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# Participation of Social Work Organisations in the Protection of Environment - A Study

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## Abstract

*Social work is a professional and academic discipline that seeks to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of an individual, group, or community by intervening through research, policy, community organizing, direct practice, and teaching on behalf of those afflicted with poverty or any real or perceived social injustices and violations of their human rights. There are a number of associations for social workers, which exist to provide ethical guidance and other forms of support for their members and social work in general. 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. The emergence of NGOs represents an organised response by civil society especially in those areas in which the state has either failed to reach or done so in adequately. The importance of public awareness and NGOs involvement in environmental protection is acknowledged worldwide. NGO's 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. 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 needs.*

**Key Words :** *Conservation, Evaluation, Social Work, Environment, NGOs.*

## INTRODUCTION

Social work is a professional and academic discipline that seeks to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of an individual, group, or community by intervening through research, policy, community organizing, direct practice, and teaching on behalf of those afflicted with poverty or any real or perceived social injustices and violations of their human rights. Research is often focused on areas such as human development, social policy, public administration, program evaluation and international and community development. Social workers are organized into local, national, continental and international professional bodies. Social work, an interdisciplinary field, includes theories from economics, education, sociology, medicine, philosophy, politics, psychology, Environment and etc.

There are a number of associations for social workers, which exist to provide ethical guidance and other forms of support for their members and social work in general. These associations/organizations are distinguished in international, continental or semi-continental, national and regional. The main international ones are the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW). In the United States the main one is the National Association of Social Workers. Smaller numbers are members of Unite the union and the GMB (trade union). The British Union of Social Work Employees (BUSWE) has been a section of the Community (trade union) since 2008. In 2011 the British Association of Social Workers launched a trade union arm for the second time (it first tried this in 1976) called the Social Workers' Union but this body is not recognized by the any employers, not only this organization but also so many National & International Non-Governmental Organization (i.e. NGO's).

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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.

### **Non-Governmental Organization**

Social work is a professional and academic discipline that seeks to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of an individual, group, or community by intervening through research, policy, community organizing, direct practice, and teaching on behalf of those afflicted with poverty or any real or perceived social injustices and violations of their human rights. Research is often focused on areas such as human development, social policy, public administration, program evaluation and international and community development. Social workers are organized into local, national, continental and international professional bodies. Social work, an interdisciplinary field, includes theories from economics, education, sociology, medicine, philosophy, politics, psychology, Environment and etc.

The Consequences of the Environmental pollution are not hard to comprehend, whereas the solution to ending environmental pollution is not easy to come by this is an unending complex and intricate debate and may be single solution, however attempts can always be made to find out solution to specific problems keeping in view the technological solutions legal parameters and judicial pronouncements & the role of NGO's has a very important to protection of environment through social services. The NGO's from past five decades have witnessed the difficult problems encountered in providing health care services to our poor people; spread the awareness to public protection of wildlife, forest, human right, Women and Children etc

One of the great challenges for NGOs campaigning on environmental issues is to involve as many people as possible and, particularly where religion plays a major role in everyday life, getting the environmental message across to key religious groups. The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) has been working internationally with many faiths to forge new, practical models of religious involvement with environmental issues. The group espouses the Ohito Declaration of 1995, a declaration on religions, land and conservation that states “for people of faith maintaining and sustaining environmental life systems is a religious responsibility” (Xiamin and Halbertsma 1997). The Ohito Declaration and the work of organizations such as ARC has led to the re-discovery of ‘holy ground’ and the concept of the need for Man to preserve and protect the environment by all the major religions of the world.

A Non-Governmental Organization is a social service organization working towards a better society. True to its name, ‘perseveres to bring in a positive change by uniting people who share the common vision of a developed India, and pay back to the society which helped us. All big missions have humble beginnings and so is ‘is endeavor. Our mission is to address issues like poverty and ignorance that are threatening and weakening our country’s progress.

A non-governmental organization’s (NGO’s) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens’ groups which is organized on a local, national or international level. Task orientated and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of service and 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, environment or health. They provide analysis and expertise, serve as early warning mechanisms and help monitor and implement international arguments.

A country like India, which is the world 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 in practice, as a vibrant 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, provide an extraordinary source of valuable fundamental rights for the protection of the rights of individuals. It is these

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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.

During the days of British Empire, in India, voluntary organizations flourished with an objet to improve social welfare, literacy and relief projects. The history of NGO's an be traced from Mahatma Gandhi's mission to encourage village to be self-reliant and this lead to the creationof central Social Welfare Board in 1953, the establishment of National community development programme, the National Extension Services, and the three tier Panchayati Raj System in 1958, Subsequently, the Association for Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development (AVARD) was established as a consortium of major voluntary agencies.

India Has recently celebrated sixty eighth years as a Republic on 26th January 2017. The last Sixty eight years have witnessed an extra ordinary blossoming of NGO's especially during the 1970's & 1980's. The 1990's have also seen a phenomenal growth in voluntary organizations with civic society taking an active interest in their development and progress. International funding and support from international donor has been noteworthy during the last few decades of 21st century. It is estimated that, in India there are approximately 1.5 million NGO's working for different causes. The Government of India in May 20, 2067, has issued its National Policy on voluntary sector and the main objet of the policy is to encourage, enable and empower an independent, creative and effective voluntary sector, with diversity in form and function, so that it can contribute to the social, cultural and economics advancement of people of India.

### **Role of NGO'S in Protection for the Environment in India**

- The NGO's constitute a world wide net work interacting with Governments and Internal intergovernmental organization in shaping international environmental policies;-
- Creating awareness among the public on current environmental issues and solutions.
- Facilitating the participation of various categories of stakeholders in the discussion on environmental issues.
- Conducting participatory rural appraisal.
- Being involved in the protection of human rights to have a clean environment.
- Protecting the natural resources and entrusting the equitable use of resources.
- Data generation on natural resources, time line history of villages.
- Analysis and monitoring of environmental quality.
- Transferring information through newsletters, brochures, articles, audio visuals, etc.
- Organizing seminars, lectures and group discussion for promotion of environmental awareness.
- Helping the villages' administrative officials in preparation, application and execution of projects on environmental protection.

### **NGOs Achievements of environment**

(NGOs) have played a major role in pushing for sustainable development at the international level. Campaigning groups have been key drivers of inter-governmental negotiations, ranging from the regulation of hazardous wastes to a global ban on land mines and the elimination of slavery. Some of the NGOs which have been playing an active role, towards protection of the environment and issues, like, sustainable development, both globally and specifically in India need a special reference here. Following are some of the environmental NGOs in India that have been successful and achieved much in the field of environment protection, conservation and sustainable development.

**WWF (India)** is engaged in a multitude of activities for protection and conservation of the environment in the Indian context. Climate change and energy conservation are among the chief areas of concern for the organisation. The forest and biodiversity conservation division strives to promote and enhance conservation of

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forest ecosystems in the country through a participatory approach involving key stakeholders. Through its environment education programme, it aims at strengthening individual and institutional capacity in nature conservation and environmental protection through widespread education and awareness.

Intimately involved in the conservation of tigers in India since the late 1960s, WWF's significant efforts culminated in the launch of Project Tiger in 1973. It seeks to conserve and protect the biodiversity of maritime life and resources by sensitising the people at large. The pollution of the river waters and the imminent threat to aquatic life is a cause of great concern. WWF (India) has stepped in on a number of occasions to launch campaigns for securing their habitat, like 'Save the River Dolphin' project. WWF believes that if you secure an animal's habitat, you secure its right to live.

### **Clean-India**

Deeply concerned with the deteriorating environmental situation in the country, Development Alternatives initiated the CLEAN-India (Community Led Environment Action Network) programme with five schools in the national capital in 1996. Today, CLEAN- Delhi has about forty schools regularly involved in monitoring water and air quality in over 150 locations spread across Delhi. Over 2000 children have been directly trained on environmental assessment and improvement activities. They keep vigil, assess environmental quality, plead, cajole and lead the community in monitoring environment. Action programmes like solid waste management, plantation drives, energy conservation, paper recycling, etc. to improve local environmental conditions have also been initiated by schools, resident welfare associations, business and industrial associations as well as individual households. Campaigns against the use of polybags, firecrackers during Diwali and toxic (chemical- based) colours during Holi and for saving the city's 'Green Treasure' are also carried out. The experience in Delhi indicates that when environment assessment is community based, it mobilises the community to review the local environmental conditions and take requisite measures, without waiting for undue external support.

Encouraged by the Delhi experience, NGOs from different towns have operationalised the CLEAN-India programme. The present CLEAN-India Centers are: Delhi, Shillong, Faizabad, Ladakh, Bangalore, Berinag (Kumaon Hills), Jhansi, Sagar, Bilaspur, Lalitpur, Madurai and Thiruvananthapuram. Almost 100 NGOs from across the country have expressed their interest to initiate the programme in their respective towns.

### **TERI (INDIA)**

Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI) was formally established in 1974. TERI has launched a major project, the first phase of which is completing near completion. This project called growth with resource enhancement of Environment and nature (GREEN INDIA-2047) has vigorously estimated the reduction in India's key natural resources during the period 1947- 97, and has completed economic values of consequent losses, which in some cases are alarmingly high. On the basis of past experience and a careful analysis of the cost behind the degradation that has taken place in the past strategies for the future have been developed, whereby a fresh and creative approach can be taken in the next 50 years.

The global presence and reach attained by TERI are not only substantiated by its presence in different parts of the world, but also in terms of wide geographical relevance of its activities. Symbolic of this fact is the annual Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS), a major event focusing on sustainable development, the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and assessment of worldwide progress in these critical areas. DSDS attracts the most prominent thinkers and practitioners in a range of fields that impinge on development. Since development worldwide is moving towards an architecture based on partnerships, the leaders who participate in DSDS come from government, business and industry, multilateral and bilateral organizations, research and academic and civil society. Encouraged by the success of DSDS, TERI has now established the World Sustainable Development Forum (WSDF).

### **Sulabh International**

The Sulabh International Social Service Organisation founded by **Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak** in the year 1970,

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is the largest nationally and internationally recognised pan-India social service outfit with 60,000 volunteers on the rolls who work to promote human rights, environmental sanitation, health and hygiene, non-conventional sources of energy, waste management and social reforms through education, training and awareness campaign. It has developed a scavenging-free two-pit pourflush toilet (Sulabh Shauchalaya) safe and hygienic on-site human waste disposal technology; a new concept of maintenance and construction of pay and use public toilets, popularly known as Sulabh Complexes with bath, laundry and urinal facilities being used by about ten million people every day and generation of biogas and bio-fertiliser produced from excreta-based plants, low maintenance waste water treatment plants of medium capacity for institutions and industries. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements has recognised Sulabh's cost-effective and appropriate sanitation system as a global 'Urban Best Practice' at the Habitat-II conference held at Istanbul (Turkey), in June, 1996. The Economic and Social Council of United Nations has granted special consultative status to sulabh in recognition of its outstanding service to mankind. The Sulabh technology has liberated so far 60,000 scavengers from the demeaning practice of physically cleaning and carrying human excreta. Sulabh is also producing and using biogas from human excreta from its 118 plants which is again an innovation in the areas of non-conventional energy.

### **Suggestions towards environmental protection**

Some suggestions that can be made towards protection of environment could be made in the following areas where NGOs could play an effective role with the assistance of the governmental agencies for achieving the ultimate goal of healthy and blissful environment :

1. Educate the students about the pollution problem and the harmful effects of pollution.
2. Minimising the use of plastic for different purposes.
3. Buy only environmental friendly products i.e. the products which do not reduce the natural resources.
4. Not to waste water for various purposes.
5. To plant and grow more trees in the house garden.
6. To support the NGOs financially which are rendering service to the health and environment sector.
7. To motivate research on different measures to be taken to solve the environmental problems.
8. To support the initiatives taken by central and state government in protecting our environment.

### **Conclusion**

The NGO's described and discuss the common characteristics of health system functioning in the given socio-economic, socio-cultural, political, environmental protection and social services to protection of world environment not only above said list they have so many social services conducting by NGO's. The Fundamental objective is to act as catalyst in brining about local, national and international initiative and community participation in overall improvement in quality of life.it would also help the Government to obtain relevant information for promoting and facilitate the implementation of major environmental programs. 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 the act as key arbitrating agents within the field of environmental policy. By inter- relating 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.

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