



NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT

DR. SEEMA RANAWAT

Principal, Keshav Mahavidyalaya, Atru, Baran, Rajasthan

RESEARCH ABSTRACT:

Organized entities with the aim of social service are known as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Not all NGOs are voluntary organizations, while all voluntary organizations are considered NGOs. Their primary objective is to work for the development and welfare of the public. In order to ensure the participation of NGOs in making development programs successful, and to provide these organizations with a new direction, the concept of "KAPART" (an organization or initiative) has been established. Currently, due to the increasing interest and trust of rural and tribal people in these organizations, their numbers are continually rising.

NGOs do not have a fixed meaning, purpose, function, or activity. Their nature often changes according to the context in which they operate. Some organizations continually adapt their activities based on community needs. Nonetheless, NGOs are generally organized groups of activists working at the grassroots level, which include Jain groups, voluntary organizations, voluntary agencies, social welfare groups, and so on. Their main objective is to serve society. These large and small organizations, which do not fall under the hierarchical structure of the country's administrative system but work for public development, are referred to as NGOs. They can operate at both local and international levels.

We can consider organized entities aimed at social service as non-governmental organizations. While not all NGOs are voluntary organizations, all voluntary organizations are classified as NGOs.

NATURE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS)

The absence of profit motive is a primary characteristic of government organizations; their main objective is to work for the development and welfare of the public. In the current era, the perception, nature, and form of voluntary organizations are undergoing changes. These organizations operate independently, free from any political or other forms of control and pressure. They assist the government in reaching out to the poor and in understanding their issues. Furthermore, they play a crucial role in coordinating with the government to fulfill the needs of the impoverished. However, these organizations are not self-sustaining; they have very limited financial resources and rely on external financial aid to operate.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

India has a glorious tradition of voluntary work and social service since ancient times. Philanthropy and aiding the needy are integral to Indian culture, often referred to in the language of duty and righteousness. Kautilya's "Arthashastra" mentions that communities used to help each other in times of need, such as during droughts, floods, or epidemics, through institutions like temples and ashrams.

In the early 19th century, social service began to be recognized as organized activity. Raja Ram Mohan Roy established institutions like the Atmiya Sabha (1815), the Unitarian Society (1822), and the Brahmo Samaj (1826). By the late 19th century, voluntary organizations emerged more robustly, focusing on social reform. Figures like Jyotirao Phule established the Satyashodhak Samaj (1873), and Dayanand Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj (1875). This period also saw the entry of Christian missionaries into India, who began their work in the Naga region in 1830 and in

Chotanagpur in 1845, focusing on education and health care while protecting tribal communities from exploitation.

Influenced by Gandhi's ideas, leaders like Thakkar Bapa and Raghav Bhai established organizations like the Adivasi Sevak Sangh for tribal upliftment. In 1921, Bapa founded the Bil Seva Mandal in Gujarat's Panchmahal district, marking the formation of one of the first organizations aimed at tribal development.

Post-independence, the number of voluntary organizations increased remarkably, with around 56,611 NGOs operating in various sectors. Various commissions have recognized the necessity of including NGOs as partners in the development process. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957) emphasized the need for NGOs in community planning, while the Dhebar Commission (1961) noted the lack of active and purposeful participation of the people, suggesting that this gap could be filled by NGOs. The 1973 commission on Panchayati Raj also acknowledged the significant role of NGOs in rural development.

To enhance the effectiveness of development programs and ensure the participation of NGOs, the Government of India established the National Fund for Voluntary Organizations in 1983 and the Council for Voluntary Social Welfare in 1986. The increasing interest and trust of rural and tribal populations in these organizations have led to a steady rise in their numbers.

WORKING METHODOLOGY

NGOs are engaged in addressing various social and economic issues, including rural development, environmental protection, child welfare, tribal development, and population control. Their outreach and credibility often surpass those of government officials and employees. When an NGO selects a target area, its workers first engage with the local residents to understand their culture, social traditions, and beliefs, establishing friendly relations and gaining trust. This rapport allows people to consider these organizations as friends and benefactors, leading to open communication regarding their needs and concerns.

NGOs are characterized by flexibility and quick decision-making processes, allowing them to respond effectively to ground-level issues. They possess a trained and technically skilled workforce that works on socio-economic development while also raising awareness about rights among marginalized communities. Regular evaluations of their activities help ensure that the intended objectives are met and provide opportunities for timely corrections if necessary.

NGOs have developed various training modules that cater to illiterate and marginalized groups, including women and tribal populations. Participatory training methods have proven to be successful. Both governments and organizations like the United Nations acknowledge that training provided by NGOs tends to be more practical and effective.

TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Despite various governmental efforts, the progress of tribal communities has not met expectations, with significant gaps remaining in education, health, employment, electricity, irrigation, drinking water, roads, and social security. For development programs to be successful, it is crucial that the communities targeted are actively involved in planning and executing those programs. True development involves empowering people to organize themselves and take charge of their own progress.

Post-independence, the responsibility for planning and implementing development programs has largely been entrusted to the bureaucracy, which has its own limitations and challenges. India's diversity poses a significant challenge in integrating the most marginalized sections of society into the mainstream and ensuring their access to development. This is a task that the government alone cannot achieve.



For effective outreach to the most disadvantaged, it is essential to involve NGOs in the development process. This is particularly true for tribal communities, where NGOs play an especially vital role. The primary needs for tribal development today include alleviating poverty, reducing unemployment, addressing indebtedness, enhancing education and health, and providing basic amenities. Ensuring the participation of tribal communities in the implementation of development plans and communicating democratic values to them is essential, a role that NGOs can fulfill more easily.

CONCLUSION

Given this comprehensive background, this research proposes to explore the current context and the role of non-governmental organizations. NGOs are capable of initiating developmental work at the grassroots level and maximizing the potential for higher development outcomes.

REFERENCES

- [1] Balkaar Singh Poonia, "The Role and Responsibilities of Non-Governmental Organizations in Rural Development," *Kurukshetra*, September 2000, Vol. 46, No. 2, p. 81.
- [2] Devendra Thakur (1997), *Role of Voluntary Organizations in Tribal Development*, Deep Publications, New Delhi.