

# **Future of Non-Government Voluntary Organisations: (Problems and Prospects)**

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*Note: This is welcome address by Shri S.P. Ahuja, then President SID (Delhi Chapter), delivered on 24.3.1988 at the inauguration of NGO meeting as part of 19th SID International conference. \**

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The world of development often separates itself from the world of poverty. World of Development needs highways, aeroplanes, elite management, elite capital and elite services. World of poverty needs a different type of infrastructure, literacy, education, rural technology, shelter, clothing, food, etc.

The conference has taken upon itself the task linking the world of poverty to the world of development and go beyond and link it to collective survival. We, the NGO's are more often involved in the world of poverty and such a linkage will be useful. And your deliberations. We must also provide our inputs to problems of Collective Survival, because threat to survival either from wars or degradation of environment will make the tasks of NGO's more difficult. And such a threat to survival effects our target group (i.e. women and the poor) the most.

In the context of development of societies, specially in underdeveloped setting, the role of NGO's remains limited. Their share in national resources, physical, financial and human is also limited. This is so because Governments in developing societies tend to be the main actors and change agents in the area of poverty alleviation and development.

In India, thanks to the wisdom of the Government of the day in early 70's we gave a major shift to our development policies in favour of the poor and thus brought about a State initiated linkage between poverty and development. That experiment which was then described as populous has today yielded abundant results in not only reducing poverty but also taking pain out of whatever poverty remains.

Time has come when in a new major experiment the responsibility of this linkage between poverty and development can be increasingly transferred to the voluntary sector. This will be especially useful at the extremities of the

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administrative setup, where administration's supervisory reach is limited if not absent and where its assessment of local needs, possibilities and aspirations is near negligible. Here the local voluntary organizations with grass root knowledge and experience can perform much better and also provide the managerial and supervisory inputs essential to success of any project.

In our context and this may be time for others also the ultimate objectives of NGO effort may be to provide an institutional framework which makes small communities at village or community level self sufficient with adequate provision towards minimum needs i.e. clean water, health facilities, literacy and functional education etc. Such a community, not much dependent upon Government institutional framework was Mahatma Gandhi's dream village. In such a village, Government becomes an enabler rather than a doer. An environment is provided in which people's participation for people's benefit becomes increasingly possible and dependence on Government is considerably reduced. This appears only way to deliver development to the hard core poor in different areas such as hills, forests, deserts and areas otherwise unconnected by modern transport systems. In these areas failure of Government institutional framework to link poor to the development is more apparent.

Here a shift in favour of NGO effort appears to be a pre-condition for the success of poverty alleviation programmes.

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