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ABSTRACT:

NGOs are usually formed among private groups of individuals sharing specialized interests in regard to issues that can be local, national or international. While a few such organizations had existed from the early beginnings of the nation-state, they were to proliferate in the transnational era and increased even more dramatically after World War II. This change can be attributed to technological developments, industrialization, and urbanization. Further still these factors are likely to continue to make the presence of NGOs felt in the global arena. The industrialized democracies in recent years have accounted for well over half of all memberships in international NGOs and have been headquarters for almost 90 percent of all these organizations. For example, the term NGOs is used to refer to such organizations as the International Red Cross, Oxfam, Care, Amnesty International, International Chamber of Commerce, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, International Criminal Police Organization, Salvation Army, World Federation of United Nations Associations, etc. Hundreds of NGOs are permitted direct involvement in the activities of several UN agencies. Their tasks involve sharing information and advancing proposals as part of a web of governmental, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental efforts aimed at global problem solving. NGOs, then, are an indispensable organ of international importance. NGOs can help the poor by providing access to the system, information on market opportunities, training facilities, information on sources of credit, etc. to meet the aspirations of rural poor, a unique set of training programmes are expected to extend for the officials of for better management of the organization and developmental initiatives. Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) are playing a very critical role in the process of managing development initiatives of various kinds at the rural level. Even the Government of India has recognized the critical role of the NGOs in the Five - Year Plans, as they have commitment, credibility with the masses and professional approach to the people's issues unlike the charitable organizations of earlier days.

Keywords: NGO, Social reforms, Rural development.

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I. INTRODUCTION:

India is a land of villages, and the Government of India has been implementing numerous rural development programmes for the upliftment of rural Communities. Non-government organizations with their advantage of non-rigid, locality specific, felt need based, beneficiary oriented and committed nature of service have established multitude of roles which can affect rural development. Several NGOs have been playing a vital role in rural community development, besides government interventions. Realizing that the government alone was not able to meet the challenges of the massive, enormous tasks in the process of rural development, the non-profit, voluntary and non-governmental organizations had to be involved in different phases and activities at the global, regional and local levels. Thus, in later phases, both the GOs and NGOs have been actively involved in transforming the lives of the rural poor. No doubt, NGOs have been constantly working day-in and day-out to solve various problems concerning children, women, senior citizens, environment etc. The NGO sector effectively works towards uplifting the socio-economic status of the poor. However, for a significant impact in the present era of liberalization and globalization wherein market forces adopt a key role, it becomes essential for the NGO sector to take a lead in helping poor fight the challenges posed by the system.

I.I HISTORY OF NGO'S:

International non-governmental organizations have a history dating back to at least 1839. It has been estimated that by 1914, there were 1083 NGOs. International NGOs were important in the anti-slavery movement and the movement for women's suffrage and reached a peak at the time of the World Disarmament Conference. However, the phrase "non-governmental organization" only came into popular use with the establishment of the United Nations Organization in 1945 with provisions in Article 71 of Chapter 10 of the United Nations Charter for a consultative role for organizations which are neither governments nor member states—see Consultative Status. The definition of "international NGO" (INGO) is first given in resolution 288 (X) of ECOSOC on February 27, 1950: it is defined as "any international

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organization that is not founded by an international treaty". The vital role of NGOs and other "major groups" in sustainable development was recognized in Chapter 27 of Agenda 21, leading to intense arrangements for a consultative relationship between the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations state of the world", rising in periods of growth and declining in periods of crisis It has been observed that the number of INGO founded or dissolved matches the general "s Rapid development of the non-governmental sector occurred in western countries as a result of the processes of restructuring of the welfare state. Further globalization of that process occurred after the fall of the communist system and was an important part of the Washington consensus.

Globalization during the 20th century gave rise to the importance of NGOs. Many problems could not be solved within a nation. International treaties and international organizations such as the World Trade Organization were centered mainly on the interests of capitalist enterprises. To counterbalance this trend, NGOs have developed to emphasize humanitarian issues, developmental aid and sustainable development. A prominent example of this is the World Social Forum, which is a rival convention to the World Economic Forum held annually in January in Davos, Switzerland. The fifth World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in January 2005 was attended by representatives from more than 1,000 NGOs. In terms of environmental issues and sustainable development, the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 was the first to show the power of international NGOs, when about 2,400 representatives of NGOs came to play a central role in deliberations. Some have argued that in forums like these, NGOs take the place of what should belong to popular movements of the poor. Whatever the case, NGO transnational networking is now extensive. Meaning and definition of NGO: NGOs are difficult to define and classify, and the term 'NGO' is not used consistently. As a result, there are many different classifications in use. The most commonly used framework includes orientation and level of operation. An NGO's orientation refers to the type of activities it takes on. These activities might include human rights, environmental,

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or development work. An NGO's level of operation indicates the scale at which an organization works, such as local, international or national. "Confronting the Classification Problem: Toward Taxonomy of NGOs" One of the earliest mentions of the acronym "NGO" was in 1945, when the UN was created. The UN, which is an inter-governmental organization, made it possible for certain approved specialized international non-state agencies - or non-governmental organizations - to be awarded observer status at its assemblies and some of its meetings. Later the term became used more widely. Today, according to the UN, any kind of private organization that is independent from government control can be termed an "NGO", provided it is not-profit, non-criminal and not simply an opposition political party. Professor Peter Willetts, from the University of London, argues the definition of NGOs can be interpreted differently by various organizations and depending on a situation's context. He defines an NGO as "an independent voluntary association of people acting together on a continuous basis for some common purpose other than achieving government office, making money or illegal activities." In this view, two main types of NGOs are recognized according to the activities they pursue: operational NGOs that deliver services and campaigning NGOs. Although Willetts proposes the operational and campaigning NGOs as a tool to differentiate the main activities of these organizations, he also explains that a single NGO may often be engaged in both activities.

The number of NGOs operating in the United States is estimated at 40,000. International numbers are even higher: Russia has 277,000 NGOs India is estimated to have around 3.3 million NGOs in year 2009, which is just over one NGO per 400 Indians, and many times the number of primary schools and primary health centers in India Some successful NGOs in Rural Development, through their hard work, dedication, commitment combined with professional competency and integrity have made their mark in the field of Rural Development during last three decades. The Government also acknowledged the contribution of such NGOs and supported them both by policy changes and financial assistance. This GO-

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NGO partnership in recent years has yielded very good results. In view of such a successful partnership, it was expected that more favorable policies towards NGOs would be introduced by the Government. Strangely, instead, reverse has started happening with the Government policies discouraging the involvement of NGOs. This example of reversal or regression in Government policy is clearly seen in the revised guidelines for watershed development (revised in 2001) by the Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development, and Government of India.

II. ROLE OF NGO'S IN SOCIAL REFORMS:

II.I GLOBALIZATION AND NGOS:

The advent of globalization has triggered the worldwide growth of civil society organizations in general and NGOs in particular (Brown, David et al, 2000). However, their impact in different countries has not been uniform and has been influenced to a large extent by the degree of openness to globalization and its implications. International NGOs and civil society alliances have been actively involved in disaster relief, service delivery and policy analysis. They have also been playing an increasing role in international policy debates that affect the institutions for international governance.

II.II NGOS' ROLE DURING CIVIL STRIFE:

Omana, Julius (2005)²⁶ has emphasized the importance of the role played by NGOs in an environment of conflict where traditional systems such as the government break down. He cites the case study of civil society organizations in war-ravaged Gulu District of Northern Uganda. He argues that the situation in Northern Uganda is representative of war-torn environments in other developing countries, notably Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia and Congo. He points to the failure of the government as well as the private sector in such environments in providing services to the people and to the potential of the "third sector" to fill the breach. Omana visualizes a role for civil society organizations, including NGOs in such environments, in three major areas – a) in providing essential goods and services b) in

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restoring peace and in advocating human rights and c) in developing infrastructure. Civil society organizations, according to him, are more visible than the government, due to their “participatory” methods of intervention. This approach implies working closely with beneficiaries, building trust, creating transparency and making NGOs more recipient friendly. Omana calls upon governments in such conflict environments to support the efforts of NGOs and to create a favorable policy environment that will facilitate their growth. At the same time, civil society organizations need to strengthen themselves by building co-operation and partnerships among themselves and with the government.

II.III NGOS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL:

NGOs are an important part of the social capital of any community. NGOs are primarily engaged in community driven development, which involves working closely with the poor and empowering them with a view to facilitate poverty reduction. According to Poteete, Amy (2003)108, community driven development brings about empowerment by building effective social institutions, which form the social capital of the community. Poteete, Amy (2003)27 uses the term social capital to refer to dimensions of social organization that generate multiple horizontal linkages and foster the development of social trust, collective reciprocity and tolerance. High levels of social capital are expected to facilitate provision of public goods and services and contribute to community well-being.

II.IV NGOS IN WATER ISSUES:

Water related issues plague many communities at the local level in most parts of the developing world and even in developing countries like India. There is enough experience to show that NGOs have the potential to play an important part in promoting water harvesting techniques, water conservation habits and building local institutions for self management of the community's water resources.

II.V NGOS IN MICRO FINANCE:

Micro finance operations of Indian NGOs began in a small way and later grew into a large-scale operation. Initially, only the savings of members of the Self-Help Groups were used to

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meet the credit requirements of the other members. Since this was sufficient only to meet consumption credit needs, the NGOs gradually began to raise funds from outside donors through agencies such as NABARD. The amount of credit funds available varied from NGO to NGO. Loan applications are submitted by members to the leader of the SHG. The decision to sanction the loan was made by the entire group, based on factors such as ability to repay the loan, attendance at group meetings and contribution to savings. All loans had to be guaranteed by two other members. In most cases, members could apply for a second loan only after the first loan was repaid. However, in emergency situations, such as for health reasons, a second loan could be granted. The loan amounts generally varied from as low as Rs. 50 to a maximum of Rs. 10,000. The average loan amount for most of the NGOs was Rs. 1500. The annual interest rates were fixed by the NGOs, based on market rates and varied from 12% to 24%. 7.18. Some banks do not value the idea of NGOs playing the role of financial intermediaries. During a workshop organized by the Small Industries Development Bank of India (2002), the argument was that NGOs could not match the formal financial institutions like banks in terms of financial know-how and scale of operations. It was felt that NGOs would do their best to focus on the formation, nurturing and capacity building of the SHGs and leave the financing activities to the banks and other micro finance institutions.

II.VI NGO POVERTY ALLEVIATION STRATEGIES:

Indian NGOs have been playing a prominent role in the empowerment of poor women, livelihood security and capacity building. However, the efforts of Indian NGOs to reduce poverty have had limited success, since they have been unable to tackle the root causes of poverty, namely lack of assets and unemployment. The same is true of local organizations, such as schools, banks, co-operatives and gram panchayats. A study by Rajasekhar, D (2004)²⁹ revealed the constraints within which NGOs have had to work - lack of technical and political capacity, managerial expertise, trained staff and infrastructure. It was also found that the main obstacle faced by NGOs in their efforts to alleviate poverty was the fact that they have had to work in isolation, due to weak support from local organizations.

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III. CONCLUSION:

Unless the NGOs are developed, prepared to face the new challenges like shortage of funds, stoppage of funds, it would be difficult for them to sustain. Rural India continues to suffer from lack of employment and self-employment opportunities owing to its narrow economic base. In the recent past, considerable success has been achieved in developing rural poor through entrepreneurship development approach which focuses on selectively utilizing local talent, appropriately developing them through training intervention and linking them with relevant business opportunities. EDI implemented Rural Entrepreneurship Development (RED) Approach, in collaboration with NGOs by training their development workers. One of the major hurdles faced in the process is the non-availability of required and timely financial support to trained entrepreneurs. Therefore, felt that the desired success rate could not be achieved in REDPs.

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