

## ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs) IN ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

**Dr. Eknath Shankarrao Mundhe**

*Assistant Professor,*

*Department of Economics,*

*Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil College, Vashi, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra, India.*

### **ABSTRACT:**

*At the beginning of the 21st century environmental issues have emerged as a major concern for the welfare of people. In India, the concept of environment protection can be seen starting from the period of Vedas. Today we come across various non-governmental organizations whose concerns are focused on various areas such as social issues, health issues, and environmental issues. There are large number of NGOs in India and other countries that are exclusively working for environmental, protection, conservation, and awareness. The number of these non-governmental organizations which are actively involved in environmental protection in our country is, in fact, more than in any of the developing country. These organizations extend beyond their own community and can reach places where Governmental agencies cannot sometimes reach. Though, recent years have seen a proliferation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with a mission to help in redressing various social and environmental problems, the effectiveness of these organizations in carrying out their stated goals is rarely assessed or critically examined. NGOs can sensitize policy makers about the local needs and priorities. They can often intimate the policy makers about the interests of both the poor and the ecosystem as a whole. In providing training facilities, both at community and government levels, NGOs can play a significant role. They can also contribute significantly by undertaking research and publication on environment and development related issues. It is necessary to support and encourage genuine, small, local level NGOs in different parts of the country which can provide much needed institutional support specific to the local needs.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Environment, NGOs, Conservation, protection, Awareness.*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Today we come across various non-governmental organizations whose concerns are focused on various areas such as social issues, health issues, and

environmental issues. Non-Governmental Organization is a broad term, which includes charity organizations, advisory committees and various other professional organizations. NGOs in India are spread across the country and they have close contacts with communities.

They are involved in the whole spectrum of developmental activities from creating environmental awareness to undertaking watershed development: from disaster management to sustainable livelihoods; from joint forest management to giving inputs to policies. They range from clubs, which encourage nature camping to agencies, which undertake research and monitoring.

There are large number of NGOs in India and other countries that are exclusively working for environmental, protection, conservation, and awareness. The number of these non-governmental organizations which are actively involved in environmental protection in our country is, in fact, more than in any of the developing country. Increasingly, the government is viewing NGOs not only as agencies that will help them to implement their programs, but also as partners shaping policy and programs.

NGOs are now playing an important role in framing the environmental policy, mobilizing public support for environmental conservation, and protecting the endangered species of forests and animals. Environmental organizations such as Earth watch and Sea Shepherd Conservation Society have been successful in creating awareness about the environmental dangers in using drift nets in the commercial fishing industry.

Through driftnet monitoring, public education and action they were successful in banning drift- net system internationally. The issues like future of environmental protection, sustainable development and zero population growth are some of the major concerns of the environmental NGOs.

Environmental policies will achieve positive results only when they are addressed to local issues and solve the problems of local people. The policymakers

should keep in mind the needs of the people while framing the policies and implementing the environment-friendly projects.

Unless the needs of the people are identified and supported, sustainable development cannot be achieved. Policymakers and administrators should take care in selecting, financing, and implementing projects, which are aimed at promoting social welfare. They should not encourage the enterprises that promote private ownership and cooperation.

Some of the international environmental organizations are Greenpeace, World Wide Fund for Nature' (WWF), Earth First, etc. Let us now have a detailed discussion on some of the environmental organizations and their efforts in protecting environment.

## **II. REVIEW OF LITURATURE**

"...NGOs are also prone to weaknesses that can limit their contribution to society, such as - Insufficient Resources, Personality Culture, Invisibility, Competitiveness and Fragmentation, Perceived Ineffectiveness and Lack of Political Sophistication" (Ovasdi, 2006).

The commercialization of NGOs has no doubt led to their rapid growth but it does not mean that all join this field for financial gains. A high official with CAPART (Council for Advancement of Peoples Action and Rural Technology) stated that there are more number of good NGO's than the bad NGOs but "...unfortunately it is only the bad ones who get projected". Despite these limitations, it is acknowledged that the NGOs have the potential to counter the detrimental effects of the state and market forces, and strengthen democratic systems. This significantly requires the enhancement of their internal abilities to effectively bring about the desired social change (Mahtani, 1998).

NGOs should be subject to the same scrutiny and assessment as any private sector organization contracted to the government and/or donor agencies, and those who fail to perform should be barred from further receipt of public funds. An

improved governance structure would acknowledge the role of NGOs and other members of the civil society and devise formal channels for participation. The mechanisms that can best be utilized to ensure balanced and equitable networking among the NGOs need to be identified. A code of conduct should be evolved to evaluate and rate the NGOs and initiative should come from within the NGO sector. "The involvement of NGOs as the 'eyes and ears' of the government in terms of the grass root monitoring of environmental quality needs to be properly recognized. In turn, steps should be taken to strengthen the NGOs" (Jain et al., 1989).

### **III. OBJECTIVES OF NGO'S.**

#### **General Objectives.**

1. To describe and discuss the common characteristics of health system functioning in the given socio-economic, socio-cultural, political and ecological settings.
2. To highlight and delineate crucial factors responsible for the health sector reforms and to undertake, as the most challenging endeavour, effective and efficient health management and quality health care service provisions in the community.
3. The fundamental objective is to act as a catalyst in bringing about local initiative and community participation in overall improvement in quality of life.

#### **Civic and Environmental Objective.**

This aims at developing civic and environmental consciousness among the public. Organisation of civic amenities and sanitary facilities on a self- help basis, enactment of suitable legislation for the betterment of civic standards, environmental protection is some means by which a cleaner and healthier environment can be achieved.

#### **Service Objective.**

This was formulated to provide service to all segments of the society like the poor,

women, children and youth through various schemes like drug and alcohol addiction programmers, organisation of rallies against child labour, medical camps, blood donation camps, etc. This also includes the protection and preservation of nature, wildlife, historical and heritage monuments.

#### **IV. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY NGO'S**

**Solid waste management:-** This includes both municipal solid waste and bio-medical wastes. Civic Exnoras play a major role in assisting the Municipal Corporation in the collection of garbage from individual households and the deposition of the same in secondary collection points by appointing street beautifiers in the concerned areas. With its experience over the years, Exnoras has realised that this was merely a relocation of waste rather than management of solid wastes.

**Zero waste management:-** NGO's have now started focusing its efforts on the concept of Zero Waste Management, by which practically all wastes can be converted into wealth through recycling. Exnora is also addressing the problem of handling and disposal of bio- medical wastes, and is trying to find a solution beneficial to all concerned.

**Citizens' Waterways Monitoring Programme (WAMP):-** This programme was started with the sole purpose of developing clean and pollution free waterways in cities and for creating a healthy living environment for all city dwellers. WAMP was formed in 1991, as a joint programme with several NGOs and individuals dedicated to the cause of developing clean waterways in the city. The WAMP objectives are:

1. To stop pollution of waterways
2. To maintain the waterways of the city cleanly. A series of meetings were conducted with various governmental agencies, which has resulted in the drafting of a detailed action plan. If the Government and the public implement the plan properly this will result in achievement of clean waterways.

**Community Sanitation Improvement Projects:-** Inadequate sanitation facilities

are a major problem to human health, especially so in the neglected low- income areas and slum settlements. NGO's concept of self- help is best displayed by the community sanitation improvement projects in these areas. Two of the most successful projects have been at the at Narikkurava (Gypsy) Colony in Indira Nagar, Chennai and at Giriappa Road in T. Nagar, Chennai.

**Student Environment Programme (STEP):-** This program has a dual role - of creating environmental awareness amongst the student community and to develop each child's mind resources through various personality development programs. A teachers' manual and an activity book that have been brought out as a part of this program are designed in the 'do-and learn' format and provide an easy understanding of the problems faced by us and at the same time kindles the mind to find remedial measures.

**Tree Planting:-** The Civic Exnoras in the city have been instrumental in planting trees for the purpose of beautification of roads, parks, playgrounds, burial grounds, etc., with the larger perspective of environmental protection.

**Vegetable Roof Gardening:-** With agricultural land shrinking rapidly and deforestation rates rocketing, urban agriculture is the need of the hour. Exnora has been propagating and training youth in setting up and maintaining vegetable roof gardens in households of Tamil Nadu. The organisation is closely working with the Tamil Nadu Horticulture and Agriculture Departments on this project.

**Rain Harvesting:-** NGO's have propagated the system of rain harvesting in several residential areas in the city with the aim of exploiting one or another important water source, viz., and rainwater. Many cities suffer from perennial water problems every summer and therefore it is important that all avenues of water source be tapped. By using simple and inexpensive techniques the NGO (Exnora) has arrived at a method to conserve a large part of the 110 cms of rain that we receive annually. A Water Conservation Committee constituted in Chennai

by Metro Water Supply and Sewerage Board Exnora is a core member.

**Pollution Control:-** The task of pollution control in India is complex due to the large number of heavy, large and small-scale industries involved. Further, the rise in the number of vehicles coupled with poverty and the large population puts tremendous pollution pressure on air, water and land.

**Noise Pollution:-** Noise pollution has become a major problem in the metropolitan cities and in other urban areas. With a view to regulate and control noise producing and generating sources, the Ministry of Environment and Forests has notified the *Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000* under the Environment (Protection) Act 1986, for prevention and control of noise pollution in the country.

**Air Pollution:-** The sources of Air Pollution are industries like thermal power plants, sugar mills, distilleries, paper mills etc. Vehicular emissions are another source of air pollution. The

Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 has classified the industries as red, orange and green depending on the degree of pollution caused by them. It further specifies the various pollution control measures to be adopted by these industries.

**Water Pollution:-** The rivers of India are part of its cultural heritage. Over the years, the quality of the water has deteriorated due to the uncontrolled release of effluents by industries into the rivers. A National River Conservation Plan (NRCP), which includes second phase of GAP also, has been formulated which aims to control the pollution of grossly polluted rivers of the country. A National River Conservation Authority has been setup to review the implementation of the programmes related to cleaning of rivers. The NRCP covers 141 towns located along 22 interstate rivers in 14 states. The total cost of the scheme is Rs.2013 crores. A National Lake Conservation Plan envisaging the conservation of lakes by prevention of pollution by catchments area treatment, desalting, weed control, based on the integrated water shed development approach is under implementation.



## **V. NGO'S ROLE IN POLLUTION CONTROL**

The success of India's environmental programmes depends greatly on the awareness and consciousness of the people. A National Environmental Awareness Campaign has been launched to sensitise people to the environmental problems through audio -visual programmes, seminars, symposia, training programmes etc. Paryavaran Vahinis have been constituted in 184 districts involving the local people to play an active role in preventing poaching, deforestation and environmental pollution. 4000 NGOs have been given financial assistance for creating environmental awareness. An Environmental Information System (ENVIS) network has been setup to disseminate information on environmental issues. India has a large network of NGO's, which are involved in spreading the message of sustainable development to the public.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

It's that commercialisation of NGOs led to their rapid growth but it does not mean that NGOs are joining the field for earning money only. There are good numbers of NGOs who works for the betterment of the society and not attracting towards money. However, these are not in focus as bad (Money making) NGOs are. Nevertheless, there is need of apex regulatory authority so that maximum energy of NGOs can divert towards welfare activities. Government also can offer more opportunities to them like P.D.S., insurance sector, watery trees under MGNREGs, etc.

## **REFERENCES**

- Gupta, N., Role of NGOs in Environmental Protection: A Case Study of Ludhiana City. *JOAAG*, (2012) Vol. 7. No. 2
- Rath, Devashis. Polluting Industries: A strategy for Social Action, *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, 2002. vol. 68(1), p.90



Planning Commission. Faster, Sustainable and More Inclusive Growth, *Draft 12th Five- Year Plan (2012-2017)*, 2011, Government of India, p.166.

Martin J. Bunch, V. Madha Suresh and T. Vasantha Kumaran, “Role of Ngo’s In Protecting Environment And Health” in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Environment and Health, Chennai, India, 15-17 December, 2003*. Chennai: Department of Geography, University of Madras and Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University. Pages 105 – 112.

Sayed Tanvir Badruddin, Role Of NGOs In The Protection Of Environment, *Journal of Environmental Research And Development* Vol. 9 No. 03, January-March 2015

<http://www.cpcb.nic.in/oldwebsite/ar2003/ar2-3ch9.htm>

<http://www.balogunbamidele.com/>