

**INTERVENTIONS OF NGOS IN STOPPING HUMAN TRAFFICKING  
IN INDIA-A STUDY**

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**ABSTRACT**

An organisation is a group of individuals working together co-operatively, under authority, to achieve goals and objectives that mutually benefit the participants and the organisation. When two or more persons work together voluntarily for social welfare, they require a defined system through which they can relate to each other and co-ordinate their efforts to meet the demands of the organisation. These types of organisations of people are called voluntary organisations.

The origin of voluntary organisations is very old in the history of the country. Individuals as well as groups have been offering their services with a philanthropic spirit, but the organisations that work with a group approach, rather than an individual approach, are considered as voluntary agencies. The term voluntarism is derived from the Latin word “Voluntas”, which means ‘will’ or ‘freedom’. The will assumes various forms of impulses, passions, appetites or desires. The assumption of voluntarism in an Indian context is based on the following hymn of social welfare. It says –

*“may all humanity be happy may all be without disease May all witness auspicious sights May none have to undergo suffering”*

The term “volunteer” is normally used to denote someone who offers unpaid services to a good cause. The sociological concept of “Voluntary Association” applies to NGOs in developing countries. In general, any type of services oriented or production-related organisations are clearly non-governmental. Voluntarism, in association, is a key organisational characteristic of all NGOs. By origin, activity, and content, the NGOs have been categorized as ‘developmental’, ‘environmental’, ‘philanthropic’, ‘vocational training’, ‘research’, ‘advocacy’, or ‘emergency aid’.

Deliberate social change may be greatly facilitated by community organisations. In the performance of many services and control functions, governments cannot deal effectively with unorganized individuals. Thus, it is important that the community be organised so that it can effectively relate to the administrative institutions performing services associated with nation-building and development programmes. This voluntary social action has become imperative in the process of obtaining developmental goals.

In India, NGOs formed by individuals, communities, and organizations have existed since ancient times. India has developed a unique tradition of social work through its built-in system of providing security to one another through the joint family system, kinship, and other supporting social structures. The role of the state has varied in the past, ranging from indifference to benevolent interest, depending upon the interest of individual rulers. Community support, rather than state benevolence, was the mainstay of voluntary agencies throughout the centuries preceding independence. Whether the case was an individual in distress or an emergency caused by a famine or flood, the volunteer agencies were the first to initiate social services.

Voluntarism played a significant role in ancient and medieval India. Even in Mughal periods, a lot of voluntary efforts in different areas were made, although in those days, such areas were confined

by religious philosophy. During the British period, many philanthropists and charity organisations established agencies to provide welfare service to the poor, orphaned, sick, suppressed, handicapped etc. Working for these types of people in a collective way is quite traditional. According to the Encyclopedia of Special Science, promotion of voluntary action is a time-honored tradition of all democratic societies that value citizen participation. It also defined a voluntary association as an unincorporated group of persons organized for some common purpose. Voluntary associations may be established for profit or for social, charitable, or other non-commercial ends. In the post-independence period, the government became committed to promoting social welfare. Planning was adopted as the mechanism to explore the socio-economic resources. . In such a scheme of planning, expectation was to organize the people to safeguard their own interests. But as India is a big country, government efforts alone were felt insufficient to meet these social needs of its large population.

There were always some missing links found in the long chain of community reconstruction. Hence, involvement of voluntary organizations that are in touch with grass root realities became not only a welcoming factor, but essential and desirable. The Voluntary agencies started representing the organized expression of public opinion and social action. The five year plans have been giving special incentives to the voluntary agencies. In the fields of social welfare, they are playing a significant role in the promotion of social welfare, the creation of awareness among people about the various measures to prevent sickness, and the provision of welfare for the victims of different types of disease.

Since the beginning of the First Plan there has been a co-operative venture between the State and NGOs. The Planners in India have emphasized all along the role of voluntary agencies and have recognized the services rendered by them. The First Plan said: "A major responsibility for organizing activities in different fields of social welfare like the welfare of the women and children, social education, community organization etc., falls naturally on NGOs. These agencies have long been working in their own humble way and without adequate aid for the achievement of their objectives with their own leadership, organization and resources. Public Cooperation through Voluntary Social Service Organizations is capable of yielding valuable results in channeling private efforts for the promotion of social welfare."

The growth of NGOs in the developing world has been the most remarkable feature in recent years. NGOs are present in both developed and developing countries, and have been involved in mobilizing support for the specific, basic need goals. The main focus of NGOs is to work according to the needs of the people due to the governments' inability to reach a large number of people, especially in a developing country like India. Voluntary organisations have become the eyes and ears of the beneficiaries of the weaker section of the society who have been left out of mainstream development benefits. This work is significant in emphasizing the independent role to be played in the development of the country. No doubt many NGOs are of different types and with different nomenclatures.

NGO's generally tend to have a more flexible and adaptive approach in contrast to the typical bureaucratic model, which is framed with strict rules and regulations. The decision making is as close to the ground as possible and the operational autonomy given to employees allows for innovation and response to the external environment with flexibility. The recruitment, training, and motivational aspects and systems of rewards and controls are given a special importance. These, in turn, result in a good worker-client relationship, facilitating the delivery of high quality services. Continuous monitoring of performance, setting up self-appraisal, and evaluation of performance enables identification and rectification of weaknesses. This approach also provides scope for mid-term corrections. In contrast, this feature is absent in government departments. The most important aspect of management practice adopted by NGOs is to ensure a low-cost delivery system to key administrative and operational costs, a practice

which is quite contrary to the government programmes where a large portion of the budget goes towards cost-intensive buildings and other facilities.

There are two types of organisations: Formal and Informal (Koontz & Donnel, 1982). The formal organisation pertains to the structure of roles in an enterprise which clearly indicate the degree of delegation of authority, the span of control, supervision, specialization and the communication channels. An informal organisation, on the other hand, grows out of interpersonal relationships. Here, the members do not have any conscious purpose; rather, the relationship may contribute to collective results.

Formal organisations can be further categorized as:

- Curative Organisations
- Rehabilitative Organisations
- Preventive Organisations
- Developmental Organisations

The role of NGOs in different fields of social work has evoked great interest in recent years among planners, administrators, political leaders, industrial or trading corporate companies, etc. and this interest has created different type of voluntary organisations.

Recognizing the role of voluntary organizations, the planners of our country, after independence, introduced many projects with the aim of initiating community participation. The Community Development programme, initiated on October 2, 1952, was the first in this field and represented a new step in the first five year plan in the area of social welfare.

We can observe the NGOs fulfilling one or more of four broad functions:

1. Providing services to people or undertaking other activities for a wider benefit.
2. Serving as a channel for self-help or shared help among people who have a common experience, problem or interest.
3. Campaigning to change the circumstances that cause a social problem.
4. Raising money so that some one else can do or change something.

Generally, NGOs are regulated under the Societies Regulation Act (1980), the Indian Trust Act (1882), the Cooperative Societies Act (1904), or the Joint Stock Companies Act (1959) depending on the nature and scope of its activities, to give it a legal status. An NGO also has definite aims, objectives, and programmes for the fulfillment and achievement of its purposes and possess a proper administrative structure and a duly constituted management and executive committee. It is an organisation initiated and governed by its own members on democratic principles, without any external control. It raises funds for its activities partly from the exchequer in the form of grants-in-aid and partly in the form of contributions or subscriptions from the members of the local community and/or the beneficiaries of the programmes.

The Roles of NGOs in the community are:

- Upholding the national character of the programme through a non-sectarian, non-political approach to keep it above political party lines or community and religious biases.

- Participating in the framing of government policies and programmes and acting as a pressure group when necessary.
- Complementing and supplementing government programmes and setting standards for them to emulate.
- Undertaking many types of sensitive activities which the government does not, or will not take up, at least for the time being (eg. sex education, programmes of family life)
- Carrying out experimental projects and innovations where valuable lessons may be learned, but which run a risk of failure the government may not be in a position to take.
- Working out different ways of providing education and services to help the programmes move faster and reach greater numbers.
- Exemplifying community action and also being the catalysts to extend it to the grassroots level.
- Bringing to bear a more personalized, flexible and sensitive approach which also safeguards human rights.

#### **Government contribution to NGOs:**

1. To contact, inform, and enthuse as many agencies as possible concerning the promotion of welfare, as well as developmental and environmental activities for all sections of society.
2. To formulate prototype programmes of varying kinds and offer them as examples of what agencies can undertake.
3. To help agencies to pool resources and obtain technical aid.
4. To arrange for counseling and the exchange of information and experience and to get feedback on a counting basis.
5. To make suitable arrangements for the training of personnel and for preparing projects, budgeting, recording, monitoring and evaluation.
6. To help NGOs in sensitizing personnel and bringing emotional fabric, solidarity, and harmony.

Unlike government organisations which must operate within a rigid periphery and whose work is restrictive in nature, NGOs operate from a source of desire and inclination towards their work which allows them to become close with those they are helping and play a substantial role in assisting them.

The NGOs, since they are not part of the government machinery, can undertake and execute the social and welfare agenda of the government in a more effective manner because of their commitment and dedication to a particular cause and also because of their personal and specialized out-reach. Those NGOs which are specially associated with combating trafficking in women and children and sex work have much more responsibility and focused dedication and are more service-oriented to the target groups than any other general NGOs, because the former have to interact directly with persons affected with STDs, HIV/AIDS.

The following includes the various responsibilities of the NGOs involved in this particular field:

- *Dedicating themselves to the cause of social service with non-profit motive.*
- *Being compassionate and stepping into the shoes of the victims of sex work in order to understand the difficulties of the victims and treat them with empathy.*
- *Fundraising and raising awareness through advertisement and publicity.*
- *Keeping the action simple and transparent.*

- *Maintaining rapport with government departments to ensure the smooth functioning of projects and the education and training of the children of the victims.*
- *Coordinating with police and monitoring the progress of the cases.*
- *Coordinating with the medical authorities.*
- *Organising social support and practical assistance from the society.*
- *Conducting workshops and seminars to raise awareness of the issue among various segments of the society.*
- *Working towards increased political intervention at national, regional and international levels and organising grassroots level efforts with women activists.*

Throughout the world, the NGOs working for the mainstreaming of prostitutes are very small in number, as is the case in India. Only 15% of the total NGOs in the nation work with the issues related to women. Out of those 15%, the number of NGOs working for mainstreaming of commercially sexually exploited women is too small. The reasons for such small numbers may be various; it may be social, political, economic, or cultural. With all these problems in south India, a good number of NGOs are showing interest in implementing programmes for mainstreaming. While some NGOs are working very hard for mainstreaming, others are just 'trying their best to rehabilitate them'. In this deep or surface level journey, the areas of intervention are:

**1. Rescue:** It means to safeguard the victims from the exploitative situation and brings them out to a safer place where their human rights are protected and their dignity is felt and expressed. The important issues to be focused on while rescuing the victims are (a) conformity with the law (b) protected identity (c) services where safety of the victims will be protected (d) recovery of personal belongings. The rescue activities are usually carried out by NGOs in collaboration with law enforcement agencies and are in the forms of raids on brothels or similar situations where rescue is always a challenge.

**2. Rehabilitation:** After the survivor/victims of commercial sexual exploitation have been rescued, they are faced with a new set of challenges including the returning to their places of origin which is difficult, if not impossible in most of the cases. Social stigma from their families and communities is enormous and most of the survivors choose to leave. In such cases they are left with no choices for alternative livelihood. The initiatives taken to help the victims to settle down socially, economically, psychological and physically is known as rehabilitation intervention.

**3. Reintegration/Repatriation:** The return of the victim to the family, but not without adequate assessment and ensuring social acceptance and family support, is known as reintegration. Repatriation is similar to reintegration, but with one difference: while reintegration takes place within the border, repatriation takes place across the border. The organisation will ensure that repatriation is carried out depending on how safe and nurturing the family environment is for the victims. If and when the victim chooses to return to an abusive family situation, the organisation would need to intervene and keep the victim in the organisation.

**4. Developmental activities:**

Building a positive self-image and confidence, developing the ability to think critically, fostering group cohesion for decision and action, ensuring active and equal participation in the process of social change, etc., are the major focus of development activities of commercially sexually exploited women after rescue. These activities also focus on making the women assertive and helping them to frame associations in which they will be the ultimate authority. Though a part of rehabilitation process, developmental activities offer strength to the exploited women to face the dual faceted society.

5. **Follow up activities:** Reintegration/repatriation, facilitated by the city/town/state/ country of residence, involves inducting the victim into a structured follow-up programme which ensures (a) protection against re-trafficking and against commercial sexual exploitation, (b) protection against stigma and discrimination, (c) protection against any other exploitation, (d) optional link with a variety of professional support systems, (e) confidentiality, (f) reorientation, (g) restoration of rights over parental, ancestral and community property and entitlements. During the initial period, periodic follow-up meetings are required and thereafter whenever necessary, to ensure that the victim receives adequate support and does not get re-trafficked.

6. **Prevention:** A Prevention programme is initiated to “prevent” the cycle of trafficking from ever beginning. Community based poverty alleviation programmes; increasing livelihood options, increasing the income of women, forming women’s forums, etc., can play an important role in preventing commercial sexual exploitation. Apart from this, educating the community to be alert about the issue also contributes to prevention; the NGOs have different kinds of activities to approach the community in this regard.

7. **Advocacy:** Advocacy is an exclusive and mutual representation of a client or a cause in a forum in an attempt to systematically influence decision-making in an unjust or unresponsive system. It intends social change, securing social justice. The field practitioners will have more exposure in this regard than the policy makers will, as they work at the grassroots level of the field. Therefore, providing input for the policy makers and insisting they adopt the same is the prime responsibility of the practitioners for the effective mainstreaming of commercially sexually exploited women. So, having advocacy programme at the organisation not only helps with effective mainstreaming, but also acts as evidence of the efforts the organisation puts into the field.

8. **Prosecution:** The best method of tackling the problem of trafficking is the integration of prevention and prosecution. Prosecution includes several tasks such as the identification of the traffickers, charging them, confiscating the illegal assets created out of trafficking, making the traffickers compensate for the damages and ensuring that they do not cause any further harm.

9. **Research:** The very field of prostitution is no longer only a social and cultural issue, but has become an issue of economic and political importance, a change which has created a demand to examine prostitution from a scientific perspective. To fulfill this need, research activities will seek the systematic facts through an objective verifiable method in order to provide knowledge and reveal the relationship among various variables. Research will also act as opportunities to redefine the problems, suggest solutions, and making scientific conclusions.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Finally, trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation is the most dehumanizing trade. A victim in flesh trade is subjected to innumerable physical sexual and psychological tortures, which leaves irreversible scars in the mind and the body. No human being deserves to be forced into a situation that destroys dignity and damages the self for a lifetime. All efforts therefore need to be taken to prevent such a situation as prevention is always better than cure. Otherwise, every victim has a right to be rescued. But the trafficking process desensitizes a victim forcing her to loose trust and faith in all support systems. It is this reason that makes a victim looks at the process of rescue with distrust. To overcome such situations, the NGOs are putting their efforts in rescuing the girls and

women from exploitative situations. But when the intensity of the problem in society is observed, the number of NGOs involved in mainstreaming commercially sexually exploited women is very less. This situation demands further more NGOs to work for the issue for which lot of the government support through framing different policies and programmes and community support by involving themselves in the process of mainstreaming are required more.

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