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SOCIAL MOVEMENT NGOS – ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN, DISABLED PEOPLE, DALITS AND ADIVASIS

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Abstract:

NGO, SHG, Social Activist etc are very much commonly used words today. The current paper is aimed at looking at the NGOs of the deprived and depressed section of the Indian society i.e., the dalits, the adivasis and along with them the physically challenged and the women. It also looks at the beginning of them all and also at their current status, contribution and achievement in their respective fields. In our country where rule and remedies for most problems have been insured by the Indian constitution, the lack of interest in its implementation has called forth the need of the help groups of Non-government, yet government aided organizations. The current paper has looked at the roles of these organizations in uplifting the various deprived sections of the society.

KEYWORDS:

Liberation, Mahila Samity, NGO, Social Movement.

INTRODUCTION

SOCIAL MOVEMENT:

Social movements are collective way of expressing. This is a mode of change like any other attempt at progress. Social movements which are collective efforts are either directed in favor of or often against the existing system. Social movement can be to bring about a positive change in any aspect of life-cultural, social, economic or religious.

There are some important definitions of social movement that has given by different authors. Some of them are given below-

According to Paul Wilkinson, "A social movement is a deliberate collective endeavor to promote change in any direction and by any means, not excluding violence, illegality, revolution or withdrawal into 'Utopian' community."

Sidney Tarrow defines a social movement as collective challenges [to elites, authorities, other groups or cultural codes] by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interactions with elites, opponents and authorities.

Charles Tilly defines social movements as a series of contentious performances, displays and campaigns by which ordinary people made collective claims on others. According to him social

Movements are a major for ordinary people's partition in public politics. He argues three major elements to a social movement-

- 1) Campaigns
- 2) Repertoire (repertoire of contention)
- 3) WUNC displays

Twentieth century has seen quite a few social movements – e.g., the Russian revolution, or the Chinese revolution, even the rise of fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany are also social movements. Which encompassed socio-economic, political-cultural all the aspects of human life. All social movements were basically an outlet of anger and revolt against the social structure. All labour movements, tribal uprisings or so called lower caste movements were all aimed at bringing positive change in their favour-attempts to, either successfully or unsuccessfully, changing the existing socio-political, economic structure.

CHARACTERISTICS OR ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS:

There are some specific characteristics or elements of social movements. Some of them are-

- (i) Definite end-
- (ii) Collective efforts
- (iii) Informal organizations
- (iv) Planned efforts
- (v) Ideology
- (vi) Development

Apart from these Broom and Seljenic has given three types of characteristics of social movements

- (i) A Distinctive Perspective and Ideology
- (ii) A Strong Sense of Solidarity and Idealism
- (iii) An Orientation towards Action

TYPES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS:

There are some different-2 classifications of social movements by scholars. We shall discuss some of them-

Classification by Horton and Hunt

- (i) Migratory Movements
- (ii) Expressive Movements
- (iii) Utopian Movements
- (iv) Reform movements
- (v) Revolutionary Movements
- (vi) Resistance Movements

Classification by Herbert Blumer

- (i) General social movements
- (ii) Specific Social movements
- (iii) Expressive Social movements

Classification by Rush and Denisoff

- (i) Revolutionary Movements
- (ii) Regressive Movements
- (iii) Reforms Movements
- (iv) Expressive Movements

NGOs

After social movement is briefly introduced it is now the turn to introduce NGO or non-government organizations. A 2002 UNDP human development report – nearly 1/5th of the world's NGOs were formed in the 1990. The NGOs now contest in spaces which were previously maneuvered by social reforms movement or trade unions. It is not easy to define NGOs for there are hardly agreements over it. They are widely connoted as major group', pressure group, or interest group. Put voluntary organization,

independent voluntary sector; third sector organization, grassroots organization, activist organization, non-profit body etc. the term was first used by the UN but the works associated with NGO existed by its existence an institution – the NGO as they subsequently began to be called. The earliest known NGOs the 19th – 20th century organizations were – British Anti slavery society (1838), international committee of the Red Cross (1864), sierra club (1892); etc. As these names suggest these was basically organization that addressed social issues. The NGOs are basically social service provider on the issues which the govt. do not or cant address – in India basically NGOs are govt. funded but also work in opposition to it. The NGOs are legally constituted organization created by legality and operates independently from any govt.

DALITS SOCIAL MOVEMENT NGOS:

The Dalits are various known by various names throughout the country- Perial, Panchama, Ati Shudra, Antyaja or Avarna etc. All these has the same meaning i.e., they don't belong to the higher rank of the Hindu caste system. Historically they had suffered inhuman treatment in the Hindu society – considered as untouchable. Mahatma Gandhi devised the term “Harijan” or “children of God” for them in the year 1933 while working for their uplift meant and emancipation.

The first important Dalit movement was the one led by the Mahar leader Dr. B. Ambedkar who no doubt was an all India leader and a top nationalist and constitutional specialist. His movement undoubtedly had improved the condition of the “Mahar” the Dalits of Maharashtra is negligible.

The main issue centering which the Dalit movement had been led was 'untouchability' – the inhuman harassment that they were made to face. The later Vedic times obviously untouchability had discouraged them in all socio-political, economic and cultural fields. The dalit movement can historically been divided into on the Dalit movements- “the post – Ambedker Dalit movement was ironically only that in the lad- a movement of Dalits Challenging some of the deepest aspects of oppression and exploitation, but failing to show the transformation two classes- 1) which was liberative /reformative movement & 2) Alternative movement (Ghanshyam Shah 1980). The former aims at emancipation of the Dalits through reformation of the caste system and abolition of untouchability. While the latter was directly aims at searching for alternative solution for emancipation e.g., mass conversion to another religion. Quoting Gail Omvedt, Shah concludes Dr. Ambedkars Mahar liberation movement and other movement aimed against untouchability was followed by Gandhi Dalit liberation movements like temple entry etc. post independence the govt. had constitutionally made provisions for reservation etc for in the educational, political and service sectors for the Dalits. But these had not been able to deliver to the grass root level. Here the role of the NGOs & SHGs, voluntary organization is commendable.

'Scheduled Castes’ categorized in the Indian constitutions are those castes of the Hindu religious hierarchy who are in the govt. schedule which entitle them with some protections and affirmations.

EVALUATING THE PRESENT DALIT CONDITION

According to Minority Right Group International, 2006, Dalits are approximately 170m of India's billion people. They are a limited share in agriculture holding and even limited irrigated land holding. According to Neelima, 2002, they are merely agrarian slaves or serfs or tenants at will. In the educational scenario among Dalits too the picture is very gloomy. In the already sick public education system in India, Dalit children suffer the most. E.g. School attendance in 1998-99 was 65.7% for SC children age 7 – 17 years compared to 81.3% of high caste. (Jenkins and Bars, 2006)

Dalit men are mostly bonded labourers and women and children are engaged in “civic sanitation work” What is surprising that though India played a heroic role to pressurize the U.N against the apartheid south Africa regime, it has refused to admit at discrimination against dalits is similar to racial discrimination.

The Dalit non-govt. organization both in India and abroad have been involved in raising the plight of India's 250m untouchables. One of the most important tasks of these Dalit NGO is to bring the plight of the Dalit to the attention of the international community and to document and publicize human right violations. The poor Dalit hardly have any opportunity to register their protest outside their rural abode which is caste ridden. Many Dalit women have joined NGOs to collectively fight abuse and exploitation.

The darkest spot of the Indian culture, the caste system, having its roots in the religious scripture, has seen rays of hope there the NGOs against caste based oppression and persecution.

Below are some Dalit NGO who has fought incessantly against Dalit Oppression.

Ambedkar Center for peace and justice and National campaign on Dalit Human Rights are

involved in bringing the plight of the Dalit people to the attention of the international community and to document and to publicize human right abuse. They have in their charts the objectives to fully enfranchise them as social citizens and complete annihilation of caste based discrimination.

After the national emergency the Dalit leaders of south India like L. Ilayaperumal and Vai. Balasundaram parties and funded their own Dalit organizations like “All India Human Rights Party”, “Ambedkar Maakkal Iyyakkam” in 1977, and the “Scheduled Caste Liberation Movement” of 1988.

Human Rights Watch – a Leading International NGOs have done great work in changing the condition of the Dalits in South. Asia.

Social watch India is a New Delhi Based broad civil society network to pressurize govt. institution to work towards their commitment to equality and democracy.

Navsarjan is an important NGO of Gujarat Which had led successful campaign again scheduled drinking water, wells, schools and implementation of Atrocity Act.

Dalit freedom Shakshi Human Right is an Andhra Pradesh based NGO which had led successful movements towards protecting the Dalits Human rights.

There are other international Non govt. organizations which have been working for Dalit emancipation. E.g. the Dalit Solidarity Network – UK based in 1998 started a network of individuals, groups, movement working in solidarity and Dalit communities in India.

Another one International solidarity network works in collaboration with the United Nations and European Union against caste based oppression.

SNDT (The Pune based NGO) mention earlier had made good achievement in improving Rag-pickers who are inclusively Dalit women and Children but providing them alternative livelihood.

CONCLUSION;

The role of NGOs, SHGs and voluntary section has been recently recognized by the govt. in developing India and has praised and gratified for stepping into the govt. shoes where there role was negligible in the proceedings of all India conference on the role of the voluntary section in National development held in the Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 20th April 2002 by the planning commission of India.

It has recognized that the voluntary section has emphasized the need for charity and sharing of wealth and concern for the poor- leading the activities towards growth of Indian institutions, hospital etc for the poor, needy, Dalits etc by the govt. the need to develop partnership between govt. and voluntary section was emphasized, the need to empower and fund the NGOs was recognized and helping NGOs and SHGs to expand their networks.

ADIVASI SOCIAL MOVEMENT NGOS:

Before we embark upon the Adivasi movements it is imperative we make an assessment of the term 'Adivasi'- the term can be broken into two parts- 'adi' meaning ancient and 'vasi' meaning inhabitants i.e.; the ancient most inhabitants of a land. They are also described as aboriginals or tribes. Articles 342 deals with the 'Tribals' of India and categorized them as “ST”. The STs constitutes 8% of the total Indian population and are categorized to 1) Frontier tribal's 2) non- frontier tribes.

ISSUES

Even the pre-independence era the tribals have asserted themselves and had raised their voices against exploitation of the colonial masters or of the indigenous Zamindars questioning them. Of them the Santhal uprising, the Kol, the Munda, the Bhunjis rebellions are mention worthy which were long drawn and as such had been quite successful to keep colonial state apparatus and the Zamindars to be on their toes. K.S. singh has classified the Adivasi movement pre independent India. India in the three parts 1st between 1795- 1860 precisely during the establishment of British empire. 2nd between 1860-1920 the haydays of the empire when their relations with the land and the forest were isolated and 3rd post 1920-1947 when the bunched movements for this emancipation and also for 'political liberation' of the country- i. e. national alone.

Post-independence the character of the their uprisings changed – now the launched movement to assert their political autonomy taken by the fear that thrown open to the majority castes Hindus- their identity will be threatened theu will be wiped out. E.g., the Naga movement or the Khasi movements

The other kind of movement involved Srinivas's term “Sanskritization” – the tribal asserted their caste Hindu Status. – Fuchs in 1967 opined at “the low castes” was greatly excited when treated with the

same respect as those of the high caste- a new phenomenon for them. Therefore the adivasi organized them to enter the “Brahminical order” to get caste Hindu status. The economic character of the tribal movements involved their grievance when the non- tribals encroach into their socio- culture- economic lives thereby explaining them economically.

TRIBAL SANSKRITION MOVEMENTS ARE ALSO CALLED BHAGAT MOVEMENT.

Scholars have variously understood the assertion of the Adivasi. NK Bose (1965) e.g., called it “sub nationalism” of the adivasi based on their religion and language whereas Rey Burman (1967) has called it as “Infranationalism”- that they were gradually shedding their “tribalism” in favour of “nationalism”

The post independence period has seen some of the massive adivasi or trival resisitences. To name some are the Chipko Movement, Narmada Bacho Andolan etc. since the colonial times, the tribals ere aggrieved with the forest policies of the govt. and this has continued even after independence. Chipko movement was actually a movement which saw multiple participations- tribals, women and environmental activists. Many tribals still has self – sufficient or subsistence economic and they are heavily dependent on on forest especially for fodder. So these Tribals of the Himalays forest of Garhwal district of U.P were aggrieved at the indiscriminate feeling of their forests trees, in the early 1973, the forest dept. refused to allot ash tree to the “Dashauli Gram Swarajya Sangh” (DGSS) a local co-operative organization in the Chamoli district, but to a private. Company called Symonds Company. Thus an aggrieved DGSS registered protest by laying themselves in the front of the timber trunks and put on fire resin and timber. When these proved ineffective, a famous leader Chandi Prasad Bhatt deviced a new technic to launch protest by hugging the tree thereby obstructing feeling of trees. In the local language “Chipak Jayenge' or thus emerged the 'Cipko Movement”(Guha 1989). The movements had claimed lives of many tribals including women. One old lady who is believed to be instrumental of sparking was martyred. The movement though is considered to have not achieved much of its objective, yet had a wide success in gaining its immediate objective that is prevention of cutting of trees. The movement spread like wild fire to the neighboring districts and provinces like Kumaon, Chamoli etc. this Tribal movement symbolized not only an assertion of tribal grievances and its remedy but also prevented depletion of a huge a huge forest resource and soil erosion.

Ramachandra Guha(1989) had called the movement as a “peasant movement” private sphere whereas in the public profit it was also an environmental movement. Gail Omvedt (1993) has tried to bring out the women movement the implicit in it.

Similarly the Indian govt. undertaking of the Narmada River Valley project has evicted and displaced many people mostly tribals who had settled along the bank and course of the Narmada river. They were also not cared to be properly rehabilitated by the state implemented programs. This sparked off the launching of the protest by the socially aware activities in the 70s, gaining movements in the 80s. the leaders like Medha Patkar are always fighting for the basic human rights of these evicted tribal's at the same time against the Dam- project which would bring in ecological balance with the movement of 'Save Narmada' attracting the attention of the activists like Baba Amte, Sunderlal Bahuguna etc many organizations has been founded for moblising and resettling of the tribal's evicted. This has also gained international attention leading to the World Bank stoppage of funding the project. The NGO related to the “Save Narmada Andolan” has worked commendably for resettlement and rehabilitation of the 'Eustis' – thereby registering huge success in the names. Thus the Adivasi (now a politically incorrect word) who are happy in their own world and detest encroachments- mostly instrumented by the governmental and calls for 'adivasi' protests, uprisings. These attract the activists and NGOs who proliferate to their cause thereby saving them and giving them new base of life at crucial movements.

WOMEN SOCIAL MOVEMENT NGOS:

Women are another field where the non- govt., non-profitable voluntary organization has made commendable achievements. As the concept of such organization suggests, they are to wrk not at theh grass root level, rising higher and attempts to work in the areas which have escape notic of the state so far or the state simple are no willing or not daring to intervene in these fields.

Women are the world is the suppressed fraction of the society. Not only Asia, Even European histories his shamefully kept their women out. Their voice is deliberately silenced. Not only that, women are over the world have been and are subjects of oppression, no better than several objects in this male dominated world. It is strange that women has been enfranchised or recently in U. K. one of the ardent followers of democracy.

In Indian women's position has been no better than the “untouchables” – barred in the field of

education and every field where males dominate, women has lived a pathetically dominated life. Since the later Vedic age (in the early Vedic period, women enjoyed relative autonomy) women's position has continued to degenerate. Whatever few women pictures in these times like Mira Bai, Razia sultan, Pandit Ramabai etc are are exceptionally exceptional cases. Thus one sees the need for women emancipation.

Attempt towards is not a recent phenomenon in India. It has started in the colonial period in the so called period of Indian “renaissance” – 19th C with raja R.M.Roy's successful attempt at abolition of 'Sati' in 1819 when lord Bentinck declared “Sati” as a punishable offence. Reforms for women emancipation followed with widow remarriage Act initiated by Ishwar chandra Vidysagar, abolition of female infanticide, raising the age of marriage for girls all followed in succession well in the colonial period. But these have scarcely helped to improve women's position in the society. Female feticide, dowry, child marriage still havoc out society

The role of reformers and emancipation of women has now been taken up by the various NGOs and Non-profit organizations.

In the academic field project to voicing the women has voicing the task of so called 'feminists' while in the practical ground this has been the prerogatives of the non-profitable non govt. organizations.

Geraldine H. Forbes in his essay “the women's movement in india” “traditional symbols and new roles” had possessed the example of two women Saroj Nalini Dutta and Narojini Naidu who were the earliest Indian women to talk of the emancipation of Women. And set up organization for the political and social movement of women. Well between 1910-20 lots of association related to women sprang like Mahila Samities, Women's Club, Ladies societies. What is mention worthy about these movements to these related to women where that they looked out the Vedas and other religious texts. The two women in and were no emancipation to this norm. Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi also talked extensively about women emancipation and empowerment. Mahatma Gandhi role about women mobilization in organized forms hardly needs to be mention. But none of these early movements aspired for the emancipation of women from the traditions. Their role were no supposed to be antithetical to that of men, i.e. they are to expected to be the 'Pativrata', 'Sati', 'Sita', or 'Savitris' who are all explicitly inferior to their husbands.

The social movements related to women were generally directed towards two causes –

- (i) Women's equality movements- i.e., attempt to bring the women at par with in terms of rights – social, political, economically.
- (ii) The other was for women's liberations – where as the former didn't directly challenge the existing socio, political, economic, cultural norms, the later did. These kinds of movement attacked the most exploitative instrument of the society and the abolition of feudal patriarchal norms. Associations such as Women's India association and the all India conference all establishment in the 1920s made commendable attempts at political empowerment of women and spreading education among them and made similar attempts post-independence. But what is the main point of critic of these attempts was that they considered and continued to think women as inferior being, subordinates in the society.

'Helpers' rather than 'comrades' in the political field – Patrick Kilby in his book NGOs in India: the challenges of women's empowerment and accountability, Rent ledge (2001) argued that one of the 'paradoxes' facing empowerment NGOs in India is that the one area that where govt. security is less, but where NGOs are still slow to react, is gender.

The NGOs are particularly non-responding to the difficulties faced by the rural Indian women. Till 1992 when 'the Respective plan' for women led to a statutory commission for women, at that time there were very few NGOs targeting program for women empowerment with the exception of SEWA a self employed women's Association and Annapurna Mahila Mandal. Vishwanath (1993) argued that not by 1980s rural based NGOs and a majority constituency of women immersed. The main development approach for NGOs working with women that has emerged over the past 30years is through self help groups (SHG).

An NGO based in Maharashtra called Centre for continuing education of women's university (SNDT) has worked commendably for the Dalit 'Women' and 'children' who had no other means of livelihood but work as 'rag pickers' or 'waste pickers' - they provided with them an alternative opportunities. They in collaboration with another international organization provided these women and children with adult literacy program hardly has a reason to attract them. So the other alternative left was to give them an alternative 'identity' to 'scavengers' and 'unclean'. So their approach now shifted a more “right-based” approach and there they achieved commendable success. They managed identity cards for these rag picking women thereby resisting harassment that they had so far faced.

Women empowerment - the most important objective of women related NGOs involved

empowering women to at least to an extent that they go out of their homes independently of any family member symbolizing for the autonomy for action. Not any SHGs directly aimed at “Pardah” or at least women seclusion – the use of Phrases like “being able to act independency” indicated what these organizations attempted. Thanks to the achievement of these SHGs now India is also experiencing greater women participation in the gram panchayat level indicating women by passing women injustices based on gender and caste bias. They had considerably improved the 'dalit' women position by launching movements for equal opportunity for them to use village “well” for washing. Kilby has evaluated the role of NGOs and SHGs in empowering women in the household in the followings words.

“The main reason given by the women for any change in the power relations in the household, was due to their participation in the SHGs and the consequent change in their role in the household economy. Because they could access the NGO programmes through these groups, it gave them some legitimacy within the household as these programmes usually brought additional resources to the household”

The NGOs and SHGs had considerably emancipated Dalit women for social exclusion of mundane nature like the former didn't have the right to use the village well meant for the higher caste. While surveying for his book, Kibly was reported that as a result of being in a SHG and the NGO work with it. Some women eventually did use the well with little or no repercussion as they began to be held in high esteem as a result of their association with NGOs.

DISABLED PEOPLE

According to World Health Organization, Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Thus disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives.

The disability social movement is the movement to secure equal opportunities and equal rights for people with disabilities. The specific goals and demands of the movement are: accessibility and safety in transportation, architecture, and the physical environment, equal opportunities in independent living, employment, education, and housing, and freedom from abuse, neglect, and violations of patients' rights. Effective civil rights legislation is sought in order to secure these opportunities and rights.

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