

“Role of NGOs in Social Development of Rajasthan”

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Abstract

This paper highlights the role of NGOs in social development of Rajasthan. It is a case study of 4 NGOs engaged in diverse dimensions like education, health, hygiene, Women empowerment and sanitation field in Rajasthan State. NGOs are organising a number of advocacy campaigns across Rajasthan in order to develop the working and living conditions of society. The paper also highlights the performance evaluation of NGOs. This research paper outlines the key role that can be played by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for social development of Rajasthan.

Objectives of the study

- To analyze whether selected NGOs propose empowerment to the society.
- To review whether selected NGOs help in offering basic facilities in the upliftment of society.
- To study how selected NGOs have played an essential role in solving diverse problems of society.

Aims and Objectives

The present research paper is based on secondary data which is composed from the books, Journals and news paper, Internet, Websites etc. to study the role of NGOs in overall social development of Rajasthan State.

Introduction:- *India lives in its villages" Mahatma Gandhi.*

The term NGO is applied to a plenty range of organizations, which are not recognized or operated by government. NGOs are generally private, non -profit organizations, which are run by their members. Professor Peter Willetts, from the University of London, argues the definition of NGOs can be interpreted in a different way by various organizations and depending on a situation's perspective. He defines an NGO as “an independent voluntary association of people acting together on a continuous basis for some common use other than achieving government office, illegal activities or making money.”

In India, the scope of development is not slight but very extensive, as it includes not just the economic growth but the growth on social front, empowerment, quality of life, women and child development, education and awareness of its society. The duty of development is so huge and

complicated that just implementing government plans is not sufficient to fix the crisis. To attain this, a holistic vision and joint efforts involving various departments, agencies and even NGOs is requisite. Owing to such a great need, the number of NGOs in India is rising speedily and, at present, there are about 25,000 to 30,000 active NGOs in India. Apparently, rural development in Rajasthan seems to be a simple task but, in actuality, it is not. Post Independence era has seen a lot of rural development programmes through diverse five-years plans. Poverty Alleviation, generation of employment, more opportunities for generating revenue, and infrastructure facilities are emphasized through the programmes and policies of the government. Along with this, the panchayat raj institutions have also been initiated by the government to build up the equality at grass roots level. We can elaborate our study through following NGOs:

Seva Mandir

Seva Mandir started its interventions with Adult Literacy Programme in late 60s. However, overtime Seva Mandir's interventions became more integrated and comprehensive.

The objectives of the Education Programme are :

- Ensure quality education to enable children in the age group of 6-14 years who are deprived of education to read and write independently with comprehension.
- To enable communities through these interventions on quality education to experience an alternative and meaningful education.
- To work proactively towards enabling communities to demand quality education from the government.

The Education Programme works along 3 lines :

Children's Education

Youth Education

Continuing Education

For Children Education, there are 3 programmes :

Non Formal Education Centres

Literacy camps

Educational intervention in Urban slums

Non Formal Education Centres :

NFE centres are usually run in those areas, where no other school facilities are easily accessible and in sections of society who are unable to participate in the formal schooling system.

Learning Camps

To reach out to those children who are not able to regularly attend a school or NFE, Seva Mandir organises residential learning camps. During the course of the year, 3 camps were conducted in

which a total of 448 children participated. It is taken as a positive sign that after attending the camps children have gained confidence and decided to go to school.

Urban Slums

Seva Mandir has been working in the urban slums of Udaipur for several years. However, concentrated work has only been initiated in the last three years and, even today, Seva Mandir is still in the process of refining its strategy. The work on education has two primary components - *The Bal Samuh* and *the Bal Shramik Schools*.

10 Bal Samuhs are being run for 209 children to help students complete their homework, to improve their educational status and to keep them involved in studies so that lagging behind or low attainment doesn't lead to them getting pushed out. Since the Bal Samuhs are only run for two hours every day, not much can be covered beyond homework, Parents contribute a monthly fee ranging from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 for each child enrolled in the Bal Samuhs.

Youth Education

Those falling in the age group of 14-30 are defined as Youth, particularly those falling in lower half age group. This age group faces multiple pressures both economically and socially. To involve this segment with Education, Seva Mandir runs Youth enters and Residential Camps at which key issues are addressed as well efforts are made to equip the participants with functional literacy.

Youth literacy camps : This year, three residential literacy camps were conducted for rural youth in which a total of 79 people (including youth, SHG members, paraworkers and GVC members) participated with 23 people coming for two camps.

Youth Resource Centers : Seva Mandir's experience over the last few years, has revealed that the literacy camps are not interesting enough for the youth as stand-alone activities. Hence work was initiated on the idea of a YRC. Work with youth has been started in three villages (Saru, Madri, Delwara) and initial steps have been made in three more villages (Kagmandada, Baleecha and Sada), YRCs are envisaged as providing a forum for the youth to come together and interact with each other, thereby encouraging and enabling a continuous dialogue and interaction with and between the youth. The idea is to use this platform to create a mass of young adults who are able to engage with the modern world in a responsible way. A variety of activities have been considered for the YRCs to achieve these objectives including dissemination of information, providing support and training to the youth, etc. also to provide a way of integrating all the development interventions on a common platform and to ensure continuity. The work has been carried out by a team composed of both Seva Mandir staff and volunteers.

Continuing Education Programme :

As the name indicates, the main aim is to keep the link of village people with education continued. Libraries are used as a means for same. At present, there are 44 libraries being run in rural areas to

provide the local communities with access to a variety of relevant reading materials. The idea behind this is to provide continued support to literate people and to ensure that there is scope for tapping into the benefits of being literate. Libraries are used primarily by students from NFES.

Health :

Seva Mandir's activities in the area of health focus on preventive, promotive and curative health needs. The activities of the health programme are planned under areas of preventive, promotive and curative health needs. Core activities across these programmes include creating awareness, providing, critical are through village functionaries and two referral centres, capable building of community level health service providers, and linking people to state facilities. Seva Mandir operates in the southern part of Rajasthan. Seva Mandir's work area encompasses 626 villages and 56 Urban Settlements. Majority of these villages are located in Udaipur District. In total the organisation reaches out to around 70,000 households, influencing the lives of approximately 360,000 persons. The region is characterized by rocky and hilly terrain of the Aravalli hill ranges, moderate to low rainfall (400-600 mm/year), and large temperature variations (4-48 degree C).

SAATHI : SAATHI is dedicated to the empowerment of the deprived and the marginalized farmers along with women and children. Its major role is to harmonize various stakeholders including NGOs and Government institutions in the overall leadership and guidance of training and integrated growth activities in Rajasthan. In days gone by, the organization has successfully implemented diverse governments and non government projects on aforesaid operational areas and has setup milestones in the passage of growth.

SAATHI is a not for profit and non-governmental civil society organization, which believes in participatory approaches. The focal point is on mobilizing the society; sharing right information and educating them which would give them a benefit in their socio-economic and political lives and release them from vulnerability, injustice and marginalization.

SAATHI believes in the significance of using local resources and wisdom in all processes and activities. The key force of the organization is the use of facilitative not directive approach to development issues. As such SAATHI leads a set-up of NGOs in Rajasthan for sharing of information, providing technical support, hand holding and facilitating two-way activities in the midst of members. All programs are based on the dynamic contribution and involvement of the beneficiary group and other stake holders.

The key sectors of intervention include

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| • | Village | Institution |
| • | Gender | Issues |
| • | Health | Issues |
| • | Educational | Issues |
| • | Child development | Issues |

The Akshaya Patra Foundation: The Akshaya Patra Foundation initiated its operations in Rajasthan in February 2004 by setting up a centralized kitchen in Jaipur district. The need of the hour and territory encouraged the Foundation to initiate a decentralized kitchen in the far-off district of Baran in April 2005. The third kitchen came up in Nathdwara in June 2006 as a centralised unit. August 2013 saw the initiation of the fourth kitchen in Jodhpur. These different units collectively offer mid-day meals to more than 1,64,769 children across the state. The centralised kitchen unit at Jaipur was recognized in February 2004. It is an ISO 22000:2005 certified kitchen unit. This kitchen currently feeds 1,12,475 Government school children each day. There are 65 custom designed meal allotment vehicles to distribute the cooked mid-day meal to the beneficiary schools. Apart from the usual preparation of mid-day meals, this kitchen also prepares food for the 5,000 daily wage earners of the Akshaya Kalewa programme and for Anganwadis. These kitchens are highly automated, well-organized enterprises capable of large scale cooking in a very small time. The Jaipur and Nathdwara kitchens ISO 22000:2005 are certified too. The Foundation's initial decentralized kitchen was recognized in Rajasthan at Baran. This kitchen is run by a local self-help group that has been skilled by Akshaya Patra personnel and provides food for the school children in the area. This decentralised kitchen was established to cater to the requirements of children in this remote area and still overcome the troubles of infrastructure and poor road connectivity that hamper constructing a centralised kitchen.

Astha: **Astha** is a Hindi word which means “Faith”. Astha believes that these capabilities are being covered up by the dominant forces, and the result is that people themselves don't recognize their inbuilt capabilities. With this conviction and deep faith in the strength of the people and their capacities, Astha was created in 1986 and was registered as a Society, under Society Registration Act. The originator members have 10 to 15 years working knowledge in the field of rural development, adult education, organizing women's group, drought management and farming and agriculture development. The work area of Astha has been mainly Rajasthan, but the national issues and larger forces and policies affect the conditions in Rajasthan, and at the confined level.

Astha always has made an effort to ensure the Peace, Right to Justice, Development, no caste, class, has worked for a society in which the poor have control on their natural as well as livelihood resources, people co-exist with environment, equality prevails in the culture, and the citizens of India have well-built moral and ethical values.

The Astha feels that the role of the NGO is to reinforce the citizens to become alert of their rights, their responsibilities and government's responsibilities, and together, to make the heap resources of the government accessible to the masses.

Conclusion

Rajasthan has a rich history of voluntarism and helping poor. In earlier days traders, businessmen and other people who had resources, used to give charity to poor people. In times of drought and other natural calamities, local communities usually come forward to help the affected people.

Over period of time this sector has grown in more than one way. Now NGOs' are working with poor & marginalised community in various sectors like Health, Education, Women empowerment, Social Welfare, Right based issues, Dalit issues. etc. This has been the result of some local and some professional initiatives taken by institutions and individuals. NGOs are playing an alarming role in the current Indian Scenario. NGOs contributed to a civil society by providing a means for expressing and actively addressing the diverse and complex requirements of society. NGOs are playing an essential role in Women Empowerment, child education & various literacy programmes, Environmental Protection, conservation and Development, sanitation, Hygiene and health etc. Multi-sectoral harmonization and union along with holistic and sustainable development of society can be achieved with participation of NGOs.

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