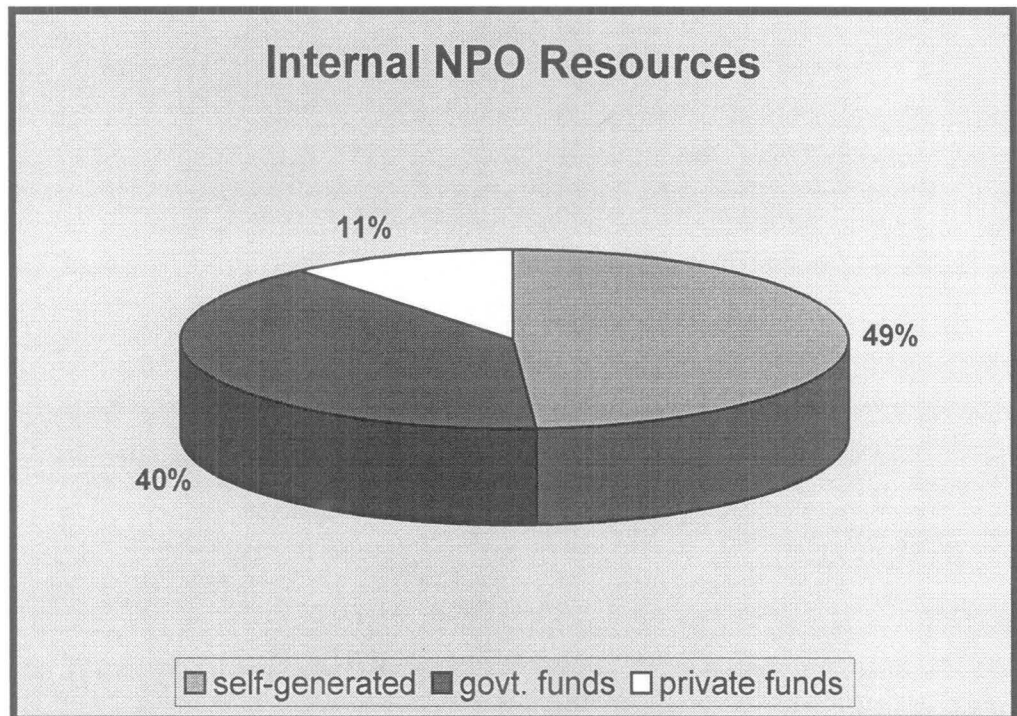
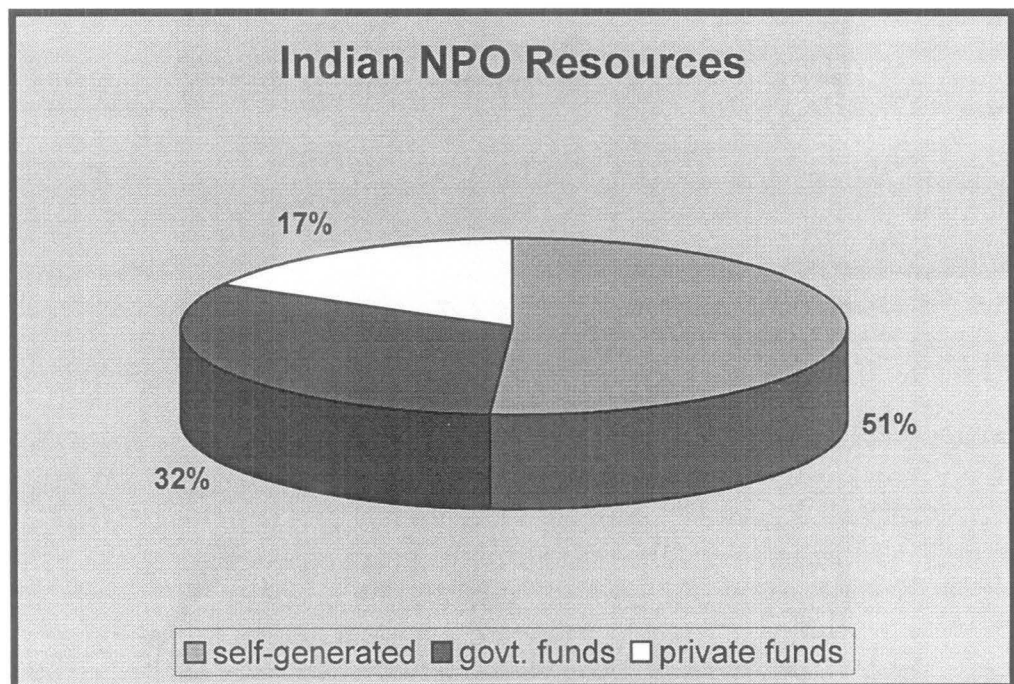


Fig. 5.2: Indian NPO Resources



The question comes to one's mind that who gives money to the NPOs and how do they generate the money for their charitable and social work. The study conducted by PRIA shows the fact that in India, more than 75 million households give for charitable causes which constitutes nearly *two-fourth* (40.7%) of all households in India. *Two-third* of all givers in India (68%) live in rural areas. The data show that more than 50 percent of the givers belong to the income groups of Rs. 25,000 to One lakh (see table. 5.1). Overall, Indians give Rs. 4214 crores per year.

Table. 5.1: Income Level and Percentage of NPO Donor Household in India

Income Level	% of Household
Below 25,000	42%
25,000 to 1 lakh	54.3%
Above 1 lakh	3.7%

8. *Absence of mutual cooperation*

When several groups are competing for the same scarce resources, cooperation is bound to take a back seat.

9. *Political problems*

Participatory development is a political process. Ability to participate implies ability to choose between various options and implement what they consider to be the best option for them. The reality in most of the third world countries is quite different. Extreme poverty and highly exploitative structures make it impossible for people to exercise their options.

10. *Government reluctance*

Another constraint is the reluctance of governments to accept NGOs as partner in development. If one took a closer look at the amount of money these governments make available to the NGOs the findings will be disheartening. This less than enthusiastic

attitude towards NGOs is not only because of the shortcomings of NGOs but also because of governments' unwillingness to strengthen NGOs especially those which are likely to help people in their quest for empowerment.

11. Desire to maintain false pretenses

Many NGOs are unclear about the meaning of the term participatory development. Many NGOs which do not have participatory development activities feel that they will be treated as second class NGOs if they do not prove that they too are votaries of the concept. Quite a few of them have little knowledge about the implications of participatory development yet they continue to insist that they are involved in participatory development activities causing confusion to others, especially funding agencies.

12. Lack of professionalism

Unfortunately, quite often professionalism is confused with careerism or full time paid work. Sometimes professionalism is due to the fact an NGO is the creation of a charismatic leader who is afraid of losing control of the organization. This lack of professionalism results in the inability of most NGOs to plan and implement programmes in an effective manner.

13. Inability to transform micro projects into macro projects

It is generally recognised that NGOs are successful in carrying out small projects. As critics put it that they work in isolation narrowing their scope of activities¹³. Quite often these projects deal with one special area of concern such as poultry training, dress making, drinking water supply etc. when the same has to take a larger project, it seems to falter and fail. Moreover, the needs of development of the local community today cannot be compartmentalized. It is necessary to have an integrated approach which also most NGOs are unable to establish. These constraints do act as hindrances to a full and real involvement of NGOs in the development process.

¹³ Gangrade, KD and Sooryamoorthy, R (1995) "NGOs: Retrospect and Prospect" in Jain, RB (ed) *NGOs in Development Perspective*, New Delhi: Vivek Prakashan, p. 40

14. Bureaucratization

When the NGOs started getting government funds, their flexibility of operations has also diminished as now they have to maintain a number of records and registers and engage themselves in much paper work that they have not before. In fact, some of the NGOs at the national level are more bureaucratic in their functioning than the government agencies. The utilization of grants needs rules and regulations which have not only stood in the way of flexibility in their operations, but have virtually tied their hands and eroded the innovation, initiative, experimentation and self-reliance for which the NGOs were known¹⁴.

15. Politicization

Some NGOs have become politicized and tend to stick to the side of the power elite, than to the people whom they are to serve. The politicians have also developed vested interests in these organizations and have used them for their political gains rather than helping them to freely accomplish their goal of serving the clientele groups (Jain: 1995:61).

16. Institutionalization

With the growing institutionalization, the NGO activities become more *programme* oriented than *people* oriented to justify the growing institutional structure. People are filled into the programme and their participation becomes minimal. The institutional framework may become necessary to provide stability and operational continuity and for conserving NGOs, but this may lead to their goal displacement. Emphasis is likely to be placed on protecting the institutional ethics rather than mobilizing the confidence and faith reposed by the people in the institution for the achievement of development goals. With the process of institutionalization the missionary zeal with which most NGOs start their operations gets evaporated (Jain: 1995:

¹⁴ Jain, RB (1995) "Influencing public Policies: Challenges to NGOs in India" in Jain, RB (ed), *op. cit.*, p. 63

82-82). Gangrade (1995) very appropriately depicts the impact of institutionalization through the following chart (see table. 5.2)¹⁵.

**Table. 5.2: Phases, Steps and Orientation of Voluntary Action
Impact of Institutionalization**

Sl.	Phases	Steps	Orientation
1	Initiation	Establishing Rapport, generalizing Confidence, Getting Acceptance	Missionary Zeal (Worker)
2	Executive or Implementation	Programmes, identification of Needs or Problems and of activities, Generating Resources, Implementing/ Providing Services/ Action Projects	Executive Planning (Programmes)
3	Institutionalization and Expansion	Evaluating Effectiveness, Development of Infrastructure (specialization), Increase of Work Load	Career (Expansion)
4	Consolidation	Stabilizing Operations, Enforcing Rules, Inservice Organizational Entity	Institutional (Stability)
5	Decline/ Decay/ Renewal/ Rebirth	Subjecting People to Rules, Emphasizing Institutional Survival, Alienating organization from People, Decay and Rebirth	Survival (Maintenance)

Source: Jain, R.B (1995), p. 83

17. Decision-making

The process of decision-making becomes a mockery as the leader himself makes the decisions for the organization. Participation of the local in the programmes of the NGOs is, therefore, diminished. Even the role of workers in decision-making has become passive in the case of a substantial number of NGOs in the country. It has become highly centralized affair in many organization and one or two individual take major decisions.¹⁶

18. Development projects and foreign funding

During the past decades northern development agencies have established themselves as quite visible actors in southern society. According to a study by Charities

¹⁵ Quoted from Jain, R.B (1995) "NGOs in Development: The Emerging Concerns" in Jain, RB (ed), *op. cit*, Pp. 82-83

¹⁶ Sooryamoorthy, R (1998), *op. cit*, Pp. 27-28

Aid Foundation (India) and Voluntary Action Network of India, Rs 2571 crore of foreign funding entered India in 1997-98, for distribution to 6,700 organisations. In 2000, this went up to Rs 4000 crores, besides Rs 200 crore from government agencies and another Rs 200 crore from corporate sources.¹⁷

Many have claimed that external funding creates more problems than it solve. They are¹⁸: (i) foreign funds undermine self-reliance and self-esteem and therefore cause a threat to moral and spiritual resources of Indian society, (ii) foreign funding will change structures of accountability in such a way that the contract between the roots of the movement and its leadership and professional may be cut, (iii) foreign funding will change organizational structure and lead to a debilitating, dangerous fragmentation of political movements, (iv) foreign funding will allow the implementation of work at a local level which is too expensive to enable duplication in contexts in which foreign funds are not available, (v) the agenda of voluntary efforts – e.g. the orders of priority and problems-formulations – will increasingly be decided by the external funding organizations, and decreasingly by the in India themselves. This too has a bad impact of reducing the power of the local communities and their self-reliance (Vijay Pratap and Wallgren: 2003: 325-326).

19. Corruption

Corruption, manipulation, power and control are not the exclusive preserve of government institutions. NGOs are not free from it. Given shrinking employment opportunities, people register charitable or service organizations as a means of livelihood. (Ramachandran: 1996) Many political leaders and retired civil servants also set up their own NGOs to make money for themselves, using their contacts for easy access to government funds without being pestered with awkward questions.¹⁹

¹⁷ Krishna, Nandita (2004) "Charity or Cheating", *Newindpress*, July, 10,
<http://www.newindpress.com/sunday/sundayitems.asp?id=SEC20040625223134&eTitl>

¹⁸ Vijay Pratap and Wallgren Thomas (2003) "Understanding Civil Action for Global Responsibility" in *Society, Politics and the Voluntary Sector*, Mehra, Ajay K, Singh, Anil K and Kueck, Gert, W (ed) Centre for Public Affairs, Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Voluntary Health Association of India, New Delhi, Pp-325-326

¹⁹ Mathur, H. M (2000), *op. cit.*

The Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), a Government of India organization that supports the projects and activities of NGOs, recently blacklisted 400 such organisations. The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), which funds NGOs on behalf of the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), has a long blacklist of 3,000 NGOs.²⁰

20. Giving Voice to the People

The NGO claims of giving voice to the people are being increasingly questioned. As people become better aware of their own situation they are able to see things for themselves. They are becoming critical of the NGOs that claim to speak on their behalf. In some cases people have even begun campaigns against such NGOs.

As Dhillon (1997) observed, the concept of voluntary work appears to have changed with NGOs becoming a source of income and employment generation for people sitting in plush, air-conditioned offices in the capital or other major cities, hopping from country to country for conferences around the globe, and doing 'advocacy work' - a fancy term for churning out reports that put you to sleep by the time you reach page three. NGOs are in the throes of a credibility crisis; a crisis brought about by racketeers in their midst. Examples of their misdemeanours now abound.

II

Role of State in the Development Discourse in India

Early development economists recognized the role of the government in providing infrastructure to facilitate development. Another role that the government was allocated to undertake activities to compensate for 'market failures'. In the developing countries market failures were supposed to have resulted due to the lack of adequate supply and demand, information failures, improper investment allocation and lack of infrastructure. It was supposed that the state would have to play a major role to raise an economy out of its backwardness. The success of Keynesian activism in fighting the great depression in

²⁰ *Ibid.*

the Western countries, the success of the Marshall plan in achieving the quick reconstruction of Western Europe and the achievement of Soviet Union in the late 1930s on the industrial front, virtually create a consensus on the viability of state-led development. The state emerged in the role of an investment planning and almost every developing country set up a planning agency to formulate plans for development.²¹

Development of capitalism in western countries led to the emergence of modern state system and the role of state has been changing in response to the changing social requirements of capitalist development. Many theoreticians of the modern state in the west legitimize the expanding role of the state because the state, according to them, promotes general welfare and all other organizations and institutions promote particular and sectional interests. The state is looked upon as the guardian of the general welfare of society, and this belief has facilitated the emergence of all-powerful state in the west. MacIver observes:²²

“The state properly intervenes, not to conduct the economic business of the country, but to uphold social standards, to prevent exploitation and manifest injustice, to remove the needless hazards of the economic struggle, to assure and advance the general interest against the carelessness or the selfishness of a particular group, to control monopolies so that the public may be protected against their exactions, to see that the future well being of the country is not jeopardized by the pursuit of immediate gains....”

The rise of significant social movements in the western democratic societies which proclaim themselves as anti-state and an alternative to the over centralized state system believe in role of voluntary action groups to tackle specific neglected problems of the marginalized groups in society. The voluntary agencies in the west are rejectionists of the modern state systems, and they believe in-group intervention to resolve the crisis generated by the centralized and militarized state systems. The modern state is

²¹ Padmaja, Enjeti (1996) *State and Developmental NGOs: A Study of Institutional Linkages*, Unpublished Dissertation to Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Pp. 24-25

²² Bhambhri, C.P (1987). “The Modern State and the Voluntary Societies” in *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, edited by T.N. Chaturvedi, July-September, No.3, Vol. XXXIII, p-395

oppressive, bureaucratized and dehumanized; the voluntary action will make societies humane and harmonious.²³

C.P Bhambhri (1987) argues that developed and developing countries are fundamentally different because the historical burden of backwardness has to be effectively tackled by all the developing countries including India. The struggle against backwardness in India cannot be fought without the active role of the state. Voluntary agencies cannot eradicate poverty of India because social and economic structures have to be transformed to destroy the basics of backwardness. India inherited a stagnant economy, a primitive agriculture, a low-level of industry and technology and a majority of poverty-stricken population.²⁴ Trade was skewed towards imports. Infrastructural facilities were grossly inadequate. Indian leaders like Nehru opted for a planned economy with preeminent role of the state in order to overcome these problems of under-development. Planning has resulted in remarkable results in all facets of the economy: the economy has been pulled out of stagnation, industrial growth has occurred and self-sufficiency in food grains has been achieved.²⁵

Developing countries like India face enormous problems. The state is the central actor today in the social sector and is the main agent of efforts to bring about development. Reduction of the state to the role of a disburser of resources when institutional mechanisms of the other sectors are not well developed could spell doom for the economies.

The system of economic planning and those mobilizing resources have tended to reinforce the centralizing tendencies of the Indian administrative structures. Advocates of decentralized development argue that what is required today is not a reduction of the functioning of the state. Planning for development should be from below and not vice versa. Local institutions ought to be strengthened to get access to the needs of the local communities, community organizations and NGOs working in various location would

²³ *Ibid*, p. 396

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 397

²⁵ Padmaja, Enjeti (1996), *op. cit*, p. 25

then play a major role in assisting local institutions in programme formulation, implementation and monitoring. With the passage of the 73rd and 74th Amendment to the constitution giving greater powers and autonomy to local governments. This perspective seems to be one possible course of action for the development policy. This argument recognizes the reality that the state cannot be dispensed with as a strategic institution in the development scenario. What needs to be done is to democratize it.²⁶ NGOs in India are, therefore, seen as supplementing actors; they cannot supersede the efforts of social reconstruction launched by the state.

The difference²⁷ between the roles of Indian state and voluntary agencies are quite clear:

- The essential tasks of development have to be undertaken by the Indian State, and the Voluntary agencies cannot perform this task.
- The voluntary agencies cannot change the social power structure, but the state can be democratically compelled to challenge the existing social power structure.
- Voluntary agencies are localized groups and have micro level impact, the State intervention affects the whole society and reaction against the State also emerges from the society. The state model of development has macro level impact.
- Voluntary agencies can become parallel centers of power, and at that juncture they cease to be voluntary agencies.

The State versus voluntary agencies is a spurious issue in India because the problems of India cannot be tackled without intervention by the state. The VOs in India come under the jurisdiction of government rules and regulations. Although the voluntary agencies play a major role in the service delivery and programme implementation, they cannot provide an alternative to the State. They can only supplement the State in the welfare activities. The voluntary agencies are of a footnote in Indian development and the problems of development of India require more of State intervention and not less of it. Thus, the State is an important and primary actor of development in Indian society.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Bhambhri, C.P (1987), *op. cit*

III

Call for A New Development Discourse: Collaboration between the Development NGOs and the State

There is increasing evidence that governments in most developing countries of the South are attempting to seek the cooperation of the NGO sector in their efforts toward poverty alleviation and grassroots development (Jain: 1995: 81). It is now recognised that development requires not only the 'hardware' of investment in physical infrastructure, but also the 'software' of developing human capabilities. Without capacity building for managing institutions, learning legal-rational procedures for decision-making and accounting, raising questions and suggesting alternatives, development will not be socially sustainable. NGOs have been entrusted with the task of developing this 'software'.²⁸ So there is a need for collaborating both the sectors in bringing sustainable social development. Neither the state nor the NGOs alone can bring development in the developing societies. There is a need for collaboration and interdependence which alone can move the development process ahead. Government of India, in March 2000, has declared Planning Commission as the nodal agency for VOs/NGOs to facilitate Government-NGO interactions. The Planning Commission is in the process of creating an exhaustive database of these organizations.²⁹

The Role of the State towards NGOs

Broadly speaking the roles and functions of the government vis-a-vis voluntary organizations can be classified into three. The First role is that of regulator – of laws, legislation, procedures and rules, constitution etc. In this role, the state through its various departments and agencies attempt to legislate and implement legislation (for registration: *Society's Registration Act, Trust Act, Cooperative Act, Trade Union Act*; for financial aspects: *Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, Income Tax Act*; for service conditions of the staff: *Shops and Establishment Act, Labour Welfare Acts and Industrial Disputes Act*)

²⁸ Baviskar, B.S (2001) "NGOs and Civil Society in India", *Sociological Bulletin*, March, Vol. 50 (1), p. 11

²⁹ <http://pib.myiris.com/policy/article.php3?fl=eng1yr23>

which directly or indirectly affects the nature and functioning of, and problems and challenges faced by, voluntary organizations.³⁰ The second role that the state plays is that of determining the national model of development and related policies. The state has policies on various sectors of development and commensurate programmes, schemes that are implemented by the departments and agencies. The third and increasingly more pervasive role of the state has been to finance the work of voluntary organizations. Starting from the Central and State Social Welfare Boards (CSWB and SSWB) to the setting up of 'autonomous' institutions like National Watershed Development Board (NWDB) and CAPART (Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology), the scope, volume and diversity of state funding of voluntary organizations has increasing dramatically in the last 40 years and an increasingly large number of voluntary organizations depend on state for their survival and programmes.³¹

State-NGO Relationship in India: A Historical Perspective

Official support to voluntary organizations can be traced back to 1950s. The Central Social Welfare Board was created in 1953 to promote/ fund voluntary organizations. The State Social Welfare Boards were created by CSWB in 1954 as a policy measure to strengthen existing voluntary organizations and provide them technical and financial support. The First Plan set aside Rs. 40 million for assistance to voluntary organizations.³² The Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Plan sanctioned Rs. 190, 310, 410, and 830 million to the voluntary sector respectively because policy makers felt the sector could deal with social problems, the State could not address.³³

The Khadi and Village Industries Corporation (KVIC) was set up during this period to finance voluntary organizations (see table. 5.3) active in this mode of promoting the economic betterment of the poor, especially the Gandhian VOs. The Ministry of Community Development involved Gandhian VOs to organize and conduct training

³⁰ Tondon, Rajesh (1991) "Government – NGO Relations in India", Apr – June, Vol. 41, No. 2, p. 218

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Dimensions of Voluntary Sector in India: CAF's validated data base – 2000, p. 19

³³ <http://shikshanic.nic.in/cd50years/15/8P/85/8P850U01.htm>

programmes for its extension workers. The training of health workers were undertaken by Gandhian organizations at the behest of the Health Ministry. In 1977 the government provided an incentive to the corporate sector under Section 35 CCA of the Income Tax Act to donate to VOs involved in rural development. The business could claim 100 percent deduction on the donation amount from their taxable income. But under Mrs. Indira Gandhi VOs were sidelines and the bureaucracy assumed the primary responsibility of implementing poverty alleviation programmes in rural areas.³⁴

Table. 5.3: Trend in Funding of Promotional Agencies to VOs

Rs. in Millions

Year	CAPART	Growth Rate	CSWB	Growth Rate	KVIC	Growth Rate	Total
1996	17.41 (66.2%)		5.57 (21.2%)		3.33 (12.7%)		26.31 (100%)
1997	30.19 (73.4%)	+73.4%	7.46 (18.1%)	+33.9%	3.48 (8.5%)	+4.5%	41.13 (100%)
		- 24.3%		- 37.4%		- 64.1%	
1998	22.84 (79.4%)		4.67 (16.2%)		1.25 (4.3%)		28.76 (100%)

Source: Dimensions of Voluntary sector in India: CAF's validated database: 2000

The government established CAPART on September 18, 1986 as an autonomous body under the Rural Development Ministry. Its main objective is to promote and assist voluntary initiatives in the implementation of projects for sustainable development in rural areas. In slightly over a decade CAPART has become a major funder of VOs engaged in rural development. As shown in the data (see table.5.3), over the years it has shown an increase in its share of funding among the promotional agencies, like 66.2 percent in 1996 to 73.4 percent in 1997 and 79.4 percent in 1998. A total funding from CAPART was Rs. 12.68 crore in 1987-88 and it rose to 33.13 crore in 1998-99 and till date it has disbursed Rs. 508.17 crore to VOs working mainly in rural areas.³⁵

³⁴ CAF's data base: 2000, *op. cit*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Why States need NGOs?

Governments need NGOs to help ensure their programmes are effective, well targeted, socially responsible and well understood. The media need NGOs because they trust the local knowledge and alternative perspectives they offer. The public need them because of their services and their mobilizing capacity – helping citizens express their voice, or challenge authority. Parliamentarians need them for policy guidance, for feed back on what people want and as watchdogs in monitoring public programmes and enhancing the accountability of officials. The legitimacy of individual NGOs rests not necessarily in their mass-membership or their budget, but their usefulness to these constituencies. The NGO sector, therefore, is symbiotic with a well-functioning, democratic state, not parasitic or undermining.³⁶

NGOs create alliances and networks to place pressure on the state. They also provide expertise in ‘development software (participatory approaches, community organizing, stake holder ownership strategies); NGOs are more innovative, adaptable, cost effective, and aware of the local situation; and their grassroots representation brings legitimacy and community mobilisation to the programme. NGOs strengthen the state through their participation in improving the efficiency in government services, acting as strategic partners from reform-oriented ministries, filling the gaps in service provision, and helping the government in forging ties with the grassroots.³⁷

Cultivating popularity needs channels for eliciting what would be popular, for providing people with what they need, and for enabling people to do the things they want. Over centuries civil societies (NGOs) have evolved to provide these channels. NGOs are important to the states in that they can:

1. encourage governments to adopt innovations from the voluntary sector
2. educate and sensitize the public about their rights and opportunities
3. collaborate in making government programmes more effective

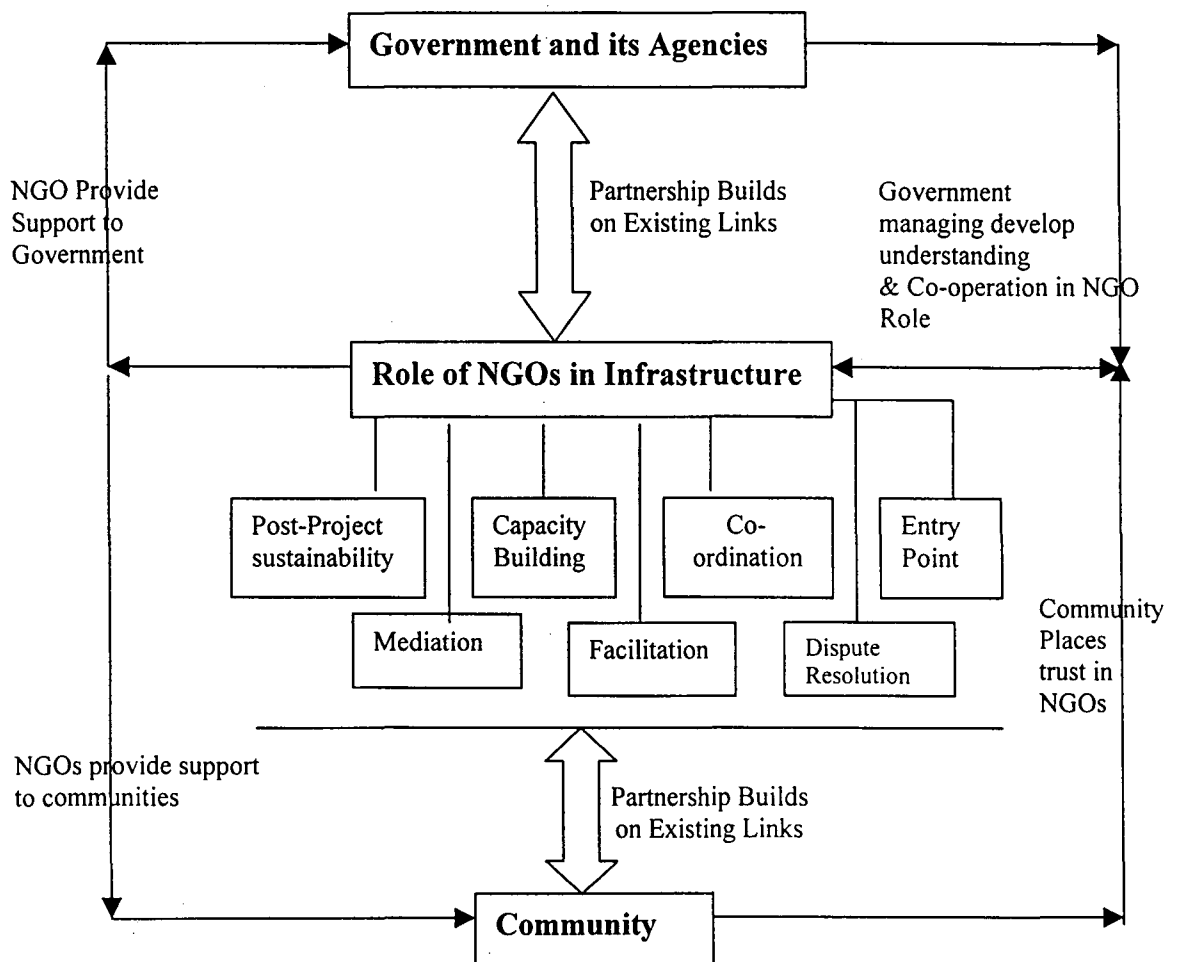
³⁶ Clark, John D (2002) “NGOs and the State” in Desai, V and Potter, R.B (eds), *The Companion to Development Studies*, London: ARNOLD, p. 505

³⁷ Desai, V (2002) in V. Desai and R.B Potter, eds, p. 497

4. attune programmes to public needs
5. strengthen local institutions and make them more accountable
6. act as conduits for citizen consultation and advocacy (Clark: 2002: 506).

According to Plummer (1999) NGOs play the role of mediator, facilitator, coordinator, capacity builder, provider of community development expertise, dispute resolution, and post-project sustainability and establishes a healthy relationship between the state and community.³⁸

Fig. 5.3: Relationship of NGOs with Community and the State



Source: Plummer, J (1999), p. 74, This is a slightly modified form of Plummer's diagram, where his study is based on government municipalities, but I have generalised it to government and its agencies.

³⁸ Plummer, J (1999) *Municipalities and Community Participation: A Source Book for Capacity Building*, London, Earthscan, p. 74

Skepticism in Partnership

The state governments in the Third World societies, due to their failure to reach the grassroots, are trying to have a partnership with the development NGOs in rural and community development. Both the sectors have their own limitations. The government implementing agency i.e. bureaucracy is considered as corrupt, ignorant about the grassroots reality and inaccessible to the general public. So also the NGOs are too small to have broad and macro structural changes in the society. They are also criticized for the continuous dependence on foreign funding and donor agencies. So most of the governments in the South, especially India, are trying to have collaboration with the voluntary sector in the process of democratizing development.

The Narasimha Rao government³⁹ identified a number of areas of NGOs participation – watershed development, sanitation and drinking water, integrated rural development programme, family welfare, education, health, women and child development, environment, science and technology and non-governmental energy sources, and urban development etc. But the Indian NGOs tend to keep a wide no-person's land between themselves and the government. Most NGOs have the feeling that the governments act as an overlord in their interactions with them. There is hardly any evidence of mutual respect that should characterize such a partnership (Jain: 1995: 81-82). As one activist puts it:

*“A rethinking of government attitudes and work style could perhaps promote a more equal partnership between the government and NGOs.... NGOs certainly need more decision-making powers when implementing government schemes. While adhering to a broad policy framework, every programme has to meet the local needs. Mutual respect and an accent on genuine people centered achievement will enable the government and NGOs to capitalize on each other's strength....”*⁴⁰

³⁹ Addressing a meeting on 7th and 8th of March 1994 on NGO- Government Relationship organised by the Planning Commission the Indian Prime Minister P.V Narasimha Rao identified a number of areas of NGO participation. He called for the collaboration and partnership between the two sectors in their effort to alleviate poverty and grassroots development. For details see Jain, RB (1995), *op. cit*, Pp. 81-82

⁴⁰ Quoted from Jain, R.B (ed) (1995), *op. cit*, p. 82

The conflicts and problems between governments and NGOs arise from the absence of inadequacies of legislation and policies or non-implementation/ mal-implementation thereof. It has been observed that the more active, dynamic and radical the NGOs, the more troublesome is its relationship with government.

Preconditions for Successful Collaboration

Government-NGO collaboration is a felt need of the present time. The skeptic, mutual distrust and the doubtful attitude of both the sectors towards each other should be removed to have a successful collaboration for a sustainable development. For successful collaboration, there are some preconditions:

- Openness and willingness for collaboration from both sides
- Mutual trust and respect
- Favourable government policy
- Favourable socio-economic and political environments
- Acceptance of autonomy and independence
- Pluralism of NGO opinion and positions
- Adequate channels of institutional communication
- Mutual learning process, training and support
- Transparency of activities and accountability of concerned government and NGO Staff (Begum Afroza: 2001: 44).

Voluntary Agencies and the Planning Process in India

The role of voluntary agencies in development was recognised when a planning commission was constituted. Underlying the significance of voluntary agencies in the welfare of a young nation like India, the First Five Year Plan (Chakrabarty: 2003: 138-139) 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 private voluntary agencies. These private agencies have long been

*working in their own humble way and without adequate aid for the achievement of their objectives with own leadership, organization and resources. Any plan for social and economic regeneration should take into account the services rendered by these agencies and the state should give maximum co-operation in strengthening their effort. Public cooperation through voluntary social service organizations is capable of yielding valuable results in channelizing private efforts for the promotion of social welfare.*⁴¹

In the Third Plan onwards the idea gained ground that the state-driven development was not adequate for India's socio-economic growth, and hence voluntary agencies had a supplementary role to play. Given the philanthropic goal, the activities of these agencies revolved around service to humanity. With the growing importance of planning in independent India, the inputs proved by the voluntary agencies, become crucial in areas where the role of the state is neither clear nor pronounced. The successive Planning commission reports have, therefore clearly laid emphasis on the need for involvement of voluntary agencies, as a significant aspect of the participation of people in the various developmental efforts.⁴² Not only do they suggest an alternative path of development involving people, they also assist the state in realizing the socio-economic objectives:

- by making state aware of the difficulties, they enable people to avail of the benefit of various government programmes to which they are entitled;
- reporting the irregularities, if any, in the implementation of programmes and
- motivating the local communities to generate resources from within the communities to meet those needs which fall out side the purview of government programmes (Chakrabarty: 2003: 141).

Since independence some urgency of voluntary action was felt in certain areas where NGOs could work constructively attention was thus drawn to reconstruction and development ensuring people's participation. The policy of the government to encourage voluntary action in the area of development further accelerated both NGOs and their development-oriented programmes. In fact, the shift in the policy of the government

⁴¹ Quoted from Chakrabarty, Bidyut (2003). "Voluntary associations and the Development Imperatives: The Indian Experience" in Mehra, Ajay K, Singh, Anil K and Kueck, Gert, W (ed), *op. cit*, Pp. 138-139

⁴² *Ibid*, Pp. 140-141

explicit in Seventh Plan document is a landmark in the history of voluntary action in rural development. The Plan document admits that there has been inadequate recognition of the role of voluntary organizations in accelerating the process of social and economic development. Serious efforts were made to involve them in development programmes, especially in the planning and implementation of rural programmes.⁴³

The Sixth Plan is probably the beginning of a process in which the voluntary agencies became an integral part of the development agenda of the Indian state in the areas of family welfare, health, education, water management, environmental protection, tribal development etc. By recognizing the importance of voluntary organizations in the above areas, the Sixth Plan also registered the shrinking role of the state in development.⁴⁴ The development oriented Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990)⁴⁵, in which the government planned to channel Rs.2 billion through NGOs where the NGOs were given three main roles⁴⁶ in promoting rural development: (i) acting as intermediaries between governmental development programmes and the people (ii) mobilizing local resources, and (iii) organizing the poor to ensure the accountability of village level officials, has explicitly recognised the positive contribution of voluntary sector and stated that henceforth serious efforts would be made to involve voluntary agencies in various development programmes, namely:

1. To supplement government effort so as to offer the rural poor choices and alternatives
2. To be eyes and ears of people at village level
3. To set an example for people by adopting simple, innovative, flexible and inexpensive means with limited resources, to reach a large number with less overheads and greater community participation

⁴³ Gangrade and Sooryamoorthy (1995) *op. cit.*, p. 40

⁴⁴ Chakrabarty, B (2003), *op. cit.*, p. 144

⁴⁵ Pattnaik, Eswar Rao (2000). "Voluntary Action and Rural Development: A Case Study of Lokadusti" in Kamta Prasad (ed), *NGOs and Socio-economic Development Opportunities*, New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publication, Pp. 229-230

⁴⁶ Clark, Gerard (1998) *"The Politics of NGOs in South East Asia: Participation and Protest in the Philippines"*, London: ROUTLEDGE, p. 16

4. To activate delivery system and to make it effective at village level
5. To disseminate information as knowledge is power
6. To make communities self-reliant
7. To show how villages human resources, rural skills and local knowledge grossly underutilized at present, could be used for their development
8. To bring technology in a simpler form to rural poor
9. To train a team of grassroots workers, who believe in professionalising volunteerism
10. Mobilize financial resources from within the community. Eventually the ambitious Plan contemplates mobilize and organize poor and to generate awareness to demand quality services and introduce a community system of accountability on performance of village level government functionaries (Pattnaik: 2000: 2290-230).

This itself is a radical improvement on the perception of the state and it took three decades 'to legitimize the role of voluntary agencies regarding facilitating the process of making people aware of alternatives – other than the monopolistic delivery system of the government – that was legal, democratic and non-violent, with a view about bring socio-economic changes'. The Seventh plan therefore a benchmark in the growth of voluntary agencies in India for two specific reasons: (a) by formally recognizing their role in the development process, and (b) by professionalising voluntarism. This ultimately resulted a radical shift in the approach of the state to development where not just the state but the cooperation of various other actors are involved in the process of development.⁴⁷

The Eighth Plan (1992-1997) approach to NGOs was also encouraging. The Narasimha Rao⁴⁸ administration called for increased participation of NGOs in improving the delivery of social services and in assuring people's participation for micro-level planning, especially for rural development. A group was set up by the government to examine the issues and simplify the procedures for processing grant-in-aid proposals to

⁴⁷ Chakrabarty, B (2003), *op. cit*, p. 145- 146

⁴⁸ Former Prime Minister of India during the Eighth Plan period.

NGOs. Ninth Plan (1997-2000) considered NGOs as peoples' participation agencies. The government has established various institutions to promote the working of NGOs in rural development.⁴⁹

Recognizing the important contribution made by the voluntary sector and to facilitate its functioning, a Steering Committee on Voluntary Sector was constituted as part of the Tenth Plan process. Further, to create an enabling environment for the voluntary sector to collaborate with the government for development, in March 2000, the Government of India declared the Planning Commission as the nodal agency for the GO-NGO interface. Government support to the voluntary sector can be gauged from the large number of schemes being implemented through NGOs by the various Ministries and Departments. It is estimated that there are about 250 such schemes under progress, under 20 Ministries and Departments. The Planning Commission lists about 13,000 NGOs who have received grants from the Government.⁵⁰

Government – NGOs Relations in India: Towards a Theory of Political Space

Two sets of opinions are found regarding the collaboration between government and NGOs. One group discourages such collaboration and holds that NGOs should not collaborate formally in programmes sponsored by government and therefore should not receive funds directly from the government; doing so NGOs would lose their independence and voluntarism. The other group encourages government-NGO collaboration and they argue that NGOs have a role to play in government programmes aimed at poverty alleviation, a role which is essential to the success of programmes and which the government cannot provide. So, government should support the NGOs to enable them to fulfill their objectives.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Banu, Shareena. C.P (2002) *Civil Society and Rural Development: An Analysis of Two NGOs in Karnataka*, Unpublished Dissertation submitted to Centre for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University, p.50

⁵⁰ Breaking New Ground: NGOs Support to Sustainable Development, <http://envfor.nic.in/divisions/ic/wssd/doc3/chapter17/css/Chapter17.htm>

⁵¹ *Ibid*, Pp. 4 2-43

The context in which NGOs operate, and the breadth of activity they are allowed, is determined by the interaction between the state and NGOs. Political space refers to the arena in which non-state actors may undertake initiatives independently *vis-a-vis* the state. It constitutes a sensitive, ever-changing environment within which all actors strive to shape their purposes and visions of development. Grassroots organizations operate within the parameters set by the state. The state may encourage, tolerate, interfere, discourage or abolish NGO activity through legal or coercive means. Indeed the political space within which they can operate is explicitly or implicitly defined by the government and is quite restricted.⁵²

Poona Wignaraja suggests that by adopting an empowering strategy, which serves to link, organise and mobilise grassroots initiatives into a cohesive movement, they can become a countervailing power in the (broader) societal context and help to widen the political space even for the participatory, self-reliant rural development (Riker: 1995: 23).

Two-fold realisation have steered the Government-NGO collaboration in developing countries. The governments are reckoning with the fact that they have to incorporate in their operational modalities the features, which account largely for NGO success. On the other hand, the NGOs have increasingly recognised that they cannot operate their programmes in isolation from the extensive government delivery mechanism and institutional framework because government has the experience, resources and communication network to scale up the NGOs programmes. Interactions and institutional collaboration between governmental organizations and the NGOs, therefore, have become an institutional strategy for development.⁵³ The relation between government and NGOs has been mixed and the areas of agreement and disagreement, of cooperation, as well as confrontation. The interaction of government – NGOs in India relates to (Jain: 1995: 69):

⁵² Riker, James. V. (1995) "Contending Perspectives for Interpreting Government-NGO Relations in South and South-east Asia: Constraints, Challenges and the Search for Common Ground in Rural Development" in Hayzer, N (et. al), *op. cit*, Pp. 23-24

⁵³ Begum, Afroza (2001) "Government – NGO Collaboration in Health Sector and Population Management in Bangladesh: Experience from the Field" in *IASSI Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 41

- policies and legislations affecting NGOs themselves or common people, especially disadvantaged sections,
- operational collaboration with programmes with or without government funding,
- mutual perception and critique of each other's independent development initiatives, and
- peaceful protest movements of people in which NGOs are involved

There are number of Acts and Legislations governing the relations between the government and NGOs are Societies Registration Act –1860, The Trade Union Act, India Trust Act, Cooperative Act and Section 25 of Companies Act under which NGOs are registered. Other Acts which directly affect the working of NGOs are the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) – 1976 regulating foreign funding of NGOs and the Income Tax Act – 1965 governing income tax liabilities and obligations of NGOs, if any. CAPART is also a major instrument of government of India for the funding of NGOs has representatives of NGOs on its general body, executive committee and standing committees.⁵⁴

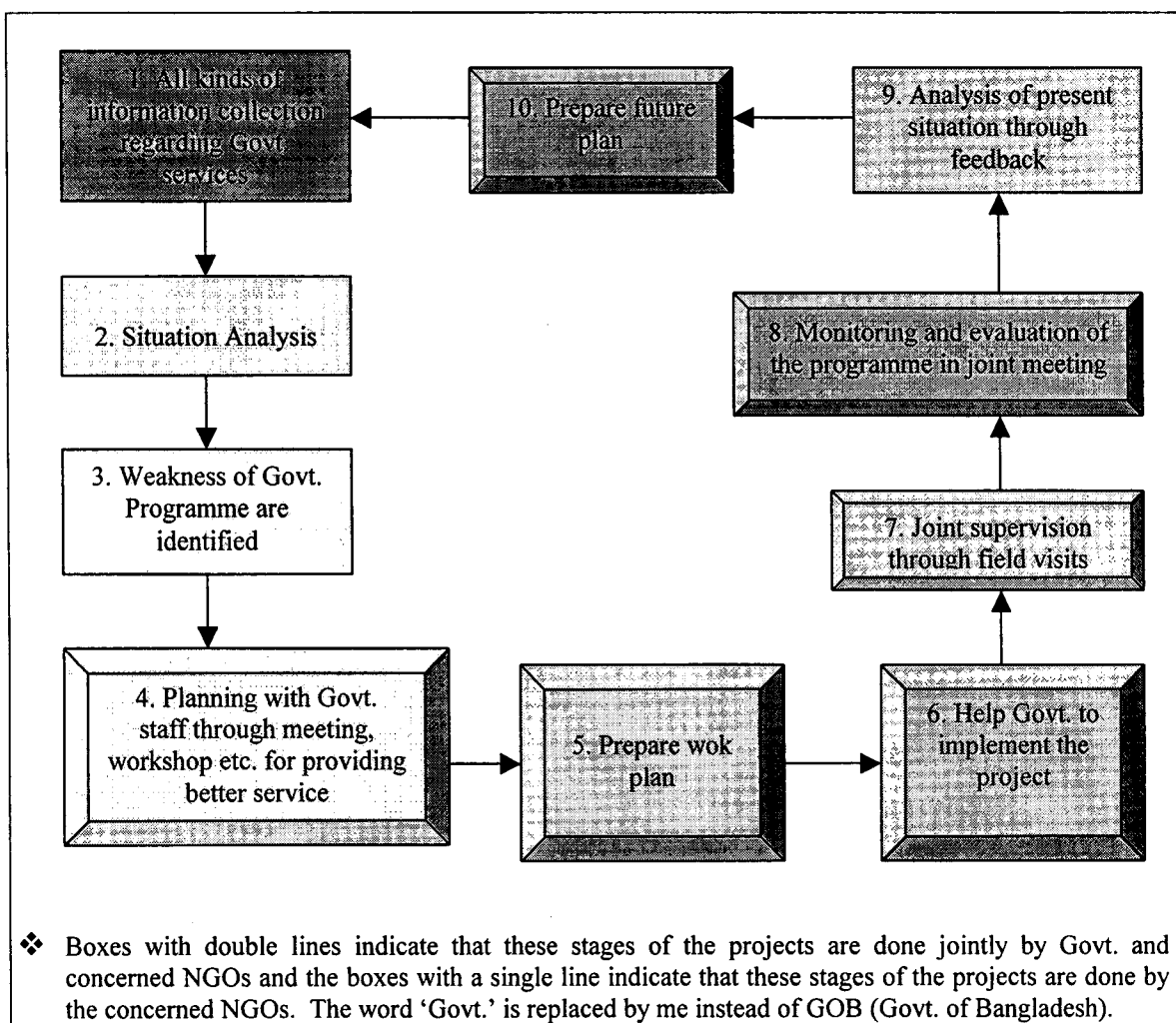
The Rationale for Government – NGO Collaboration

- collaboration ensures participation of the poor people
- collaboration creates the effective demand of the poor people for public services
- collaboration ensures pluralism
- collaboration ensures utilization of the knowledge and ability of the both counterparts
- collaboration ensures the utilization of the potentials of both the sectors
- collaboration ensures cost-effectiveness through coordinated programmes
- collaboration ensures the country wide expansion of successful programmes
- collaboration creates a new networking system in the development scenario (Begum Afroza: 2001: 43).

⁵⁴ Jain, R.B (1995), *op. cit*, p. 69

Afroza Begum points out the various stages of the government and NGOs collaboration (see fig. 5.3), the outcome of which brings efficient implementation and service delivery in the rural areas. She has mentioned ten steps of the collaboration in which the NGOs collect the preliminary information about the needs and problems of the people at the grassroots level, on the basis of which they move ahead to prepare the plan for their development with government. The collaboration includes joint planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Figure: 5: 4: Functional flow of GO – NGOs Collaboration



Source: Begum, Afroza (2001), p.48

Both government and NGOs enjoy various advantages from collaboration (see table.5.3). NGOs in the collaborative discourse got a chance to represent the poorer sections of the society and influence the government during the planning by suggesting policy formulation. They also motivate the government bureaucracy to have a more participated and people centered approach to development. The NGOs act as the service providers of the government projects in the remote places. The government also get access to the technical innovations and strategies of the NGOs. The government also uses the NGOs to mobilize people on various development issues. The following table explains the benefits that both the counterparts enjoy from collaborative programmes.

Table: 5: 4
Advantages of Collaborative Programme

Sl.	NGOs Perspective	GOs Perspective
1	Gaining access to research expertise and technological resources in government.	Helps gaining access to the technical innovations and strategies of NGOs
2	Helps to scale up NGO generated innovations through the government apparatus.	NGOs can help implementing public policy and monitoring and coordinating grassroots activities.
3	Greater and easy access to government agencies, resources and expertise.	NGOs can train the field level government staff to motivate and to innovate participatory and people oriented approach.
4	Create opportunity to advocate and motivate government staff to be more people oriented.	NGOs can be used as sub-contractors of government projects in the remote places. Greater cost-effectiveness and better delivery services for the government.
5	Provide means of exercising pressure over government agencies, and urging them to reorient their policies.	Government can use NGOs to mobilize people more effectively. More information available to government from the grassroots and more interaction with the people.

Source: Begum, Afroza (2001), p. 43 and Holloway, Richard (1998), p. 103

The discussions in earlier chapters reveal the idea that the development model adopted by the State in the past fifty years has failed to reach at the grassroots and understand the problems of the rural poor. The state and the earlier development paradigm is criticised on the basis of its elite centered, centralised, bureaucratic, unaccountable, growth and profit oriented planning. As a response, the NGOs provided an alternative to the State approach of development. They, on the basis of their closeness to the grassroots social reality understand the rural social problems. The NGOs are also

criticised on their complete dependence on funding, corruption, internal bureaucratisation and lack of ability to produce macro level changes. The inability of both the paradigms has led the way to think of a new development discourse which calls for the emergence of a new development paradigm where the State is acting in collaboration with the NGOs for the rural development project. A comparison between the dominant model and alternative model are discussed below (see table. 5.4).

**Table: 5: 5: Comparison between the Dominant and Alternative Model
In Development Discourse**

Sl.	The Dominant Model	The Alternative Model
1	Centralized, elite-controlled	Democratic, decentralized
2	Growth based, profit oriented	People-based, welfare oriented
3	Aggravates socio-economic inequalities and discrimination based on gender, caste, ethnicity, class, race, religion, etc	Reduces existing biases and discrimination based on gender, caste, ethnicity, class, race, religion, etc
4	Decision-making and resources controlled by a few	Decision-making and resources controlled by many
5	Ecologically destructive, instrumentalises nature	Ecologically sound, cherishes nature
6	Women are marginalized, their and problems are secondary	Women are central, their needs and problems paramount
7	Accelerates urbanization, rural impoverishment and rural-urban migration	Limits urbanization, promotes rural based economic generation
8	Competitive and survival of the fittest	Cooperative, survival of all
9	Industrialization and 'high' technology	Decentralized production, appropriate technology
10	Westernized, promotes 'First World' needs and interests	Indigenous, promotes local needs and interests
11	Promotes cultural homogeneity	Protects cultural diversity
12	Aggravates conflict and militarization	Promotes peace, disarmament demilitarization
13	Low priority for social sector investments	High priority for social sector spending, especially health, education, child care
14	Promotes Western science and technology as superior	Validates indigenous science and technology, integrates the best from all systems

Source: Giri, Bharati Silawal (1998), p. 35
Meloo, Sevanavel (1995)

Concluding Remarks

This chapter tries to strike the balance between the State and NGOs approach to development in Indian context. It explains that neither the State nor the NGOs can alone bring development in a vast and complex country like India. Both the approaches have their own internal contradiction. The State model of development has been criticized on the ground that it is very centralized and bureaucratic in nature. It has failed to include the excluding sections of the society and the State seems to have followed a capitalist discourse where the poor over the years have become poorer and the rich has become richer. The problems at the grassroots have not got any long-term solution. The NGOs, which are very close to the people as they claim, are always dependent on outside funding and are micro project oriented. They are not able to bring any macro level social transformation and their targets are very small because of their structural deficiencies. Both the State and NGOs have also their own plus points. The state has the structural capacity to bring any kind of macro level changes and it has the implementing machinery; so also the NGOs are very close to the grassroots level and employ the method of participatory approach in problem solving. They give voice to the people and mobilize the silent majority to participate actively in the decision-making process. Thus, this chapter, striking a balance, calls for the collaboration between the two agents of development, for the welfare of the people and transformation of society.

Towards Conclusion

Towards Conclusion

The last two decades have seen a rapid growth of indigenous NGOs and a new emphasis of non-governmental sector reflects the framework of wider changes in macro-economic policy, privatization and the reduced role of states in all aspects of the economy and the provision of services. At a time when orthodox models lie in tatters, NGOs are seen as dynamic, privatized alternatives to bloated state bureaucracies and are envisioned as vehicles of development, democracy and empowerment.¹

In the previous chapters I have tried to discuss the various issues relating State, NGOs and the issue of development and pattern of governance in India. Non-governmental organizations, which form a part of the larger domain of civil society, have emerged as an important actor of development after the rolling back of the State from the socio-economic activities since the 1980s. They are defined as the private, non-profit, professional organizations concerned public welfare goals. Civil society is characterized as the non-State actor autonomous sphere and the trust building associational life, formed by citizens voluntarily in interaction with rather than subordination to the State. NGOs are acting as the watchdog of democracy in India, as explained by Toqueville, and enhancing the process of democratization by mobilizing the people and organizing social movements to keep the State machinery transparent and accountable. Thus, the civic groups have proliferated in India after the 1980s, providing a third force to check governments and corporations and make them more and more accountable to the common mass.

The idea of civil society and developmental NGOs which has brought an associational revolution in the country emerged as a response to fulfill the aspirations of the common people to crave out an autonomous space for collective action and counter to the State. The experience in the past fifty years of post-independence period development

¹ Wickramasinghe, Nira (2001) *Civil Society in Sri Lanka: New Circles of Power*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p. 72

model explains that the rolling back of the developmental State, inefficiency, increasing corruption and hierarchical bureaucratic structure have together given rise to the increasing role of NGOs in post liberalization period. As Shashi Tharoor points out that the dominance of the State in the national economy had some negative repercussions. The sector of the economy that grew most in independent India was neither the agricultural nor the industrial, but the bureaucratic. In other words regulation became more important economic activity than production. The State became all-pervasive during the initial years of planning and the citizens became alienated from the development and decision-making process. All these show that despite the domination of the State in the initial decades of planning, the Indian State has not been able to tackle the basic problems of the society.

The State machinery emerged to monolithic, bureaucratized, rigid and unaccountable to its citizens. The largest democracy of the World has failed to fulfill the aspirations of its people and guarantee them the constitutional rights and opportunities. A major chunk of its population are living below the minimum subsistence level and the marginalized sections of society like scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and women are deprived of their human rights and entitlements. The people of these sections are more vulnerable to exploitation and oppression. As the data show that the crime rate against the people of these sections are increasing over the years. The unaccountable government and corrupt bureaucracy have placed India in the eighty-third position in the corruption perception index with a rating of 2.8 in a list of 133 countries of the world.

As a response to the State failure, the NGOs emerged as the alternative development agent in the India scenario. They claimed that the failure of the State is not because of lack of resources or any other thing, but because of the centralized system of planning and lack of people's participation in the decision making process. They, on the grounds of their flexibility of methods and closeness to the grassroots social reality, developed an alternative paradigm as a response to the centralized State planning.

Voluntary action has spread today from the activity of those agencies which are the most dominant sectors of government and corporate policy, destroying democratic

institutions, natural resources and natural communities, to the actions of social movements concerned with restructuring society towards greater control of the people on their destinies on the basis of justice and non-violence. The non-party, non governmental organizations is a similarly diffused category ranging from representative voices of impoverished and ravaged communities to those propagating and carrying out official 'development' policies that are hurting the mass of the people under the influence of transnational corporations that are acquiring a growing influence on the state policies. The comparative advantage of NGOs who are participating in such governmental programmes is not that they induce any shift in development strategy but that they speed up development strategy by bypassing the bureaucracy.²

Although it is experienced that the NGOs have emerged as an important agent of development and democratization, it is not free from any deficiencies. The strengths of the voluntary sector are the micro-nature of its activities, innovativeness and the commitment of the personnel. But as Sheldon Annis (1987: 129) points out, "in the face of pervasive poverty small scale can merely mean insignificant; low cost can mean under-financed; innovative can mean temporary".³ Hence, what is now required of this sector in the ability to consolidate its strengths and work towards producing a greater and wider impact.

Being critical of the state model of development, the neo-liberal economists have talked of the need to streamline bureaucracy and cut-down the role of the state. Advocates of decentralized development have talked of the need for revitalization of the local institutions and community organizations to bring about development. Grassroots activists demand the withdrawal of the state from civil society. The grassroots action groups argue that state interference cripples local initiatives and compromises on the autonomy of civil society.⁴

² Kothari, Rajni (1986) "The NGOs, the State and World Capitalism", *Social Action: Quarterly Journal of Social Trends*, Oct- Dec, Vol. 36, No. 4, Pp. 370- 371

³ Annis, Sheldon (1987) "Can small scale development become a large scale policy? The case of Latin America", *World Development*, Vol. 15, p. 129

⁴ Padmaja, Enjeti (1996) *State and Developmental NGOs: A Study of Institutional Linkages*, Unpublished Dissertation to Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. P. 26

In India and other developing countries there are areas of conflict in state-society relations but equally there are areas where collaboration and cooperation between society and state. The state is an institution that arises from the society and can be understood properly when placed in the social context. A perspective that sees state-society relations as opposing categories or as one of them being submissive cannot explain a range of institutions such as developmental NGOs. Development NGOs can be defined as the 'civic organizations' which draw upon the resources of the society and on the basis of voluntariness transform them into collective goods to solve social problems in the life of individuals and communities inhabiting this sphere; their closer association with community life makes them better problem solving mechanisms than government agencies. Efforts to make state more responsive and efficient should take steps to bring in institutional pluralism. Institutional pluralism is a necessity in the contemporary society because of the vast diversity of the problems facing us. A number of institutions acting in tandem could solve these problems better than a single institution. It would along strengthen the democratic impulses of the society by providing a wider social base for the institution. The crucial point, however, is that the key actors i.e. the state and the developmental NGOs must be able to work out a broader framework of collaboration.⁵

The State-NGO relationship should not be one of contractor and sub-contractor where the NGOs receive payment for fulfilling certain targets. They should also actively participate with the government in the development programmes designated by the state starting from the identification of the rural needs and necessities to plan formulation, program designing, decision-making process, policy formulation, programme implementation, evaluation and monitoring. They should neither be the contractor or provider of social services of the government or of the people rather they should act as enabler and supporter of the people for the improvement and the transformation of the society to establish a just and egalitarian social order. Government also should not try to co-opt NGOs but should collaborate with NGOs. The NGO-Government relationship is the issue of co-existence with mutual respect, dignity and autonomy.

⁵ *Ibid*, Pp. 34-35

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