

## **Impact of Non-Governmental Organizations on Social Development and Civil Society**

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### **Abstract**

Since the late 1970s, NGOs have played an increasingly important role in the development field as innovative grassroots organizations with the desire and capacity to pursue participatory and people-centred forms of development and to bridge the gaps created by development. The failure of developing countries to meet the needs of their poorest citizens. As the presence of NGOs has grown, funding for their activities and advocacy programs has increased, but so have concerns about their legitimacy. These comparative advantages continue to be challenged as we move further and further away from low-income people, communities, and their donors. Furthermore, given the apolitical environment in which NGOs operate, they have the potential to address structurally underlying causes and symptoms of poverty, including: B. Affecting social and political exclusion and "solved" technical problems. The impact should be small. So how can NGOs go "back to basics" and take a truly participatory and experimental path towards empowerment. As we have explored in this article, NGOs are important but, is increasingly recognized as just one of the actors in society. Success in this area requires a shift from their role as service providers to their role as promoters and supporters of broader civil society organizations, where low-income communities themselves can participate in dialogue and negotiation. They can participate and improve their collective assets and skills.

**Keywords:** Development and non-governmental organization civil society, poverty reduction

### **Introduction**

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are becoming increasingly popular. The reason for this is the argument that NGOs are efficient and effective because they are innovative, flexible, independent, and able to address the problems of the poor at the grassroots level. It is becoming a great force. The growth of NGOs over the past two decades has seen them play an increasingly important role and form a distinct sector within civil society. They leverage voluntary private funding and funding from donor organizations to support local, national, and regional initiatives. We act and operate independently. International level. This article reviews the literature on NGOs and civil society, particularly considering development NGOs in the dominant context of recent neoliberal policy agendas. We will assess the extent to which these NGOs can foster participation in development. Meaning and Definitions NGO Defining terms in academic fields can be difficult and do not always agree. The term "NGO" was understood and used differently in different places and times, and was considered very difficult, if not impossible, to define and agree on. Complicating this task is the large number of similar terms used for the same thing or with slightly different meanings. Some definitions indicate that these are action groups. Interest groups; private volunteer organizations. Independent volunteer sector. Third sector organizations. Grassroots organization. Activist organization. Non-profit organization and professional, voluntary, and civil society organizations. Simply put, NGOs in the West refer to organizations that promote development in non-industrialized countries, while "non-profit" or "volunteer" organizations

refer to organizations that promote welfare issues in developed Western countries. However, in general, the terms "third sector" or "nonprofit organization" refer to activities that are not part of the government or corporate sector. Another important assumption is that unlike cooperatives and interactions, whose activities more directly benefit their members, NGOs serve the interests of a large number of individuals, although there is some overlap with interactions. about it. (Bidet, 2002, Park, 2002) [2]. The term NGO appears to have been first invented by the United Nations (UN).

According to the Courier Report (1987) for an organisation to be an NGO in the true sense, it should fulfil the following criteria; firstly, it should be autonomous, neither depending substantially on the state for its funds (though it may be-and often does receive a proportion of its funds from public sources nor being beholden to Government in the pursuit of its objective; secondly, it should be non-profit making, thirdly, the major part of its funds should come from voluntary contribution. (1987:50)

### **Literature Review**

At present, many research-based literatures have tried to explain the importance of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Relationship between Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society. Some of the studies include:

Jones (1982) [5] defined community development as "Community participation, Community empowerment and Community capacity." There are two aspects to community development process: first, community participation in the

improvement of the average of living with reliance on the people's own initiative. Second, technical and social service delivery in a manner that encourages initiative, self-help and mutual understanding.

According to Zimmerman & Rappaport (1988) <sup>[23]</sup> Empowerment refers to an individual's ability to take control over the social, political, economic and psychological life of an entire community through the acquisition of information, knowledge, skills, decision-making, self-determination, community participation and perceived control;

According to Korten (1990) <sup>[6]</sup> "NGOs are to be commended for their support of community groups and their participation in the process

- a) Facilitating communication (NGOs can facilitate communication upward from people to the government and downward from the government to the people);
- b) Technical assistance and training
- c) Research, monitoring and evaluation; and
- d) Advocacy for and with the poor.

According to Streeten (1997) <sup>[20]</sup>, The term NGOs states to approximately all organisations created outside governmental bodies, except for political parties and private organisations. The organisation must be voluntary and carry out activities legally following the laws in force in a country. NGOs are competently run organisations that aim to contribute to the human suffering reduction and poor countries development through variety techniques including funding projects, helping provide services and building capacity.

According to Pearce (2000) <sup>[17]</sup>, a community development method should include three critical components which are united empowerment, united leadership and driving revolution through discourse. Community development model in rural and urban regions should be involved in all process stages, including need assessment, planning, and implementation. In this context, the community development process can be used for a variety of reasons such as

- a) To improve education;
- b) To improve health;
- c) To improve recreation and housing;
- d) To motivate community to organize community-based plans to unravel their problems;
- e) To grow community leaders;
- f) To strengthen local communities' capacities to spot their incomes and interests;
- g) To enhance operative community groups and organizations; and
- h) To figure a clear support among community.

Langran (2002) <sup>[11]</sup> described capacity building as enabling NGOs to support community development. NGOs are often created to increase people's capabilities. Over the long period, NGOs seek to promote sustainable community development through activities that promote capacity building and empowerment.

Kenny (2007) <sup>[7]</sup> opined that, a community is a known social unit, such as a group or association of people who have similar needs, interests, functions and values. Whereas community development is a process where community members are supported by agencies to identify and take collective action on issues which are important to them. Community development empowers community members and creates stronger and more connected communities.

## Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in a Civil Society

**Monitoring, Criticism and Advocating:** NGOs promote social change and protect individual rights through monitoring, criticism of government and market power and influence over social or market policies, which can lead to NGOs acting against government, often resulting in negative relations between NGOs and government. On the other hand, in cases of international or supranational matters that government cannot address on its own for diplomatic reasons, NGOs are able to make their voice heard without restrictions. It is very important to monitor, criticize and advocate the role of NGOs, especially in countries where government abuse its power to suppress individual liberty and rights. There are three levels of potential impact of NGOs: first, grass-roots impact; second, government policy impact; and third, civil society impact. Many NGOs seek to influence policy development for the benefit of poor and marginalised communities. They are most likely to hold protests, stage demonstrations, and participate in policy formulation.

**Advocating for Human Rights and Social Justice:** Advocating for the vulnerable is a primary role of NGOs. These organizations actively protect the rights and dignity of marginalized groups through efforts that raise awareness of injustices, hold institutions accountable, and promote human rights standards.

**Promoting Sustainable Community Development:** NGOs have assumed a leadership role in promoting sustainable community development. Due to their unique ideology and nature, NGOs excel at engaging and mobilizing underprivileged and remote communities. We can also empower these people to regain control of their lives and collaborate with and strengthen local organizations. Such NGOs can implement projects more efficiently and cost-effectively than government agencies and, most critically, advance sustainable development. Promoting sustainable community development through activities like capacity building and self-reliance is the long-term objective of these NGOs. This can be achieved by funding projects, raising awareness, and encouraging self-organization of various groups. NGOs play a vital role in supporting women, men and households. The functions of such NGOs include providing advice and support, raising awareness and advocating, offering legal aid and microfinance.

**Filling Gaps in Service Provision:** NGOs play a vital role by providing essential services like healthcare, education, clean water, and sanitation in areas where government services are inadequate or nonexistent. Working closely with local communities to identify needs, NGOs design targeted programs that effectively address gaps in services.

**Empowering Marginalized Communities:** NGOs empower marginalized communities by equipping them with resources and skills to enhance their quality of life. Through vocational training, microfinance, and community development programs, NGOs enable individuals to become self-sufficient and engaged members of society.

**Promoting Sustainable Development:** Many NGOs focus on sustainable development, balancing economic, social, and environmental goals to build resilient, inclusive communities. Through advocacy and education, these organizations promote environmentally friendly practices and responsible resource management.

**Driving Social Change and Advocacy:** NGOs serve as the vanguard for driving social change and championing policy reforms. Whether promoting gender equality, battling climate

change, or tackling systemic issues like poverty, NGOs leverage their collective voice and influence to enact lasting, positive change in society.

**Strengthening Civil Society:** NGOs are vital to a vibrant democracy because they strengthen civil society by promoting citizen participation, transparency, and an engaged citizenry. Located between government and the individual, NGOs protect individual rights, check government power, and encourage public participation in decision-making processes that affect people's lives.

**Providing Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief:** In times of crises and emergencies, NGOs are typically the first on the scene, swiftly delivering vital humanitarian aid and disaster relief to impacted communities at their most vulnerable. With an ability to mobilize rapidly and effectively, these organizations ensure people receive essential support exactly when they need it most.

**Fostering Innovation and Collaboration:** NGOs are known for their innovative and flexible approaches to problem-solving, often taking risks to experiment with new solutions that address complex challenges. Additionally, they collaborate with various stakeholders like governments, businesses, and civil society groups to leverage resources and expertise for greater impact.

**Impact on Grass-roots:** NGOs can empower the poor or disadvantaged at the grassroots level. Another way to empower people is through community movements that provide an alternative lifestyle. These citizen-led movements arose from the recognition that individuals feel isolated from decisions about production in the enormous market system. Community movements encourage self-sufficiency by raising awareness of everyday issues like food, housing, waste, healthcare, and transportation. Many such movements begin in rural areas or through environmental NGOs promoting organic farming and linking producers with consumers. Although locally-based movements have not yet had widespread impact, they hold promise for enabling communities to take control of their lives.

### Limits and Opportunities of NGOs

**Poor Governance:** While good governance is crucial for NGO accountability and transparency, there is little understanding of why NGOs must have Boards or what the Boards' roles and responsibilities should be. Many founders are unwilling to cede power to a Board and continue steering their NGOs in directions that serve the founders' own interests.

**Poor Networking and Coordination:** Have been identified as major challenges, causing duplicated efforts, conflicting community-level strategies, a lack of learning from experience, and an inability of NGOs to address local structural causes of poverty, deprivation, and underdevelopment. Many NGOs, both large and small, intervene at the community level without any community mapping or regard for ongoing community initiatives, implementing projects in a disconnected manner.

**Lack of Funds:** NGOs struggle to secure consistent funding for their work, as they have limited fundraising skills and tend to wait passively for international donors rather than seeking out local funding opportunities.

**Absence of Strategic Planning:** Many NGOs face challenges in strategic planning due to the instability of their operating environments. However, the lack of long-term strategy can hinder impact measurement and effective planning over time.

**Government Procedures:** Many countries impose burdensome procedures and stringent requirements on NGOs, backed by harsh penalties like suspension or closure that can make it difficult for these organizations to operate.

**Limited Capacity:** Many NGOs recognize they have limited technical and organizational capacity, but only a few are able or willing to invest in capacity building. The pace of technological change also poses a challenge, especially regarding IT capabilities.

The rapid proliferation of civil society organizations has not been matched by improvements in quality and accountability. The expanding number, scope, and outreach of these groups calls for more robust, reliable, and sustainable funding. Meeting future escalating resource demands may require developing new or indigenous fundraising methods, or finding ways to increase existing resources.

### Relationship between NGOs and Civil Society

Originally, it was thought that economic development was primarily the government's responsibility. However, in the 20th century, people became increasingly dissatisfied with centralized economic planning and government due to corruption and mismanagement. As an alternative approach, the nonprofit private sector, known as civil society, gained significant interest. Civil society refers to non-governmental, non-profit organizations that mobilize resources to serve the public interest. It embraces diverse groups like nonprofits, charities, religious institutions, community associations, academia, and the media. In contrast to the for-profit business sector and government, civil society channels private initiatives and shared values to empower people, especially at the grassroots level. The literature on civil society and poverty reduction often focuses narrowly on NGOs, sometimes using the terms interchangeably. But in reality, NGOs are just one component of the broader civil society ecosystem. The organizing principles of civil society are serving others and bringing people together. It includes indigenous community groups, cooperatives, trade unions, professional associations, philanthropic institutions, and NGOs devoted to fulfilling the needs of the disadvantaged. In summary, civil society mobilizes volunteerism and shared commitment to complement government and business in serving the public good.

### Conclusion

The number of roles played by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at local, national, regional, and international levels continues to grow. Consulting with NGOs when formulating key policies has become common practice for governmental and intergovernmental agencies. It is worth summarizing the key points about the impact and limits of NGOs. NGOs have varied effects depending on their size, goals, and other characteristics. Advocacy and challenging the status quo seem to be areas where NGOs have achieved some success; evidence from South Korea points to important outcomes in this realm. Regarding social development, NGOs can provide many benefits, from spurring innovation to supporting volunteers. However, interactions with governments can also lead to limitations and problems for NGOs, including reduced autonomy if they are drawn too deeply into governmental agendas, difficulties with accountability, paternalism, or representation.

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