

# The Role of NGOs in Social Mobilizations

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**Abstract:** *It is high time to understand the process of Social Mobilization done by the NGOs in the above said process and implementing SGSY, it is high time to understand and to documents on what are the various methods followed for social mobilization while implementing SGSY in their respective areas so that if any innovative methods used, it can be popularized and used in the future.*

*Hence the present study would be the miles stone for exploring various methods used and impact made through social mobilization for making the SGSY effective and efficient in the future.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Voluntary organisation is not a new phenomenon in our country. Voluntary effort has always been an important part of our culture and social tradition. The need for organizing people into accredited associations and their involvement and participation in rural development have now been fully recognized. In recent years, they have increased in considerable number, acquired greater importance and significance and put up many new experiments in the field of rural development.

Voluntary organisation can play a crucial role in rural development by supplementing government efforts as they are close to the minds and hearts of the rural people. They have their roots in the people and can respond to the needs and aspirations of the community very effectively. They can experiment new approaches to rural development. (Dhillon & Hansra - 1995)

The success of the rural development depends upon the active participation and willing co-operation of the rural people through Self-Help organizations and voluntary agencies. In recent years, the voluntary agencies have acquired greater importance and significance than before because the administration has not been able to reach the people, especially the poor and weaker sections. They have been able to make their presence felt from the local to the national level and now at the international level also. Many of them have pioneered works in areas, which were ignored by the process of national development planning (Anandharajakumar - 1995).

## 2. ORIGIN OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Voluntary action have been part of the historical legacy. In early 20th century, several voluntary efforts were started in the fields of education, health etc. The NGOs became prominent after independence, especially after 1970s.

Development practitioners, government officials and foreign donors consider that Non-Governmental organizations by the virtue of being small- scale, flexible, innovative and participatory, are more successful in reaching the poor and in poverty alleviating. This consideration has resulted in the rapid growth of NGOs involved in initiating and implementing rural development programmes.

According to the estimates of the working groups of NGOs, there are about 30,000 NGOs in India. A rapid growth took place in the 1980s and the early 1990s. With the SHG linkages programme introduced in 1989, the NGO sector has been recognized as a crucial partner, recognizing the strengths of the NGOs in organizing the community and the potential in saving and credit programmes (both under the linkage programme and other credit delivery innovations. (Laxmi R.Kulshresth et.al - 2002).

The concept of NGOs and Social welfare are not new. India has a glorious tradition of Voluntary organisations. In the pre-Independence days, Rabindranath Tagore in his Santiniketan experiments showed how rural development could be brought about by integration of education and culture. Gandhiji in his Wardha experiment showed how village industries could bring about the development of the poorest sections of the people in this country. (Malik-1995)

After independence too, there was a lot of talk about the role of NGOs and people's participation when we started

our planning process in the early

50s. The British Government in India spent minimum resources on social welfare programmes and so voluntary agencies played an important role in developing programmes for the poor, the destitutes, women and children.

### **3. EMPHASIS ON THE ROLE OF NGOS IN FIVE YEARS PLANS**

After Independence, India was declared as a welfare state and relevant provisions were included in the Constitution of India. Social welfare was included as part of the Five Year Plans. The major responsibility of organizing social welfare services continued with the voluntary organizations. Hence, even today it is the voluntary organizations that are taking care of welfare activities (Basanta Kumar - 1995). The VII plan documents had anticipated that voluntary efforts would be forthcoming in a massive way for better implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes (Malik - 1995).

Also in the VII plan (1992-97), a greater emphasis has been laid on the role of voluntary organizations in rural development. The plan document states: "A nation-wide network of NGOs will be created. In order to facilitate the working of this network, three schemes relating to the creation/replication/multiplication and consultancy development have been worked out by the planning commission (Malik - 1995).

### **4. PANCHAYAT RAJ INSTITUTIONS AND NGOS**

Recently, the revival and strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions— consequent upon the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992- the NGO's role has become more significant. In order to promote holistic and integrated development with the range of development schemes and programmes, the role of NGOs services and their involvement in the development process will be all the more in demand (Malik - 1995).

### **5. VARIOUS ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF NGOS**

Voluntary action stimulated and promoted by voluntary agencies engaged in development play a significant role at the grass roots level in the Indian social milieu; the success of rural development depends upon the active participation of the people through Self Help Organizations. The various roles of NGOs are described below for better understanding.

- a. Catalyze Rural Population
- b. Build Models and Experiment

- c. Supplement Government Efforts d. Organizing Rural Poor
- e. Educate the Rural People f. Provide Training
- g. Disseminate Information h. Mobilize of Resources
- i. Promote Rural Leadership
- j. Represent the Rural People k. Act as Innovators
- l. Ensure People's Participation
- m. Promote Appropriate Technology
- n. Activate the Rural Delivery System

The widespread belief that NGOs are more successful in reaching the poor in poverty reduction also resulted in rapid growth of funding for NGOs by government and external donors. As far as the government funding is concerned, there are over 200 government schemes initiated by the central and state governments through which NGOs can have direct access to resources for rural development (Reddy and Rajasekhar 1996)

### **6. ROLE OF NGOS IN SOCIAL MOBILIZATION**

In recent times, many Non-Governmental organisations have been concentrating social mobilization on contemporary issues of importance such as women empowerment, human rights, and implementation of various central and state government development programmes. The NGOs in India have contributed handsomely towards social mobilization and social activism through their intensive campaigns, people's mobilization programmes and effective networks.

The NGO as a social force facilitates collective action and people mobilization for the purpose of achieving the desired objectives. The NGOs are deploying various people-oriented as well as people-centered strategies, and these organizations build rapport with the people and mobilize them. The NGOs play in making the people environmentally aware and sensitive to take part in the development process (Biswambhar Panda et.al -2003)

### **7. ROLE OF NGO IN SOCIAL MOBILIZATION UNDER SHG & SGSY**

Alleviation of poverty has persistently been on the agenda of the government. Various programmes with contrasting methodologies have been tried, whopping funds expended, yet the poverty yet the poverty seems ineluctable. The Yojana (SGSY) is the latest poverty alleviation programme integrating six erstwhile rural development programmes, and it has been in operation

since 1st April 1999.

The very sticking feature of this scheme is that it is quite different from earlier programmes in terms of objective, strategy, methodology and sustainability. Obviating the loose ends of the earlier programmes, the Yojana intends to overcome poverty through generation of self-employment opportunities with a debatable participation, contribution and initiative of the poor themselves. Doing away with the targeted individual-centric beneficiary approach, the group approach is adopted, which is by itself a radical departure. The Yojana attempts to address poverty in all its dimensions through multi-promoted strategy.

Thus, this SGSY scheme focuses on Group approach by organizing the poor into self-help groups (SHG) through social mobilization process. Against this backdrop of this programme, the SGSY's guidelines emphasis on the role of NGOs and their significant participation in mobilizing people and to creating awareness among the people for the successful implementation of the SGSY schemes.

Promotion of Self Help Groups and establishing a large number of micro- enterprises in the rural areas building upon the potential of the rural poor. To wards this end, Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana is conceived as a holistic programme of micro-enterprises covering all aspects of self- employment. With this single most important objective, the central and state governments are concentrating in promoting large number of micro enterprises across the country.

In the context of impressive growth of SHGs and implementation of SGSY and emphasis on role of NGOs in Social Mobilization in our country, it is high time to understand the various methods used for social mobilization by the NGOs for effective implementation of SGSY so that the same methods and process can be adopted and applied elsewhere in our country while implementing SGSY and promoting the Self Help Groups in the years to come. Keeping all the above in mind, the present study proposes to find the answers for the following questions;

1. What are the various methods used for Social Mobilization in promoting the SHGs and SGSY?
2. How effective are those methods in fulfilling the expectations of SGSY guidelines?
3. Background of the NGOs and their role in social mobilization
4. Problems that arose during the process of social mobilization.

5. What are the important suggestions to improve social mobilization process?

## 8. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The major objective of the study is to understand the various methods applied by the concerned NGOs for the purpose of Social Mobilization in the context of SGSY and its impact in the promotion of SHGs and growth of SGSY, the background of NGOs, and their role in process of Social Mobilization.

The following are the specific objectives of the Study.

To study and document the profile and background of the NGOs which are extensively involved in the process of social mobilization and promotion of SGSY.

To study the various methods used for Social Mobilization for the promotion of SGSY and SHGs.

To Study the various experiences gained and problems faced by the NGOs during the Social Mobilization process in the context of SHGs and SGSY.

To Study the various impacts made out of Social Mobilization

To suggest and advocate the successful processes and methods of Social Mobilization for those involved in the promotion of SHGs and implementation of SGSY

## 9. CONCLUSION

The goal of social mobilization is to raise the status of the poor in a society through capacity building for self-awareness, self-development and self-realisation. Hence, to understand this process, the present study is proposed. In this chapter an attempt is made to trace the origin of the NGOs, Role of NGOs in Social Mobilization and merging needs for conducting a study on various methods used and impact made on social mobilization.

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## REVIEW OF CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDINGS

## ON SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

### MEANING OF MOBILIZATION

The concept of mobilization was first used to refer to the shifting of the control of resources from private-civilian to public-military process. More recently, it has been applied to a society's deliberate increase in the control of a variety of assets, such as new nation's mobilization of economic resources for development (Prasad 2003).

According to Jenkins (1983) "Mobilization is the process by which a group secures collective control over the resources needed for collection action. The major issues, therefore, are the resources controlled by the group prior to mobilization efforts, the processes by which the group pools recourses and directs these towards social change and the extent to which outsiders increase the pool of resources.

Any scheme that ignores the intrinsic features of resources is, therefore, of limited values. In response, most analysis has simply listed the assets that are frequently mobilized by movements (McCarthy & Zald's (1977) money, facilities, labor, and legitimacy: or Tilly's (1978:69), land, labor, capital and technical expertise).

Mobilization is the process, argues Barua (2001), by which energy that is latent from the viewpoint of the acting unit is made available for collection action. A more mobilized unit can get more done collectively either by increasing the number of goals it realizes or by increasing the intensity with which it pursues those goals already realized. Barua feels that it is essential in this discussion to maintain the differences among sub-units, units and supra-units, because mobilization of one entity often entails the demobilization of some others.

Mobilization is, by definition, according to Barua (2001), both a process of change and a changing process. Mobilization is also conceived as the process by which potentials are brought closer to actualization: the raw material is processed to provide the societal energy to fuel the pursuit of societal goals, and energy locked in other entities is made available.

Social Mobilization as means for Empowerment process  
Of late, great success has been achieved around the world in programmes like immunization, eradicating illiteracy; empowerment of the weak and the underprivileged, creating self-managed institutions of the poor etc. One of the key elements responsible for this success has been the concept of social mobilization, the process of bringing together all feasible and practical inter-sectoral social allies to raise people's awareness of and demand for a particular development programme, to

assist in the delivery of resources and services and to strengthen community participation for sustainable and self-reliance (Prasad 2003).

Social mobilization is about empowering the poor based on three vital parameters of power namely (Prasad 2003), a) their own capital, b) their own knowledge, c) their own organizations. Its idea of empowerment is based on the assumption that there are three fundamental sources of power that is:

♣ Capital is power and for self-reliance, the habit of saving must be included.

♣ Knowledge is power; no development can be sustained without the process being grounded in one's own knowledge base, culture and skills.

♣ Organization is power for participation to be effective and dynamic; the groups must respect the principle of social, economic and cultural homogeneity.

Sakuntala Narasimhan (1999) says that the strategies for empowering women must focus beyond economic restructuring to improve the social relations, which constrain and restrain women. She stresses social assurance and motivation as the most important directions, especially for rural SC and ST women, to fight for their cause. She equates awareness with empowerment and argues that women need to be aware of what they can do legally, positively and constructively to overcome their oppression and borrows Amartya Sen's view that " what is important is not so much what people receive, as how much involvement they have, and what part they play in the process of growth itself ( Sen, Amartya, The Hindu, Delhi,6.11.1995) Relationship between social mobilization and development process

### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MOBILIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

There is a symbiotic relationship between social mobilization and development process. Social mobilization lies at the genuine development. It gives impetus to the necessary changes that must occur before development-whether social, political or economic-can be realized (Prasad 2003).

Social mobilization, argues Ikoikwak (1989), in fact, is an essential surgical operation for the removal or virulent tissues of development in a polity. These malignant tissues are old or traditional economic, social, institutional, administrative, cultural system.

### SOCIAL MOBILIZATION IS THE PROCESS



Social Mobilization is the process of dialogue, negotiation and consensus building for action by people, communities, and organizations etc. to identify, address and solve a common problem (UNICEF, 1997). It can be an effective strategy to create the kind of supportive environment necessary to create sustained behavioral change that will bring about community participation for sustainability and self-reliance. To achieve this according to UNICEF (1997), the strategy must reach from the highest levels of societal power to the hardest to reach and the most disempowered families and community.

The social mobilization process deals with the whole reality, unlike many projects that deal with a slice of reality, simplifying and fragmenting the life of the poor, their problems and solutions. Therefore, these fragmented solutions result in problems continuing even after the project ends. (Prasad 2003).

Each mobilization is derived from a thorough probing and understanding of felt needs in due order of priority. The iterative nature of the process results in a progressive deepening of their understanding of their problems and how they can be collectively addressed. Through a process of reflection-action-reflection, the spirals of activities move simultaneously on both the material front as well as on the mind. The important aspect of social mobilization is that the minds of the people are affected, consciousness is raised and creativity is realized while at the same time immediate material benefits are enjoyed by the prime actors (Prasad 2003).

Social Mobilization, argues Reddy (2001) means the process in which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behavior'.

## **SOCIAL MOBILIZATION IS A METHODOLOGY**

Social mobilization is methodologies for making the poor contribute to economic growth. Rana (2001) is of the opinion that "social mobilization provides a non-violent way of the morass of deprivation, alienation, insecurity, political graft, and corruption experienced relentlessly over the past fifty years of development and democracy".

Deutsch (1961) states that social mobilization is a name given to an overall process of change that happens to sustainable parts of human population in countries that are moving from traditional to modern ways of life. This specific process of change, he says, affects residence, occupation, social setting, associates, institutions, roles and ways of acting, demands and capabilities. Later, Deutsch gave a rather short hand definition of his concept of social mobilization as "the process in which major

clusters of old social, economic, and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socializations and behavior".

Jarry Gana (1987) argues, "Social Mobilization is the process of pooling together, harnessing, actualizing and utilizing potential human resources for the purpose of development. It is process whereby human beings are made aware of the resources at their disposal, and are also motivated and energized to collectively utilize such resources for the improvement of their spiritual and material conditions of living".

Social Mobilization, according to Rana (1995a:5), may be defined as "the process of enabling the poor, marginalized and disenfranchised segments of society to build and manage their own organisations and thereby participate in decisions affecting their day-to-day lives through the use of their own creativity".

Social Mobilization, argues Cohen (1996), can also be defined as "a process of engaging a large number of people in joint action for achieving societal goals through self-reliant efforts. Its immediate expected outcomes are the mobilization of all possible resources and the sustained adoption/utilization of appropriate policies, technologies or services through the modification of attitudes and behavior of various social actors".

Social Mobilization, according to Amarsinghe (2001), "is a process of organizing the target groups to take initiatives and assert themselves". It seeks to make people more aware of the resources available to them, to raise their consciousness and to give them the motivation to undertake development activities for their own betterment in the long run social mobilization aims at empowering people to demand and generate the satisfaction of their needs.

Social mobilization is an approach and tool that enables people to organize for collective action, by pooling resources and building solidarity required to resolved common problems and work towards community advancement (UNDP, 2002). It is a process that empowers women and men to organize their own democratically self-governing groups or community organizations which enable them to initiate and control their own personal and communal development, as opposed to mere participation in an initiative designed by the government or an external origination (ibid, 2002).

## **COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND INTERRELATIONSHIP**

Social mobilization is commonly considered to be an important dimension of capacity, organisation and

institution building, particularly, when relating to disadvantaged people. Social mobilization may occur at all levels. Most often, however, the term is used for activities in local communities, although not necessarily confined to such communities. When thus confined, the process is commonly referred to as community mobilization. This may involve whole communities or be limited to sections of communities (for instance, land-less people or groups of particularly poor women).

The interrelationship between community mobilization/participation and social mobilization needs to be clarified. For some, social mobilization seems to cover mostly social movements initiated from the top in which persuasion and /or 'manipulation' techniques are used to reach objectives on a massive and rapid scale. Conversely, community mobilization for participation is often viewed as spontaneous movements initiated from the grassroots, which take the form of self-help and small-scale projects (Prasad 2003).

Avoiding this simplistic and counterproductive dichotomy, Cohen (1996) argues that community mobilization and social mobilization can be made unified parts of the same process of social change so that, ultimately, community mobilization is viewed as the community component of the national development process.

The forces of community awareness and social mobilization for development unleashed by the UNDP sponsored project motivated the rural community of Garhwal to move ahead on the already created path of development. And the all-women Self Help Groups took upon themselves the task of giving a fresh thrust to developmental activities and community empowerment. Rightly and appropriately, RLEK christened this programme a "Prakriya", meaning a process of change for the rural community. As pointed out by Kaushal, with a people-centered approach, Prakriya continues to focus on community mobilization and capacity rather than on the direct service delivery (Radhakrishna Rao-2005)

### **SOCIAL MOBILIZATION AS A MEANS FOR HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

Community members can maximize their potential not only by organizing themselves but also by upgrading their existing skills to better manage new inputs-business and community initiatives and establish effective links with local government and other sectors. The change agent can support direct training, exchange visits and other capacity building activities based on needs identified by the members of the community organizations. These can cover: organizational development, leadership, savings, and credits programmes, agriculture, natural resource

management, and other key areas. Local human resource development can best be promoted when trained individuals take up the responsibility to train other community members (Prasad 2003).

The massive expansion of the rural water supply infrastructure has gone hand in hand with increased community participation, awareness generation and decentralized management. Since women are the principal beneficiaries of the programme, they are involved in all stages of implementation of rural water supply and sanitation schemes, from hand pump mechanics to members of village water and sanitation committees.

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL MOBILIZATION**

Socio-economic development initiatives are a great incentive for community members to organize themselves. It is important, therefore, that initiatives, which include social mobilization, provide supports in the form of matching grants or access to credit, marketing and other services that will lead to tangible improvements in socio-economic conditions within the community. The process of identifying community priorities, participatory planning, implementing and monitoring of community projects and managing partnerships with local government, private sector and other actor's helps not only to improve local conditions but also to empower people and their organizations (Prasad 2003).

According to UNICEF (1997), dialogue is at the heart of social mobilization. Information sharing and discussion are critical elements of effective communication. Dialogue includes debate, disagreement and negotiation. It builds consensus and unities in diverse sectors of society around a common purpose. Sometimes, mediation is required to bring discussion and debate to agreement on problem definition, goals, or actions. Often dialogue is a means to empowerment. It may overcome or diffuse resistance, lead to compromise or to new ideas.

Besides dialogue, UNICEF (1997) is of the view that collecting; understanding and using information are other critical components of social mobilization. If gathering and disseminating information are to be a genuine part of social mobilization, it must involve local communities, families and children in the design and implementation of research and action. This includes identification of the problem and its cause, carrying out surveys or interviews, giving feedback, discussing the results and deciding what action to take; whether to organize local groups, advocate for a new service, or seek funds to create new infrastructure.

## **SUBSTANTIAL ROLE OF NGO IN SOCIAL MOBILIZATION**

In recent times, many grassroots micro movements also known as new social movements have been taking place centering on contemporary issues of importance such as ecology, environment, women empowerment, human rights, sharing of natural resources and the like. The NGOs in India have contributed handsomely towards social activism through intense campaigns, people's mobilization programmes and effective networks. The NGOs, as a social force facilitates collective action and people's mobilization. The NGOs play in making the people environmentally aware and sensitive to take part in the social activism through social mobilization process (Biswambhar Panda et.al - 2003).

Empowerment of poor particularly approach and social mobilization are the possible process for eradicating poverty. Poverty can be effectively eradicated only when the poor start contributing to the growth process through their active involvement. Voluntary organization, community based self-help groups and local governmental organizations have a substantial role to play says Sivasubramanian (1999)

The experiences across the country have shown that group formation and development are not a spontaneous process. A facilitator working closely with the communities at grassroots level can play a critical role in the group formation and development. The quality of the groups can be influenced by the capacity of the facilitator. The facilitator may or may not be a official. In some cases, NGOs can not only work as the facilitator but also help in Social Mobilization, Training, and capacity building of facilitators being used by DRDAs. DRD As may support such sensitive support mechanisms in the shape of NGOs or Community Based Organizations (CBOs) or Network of Community Institutions (SGSY Guidelines).

## **4. REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES.**

Vasudeva Rao in his study on the "Swasakti Banks" which are established, organised and run by SC women through self-management, has observed many changes in the thinking process of women through social effective social mobilization process. Those SC women who were once passive recipients have now become vocal, articulate and active stakeholders. They are able to ask for equal wage, assert self-esteem, and are able to provide better education, nutrition and health facilities for their girl children. On the community front, they could stop the social evil of 'Joginism' a system akin to the devadasi system, found in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra under which the girls from SC and BC are set apart under the name of wives of the gods jogsins, who

are actually harassed and exploited by the rich and powerful of the villages. (Kumar 2002) and prevented men from taking alcohol. Thus the illiterate SC women could gradually change the social scenario thanks to social mobilization process and initiatives.

Sundari and Geeta (2000) opine that the gender disparity in access to institutional credit is gradually narrowing down over time. Women should be encouraged to undertake micro enterprises with the available credit facilities by banks and other financial bodies. Poverty is often the consequence of unemployment, which being gender related, leads to feminization of poverty as poverty particularly affects women. However, authors suggest that factors such as training and skill formation, technology upgrading, credit women's bank, supply of raw material and market, promotion of small savings and publicity could contribute to empowering women.

According to Agarwal (2001), women need to be viewed not as beneficiaries but a active participants in the process of development and change. Empowerment of women can be effectively achieved if poor women could be organised into groups – for community participation as well as for assertion of their rights in various services related to their economic and social well-being.

Women's empowerment is not only in financial terms but also in attitudinal and motivational factors. There is no need for much inventions and innovation to empower rural women and what needed is reorientation, mobilization and realisation of women friendly environment in the rural areas, says Devasia, (2001).

According to Anand (2001), empowerment is the process of building capacities of creating an atmosphere, which enables people to fully utilize their creative potential in pursuance of quality of life. Empowerment gives women the capacity to influence decision-making process, planning, implementation and evaluation. It also deepens and popularizes the democratic process.

According to Gurumoorthy (2000), empowering women contributes to social development. Economic progress in any country whether developed or underdeveloped could be achieved through social development. The Self Help Group disburses micro credit to the rural women for the purpose of making them enterprising women and encouraging them to enter into entrepreneurial activities.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

In summary it may be indicated that for the purpose of present study, review of related literature is treated as a

continuous process (Conway et.al, 1070), starting with concept identification and editing with more pertinent for the research problem currently undertaken. The review pertinent to the earlier studies as shown in the preceding pages had clearly indicated that studies specifically aimed at the Social Mobilization are very scarce and particularly there is no objective study of the type described has hitherto been undertaken.

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