

CHALLENGES FACING CONTEMPORARY SOCIETIES AND THE ROLE OF NGOS IN ADDRESSING THEM

Arun Kumar Ramesh

College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore.

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Abstract

This article intends to discern the hardships faced by a communal contemporary society throughout the country, predominantly in India, as they take part in superior roles like political, financial and community development. It accentuates the status and endorsement of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for providing their support in the sustainable development of the society in a drive to ascertain the means by which the service organizations deal with the plentiful snags endured by the modern-day society. Therefore, it has been proposed that solidifying NGOs can surely hone sustainable growth.

Keywords: *Modern-day, NGOs, Snags, Solidifying, Sustainable development.*

I. Introduction

This paper attempts to enumerate the issues and challenges faced by the contemporary Indian society and the role of NGO's with these issues. The first part provides a brief bird's eye view of the issues present in the contemporary society. Secondly, this paper deals with the role of NGO's in resolving this crisis. Finally an attempt is made to suggest measures to strengthen NGO's after identifying the problems faced by the NGO's. The day by day rise of non-profit organizations as well as non-governmental organizations in the contemporary society has been mentioned by a number of observers (Example: Schneider-1988; Salamon-1993). These organizations seem to play a main role in every segment of political, economic and social development activities. This in turn has given ample opportunity for these organizations to make their presence felt in the contemporary society as they have a greater scope for contributing to the sustainable growth of the society.

II. Issues In The Contemporary Societies

India has been listed under the category of developing countries by the United Nations Organization. Even though India attained its independence almost six decades ago, it has been striving hard to attain heights through spreading awareness, providing education to all, taking strides in scientific innovations, evolving new ideologies in technologies, excelling in sports and so on.

The life expectancy of the Indian people has increased to a larger extent due to the focus of the medical sciences in eradicating a number of diseases and in controlling epidemics. Despite these developments, still the Indian Society suffers from a number of social problems that stunt its growth and keep it listed under 'developing countries'. As a result, since every issue is a cog in the machine disturbing it's functioning, it has become a dire necessity to enumerate the various issues and explore avenues to gradually free the Indian Society of these issues.

Poverty

Half of the world, that is, nearly three billion people lives with less than two dollars a day. According to the United Nations Development Program (2010) data, 37.2% of people living in India are under the poverty line. Although the Indian economy is developing, it has not been consistent in addressing this issue sufficiency with a view to eradicating it. A recent report by the Oxford Poverty and Human Initiative states that eight states in India are poorer than twenty six African Nations. Many studies have shown or proved that the children from the backward area or poverty affected area are lagging behind compared to the other enriched or developed areas. So the performance level in most of the areas is found to be below the expectancy level.

Gender Discrimination

Both men and women are equally important for the development and well-being of individual man, the family the microcosm as well as the society, the macrocosm. Women in the society play a very important role of a mother, sister and wife in the life of man. However in many cases in the contemporary society, the situation is not favorable to women. Women are treated as the fairer sex, but also the weaker sex by the society. In India most of the women are dependent upon their father or husband. Due to this, the men folk take undue advantage of it and they succumb as victims to this exploitation. Even though women sacrifice most of their ambitions and interest for the sake of the wellbeing of the family, they are not given due recognition within the family and the society. This is ridiculous considering the self-sacrifice of the members of this gender.

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Corruption

Corruption is nothing but a payment for services (either through goods or cash) for which the recipient is in no way eligible and has no right at all under law. The same is called as bribery or kickback in colloquial terms. Corruption is more prevalent among the government officials working in the District Collectorate, police authorities, judicial sector and also politicians. Due to this there is lack of insistence in standards and quality in Government projects like construction work, etc. The substandard work is always a threat to everyone within the society. There are mainly two forms of corruption in the developing world. They are honest corruption and dishonest corruption. In honest corruption, the bribe receiver will give back the bribe if the work could not be completed. In dishonest corruption, the bribe once taken is taken. It will not be given back. Honest corruption is mostly found in countries like Thailand. Dishonest corruption takes place in countries like India.

Illiteracy

Illiteracy is emerging as the biggest problem in the contemporary society. People do not have the awareness that their opportunities have been denied by the creamy layer of society. Reading, writing and arithmetic skills are very important for an individual if he or she wants to have an upswing in life. It has become very imperative that one strives very hard and takes all efforts to become literate. There is a saying that "You can only take a horse to the river, but you cannot make it drink". In tune with this, it is the basic

duty of the society to uphold every person his or her right to literacy and extend it accordingly. But it is in the hands of the recipients whether they grab the opportunity or not. Even though the government tries to give free education to the children, many families force their children to go for work in their childhood itself in order to supplement the income of to a very less income of the family.

Global Warming

Global warming is another main issue which is of great concern as a result of air pollution. Many researchers including scientists agree that the temperature of the planet is going up. The main cause of the global warming is due to the emissions of Carbon-di-oxide and methane gas into the atmosphere. These substances emanate high density of heat as they evolve around the atmosphere increasing global temperature. Global warming is the major hazard causing damages to the ozone layer. Due to its disaster many species are gradually becoming extinct today. As the temperature increases, the water level in the planet also increases due to the melting of ice in the arctic and the Antarctic regions. This rise in the water level reduces the land mass slowly submerging it.

War

War is a prolonged conflict that is well planned and organized that is carried out between two or more countries. A war fought between countries is full of aggression, social disruption, etc. In the contemporary society usually a war is fought with weapons which bring in irrevocable damage to life and properties. When a war is been fought between countries, it brings collapse of the economy as large quantity of money is spent on warfare. Again it involves loss of human lives resulting in dislocation of families in particular and societies at large. As a result of social, economic as well as cultural damage, the outcome would be that of chaos and crisis. Winning or losing is only a secondary, were as losing lives, property, wealth, peace, economical break down of a country has to be taken into consideration before entering into a war. There is a quote which says "If the third world war is been fought, then the fourth world war will be fought in stones and sticks"

III. Stature Of The Ngos

Alleviating Poverty

Although the poor yearn for their right and dream of a life devoid of poverty, they are left helpless as it is something beyond their reach. There are many factors within the social strata that suppress them by way of marginalization forcing them to succumb to their prevailing condition of poverty. They are victims of environmental degradation, diseases due to unhygienic conditions, climatic stress, etc. In the endeavor to uplift to poor, it has become essential for the NGO's to intervene and play a vital role in creating awareness among the masses. Only through this awareness it is possible to as the saying goes 'not to offer food, but to teach a person to fish'. The marginalized should come forward willing to oppose any violation to their rights. Only then the efforts by the NGO's would be fruitful. At this juncture, the NGOs play a vital role, in giving a helping hand to those living under the poverty line. The NGOs provide many social and economic services to the needy were the governments fail to do so. Micro financing comes under the economical

service provided by the NGOs.. The NGOs also help the poverty affected people by tapping out the government resources which are available to them wherever possible.

Empowering Women

There is a saying “educate a man, you empower an individual, were as you educate a woman you empower a family”. Since women’s empowerment is a key factor for many socio economic in this contemporary society, the NGOs give more importance in bringing in more innovative ideas to empower the women folk. Such schemes include providing education, forming self-help groups, micro finance, vocational training, etc. The NGOs also teach the poor women how to save money and spend at times of unemployment. They also help the women who possess skills in getting a job according to their strengths by also not stressing them a lot. It is not that easy to establish rapport with the women folk in the rural or backward areas. So the NGOs take necessary steps in order to encounter them and to the needful help.

Corruption Eradication

The NGOs in the contemporary society create awareness among the public in regards to the corruption as it damages the economy of the society to a greater extent. The NGO being a single institution cannot fight against corruption in the society. But the NGOs can spread awareness to the public and make them participate in the social action campaigns. The NGOs have the ability to make the individuals think, arise and fight for the rights (especially in regards to corruption). As the corruption is an evil in contemporary societies like India, the individuals are triggered of stimulated in a larger scale to tackle the issue. But still the NGOs, groups and individuals are not able to pass a bill against corruption against in the Indian parliament. The politicians will be very careful in eating the people’s money as many are been caught by the government officials. To an extent the abolition of corruption has taken its swing but then not fully.

Providing Education

The main purpose of social work is to empower people so that they themselves can live on their own. So the NGOs provide education in various settings. They are formal, non-formal and informal education. Formal education is a well-organized model with a well-structured curriculum given by the association of the educational institutions which are affiliated with the government organizations. In non-formal education system, the pattern is almost the same like the previous one, but the eye to eye contact between the teacher and the student will be very less. It is something said to be like distance education pattern. In informal education the main goal is to enrich the knowledge, but it does not follow any curriculum. Here no degree or diploma is given. This type of education does not expect any requirements but helps to develop the skills and be self-sufficient in getting on to a job.

Awareness for Global Warming

There is a tremendous growth of NGOs working for creating awareness in the contemporary society. Many scholars agree that the NGOs make more differences in the environmental issues. Some NonGovernmental Organizations work for creating awareness and some NGOs for activism. Usually NGOs working for the environmental issues spread awareness on planting trees, stop using plastics, proper disposal of wastes, disposals, etc. Only few organizations in the modern society raise their voices against

the government and people by conducting rallies, etc. Even in facing this tough issue the NGOs require the community participation and involvement in full phase.

Problems faced by the NGOs in the contemporary Society

IV. Internal Problems Faced By The Ngos:

Lack Of Commitment From Staff

Without a commitment and the thirst to serve the needy, a social worker cannot survive in NGOs as he needs to humble himself before the community and serve the mankind. In this 21st century the motive of the individuals is to earn money and settle in life. Most of the people do not even have time to think about the people who are dying without the lack of services. People of this generation don't even what to see the people who are in hunger and cry. So a social worker with a humbleness, commitment, thirst, dedication to serve the needy are in a very few number. ***Lack Of Training Facilities***

As many NGOs do not have large budgets, they will be concentrating more on the development activities in their target area. For a social worker the theoretical knowledge is alone not enough to serve the community. He also needs a very good exposure and a practical knowledge. This can be given only by means of training the individual. As social work profession is not been paid like other profession, (doctors, engineers, lawyers) well motivated quality workers are not interested to come for this profession. Only training gives more ideology in regards to deal with the community. As there are lacks of funds in many NGOs in a contemporary society, training is not given more importance. So quality work is missing among many NGOs.

Misappropriation Of Funds

In some NGOs the workers are been paid with a less salary which is not sufficient for them to run their family. As their family is in a tough situation, some tend to misappropriate the funds which are yet to be spent for needy. When a worker with a stone heart works only for the sake of his family members and not for the needy, there arises problem inside the organization and everything collapses. The money which is yet to be spent for the community when it goes into some employee's pocket, automatically there is a downfall in the development to the community.

V. External Problem Faced By The Ngos:

Fund Raising

Fund raising or marketing are considered to be more stressful work in regards to the NGOs. As some NGOs are not fulfilling their visions and missions, the donors are not interested to contribute their valuable donations to help the needy. And also people think that the donations are been spent more on the administrative section, they are not interested to contribute. The economic crisis or the inflation rate has got an upswing, and many individuals have lost their job because of the effect. So in this contemporary society people hesitate to donate to the NGOs. So whatever strategy the social workers follow in regards to fund rising, it goes vain.

Community Participation

In a contemporary society urbanization and modernization plays a vital role in it. As there is a positive change seen in the society, also a negative change within the individuals occurs. When people lived in the rural areas, they were very close and attached. But now after coming to the cities people fail to have a rapport within their neighborhood. In result of it the individuals do not even talk properly out of their family and the family set up which was prevailing in the rural areas has perished. And also people started thinking people who are involved in service will take care of the needs of the needy. So their participation is very less. Some community people involve in service for their religious aspect, some for the name and fame. Now days they don't even care about it. So the NGOs here find it difficult to organize people for the useful work in the community.

Lack Of Trust

Trust is a very important which bridges the community and the NGOs who are working for them. Even in a contemporary society there is a lack of trust. In an initial phase the community people see the NGOs as a religion spreading institutions. And when they get their funds from overseas they confirm it. Sometimes the community people get into miss -guidance from other people. Even if the NGOs do a wonderful work in the community, the people are not interested to get their service and mingle with them. So the NGOs in long run get fed up with the people and close down their projects and move on to an another area. Even to establish rapport and build trust it takes long time for the organizations.

VI. Conclusion

In a contemporary society the role of NGOs is tremendous and they are known for their services provided to the needy sections of society. To meet the issues in the contemporary society, a demand is placed on the NGOs to increase their capacity so as to meet the challenges internally and externally. This paper talks about the issues prevailing in a contemporary society and the role of NGOs in tackling those issues. In today's fast moving world, people in the society always look forward to a sudden change. It is not possible because it is a slow process. Better understanding of the roles and the problems faced by the NGOs or support organizations will give way to effective intervention for the betterment of the contemporary society.

If the NGOs continue striving for the development of the contemporary society, then one need not have even an iota of doubt that this community that has benefitted will stand by these NGO's in future. This ensures sustainable development in the contemporary society.

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