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Nagaraju RK

Research Scholar, Department
of Sociology, Jnanabharathi,
Bangalore University,
Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Role of non - governmental organisations in the protection of environment: A sociological study

Nagaraju RK

Abstract

At the beginning of the 21st century environmental issues have emerged as a major concern for the welfare of the people. In India, the concept of environmental protection can be seen starting from the period of Vedas. The protection of environment is an urgent issue. Every individual, organization and institution has an obligation and duty to protect environment. Environmental protection encompasses not only pollution but also a sustainable development and conservation of natural resources and the eco system. Present day, the necessity of environmental awareness and enforcement is more demanding and urgent than ever before. The protection of environment is a pressing issue. Every person, organization and institution has an obligation and duty to protect it. Environmental protection encompasses not only pollution but also sustainable development and conservation of natural resources and the ecosystem. Today, the necessity of environmental awareness and enforcement is more demanding and urgent than ever before. Despite provisions in Indian Constitution providing for Environmental protection and many statutory provisions, the environment degradation continues. The main cause for environment degradation is lack of effective enforcement of various laws. The emergence of NGOs represents an organized response by civil society especially in those areas in which the state has either failed to reach or done so inadequately. The importance of public awareness and NGOs involvement in environmental protection is acknowledged worldwide. NGOs have been taking a number of steps to promote discussion and debate about environmental issues, outside the broad spheres of popular media and the educational system. Advocacy and awareness is especially crucial in promoting concepts such as sustainable development, natural resource conservation and the restoration of ecosystems. NGOs can sensitize policy makers about the local needs and priorities.

Keywords: Environment, NGOS, conservation, sustainable development, evaluation. Environment protection, social services, awareness & conservation

Introduction

There is a growing environmental awareness amongst stakeholders, individuals and communities within the Asian and Pacific Region. This increase in knowledge and awareness has been, by and large, the result of campaigns and education programmes run by major public interest groups concerned with the environment. These include non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at the international, regional and national levels, as well as groups concerned with the empowerment of marginalized sections of society, such as women, indigenous peoples, and youth groups, and other community based organizations. Such organizations have worked to foster grassroots based approaches to the protection and preservation of the region's environment. Over the past quarter of a century and especially during the past few decades there has been a rapid growth in the numbers of NGOs involved in the development, in the number of people working for NGOs and in the amount of money that flows into these voluntary agencies working in the activities such as –Disaster management and relief, development, public health, rehabilitation, environment protection etc. However, this paper focuses on the role played by NGOs particularly in the protection of environment. The protection of environment is a pressing issue. Every person, organisation and institution has an obligation and duty to protect it. Environmental protection encompasses not only pollution but also sustainable development and conservation of natural resources and the ecosystem. Today, the necessity of environmental awareness and enforcement is more demanding and urgent than ever before. Despite provisions in Indian Constitution providing for Environmental protection and many statutory provisions,

Correspondence

Nagaraju RK

Research Scholar, Department
of Sociology, Jnanabharathi,
Bangalore University,
Bangalore, Karnataka, India

the environment degradation continues. The main cause for environment degradation is lack of effective enforcement of various laws. Environment degradation is lack of effective enforcement of various laws.

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) have become an irresistible global force today. The non-governmental sector, also known as voluntary sector, is growing in relation to its presence in developmental activities. Its role in the sphere of human development is now widely recognized and accepted in most parts of the universe. Basically, an NGO or voluntary organisations are non-profit making agencies that are constituted with a vision by a group of like-minded people, committed for the uplift of the poor, marginalized, unprivileged, underprivileged, impoverished, downtrodden and the needy and they are closer and accessible to the target groups, flexible in administration, quicker in decision making, timely in action and facilitating the people towards self-reliance ensuring their fullest participation in the whole process of development. The rapid growth of NGOs has been clearly revealed in a major multi-nation study conducted recently by Lester Salamon, who finds it as a major economic and social force. He remarks that the global rise of the non-profit sector may be as important a development of the latter twentieth century as the development of the nation-state was in the nineteenth century. A surprisingly large scale of non-profit activity was found in almost every place the study team looked for the study. The study, covering countries like France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the UK, the US, Brazil, Ghana, India and supports the view that the sector is undoubtedly making fast strides in many spheres of human activity. The sector, as the study shows, has turned out to be a big employer offering employment to seven million people in the US, 1.4 million in Japan, nearly one million in France, Germany and the UK combined. It forms an average of 3.4 percent of these countries total work forces employing one in every 11 workers holding service jobs. It is also found that the sector is spending huge sums varying from 1.2 percent of the GDP in Hungary to 6.3 percent in the US with an average of 3.5 percent. Apparently, the growth of the voluntary sector has been phenomenal particular during the last two decades. The presence of the NGOs, especially those engaged in developmental efforts, has been strongly felt during these years. In fact, the involvement of NGOs in development has become indispensable today. It is estimated that about 10 percent - \$ eight billion-public development aid world-wide is now being routed through NGOs. The Indian situation has not been, however, different. It the proliferation of NGOs is of any indication, the sector is expanding day to day. As per one conservative estimate, the total number of NGOs is over 0.2 million. This figure excludes organizations like trade unions, schools and hospital but includes only those registered for certification for receiving foreign assistance. The magnitude of funds the NGOs in the country handle today is another index to this growth. The annual budgets of these organizations are now not a party sum but ranges from Rs. 30 million to 5000 million. Today, the NGOs in the country assume a conspicuous role in multifarious developmental programmes and activities. The achievements and success of NGOs in various fields and the excellent work done by them in specific areas is no doubt a tremendous task that has helped to meet the changing needs of the social system. However, inspite of its achievements in various fields, NGOs are facing different problems which

differ from organization to organization, region to region. In this context, an attempt is made in this paper to discuss some of the common problems faced by the NGOs and to give some remedies to overcome these problems.

Role of NGOs in the Protection of Environment

On the basis of the object of environmental protection, NGOs can be classified into two categories. Firstly, NGOs for environmental protection, secondly, NGOs for socio-economic developing, but having concern for safe environment. Many of the NGOs are belonging to the latter category. Only very few NGOs are working directly for the cause and object of environmental protection. The role of NGOs in the protecting the environment can be classified into two categories; a) Protecting the environment by way of using some techniques, i.e. action oriented programmes such as planting of trees for conservation of soil, growing endangered and rare tree species etc., b) Creating awareness among the people about environmental degradation and finding solutions to protect the environment involving the people.

Government and Non-Government organizations in Environmental Management

In most of the countries now both national and state governments along-with nongovernmental organizations are now actively getting participation in promoting public awareness and share the burden of restoration of the ecological balance for the posterity. Conservation and protection of environment has become mandatory for good governance so as to avoid growing public opposition because healthy life practices are gaining priority over the materialistic benefits and pleasures. Environmental management, therefore, has become a challenging task demanding public participation and active involvement of voluntary organizations for evolving a collective and an integrative approaches to restore and prevent ecological degradation by identifying following critical issues:-

- To assess and predict future trends in environmental managements
- To promote case studies with regard to the environmental problems arising from different sources within the state.
- To encourage and organize public participation in planning new projects.
- To formulate area specific strategies for promoting public support for balancing developmental schemes with ecological requirement agencies in different regions of the state.
- To evaluate and study role of various non-governmental and voluntary organizations involved with the environmental management. Core elements of Environmental Management Commitment of top management and defined responsibilities;
- Identifying environmental impacts;
- Communicating an environmental policy;
- Setting environmental objectives and programmes/plans; and
- Regular audit and review cycle

Review of literature

Felix Iyalomhe, (2017), in his paper titled "Environmental Management System and ISO 14001 for Nigeria Higher Education: A Case Study of Auchi Polytechnic" suggest that

the new management of Environmental Management System (EMS) certified by ISO 14001 has achieved positive results in the developed part of the world and if introduced in the developing countries, like Nigeria, could help to reduce the impacts on the environment. It further suggests that the new system can provide results, such as possible success factors, like top management commitment in all aspect, strict legislations on punishment for noncompliances and incentives for compliances etc, recommendations to Auchu Polytechnic, possible drivers, like Government directives, strict regulatory legislative laws on EMS implementation etc, barriers to EMS implementation like lack of commitment from government and stakeholders, lack of funds etc and suggestions for further studies.

Mark S. Reed (2016) in his paper titled "Stakeholder participation for Environmental management" highlights the complex and dynamic nature of environmental problems and suggests flexible and transparent decision-making that embraces a diversity of knowledge and values. For this reason, stakeholder participation in environmental decision-making has been increasingly sought and embedded into national and international policy. It draws together the typologies that have been developed to understand the basis for stakeholder participation. It is argued that to be successful, such a process needs to be underpinned by an appropriate philosophy, and to consider how to engage relevant stakeholders at the appropriate time and in a manner that will enable them to fairly and effectively shape environmental decisions.

De Moore, P. & De Beelde, I. (2012) in their paper titled "Environmental Auditing and the Role of the Accountancy Profession" emphasizes on environmental auditing and the potential role of accountants distinguishing between compliance audits and audits of the environmental management system. This review focuses on the similarities and differences between an environmental audit and a financial statement audit. Except that environmental audits are largely unregulated, the general approach to both types of audits is similar. Both audits place an emphasis on the evaluation of control systems, which is an argument in favor of external auditors playing a role in environmental audits. Another argument for including external accountants, is their code of ethics. It is argued that this reluctance is because of a lack of generally accepted principles for conducting environmental audits. Rather than treating these audits as totally different, it is proposed that there be a move towards integrated, or even universal, audits.

Jean-Laurent P fund, Trudy O'Connor, Piia Koponen & Jean-Marc Boffa, (2010), in their paper titled "Trans disciplinary Research to Promote Biodiversity Conservation and Enhanced Management of Tropical Landscape Mosaics" suggests that by developing methods and instruments that help to inform and facilitate coherent landscape planning across various spatial scales, research institutions can support decisions by communities, conservation agencies and policy-makers. Ideally, these would help to define management options that integrate biodiversity and livelihoods and promote equitable participation in planning processes. Within a joint „Biodiversity Platform“, the CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) centers CIFOR and ICRAF aim to better understand biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in mosaic landscapes with intermediate

land uses such as utilized forests and agro forests. It further reviews historical trends of research on conservation and development and identifies lessons from past attempts to combine biodiversity and livelihood aims in tropical landscapes.

Ramin Maysami, Lei Yalin and Zhang Long (1999) in their paper titled "Research trends in resource and Environmental management" examines that the Environmental and resource management have often been at odds with industrialization and rapid economic growth and this is apparent when reviewing the cases of growing economies of China and India. This article reviews the literature and concludes that not only promoting effective natural resource management contributes to price stability, availability of products and long-term employment, but also that it is socially desirable in terms of poverty reduction and reducing the burden on public health systems. The article further proposes that a key step in alleviating the clash between the national desire to grow and its potential adverse effects on the environment and natural resources is the enhancement of academic research on sustainable resource and environmental management among the intellectual community.

Raffaele Spinelli and Enrico Marchi (1995) in their paper titled "Environmental Impacts of Forests Road Construction" suggest effective forest management and the maintenance of an appropriate forest road network. Road building is essential to the multiple use of forest resources, and to satisfy a whole range of needs. However, careless logging and road building are the main causes for the environmental degradation of most forest regions. In particular, road building can produce severe negative effects on soil stability, water regime, landscape quality and game population. The mechanisms that lead to these unwanted effects have been investigated in a number of studies, and a large corpus of knowledge is now available. Implementing a number of measures during all three stages of the process (planning, construction and maintenance) can reduce the environmental impact of road building. In general, careful route selection, avoidance of unnecessary earthmoving and construction of an effective drainage system yield the best results. Road-bank re-vegetation and regular road maintenance are also crucial to good environmental performance.

Importance of the study

Environmental management is a purposeful activity with the goal to maintain and improve the state of an environmental resource affected by human activities. It is not, as the phrase suggests, the management of the environment as such, but rather the management of the interaction and impact of human societies on the environment. The present day era of post-modernist reflexivity has projected an intimate and close link between man and the nature. So far as industrialization is concerned, India like other countries also opted for the process of industrial development for attaining over all socio-economic upliftment of its masses in shortest possible time. This urgency apparently made planner to ignore the consequences of such modes of development on the environment at least until late 1970's. Now taking the stock of environmental degradation India is actively involved in restoration strategies which are not in conflict with the environment.

Objectives of the study

- To highlight role of NGOs in the environment protection and to specify the aims and objectives of environmental NGOs
- To describe and analyze achievements of some environmental NGOs in India.
- To point out the limitations in performance of environmental NGOs in India.

Research Design	Proposed Model – Exploratory Comparative Analysis -Descriptive
Sources of data collection	Secondary – Articles, Internet Sites Books

Remedies

The following are the suggested remedies to the problems of the NGOs in India. 1. The government of India has to liberalize the rules and regulations of grants-in-aid and to sanction more grants to NGOs. At the same time, the government should appoint commissions of enquiry or committees to cross check the misuse of funds by NGOs. The member of committee has to supervise and monitor the activities of NGOs periodically. Political and personnel vendetta may be responsible for such investigation 2. Young graduates from universities, colleges and schools has to conduct the public seminars, meetings, symposiums etc., and use the local media to advertise the importance of volunteerism, success stories of NGOs and encourage people to participate in voluntarism. 3. At the same time, universities, colleges and schools has to collaborate with NGOs and conduct a campus interviews for the young graduates who are interested in voluntarism. NSS and NCC should encourage students to participate in voluntarism from childhood days onwards. 4. The government of India has to introduce the success stories of great leaders and their style of leadership qualities, voluntarism, dedication and commitment towards social work in the curriculum of social work departments and in the school syllabus to build leadership qualities in the coming generation. The new ideas, initiatives and innovation in the minds of youth have to help them to become great leaders. 5. There must be coordinating organizations like Association of Voluntary Association for Rural Development (AVARD), Coordination Council of Voluntary Association (CCVA) etc., to solve the problems of NGOs. These associations are to facilitate the exchange of information between the government and the NGOs. 6. In India, 65% of populations belong to rural areas. NGOs, therefore, need to operate in rural areas on a bigger scale to enlist the cooperation of village people in making their lives better. At the same time, these NGOs have to encourage the educated young graduates of rural areas to participate in voluntarism. The government has also give some special provisions for NGOs who are working in rural areas in getting eligibility conditions for grants. 7. NGOs being a welfare organization have to maintain high standard of quality in service. The government has to recognize those NGOs, by giving awards or rewards with additional grants. This would motivate the other NGOs to work efficiently. 8. Monopolization of leadership should be avoided. NGOs should recruit young and efficient people as leaders and retire the persons who are nominated members for very long tenures in any group or agency. 9. The government should revise the pay-scales and allowances to the personnel of NGOs. At the same time some special funds to be allotted for the NGOs to train the personnel at the grass root level. 10. The NGOs should use

Research Design

A working exploratory model of ENGOs has been proposed whose implications will be discussed in future working series by developing an instrument to gather information. This model is purely qualitative and no quantitative aspect is under coverage.

of latest technologies like internet, websites etc., for raising of their funds, to have mutual associations, to advertise their products and for the selection of efficient personals. 11. The government or donor while sanctioning the grants for particular programme has to considered the interest of that particular NGO. According to NGOs interest of programme, the funds to be sanctioned. 12. The government or donor should concern that particular NGO while giving target orientated or time bound programme. This leads to maintain the quality in service.

Discussion, suggestions and conclusion

In recent past concerted efforts have been made by different countries for bringing about a harmonious relationship between the environment and growth processes and modes of economic development. In initial stages more especially in developing economics a keen desire and telling urgency about achieving rapid industrial and economic upliftment of the masses, forced governments to opt for such developmental strategies which often ignored the disastrous environmental consequences as a result there of. Thus by the beginning of 1980's a growing realization by various government and non-governmental agencies about the colossal damages caused to environment by the singular focus on economic benefits came under a serious review. Dangers of environmental degradation to the very existence of human life as of late has triggered massive destruction of life and property due to cyclones, de-forestation, earth quakes, forest fires and shrinking space for natural habitat for other animal species. Problem has been further compounded by greenhouse effect, acid rains, air pollution, water pollution, noise pollution effect on the flora and fauna, growing incidence of cancer among the people in the polluted industrial environment, global warning, soil erosion and host of other alike factors. It is now being acknowledged that government alone cannot effectively respond to this crisis, as such public participation through non-governmental organization needs to be promoted. Though social development has emerged as a very important sector in 21st century there are no institutionalized mechanisms of collaborations of the Government and NGO's. The need of the hour is to evolve long term, sustainable and institutionalized collaboration between the Government and NGO's. NGO's in any country all over the world including international development agencies seek collaboration with the government and development organizations for the below mentioned causes:-

- To access technical or managerial resources.
- To gain legitimacy or recognition.
- To gain institutional support.
- To adapt a programme to their areas.

- To acquire appropriate solutions to development problems.
- To promote greater accountability and transparency.

To promote reforms in public services system. In initial formation stages NGO's needs governmental resources and linkages for better organizational services for the needy people. In the later stages, when there is relative stability of funds and a sufficient pool of experience to draw upon, the NGO's priorities may change: it may be motivated to make larger scale impacts or inform public policy through its work. Secondly, the ideology and the quality of leadership strongly influence the motivation of the agency in working with the government. Government agencies on the other hand should work with the NGO's to:- Enhance people's participation in their programmes.

- To extend coverage of programmes to areas and groups that are poorly served by government staff.
- To test and replicate innovative approaches.
- To achieve greater cost effectiveness.

Therefore, behind a NGO's interest in working with the government, or conversely, the government extending an invitation to NGO's, lays a certain degree of convergence in their development objectives and certain needs. It is also evident from the study that community participation and public private partnerships can play an effective role in environmental management. The study concludes that socio-economic factors have a positive impact on environmental management. The basic factors identified from the research area were

- Demographic change: Although still largely rural, the region has been experiencing major transformation in terms of population composition and distribution, with positive and negative implications for the environment and development.
- Social change: Improved human well-being is a crucial objective of sustainable development and is closely linked to environmental goods and services. Human well-being is multidimensional and requires access to resources to live a good life in good health, such as income, food, clean water, and energy; personal security through the absence of conflict, the ability to mitigate environmental disasters, and good governance; good social relations which include all people and promote fairness and equity; and the opportunity to make choices. Gender and divisions of labor:
- Gender relations and the divisions of labor are important factors in the economic development, human well-being and environmental stewardship and therefore need to be part of an integrated environmental management approach.
- Health: Good health is essential for people to maximize the opportunities available and is closely linked to the state of the environment. Poor environmental management exacerbates the incidence and negative health impacts of many "natural occurrences" such as floods, droughts and cyclones.
- Education, knowledge and information: Knowledge and access to information are essential for effective environmental management and have significant impacts on the economy and the livelihood choices people make. Indigenous knowledge systems based on centuries of observation and continually developed in response to changing social and environmental

conditions are an important resource for many rural people.

- Poverty: Pervasive poverty and social inequities remain major constraints to sustainable development. Poverty is a cause and an effect of environmental degradation. The equitable, efficient and productive use of natural resources offers important opportunities for sustainable livelihoods which can contribute to reducing poverty.
- Economic change: Equitable and environmentally sustainable growth can improve human well-being and increase the range of opportunities available to people, including those who are most disadvantaged.
- Technological change: Research and the development of new technologies can drive environmental change in positive and negative ways. They may increase the demand for natural resources, their application may impact on the integrity of ecosystems and they may offer an opportunity for more efficient use of natural resources, cleaner production techniques and improved environmental management.

Conclusion

Environmental non-governmental organizations, in recent years, have grown in size and in number as a result of governmental negligence towards the environmental crisis. NGOs have grown in importance to a point where they act as key arbitrating agents within the field of environmental policy. By interrelating global and local concerns, NGOs find themselves able to not only emphasize important ecological issues, but also raise consciousness about the environment. It can be assessed by the above discussion that the very existence of NGOs and the role played by them in the protection of the environment is not only important but also necessary because no government alone with any amount of laws and acts can achieve the objectives of environment protection without individual and public participation which can be achieved only through a network of motivated and dedicated voluntary organizations, like the NGOs.

NGOs are the ones who really intend to care the uncared sections and the people at the bottom of the social stratum. Ours is a developing country which requires these type of committed, devoted and dedicated organizations for the development of the country. So, the government, the leaders, the donors, the politicians and the people should support these organizations and help them to solve their problems at the grass-root level. Their services are undoubtedly commendable in the uplift of the rural poor.

The issues of environmental protection is not the responsibility of the state alone. It is the concern of every individual group. The world community is now concerned about environmental protection. Now a days NGOs are playing virtual role in the protection of Environment, conservation and development. Government, with the collaboration NGO and people is in the imminent need of the hour. NGOs as the watch dogs of the environmental issues. Multi sectoral co-ordination, convergence, holistic and sustainable development can be achieved with participation of NGOs. It can be assessed by the above discussion that the very existence of NGOs and the role played by them in the protection of the environment is not only important but also necessary because no government alone with any amount of laws and acts can achieve the objectives of environment protection without individual and

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