

MANIDHANAHEYAM FREE IAS ACADEMY – TNPSC GROUP II & IIA
UNIT - III

Role of N.G.O's in Social Welfare

1. Define NGO and explain aim and limitations?

A non-governmental organization (NGO) or non-governmental organisation is an organization that generally is formed independent from government. They are typically nonprofit entities, and many of them are active in humanitarianism or the social sciences; they can also include clubs and associations that provide services to their members and others. Surveys indicate that NGO's have a high degree of public trust, which can make them a useful proxy for the concerns of society and stakeholders. However, NGO's can also be lobby groups for corporations, such as the World Economic Forum. NGO's are distinguished from international and intergovernmental organizations (IOs) in that the latter are more directly involved with sovereign states and their governments.

Aim:

A major objective of many non-governmental organizations (NGO's) is welfare work in relation to poverty and disease or in respect to social groups such as the elderly or children. Some other types of NGO's help groups of people to unite at a grass-roots level and find their voice in local and national government.

Features of NGO's:

- Voluntary associations: NGO's are voluntary associations which are created by people having a common interest.
- Autonomous: NGO's are autonomous bodies free from the interference of government. They are regulated by their own policies and procedures.
- Service Motive: NGO's are not profit making business organisations. Rather they show a lot of concern in social welfare aspects such as education of children, protection of animals, wildlife, environment, improving the status of women etc.
- Own funds: NGO's create and maintain their own funds. They often collect contribution from the public. Some NGO's are also financed by private business organisations. Some NGO's are also financed by international authorities.

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Role of NGO's:

NGO's are playing crucial role in the present scenario. They are trying to fill the gaps created by the government. Their contribution is significant particularly in the following fields.

1. Education of Children: Some NGO's have played an important role in the education of children, eg. : Infosys foundation is providing free text books and computers to rural schools. Voice a NGO at Mumbai teaches under-privileged children at Mumbai.
2. Development of Youth: NGO's are conducting various programmes to develop youth and bring out their talents E.g.: "Yavanika"
3. Protection of animals: NGO's are taking sufficient care in preventing cruelty and protecting animals. Eg: Prani Daya Sangha.
4. Betterment of disabled: Spastic Society of India, Alert working for the leprosy patients.
5. Development and operation of infrastructure: NGO's can acquire and develop land, construct housing. They provide basic amenities like wells, public toilets, and waste collection services. E.g: Infosys has constructed Public toilets called "Nirmal" at many places in Bangalore city.
6. Technical assistance and training: NGO's provide technical assistance and training in various fields. E.g: "Awake" is a NGO providing development programmes for women entrepreneurs.
7. Facilitating communication: NGO's facilitate communication from people to the government and government to people. They also facilitate communication between organisations through networking.
8. Providing service: NGO's take up activities such as the provision of health, family planning or education services. E.g: Hindu Kusht Nivaran Sangh offering services for people suffering from the disease and providing rehabilitation programmes. E.g: Society for integrated development in rural and urban areas.
9. Emancipation of women: Some NGO's have engaged in activities pertaining to upliftment of women. E.g: Chaitanya, Yuvatiyara Sangha is helping the women in distress.
10. Helping in distress: Some NGO's take up general welfare programmes in times of natural calamity such as flood, earthquake etc. E.g.: "Medhavi". NGO based at Ahmedabad has rendered active assistance to 2, 50,000

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homeless in Gujarat after the major earthquake. Many NGO's have rendered financial assistance for Suhami victims.

11. Protection of environment: Some NGO's are playing a key role in protecting the environment. They have taken up activities like afforestation, prevention of water and air pollution etc. E.g: NASA Foundation, Ahmadabad, India.
12. Preventing exploitation of unorganised labour: Some NGO's have carried out such activities as to prevent bonded labour. E.g.: "Bandhu Mukti Morcha" a NGO played a crucial role in filing a public interest litigation to prevent exploitation of labourers at stone quarries.

Limitations of NGO's:

Though NGO's are playing a key role in the development of economy, they suffer from the following limitations:

1. Lack of financial resources: Most of the NGO's suffer from serious shortage of funds. They have to depend on Public contributions or sponsorship by corporates which makes it difficult to mobilise financial resources.
2. Lack of trained staff: The volunteers of NGO's are not specifically trained in handling problems concerning people. Lack of accountability on the part of the staff hinders the growth of NGO's.
3. Mismanagement of funds: NGO's have lost confidence of the general public, quite often, it is noticed that the NGO's misappropriate the funds.
4. Limited territory: Most NGO's do not take up nationwide programmes. They operate only in a limited territory.
5. Unhealthy Competition: The increasing number of NGO's has created an unhealthy competition among themselves which has defeated the real objectives.
6. Lack of government control has resulted in defective administration in the NGO's: In spite of the above limitations, it can be observed that the NGO's are supplementing the activities of the government.

2. Role of NGO in policy implementation

NGO's have brought various social changes for the promotion and development of society. These organizations work for serving humanity and other good cause.

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1. **Improving Government performance:** It is one of the important works of the NGO's to ensure that the Government should be responsive and solve the problems of the citizens thereby making the Government more accountable. NGO's also help in providing suggestions and their expertise in matters related to policy-making of Government by providing research teams. Many path-breaking laws in the country like Environmental Protection Act 1986, Right to Education Act 2009, Right to Information Act 2005, etc. have been formulated with the initiatives of the NGO's.
2. **Acting as a social mediator:** People in India are influenced a lot by faith, superstitions, belief, and customs. NGO's act as social mediators at various different levels of society so as to bring the required change in social and behavioral attitudes prevailing within the social environment. They create awareness among people and become the voice of the poor and needy person or group.
3. **Facilitating communication:** NGO's work at two different levels in order to facilitate communication. One is at the upward level whereby NGO's inform the Government about the needs, abilities, and activities of the people in their local area. On the other hand, they work at the downward level where people are informed and educated about the policies and programs of the Government.
4. **Acting as a pressure group:** They also act as a pressure group and mobilize public opinion against various Governmental policies and activities. They also help poor people, Farmers, STs, and SCs etc. in availing quality services by making the Government accountable.
5. **Building Community Participation:** NGO's encourage and facilitate the participation of disadvantaged communities and help in preserving the culture of diverse communities.
6. **Women Empowerment:** The role of NGO's in women empowerment cannot be denied. They have been constantly fighting against social evils like Sati, dowry, cruelty, and other causes like employment, lessening of female foeticide, etc. Various NGO's like the Agrani foundation, Eklavya, Sewa, etc. have been trying to achieve gender equality as far as possible.
7. **Mobilising Local Resources:** Over utilization of natural resources lead to natural calamities and environmental threats. NGO's keep an eye on this

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particular domain so that the destruction of natural resources does not take place.

8. **Providing Education, Training, and Technical Assistance:** NGO's provide education, training, and technical assistance to the people in need, volunteers, and to other NGO's. Later on, the trained NGO's provide their services to assist the Government.
9. **Bridging the gap:** NGO's reach out to those sections of people who are often left untouched by the State projects. For example, during the Covid-19 crisis, aid was provided to migrant workers. Apart from this, NGO's are also engaged in activities like education, human and labor rights, legal aid, gender issues, healthcare, and even research.
10. **Monitoring and evaluation:** NGO's monitor and evaluate government policies and activities that encourage active people's participation in the developmental process. This also results in keeping a check on the administrative functions of the Government.

3. Role of NGO's in rural areas

1. Participates in rural employment schemes.
2. Implementation of Land Ceiling Scheme
3. Ensuring minimum wages of agricultural labourers
4. Identification and rehabilitation of bonded labourers
5. Protected drinking water supply
6. Promotion of afforestation, community forestry
7. Development of alternative energy sources
- viii. Promotion of family planning program
8. Development of Primary Health Centre
9. Preventive medicine programs
10. Village Women (M) Child Welfare Schemes
11. Focus on education systems
12. Consumer protection (m) Promotion of co-operative sector
13. Handicrafts (m) Promotion of village cottage industries
14. Development of rural slums
15. Environmental Development
16. Dissemination of information through media
17. Diffusion of Science and Technology

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4. Various environmental movements

Ecological Movements

A. Bishnoi Movement

Bishnoi non-violent struggle was a successful ecological movement in the 18th century in Rajasthan. Bishnoi is a religious sect in the Thar Desert of Rajasthan founded by Guru Jambheshwar in medieval period. Bishnoi in Hindi means 29 and the sect came to be named after the 29 cardinal principles the founder expounded. The sect promoted a socio-religious belief system in perfect harmony with ecology creating a lush green local ecosystem in the desert.

The maharaja of Jodhpur desired to construct a palace in the 18th century and sent the army to the Khejarli village to cut the acacia trees in the locally nurtured forest. The ecologically- conscious local population protested against the cutting of trees. An elderly woman named Amrita Devi was in the frontline of the protest and when the army refused to desist from cutting the trees she hugged the trees asking the army to cut her head instead of cutting the trees. The army remorselessly cut her head off and concerned but determined villagers came forward in a line to offer their lives. A total of 363 people sacrificed their lives for protecting the forest. Ultimately the maharaja after knowing about the terrible events in the village recalled the army and offered his apologies for the massacre. He also officially designated the area as a protected forest. Bishnoi Khejarli movement is perhaps, the first greatest ecological movement of modern India.

B. Chipko Movement

Chipko movement was a non-violent popular, ecological movement organised by villagers in the mountain state of Uttarakhand in 1973. 'Chipko' in Hindi means to hug. The agitators of Chipko movement embraced the trees to protect them from being cut thereby earning the name Chipko movement. The contractors of sports Goods Company began to cut the trees in the Alknanda valley of the Uttarakhand state (part of Uttar Pradesh at that time) after getting government clearance. The enraged local population, especially women protested in a non-violent manner by embracing the trees and prevented the contractors. The organisational leadership was provided by an NGO called Dasholi Gram Swarajya Mandal (DGSM) that was formed a few years back by a noted social activist Chandi Prasad Bhatt.

The famous environmentalist Sundarlal Bahuguna joined the agitation and appealed to the union government to ban logging in the Himalayan forests. The

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large-scale participation of women was a significant and laudable feature of the Chipko movement. Many women leaders like Dhoom Singh Negi, Bachni Devi played a prominent role fighting for forest rights of the people. The movement gradually spread across many parts of the Himalayan Mountains forcing the government to officially ban logging from 1980. The movement symbolises the successful fusion of three major ideologies of feminism, environmentalism and Gandhism.

C. Appiko Movement

The Appiko movement is an ecological protest movement in Uttar Kannada district of Karnataka in the Western Ghats. It was inspired by the Chipko Movement and 'appiko' in Kannada means to embrace. The Uttar Kannada district falls in the Western Ghats. The launch of many developmental projects in the district has precipitated deforestation reducing the forest cover of the district from a massive 81 percent in 1950 to an alarming 24 percent in 1980. The ecologically-conscious people launched the movement with three-fold objectives of conservation of remaining tropical forests, afforestation of the denuded forests and dissemination of ideas on rational utilisation of forests.

D. Save Silent Valley Movement

The silent valley is an ecologically rich terrain in the Western Ghats in the Palakkad district of Kerala consisting of the tropical moist evergreen forests largely undisturbed by human activities. The valley is named after Sairandhiri (Draupati), the wife of Pandavas in the Indian epic Mahabharata. Another explanation of the nomenclature says that when the Englishmen visited there during the colonial period the valley was observed to be strangely silent because of the supposed absence of the noise-making insect Cicadas.

The valley is rich in biodiversity. The lion-tailed macaque is abundantly found in the valley. There is even an argument that the valley itself is named after the binomial name of lion-tailed macaque, *Macaca Silenus*. The Kerala State Electricity Board began to implement Silent Valley Hydro Electricity Project across the river Kunthipuzha in the valley in the 1970s.

The Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishad, other civil society organisations and ecologically-conscious people conducted an intense protest against the project. They criticised the negative impact of the project on the environment especially the bio diversity of the valley. The Kerala government, in the face of stiff opposition from diverse sections of society dropped the project in 1980. The valley was declared a national park in 1984 and later on it came to be designated

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as the core area of the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve. The Save Silent Valley movement is one of the most successful ecological movements of India in late 20th century.

5. Role of NGO in population control

Role of NGO's

Non-Governmental Organizations participate in emphasizing the following.

- i. Dispelling the idea of large family size
- ii. Increasing the marriageable age of women
- iii. Realizing the need for late marriage
- iv. Emphasizing the need for careful protection of newborns
- v. Emphasizing the need for space between one child and the next

Department of Family Welfare

To ensure the role of NGO's in family welfare programmes, Department of Family Welfare has announced various schemes.

- i. Small Family Scheme (m) Family Welfare Assistance to NGO's up to 90% of the amount spent on Family Welfare Schemes
- ii. Requesting the government to help NGO's to implement such projects
- iii. In order to increase the role of NGO's, meetings should be held at the regional level.
- iv. Establishment of State Standing Committees headed by the Family Welfare Secretary and empowered to provide up to Rs 10 lakh for each scheme.
- v. Help train health workers better
- vi. Non-Governmental Organizations should help to know the situation of the States and encourage community participation.
- vii. Thus arrangements should be made for them to visit different towns.

6. Role of NGO's in Eradication of Child Labour

- i. Awareness
- ii. monitoring
- iii. Children's Welfare Centre
- iv. Advertising
- v. Finance
- vi. Project implementation
- vii. Viewing
- viii. Collaboration with Govt

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- ix. Report
- x. People participation
- xi. Prior efforts
- xii. Frontline workers
- xiii. Participating in project, law making

