



ROLE OF NGOS IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN INDIA

Mrs.Eesam Ramana

*Assistant professor (C), Department of Social Work ,PG Centre Kollapur, Nagarkurnool
District, Palamuru University*

Abstract

India is among the top polluted countries. Thus, ecological problems are the main reasons which cause diseases as a clean environment leads to a healthy society. 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. The present article will focus on environmental protection in India and the role which played by the Nongovernmental organisations.

Key words: *India, Ecology, Environment, Nongovernmental organizations.*

Introduction

A Non-Governmental Organization is a social organization working towards a better society. NGO's perform a variety of service & humanitarian functions, bring citizens concerns to the government, advocate and monitor policies and encourage political participation through provisions of information. Some are organized around specific issues, such as human rights, environment or health. They provide analysis and expertise, serve as early working mechanisms and help monitor and implement international arguments.

India is the world largest democracy the seventh largest country in the world in terms of land area and the second most populous country in the world, the relevance of the NGO as a concept in theory and in practice, as a vibrant means of ensuring that the concerns of the citizens of this country derive protection in terms of the rule of law, can hardly be over emphasized. The constitution of India, provide an extraordinary source of valuable.

fundamental rights for the protection of rights of individuals. It is these rights, coupled with the directive principles of state policy that are relief upon by NGO's in their pivotal role in supporting individuals for the enforcement of their rights in India.

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 aware-ness. 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 develop-ing 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, mobi-lizing 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, sustain-able 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 envi-ronment-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 pro-moting social welfare. They should not encourage the enterprises that promote private ownership and cooperation.

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

Greenpeace

Greenpeace is an environment-friendly international organization, which aims at promoting environmental awareness. It is an independent, campaigning organiza-tion, addressing the environmental abuse through direct, non-violent confrontations with governments and companies. It exposes the global environmental problems and provides solutions for a healthy environment.

Greenpeace focuses on the most crucial worldwide threats to our planets biodiver-sity and environment. It campaigns to:

1 Stop Climate Change:

The extensive use of oil, gas, fuel, and other energy resources leads to climatic changes, which results in global warming. In order to stop climate change, Greenpeace is campaigning on various fronts. It has been researching to stop climate change and to promote clean energy solutions.

2 Protect Ancient Forests:

Many forests of the world are in crisis. The plants and animals are facing the threat of extinction. People living in forests and depend-ing on them for their livelihood are also under threat. Greenpeace takes up the responsibility to save the forests and provides solutions for the same.



3 Save the Oceans

Greenpeace's save the oceans campaign currently focuses on four major threats to the world's oceans: overfishing, pirate fishing, whaling, and intensive shrimp aquaculture.

4 Stop Whaling

Commercial Whaling has resulted in the decline of the world's whale population. In order to stop commercial whaling, Greenpeace is working on many fronts. Through political work public outreach and by adopting non-violent direct, action against the whalers at sea. Greenpeace is fighting against commercial whaling.

5 Say No to Genetic Engineering

Genetic engineering enables creation of plants, animals and micro-organisms through the manipulation of genes. The organisms, which are produced through genetic engineering when interbred with the natural organisms lead to new environments, which are uncontrolled.

Their release into the environment leads to "genetic pollution", as once released they cannot be recalled back. Greenpeace believes that "organisms," which are genetically engineered, should not be released into the environment without adequate knowledge of their impact on the health and environment. It advocates taking immediate measures such as labeling of genetically engineered ingredients, and the segregation of genetically engineered crops from conventional ones.

6 Stop the Nuclear Threat

Greenpeace campaigns against the use of nuclear power as its use has never been peaceful. It leads to accidents, deaths, and disasters. Radiation released into the environment through the nuclear tests has led to the contamination of soil, air, rivers, and oceans, causing cancer and other diseases in people.

7 Eliminate Toxic Chemicals

Greenpeace also campaigns against toxic chemicals, as they prove to be a global threat to the health and environment.

8 Encourage Sustainable Trade

Greenpeace opposes the current form of globalization that is increasing corporate power. It demands that the World Trade Organization (WTO) adopt a policy of trade, which works for all and that pre-serves and restores the environment. Governments must work toward achieving sustainable development, which means integrating three things: environmental, social, and economic priorities.

Greenpeace is a non-profit organization, and in order to maintain its independence it does not accept funds from governments or from the corporate sector. It depends mainly on the voluntary contributions of individuals and grants from foundations. Greenpeace was founded in 1971 to oppose US nuclear testing in Alaska.



The organization has fought to protect the endangered species, stop the dumping of hazardous waste, and strengthen national and international laws that regulate environmental affairs. French intelligence agents blew up Rainbow Warrior, a Greenpeace ship scheduled to protest French nuclear weapons tests, in Auckland Harbor, New Zealand, on 10 July 1985. The resulting scandal caused the resignation of France's minister of defense and the firing of the head of France's intelligence service.

Greenpeace has played an important role in preserving the environment, which is proved by its successful achievements:

1. A ban on toxic waste exports to less developed countries.
2. A moratorium on commercial whaling.
3. A United Nations convention providing for better management of world fisheries.
4. A Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary.
5. A 50-year moratorium on mineral exploitation in Antarctica.
6. Ban on the dumping at sea of radioactive and industrial waste and disused oil installations.
7. An end to high-sea, large-scale driftnet fishing.
8. A ban on all nuclear weapons testing their first ever campaign.

Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF)—India

WWF is an international organization for wildlife conservation with its focus on protecting particular species of wildlife fauna. As its range of activities broadened, the international organization believed that its name no longer reflected the scope of its activities and became the Worldwide Fund for Nature in 1986. But the affiliated groups in the United States and Canada retained the original name. The organization is now simply, referred to as WWF.

WWF-India is committed to protecting and saving the already degraded and threat-ened natural bounties in the country. The organization is today dedicated to the con-servation of natural habitats and ecosystems in India.

WWF-India was established as a Charitable Trust in 1969. With its network of State/Divisional and Field Offices spread across the country to implement its programs, WWF-India is the largest and one of the most experienced conservation organizations in the country.

The Secretariat of the orga-nization functions from New Delhi. The organization is part of the WWF family with 27 independent national organizations. The coordinating body, the WWF International, is located at Gland in Switzerland.

In order to suit India's specific ecological and socio-cultural situation, WWF-India articulated its mission in 1987 as follows: "The promotion of nature conservation and environmental protection as the basis for sustainable and equitable development."

The WWF-India Mission has five broad program components:

- 1 Promoting India's ecological security; restoring the ecological balance.
- 2 Conserving biological diversity.
- 3 Ensuring sustainable use of the natural resource base.
- 4 Minimizing pollution and wasteful consumption, promoting sustainable lifestyles.



WWF-India implements its conservation programs through Field Programs, Public Policy, Education, Communications, NGO Networking, and Resource Mobilization.

The key environmental issues, which WWF-India has involved itself with, are:

The tiger conservation program, fresh-water and wetlands program, river dolphin conservation program, wildlife trade monitoring, managing forests, environmental law, information management and environmental education.

Some Other Environmental Organizations in India

1. The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)

Founded in 1883, is recognized as one of the foremost conservation research organizations in the world. It aims to collect data on the specimens on natural history throughout the Indian sub-continent. To disseminate knowledge of flora and fauna by means of lectures, field trips, literature, expeditions and to study wildlife-related problems and recommend management plans to conserve wildlife and its habitat. It conducts field research projects on bird migration. It also conducts studies of certain endangered species of wildlife and their habitat and through environmental education imparts the knowledge and awareness of the need to conserve wildlife.

It has undertaken a wide range of projects in conjunction with both local and overseas counter-part organizations on birds, reptiles, mammals, natural history, and the impact of developmental programs on wildlife.

2. Development Alternatives Group

Development Alternatives Group based in Delhi works in all parts of the country. It was established in 1983 to design options and promote sustainable development through programs of economic efficiency, equity and social justice, resource conservation, and self-reliance. Its activities cover the entire nation: It is working in the field of pollution monitoring and control, waste recycling management, wasteland development, and appropriate technology.

Its objective is to design options and promote sustainable development through programs of:

- i. Economic efficiency,
- ii. Equity and social justice,
- iii. Environmental harmony,
- iv. Resource conservation, and
- v. Self-reliance.

3. The Energy Research Institute (TERI)

Established in 1974, is a wholly independent, non-profit research institute. Its mission is to develop and promote technologies, policies, and institutions for efficient and sustainable use of natural resources. It has been imparting environmental education through projects, workshops, audio-visual aids, and quiz competitions.

It deals with policy-related works in the energy sector, research on environmental subjects, development of renewable energy technologies and promotion of energy efficiency in the industry and transport sector. TERI also has a major program in biotechnology, the applications of which are oriented toward increased biomass production, conversion of waste into useful products and mitigating the harmful environmental impacts of several economic activities. TERI established the TERI University in 1998. Initially set up as the TERI School of Advanced Studies, it received the status of a deemed university in



1999. The University is a unique institution of higher learning exclusively for programs leading to PhD and master level degrees. Its uniqueness lies in the wealth of research carried out within TERI as well as by its faculty and students making it a genuinely research oriented University.

Vanashakti

Vanashakti was founded by Meenakshi Menon, Namita Roy Ghose, Peter Armand Menon in 2006. This nonprofit environmental NGO is based in Mumbai.

According to Vanashakti, there are two groups in this world. The first group creates environmental issues, and the second group becomes a part of the solution. Thus, Vanashakti encourages people to be a part of the second group. Furthermore, they play a crucial role in spreading public awareness about the vital part of the forest in human wellbeing. The mission of Vanashakti is to demonstrate the critical link between ecosystem and human welfare, especially for the poor, by communication, community building, and projects. They mainly focus on promoting conservation and environmental education. Besides these, Vanashakti generates income development for forest communities who depend on ecology.

Conclusion

This important to realise that NGOs aren't one monolithic entity, but groups and organizations all engaged in activism, development, relief, access to information, and research across both grassroots and pan-India demographics. They are united in their goal for the public good and sustainability. With more awareness of their role in India's development, NGOs enjoy increasing credibility, acceptance and access to developmental areas. However, development mandates can only be thoroughly realised when achieved in partnership with other stakeholders in order to ensure that an NGO can make full use of its capability to make long-term development plans.

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