

## NGOs Contribution towards Environmental Protection And Green Economy

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### ABSTRACT:

Now a day's protection of environment is a critical and important issue which is developing interest among people as well as organisation. Every organisation, institution and person has an accountability and responsibility to protect surroundings. Environmental protection includes not only polluting surrounding around self but also continuous growth and preservation of natural resources and the ecosystem. Present day, the requirement of environmental protection alertness and implementation of laws for the same is more challenging and demanding than ever before. Instead of many legal provisions in Indian Constitution about Environmental protection, the environmental downgrading persists. The major reason for environment degradation is inadequacy of effective implementation of different laws.

The emergence of NGOs symbolizes a collective response by society specifically in those areas in which the government/state has either unsuccessful to reach or done so partially. The relevance of public awareness and NGOs engagement in environmental protection is accepted all over the world. NGOs have been initiating by taking a number of steps to promote discussion and debate about environmental issues, outside the broad spheres of popular media and the educational system. Advocacy and awareness is especially crucial in promoting concepts such as sustainable development, natural resource conservation and the restoration of ecosystems. These programmes aim at spreading environmental consciousness not only among the student community, professionals and other intellectuals but also general public.

Internationally there is a growing environmental awareness amongst stakeholders, individuals and communities. This increase in knowledge and awareness has been the result of campaigns and education programmes run by major public interest groups. These include non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at the international, national and regional levels. These organizations extend beyond their own community and can reach places where governmental agencies cannot sometimes reach.

**KEYWORDS:** Environmental protection, Civil Society, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

### INTRODUCTION:

Man's concern for natural environment has always been a point of consideration but the serious concern about the issue of resource depletion and degrading environmental ecosystems began after the Second World War, when industrialization started vigorously. Population explosion, ever increasing thirst of consumerism and advancement in human life and life style posed a serious challenge to the very survival of the human species. Environmental problems thus, have become critical. The protection of environment and conservation of resources has emerged as the focal point of nations. The international debate and concern for ecology has now become the watchword. As the concern for environmental problems increased, government institutionalized the environmental issues through new legislations and regulations. NGOs embrace a wide array of agencies within and across different countries of the world. At their broadest NGOs are simply agencies or groups, which are different from government bodies. However, NGOs are distinctive in containing a voluntary component and also because they do not operate for profit. Over the past quarter of a century and especially during the past few decades there has been a rapid growth in the numbers of NGOs involved in the development, in the number of people working for NGOs and in the amount of money that flows into these voluntary agencies working in the activities such as –Disaster management and relief, development, public health, rehabilitation, environment protection

etc. However, this paper focuses on the role played by NGOs particularly in the protection of environment.

The protection of environment is a pressing issue. Every person, organisation and institution has an obligation and duty to protect it. Environmental protection encompasses not only pollution but also sustainable development and conservation of natural resources and the ecosystem. Today, the necessity of environmental awareness and enforcement is more demanding and urgent than ever before. Despite provisions in Indian Constitution providing for Environmental protection and many statutory provisions, the environment degradation continues.

The encouragement to public participation in environmental management through legislations in recent years has also enhanced the role of NGOs and other civil society organizations. Broadly, four kinds of participation by NGOs had been recognized: participation in decision making, in implementation, in benefits and in evaluation. Among all these functions, the facilitation of dissemination of environmental information had been a crucial aspect of each - whether as the watchdogs of government policy and industrial activity, or indirectly educating entrepreneurs and consumers.

As the issue of environment pollution in India is large and diverse with wide ranging socio-economic dimensions, the Government of India has envisaged an important role for NGOs in environmental protection. The 'Policy Statement for Abatement of Pollution' (1992) included various activities of NGOs and the general public. It specifically stressed upon partnership with the public in implementing environmental laws (Government of India, 1992). To encourage the role of NGOs in environmental protection, the Pollution Control Boards gave official recognition to NGOs. The Central Pollution Control Board established an 'NGO Cell' to coordinate pollution control activities across the country (CPCB, 2000-01). Besides establishing a network with the State Pollution Control Boards, NGOs were provided with pollution testing kits.

They were also offered financial assistance to organize mass awareness programs on environmental issues. The NGOs' activities were placed in three different categories –

- (a) Supplementing the pollution control authorities through monitoring and vigilance;
- (b) Preparation of literature, audio and video programmes for educating the general public; and
- (c) Organizing and conducting programmes/camps for creating mass awareness.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) also supported NGOs engaged in promoting environmental education in the country. The National Environmental Awareness Campaigns, promoted by the MoEF successfully encouraged many NGOs to work for environment protection and sustainable development. About 4000 NGOs were given financial assistance for creating environmental awareness. An Environmental Information System (ENVIS) network was setup to disseminate information on environmental issues.

NGOs have been taking a number of steps to promote discussion and debate about environmental issues, outside the broad spheres of popular media and the educational system. Advocacy and awareness is especially crucial in promoting concepts such as sustainable development, natural resource conservation and the restoration of ecosystems. NGOs can sensitize policy makers about the local needs and priorities. They can often intimate the policy makers about the interests of both the poor and the ecosystem as a whole. In providing training facilities, both at community and government levels, NGOs can play a significant role. They can also contribute significantly by undertaking research and publication on environment and development related issues. It is necessary to support and encourage genuine, small and local level NGOs in different parts of the country which can provide much needed institutional support specific to the local needs.

It is an acceptable fact that no government can enforce environmental laws to keep cities clean. They rely heavily on NGOs to provide the infrastructure for monitoring, creating awareness and taking action. NGOs are playing a very effective role in presenting the various environmental issues before the people and those in positions of authority. It is also an accepted fact that the civic agencies are more amenable to suggestions and advice by people who work in the field of environment. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played a major role in pushing for sustainable development at the international level. Campaigning groups have been key drivers of inter-governmental negotiations, ranging from the regulation of hazardous wastes to a global ban on land mines and the elimination of slavery. Some of the

NGOs which have been playing an active role, towards protection of the environment and issues, like, sustainable development, both globally and specifically in India need a special reference here. *Following are some of the environmental NGOs in India that have been successful and achieved much in the field of environment protection, conservation and sustainable development.*

**WWF (India)** is engaged in a multitude of activities for protection and conservation of the environment in the Indian context. Climate change and energy conservation are among the chief areas of concern for the organisation. The forest and biodiversity conservation division strives to promote and enhance conservation of forest ecosystems in the country through a participatory approach involving key stakeholders. Through its environment education programme, it aims at strengthening individual and institutional capacity in nature conservation and environmental protection through widespread education and awareness.

**CLEAN-INDIA** Deeply concerned with the deteriorating environmental situation in the country, Development Alternatives initiated the CLEAN-India (Community Led Environment Action Network) programme with five schools in the national capital in 1996. Today, CLEAN Delhi has about forty schools regularly involved in monitoring water and air quality in over 150 locations spread across Delhi. Over 2000 children have been directly trained on environmental assessment and improvement activities. They keep vigil, assess environmental quality, plead, cajole and lead the community in monitoring environment. Action programmes like solid waste management, plantation drives, energy conservation, paper recycling, etc. to improve local environmental conditions have also been initiated by schools, resident welfare associations, business and industrial associations as well as individual households. Campaigns against the use of poly bags, firecrackers during Diwali and toxic (chemical based) colours during Holi and for saving the city's 'Green Treasure' are also carried out. The experience in Delhi indicates that when environment assessment is community based, it mobilises the community to review the local environmental conditions and take requisite measures, without waiting for undue external support.

**TERI (INDIA)** Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI) was formally established in 1974 with the purpose of tackling and dealing with the immense and acute problems that mankind is likely to be faced with in the years ahead:

- On account of the gradual depletion of the earth's finite energy resources which are largely non-renewable and
- On account of the existing methods of their use which are polluting

TERI has launched a major project, the first phase of which is completing near completion. This project called growth with resource enhancement of Environment and nature (GREEN INDIA-2047)" has vigorously estimated the reduction in India's key natural resources during the period 1947- 97, and has completed economic values of consequent losses, which in some cases are alarmingly high. On the basis of past experience and a careful analysis of the cost behind the degradation that has taken place in the past strategies for the future have been developed, whereby a fresh and creative approach can be taken in the next 50 years. TERI has now established the World Sustainable Development Forum (WSDF).

### **SULABH INTERNATIONAL :**

The Sulabh International Social Service Organisation founded by **Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak** in the year 1970, is the largest nationally and internationally recognised pan-India social service outfit with 60,000 volunteers on the rolls who work to promote human rights, environmental sanitation, health and hygiene, non-conventional sources of energy, waste management and social reforms through education, training and awareness campaign. It has developed a scavenging-free two-pit pour flush toilet (Sulabh Shauchalaya) safe and hygienic on-site human waste disposal technology; a new concept of maintenance and construction of pay- and use public toilets, popularly known as Sulabh Complexes with bath, laundry and urinal facilities being used by about ten million people every day and generation of biogas and bio fertiliser produced from excreta-based plants, low maintenance waste water treatment plants of medium

capacity for institutions and industries. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements has recognised Sulabh's cost-effective and appropriate sanitation system as a global 'Urban Best Practice' at the Habitat-II conference held at Istanbul (Turkey), in June, 1996. The Economic and Social Council of United Nations has granted special consultative status to Sulabh in recognition of its outstanding service to mankind. The Sulabh technology has liberated so far 60,000 scavengers from the demeaning practice of physically cleaning and carrying human excreta. Sulabh is also producing and using biogas from human excreta from its 118 plants which is again an innovation in the areas of non-conventional energy.

### CONCLUSION:

Environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in recent years, have grown in size and in number as a result of governmental negligence towards the environmental crisis. NGOs have grown in importance to a point where they act as key arbitrating agents within the field of environmental policy. By interrelating global and local concerns, NGOs find themselves able to not only emphasize important ecological issues, but also raise consciousness about the environment.

In a nutshell, it can be stated that designing governance structures that draw NGOs into environmental problem solving, policymaking, and implementation remains an important challenge. The solution lies in a revitalized global environmental governance system that would facilitate both an expansion of these roles for NGOs and the development of better-defined processes of participation. NGOs cannot replace the state, but may perform complementary as well as supplementary role. Nonetheless, a successful Government-Corporate-NGO partnership based upon a commitment, mutual trust and respect, as well as the willingness to understand the values, objectives and concerns of all partners is a step in the right direction that would lead to a significant improvement in the environment.

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