



Protection of Human Rights in India : The role of NGOs

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Abstract: *The issue of human rights is one that has inspired not only politicians, religious organizations, and trade unions, but also private individuals and non-governmental organizations that strive to secure conformity with the international standards set up to protect those rights" NGO has a great faith in the betterment of human civilization and working in that direction. The Non-Governmental organizations work from grass roots level to the national and international level in the protection of human rights. NGOs play a pivotal role to educate, to teach and train vulnerable groups, about existing human rights norms, possibilities of redress and the dissemination of information both to the public in general and to vulnerable groups, making the latter aware of their rights and freedoms. It is necessary to support and encourage genuine, small, local level NGOs and help them to solve the problems at grass-root level. The present paper is widely discussed the role of NGOs in the protection of Human Rights in India.*

Key words: Human Rights, NGOs, protection, exploitation, violation, poverty, under privileged, vulnerable.

Introduction: Human rights as the 'Rights relating to life, liberty, equality, and dignity of individuals guaranteed by the constitution or embodied in international covenants and enforceable by the courts in India'. It is "commonly understood as inalienable fundamental rights to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being." Protection and preservation of the rights of the individual and his free access to justice are indispensable constituents of the march of a civilized society, hence equal attention and urgent consideration should be given to the implementation, promotion and protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and interdependent. "the issue of human rights.....is one that has inspired not only politicians, religious organizations, and trade unions, but also private individuals and non-

governmental organizations that strive to secure conformity with the international standards set up to protect those rights"

Human security is fundamentally concerned with helping people to deal with unforeseeable threats and sudden downturns, whether international financial crises, environmental disasters or incapacitating illnesses. The protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 requires the National Human Rights Commission to encourage the efforts of non-governmental organizations working in the field of human rights. NGO has a great faith in the betterment of human civilization and working in that direction. It is one of the most visible sets of actors in the related fields of human development and human rights can play a significant role in helping to achieve human security. NGOs are organizations within the civil society that work on the



“not-for-profit” approach in the space which exists between the family (household), market and state. It is defined as “self-governing, private, not-for-profit organizations that are geared toward improving the quality of life of disadvantaged people. They are neither part of government nor controlled by a public body. They are elements of civil society, which is a space arena between households and the state which affords possibilities of concerted action and social self-organization”. NGOs range from small pressure groups on, for example, specific environmental concerns or specific human rights violations, through educational charities, women's refuges, cultural associations, religious organizations, legal foundations, humanitarian assistance programs. Sometimes it become spokespersons or ombudsmen for the poor and attempt to influence government policies and programs on their behalf. It monitors the actions of governments and pressures them to act according to human rights principles. They are serving the people who are unable to meet the minimum life standard and provide a voice for those unable to speak for themselves and counter the views of more powerful groups. NGOs play roles from advocates for the poor to implementers of government programs; from agitators and critics to partners and advisors; from sponsors of pilot projects to mediators.

Need for the study: There is very need to study about human rights and the role of NGOs to protect human rights in India. There are so many incidents occurred related to human rights violations in India like child labour, bonded labour, violence against women, juvenile rights, violence against deprived class people, religious violence,

Caste violence throughout India. NGOs agitation plays a very crucial role to protect human rights in India.

Objectives of the study:

1. To study the role of NGOs to protect and promote human rights in India.
2. To study the activities and methods of NGOs.
3. To find out the suggestions for effective implementation of NGOs programmes to tackle the human rights violation in India.

Methodology:

Secondary sources of data have been collected for this study. Human Rights related books, and various journals; National Human Rights commissions articles and reports, Special references of some articles have been also used to find out the need, scope, and recent project in this direction in India

What is NGO?

NGO is a non-governmental organization. NGOs are part of the civil society is a broader term – includes also churches, religious associations, trade unions, interest groups, organizations of employers etc. NGOs are intermediary between individuals and the government in transmitting ideas and concepts.

Different types of NGOs: International and national level- Main-stream or focused on selected issues, Grass roots' organizations, Different scope of activities, Activist organizations vs. think tank organizations. NGOs acting in a public interest vs. NGOs pursuing particular interest (e.g. lobbying NGOs) Some NGOs are concentrated on



protection of human rights ,Most NGOs – independent from government (as compared to GONGOs)Depending on mission and scope of operation NGOs use different methods in order to protect human rights.

Activities and methods of NGOs:

Depending on mission and scope of operation NGOs use different methods in order to protect human rights.Over the years the role of NGOs grows (e.g. rapid development of Human rights Watch)NGOs understand sometimes differently the notion of human rights(possibility of abuse)Most important features of NGOs dealing with human rights,Credibility,Public trust and confidence,Responsiveness,Independence, Dynamism, NGOs may have impact they do not make political decisions.NGOs are responsible before the society and their sponsorsNGOs are transmitter of views of the society to the government.

Four basic methods:

1.Monitoring:NGOs – role of watchdog – controlling the government and other institutions (also private institutions),Selected issue,Day to day monitoring (e.g. freedom of speech),Controlling compliance with certain standards (e.g. controlling prisons in certain area),Preparation of reports on compliance with human rights on the basis of monitoring,Results: (i) reports, (ii) interventions, (iii) raising awareness, (iv) accountability.

2.Advocacy: Advocacy means arguing on behalf of a certain issue, idea or person,Changing the attitude of government,Showing the problem and Convincing the society,

3.Strategic litigation:objective of strategic litigation is to make significant changes in law or legal practice through litigation of the carefully selected cases.

4.Education:Education on human rights is an important element of NGOs' activities,Education is a priority for many organizations. In some countries it is the only method to advance human rights,You can educate on human rights' standards or skills how to advance human rights (for other NGOs or activists),Human rights' education may be subject of manipulation.Education has only indirect and long-term impact on human rights' protection.

The positive role that the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can play in furthering the cause of human rights has been recognized both by the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993(PHR Act) and the National commission on Human Rights (NHRC).PHR Act in section 12(1) has enjoyed upon the NHRC to encourage the efforts of the NGOs and institutions working in the field of human rights.

In India, due to historical reasons, human rights issues have been emphasized by organizations owing allegiance to leftist political ideology. There have been many small and scattered social action groups raising the issue of oppression and exploitation trying to enlarge the scope of social legislation to improve the living conditions of masses, women groups environment groups, groups which extended support to the struggle for democracy and justice, legal for a and small political parties constituted to fight for group rights etc. form the broad base of human rights groups. Human Rights violations by the state and its organs



have been articulated by specialist groups of NGOs known as Civil Liberties and democratic Rights groups. Most of these specialist groups have and are suffering from institutional instability. They become very vocal and active in pursuing a specific agenda and go into hibernation thereafter. Many of them have suffered splits and strayed into different fields. Most of these organizations are reluctant to share information about their organization, membership, funds etc. some of these were given below

1. Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC), Secunderabad, journal-SWECHHA
2. Association for the protection of Democratic Rights (APDR), Calcutta, journal-ADHIKAR
3. Committee for Protection of Democratic Rights (CPDR) Mumbai, journal-ADHIKAR RAKSHA (English)
4. Citizen's Committee for Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights, GOA,
5. LokAdhikarSangh, Gujarat-Ahmadabad.
6. People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) Delhi
7. Citizens for Democracy (CFD) New Delhi.
8. Karnataka Civil Liberties Committee (KCLC), Bangalore
9. Organizing committee for democratic Rights (OCDR), Tirupattur.
10. People's Union for Civil liberties (PUCL), DELHI, journal-PUCL BULLETINE
11. Indian people's Human Rights commission, Mumbai.

An NGO is nowadays not expected to deliver directly some benefits to people, but to motivate people, mobilize resources, initiate leadership, and

participate in development programmes for self-reliance. NGOs play a pivotal role to educate to teach and train vulnerable groups, about existing human rights norms, possibilities of redress and the dissemination of information both to the public in general and to vulnerable groups, making the latter aware of their rights and freedoms. Many NGOs have worked hard to include children with disability in schools, end caste-based stigma and discrimination, prevent child labour and promote gender equality resulting in women receiving equal wages for the same work compared to men. During natural calamities they have played an active role in relief and rehabilitation efforts, in particular, providing psycho-social care and support to the disaster affected children, women and men. NGOs have been instrumental in the formation and capacity building of farmers and producers' cooperatives and women's self-help groups. Sulabh Movement for the betterment and welfare of Dalits, in a generic sense, and in particular for the liberation and social mainstreaming of scavengers. Child Relief and You (CRY) is a voluntary organisation committed to the upliftment of millions of children who have been deprived of their childhood due to various reasons. Organisations like Saheli and Chetna are actively involved in the protection of Women's Rights. Butterflies are an NGO with a programme for street and working children. Several NGOs have worked hand in hand with the Government to ensure that millions of out of school children are enrolled and continue their school education. Bodh ShikshaSamiti has advocated a model of appropriate education for the urban deprived, by drawing attention to the size of the problem of the unschooled among the urban poor in Rajasthan. Pratham



has established a partnership with the Municipal Corporation of Mumbai on the importance of universal pre-school education as a gateway to universalizing primary education. Teach India, a Times Group initiative, is a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) project to improve employability of youth from underprivileged background by training them in spoken English. Child welfare NGO can mould the scattered future that is an orphan child into a strong leader of tomorrow.

NGOs are committed for the uplift of the poor, marginalized, unprivileged, underprivileged, and downtrodden and the needy, it can and should play the "game changer" to pro-poor development through leadership on participatory research, community empowerment and search for development alternatives. These types of committed devoted and dedicated organizations are required for the development of the country and it is also necessary to support and encourage genuine, small, local level NGOs and help them to solve the problems at grass-root level.

Suggestions:

➤ NGOs are a welfare organization, to maintain high quality in service the government should recognize those NGOs, by giving awards or rewards with additional grants; this would motivate other NGOs to work efficiently.

➤ NGOs need to expand their programmes, campaigns, skits; frequent programmes increase the awareness of human rights.

➤ NGOs also need to get more aid both from foreign and within India which will be useful to carry out their cause.

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