

Review

Emerging role of NGOs in the world's socio-political affairs

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The past two decades had witnessed tremendous increase in the role of NGOs in various walks of life and it is now an established fact that their role cannot be sidelined any state while formulating and implemented the her policies. The number of NGOs has grown tremendously and so their functions, conservatively estimated at between 6,000 and 8,000.... They are bringing the voice of voiceless and marginalized to the centers of power, enforcing accountability, building responsive and transparent systems. They are performing an important task in the arena of social, cultural, economic and political activity alongside the state and market. They are being perceived as a constructive power building vibrant democracy and people oriented development. Its absence is being considered as a criterion for authoritarian move. This paper is an attempt to shed light on the emerging role of NGOs in world politics, making an assessment with regard to their gains in the socio-political arena.

Key World: NGOs, Role, Politics, Human Rights, Public Policy, State, UN, Lobbying.

INTRODUCTION

NGOs had gained considerable attention during the past few decades on account of some strategic changes at global level. NGOs, for their part, sprang up like mushrooms, offering to be both the channel through which to strengthen civil society, and as civil society organisations in their own right (Pearce, 2000). The impact of NGOs on the democratization process has been remarkable. The impact of NGOs on the democratization process has been remarkable. They have made a crucial difference in the way international justice is delivered; its deliverance has improved both at global and local level. What role they are playing and to what extent they are successful in their mission are to be addressed in this paper. However, before doing the same let us see its brief emergence. The United Nations Charter included a clause which provided for official 'consultative' relations between certain NGOs and the United Nations. Only 418 NGOs held this status in 1993 as the new UN conference cycle was getting under way. Today, however, tens of thousands of NGOs have achieved consultative status participating both at UN

conferences and national level affairs. By 2000, about 2,500¹ NGOs had achieved consultative status with the UN and many thousands had official arrangements with UN organs and other inter-governmental bodies (Paul, 2004).² Some avidly target intergovernmental politics as they lobby and help formulate, implement, and monitor the policies of states and intergovernmental organizations, while others supplement or eschew traditional political channels (Clark et al., 1998). This case led to the first legal definition of these organizations; they were defined as:

"Any international organization which is not established by inter-governmental agreement shall be considered as a non-governmental organization for the purpose of these

¹ The number has been steadily increasing ever since to 3,900 organizations today, see this website, <http://csonet.org/index.php?menu=30>, accessed on 12/8/2013

² The Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 set the pace for intense NGO participation in world conferences, with 17,000 NGO representatives participating in the NGO parallel forum and 1,400 directly involved in the intergovernmental negotiations.

arrangements". (UN ECOSOC Resolution 288 (X), 27 February, 1950).

This definition has just been revised for the first time and now reads:

"... (As above)..., including organizations which accept members designated by governmental authorities, provided that such membership does not interfere with the free expression of use of the organization" (UK ECOSOC Resolution 1296 (XLIV), 25 June 1968).

The rapid increase of NGOs at global level promoting diverse issues-ranging from human rights to governmental accountability and from rule of law to environmental protection is of remarkable worth. NGOs are assuming considerable political weight in international politics. The kinds of pressure NGOs are exerting possibly place governments under an obligation to fulfill her promises and indeed persuade them to change policies. This growth of NGO diplomats now plays a significant role in intergovernmental negotiations. This is all because of the increasing trend towards democratization. More and more countries are moving close to the democratic politics following rule of law, fair electoral politics, human rights and civil society etc. The increase in participation of NGOs in global institutions reflects the changing state of our democracy. However, this assumption that civil society per se promotes democratic governance came under heavy criticism by the mid-1990s. Before we move to the main theme of the paper, let's have a brief framework so it becomes easy job for us to examine their role.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

One useful way of approaching the problem or conceptualizing the definition of NGOs is to see them as part of what has been called the 'third sector'. The idea is based on the assumption that the world of institutions can be divided into three ways: the first part belongs to government, the second belongs to private or profit-business and the third group of organization does not easily fit into either category: a 'third sector.' Some observers have identified it with 'not-for-profit'; others associated it with 'voluntary' or 'non-governmental organization. To be included in the third sector any organization should be based on five key characteristics: that is, the organization is to be institutionalized in that it should have regular meeting, office bearers and some organizational performance; it is private in that it is

institutionally separate from the government; though it may receive some support from government; it is non-profit distributing, and if a financial surplus is generated it does not accrue to owners or directors; it is self-governing and therefore able to control and manage its own affairs; and finally it is volunteer staff as such, there is voluntary, and even if it does not use volunteer participation in the conduct or management of the organization, such as in the form of voluntary board of directors.

An NGO is generally defined as an essentially non-profit, voluntary citizen groups which is organized at the local, national, or international level, and is locally, nationally, internationally active. Various authors have suggested other names because of the confusion arising from this negative title. The title does not indicate precisely what is governmental or what is international. No other title has come to be generally accepted although a variety of terms are in use. In the United States the term transnational non-governmental organization is increasingly used. The issue of independence is an important one in the credibility of an NGO. It is hard for NGOs not to come under any governmental influence. Individual governments do at times try to influence the NGO community in a particular field, by establishing NGOs that promote their policies. This has been recognized by quite common use of the acronym GONGO, to label a government-organized NGO. Also, in more authoritarian societies, NGOs may find it very difficult to act independently and they may not receive acknowledgment from other political actors even when they are acting independently (Mostashari, 2005).

Other designations like CBOs (community-based organizations), GROs (grass-roots organizations), or POs (people's organizations distinguish membership-based) are also being increasingly used. Other acronyms call attention to the varying autonomy of NGOs, distinguishing fully autonomous NGOs from government-organized or – supported groups or GONGOs quasi-autonomous NGOs or QUANGOs and donor-organized NGOs or DONGOs. Still other distinctions are made among NNGOs (NGOs in, Northern or industrialized countries), SNGOs (NGOs based in Southern or developing countries), and INGOs (international NGOs).

Yet, there are some high levels of government funding and they possess some of the characteristics of bureaucracies, while others can resemble highly professionalized private organizations with corporate identities. This has generated debates about what is and what is not an NGO, and most suitable approaches for analyzing NGO roles in development. In its broadest sense, the term "non-government organization" refers to

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organizations (i) not based in government, and (ii) not created to earn profit. While this broad definition of an NGO is correct semantically, it presents a problem in that it embraces a large number and wide range of organizations that structurally and functionally are unrelated. This broad definition of NGO refers more to what an organization is not, rather than to what it is, and can be applied to many organizations.

Terms parallel with NGOs, and sometimes used instead, include—among many others—voluntary organization, private voluntary organization, or private voluntary development organization; people's organization; community organization or community based organization; community group or community association; grassroots organization; intermediary organization; and public interest group (Vedder, 2007). In some languages, nongovernment translates into terms such as "anti-governmental" or "not with the government," prompting the voluntary sector to employ other terms to describe itself (Fisher, 2003). These groups vary significantly according to philosophy, purpose, expertise, program approach, and scope of activities. Important distinctions can be drawn with regard to;³

1. The functional roles of different types of NGOs;
2. The differing roles of NGOs on the continuum of NGOs from the local level, to the national level, and to the regional and international levels; and
3. The operational orientations and approaches of different kinds of NGOs

A great number of criteria can potentially be applied in order to classify such NGOs for purposes of analysis, including the primary aims of the organisations, their types or scope of activities, the type of membership, their organizational structure or their funding structure. The three basic characteristics of NGOs seem to be (1) Being non-profit; (2) consisting at least partially or completely on voluntary citizens group; (3) and depending at least partially of voluntary citizens (Vedder, 2007).

ROLE OF NGOs IN WORLD'S AFFAIRS

The past decade or so has witnessed a spectacular growth in the number and scope of third sector organizations around the world and arguably could be described as the golden age of INGO.⁴ In the late 1980s,

between 10 and 15 per cent of development assistance funds generated by the OECD member countries were channeled through Northern NGOs. By 1991, 25 per cent of the official development assistance of some bilateral donors flowed through INGOs, and almost all bilateral and multilateral donor agencies had established permanent units to act as liaisons with development INGOs (Boli and Thomas, 1999). By 1995, over 2,500 INGOs in OECD countries claimed to be advocating increased support for international development or operating development programs in low-income countries, thus outnumbering all other types of development organizations (Boli and Thomas, 1999). The NGO Working Group on UN-NGO Relations founded in mid-2009 advocates for a positive and open partnership between the United Nations and NGOs. The group addresses issues such as the accreditation process, NGO participation in UN meetings and conferences, and physical access to the Headquarters complex. It maintains contact with a similar group in Geneva and other concerned NGOs worldwide.

Today NGOs deliver more official development assistance than the entire U.N. system (excluding the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) (Mathews, 1997). Social scientists have begun to take new interest in the increasing role of NGOs in environmental protection, gender justice, human rights etc. Mary Kaldor argues that global civil society in the 1990s was dominated by NGOs changing the norms concerning human rights and humanitarian intervention. NGOs wielding tremendous power are also important from post-conflict reconstruction perspectives (Kaldor, 2003). Some NGOs can, however, wield enough clout to change governments and other NGOs advocates for behavioral change of the nation states (Finger and Princen, 2013).

Today, the fact of the matter is that one cannot ignore the role of NGOs in the various walks of life be it politics or impolitic. NGOs are in the center of developmental activities for instance in poverty alleviation, conflict resolution, building peace in conflict ridden situations and conservation of environment programmes etc. In the OSCE context, the role of NGOs in pressing for adherence to democratic standards and practices including monitoring elections remains vital. Environmental NGOs in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe played a vital role in the political, social and economic changes of the 1980s (Barbara Jancar Webster, 1993). Today, they continue to have an enormous impact in countries across the globe, pushing for governmental transparency and accountability which in turn can fuel political reform. Chipko Movement is one of the significant environmental NGOs in India demands that the Himalayan forests should be declared protected

³Cooperation between Asian Development Bank and Non Government Organizations, ADB 2004, p. 5, p. 5. <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/adb-ngo-policy.pdf>, accessed on 7/01/2014.

⁴According to the Yearbook of International Organizations, the number of international NGOs was reported to have increased from 6,000 in 1990 to more than 50,000 in 2006. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have also become significant players in global development assistance, with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimating that, as of 2006, CSOs provided approximately US\$15 billion in international assistance.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20101499~menuPK:244752~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html>, Defining Civil Society, p, 2

forests (Dharmarajan, 2007). For the international community, however, the Chipko Movement is perhaps best known for its critique of Westernized developmental practices. It is leaving its impact on the decisions of policy makers via environmental protection. Recognizing the tactics of Chipko's Movement many environmentalists adapted Chipko-like protests in Switzerland, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand. Most of the regional economic and security organisations have expanded their network to include the participation of NGOs in their deliberation and discussions. The OAS (Organisation of American States) has formal structures for NGO participation and it seeks greater engagement by civil society organizations. Likewise ASEAN has formal guidelines for NGO participation in its activities (Lowenkron, 2006). The inclusion of NGOs in the deliberations of various organizations means the increasing recognition of their work both at regional and global level. It is also believed that NGOs have played a significant role in throwing away the authoritarian regimes of Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. Even it is believed that in the demise of USSR civil society had made a significant contribution. There is another version of truth that these NGOs were backed by US Government with a view to install friendly government there. Fuhrmann identifies two distinct kinds of social capital which have removed these regimes from power through orange and tulip revolutions: is that of imported and indigenous, which had mobilized the people during the Tulip revolution. Imported refers here to the western based NGOs who have played a significant role in mobilizing the anti-Akeav wave (Mitchell, 2012). Civil Society has played an important role in dismantling the USSR especially under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev.

These NGOs are also working on various aspects of institutional development, such as helping to establish competitive political parties, fair elections, independent media, and civic advocacy groups and mediating or reducing ethnic conflicts. Democratic assistance channeled through INGOs played a significant role in fostering a positive change in the transitional recipient countries. (Mendelson and Glenn, 2002). During the ethnic clashes in Kyrgyzstan in 2010, NGOs have reduced tensions between the two adversary communities, build peace between Uzbek and Kyrgyz in the Osh region of the country.⁵

Now Country's Foreign policy hardly ignores the engagement of nonstate actors. While the promotion of democracy has been a central plank of U.S. foreign policy since the end of the cold war, it has frequently been nongovernmental organizations (occasionally funded by USAID) that have implemented this policy in the formerly communist countries (Mendelson and Glenn, 2002). Samuel Huntington, while analyzing the main causes for the "third wave" of democratization listed a

major shift in US foreign policy toward the promotion of human rights and democracy in other countries via NGOs. Even President Bush declared that it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world. To do the same the service of NGOs is crucial and they become the main strategic weapons to carry the policy forward. The neo-liberal economic policy initiated under the garb of 'new policy agenda' committed to good governance emphasized development NGOs an effective and efficient alternative to the state led developmental perspective having the potential to strengthen democratic processes. In this regard, American international NGOs were remained at the forefront to bring transitional societies close to democratic mood (Chaulia, 2006). The shifting interdependencies among political actors came through globalization of capitalism and power, and by the decline of the state, growing numbers of groups loosely identified as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have under-taken an enormously wide range of activities. These include implementing grass-roots or sustainable development programmes, promoting human rights, providing social justice, protesting against environmental degradation and pursuing many other objectives formerly ignored or left to governmental agencies. Recent past witnessed capacity building reflecting a changing nature in development thinking away from the simple transfer of skills and resources towards building autonomy and self-reliance (Lewis, 2000). Over a 150 NGOs worldwide criticized the failure of the WTO to adhere to democratic principles. NGOs challenge such notions as a violation of the very democratic principles enshrined in the constitutions of the powerful member states (Global Policy Forum, 2002).

An NGO works to empower poverty-stricken people, tries to change public attitudes and consistently campaigns for policy making process and public related issues. NGOs have created global governance and have promoted the constitutive norms to create a system of global governance. A variety of women's groups actively influence the United Nations on social welfare questions. The greatest political achievement by NGOs has been the creation of the International Criminal Court (Willems, 2010). NGOs have dominated the international diplomacy of human rights. These are increasingly participating in the management of civil conflicts, enhancing their role in the affirmation of humanitarian intervention (Daniela, 2010). In the multilateral context alone, the number of UN-accredited NGOs had risen from 40 in 1945 to 3,536 by the end of 2011.

They are performing an important work in the arena of social, cultural, economic and political activity alongside the state and the market and have come to play increased roles in public policy. More recent treatments have begun to place NGOs in a broader social context and credit them with a wide range of political functions, what Levy calls, a critical 'third sector' that fosters the

⁵Authors interview with Armaan Ali of Kyrgyzstan who was himself involved in such activities as volunteer of INTRAC, on 5/01/2014

development of the marginalized groups (Lekorwe and Mpabanga, 2007). These NGOs are acting as transnational advocacy groups changing the attitude of people for their betterment (Warkentin, 2001). The description of world politics has also increasingly being challenged as many other non-state actors especially NGOs have become more and more important, finding their progressive role in international relations. States are now sharing much of its political, social and security role with such non-state actors (Agg, 2006).⁶ Their role in pluralism, collective social action, interdependence, global governance, environmental governance (Finger, 1994)⁷ and transnationalism has become an established fact. NGOs have acquired the power to negotiate with and exert the pressure on the state and market holder in favor of the excluded (Lewis, 2000). Indeed, NGOs strengthen the institutions of civil society that mediate between the individual and the state, making governments accountable and responsive at both local and national level (Fisher, 2003).

The potential of the global associational explosion has captivated the imagination of a wide variety of development planners, policy makers, activists, and analysts. Economists and development planners exalt the role of local associations in alleviating rural poverty and helping communities adapt to modernization, World Bank, UNDP; political scientists are reevaluating the role of voluntary associations in building vibrant civil societies and their impact on the relationship between society and the state. There has been a recent shift of international donor community channeling INGOs to make partnerships with these mahallas in central Asia. To regenerate the traditional communal societies, the **Khujand Civil Society Support Center** has formulated a three month program on "Development of Volunteers movement in Soghd Region". Twenty-five volunteers were trained and received skills at Counterpart's International support center. Its purpose was to develop civic sense promotion

⁶BRAC in Bangladesh is an example of NGO expanding into the entire infrastructure of a country. BRAC is a huge organization-the largest in the country with more than 28,000 staff employed in projects. Its projects include a university, a bank, an Internet service provider and several financing organizations. Its 115,840 village organizations have a membership of just under four million. BRAC is a key example of how large some NGOs have grown, with the support of the international development community. In some villages in Bangladesh, "you can send your child to an NGO school, have a vasectomy arranged by an NGO's health worker, sell your milk to an NGO dairy and talk on an NGO phone. And there's usually a choice of several NGO banks. There's even NGO entertainment"

⁷The emerging phenomenon of environmental non-governmental organizations in world politics in terms of social movements' activism has been transformed for a single concentration in national politics in the 1970s to an increasingly broad focus at global and local levels in the 1980s that revitalized the impotence they initially attributed to national politics. In the negotiation of the Great Lakes Water quality, the NGO representatives who sat at the table had considerable influence because all concerned were experimenting with an attempt to institutionalize transboundary, ecosystem management practices, in an attempt to save the planet and animal species threatened by trade, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and WWF drafted the treaty that became CITES and over the succeeding years have been a major for implementing that treaty.

among the people. Scholars of international relations have begun to examine the impact of NGO coalitions and networks on international politics and their role in the formation of an international civil society.

Both the quantity and quality of NGO participation has changed as we know that less than 300 NGOs have attended the Stockholm Conference on the Environment. Subsequently at Rio conference held in 1992; more than 1,400 NGOs registered themselves as participants. At another occasion, only 53 NGOs with consultative status sent their representatives to the 1968 Tehran International Conference on Human Rights, and few others attended the invitation of the conference's Preparatory Committee. For the 1993 Human Rights Conference in Vienna, a UN source lists 248 NGOs with consultative status and 593 as participants. Another source prepared by NGO community themselves reports that around 1,400 to 1,500 NGOs attended the said conference. Similarly, the Mexico City Conference celebrated International Women's Year held in 1975; it was attended by more than 114 NGOs as participants. A decade later at the end of 1985, a UN Decade on Women in Nairobi was conducted; 13,500 people registered for and many more attended. Ten years later over 300,000 people attended the Beijing NGO forum, doubling previous attendance records. But equally impressive, 3,000 accredited NGOs gained access to the Fourth World Conference on Women (Clark et al., 1998). In the Global Governance, World Bank has recognized their role as agents for democratic governance along with developmental programmes (Vedder, 2007). As the world changed after the cold war, under the influence of globalization and the politics of the single superpower, NGOs began to assume a new role in the peace and security realm. They have moved from less sensitive to more politically sensitive areas, thereby involved in the protection of political rights and civil liberties.

Former Secretary General Boutros Ghali affirmed that NGOs "are indispensable parts of the legitimacy without which no international activity can be meaningful." Again an indication of their current status is given by the former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, who declared that NGOs are 'the conscience of humanity'. The Security Council's total number of meetings and consultations with NGOs grew nearly fourfold while its total resolutions and presidential statements increased more than six fold. Their role in Security Council's election monitoring, policing, and post-conflict peace-building and peace keeping is admirable (Paul, 2004). Such activities may concentrate on the micro-level building of social capital through inclusive forums or training of the local conflict resolution activists. They have begun to influence national governments to operate in ways that go beyond realistic perspectives of foreign policy consideration (Lewis, 2000). NGOs have begun to move from a "development as delivery" to a "development as leverage" (Lewis, 2000). They are now affecting national politics in number of ways; for instance, their role in agenda setting,

negotiating outcomes and conferring legitimacy is now an acceptable fact (Boutros-Ghali, 1995). As such, these actors are not only more visible in the political and legal matters of the developed world, but they also “have become a significant part of political landscape in a growing number of countries in the Third World and former Soviet bloc.” In particular, the end of Cold War created opportunities for NGO activity on global level. The concept of civil society got a new lease of life during 1980 on account of revival of democracies in the Eastern Europe. The rediscovering of social capital by Communitarians based on local associations to radical pluralists championing associative democracy substantiates the renewal of free and democratic atmosphere that came on the fore in this period.

Westphalian type of state has been changed both in its institutional and functional perspective. Power in international relations has become less hierarchical and more diffuse than in the past, states share some of their key functions with other actors. In order to be more effective in international politics NGOs are forming coalitions creating networks of advocacy groups etc. They have learned to collaborate in information exchange, project implementation and joint membership in advocacy coalitions.⁸ For instance, the anti-globalization movements, the world wide protest against Iraq in February 2003, environmental protection campaigns highlighting the alliances NGOs were formed in order to be more inclusive and broad in approach (Anheier and Katz, 2006). At the same time, NGOs have also become proactive in a wide range of specialized roles such as emergency response, democracy building, conflict resolution and human rights. Besides this, cultural preservation, environment activism, policy analysis and research were also the subjects of their interest. The expanding role of NGOs in development is evident in the amount of development resources they collectively manage. It was estimated that NGOs were responsible for about \$ US 23 million of total money aid tended to be provided to governments. The United Nations estimates that NGOs are responsible for the transfer of an estimated US \$5 billion in development aid from the North to developing countries. This represents about 12.5 percent of the total bilateral transfer of funds from rich to poor countries and this percentage is growing annually. Many scholars argue that the primary contribution of NGOs is not monetary but organizational and cultural. INGOs facilitate the flow of information, standardize trade and professional practices, rationalize development efforts, offer technological expertise, and foster global culture. For example, they contribute their own expertise

and thereby enhance the scientific and policy-related knowledge base of policymaking. They are engaged in advocacy and lobbying; serve as members of national delegations; participate in review and enforcement procedures; ensure transparency of international processes and supports international secretariat in many ways. In addition, they fulfil broader functions in international environmental governance, for example by raising public awareness, linking the international with national and local levels, influencing industry and business, etc. The legitimate role of NGOs in international environmental policy-making is widely acknowledged.

Consequently, Agenda 21 devotes Chapter 27 to NGOs and the strengthening of their role as “partners for sustainable development”. In particular, it aims at enhancing or establishing formal participatory procedures “for the involvement of NGOs at all levels from policy-making and decision-making to implementation”. Overall, Agenda 21 establishes a general presumption for a further strengthening of the role of NGOs in international institutions, treaty systems and organisations.

NGOs have become the favored child of official development agencies, hailed as the new panacea to cure the ills that have befallen the development process and imagined as a magic bullet which will mysteriously but effectively find its target. They are providing the means to mitigate some of the weaknesses in the development process. NGOs or community associations are valuable in so far as they are a potential source of alternative development discourses and practices. Critics from each camp may promote NGOs for their ability to facilitate participation and empowerment, but the meanings attached to these terms differ. Development agencies and international NGOs, in particular, support local NGOs for their effectiveness in pursuing the goals of what some have called a new policy agenda, a heterogeneous set of policies based on a faith in two basic values, neoliberal economics and liberal democratic theory. As these proponents envision them, NGOs have the capacity to efficiently transfer training and skills that assist individuals and communities to compete in markets, to provide welfare services to those who are marginalized by the market, and to contribute democratization and the growth of a robust civil society, all of which are considered as critical to the success of the neoliberal economic policies.

The success of the NGOs sector can be evaluated from the number factors. Firstly, they are free from the bureaucratic burdens of governments. Secondly, they are relatively more flexible and open to innovation, more effective and faster at implementing development efforts, and able to identify and respond to grass-roots needs. As the World Bank (1991) has noted, NGOs have become an important force in the development process, mitigating the costs of developing countries and helping in institutional weakness. From this perspective, NGOs are a means through which impediments to development can be overcome. International NGOs are useful in so far as

⁸ The Global Climate Action Network, a worldwide network of over 340 NGOs working to promote government and individual action to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels. NGOs have central role and nevertheless, INGOs are a prominent part of the infrastructure of global civil society and are most visible or tangible actors. Helmut K Anheier, (ed.) *Global civil society*, SAGE, 2005/2006, p. 243

they serve as intermediaries that can facilitate the work of local NGOs (Fisher, 1997). Thirdly, these non-governmental organisations are being supported by advocates of the new policy agenda because it is believed that they contribute to democratizing processes. Optimistic expectations for democratization have been boosted in the past decade by the successful challenges citizens made to formerly strong states in Eastern Europe and Latin America.

NGOs are 'self governing, private, not-for-profit organizations that are geared to improving the quality of life for disadvantaged people'. There has been rapid growth in NGO service provision, as neoliberal development policies have emphasized a decreasing role for governments as direct service providers. Government services have been withdrawn under conditions as dictated by the World Bank and other donors, leaving NGOs of varying types and with different capacities and competencies of varying quality to pick-up the pieces, or fill the gaps which are left. The Good Governance agenda has emphasized a more flexible provision of services through using a range of sector and non-governmental actors. Donors also believe in stronger role of NGOs in service delivery on account of their organizational and comparative advantage such as flexibility, commitment and cost effectiveness (Lewis, 2009). The liberal notion of civil society warns against the domination of public life by the state, seeing NGOs and other organizations of civil society as able to act as bulwark against such a tendency. Donors such USAID, for example has been leading donors in supporting NGOs as vehicles for strengthening democratization process through advocacy and voter education and incubators of civil society ideas and values. Third sectors leaders should be seen as guardians of civil society both wider civil responsibilities and as responsible for expressions of civil society within their organizations

NGOS STRATEGIES

While accomplishing their role nongovernmental organisations are adapting various strategies. In the first category there is operational and advocacy type of NGOs. This may be interpreted as the choice between small-scale change achieved directly through projects and large-scale change promoted indirectly through influence on the political system (Mostashari, 2005). The functions of an NGO relates to designing and implementing concrete action programmes that result directly to changes in the conditions of persons, cultural artefacts, or the natural environment; development, food aid, health care, the protection of historical landmarks etc. The function of advocacy NGOs are aimed at influencing the opinions, policies, and practices of national and international governmental authorities, social groups and general public (Vedder, 2007). Advocacy NGOs can be regarded as NGOs whose primary orientation is toward

the advocacy of policies or actions that address specific concerns, points of view, or interests. Most often, advocacy NGOs exist to serve as a voice that they consider otherwise would not be heard in social, economic, and political processes. Advocacy NGOs more often exist at national and international levels.

Operational NGOs can be regarded as NGOs, whose primary areas of activity are directed toward the contribution or delivery of development or welfare services, including emergency relief, and environmental protection and management. These may exist at the local or community level, district and national levels, and regional and worldwide levels. Despite differentiations between operational and advocacy NGOs, in many cases it may not be possible to characterize an NGO entirely as operational or advocacy. Some operational NGOs do focus entirely on service delivery and do not possess an analytical or advocacy base; some advocacy NGOs are oriented entirely toward activities such as policy analysis and advocacy of development processes. However, most NGOs are involved in a mix of activities.

Level of operations

Among operational NGOs, it is possible to distinguish between international- level NGOs, often headquartered in developed countries. National level NGOs whose orientations are toward issues and interests in the countries in which they are based and local-level or community-based NGOs that generally exist to address concerns in relatively localized geographical areas. NGOs operating at the community level often reflect memberships comprising individuals who have come together to address immediate community-based interests. While often possessing limited technical or implementation capacity, community-level NGOs can be especially significant in projects that require identification of local needs or direct beneficiary participation. NGOs operating at the national and international levels often have important technical and organizational capacities. In some cases, larger and more capable NGOs can serve as intermediaries between governments, development agencies, and other NGOs, channeling information, resources, and technical support. Some international NGOs, and some national NGOs have become capable in a number of roles, including provision of donor support to smaller NGOs (ADB, 2004).

ORIENTATION OF ACTIVITY

NGOs reflect differences in philosophy, purpose, specialization, and operational approach. For operational purposes, NGOs can be classified by characteristics such as

1. Purpose—for example, religious versus secular;

2. Operational orientation—for example, a relief and welfare orientation versus a development orientation;
3. Approach—for example, service delivery versus participatory activities; and
4. Degree of openness—for example, a large degree of openness and public exposure versus a more closed, private character, or willingness to cooperate with institutions

In terms of their structure, NGOs may be large or small, formal or informal, bureaucratic or flexible. In terms of funding, many are externally funded, while others depend on locally mobilized resources. Some may be well resourced and affluent, while others may lead a 'hand to mouth' existence, struggling to survive from one year to the next. There are NGOs with highly professionalized staff, while others rely heavily on volunteers and supporters. In terms of values, NGOs are driven by a range of motivations. There are secular NGOs based on organizations. Some may be charitable and paternalistic, others seeking to pursue radical or employment based approaches. There are also frequent references to other similar terms such as 'non-profit' 'voluntary' and 'civil society' organizations. 'Voluntary organization' or 'charities' are terms that are common in the UK, following a long tradition of volunteering and voluntary work that has been informed by Christian values and the development of charity. Non-profit organization is frequently used in the United States, where the market is dominant and the citizen organizations are rewarded with fiscal benefits if they show that they are not commercial, profit-making entities and work for the common public. 'NGO' has come to be used in relation to organizations which work internationally or those belonging to a developing context.

Negative image of NGOs

The other side of the fact is that they are being viewed as the new ways of imperialistic designs. Recognizing this shift in power, the power holders are replacing the most confrontational style of power giving much greater emphasis on the soft power. *Keohane* and *Nye* define soft power as, the ability to get desired outcomes because others mean to lose their weight. It is the ability to achieve goals through attraction rather than coercion. It works through convincing others to follow or to get them to agree to norms and institutions that produce the desired behavior. Soft power can rest on the appeal of one's ideas or culture or ability to set the agenda through standards and institutions that shape the preferences of others. It depends largely on the persuasiveness of the free information that an actor seeks to transmit. Soft power combined with US's military and economic might is providing the basis for a new approach to foreign policy termed as smart power. It is the ability to combine soft and hard into a winning strategy. For example in her

Senate confirmation hearing on Jan. 13, 2009, Hillary Clinton said, 'we must use what has been called smart power- the full range of tools at our disposal- diplomatic, economic, political and military, legal and cultural picking the right tool, or combination of tools for each situation with smart power diplomacy will be the vanguard of foreign policy'. The theorist of international relations emphasizes the role of ideas, norms, and culture in international relations. A good example of this influence is the way that international actors rely on ethically charged claims and counterclaims to justify their behaviour or criticize the behavior of others (2010). In the contemporary times this type of job has been assigned to NGOs. This is how development is always conditional viewed by different recipient countries. The recipient country has to fulfil some conditions, for instance liberalizing her economy, strengthening human rights situation and free press. While accomplishing the same no country can ignore the role of NGOs.

In contrast to this positive view of NGOs, a dependency-oriented perspective argues that some NGOs are simply another arm of international capitalism. Although INGOs are distinguished from intergovernmental organizations like the Peace Corps, the United Nations, the World Bank, and the U.S. During the 1980s, for instance, INGOs were involved in 128 World Bank projects, giving both groups more power and influence. The fear is that this will result in more projects that benefit international capital (e.g., building of airports and high-ways) instead of the mass population (e.g., building low-cost housing and health clinics). If this is true, then involvement by INGOs could worsen over-urbanization by creating the illusion of urban vibrancy without providing additional services for new migrants to the city. It could also slow economic growth in the long run by exacerbating North-South resource imbalances, impeding local institutional development. A number of quantitative studies have demonstrated convincingly that, in fact, structural adjustment policies have reduced state spending in health, education, and other social services. This has contributed to over-urbanization, slowed economic expansion, and hurt the poorest segments of society.

Conclusion

As we have seen, with the growth in the involvement of NGOs in many aspects of politics, government services have been withdrawn under conditions as dictated by the World Bank and other donors, leaving NGOs of varying types and with different capacities and competencies of varying quality to pick-up the pieces, or fill the gaps which are left. The Good Governance agenda has emphasized a more flexible provision of services through using a range of non-governmental actors. Donors also believe in a stronger role of NGOs in service delivery on account of their organizational and comparative advantage such as

flexibility, commitment and cost effectiveness. NGOs are in the center of developmental activities especially in the arena of poverty alleviation, conflict resolution, building peace in conflict ridden situations and conservation of environment programmes etc. NGOs have the capacity to efficiently transfer training and skills that assist individuals and communities to compete in markets, to provide welfare services to those who are marginalized by the market, and to contribute democratization and the growth of a robust civil society, all of which are considered as critical to the success of the neoliberal economic policies. They have begun to influence national governments to operate in ways that go beyond realistic perspectives of foreign policy consideration. NGOs have begun to move from a “development as delivery” to a “development as leverage”. However, there is another side of the NGOs which portrays the same with imperialistic designs at the backyard.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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