

An Inquiry Into Political Economy of Non-Governmental Organizations In India

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

SUSHANT GAURAV



**CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067, INDIA**

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जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067

Centre for the Study of Social Systems
School of Social Sciences

Tel.: 26704408
Email: chair_csss@mail.jnu

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation titled '**An Inquiry Into Political Economy of Non-Governmental Organizations in India**' submitted to the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** is an original research work and has not been submitted so far, in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma to any University/Institution.

Sushant Gaurav
SUSHANT GAURAV

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


Nilika Mehrotra
PROF. NILIKA MEHROTRA

(Chairperson)

 Chairperson
CSSS/SSS
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067

Bimgl Akoijam
Dr. BIMGL AKOIJAM

(Supervisor)

 Associate Professor
Centre for the Study
of Social Systems
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi

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Abbreviations

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
UN	United Nations
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programmes
IMF	International Monetary Fund
CWF	Commonwealth Federation
GROs	Grassroot Organization
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
GONGOs	Government Organized Non-Governmental Organizations
BINGOs	Business Industries Non-Governmental Organizations
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
RWA	Resident Welfare Association
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
DNGOs	Donor-based Non-Governmental Organizations
SHGs	Self-Help Groups
PNGOs	Professionalised Non-Governmental Organizations
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
GOI	Government of India
CSWB	Central Social Welfare Board
CDPs	Community Development Programs
Oxfam	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief

SFDA	Small Farmers' Development Agency
IADP	Intensive Agricultural District Program
IAAP	Intensive Agricultural Areas Program
TDA	Tribal Development Agency
MFAL	Marginal, Small Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Development Agency
NPA	New Policy Agenda
USAID	United States Agency for International Aid
ADC	Alianza Democratica Compesino
MNCs	Multi-National Companies
ULB	Urban Local Bodies
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
NBA	Narmada Bachao Andolan
NVDP	Narmada Valley Dam Project
SSP	Sardar Sarovar Project
NCT	National Capital Territory
IPC	Indian Penal Code

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INTRODUCTION

The year 1991 marks a sharp break in the process of 'development' in India. It heralded not only the accentuation of neo-liberalism, characterized through strategies of *liberalization, privatization and globalization*, but it also marked the culmination of a development paradigm. The state led development strategies in which state had been the embodiment of welfare and guarantor of citizens' rights was substituted by development perspectives of neo-liberalism. In other words, 'top-down' approach led by state was apparently substituted by 'bottom-up' approach of development.

Since 1980s, the discourse of 'alternative development' began to point out the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of state in bringing about 'development' at grassroots level. It is in this context of 'development' at grassroots level that *non-governmental organizations* emerged as important organizational entity. In India, 'the rise of NGOs is one of the central processes in the sphere of development since 1980s' (Baviskar 2001). There seems a correlation between neo-liberal socio-economic policies of state and emergence of NGOs. This period is marked by 'retreat of developmentalism as a project of nation-state and the rise of post-developmental neo-liberal political economy' (*ibid.*).

In the discourse of 'alternative development' or 'bottom-up' approach of development civil society is held to be one of the most important agents of delivering developmental activities. It is argued that an active civil society is indispensable to the realization of democracy and development. The NGO discourse also makes similar argument and regards NGOs as extension of civil society. The discourse of 'alternative development' can be characterized as an attempt at reversal of the conquest of society by market (Kothari 1994). The strength of NGO discourse also marks a weakness characterized by the neglect of the state in the process of development (*ibid.*).

The context of proliferation of NGOs can be situated in the advancement of neo-liberal regime across the world (Petras 1999). If conditions of proliferation of NGOs, their funding, organization structure and recruitment thereof are subjected to analysis, one finds that many of the claims of NGO discourse are contradictory. Relationship between NGOs and their donor constrains NGOs in a way that NGOs cannot overlook the priorities of the donors.

History of proliferation of NGOs can be traced back to the end of Second World War. United Nations held NGOs to be a significant partner in promoting democracy and human security (United Nations Charter 1949). Various multilateral agencies like World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and United Nation Organization have advocated for participation of NGOs in the execution of developmental processes. World Bank hailed NGOs for their cost-effectiveness, efficient management and for their links with grassroots communities. Eventually, as consequences of 'structural adjustment' and 'New Policy Agenda' unfolded, NGOs became the preferred agency in both formulation as well as execution of welfare services.

There are about 3.1 million NGOs in India, double the number of schools in India and 250 times the number of government hospitals, approximately one NGO per 400 people in India (The Indian Express Aug 2015). From 2002-09, Rs 6,654 crore was released by centre and state governments to various NGOs, averaging Rs 950 crore per year. In the financial year 2010-11, about 22,000 NGOs received more than \$2 billion of which \$650 million came from United States (The Times of India Feb 2013).

Despite the preponderance of NGOs in India, many of the socio-economic indicators like population below poverty line, per capita income, gross enrolment ratio and some health indicators like proportion of malnutrition among others only point to the fact that NGOs have not been successful in their task. One of the major reasons is that the very socio-economic and political structures in which they are situated, limits them to making some ethical, moral or at best humanist claim. They fail to address the broad structural issues and thus are rendered depoliticised.

I intend to examine the historical conditions in which NGOs emerged and concomitant processes that have led to proliferation of NGOs. The notion of development presumably forms the background of the intended study. However, in so far as organizations such as NGOs, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), or Community Based Organizations (CBOs) can be conceptually regarded as constituting a domain distinct from state and market, and historically situated in the discourses and practices of 'development', I think that an inquiry into political economy of NGOs (particularly in India) is indispensable to understanding of politics of aid and by extension to that of 'development'.

Literature Review

Defining NGO

The term 'nongovernmental organization' (NGO) is a post- Second World War expression which was initially coined by the United Nations. Article 71 of United Nations Charter stipulated that NGOs could be accredited to UN for consulting purposes (Martens 2002). The usage of the term NGO thus disseminated and crystallised through the practice of UN. In *Mission Impossible? Defining Nongovernmental Organizations*, Martens outlines two approaches to defining NGOs: juridical and sociological. In juridical studies, the emphasis is placed on the legal status of NGOs in the national context and their implications for international law. Since the beginning of the 1990s, NGOs have been heavily involved in the formulation and implementation of international laws and norms. Most important, NGOs take part during all stages of the negotiation processes at global conferences; they seek to influence governmental representatives through informal lobbying and presenting expert knowledge. Notably, in the field of human rights protection, NGOs have been identified as contributing to the advancement of international standards. Human rights NGOs have continuously gathered information on human rights abuses and put forward proposals on the development and the implementation of human rights law. For example, experts from Amnesty International were participating during the establishment and writing processes of the Convention of the Abolition of Torture and the drafting of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Similarly, in the field of environmental protection, NGO input on advancing international standards to protect the environment has been of much importance (Martens 2002).

There is not any consensus regarding the definition of NGOs in the field of sociology. They are primarily defined/described through negative references, in other words they are defined by what they are not. Most of the sociologists define NGOs as organizations which exhibit four defining characteristics which enable them to be distinguished from other organizations in civil society. They are; voluntary, dependent, not-for profit, self-serving (Edwards & Hulme, 1989).

Martens, attempts to integrate two approaches and arrives at the following definition: *NGOs are formal (professionalized) independent societal organizations whose primary aim is to promote common goals at the national or the international level* (Martens 2002).

However, even this definition is inconsistent and misleading. NGOs need not necessarily be independent and promoter of common goal. One of the most important conditions for NGOs to even operate at the first place is a regime which allows such organizations to operate. In other words NGOs can operate within a juridico-legal complex which recognizes them as a legitimate entity and allows them to function. So, NGOs have to be situated in the intersectionality of the political apparatuses. In India, NGOs are registered under *Societies Registration Act 1860* and *The Bombay Public Trust Act 1950*. In contemporary times, there is a marked tendency of state to collaborate with NGOs in terms of formulation of socio-economic policies and also their execution. Various agencies of state (bureaucracy at different level) collaborate with NGOs to deliver the welfare services, the implication of which means that there is an aspect of interaction between NGOs and various agencies of state such as law, bureaucracy etc.

Besides state, NGOs depend on other institutions for their different needs. The need for funds brings them in direct dependency with donor agencies. Major proportion of the funding of NGOs (particularly in India) comes from department of government of western countries, US department of Aid, British department of Aid etc. NGOs also secure a substantial amount of funding from various corporate houses, which in turn also involve NGOs to fulfil their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Quite clearly, NGOs can secure funding in an economic set up which allows corporate sector to make huge profit, in other words neo-liberal set up is indispensable to the functioning of NGOs.

The purpose of foregone paragraphs was not merely intended as exercise in nomenclature, rather this exercise was undertaken to delineate relationship that are constitutive of NGOs. Quite clearly, NGOs exist in a dynamic relationship with state and market on the one hand and with the people on the other. The purpose of the proposed research is to critically examine such relationship along with concomitant implications in the field of what is broadly termed as 'development'.

Onset of Proliferation of NGOs

As mentioned earlier, there seems to be a correlation or concurrence of the advancement of neo-liberalism and proliferation of NGOs. The broader discourse within which NGOs can be situated is that of 'alternative development'.

The origin of formulation of alternative approach to development can be traced back to early 1970s as a response that precipitated around the economic crisis characterised by first oil shock in 1973. The 'oil shock' forced the governments of developed countries to realise the limitations of development based on economic growth. Besides, the process of globalisation was already in place and gathered momentum through 1980s and 1990s limited the capacities of governments of developing countries to provide for social needs and welfare spending. It is also important to mention here that 1980s and 1990s were the period which marked the onset of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) and New Policy Agenda led by multilateral institutions like World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), etc., which in turn was backed by developed countries or global north, so to speak. It is in this context that 'alternative development' began to take root as an alternative model of development. This alternative model called for wider role of 'third sector' distinct from state and market.

Hettne in *Development Theory and Three Worlds* provides one of the earliest elaboration of alternative development approach. Hettne outlines three worlds wherein the first refers to state, the second to market and the third refers to community based organizations. Hettne argues that first two worlds led by state and market respectively have failed to deliver the goals of development. He doesn't question the notion of development per se, rather argues that mechanisms/approach followed by first two worlds have been at odds with the needs of local communities. Hettne's third world might include community based organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations. Thus we can say that non-governmental organizations are linked with practice of development as agents of the same.

Many NGOs are involved in what can be termed 'care and welfare' activities inherited from the charitable work or philanthropy that flourished in the industrial countries from the 19th century onwards. The second historical root of today's NGOs is addressing the deeper causes of disadvantage by advocating change and raising public awareness of issues. When NGOs were largely concerned with care and welfare activities they carried out their activities in fields where government did not, or was unable to operate. This situation refers to the rise of liberal, social, political, and economic development of societies. It would seem that the emergence of NGOs and the development process of liberalism go together. They are both the cause and the outcome of each other (Korten, 1990).

The explosion of NGOs has been happening in the context of a world which has been over the past few decades, characterized by rapid, complex and often unpredictable political,

institutional, environmental, demographic, social and economic changes, which show no sign of ending which the past decade in particular has seen dramatic changes at global level that have been a fundamental impact on societies everywhere. (CWF, 1994)

There was positive recognition of NGOs both in developed and developing countries. They recognized it as “potent forces for social and economic development; important partners in nation building and national development; valuable forces in promoting democracy. At the beginning, its role was understood as ‘care and welfare’ or ‘philanthropy’ but nowadays the image of NGOs is seen as organizations which are working for structural change in the society. They have the goal of working for the transformation of existing structures, democratization, civil society (Korten 1990). One of the more positive advances of the 1980s has been the recognition of the essential development role of civil society. In this context NGOs can be seen as ‘indigenous people’s organizations’. Because, they can also be an expression of people’s belief that through their own initiative they can better fulfill their potential by working together, and thereby reduce the opportunity gap that exists between the advantaged and the disadvantages in society.

According to Edwards and Hulme, since the end of Cold War in 1989, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies have pursued a ‘*New Policy Agenda*’ which gives renewed prominence to NGOs and Grassroot Organizations (GROs) in poverty alleviation, social welfare and the development of civil society (Edwards & Hulme, 1996). NGOs are seen as the preferred channel for social welfare. They were seen as the integral part of a thriving civil society and an essential counterweight to state power (*ibid*)

The NGO growth can be also be seen as manifestation of new thinking about the role of government. Thus participation of government with NGOs for delivery of welfare services, deliberation on policy matters, decentralization, and localization are parallel manifestations of the same general trend. The NGO explosion is also directly related to the diminishing direct role of government in the political economy. It is argued that, because of their supposed cost-effectiveness in reaching the poorest, official agencies support NGOs in providing welfare services to those who cannot be reached through markets.

All these global and local changes thus represent different forms of impetus that have contributed to the NGO growth, and placed the spotlight of them. As Edwards and Hulme point out:

“NGO expansion is seen as complementing the counter-revolution in development theory that underpins the policies of liberalization, state withdrawal and structural adjustment favored by official donors. NGOs are viewed as the ‘private non-profit’ sector, the performance of which advances the ‘public-bad’, and ‘private good’ ideology of the new orthodoxy” (1992: 20).

In other words, with respect to agency, in alternative development thinking, social change is initiated from within communities, endogenously, or at least in equal collaboration with external agents. The history of power relations between the West and non-West (or between proxy developers/ruling elites and their peripheries) has meant that it has been the agency of the West that has won out in the model of development. In contrast to this, an alternative development approach emphasises the importance of the local stakeholders in any decision-making process. Development projects need to emerge as part of human needs that a community identifies for itself as a worthy goal and aim, not by outsiders who claim a community ‘lacks’ one thing or another. In this context, NGOs are regarded as representing the aspirations of the community at the grassroot level.

Potentialities of NGOs

The proponents of NGOs sketch extremely optimistic scope for NGOs. In parallel to Rio Conference of 1992, Global Forum was held which was attended by 9000 organizations from 171 countries. The optimism of the proponents of NGOs derives from a general sense of NGOs as ‘doing good’ unencumbered and untainted by the politics of government or the greed of the market (Fisher 1997). William Fisher in *Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGOs* argues that idealization of NGOs as organizations that are oriented towards helping people for reason other than profit or politics has led to construction of positive image of NGOs. It is argued that NGOs provide means to mitigate some of the weaknesses of top-down approach to development. The proponents of NGOs argue that they NGOs have the potential to facilitate empowerment and democratization. One of the most common assertions is that NGOs have arisen in the face of internal and external exigencies and where state-directed change has failed or suffer from limitations. In fact, this is the view advocated by multilateral institutions like World Bank and International Monetary Fund. According to World Bank report, “NGOs have become an important force in the development process mitigating the costs of developing countries’ institutional weakness”. “Local” NGOs are the means through which impediments to development can be overcome and international

NGOs are useful to the extent that they can serve as intermediaries that can facilitate the work of local NGOs (World Bank Report 1998). However, in the same essay Fisher also points out the limitations of optimism displayed by the proponents of NGOs. He draws from arguments of Escobar and Ferguson that view the development apparatus as identifying 'problems' that impede or that result from an imagined linear march of progress, and that require the intervention of government or multilateral development agencies. Such critics have pointed the danger posed to NGOs by the resilient ability of the development industry to absorb and transform ideas and institutions. In their view, NGOs are at risk of becoming the new 'technical' solutions to development 'problems', solutions that can be promoted by international development agencies in situations in which the state is seen an inhibitor (Fisher 1997).

Joan P. Mencher in *NGOs: Are They a Force for Change?* examines the relationship between NGOs and the socio-economic and political milieu in which they exist locally, nationally and internationally. She broadly describes the scope and limitations of NGOs with regards to involvement of NGOs with market and state. She suggests about the required conditions for effective functioning of NGOs. She also acknowledges the changing practices of NGO and offers framework for constructing a typology of NGOs.

D.C Korten in *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* outlines criteria for classification of NGOs. He also describes the 'three generation' in the evolution of NGOs. In the first generation, NGOs carry out relief activities. They build a local base in second generation and finally in third generation they build a network in partnership with other agencies and various states. However, Korten doesn't examine the conditions leading to proliferation of NGOs and prominence thereof.

James Petras offers a more nuanced critique of the discourse of 'alternative development' in general and NGOs in particular. Petras conceptualises NGOs as '*imperial agents*'. Petras in his essay: *NGOs in the Service of Imperialism* argues that NGOs serve as the 'community face' of neo-liberalism (Petras 1999). He traces the proliferation of NGOs to the rise of neo-liberalism and concomitant decline of welfare state (ibid.). However, this doesn't imply that NGOs originated after the advent of neo-liberalism as history of NGOs can be traced back to the missionary organizations of nineteenth century, rather it means that conditions entailed by neo-liberalism favors the proliferation of NGOs. On the other hand it can also be said that NGOs reinforces neo-liberalism. Nurtured and, in many cases, subsidised by the principal

financial institutions and governmental agencies promoting neo-liberalism, a massive number of organizations describing themselves as NGOs have emerged. These organizations, in most cases have been active in propounding ideologies and political practices that are compatible with and complement the neo-liberal agenda of their financial patrons (ibid.). The cornerstone of discourse of ‘alternative development’ is wider role of ‘civil society’ and by extension to that of NGOs in promoting development. The common line of arguments of NGO discourse, though not exhaustive, can be listed as follows:

1. State is inefficient and ineffective in delivering development.
2. NGOs promote democracy by aligning with citizens at the local level.
3. NGOs restores agency to the people at grassroots level and enables them to participate in the process of development.
4. NGOs are de facto civil society.
5. Leaders of popular organisations should not be exclusively oriented toward organising the poor and sharing their conditions. Internal mobilisation should be based on external funding. Professionals should design programmes and secure external financing to organise local groups. Without outside aid, local groups and professional careers would collapse.
6. The world is increasingly interdependent and in this world there is a need for greater international cooperation in transferring capital, technology and know-how from the “rich” to the “poor” countries.

Petras offers a nuanced and detailed critique of each of these arguments which would be discussed in the following chapters.

Conflict between Public and Private

The thrust of NGO remains on self-help and micro enterprises. They celebrate the individual successes. They posit an individual as both the problem as well as the solution. They deliberately overlook social structures and social relations entailed by the same which effectively serves to conceal the recognition of the structural reasons of socio-economic exploitation. NGOs are not capable of providing long term comprehensive plans that a welfare state can furnish. Nevertheless, armed with anti-statist ideology, NGOs promote

inward and downward perspective. In effect, this vitiates the essence of social contract which guarantees that state shall endeavor to provide security to its citizens. NGO discourse relieves state of responsibility and accountability while at the same time imposes additional burden on the individuals. Petras argues that anti-statist rhetoric of NGOs masquerades the mechanisms through which the ideology of free market continue to penetrate the grassroots levels of society (Petras 1999).

Depoliticization

Petras correlates the decline in independent political assertion with the proliferation of NGOs. He argues that “NGOs emphasize projects, not movements; they ‘mobilize’ people to produce at the margins but not to struggle to control the basic means of production and wealth; they focus on technical financial assistance of projects, not on structural conditions that shape the everyday lives of people.” The framework of collaboration with donor agencies leads to subordination of practical activity to non-confrontational politics.

The rhetoric of empowerment operates within the domain as allowed by neoliberal state and macro-economy. Economic development compatible with free market rather than social organization for social change becomes the dominant theme of funding agenda. They foster a new kind of cultural and economic colonialism and dependency; agendas are determined according to the priorities of imperial donors and subsequently evaluations are done by and for imperial institutions. NGOs preclude the possibility of forging unity in order to struggle against the exploitative system. Besides, NGOs co-opt the leaders of social movement and corresponding organizations in addition to the co-optation of the language of left (ibid).

Sangeeta Kamat in *the Privatization of Public Interest: Theorizing NGO Discourse in a Neo-liberal Era* analyse the involvement of NGOs in socio-economic and political spheres. She argues that pluralisation of public sphere by factoring in state, International development agencies, NGOs, multi-national corporations weakens the state which results in the loss of accountability. She claims that increasing participation of NGOs in representation of public interest has led to ‘depoliticization of private sphere’. She argues that tendency of NGOs to provide techno-managerial solution precludes the possibility of structural changes.

Ranjita Mohanty in *Civil Society and NGOs* analyses the notions of empowerment as proposed by advocates of NGO. She argues that western powers are attempting to implant their notion of progress in India. She explains that tendency of state to work with NGOs in

formulation as well as execution of socio-economic policies limits the scope of NGO induced empowerment in society where power is all pervasive.

Rajni Kothari in *NGOs, the state and World Capitalism* has contextualized emergence of NGOs in India. Kothari argues that increasing significance and wider role for NGOs is delivering welfare services characterized the accentuation of pursuit of neo-liberal ethos. He argues that NGOs' emergence and their rise to prominence can be situated within the structural transformation of Indian society affected by 'New Policy Agenda' and 'structural adjustment programmes'. He further signals the danger of social movement and political resistance being co-opted by NGOs thus by implication, it risks being depoliticized and diluted.

Statement of the Problem

Neo-liberalism favours the NGOisation approach to 'development'.

Research Questions

1. What are the historical factors accounting for growth and proliferation of NGOs in India?
2. Why has there been a sudden increase in the strength of NGO in last two decades in India?
3. What are the implications of dependency of NGOs on donor agencies?
4. What is the nature of relationship between state and NGO in the context of 'development'?
5. How does NGOisation affect social movements?

Objective

The objective of the study is to examine the nature of volunteerism and notions of charity and thereby attempts to unmask the apparently humane nature of NGOs.

Methodology

The rationale of the study is to explain the causal relation among factors and variables that have spurred NGOisation.

The study would be critical analysis of literature on development. Primarily, discourse analysis would be used as method. The study would be anchored by the concept of 'alternative development' and civil society and thus attempt to show how civil society organizations impinge on the politics of development.

The primary unit of analysis for the study will be NGOs, and the central process to be studied is 'development'. So, the study can broadly be situated in the field of sociology of development. However, development is an umbrella process which involves various agencies and actors, thus implying that some of the variables of the study might be situated in some other field of sociology.

At one level, NGOs can be subjected to internal analysis with reference to their organizational structure and mode of functioning, and thereby coming at an understanding of changes taking place within the domain of NGOs. In last four decade or so, NGOs have undergone many changes in their organizational structure, size, mission, scope and in their capacity to secure funding from various agencies; from community based organizations (CBOs) to advocacy, NGOs have come to represent public interest (Korten 1990).

In contemporary times NGOs are not strictly limited to its original criteria of not having participation of state or its agencies. A whole new series of NGOs have come to function in various domains. NGOs which collaborate on international scale with various nation-states and multilateral agencies are called 'International NGOs' (INGOs). There are various such organizations which are indeed organized by state but apparently they are autonomous to certain degree, these are called Government Organized NGOs (GONGOs). Various corporate houses also collaborate to form what are called Business Industries NGOs (BINGOs). Similarly there are cultural NGOs and so on and so forth.

However, if the analysis is limited to identifying changes within the realm of NGOs, then, it would be unable to factor in the broad structural elements in the socio-economic and political realm. Having Bourdieu's argument in *The Peculiar History of Scientific Reason* in the backdrop, one can say that dynamics of practice of NGOs can't be analysed only with reference to internal changes in the realm of NGOs. There has to be a context and historicity to both origin as well as proliferation of NGOs. In other words, there are corresponding structural forces which make possible the operationalization of NGOs.

One of the most important conditions for NGOs to even operate at the first place is a regime which allows such organizations to operate. In other words NGOs can operate within a juridico-legal complex which recognizes them as a legitimate entity and allows them to function. So, NGOs have to be situated in the inter-sectionality of the political apparatuses.

In contemporary times, there is a marked tendency of state to collaborate with NGOs in terms of formulation of socio-economic policies and also their execution. Various agencies of state (bureaucracy at different level) collaborate with NGOs to deliver the welfare services, the implication of which means that there is an aspect of interaction between NGOs and various agencies of state such as law, bureaucracy etc.

Besides state, NGOs depend on other institutions for their different needs. The need for funds brings them in direct dependency with donor agencies. Major proportion of the funding of NGOs (particularly in India) comes from department of government of western countries, US department of Aid, British department of Aid etc. NGOs also secure a substantial amount of funding from various corporate houses, which in turn also involve NGOs to fulfil their corporate social responsibility (CSR). Quite clearly, NGOs can secure funding in an economic set up which allows corporate sector to make huge profit, in other words neo-liberal set up is indispensable to the functioning of NGOs.

The time period covered for the intended study would be after India's independence to present. Hence, it is important to mention here that I shall not examine the concept of charity, voluntarism, and 'seva' and so on and so forth which is rooted in religious values though might have undergone changes in contemporary times. I would rather focus upon NGO as distinct empirical category.

Therefore, broadly the inter-sectionality of economic sociology, political sociology and sociology of development constitutes the field of the intended study.

Data collection

The nature of data employed in the study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The data has been collected from secondary sources; from governmental reports, newspapers, journals, archives and various online sources.

Data analysis

The data thus collected have been subjected to critical analysis. To some extent, the method of discourse analysis has been employed in the study. As mentioned earlier, my orientation is informed by neo-Marxism; particularly that of theoretical anti-humanism.

Chapterization

The first chapter explores history of and approaches to definition and construction of typology of NGOs.

The second chapter explores the causal correlation between onset of neo-liberal programs and retreat of the state on the one hand, and proliferation of NGOs on the other. It also takes into account historicity of India's planning with the sole objective of highlighting the components of decentralization and partnership with NGOs and other voluntary organizations.

The third chapter examines the effect of proliferation of NGOs and thereby I come to an understanding that NGOs are part of the apparatus that singularly aims at politics of depoliticization; and thereby NGOs engage in weakening, co-opting, and/or preventing outbreak of social movements or any other possibility of radical social change.

CHAPTER 1

NGO: DEFINITION AND TYPOLOGY

Defining NGO

The term 'Non-Governmental Organization' (NGO) is a heterogeneous category. Sheer diversity among NGOs in terms of size, domains of operation, resource mobilization, geographical area of operation among others renders any crude generalization about the same appear as truncated as well as poor index, in other words, a futile exercise in nomenclature. This term has interchangeably been used with 'civil society', 'third sector', voluntary associations among others (Hettne 1990). The box 1.1 indicates the list of acronyms which has widely been associated with NGO. The list is not exhaustive; however, it is indicative of the ambiguity surrounding the precise conceptualization of NGO.

Box 1.1

The diversity of NGO acronyms

AGNs	Advocacy groups and networks
BINGOs	Big international NGOs
BONGOs	Business-organized NGOs
CBOs	Community-based organizations
COME'n'GOs	The idea of temporary NGOs following funds!
DONGOs	Donor-oriented/organized NGOs
Dotcause	Civil society networks mobilizing support through the internet
ENGOs	Environmental NGOs
GDOs	Grassroots development organizations
GONGOs	Government-organized NGOs
GRINGOs	Government-run (or -inspired) NGOs
GROs	Grassroots organizations
GRSOs	Grassroots support organizations
GSCOs	Global social change organizations
GSOs	Grassroots support organizations
IAs	Interest associations
IDCIs	International development cooperation institutions
IOs	Intermediate organizations
IPOs	International/indigenous people's organizations
LDAs	Local development associations
LINGOs	Little international NGOs
LOs	Local organizations
MOs	Membership organizations

MSOs	Membership support organizations
NGDOs	Non-governmental development organizations
NGIs	Non-governmental interests
NGIs	Non-governmental individuals
NNGOs	Northern NGOs
NPOs	Non-profit or not-for-profit organizations
PDA	Popular development associations
POs	People's organizations
PSCs	Public service contractors
PSNPOs	Paid staff NPOs
PVDOs	Private voluntary development organizations
PVOs	Private voluntary organizations
QUANGOs	Quasi-non-governmental organizations
RONGOs	Royal non-governmental organizations
RWAs	Relief and welfare associations
SHOs	Self-help organizations
TIOs	Technical innovation organizations
TNGOs	Trans-national NGOs
VDAs	Village development associations
VI	Village institutions
VNPOs	Volunteer non-profit organizations
VOs	Village organizations
VOs	Volunteer organizations

Source: taken from Lewis and Kanji (2009)

In United Kingdom (UK) 'voluntary organization' or 'charity' are the most frequently used terms owing to the tradition of volunteering which in turn was informed by Christian values and specific legislations on charity. In United States of America (USA), the term 'non-profit organization' is more common given the dominance of the market in USA, where the citizens are rewarded with fiscal benefits if they are able to demonstrate that they are working for public good (Lewis and Kanji 2009). The term has a history rooted in the use of United Nations.

The term NGO is a post-Second World War expression which was first coined by United Nations (UN). According to Article 71 of the UN charter adopted in 1945, this term was meant to designate the international organizations which would serve the role of consultation for United Nations. The UN charter explicitly mentioned that Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) shall consult NGOs only for the purposes which lie within the competence of the UN. The regulatory framework for the interaction between two kinds of organization dealt with nature of consultative relationship and objectives of such interaction as well as the necessity of accreditation of NGOs at the international level. The annex in Article 71 of UN

charter allows for accreditation of national NGOs under special circumstances, but remained vague in its application (Martens 2002).

Since the beginning of 1990s, NGOs have taken active participation in formulation as well as implementation of international laws and norms in varying domains such as human rights, environmental protection, and child rights and so on and so forth. They have been one of the most significant participants of global conferences on these issues; they not only influence government representatives but also are involved as experts in drafting committees (Shelton 1994; Cook 1996). The cumulative consequence of this increasing participation of NGOs in global conferences and drafting committees at various levels was the adoption of resolution 1996/31 in UN which for the first time explicitly allowed for recognition of NGOs at national, regional and international levels and also laid down criteria for such organizations.

The most important criteria according to this resolution were ‘international standing’, ‘independent governance’ and ‘geographical affiliation’ (Martens 2002). However, accreditation at international level didn’t accord any legal status at the same level and hence these organizations were left to be subjected to national laws of respective countries. Quite clearly, the ambiguity surrounding legal status precluded any comprehensive formulation of the term NGO.

Having outlined the context of the usage and application of the term NGO up till 1980s and early 1990s, it can be safely argued that this term percolated down to academia in the same form as outlined and formulated by United Nations, perhaps initially without analytical refinement of the term. However, as the term gained traction in popular socio-political vocabularies various scholars initiated attempts to remove ambiguities and clear away the vagueness associated with precise conceptualization, or lack thereof, of NGO.

Keeping in mind the trajectory of definition of NGO, that is flowing from United Nations at the international level to regional or national level, juridical or legal perspective became the entry point of attempts to arrive at a precise definition of NGO. As Martens points out the juridical approach lays emphasis on legal status in the national context which has bearing on international laws (Martens 2002). Conceptualization of NGO in this regard has negative referent- that which is ‘not for profit’ and ‘not of the government’ and hence the term non-governmental. Salamon and Anheier (1992) argue that definitions which are legal in orientation lay emphasis on the process of formal registration and status of such organizations in the context of different countries.

It is important to take into consideration the particularity of the process of formal registration of such organizations in India. Any association or organization in order to be accredited as NGO in India has to be registered under *Societies Registration Act 1860*, *The Bombay Public Trusts Act 1950* and other variants. One can easily discern the complexity of terming an organization as NGO merely on the basis of registration under a specific legislation. Mere registration under the above legislation entails that any or every organization can be termed as NGO, for instance, *Resident Welfare Association (RWA)* of respective housing colonies or 'golf course club' and so on and so forth. The point to be taken into consideration here is that any attempt to define NGO based on the process of formal registration under specific legislation in India would be a futile exercise because such legislations cover a wide range of organizations or associations that varies in scope, purpose, membership, size and so on and so forth. Therefore, in order to arrive at an appropriate definition of NGO, it is necessary to move beyond the criterion of formal registration.

Salamon and Anheier (1992) argue that one of the bases of defining NGOs is the *economic* criterion. Basically, this means that an organization can be defined with reference to the source of organization's resources; primarily financial resources. The source in question is not one and same for every organization termed as NGO. Some generate funds on their own which are called Self-help Groups. Some secure funds through government of respective countries which are called government organized NGOs (GONGO). Some are dependent on business or corporate donors, which are called Business organized NGOs, while still others generate their funds through appeal to individual and voluntary donations which are called Private Voluntary Organizations. Hence, we can see that this criterion alone though helpful to an extent doesn't provide the complete defining characteristics of NGO.

In addition to legal and economic, Salamon and Anheier (1992) argue that there are also *functional* basis of defining NGOs. This criterion is based on the type of activities that specific organization is engaged in. If an organization primarily engages itself in raising awareness about certain socio-economic-political issues and strives for specific legislation(s) in specific countries or at international forum in order to promote a give set of interests or ideology, then such organizations are called as advocacy NGO. On the other hand, if an organization is primarily engaged in delivering services like healthcare, education among others, then it is termed as service NGO (World Bank 1993).

The foregoing paragraphs indicate that different perspective or basis per se cover only a part of the picture and do not help in arriving at a comprehensive definition of NGOs. On the other side of the spectrum, sociological perspective needs to be looked into in order to be able to define NGO. As has already been pointed out, most of sociological literature attempt to define NGO with a negative reference that is in terms of what *it is not* (Lador-Lederer 1960). The term non-governmental is structured from the point of view of the government and lacks any autonomous point of reference. Another defining characteristic is *not for profit* which again has a negative referent. It is precisely because of this reason that some of the definitions merely appear to be provisional in nature.

Princen and Finger (1994) have explained why it is so complicated to pin down typical characteristics for NGOs: “*The difficulty of characterizing the entire phenomenon results in large part from the tremendous diversity found in the global NGO community. That diversity derives from differences in size, duration, range and scope of activities, ideologies, cultural background, organizational culture, and legal status*”. Therefore it becomes imperative to unpack each component of N-G-O.

The ‘non’ in NGO is associated with the notion of being non-governmental and non-profit making (ibid). The non-profit making criterion helps in distinguishing NGOs from other non-state actors such as multinational companies or corporate which remains in the pursuit of profit (Mawlawski 1993). The governmental in NGO is again excluded from the definition of NGO meaning that NGOs are organizations that do not include representatives of the government. An NGO might be funded by government to an extent; however, this should not imply complete dependency of NGO on government for its very functioning. Of course, an NGO requires formal registration under specific legislation but this does not imply dependence on government.

Salamon and Anheier (1992) have proposed a somewhat tenable definition based on the structural features. They argue that an organization that exhibits following five characteristics shall be termed as NGO. They are:

- a) *Formal* – the organization is institutionalized and has relatively durable permanence. This is in line with the criteria as laid out by United Nations; that such organization should have some standing in the field of their competence. This characteristic also calls for ‘geographical association’ which enables consistent meeting of the office bearers of the organization.

- b) *Private* – the organization should be institutionally separate from the government. It may receive some support from the government or it might require legal recognition by the state in order to operate in the first place; however it should not be owned by government failing which it acquires characteristic which is public in nature.
- c) *Non-Profit* – this implies that the organization does not partake in the exchange market which is driven in and through pursuit of profit. Even if financial surplus is generated it does not accrue to directors or managers of the organization. Majority of such organizations depend on corporate sector for their funding, yet it is not imperative on the part of organization to distribute surplus among its donors. Dependency on donors poses several other constraints which shall be discussed in following chapter, it suffices here to say that formally such organizations shall not be obligated to distribute financial surplus among its donors if it accrues.
- d) *Self-Governing* – basically it implies autonomy of the organization in setting its objectives, mission, and strategies to accomplish the same. In the context of, designing of specific projects as well as recruitment of personnel required to undertake those projects, the organization shall exhibit total independence from external control. In other words, the organization shall exhibit total control over management of its own affairs. However, in reality it seldom happens that any such organization remains free of any external influence which again shall be taken up in following chapter.
- e) *Voluntary* – voluntariness implies the voluntary thrust for participation in any issue, event, and campaign and so on and so forth. At the level of personnel/staff, there might be some paid staff, yet there shall remain some degree of voluntariness in the management of the organization.

Despite the claim of defining NGO on structural/observable features, some of the characteristics are normative in nature. This does not render the definition as outright inaccuracy; rather it calls for further analytical refinement of the same. Edward and

Hulme (1989) add another two criteria for an organization to be termed as NGO; namely ‘dependent’ and self-serving’. Most of the sociologists define NGOs as organizations which exhibit four defining characteristics which enable them to be distinguished from other organizations in civil society. They are; voluntary, dependent, not-for profit, self-serving (Edwards & Hulme, 1989).

Dependency might refer to the requirement of legal recognition by the state as well as the source of resource mobilization; financial, intellectual and manpower which in turn inevitably depends on exogenous factors. The criterion of 'self-serving' remains vague in the sense that it does not clarify that what is to be characterized as self-interest; it might refer to the interests of the directors or as is largely the case that of donors, also it might refer to the interests of the region, community or specific group that the organization claims to represent.

Martens attempts to integrate two approaches (juridical and sociological) and arrives at the following definition: *NGOs are formal (professionalized) independent societal organizations whose primary aim is to promote common goals at the national or the international level* (Martens 2002).

However, even this definition is inconsistent and misleading. NGOs need not necessarily be independent or promoter of common goal for that matter. Petras (1999) justifiably demonstrates that far from being independent, NGOs remain within the clutches of the donor agencies. According to Petras, NGOs are de facto 'in the service of imperialism'. Sangeeta Kamat (2004) demystifies the notion of 'promoter of common goal'; a role apparently assigned to or appropriated by NGOs and concludes that essential consequence of engagement in the context of advocacy amounts to 'privatization of public interest'. The above mentioned critiques of NGO shall be taken up in the following chapter.

I think it is more useful for the approach towards conceptualising or defining NGO to situate them in what has Hettne termed as 'third sector'. The world of institutions can be divided in three categories; first sector of *government*, second that of *market*, and the third sector belongs to organizations or group thereof which do not fit into either of the first two. At the analytical level it does help to delineate the social space separated from state and market (Hettne 1990).

Typology of NGO

Similar to the problematic of defining NGO, classification of NGOs also presents difficulty owing to huge diversity prevalent in the domain of NGOs. There are multiple parameters and variables around which an exercise in classification of NGOs might be undertaken. One of the earliest classificatory exercises was put in place by the United

Nations; whence by the very definition and regulatory framework it categorised NGO into 'international' and 'national' ones. The fact that Article 71 of UN charter explicitly recognized 'international' NGO and annex of the same article provided provision for recognition of 'national' NGOs under special circumstances helped to create a criterion of 'geographical standing' as the basis for classifying NGOs. This criterion was further used to classify 'Northern' NGOs and 'Southern' NGOs. Most of the 'northern' NGOs originated in industrialized or 'developed' country and 'southern' NGOs referred to NGOs originating in the 'developing' or 'underdeveloped' regions of the world (Lewis and Kanji 2009).

The above criterion is one among several others. One can classify NGOs based on categories such as *Orientation, Participation and Geographical Standing, Beneficiary, Resource Mobilization, Activity, Internal Structure, Networks* and so on and so forth.

Orientation

One of the easiest and far too generalising criteria as given by forum of NGOs themselves is the '*orientation*' of organizations. Based on given orientation, NGOs can be classified into four categories; 'charitable', 'service', 'participatory', and 'empowering' (<http://www.ngo.in/types-of-ngos>).

Charitable organizations refer mainly to those which provide some financial resources to people or communities without significant engagement with them. In India there are three subcategories within this; Animal Charities, Children Charities and Development Charities. Aashayein Foundation, Calcutta Rescue, and Disable Welfare Trust of India are some of the examples that belong to three subcategories respectively.

Service organizations are those that are engaged in providing services such as healthcare, education etc. Indian Red Cross Society, Helping minds among others can be fitted into this category.

Participation refers to active and significant engagement with the section of people, region or community that an organization claims to participate with. This is a sweeping category in the sense that it might involve active participation in protests and demonstrations by the group or as well as living with them.

Empowering refers to capacity building programmes, skilling or providing alternate opportunities for livelihood. 'Self Employed Women's Association' (SEWA) is one such example.

Participation and Geographical Standing

If one were to combine '*participation*' and '*geographical standing*', one can arrive at another set of categories. They are as follows

Community Based Organizations (CBOs) - Groups/Organizations that stay in direct contact and include members from the specific community which is represented by the organization are called CBOs. There are '*National*' and '*International*' NGOs within this category which have already been discussed earlier.

Beneficiary

NGOs have multiple set of stakeholders; financial donors, board members, staff (both paid and voluntary) and the section of people, group or communities that they engage with. Depending upon the beneficiary we can classify NGOs into two categories; *self-benefitting* and *other-benefitting* (Doh and Yaziji 2009).

Self-benefitting – these are membership associations designed to benefit their members. Examples include *Business Associations, Church Groups, and Sports Club etc.*

Other-benefitting – these are the organizations in which the primary contributors of resources (capital and labour) are not the intended beneficiaries. In other words, contributors do not extract private good from such organizations. Greenpeace, Amnesty International, and CARE are some of the examples of this kind.

Resource and Internal Structure

Resource mobilization primarily refers to the source of organizations' resources. If an organization is dependent on external fund for financial resources it is called as *Donor based NGO* (DNGO), on the other hand if they generate funds on their own they are termed as *Self-Help Groups* (SHGs) (Lewis 2005).

Internal Structure mainly refers to the degree of professionalization, recruitment process and decision making process. There is no proper nomenclature based on this except for the NGOs comprising of voluntary staff; in such case it is called as *Voluntary*

Organization. Some do term some NGOs as Professionalized NGOs (PNGOs) depending upon high degree of professionalization meaning that such organizations have established office space, conduct regular meetings and hire staff on the payment basis (*Ibid*).

Activity

This is one of the most significant criteria of classifying NGOs. With the expansion of private sector in contemporary times, NGOs have undergone a shift in terms of formulating their strategies; whether to collaborate or confront or both with private sector on the one hand and government on the other. Based on this category of strategic activity NGOs can be classified into ‘Service’ and ‘Advocacy’ NGOs (World Bank 1993).

Figure 1.1

Beneficiary	Self	Alcoholics Anonymous	Labor unions
		Chess clubs	Trade associations
	Others	Salvation Army CARE	WWF Amnesty International
		Service	Advocacy
Type of Activity			

Source: <http://www.ngosindia.com/what-is-ngo/ngos-classification-definitions-typologies-and-networks/>

Service NGOs are those that are directly engaged in providing services to the disadvantaged and underprivileged with some governmental assistance. Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders among others are such NGOs.

Advocacy NGOs work to shape the social, economic or political system to promote a given set of interests or ideology. They engage in lobbying, serve as representatives and

advisory experts to decision-makers, conduct research, hold conferences, stage citizen tribunals, monitor and expose actions (and inactions) of others, disseminate information to key constituencies, set/define agendas, develop and promote codes of conduct and organize boycotts or investor actions. These NGOs apparently give voice and provide access to institutions to those who have been excluded or are at disadvantaged position in society (Doh and Yaziji 2009).

Tandon (1996) also classifies NGOs according to similar theme. According to Tandon there are NGOs that are engaged in meeting the immediate needs or 'conveying palliatives' like the ones that provide relief materials like clothes, food, medicine etc after any disaster, and there are 'thinking' NGOs that reflect on the possibilities of the alternatives.

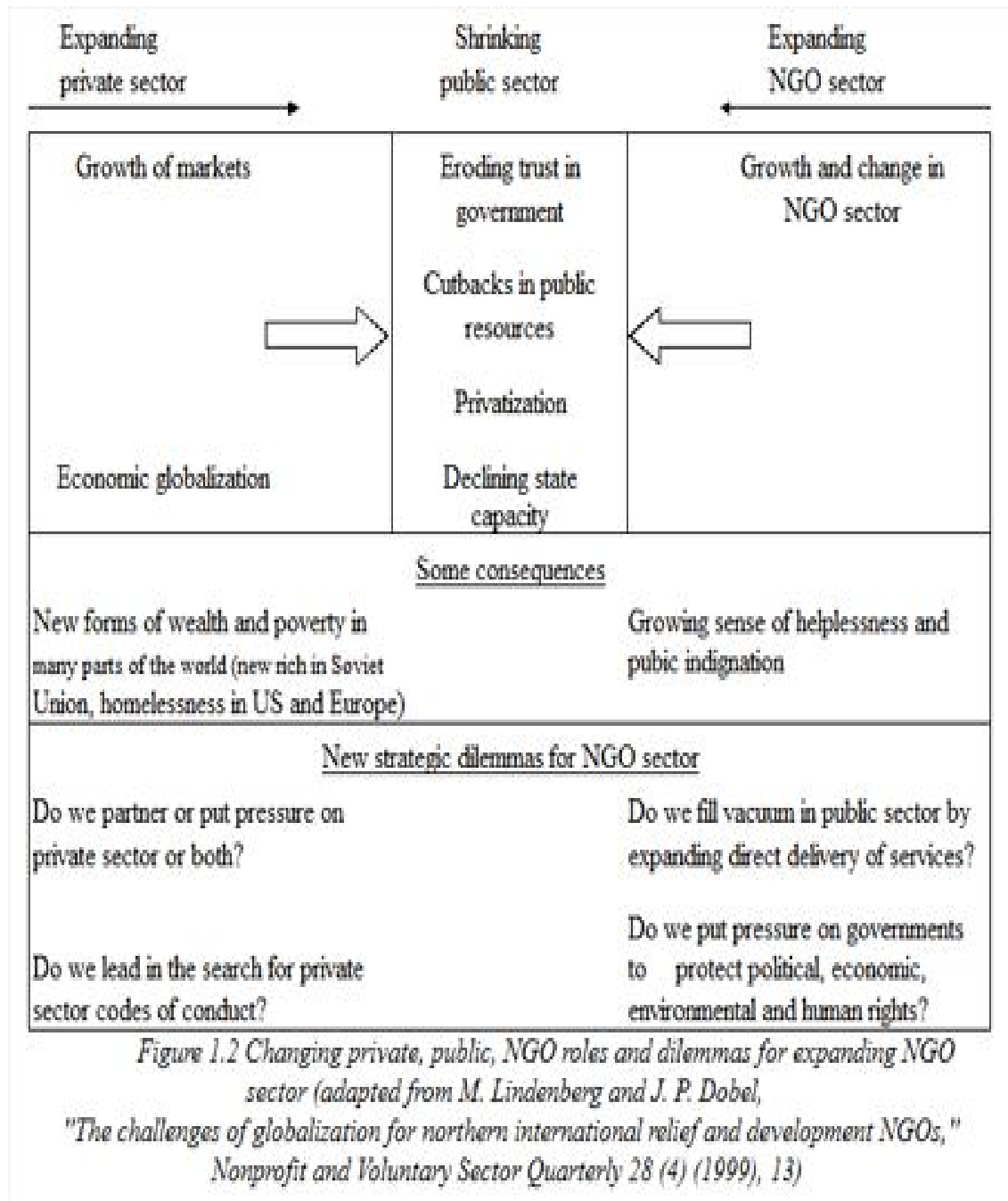
Network

So far the discussion has assumed each NGO in isolation, however, like any other organization NGOs also engages in networking and leveraging thereof. The application of network theory to understanding of organizational study and adopting such an approach to classify NGOs is relatively recent development. Doh et al (2004) argue that because of limited resources, diverse goals and competition for support, NGOs are particular beneficiaries of network involvement. They suggest that the type of network employed and the relative utility of these networks differs for NGOs as compared to corporate sector. They use the concept of 'power' and influence' as the instruments put to use by NGOs. They construct following typology based on the above mentioned network usage by NGOs; 1) network connection locus, 2) network goal scope. At various point of time and in varying situations NGOs bring their network into play.

In the context of network usage by NGOs through the instruments of power and influence, it would be relevant to analyse the case of banning fund transfer by Compassionate International, an NGO based in U.S.A., by Government of India (GOI) and subsequent lifting of the ban. Sometime in August 2016, the GOI imposed restrictions on Compassionate International which amounted to ban on fund transfer by the same to other NGOs in India. Compassionate International initially protested against the move but to no avail. Two months later the then Secretary of US John Kerry called up Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs in GOI, to register 'grievances' against the ban in question. Subsequently the ban was lifted by GOI with immediate effect (The

Hindu, Oct 2016). What this case demonstrates is exactly the network usage. Compassionate International leveraged its connection with the U.S state secretary, and given the dominance of US in world affairs, lifting of the ban in question was inevitable.

Figure 1.2



Source: <http://www.ngosindia.com/what-is-ngo/ngos-classification-definitions-typologies-and-networks/>

Evolution of NGOs

It is important here to mention that preceding discussion presupposes that NGOs as organizational entity is not susceptible to change over time. However, it is common sense that any organization necessarily undergoes change if it survives for a relatively longer duration of time. In other words there is dynamism associated with organization as a result of which it evolves with time. D.C Korten (1990) has done an extensive study in this context and he proposes a schematic framework of four generations of NGOs.

The first generation NGOs are mainly engaged in relief and welfare work, that is they are mostly concerned with addressing immediate requirements. The second generation NGOs shift their objectives towards building small scale and self-reliant local development initiatives. In the process they acquire more experience and build better knowledge. This is the phase when they enter into relationship with donors and might exhibit considerable influence of donors. The third generation NGOs strategise with the aim of sustainability of organizations and attempt to influence wider institutional and policy contexts through advocacy. The fourth generation NGOs become more closely linked to wider social movements and combine local action with activities at a national or global level. They aim at long-term structural change (Korten 1990).

Table 1.1

Korten's schema of the four development NGO strategy 'generations'

Generation				
	First (relief and welfare)	Second (community development)	Third (sustainable systems development)	Fourth(people's movements)
Problem Definition	Shortage	Local inertia	Institutional and Policy Constraints	Inadequate mobilizing vision
Timeframe	Immediate	Project Life	10-20 years	Indefinite Future

Scope	Individual or Family	Neighbourhood or village	Region or nation	National or Global
Main actors	NGO	NGO plus community	All relevant public and private institutions	Loosely defined networks of people and organizations
NGO role	Doer	Mobilizer	Catalyst	Activist/educator

Source: cf Lewis and Kanji (2009)

Conclusion

In the foregoing paragraphs, I have attempted to review definitions of NGOs and classificatory exercise based on multiple variables. It would be naïve to claim any finality of the proposed definitions, especially because contemporary debates on development practice and the role of NGOs in this context is far from reaching any plausible culmination. Similarly, with reference to classification, I do not think that set of variables used in the discussion are exhaustive in nature. Besides, these categories need not be neat and rigid. One can clearly discern that some of the categories are overlapping in nature while others fit into more than one category. Some more bases of typology of NGOs might be constructed by combination of different variables. I hope to arrive at a precise and clear conception, definition and typology in my future undertakings.

CHAPTER 2

SITUATING NGOS IN THE SHIFTING TRAJECTORIES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY OF INDIA

Introduction

In this chapter I shall explore the nature of relationship and their implication, among three sectors; the first sector belongs to the institution of state, the second to market and the third to civil society and NGOs (Hettne 1990). The term civil society has been mentioned only for the conceptual purpose and henceforth ‘third sector’ shall stand for NGOs as argued by Hettne. The context or the field of the above mentioned relationship would be ‘development’. I would like to clarify some issues right here. This chapter would not focus upon what constitutes ‘development’; it would rather focus upon the structural implications of means and strategies adopted in order to achieve what is called ‘development. It is in this context that I intend to explore the causes and consequences of prevalence as well as prominence of NGOs.

As has already been mentioned earlier, the time frame for this study is the period from 1947 to present and given the field of development, it is imperative to gloss over India’s planning history. Once again I submit here that it is not the specific figures and details of planning that are object of focus; rather I want to point out the various phases during which state actively encouraged or supported NGOs in bringing about development. In so doing, I shall also examine the reasons for the same.

First Three Decades of Planned Development

After independence India set out on a mission to bring about development. The task was of such complexity that no other institution or agency other than state could be imagined to be capable of carrying out the task. Hence, India adopted the strategy of ‘planned development’ with the aim to ensure social development along with economic growth. Social development meant eradicating various inequalities existing in society. As a result, Planning Commission was set up in 1950 entrusted with the task of envisioning goals and strategies to climb up the ladder of development. The first-five year plan came into effect from 1952 (Kapila 2016).

The planners recognized the importance of Non-governmental Organizations/Voluntary Organizations in the first-five year plan itself. The government considered activities and services rendered by NGOs and co-operated with them in order to strengthen their activities. An autonomous body *Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB)* was set up in 1953 especially to serve in the field of women and child welfare. The purpose of CSWB was to provide funds to NGOs in order to strengthen and develop them; it also provided grant-in-aid to set up new NGOs. As a result, there was a rapid increase in the number of NGOs during 1950s (Srinivas 2015). The study reveals that out of 6000 NGOs added by CSWB, 3000 NGOs came into being after the board was set up. According to Lalitha and Kohl (1982), during the period 1953-61, number of NGOs grew by 117 per cent. Quite clearly, from the beginning state not only supported NGOs; rather it created amenable conditions for them to blossom. Although the scale and scope of involvement of NGOs in participating in social development during this period was small; one can't ignore the fact that state recognized its inability to reach out to the lowest rung of society and hence encouraged NGOs to deliver on the same.

It is important to have a brief discussion about Community Development Programs (CDPs) and Panchayati Raj Institutions in this context. The experiment of CDPs was state's own exercise in decentralization of state and its authorities. After the independence of India in 1947, community development assumed high priority. In 1948, a pilot community development project was launched through the Etawah Project. Later in 1952, the Government of India launched 55 Community Development Projects, each covering about 300 villages or a population of 30,000. These community development blocks were treated as normal administrative units for planning and development with regular budgetary allocations. By the end of the First Five Year Plan (1952-57), 1114 blocks covering 163,000 villages were in operation and by sixties, the community development program covered the entire country (Thapliyal 1995).

In 1957, five years after launching the community development program, the Government on recommendation of Balvantrai Mehta Committee initiated to bring forth legislations for the formation of a three-tier-system of rural local Government, to be called 'Panchayati Raj' (Rule by Local Councils). These were Gram Panchayat (Village level), Panchayat Samiti (Block level) and Zilla Parishad (District level). The aim was to decentralize the process of decision making and to shift the decision making centre closer to the people, encourage their participation and place the bureaucracy under the local people's control (Maheshwari 1985).

During 1960s and early 1970s, successive five-year plan revised and reformulated strategies to develop rural areas with the stated goal of reaching out to the underprivileged. Basically, it involved bureaucratic engagements by way of changing the target area and corresponding administrative unit; from block level planning to district level. In addition to this it came up with the idea of 'integrated area approach' which supposedly would be area specific and thus more effective. Under the Fourth and Fifth Five Year Plans (1969-74 and 1974-79), the central government introduced independent administrative hierarchies to carry out special programs, bypassing the Panchayati Raj institutions. Special programs like Small Farmers' Development Agency (SFDA), Intensive Agricultural Areas Program (IAAP), Intensive Agricultural District Program (IADP), Tribal Development Agency (TDA), Marginal, Small Farmers and Agricultural Laborers Development Agency (MFAL) and area development agencies such as Command Area Development, Drought Prone Area and Hill area Development Programs were financed and operated directly by the Central Government (Sanyal 2009).

The first three decades of planning of development with reference to marginalized, underprivileged and disadvantaged sections of society (social development according to the schema of planners) could best be regarded as continuous experiment. The experiment had its fair share of successful outcome; however they were far too disparate. A decade later, Indian state once more attempted to revive the framework of participatory development through 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments which aimed to provide constitutional sanction to Panchayati Raj Institutions (Sanyal 2009); but by then India had also embarked on the journey of liberalization, privatization and globalization. This shall be discussed later. Simultaneously, state had been paving pathways by leaving familiar trails which could be followed by NGOs, and indeed they followed the trails.

Post 1980s: Onset of Proliferation of NGOs in India

Sixth five-year plan (1980) the planners admitted that there had been numerous success stories of NGOs and voluntary sector. It stated, "...considering the vast pool of motivated individuals available in the country what has fructified by way of organizational effort is not even a fraction of the potential, important objective of the plan was to meaningfully tap this potential" (Sixth five-year plan, 1980-85).

In 1983, Council for the Advancement of Rural Technology (CART) was set up and later

in 1986 it was changed into Council for Advancement of People’s Action (CAPART) and Rural Technology to coordinate and catalyze development. “It was realized people’s initiative and participation must become the key elements of the whole process of development and hence the focus on developing multiple institutional options for improving the delivery system by using the vast potential of voluntary sector” (Eighth five-year plan, 1992-97). The inclusion of the word ‘people’s’ in CART and changing it into CAPART connotes a process of gradual withdrawal of state; this onset of withdrawal was not merely an acknowledgement of inabilities of state, but something more insidious. It had set way for delegating its responsibilities to individuals with ‘adequate’ and ‘proper’ motivation, in other words, it was an attempt to individualize issues of structural imbalances.

This period saw accelerated growth in number of NGOs in India. The numbers which were in thousands in late 1970s grew up to 1.2 million by 2001 (Tandon 2003). By 2015, the number went up to 3.1 million (The Indian Express Aug 2015). According to Ministry of Home Affairs, number of NGOs with Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) account in 1985-86 were 700, this shot up to 22924 in 2001. Evidently, 1980s onwards saw exponential growth in number of NGOs. Along with the numbers there took place a fundamental qualitative change in the practice of development marked by the withdrawal of state from welfare activities. The resultant void has been filled by market and its ‘community face’ – NGOs (Petras 1999). Lest we miss the significance of preponderance of NGOs in development industry; it should be emphasized here that this era happens to be contemporaneous to the era of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) and New Policy Agenda (NPA).

Below are some facts and figures

Table 2.1

Basic Facts on NGO

Total Number of NGO	1.2 million
Rural Based	53%
Urban Based	47%
Unregistered	49.6%

(Source: Invisible, Yet Widespread: The Non-Profit Sector in India, December 2002, PRIA)

Table 2.2**Size**

Category of staff	Percentage of NGOs
One or less paid staff	73.4
Between 2-5	13.3
Between 6-10	4.8
Above ten paid staff	8.5

(Source: Invisible, Yet Widespread: The Non-Profit Sector in India, December 2002, PRIA)

Table 2.3**Types of Funding**

Types	Percentage of Total Fund (app.)
Self-Generated	51%
Loans	7.1%
Grants	29%
Donations	12.9%

(Source: Invisible, Yet Widespread: The Non-Profit Sector in India, December 2002, PRIA)

Table 2.4**Dominant activities in India**

Type of Activities	Percentage of NGOs
Religious	26.5%
Community/Social Service	21.3%
Education	20.4%
Sports/Culture	17.9%
Health	6.6%
Others	7.5%

(Source: Invisible, Yet Widespread: The Non-Profit Sector in India, December 2002, PRIA) & Vani India

Structural Adjustment Programs and NGOisation

The 'oil shock' of 1970s precipitated economic crisis at the global level (Negri and Hardt 2000). The crisis had hit various countries of the world; developing countries in particular, however were most severely struck. The crisis in question had dismantled the organizing principles of international economic and trade framework (ibid.). Consequently, developed countries enforced developing countries to restructure their institutional framework in a way that accorded highest priority to economic institutions and their instrument, in other words, the resultant schema had to assign top priority in creating and sustaining conditions that could enable unfettered run for market. This period marked the onset of neo-liberalism (Harvey 2005). As Harvey emphatically puts it "*Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices*" (Harvey 2005).

It would be worthwhile to briefly discuss Rostow's model of economic growth and development which later became the de facto model prescribed as well as imposed by World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) on developing countries and India was no exception to this. Rostow (1959) delineates the stages of economic growth very assiduously. The five stages are *traditional society, pre-conditions for take-off, take-off, drive to maturity and high mass consumption*.

The traditional society is characterized by lack of systematic understanding of their physical environment. He further elaborates that they did not lack in innovation per se, rather they did not have the tools and outlook of the physical world of the post-Newtonian era (ibid). Invariably, the geographical location of such traditional society happened to fall outside Western Europe and North America.

The preconditions for take-off correspond to societal tendencies that encourage innovation and scientific temperament and subsequently the inventions and discoveries thus achieved could be utilized in economic sphere (ibid.). This phase might be corresponding to the period of enlightenment in Europe.

The take-off stage is characterized by the increasing application of technological

developments in the production activities and thereby exhaust; so to speak the limits of available technology at a given period of time. The other facet of take-off stage is the expansion in trade and commerce, both in terms of geographical expansion, thereby bringing about hitherto other societies in other regions into the ambit of trade (ibid). In other words, takeoff stage concurred with colonialism.

Drive to maturity begins with sectoral expansion of the economy implying that the sectors of economy which were hitherto not brought into the cycle of production and consumption, started to expand. For instance, after the expansion of railroads in United States in last quarter of nineteenth century, it was heavy engineering, coal, electricity, steel among others that catapulted the economic growth of US. Western Europe and North America achieved maturity in the first half of the twentieth century. In economic vocabulary this stage is termed as full employment level (ibid.). This stage, just like other preceding stages, creates conditions amenable to transition to the higher stage.

The stage of high mass consumption sets in and marks the completion of economic growth and by extension it also marks the culmination of social progress. This is the stage wherein humans master the control over environment and surpass the need of basic necessities. At this stage service sector becomes the propellant of the economy. In terms of economics, this stage exhibits signs of diminishing marginal utility in relation to income and price (ibid.). In other words, in this stage, society as a whole places lesser emphasis on income, the underlying assumption being that individuals have enough to meet their needs and thus they engage in other non-economic pursuits.

The preceding paragraphs might seem at odd with the theme of this chapter, however, I think it was important in order to bring out the intellectual as well as ideological foundations of programs undertaken by World Bank. Having briefly contextualized the global scenario, I would now like to discuss its implications for India and bearing of the same on NGOisation.

Under pressure from the World Bank and IMF in the face of depleting foreign exchange reserves, India was forced to adopt the SAPs and New Policy Agenda (NPA) in 1980s (Mukherjee 2012). This process continued till the watershed year of 1991 and culminated in what is called liberalization, privatization and globalization (Sen 1984, 1999). Effectively it resulted in withdrawal of state and to an extent marked the transition of

Indian state from welfare state to neo-liberal one.

The new model of development; neo-liberal order had been put in practice; however, the discontents of development also started to raise its ugly head. Poverty continued to be prevalent, disparity in income distribution widened, unemployment grew to threatening proportion, health indices started reflecting a worrying trend and so on and so forth (Sen 1999). The proponents of neo-liberal model of development quickly realized the threat and came up with alternative approach; 'alternative development'. Alternative development placed renewed emphasis on 'bottom-up' approach to development.

Alternative development thinkers see development as taking dynamic and plural forms. This approach to development thinking opens up many areas to development: health, community, peace, food security, ecological health, citizen participation / engagement, public space. Neef's distinctions in Human Scale Development is a good example, where he uses categories such as subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, idleness, creation, identity, and freedom, to distinguish fundamental needs and satisfiers. He distinguishes between 'pseudo-satisfiers' like economic aggregates which purport to explain but cloud understanding of human needs, from 'single satisfiers' which offer instrumental solutions, to 'synergic satisfiers' which are considered fundamental to human wellbeing (Neef, 1991). Alternative development does not completely deny the role of economic development, but rather qualifies it in a much broader view of what it means to 'develop'.

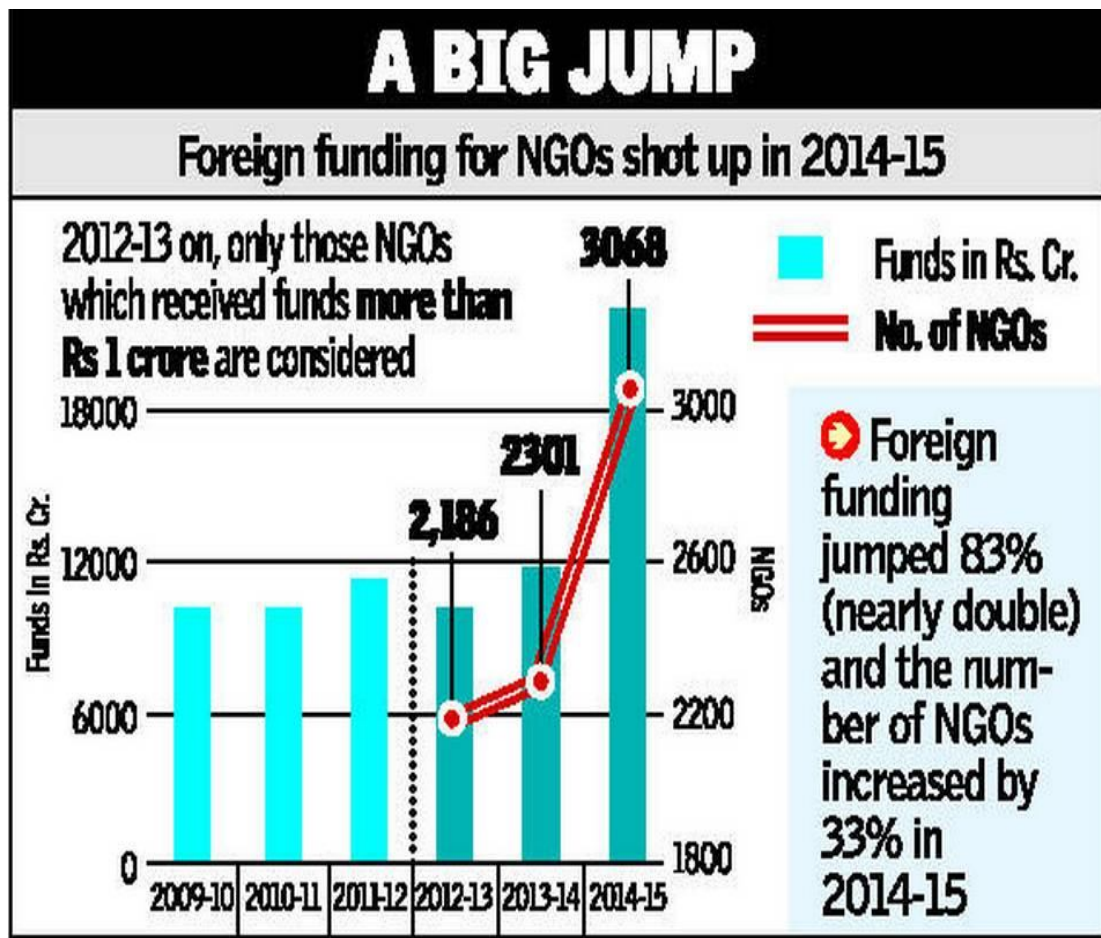
Alternative development problematizes the cultural projections occurring through 'development', and seeks to open up alternatives, global South, and local visions of development. The epistemology of alternative development challenges the 'diffusion model', in which 'scientific' and 'expert' knowledge, created in universities and polytechnics, is then diffused into society. The linking of expert science with technology with development, which is then exported / imposed from above on so-called 'under-developed' people; is seen as a dangerous misuse of power as well as a misrepresentation of reality (Borda, 2002). Alternative development thinkers call for a new ethic to development. One important aspect of this is to shift from 'development on' to 'development with'.

Notwithstanding the conceptual tenor of alternative development; the renewed approach resulted in one singular phenomenon; NGOisation. Since 1980s, NGOs have proliferated everywhere; their huge growth in regions such as Asia, Africa and Latin America sheds light

on this phenomenon. As the figure for India has already been mentioned earlier (3.1 million by 2015 from 1.2 million in 2001 and some thousands in 1980), it would be fruitful to highlight multiple factors responsible for such unprecedented growth.

First, NGOs in northern industrialized countries channel significant amount of grant-in-aid through their partner NGOs in developing countries or Southern NGOs. In 1990, Northern NGOs provided US\$ 7.2 billion, equivalent to 13 % of net disbursement of official aid to Southern NGOs (Clarke 1998). For India, the latest figure available is for year 2014-15.

According to government data presented in parliament as reported in The Hindu dated August 03 2016, a total of 3068 NGOs (this include only those NGOs registered under FCRA, even within this category the number of such NGOs is close to 33,091; report covers organization which received more than Rs 10 million), received more than Rs 2200 million (Rs 22000 crore) as foreign aid. During the period 2012-15, NGOs received Rs 5100 million (Rs 51000 crore) (The Hindu August 2016).



Source: The Hindu; August 03, 2016.

Second, multilateral and bilateral agencies have been showing preference towards Southern NGOs in order to channel fund since 1980s. Since 1981, US Congress has made it compulsory for United States Agency for International Aid (USAID) to channel 12 % of expenditure through Southern NGOs. This figure was raised to 13.5 % in 1986. This was because of disenchantment with state in neo-liberal order and also because of pressure from member countries (Clarke 1998).

Third, governments of developing countries in the face of economic crisis during this period were forced to acknowledge greater recognition of NGOs and involve them in socio-economic programs (*ibid*)

Fourth, the fragmentation of large scale social movements amidst changing themes of social mobilization led to proliferation of NGOs (*ibid*). This particular relationship between NGOs and Social Movements shall be taken up in following chapter.

The above mentioned numerical data is without doubt important; however, the qualitative changes wrought by increasing NGOisation of the practice of development need special mention. The profiles of agencies that promote NGOisation have to be looked into with critical lens. One of the most vocal advocates of NGOisation is the World Bank; the same institution that have been pushing forth agendas of neo-liberalism through SAPs and NPAs. World Bank in its annual document (1993) lavishes praise on NGOs. It argues that NGOs are better equipped to deliver on the goals of development because of their efficiency and effectiveness. They argue that NGOs are de facto grassroots organizations that address the unaddressed needs and grievances of the people; the lowest rung of society. According to World Bank, NGOs are the agents of 'democratization' as they are not plagued by 'inefficiency' and 'ineffectiveness' that stems from corruption embedded in the practices of state (World Bank 1993). What is not explicitly declared by World Bank and other advocates of NGOisation is the fact that state is nothing but a hindrance in the pathway of market. India continues to have institutions and authorities at lowest level of administration; the Panchayati Raj Institutions; however, they have been left to decay in the lurch amidst the onslaught of neo-liberalism; and by NGOisation.

Critique of NGOisation

It is important as well as necessary to have a critique of NGOisation at one's disposal. I think NGOisation of practice of development is perfect illustration of what Althusser has termed

'*humanist controversy*'. Edwards and Hulmes also offer some insight about the increasing NGOisation. According to Edwards and Hulme, since the end of Cold War in 1989, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies have pursued a '*New Policy Agenda*' which gives renewed prominence to NGOs and GROs in poverty alleviation, social welfare and the development of civil society (Edwards & Hulme, 1996). NGOs are seen as the preferred channel for social welfare. They were seen as the integral part of a thriving civil society and an essential counterweight to state power (ibid.)

The NGO growth can be also be seen as manifestation of new thinking about the role of government. Thus participation of government with NGOs for delivery of welfare services, deliberation on policy matters, decentralization, and localization are parallel manifestations of the same general trend. The NGO explosion is also directly related to the diminishing direct role of government in the political economy. It is argued that, because of their supposed cost-effectiveness in reaching the poorest, official agencies support NGOs in providing welfare services to those who cannot be reached through markets.

All these global and local changes thus represent different forms of impetus that have contributed to the NGO growth, and placed the spotlight of them. As Edwards and Hulme point out:

"NGO expansion is seen as complementing the counter-revolution in development theory that underpins the policies of liberalization, state withdrawal and structural adjustment favored by official donors. NGOs are viewed as the 'private non-profit' sector, the performance of which advances the 'public-bad', and 'private good' ideology of the new orthodoxy" (1992).

James Petras provides a brilliant critique of NGOisation. I shall go at some length to situate NGOs in its right place; neo-liberal order.

James Petras offers a more nuanced critique of the discourse of 'alternative development' in general and NGOs in particular. Petras conceptualises NGOs as '*imperial agents*'. Petras in his essay: *NGOs in the Service of Imperialism* argues that NGOs serve as the 'community face' of neo-liberalism (Petras 1999). He traces the proliferation of NGOs to the rise of neo-liberalism and concomitant decline of welfare state (ibid). However, this doesn't imply that NGOs originated after the advent of neo-liberalism as history of NGOs can be traced back to the missionary organizations of nineteenth century; rather it means that conditions entailed by

neo-liberalism favours the proliferation of NGOs. On the other hand it can also be said that NGOs reinforces neo-liberalism. Nurtured and, in many cases, subsidised by the principal financial institutions and governmental agencies promoting neo-liberalism, a massive number of organizations describing themselves as NGOs have emerged. These organizations, in most cases have been active in propounding ideologies and political practices that are compatible with and complement the neo-liberal agenda of their financial patrons (ibid). The cornerstone of discourse of 'alternative development' is wider role of 'civil society' and by extension to that of NGOs in promoting development. The common line of arguments of NGO discourse, though not exhaustive, can be listed as follows:

1. State is inefficient and ineffective in delivering development.
2. NGOs promote democracy by aligning with citizens at the local level.
3. NGOs restores agency to the people at grassroot level and enables them to participate in the process of development.
4. NGOs are de facto civil society.
5. Leaders of popular organisations should not be exclusively oriented toward organising the poor and sharing their conditions. Internal mobilisation should be based on external funding. Professionals should design programmes and secure external financing to organise local groups. Without outside aid, local groups and professional careers would collapse.
6. The world is increasingly interdependent and in this world there is a need for greater international cooperation in transferring capital, technology and know-how from the "rich" to the "poor" countries.

Petras offers a critique of each of these arguments.

NGOs portray state as inefficient. It is argued that state with its inefficient bureaucracy has plundered the public wealth. Bureaucracy impedes the process of development. In contrast to this, NGOs are better suited to carry out the developmental activities by expediting the decision making process and execution thereof. However, this line of reasoning portrays only one side of the story. It completely neglects the role of public sector in generating employment. It also belittles the role of state as guarantor of citizens' rights. The retreat of

state actually entails free run for the market and subsequently deregulation. Deregulation has led to surge in informalization of labour. In reality NGOs do not take part in production activities which implies that they do not contribute in gross national product. They live off as parasites, generating private wealth without partaking in production. In India, it is still the public sector enterprises which employ majority of workforce next to agriculture. Besides, the resources in India are not evenly distributed in terms of region and social demography. Precisely because of this reason, the role of the state is necessary to ensure balanced regional development, otherwise market will tend to favour those areas enjoying geographical and historical advantages. In this regard NGOs are severely limited in terms of capacity, scope and authority. The point to be kept in mind is that it is the relation of state to citizens and various groups that matters in the process of development. As Kothari points out that that strength of NGO discourse highlights a glaring weakness- reduced scope for state in economic sphere (Kothari 1994).

NGOs as agents of grassroots aspiration- it is claimed that NGOs align and participate with people at the local level and subsequently voice their concerns. In other words they claim to restore agency at the local level. This claim is ostentatious to say the least. The organizational structure of NGOs actually contradicts their claim. NGOs are professional organizations, recruitment to NGOs is seldom done from amongst the communities which they claim to be working with.

The personnel of NGOs come from urban middle class background. Effectively, NGOs impose top-down model designed by experts on to communities at the local level. The mechanisms of their functioning are essentially techno-managerial. Instead of endogenous development, that is people themselves defining their needs and aspirations, NGOs follows the expert model. Far from restoring agency to the grassroots communities, they actually impose a model which deceptively functions to redefine the perception of needs and aspirations of the people at the local level. NGOs function according to the priorities of donor agencies; in fact their projects are approved if not designed according to the requirements of donor agencies. Major portion of the funding of NGOs in India come from the government department of USA, UK and other western countries. As Wright argues that NGOs proliferation in developing countries is part of the project of western hegemony which exclusively prescribes western ideas of development and change (Wright 2012). Petras

defines NGOs as imperial agents which serve to further the interest of imperialism. He argues that through NGOs neo-liberalism attempts to present a community face (Petras 1997 1999).

NGOs as de facto civil society- NGOs claim to be a part of civil society if not a variant of it. By virtue of this, they claim to mediate between state and citizens. What has actually entailed is the fact that state has co-opted NGOs or civil society. Co-optation implies that NGOs participate with state in the formulation, design, and execution of various policies. Increasingly, state partners with NGOs in the delivery of welfare services. What this means is that NGOs are not non-governmental in effect. Another aspect that needs to be mentioned in this context is relationship of NGOs with corporate sectors. NGOs rely on corporate sector for their funding, in fact corporate sector in order to fulfil their legal obligation under Corporate Social Responsibility works with NGOs. Under these circumstances, it is quite inevitable that NGOs would pursue/push for agendas which are suited for state in the political realm and for market in the economic realm. In other words NGOs can't function without recourse to neo-liberal agendas. That being the case, they can't function as emancipator organizations. Another point that needs to be mentioned here is that pluralisation of public sphere through involvement of state along with NGOs, corporate sector, international development agencies in the name of 'stakeholders', effectively weakens the state. It also results in the loss of accountability. I think NGOs claim to being a stakeholder in the policy process is a ruse to conceal the neo-liberal agendas.

NGOs as agents of empowerment- this is one of the most specious claims of NGO discourse. NGOs emphasise projects not movements. They "mobilise" people to produce at the margins not to struggle to control the basic means of production and wealth. They focus on technical financial assistance of projects not on structural conditions that shape the everyday lives of people. The NGOs co-opt the language of the left: "popular power", "empowerment", "gender equality", "sustainable development" and "bottom up leadership". The problem is that this language is linked to a framework of collaboration with donors and government agencies that subordinate practical activity to non-confrontational politics. The local nature of NGO activity means "empowerment" which never goes beyond influencing small areas of social life with limited resources within the conditions permitted by the neo-liberal state and macro-economy (Petras 1997). In this context it is important to mention the facade of micro enterprise or micro credit programmes managed by NGOs. The very emphasis on self-help instead of social organisation is problematic. Effectively, NGOs posits individuals both as the

problem as well as solution of poverty. NGO led approach to overcome poverty is part of the problem rather than that of solution. They fail or deliberately ignore to address the structural forces leading to perpetuation of poverty. The bottom line is that the growth of NGOs coincides with increased funding from neo-liberalism and the deepening of poverty everywhere. Despite its claims of many local successes, the overall power of neo-liberalism stands unchallenged and the NGOs increasingly search for niches in the interstices of power (Petras 1997). In any case, even the success of NGO led micro credit programmes is limited to minuscule fragment of population. Hence, NGO led approach to alleviate poverty has failed to provide any structural solution to the problem.

NGOs role in the process of democratization- NGOs stands in direct contrast to social movements and political resistance. Social movements are vital markers of substantial democracy. However, NGOs tend to divert attention from the radical assertion of social movements. In other words, NGOs effectively brings about 'depoliticization' of movements.

NGOs, professional design of programmes and external funding- One of the major critique of state led development by NGO discourse pertains to 'planning' of development programmes. In this context, state including bureaucratic apparatuses is portrayed as authoritative and excessively centralized. This might be true for some dictatorial regime, but for most of the cases it presents only one side of the story. 'Planning' is essential for governance.

Unlike state which has to formulate policies with due planning, NGOs functions according to the exigencies of project. In most of the cases, timeframe for completion of specific project is relatively shorter. It must be noted that multinational corporations (MNCs) also have a centralised panel for 'planning' and 'decision making', however, NGOs ignore centralization in case of MNCs. In fact NGOs themselves have centralised decision making process. In the guise of professional design, what NGOs prescribe is nothing less than top-down approach, the very process that they claim to reverse. Recruitment of personnel in NGOs, decision making process, sources of funding etc are far from transparent. The bottom line is that projects of NGOs are not free of vested interest, on the contrary NGOs insidiously promote the interests of donor agencies.

NGOs and international dependency- the NGO discourse makes a claim that the world is increasingly interdependent and hence there is greater need for international cooperation for the transfer of capital, technology, and knowledge from 'rich' to 'poor' countries. Majority of

NGOs operating in third world countries are funded by government of US, UK, and other western countries and multilateral financial institutions like World Bank, International Monetary Fund. World Bank in its 1993 policy guidelines has advocated for wider participation of NGOs in bringing about development in third world countries. The Bank stated that NGOs are cost-effective and efficient (World Bank 1993).

In effect, the rhetoric of globalisation and interdependency has translated in pushing through 'Structural Adjustment Programmes' and 'New Policy Agendas'. NGOs in their stated opposition to statism have managed to create a perception of inherent incompetency of state. In the domain of process of development, NGOs have come to pervade the space formerly occupied by state. Effectively, this has meant unrestricted and unfettered expansion of market so much so that NGO has become industry in its own right. NGOs are nothing but 'community face' of market. Petras rightly calls NGOs agents of imperialism.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to bring forth correlation between rise of neo-liberalism and proliferation of NGO, in the process I have also attempted to establish causal relation between the two.

As has already been flagged off, NGOisation also amounts to depoliticization; in other words, NGOisation effectively blunts resistance. The theme of depoliticization shall be taken up in next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

NGOS AND THE ISSUE OF DEPOLITICIZATION

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to highlight the consequences of increasing NGOisation. The hypothesis is that depoliticization comes about in and through NGOisation. In other words, NGOs through their practice attempt to obscure structural inequalities and reduce them to individualistic issue; such that individuals can and must solve the structural issues that they confront on their own. I shall also examine the nature of interaction between NGOs and social movements. I would like to clarify that social movements per se is not the focus of my enquiry; rather the mechanisms by which NGOs attempt to prevent the outbreak of social movements and co-opt the same. To put it precisely, I shall attempt to illustrate how NGOs serve the function of 'safety valve'.

Depoliticization

It is important to have a brief discussion on depoliticization before proceeding to examine the ways by which NGOs bring into effect the same. The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2003) defines depoliticization as 'the act or process of causing someone or something to have no political connection'. It basically means that such actions or processes are far removed from the sphere of influence of politics. Lest we misunderstand this, it is pertinent to state that depoliticization per se is a tactic. It may sound paradoxical; yet depoliticization has been the governing principle of neo-liberalism such that it fosters a projection that the fundamental socio-economic processes are beyond the control of state (Bourdieu 2001). Drawing upon the traditions of liberalism and deregulation, this tactic seeks to extricate economic determinisms from all sorts of control, especially that of state. Bourdieu in his essay *Against the Policy of Depoliticization* puts it succinctly; contrary to the literal meaning of the term, states play a crucial role of bringing about depoliticization in so far as it supports the free run of neo-liberalism by providing the legislative backing, in other words state facilitates depoliticization by 'distancing itself' from the realm of policy making. Besides, it also amounts to concealing the 'powers for which they act as relays' (Bourdieu 2001).

Peter Burnham in *New Labour and the Politics of Depoliticization* (2001) defines the term as “the process of placing at one remove the political character of decision making”. It is couched in the vocabularies of inclusiveness, empowerment and democratization and primarily involves withdrawal of state from socio-economic processes and corresponding decision making. Basically, the space thus vacated is occupied by expert committees and development agencies that prepare blueprint of socio-economic policies.

James Ferguson (1990) in his book *The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*, has contextualized the process of depoliticization against the background of development. He argues that multilateral development agencies engages in preparing a technocratic blueprint of development in a way that overlooks or rather obfuscates the political vicissitudes of respective countries. The essential question projected is as to how best to develop countries or regions that are yet to catch up with the modern economic dispensation. The question what is to be done is inextricably tied up to who can do it? The structure and the role of the state have to be that of mere facilitator. Ferguson further examines in detail the real effects of discourse of development; however, for our purpose it suffices to state that his analysis provides an opening into discussion on NGOisation and concomitant depoliticization.

The politics of depoliticization has three key elements. Flinders (2005) suggests that the first element at the core is the principle of acceptance of depoliticization as legitimate and governing schema for decision making process. This element operates at macro-political level. This can be associated with general current of withdrawal of state from socio-economic processes. Second, tactic employed to realize the goal of the chosen principle at any given moment. This operates at meso-political level. The word ‘tactic’ signifies instrumental approach to development; instead of holistic socio-economic programs that aim to bring real development short-term projects with specified duration are put into practice. Third, the specific tool or form employed to support the principle and tactic of depoliticization. This operates at micro-political level. The same can be associated with the lowest rung of society or the grassroots level of society. In recent times, NGOs are preferred agency to bring change at grassroots level. The cumulative effect happens to be institutional depoliticization; a climate in which state although is involved but only as mute spectator. It delegates its role and authority to quasi-autonomous bodies and various sorts of development agencies; in which NGOs are the most preponderant entity.

In so far as acceleration in proliferation of NGOs in India can be associated with the onslaught of neo-liberalism and thus with withdrawal of state; it can be argued that increasing NGOization amidst practices of development is both the consequence and agents of depoliticization. It is reinforced in and through NGOization of development such that it sets in motion apparently interminable chain of movements. I would now like to discuss how NGOs are implicated in as well as contributors to depoliticization. I have identified some themes through which argumentation will proceed.

Constraints of Dependency on Donors

Advocates of NGOization including World Bank and official aid agencies hail NGOs as the agents of empowerment and democratization on account of their efficacy and connectedness with the grassroots. They argue that NGOs are not crippled by inefficiency and ineffectiveness plaguing the corrupt state (World Bank 1998). One is forced to enquire as to why these development institutions advocate withdrawal of the state and simultaneously favours NGOs as partners in bringing about development. If one were to analyze the structural constraints faced by NGOs with reference to their dependency on donors; one would easily discern the fact that such dependency severely limits the freedom of NGOs not only in setting agendas on their own but also on mechanisms of implementation of specific project.

Robert Hayden (2002) in “*Dictatorship of Virtue?*” provides a pithy argument that claims of autonomy of NGOs is nothing but an act of mystification. Such claims conceal the interests of powerful states, national elites and private capital. If it is a myth in reality; it becomes even more important to assess the nature of developing states’ dependency on NGOs and their effects on notions of empowerment and democratization.

Sangeeta Kamat (2003) in *NGOs and the New Democracy* offers pertinent insight into the aspect of depoliticization induced by dependency of NGOs on external donors. The nature of dependency engenders a relationship of patronage and control by donor agencies over the activities of NGOs. The influx of money coupled with pressure to operate in areas vacated by state has forced NGOs to restructure their operations to suit the needs of Northern aid agencies. There is a perfect relationship between demand and supply of aid channeled through NGOs. The operational NGOs – that function in poor areas but need not necessarily be participated by poor, are “engaged primarily in design, facilitation and implementation of development sub projects,” according to the mechanisms laid out by World Bank.

Implementation of such projects involves training in specific skill rather than general education that informs people of their rights. Quite clearly, this vision of development is both narrow and truncated. It effectively amounts in restructuring of political engagement at the grassroots level. The notion of empowerment is couched in economic and apolitical terms. People are encouraged to find their own solution with emphasis on entrepreneurial skills. The World Bank explicitly states that empowerment of poor transforms them into ‘clients’ who can demand goods and services from government and private sector; eventually poor should become the owners and managers of their own assets (World Bank 1998).

Goldman (2005) also highlights co-optation of NGOs by World Bank in a way that NGOs become partner of World Bank in furtherance of capitalist led development. According to Goldman, NGOs play a role that can’t be carried out by multilateral banks and private capital on their own; NGOs effectively lend legitimacy to development projects through advocacy of development and empowerment. Competition among NGOs to secure funding prevents them from adopting a political stance and hence they prefer to stay out of controversy and thus engage in micro projects.

NGOs effectively serve the function of conduit for passage of information and capital so as to entrench capitalist modalities of development down to the most basic elements of society. It is through their orientation programs, seminars, conferences, training and so on and so forth that they gather information about potential resistance and renders the same in the service of donor agencies. In short, they attempt to disrupt or prevent eruption of resistance movements by nipping it in the bud. Arundhati Roy (2012) in *Capitalism: A Ghost Story* puts forward this point quite incisively; “...the corporate or foundation-endowed NGOs are global finance’s ways of buying into resistance and then try to control them. ... they sit like nodes on the central nervous system, the pathways along which global finance flows...”.

In “*The Revolution Will Not be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*” – an anthology of essays edited by INCITE! Women of Colour Against Violence, the consequences of adopting political position have been well documented. What comes to fore is the fact that donors eschew ties if recipient organizations breach the code of maintaining apolitical character. Andrea Smith documents the cancellation of grant offered to Incite by Ford Foundation. Incite received approval for grant by Ford Foundation in April 2004 but the same was annulled in July the same year. The reason was that Incite unequivocally supported Palestinian liberation struggle. The board members investigated the profile of Incite and

upon finding that the organization supports Palestinian cause in their struggle against Israeli occupation annulled the earlier approval granted by the foundation (Smith 2007). Similarly, Paul Kivel also points out the precariousness engendered by dependency on donors. In the same anthology, Kivel writes, “While there is always the risk of not securing adequate funding, there is a greater risk that if we did something to really rock the boat and address the roots of the problems, we would lose whatever funding we’ve managed to secure” (Kivel 2007).

Stirrat and Henkel (1997) offer similar conclusions from entirely different perspective. They draw upon Marcel Mauss’s expositions on ‘The Gift’ and the notion of reciprocity and conclude that Northern donors engaging in South in partnership with Southern NGOs aim primarily at providing legitimacy and naturalness to the notions of development as prescribed by Northern aid agencies and other donors. It is obvious that the subtleties, nuances and context that informed Mauss exposition on the notion of ‘gift’ are at variance with contemporary times. However, the import of their arguments lie not so much in the analytical framework as in the nature of their treatment of development aid as gift that is still anchored in expectation and reciprocity. Gifts or aid to NGOs set in motion a chain of transaction between various people and organizations that links donors to recipients, “archetypically, the relative rich middle class of the North with the poor of the South. The moral underpinnings of donations have spurred debates with regards to accountability and independent functioning of NGOs which as has been mentioned earlier is simply a myth. The act of donating or the gift is not without its reciprocal correlates. It is accompanied by conditionality; one that become a form of patronage and means of control (Stirrat and Henkel 1997). In recent times, one of the most important things accompanying aid or gift is the discourse on development; the advice and blueprints. In other words, NGOs also become de facto consultants that have apparently flawless roadmap for development; one in which state shall stay in the periphery while NGOs and development agencies acquire the centrality. This centrality lends infallible and messianic characteristics to them such that they exclusively have access to answers for all problems: development, real development, alternative development, empowerment and so on and so forth. While the fact of the matter is that they end up achieving the complete opposite; namely depoliticization and powerlessness.

Lack of Accountability

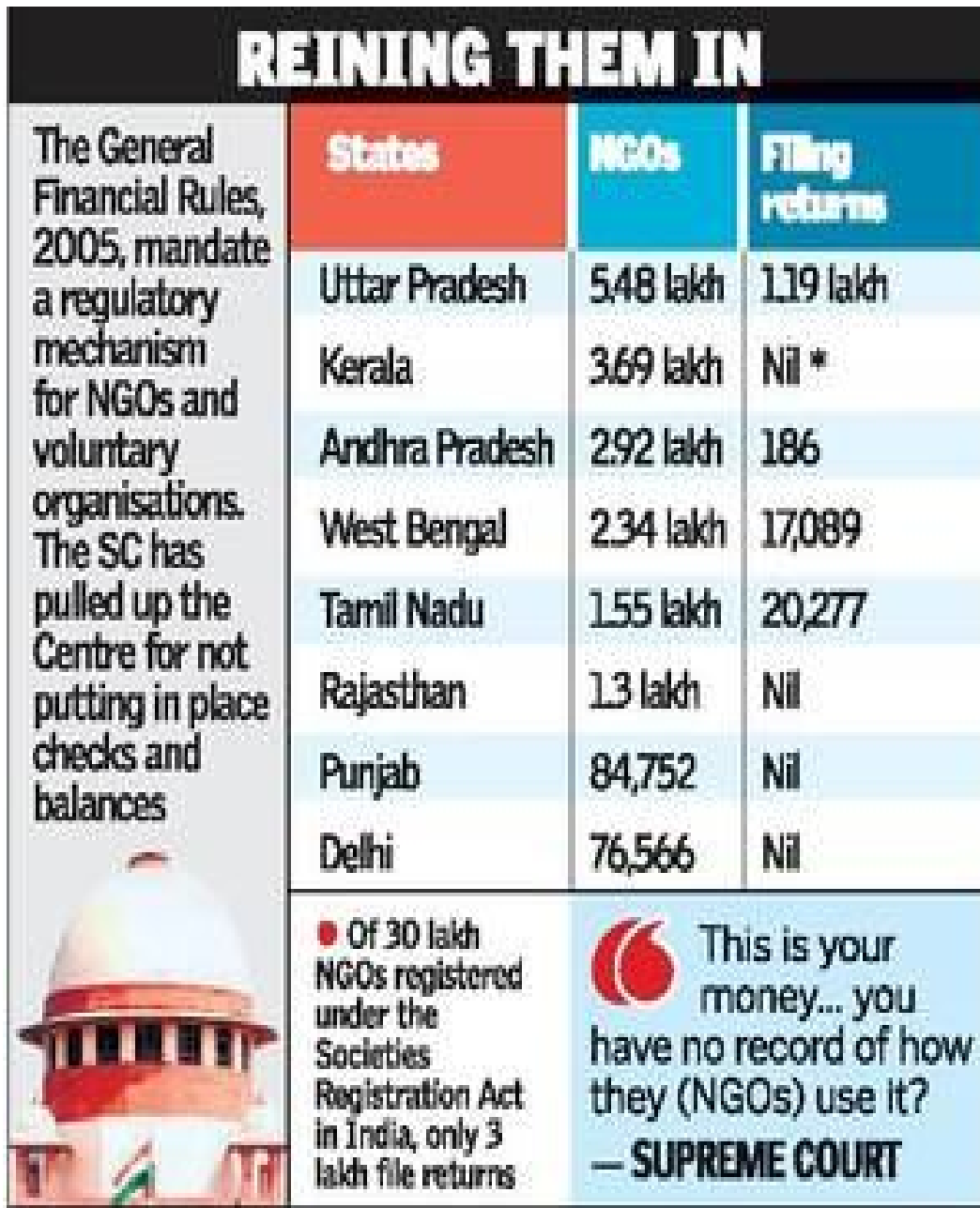
It shall come as foregone conclusion that dependency on external donors; corporate, official aid agencies or governmental assistance for that matter, fosters compliance of NGOs to demands of donors. Lack of accountability towards people at the grassroots level, that NGOs avowedly claims to empower, is closely associated with their dependency on donors. One of the most important issues to be kept in mind is the fact that unlike decentralized structures of state, for example Panchayati Raj Institutions in India, NGOs are not elected bodies and hence can't be held accountable to people even in the face of unremitting failures (Kamat 2003). This is not to say that everything runs smoothly in and through Panchayati Raj Institutions; at least there is theoretical possibility of assigning accountability on the elected representatives of these institutions. The personnel of NGOs have become professionalized and they might not, as is the case more often than not, belong to regions in which they operate. However, not belonging from a particular region in itself does not theoretically alter the possibility of understanding needs and grievances of people; rather increasing professionalization of personnel of NGOs place them far removed from the local interests and grievances. The disinterestedness engenders unaccountability as the focus is shifted towards implementation of project as designed and envisioned by the board members.

Kamat (2003) states that during the post-independence era, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) came into being without significant patronage of state or corporate donors. Besides, they were rooted in local needs and grievances and hence were capable of addressing local issues. However with the onslaught of neo-liberalism; NGOs sprang up and became the preferred channel of grant-in-aid and other assistance. Consequently, competition among NGOs for their survival and sustainability led to restructuring of political engagements at the grassroots level. CBOs with minimal resources either vanished or were co-opted by bigger NGOs. The dual policy of official aid agencies; advocating neo-liberalism and supporting NGOs has undermined the credibility of NGOs. Loss in credibility of NGOs is proportional to their unflinching loyalty towards donors.

Particularly in India, NGOs are by and large unregulated barring some legal formalities pertaining to process of registration. Contrary to projected image of NGOs engaging in corruption-free management, there are evidences that point to glaring disjuncture between their claims and practices. As late as January 2017, the Supreme Court of India had to instruct the government to audit the financial recordings of close to 3.1 million NGOs in India. The

order clearly mentions the observation that NGOs receive public money but fail to give account of their expenditure. Out of more than 3 million NGOs only .3 (3lakh) file returns (The Hindu Jan 2017). The tables below illustrate the point further.

Figure 3.1



* In Kerala, Rajasthan & Punjab, there's no legal provision of filing returns | Source: CBI

Source: The Hindu; January 11, 2017

Figure 3.2

Trends in Foreign Contributions

Financial Year	Registered Associations (as on 31 st March of F.Y.)	Associations that gave details of remittances received	Amounts received Rs crs
1993-94	15,039	Not Available	1865
2000-01	22,924	64%	4535
2003-04	28,351	61%	5105
2004-05	30,321	61%	6257
2005-06	32,144	58%	7878
2006-07	33,937	56%	11,007
2007-08	34,803	54%	9,663
2008-09	36,414	55%	10,803
2009-10	38,436	56%	10,338
2010-11	40,575	56%	10,334
2011-12	41844+	16756 not filed returns+	11548+
	Total 1993-94 to 2011-12		1,16,073

*All numbers in this article are reproduced from FCRA reports published by the MHA.
+ Reply to Rajya Sabha question no 199 dated 18/12/2013

Source: <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/foreign-funding-of-indian-ngos/0/>

The table clearly points to discrepancy in the financial management of NGOs. More importantly, it helps to demystify their NGOs as the gatekeeper of ultimate probity and highlights the fact that they are particularly vulnerable to corruption in the absence of any regulatory framework that could ensure accountability on their part.

Individualization of Structural Problems

One of the hallmarks of NGOs led approach to development is the heightened emphasis placed on an individual. Since NGOization is correlated to neo-liberalism, NGOs share the same meaning of empowerment as do the advocates of neo-liberalism. As was stated earlier, NGOization aims only apolitical and economic empowerment and that too within the modalities and values of neo-liberalism. Slight deviance from the prescribed pathways of World Bank style of development not only leads to fund cuts for the deviant NGOs but also

they find it increasingly difficult to survive in the first place. The partnership among NGOs, state and donor agencies have been bringing about a 'discursive shift from social welfare and redistribution to individualism, entrepreneurship and self-reliance' (Feldman 2010).

They posit an individual as both the problem and the solution. They deliberately overlook social structures and social relations entailed by the same which effectively serves to conceal the recognition of the structural reasons of socio-economic exploitation. NGOs are not capable of providing long term comprehensive plans that a welfare state can furnish. Nevertheless, armed with anti-statist ideology, NGOs promote inward and downward perspective. In effect, this vitiates the essence of social contract which guarantees that state shall endeavor to provide security to its citizens.

Kamat (2003) offers a brilliant analysis in this context. As earlier stated the general tenor of NGOization is couched in crude economic terms. They deliberately emphasize target specific training programs instead of general education that enables citizens to demand for their rights. The individual being projected as solution to the problem of development signifies deliberate obscuring of structural inequity. The neo-liberal notion reinforced by NGOization unequivocally leads to 'marketization of social identities and social relations' (Kamat 2003). One of the significant effects of individualizing the notion of empowerment through individual capacity building reduces the question of 'public welfare' to that of 'private interests'.

Kamat (2004) also states that pluralizing the public sphere through increasing involvement of NGOs in matters of socio-economic decision making and implementation of the same leads to displacement of accountability. The loss of accountability on the part of state inevitably follows in the reduced scope for the state. On the other hand, NGOs can't be accountable to the lowest rung of society. The popularity of micro-credit programs and employment generation through self-help groups among donor agencies can best be understood in this framework because effectively they obfuscates the structural causes of poverty and unemployment. They help to maintain status quo and reinforce encroachment by market. In effect, micro-credit programs leads to entrenchment of neo-liberal values. The projection of individual success stories symbolically absolves state of any responsibility of eradicating poverty and generation of employment opportunities. In a similar vein, project specific training displaces the general need of education and so on and so forth.

Technocratic Managerial Approach

One of the corollaries of individualizing notions of empowerment that follow is the proliferation of technocratic managerial approach to issues surrounding development. The discourse of development in general and that of NGOization in particular has helped create a new science; the science of development. Ferguson (1990) describes the 'real' effect of development schemes. Development projects involve a whole range of apparatuses including dominant states, official aid agencies and partner NGOs. They not only seek to alter the socio-economic structures of any specific region in the name of development; rather they also construct that region as object of knowledge. The knowledge is thus created in the headquarters of multilateral institutions, global conferences and so on and so forth and that is put to use through the instruments of power wielded by dominant states, aid agencies and their partner NGOs. It is through this construction of knowledge that development is denuded of its political character and rendered as mere technical problems to be addressed by one or the other permutation and combination of economic variables; some combination of investment and natural resources to be harnessed, or targeted investment among many others (Ferguson 1990).

Particularly important happens to be that of role NGOs in producing and disseminating this knowledge. Goldman (2005) in his ethnographic work on World Bank and struggle for social justice provides potent insight into this hand in glove partnership of NGOs and World Bank. Let us look into specific instance. In early 1990s, the World Bank commissioned a mega project *Nam Theun 2*, the dam, hydroelectric power and forestry project in Mekong river basin in Laos. The proposed site is one of the most biologically diverse forests in the world. Besides, close to 60 million inhabitants of the hill areas would have been displaced. There was some resistance from hill inhabitants but NGOs such as Oxfam, Save the Children, CARE, and World Education chose to focus their attention on subsidiary projects such as sustainable forestry, megafauna preservation, village level support for resettlement and training so as to mitigate the worst effects of dam. NGOs were complicit in massive displacement of people and environmental damage wrought by Nam Theun 2 project (Goldman 2005). They were busy in projecting the humane face of development projects by offering crude palliatives through strategies of adaptation and compromise.

Some authors argue that NGO action is 'intrinsically political' and proliferation of NGOs in developing countries has triggered an 'associational revolution' (Clarke 1998). While others

like Sethi (1992) ground their argument in slightly historicized context. He argues that dismantling of structures of state has fuelled proliferation of NGOs; political parties have not adequately represented aspirations of vast sections of society. Similarly, Seth (1991) argues that capacity of political parties to address economic issues and induce new groups into politics has reduced significantly and hence NGOs have grown in huge numbers. However, I think they presuppose that NGOs led actions are political in nature. The arguments presented in the initial part of this section do acknowledge withdrawal of state as important reasons for NGOization; however, they also outline the force behind this withdrawal and elaborate on complicit role of NGOs in bringing about depoliticization of public sphere.

NGOs and Social Movements: A comparative Perspective

NGOs emphasize projects; not movements. They believe in maintain status quo; not radical change (Petras 1997). These statements aptly describe orientation and attitudes of NGOs towards social movements. Smith (2007) also put forward similar arguments. She argues that framework of funding by benefactors rather than by constituents negatively impact social movements, effectively precluding the possibility of radical change. I would like to discuss in detail the impact of NGOs on social movements through Petras's analysis of the same in the context of Latin America.

1980s was the decade when the consequences of Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP) and New Policy Agenda were manifested in potential social movements. Accumulation of wealth for a select few against the mass impoverishment aggravated social discontent at the grassroots level which potentially could spur confrontational politics. However, in order to preclude the actualization of this potentiality, neoliberal regimes adopted an ostensibly parallel strategy which sought to promote organizations 'from below' situated at the grassroots level with an anti-statist ideology in order to create social cushion. These were called non-governmental organizations, which numbered in thousands by 1990s and were receiving close to four billion dollars world-wide. In 1970s, majority of NGOs were active in providing humanitarian support to the victims of military dictatorship which created a favorable image of NGOs. As a matter of fact, state aided by multilateral institutions like World Bank and International Monetary Fund and by their counterparts in U.S and Europe merely exploited the confusion regarding the political character of NGOs (Petras 1997).

Economic development compatible with free market rather than social organization for social change becomes the dominant theme of funding agenda. They foster a new kind of cultural

and economic colonialism and dependency; agendas are determined according to the priorities of imperial donors and subsequently evaluations are done by and for imperial institutions. NGOs preclude the possibility of forging unity in order to struggle against the exploitative system. Besides, NGOs co-opt the leaders of social movement and corresponding organizations in addition to the co-optation of the language of left. He corroborates his argument by providing examples of Bolivia, Chile, Brazil and El Salvador.

Bolivia- In 1985 Bolivian government launched its New Economic Policy by decree: freezing wages for four months, inflation rate was hovering at 15,000 per cent annual rate. It was followed by cut in food and fuel subsidy, reduced expenditure on health and education and increase in privatization. Prolonged general strike and violent confrontation ensued. In response, World Bank, European and U.S government agencies provided a massive aid to fund 'poverty alleviation program'. The foreign funding spurred rise in the number of NGOs in Bolivia, from 100 in 1982 to 530 in 1982. However, only 15-20 % of \$738 million received as foreign aid could reach the poor. Bolivian NGOs functioned as appendage of the state and served to consolidate its power.

Chile- Although NGOs denounced the violation of human rights under Pinochet's regime and projected the ideology of 'development with equity', less than five of the 200 NGOs offered a critical analysis of the relationship between U.S imperialism and Pinochet's dictatorship. After the killing of Pinochet, the erstwhile supporters of social movements became ministers in the alliance of Socialists and Christian Democrats, they converted from critics of Pinochet's economic policies to supporters/upholders of the same. In case of 'women's movement' which started as a promising movement in 1980s was co-opted by NGOs ended up being an elitist organization whose concerns were limited to publication of newsletters.

Brazil- In case of Brazil, Petras just mentions about the interaction between 'Landless Rural Workers Movement' which he argues was the most dynamic social movement in Brazil, and NGOs just to highlight the efficacy and superiority of Social Movements as compared to NGOs. However, he also mentions about the strategic weakening of women's wing of MST in the face of collaboration with the feminist NGOs.

El Salvador- Petras highlights the hierarchized relationship between NGOs and the people they apparently collaborate with. Petras was part of Alianza Democratica Campesino (ADC, or Democratic Peasant Alliance) which represented 26 peasant and landless workers' organizations. ADC together with CRC SOGEMA- a Canadian agency-were supposed to

conduct a participatory research for the program to be implemented for peasants. During, interaction with CRC Sogema, Petras as part of ADC was given a figurative presentation. The head- one that thinks, write and prepare programs- was referred to as NGOs while the hand and feet- which provide data and implement the program-were referred to as peasants. Petras mentions this particular incident to demystify the myths around grassroots aspects of NGOs.

I would now discuss about resistance against land acquisition in Bangladesh and role of NGOs in this context drawing upon Ahasan and Gardner (2016). Based on case study of two extractive MNCs, Chevron and JT, author brings out their alliance with NGOs, state and local elites in order to gain 'social license' to operate. They worked through local and national political networks and drew upon the development discourse resonating with modernity. However, they strategically contracted out the project of community development to NGOs. Alliance with NGOs served as buffer between local population and the corporation and added ethical respectability to NGOs. (Ahasan and Gardner 2016).

Chevron in Bibiyana

In early 2000s government of Bangladesh handed contracted to Unocal, or ULB a multinational company (MNC); in order to extract gas from the gas field of Bibiyana. Land had been forcibly acquired by state between 2005 and 2007. The local landowners opposed and continuous protests led to halting of construction of gas field. The state responded with violent tactics; armed police escorts were provided to company and government officials while local leader was arrested. Chevron was caught in the problem as it had been attempting to build rapport with local leaders. The company renegotiated compensatory prices and expedited land settlement claims. Chevron in alliance with *Friends in Village Development Bangladesh* funded 'alternative livelihood programs'. Further, program of providing stipends and scholarship for school children was also initiated in alliance with other NGOs. In effect, NGOs facilitated amelioration or blunting the resistance of local people Ahasan and Gardner 2016).

JT in Dumki, Sylhet

JT, again an MNC right from the outset contracted BRAC (an NGO) as part of its corporate social responsibility. JT aimed at large-scale landscape engineering plan in order to secure the supply of raw materials for its production activities. BRAC initiated 'Dumki Uplifting Project'. By the time BRAC's Research and Evaluation division backed out of the contract

amidst rejection of approval of JT's venture by state, JT was already in a position to buy offering contracts to local elites. Dumki Uplifting Project continued and limited resistance shown by small farmers was quelled by local elites (Ahasan and Gardner 2016). This case is particularly interesting because JT had already anticipated resistance by farmers; however, they were successful in acquiring land through partial effort of Dumki Uplifting project which fostered a favorable image of JT and the rest were helped by local elites.

A Post-facto analysis of Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA)

Hindsight always offers a better perspective to evaluate things. NBA was an alliance of numerous NGOs protesting against Narmada Valley Dam Project (NVDP) in general; and against Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) in particular. The protest against SSP started in 1980s, though they were sporadic in nature. NBA was formed in 1989 and just after one year of its involvement in protests, there occurred a shift in demand. In 1990, NBA changed its demand from total stalling of construction of SSP to initiating a review by the government before the commencement of the construction (Baviskar 1995).

I think that leaders and coordinators of NBA were informed by different worldview than the ones directly affected by the project. The change in demand clearly marked softening of the resistance movements. In any case, demanding a review by the government even if met would have no impact; the review as was the case was articulated in vocabularies associated with development. Five years later, NBA approached Supreme Court of India and eventually it lost the case against the state (Roy 1999). My intentions are not to decry NBA in totality. As a matter of fact, NBA did achieve symbolic success by catapulting the local issue to national as well as international level. It did create pressure on World Bank to withdraw from funding and eventually it did happen (Baviskar 1995); however, these were mere token of success. I think that modalities of strategies employed by NBA were caught up within the structural constraints. Had it continued protest at the local level and refused to budge, who knows history would have had a different story to tell. My analysis of NBA was aimed to be theoretical in nature and I reiterate that I have the benefit of hindsight. My objective was to showcase limitations of NGO led movements.

Naz Foundation and struggle for Sexual Freedom

I would like to briefly discuss about the case *Naz Foundation vs. Govt. of NCT Delhi*. Naz Foundation was involved in a famous litigation process that temporarily resulted in

decriminalization of Section 377 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) (www.nazindia.org). Section 377 of IPC states that “*Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal, shall be punished with [imprisonment for life], or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine. Explanation.—Penetration is sufficient to constitute the carnal intercourse necessary to the offence described in this section*” (<http://www.lawyerscollective.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/377-Brochure-final.pdf>).

This section criminalizes homosexuality or any other sexual orientation than hetero-sexual orientation. Naz Foundation approached Delhi High Court with the petition seeking abolition of section 377 of IPC. Delhi High Court upon hearing ordered decriminalization of the same in 2009 (www.nazindia.org). Five years later, Supreme Court of India overruled Delhi High Court order (<http://www.lawyerscollective.org/vulnerable-communities/lgbt/section-377>), and presently the same section is operational.

In this case, it is evident that the NGO did not even consider mobilizing public at large. The wider public was informed about the case through media. Secondly, Naz Foundation chose to operate within the limited scope of politico-judicial sphere as opposed to mobilizing public support. Here again we find a scenario wherein NGOs do not choose confrontational politics. Their strategies and tactics are informed by and oriented according to ‘expert model’. By placing demands at the disposal of authoritative structures which encourage control over citizens, one risks the fate of being dependent on the mercy of office bearers of those structures.

Conclusion

To summarize the chapter, I would like to state that NGOization is a manifestation of neo-liberal values in practice. Furthermore, NGOization reinforces neo-liberal notions of empowerment. Notwithstanding the subjective intentionality of personnel of NGOs or some real grassroots NGOs, the structure within which they are situated imposes severe limitations on their capacity to bring into effect the process of democratization. They are part of the system and are complicit in perpetuating status quo.

CONCLUSION

The initial stimulus for the present work came through a project on malnutrition funded by United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) which I was part of as research investigator. The project which started in October 2014 was aimed at ascertaining factors responsible for chronic malnutrition among children in Bihar, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh; some of the state worst affected by malnutrition. One of the obvious factors, in my own view is chronic poverty. However, I was struck by the design and modalities of the research program; it explicitly was geared towards discovering 'cultural' system of meanings associated with malnutrition. In any case, when I went to field; contrary to my research guidelines, I found that that poverty is the most important reason behind prevalence of malnutrition. Besides, observation of institutional arrangements struck me particularly; the agency or organization operating the treatment and rehabilitation centre was an NGO, state governments were funding the program. The project helped me to introduce to partnership between state and NGOs. It altered my perception of NGOs being de facto non-governmental and from there I undertook this inquiry. The inquiry has resulted in the form of this dissertation; though the inquiry is far from complete. However, I attempted to present preliminary findings of my inquiry through the course of this work. I would like to summarize the same.

In the first chapter I have tried to present various definitions and classifications of NGOs starting from post-second World War era to present times. In the course of the chapter, I tried to present the definitional and typological framework pertinent to understanding of NGOs. Thus, history of defining NGOs can be traced back to formation of United Nations in 1945. Article 71 of UN gave a preliminary or working definition of NGOs. Initially, NGOs signified international organizations that were assigned the role of consultation. With passage of time and corresponding changes, UN amended its article and passed resolution to this effect in 1996. This was an acknowledgement of influence enjoyed by NGOs in aspects of setting agendas and policy making at governmental and inter-governmental level. I also outlined, however briefly, dominant orientation in defining NGOs; juridical and sociological. Juridical approach focuses on legal processes while sociological approach focuses on structural or operational features of NGO. Various scholars have attempted to define NGOs within the conceptual framework of civil society. This does help to an extent but I think it would be more relevant to treat NGO/NGOization as conceptual category in its own right which would then be amenable to comparison with civil society. We also learned about

various criteria for classifying NGOs. I would reiterate that those criteria were few amongst many and there can be many other criteria for constructing typology of NGOs.

In the second chapter I focused on locating NGOs within the matrix of state, market and third sector. Through the course of India's planning history, I tried to illustrate that contrary to widespread belief, Indian state solicited participation of NGOs right from its inception. The scale was limited though. Three decades later, 1980s marked the onset of SAPs and NPAs brought into effect effective withdrawal of state from welfare services. Contrary to widespread idea of inefficient and ineffective state being the reason for proliferation of NGOs, I assert that the above scheme of reasoning is an attempt to reverse the causal chain. The effect is posited as cause; proliferation of NGOs has directly been caused by SAPs and NPAs. SAPs and NPAs have forced withdrawal of state from welfare services to favour unhindered run for neo-liberal values. NGOs mere followed as inevitable link in the chain. The persistent upsurge in their number and influence not only marks weakening of state but also induces powerlessness in society.

The third chapter focuses upon the impact of NGOization. The singular and most significant impact has been analyzed through the thematic of depoliticization. It would be naïve to believe depoliticization to mean something free of politics; rather, NGOs engage in the politics of depoliticization. In other words, NGOs through their engagements aim at depoliticizing the masses of individuals – to transform them into unquestioning follower of development as propounded by neo-liberal masters. Since they are constrained by dependency on external sources; their claim pertaining to their capacity to act and function as independent entity remains chimera. NGOs deliberately narrow their focus down to individual and just micro-level phenomenon. They effectively attempt to present worldviews that individual phenomenon is unconnected to any ties with wider structural phenomena. Fundamentally, NGOs invoke moral claims, which are neither required nor helpful. Finally, NGOs aim at precluding the possibilities of social movements from actualizing. NGOs, with their networks prefigure the potentialities at grassroots level and by dint of their communication channel prevent actualization of the same. Notwithstanding the claims of advocates of NGOisation; NGOs are in effect the tools and instruments in the service of neo-liberalism. They serve to ameliorate poverty, but do not rebel against the same; they rejoice in limited success of self-help groups but conveniently ignore structural analysis of unemployment and so on and so forth.

Whatever be the particular form of NGOization, the essence remains one and the same; depoliticization. Powerlessness and debilitation of individuals is understandably not the direct result of NGOization. However, NGOs can't be absolved of the complicity that they have just been performing the service of moral brigades of neo-liberalism. NGOs are not the exclusive causal agent, however, they reinforce and contribute to entrenchment of systems of exploitation and exclusion.

I would like to acknowledge the fact that I have not undertaken examination of concepts of voluntarism, charity, seva etc. These concepts might have some bearing on the origins of NGOs. However, for the reason of pragmatics I decided not to examine these concepts; they have origins in religious values; for instance '*daan*' (giving) in Hinduism, *zakat* in Islam, '*charity*' in Christianity and so on and so forth. I have also not given due attention to international and geo-political aspects of politics of aid. I acknowledge that these might have some bearing on thorough understanding of political economy of NGOs. I have not taken into account different subjective orientations of various NGOs; generalization thus arrived at might be crude, however, my focus was on the prevalent trend rather than on the exceptions. I hope to undertake these in future endeavour. However, it does not invalidate the conclusions reached here; rather it could contribute to enhanced and more nuanced understanding of political economy of NGOs.

If 'civilizing' the world was mission of Europe in eighteenth and nineteenth century; 'development' has been the mission of the world since late twentieth century. The idea of development has been naturalized to such an extent that it is virtually impossible to imagine the world dissociated from any notion of development. The particular historical significance of contemporary lies in the fact that development has become central in modes of thinking about regions of the world. Ferguson (1990) rightly points out that like 'God' in twelfth century and 'civilization' in nineteenth century; 'development' has become the central value around which different positions are accorded legitimacy. Various world views are articulated in terms of development; either for or against, but it acquires the centrality. In other words, development has not only become the central organizing concept of contemporary era but also acquired the position of dominant problematic to be defined, refined, evaluated and so on and so forth. The complete set of governing principles and entire government are assessed according to their ability to project as well as promote development. It has become 'interpretive grid' through which imagery of various regions of the world are recognized.

Impoverishment in various regions thus becomes a signifier of particular stage of development.

Development implicates a systemic apparatus that includes discourses, values, instruments and tools to accomplish the goal. Esteva (1992) traces the recent history of development with all its political connotations to the rise of United States (US) as imperial power after Second World War. Since then, development has signified at least one thing; 'to escape from the undignified condition called underdevelopment'. In order to move out of underdevelopment one necessarily has to acknowledge and internalize the idea that one has fallen in the trap of underdevelopment. The only way out is to embark upon development. As pointed earlier, it is through interpretive grid of development that conditions of various regions of the world are rendered intelligible. Besides, the discourse of development conceives economic histories of different countries as following a linear trajectory of history along the ladder of stages of development. Majority of third world countries are labeled as either developing or underdeveloped. The label 'developing' signifies a processual category- one that has been embarked upon, but remains incomplete. In this case, the goal of the process along with means attendant to it are laid out in complete detail, the goal being that of reaching a stage which can be labeled as 'developed' while the only necessary and desirable means is the self-regulating *market* with all its paraphernalia. In other words, the imperative prescription for the so called third world countries is to reorganize the institutional arrangements of their society in a mechanism that allows *market* to gallop ahead, notwithstanding the disjuncture among society, economy, polity or culture for that matter wrought by unfettered as well as unrestrained market. The entrenchment of market and market values in every sphere of society is what is basically termed as neo-liberalism. The semantics of development and neo-liberalism might be completely different from each other; however, they tend to converge in essence and practice

'Development' became the most important paradigm for global order after Second World War. The paradigm entailed specious classification of countries into neat compartments of First world, Second World and Third World countries. Apparently, the first world corresponded to status of being developed while second and third corresponded to being 'developing' or 'underdeveloped' respectively. The first world had been posited as the 'model' to be emulated by the rest of the world which implied restructuring of socio-economic and political structures of so-called second and third world countries according to the 'model' that stood atop the summit of development.

The practice and values of neo-liberalism undergo constant churning in order to reconfigure it according to changing times. The reproduction of neo-liberal values is carried out and reinforced by various agencies, institutions, discourses and so on and so forth. It constantly seeks to produce and safeguard the legitimacy of such neo-liberal order. Proliferation of NGOs is manifestation of moral forces employed by neo-liberal order; it is in a way the imperceptible force that propels pervasiveness of such an order. It would be naïve to undermine the significance of preponderance of NGOs in global south. Some of the figures are staggering to say the least; consider the following numbers. In Philippines, the number of NGOs grew by 148 % to 58,000 between 1984 and 1993. In Kenya, the number grew by 187 % between 1978 and 1987. By 1993, Brazil had an estimated number of 110,000 NGOs (Clarke 1998). These figures are more than twenty years old; one can safely say that numbers must have exponentially risen by now under the thrust provided by the World Bank, First World and official aid agencies. In India alone there are more than 3.1 million NGOs (The Indian Express Aug 2015). If one were to think about preponderance of NGOs and historical timing of the same in developing countries; one can easily discern direct correlation between onset of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) and New Policy Agendas (NPAs) on the one hand, and acceleration in growth of number of NGOs in developing countries on the other.

NGOs arguably are the moral brigades of neo-liberalism; their pursuits have been to preserve and perpetuate the onslaught wrought by neo-liberalism. The core of the morality practiced by NGOs invokes the notions of ‘justice, ‘doing good’, ‘help’ among other tenets of humanist values.

They claim to assume social responsibility on their part and practice with the projected belief that they extend helping hand to pull people out of the situation of want; thereby bringing prosperity and happiness in the lives of individuals. In effect, what they do is that they serve to cloak the structures which produce unhappiness and suffering arising out of deprivation; they basically limit the perceptibility of systemic exclusion. Negri and Hardt (2000) aptly attribute to them the quality of ‘most powerful pacific weapons’ of the present order. Neo-liberalism through NGOs aims at moral intervention in order to prefigure the conditions at the margin. It is through this act of prefiguring that they are able to quell resistance and nip in the bud any possibility of change.

I think extrapolation of Marxian concepts of formal subsumption and real subsumption; which means absorption of non-capitalist mode of production into capitalist mode (geographical expansion of capitalism), and intensification of capitalist relations by absorbing new activities into its fold respectively; finds resonance with the practice of NGOisation. According to my view point real subsumption is an interminable process; capitalism constantly seeks to expand the horizon of its influence by not only absorbing new set of activities but also by reproducing the same. In accordance with the World Bank's vision of development and empowerment which purports to transform poor into 'client' who are just capable of participating in the cycle of demand and supply, NGOs display an unquestionable loyalty to their master by exactly doing just the same. In other words NGOs engage in uplifting people to bare subsistence.

NGOs in and through their insidious engagement with people at the grassroots indeed serve to contribute to real subsumption in the sense that they relentlessly pursue induction of ever more people into the circuits and pathways of neo-liberal development. The orientation of their operational activities is necessarily grounded within the limits of neo-liberal notions of development. Consequently, they neither confront nor challenge the structural arrangements in place. Besides, the imperceptible impact of their activities happens to be preventing the possibility of eruption of challenges to those structures. As a result, ever increasing number of individuals is inducted in such an order which further leads to entrenchment of strongholds of neo-liberalism. For instance, let us consider about self-help groups. Indeed, self-help groups provide livelihood opportunity to some, but it is just limited to some and not all. Another, and that is far more serious in nature, impact is that it leads to divestment of responsibility on the part of state to provide employment to all. This is the modus operandi of NGOs; they operate in areas vacated by state and through their individualizing schema, they conceal the real forces and structures that produce exclusion of many. In Petras's words, 'NGOs encourage people to produce at the margins and not motivate them to control the means of production' (Petras 1999).

The unflinching emphasis on 'individuals' rather than on structures – the most dangerous pacific weapon, is also a reflection of the world view in which humans and humans alone control the movement of history. In other words, this world view projects a fallacy that men, independent of material circumstances, decide the locus and trajectory of history. The incantation implicitly invoked through NGOization is precisely this fallacy. Like any other incantation or fallacy for that matter, reality or real perception of the same, NGOs charm us

into believing the fallacy to be true. According to my viewpoint, NGOization effectively leads to pulverization of historical possibilities. NGOs are complicit in preventing the creation; the creation of history different from the history of perpetuation of exploitative order. The singular purpose of NGOization remains to continuously inflame what Althusser calls, 'the humanist controversy'. A controversy which is presented and projected as anything other than what it stands for – moral incantation to disguise the debilitating effects of neo-liberalism; through individualizing the powerlessness when in reality it is systemic in nature. I would like to end the essay with the following statement: *“had there been accurate and sincere recognition of humanity, there would have been less of charity”*.

