

Development & Social Transformation - Role of the Voluntary Sector

Jimmy Dabhi

NGOs must look into and respond to the critical concerns of power, equality, justice and human rights if they want to be relevant and effective partners in development that is pro poor, pro marginalised and pro-excluded. NGOs have a crucial role to play in facilitating people's movements and grassroots organisations, to ensure that governance is accountable and that people actively participate in decision-making processes. Only if they can articulate their demands and organise for collective action will the poor and excluded have a voice; hence NGOs need to be geared to mobilisation and collective assertion of rights and demands by poor and marginalised groups and communities. The NGO sector, along with people's organisations and movements need to influence State policies for allocation of adequate resources to human development priorities, people friendly markets and pro poor growth.

Countries can promote human development for all only when they have governance systems that are fully accountable to all people – and when all people can participate in the debates and decisions that shape their lives

– HDR 2002:3

'Development' is much talked about in workshops, seminars, classrooms and commissions, by theoreticians and practitioners. Our understanding of development has evolved over the years with increase in our knowledge and experience. Along with the understanding of development, the actors assisting and facilitating development have increased in numbers as well; in 1996, India had more than 1 million Not for Profit Organisations (HDR 2002). The paper attempts to throw light on the role of Not for Profit Sector or Voluntary Sector or /and the NGO Sector, as commonly referred to in India, and to indicate some areas of concern that NGOs must look into and respond to if they want to be relevant and effective partners in development.

Let me begin with the issue of definitional clarity on Non Governmental Organisations, NGOs as they are called. Any organisation which is not governmental can be called a non-governmental organisation and, as such, the term may include profit-making organisations, foundations, educational institutions, churches and other religious groups and missions, medical organisations and hospitals, unions and professional organisations, business and commercial associations, co-operatives and cultural groups as well as voluntary agencies (OCED 1988). Distinguishing between different types of NGOs, Pandey (1991: 46) notes: 'The term non-government development organisation (NGDO) sometimes singles out development-oriented NGOs from other types of NGOs which deal mostly with foreign funds as either donors or recipients'. Other definitions include that by Fisher (1993: 5), who includes Grassroots Support Organisations (GRSOs) in her definition of NGOs; 'GRSOs are nationally or regionally based development assistance organisations,

Dabhi, Jimmy. 2004, 'Development and Social Transformation – Role of the voluntary sector', in *Social Change – issues and perspective*, vol. 34, No. 1, March 2004:86-101, New Delhi: Journal of the Council for Social Development.

usually staffed by professionals, that channel international funds to grassroots organisations (GROs) and help communities other than their own develop'. Korten (1991) suggests that the term NGO embraces a variety of organisations - 'Voluntary Organisations' (VOs) are those having a social mission and committed to shared values. Finally, we have Non Governmental Organisations which are promoted by government and act as its instruments, for example, Council for Advancement of People's Organisational and Rural Technology (CAPART). The definition of non-governmental organisations further depends upon the particular situation within a given country, but for our purpose we would adhere to the term NGO as - 'all non-statutory, non-profit-making organisations that are concerned in some way with relief and development in the Third World' (Billis and MacKeith 1993). It is helpful also, it seems to me, to think of Southern NGOs, as involved in development activities like elimination of poverty, social and economic injustice, caste, gender and religious discriminations, and protection of the environment.

Before I draw the reader's attention to the social context of the NGOs and explore some reasons for their sprouting in the society, I would like, very briefly, to glance at the NGO scenario in India, a country which had a long tradition of voluntarism before independence, and does so even to this day. One estimate suggests that the number of NGOs active in rural development in India range from fewer than 10,000 to several hundred thousand depending on the type of classification used. Some 15000-20000 are actively engaged in rural development (Earrington et al. 1993). The total foreign aid to NGOs in the State of Gujarat in 1992-93 was 403.3 billion rupees (2.5 % of the total foreign aid received by India), which is an indication of scale of the operation by the sector. Organisations initiating voluntary action had multiplied rapidly after independence, with the introduction of development planning in 1951. The antecedents can be traced even further back. The establishment of Friends in Need Society in Madras, in 1858, is one of the earliest traces of voluntary action in the modern era (Chandra 2001). Christian missionaries have contributed a great deal to relief and welfare in India through their institutions and through Church extension programmes especially in health and education (Dabhi 1995, Chandra 2001); NGOs inspired and led by Gandhians have done a good deal of work in the rural areas of Gujarat, though many of them have not been able to adequately respond to the changing situation and needs; the Jayaprakash Narayan movement inspired many individuals and professionals to initiate a number of voluntary organisations all over the country; and the Ramakrishna mission has done considerable amount of work in West Bengal and other parts of the country as well. After 1971, the Jesuits (known for their education institutions all over the world) have played a significant role in the NGO sector in India, in the areas of development and empowerment. Asag, Saath, Navsarjan, Janvikas, and Sahyog are some of the NGOs in Gujarat whose leaders worked extensively in Jesuit inspired Voluntary Organisations such as Behavioural Science Centre, and the Xavier Social Service Society.

NGOs and their Emergence

Let us now turn to some of the reasons cited for the emergence and existence of NGOs or voluntary organisations. They are as follows:

- **Reach of the State**

The State has a social responsibility and in this context the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Indian Constitution specifies that 'the state shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all institutions of the national life' (Mathur 1997:49). The State has special departments and ministries to ensure the satisfaction of these needs, such as the Public Distribution System (PDS) and the Welfare Department. Due to various reasons, however, it may not be able to meet or may just pay lip service to the needs of citizens. The State may not fulfil its role due to apathy, inefficiency, lack of political will or other such reasons. The failure of State can be seen in many instances – the Constitution of India has abolished untouchability, but in practice, it exists all over the country, and land reforms have hardly been implemented in absence of 'political will'.

It is rightly said that the growth of NGOs has occurred partly as a result of the failure of official aid programmes to reach down and assist the poor (Chandra 2001). Therefore 'the NGO sector in different countries has developed widely differing characteristics according to the history of the State, the amount of development assistance received and the gap perceived in public service provision' (Farrington and Lewis 1993:30).

The governments of developing countries like India have launched many development programmes, through different institutions but these have generally failed to make any noticeable impact on poverty, inequalities and social injustice (Bhatt 1987; Sheth and Shethi 1991; Sen 1992). They serve the elite at the expense of the poor, and, as Bhatt (1987) suggests, they neglect the politically disconnected or those living in the remote areas, and reflect short-term expediency rather than long-term survival. Accessibility to centres of power and the ability of the leaders to obtain human and other resources are mainly responsible for their location in urban areas (Kapoor and Singh 1997:24).

Apart from the failure of the State is the issue of its shrinking role. With Structural Adjustment Programme (as a conditionality of IMF loans), increased globalisation and privatisation (often without a human face), the State has reduced its role in providing certain services to the public. The worst hit are the poor, unorganised labour, marginalised farmers and fisher folk; and women and children across these groups

- **Failure of the market**

Too much of interference from the State may erode personal freedom and the creativity of citizens in meeting individual needs. The State may allow the market forces to work without much control, in the hope that these

market forces will help and allow individuals to take care of their needs. There is a belief that people will find ways and means to take care of their needs and a free and open market will provide such opportunities. But monopolies, unhealthy competition, lack of encouragement to indigenous technologies and knowledge, lack of purchasing power etc., have led to failures of markets in meeting the needs of especially the marginalised, the poor and unorganised labourers. The market, left to itself, has failed to ensure the basic needs of individuals. In the case of market failure, the HDR (1997:10) has recommended: 'The State must advance the interests of the poor people and promote pro-poor markets'.

- **Decline of subsistence economy**

In many of the Third World countries there existed a subsistence economy at the rural level (barter system). Labour, production and consumption were regulated by village communities and, by and large, basic needs of people were ensured. The industrialisation, westernisation and urbanisation processes impacted the subsistence economy of these countries to the detriment of the poor, the village artisans, and marginalised and landless labourers, giving rise to new social problems that demand to be addressed.

- **Altruism and / or response to community need**

Idealistic commitment to one's country and its people has motivated many individuals and groups to do something for the people who are economically, socially and politically marginalised (Dabhi 1995). Citizens are free and autonomous and can contribute and assist the State in its development efforts. Individuals and groups work towards their own well being as well as that of others. Religious values, the humanitarian cause, social commitment and goodwill, motivate and propel human beings to act in the interest of the larger society, especially the poor and the marginalised, or for the common good.

- **Employment, political clout, status/power**

Individuals and groups act in the interest of the common good or for a human development cause, not always just out of altruism but also for personal gain and advantage. Certain activities and endeavours may bring people prestige, status, political and/or social upward mobility. There are hundreds of NGOs registered under Trust Acts, which are governed and managed by family members and relations - they have become 'one person/one family' owned and run NGOs; there are individuals and organisations getting political mileage out of their efforts with and through NGOs; some individuals have used NGO platform and 'constituency' to get into politics; and political and bureaucratic elites in many developing countries are setting up NGO-like institutions under State and/or partly control with a view to access resources (Chandra 2001).

On the one hand, one cannot conclude that NGOs and voluntary organisations that mushroomed in the last few decades have a single motive and that too

Dabhi, Jimmy. 2004, 'Development and Social Transformation – Role of the voluntary sector', in *Social Change – issues and perspective*, vol. 34, No. 1, March 2004:86-101, New Delhi: Journal of the Council for Social Development.

mere altruism, on the other, not all NGOs can be condemned as frauds and self-seeking. It is obvious also from the above discussion that one cannot expect the NGOs to behave in a uniform manner, as their roots, inspiration and motives 'to exist, to be' are different.

Development: Meaning & Direction

I would now like to focus on the concept of development. Often growth, progress, modernity, and westernisation or sanskritisation are equated with development. Perhaps the simplest way of thinking about development is that it means an increase in prosperity. At the national level, the most used measure of economic well-being is gross national product (GNP). GNP per capita gives an indication of the average material living standard of a nation.

'Development' is a value-loaded term, almost synonymous with 'progress'. Although it may entail disruption of established patterns of living, over the long term, it implies increased living standards, improved health and well-being for all, and the achievement of whatever is regarded as a general good for society at large (Thomas and Potter 1992:6).

Dudley Seers (1979), in his article 'The meaning of development', suggests that 'realisation of the potential of human personality ... is a universally acceptable aim', and development must therefore entail ensuring the conditions for achieving this goal. The three conditions, according to him, are: first, the capacity to obtain physical necessities (particularly food); second, a job (not necessarily paid employment, but including studying, working on a family farm or keeping house); and third, equality, which should be considered an objective in its own right (Thomas and Potter 1992). Seers goes on to say: 'The questions to ask about a country's development are therefore: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have become less severe, then without doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result 'development'...' (Thomas and Potter 1992:12).

From the perspective of human-needs centred development, where the level of satisfaction of various dimensions of human needs is considered to have improved, Seer's conditions for development can be extended to a list of eight (Thomas and Potter 1992:123):

1. low levels of material poverty
2. low level of unemployment
3. relative equality
4. democratisation of political life
5. 'true' national independence
6. good literacy and educational levels
7. relatively equal status for women and participation by women

Dabhi, Jimmy. 2004, 'Development and Social Transformation – Role of the voluntary sector', in *Social Change – issues and perspective*, vol. 34, No. 1, March 2004:86-101, New Delhi: Journal of the Council for Social Development.

8. sustainable ability to meet future needs.

The debates over environment have given rise to the concept of 'sustainable development', and gender and caste perspectives are also important while considering development. Women, children, the aged and the physically challenged are some of the worst victims of discrimination and exploitation, and those among Scheduled castes and Tribes are worst among the worst. As Ambedkar puts it:

'It must be recognized that Indian society is a gradation of castes forming an ascending scale of reverence and a descending scale of contempt, a system which gives no scope for the growth of that sentiment of equality & fraternity so essential for a democratic form of government.' (Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as cited in Yadav, 1998:55).

The rise of fundamentalism in India, the events of 1992 – the Rath Yatra, the demolition of Babri Mosque, communal riots, and the Gujarat carnage of 2002 bring in another dimension to development – the need for secularism and depoliticisation of religion. Jain (2000:44) suggests 'Development must be woven around people, not people around development and it should empower the citizens with an awareness of the issues to participate in the development and politics and not to make them share the corruption of the politicians'.

Summing up this section, we can agree upon some points, namely, reducing poverty is a fundamental objective of economic development and second, development is a multi-faceted process with political and social-cultural as well as economic aspects (see World Development Report 1990, also see Gujarat Human Development Report 1999). To quote Mahbub ul Haq, the architect of the Human Development Reports

'The basic purpose of development is to enlarge people's choices. In principle, these choices can be infinite and can change over time. People often value achievements that do not show up at all, or not immediately, in income or growth figures: greater access to knowledge, better nutrition and health services, more secure livelihoods, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, political and cultural freedoms and sense of participation in community activities. The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives' (Mahbub ul Haq)¹.

NGOs & Development

In this section, we examine the assumptions, strategies and approaches NGOs exhibit through and in their interventions in communities and regions. Four approaches are cited here and their underlying assumptions are presented.

¹ 'What is Human Development'. Source: <http://hdr.undp.org/hd/default.cfm>

The charity and relief approach: Some people are unfortunate to suffer the brunt of the disasters and tragedies which disturb and upset the peace and harmony in society. They need assistance, help and relief. It is assumed that charity and relief will reduce if not eliminate human suffering and pain. Therefore charity demands that we be kind to women, the physically challenged, the 'avaras', and the tribals.

- **Social Reform Approach:** A sizeable number of NGOs and organisations adhere to social reform approach, which assumes that in spite of progress and change there are some communities and areas which have lagged behind in this advancement of 'civilisation' and therefore these groups and communities deserve special attention. If these communities are exposed to a more 'civilised' world, modernity, and process of 'sanskritisation', they will come out of their backwardness, it is assumed. Therefore changes and modifications, cosmetic in nature, such as better education and health facilities, the brahmanical ritual bath in the morning, vegetarianism, joining bhakti movements, and movements like swadhyay (a softer Hindutva movement, very strong in Gujarat and Maharashtra) will be on the agenda for the poor. The social order, access and control over public wealth and natural resources, unequal distribution of power and blatant social discrimination and violence are neither questioned or addressed by organisations who view development in this manner.
- **Techno-managerial approach:** There are yet other NGOs who subscribe to the techno-managerial development approach and believe that poverty and underdevelopment can be remedied by professional, techno-managerial development interventions in the fields of agriculture, community development, health, and natural resource development and management. Some of the NGOs which are service providing, intermediary, in specific areas like health, education, self-help groups, watershed development, and natural resource management fall within this category. Community development and community dynamics are tools necessary for these NGOs to implement programmes and projects to improve the quality of life of the poor. Often the poor are seen as a homogeneous group by these organisations. They do not interfere in the socio-political dynamics of the communities and therefore the issue of equality and justice may not have priority in this approach. To quote from a report of the Behavioural Scheme Centre :

Expansion in size and diversification has led NGOs to move to what may be called 'non controversial' areas of operation like 'education' and 'health'. The percentage of organizations which have cited general or non-controversial activities are much higher than those which have cited 'specialized' or controversial activities. Education and vocational training (73.96%), health (73.49%), alleviation of poverty (61.19%) and environment action (66.67%) are the 'general' and 'non controversial' activities that engage the highest number of NGOs. When it comes to

Dabhi, Jimmy. 2004, 'Development and Social Transformation – Role of the voluntary sector', in *Social Change – issues and perspective*, vol. 34, No. 1, March 2004:86-101, New Delhi: Journal of the Council for Social Development.

controversial activities like countering injustice and atrocities, gender issue based action or advocacy, the percentage of organizations is reduced.

- Behavioural Science Centre 1998:100

- **Human Rights & Advocacy Approach:** Often, the above mentioned approaches focus on merely economic and physical deprivation and do not consider psycho-social deprivation, discrimination, pain and suffering that the caste system and gender, patriarchal and communal ideologies inflict on women, Scheduled Castes, tribes and minorities. The NGOs inclined to the above approaches do not see human pain and suffering as organised and ideologically supported to exclude groups and communities based on purity and pollution (caste discrimination), sex (gender discrimination) and the principle of exclusion (religious discrimination, because s/he does not practice a religion of Indian origin). Experience and observation suggest that often the organisations which adhere to these approaches, reinforce and perpetuate these ideologies and discrimination, see the 'societal wrongs' merely as human frailties and weakness but not as structural in nature, or as issues of human rights and justice.

Human Rights and Advocacy is yet another approach that a few NGOs are committed to. 'Empowerment is about change in favour of those who previously exercised little control over their lives. This has two sides: the first is control over resources. The second is control over ideology' (HDR 1997:96). The underlying assumption of this approach is that human society, with all its ideals and constitutional safeguards, is infested with injustice and discrimination, which is structural in nature and human made. Social order and relations; political dynamics and power alliances in society are such that they assist in perpetuating imbalance of power, dominance (by some groups and communities, which by and large is caste based, gendered and exclusive of some 'minorities'), social and economic discrimination, marginalisation and even polarisation among communities. NGOs with this approach do not disregard community development and enhancing quality of life, but the basic premise here is that no development is possible unless the deprived, the marginalised, the discriminated, the excluded and voiceless communities and groups have a share in political power, namely power in governance and decision making at various levels from the village to State and Nation (Dabhi 1999).

On the ground, the approaches discussed above do not appear as unambiguous or clear-cut manifestations. It may not be even justifiable to condemn some approaches or put them in a hierarchy of value. However if NGOs want to contribute to development then they cannot remain passive to the socio-cultural, economic and political dynamics which shape our society. Unless issues of injustice, power, discrimination based on caste, creed, sex, wealth, polarisation of society based on religion, and access and control over natural resources are addressed and dealt with, the development we are talking of will be an utopia.

NGOs as Partners in Development

We have so far looked at reasons for NGOs to come to existence, the strategies and approaches they take up. Now let us focus on future and the role the NGOs can and must play if they mean to be partners in development.

Drawing from Human Development Report (1997) we can say that development 'is the process of enlarging people's choice. The most critical ones are to lead a long and healthy life, to be educated and to enjoy a decent standard of living. Additional choices include political freedom, other guaranteed human rights and various ingredients of self respect ... including what Adam Smith called the ability to mix with others without being 'ashamed to appear in Public'' (HDR 1997:15). Poverty then means that opportunities and choices most basic to human development are denied. Thus individuals, groups and organisations such as NGOs must come forward to respond to these human development needs, not in isolation, but collectively, emphasising alliances and networking for a common cause, i.e., the cause of the people. In the context of last decade, where the fundamentalist forces in India have strengthened and are bent on destroying the pluralist, multicultural fabric of Indian society, it is important that national development is seen as development of a plural society, with a big majority and number of smaller minorities, where social justice, economic progress and political democracy are based on a national integration, unity with diversity, as plural interest, as provided by Ambedkar in the Constitution (Majeed 2002).

The NGOs, as part of their strategies and action plan, will have to spend a substantial amount of time, energy and resources at the grassroots assisting people for collective action and reflection. It is rightly said that achievement in eradication of human poverty depends, first and foremost on people's ability to articulate their demands and mobilise for collective action (HRD 1997). Therefore mass level awareness and education campaigns, which include understanding of human rights, constitutional provisions, role and obligation of the State, and rights and responsibilities of the citizen, is essential. It must be noted that the awareness and education programme of the NGOs must address the various kinds of discriminations and exclusion that the poor face – whether it is caste, class, gender or religion. Strategically one can focus on one or the other but unless they are seen as a whole, the efforts will lose its effectiveness and credibility among the discriminated and excluded groups and communities.

In the last decade, people around the world seem to have lost confidence in the effectiveness of their governments, and seem to be losing faith in democracy (HDR 2002); the Gujarat carnage of 2002, war on Iraq by USA and UK led armed forces, State sponsored terrorism, are cases that can be cited. Isolated and dispersed, poor people have no power and no influence over political decisions that affect their lives. Organised, they have the power to ensure that their interest are advanced (HDR 1997); therefore mobilisation, promoting functional unity, and collective assertion of rights and demands by the poor and marginalised groups and communities will have to be taken on

board by the NGOs. NGO as a sector, along with people's organisation and movements, will have to influence State policies and push for the allocation of adequate resources to human development priorities, for markets that are more people friendly, for economic growth that is pro-poor. Taking up critically selected development programmes which provide avenues for capacity building and mobilisation and organisation of the people is not out of place in this advocacy and movement approach discussed here. In this context, the Behavioural Science Centre, working in Kutch and Banaskantha Districts of Gujarat, is a good example to cite.

It is the pressure from people to defend their rights and to remove obstacles and enhance their rights and opportunities that will eradicate human poverty (HRD 1997). Therefore the NGO strategy must be such that eventually it is people who are empowered and their movements which become strong and lasting. These movements must be allowed to take various forms and shapes as long as they address issues of people's life in a consistent manner. These movements may be amalgamation of so many actions and may take the shape of mass awareness programme (social-political, legal) about people's situation and rights, 'pad yataras' (rallies), public hearings, series of workshops and seminars, surveys and action-research leading to pressurising governments and other agencies to address the issues. These are activities that can make the masses aware, highlight people's concerns, problems, indicate where lies the responsibility, who are responsible for the sad state of affairs and also possible responsible actions by various actors. The movement must aim towards inclusion of all socially and economically poor and discriminated, while not allowing domination by any group. The actions and programmes in and through the movements are to be such that they unite the poor, the marginalised, the discriminated, the displaced and excluded minorities. These actions have a follow up and are not just of symbolic value, a mere political stunt, or a game of achieving targets: 'We did so many programmes this year'. The end is envisaged in larger participation of people in planning and implementation of development programmes at local as well as national levels, more so of marginalised communities. The end is visualised as change in policies so that they are pro-poor and effective and efficient implementation of these policies.

These movements must encompass village level issues such as drinking water, electricity, roads, primary education, primary health services, minimum wages, bus service, to much larger issues such as land reform policies and regulations, access and control over natural resources, forest regulation, displacement, draught proofing programmes and other various schemes and programmes at the State and national level.

Experience suggests that democracies are not always responsive to the needs and concerns of ordinary people. Therefore ways and means by which these movements must help people must go beyond simply expressing their views, grievances, and preferences to check power of the rulers and influence decisions. These movements must make the State accountable. HDR (2002)

Dabhi, Jimmy. 2004, 'Development and Social Transformation – Role of the voluntary sector', in *Social Change – issues and perspective*, vol. 34, No. 1, March 2004:86-101, New Delhi: Journal of the Council for Social Development.

has rightly said that accountability is about power – about people having not just say in official decisions but also the right to hold their rulers to account. HDR (2002) comments that this accountability must be extended to corporations, multinational organisations and others who have more power in public decision making. It is also argued that because of their influence over the lives of people and communities, they are holders of public trust – and so they are answerable for their actions to national legislatures and to the public. NGOs, over time, must play a supportive role, allowing people's leadership to emerge and take lead. This requires that NGOs invest in human resource development and capacity building of people. The NGOs must help in the process of building people's alliance with various marginalised communities especially the Scheduled Castes, Tribes, OBCs and the minorities.

NGOs will also have to support the grassroots and people's movement with legal assistance. Experience suggests that often people's struggles get entangled in judicial systems. 'Poor people, poor justice' is a phenomenon seen all over the world. HDR (2002) observes, 'Judicial systems often seem more diligent in prosecuting crimes committed by poor people than crimes against them. A survey of poor people (HDR 2002:66)) finds that at best the police and judiciary are considered unresponsive – at worst, they are aggressive abusers of judicial rights. The recent 'Public Hearing' held on 22-23, February 2002 at Palanpur, head quarters of Banaskantha District of Gujarat, under the aegis of Behavioural Science Centre, Banaskantha Dalit Sangh and Indian People's Tribunal endorses the finding. The movements therefore must address the judiciary and hold it accountable to do what it is suppose to do. Thus the advocacy efforts of the NGOs must draw upon and impact the executive, the judiciary and the legislative systems of the State in order to promote and ensure development and demand transparency (right to information) and accountability in the process.

Summing up

We have focused on advocacy and human rights approach to development as a role NGOs so far. It is argued that development of people requires active participation of civil society, of the people themselves, and that the NGOs' role and strategy must be to promote people's movements with and through grassroots organisations of people. The objective of these movements will be to ensure that governance systems are accountable to the people and that people actively participate in decision-making processes (at micro and macro level) which affect their lives.

Before concluding, let us briefly examine the view of the HDR (2002) on role of civil society and NGOs. It will also help to look at some dangers the roles proposed will throw up. NGOs are seen as playing two distinct roles in reshaping global and local politics. One is to pressurise decision-makers through campaigns, movements (micro and macro) as we discussed earlier. The second role of NGOs is involving them directly in global and domestic negotiations. To cite an example women's empowerment and development

Dabhi, Jimmy. 2004, 'Development and Social Transformation – Role of the voluntary sector', in *Social Change – issues and perspective*, vol. 34, No. 1, March 2004:86-101, New Delhi: Journal of the Council for Social Development.

organisations have often tried to play a constructive role in pressurising decision makers and negotiating proposals (HDR 2002). I would like to highlight dangers in carrying out both these roles. One of the dangers is of 'romanticism' – a sense of achievement disproportionate to 'real' accomplishment where the real outcomes occur in forms of carefully guarded texts of declarations and programmes of action (Baxi 2002). These roles have implications for NGOs' code of conduct, networking, relationship with government and international NGOs and agencies. Co-opting, marginalisation of smaller NGOs and grassroots organisations, using networking forums for personal gain and enhancement, subtle manipulation for places on Governing Board and access to funds, disengagement from grassroots and becoming white collars advocacy NGOs (hardly any involvement and commitment to grassroots), aspiration to become mega NGOs with lot of resources and influence with government and International agencies, are to be guarded against.

References

- Baxi, Upendra. 2002. *The Future of Human Rights*. New Delhi: Oxford: University Press.
- Behavioural Science Centre. 1998. 'Non - Governmental Organisations in India: A Profile of Their Organizational Features'. Ahmedabad: Behavioural Science Centre.
- Bhatt, Anil. 1987. 'Social and Political Dimensions of Administering Development', in Ichis, John et al. Eds. *Beyond Bureaucracy*. USA: West Hartford, Kumarian Press.
- Billis, D. and Mackeith, Joy. 1993. *Organising NGOs: Challenges and Trends in the Management of Overseas Aid*, London: CVO, LSE.
- Chandra, Snehlata. 2001. *Non-Governmental Organisations – Structure, Relevance and Function*. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers.
- Dabhi, James C. 1995. 'The key factors which lead to the establishment of new NGOs'. An essay submitted as partial requirement of M.Sc. in Voluntary Sector Organisation, London: London School of Economics and Political Science.
- Dabhi, Jimmy C. 1999. 'Empowerment Of People - A Process: HRD Challenge In 21st Century', in Pareek, U. and Sisodia, V. eds. (1999). *HRD In The New Millennium*. New Delhi: Tata-Mcgraw-Hill.
- Farrigton J. and Lewis D. J. eds. 1993. *Non-Governmental Organisations and The State in Asia: Rethinking Roles in Sustainable Agricultural Development*. UK: Routledge.
- Human Development Report – UNDP. 1997. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Jain, Ravi Kiran. 2000, 'The Emerging Human Rights Situation in India', in Alam, Aftab. Ed. *Human Rights in India: Issues and Challenge*. Delhi: Raj Publication.

Dabhi, Jimmy. 2004, 'Development and Social Transformation – Role of the voluntary sector', in *Social Change – issues and perspective*, vol. 34, No. 1, March 2004:86-101, New Delhi: Journal of the Council for Social Development.

Kapoor A.K. and Singh, D. 1997. *Rural Development Through NGOs*, New Delhi: Rawat Publications.

Korten, David C. 1991. 'The role of non-governmental organisations in development: changing patterns and perspectives` in Paul, Samuel and Israel, Arturo, eds. *Non Government Organisations and the World Bank*. Washington DC: the World Bank.

Majeed, Akhtar. 2002. 'Minorities and Nation-State' in Majeed, Akhtar ed. 2002. *Nation and Minorities – India's Plural Society and its Constituents*. New Delhi: Centre for Federal Studies.

Mathur, B. S. 1997. *Principle of Management*, Jaipur: National Publishing House.

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) 1988. 'Voluntary Aid Development: the role of non-governmental organisations'. Paris.

Pandey, S. R. 1991. *Community Action for Social Justice: Grassroots Organisations in India*. New Delhi: Sage.

Seers D. 1979. 'The meaning of development', in Lehmann D. (ed.), 'Development Theory: four critical studies', Frank Class, London.

Sen, Sidharth. 1992. *Non-profit organisations in India: Historical development and Common Patterns*. *Voluntas* 3/2, November, USA.

Sheth, D. L. and Sethi, H. 1991. 'The NGO Sector in India: Historical context and current discourse'. *Voluntas* 2/2, November, USA.

Staudt, Kathleen. 1991. *Managing Development: State, Society and International Context*, London: Sage.

Thomas, A. and Potter D. 1992. 'Development, Capitalism and the Nation State' in Allen, Tim and Thomas, Alan eds. 1992. *Poverty and Development in the 1990s*, UK: Open University.

Worsley, P. 1984. *The Three Worlds*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson.

Yadav, R. R. 1998. 'Ambedkar: A Judicious Evaluation' in Lal, Shyam and Saxena, K. S. eds. 1998. *Ambedkar and Nation-Building*, Jaipur: Rawat Publication.