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SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC WELFARE AND INITIATIVES

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ROLE OF THE NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION IN INDIA – A STUDY



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Abstract: *NGO is any non-profit, voluntary citizen group that is organised on a local, national, and international level. NGOs are now playing an important role in framing environmental policy, mobilizing public support for environmental conservation, and protecting the endangered species of forests and animals. It is estimated that in India approximately 1.5 million NGOs are working for different causes. India has several NGOs that work in the field of environmental conservation and ecology. These are the Assam Science Society, Bombay Natural History Society, CEE, CSE, CPR Environmental Education Centre, Kerela Sastra Sahitya Parishad, Kalpavriksh, Narmada Bachao Andolan, FRLHT, TERI, Development Alternative Groups, Madras Crocodile Bank Trust etc. NGOs are not one monolithic entity, but groups and organisations 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. The fundamental objectives of these NGOs are to act as a catalyst in bringing about local, national, and international initiatives and community participation in an overall improvement in quality of life. They help the Government to obtain relevant information for promoting and facilitating the implementation of major environmental programmes.*

Keywords: *NGOs, Environmental Protection, Conservation, Awareness, India*

Introduction

The NGO is a social organization working towards a better society. NGOs 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, the environment, or health. They provide analysis and expertise, serve as early working mechanisms, and help monitor and implement international arguments.

India is the world's 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 practice, as avibrant 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 provides an extraordinary source of valuable fundamental rights for the protection of the rights of individuals. It is these rights, coupled with the directive principles of state policy that are relied upon by NGOs in their pivotal role in supporting individuals for the enforcement of their rights in India.

NGOs in Protection for the Environment in India

The NGOs constitute a worldwide network interacting with Governments and Internal inter governmental organizations in shaping international environmental policies:

1. Analysis and monitory of environmental quality.
2. Being involved in the protection of human rights to have a clean environment.
3. Creating awareness among the public on current environmentalissues and solutions.
4. Facilitating the participation of various categories of stakeholders in the discussion on environmental issues.
5. Helping the village's administrative officials with projects on environmental protection.
6. Organizing seminars, lectures, and group discussions for the promotion of environmental awareness.
7. Protecting the natural resources and entrusting the equitable use of resources.

NGOs working for Environmental Conservation and Ecology in India

1. **Assam Science Society:** It was established as Gauhati Science Society in the year 1953 and subsequently renamed Assam Science Society in the year 1956. It has five thousand life members. They impart environmental education and training through camps for teachers and students and conduct surveys on the environment: This Society is Publishing a Journal entitled: Journal of the Assam Science, Society.

2. **Bombay Natural History Society (BMIS):** One of the largest NGOs established in 1883 with its Headquarters located in Horn bill House, Mumbai, India. BNHS publishes its journal entitled "Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society (Jour. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.) since 1886 dealing with the conservation of nature and biological diversity. The organization also sponsors studies in Indian wildlife and conservation. BNHS has a Museum housed in Mumbai which preserves the fossil plants and animals of India.
3. **Centre for Environmental Education (CEE):** This was established in August 1984 as a centre of excellence supported by the Ministry of Environment & Forest, Govt. of India CEE, a National Institution with its headquarters in Ahmadabad. They mainly aim to create environmental awareness in the communities and conduct widespread environmental education and training programmes through a very vast network. Publications and data bases have a vast range of publications-books, posters, educational packages, bibliographies, and directories. There is also a large computerized database - the Environment Education bank, which has a collection of more than 800 environment concepts, about 2500 environment-related activities and 100s of case studies.
4. **Centre for Science and Environment (CSE):** This organization is founded by Mr Anil Agarwal in the year 1980. Its headquarters is situated in New Delhi. It involved research, investigative and educational work in the field of pollution, forest, wildlife, land, and water use. Publications; 'Down to Earth'- a fortnightly environment magazine; Children's magazine: 'The Gobar Times'; books; reports; computer a base; audio visuals, etc.
5. **CPR Environmental Education Centre (C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation):** CPR Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation was founded on 14 October 1966 as per the will of lawyer C.P. Ramaswami Iyer. The foundation is headquartered-a at 11, Eldam's Road, Alwarpet in Chennai, India (also known as C.P. Ramaswami Road) on the property known as "The Grove" which belongs to the C.P. Ramaswami Iyer family. It promotes environmental awareness, produces, and disseminates basic educational and reference material on the environment and takes up environmental projects. It works in the field of environmental education. The Publications of this foundation are Books on the environment, posters, audio cassettes, and web site on environmental education.
6. **Cure:** Congregation for Urban and Rural Environment ie. CURE is a non-political non-aided social Environment NGO working in Prayagraj since 23/04/1994. Aims and Objectives: CURE is working for the betterment of the Environment through Environment education and awareness programs such as inter-school debate, Essay writing, letter writing, poster/painting competition, Run for CURE, Quiz on Wildlife, Quiz on Environment, play card march on the eve of World Environment Day etc. etc., by targeting students of class 3rd

to 12th standard. Upto 1997-98 we did the programme with a focus on Anti-Polythene and Garbage Management. A seminar on World Environment Day is organized every year on the current burning topic of the Environment. CURE society has also had a yearly publication under its name ie. CURE Environment Bulletin since 1995 within formative articles on the current topics of the Environment with a detailed summary of yearly activities.

7. **Development Alternatives Group:** Development Alternatives Group based in Delhi works in all parts of the country. It was established in 1983 (in New Delhi) 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, waste land development, and appropriate technology. The main objectives of this NGO are Economic efficiency, Equity and social justice, Environmental harmony, Resource conservation, and self-reliance.
8. **Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT):** It is a registered public trust and Charitable society, which started its activities in 1993 under the guidance of Sam Pitroda and Anant Darshan Shankar. The Indian Ministry of Science & Technology recognizes FRLHT as a Scientific & research organization. Its headquarters is in Bengaluru. FRLHT is pioneering Knowledge institute with a vision to revitalize the Indian Medical Heritage. Its mission is to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of Indian Medical Heritage by designing and implementing an innovative programme on a size and scale that will have a societal impact. The three thrust areas of FRLHTs work are: Conservation of natural resources used by Indian Systems of Medicine, Demonstrate the contemporary relevance of traditional knowledge, and Revitalizations of social processes for transmission of heritage. FRLHT has been pioneering in endogenous research; training and development processes related to traditional health sciences. It has built up a reputation in this field and has started collaborative activities with other research and development centres in the country including the Government. The main objective of the CAPTURED programme is to build capacities for the transformation of Universities and Research centres in the South by integration of formation, trans-disciplinary research and social interaction with local healers and indigenous communities, considering the revitalization of local knowledge and wisdom of the indigenous people in dialogue with the knowledge of western sciences. It also envisages systematically elaborate concepts, theories, methodologies and techniques for trans-disciplinary doctoral research including the development of a curriculum on inter-cultural science and applications of research to support endogenous development in rural communities.

9. **Kalpavriksh:** It began in 1979, with a campaign led by students to save Delhi. Its office is in Pune, Maharashtra. It is a citizen's action group setup to inculcate understanding and concern on environmental issues, especially among the youth. It also aims to conduct research on environmental problems, to campaign on environmental issues and to evolve a holistic environmental perspective. It imparts environmental education in schools and colleges by forming a network of nature clubs, conducting bird-watching expeditions and nature trails, and has developed workbooks for the school level. Its Publications are: 1. The Little Green Book, 2. Narmada - a campaign newsletter, 3. What is that bird (An illustrated guide)
10. **Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad:** It was established on 10th September 1962. Its head Office is situated in Parishad Bhavan, Guruvayo or Road, Thrissur, Kerala, the main aim is to preserve the environment, provide alternative development models and popularize science among the people. They have worked in the field of ecodevelopment, creating awareness about water and energy conservation and encouraging the use of non-conventional energy sources such as smokeless Chulhas etc. This organization publishes two monthly magazines-1. Sastra Keralam (for secondary school students) and 2. Sastragathi and a biweekly, Eureka (for primary school students) and a newsletter Parishad Vartha).
11. **Madras Crocodile Bank Trust (MCBT):** A reptile zoo and a research station for reptiles and amphibians situated 40 km south of Chennai (Tamil Nadu) was founded in 1976. The research station is a public trust and is managed by a board of trustees. MCBT covers an area of 8.5 acres and is one of the largest reptile zoos in the world. It also provides the nesting site for Olive Ridley Sea Turtles. The crocodile Bank is a breeding centre for gharials since 1989 and is known for the Indian-painted roof turtle. The zoo has about 2500 reptiles including several species of Indian and African crocodiles and alligators.
12. **Narmada Bachao Andolon:** Set up in 1986 (in Madhya Pradesh) under the leadership of Medha Patkar. It aims mainly to educate those directly affected by large development projects, such as tribals, on the social and environmental impact of such projects. To protest the construction of dams in the Narmada Valley in general; struggling towards a right to information and a new environmentally sustainable water policy. To help the tribals get a substantial share of the government's development schemes/services and to enable them to undertake development activities themselves. They mainly educate, mobilize, and organize residents of the Narmada Valley on human rights and justice, alternative development policies, environmental issues related to big dams in general and the Narmada project. They undertake surveys of the affected villages, protest land and forest issues and government interference in this regard. They are fighting against displacement and disregard for the rights of

the people. Publication: They come out with a bi-monthly publication the Narmada Sa ma char.

13. **Society of Biological Sciences and Rural Development:** Society of Biological Sciences and Rural Development, Prayagraj, UP registered on the date 19 October 2004 under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The society aims to undertake research, Department, and extension activities, particularly in the field of biological sciences, environmental sciences and rural development. The ultimate objectives of the society is economic improvement through the transfer of scientific technologies in rural areas. The society would like to fulfil its mission through publications of the journal, Magazines, news bulletins and extension pamphlets. The society is publishing one journal and one Hindi magazine entitled: Journal of Natural Resource and Development and Grameen Vikas Sandesh respectively since 2006. The society has published 15 books on different emerging issues including the environment. The society has conducted seven National seminars and four seven days National workshops as well as two webinars and various training programmes related to agricultural, Health and environmental issues. It also intends to invite eminent scientists to deliver talks on various aspects of spreading technologies on the ground level. Society has also conducted an environmental quiz to the awareness of the protection of the environment. The society also conducted Late Dr Gopal Pandey Memorial lectures from the year 2014 and also start drawing competitions related to the environment and Essay competitions related to COVID-19 in the year 2020.
14. **The Energy Research Institute (TERI):** Established in 1974, (It was formerly known as Tata Energy Research Institute) in Mithapur is a wholly independent, non profit research institute. Its headquarters is situated in New Delhi. It was founded by *Darbari S. Seth*. Its mission is to develop and promote technologies, policies, and institutions for the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources. It has been imparting environmental education through projects, workshops, audio-visual aids, and quiz competitions. TERI also has a major program in biotechnology, the applications of which are oriented towards increased biomass production, conservation of waste into useful products & mitigating the harmful environmental impacts of several economic activities. TERI established TERI University in 1998. Initially set up environmental impacts of several economic activities 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.

Conclusion

It is that commercialization of NGOs led to their rapid growth but it does not mean that NGOs are joining the field for earning money only. There are good numbers of NGOs that work for the betterment of society and not attracting towards money. However, these are not in focus as bad (Money making) NGOs are. Nevertheless, there is a need for apex regulatory authority so that the maximum energy of NGOs can divert towards welfare activities. They are also contributing significantly to environmental and development-related issues. It is necessary to support and encourage genuine, small, local-level NGOs in different parts of the country which can provide much-needed institutional support specific to the local need.

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