

THE ROLE OF NGO'S IN EDUCATION SYSTEM

By Neeta Khandpekar

Abstract: This paper tries to explore the role of non-government organisations (NGO's) in education sector. Most of the NGO's described have inspired us in some way or other way to look at education based on spiritual foundations and not merely the education which is being imparted nowadays in educational institutions. Education that is necessary for character building thereby bringing out the physical, mental and spiritual culture of the human personality. NGO's create awareness and will lead us in future. The human brains behind some of the NGO's have been highlighted.

Key Words: NGO, Role, Organisation, Education System, Values

The break-up of the Soviet bloc, culminating in the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, was associated with- and, by some observers, attributed to- the emergence of people's organisation through which opposition to the prevailing political system was powerfully articulated. These included church-based groups, unions, professional bodies, and also a nascent NGO sector. The idea of autonomous civil society organisations holding governments accountable, and at the same time pushing forward a democratization agenda, was appealing to observers from different points in the political spectrum, pragmatists and romantic alike. The opening up of the centralized economies of Eastern Europe coincided very neatly with the advance of the neo-liberal agenda that was already underway both in North America and Western Europe, and also throughout much of the South. NGOs had played a vital role in countries such as Brazil and Chile, often maintaining what little space might exist for debate, or holding on to an alternative vision of society. Sangeeta Kamat writes in the preface¹ "the future of neoliberalism is uncertain today, and with it the institutional form of the NGO that has existed as a compulsory feature of neo liberalization for the past more than four and half decades. The links between neoliberalism and the growth of NGO's are documented by scholars from diverse disciplines, studying vastly different geographical contexts across multiple institutional scales than span the local to the global. The presence of numerous NGOs at the grassroots that provide services to under-privileged populations, and at the same time mobilize them for their rights also present a threat to the neo liberal agenda of privatization.² That NGOs have a vital part in articulating the dramatic transformations in state and economy is visible". Today's NGOs are serving millions of citizens in scores of countries. Their reach and scope often eclipse both the private and public sector, touching and affecting the lives of every citizen.

NGOs and alternative think-tanks began to turn to Antonio Gramsci- one of the most influential modern thinkers on civil society- rather than to Che Guevara in thinking, through what their role might be in helping to build a new state, while also maintaining their own independent watchdog function and political protagonism.³

Over the past 30 years there has been a dramatic shift in the provision of basic services in many developing countries. Services in health care, education, and rural credit, once largely the province of government ministries and other public entities, are now increasingly being provided by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). 20% of World Bank financed projects approved in 1989 included some NGO or Community Based Organization (CBO) involvement, the figure was 47% in 1997. The usual answer to why NGOs were formed in such large numbers is that they fill the gaps created by withdrawal of government control under pressure of neoliberal reform policies.⁴ This paper highlights some lesser known NGOs in India in general and Mumbai in particular.⁵

Health care and education were prominent among the initial concerns of many NGOs in the 1950s and 1960s. Increasingly, however, NGOs have moved into projects directly targeted at alleviating poverty and attempting to raise the incomes of the poor. New concerns came to the fore in the 1980s such as gender and the environment, with social forestry and social conservation.⁶

Education has always been important but perhaps never more so in man's history than today. The key functionaries of any educational infrastructure are the teachers. Without the teachers an educational institution cannot function at all⁷. Effective education is important not only for the intellectual, but for physical, emotional, social, moral and spiritual development of the students as well as to accelerate the progress of the nation. Today when the world is increasingly becoming more and more of 'one island', education can address the need to inculcate the broad and modern outlook in Generation Y through education. The role of NGO's today in inculcating core values that are essential to ensure the smooth working of the day to day mechanism, by making people aware about responsibility, spread awareness and motivating the students fraternity for taking action to seek solution.

A Non-Government Organization is an organization neither a part of government nor a conventional for profit business. Arundhati Roy has called NGOs as 'indicator

species', i.e. the greater the devastation caused by neoliberalism, the greater the outbreak of NGOs.

NGOs are non-profit organizations presumably guided by altruism. The location decision of NGOs depends on how potential donors react to NGO success or failure. Because NGOs, unlike firms and government agencies obtain funds from external donors who presumably look for demonstrable results. NGOs might be benevolent and pragmatic: they might choose to locate in some poor areas, but not in poor areas primarily, because in the latter case the risk of a failure is so high that it could jeopardize the flow of funding from donors.

Varying perceptions of NGOs

Recently the term 'NGOization' is commonly used among many social movements, activist networks and academics to refer to the institutionalization, professionalization, DE politicization and demobilization of movements for social and environmental change.

Perceptions of non-governmental organizations in development are mixed. On the one hand, some believe that they are flexible, innovative and efficient vehicles for the delivery of basic services and for poverty alleviation, that they reach poor communities and remote areas at lower cost than governments, that they identify genuine local needs, and that they promote participation and transfer appropriate technologies- they are the "magic bullets" of development. Others argue that most NGOs are started and controlled by charismatic individuals who necessarily limit participatory decision making and that any evidence of NGO effectiveness remains weak. In South Asia, for instance, the Grameen Bank has built a worldwide reputation for its work and now offers development advice and consulting services to a number of other countries. There are two main reasons why perceptions of NGOs differ so. The term encompasses a variety of different organizations. NGO's vary in size and scope, religious orientation, their use of volunteers or professions, and their relationships to governments and donors. The same NGO, moreover, can evolve

substantially over its lifetime. Characterization of the life of a typical NGO generally describe an evolution from volunteerism, political activity, “conscientization”, and small-scale pilots toward professional staff, expansion in size and scale, report-writing and evaluation, contracting with donors and government, and involvement in profit-generating activities. At different times, the same NGO can appear to be original and foreign-directed, selfless and self-promoting, haphazard and efficient, giving credence to various charges of hypocrisy or “selling out.”

Also the judgments of NGOs tend to be polarized, for NGOs are usually defined in relation to what they are not. Unlike government, NGOs are supposed to prioritize the poor and to serve public, rather than private purposes. Also the same economic, social, political pressures that influence public sector and firm behavior eventually affect NGOs, particularly as they scale up. For example, Sahaya Sadanam, a rural development NGO in India, began as a popular community development association led by rustic villager with strong Gandhian ideals. As it grew in size and complexity, the founder brought on first his wife then his daughters, a brother, and a son-in-law, to help run the organization because he spent more time away fund-raising. Villagers believed that both the family’s and the NGO’s expenditures grew lavish, and the NGO resisted an attempt by a local Marxist party to unionize its staff. Although outrageous to some of those directly involved, from a distance it is not surprising that pressure to employ kin, which afflicts many if not most firms in India, would also affect this private entity. The incongruity stems from the belief that NGOs are supposed to serve public, and never private, objectives.⁸

This paper is structured as follows

- 1) Different NGOs
- 2) conclusion

The NGOs highlighted below create awareness which I feel is a big contributor towards our present and future education system

According to the census of 2011, India has the second lowest sex ratio among the 10 most populous countries of the world, with China at the top of the list.

Effectiveness of the incentive-based scheme Ladli in Haryana. The reason for choosing this scheme was Haryana's most adverse female child sex ratio. Under this scheme parents of Girl children who are residents of Haryana, or are domiciled in the state and whose second girl child was born on or after 20th August, 2005 are eligible for cash incentives irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, income or the number of sons. Also one of the parents along with the girl child should be resident in Haryana and the birth of both the girl children should have been registered⁹.

SEWA Self Employed Women's Association of India founded in 1972 by Ela Bhatt is a symbol for women empowerment. Around 80% of economically active women in India who were outside the purview of legislation (like vegetable sellers, rag pickers, bidi rollers, incense makers, cleaners, cart pullers etc) were organized into a union which strengthen their bargaining position. Bringing them together brought dignity and independence to millions of poor women, later it also led to the formation of SEWA Bank in 1974.¹⁰

NGO Don Bosco Balprafulta runs a project on child rights project called Talash (field supervisors of Talash are very active they have rescued 394 children between June 2014 and May 2015). In July 2015 a teenaged boy lingering near the long distance trains at CST station was spotted by a child care worker Sashikala Kale. Kale took the teenager to the children's home in Dongri. The boy was lodged in the boy's section of the shelter, where he was required to change into the standard issue uniform. The boy refused to change his clothes saying he wasn't a boy, but a girl. Then this 15 yr old was transferred to the girls section and later told her below story.

She had lived on the streets all her life. When she was five or six, living among boys. This is when it became apparent to her that the only means of survival was to dress like a boy and behave like one. She began portraying herself as a boy to find work. She worked in dhabas as a waiter. She also worked on construction sites. She changed her workplace often so that no one could find out that she was a girl. The girl found her disguise an effective way to keep predatory men at bay. This girl can read a bit of English, which she picked up from the menus she had to hand out at dhabas.¹¹

Thus this rescue will at least help the change in the future course of the young girl who hired her gender.

Have you heard of The World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child (WCPRC)?

It's an annual prize given to someone who has done outstanding work in protecting the rights of Children. This prize was launched in the year 2000, and it has grown to become the world's largest annual education and empowerment process for the rights of the child and global friendship for children. The 2007 award went to late Inderjit Khurana (who founded Ruchika) for her long struggle for the poorest and the most vulnerable children's right to education. Ruchika organization believes that if child cannot come to the school the school has to come to the child. The 2008 award went to 3 brave women from three different continents who fought for a better world for children and for more respect for their rights. They were Josefine Condori from Peru, Late Agnes Stevens from USA and Somaly Mam from Cambodia. The last name mentioned here Somaly has been, fighting for the rights of poor girls in Cambodia for more than a decade. Through an organization called AFESIP she has built 3 safe houses for the girls where they get food, healthcare, a home and the chance to go to school, as well as training for jobs when they are older. (information about all the above's work enclosed with this paper separately).

NGO GOONJ's founder and co-winner of the 2015 Magsaysay Award Anshu Gupta believes in the creation of a barter economy with waste as currency. He says 'the current development model's is we have never attended to the material needs of all sections of society. In an area in Madhya Pradesh in last few years not a single woman bought a sari. A sweater is a dream for most. Most of us have double standards- we want to live but we want others to survive. If you only took care of some of the material needs of society, you wouldn't just be providing them clothes, utensils or facilitating bridges- you would actually be freeing up their meager resources, which could then be diverted to some other pressing needs like better health

or education'. Goonj started its sanitary project in 2004-05, then its project School to School had a potential for social change.¹²

The Sangharsh Samiti, a platform of NGO'S and residents has launched a campaign against the Royal Tulip Hotel, which in March 2015 wrangled a liquor licence from the excise department. In June 2015 local politicians joined the Samiti's morcha against the hotel's bar, which is now one of the only two places you can get a drink in kharghar. Kharghar, which was planned to be one of the biggest townships, its villagers were determined to avoid going the route of how Belapur (evening brawls are frequent on a Belapur road lines with 24 bars) developed. Excise rules gave the gram panchayat the power to grant a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for bars and wine shops. Former Sarpanch Vishnu Patil decided not to give a NOC. Those who wanted to drink could go to Thane or Vashi.

The Samiti members don't want this social pollution in Kharghar. Many residents support the Samiti for many educational institutions are there here and it is easy for youngsters to get used to alcohol. But there are wine shops in the area, so the ban seem absurd to many.¹³

Point of View (POV) a Mumbai based NGO conducts an innovative and tactile sex education programme for the visually impaired. Initially, figuring out how to explain complicated concepts without visual aids was hard. Once while speaking to a group of blind women from rural Maharashtra, Gynaecologist Dr Shrutika Thakkar compared sperm to fish only to realize that 99% had no concept of what a fish looked like. To help them "visualize", Thakkar now hands out scientific models of body parts.

Snehdhara Foundation founded by Gitanjali Sarangan in 2012 in Bangalore, started when a child Sneha who suffers from Down syndrome after finishing her play schools was not given admission by 2,500 schools in Bangalore , for she was a child with special needs. Sarangan had done a course on arts- based therapy from the World

Centre for Creative Learning in Pune in 2010. Two years later, she launched the foundation, a non-profit that works with the differently-abled, their caregivers and families.

Today, the 8 room building houses those with special needs between the ages of 5 and 32. 80% of the students are on medication for ADHD Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, aggressive behavior and epilepsy.

At the beginning of the year, the teachers work on a curriculum tailor-made for each child. For instance Sneha needed to work on her writing, so she was made to use a brush dipped in water and paint. She then progressed to be a user in paints. The foundation's focus is on developing life skills. Their Oota Thota programme uses the kitchen to build awareness, social skills and a prospective livelihood option. To improve motor skills, they are taught to string flowers together to make a garland.

Immediately after a concept is taught, students are asked to apply it. A theater performance, which showed them ways to handle money, was followed by a visit to a shop, where they had to implement what they learnt. "We want them to lead as normal life as possible, instead of sheltering them" says the founder of the NGO. Other interesting concepts include the Friday night stayover-to help the children learn to manage independently. Divided into two groups, the students spend the night at school every other week, so they learn how to brush their teeth and comb their hair. This exercise gives confidence to both parents and children that they are independent. Sarangan believes that both, the foundation and the parents are "equal stakeholders" in the learning process. Which is why she has identified 3 students who help with packing and labeling a Daily Bread, a bakery located a kilometer from the school. On other days, they attend movies, weddings, and all this helps them to learn to conduct themselves in social situations.

While the students begin their day by 10.30 am, the teachers start an hour earlier. This time is to allow them to meditate on the terrace to ensure that they are in the "right" frame of mind."¹⁴

Late President Dr.APJ Abdul Kalam talked about the concept of PURA which means Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas in his co-authored (with Srijan Pal Singh) book entitled Target 3 Billion. PURA concept started around 2001 with the master mind behind it Mr Indirasen then director of IIT Madras and Delhi.

Under PURA how capacity building can be done at the village level is stressed for example, A fisherman sells his catch to a middleman for very little profit because of the short shelf life of his catch. He has no access to cold stores. That leads to poverty. PURA's purpose is to give people knowledge so they can enhance their capacity building.

Dr. Maya Tulpule's Shweta Association (self help group for people having Albino) works from Pune to change the mindset of our society towards people who have white spots on skin. It organizes bride-bridgroom matching programmes for albino people . A film entitled *Nital* on this theme was made which won 2006 best cinema award by Maharashtra Rajya Puraskar¹⁵.

Dr. Jayanta Sthanapati did a project(which some NGO's can get inspired) on Planetariums in Girls Schools in India, wherein he highlights that today there are 50 planetariums in India but only two are housed in girls schools. One in the Arya Kanya Gurukul in Porbandar (Installed in 1965) and other in Modern High School for Girls in Kolkata (opened in 1989). These two planetariums continue to serve to become a wondrous start for mental nourishment of girl children and also would let them ponder over the varied themes of astronomy.¹⁶

The aim behind writing this essay was to document unknown NGO's playing direct or indirect role in education. One of my personal learnings from this paper is NGO is a good word when it comes to non-profits. NGO's have creativity and commitment to the greater good. NGO's bringing together a strong social mission with rigorous discipline can be a powerful force for positive change. Under a non-profit umbrella

greater risks are possible, which creates the possibility for greater innovation. NGO's can bring a clear sense of mission, an innovative vision and approach.

The new generation of students is more engaged compared to earlier "boomer" generation. They are bursting with energy and desire to make a difference in the world.

According to Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore there are four types of Teachers

- A poor Teacher Tells
- An Average Teacher Explains
- A Good Teacher Demonstrates
- A Great Teacher Inspires

I think most of the NGO's described above inspire us in some way or other. Education means not merely the education which is being imparted nowadays in schools, colleges and universities, but also the education based on spiritual foundations, necessary for character building and physical, mental and spiritual culture of the human personality.¹⁷

Education thus is far beyond gaining knowledge. It is more about an ounce of knowledge and a pound of wisdom. NGO's can bring renaissance in the way humanity work and lives. As private voluntary agencies, NGOs could participate in the social safety-net projects and social investment funds that were supposed to alleviate the immediate effects of structural adjustment. Hence NGOs are encouraged to present themselves as appropriate channels for aid to the poorest, for those at risk of falling through the net- or for whom the net was simply never designed to protect. Many NGOs that had previously prided themselves on how little government money they accepted began to raise their self-imposed ceilings as the money flowed in.¹⁸

IF EGG IS BROKEN BY OUTSIDE FORCE LIFE ENDS. IF BROKEN BY INSIDE FORCE, LIFE BEGINS- GREAT THINGS ALWAYS BEGIN FROM INSIDE.

End Notes

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¹⁷ *The Needs of Life Movement of The Servant of Servants of God*, Bombay, 1955 P6

¹⁸ Deborah Eade Op Cit P10

Josefina-Condori

<http://worldschildrensprize.org/josefina-condori> retrieved on 18.10.2015



Many of the hundreds of thousands of domestic workers face abuse in the homes in which they work. Josefina, who has been a maid herself, has been fighting for the rights of domestic workers since she was a teenager. In 1994 she founded Yanapanakusun, an organisation that runs a home for vulnerable girls and a centre for domestic workers.

Josefina and Yanapanakusun run courses and do preventive work in 30 villages in the Andes mountain range around Cusco. They also broadcast five radio shows and run a hotel, a farm and a school for girls and boys who work. 500 girls have lived in the home. Tens of thousands have received support and help from the drop-in centre. Josefina gives the girls food, clothes, shoes, healthcare, a home, the chance to go to school, security and love. More than anything else, however, she works to ensure that child workers know their rights and are able to demand respect for those rights.

Agnes-Stevens

<http://worldschildrensprize.org/agnes-stevens> retrieved on 18.10.2015



Hundreds of volunteers donate tens of thousands of hours as tutors for children who live in shelters, in motels, in cars or on the streets. The tutors give the homeless children security. When the kids move, School on Wheels follows them and gives them stability in an otherwise unstable existence. Agnes and School on Wheels help children and their parents

with changing schools and retrieving lost documents, like grades and birth certificates. The children can stay in touch with School on Wheels using a toll-free phone number. The kids also get backpacks, school uniforms, school supplies and money for the bus or the subway. At many shelters, School on Wheels has created special learning rooms, with computers, books, and drawing and writing materials, to give the children a quiet place to study and the chance to be kids. In 2015, Agnes Stevens sadly passed away. But her legacy and organization will live on.

Somaly Mam

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somaly_Mam retrieved on 18.10.2015



Mam served as an untrained healthcare worker with Médecins Sans Frontières and, in her spare time, handed out condoms, soap, and information to women in the brothels. In 1996, she founded AFESIP (*Agir pour les Femmes en Situation Precaire* or "Acting for Women in Distressing Situations"), a Cambodian NGO dedicated to rescuing, housing and rehabilitating women and children in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam who have been sexually exploited.^[15] AFESIP conducts outreach work to try helping the women still enslaved. The organization also works with law enforcement to raid the brothels. The company has locations in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam

In June 2007, Mam co-founded the Somaly Mam Foundation, a nonprofit organization formed in the United States that supported anti-trafficking groups and helped women and girls who had been forced into sexual slavery. The Somaly Mam Foundation (SMF) attracted the support of U.S. business leaders and Hollywood stars. SMF was the global fundraising arm of Somaly Mam's Phnom Penh-based AFESIP

Inderjit Khurana

Worldschildrensprize.org/inderjit-khurana retrieved on 18.10.2015



Inderjit Khurana received The World's Children's Honorary Award 2007 for her long struggle for the poorest and most vulnerable children's right to education. She opened her first railway platform school 21 years ago. Today her organisation, Ruchika, runs twelve platform schools, six nurseries, 75 slum schools, 20 nursery schools, preventative HIV and AIDS projects, two "schools on wheels", vocational training and clean water and sanitation projects in the slums. Inderjit and Ruchika also offer healthcare and run an ambulance service for emergencies. In addition, Ruchika has two helplines for children and women and gives scholarships to gifted poor children.

Inderjit believes that if the child cannot come to the school, the school has to come to the child. She and Ruchika seek to give a basic education, building up children's self-esteem and opening the door for them to have a life free from poverty, child labour and violence.

Dr. Maya Tulpule

<http://www.myshweta.org/my-story.php> retrieved on 18.10.2015



Over the years I have overcome the anxiety. After completing my medical graduation I started practicing as a General Surgeon and got associated with many social organizations holding honorable positions. Living life with two colours and two identities is not so easy but I have learned to live happily with it.





Bio

Dr. Mrs. Neeta M Khandpekar, D.Litt is an Asst. Professor Department of History, University of Mumbai. She can be contacted at neeta_khandpekar@yahoo.com