



# India's Million Missions

75 Years of Service  
Toward Nation-Building

India's Non-Profit Sector Report



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## INDIA'S NON-PROFIT SECTOR REPORT

**Collaborators of this report include:** Art X, Business and Community Foundation, Banyan, Catalyst 2030, Crafts Council of India, Dasra, Digital Empowerment Foundation, GuideStar India, Indian School of Development Management (ISDM), IIM Ahmedabad Research Team, Praxis, Salaam Baalak Trust, Socio Research and Reform Foundation (SRRF), Society for Social and Economic Research (SSER), South India Producers Association (SIPA), Fairtrade, Teamwork Fine Arts Society, VANI and Vidyasagar.

## Authors & Associations

The authors of this report are drawn from the CSO COALITION@75 and have devoted their pro bono time to it, in the best traditions of civil society, and have been involved in the research and writing of the various sections of this report. Donors to the survey and GDP reports are gratefully acknowledged: Anu Aga, GIVE India, Mohit Satyanand, Business and Community Foundation (BCF), and UNESCO India. The research by SSER and GuideStar India has been funded by the above donors. Contributors to this report: Business and Community Foundation, Banyan, Catalyst 2030, Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy, Crafts Council of India, Dasra, GuideStar India, IIM Ahmedabad Research Team, Praxis, Salaam Baalak Trust, Socio Research and Reform Foundation (SRRF), Society for Social and Economic Research (SSER), Vidyasagar, Mathew Cherian Osama Manzar of DEF, and Prof. Sankar Datta ex Basix

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## NOTE FROM THE AUTHORS

This research was undertaken by a group of civil society members to demonstrate the immense contribution of civil society to the nation in 75 years of Independence. This research summary containing an introduction to the study, key findings, and recommendations has been prepared to accompany the main report and may be shared with external partners. Some of the insights shared which require more context will be on the website prepared for this report.

This report is a public resource in the public domain in the public interest. Anyone can use, critique, forward, or copy this report in its entirety.

CSO Coalition @75

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This report is dedicated to the citizens of the nation with whom the sector has worked over the last 75 years.

## DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the CSO Coalition, Catalyst 2030, or any other organisation mentioned. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this paper, however, the research is subject to uncertainties that are beyond the author's ability to control or estimate precisely. Readers are responsible for assessing the relevance and accuracy of the content of this research.

## **ACRONYMS AND KEY TERMINOLOGY**

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
PWD	People with Disabilities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
NPI	Non-Profit Institution
OBC	Other Backward Classes

## FOREWORD

In the 75th year of India's independence, this report attempts to measure the significant contribution of the Indian Non-Profit Sector (NPOs) or 'NGOs' as they are popularly known to the nation.

We have used 'Civil Society Organisations (CSOs/NPOs - Non-Profit Organisations as this includes networks and citizen groups. It pays tribute to the stakeholders of India's 3 million estimated charitable non-profit organisations that enrich the lives of Indians, upholding the nation's democratic ideals of equality and equity. Every day, they touch the lives of more than 200 million Indians - children, youth, women, and elderly across the country, including People with Disabilities (PWDs) and LGBTQ communities.

The report describes the vast canvas of work of the 16 million employees, 21 million non-profit honorary board volunteers/members who inspire the work, and the millions of volunteers and donors who support the work and causes served by civil society/non-profit organisations in India.

It provides a snapshot of what millions of non-profit organisations have done in 75 years in India and welcomes journalists, policy-makers, governments, educators, students, and the general public to write about the good work being done with dedication across the country with meager resources raised in difficult circumstances to reach the 'unreached', the 'last and the least'.

The full report is available on many websites in the public domain as a public resource in the public interest. Relevant statistics and sector reports will be added from time to time. Please circulate the report to the well-wishers of civil society.

**CSO Coalition@75**

January 2023

# Preface

In mid-2022, a group of civil society organisations joined together with the express aim of measuring the contribution of civil society to the nation. The research covered all the states of India and tried to reach out to all the civil society organisations / non-profit institutions registered as trusts, societies, and Section 8 companies.

A voluntary group came together, convinced that a Narrative Change for the Non-Profit Associations (NPA) and Non-Government Organisations (NGO), Non-Profit Institutions (NPI) who collectively make up the civil society sector was the urgent need of the hour. Many of us are keen to demonstrate that the sector, over the decades, has contributed in a holistic way to India's development, NPOs/CSOs\* have several ways of working with communities and raising their resources to serve India. To present a realistic and holistic picture of the sector, contributions, and good practices, a major survey to glean primary data to understand this sector has been undertaken. It is a public resource in the public domain to be used by all as they wish for advocacy or as a fact sheet, acknowledgment of civil society's (NPO/NGO) contribution to the Nation @ 75.

## **CSO COALITION@75**

*In the report, we have used NPOs - non-profit organisations, but community-based organisations are also called civil society organisations (CSOs). These terms will appear in the report but are all part of the non-profit sector.*

# Fact sheet

- CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOs) improve the lives of excluded people and leave no one behind. By 2030, they would have created a substantial impact. Civil Society Organisations contribute to Sustainable Development, are engaged in all the SDG goals, and are big players in SDG 17 on collaboration and partnership.
- Civil Society Organisations are places where the common man comes together to solve many of India's problems in every sector of the economy and combine vision with commitment.
- Civil Society Organisations are problem solvers, innovators, job creators, and revenue generators and create community leaders in every sphere of activity. Civil Society Organisations are involved in Panchayats in rural areas and urban wards in the country and promote community engagement and participation.
- Civil Society Organisations are Economic Engines of Growth and contribute to 2.7 million jobs and 3.4 million full-time volunteers, generating employment figures higher than that of the public sector. A substantial portion of Civil Society Organisations contributes Rs. 3.56 trillion, which is as high as 2 per cent of GDP.
- Civil Society Organisations create skilling opportunities for millions of youths.
- Civil Society Organisations provide services to millions of vulnerable children in children's homes and the elderly in old age homes.
- Civil Society Organisations provide services that enable millions of treatments in various mission hospitals and charitable hospitals.
- Civil Society Organisations provide shelter to about a million homeless in cities.
- Civil Society Organisations spur economic activity by working with millions of artisans, making products, and selling and promoting crafts and crafts-based livelihoods.
- Civil Society Organisations work with almost 25 million self-help groups to create livelihoods.
- Civil Society Organisations improve the lives of millions of individuals in India and are community-focused, grassroots-oriented, and people-centric to "leave no one behind."

# Executive Summary

1. The NON-PROFIT SECTOR (NPO) activities remain an important part of socioeconomic life in India.
2. It is estimated that the economic contribution of the NPO sector to the Indian economy increased from about Rs 73,000 crore in 2008-09 to about Rs 3,56,000 crore in 2019-20.
3. As a share in gross domestic product, the economic contribution of the NPO sector increased from about 1.41 per cent in 2008-09 to 1.94 per cent in 2019-20. In 2022-23, it is poised to be at 2 per cent of the GDP.



# Key Recommendations of the Report:

## A. RATIONALISE TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are granted tax exemption because, as the name suggests, they voluntarily supplement the work of the government without being the government. The government collects taxes for various welfare and development work, which is what NGOs also do. Hence, they are tax-exempt, and donors who contribute to such organisations also get 50 per cent tax deductions up to 10 per cent of their gross total income. However, the income tax exemption and deduction regulatory regime since the year 2008 has become dis-enabling and crippling for NGOs. We, therefore, have the following recommendations to make:

1. Organisations falling under category (vi) of Section 2(15) of Income-tax (i.e., any other object of general public utility) must ensure that any income-generating activity (dubbed by income tax authorities as ‘business activity’) must not be more than 20 per cent of the NGO’s total income. As per the Supreme Court of India’s landmark verdict of October 19, 2022, what Income tax needs to test is whether the so-called “business activity” (fees for services or sale of goods made by beneficiaries) is in furtherance of the objects and whether carried out with a “profit motive” or otherwise. The Supreme Court has ruled to the effect that if fees charged are on a “cost basis” or “nominally above cost”, they should not be treated as income from trade commerce or business. Section 2(15) of Income tax should be suitably amended in the light and spirit of this verdict by the apex court.

- 2.** Originally, NGOs were required to apply 75 per cent of their income every financial year. In the past several years, it has reached 85 per cent . We suggest that it should be brought back to 75 per cent so that NGOs can save 25 per cent every year and build reserves for meeting future exigencies and ensuring sustainability.
- 3.** Under section 80G, the donor is entitled to a tax deduction of only 50 per cent, and that too, only up to 10 per cent of his or her income. This should be enhanced to 100 per cent to incentivise giving.
- 4.** Alternatively, deduction u/s 35AC should be reinstated whereby donors giving for rural welfare or projects aimed at the urban poor would provide the donor with a 100 per cent tax deduction.
- 5.** Earlier, there was a weighted deduction of 150 per cent u/s 35(1)(ii) for scientific research and 125 per cent u/s 35(1)(iii) for statistical research, but has now been reduced to 100 per cent . We suggest that this should be brought back to the original weighted deductions to encourage support for scientific and statistical research.
- 6.** Under Finance Bill 2023, it is proposed that Form 9A (exercising the option to use income received late in the fiscal year or accrued but not received to the immediate next fiscal year) and Form 10 accumulate income for up to five years has been advanced from October 31 to August 31. We suggest that NGOs be allowed the option to file Form 9A and Form 10 by October 31, as has been the practice so far.
- 7.** The Audit Report in the new form 10B has been made more elaborate. Virtually all the information provided in the return filed in ITR 7 is repeated here in the new form 10B. This creates an additional burden on tax auditors in furnishing virtually the same details twice.
- 8.** Amendments to the Income Tax Act over the years have disabled inter-charity donations.

Internationally as well as locally, there are grant-making foundations and resource-mobilising intermediaries, and on the other hand, there are grassroots-level implementing NGOs. It is proposed under the Finance Bill 2023 that if one charitable organisation gives funds to another charitable organisation, only 85 per cent of the total so granted would be deemed as the application of the donor organisation's income for charitable purposes. This will directly and severely impact corporate and other grant-making foundations as also intermediaries and indirectly also the grassroots level NGOs.

9. Under Finance Bill 2023, it has been proposed that if a charitable organisation digs into its corpus fund due to a contingency or borrows funds, both would be allowed as deductions only in the year that the corpus is replenished or the loan is paid, and the limit for both is 'within five years'. This is not practical at all. In our opinion, NGOs should have the liberty to use their corpus in case of a contingency, and there should be no specific time limit within which the amount used for the bona fide purpose is to be replenished.
10. Tax exemption certificates u/s 12AB and tax deduction certificates u/s 80G must now be renewed every five years. In our opinion, tax exemption and tax deduction certificate by itself does not guarantee that the NGO is free from payment of tax or entitles a donor to an automatic tax deduction. If there is any violation of sections 11,12, or 13, the ITO is at liberty to suspend tax exemption for such year or years when there is a violation. Hence, the renewal exercise will only lead to more paperwork for both the regulatory body and the NGOs. In our opinion, even if renewal is necessary, it should be once in ten instead of five years.
11. Recognition of its leaders, workers, volunteers, and boards who work pro bono in service to the nation.

## **B. IMPROVE COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES TO “LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND”**

- 1.** Document and share good practices, scale up these innovations, and include them in government schemes and facilitation.
- 2.** Build trust between Government at the local, district, state, and centre through regular stakeholder meetings, exchange of ideas, and consultations.
- 3.** Ensure minimum wages for skilled workers form the base of all government schemes for this extended sector.
- 4.** Build SDG commitments into all applicable schemes of the government to “leave no one behind”.
- 5.** “Ease of Doing Good index” to be instituted on par with the ease of doing business for the non-profit sector.
- 6.** A social security fund for the social sector, workers during emergencies, health needs, etc.





Chapter 1:

# **Introduction & Overview**

India has a thriving culture of *shramdaan* or voluntary work, which has played an important role in the evolution of the country's civil society ethos and its immense contribution to the Nation since Independence.

“He who gives all his time to the service of the people, his whole life is an unbroken round of prayer” - Mahatma Gandhi, Harijan: November 10, 1946.

India's rich tradition of voluntary and civil society action owes its inception to the pre-Independence era when social reformers and stalwarts such as Ram Mohan Roy, Dayananda Saraswati, and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, among others, campaigned tirelessly for an equitable social order. During the Gandhian era, the voluntary movement gained further traction, and home-grown organisations espousing Mahatma Gandhi's principles of constructive work emerged.

In his book *Hind Swaraj* or *Indian Home Rule*, written in 1909, the Mahatma argued that home rule without “*Swaraj*” would only mean the replacement of the “Tiger” (the British) by another (our own). In the weeks following Independence, Gandhi felt that political and social development would become a reality only when *Swaraj* as political self-rule was accompanied by *Swaraj* as **moral self-rule**.

In 1948, Mahatma Gandhi urgently called for a conference at his ashram in Sevagram, Wardha. The workings of the political class in the months leading up to Independence and the weeks immediately after had led the Mahatma to believe that political formations and personalities were becoming self-absorbed and moving further away from serving the interests of the public.

The Sevagram meeting was to have been a call to action for constructive workers. But the Mahatma was unable to make it back to his ashram and was assassinated shortly afterward. On January 30, 1948, three bullets were fired at close range at Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi as he walked to a public prayer on the lawns of Birla House, New Delhi. His philosopher-grandson Ramachandra Gandhi, who was eleven at that time, wrote many years later: “Gandhi stopped three bullets on their deathly trajectory of hate.”



Gandhi's last message was that in a free society, political parties must regard politics as a form of public service rather than a means to dominate fellow citizens. And the Mahatma wanted to take this new ideology forward with the same force that he had applied to politics.

In the last 75 years, the country's NPO - or 'NGOs' as popularly known has built on this vision of public service and constructive work to grow into one of the largest non-profit sectors in the world. The Mahatma has been its ideological compass.

## 1947 Onwards – The Growth of the NGO Sector

The leaders who met at Wardha pledged to support social action and set up the Sarva Seva Sangh. This led to the constructive work of *Gram Swaraj* as Gandhi had envisioned. Many others went into rural areas and set up village ashrams and voluntary organisations, which later came to be known as Gandhian organisations. ASSEFA (Association of Sarva Seva Farms) took up land donated to Vinobha Bhave during the Bhoodan movement (the land was donated to landless peasants) and worked in several states. This was the first Gandhian organisation in a multi-state model. Subsequently, many other organisations followed suit. Some Gandhians went to remote areas and established ashrams such as Prembhai, who started the Banwasi Seva Ashram in the erstwhile Mirzapur, now Sonbhadra district.

Subsequently, several initiatives were taken up by Gandhian leaders in different parts of the country. Over the years, other organisations came to the forefront, supporting social action initiatives for various sections of society. Organisations such as Gram Vikas, People's Rural Education Movement (PREM) working in rural Odisha, the Social Work and Research Centre (SWRC) widely known as the Barefoot College Tilonia, Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (Jaipur Foot) which started in Rajasthan, Child Rights and You (CRY), HelpAge India and Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) have completed over four to five decades of service to children, elderly, and the youth in India.

Organisations such as 'Servants of the People Society' were set up by Lala Lajpat Rai before Independence and continue to serve the country. The Ramakrishna Mission was founded by Vivekananda near Calcutta in 1897 and continues its mission to improve social conditions of people and works with dedication across India, and Chinmaya Mission, since 1953, has been working in education, health, etc. In addition, organisations such as Church Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA), established 75

years ago, have supported under-served communities in remote villages across India. The Catholic Health Association of India (CHAI) coordinated the work of several mission hospitals across India, providing affordable, ethical healthcare to all. Care India was invited by the Government of India in 1950 to begin the nutrition program in schools and has completed 73 years of work supporting women and children in rural and urban India under Central and state government jurisdiction.

With India starting on a path of Five-Year Plans as its chosen way for economic growth in the decades following Independence, many public sector corporations were set up in under-served areas to serve both economic needs as well as promote education, healthcare, and social upliftment in those regions. This was also emulated by large Indian business houses of the time, the best example being the Tata Group in Jamshedpur, which established support organisations to work among the tribal population of the region, the Bajaj Group, which set up Jamnalal Bajaj Seva Trust and many more such as Janki Devi Gram Vikas Sansthan on principles of 'Trusteeship'.

In the mid-1970s and early 1980s, thousands of professional NGOs were registered (mostly under the Societies Act, 1860), with funding support from international donor agencies as well as seed funding from Central government agencies such as PADI and CART and subsequently the Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART). SWRC Tilonia, led by Bunker and Aruna Roy, Gram Vikas, led by Joe Madiath, and ASSEFA, led by Loganathan, were the leaders in this phase of growth of professional NGOs.

The failure of the *Sampoorna Kranti* (total revolution) of Jayaprakash Narayan led to young leaders becoming civil society heads, such as Rajendra Singh (waterman of India) with the Jal Yatra and Ganga Andolan campaigns. In Jharkhand, Satish Girija (Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra) and Arbind Kumar (Lok Jagriti) became organisers against the exploitation of tribals. Similarly, Ekta Parishad under PV Rajagopal started supporting displaced tribals and forest dwellers who were pushed out by mega projects in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

By 1985, the Government of India had realised the importance of large-scale NGOs or voluntary organisations and recognised their productive role in the development process. This led to the commencement of state funding by introducing grants-in-aid to NGOs in the early 1980s. Though the Union government had drafted policies to fund NGOs many decades ago, the implementation of centrally-sponsored programmes providing financial assistance to voluntary organisations as grants-in-aid through various departments and ministries began in the Seventh Five Year Plan period.

By the 1990s, there were major shifts in India's economic landscape due to liberalisation and its varied challenges. In response, CSOs came together to advocate for vulnerable populations. By the early 1990s - with the advent of a neoliberal economic regime and liberal financial capital at the disposal of investors - management education, urban planning, design, and architecture became new employment, providing avenues for young graduates. It is from these professions that many NGO professionals entered rural and urban development work such as PRADAN.

Post-India's economic liberalisation in 1991, and a larger role being carved out for private enterprise, the mandate for business philanthropy to deliver social sector outcomes moved to professional NGOs, which were set up to work effectively on specific causes and in specific regions.

There are many governmental and semi or quasi-governmental agencies, such as the National Children's Fund, the Central Social Welfare Board, the Family Planning Associations of India, and CAPART, among others, which provide funding for voluntary efforts. At the local level, funds are provided largely through the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs), Zila Parishads, Panchayati Raj Institutions, etc. The government funding to the voluntary sector is many times larger than what they get from external sources. For example, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment supported 2,100 voluntary organisations in the country and released around Rs 1,800 million during 1999- 2000, as against Rs 1,110 million in the year 1998-99. At present, the total funding by the Government of India is estimated to cross

Rs 10 billion, a significant increase from Rs 1,500 million during the Seventh Five Year Plan period. In 2013, the new “Companies Act” mandated a 2 per cent Corporate Social Responsibility - CSR - contribution whose implementation on the ground has been primarily carried out by non-profit organisations that have worked with communities over the years and earned their trust.

It would be impossible for the country to overlook the pathbreaking contribution of the non-profit sector. The ASHA workers, Polio Eradication, TB, and Leprosy control could not have been achieved without the NPOs piloting and implementing it on the ground. Innovative and ground-breaking work in rehabilitation, such as the Jaipur Foot, watersheds, microfinance, livelihoods, and innovation, has been led by non-profits across the country. Their contribution to the field of disaster and humanitarian assistance has been appreciated by all sections of society, including the Government. The Government, during national calamities, waives off the FCRA for a certain limited period and allows foreign NGOs and aid agencies to freely bring aid and help people at large. This took place during the Gujarat Earthquake in 2001 and the Tsunami in South India in 2004.

The NPOs' contribution to major policy and democratic reform - particularly in the formulation of the Right to Information (RTI), Right to Education (RTE), and MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act), JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission), and shaping policies on anti-corruption issues have been instances of good practice and has been emulated across states. The sector has become a magnet for young people and tech-enabled activities, creating new start ups, travelling to remote areas, and working in the larger public interest.

The debate in changing times today should not be about the regulation of NGOs by the government nor voluntary adherence to rules by NGOs; rather, the debate should centre around what constitutes 'good action.' There must now be a fair and level playing field and a new regulatory system to incentivise NPOs.

It is imperative that the good work and significant contribution of civil society to the nation is acknowledged and highlighted,

and an 'Ease of Doing Good' index is established alongside the "Ease of Doing Business" index and estimated annually.

This report records the significant contribution of NPOs/CSOs in most sectors towards building the nation over the last 75 years.

Many countries have tried to create a comparative database of the non-profit sector backed by the UN Statistics Division. The focus has been on creating non-profit satellite accounts as part of the UN system of National Accounts, the official international system of collecting and reporting economic statistics. The first few countries to complete satellite accounts show the following results for the contribution of non-profit institutions toward the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Refer to the table below.

*Table – Contribution of Non-Profit Institutions to GDP*

Country	Non-Profit Contribution to GDP	Research year
Canada	8.1	2008
Israel	7.1	2007
Mozambique	6.7	2003
United States	6.6	2009
Belgium	5.8	2008
Japan	5.2	2004
Brazil	3.4	2002
Kyrgyzstan	2.3	2008
France	4.7	2002

*Source: Salamon, 2010*

India was able to complete this until 2013 when the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) completed the survey and released the report in 2014, as well as the satellite accounts of the non-profit institutions (NPIs) in the country. India Report indicated there are 3.17 million non-profit institutions

that involve as many as 19.2 million people, many of whom work voluntarily (source: MOSPI report). This is equivalent to 2.7 million paid employees and 3.4 million full-time volunteers, a total of 6.1 million, which is a noteworthy number in India as 50 per cent of them are sole breadwinners.

The COVID pandemic in 2020 led to a large migrant population being stranded in several parts of the country. Civil society organisations provided relief and humanitarian support to millions of migrants. From sending food supplies via community kitchens to organising medical aid and making travel arrangements so that migrants could return home safely, civil society handled it all. Several organisations organised medical camps and supplied oxygen cylinders and concentrators to those in need. In some cases, organisations also transported patients to hospitals and even volunteered to perform the last rites, and this was acknowledged across the nation by respective state governments, nodal agencies such as NITI Aayog, etc., which sought collaboration.

Over the last 75 years, civil society has earned its place as one of the largest humanitarian forces in India. The sector has contributed significantly to education, health, livelihoods, skill development, disability, women's development, arts, and culture. This study analyses the contribution of the sector to determine its reach, role, and positive value to society and underserved communities.

The international classification of non-profit Institutions, called the ICNPO classification, adopted by the UN, has been used. It is also called the UN classification.

The research points towards increasing the potential for civil society organisations to get positive outcomes on all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by working in partnership with governments by 2030.

The research also indicates that many civil society organisations worked in all fields of education, from early childhood education, primary education, secondary education, teacher training, etc. Their contribution to nation building of the next generation is critical and commendable.

## TRENDS IN CIVIL SOCIETY WORK

In India, non-profit work has been substantially involved with vision and commitment towards the upliftment of the last rung of society (the Gandhian concept of Antyodaya).

- Non-profit organisations have continued with grassroots innovation while evolving with time to include deep tech innovation in implementation.
- These innovations have delivered positive outcomes during the pandemic, as analysts have noted.
- The pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital medium in the sector for the delivery of education, telemedicine, as well as local governance support.
- Migrants and the lockdown highlighted the positive contribution of NPOs.
- Web 2.0/ social media has been an active digital platform and tool for community building, communication, and engagement for programme coordination and fundraising during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to survey respondents.
- There have been several technology startups centred around health tech, agriculture, and farmer producer organisations – as a spin-off from the federation of self-help groups.

## PERCEPTIONS OF THE INDIAN NON-PROFIT SECTOR

- There is a lack of awareness of what NPOs do across the country in remote corners and causes.
- Most CSOs work at the grassroots across various specialisation domains and are highly innovative and cost-efficient in their approach, raising resources themselves.
- The majority of the organisations in the sector are



small and people-centred, working with passion and commitment to their respective causes.

- India's strong tradition of voluntarism and *shramdaan* has helped many organisations involved in rural livelihoods like MGNREGA and watershed programmes to scale up considerably.
- Print and TV rarely carry the impact of work done by the sector.
- Indian states that have been very supportive of the voluntary sector include Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, and Rajasthan.

There are multiple courses on social work and several colleges offering degrees in social work. Recommended well-known institutes include:

- Tata Institute of Social Sciences
- Gandhigram University- Madurai
- Institute of Rural Management Anand
- Indian School of Development Management, Noida
- Indira Gandhi National Open University (PG Diploma in Rural Development)
- Social Work colleges in several states



Chapter 2:

# **India's Non- Profit Sector**

## Origins and Scope

The role of the voluntary sector has transformed with the times to meet the evolving needs of society. The organisations not only provide support to under-served and disadvantaged communities, but they have also been successful in putting the spotlight on health, education, rural development, environment, women, and child welfare, partnering with policymakers and governments across states.

The earliest legislation to regulate civil society was implemented by the then-colonial administration in the form of the Societies Registration Act (1860) and the Trusts Act (1882). These acts continue to not just exist in the present day but are the only legislations governing the sector, even after a century and 75 years after independence, apart from the Bombay Public Trusts Act (1950) and the Income Tax Act (1976).

The voluntary sector is very large and varied, encompassing diverse ideologies from Gandhian to Socialist and development principles. The first estimate of the size of the sector was presented in a study conducted by PRIA (Participatory Research in Asia) in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University, USA, in 2001. According to the study, there were over 1.2 million voluntary agencies in the last five decades.

Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) India also partnered with the Planning Commission to survey 2000 voluntary agencies at the turn of the millennium. The survey established the scope of the sector and its contribution to all sections of society. The study also identified a system of accreditation for the sector and, for the first time, created a comprehensive, validated database of the sector.

In 2013, Dr. Pronab Sen, the then Secretary, of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, conducted a national survey and estimated that there were approximately 3.17 million non-profit organisations in the country. The report drew on an ambitious survey implemented in two phases. In the first phase, a comprehensive list of societies was prepared by the Registrar

of Societies in each state; the second phase involved physical verification of these societies and the collection of financial and employment data.

The first phase of the survey identified about 3.17 million NPIs registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860 and the Bombay Public Trusts Act of 1950. As many as 58.7 per cent of these were in rural areas. The majority of NPIs were engaged in community, social, and personal services, cultural services, education, and health services. Subsequently, in the second phase, these listed societies were physically surveyed. Out of nearly 2.2 million societies, 71 per cent of the registered societies were visited. The final survey results were obtained for just 6,94,000, or 22 per cent . (Source MOSPI report 2012)

Despite these limitations, the report sheds much-needed light on this sector. Three activities - social services (37 per cent ), education and research (24 per cent ), and culture and recreation (15 per cent ) - accounted for 76 per cent of the traced societies. The number of non-profit organisations reporting religion as their primary activity was surprisingly low - less than 5 per cent . Nearly 80 per cent of the traced societies were formed after 1990, and just 3 per cent before 1970. The total workforce - 18.2 million workers - exceeded the entire public sector workforce. However, only 2.7 million were paid workers (the rest were volunteers, according to the survey). Surprisingly, female workers in these societies made up just 28 per cent, not much higher than in the non-agriculture workforce in general. Statistically, it is a large number, and the work they contribute to the country is extensive and significant.

In the late 1970s, NGOs launched several new initiatives. They engaged in more focused work with target groups - landless laborers, tribals, small farmers, women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and Dalits. NGOs grew in number and scope and began to specialise in certain aspects, such as health, agriculture, education, and literacy. This period saw the growth of voluntary action at other levels: resource centres and support organisations specialising in training, research, advocacy, documentation, legal aid, etc. Issues such as women's development, the environment,

and forestry began to gain significance. The work of NGOs also focused on droughts, floods, deforestation, bonded labour, housing rights, water, pollution, etc. The recognition and visibility of the work of NGOs increased during this period.

A more professional approach to development characterised the work of NGOs from the 1990s onwards led by organisations such as PRADAN, etc. Trained social workers from different academic institutions started joining the non-governmental sector, as did young professionals from engineering, medicine, service, management, and accountancy, among other disciplines. They regarded the non-governmental sector as a profession and tried to find ways to align their careers with their social commitments.

Many agencies work in remote areas of India, bringing relief and succor to millions, while others concentrate on articulating the rights of the poor to reduce exploitation from vested interests and exploitative systems. Then others work in areas such as policy, juvenile justice, Right to Information, access to entitlements, art and culture, and heritage.

## **PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY**

While the cause of the Right to Information has been championed by many from the days of Mahatma Gandhi, civil society took this issue to great lengths to reduce corruption and improve accountability in the public sphere by bringing in a “Right to Information Bill” and Act to improve public life and promote transparency. Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) in Bhim, Rajasthan, under the leadership of Aruna Roy, was able to take positive action in making this a public law in India.

CSOs rely on public funds for the work that they undertake, whether it is in the form of donations from individuals and corporates, grants from foundations, or CSR grants from companies under CSR programmes. CSOs need to build their credibility for the work that they do, as the consequences of any adverse impact on their credibility could be disastrous, affecting their ability to gather funds for future endeavors.

CSOs acknowledge that they need to be transparent regarding the funds received by the sector and how these are utilised. Such transparency will also eliminate uninformed and unsubstantiated charges that non-profits misutilised funds.

There is a need to have a framework of transparency and accountability for the sector in the long run. And while individual CSOs are responsible for championing and following high-integrity practices, the Government has, from time to time, brought in key provisions to regulate the sector.

The voluntary sector debated these concerns for two years before promoting the Credibility Alliance (CA) in 2004. The Alliance developed Accreditation Norms for CSOs. At present, the CA website claims that over 1000 organisations have been accredited, indicating the establishment of an accreditation process for CSOs. This mechanism of accreditation needs to be encouraged and further strengthened. One also needs to critically assess its contribution, considering the size of the sector in India, and evaluate how it can be rolled out more widely. GuideStar India, which carried out the survey, is the first transparent database of civil society.

## PAST EFFORTS IN MAINTAINING ACCOUNTABILITY

Historically, accountability has been mostly conceived in economic or financial terms, mainly from the point of view of donors. If the money has been spent as expected by the donors, accountability is achieved. Other aspects of accountability have so far been heavily influenced by government controls, that is, preparing financial statements to file returns. This means accountability has been reduced to an administrative and legislative task. To gain the confidence of stakeholders, CSOs have been working on improving processes and mechanisms of accountability. Some of these mechanisms can be summarised below.

- Adoption of high standards & policies: Organisations have been adopting an ethical code of conduct through a

set of values, norms, and standards. Many organisations follow global benchmark policies such as Conflict of Interest and Whistleblowing to demonstrate their high ethical standards. Many follow self-regulation standards jointly developed with and by civil society influencers and stakeholders.

- Governing boards include independent individuals with experience and integrity to guard and advise in the best interests of the organisation. They ensure proper mechanisms are put in place to maintain high standards of the organisation.
- Standards for disclosure and public reporting aim to democratise information about an organisation's finances, activities, programmatic learning, impact, and governance through external evaluations, annual reports, and disclosure of information to maintain high standards of public reporting.
- Consultative and participatory mechanisms with the community and local stakeholders and *jansunwai* (grievance redressal) in many villages where CSOs work. However, many of the above mechanisms, while maintaining high standards of conduct in public and complying with various benchmarks, do not necessarily achieve accountability at the desired levels.







Chapter 3:

# **Understanding the Contribution of the NPO Sector in India: Estimation of the Economic Value**

**A RESEARCH REPORT BY SOCIETY FOR SOCIAL AND  
ECONOMIC RESEARCH**

The non-profit (NPO) sector's activities are spread across different economic sectors, including health, education, advocacy, environment, social services, creative activities, development, gender, etc. The sector provides a large and significant contribution to the improvement of life and livelihoods for large sections of society in India. The economic valuation of these contributions is complex and not easy to compute due to several factors.

1. The NPO sector is itself not defined as a sector in the system of national accounts.
2. The NPO sector makes substantial contributions to intangibles with long-term benefits that are difficult to compute in terms of present value.
3. A vital aspect is the role and presence of a large number of volunteers within the sector who provide services on an honorary basis or for a token honorarium.
4. There are very few survey or field-based attempts to estimate the economic value of the NPO sector at the national level in India (Casey 2016).

Given the challenges listed above, this report attempts to compute an approximate economic value of the contributions made by the NPO sector in India.

The report is based on an extensive review of existing data and information that attempts to estimate the economic contribution of the NPO sector in India and other countries. Inputs for this report were also obtained from experts on national accounting, economists who work on issues related to activities of the unorganised and informal sector, and the macroeconomy in general. Data has been derived from national accounts statistics and additional sources, including the statistical tables provided by the Reserve Bank of India. This report is like other reports that attempt to estimate the economic contribution of 'non-conventional' sectors such as the creative sector, the music industry, and so on ("Taking the Temperature" 2022) (Kedia 2022).

The NPO or non-governmental sector is not defined as a 'sector' in the system of national accounts of a country. The sector is, at best, a composite sector including parts of other sectors such as health, education, social service, and so on. The first step, therefore, in arriving at an estimation of the economic value of the NPO sector's contribution, is to identify different sectors in the national accounts framework in which these NPOs are active and have contributed. The economic contribution of composite sectors such as the NPO is obtained through the creation of satellite accounts, which are, in turn, based on surveys of establishments and institutions in the sector.<sup>1</sup> One such effort was made between 2009 and 2011 by the National Accounts Division (NAD) of the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI). The report of these satellite accounts forms the base for arriving at the estimates in this report.<sup>2</sup>

A related difficulty in obtaining the economic value of NPO activities is that most NPO activities are in what is called the services sector. A study related to other countries found that within the services sector, the vast majority (nearly 75 per cent) of non-profit gross value added (GVA) is generated through service activities as opposed to expressive activities (Salamon et al. 2013). Examples of service activities can be found in health, education, nutrition, and so on, while expressive activities are meetings, demonstrations, speeches, performances, distribution of literature, and so on. The issues related to the economic measurement of the services sector have been known to governments and scholars for several years.

There are three major problems regarding the measurement of the value added<sup>3</sup> to the services sector (Pais 2020). The first

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1 Satellite accounts are one way in which the System of National Accounts may be adapted to meet differing circumstances and needs. They are closely linked to the main system but are not bound to employ the same concepts or restrict themselves to data expressed in monetary terms.

2 Another successfully implemented satellite account in India is the Tourism Satellite Account.

3 "Value-added" in economics and National accounting is a technical term with a very specific meaning. GDP is the total of all value added in the country. Value added is defined as the value of output minus the costs of inputs. This is very different from the value-addition

is the inability to measure the value of the service output itself. Given this, the most accepted method of measuring value added is the value of wages given to workers in the sector. Further, in the case of services such as health and education, it is argued that the demand for such services remains stable even when there are large fluctuations in income. The second issue in measuring value in monetary terms relates to computing the rate of inflation for the value of services. The most popular method is the method of double deflation. In the method of double deflation, the value of output and the value of inputs are deflated separately by their appropriate price indices, and the value added for the service is then estimated as the difference between the output and inputs (CSO, 2007). The third set of issues has to do with the inability to make measurements on the ground and, hence, the use of indicators as proxies for the existence and growth of some services. As a consequence, in the case of several services, employment in the given service is used as an indicator to arrive at the size and growth of the service (Pais 2002).<sup>4</sup>

A substantial effort in the NPO sector is in producing intangible outputs. For example, efforts towards nation-building, creating awareness about human rights, empowerment of vulnerable sections of society such as women, Dalits, Adivasis, and minorities, work towards improving enlightened citizenry and so on, better health facilities, education inputs, and so on. An economic valuation of such outcomes is near impossible. The value of such contributions, while significant and with long-term impact, is not included in the current estimation. A related difficulty in obtaining accurate valuation is of activities that have tangible consequences but that are long-term and often indirect. This is true for NPO activities working on issues related to health, education, environment, and so on where there is known measurable positive contribution, a large part of which accrues in

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used in the management/marketing sector. The value added in GDP or National accounts includes Value added includes wages, salaries, interest, depreciation, rent, taxes, and profit. Value-added is a measure of the economic contribution of the enterprise or the sector to the economy.

<sup>4</sup> There are other additional issues such as the level of disaggregation at which estimates are obtained given the methodology followed. While these are all important for the NPO sector, this present report does not attempt estimations at a very detailed level.

the future and the extent of which is unknown due to uncertainties related to other related factors. For example, an NPO activity may work towards substantially improving health in a particular area. But, this positive outcome may disproportionately be undone by factors such as vehicular pollution or industrial activities that simultaneously grow in the target area.

Several studies on the NPO sector have highlighted the role of volunteers along with paid workers. It has been argued that not only are volunteers present and working in large numbers in the NPO sector, but their contribution must also be considered while measuring the economic value of the contribution of the NPO sector (Eliasoph 2020). A study in Tamil Nadu estimated that nearly two-thirds of the workers in the NPO sector were volunteers (PRIA 2002). The estimates by the NAD satellite accounts show that in 2007-08, nearly 84.2 lakh volunteers were making up three-fourths of the workers in the sector. This report attempts to estimate the value of the contribution of volunteers to the economic valuation.

International statistical efforts towards the identification and classification of the NPO sector activities have led to the development of the International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations (ICNPO). The ICNPO consists of 11 sub-sectors at the first level of disaggregation. These sub-sectors are (1) Culture and Recreation, (2) Development and Housing, (3) Education and Research, (4) Environment, (5) Health, (6) International Activities, (7) Law, Advocacy, and Politics, (8) Philanthropic Intermediaries and Voluntarism Promotion, (9) Professional and Business Associations and Unions, (10) Religion and (11) Social Services. Reconciling the conventional National Accounts statistics sub-sectors and the ICNPO sub-sectors is a challenge for the data from India. The estimation of the economic value of the NPO contribution in this report is along the 11 ICNPO sub-sectors.

Estimates of the share of the NPO sector in different 'national accounts sectors' such as health, education, and so on can be estimated through what is called the creation of satellite accounts. Such satellite accounts have been developed for India by

national agencies associated with the National Accounts Division of the Department of Statistics along with partner organisations who help in the conduct of surveys of households, individuals, or enterprises, as the case may be. There have been several attempts at developing satellite accounts for the tourism sector in India, both at the national as well as state levels. Similarly, there is at least one recent attempt to develop satellite accounts for the NPO sector (2012). There are also attempts at developing satellite accounts in other countries in India's neighbourhood, such as Bangladesh.

## SOURCES OF DATA

Satellite accounts on the NPO sector from India (2012). Data from the surveys of unincorporated non-agricultural enterprises by the NSS (2010-11) and NSS (2015-16). Disaggregated data on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from the National Accounts Statistics (various years till 2019-20).

## ESTIMATION METHODOLOGY FOR VALUE ADDED IN THE NPO SECTOR

Value added in a sector is a measure of its economic contribution to the country. A suitable method for estimating the value added in the NPO sector is given here in light of challenges discussed above. This method involves estimating value added in different sub-sectors of the formal and registered NPO sector for the latest possible year. The methodology was developed after discussions with experts and economists working on the estimation of GDP, Gross Value Added (GVA)<sup>5</sup>, and sectoral economic values.

<sup>5</sup> Gross value added (GVA) is the total of value-added, that is the sum total of all value added by different NPO organisations in the sector. This is like GDP, the difference being taxes and subsidies are not included.

Both GVA and GDP give a measure of the contribution of a sector to the country/total economy. "Value-added" in economics and National accounting is a technical term with a very specific meaning. GDP is the total of all value added in the country. Value added is defined as the value of output minus the costs of inputs. This is very different from the value-addition used in the management/marketing sector. The value added in GDP or National accounts includes Value added in the form of wages, salaries, interest, depreciation, rent, taxes, and profit. Value-added is a measure of the economic contribution of the enterprise or the sector to the economy.



Imputed values are computed for each of these sub-sectors to account for the contribution of volunteers. Similarly, the value of a contribution from the informal sector or unregistered NPO activities is computed using data from the unincorporated enterprises' survey of the NSS.

It is assumed that the average economic contribution of the formal sector volunteers is equal to the average economic contribution of formally paid workers in the respective sub-sector. In the case of the informal sector, however, it is assumed that the economic contribution of the average worker is about two-thirds that of the formal sector. For change over time and for obtaining estimates for the latest possible year, sub-sectoral growth rates of gross value added are computed from national accounts. These growth rates are then applied to sectoral estimates of value added for the NPO sector computed above. Since obtaining inflation estimates for the NPO sector is complex, all estimates are in current values. Normalising the estimates is done by presenting ratios concerning sectoral and National GDP. It should be noted that formally registered NPO sector institutions covered in the satellite accounts used in this report only include organisations registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860, Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950, and companies registered under section 25 of the Indian Companies Act, 1956. Other organisations registered under other acts, though engaged in not-for-profit activities, are not covered. However, according to an estimate, a bulk of the NPO activities are by institutions registered under these three regulations. Also, it should be noted that the attempt here is to provide an estimate of the value added in different sectors by activities of NPO institutions. The attempt is not to estimate the total grants received by the NPO sector or funds or even credit disbursed by the NPO sector.

### **More specifically**

- Estimates for the 11 ICNPO sub-sectors for the year 2007-08 are computed.
- The value of the contribution of volunteers in each of the sub-sectors is added to this estimate.

- Further, contribution of the informal sector is added using estimates of workers in the unincorporated establishments in 2011-12 and 2015-16.
- Reconciliation between 11 ICNPO sub-sectors and NAD sub-sectors is done using appropriate concordance tables. Value added along the 11 ICNPO sub sector estimated for the years 2007-8 to 2019-20 (latest possible).
- Sectoral growth rates for the value added for the 11 ICNPO sub-sectors were computed.
- These growth rates were applied to estimates of value added in the NPO sub-sectors to arrive at estimates for 2019-20.

## ESTIMATES OF THE ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF THE NPO SECTOR IN INDIA

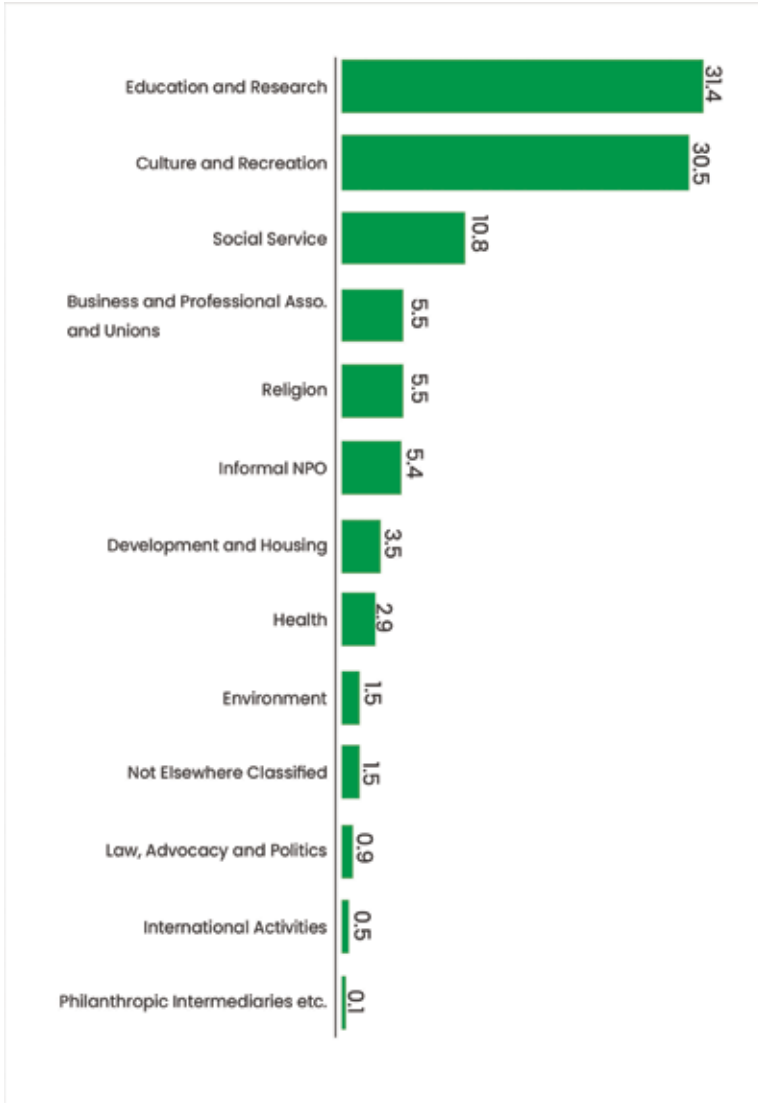
Education and related activities accounted for the largest share of the economic contribution of the NPO sector in India. The estimates across sectors for 2019-20 are given in Table 1. The contribution of Education and Research was about Rs 1,12,000 crore, followed by Culture and Recreation at Rs 1,08,000 crore. The third most important sector was Social Services, which amounted to about Rs 38,000 crore. Both Education and Cultural Activities account together for about 62 per cent of all NPO activities in India.

*Table 1: Sectoral estimates of the economic contribution of the NPO Sector, India, 2019-20*

NPO sectors	Estimated sectoral GVA (INR crore)	Sectoral share in total (per cent)
Education and Research	1,12,166	31.4
Culture and Recreation	1,08,626	30.5
Social Services	38,534	10.8
Business and Professional Assoc. and Unions	19,522	5.5
Religion	19,460	5.5
Informal NPO activities	19,391	5.4
Development and Housing	12,571	3.5
Health	10,490	2.9
Environment	5479	1.5
Not Elsewhere Classified	5213	1.5
Law, Advocacy, and Politics	3066	0.9
International Activities	1857	0.5
Philanthropic Intermediaries etc	294	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>356670</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note: All estimates are at the current value in 2019-20.*

*Figure 1: Share of Economic activity of NPOs across ICNPO categories (2019-20)*



The NPO activities remain an important part of socio-economic life in India. These activities are also growing over time. Estimates of the size and growth of the value of the economic

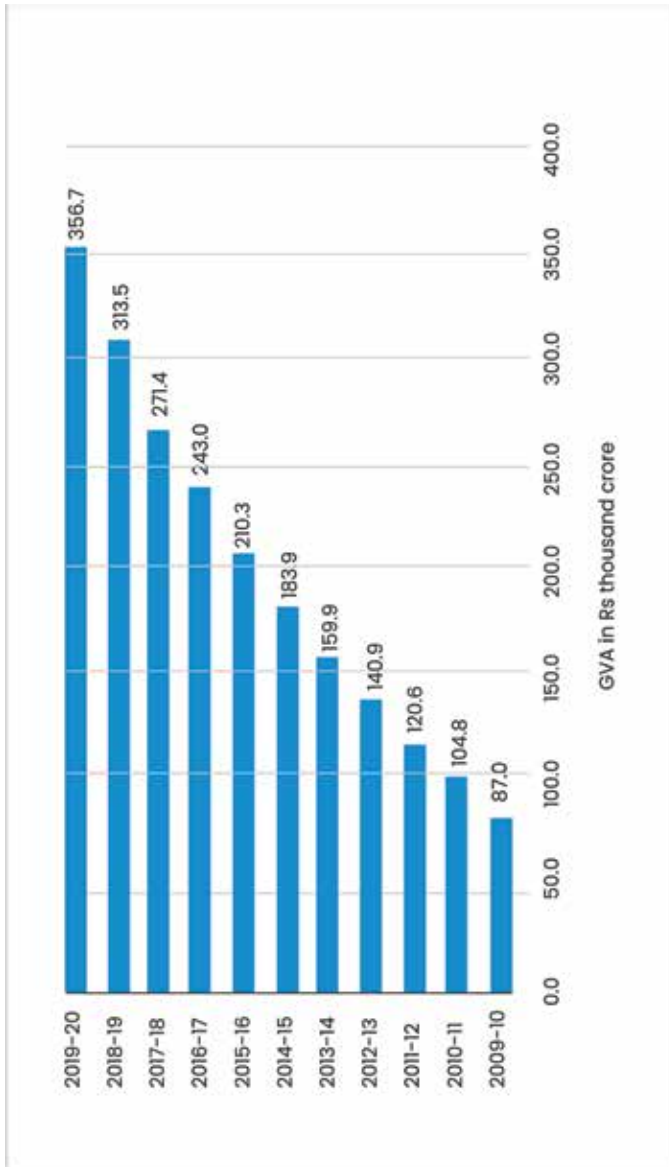
contribution of the NPO sector over time are given in Table 2. It is estimated that the economic contribution of the NPO sector to the Indian economy increased from about Rs 73,000 crore in 2008-09 to about Rs 3,56,000 crore in 2019-20. As a share in the gross domestic product, the economic contribution of the NPO sector increased from about 1.41 per cent in 2008-09 to 1.94 per cent in 2019-20. Figure 2 shows the shares of NPO contribution to GDP over the years.

Table 2: Estimates of Economic Contribution of the NPO sector in India (2009-10 to 2019-20)

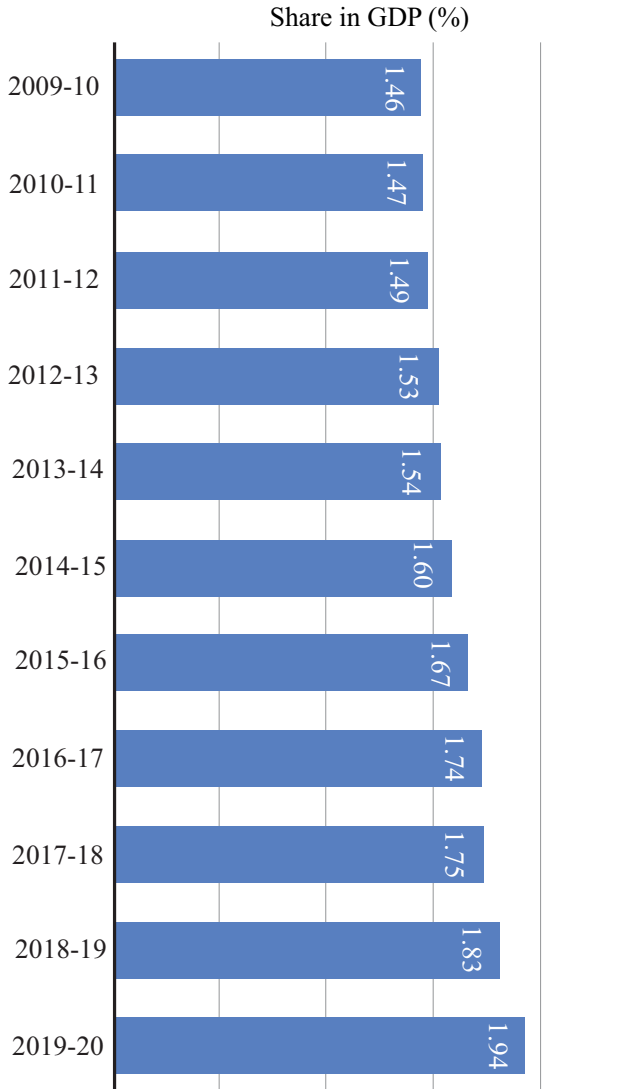
Year	Estimated GVA of the NPO sector (INR crore)	Share in GDP (Percent)
2008-09	73,095	1.41
2009-10	87,028	1.46
2010-11	1,03,793	1.47
2011-12	1,20,638	1.49
2012-13	1,40,891	1.53
2013-14	1,59,881	1.54
2014-15	1,83,915	1.60
2015-16	2,10,349	1.67
2016-17	2,42,984	1.74
2017-18	2,71,399	1.75
2018-19	3,13,512	1.83
2019-20	3,56,670	1.94

*Note: All estimates in current prices*

Figure 2 Estimated GVA of the NPO sector, India, 2009-10 to 2019-20



**Figure 3: Estimated Share of the NPO Sector in GDP, India (2009-10 to 2019-20)**



## LIMITATION OF THE PRESENT ESTIMATES

To estimate the economic contribution of the NPO sector in 2019-20, this report uses satellite accounts as a starting point. The base for the estimations is from the national-level satellite accounts (2011-12) which provide sectoral values for reference year 2007-08. A more recent satellite accounts effort is likely to improve the quality of these estimates. Formal registered NPO sector estimates only include organisations registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860, Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950, and companies registered under section 25 of the Indian Companies Act, 1956 in 2007-08. Other NPOs, even though registered under other regulations, are, unfortunately, not included. Though an attempt is made to include contributions of the informal sector NPOs, however, these are likely to be underestimated. Finally, the estimates suffer from usual limitations concerning approximations of value added in the services sector (they could be highly overestimated or underestimated depending on the sub-sector).

### Key findings:

- The NPO sector contributes substantially to value-adds in several sectors in India, especially in cultural activities, education, and health.
- The present estimates show that the share of the economic contribution of the NPO sector to GDP increased from about 1.46 per cent in 2009-10 to 1.94 per cent in 2019-20
- The lack of data prevents a more complete evaluation of the economic value added by the NPO sector.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Credible, reliable, and regularly available estimates of the economic contribution of the NPO sector are required not only for the sector to obtain an understanding of its performance but these estimates also help governments, funding agencies, and other stakeholders plan and mobilise support both financially and in terms of policies and programmes.

- India has a rich history when it comes to the collection of statistical data; in line with this, it is recommended that regular detailed studies should be made for the independent collection of data on the activities and contributions of the NPO sector.
- Reliable estimates of the economic contribution of the NPO sector can only be obtained through satellite accounts. The Government of India, through MOSPI, should regularly conduct national-level surveys as part of the building of these satellite accounts.
- Informal NPO activities are likely to be significantly larger than estimated in this report. It is suggested that the NSO surveys on unincorporated enterprises in India should include a block that is specifically designed to gather information on informal NPOs and their activities.
- Since the nature of work and workers in the NPO sector is different from regular work, there is a need to develop a framework and categorisation of workers associated with the NPO sectors- paid employees, volunteers –full-time and part-time (including interns), members of governing boards and so on.
- A substantial contribution of the NPO sector is in outcomes that cannot be measured in terms of monetary value and are intangible. The contributions due to intangibles can be brought out through descriptive and qualitative studies with a pan-India, multi-sectoral sample.



Chapter 4:

# **Non-Profit Sector Survey 2022-23**

**A REPORT ON PRELIMINARY RESULTS**

*Revised on October 25, 2023*

## CONTEXT

It is vital to know the size and composition of the NPA/ NGO sector, the breadth of activities that non-profits engage in and the various dimensions of socio-cultural and economic life they influence. The largest exercise to map non-profit institutions was undertaken by the Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) in 2012<sup>1</sup>. It was conducted in two phases. MOSPI put out a number of 31.7 lakh non-profit institutions/organisations (NPIs or NPOs) based on registration records until 2008. Subsequently in an effort to know the number of live organisations as a part of phase 2 of the MOSPI study in 2009-10, a physical exercise was conducted and 6.94 lakh NPOs were traced.

NGO Darpan<sup>2</sup>, NITI Aayog's directory of NPOs, has a list of 1.5 lakh NPOs (as of October 2022), after removing duplicate records and entities such as co-operatives. The Income Tax Department released a list of NPOs with tax exemption and tax deduction as of November 2022. This has 2.52 lakh tax exempt NPOs of which 1.64 lakh NPOs have valid registration to offer tax deductions to donors. As per the dashboard of the FCRA division<sup>3</sup> of the Ministry of Home Affairs that regulates NPOs receiving foreign contributions, in January 2023, there were 16,508 NPOs with active status and 12,947 deemed expired. GuideStar India<sup>4</sup>, the information repository of NPOs where NPOs voluntarily register, features 11,500 NPOs as of January 2023.

## SURVEY OBJECTIVES

Given the paucity of secondary data about NPOs, to learn about the current state of the non-profit sector, CSO Coalition@75

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1 Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India. (2012). *Final Report on Non-Profit Institutions in India: A Profile and Satellite Accounts in the framework of System of National Accounts (including State-wise Comparison of Profiles)*. New Delhi: Government of India. [Final Report of the Survey](#)

2 NGO Darpan <https://ngodarpan.gov.in/index.php/home>

3 FCRA Dashboard [https://fcraonline.nic.in/fc\\_dashboard.aspx](https://fcraonline.nic.in/fc_dashboard.aspx)

4 GuideStar India NPO information repository <https://guidestarindia.org>

decided to conduct a cross-sectional study of non-profit organisations working in different geographies and across diverse sets of activities through a primary survey. The survey data would allow developing a sector-wide understanding of practices and priorities. The aim was to examine associations between organisational characteristics and various dimensions captured in the survey to develop a more granular understanding of the sector. The data would also be useful in the creation of sector-specific reports.

As the survey could not reach out to all the non-profits owing to logistical constraints and as MOSPI does not provide the details of the surveyed organisations, a sampling strategy was developed for the purposes of this study. The MOSPI study is the largest exercise in mapping the sector and has served as a benchmark. However, as the MOSPI report does not provide the identifier details of the surveyed organisations, the list of non-profits from NGO Darpan<sup>5</sup>, the largest government directory of non-profits, was referenced.

## DATA AND METHODS

An online survey<sup>6</sup> was designed to capture the organisational details, size, reach and scope of activities, contribution to UN SDGs, systems of governance, accountability and employment. It also captures the qualitative dimensions of the work of non-profits.

The survey was anchored by GuideStar India and the outreach was a combined effort of all the coalition partners. The survey was emailed directly by GuideStar India to 1.55 lakh organisations and the combined reach of the coalition is estimated to be about 2 lakh NPOs.

The survey was conducted in English with translation support in Hindi. Webinars and workshops were conducted through networks of non-profits in English and regional languages. Follow-up calls,

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5 NGO Darpan <https://ngodarpan.gov.in/index.php/home>

6 NPO Sector Survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NPOsurvey2022-GSI>

email reminders and call support was provided to respondents. NPOs took about 2 hours to complete the survey, with additional time spent on internal data gathering. Phase 1 of the NPO survey was open from September to December 2022. While over 1000 responses were received, these were validated for unique records of NPOs based on Income Tax PAN. 851 records were taken up for analysis. Data validations were done for registration status as regards tax exemption, tax deduction and FCRA registration, using publicly available data on the IT and FCRA portals. Outlier data points were cross-checked on the GuideStar India profile of NPOs, websites of NPOs and through clarificatory calls and emails with respondents.

The GuideStar India team implemented outreach activities through mailers, webinars and workshops, as well as managed data gathering, de-duplication, validations and reporting. The survey design and analysis were guided by the IIM Ahmedabad Research team led by Prof. Ankur Sarin and supported by Bikalp Chamola, Doctoral Student, Public Systems Group, IIM Ahmedabad.

A big thank you to every NPO that participated in the NPO Survey and to all the CSO Coalition@75 partners as well as other partners such as BPA, CASA, CFAR, Goonj, Janpath that hosted meetings.

Given the complexity of the survey, not all organisations responded to every question. Hence the number of responses used varies. To account for this, the relevant sample size (n) is mentioned for each statistic when they vary.

- Limitations of Phase 1 and Plan for Subsequent Phases
  - » The sample for the first phase was drawn using convenience sampling. The findings of this phase which are presented here should be read with this cautionary note. It is not intended to extrapolate the results to the overall population of non-profits on the basis of Phase 1 results.
  - » In the subsequent phases of data collection, it is planned to utilise stratified random sampling based on proportional representation of non-profits' geography in the NGO Darpan database. In the

subsequent phases (from January to August 2023), the survey will have increased breadth of coverage through stronger outreach at the local level and multilingual survey communication.

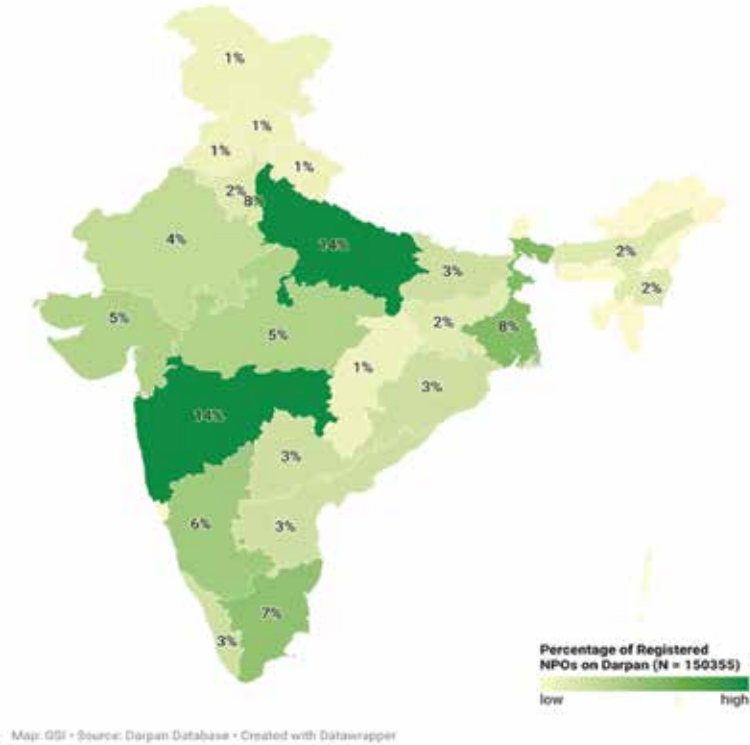
## **A REPORT ON PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE SURVEY**

The total number of validated, unique non-profit responses used for survey analysis in the first phase is 851. Comparing the state of registration of NPOs in our sample with that of NGO Darpan we find that the geographical distribution of our sample broadly corresponds with that of organisations in NGO Darpan (see Figures 1 and 2). Although the NGO Darpan database has known limitations, it serves as a useful benchmark as it is the largest directory of information on NPOs. States where the percentage point difference between NGO Darpan<sup>7</sup> and our sample is 4 or more, are Uttar Pradesh (which is under-represented) and Tamil Nadu (which is over-represented in our sample).

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<sup>7</sup> NGO Darpan <https://ngodarpan.gov.in/index.php/home>

Figure 1: Geographical distribution of NPOs according to NGO Darpan (n=150355)



Disclaimer: Map of India may not be to scale and is only for illustration purposes.





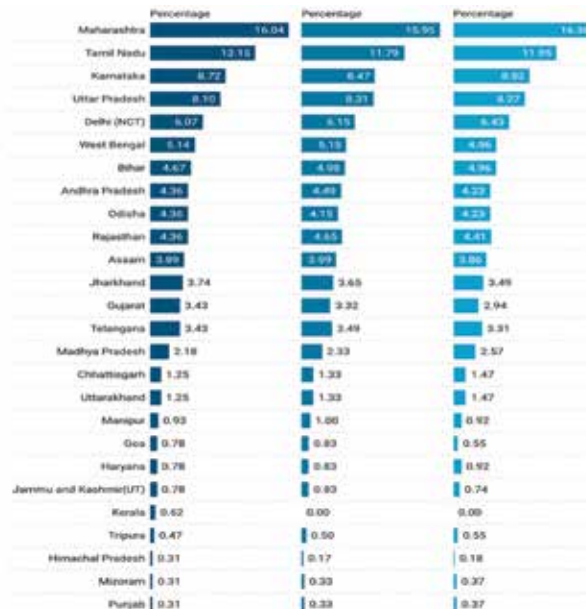
## KEY ATTRIBUTES OF SURVEYED ORGANISATIONS

### Geographies of Work

- Regions where NPOs are active:
  - » Predominantly organisations in our survey report indicated Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi as their primary areas of work. These 5 states/ regions constitute 50% of our sample (n=642) (see Table 1). 50% of the NPOs in our sample work in only one state, with 30% working in 2-5 states, and the remaining 20% working pan-India (i.e. in more than five states).

Table 1: Areas where NPOs work (n=642)

NPOs were asked to indicate the top 3 states of their work. Columns represent states in order of NPOs' ranking their highest to lowest. Column 1 is arranged in descending order of highest ranked state



Client: GIZ | Source: Nonprofit Sector Study 2022 - 23 | Created with Datawrapper

**Aspirational Districts<sup>8</sup>:** Aspirational districts are lowest on Human Development Index (HDI), and require significant synergies from businesses, non-profits and the governments for development in these remote geographies. 54% of the NPOs (n=639) in our sample report work in aspirational districts (see Figure 3). Among those NPOs that responded (n=469), on an average 55% of their overall work is located in villages (as against metropolitan areas, urban and semi-rural areas).

Figure 3: NPOs working in Aspirational Districts (n=639)



Chart: GDI • Source: Nonprofit Sector Study, 2022 - 23 • Created with Datawrapper

- **Activities:**

In terms of International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations (ICNPO)<sup>9</sup> primary classification (n=515), 70% of NPOs in our sample work on social services, 59% on Education and Research, 56% in Employment, Community development and Housing and 27% in Health.

<sup>8</sup> Aspirational Districts [https://my.msme.gov.in/MyMsme/List\\_of\\_AspirationalDistricts.aspx](https://my.msme.gov.in/MyMsme/List_of_AspirationalDistricts.aspx)

<sup>9</sup> ICNPO: International Classification of Non-profit Organisations [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesF/SeriesF\\_91E.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesF/SeriesF_91E.pdf)

Contribution to SDGs: Among the 17 SDGs, NPOs (n=643) in our sample predominantly work towards quality education, good health, gender equality and no poverty (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Engagement of NPOs with SDGs (n=643)

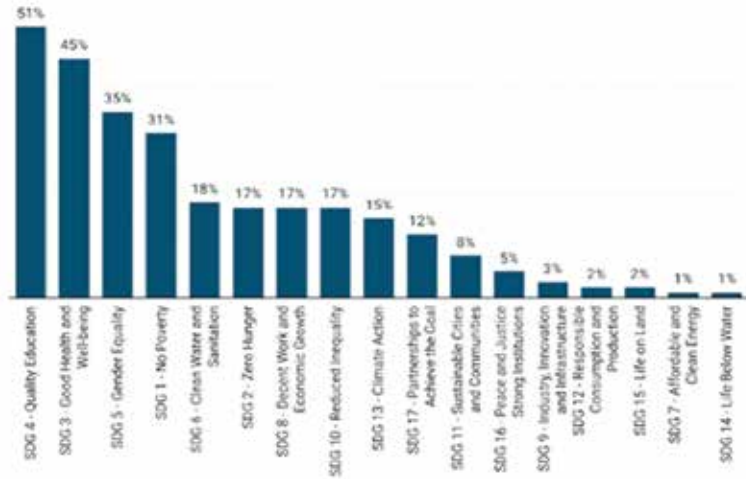


Chart: SDG • Source: Nonprofit Sector Study, 2022 - 23 • Created with Datawrapper

Communities that NPOs work with: Among the different communities that NPOs work with, more than half of the NPOs (n=594) in our sample report are working with women, rural poor, children, youth, students, self-help groups, girl children and NPOs. 94% of the NPOs (n=739) in our sample reported that at least two-thirds (67%) of their organisational activities cover target population segments that are under-served or less privileged or live in regions recording lower performance in the development priorities of central or state governments.

- Organisational Attributes

Age: Over half of the organisations in our sample (n=851) were registered within the last 20 years. While 27% of NPOs are less than 10 years old, 30% are between 10 and

19 years old. 25% of the NPOs are between 20 and 29 years old and lastly only 18% NPOs are more than 30 years old (see Figure 6). As per the MOSPI<sup>10</sup> report, 79% of traced societies were registered post 1990. In our sample, 87% of NPOs are registered after 1990.

Figure 6: Age-wise distribution of Non-profits in the Sample (n=851)

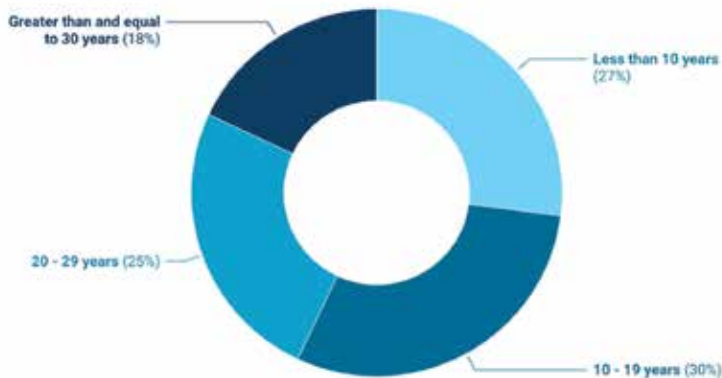
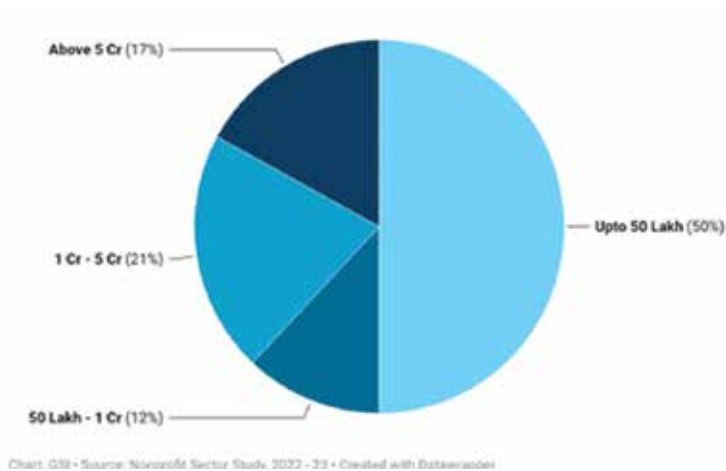


Chart: GSI - Source: Nonprofit Sector Study 2022 - 23 - Created with Datawrapper

**Size by Annual Expenditure:** Small organisations (annual expenditure less than Rs. 1 crore) constitute 62% of our sample (n=565), followed by medium-sized organisations (annual expenditure between Rs. 1 crore and Rs. 5 crore) at 21% and large organisations (annual expenditure above Rs. 5 crore) being 17% of the sample (see Figure 7). 26% had annual expenditure of less than Rs. 10 lakh in 2021-22; 24% had an annual expenditure between Rs. 10-50 lakh and 12% between Rs. 50 lakh and Rs 1 crore.

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India. (2012). *Final Report on Non-Profit Institutions in India: A Profile and Satellite Accounts in the framework of System of National Accounts (including State-wise Comparison of Profiles)*. New Delhi: Government of India. Final Report of the Survey

Figure 7: Size of NPOs by annual expenditure (n=565)



- » Organizational Staff: Half the NPOs in our sample have less than 20 employees (median) and half the NPOs have less than 30 volunteers (median) for 2021 – 22 (n=489).

#### Promoters & Registration:

- » Of the total NPOs (n=515) in our sample, 9% are promoted by governments and 6% by professional/trade associations. 3% each are promoted by businesses, religious organisations and families. 72% are independent.
- » 50% of the NPOs (n=515) in our sample are registered as societies, 32% as Trusts, 9% as trusts and societies and 8% as Section 8 Not-for-Profit Companies (see Figure 8). 92% NPOs report 12A/ 12AA/ 12AB as their tax exemption type with only 1% reporting 10(23C) as the tax exemption type. 7% NPOs report no exemption status. 87% NPOs reported that their tax exemption certificate was valid. Further, 92% NPOs reported 80G as their tax deduction type and 8% reported no tax deduction status. 84% NPOs

reported that their tax deduction certificate was active. 90% of NPOs in our sample are registered on Darpan, NITI Aayog's portal.

Figure 8: Registration Type of Organisations (n= 515)

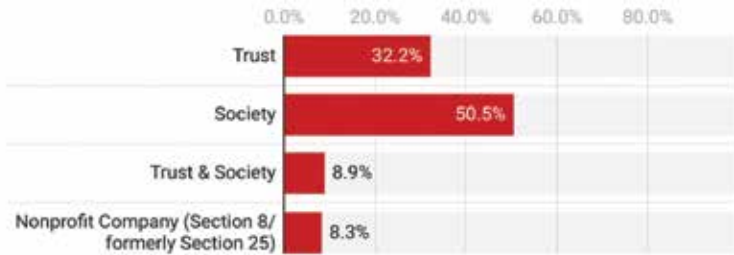


Chart: GSI • Source: Nonprofit Sector Study 2022 - 23 • Created with Datawrapper

Sources of Funds (n=515): Overall, NPOs in our sample report record CSR as their top source of funding, followed by grants from Indian foundations and grants from International foundations (see Figure 9). Medium and large organisations have reported grants from CSR programs and foundations as their predominant sources of revenue. In contrast, smaller organisations more frequently reported relying on self-generated revenue and individual donations (see Figure 10).

Figure 9: Top Sources of Funds for NPOs (n=515)

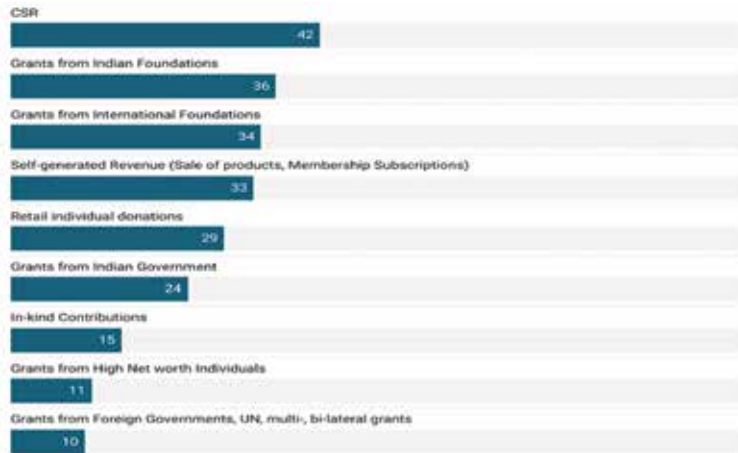


Chart: CSI • Source: Nongprofit Sector Study, 2022 - 23 • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 10: Top sources of Funds for NPOs (n=515)

Expenditure in INR (2021 - 22)	Upto 1 Cr (n=316)	1 Cr - 5 Cr (n=115)	Above 5 Cr (n=84)	Total (n=515)
Self-generated Revenue	47%	12%	11%	33%
Retail individual donations	35%	23%	19%	30%
Grants from High Net worth Individuals	9%	15%	17%	12%
Grants from Indian Foundations	28%	50%	58%	37%
Grants from International Foundations	23%	49%	55%	34%
CSR	24%	58%	74%	40%
Grants from Indian Government	24%	30%	17%	24%
Grants from Foreign Governments, UN, multi-, bi-lateral grants	7%	19%	13%	11%
In-kind Contributions	21%	6%	4%	15%
Others	9%	6%	1%	7%

Table: CSI • Source: Nongprofit Sector Study, 2022 - 23 • Created with Datawrapper



**FCRA:** NPOs with an FCRA registration constitute 54% of our sample (n=565) (see Figure 11). More than 78% of the mid-sized and large organisations in our sample have reported having an FCRA registration. However, only 37% of the small organisations have access to foreign funding.

Figure 11: NPOs with a FCRA Registration (n=565)



Chart: GSI - Source: Nonprofit Sector Study, 2022 - 23 - Created with Datawrapper

- **Systems of Accountability (n=515):**
  - » While 65% of NPOs in our sample reported that they track directly reached numbers for all of their top three activities, 25% reported that they track directly reached numbers for at least one of their top three activities. Only 11% of NPOs reported that they do not track their reach numbers.
  - » Internal assessments constituted the primary source for reach numbers for 40% of NPOs in our sample. Project reports constituted as the primary source for 39% NPOs. Only 6% NPOs reported external evaluations as the primary source for their reach numbers. However, 84% NPOs, from those who stated they track all or some of their directly reached numbers, reported that their reach numbers can be independently verified (n=460).

- » 84% NPOs reported the availability of governing body details on websites/ other public sources.
- » 77% NPOs reported that their audited accounts are prepared, audited and publicly available, 20% reported that the accounts are prepared, audited but not publicly available, 2% reported that the accounts are prepared but not audited and 1% reported that accounts are not prepared.
- NPOs create local livelihoods, develop skills and promote social mobility (n=515):
  - » In terms of the contribution to the workforce, the median number of volunteers associated with NPOs in our sample is 30 and that of employees is 20, for the year 2021 - 22. The median number of people mobilized by NPOs in our sample is 750. NPOs in our survey have reported mobilizing 3 lakh volunteers, employed 60,000 people, and mobilised 64 lakh people through SHGs in total.
  - » Besides the number of people, they directly create livelihood opportunities for, what should also be noted is the quality, nature and context of these opportunities.
  - » In geographies where NPOs are present, 47% report that they are the biggest source of formal employment in more than half of the local geographies (gram panchayats, urban neighbourhoods) that they work in.
  - » 55% NPOs report that more than half of their economic activity is with local business and vendors.
  - » 67% NPOs report that more than half of their personnel (employees and volunteers) are from communities (geographical or beneficiary community) that they work with.
  - » On an average, 64% of the NPO employees are the sole breadwinners in their respective families.

- » Organisations were asked to rank where the majority of their employees stood in terms of social and economic status and skills (compared to others with similar education and work background) on a scale of 1 to 7, (with 1 being “very poor”, 2 “poor” 3 “fair” 4 “good” 5 “very good” 6 “excellent” and 7 being “exceptional”) when they start working and after working five years with them.
- » In terms of contributing to the skilling of the workforce, NPOs have reported that on average skills of their employees have moved from fair to very good and excellent after five years of working with them. Moreover, the socio-economic status of their employees has changed from fair to good and very good after five years of working with them (see Figure 12).
  - ◇ On average, over 50% of employees are characterised as having a “fair” or worse socio-economic status when they start. However, this proportion drops to less than 25% in five years.
  - ◇ Likewise, while 40% of employees are characterised as having “fair” or worse skills when joining; the proportion drops to less than 10%, with the balance being seen as “good” or better in 5 years.
  - ◇ Coupled with information on the disadvantaged geographies that the organisations work in, the high proportion of locals employed; the sector can be seen as contributing to creation of quality livelihoods and the development of skills among more disadvantaged sections of the society.

Figure 12: Skills and Economic Status of NPO Employees (n=515)

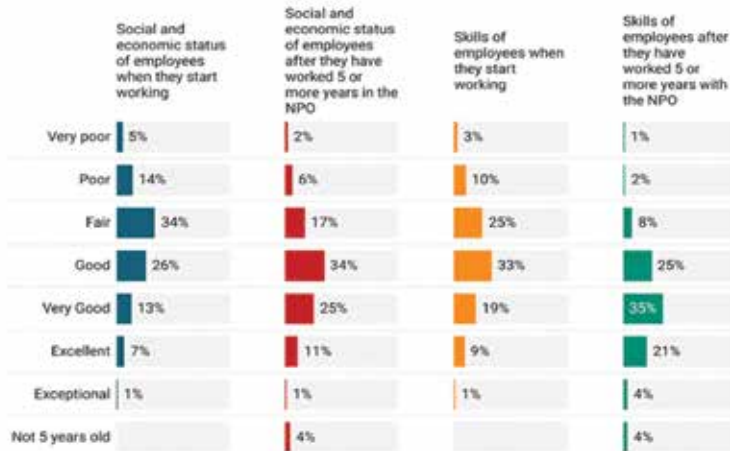


Chart: GSI • Source: Nonprofit Sector Study, 2022 - 23 • Created with Datawrapper

- Working in partnerships and collaborations (n=515):

While NPOs in our sample have reported that on an average 65% of their organisational activities are dedicated to bringing about direct change in the lives of the communities they serve, the remaining 35% of their activities are aimed at bringing about ecosystem-level changes at the state, national and international levels. In addition, the work of the NPOs is characterised by high levels of collaborations and working with complementary institutions of the government and even businesses.

- » Working together with government bodies: Roughly 75% of NPOs in our sample, report working with government schools (average 700 government schools), 69% report working with Panchayats (average 380 panchayats), 57% report working with anganwadis (average 200 anganwadis), 60% report working with primary health centres (average of 62 PHCs), 68% report working with self-help groups (average 540 SHGs) and 56% report working with municipalities (average 130 municipalities).

- » Collaborating within and across sectors: Collaborations with other NPOs are common across all sizes of non-profits. While for larger organisations, participation in alliances/networks is predominant choice of working together, for small and medium NPOs alongside participation in alliances/networks, collaborations with governments are more common (see Figure 13).
  - ◇ Purpose of Collaboration: The primary purpose of collaborations with governments was reported as funding and improving service delivery by 35% of NPOs in our sample. 26% NPOs reported that they collaborate with governments to help them in achieving scale for impact.
  - ◇ 37% NPOs reported funding and 19% capacity building of staff as primary motivations for collaborating with businesses.
  - ◇ The primary motivations for collaboration with other NPOs included capacity building of staff (48%), improving service delivery (46%), knowledge production (39%) and achieving scale (38%).

Figure 13: Percentage of NPOs engaged in collaborations (n=515)

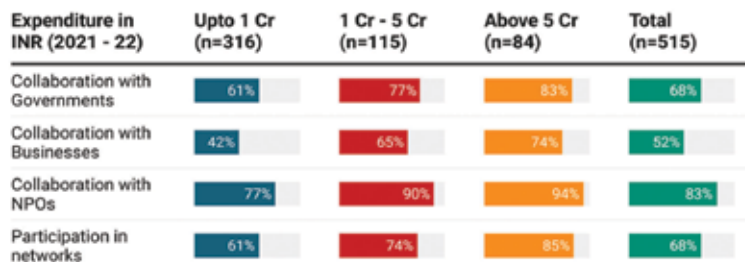


Table: GSI • Source: Nonprofit Sector Study 2022 - 23 • Created with Datawrapper

- Recent Trends
  - » In the last five years, 58% NPOs (n=515) have reported that their annual budget sizes have increased, 20% reported that the numbers have stayed the same and 22% reported a decrease in the number. In terms of sources of funding too, 56% reported that the number of sources has increased in the last five years, with 22% reporting they stayed the same and 22% suggesting the number of sources have decreased.
  - » 87% NPOs (n=460) reported that their reach numbers of communities served have increased in the last five years, and about 9% reported that these numbers have come down during the same period.
  - » Influence of Pandemic (n=515)
    - ◇ Roughly 65% of the small and midsize NPOs have reported some form of losses due to COVID-19, whereas 55% of the larger organisations have reported the same (see Table 2).
    - ◇ In the aftermath of COVID-19, 50% NPOs (n=460) reported that their reach numbers increased and 32% reported that these in fact decreased during and after the pandemic.
    - ◇ Roughly half of the NPOs (48%) reported attrition in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Table 2: Loss of Income due to COVID-19 (n=515)

Expenditure in INR (2021 - 22)	Upto 1 Cr (n=316)	1 Cr - 5 Cr (n=115)	Above 5 Cr (n=84)	Total (n=515)
No loss at all	35%	37%	45%	37%
Loss Upto Rs10 Lac	38%	12%	6%	27%
Loss of Rs10 Lac - Rs1 Cr	24%	39%	19%	27%
Loss of Rs1 Cr - Rs10 Cr	2%	11%	26%	8%
Loss of More than Rs10 Cr	1%	1%	4%	1%

Table: GSI • Source: Nonprofit Sector Study, 2022 - 23 • Created with Datawrapper

- » Increased efficacy in the last 15 years
  - ◇ Among respondent NPOs that were registered on or before 2007 (n=312), more than half have reported an increase in: their ability to achieve impact, to collaborate with other organisations, to work on causes that they consider to be most important, to work with the most disadvantaged/groups needing attention and clarity, consistency, timeliness of interactions with regulators.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

While these are only preliminary results and Phase 2 of the NPO Survey will have deeper and wider coverage, these findings could be used by government regulators, ecosystem builders, funders and CSR to inform policy, resource allocation and NPO capacity building strategies. NPOs could use the findings to inform strategy and project design, benchmark performance and impact reporting.

### For government regulators and ecosystem builders

- 88% of NPOs work to strengthen government programmes across themes. 50% of NPOs work locally, improve socio-

economic life of workers and engage local businesses. Strengthening NPOs could accelerate local area development.

- Apply the 80/20 Pareto principle for statutory reporting and compliance
- Prioritise charity reforms in five states that account for half of the NPOs in the country
- Design capacity building support and services based on age and size of NPOs
- Support the sector in developing impact assessment standards (definitions, indicators and processes) and enable aggregation and reporting
- Foster collaborative effort through enabling regulation for collective fundraising and programme implementation through CSR, onward grant-making, etc.

### **For funders and CSR**

- Support ecosystem development for impact measurement and reporting: development of definitions and standards and support adoption of logical frameworks and standard indicators
- 62% NPOs are less than Rs1 Cr & 57% less than 20 years old- they could be given simple tools for tracking output and reporting for aggregation of sector's contribution
- Support capacity building and foster collaboration for scaling impact, while harnessing benefits of localised interventions
- Support creating resources for the sector in the following 10 languages would help cover 80% of NPOs: English, Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odiya, Tamil and Telugu
- Use the findings of this report in decision making
- Support this study to be repeated every 2 years to support longitudinal analysis for sharper insights



## For NPOs

- Benchmark against sector data pertaining to size, geography and thematic areas
- Quote the NPO Sector Survey data in strategy documents and project proposals to establish where gaps exist
- NPOs in sectors like Education, Health, Employment and Social Services, with tangible outputs and outcomes could gather evidence of work along common indicators, which intermediaries could aggregate and report sector-wise
- Older organisations should widely and consistently share their impact reports, stories and learning
- Gather and share data points/ descriptors about the communities served to improve understanding and appreciation of the problems addressed
- Make community participation visible, report community feedback and make more voices from communities heard
- Speak openly about challenges, interventions and learnings to improve the understanding of the sector realities



To download the report and for further updates, scan this QR or write to [nposurvey@guidestarindia.org](mailto:nposurvey@guidestarindia.org)



Chapter 5:

# **Aligning CSR and Business Responsibility**

India is touted as the first country in the world to mandate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) through the Companies Act of 2013. Coming from a tradition of religious giving and philanthropy, CSR brought the logical step forward in mandating corporate participation in addressing disparity. India's million+ non-profits (NPOs) have, over the decades, worked at the grassroots to fill the systemic gaps that exist in society. The non-profit sector in India contributes to GDP, provides employment, valuable goods, and services in nation-building, and holds a high trust value amongst communities. Non-profits, as part of civil society, have also pioneered several movements and campaigns to ensure the basic rights of people are not violated. For the implementation of CSR projects, it is evident that NPOs remain one of the critical partners for corporates, and an analysis by the High-Level Committee on CSR (2018) reveals that between 2014 to 2018, almost 66 per cent of the expenditure was done by companies through other entities. Though, on the one hand, it depicts the dependency on NPOs, it is observed that often NPOs are limited to the role of being an implementer of projects while the company retains ownership and supervision of the programmes. Another fact, as reported in the same analysis, has been about the prescribed versus actual expenditure, between the period 2014 to 2018, the compliance in terms of actual expenditure remained at an average of 68.25 per cent .

With CSR funding focused largely on education (almost 30 per cent of annual average CSR expenses), health (20 per cent ), and rural development and environment (15.9 per cent ) work (*see graph alongside*), it is unlikely that these will be used for policy changes or bottom-up movements and rights-based campaigns which call for the state as well as corporate accountability. When the CSR law was implemented in 2013, the officials concerned said it could lead to Rs 50,000 crore in funding for development projects annually. After seven years of implementation, the total annual spending rose from Rs 10,066 crore in the financial year 2014-15 (FY15) but is still half the projected spend at Rs 25,715 crore in FY21, according to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (*refer to the graph below*).



Similarly, CSR, it was hoped, would contribute to community development in regions that were struggling to meet Human Development Indices such as Health and Nutrition, Education, and Financial Inclusion. However, out of the total spending by companies in FY18, FY19, and FY20, the amount spent on the 112 aspirational districts identified by the NITI Aayog was only Rs 232.8 crore, Rs 307.51 crore and Rs 104.04 crore, respectively. The total spending for these years was Rs 17,098.18 crore, Rs 20,196.92 crore, and Rs 24,954.78 crore. States that account for only 15 per cent of the aspirational districts or backward districts accounted for more than 60 per cent of the CSR expenditure.

On the other hand, states that account for more than 55 per cent of the aspirational districts received 25 per cent of CSR projects but only 13 per cent of the total expenditure towards CSR during FY18. In what could be a sign of change, CSR spending by companies in the most backward districts in the country rose in FY21, according to data from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. The Ministry informed the Parliament that companies spent over Rs 507 crore in 84 backward districts identified by the NITI Aayog in FY21, against nearly Rs 332 crore spent in 82 aspirational districts in FY20. (The Mint, April 6, 2022).



Another challenge has been the funding of specific programmes such as PM-CARES. Post its establishment in March 2020, through information collected through RTI applications, it was found that 98 PSUs spent around Rs 2,422.87 crore from CSR funds in the year 2020. In a recent response in Parliament, it was revealed by the concerned Ministry that in the last seven years, out of the total spend of Rs 1,25,000 crore, around 4 to 5 per cent have been contributed to the PM-CARES, with most of it being done for the two years of the pandemic.

In 2013, a Socio Research & Reform Foundation (SRRF) study of CSR spending of the top 100 companies identified that companies spent around Rs 2650 crore just before the official CSR implementation. In FY21, as per the data available of the top 100 companies covered in the 2013 study, their CSR spending amounted to around Rs 8402 crore, pointing to the role of CSR legislation in improving spending by companies on social projects. Another major change is the quality of disclosure about CSR. Before official CSR kicked in, generally, there was no norm for CSR disclosure. The same survey observed that out of 100 top companies in India, only 73 companies disclosed their CSR spending. This has also improved over the period due to national reporting guidelines and requirements.

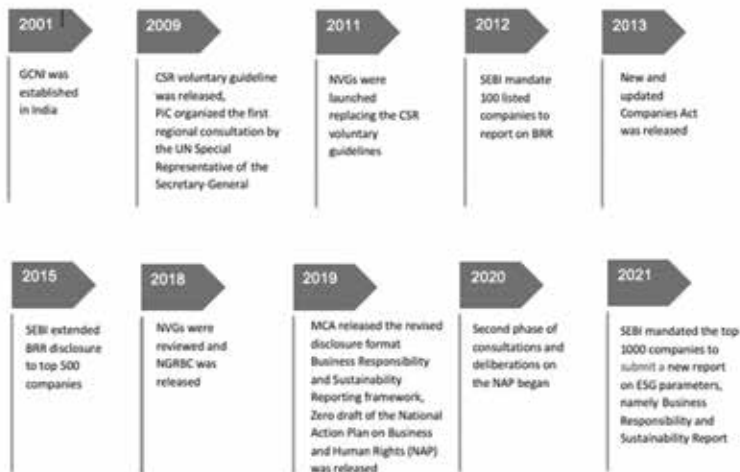
Over the years, there have been amendments streamlining the CSR spending of companies, laying down guidelines, and setting rules for mandatory disclosures. The Corporate Social Responsibility rules in the Amendments to the Companies Act in 2019 and 2020, which mandated Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contributions for some companies, have helped the corporate

sector transition from a voluntary and unsystematic approach to a structured way of contributing to societal welfare. As recently as September 2022, the Government of India amended the CSR law for the fifth time since 2013. These amendments made a CSR committee mandatory and widened the organisational ambit for implementation. Also, it fixed the responsibility of the Board to comply with the requirements of the legislative framework - approval of CSR policy, disclosing the policy in its report and on a company website, ensuring that activities, as included, are undertaken by the company, and ensuring that at least 2 per cent of the three -year average net profit is spent on CSR activities. Further strict provisions on unspent amounts and further penalties have also been introduced.

# Broadening the definition of CSR to incorporate Responsible Business Conduct

These amendments in the quantum and quality of CSR spending and disclosures about the same would not have been possible without the role of NPOs/civil society. NPOs over the last decade have been instrumental in moving the corporate responsibility agenda beyond 2 per cent expenditures of profits under the CSR law through their work on guidelines that seek to align CSR and Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reports (BRR) that can throw light on the actual conduct of business and its practices.

In 2009, the first regional consultation by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights and transnational corporations, other business enterprises, and CSOs led to the integration of the 'Protect-Respect-Remedy' framework into the National Voluntary Guidelines (NVGs). Several key developments, as summarised below, have attempted to shape the responsible business discourse in India.





# Timeline of Business and Human Rights-related Developments in India

One of the key interventions done by the voluntary network, named Corporate Responsibility Watch (CRW), with other NPOs has been to consistently monitor the disclosures made by the top listed companies. Since 2014, CRW has been continuously publishing disclosure analysis reports for the top 100 listed companies and has expanded its research base to the top 300 companies. CRW contributed to creating an India Responsible Business Index along with other CSOs, which investigates the disclosures made by companies in terms of their policies, practices, and performance from the lens of equity. The annual analysis served the purpose of bringing in larger developmental narratives of diversity and inclusion around gender, ability, diversity, and identity within the business spaces. Some of the insights provided through the annual Corporate Responsibility report in India and their alignment with Business Responsibility Reports have been significant in informing the quality of disclosures made by the companies in the public domain and separate societal obligations from the overpowering CSR 2 per cent narrative that tends to absolve companies of their responsibilities to adhere to National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct (NGRBC) framework.

The discourse on the intersection of business and human rights has expanded and grown to include ideas that were previously absent or barely discussed. The introduction of laws, rules, and frameworks with essential components of business and human rights, and with the rise of business and human rights-related conversation has attempted to build awareness among the companies and their stakeholders, encouraging better disclosure and ultimately towards accountability to society. Stakeholders must recognise the reality of the collaboration between state and businesses with civil society and community demanding a model of CSR based on principles of equity, responsible business conduct that respects laws of the land regarding 'People and the Planet' that can be emulated by the world over.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- CSR strategies should be developed in consultation as well as active inclusion of voices from Project Affected communities and other stakeholders, including regulators, consumers, trade unions, and climate impact specialists, as relevant.
- CSR needs to look beyond just project expenditure through a 2 per cent allocation of profits, and health and safety policies of companies should also be extended to all - formal and non-formal supply chains with budgeting provisions of the company with full worker training and safety compliance as per local laws.
- Vulnerability analysis for CSR focus themes and population needs to be done and actively reported. Expenditures should clearly articulate the proportion spent on vulnerable groups such as women, children, SC/ST/OBC/, PWDs, LGBTQ, Elderly, minorities, among others .
- CSR should align with principles as articulated in NGRBC, especially those related to both the planet and human rights. Business Responsibility Report should be the way forward, where all practices of the companies should be regularly vetted to ensure that their activities positively impact the environment, health, water, and other related issues of impacted communities.
- The focus of spending should be on the aspirational districts across the country.





Chapter 6:

# **Not-For-Profits Working in Livelihood Promotion and Microfinance**

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One of the significant areas of contribution by the Not-for-Profits, also referred to as the Third Sector, is to perform functions required by the society but not adequately covered by the Market or the State. These include social innovation, which, when developed, is adopted by the State or the Market<sup>1</sup>. Two such areas of contribution of the Not-for-Profits in the last few decades have been in the areas of livelihood promotion and microfinance. Both areas required the use of profit-making tools for addressing a public purpose. It was recognised that the economically disadvantaged groups, to sustain their livelihoods, needed to engage with the market, not only as the recipient but also as equal players. Hence, Not-for-Profit players took the initiative to help them engage more effectively and efficiently with the market, which popularly got to be known as **Livelihood Promotion**. It was also recognised that the economically disadvantaged group, to enhance their economic outcome, needed to invest capital. As a large majority of them were subsistence workers generating just about enough (sometimes not even that) to survive, there was no capital formation on their part, not-for-profit organisations had to innovate and develop models of making capital accessible to the poor, which popularly got to be known as **Microfinance**. As both social innovations support the disadvantaged involved in engagement with the market, including the capital market, the organisational forms chosen by NPOs were more often **hybrid forms**. And, the models developed by the NPOs, when demonstrated to work, were taken up for further replication by the for-profit organisations on a large scale.

## Livelihood Promotion Challenge

Presently, as per **The Annual Report - FY21 of the Ministry of Agriculture**<sup>2</sup>, approximately, 58 per cent of the Indian workforce

<sup>1</sup> Detailed by Hansmann, H. (1987) Economic Theories of Non-profit Organisations, Yale Law School

<sup>2</sup> Available here: [https://agricoop.nic.in/sites/default/files/Web%20copy%20of%20AR%20%28Eng%29\\_7.pdf](https://agricoop.nic.in/sites/default/files/Web%20copy%20of%20AR%20%28Eng%29_7.pdf)

is engaged in the agriculture and allied sectors, contributing approx. 18 per cent of India's GDP. Though this had gone down to 49.26 per cent in 2011<sup>3</sup>, it has started climbing up in recent years, especially post-COVID -19 pandemic, when due to a shortage of opportunities, many people went back to their villages to remain under-employed and were 'counted' as part of the agricultural labour force. With this marginal change in contribution to GDP, with a large proportion of the workforce continuing to depend on agriculture and allied sectors, the per capita income from agriculture has been declining over the years.

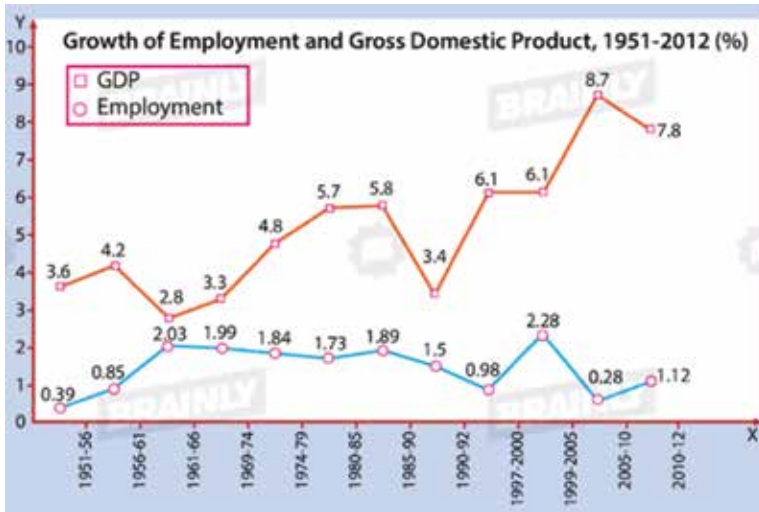
One of the significant blows to the livelihood situation was dealt by the COVID -19 pandemic. The slowing down of the economy led to job losses on a humongous scale. However, the pandemic also led to the emergence of many new livelihood opportunities in online marketing, and door step delivery of many goods and services, as well as para-medical and health services. But the available talent pool of job seekers is nowhere close to the demand from cutting-edge sectors as diverse as artificial intelligence, machine learning, augmented reality, virtual reality, e-commerce, e-healthcare services, EdTech, Fintech, Agri-Tech, to name a few that opened newer opportunities.

With COVID -19 hitting the economy, the first quarter of the financial year FY21 saw the steepest fall in GDP ever recorded in India at a negative 24.4 per cent . The first quarter of the financial year FY22 also saw the sharpest GDP growth of 20.1 per cent . A report from NABARD pointed out, 'After two years and three waves of COVID-19 pandemic, the Indian economy started recovering from the second quarter of FY22 even as a few sectors struggled to regain pre-pandemic momentum.'<sup>4</sup> But it needs to be recognised that GDP growth did not necessarily improve the employment situation of the poor, as most of the recovery of the economy was also driven by sectors mentioned earlier, where the current rural youth did not get employed.

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<sup>3</sup> As reported in <https://www.statista.com/statistics/271320/distribution-of-the-workforce-across-economic-sectors-in-india/>

<sup>4</sup> Available here: <https://www.nabard.org/pdf/economy-in-recovery-mode-eng.pdf>



Though current data was not available, the graph above shows that GDP growth did not lead to better livelihood opportunities for all.

As reported in the State of India's Livelihoods 2021 report by ACCESS<sup>5</sup> since 1980, India's annual GDP growth has been in the range of 4 to 8 per cent, but over the same period, the employment generated by this growth has been shrinking. Meanwhile, India's working-age population has continued to grow, with the delayed effect of fertility rates, which remained at their peak of 2.3 per cent until 1986. So, since the early 2000s, the crisis of 'jobless growth' has been further confounded by an acceleration in the young people coming of working age.

Though engagement as a worker is not the same as livelihoods, the distribution of the workforce across different NIC sectors gives us a sense of the number of livelihoods dependent on the sector.

<sup>5</sup> Access Development. State of India's Livelihood Report. Available here: <https://www.accessdev.org/state-of-indias-livelihood-report/>



Table 1:

	NIC Category	Estimated Number of Workers Engaged
1	Agriculture	234.1
2	Animal Husbandry	20.5
3	Forestry & Fishing	33.1
4	Mining and Quarrying <sup>1</sup>	0.7
5	Manufacturing	12.8
6	Electricity, Gas, and Water	3.6
7	Construction	54.0
8	Wholesale and Retail Trade	152.4
9	Restaurants and Hotels	7.1
10	Storage and Transport	1.3
11	Communications	7.7
12	Financing, Insurance, Real Estate, and Business Services,	4.5
13	Community, Social, and Personal Services	5.9
	Total Workforce	471.3

Table compiled by the author based on reported figures of employment from different sources. These are indicative figures only. There are serious difficulties in estimating these numbers, arising from a large proportion being in unorganised sectors, and the people engaged in multiple activities.

Table compiled by the author based on reported figures of employment from different sources. These are indicative figures only. There are serious difficulties in estimating these numbers, arising from a large proportion being in unorganised sectors, and the people engaged in multiple activities.

The table above shows that though agriculture is the sector generating the largest number of livelihoods, wholesale, and retail trade (which includes various forms of *kirana* shops, is the other sector supporting many livelihoods, followed by construction. The COVID -19 pandemic in FY21 and consequent lockdowns affected the construction industry very badly, leading to severe reverse migration, leading to loss of employment for some months, and were supported by Government initiatives, including provisions of free food, MGNREGA, and other schemes.

A primary challenge for livelihood promotion in India is the number of people whose livelihoods need to be supported. Though initially adapted and successfully implemented by NPOs including MYRADA, SEWA Bank, and ASSEFA, the self-help group methodology has been expanded and adapted by the Government. The National Rural Livelihoods Missions launched by the Government in districts include self-help groups, their village-level federations called Village Organisations, and the Cluster Level Federations (CLF). This inclusive approach represents the interests of the underprivileged and economically disadvantaged people in the organisations by design. These new forms of NPOs across the country are designed to work on multidimensional poverty, with a significant focus on articulating the demands of the poor, especially for improved governance. In effect, one form of NPOs seems to be yielding space to another form. These new-generation NPOs, owned and managed by poor people, continue to play an important role in extending microfinance.

## THE NEED FOR MICROFINANCE

Globally, NPOs like Grameen Bank, Bangladesh, K-REP (Kenyan Rural Enterprise Programme) Bank, Kenya, and PT Bank Rakyat Indonesia Tbk were established to augment the economic life of

the poor through capital infusion. These NPOs started developing alternate methods to deliver financial services to the poor, whom formal financial institutions, both the Market and the State, had failed to serve adequately. The methodologies developed to reach the poorer segments came to be known as microfinance over time.

Similarly, in India, several NPOs started expanding microfinance services. But, one thing that the leaders of the microfinance movement in India were clear about was that there were several institutional forms, like banks and NBFCs, which were mandated to mobilise and redistribute capital. So, though several NPOs started experimenting with microfinance, over time, they converted themselves into a more suitable form like an NBFC-MFI, a Local Area Bank, or Small Finance Banks, which were mostly for-profit organisations, though mandated to serve the weaker sections.

While microfinance in India started with replication of the Grameen Bank model, where six to eight groups of five members each formed a centre and loans were given to individual members of the group, as recommended by the Centre, through its weekly meeting; the model of self-help group (SHG), where a group of 15 to 20 individual members formed a group became more popular. In this SHG Methodology, loans were extended by the bank to the group, which in turn further lent to individual members. In 1992, this SHG method of extending microfinance got a major fillip with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) launching the Self-Help Group-Bank Linkage Programme (SHG-BLP) as a pilot programme aimed at linking just 500 SHGs with six NPOs with branches of six banks. The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India launched the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) by restructuring Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY). NRLM was renamed as DAY-NRLM (Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission) w.e.f. March 29, 2016. SHGs were designated as the primary unit of the large institutional network. All SHGs in a village federated into a Village Organisation, which further came together to form Cluster Level Federation/Block Level Federation, and so on. The not-for-profit organisations played the role of SHG Promotion Institutions (SHPI). By March

2022, there were 14.2 crore BPL households organised into 119 lakh SHGs, with savings deposit of Rs. 47,240 crores, with loan outstanding of Rs. 1,51,051 crores to these poor women, with loan repayment rate by SHGs to Banks 97.71 per cent . (Status of Microfinance in India 2021-22, NABARD)

Apart from the SHG-BLP program, the Not-for-Profits also got engaged in delivering microfinance services using other models, including the Grameen Bank Model, the Joint Liability Group model, and the direct lending model, among others. As reported in Sa-Dhan's Bharat Microfinance Report 2021, Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) even a year back, by March 2021, operating in 28 states and five Union Territories in India. The reporting MFIs were 208 with a network of 20,065 branches, and 1.61 lakh employees had reached out to over 4.2 crore clients with an outstanding loan portfolio of Rs. 1,13,459 crores. This includes a managed portfolio of Rs. 35,310 crores. The loan outstanding per borrower stood at Rs. 18,894, and 90 per cent of loans were used for income generation purposes. Of the total, For Profit MFIs (NBFCs/NBFC-MFIs) contribute to 87 per cent of client outreach and 82 per cent of an outstanding portfolio, while not-for-profit MFIs contribute to the remaining. MFIs with a portfolio size of more than Rs. 2,000 crores contribute significantly to the total outreach (69 per cent ) and loan outstanding (76 per cent ) of the sector. As on December 31, 2021, the for-profit microfinance industry served 5.57 crore unique borrowers, through 10.58 crore loan accounts. The overall microfinance industry currently has a total Gross Loan Portfolio (GLP) of Rs. 2,56,058 crores.<sup>6</sup>

A third set of financial institutions that extend microfinance services to the rural people is the network of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) set up by the commercial banks, with 56 RRBs in India. By March 2021, they had a GLP of Rs. 3,34,171 crores. Though these RRBs also cater to the financial needs of similar client group, as they are owned by the Government of India, they cannot be treated as a part of the Not-for-Profits.

However, a major change in the microfinance sector in the country

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<sup>6</sup> Sa-Dhan. The Bharat Microfinance Report 2021. Available here: <https://www.sa-dhan.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/BMR-2021.pdf>

came with a revolutionary change in information technology (IT), the opening of a large number of bank accounts as a part of Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), the Introduction of the core banking system facilitating online payment systems and Development of the Business Correspondent model of delivery.

As most of these changes were happening concurrently, it is difficult to lay down their specific sequence of introduction in microfinance. However, with the introduction of the Core-Banking Systems in the early 1990s, most commercial banks were virtually connected, easing interbank transactions with a large number of accounts. This, with international recognition of microfinance methodology, with Professor Mohammed Yunus being awarded the Nobel Prize in 2006, and the IPO of Banco Compartamos in Mexico getting highly oversubscribed in 2007, led many commercial banks to start looking at microfinance as a commercial opportunity. Even Online-Payment systems became a possibility with the development of information technology (IT). As per the Master Directions – Priority Sector Lending (PSL) issued by RBI in September 2020, loans extended by regular commercial banks to both for-profit and not-for-profit MFIs for on-lending to other priority sector clients were also treated as PSL by the commercial bank. This opened a new channel for extending microfinance to disadvantaged sections.<sup>7</sup> All these efforts of the State-Market-Third Sector led to what can be treated as the mainstreaming of microfinance, which was part of the original objective of the innovation.

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<sup>7</sup> RBI. *Master Directions*. Available here: [https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/BS\\_ViewMasDirections.aspx?id=11959#MFI\\_On\\_lending](https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/BS_ViewMasDirections.aspx?id=11959#MFI_On_lending) for details.



Chapter 7:

# **A Threefold Growth Story**

**THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS  
IN INDIA'S SOCIAL JUSTICE, EDUCATION &  
HEALTH SECTORS**

*Authored by Deval Sanghavi, Kasturi Gandhi, Pratyaksha Jha, and Ami Misra with inputs from Sampath Vemulapati*

*Dasra has compiled three reports to reflect on the efforts of civil society across the themes of social justice, education, and health since 1947. These reports shine a light on key interventions by organisations, policy shifts, and on-ground impact across diverse landscapes and timeframes. This executive summary is a glimpse into the past 75 years – the context and civil society interventions that shaped India's growth story.*

India at 75 – our struggle for Independence, selfhood, milestones, and emerging as one of the top economies in the world – is a collective effort. Civil society organisations (CSOs), often regarded as a “third” sector, have always been at the frontline of this collective effort: as partners, service providers, facilitators, and torchbearers consistently shining the light on what is fundamental to the idea of India. Starting with the First Five-Year Plan, the government emphasised the involvement of CSOs in realising progress, stating that “*any plan for social and economic regeneration should take into account the services rendered by these agencies, and the state should give them maximum cooperation in strengthening their efforts.*”

Five-year plans may have run their course, but the government's think tank, the NITI Aayog, continues to consult with civil society through the NGO Darpan portal and several other consultative processes on the national development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. G20 Sherpa and former CEO of the NITI Aayog, Amitabh Kant, acknowledging the productive and creative role of the sector in India's development story, has said, “India's philanthropy and civil society, noted for its vibrancy, innovation, and advocacy, is an important nation-building partner for the government.”

Echoing this ethos, this report recognises and celebrates CSOs as important actors in the development ecosystem. We spotlight the especially important role CSOs have played in sectors that have the most direct impact on the lived experiences of citizens, focusing on themes of social justice, education, and health – cornerstones of the social contract. Across the three themes,



we have followed a structure that provides a perspective on decadal milestones and key civil society intervention models that continue to offer good practices for the country's growth. We have also touched upon the collaborations, processes, and institution-building work undertaken by CSOs. In our summary on social justice, we focus on landmark judgments through the decades and analyse key practices that strengthened citizens' access to the judicial system. Next, we prioritise milestones of India's education sector since 1947, alongside the social workers and organisations who contributed to their success. Finally, for the health sector, we map the role of civil society in delivering health services and resources, acting as a supporting institution for the government, or simply carrying people's voices and stories to policymakers and the world at large.

Undertaking archival research on the multi-fold decadal milestones has reiterated the strong partnership among different stakeholders and underscored how critical this partnership is for our present and future. This exercise has helped us learn that CSOs have worked closely with all three branches of the state – legislature, executive, and judiciary – resulting in tangible outcomes such as policy reform, service delivery models, behaviour change, and judicial precedents for India's most vulnerable communities and individuals. The underlying theme revealed through our research is the collective ability of CSOs to transcend geography and time while remaining firmly rooted to the ground in their service for India's diverse billions.

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# SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

“The economics of poverty affects the receipt and delivery of justice. Democratic India has tried to tackle this very knotty issue from the bottom up.” - *Aruna Roy, Co-Founder of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan.*

## SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INDIA: A SUMMARY

Social justice in the context of India borrows from constitutional values that secure **social, economic, and political justice, along with liberty, equality, and fraternity** for all its citizens. Equality, legal aid, living wages for all, good health and environment, and education are some social justice provisions featured in the Constitution’s Directive Principles of State Policy. The underpinnings of the term social justice in this section emphasise the equal rights of all citizens towards meeting their basic needs and accessing opportunities while eliminating unjustified inequalities, hierarchies, and discriminatory practices.

In India, although the government has the chief mandate of ensuring social justice through its policies, several social action groups – consisting of the judiciary, media, and civil society – have been instrumental in realising and solidifying key principles of social justice in the Indian setting. Together, these actors have helped contextualise India’s social justice sector into the following thematic areas:

1. Social justice movements for enabling recognition, awareness, and advocacy
2. Social action litigation towards juristic activism and adjudication in India’s highest court
3. Partnerships for social justice via community associations, media, and rehabilitation

#### 4. Access to justice by facilitating redressal, reform, and enforcement

## MILESTONES, INTERVENTIONS, AND CSOS IN SOCIAL JUSTICE

The table below lists key milestones in India's social justice sector since 1947, alongside the social workers and organisations who contributed to them.

TABLE 1: SOCIAL JUSTICE MILESTONES IN INDIA AND THE CSO SECTOR

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
1950: The first free speech challenge by civil society and the landmark ruling by the Supreme Court of India to uphold the Constitution of India	When " <b>Crossroads</b> ", an English journal by journalist Romesh Thapar, was banned in Madras due to its political commentary and critique, Thapar appealed to the Supreme Court. The court upheld his Freedom of Speech and Expression, striking down the Madras Maintenance of Public Order Act (1949).
1977: Precedent set for poor workers to directly approach the Supreme Court of India, expanding the Right to Live with Fundamental Human Dignity	<b>People's Union for Democratic Rights</b> , a CSO working for the protection of democratic rights, spotlighted the exploitation and living conditions of workmen working for the Asian Games to be held in India, in a writ petition.

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
<p>1979: The genesis of Public Interest Litigation (PIL), right to speedy trials, and upholding the Fundamental Right to Life and Liberty</p>	<p>Based on a series of articles about languishing undertrial prisoners in Bihar by The Indian Express, Supreme Court advocate <b>Kapila Hingorani</b> filed a writ petition. This, together with GK Rustom's reporting on undertrial prisoners, led to the formulation of PILs and the immediate release of 40,000 languishing prisoners all over India.</p>
<p>1985: Landmark judgment that led to the inclusion of the Right to Livelihood under the purview of the Right to Life</p>	<p>Petitions by the <b>Peoples' Union of Civil Liberties</b>, the <b>Committee for the Protection of Democratic Rights</b>, and civil society actors like <b>Olga Tellis</b>, <b>Indira Jaisingh</b>, and <b>Prafulla Chandra Bidwai</b> helped spotlight the rights of pavement dwellers in Mumbai, the State's duty to provide them with housing sites close to their workspaces, and their experiences of forced evictions.</p>
<p>1987: The first conviction in the country under the Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act</p>	<p>To obtain redressal for bonded agricultural laborers in Maharashtra, <b>Shramjivi Sanghatana</b>, a social organisation, mobilised 300 bonded labourers to register complaints with local authorities against exploitative landlords. This led to the first conviction in the country under the Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act.</p>

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
<p>The 1980s: The emergence of post-Emergency lawyers led social justice groups to enable legal recourse against oppression, violence, and torture</p>	<p>Three principal groups of this decade include the <b>Citizens for Democracy (CFD)</b>, the <b>People's Union of Civil Liberties</b>, and the <b>People's Union for Democratic Rights</b>. Their work spanned prison reform, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding in the context of the North East, and the riots of 1984, among others.</p>
<p>The 1990s: International spotlight on environmental and rehabilitation issues due to big dams and the people most affected by such projects in India</p>	<p>The <b>Narmada BachaoAndolan (NBA)</b> mobilised 250,000 people who faced submergence during the construction of big dams along the Narmada River. The organisation's biggest triumph was in 1993 when the World Bank withdrew its Narmada loan and published an independent review of the project.</p>
<p>The 1990s: A series of initiatives across the country using human rights fact findings, reports of fact findings leading to court interventions and public hearings across the country</p>	<p>Initiatives, in fact findings, were undertaken by organisations such as <b>Human Rights Law Network</b>, <b>People's Watch</b>, and several others. Popularisation of public hearings/ people's tribunals undertaken across the country through bodies such as the Indian People's Tribunal led by retired judges investigating a variety of human rights themes.</p>

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
<p>The 1990s: The first all-rural women-run news bulletin is launched in Madhya Pradesh</p>	<p><b>Mahila Dakia</b>, succeeded by <b>Khabar Lahariya</b>, was then India's only women-run ethical and independent rural news brand. It resulted from a government literacy initiative, Mahila Samikhya Programme, and was set up with support from <b>Nirantar Trust</b>, a Delhi-based Centre for Gender and Education.</p>
<p>1997: A PIL by women's rights activists results in the creation of the 'Vishaka guidelines'</p>	<p>The petitioners in <i>Vishaka and Ors v State of Rajasthan</i> were a coalition of <b>women's rights organisations and activists</b> led by <b>Sakshi</b>, an NGO working against sexual violence in India. In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court instituted a set of definitions and guidelines against sexual harassment in the workplace, also laying the foundation of current laws.</p>
<p>1997: The Supreme Court issues welfare directives for children under the age of 14 to be protected from participation in the labor</p>	<p><b>Bandhua Mukti Morcha</b>, an organisation working to abolish bonded labour in India, filed a PIL in 1997 against the exploitation of children employed in the carpet industry in Uttar Pradesh. The ensuing judgment directed the state to stop the employment of children in this industry and further provided directives to prevent child labour and increase children's access to health and education facilities.</p>

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
<p>2001: The Right to Food case creates path-breaking imperatives for food policy in India</p>	<p>In 2001, in the aftermath of severe drought and famine in Rajasthan, a network of civil society organisations and activists known as the <b>Right to Food Campaign</b> moved the Supreme Court. <i>People's Union for Civil Liberties v Union of India</i> culminated in the court directing states to lift the food grains allotted to them by the Central government and disburse them in accordance with existing schemes. In 2002, the court also appointed two former bureaucrats as food commissioners to oversee the implementation of this order.</p>
<p>2002: Landmark judgment requiring electoral candidates to disclose their criminal record, financial background, and educational background</p>	<p><b>Association for Democratic Reforms</b>, a non-profit working on electoral reforms in India, petitioned for voters' right to more information about the backgrounds of electoral candidates in 1999. Three years later, the Supreme Court directed that the Election Commission of India must seek information about criminal records, financial assets, and educational qualifications of all candidates contesting elections to the Parliament or state legislatures. In 2003, legislation was passed making it mandatory for electoral candidates to share their criminal records but not their financial or educational backgrounds. However, the Supreme Court reverted this to the original precedent.</p>

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
<p>2010: India sets up the National Green Tribunal (NGT) – a specialized judicial body adjudicating environmental cases in the country</p>	<p>Discussions at the NGT showed the active collaboration between <b>environmental NPOs</b> and <b>environmental advocates</b>, who were simultaneously attorneys and environmental activists. Outside the courts, some of these lawyers were associated with national and international environmental initiatives to promote better legal access to justice and environmental protection.</p>
<p>2014: The NGT recognizes the environmental rights of non-citizen residents of India</p>	<p><b>Betty Alvares</b>, a resident of Goa, filed a High Court petition in 2012 claiming instances of illegal construction in the Coastal Regulation Zone of Candolim. The petition was transferred to the National Green Tribunal, which examined if Alvares had <i>locus standi</i> to petition the court as a foreign national. In a landmark judgment, the Tribunal declared in 2014 that any individual could file a petition linked to environmental disputes, irrespective of nationality and citizenship.</p>



Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
<p>2014: Supreme Court sets up a Social Justice Bench to hear cases concerning socially marginalized groups</p>	<p>The bench heard cases on issues such as the rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits, the exploitation of children in orphanages in Tamil Nadu, the monitoring of rehabilitation of those impacted by the construction of the Sardar Sarovar dam, monitoring of the Nirbhaya Fund, and the fund for rehabilitation of Devdasis in Karnataka – each of these was represented by CSOs like <b>MASS</b>, <b>NBA</b>, and <b>We the Citizens</b>, among others.</p>
<p>2014: Supreme Court verdict on the regulation of hate speech in the 2014 Pravasi Bhalai Sangthan versus Union of India judgment to protect marginalised communities</p>	<p><b>Citizens for Justice &amp; Peace (CJP)</b> launched a programme to counter hate speech, especially that focused on religious minorities, Dalits, Adivasis, Women, Children, and LGBTQIA+, and continues to work on various social justice and peace issues.</p>

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
<p>2016: The Save Mon Region Federation judgment addresses the overlap between indigenous, cultural, and environmental rights</p>	<p>The <b>Save Mon Region Federation</b>, an organisation representing the indigenous Monpa community in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang region, petitioned the NGT against a hydroelectric project in the Naymjang Chhu river basin. The petition challenged the environmental clearance granted to the project due to its location in an eco-sensitive stretch. This stretch was a wintering site for the endangered black-necked crane, which is revered by the Monpas. The Tribunal held that the project must be halted while a fresh environmental review is undertaken by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, keeping in mind this cultural context.</p>
<p>2016: PIL on the rights of senior citizens examines government schemes and programmes for the elderly</p>	<p>Former Union Minister <b>Dr. Ashwani Kumar</b> moved the Supreme Court in 2016 with a plea for the protection of elderly citizens. The presiding bench enlisted assistance from the non-profit <b>HelpAge India</b> and the <b>National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)</b> to understand the problems being faced by senior citizens and issued directions to ensure the effective implementation of government interventions linked to pensions, shelter, and geriatric care.</p>

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
2016: Supreme Court issues directives for homeless shelters to be built in urban areas	In 2003, a group of <b>lawyer-activists</b> moved the Supreme Court over the right of homeless individuals to shelters in urban areas. This matter sat in court for more than a decade due to a lack of response from state governments. In 2016, upon examining the status of the implementation of a scheme for urban homeless shelters under the National Urban Livelihoods Mission of 2013, the court constituted a committee to oversee the building of homeless shelters as well as temporary winter shelters. The impact of this judgment led to 200 homeless shelters and 150 temporary winter shelters being built in the NCT of Delhi.

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
<p>2018: Homosexuality is decriminalised in India through a reading down of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code</p>	<p>The decriminalisation of homosexuality in India came as a culmination of decades of civil society efforts. One of the first prominent petitions against Section 377, which criminalised homosexual acts, was filed by the HIV/AIDS activist group <b>AIDS Bhedhav Virodhi Andolan</b> in 1994. In 2001, <b>Naz Foundation</b>, a queer rights organisation, petitioned courts again, leading to a 2009 Delhi High Court judgment that declared the Section to be violative of fundamental rights. This judgment was overturned by the Supreme Court in 2013. In 2018, a five-member bench of the Supreme Court was constituted to hear pleas against Section 377 from <b>queer rights activists, organisations, and members of civil society</b>, and ultimately repealed its applicability to consensual homosexual acts.</p>

The table below reviews unique and impactful CSO interventions in social justice and highlights good practices within the sector.

*Table 2: CSO models and systems for change over the years*

CSO's area of work	Intervention	Good practices
Recognition	<b>Social Justice movements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilising and educating critical stakeholders</li> <li>• Attracting committed activists</li> <li>• Strategising plans of action</li> <li>• Interacting with people across the board and international actors</li> </ul>
	<b>Community partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of a catalytic agent with knowledge of the issue and a problem-solving mindset</li> <li>• Organisational transformations to respond to community needs more efficiently</li> <li>• Regular community patrols to stay on top of local issues of health, education, environmental issues, issues related to communal harmony, etc.</li> </ul>

CSO's area of work	Intervention	Good practices
	<b>Research and documentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting up education camps where stakeholders can hone reading and writing skills</li> <li>• Documenting information in languages and dialects known to stakeholders</li> <li>• Digital dissemination</li> </ul>
Advocacy and Social Action Litigation	<b>Training of paralegals or 'Barefoot Lawyers'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incubating personnel to support lawyers at lower-level courts</li> <li>• Training camps for barefoot lawyers to identify the problems of the poor, give voice to their demands and protect them against injustices, alert them against deprivation and exploitation, and give them first aid in law</li> </ul>

CSO's area of work	Intervention	Good practices
	<b>Training social action groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting legal awareness among people</li> <li>• Equipping the poor with the knowledge of how the law works, and how to use the law to assert or defend their rights</li> </ul>
	<b>Independent, domestic funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding from social service organisations and public-spirited individuals</li> <li>• <i>Pro bono</i> work by established lawyers</li> <li>• Self-reliance and availability of easy finances, which enables grassroots work, instead of preoccupation with administrative structures and reporting obligations</li> </ul>

CSO's area of work	Intervention	Good practices
Access to justice, adjudication, and rehabilitation	<b>Prison reform initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training police officials and/or prison authorities in effective law enforcement</li> <li>• Monitoring and ensuring accountability of police and prison authorities</li> <li>• Providing psycho-social and rehabilitative support to inmates, released prisoners, and their families</li> </ul>
	<b>Monitoring judicial pendency (number of pending cases)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitating case management</li> <li>• Conducting training and sensitisation workshops for the judiciary</li> <li>• Leveraging informal dispute resolution systems</li> </ul>



# EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

*“Education is what makes a person fearless, teaches him the lesson of unity, makes him aware of his rights, and inspires him to struggle for his rights” –Dr. BR Ambedkar*

## EDUCATION AND INDIA: A SUMMARY

In the three decades that followed Independence, various review committees formed the crux of the Central government's engagement with the idea of a national education system in India. Although the first National Policy on Education – conceptualising a national school system geared towards universalising elementary education – was legislated in 1968, guidelines for education in independent India were released much sooner, through the Constitution of India. These guidelines covered free compulsory education until the age of 14 and education for minority groups.

Since then, through decades of policy reform and milestones within the sector, civil society groups have worked extensively alongside Central and local governments through each step of education delivery – inclusion, capacity building, curriculum improvement, and in scaling programmes.

The common goals of civil society organisations and governments have been:

- Universalisation of elementary education, foundational literacy, and numeracy
- Eradication of gender, caste, economic, and other barriers to education
- Technical training, research, and innovation through higher education

- Non-formal education, vocational training, and adult literacy programmes
- Holistic development, life skills, and social and political education

## MILESTONES, INTERVENTIONS, AND CSOS IN EDUCATION

Non-profit interventions in education can be conceptualised through three distinct phases:

- **Phase 1: Substitution:** For several decades following independence, social activists and non-profits in India prioritised building education systems parallel to government infrastructure, with a focus on providing socially and economically marginalised groups with education services. These interventions included setting up welfare schools and centres for non-formal education
- **Phase 2: Ensuring government-provided access:** In the aftermath of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2001) and the Right to Education Act (2009), non-profit interventions became focused on ensuring that marginalised groups could access government-led education systems. This often took the shape of collaborating with government schools and programmes to make them more responsive to community needs.
- **Phase 3: Quality improvement phase:** Despite the existence of accessible government infrastructure, learning outcomes for students are not being met to a satisfactory standard. This has led to non-profits focusing on quality-of-learning interventions more keenly since 2020.

The table below lists key social justice milestones of India's education sector since 1947, alongside the social workers and organisations who contributed to their success.

Table 1: Education Milestones in India and the CSO sector

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
<p>1945: Dr BR Ambedkar established the People's Education Society for the advancement of Scheduled Caste (SC) students</p>	<p>Starting from 1945, the <b>People's Education Society</b> has established approximately 30 schools and colleges in Maharashtra that offer freeships and scholarships to SC students. These institutions have been built around an Ambedkarite blueprint that centres moral, social, and political education linked to caste emancipation. Their key features include allowing students to work and earn while pursuing their education and allowing them to gain admissions in disciplines of their choice, irrespective of past performance.</p>
<p>1963: Introduction of modern science teaching in government schools through learning based on experiments, demonstration, and cultivating scientific curiosity among students</p>	<p>From 1963 onwards, NCERT received external support from <b>UNICEF</b> and <b>UNESCO</b> to improve science teaching in Indian schools. Several initiatives were taken up as part of this programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A cohort of 49 science educationists from NCERT received training in curriculum development and service delivery from UNESCO experts</li> <li>• Science kits were supplied to approximately 30,000 schools</li> <li>• Activity-based instructional materials were developed through trials in government primary schools.</li> </ul>

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
<p>1972: The Hoshangabad Science Teaching Programme for science teaching and innovation in rural schools is initiated in Madhya Pradesh</p>	<p>The Hoshangabad Science Teaching Programme (HSTP) was set up in 1972 by non-profit organisations <b>Friends Rural Centre</b> and <b>Kishore Bharati</b>. Drawing on academic guidance from scientific experts, the programme developed innovative learning practices based on experiments and field studies, with curricula focused on students' lived contexts and environments. In 1982, <b>Eklavya Foundation</b> was established to scale the Hoshangabad - HSTP model to foster learning innovations in other parts of Madhya Pradesh, and, over subsequent decades, across other Indian states.</p>
<p>1984: The Shiksha Karmi community primary schooling project is set up in Rajasthan</p>	<p>Under the Shiksha Karmi project, primary school teachers in 2000 remote villages in Rajasthan were replaced by two volunteer <i>shikshakarmis</i> (education workers) from local communities. Non-profit organisations were key collaborators in the implementation of the programme. <b>SANDHAN</b>, a non-profit organisation based in Jaipur, took up the implementational charge for training and supporting <i>shikshakarmis</i> as well as introducing other learning innovations in schools where the project was operational. In addition to the Shiksha Karmi project, the organisation also served as an implementation partner for the Lok Jumbish programme in the 1990s.</p>

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
<p>1989: The Mahila Samakhya Programme is established for community-oriented development and women's participation in education in rural areas</p>	<p>The Mahila Samakhya programme engages women in rural areas in the process of planning, implementing, and overseeing school education in their villages. Initiated in districts where women's literacy rates and participation in education are low, the programme organises women into <b>sanghas (collectives)</b> that are responsible for developing education goals and strategies for their villages. <b>Autonomous state-level education societies</b> function as implementation partners for these strategies. Many women who have been participants in the programme have gone on to become school board members and school administrators, as well as getting involved in other local political bodies. As of 2014, Mahila Samakhya was operational in 130 districts and 679 blocks across India.</p>
<p>1991: MV Foundation initiates area-based interventions in Andhra Pradesh to combat child labour through school retention and enrolment programmes</p>	<p>In 1991, <b>Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation (MV Foundation)</b> began work in the Ranga Reddy district in Andhra Pradesh, a state with one of the highest incidences of child labour in India at the time. The organisation followed an area-based approach, securing over a million children's removal from the workforce and integration into the formal schooling pipeline to date. The organisation has also worked with non-profits and government-initiated education programmes in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Bihar, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, and Tamil Nadu to scale its model.</p>

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
<p>1992: The Lok Jumbish programme is initiated in Rajasthan by the government of India, as a grassroots-level multi-stakeholder intervention to achieve <i>Education for All</i> in the state</p>	<p>Lok Jumbish set the precedent for a period of decentralised, district-level micro-planning as a policy norm in education. Aided by <b>52 non-profit organisations</b> in the state (including <b>SANDHAN</b>), the programme created local management systems for primary schooling in more than 50 blocks in Rajasthan. Primary schools were reviewed and updated with a focus on environment-building activities, and pedagogical and curricular changes, such as the development and mainstreaming of new textbooks for the state, were initiated as an outcome.</p>
<p>2005: The National Curriculum Framework made in collaboration with civil society is drafted</p>	<p>A thorough revision of curricula in primary, elementary, and secondary education was undertaken to create the National Curriculum Framework, 2005. Consultations were held between NCERT officials, non-governmental organisations, teachers' associations, and academic experts to draft this framework. Key civil society actors who served on the central steering committee of this exercise included <b>Prof Shantha Sinha</b> from the <b>MV Foundation</b>, <b>Ms. Mina Swaminathan</b> from the <b>MS Swaminathan Research Foundation</b>, and academics such as <b>Dr. Padma Sarangapani</b>, <b>Prof Gopal Guru</b>, and <b>Dr. Ramachandra Guha</b>.</p>

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
<p>2009: The RTE Forum emerges as a national consortium of civil society actors to oversee the implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009</p>	<p>The <b>RTE Forum</b> was initiated by <b>Oxfam India</b> as a national coalition of more than <b>10,000 NGOs, educationists, and social activists</b> in the aftermath of the legislation of the Right to Education Act. Its primary goal was to examine the progress made by the Act along parameters such as quality, inclusivity, and addressing communities' needs. By 2018, <b>state-level RTE Forums</b> had been initiated in 14 states— Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal.</p>
<p>2012: Interventions by 17000 ft Foundation reach remote Himalayan schools in Ladakh</p>	<p>Remote rural schools in Ladakh are often cut off from other regions for several months a year due to harsh winter weather. <b>17000 ft Foundation</b> was set up in 2012 to work with these schools to achieve quality education, and ultimately, economic independence for individuals living in these remote regions. Mobilising technology, capacity-building exercises, and collaborations with volunteers, the organisation has expanded to cover two districts and almost 900 schools in the region.</p>

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
2017: Pratham Education Foundation scales impact and implements learning innovations in 24 states	Founded in 1995, <b>Pratham Education Foundation</b> develops learning innovations, impacting millions of children across the country every year. This decade saw the organisation achieve unprecedented scale by working with government schools, bodies, and programmes in 24 Indian states. Key milestones in Pratham's success story include their flagship publication ASER (Annual Status of Education Report), innovations in early childhood education and foundational literacy, and the introduction of digital classrooms into their programmes.

The table below reviews unique and impactful CSO interventions in education and highlights good practices within the sector.

*Table 2: CSO Models, Interventions, and Good Practices*

CSO's area of work	Intervention	Good practices
Process	<b>Science teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of experiments and demonstrations</li> <li>• Engagement with students' natural surroundings and lived contexts</li> <li>• Student and teacher feedback mechanisms for developing new pedagogies</li> </ul>



CSO's area of work	Intervention	Good practices
	<b>Curriculum development and teaching-learning materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of relatable and culturally responsive instructional material</li> <li>• Incorporation of vocational skills and life skills-oriented material</li> <li>• Models for holistic education that encompass mental, physical, and social wellbeing</li> </ul>
Governance	<b>Policy Advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-stakeholder civil society networks and coalitions to serve as advocacy forums</li> <li>• External monitoring and evaluation of existing education programmes</li> </ul>
	<b>Programme implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity-building and teacher training</li> <li>• Multi-level engagement with the government (schools, districts, states, Centre)</li> <li>• Updating technical and digital capacities</li> </ul>

CSO's area of work	Intervention	Good practices
Research	<b>Learning innovations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prototype-testing and pilot projects to gather monitoring, evaluation, and learning insights</li> <li>• Operating within existing government school infrastructure</li> <li>• Cultivation of community-led thought leadership and implementation models</li> </ul>
	<b>Archives and knowledge dissemination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservation of cultural and lived experiences as knowledge</li> <li>• Emphasis on the need for marginalised groups to have control over their representation, visibility, and knowledge dissemination</li> </ul>

CSO's area of work	Intervention	Good practices
Implementation	<b>School enrolments and retention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grassroots-level awareness and sensitisation campaigns</li> <li>• Focus on lowering children's workforce participation and preventing child marriage</li> <li>• Securing access to government schools, schemes, and programmes</li> </ul>
	<b>Early childcare and education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted interventions for at-risk communities that lack access to childcare (e.g., unorganised sector workers)</li> <li>• Preparing children from under-resourced groups for integration into the formal schooling pipeline</li> </ul>

CSO's area of work	Intervention	Good practices
	<b>Vocational skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrating education with self-sustaining community-oriented development projects</li> <li>• Skill training as an alternate form of education for individuals excluded from formal education</li> <li>• Different modes of hands-on skill learning, such as home-based programmes, mobile skill labs, and training centers</li> </ul>
	<b>Charitable and budget-private schools, scholarships, and funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial support or provision of voluntary education services to marginalized (e.g., women, Dalits, Adivasis) and at-risk (e.g., homeless children, children living in conflict-stricken regions) groups</li> <li>• Non-formal education centers in high-risk, under-resourced, and remote regions</li> </ul>

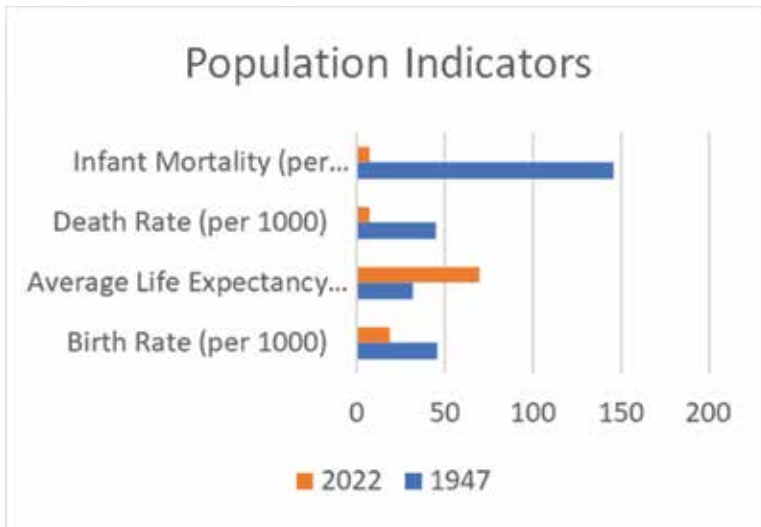
# PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

*“They went beyond simply improving health conditions... demonstrating that health could be an entering wedge into total socioeconomic development.” - Carl Taylor, ‘Jamkhed: A Comprehensive Rural Health Project’ (1994)*

## PUBLIC HEALTH AND INDIA

In 1946, as India was preparing for Independence, the ‘Health Survey and Development Committee Report’ popularly referred to as the Bhole Committee Report, prepared a detailed plan of a National Health Service for the country, envisioning **universal coverage for the entire population, free of charge, through a comprehensive state-run salaried health service**. However, it was not until four decades later that India notified its first policy on health – **the National Health Policy of 1983**.

Despite the lack of a policy, the Constitution of India did the job of articulating public health and its many facets like the right to life, often taken as the right to health by extension, the health status of young citizens, workers, mothers, the standard of living and the environment. Since 1947, India’s public health sector has crossed huge milestones:



**Maternal mortality**

95% decrease since 1947

- 1947 = 2000/ 100,000 live births
- 2022 = 97/ 100,000 live births

**Primary Healthcare Centers**

48 times increase since 1947

- 1947 = 725
- 2022 = 34,545

**Doctor-Patient Ratio**

800% increase

- 1947 = 1:6800
- 2022 = 1:834

Several of these milestones have been conceived, enabled, and launched from the ground up by India’s civil society sector. Every decade since independence has seen the emergence and success of community interventions and the ability of civil society groups to shoulder the massive task of achieving public health for all in a newly independent India – be it delivering health services and resources, acting as a supporting institution for the government, or simply carrying people’s voices and stories to policymakers and the world at large.

## MILESTONES, INTERVENTIONS, AND CSOS IN PUBLIC HEALTH

The table below lists key social justice milestones of India's public health sector since 1947, alongside the social workers and organisations who contributed to their success.

**Table 1: Public health milestones in India and the CSO sector**

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
1949: India becomes the first country in the world to devise a Family Planning Programme	A group of concerned women led by Dhanvanti Rama Rau, a feminist freedom fighter and civil society activist, established the <b>Family Planning Association of India (FPA India)</b> .
1950s and 1960s: India launches an anti-malaria programme and makes progress in the fight against malaria	<b>The Co-operative Anti-Malaria Society and Panihati (Bengal)</b> set international precedents in combating malaria in remote villages, growing from 27 members and one village to 3500 voluntary village societies in 10 years.
1964: India gets its first registered NGO and halfway home for mentally ill patients	The <b>Medico Pastoralist Association</b> – comprising professionals like doctors and clergymen under the Urban Industrial Mission Programme of St. Mark's Cathedral, Bangalore – got together to create awareness, and to provide training in skills required to remove the fear and misconceptions surrounding mental health problems.

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
<p>1971: ORS, “the most important medical discovery of the 20th century,” deployed to cure cholera at Bangaon refugee camp</p>	<p><b>Dr. Dilip Mahalanabis</b>, the ORS pioneer, saved thousands of people affected by cholera at the Bangaon refugee camp by administering oral rehydration therapy or ORT. He prepared ORS for the masses by mixing table salt, baking soda, and glucose, and deployed it via <b>health volunteers</b> at the camp.</p>
<p>1975: Integrated Child Development Scheme – one of the world’s largest and unique programmes for early childhood care and development – launched in India</p>	<p><b>Child in Need Institute</b> of West Bengal, through its services for growth monitoring, treatment of common childhood diseases, and preventive measures like immunisation, health, and nutrition education, realised the Health for All goal of reducing infant mortality rate, received the 1985 ‘National Award for Child Welfare’, and was nominated for the SASAKAWA Health prize at the 39th World Health Assembly in 1985.</p>



Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
1977: India launches Village Health Guides or Community Health Worker scheme	<p>Inspired by the 1970 <b>Jamkhed Comprehensive Rural Health Project</b> approach, developed by <b>Rajanikant</b> and <b>Mabelle Arole</b> in rural Maharashtra – which was instrumental in influencing these concepts and principles, which were embedded in the international 1978 Declaration of Alma-Ata.</p> <p>Inspired by the 1977<b>Pachod CHDP Community Health Worker Programme</b>, which focused on maternal health and covered 72 villages and hamlets situated in the southern part of Paithan block of Aurangabad district, Maharashtra.</p>
1976: National Blindness Control Programme launched	Aravind Eye Hospitals – a hospital chain founded by Dr. Govindappa Venkataswamyin Madurai, Tamil Nadu – starts a network of eye hospitals and goes on to have a major impact in eradicating cataract-related blindness in India.
1979: India is small pox free	India was hailed for eradicating smallpox through the aid of civil society organisations, where thousands of healthcare workers and one lakh community workers trained by WHO went door to door in the country and covered a hundred million households in 575,721 villages and 2,641 cities.

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
1983: India notifies its first National Health Policy	Recommended a decentralised system of health care, the key features of which were low cost, and the <b>use of volunteers and paramedics, and community participation.</b>
1986: National Rural Sanitation Programme launched by the government	The <b>Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART)</b> , the apex organisation for supporting and coordinating the activities of NGOs in the field of rural development oversaw, involving more NGOs. In Gujarat, the entire sanitation programme was implemented through a network of NGOs. In West Bengal, it was the <b>Ram Krishna Mission</b> that helped the government implement sanitation programmes.
1995: launch of the Pulse Polio Programme	The government's polio eradication programme was faced with immense people-driven challenges, which created the need for tailor-made and novel responses. This took the form of a combination of international NGOs and Indian civil society groups, individuals, and activists. One of the most effective interventions of this collaboration was generating intermediaries from within the community itself – through the <b>CORE Group Polio Project.</b>

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
2004: India launches Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme	<p><b>The North Arcot District Health Information Network's</b> community-based District Level Disease Surveillance (DLDS) model and monthly health information bulletin (called <b>NADHI</b>) helped extend this programme to include tribal health.</p>
2000s: exponential decline in child undernutrition between 2006 and 2014 – stunting rates for children under five reduced from 48 per cent to 39 per cent, resulting in fewer stunted and wasted children	<p>Through the public-private model, the <b>Akshaya Patra Foundation</b> started running the world's largest Mid-Day Meal. Programme, which helped provide nutritious and hygienic food to thousands of school-going children.</p>

Milestone	Civil Society Contribution
<p>2014-2015: National Immunisation Programme crosses two milestones – the eradication of Polio and maternal and neonatal Tetanus, respectively</p>	<p>NGOs like <b>CRY</b> helped address and reduce vaccine hesitancy within communities, and NGOs like Sahyog, ARMMAN, Committed Communities Development Trust, and SNEHA helped improve medical conditions for at-risk pregnant women.</p>
<p>2020 onwards: responding to COVID-19</p>	<p>When the second wave of COVID-19 hit India, and its population was met with a failing healthcare system, NGOs across the country—Save The Children, SaveLIFE Foundation, and Goonj, amongst several others—played a significant role in reinforcing the health infrastructure.</p>

The table below reviews unique and impactful CSO interventions in public health and highlights good practices within the sector.

*Table 2: CSO Models, Interventions, and Good Practices*

CSO's area of work	Intervention	Best practices
Service delivery	<b>Setting up Village Societies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing vernacular journals</li> <li>• Convening regular community meetings</li> <li>• Networking with professionals in the field</li> <li>• Involving men and women equitably</li> </ul>
	<b>Communication for behaviour change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using folk art to communicate modern concepts</li> <li>• Production and distribution of pamphlets and digital messages for public health best practices</li> </ul>
	<b>Community-based health insurance scheme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starting with primary health care support to a catchment community and then moving to provide coverage for them</li> <li>• Running run in-house health insurance services without external partnerships with insurance companies</li> </ul>

CSO's area of work	Intervention	Best practices
	<b>Free service to needy populations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free food and return transportation for under-resourced patients</li> <li>• Distinct facilities and differential pricing</li> <li>• Travelling to the community and doing house visits instead of hosting surgical camps</li> </ul>
Behaviour change	<b>Training patient counselors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers with good communication skills and high empathy were trained for this</li> <li>• Creating opportunities for more interpersonal conversation and counseling</li> </ul>
	<b>Outreach to the non-customer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading the message through word of mouth</li> <li>• Meeting people where they live, work, and spend time, instead of placing the onus on them to visit</li> <li>• Monthly meet-ups, where stakeholders are encouraged to break biases and air concerns</li> </ul>

CSO's area of work	Intervention	Best practices
Innovation	<b>Scalable human-centric interventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human milk banks for premature babies</li> <li>• Kangaroo method for keeping new-borns warm</li> </ul>
	<b>mHealth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free mobile health service voice calls</li> <li>• Timed and targeted preventive care information weekly/ bi-weekly directly to peoples' phone</li> <li>• Available in local dialects</li> </ul>
	<b>Open-source software</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing digital platforms for monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>• Digital platforms for quality assessment and quality assessment and reporting for government hospitals and health centres</li> </ul>

## WAY FORWARD

Our reports have provided evidence that is testimony to the countless models, legislations, and innovations that CSOs have contributed to India's development. As we build back from the pandemic, the path ahead for India is rife with multidimensional challenges. To address these challenges, CSOs can provide tailored and localised responses in embedded, layered, and dynamic systems.

### **The Government can work with CSOs to provision for the last mile by:**

- Engaging civil society in implementing community-based programmes, with a focus on reaching and engaging with under-served, vulnerable, and marginalised communities
- Strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems to identify opportunities and priority areas for government interventions in public delivery systems
- Undertaking consultative processes that rely on evidence-based policymaking, leveraging insights from stakeholders, data, and innovation to meet specific development targets and goals
- Seeking technical and specialised support on sub-areas of work within larger themes (for example, legal awareness building for women in social justice, teacher training in education, and last-mile delivery of vaccinations in health)

### **Apart from channelising resources, Funders can collaborate with CSOs to catalyse impact by:**

- Fostering innovations and experiments that aim to create interventions that are geared towards systemic-level changes, instead of providing stopgap project-based funding
- Approaching giving with a diversity and equity lens, in a manner that prioritises highly vulnerable stakeholders



and the need for inclusive developmental programmes

- Increasing engagement with non-profits and civil society actors who interact with local communities and ecosystems through their work, to help identify opportunities and funding strategies that maximise grassroots impact

**CSOs can enhance their role in the sectors of social justice, health, and education sectors by:**

- Strengthening collaborations with other stakeholders in public delivery systems, including government institutions, like-minded organisations, private players, and communities
- Improving mechanisms for fundraising, outcome measurement, and technical capacity-building by creating successful interventions that can be replicated and scaled
- Leveraging technology and digital tools to increase reach for advocacy, sensitisation, and awareness programmes, and develop new interventions.



Chapter 8:

# **Impact of Non- Governmental Organisations Towards Mental Healthcare in India**

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It is estimated that 150 million Indians suffer from one or more mental health conditions (National Mental Health Survey, 2015-2016). The current treatment gap in mental health in India ranges between 83-87 per cent, where lack of access to care is highest in rural and tribal areas. Mental health conditions are impacted by multiple predisposing and precipitating factors. Systemic barriers, including class, gender, and caste-based discrimination and various social determinants, influence the onset of illness and one's recovery and life trajectory. The overall burden of disease is assessed using the disability-adjusted life year (DALY), a time-based measure that combines years of life lost due to premature mortality (YLLs) and years of life lost due to time lived in states of less than full health, or years of healthy life lost due to disability (YLDs). Mental disorders, including Depressive disorders, Bipolar disorders, Schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, Autism and Asperger's Syndrome, childhood behavioural disorders, and other mental conditions are major causes of years lived with disability. The global disability-adjusted life-years (DALYs) attributed to mental disorders have increased from 3.1 per cent in 1990 to 4.9 per cent in 2019. (Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study, 2019).

Mental health issues have been debated much more in public spaces than in oncology or cardiology and have been relatively more engaged with both humanities and the natural sciences than most other fields of medicine. From the times of the asylum and related segregation of persons with mental illness that resulted in a sense of othering and discrimination to the times that marked the advent of biomedicine and neuroscience-related discoveries, much has changed, and yet gains are somewhat marginal. In this lies both the challenge and paradox around mental health.

The 1960s ushered in an era of progressive reforms in hospital-based care that moved beyond restraints. Care in the community, supported by families and support circles, and enabling

collaborations largely became the norm globally, as it did in India, especially with the initiation of the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) that ensured coverage. While human rights and justice-based frameworks have largely taken centre stage in the global discourse, owing to the introduction of international declarations on disability and health and progressive mental health legislations and policies that promote community inclusion and participation, translation of the same in practice is somewhat lacking. Convergence between the health and social sectors, while mandated and essential in addressing social determinants, remains less than satisfactory. Focus on the whole person across one's lifespan is considered essential to responsive care approaches and protocols that inspire the pursuit of capabilities and the attainment of valued social roles.

## Social Determinants and Mental Health

The inextricable link between mental ill health and poverty has been well-established in the literature. The impact of income insecurity on cognition, on the one hand, and lack of access to affordable and appropriate care that recognises deprivation, marginalisation, and intergenerational trauma (especially for historically oppressed communities) of persons from marginalised communities and Below Poverty Line Families with mental health issues on the other, perpetuates a cycle of distress and exclusion.

The persons living with mental illness (PLMI) have needs that are divergent and non-linear, and conditions ranging from depression and anxiety to severe mental illnesses, organic conditions, and age-related mental health conditions, including dementia, need to be addressed. While mental health may now receive the sort of attention that it deserves, the legacy of stigma is determined, and only concerted efforts to promote community inclusion can break the shackles of stigma. This combination of lack of nuance in care plans that lend themselves to person-

centric responses and inaccurate societal perceptions resulted in limited social and cultural participation and further perpetuated alienation, exclusion, and loneliness. While investments grew in the field, they were still found lacking and were largely focused on sustaining exclusionary biomedical responses.

Research, meanwhile, had gradually expanded from a mental illness focus to include public health, social sciences, humanities, and the neurosciences. While a few significant outcomes have been realised that have influenced the development of care approaches, the essentiality of demonstrating efficacy and, more importantly, effectiveness in the real world remains underwhelming. Furthermore, mental health remained a topic of discussion relegated to academic quarters, predominantly amongst service providers, with minimal inputs from persons with lived experience and caregivers and those engaged in implementation.

Mental health, as we know, is much larger than inpatient and biomedical care and requires psychological, social, occupational, educational, economic, religious/theological, philosophical, political, and ecological inputs and interactions to facilitate well-being and promotion of individual capabilities. Some of the domains mentioned above have only recently begun to feature in the research and service discourse for persons with mental illness. However, a focus on public mental health and social care, with the initiation of diverse models and innovations that influence multi-factorial facets of mental illness and that are culturally resonant, have been tested by various civil society groups, ranging from mental health professionals and researchers to lived experience experts – all of whom have fostered collaborations to support the mental health sector. From deinstitutionalisation to community care to social care innovations and civil society participation, the mental health sector today perhaps uses lived experience and caregiver advocates largely, many of them leaders in the civil society space.

## REHABILITATION OPTIONS

NGOs have played a crucial role in all the areas mentioned above. Initiated in 1964, Medico Pastoral Association (MPA), the first mental health NGO in the country, led the way in community-based care through the establishment of halfway homes, responding to a growing need in the country. Basic Needs India, Richmond Fellowship Society, Paripurnata, and Parivartan, amongst others, have made significant contributions to the creation of halfway homes and community-based rehabilitation options in India.

## TRANSFORMING MENTAL HOSPITALS

Pioneers, including Dr. Vidya Sagar and Dr. Sarada Menon, were amongst the first in the country to begin changing the face of institutions in the country. Dr. Vidya Sagar, in the 1950s, was instrumental in setting up open wards and facilitating family-based treatment at the mental hospital in Amritsar, and Dr. Sarada Menon's efforts were crucial in bringing about greater transparency, adherence to human rights tenets, and integration of comprehensive rehabilitation packages at the Institute of Mental Health, Chennai. Dr. Menon subsequently went on to establish the Schizophrenia Awareness and Research Foundation (SCARF) in 1984, an institution that has since played a key role in offering institutional care (among several other contributions towards mental healthcare).

In the decades that followed, organisations such as Anjali Mental Health Rights and Tata Trusts stationed themselves out of Pavlov Hospital in Kolkata and Nagpur Mental Hospital to facilitate exit pathways for patients stuck in institutional care through family reunification programmes, an integration into community-based living options. These efforts gained increased momentum in 2016, when a Supreme Court of India ruling mandated exit plans for clients from hospital-based settings into community-based living options in case of a period of stay over a year. The court ruling was in response to a petition filed by Adv. Gaurav Bansal

to promote community living for persons with mental health issues, in line with Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

India is home to 43 mental hospitals, and while many of them are not in the finest of conditions, much has improved thanks to the efforts of volunteers, individuals from within the Government system, the health departments, and support from organisations such as SCARF, The Banyan, Chellamuthu Trust, Saumanasya, Sanjeevani, among others .

## **DISTRICT MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME (DMHP) AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE OPTIONS IN PRIMARY CARE**

DMHP is a decentralised community-based mental health programme conceptualised and field- tested between 1985 and 1990 in the district of Bellary. Evaluation of this approach revealed very encouraging results, as close to 42 per cent of the expected neuropsychiatric morbidity in 1.2 million population received continuous care through the work of primary health care institutions. Currently, there are 723 DMHPs out of 766 districts, and the funds are released through the National Health Mission. However, the DMHP, although largely a medically robust model, faces several implementation challenges and is currently augmented by organisations across India, each using unique ways to promote early identification of distress and ill health and facilitation of appropriate referral pathways to mental health and social care service access points.

Several public-private partnerships (PPPs) have been initiated to support the DMHP. Karuna Trust, based in Karnataka extended its services across 70 Primary Health Centres in seven states, servicing a population of 1.5 million persons. Altruist Foundation, an organisation based in Gujarat, pioneered a model that integrated spiritual healing and medical support in collaboration with the Hazrat Saiyed Ali Mira Data Dargah in Unnava and has reached out to over 2 lakh individuals since its inception.



Chellamuthu Trust also worked with faith-based organisations to integrate the Dava-Dua model of care, which places equal emphasis on religious and biopsychosocial modalities of care in Madurai and Ramanathapuram districts, Tamil Nadu. By demonstrating transformation in individuals who sought mental health care, these organisations were then able to forge important partnerships with the government to augment the district mental health programme through expansive rehabilitation packages that facilitated community inclusion.

Similarly, in Madhya Pradesh, the Gramin Adivasi Samaj Vikas Sanstha (GASVS) works in 80 villages in Sausar block along with the Hanuman Mandir to conduct outpatient clinics and community mental health programmes, servicing a population of over 1.3 lakh individuals. GASVS has also federated 11 client and caregiver groups that advocate for access to employment options and social entitlements. The Arulmigu Prasanna Venkatachalapathy Temple in Gunaseelam has, for over 50 years, offered faith-based mental health treatments in collaboration with mainstream psychiatric facilities in rural Tamil Nadu.

The Schizophrenia Awareness and Research Foundation (SCARF) runs telepsychiatry facilities in rural Tamil Nadu to promote access to care, covering seven districts and 5.2 lakh individuals in coordination with local DMHP programmes.

In a noteworthy move, Panchayats in Kerala have played an important role in the disability and palliative care sectors through which they have integrated mental health services in the community through Public Private Partnerships. MEHAC Foundation, MHAT, Thanal, and other organisations have adopted this approach, covering almost all of the State of Kerala.

In the context of community mental health care, indigenous communities form a highly vulnerable group linked to historical marginalisation, and a complex process of adaptation to rapid cultural shifts. Ashwini, Tribal Health Initiative, Ekjut, Keystone Foundation, and Nilgiris Adivasi Welfare Association, amongst a few others, have carried out path-breaking work in bringing mental healthcare access to tribal communities, and a few have integrated indigenous healing practices into mainstream treatment

paradigms. Ashadeep Society is among the first organisations in the Northeast to develop comprehensive community mental health programmes in Assam. Models developed at Chandigarh, Ballabgarh, Sakalvara, and Bellary by PGI/AIIMS/NIMHANS and the ideas of Satyanand, Masani, Kapur, Wig, RS Murthy, Issac, CRC, Chakravarthy, among others, which allowed the idea of working with local traditions (using Anthropology/Kapur); NHS like (Wig); bureaucratic policy-making (Issac/Murthy)

A challenge in the Indian context is that demand and supply chains are skewed, with demand surpassing supply. India has only 0.80 psychiatric nurses, 0.29 psychiatrists, 0.07 clinical psychologists, and 0.06 psychiatric social workers for every 1 lakh population (WHO, 2017). Given the large treatment gap in the country and the lack of available human resources to bridge this gap, it is important to take on a task-shifting approach, which involves training primary care and community health workers to take on some health care responsibilities that specialists typically deliver. The Atmiyata model by the Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy (CMHLP), the MANAS trial by Sangath, and the NALAM approach by The Banyan have been crucial in promoting and strengthening task-shifting approaches and addressing the care gap.

## SUICIDE PREVENTION

Linked to various psycho-social concerns, alarmingly high suicide rates are being observed globally and nationally. Over 7,00,000 people globally die by suicide every year. (World Health Organisation, 2021). Data published by the National Crime Records Bureau (August 2022) indicated that a total of 1,64,033 suicides were reported in the country in 2021 and that this number had increased by 7.2 per cent in comparison to the previous year. Suicides are observed to be most common among men experiencing challenges linked to unemployment and loss of income, daily wage earners, women experiencing dowry-related family problems, and young adults experiencing academic failures and relationship problems. The Global Burden

of Disease Study (GBD) 1990 - 2017 has also pointed out that suicide was the leading cause of death in India for those in the age groups of 15–29 years. Hence, deaths by suicide contribute to a serious public health challenge and require urgent, comprehensive interventions. In this context, organisations such as SNEHA and the Centre for Mental Health, Law and Policy (CMHLP) have been instrumental in driving a suicide-prevention strategy, also contributing to policy and legislation (through the decriminalisation of suicide and developing a nationwide suicide prevention policy).

## **ACCESS TO CARE FOR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS**

Increased use of and dependence on substances over the years has become a pressing challenge in India. The prevalence of opioid use in India is three times the global average. (Ray R, 2004). A study conducted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 2019 suggests that at least 2.9 crore individuals require support for dependence on alcohol, and at least 4.6 lakh children for dependence on inhalants. This is a critical concern, considering the bidirectional link between heightened substance use and several physical and mental health concerns. To respond to these challenges, NGOs have played a central role in creating rehabilitation facilities for persons in distress owing to substance use disorders. In addition, many NGOs also offer support for managing co-morbid challenges such as HIV-AIDS and hepatitis. Some of the key players in this domain are TTK Foundation, Chennai, Mind Plus, Punjab, Kripa Foundation, Mumbai, Sambandh Foundation, New Delhi, and Gunjan Organisation for Community Development.

## **CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH**

Responses to the mental health needs of children began through day-care centres for children with physical and intellectual disabilities and have since grown to cater to childhood traumas,

abuse, and specific behavioural concerns, including, substance abuse, self-harm, and suicide. Organisations such as Spastic Society of India, Salaam Baalak, Tulir, Chetna, Aangan Trust, Arpan, Sangath, Rainbow Homes, and Nalandaway have forged the path for comprehensive mental health services for children and young adults, including but not limited to day-care centres, awareness, and school mental health programmes, mentorship initiatives and emergency care. Children with parental mental health issues are cared for as an extension of community-based services in several organisations, however, specialised focus is needed to respond to the unique mental health concerns of this cohort.

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Women and sexual minorities have confronted structural barriers and oppression for generations. Mental illness as a label and subsequent incarceration was the lot of this group as a response to any form of rebellion against established patriarchal norms for at least two centuries. Paradoxically, any help-seeking behaviour for standalone mental health concerns and/or those emerging from abuse and violence continues to be actively discouraged by families and members of the community. Organisations such as Anjali Mental Health Rights, Sri Mukti Sangathana, SNEHA Mumbai, PCVC, and Prerna have contributed significantly to bridging this care gap and responding to the specific mental health needs of women.

Homosexuality was featured as a disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders until 1973. In India, Article 377, which criminalised homosexuality, was abrogated only in 2018. LGBTQIA+ communities continue to be stigmatised, marginalised, and subjected to several forms of abuse. Moreover, mental health interventions largely existed in the form of 'conversion therapies,' causing unimaginable distress to individuals and the community. The Mariwala Health Initiative and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Nirangal, The Queer Muslim Project, Queerabad, Queergarh, Y'all, and the Resistive

Alliance of Queer Solidarity, have carried out pioneering work in creating Queer Affirmative Counselling Practices that aim to alleviate the distress, ambiguity, and shame to which these communities were subjected.

## CARE FOR HOMELESS PERSONS WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Missionaries of Charity (MoC) has been one of the forerunners in caring for the most marginalised, even among those who are mentally ill, the homeless. With establishments across the country, MoC has reached out to over 10 lakh individuals from the streets, offering humanitarian services for the homeless and mentally ill. Others include Ishwar Sankalp, The Banyan, Ashadeep Society, Green Dot Trust, Maria, Sadanam, and Brothers of Charity to name a few. Apna Ghar in Bharatpur has created a community to cater to the needs of 4000 homeless persons with mental health issues, other disabilities, children, and the elderly, offering a range of medical and social support services.

There are approximately 600,000 homeless persons with mental health issues sleeping rough in India and an additional 3000 in state mental hospitals in the country. Most studies of 'beggars homes'; 'night shelters' etc also uniformly talk of 30-50 per cent SMI, so one can estimate that at least 2-3 lakh represent those with SMI, ensuring that they get the proper treatment should be a focus, especially for the elderly and those with multiple disabilities.

The Banyan has further partnered with the Government of Tamil Nadu (TN) and a local Panchayat in Kerala to service the most marginalised in addressing their acute care needs by offering them crisis support, patient care, social needs care, and community re-entry and livelihood options besides their self-operated units through partnerships with the National Health Mission, the Govt of TN, local CSOs and IMH, Chennai. This can serve close to a thousand persons annually.

## ELDERLY

India's elderly population is rising from 8.6 per cent in the 2011 census to 12.5 per cent by 2030, almost 20 per cent by 2050, and a little more than 25 per cent by 2061. Mental health care for the elderly, those with Dementia, chronic Schizophrenia, and other disabilities is gaining increasing focus through organisations, such as HelpAge India and SCARF (through the DEMCARE project).

## RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Organisations, such as Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF), Sangath, Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health (BALM), Centre for Mental Health Law & Policy (CMHLP), Search, Ekjut, St Johns Institute, Krea University, among others, have been involved in initiating various trials that strengthen public mental health approaches, long-term inclusive care options, biomedical responses, etc. SCARF was also responsible for developing IDEAS, a tool that is used to measure the extent of disability based on which disability certification was made possible. BALM's attempts at developing inclusive living options for persons with moderate to severe disabilities through Home Again have now been validated by the World Health Organisation in 2021, as has the Atmiyata approach initiated by CMHLP that supports persons with mental health issues.

Pioneering research has been carried out by non-governmental organisations in India to transform the face of mental health and integrate evidence-based and person-centred services into mainstream care. Several organisations mentioned in this report engage in research and capacity building and have created important leadership programmes to create a cadre of mental health professionals in the country and bridge the glaring human service professional gap. There are currently 0.1 mental health professionals for every 100,000 individuals with diagnosable mental health conditions in the country. NGOs have also made huge strides in the field of child mental health through school

and college mental health programmes, life skills training, early identification, and treatment. Anubuthi Trust and Blue Dawn have made important strides in mental health education and advocacy, especially amongst Dalit, Bahujan, and Adivasi (DBA) communities. Belongg is an online learning platform focusing on intersectionalities in mental health, amongst the first in the country.

**Schools of Social Work and Social Sciences:** Various institutions that offer courses in social work and psychology have initiated programmes that build human resources in the mental health and social care sectors. These institutions also initiate field/social action programmes that allow for engagement with persons with mental health concerns in rural, peri-urban, and urban areas through partnerships with the State or CSOs. Several programmes, such as Tarasha, facilitate exit options from mental hospitals into the community through halfway homes, Koshish and Integrated Health and Rural Development Project (Pragati) initiated by the Tata Institute, and counselling centres and social action programmes for the homeless initiated by the Madras School of Social Work amongst others are exemplar contributions of educational institutions in fostering social justice and transformation.

## PEER AND CAREGIVER LEADERSHIP

Peer and caregiver groups are central to transformative care in the mental health sector. Focus on the co-production of knowledge that informs care plans, policy, and advocacy efforts is now instrumental in driving change in the sector. Peer and caregiver-led programmes run rehabilitation services, engage in stigma reduction efforts, and, most importantly, encourage persons with lived experience to share their perspectives and insights with a larger audience, shattering misconceptions and promoting social inclusion and participation.

Caregivers are the most important mental health service providers, and yet, they do not receive any recognition or resources from the state despite provisions in the Rights of

Persons in Disability Act 2016. They, as a result, tend to focus on existing preoccupations and emergencies related to caregiving duties, leaving behind a huge vacuum in service provision, policy, and advocacy. Similarly, persons with mental health issues are an important workforce in mental health care, including mental hospitals. Their compensation is minimal to nil, creating a roadblock in achieving financial independence and dissuading them from further participation in the workforce.

Organisations, such as Action Care for Mental Illness, Schizophrenia Awareness Association, Sambandh Foundation, and ASHA, were founded by caregivers to create spaces for advocacy and social action programmes that respond to caregivers' greatest preoccupation – “What after me?” These include day care and long-term facilities offering graded levels of support for persons with mental health issues and intellectual disabilities.

## **LIVELIHOODS**

AtmaNirbhar, an offshoot of Asha, has created a range of employment options for persons with mental health issues in Chennai. This includes employment placement, facilitation of self-employment through petty shops across the city, and, by extension, counselling services to prevent attrition and prolonged absence from the workforce.

One of the most important achievements of the non-profit sector in mental health was the integration of persons with mental health issues and other disabilities into the Mahatma Gandhi National Urban Livelihoods Mission in 2012 through a time and motion study conducted by four NGOs in Tamil Nadu.

## **RIGHTS, POLICY, AND LEGISLATION**

The Disability Rights Alliance (DRA) and EQUALS, based out of Tamil Nadu, have carried out path-breaking work in recognising the citizenship of persons with mental health issues in the



country. Through their advocacy efforts, persons with mental illness (PWMI) are now able to access Aadhaarcards, and voter's IDs and have begun voting in municipal, state, and union elections from 2018 onwards.

Between 2012 and 2018 was an important period for mental health in India, when a new mental health policy and mental health legislation was introduced in India, led by the government in partnership with several important mental health stakeholders from the civil society, including representatives from Sangath, CMHLP, The Banyan, St Johns, ACMI, Sitaram Bhartia, among others. The Indian Mental Health Policy outlines mental health as a basic right to health and therefore holds the state accountable to provide for any person in need of mental healthcare. It also emphasises the importance of improving workforce participation and overall quality of life and thus mandates convergence between the health and social sectors and recognises the importance of social entitlements in addressing social determinants.

## **ROLE OF PHILANTHROPIES IN MENTAL HEALTH**

As mental health continues to be marginalised, contributions of philanthropies that recognised and responded to the resource gap must be acknowledged. Tata Trusts, Azim Premji Foundation, Mariwala Health Initiative, HCL Foundation, Bajaj Finserv, SundramFasteners Limited, Paul Hamlyn Foundation India, Rural India Supporting Trust, Rangoonwala Foundation of India Trust, Thakur Foundation, IDFC First Bank, Cognizant Foundation, Hans Foundation to name a few, have engaged with the mental health sector over a period, and across geographies.

## **CONCLUSION**

Non-governmental organisations have been crucial to the growth of the mental health sector in India in building a sense of community, facilitating culturally congruent, last-mile service delivery, and in center staging equity, social justice, and

participation as key values in care protocols. As indicated in the introduction, multi-model interventions to promote well-being are becoming accessible for persons with diagnosable mental health conditions, after ceaseless efforts by NGOs, private sector organisations, and the state. There is, however, a long way to go in ensuring last-mile access to under-served communities in psychosocial distress. This will only be possible by recognising the contributions of each stakeholder and ensuring that resources are accessible without bureaucratic hurdles standing in the way of meaningful work. Unless the MH needs of vulnerable groups are addressed, the vision of the SDGs, such as gender parity, poverty reduction, housing security, among others . may not be advanced with the sense of urgency that it deserves.





**GOAL-SAMARTH**  
Digital Mentorship of Differently Abled

Chapter 9:

**NGOs @ 75:  
Civil Society  
Initiatives for  
Persons with  
Disability**

*Authored by*

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In India, the state has always relegated persons with disabilities to the sidelines of neglect and charity, with the sole mention of disabled people in the Constitution of India being in Article 41, which stipulates that ‘The state shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education, and public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness, and disablement’ (Advani 1997).

The policies of the state are paternalistic, expressed through providing welfare to persons with disabilities in the form of residential institutions, hospitals, and special schools for the rehabilitation of the physically disabled, primarily the blind, crippled, and deaf people (Ghosh 2016).

Most of the programmes initiated for the welfare and rehabilitation of disabled people were implemented through voluntary organisations in different parts of the country, without any direct commitment towards bringing about changes at the social or political levels. While colonial efforts in the pre-Independence period focused on collecting census data on disability from the first census in India in 1872 to 1931, the categories included were limited, as knowledge about disability categories was still evolving at that time. Colonial and missionary initiatives of this period concentrated mostly on the deaf and the blind, with schools and skill training introduced for these groups of disabled people. The schools were primarily secondary level, which indicates the focus on higher education for disabled persons as a need in the colonial period. While most of these efforts were in west and south India, there were a few notable efforts across the country too, started by colonial missionaries and Indians, possibly trained in, or exposed to Western methods and ideas. There are also instances of residential homes for persons with intellectual disabilities in Mumbai and a residential school for

such children in Darjeeling. What is important is the emergence of a consciousness among these civil society organisations in raising questions about building self-confidence and a sense of purpose for disabled people.

In the post-independence decade till about 1960, the previous efforts were sustained and, schools and training centres for the blind, deaf, and physically disabled cropped up across the country. Along with education, rehabilitation became a major focus with stress on medical treatment, aids and appliances in tandem with the global progress in these domains. Most efforts were still concentrated in west and south India, and an interest in addressing cross-disability concerns emerged in many of the NGOs. These efforts replicated the policy thrust of that period, with the government encouraging civil society organisations in local areas to take responsibility for different aspects of the rehabilitation of the physically disabled and sensorily disabled, such as the blind and the deaf. However, the efforts for the blind and somewhat for the deaf dominated the scenario then, with multiple organisations being set up for education, rehabilitation, skill development, and employment.

In the decade of 1960s, along with the existing efforts for education and rehabilitation, the focus shifted to intellectual disabilities as parents started to raise questions about education and livelihoods. This period saw the emergence of the first daycare centres in urban areas where parents needed to go out for work, and the services responded to such needs. Many NGOs working with children and adults with intellectual disabilities focus on building an atmosphere of harmony, learning, and participation. Organisations led by doctors and social workers highlighted not just issues of education, training, and rehabilitation but also stressed awareness generation and prevention of disabilities. This period witnessed the proliferation of special schools and some research wings to study the cause and prevention of mental disabilities and to find ways for their rehabilitation. Some of these organisations also started to provide residential facilities for children with intellectual disabilities. Efforts of civil society partners diversified into providing rehabilitation support, education, vocational training, employment with income-

generating options, physical restorative services, awareness campaigns, and advocacy for the rural disabled.

The nascent disability movement became visible in the decade of the 1970s - associations of persons with disabilities emerged along with the continuing efforts of NGOs where questions of job reservations, empowerment, and awareness became more important as goals of education were reached and educated disabled persons entered the job market. Attention also shifted to the more intensive interventions for persons with multiple disabilities like Cerebral Palsy and deaf/blindness. This period also saw the widespread promotion and use of Indian Sign Language as a medium of communication for the deaf in India. While many NGOs were working on issues of disabilities, parents' associations, disabled people's organisations (DPOs) and organisations started by persons with disabilities themselves started during this decade, to highlight the major concerns of disabled people in India. Till this point in time, the government's efforts were limited only to setting up some of the national institutes, allocating funds for disability rehabilitation programmes being implemented by NGOs and CSOs, and half-hearted efforts at monitoring the work of these organisations. It was during the end of this decade that the first efforts to frame a law for persons with disabilities were taken up by many disability advocates. Such advocacy efforts also stimulated demand for a collection of disability data during Census enumeration, which led to the inclusion of disability as a category in the 1981 Census of India.

From the 1980s onward, disability efforts spread to rural areas in India, with the concept of Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) coming in with evidence from Census 1981 showing that persons with disability were primarily located in rural areas. While the efforts to educate and promote employment for persons with blindness and deafness continued, NGO-run centres for surgical interventions and aids and appliances for disabled people living in rural areas started emerging on the outskirts of major cities. There was also increasing awareness and interventions for intellectual disabilities and persons living with autism (then referred to as mental retardation). These efforts were further stimulated in the 1990s by the passing of the Rehabilitation



Council of India Act in 1993 and the Persons with Disabilities Act of 1995. The civil society efforts also included leisure activities like car rallies for the blind, social rehabilitation of all persons with disabilities, talking libraries, etc.

The visibility of disabled people as self-advocates in the 1990s is an outcome of the efforts of civil society organisations in the previous decades. CSOs and disability activists together campaigned for a comprehensive law to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The Persons with Disabilities Act of 1995 enabled CSOs to take up the gargantuan task of spreading awareness about the law and ensuring that disabled people started accessing the legal provisions. Using the thrust of the law on education, training, and employment for persons with disabilities, these NGOs/CSOs started market-friendly skill development programmes so that disabled people across the country had access to livelihood. At the same time, the law gave them a tool to press for counting persons with disabilities during Census operations, and from 2001, there is all India-level data on persons with disabilities available for intervention, research, and advocacy purposes. The continuous engagement of parents' associations also created the space for dialogue with the government regarding care and protection for groups of persons with disabilities, which led to the passage of the National Trust Act of 1999. Responding to global developments and the influx of international agencies in India, the disability movement received a boost for demanding services and access to rights available to all other marginalised groups.

At the core of the disability sector in India, therefore, are the civil society organisations that have promoted the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of social living, from health care, education, and rehabilitation to employment and livelihoods. In the 2000s, these efforts extended to engaging with questions of rights of persons with disabilities beyond the social and economic rights to political rights and entitlements for leisure, recreation, community inclusion, etc. It has been the CSOs/NGOs/DPOs that have brought to the forefront and pushed the government to recognise the invisible or 'lesser' disabilities and bring in provisions for them, and to use the law to ensure

that the provisions of the different policies and programmes are implemented at the ground level. For example, in 2004, Disability Rights Group, a cross-disability advocacy group, filed a PIL that led to a landmark judgement by the Supreme Court making all polling booths accessible, including equipping electronic voting machines (EVMs) with Braille.

The disability sector in India, comprising diverse organisations working with persons with disabilities, CSOs, DPOs, and disability advocates, received a fillip in 2007 in the form of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This UN intervention enabled them to campaign with the Indian Government for a law that enshrined the principles of inclusion and accommodation for persons with disabilities and directed the government to take responsibility along the lines of the UNCRPD to ensure that disabled people are treated as equals by the Government and society. As the Government dragged its feet in passing the new law on the rights of persons with disabilities, the disability sector, now extending beyond the urban to the rural grassroots levels, DPOs and CSOs highlighted their concerns and were able to ensure that the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act was passed in 2016. However, the implementation of the law has been slow to date, and the dream of inclusion, access, and equal opportunity and participation is yet to be realised. Hence, Disability in India @75 promises more action and advocacy to ensure that the government owns up to its responsibility and upholds the promises made to citizens with disabilities. The government will have to ensure accessibility of persons with disabilities to all public and private spaces. Civil society must work in collaboration with the government to bring about changes in attitudes and norms of society so that the capacity of disabled people to participate fully and optimally in communities is ensured while recognising certain support systems must be put in place for those who require it.





Chapter 10:

# **Child Rights- A Development Sector Report**

## Introduction

Ancient India's earliest religious texts advocated equal rights for men, women, and children. But children were overlooked until the early nineteenth century when social reformers went about actively improving the plight of children, specifically the girl child. India's Independence in 1947 and the adoption of the Constitution of India in 1950 brought about specific provisions around the survival, development, and protection of children. In 1974, India declared children, as the nation's most precious asset through the National Policy for Children.

Following the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989, the Government of India adopted a National Plan of Action for Children in 1992 and took several measures for improving the lives of children across the country. The UNCRC outlines basic children's rights as being classified into four categories, i.e., Survival, Protection, Participation, and Development. Since Independence, India's progress in ensuring child rights has been commendable on several fronts, with greater attention required in some areas to meet the SDG 2030 agenda. Civil society organisations (CSOs) have partnered with the government on this important journey of upholding the rights of children and will continue to do so going forward.

## CONTRIBUTION OF CSOS ON DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

In the child rights ecosystem, the government provides the necessary infrastructure in the form of legislative policies and programmes with financial and physical outlay. To support the successful implementation of these initiatives and ensure inclusivity, CSOs have extended their valuable and critical support through:

Awareness generation and capacity building initiatives: CSOs have always supplemented government initiatives by creating large-scale awareness of public schemes and supporting

vulnerable communities in accessing them. CSOs have also constantly engaged with frontline workers, including Anganwadi workers, Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), Urban Slum Health Action Programme (USHA), Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM), teachers, local elected representatives (Panchayati Raj institutions/urban local bodies) in building their capacities to effectively deliver the Government provisions to the eligible population.

**Service Delivery:** CSOs bridge the gap between communities and the Government, both from the side of communities demanding their rights as well as on behalf of the Government by facilitating government services accessible to the communities and children, especially the most marginalised population sub-groups so that no one is left behind.

**Responding To Humanitarian Crisis:** CSOs have always provided their support in reaching out to vulnerable families (including children) during natural disasters or any other humanitarian crisis. In recent times, during the widespread distress owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, CSOs in India came forward to help with the distribution of food and dignity kits to marginalised communities across the country. There were also dedicated efforts to support the Government in increasing vaccination uptake across India.

## CONTRIBUTION OF CSOS TO POLICY-MAKING

CSOs in India have contributed to advancing child rights through policy-level changes, through their sustained advocacy, public engagement, and network initiatives. Some critical contributions include:

**Contribute to Progressive and Inclusive Legislations:** CSOs draw the attention of the state and policymakers to the most pressing needs of children and contribute to critical legislation such as making education a fundamental right in the form of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009). CSOs

made substantial contributions in transforming The Juvenile Justice Act (2000) into the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (2006), especially the component of 'preventive mechanism' and 'non-institutional care' which have been advocated by the CSO representatives in the committee providing technical inputs in the drafting of the scheme.

***Demonstrating the success of community-based interventions which the State has adopted for scaling up:*** An impressive example is the adoption of home-based neonatal care (Home Based New-born Care (HBNC)) - a low-cost approach developed and tested by SEARCH, a reputed organisation working in rural *Gadchiroli* (Maharashtra) – as part of Government of India's National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). Another example is CHILDLINE, an initiative by Prof Jeroo Billimoria from the Department of Family and Child Welfare, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) Mumbai. The helpline was initially set up for children living and working on the streets of Mumbai which was later scaled up to different cities of India by the Ministry of Social Justice Empowerment. Later, in 2006-07, the Ministry for Women and Child Development (MWCD) granted the exclusive 'Nodal Mother NGO' status to CHILDLINE India Foundation and set up CHILDLINE services across the country.

## CHALLENGES FACED

Some key challenges faced by the CSOs in making a significant impact on the present situation include the inability of many CSOs to work at scale, demonstrate success and capture the impact of their work effectively; limited resources (financial, human, institutional); limited efforts or facilitation for developing strong partnership and trust between governments and CSOs; and restricted opportunity to strengthen capacities of CSOs to adapt and respond to emerging realities, like a shift to more cost-effective, technologically-enabled service delivery models.



## WAY FORWARD

To ensure greater momentum on Child Rights in India, in keeping with the 2030 SDG agenda, the role of CSOs must be strengthened and acknowledged. This can only happen if:

1. Government and non-government collaborations are strengthened with clear accountability and a mechanism through which responsibilities can be shared.
2. Stronger platforms are built so that CSOs can engage with the Government and create an enabling environment for civil society action.
3. CSOs forge partnerships with other critical stakeholders, including the private sector, media, citizen and children collectives, and think tanks to leverage their unique strengths and strengthen the agenda for child rights.
4. Greater attention, resources, and partnerships are focused upon to ensure ongoing capacity building of CSOs to respond to emerging realities and opportunities on child rights, including influencing enhanced public investment and expenditure on children.

**Community-based child protection institutions:** The journey of the Juvenile Justice Act (2000) transforming into the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (2006) received substantial contributions from the CSOs. Specifically, the components of 'preventive mechanism' and 'non-institutional care' have been advocated by the CSO representatives in the committee providing technical input in the drafting of the scheme. The decentralised community-based child protection mechanism at the village level in the form of Village Level Child Protection Committees (VLCPC) has been strongly demonstrated by the preventive initiatives of CSOs.

## Innovation in Child Rights:

**CHILDLINE (Helpline for children in distress):** CHILDLINE was an initiative started by Prof Jeroo Billimoria from the Department of Family and Child Welfare, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) Mumbai. The helpline was initially set up for children living or working on the streets of Mumbai which was later scaled up to different cities of India by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Later, in 2006-07, the Ministry for Women and Child Development (MWCD) granted the exclusive 'Nodal Mother NGO' status to CHILDLINE India Foundation and set up CHILDLINE services across the country.





Chapter 11:

# **NGOs for Age Care in India**

**N**GOs or voluntary organisations, with their deep connection with the community, serve as catalysts for social change and development. They play a critical part in developing society, improving communities, and promoting citizen participation. Since they have close proximity to grassroots communities, they also serve as extended arms for the government in the delivery of its services for the benefit of the community. NGOs act on various areas and themes which are relevant to social change and development, and caring for the aged is one of the most crucial themes on the rise in the Indian community.

As per Population Projections for India, Report of Technical Group on Population Projections, India has around 140 million people aged 60 years and above, at a proportion above 10 per cent of the total population. During 2000-2050, the overall population of India will grow by 56 per cent while the population aged 60+ will grow by 326 per cent. During the same period, the population aged 80+ will grow by 700 per cent with a predominance of widowed and highly dependent very old women. The number of older women compared to the number of older men will progressively increase with advancing ages from 60 through 80 years. A majority of 71 per cent of the elderly population lives in rural India and 29 per cent in urban. Factors like literacy level, economic independence, age-old dependency ratio, diseases, and other health impacts vary. Hence, the need for action for caring for the aged, and their socio-political and economic well-being is of utmost necessity in the Indian context.

Several NGOs are working for the welfare of the Indian elderly, apart from the initiatives undertaken by the government, extending support to these initiatives, as well as filling the gaps left by these initiatives. However, the extent of NGO involvement in elderly care in India is a meagre 3 percent. HelpAge India, one of the major NGOs in age care focused on direct interventions in the areas of healthcare (mobile healthcare units, cataract surgeries), Age care (helplines, senior citizen care homes, and day-care centres, physiotherapy), Livelihoods (elder-self-help groups; linkages with government schemes), Disaster Response (e.g. COVID-19 relief response), as well as Advocacy and Awareness on rights and policies relating to elders.

## ADVOCACY INITIATIVES IN AGE CARE – GOOD PRACTICES

HelpAge India (HI) is involved with knowledge dissipation, livelihood opportunities with the elderly, as well as, working closely with schools to change the outlook towards the old population in India. HelpAge India works with around 5560 Senior Citizen Associations across the country with the intent to empower the elderly population to be voices for their rights. For this, HelpAge India conducts awareness sessions and knowledge development on issues such as pensions, reverse mortgages, financial planning, wills, and legalities. In many districts, HI works with the District Legal Services Authority to raise awareness of legal rights.

Apart from these, HI plays the role of representing the causes of the elderly at the systemic level to the government, by being the platform for the elders to bring their concerns and issues into the scope of policymaking and framework. The organisation has been a pioneer and active catalyst for the formulation of the National Policy of Older Persons 1999 and has also been an active contributor to the revision of the policy and formulation of the National Policy for Senior Citizens. HI has also been at the forefront of the enactment and implementation of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act (MWPSCA) 2007, and its revision in 2011.

Moreover, HI also researches areas related to the welfare and well-being of the elderly, including annual nationwide research on elder abuse. These studies play a crucial role in highlighting the concerns of the elderly and bringing that into the purview of policy interventions. It has also conducted a research study on the effectiveness of MWPSCA 2007 in 2017, and released a report titled “Preliminary Study on Effectiveness of Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007.”

HI provides technical assistance to the government, both central as well as state governments, for initiatives related to elder causes, as an active and contributing member to various committees and core groups created by various ministries and departments on issues related to elder well-being.

At the state level too, HI advocates for the rights and entitlements of the elderly and represents their causes in various local government initiatives. At the state level, the organisation's robust network of state teams engages consistently with the local governments, departments, and other stakeholders for the betterment of the elder community. HI has been the advocate of the formulation of State Policy on Older Persons in all the states where it has been implemented and is still pushing for its formulation and implementation in other states too. HI and its team in different states are advocating for policy-level changes for the benefit of the elderly and are part of various state-level committees and groups too, most importantly, for State Policy on Older Persons, and State Committees for Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007. Some of the other contributions at the state level include being an NGO member in the Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens, Grant-in-Aid, by the Government of Tamil Nadu, a member of the State Planning Commission for Elderly, Government of Tamil Nadu, Bihar State Head of State Council of Senior Citizens formed under MWPSCA 2007, State level Monitoring Committee under MWPSCA in West Bengal, and more.

## LEGAL ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

The legal advocacy initiatives for policy changes regarding the rights and entitlements of older persons in India have also been a major drive by the organisation. A significant example of such initiatives was the PIL in 2016 (Writ Petition [C] No. 193 of 29016) for enforcement of rights of older persons under article 21 of the constitution, where Mr Mathew Cherian, Former CEO, HelpAge India was appointed 'Amicus Curiae.' The PIL focused on the rights of the older person to pension, shelter, geriatric care, and effective implementation of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007. The historic judgement on December 13, 2018, was a milestone in the efforts to address the social issues of the elderly in the country. The Supreme Court in its judgement read the right to life with dignity of the elderly under the mandate of Article 21 of the Constitution. The judgement quoted



*“...the right to life includes the right to live with human dignity and all that goes along with it, namely, the bare necessities of life such as adequate nutrition, clothing and shelter and facilities for reading, writing and expressing oneself in diverse forms, freely moving about and mixing and commingling with fellow human beings.”*

It was further revised on August 4, 2020, in the purview of COVID -19. The Court, while issuing a set of directions on the need to review pensions, for the provision of medical care, to prepare a plan of action for giving publicity to the provisions of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, and appropriate directions to the State Government for effective implementation of the provisions of the Act, stated, “T here is a need to continuously monitor the progress in the implementation of the constitutional mandate to make available to the elderly the right to live with dignity and to provide them with reasonable accommodation, medical facilities, and geriatric care. The judgement also mentioned the importance of financial means to have a dignified life and thus the utmost necessity for adequate pensions for older persons.”

## **INCOME AND SOCIAL SECURITY IMPERATIVES**

HelpAge India also acknowledges the importance of income security which is a driving factor to the overall well-being and welfare of the elderly, and hence, has always been a vocal advocate for social pensions for older persons. In a lower-middle-income country like India, where almost 94% of the population is employed in the unorganised sector, with hardly any private assets or savings, non-contributory pensions play a greater role in ensuring at least a basic level of social protection. HI has been advocating for the social income security of the poor and vulnerable elderly population through pensions, with due significance given to both substantive aspects and procedural challenges of the pension system in India.

HI worked with Pension Parishad, a network of around 200 groups

and individuals working for the welfare of the elderly, women, differently-abled, and poor and disadvantaged populations, fighting for the rights of universal pension. HI along with Pension Parishad brought out a research report titled “State of Social Pensions in India” in 2018, highlighting the gaps in the systemic and procedural implementation of social pensions in India. HI has been rigorously putting efforts to give voice to the elderly to address their plight, demanding raise in the pension amount, effective disbursement, alleviation of systemic barriers to its access, and procedural changes. These efforts culminated in a public event in Delhi in 2019 for the rights of the elderly to lead a dignified life, demanding the government to bring immediate and necessary changes to the pension system.

## **ELDER SELF-HELP GROUPS**

HI began piloting the Elder Self-Help Groups (ESHGs) in 2005 and has helped them with small seed money to begin functioning to make the elderly economically engaged. While initially they were carried out internally, HelpAge India soon entered partnerships with corporates and government bodies. A dedicated and comprehensive support structure is now put in place across various levels for building and nurturing the ESHGs.

At the core of the support structure are the village volunteers who are recruited within the community and extensively trained by HelpAge India. Besides these volunteers, project coordinators are placed at the district level. The concept of Elderly Livelihoods pioneered by HI borrows from the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework of the United Kingdom’s (UK) Department for International Development (DfID), now the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), further developed by Akshara Livelihoods. HelpAge India Livelihoods concept recognises the need for timely external interventions on the social capital, human capital, economic capital, and spiritual capital (the spirit to keep fighting) of the elderly in reducing risk, increasing incomes, reducing costs/expenditures, and increasing engagement. The livelihood programme is a long-term, process-intensive, linear process with an intervention period typically

extending to 3-5 years and envisions four inclusions namely - Social inclusion, Financial inclusion, Health inclusion, and Accessing due Rights and Entitlements.

The Elder Self-Help Groups (ESHGs) and higher-order Federations of the elderly are being directly supported and developed to act as a support structure and informed movement of older people in 12 states, with specific priority to remote areas called Aspirational Districts. The cumulative saving of the current batch of Elders Self Help Groups is Rs 5.22 crore, with a cumulative financial portfolio of Rs 13.64 crore. The ESHG model has also received the UN Global Compact Network India Award 2018 for its sustainable and innovative intervention in the community.

Help Age India received Vayoshrestha Samman from the Indian government in 2014 as the outstanding institution for its efforts working over three decades for the cause of the elderly. HI became the first Indian institution to be awarded the UN Population Award in 2020 for its exemplary work in the field of aging for disadvantaged elderly in India.

## **ELDERS CSO SPECTRUM**

Some of the other organisations working for the elderly are Agewell Foundation, Abhoy Mission, Dadi Dada Foundation, Pallium India, and several other NGOs which work broadly on various segments of disadvantaged communities. On the larger spectrum, most of these organisations are working on the health issues of ageing and rehabilitation through old age homes, while several initiatives have also brought about many of them to untangle the chains of ageist stereotypes and put the elderly as an empowered segment of the population, contributing to Active and Healthy Ageing. Dadi Dada Foundation offers a wide range of services, including organising social and cultural activities for older individuals, giving work possibilities, and educating them about health policies.

## AGEWELL FOUNDATION

Agewell Foundation engages with the elderly and understands their needs and problems, subsequently, handled through a network of volunteers. With its team of professionals, volunteers, and social workers, the organisation conducts many projects and activities targeted at improving all aspects of the lives of seniors. The foundation seeks to reach out to a larger audience of older persons and act as a catalyst of change in bridging the gap between generations and ensuring a respectful and comfortable life for old people. Apart from its initiatives in healthcare, shelter, and nutrition of the elderly, it also focuses on research studies for understanding the nuances of age care. Several NGOs, such as HelpAge India, also enable the elderly to be beneficiaries of the government schemes benefiting them, helping them with linking with the services, and also creating self-help groups to become economically independent.

Agewell Foundation has undertaken a sensitisation and training programme for Delhi Police personnel about the needs & rights of older people in collaboration with Delhi Police. The foundation has organised sensitisation and training programmes at various police stations in Delhi. Agewell also conducts an employment exchange programme for the elderly, attempting to bring opportunity seekers and providers together and facilitating interaction at no cost. For community engagement and the complete development of the potential of the elderly, the foundation has also launched a home tutoring and easy accounts scheme, Eklavya. Over 5 lakh retired people are working as tutors in their locality/nearby areas, benefiting from the scheme.

Agewell also registers old people who live alone under its Family Membership programme and provide services of leading doctors, hospitals, security agencies, trained counselors, legal and financial wizards, personnel managers, and trained attendants at nominal prices.

## DADI DADA FOUNDATION

Dadi Dada Foundation, with its 'Dadi Dada Arogya Card' for the elderly, provides financial assistance in health check-ups and medical treatment for individuals above the age of 50. Through this card, various hospitalisation charges including charges of consultations with medical practitioners, medical check-ups, and other lab tests, are all given at discounted rates, along with the provision for interest-free loans up to Rs 5 lakh for medical requirements.

## PALLIUM INDIA

Pallium India offers the delivery of service and training of professionals in palliative care through its flagship programme, Trivandrum Institute of Palliative Sciences (TIPS). Apart from educational and training programmes, it runs a clinical service developing and operating community-oriented palliative care services, including service of local volunteers and home visits.

Even though there are several initiatives focused on the welfare of the elderly, the whole system is still geared towards the youth and often neglects the ageing population, with the least significance being given to the welfare and development of the elderly, with only a few NGOs working solely for the upliftment and empowerment of the elderly.

## SENIOR CITIZEN ASSOCIATIONS

In addition, there are thousands of senior citizen associations working for their community in urban areas. There are federations of senior citizens operating in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata. They provide localised services in these urban wards and localities. Every state has a senior citizens federation, including Delhi and Puducherry. These are called the State Council of Senior Citizens. Their role is in making the senior citizens an advocacy group to work on policy issues.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAKING AN AGE-FRIENDLY SOCIETY

- Universalise non-contributory pension for BPL and women and oldest old in APL
- Universalise health insurance in PMJAY for all older persons except those covered under CGHS, ESI, and Income tax payees.
- Home care and palliative care are to be included in the agenda of Panchayat and urban local bodies. Timebank to be set up for community involvement.
- Outreach in all services critical to older persons: health care, mental health, legal services, and counseling.
- Police and local administration to identify nodal persons for older persons who are victims of violence or abuse.
- Encourage start-ups to work on tech solutions for older persons.
- Include age-friendly features in the Smart/ Sustainable Cities project, especially mobility/transport.







Chapter 12:

# **Animal Protection by Non-profit Sector**

## Introduction and Overview

India has a well-documented history of non-violence<sup>1</sup> and compassion towards animals. For this chapter, we will start with the first impassioned post-Indian Independence defence of animals on record: “Animals cannot speak, but can you and I not speak for them and represent them? Let us all feel their silent cry of agony, and let us all help that cry to be heard in the world.” The speech was made by Rukmini Devi Arundale, renowned dancer and a nominated member of the Rajya Sabha, at whose instance Prime Minister Nehru introduced the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act 1960, which replaced the colonial Animal Welfare Act of 1890.

Two years later, the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) was constituted, with Arundale as its chair, as a statutory body to promote and institute rules for animal welfare. Today, the AWBI operates under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying. The latest AWBI figures show that there are more than 3,700 Organisations<sup>2</sup> working for the welfare and rights of animals in India. Most of these organisations (close to 60 per cent<sup>3</sup>) are *gaushalas* (established for the care of stray, ‘unproductive,’ and old cows), and *pinjrapoles* (shelters that provide a home to all animals in distress, including birds). About 6 per cent are Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCAs), which are supposed to be established in every district in India<sup>4</sup>. The balance comprises organisations that work on diverse animal welfare and rights issues, from providing shelter and direct services to community animals (more commonly referred to as stray animals), dispensing medical care and rehabilitation for ailing, disabled, and injured animals, to securing the rights of all animals and preventing cruelty.

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1 Nanditha Krishna, *Animal Sentience in Indian Culture: Colonial and Post-Colonial Changes*

2 List of animal welfare organisations published by the AWBI, dated September 30, 2022

3 Source: AWBI’s annual report 2019-2020

4 [https://www.awbi.in/awbi-pdf/Advisory\\_to\\_Establish\\_01\\_10\\_18.pdf](https://www.awbi.in/awbi-pdf/Advisory_to_Establish_01_10_18.pdf)

While the figure above refers to organisations registered with AWBI, the actual number of animal protection and advocacy organisations – if we were to include trusts and societies registered under Indian law and unregistered groups that work for animal protection, especially in feeding, rescue, and sheltering – is likely to be 10 times higher. To that, if we were to add the millions of citizens who invest their time and money in the rescue, feeding, and care of stray and wild animals, it would speak of a volunteer force that is one of the largest in the country.

Among animal protection organisations, the majority work on issues around stray dogs. Unlike in the US and the UK, stray dogs and cats in India are not considered homeless, but are seen as community animals, the care (including feeding, vaccination, and sterilisation ) of whom, is the responsibility of the government and the community. A second category of organisations works on wild animals, their protection, conservation, and mitigation of human and animal conflicts, and on wild animals in captivity (for example, in circuses and zoos).

India has the highest number of Farmed Animals, i.e., animals that are farmed for food, such as buffaloes, cows, chickens, goats, pigs, sheep, and fish. India's livestock sector is the largest in the world, employing two-thirds of the country's rural population. The dairy industry in the country is the largest in the world, at USD 144.55 billion in 2020. Production and per capita consumption of dairy, eggs, chicken, meat, and fish are rising in the country. And yet, in comparison to the overwhelming numbers of organisations and individuals working for the welfare of companion animals, few organisations work on the welfare and rights of farmed animals, working animals, and animals used in experimentation. The suffering of farmed animals is, therefore, widespread but invisible or normalised.

# Context

## A. LAWS THAT GOVERN ANIMAL WELFARE

India has one of the most extensive laws and rules concerning animals. IV-A, Fundamental Duties, Article 51 A (g) of the Indian Constitution states, “It shall be the duty of every citizen of India ... to protect and improve the natural environment, including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife, and to have compassion for living creatures.” Compassion towards animals is, therefore, enshrined in the Constitution of India.

The fundamental law that protects domestic and captive animals is the PCA Act of 1960, which aims to “prevent the infliction of unnecessary pain or suffering on animals.” Areas of application are spelt out through an extensive set of rules on diverse matters such as performing animals, registration of cattle premises, draught and pack animals, animal birth control, pet shops, breeding, etc. The Wild Life Protection (Amendment) Act is aimed at the conservation of wild animals and their habitat. These basic laws are supported in their implementation by the Indian Penal Code, various police acts, and municipal corporation acts.

One of the key points to note about the legal status of animals in India is that they are regarded as property. And yet, in the landmark case in 2014 of the Animal Welfare Board of India v. A. Nagaraja, the Supreme Court rejected the prevailing legal paradigm of animals as mere property, stating that animals possessed an inherent dignity, a dignity that all sentient beings possess, and that extends far beyond their use to humans.

By far one of the most progressive judgments in the world, this gives countless animal advocates hope that one day, animals might be considered legal persons.

## B. ADVOCACY FOR FARMED ANIMALS

In comparison to the magnitude of suffering of animals farmed

in appalling conditions for food, there are only a handful of organisations that advocate for the rights of farmed animals. Some of the organisations focused on farmed animal advocacy are Animal Equality (AE), the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO), Fish Welfare Institute (FWI), Humane Society International India (HSI), Mercy for Animals (MFA), People for Animals (PFA), and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta India).

The campaign for farmed animal advocacy takes two forms: one, where the organisations advocate for improved welfare measures in animal farming. Their work includes undercover investigations to reveal the reality of animal farming, campaigns to create public awareness, as well as, targeted policy advocacy, pilot programmes to demonstrate solutions, and legal action. Some examples are the campaign to end battery cages by HSI, MFA, and PFA; advocacy with fish farmers to improve welfare conditions in ponds by FWI and FIAPO; and undercover investigations by Peta India and FIAPO to highlight the horrors of the dairy industry – where calves are separated from their mothers soon after birth, cows are artificially impregnated and pumped with hormones to keep them lactating, and once their ‘productive’ life is over, mostly left to starve on the streets or sent for slaughter.

The second form that this advocacy for farmed animals takes is in persuading people to make dietary (i.e., promoting the switch to plant-based food) and lifestyle changes to end the use of animals and products derived from animals for food. The vegan movement, led by organisations such as Sharan, Vegan Outreach, Veganuary, FIAPO, Peta India, MFA, among others, is gaining ground.

## **C. STRAY DOGS AND OTHER STRAY ANIMALS**

The majority of animal protection organisations in India are involved in the rescue, shelter, spay-and-neuter, and vaccination of stray or community dogs and cats. Various studies estimate the number of dogs and cats living on the streets, as between 60 million and 80 million.

One of the biggest challenges is the management of the population of strays. 'In India, for more than 150 years up to 2001, mass killing of street dogs... was seen as the only solution by the authorities to address the issue of overpopulation.'<sup>5</sup> The AWBI brought out a module that demonstrated why the killing of stray dogs would not work to curb the dog population and put forward Animal Birth Control (ABC) as the comprehensive solution to managing the dog population. Implemented together with a comprehensive anti-rabies (AR) vaccination programme, ABC-AR as it is known, is the way forward in managing the dog population and eradicating rabies. This assumes particular significance in the context of the rising human and stray dog conflict in the country.

Some of the well-known organisations working on stray animal rescue, sheltering, medical aid, spay-and-neuter, and vaccination, include Animal Aid India, Blue Cross of Hyderabad, Blue Cross India, Compassion Unlimited Plus Action (CUPA), Frenedicoes, Help in Suffering, Peepal Farm, People for Animals, Straw, Thane CPCA, and Welfare of Stray Dogs. FIAPO, a nationwide federation of animal protection organisations, has a membership of 186 organisations, most of whom work with companion or stray animals.

Any account of the work with stray animals would be incomplete without talking about the millions of voluntary dog feeders, rescuers, and fosters across the country, who invest their time, money, and other resources in caring for stray dogs and cats.

## **D. HUMAN-WILD ANIMAL CONFLICT AND ANIMALS IN CAPTIVITY**

There are specialist organisations that work on wildlife conservation in India, such as the World-Wide Fund for Nature India, Wildlife SOS, Wildlife Protection Society of India, Nature Conservation Foundation, and Centre for Wildlife Studies.

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<sup>5</sup> Animal Welfare Board of India, Revised Manual for Street Dog Population Management, Rabies Eradication, Reducing Man-Dog Conflict

Besides this, some organisations focus on the increasing conflict between humans and wild animals. Examples of such conflict include periodic calls from state governments to declare species such as wild boar and nilgai as vermin and to allow their culling, and the increasingly frequent human-elephant conflicts that have led to the capture and subsequent life in captivity of hundreds of elephants.

As forests are cleared to make way for roads, industries, and human habitation, the protective natural barriers that not only kept wild animals from straying into human habitats but also provided food for animals, are dwindling. Some organisations that specialise in working on issues of human and wildlife conflict are the Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre (WRRC), PFA Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Centre, Wildlife SOS, Resqink Association for Wildlife Welfare (RAWW), Centre for Research on Animal Rights, and several organisations already mentioned above.

These battles take the form of investigations or studies on conditions that escalate the conflict, pilot programmes to find viable solutions, calling attention to authorities at the municipal/state/ national levels to illegal orders or actions, lobbying with policymakers to bring about sustainable solutions that balance the needs of humans and wild animals, and going to court.

Another key area of concern is the continued captivity of animals for human entertainment, in zoos and circuses, but also seen in the prevalence of events such as *jallikkattu*, *kambala*, bull races, and even dog fighting. Organisations such as Peta India, FIAPO, CUPA, HIS, and PFA are fighting various cases to maintain the ban on *jallikkattu* and other events, and to ban the use of animals in circuses.

## GOOD PRACTICES

India has one of the most extensive laws and rules to protect animals and prevent cruelty, as mentioned above, though there are major gaps in implementation and enforcement.

The animal protection movement has secured several wins for animals in the recent past, some of which are:

- India is the first country in South Asia to ban the testing of cosmetics and their ingredients on animals, as well as, the import of cosmetics tested on animals into the country, thanks to the efforts of HSI India and PETA India.
- FIAPO and its member animal protection organisations secured a successful ban on the setting up of dolphinariums in India.
- India also became the first country to ban the import of foiegras, obtained from the liver of a goose or duck fattened by force-feeding, after efforts by the group Animal Equality.
- Peta India secured a judgment in the Bombay High Court requiring all films for public viewing in which an animal is used or filmed to obtain a No Objection Certificate from AWBI.
- More than 40 organisations and 100 activists came together under FIAPO's campaign to end the use of animals in circuses, because of which the Central Zoo Authority cancelled the registration of 21 circuses for keeping wild animals.
- In the landmark judgment (A. Nagaraja) quoted above, the Supreme Court banned *jallikkattu*, *kambala*, and bull races in 2014, a judgment that is being challenged by the states where these events are held.



## RECOMMENDED POLICY CHANGES

The areas requiring policy interventions are far too many to list here. But there are several critical areas – across the categories of animal protection mentioned in this article – that need urgent attention. The following recommendations are indicative of the kind of policy framework needed in favour of animals:

- **Funds for district-level Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCAs) to be set up and properly function:** The Supreme Court has mandated the creation of SPCAs (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) in each district of India. Yet, in most districts, SPCAs have either not been set up, or are in a dire state due to the lack of funds. Budgetary allocations are needed for the proper establishment and functioning of SPCAs in every district.
- **National-level Animal Birth Control and Anti-Rabies Vaccination campaign:** This is the need of the hour for India to fulfil its commitment to eliminating Rabies by the year 2030. Central and state budget allocations are also needed to implement state-wide animal birth control programmes.
- **End to the use of animals in entertainment:** There needs to be a complete end to the use of animals for human entertainment, whether in circuses, zoos, forest camps, events such as *jallikattu*, *kambala*, bull races, or the use of animals in films.
- **Dairy innovations and welfare measures:** Sex-sorted semen technology needs to be made available on a mass scale and at cheaper rates so that farmers can adopt the technology to reduce the birth of male calves and ultimately minimise cruelty to male calves (currently sent to slaughter or left to die). There needs to be budgetary allocations for improving facilities in existing gaushalas across the world, rather than establishing new gaushalas, which is a more capital and effort-intensive exercise. In particular, there must be specific allocations to create shelters in states that have a problem with stray cattle.

- **Radical steps to reduce cruelty and increase welfare in animal farming:** There needs to be a complete ban on battery cages and gestational crates. Policy measures are needed to introduce welfare measures to stop the indiscriminate use of antibiotics in dairy, poultry, and aquaculture, the overcrowding of fish, and maintaining water quality in aquaculture ponds, among others .
- **Alternatives to animal agriculture:** India needs to take giant steps to reduce animal farming and provide livelihood and food alternatives, a development aimed at decreasing the sector's contribution to global warming and climate change. The plant-based alternative protein industry needs to be supported so that it can provide affordable alternatives. The introduction of lab-grown meat technology is another way to provide alternatives to consumers. The mainstreaming of such alternatives will have a positive impact on human health, planetary health, and, of course, on the lives of animals.
- **Serious efforts to mitigate human and wildlife conflict by working with experts:** Wildlife budgets must be restored at least to previous levels, if not enhanced further, especially considering the need for investment in human and wildlife conflict mitigation, and the need to invest in better care for captive elephants in the light of the newly promulgated Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act 2022. Investments in early warning systems and the creation of natural barriers by consulting experts in the field will go a long way in reducing human and wildlife conflict.





Chapter 13:

# **Arts and Culture in the Non-Profit Sector**

# Introduction

Arts and culture NPOs or not-for-profit organisations play a vital role in preserving and enriching India's diverse cultural heritage. Apart from promoting cultural awareness, bolstering infrastructure, creating a space for artists and cultural enthusiasts, promoting skills development and capacity building, and supporting livelihoods, the work done by these NPOs also has a major spill-over impact on allied sectors such as health, education, policy-making, festivals, and other creative industries.

The following report highlights the evolution, composition, governing policies, and contributions of not-for-profits (hereby referred to as NPOs) working in the arts and culture sector in India. The report first traces the establishment and evolution of these organisations, followed by their presence, and spread across the country. It then showcases how the vital work done by these organisations shapes, supports, and strengthens the arts and culture sector in the country, along with far-reaching effects on the larger ecosystem.

## I. Evolution of the NPO sector: Arts and Culture

The study of the evolution of operations of arts and culture NPOs in India requires a review of the relationship of culture with colonialism and the consequential civil support for the development of the nation's art, culture, and heritage.

A pre-colonised Indian subcontinent was diverse in language, customs, and belief systems, thereby creating a cultural landscape across the region that is also incredibly rich and varied. Aesthetic treatise (Natya Shastra)-led the evolution of classical arts, rich tribal and folk-art practices, and thriving handicrafts, textiles, and the artisanal market was bolstered by further cultural exchanges stemming from trade, religious movements, and invasions into the sub-continent from a host of minor and major foreign powers. Art and culture at the time were supported by

four major frameworks – the court and the emperor, religious institutions, the people, and the market. The growth of the Indian arts and culture sector and industries as we see it today are thus inextricably linked with colonisation and its impact on livelihoods, identity, and opportunity.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout its history, India has had a strong tradition of supporting and promoting culture, including art, music, literature, and architecture, both through official channels and personal patronage. Under different monarchies, artistic expression flourished, with examples ranging from the Sangam poetry of the Chera dynasty to the bronze sculptures of the Chola dynasty. Artists often found refuge in the courts, where they could gain recognition and fame, such as the musician Tansen and the painter Ustad Mansur in the Mughal Diwan-e-Khas. Investment in architecture allowed for large-scale projects, such as the intricately carved Kailasa Temple in the Ellora Caves complex, which benefited from innovative design and sculpture. In addition, India's trade and commerce networks connected it to other parts of the world, including Egypt and Iran, and this global exchange facilitated artistic collaboration and contribution to aesthetic movements.<sup>2</sup>

The intervention of different colonial powers and the creation of cultural institutions by the British led to the establishment of structured platforms for supporting art and culture. The government set up various cultural organisations which introduced a specific, bureaucratic approach to funding arts and culture. This also resulted in the development of a Euro-centric perspective on Indian art, culture, and heritage through the canonisation of knowledge. Asiatic Society in 1784, Indian Museum in 1814, Archaeological Survey of India in 1841, schools of art such as The Government College of Fine Arts (formerly Madras School of Art) in Chennai in 1850 and Sir J.J. School of Art in Mumbai in 1878 were some of the organisations established early on. In line with the Western policy on cultural management

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1 Rajadhyaksha, Ashish, P. Radhika, and Raghavendra Tenkayala. "Country Profile: India." *International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies* (2013).

2 "Corporate Engagement with Culture in India - A white paper." *Godrej India Culture Lab*. Accessed: January 2023.

of the times, many of these institutions were established as government institutions or as not-for-profit organisations bolstered by donations from Indian philanthropists (such as Jamsetji Jeejabhoy).

In their seminal culture policy profile on India, authors Ashish Rajadhyaksha, P. Radhika, and Raghavendra Tenkayala, emphasise the 'nationalist' location of culture in the pre-Independence period. Aligned with India's nationalist movement, a broadly modernist agenda for the arts led to the founding of some influential art institutions in the early years of the 20th century. Some of the most visible institutions were Shantiniketan (founded by the Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore), the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya (founded by Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, 1901), Kerala Kalamandalam (founded by Vallathol Narayana Menon, 1930) and the Kalakshetra (founded by Rukmini Devi Arundale, 1935), and later the Uday Shankar India Cultural Centre (1938).<sup>3</sup>

The civil society's preoccupations with education and preservation further fortified the place of arts and culture as a civil issue. Just before Independence and shortly thereafter, left-of-centre associations like the Indian People's Theatre Association, the Progressive Writers Association, and the Progressive Artists' Group exerted an influential presence of culture in civil society. By the time India gained Independence, a well-formed concept of culture as identity and tradition played a dominating role in determining everyday life in India.

Historically and economically, the nationalist perspective on culture has focused on the role of artisans and the crafts industry, particularly handicrafts. According to historian Bipan Chandra in his work "Reinterpretation of Nineteenth Century Indian Economic History" (1979), the 19th century saw the decline of the artisan class and handicrafts industry, including the ruin of textile weavers due to competition from imported yarn. This decline had negative effects on both peasants and artisans and is a well-documented issue in the economic history of colonial India. While the Indian sub-continent boasts of rich cultural

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<sup>3</sup> Rajadhyaksha, Ashish, P. Radhika, and Raghavendra Tenkayala. "Country Profile: India." *International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies* (2013). pp5



traditions, the introduction of technological innovations such as the printing press, the film camera, and the gramophone by the West and missionaries laid the ground for the creation, mass production, consumption, and mass distribution of cultural goods. Responding to the national events of the times, the pre-Independence 1947, the publishing industry, the music industry, and print media also played a critical role in forging and consolidating a sense of nationhood. Regulation evolved alongside using various Acts of Parliament.

In post-Independence India, culture played an important role in the building of a young country. In the early years after Independence, the Planning Commission was tasked with shaping strategies for the development of a new nation and regarded culture as integral to planned national development. This was evident in Planning Commission documents from the period, which challenged the assumption that culture was a peripheral concern only relevant to the “arts and culture” sector. As a result, the government established several cultural institutions during this time that not only shaped its cultural policy but also influenced the dominant paradigms for the entire field. These institutions included the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (1950), the Sangeet Natak Akademi (1953), the National Museum, the Sahitya Akademi, the National Gallery of Modern Art, and the Lalit Kala Akademi (all established in 1954 following a Parliamentary Resolution initiated by Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad, the first Prime Minister and Education Minister, respectively), the Film Institute of India (1959), the National School of Drama (1959), and the National Institute of Design (1961).

However, none of these movements and priorities led to the development of a coherent or unitary cultural policy. Without a centralised policy on culture, the cultural sector still relies on both the arms-length funding model and the market model. Regulation mandates are divided among existing structures in the Indian economy, leading to a lack of cohesion among the various practices and professionals in this field. Several initiatives are undertaken by non-profit organisations and individuals driven by passion, many of which were registered as Trusts or

Societies before Independence. Post-independence, with the widening of regulatory frameworks, arts, and culture NPOs were also registered as associations and Section 8 not-for-profit companies. Today, the following are the legal structures that arts and cultural organisations adopt with the first three being in the not-for-profit domain:

- A.** *Societies*
- B.** *Trusts, Religious Endowments, and Wakfs*
- C.** *Private limited non-profit companies under Section 8 (formerly section-25) under the Indian Companies Act, 2013*
- D.** *Private for-profit organisations as proprietorships, Limited Liability Partnerships, Private Limited Companies*
- E.** *Public Limited Companies*

## II. Sector Composition

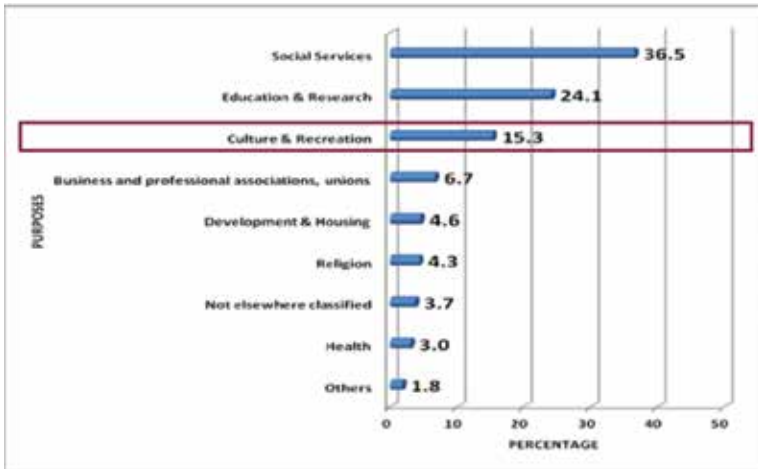
To get a quantitative picture of the evolution and composition of NPOs and NGOs in the arts and culture sector, we draw upon Non-Profit Institutions in India: A Profile and Satellite Accounts in the framework of System of National Accounts, a 2012 report by Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India (further referred to as MOSPI). This comprehensive report covering 6.9 lakh traced societies in India presents critical data on NPOs and NGOs in major sectors over the past five decades. We use this report as a baseline to isolate and study the spread and composition of the art and culture sector within the non-profit field. While the first phase of the study was solely based on secondary data, the second phase involved tracing and verifying the existence of all the societies found in Phase 1. The data further presented in this report will only refer to the second phase of the study to offer on-ground and verified facts about the sector.

### A. SPREAD ACROSS INDIA

As per the first phase of the survey, which was solely based on

secondary data,<sup>4</sup> Culture and Recreation accounted for 3,69,912 societies (12 per cent of the total registered societies), of which 63.42 per cent were categorised as rural and 36.58 per cent of the total as urban.

The second phase of the study, however, revealed a different scenario. There was more than a 50 per cent drop in the number of these NGOs in the second phase as compared to the first one - only 1,06,147 societies were traced within the Culture and Recreation sector. Proportionally, however, the number of NGOs within the culture sector maintains a similar percentage, accounting for 15.3 per cent of the total number of NGOs in the country. Of these, 71.8 per cent functioned within rural areas, while 28.2 per cent worked in urban areas.<sup>5</sup>



*Distribution of traced societies as per the purpose*

*Source: MOSPI Study, p.37*

The highest number of registered cultural NGOs was found to be in Uttar Pradesh (21,841) - however, these cultural societies accounted for only 10.2 per cent of the total societies operating

<sup>4</sup> This was a computerised list from the original records of the societies available with their registering authorities in different states.

<sup>5</sup> This data does not include states where the percentage of societies visited (SV) to registered societies (RS) is less than 65 per cent: Haryana, Chandigarh, Assam, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Gujarat.

within the state. Therefore, a percentage distribution offers a clearer look into the state-wise composition of the NGO sector. The highest percentages of traced cultural societies were in Goa (62.5 per cent of total Goan societies - 2043 out of 3267 societies), Meghalaya (45.7 per cent of total Meghalayan societies - 1786 out of 3904 societies), and West Bengal (43.3 per cent of total West Bengal societies - 15368 out of 35497 societies).

## **B. QUANTITATIVE DESCRIPTIONS OF CULTURAL NGOS**

Culture and Recreation NGOs consistently rank third in the number of registered societies in respective domains throughout most periods, usually ranked right under Social Services, and Education and Research. Of the total registered societies in the 1970s and before, 11 per cent were dedicated to culture and recreation. The period between 1971 and 1990 observed a sudden peak, with an average of 21.1 per cent of total registered societies working in the culture and recreation sector. Thereafter, there was again a steady decline, settling back at 12.5 per cent post-2001. In recent decades i.e., 2001 and after, there has been a significant drop in the number of cultural NGOs, and the gap between the educational NGOs versus those of cultural ones has now widened. While cultural rehabilitation continues to be one of the major domains of NGOs, it no longer holds the same weight that Social Services and Education do, indicating a change in priorities. Living standards and literacy rates, especially for a developing country like India with strong international relations, is not an isolated issue but becomes closely linked with its global sociocultural identity. Thus, NGOs have been considerably more focused on issues of poverty alleviation, child and women rights, caste stigma and discrimination, sanitation, and environmental issues in the current time period (Ranga, 2014).

## **C. SOURCES OF FUNDING**

Perhaps another aspect of this widened gap between social service

and educational NGOs vis-a-vis cultural NGOs is the source of funding for these organisations . Of the total funding of Rs 4901 crore, Culture and Recreation societies' major source of funding, in 2012, was donations and offerings instead of government grants. In fact, in the last decade, cultural organisations received the highest amount of donations (Rs 3173 crore ), which was almost four times that of the grant funding (Rs 790 crore ) that it receives from the government.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, culture and recreation NGOs primarily serve the household<sup>7</sup>, i.e., they are part of the group of societies which provide or sell goods or services to households and are not mainly funded by the government.

The Ministry of Culture, Government of India, set aside these budgets for the Culture sector over the last eight years:

Financial Year	INR (Crore)
2016-2017	2302.5539
2017-2018	2530.5049
2018-2019	2602.1851
2019-2020	2647.0000
2020-2021	3149.8600
2021-2022	2,687.99
2022-2023	3009

*Ministry of Culture's Yearly Budgets for the Culture Sector*

*Source: Taking the Temperature 1 (2021), p.44.<sup>8</sup>*

A 2021-22 analysis of budgets allocated to the Ministry of Culture (MoC) and consequent spending, stated the total allocation for

<sup>6</sup> Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI), Government of India. "Non-Profit Institutions in India: A Profile and Satellite Accounts in the framework of System of National Accounts". (2012). 54-57.

<sup>7</sup> Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI), Government of India. "Non-Profit Institutions in India: A Profile and Satellite Accounts in the framework of System of National Accounts". (2012). 35.

<sup>8</sup> British Council. "Taking the Temperature".(2021). 44.

MoC for FY 2021-22 stood at Rs 2,688 crore, while allocations for the Art and Culture Sector across different ministries in GoI for FY 2021-22 stood at Rs 4,482 crore.<sup>9</sup> **The outlay<sup>10</sup> for the Annual Budget 2023-24 of the Ministry of Culture is Rs 3,399.65 crore** as against the outlay of Rs 3,009.05 crore approved for the Budget Plan 2022-2023. The annual outlay in FY 2023-24 is 12.97 per cent higher than the annual outlay in FY 2022-23.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast, the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) mandate, which began in 2014, continues to see an upward trend overall with an expected INR 23,665 Cr. in FY 2021, a robust compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 15 per cent in the past seven years.<sup>12</sup> In India, under the Companies Act, 2013, companies meeting certain criteria are required to spend 2 per cent of their average net profits of the past three years on CSR activities. While there is no specific data available on the share of arts and culture in CSR spending in India, it is one of the eligible areas of CSR spending under the law. As per the India Philanthropy Report 2022 by Bain & Co, in total, the top four areas of CSR spending in India over FY 2018 – 2021 were education, healthcare, rural development, environmental sustainability, and poverty. Because of this wider spread, CSR also affects smaller sectors, such as sports, art and culture, animal welfare, and women empowerment, which struggle to attract funding from other sources.<sup>13</sup>

*Please refer to page 22 of this report for a detailed note on CSR and its contribution to policy-making in the arts and culture sector in India.*

The following is a non-exhaustive list of corporates that have

<sup>9</sup> Janakiraman P & Verma M, Art and Culture Budget Guide, Union Budget 2021-22, Sahapedia March 2021. Accessed: December 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Note: Outlays are the measure of Government spending. They are payments to liquidate obligations (other than the repayment of debt), net of refunds and offsetting collections. They are recorded when obligations are paid, in the amount that is paid.

<sup>11</sup> The annual outlay for the Ministry of Culture in FY 2023-24 - Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Link. Accessed: February 2023

<sup>12</sup> Sheth A, Sridharan A, Nundy N, Datoor P & Pal P, India Philanthropy Report 2022. Bain & Company and Dasra. Accessed January 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Sheth A, Sridharan A, Nundy N, Datoor P & Pal P, India Philanthropy Report 2022. Bain & Company and Dasra. Accessed January 2022.

promoted art and culture under both their CSR and marketing departments:

Company	Initiative
Aditya Birla Group	Aadyam
Apeejay Group	Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival
Asian Paints	St+Art Festival
ESSAR	Avid Learning
Hero Group	Serendipity Arts Foundation
Infosys Foundation	Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum
Mahindra	Mahindra Blues Festival. Mahindra Roots, Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META), Mahindra Kabira Festival, Mahindra Open Skies
Shiv Nadar Foundation	Kiran Nadar Museum of Art
Tata Group	Tata Trusts

In 1996, the National Culture Fund (NCF) was established as a funding mechanism distinct from the existing sources and patterns of funding for the arts and culture in India. It sought to enable institutions and individuals to support arts and culture directly as partners with the government.<sup>14</sup>

## D. WORKFORCE PROFILE

At a national level, 85.1 per cent of the total workforce in NGOs are volunteers, and only 14.9 per cent are paid workers. A large portion of the workforce – 72.4 per cent – in most of the traced societies are males, while only 27.6 per cent are female. While

<sup>14</sup> National Culture Fund Website. Link. Accessed: January 2025.

some states such as Nagaland, and Puducherry have about 40 -50 per cent female workers, the general trend of gender distribution in the workforce for both, paid employees as well as volunteers, are skewed significantly towards a male majority. **Of the total workforce engaged in NGOs in the country, only 18.9 per cent is engaged in Culture and Recreation societies.**

Lastly, while considering the composition of this sector, one cannot solely look at it in terms of the number of formally registered NGOs. As one of the interviewees rightly pointed out, the diverse and diffused nature of the sector is such that many small organisations (such as theatre or dance companies, groups of crafts persons, etc.) carry out functions such as that of NGOs, but do not have the knowledge, time or resources to formalise the work they do. Thus, while we evaluate Culture and Recreation societies, it would be important to account for this informal nature and organisation of the sector as well.

Anecdotally, there is an understanding of wider representation of women than men who work in the culture vector but there's little cohesive data to support this. The reason for this is the informal nature of India's cultural sector and the inability to apply statistical models to this sector regarding skills, qualifications, and workforce strength. Coupled with this is the fact that arts and culture are practised as secondary professionals in vastly different communities across rural and urban India, ranging from craft and textile making in villages to the high participation in the gig economy of creative professionals in sectors such as film design and advertising. As a result, there are no systems in place to adequately consolidate the vast range of practices and professionals working in this space, which has, in turn, adversely affected the growth of the sector – both ideologically and economically.

- **Crafts sector:** Artisans within the sector often draw upon community heritage for making and teaching their particular craft. There exist government policies, as well as, not-for-profit sector interventions which facilitate the handicrafts sector in gaining access to markets as communities, as well as, individuals.
- **Urban and Contemporary Art Spaces:** Independent



artists within urban art spaces tend to work as individuals or small collectives and groups (for example, as bands or dance troupes, which are often unregistered as legal structures but perform non-profit services and activities in service of society). The lack of formal institutional structures for art in India forces artists to work independently - unlike in the West - where alliances between institutions and independent artists/collectives are more common (take, for instance, ballet dancers at the Royal Ballet or musicians in orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra). This lack of larger organisational structures or policies in India makes the artists and the sector vulnerable and unstable without any safety net to rely on.

- **Formal (Trade Unions and Management bodies) and Informal (sector collectives and consortia)** are few in number. The lack of the former mitigates a collective approach to the protection of employment rights for the workforce, and the latter impedes the ability to pool resources and expertise to speak with one voice.<sup>15</sup>

### III. Major governing policies and regulations

#### A. POLICIES, ACTS, AND LAWS IN THE CONSTITUTION

In a federal democracy such as India, policies are prioritised and created if the subject matter is mentioned in the Constitution, or if a specific Act is made and passed and subordinate legislations and bye-laws are created to regulate. Currently, as it stands, this is the status of the legislation of culture:

- **Cultural Policy Frameworks:** Draft National Policy on Culture, 1992
- **Laws relating to funding of cultural institutions:** None

<sup>15</sup> British Council. "Literature Review". *Taking the Temperature 1*. (2021). p.44.

- **Laws providing financing:** None
- **Status of artists:** None

There are some specific legal provisions in the Constitution, other acts that govern specific matters of art and culture, and related governing mechanisms that peripherally affect the arts and culture sector. Please refer to Appendix A on p.25 of this report for further details.

## B. THE COMPANIES ACT 2013 AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Companies Act 2013, repealing the old Companies Act 1956, was enacted on August 29, 2013. This act was monumental due to its precise instructions for companies on *how much* money to spend on their CSR programmes as well as *how they were supposed to spend the money*. Under Section 135 of the Act, companies with a net worth of at least Rs 5 billion, with turnover greater than Rs 10 billion, or profits of Rs 150 million, during the ‘immediately preceding financial year’, are required to invest a minimum of 2 per cent of their average net profits, incurred over the last immediately preceding financial years, on activities given under Schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013, described as ‘CSR Activities’<sup>16</sup>.

The list of ‘CSR Activities’ mentions:

protection of national heritage, art, and culture including restoration of buildings and sites of historical importance and works of art; setting up public libraries; promotion and development of traditional art and handicraft.

as one of the domains that corporate organisations can direct their funds for CSR activities. What is key here is that The Companies Act 2013 was the first time that the arts and culture sector was included in the list of ‘CSR Activities’, thus, bringing in funding for cultural organisations through the corporate sector.

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<sup>16</sup> Jumde, Akanksha, and Jean Du Plessis. “Legislated corporate social responsibility (CSR) in India: The law and practicalities of its compliance.” *Statute Law Review* 43.2 (2022): 170-197.

As per a Times of India article<sup>17</sup> data analysis on 1,132 companies listed on the NSE as on March 31, 2019, showed that “companies more than halved their funding for national heritage, arts and culture, under corporate social responsibility (CSR). National heritage saw the highest drop of nearly 56 per cent in 2018-19”.

## C. ARTS AND PHILANTHROPY

As per the Art Tactic Art & Philanthropy Report 2019, ‘Art & Philanthropic initiatives have increased significantly over the last 10 years, with 32 new initiatives commencing since 2008 in India alone - more than double the number of philanthropic art projects and foundations existing pre-2008.<sup>18</sup> The report further pointed out that decentralisation of art and philanthropy is beyond the megacities Mumbai and New Delhi, ‘with 53 per cent of the projects in the last five years taking place in other Indian cities (up from 17 per cent share in the period 2008 to 2012).’<sup>19</sup>

## IV. Contributions to other sectors and the larger ecosystem

### A. EDUCATION

A bulk of the training in the arts in India comes from courses and degrees that are university-led and focused on the practice of theatre, music, visual arts, dance, and related fields. For instance, there are approximately 460 music colleges in India that offer music courses, out of which about 130 colleges are private, 160 are public, and the rest are public-private.<sup>20</sup> There are several

17 Mukherjee, Rupali. “Companies cut CSR spends on national heritage by 56%.” *Times of India*. (2020)

18 ArtTactic. “India: Art and Philanthropy Report 2019. (2019). pp.6. Accessed February 2023. <https://arttactic.com/product/india-art-philanthropy-report-2019/>

19 ArtTactic. “India: Art and Philanthropy Report 2019. (2019). pp.14. Accessed February 2023. <https://arttactic.com/product/india-art-philanthropy-report-2019/>

20 “569 Music colleges in India.” *Shiksha*. Accessed February 2023. <https://www.shiksha.com/arts-fine-visual-performing/music/colleges/colleges-India>

visual arts, dance and theatre courses, both at the degree and master's levels across the country, along with several universities also offering PhDs. Furthermore, there is a range of private and government art schools solely focused on training professionals in one art form. Performing and visual arts are also taught at the school level, and the depth and degree of training differ across various boards. Many of these educational institutions teach arts as a skill and as an integral part of developing a well-integrated personality, with a range of intersections with not-for-profit arts organisations delivering this training, teachers who have often come from art schools, and for-profit sectors that want to give back to the society through arts.

In the last five years, the number of students opting for courses in humanities has registered an increase, while enrollments in fields like engineering and medicine have either increased marginally or decreased. According to a 2014-15 report by India's Ministry of Human Resource and Development, "At the undergraduate level, the highest number (40 per cent ) of students are enrolled in Arts/Humanities/Social Sciences courses followed by Science (16 per cent ), Engineering and Technology (15.6 per cent ) and Commerce (14.1 per cent )." The trend could also be indicative of the fact that humanities courses are less resource-intensive compared to sciences. But largely, it is attested to the value that a broader liberal arts degree brings to a well-rounded workforce armed with emotional intelligence, general knowledge, and problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

## **B. MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT AND RELATED CREATIVE INDUSTRIES**

The cultural sector in India is vast, comprising museums, galleries, biennales, art fairs, film festivals, music concerts, stage productions, and allied activities. This allows for intersections with specific sectors and structures such as the NPO sector and philanthropy with initiatives in museums and arts education, with the events sector for fairs and festivals, the audio-visual production sector with film, advertising, design, and many more such as fashion, gaming, and publishing. The following are some

of the prominent creative industries in India:

- 1. Film Industry:** The Indian film industry is one of the largest film industries in the world. It produces a significant number of films in various languages, including Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam.
- 2. Music Industry:** The Indian music industry is known for its diversity and richness, with various genres such as classical, folk, and contemporary music.
- 3. Literature:** India has several publishing industries in various languages, including English, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi, Gujarati, Assamese, Bengali, among others .
- 4. Art:** India has a growing art market comprising galleries, auction houses, artists, fairs and festivals, and more. According to the State of Art Market Report 2021, the collective turnover of Indian art sales recorded a rise from Rs 13 crore in 2000 to Rs 880.9 crore in FY21.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, another recent report by Indian Art Investor suggests that in the first half of FY 22-23, the Indian art market generated a staggering Rs 582.7 crore (USD 75.8 Million). IIM-Ahmedabad and Mumbai-based Aura Art came together to jointly develop an art price index that was launched in the BSE auditorium last month titled IIMA - AuraArt Indian Art Index (IAIAI). The quarterly index is based on a hedonic pricing model and should be updated twice a year.<sup>22</sup>
- 5. Design:** India's design industry is growing rapidly, with a focus on fashion, graphic design, and interior design.
- 6. Fashion:** With a rich history and an intense diversity in textile traditions, India is now the second-largest producer of textiles and garments in the world and

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<sup>21</sup> "Top Artists to Watch In 2023 Amid the Indian Art Market's Exponential Growth." Outlook. (2023).

<sup>22</sup> Das, Prashant. "How art indices are changing the narrative of Indian art." *Forbes India*. (2022).

ranks fifth on the list of exporters of textiles for apparel, home, and technical products. The textile industry contributes significantly to the country's economic landscape, making up 2.3 per cent of the total country's GDP and contributing 13 per cent to industrial productions and 12 per cent to exports. It has a total national workforce of about 45 million with 3.5 million people working on handlooms as well. The Indian textile and apparel industry is expected to grow at 10 per cent CAGR from 2019-20 to reach USD 190 billion by 2025-26. It stood at USD 40 billion in 2020 and is expected to reach USD 135 billion by 2025.<sup>23</sup>

7. Gaming: India's gaming industry is growing rapidly with the rise of mobile gaming.
8. Festivals sector: A look at the festival market indicates a steady growth over the past decade. India sees more than 200 literature festivals and 20-25 top-line music and food festivals produced each year. Most recently, an exclusive website, [www.festivalsfromindia.com](http://www.festivalsfromindia.com), has mapped over 700 festivals and listed 250 arts and culture festivals in India. A more detailed explanation of the festivals sector is provided below on page 21.

These are just a few examples of the creative industries in India, and many more sectors contribute to the country's vibrant and diverse cultural scene.

## C. FESTIVALS SECTOR

As per the Festivals from India — Needs and Insights research study,<sup>24</sup> India has experienced a recent surge in privately-funded arts festivals, resulting in a multitude of festivals spanning music, art, film, and theatre, as well as public arts biennales

<sup>23</sup> India Brand Equity Foundation. "Indian Textiles and Apparel Industry Analysis." (2022).

<sup>24</sup> Ghosh, Aatreyee, et al. "Festivals From India — Needs and Insights." Art X Company(2022). p.22.

and interdisciplinary science, art, and tech unconferences. According to a 2017 report by Ernst & Young and the Event and Entertainment Management Association (EEMA), the organised events and activations industry in India was estimated to be worth Rs 10,000 crore, with an annual growth rate of 16 per cent CAGR. However, EEMA's informal estimates suggest that if the unorganised segment is included, the industry could be as large as Rs 5 trillion. With increasing public interest and engagement with the arts, culture, and heritage in India, there has been an exponential growth in cultural festivals over the past decade, organised by everyone from city councils, NPOs, and state governments to private companies. These festivals have contributed to tourism revenue, economic benefits, and enhanced the brand identity of the places where they are held. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdowns have put a halt to this growth.

The Godrej white paper on cultural engagement by corporations in India affirms the same trend. It highlights the growth of music festivals like Mahindra Blues and biennales that spread across months like the Kochi-Muziris Biennale. As the report explains,

These events are grand productions requiring large-scale funding from varied sectors. The sponsorship of such events is often multi-layered: the Kochi-Muziris Biennale has over ten levels of funding options and receives funding from government organisations, embassies and consulates, foreign NGOs, and global corporations. It boasts of corporate partners like BMW and DLF, which receive large-scale publicity for contributing to the biennale.<sup>25</sup>

This shows how the festivals sector is being bolstered by the support of foreign and domestic NGOs. Other major regional and national festivals such as the Khajuraho dance festival, Konark dance festival, Sankatmochan music festival, Shankar Lal music festival, NSD theatre festival, the Mazhgazhi season in Chennai and so on have also been made possible due to the support and involvement of not-for-profit organisations .

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<sup>25</sup> "Corporate Engagement with Culture in India - A white paper." Godrej India Culture Lab. p.22. Accessed: January 2023. Link available here.

### ***Mapping the Creative Economy Around Durga Puja***

While thinking about festivals in the Indian context, one must also consider the gamut of religion-based festivals like Durga Puja, Diwali, Ramlila traditions, and so on, which form an integral part of the festival's ecosystem in the country. These festivals are made possible by the varied support of NPOs in terms of involving artisans, providing infrastructural support, dissemination of information, among others. Here, we specifically highlight a report on the creative economy around Durga Puja.

*In 2019, the Department of Tourism, Government of West Bengal, invited the British Council to conduct, on their behalf, a mapping exercise to identify the economic worth of specific creative industries of West Bengal. Some of the major findings from the quantitative and qualitative sections of the report are as follows:*

- The total estimated economic worth of the creative industries around Durga Puja is Rs 32,377 crore (GBP 3.29 billion ) (excluding sponsorships\*)
- Idol-making: It is a generational business with some families in the business for more than 200 years. Young artists are also commissioned.
- Illumination: The city of Chandernagore in West Bengal hosts many renowned light artists who help light up pandals across West Bengal during this high-demand season.
- Literature and publishing: Puja-specific content is released by leading publishing houses, newspapers, and magazines at this time, which are major sources of income.
- Crafts and design: Puja generate jobs and livelihoods for the handicraft and craft sector. The artisans are involved in making everything from decorative to utilitarian items.
- Food and beverages: 65 per cent of the stalls and kiosks put up during this season belong to the unorganised sector. They see a huge boom in income.
- Earning: 35 per cent of 240 questionnaire respondents earn 81 –100 per cent of their yearly income through the Durga Puja festival, showing how important it is to their economic growth.
- Expenditure: 92 per cent of Puja organisers spend over 20 per cent of their budget paying artists. These are not jobs with permanent contracts, and hence, are often fewer stable sources of income.



## D. HEALTH, SOCIAL SECTOR, AND RELATED POLICY- MAKING

Artists have been closely involved with and have influenced social change throughout history. The diversity offered by the arts makes for an excellent communication medium to represent ideas and advocate for issues from any sector in an impactful as well as engaging manner. Non-profits working within the arts and culture sector, and, thus, have often been instrumental in policy execution across the health sector.

- **Theatre and Music:** Street theatre and theatrical devices have often been used to communicate key messages across major social and health policies, such as workers' rights, women's health, birth control, and diseases (AIDS, leprosy, COVID-19).
- **Art Therapy:** Mental health support is another aspect that the arts have been contributing towards in recent years. For example, art therapy has been an emerging aspect of psychological theory, and there are several arts NGOs providing programmes and opportunities for positive mental healthcare.
- **Visual Arts:** Artists are, often, employed in recent times to paint city walls as a mode of urban beautification by municipal governments.
- **Arts-integrated education:** Several organisations, including the India Foundation for Arts (IFA), work closely with State and Central level education ministries to integrate arts with education. For instance, the IFA has worked with government schools in Karnataka, training teachers in arts-integrated curricula. Delhi-based organisation slams-out loud, an arts-based NGO working towards empowering the voices of children from disadvantaged communities, has worked with the Delhi Government to deploy the Jivisha Fellowship. The fellowship brings professional artists to learning spaces and helps children build relevant social and economic life skills through mediums such as visual arts, theatre, poetry, and storytelling.

## V. Contributions to policy-making in India

### **Corporate Social Responsibility**

The Corporate Social Responsibility mandate for businesses and companies under the Companies Act 2013 was created to work on the socio-economic realities of the country and to balance out the debate of developmental growth versus that of welfare-based development. Thus, the inclusion of CSR under the Companies Act was an attempt to engage the corporate world with the country's development agenda.<sup>26</sup>

Post the liberalisation of the economy and the large influx of funds into the private sector, government spending on culture had reduced considerably. Presently, apex bodies such as the Ministry of Culture offer multiple cultural initiatives, for instance, offering fellowships and grants towards the cultural sector. However, as mentioned previously, the funds allocated towards the arts and culture sector already make up quite a small share of national funds, and these are too thinly spread across the sector. As a result, cultural institutions in India began partnering up with private organisations and foreign institutions for funding. For example, the Ford Foundation and the British Council have been instrumental in promoting and providing funding for the development of the arts and culture within the country.

With a need for further engagement of corporate organisations with cultural initiatives in India, cultural NGOs and cultural movements across the country began to turn to corporations and wealthy patrons to fund their activities – take, for example, Tata Trusts and Pirojsha Godrej Foundations that began contributing to the funding of national cultural institutions. With slow but consistent partnerships and rising public engagement between large corporate organisations and cultural initiatives, arts, and cultural initiatives began to appeal to the private sector for CSR activities. This kind of public awareness, along with a

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<sup>26</sup> Bulut, Diren and Ceren Bulut Yumrukaya. "Corporate social responsibility in culture and art." *Management of Environmental Quality: An International Journal*. 20.3 (2009): 311-320.

consistent push from cultural NGOs and the cultural sector, led to a codification of the arts and culture within the list of recognised 'CSR Activities' in the Companies Act 2013. While initially, there was a hesitancy within the corporate sector regarding the legitimacy of arts and cultural activities as a CSR initiative, this codification allowed for corporate institutions to freely invest in the sector, giving rise to large-scale cultural initiatives through CSR, for instance, cultural festivals sponsored by Mahindra such as the Mahindra Blues Festival or Mahindra Roots.<sup>27</sup>

## National Education Policy

As the first education policy of the 21st century, The National Education Policy 2020 proposed a revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure based upon national and global goals for the century while also building upon India's traditions and value systems and laying emphasis on the development of creative potential in the education system<sup>28</sup>. Apart from administrative and academic restructuring, a large part of the NEP 2020 was its emphasis on the inclusion of arts and culture within the academic curriculum across the school and higher education.

Art integration is a cross-curricular pedagogical approach that utilises various aspects and forms of art and culture as the basis for the learning of concepts across subjects. As a part of the thrust on experiential learning, art-integrated education will be embedded in classroom transactions not only for creating joyful classrooms but also for imbibing the Indian ethos through the integration of Indian art and culture in the teaching and learning process at every level. This art-integrated approach will strengthen the linkages between education and culture.<sup>29</sup>

Policy 22 of the NEP 2020 is entirely dedicated to the 'Promotion of

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27 "Corporate Engagement with Culture in India - A white paper." Godrej India Culture Lab. Accessed: January 2023.

28 Ministry of Human Resource Development. "Introduction". *National Education Policy (2020)*. 3-4. Accessed: January 2023.

29 Ministry of Human Resource Development. "Curriculum and Pedagogy in Schools: Learning Should be Holistic, Integrated, Enjoyable, and Engaging". *National Education Policy (2020)*. 11-20 (p.12). Accessed: January 2023.

Indian Languages, Arts, and Culture'. It details the various forms of the arts present in India, the necessity of cultural awareness in students from national as well as individual perspectives, and fostering and maintaining the diversity of culture and languages in India. The policy lists out a few suggestions in which the arts and culture can be promoted in the classroom, for instance -

Several initiatives to foster languages, arts, and culture in school children have been discussed in Chapter 4, which include a greater emphasis on music, arts, and crafts throughout all levels of the school; early implementation of the three-language formula to promote multilingualism; teaching in the home/local language wherever possible; conducting more experiential language learning; the hiring of outstanding local artists, writers, craftspersons, and other experts as master instructors in various subjects of local expertise; accurate inclusion of traditional Indian knowledge including tribal and other local knowledge throughout into the curriculum, across humanities, sciences, arts, crafts, and sports, whenever relevant; and much greater flexibility in the curriculum, especially in secondary schools and in higher education, so that students can choose the ideal balance among courses for themselves to develop their own creative, artistic, cultural, and academic paths.<sup>30</sup>

The NEP 2020 came about 34 years after the last education policy in India, which was announced in 1986 and revised in 1992. It took six years of work for NEP 2020 to be finalised and involved extensive consultations with educators, policymakers, cultural experts, and members of civil society. This was reflected in the composition of the Committee for the Draft National Education Policy as well. Headed by K. Kasturirangan, former chairman of ISRO, members of the committee included professors of mathematics, sciences, social sciences, literature, and culture studies along with personnel from the education and examination boards of multiple states in the country. The consultation process for the formulation of the policy involved field visits, discussions, conferences/workshops, interviews, limited citizen outreach, special studies, and meetings with constitutional leaders and

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<sup>30</sup> Ministry of Human Resource Development. "Promotion of Indian Languages, Arts, and Culture". National Education Policy (2020). 53-56 (p.54). Accessed: January 2023.

elected officials. Along with this, it involved the creation of a National Education Task Force with multi-stakeholder members from diverse backgrounds, including government, academic, industry experts, and media<sup>31</sup>. In 2022, the Ministry of Education also launched a worldwide survey for opinions regarding the development of a National Curriculum Framework as part of the NEP. The idea was to bring in a diversity of views including (but not restricted to) teachers, school leaders, educationists, students, members of NGOs, artists, and artisans, to create a holistic National Curriculum Framework.<sup>32</sup> The inclusion of the arts and culture within the policy was, thus, an amalgamation of rigorous efforts of personnel from NGOs (cultural ones and otherwise), artists, craftsmen, and educators who consulted with the Committee for the National Education Policy 2020 to create a holistic environment within the education system.

## VI. A case study: India Foundation for the Arts

The following case study on the India Foundation for the Arts (IFA) is based on the author's interview with the Executive Director, Arundhati Ghosh, and Menaka Rodriguez, the present Head of Resource Mobilisation and Outreach, and the next Executive Director of the organisation. They presented in-depth insights about IFA's work with a range of cultural projects as well as her own experiences and challenges of working within this sector. The case study also offers hands-on perspectives emerging from IFA's long history of operating as a key cultural non-profit organisation.

### *Establishment of the IFA*

Established in 1993 as a Public Charitable Trust, IFA has supported and implemented over 734 projects across the country. IFA has been consistently influential in the cultural sector, with

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31 Ministry of Education. "Consultation Framework." Accessed: January 2023.

32 ANI. "Education Ministry to invite views on National Curriculum Framework".TimesNow. (2020). Accessed: January 2023.

programmes for Arts Research, Arts Practice, Arts Education, and Archives and Museums<sup>33</sup>.

As explained above in section III, there was a significant rise in cultural non-profit organisations after the 1980s. By the time IFA emerged in 1993, Culture and Recreation organisations accounted for 11.18 per cent of the total NPO sector, with 1,25,504 societies established at the time<sup>34</sup>. Many cultural NGOs, especially in the 1990s, were often set up by arts patrons as corporate art foundations (if they belonged to business families) or in partnership with larger foundations or trusts – such as the JSW Foundation in 1989<sup>35</sup> or Khoj in 1997<sup>36</sup>. Similarly, IFA was set up as a Public Charitable Trust in 1993, which came out of the Ford Foundation's desire to set up an independent art and culture funding organisation in India. The reason IFA was established as a Trust was because, in the 1990s, it was seen as the most robust legal body in the not-for-profit world. Moreover, it was noted that for all kinds of funding possibilities, the Trust structure was the most reliable and trusted.<sup>37</sup>

As India entered the liberalisation decade, there was a felt need amongst the cultural community as well as the wealthy elite, including the nouveau riche, to focus on bolstering and supporting the arts, in addition to primary support mandates of poverty alleviation or education. These mandates were previously seen as CSR towards nation-building, while art and culture were seen as a way to 'preserve' and 'promote' knowledge building as opposed to supporting creativity and aesthetic development. Thus, a principal task for cultural organisations has been to shift the existing perception of arts NGOs from mere guardians

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33 About IFA | India Foundation for Arts, n.d. Accessed January 2023. <https://indiaifa.org/about-us/about-ifa.html>

34 "Non-Profit Institutions in India: A Profile and Satellite Accounts in the framework of System of National Accounts". 2012 report by Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI), Government of India. Accessed: December 2022.

35 "Overview". JSW Foundation, Accessed: January 2023. <https://www.jsw.in/foundation/about-jsw-foundation-0>

36 "About Us". Khoj Studios, Accessed: January 2023. <https://khojstudios.org/about-us/>

37 As explained to the authors during an interview with Arundhati Ghosh, Executive Director at the IFA.

of heritage preservation and education to demonstrating their value to society, to gain increased patronage and funding. The IFA gained credibility in terms of its value and allowed for better public visibility. By 1995, IFA started offering grants and implementing projects across the country to bring visibility to the arts and to offer funding as well as a space for the arts to be celebrated and archived.

### *Functioning of the IFA and its contributions*

IFA functions as an independent non-profit organisation, not just in its project implementation but also in its choice of donors and team structure. The IFA team primarily comprises the outreach team, the management team, and the programme team. It is governed by a Board of Directors that comprises: 1) The Programme Committee, which reviews the content and priorities of the grant programmes; 2) The Finance Committee, which supervises investments, approves budgets, and monitors expenditures and 3) Advisors, who help them in specific areas. With an annual budget of Rs 4-5 crore, the foundation completes 50 projects a year on average and usually has at least 100 active projects at any given time.

The IFA has distinct policies and procedures regarding its programmes and their grant approval processes. The foundation conducts about five programmes a year for cultural grants. A call for proposals is sent out, each project usually having a specific mandate. For instance, IFA provides grants for arts research, art creation (pushing new boundaries in content, form, and medium), and even city-based grants to re-imagine urban interactions via the arts (Project 560). IFA typically receives about 200-300 proposals, 100 of which are shortlisted by programme officers. Within these 100, the main IFA team further shortlists it down to 25. These 25 proposals are then sent out to an external panel or a jury that chooses the final grantees. The foundation, thus, does its best to eliminate possibilities of bias and make the process as fair as possible. Every five years, all IFA programmes are reviewed during a session called *Voices From the Field*. They conduct interviews with 50-60 active artists to understand what the artists themselves know of IFA and its role, what they think IFA can do better, and what gaps need to be filled within the field

that IFA can contribute towards. This ensures that the foundation is consistently up to date with the changing, dynamic arts and cultural landscape and adapts itself accordingly to provide for the needs of the artists.

One of IFA's key mandates is also to provide space for marginalised communities and voices from the arts. The foundation accepts and processes proposals in 14 languages, which are then translated for the jury as required. They also consistently map geographical data for their proposals – for instance, Rodriguez mentioned a 10-year review discussion wherein IFA realised that most of the proposals they received came primarily from the metropolitan regions. To rectify this, they approached underrepresented areas and marginalised communities, conducted extensive fieldwork, created awareness about IFA's work, and encouraged people from non-metropolitan regions to apply. This shows the integral role that NGOs like IFA have played in promoting equal opportunities and giving a platform for underrepresented voices.

#### *Contribution of the IFA and the Arts and Culture NGOs to Development*

The major contributions of IFA, as summarised by Rodriguez, are: *'capacity building, creation of work, and contribution to a larger discourse.'* IFA's cultural archive is perhaps one of its most distinct contributions. It has supported over 730 projects in a large variety of art forms and has supported artists from all over the country. IFA also designed and delivered a capacity-building programme titled Strategic Management in the Art of Theatre (SMART), to "build knowledge, skills, and expertise about arts management from within the Indian theatre community"<sup>38</sup>. She also cites "*discourse building in different languages*" as one of IFA's major contributions to the arts, allowing them to build a diverse archive and bring marginalised voices to the forefront.

Rodriguez says that cultural NGOs have simply made available the infrastructures that artists need to exhibit their art. Even just having the accessibility to be able to exhibit their art makes a world of difference for artists. The problem with cultural and

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<sup>38</sup> Strategic Management in the Art of Theatre (SMART) Programme | India Foundation for Arts.



art spaces, according to her, has always been either the lack of visibility or the lack of importance and value ascribed to the arts. The NPOs have bridged this through consistent advocacy and promotion of the arts, making them much more accessible to the general audience. Furthermore, these NPOs have also consistently attempted to diversify their activities to promote socio-economic growth, bringing more visibility to the benefits, the value, and the overall contribution of the arts to personal and national development.

### *Challenges Faced by Arts NPOs*

Drawing from her experiences, Rodriguez mentioned three primary challenges that she has noticed within the sector.

The first aspect is the constraints faced by NPOs due to policy and governmental regulations. The laws and regulations on NPOs are consistently becoming tighter and require extensive and constant reporting. Furthermore, there has been an increased regulation of foreign donations which severely impacted NGO funding. For example, the 2022 amendment of the FCRA put in place stricter requirements and regulations for NGOs to receive foreign donations (Chander, 2022). The arts and culture sector, especially the younger organisations at the current moment, is found to be already doing the fieldwork but simply do not register as NPOs or cannot stay up-to-date with reporting, thus skewing data. Considering that NPOs are largely volunteer-based and often have smaller teams, the heavy administrative expectation is often a struggle to meet for organisations and they do not have the bandwidth to deal with organisational and reporting aspects of the NPO sector.

Another aspect, as mentioned before, is simply demonstrating the *value* of the work of an arts NPO. The problem here arises because most other sectors can have much more defined quantitative data - an education sector can quantify the number of schools started or the number of students enrolled in an area. The same cannot be done for the arts and culture due to their subjective and diverse nature. Thus, depicting the value of work becomes difficult, which in turn, makes it tougher to receive donations and patrons. This was made at least mildly easier, however, with

the amendment of the CSR Bill in 2013-14, which finally listed arts and culture as part of corporate social responsibility. This brought legitimacy to the arts and culture NPOs and allowed for more corporate attention and funding for the sector.

Finally, there is a lack of cohesiveness within the non-profit art and culture sector itself. Rodriguez believes that other sectors tend to have organisations that are more connected with each other and have more coalitions together. However, due to the diversity within the arts and culture sector, the organisations do not have as many connections with each other outside the domain of their work. This results in a lack or low awareness of new policies being implemented for the arts and culture sector. Secondly, it also means the sector rarely comes together to advocate for policy changes for the benefit of the sector.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

India's culture sector is vital to its sense of identity and nationhood and for the cultural pride it evokes in its people. The right to practice and conserve one's culture is enshrined in our constitution, and given the vast disparity among her people, India must develop policies that safeguard the right to one's cultural practices, access to artistic education, and make one's livelihood from practising an art form. Furthermore, given the global policy evolution from arm's length funding to creative industries models, we need to recognise India's cultural sector contribution to the creative economy as a key part of her global competitive advantage in the marketplace as a driver for wealth creation; enterprise and innovation; and positive international cultural relations. In line with the above, here are the policy recommendations which also consider recommendations made by the author in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on India's creative sector<sup>39,40</sup>:

### *Develop a culture policy*

- We strongly recommend the development of a mid and long-term national policy for the creative sector and arts.
- This should accompany certain regulatory changes that make it easy for companies and individuals to donate to art and culture. Currently, only 50 per cent of one's donation to the arts is set off against Income Tax. This needs to be increased to 100 per cent .
- The policy should also safeguard the right to practice art and protect the freedom of expression of the artiste.
- The policy should seek integration of socio-cultural impact as a key metric for assessment in all major infrastructure projects, be it ports, bridges, dams, or in urban planning (such as new townships).
- Regular research reports measuring the value of arts to society, livelihoods, cultural pride, and the economy.

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39 British Council. "Taking the Temperature 2". (2021)

40 British Council. "Taking the Temperature 3". (2021)

### ***Review regulatory frameworks***

- Review the regulatory framework to strengthen the export and import market for creative goods and services and reduce barriers to entry.
- A significant review of financial and livelihood statistics is needed to assess the impact and contribution of the sector in a broader context. For example, We recommend embedding tax coding of the creative industries in the formal economy through the Goods and Services Tax (GST) council to measure the contribution of both not-for-profit and for-profit arts and culture organisations and individuals.
- Review the CSR framework to develop a systematic inclusion for private investment and build a system of philanthropy for arts and culture.
- Establish arms-length bodies (ALBs) to strengthen and invest in arts and culture through a partnership of public and private investors.
- Identify common sectoral barriers to enabling deeper socio-cultural impact through policy change and implementation of innovative schemes in the regulatory framework to strengthen routes to the market for both for-profit and social impact enterprises in the sector.

### ***Creative Economy Taskforce***

- Establish coordination between secretaries and ministers from the 14 Ministries that have a mandate for the Creative Sector. This can take the form of a Creative Economy Task Force (CETF) to coordinate and plan a comprehensive and substantial package of emergency and long-term investment across arts and culture sectors.

### ***Strengthen infrastructure development***

- The CETF, made of bureaucrats and politicians from the central government and states of India and major stakeholders, inaugurated a major ground-breaking international creative economy conference, convening public and private partnerships across government.

- Establish sector-specific management self-help groups and management organisations and city-wide enterprise zones and clusters in performing arts, festivals, literature and publishing, visual arts, galleries, museums, crafts, CreaTech, and start-ups.
- Unite with national and state government interventions, e.g., create cultural districts in every Smart City to allow for performance spaces, rehearsal venues, libraries, studios, and artist's offices.
- Institute programmes for arts management education and deeper studies on India's culture sector across all domains.
- Establish creative economy networks of artists, artisans, and cultural organisations to develop sector, city, state, and national knowledge and impact for:
  - a. Collective advocacy
  - b. Pooling resources for mutual support
  - c. Shared learning across the diversity of India's languages, creative industries, and art forms.

### ***Financial investment and innovation***

- Maximise the potential of technology and AI through informal education networks to enable livelihoods for artists, entrepreneurs, and arts innovators.
- A comprehensive national skills campaign across urban and rural geographies for cultural MSMEs and not-for-profits in digital and technological skills, business development, marketing, and communication capacity.

### ***Export and Import of Cultural Services and Goods***

- Evaluate the free flow of artists between countries with whom cultural treaties are in place. The free flow of artists is a significant need as written into the charter by UNESCO and signed by member countries.
- Acknowledge the export of cultural services and goods and offset taxes as per existing laws.

- Remove import taxes on artwork pledged to or gifted to museums both by governments and private organisations .
- A provision for blanket permission for an institution valid for a certain period to receive gifts and endowments of artworks and bring them into the country.
- Work with national galleries and museums across the world to bring back objects that may have been carried out of the country through illegal means. These may be in the form of long-term loans or permanent loans to offset legal requirements in those countries.
- Create a special service for artworks that are being exported or imported with a one-window clearance and custom system.

## APPENDIX A

The source of this appendix is: “Country Profile: India.” International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (2013), authored by Ashish Rajadhyaksha, P. Radhika, and Raghavendra Tenkayala.

### A. Constitution

In the Indian Constitution, Articles 29 and 30 are the ones usually used to define both cultural and educational rights. These Articles deal broadly with cultural rights such as language, script, and religion. We detail below the specific references:

Article 29 refers to the protection of the interests of minorities and includes 29 (1) which says that ‘any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script, or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same’, and 29(2) which affirms that no citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste (or) language.<sup>41</sup>

Article 30 refers specifically to the rights of minorities to set up educational institutions. 30(1) explicitly allows minorities – whether based on religion or language – to explicitly possess the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. 30(2) requires that the Indian state shall not discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority.<sup>39</sup>

Apart from Articles 29 and 30, several other Constitutional provisions are seen as having a bearing on culture. For instance, *Article 15* asserts a right to equality, ensuring equal access to resources for everyone irrespective of one’s religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, and the even more famous right to freedom of speech and expression (*Article 19*).<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, Article 25 strengthens these rights, stating that ‘subject to public order, morality, and health...all persons are

<sup>41</sup> Rajadhyaksha, Ashish, P. Radhika, and Raghavendra Tenkayala. “Country Profile: India.” *International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies* (2013). P.100

equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion.<sup>42</sup>

These articles are further backed up by *Article 51A*, which details the fundamental duties of citizens, some of which are focused upon an Indian citizen's duty to preserve and promote Indian culture -

- to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic, and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.
- to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture.
- to protect and improve the natural environment, including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife, and to have compassion for living creatures
- to develop the scientific temper, humanism, and the spirit of inquiry and reform<sup>43</sup>.

The Constitution also ensures the proper allocation of funds and resources toward the maintenance and promotion of cultural heritage in India. The Ministry of Culture (MoC) has sole discretion, subject to audit and other restrictions, to disburse funds in the following areas:

Tangible Heritage	Intangible Heritage Culture	Knowledge Resource Heritage
Archaeological Survey of India,	National School of Drama	National Archives of India
National Museum	Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts,	Anthropological Survey of India

42 Rajadhyaksha, Ashish, P. Radhika, and Raghavendra Tenkayala. "Country Profile: India." *International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies* (2013). p.101

43 Rajadhyaksha, Ashish, P. Radhika, and Raghavendra Tenkayala. "Country Profile: India." *International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies* (2013). P.102



Tangible Heritage	Intangible Heritage Culture	Knowledge Resource Heritage
National Gallery of Modern Art	Sahitya Akademi, Lalit Kala Akademi and Sangeet Natak Akademi.	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural Property	Centre for Cultural Resources and Training	Asiatic Society
National Culture Fund.	Kalakshetra Foundation	Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies
	all Zonal Cultural Centres.	

*Areas and organisations under the areas funded by the Ministry of Culture*

*Source: Country Profile: India. (2013). p.104<sup>44</sup>*

<sup>44</sup> Rajadhyaksha, Ashish, P. Radhika, and Raghavendra Tenkayala. "Country Profile: India." *International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies* (2013). P.104

## B. ACT: MADE BY PARLIAMENT/STATE ASSEMBLY WITHIN THE PARAMETERS OF THE CONSTITUTION<sup>45</sup>

In India, several acts and amendments have been made about culture.

ACT	AMENDMENT	SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION/ RULES/BY-LAWS/ NOTIFICATIONS
The Asiatic Society Act, 1984	The Asiatic Society Amendment to Regulations, 2007	
The Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951	The Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Act, 2006 The Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Act, 2019	Notification - 28.09.2018 regarding the nomination of Members as Trustees
The Public Records Act, 1993		Public Records Rules, 1997
The Delivery of Books [And Newspapers] (Public Libraries) Act, 1954		

<sup>45</sup> Acts & Subordinate Legislation | Ministry of Culture. n.d. Accessed January 2023. <https://www.indiaculture.nic.in/acts-subordinate-legislation>

ACT	AMENDMENT	SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION/ RULES/BY-LAWS/ NOTIFICATIONS
The Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, 1969		
The Salar Jung Museum Act, 1961		<p>The Salar Jung Museum Rules, 1961</p> <p>The Salar Jung Museum Regulations, 1962</p> <p>The Salar Jung Museum Board Regulations, 1972</p> <p>The Salar Jung Museum Notification, 1962</p>
The Kalakshetra Foundation Act, 1993		<p>The Kalakshetra Foundation Rules, 1998</p> <p>The Kalakshetra Foundation Recruitment Regulation 13.01.2005</p> <p>The Kalakshetra Foundation, Chennai, (Director) Recruitment Rules, 2012</p>

ACT	AMENDMENT	SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION/ RULES/BY-LAWS/ NOTIFICATIONS
The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972		The Antiquities and Art Treasures Rules, 1973
The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958	The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2010	<p>The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Rules, 1959</p> <p>The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Framing of Heritage By-Laws and Other Functions of the Competent Authority) Rules, 2011</p> <p>The National Monuments Authority (Condition of Service of Chairman and Members of the Authority and Conduct of Business) Rules, 2011</p>

ACT	AMENDMENT	SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION/ RULES/BY-LAWS/ NOTIFICATIONS
The Lalit Kala Akadami (Taking Over of Management) Act, 1997		Order under Section 6 of the Act vide S.O 202(E) dated 31.03.1999
The Rampur Raza Library Act, 1975		

*Acts Made by Parliaments/State Assembly*

*Source: Acts & Subordinate Legislation | Ministry of Culture*

## C. SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

Subordinate legislation refers to Rules, Regulations, and Bylaws made by the authorised government agency within the parameters prescribed by the Act. The country does not have a single, central cultural policy, but the sector has been supported by a range of Government initiatives and departments from the Ministry of Culture (MoC), Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. The following section is entirely sourced from IFACCA, “WorldCP-Asia International Database of Cultural Policies”, 1st edition, 2013.

The Government itself divides its functions into Central, State, and Municipal levels (outlined in this section). Cultural policy, along with procedures for disbursement of funds for public purposes in culture, move from the Centre (various Ministries involved with cultural issues), State, and City (Municipal) levels.

Central administration: At the Centre, the Ministry of Culture plays a major role in the promotion and protection of India's ‘cultural diversity and heritage’ (quoting from the Ministry of

Culture's Vision Statement of Citizen Charter)<sup>46</sup>. The Ministry's mandate emphasises the right of all sections of Indian society to conserve their language and culture as also the rich heritage of its composite culture (see Legal Mandate, Ministry of Culture)<sup>47</sup>. Thus, the Ministry largely focused on establishing museums, libraries, and arts institutions, and protecting ancient monuments and archaeological sites. The Ministry of Culture has numerous organisations under its jurisdiction.

These fall under the categories:

- **Subordinate Offices**, including the Anthropological Survey of India, Central Reference Library, National Library, National Gallery of Modern Art, National Museum (Delhi) National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural Property (Lucknow).
- **Attached Offices**, including the Archaeological Survey of India, The Central Secretariat Library, and the National Archives of India.
- **Autonomous Bodies**, including Museums, Libraries, Academies, Zonal Cultural Centres, and Buddhist Institutions.<sup>48</sup>

In addition, as mentioned in the earlier sections, there are other ministries involved in culture:

- Ministry of Education, which deals with art education and technical education relating to crafts.
- Ministry of Human Resource and Development, which deals with a total of 153 educational and cultural institutions including the Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR), the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), and the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

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<sup>46</sup> Ministry of Culture. "Vision Statement". Citizen's Charter/Client's Charter for the Ministry of Culture. (2011). Accessed: January 2023.

<sup>47</sup> Legal Mandate | Ministry of Culture. Accessed: January 2023.

<sup>48</sup> About Us | Ministry of Culture. Accessed January 2023. <https://indiaculture.gov.in/about-us>

- Ministry of Textiles, which runs the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), the Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation (HHEC), the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) and the National Handicrafts and Handlooms Museum.
- Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, which runs the Khadi and Village Industries Commission.
- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, as well as the Department of Science and Technology, which deals with radio, satellite communications, television, and cinema.
- Ministry of External Affairs, which looks into international cultural relations through the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)
- Ministry of Tourism
- Ministry of Tribal Affairs
- Ministry of Minority Affairs
- Ministry of Commerce and Industry, which runs the National Institute of Design (NID)
- Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports

**State administration:** At the state level, the 28 states and seven union territories that constitute the Indian Republic either have a department of culture or a department that also handles culture (e.g., the Department of Tourism in Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli). The respective departments of culture centrally focus on the protection of regional languages and folk cultures and support of contemporary arts - literature, visual, and performing arts.

Mirroring the Akademies that constitute the apex arts bodies at the centre, there are state

Akademies in the fields of literature, music and dance, sculpture, visual arts, folk, minority

languages and book publications. For example, the state of Karnataka has a Karnataka Sahitya Academy (Karnataka Academy of Letters); Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy (Karnataka

Music and Dance Academy); Janapada and Yakshagana Academy (Folklore and Yakshagana Academy); Karnataka Media Academy; Nataka Academy (Drama Academy); Book Development Authority; Karnataka Lalitha Kala Academy (Karnataka Academy of Fine Art); Karnataka Shilpa Kala Academy (Karnataka Academy of Sculpture); Tulu Sahitya Academy (Tulu Academy of Letters); Konkani Sahitya Academy (Konkani Academy of Letters); Kodava Sahitya Academy (Kodava Academy of Letters) and Urdu Academy.

***Municipal administration:*** At the municipal level, there are local bodies that have concentrated on heritage/conservation and related structures, gentrification, reuse of vacant lands, and arts in public spaces. Examples of important city-based bodies include the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) and the Delhi Urban Arts Commission (DUAC). In 1997 MMRDA constituted a body MMR-Heritage Conservation Society for creating awareness of heritage conservation and support for the preservation and development of natural and built cultural heritage.<sup>49</sup> The DUAC was set up in 1973 to 'advise the Government of India in the matter of preserving, developing and maintaining the aesthetic quality of urban and environmental design within Delhi' and has been one of the more proactive local bodies that have intervened in the preservation of cultural and historical meanings of the city in urban planning and development. Many municipal corporations, such as in Ahmedabad, Cochin, Delhi, Mumbai, and Puducherry (formerly Pondicherry) have, in the last decade or so, set up Heritage Cells, in partnership with non-governmental organisations .

***Inter-ministerial or intergovernmental cooperation:*** Culture administratively comprises the departments covering Education, Economy, Human Resources, Communications, and Science and Technology and, in disciplinary terms, includes at least History, Anthropology, Political Science, Design, Literature, Economics, and Science, all of which appear to incorporate and even perhaps supersede substantial aspects of contemporary cultural practice in the sense of merely 'fine arts'.

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<sup>49</sup> Home | Mumbai Metropolitan Region - Heritage Conservation Society. Accessed: February 2023.



## D. INTERNATIONAL TREATIES RATIFIED BY INDIA<sup>50</sup>

Title of the Treaty	Year of adoption
Human Rights	
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)	1949
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	1979
International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	1979
UNESCO	
Universal Copyright Convention	1957
Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention	1958
Convention for the Protection of Producers of Phonograms against Unauthorised Duplication of their Phonograms. Geneva	1974
Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. Paris	1977

<sup>50</sup> Rajadhyaksha, Ashish, P. Radhika, and Raghavendra Tenkayala. "Country Profile: India." *International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies* (2013). p.110.

Title of the Treaty	Year of adoption
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Paris	1977
Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat. Ramsar	1981
Multilateral Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation of Copyright Royalties, with model bilateral agreement and additional Protocol. Madrid	1983
Universal Copyright Convention as revised on 24 July, 1971, with Appendix Declaration relating to Article XVII and Resolution concerning Article XI. Paris	1988
Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas, and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific. Bangkok	2000
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Paris	2005
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Paris	2006
International Convention against Doping in Sport. Paris	2007

*International Treaties ratified by India*

*Source: Country Profile: India. (2013). p.110*

## E. SECTOR-SPECIFIC LEGISLATION<sup>51</sup>

Sector	Legislation	Description
Visual and Applied Arts	Indian Copyright Act 1957	Under Section 2 (c) of the Indian Copyright Act, 1957: (c) “artistic work” means- (i) a painting, a sculpture, a drawing (including a diagram, map, chart, or plan), an engraving or a photograph, whether or not any such work possesses artistic quality; (ii) work of architecture; and (iii) any other work of artistic craftsmanship
	Indian Penal Code 1860	Used to regulate exhibitions, publications, etc.
Performing Arts and Music	Indian Copyright Act 1957	

<sup>51</sup> Rajadhyaksha, Ashish, P. Radhika, and Raghavendra Tenkayala. “Country Profile: India.” *International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies* (2013). p.111-113

Sector	Legislation	Description
	Dramatic Performance Act 1876	Believed to be draconian and used for rigid regulation of dramatic performances. Replicated by several state governments
	Article 246 of Constitution of India	All state Governments have the power to regulate "Theatres and dramatic performances"
Cultural Heritage	Central Acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indian Treasure Trove Act</li> <li>• 1878 Ancient Monuments Preservation Act 1904</li> <li>• Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Rules, 1959</li> <li>• Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972</li> <li>• Environment Protection Act, 1986</li> </ul>
	State Acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monuments and Antiquities Act, 1961</li> <li>• Town and Country Planning Acts</li> </ul>

Sector	Legislation	Description
Cultural Heritage	City Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory protection is available only to monuments protected under the Monuments and Antiquities Act, 1961 in the states.</li> <li>• Cities and the heritage within them are governed by Municipal laws, which are a state subject. Many states do not have adequate legislation to conserve city heritage, and amendments to heritage protection rules are pending in many states.</li> </ul>

*Sector-Specific Legislation in India for the Arts*

*Source: Country Profile: India. (2013). p.111-113*



Chapter 14:

# **Working With Women**

## BACKGROUND

The concept of empowerment flows from authority, and the empowerment of women would mean exercising that authority to control over their own material assets and lives, thereby equipping women to be economically independent and self-reliant. The process enable women to pursue personal, social and economic endeavors, engaging in all parts of society on the same basis as men.

Though empowerment of women in India had a long history it was during the freedom movement they were propelled into the political arena as equal partners with men. Post-independence, equal rights for men and women were enshrined in our Constitution under Articles 14 to 16. These Articles provides women with the fundamental rights of equality (Article 14) irrespective of creed, race or sex, and includes equal employment opportunity (Article 16). While proclaiming their equal status with men, Article 15 of the Constitution recognized that women needed 'special provision' – i.e. positive discrimination. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. However, there is a wide gap between the stated objectives and the position that prevails. Despite the Constitution granting equal rights to both men and women are still discriminated as gender disparity lurks in various parts of the country.

## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Since independence, several women's movements have happened, thereby making major gains in highlighting women empowerment in India as an issue of prime importance while formulating policies. The government took various initiatives to improve the social, economic and political conditions of women. These movements and initiatives on women's empowerment have resulted in an increase in the education domain, and in the health sector where investments in reproductive health issues



have resulted in better maternal health, longer lives, and lower population growth

Between 1947 and the early 1970s development was primarily welfare oriented, with an emphasis on women as wives and mothers. This period saw the establishment of the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) in 1953 and the institution of a number of schemes based on nutrition, child care, non-formal education, etc. The CSWB is of particular significance to the voluntary sector because it was the first organization created by the Government of India to fund the non-governmental sector generally, although its main emphasis was schemes for women and children.

The establishment of a separate Department of Women and Child Development in 1985 under the Ministry of Human Resource Development was another important step. There have been several policy statements and documents, including the National Perspective Plan for Women (1998-2000), the Shram Shakti Report and the Country Report of the Government for the Fourth World Conference in Beijing.

In 1990 the National Commission for Women was created by an Act of Parliament. Its main functions are to look after women's issues, atrocities and violence against women, and equality before the law. In addition, the Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) was set up as a National Credit Fund to help poor women have access to credit. RMK works primarily through non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The Government declared 2001 as the Year of Women's Empowerment (Swashakti). The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women was passed that same year. It states unequivocally that "All forms of violence against women, physical and mental, whether at domestic or societal levels, including those arising from customs, traditions or accepted practices shall be dealt with effectively with a view to eliminate its incidence."

Prior to Ninth Five-Year Plan the Government was implementing several other schemes for women. These include Support to Training and Employment Programme For Women (STEP) Women's Employment Programme (NORAD), Hostel For Working

Women, Short Stay Homes, Awareness Generation Programme, and Family Counselling Centres

## POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

Historically, women in India have been underrepresented in politics and have faced significant barriers to political participation. This can be attributed to societal attitudes, discrimination and lack of access to resources. In recent years there have been an increasing recognition of the importance of women's political participation, and efforts have been made to promote gender equality and increase the representation of women in politics and local bodies/institutions.

One of the key developments was the passage of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments passed by Parliament in 1992, which provided for the reservation of one-third of all seats for women in Panchayats and Municipalities. This has increased the representation of women at the local level of governance and helped to ensure that women's voices are heard and their needs are taken into account.

The amendments require all state governments to reserve a 1/3rd of the seats for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions and a 1/3rd of the chairperson positions at all levels of Panchayati Raj Institutions and in urban local bodies, respectively. A 1/3rd of these seats are designated for SC/ST women. A number of states, including Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, and Kerala, have passed laws ensuring 50% female representation in local authorities.

<https://www.youthkiawaaz.com/2023/03/empowering-women-in-politics-the-role-of-reservation-policy/>

Besides, the Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, introduced a system that ensures the employment of not less than 33 per cent women at all levels of local bodies, whether in urban or in rural areas. This has propelled many women into leadership, especially as one-third of the posts of chairperson were also reserved for them. On September 21, 2023, the country took a major step forward

for gender equality when Parliament passed the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam that would reserve one-third of seats in the more powerful Lower House and State legislative assemblies for women.

According to government data, women occupy just 82 out of 550, or about 15% of seats in the Lok Sabha, with the number dipping further in the Rajya Sabha, where they occupy 31 out of 250 seats, or 12%. A 2015 Report on the Status of Women in India by the Ministry of Women and Child Development noted that women's representation in Parliament and State assemblies was dismal, especially in senior decision-making positions. When implemented, the Nari Shakti Vandan Abhiniyam will go a long way in strengthening the women's representation in Parliament and State assemblies.

## SHAH BANO CASE

It was the Shah Bano case that provided the first major jolt to the women's movement and demanded that it look at itself and its self-definitions anew. In April 1985, the Supreme Court ruled that Shah Bano was entitled to maintenance by her divorced husband under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedures Code. The judgment upheld Shah Bano's right to maintenance from her husband both under Section 125 and under Muslim Personal Law. Secondly, it asserted that Section 125 transcended the personal laws of any of the religious communities. Thirdly, it was critical of the way women have been traditionally unjustly treated and cited examples of Manu and the Prophet. Finally, it urged the government to frame a common civil code. The judgment was criticized on a number of grounds as many feminists, felt that it brought issues of religion and personal law into what was essentially a question of secular criminal law. Having asserted that Section 125 transcended personal law there had been no need to comment on personal law or the need for a common civil code.

## INDIA RATIFIES INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Women's empowerment as a concept was introduced at the UN's Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985, which defined it as a redistribution of social and economic powers and control of resources in favor of women.

India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among them was the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1993.

The Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Beijing Declaration as well as the Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome Document adopted by the UNGA Session on Gender Equality and Development and Peace for the 21st century, titled "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action" had been unreservedly endorsed by India for appropriate follow up.

## SHIFT IN APPROACH TOWARDS WOMEN

A major shift in development approaches took place in 1974 with the publication of the report Towards Equality by the Committee on the Status of Women in India. This was preceded by the First World Conference of Women in Mexico. Women were no longer viewed only as mothers but were also seen as producers and vital agencies of development. This was reflected in the sixth Five Year Plan (1980- 85), which for the first time had a chapter on women and development. "Towards Equality", borrowing it from the monumental report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI). The report was submitted under the stewardship of Vina Mazumdar in 1974, on the eve of United Nations declaring 1975 as International Women's Year.

The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) Advisory Committee on Women's Studies recommended the establishment of an autonomous institute with a wider mandate and resources to build on the knowledge generated towards expanding research and advocacy. Upon acceptance of this proposal by ICSSR, CWDS began functioning with a small grant from the Vikram Sarabhai Foundation under the leadership of Prof. J.P. Naik, and Dr. Vina Mazumdar was the Centre's first Director and Dr. Phulrenu Guha Chairperson. With her customary grit and energy, Vina Mazumdar took on the task, and with the support of her good friend and colleague, Lotika Sarkar, they produced what was to become one of the most important documents about women to come out of independent India – Towards Equality: The Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (1974-5) – Urvashi Bhutalia (<https://www.cwds.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/GenderGovernance57.pdf>)

The link between women's representation and democracy should be self-evident, since women account for over half the population of most societies: if the majority doesn't have full political rights, the society is not democratic. But for much of history, this proposition did not seem at all self-evident, until well into the 20th century. The year 1975 saw the development of a number of feminist activities in various parts of the country, especially in Maharashtra. We saw the establishment of the Progressive Organization of Women (POW) in Hyderabad, Purogami Stree Sangathana (Progressive Women's Organization) in Pune, and the Stree Mukti Sangathana (Women's Liberation Organization) in Bombay. This was seen as a result of the United Nations declaration of 1975 as the International Women's Year.

But if the decade can claim some credit for rescuing women from statistical invisibility, it has little progress to report on the incorporation of such statistics into processes of policy analysis and reevaluation. The result is that policies, national and international, still fails to acknowledge women's critical role in agricultural production. And this is one of the most telling indicators of the decade's failure to achieve its objectives.

## EQUAL REMUNERATION ACT - A MILESTONE

The dominant area of gender discrimination is at workplace where women are paid less than men for equal work. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 was enacted to end this discrimination towards working women. The Act provides for the payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers for the same work or work of a similar nature and for the prevention of discrimination on the ground of sex against women in the matter of employment.

In the case of People's Union of Democratic Republic v. Union of India 1982 in the Supreme Court, women were only paid Rs 7 per day as opposed to Rs 9.25 per day for male workers. After hearing both sides, Justice P.N. Bhagwati held that the authorities need to make sure that the men and women both are paid at par to each other for similar amount of work.

The Act suggests that there must not be discrimination in recruitment of personnel on the basis of ground of sex. The section states that there must be no discrimination in remuneration from the commencement of the Act and provides an exception regarding employment of women is prohibited. There are certain places which are hazardous for employment of women and children, the section provides immunity from employment at those places.

The Central Industrial Machinery (also, Chief Labour Commissioner) had given effect to this Act and it states that it will not affect the terms and conditions of any law which provides special treatment to women. The statement in Section 3 itself suggests that it will have effect under all circumstances. However, it also provides that any special treatment accorded to women in connection with the birth or expected birth of a child, or the terms and conditions relating to retirement, marriage or death or any of them will not be affected by the present Act. The Act helped to a great extent in bridging the gap between unequal remuneration between men and women, and was one of the milestones towards mainstreaming women in the world of work in India.

Since liberalization of the economy, women's economic roles have been the subject of a knowledge explosion, distinguished by assiduous data-collection, research and analysis which have been carried out largely by women themselves. It has served to destroy many old myths, and to open up fresh insights into women's actual and potential economic functioning. Some of the finest minds of every region are confronting the exclusionary and androcentric concept of wage labour, and have pressed for a redefinition of work which embraces the multifaceted productive content of non-monetized labour (mainly female labour), and which can therefore begin to do justice to women's real contribution to the economy.

<https://clc.gov.in/clc/sites/default/files/EQUAL%20REMUNERATION%20ACT.pdf>

## **MATHURA RAPE CASE AND RISE OF FEMINIST MOVEMENT**

Mathura, a young tribal woman from Maharashtra, was reportedly raped by two uniformed police officers in 1972. Her trauma shook the country and changed the landscape of rape laws in India. The two policemen were convicted by the Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court. But in 1978, the Supreme Court overturned the ruling and acquitted them.

Aggrieved by the Supreme Court ruling, women and civil society groups had launched massive protests during 1979-80. With massive press coverage, this widespread protests brought women's issues in to the public agenda. The rape case also brought together the various isolated protests across the country and women's groups began to speak in one voice. In the wake of it, the magnitude and tenor of press coverage of incidents of police rape and protests suggested that there was a surge of anger all over the country. Given this apparent mass support, women issues assumed political significance and political parties could no longer afford to ignore them. This campaign was also marked the beginning of the quest for legal reform by the women's movement.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2003/43/review-womens-studies-review-issues-specials/thirty-years.html>

When taking a look at Mathura's case it becomes important to talk about the power structures at play. Mathura was an orphaned Adivasi teenager who was struggling to make ends meet. In her first recounting of the incident Mathura, she said that the cops had threatened to file a false case and imprison her and her relatives if she did not do exactly as they said.

<https://feminisminindia.com/2021/09/02/mathura-rape-case-1972-watershed-moment-india-rape-laws/>

## DELHI GANG RAPE INCIDENT

Similar to Mathura rape case, Delhi's "Nirbhaya" gang rape incident had also shook the nation triggering a nationwide movement that drew attention to the prevalence of sexual violence against women in India. The incident also brought the need to strengthen criminal laws in rape cases. The case involved a paramedic student who was sexually assaulted in a moving bus in south Delhi on December 16, 2012. Six people, including a juvenile, were named as accused. The case became a pivotal turning point for India's feminist movement. This spurred the government to take important steps to advance laws and policies regarding violence against women. A high-level committee, headed by former Chief of Justice of India, Justice Verma, was constituted by the government, to recommend amendments to the Criminal Law so as to provide for quicker trial and enhanced punishment for criminals accused of committing sexual assault against women.

The Committee's key recommendations were to widen the definition of "rape" to include non-penetrative sex, create new offenses for acts such as acid attacks and sexual harassment, and increase penalties for those convicted of rape. These recommendations were all introduced into the Indian Penal Code (IPC) through the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 2013.

The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act was passed, strengthening



the laws against sexual violence and harassment of women. Yet, there is still a gap between policy and practice. Without bridging this gap and creating a shift within the operation of the criminal justice system, women will continue to be vulnerable.

Roop Kanwar incident sparks off campaign, also division among feminists groups. On September 4, 1987, an 18-year-old Roop Kanwar, a Rajput woman, burnt herself to death on her husband's funeral pyre in a Rajasthan village. Kanwar had allegedly decided to follow the now abolished sati practice when her husband suddenly died due to an unknown illness within nine months of marriage. The incident sparked off a campaign which raised important questions on the issue of rights and wrongs of Hindu women, religious identity, communal autonomy, role of the law, and role of the Indian state.

While there were widespread protest demanding legislation to deal with the issue, there were also accusations against the Indian feminists of being agents of modernity and they were labelled as westernized, colonialists, cultural imperialists. In seeking to negotiate their position within the debate of 'tradition' versus 'modernity', the opponents of sati sought to historicise the practice of sati by demonstrating that the social, economic and political dimensions of the contemporary practice contested the claim of a timeless sati [S Rajan 1993].

"Is the Indian Penal Code dead when it comes to crimes against women?" Indira Jaising, the legal expert on women's issues asked in her editorial of The Lawyers Collective Newsletter. In fact, a certain section within the women's movement had become wary of the government's eagerness to pass laws, and were highly critical of the new law.

Notwithstanding the criticism against the new law, the Rajasthan government passed a state law---the Rajasthan Sati (Prevention) Ordinance' in October 1987. This was soon followed by a central legislation - the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act - which was passed by Parliament in January 1988. The Central law substituted the various legislation that had been operative in different parts of the country with a central law that sought not only to prevent and punish the person who commit the act of sati, but also to

make any glorification of the act of sati an offence.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2003/43/review-womens-studies-review-issues-specials/thirty-years.html>

The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act 1987 brought about a division in the women's movement. A section felt that all sati was murder and there was no need for a separate legislation. The other section felt that Sati Regulation Act of 1829 enacted by the British Raj was still law but ineffective though it clearly stated that burning or burying of a Hindu widow was illegal and punishable. No distinction was sought to be made between the Act being voluntary or otherwise. But the British law did not make the widow liable for punishment but the Indian law did. Glorification of sati which was previously not made punishable is today made punishable but in spite of it, the women's groups have to remain vigilant every year so that worshipping does not take place in a sati temple.

<https://www.cwds.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/WomensMovement.pdf>

A PIL by women's rights activists results in the creation of the 'Vishaka guidelines'

In 1997, the Supreme Court formulated the Vishaka guidelines making it mandatory for organisations, whether working in the private or public sector to establish a mechanism for redressal of sexual harassment complaints.

The petitioners in Vishaka and Ors v State of Rajasthan were a coalition of women's rights organizations and activists led by Sakshi, an NGO working against sexual violence in India. In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court instituted a set of definitions and guidelines against sexual harassment at the workplace, also laying the foundation of current laws.

The Bhanwari Devi case is one of the most significant cases among the cases of women's safety as it paved the way to the Vishaka guidelines. As a part of her work Bhanwari Devi was helping a young girl who was forced to marry at a young age by her parents. However, there were powerful political personalities

and influential people involved and she failed to stop the child marriage from happening. She tried to resist and even took out a rally but she was not able to stop the marriage from happening. In order to take revenge for the rallies and protest campaigns she organized a group of people attacked Bhanwari Devi when she was walking along the road with her husband. She was gang-raped by these men.

The incident reveals the hazards to which a working woman may be exposed while working on a job. The court observed that it is the duty of an employer to protect the safety of their employees and other people who might be affected by their business. It instituted a set of definitions and guidelines against sexual harassment at the workplace, also laying the foundation of current laws.

## **SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN**

The holistic empowerment of women is one of the goals in the ninth Five Year Plans, as is the mainstreaming of women's needs and interests into all sectors through a women's component plan. The strategy of Women's Component Plan adopted in the Ninth Plan of ensuring that not less than 30% of benefits/funds flow to women from all Ministries and Departments will be implemented effectively so that the needs and interests of women and girls are addressed by all concerned sectors

In terms of current and proposed programmes, the Indira Mahila Yojna was launched in 200 blocks throughout the country in 1994/95. It is a programme that mobilizes women into self-help groups and builds on existing women's groups both in rural areas and in urban slums, using thrift and savings as an entry point. Its essential components are awareness generation and income generation.

NGOs have played a major role in training, group formation and capacity building. This programme is currently being evaluated and revised. In view of the overall shortage of resources,

bilateral and multilateral agencies such as DFID (Department for International Development), UNFPA (United Nations Fund for Population Activities) and GTZ (the German Agency for Technical Cooperation) have also supported capacity-building programmes for development personnel and NGOs under Indira Mahila Yojana.

A major World Bank project had been approved for certain areas in the six states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, Bihar and Gujarat. Its aims are to improve the livelihoods of poor women through group mobilization, training and capacity building, accessing credit through formal institutions and income generation.

Mahila Samakhya was another programme. It is a collaborative project of the Department of Education and the government of the Netherlands. Although its main focus is empowerment, it also aims to form groups of women to address an issue of local significance - for example, violence in Saharanpur and forestry in the hills of Uttar Pradesh.

A significant programme to alleviate poverty among women is the Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas Scheme (Ministry of Rural Employment and Poverty Alleviation). The first of its kind, it was launched in 1982 to fund groups of women who are below the poverty line in a certain geographical area to train for a certain activity.

## **TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

The central and state governments have a variety of women's programmes for training, upgrading skills and awareness generation. Most of them are funded through NGOs. For example, the CSWB funds NGOs for awareness-generation camps, including educating people about their legal rights ('legal literacy'), the federal government funds educational work for the prevention of atrocities on women, which includes legal literacy camps, street plays, poster campaigns, etc. There are also programmes, called STEP, that upgrade women's skills in areas

such as dairies, fisheries, handlooms and handicrafts so as to increase their capacity for employment and, therefore, income generation. In the STEP programme women are organized into groups to provide a complete package of services. The NORAD (Norwegian Aid) scheme prefers to provide financial assistance to NGOs, women's development corporations and public sector corporations in non-traditional trades such as computer training, electronics, mechanics, etc. Government also has its own training institutions to develop NGO workers' skills in implementing various programmes.

Another major training area is gender sensitization at all levels of government. This forms part of many programmes, as well as being an area that is being tackled as a specific problem - stimulating and accelerating the change in attitudes to women. Government interventions include the Department of Personnel and Training and the Department of Women and Child Development. Modules have been developed specifically for the needs of police, forestry, health officials, the civil service and so on.

## **GENDER EQUALITY**

As gender relations in various parts of the country are determined by a complex mix of factors such as kinship and workforce participation, there are wide variations in the position of men and women. An indication of India's position regarding gender and development can be gleaned from its position in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Reports which now compute the Gender Development Index and Gender Empowerment Measure. In 1998 India was 101 out of 134 countries for the former and 99 in the latter (India's position for the Human Development Index (HDI) is 134 out of 160 countries). India now ranks 122nd out of 191 countries in the Gender Inequality Index. These figures give India's position in the world regarding gender-related inequalities, but there are wide variations both between and within states.

Opposition to gender equality, often referred to as "backlash", while not new, has grown in strength and visibility, causing

drastic reversals of women's and girl's rights around the world. The deteriorating global peace and security and broader context presents immense challenges for programme delivery, reversing progress across many global goals and commitments.

While good progress has been made in global normative frameworks to advance gender equality and operationalize them at country levels, including through United Nations system coordination efforts, latest figures indicate the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030. Over 25 per cent of the SDGs' gender indicators are far from 2030 targets and it could take 286 years to achieve gender equality.

<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/ED-annual-report-2023-en.pdf>

## HEALTH AND EDUCATION

These are two core areas for the development of women. Women have considerably less access than men to health and education but wide-ranging interventions such as the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) specifically seeks to reduce this gender gap. The federal government has also extended free education to girls up to university (as for boys). In the health sector the focus on women is predominantly in terms of maternity and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS.

## LITERACY

Although literacy generally has increased substantially from 886 in 1,000 in 1951 to 39 per cent of the population in 1991 there is tremendous disparity between male and female literacy: 64 per cent and 40 per cent respectively. Moreover, this figure often masks the fact that the gap widens as girls try to access higher education (see Table 3). The enrolment figure for girls drops considerably after class IV.

Country	First level		Second level		Third level
	Primary school		Secondary school		University
	1970	1985-87	1970	1985-87	1985-87
Bangladesh	47	66	NA	39	NA
India	60	65	39	60	35
Indonesia	84	93	52	74	48
Nepal	18	41	NA	30	25
Sri Lanka	89	93	NA	NA	68

**Source** *The World's Women: Trends and statistics. United Nations, 1991*

**N/A: information not available**

Another estimate is that India's female-to-male enrolment in the first level was 53 in 1965 and 74 in 1985, and in the second level 60 in 1985.

For girls one of the major areas of concern is the high rate of dropout. In 1993/94 more than one-third of the girls who enrolled in primary education dropped out before completing primary level. Even of those enrolled for secondary education, only 32 per cent completed their schooling.

## INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

Women contribute greatly to India's economy. Nevertheless, two points need to be made:

- Most women work in the informal or unorganized sector.
- In the organized sector women constitute only 14.6 per cent of the total employed, compared with 90 per cent of marginal workers.

There is also tremendous variation between the states, ranging from 4 per cent to 34 per cent. Much of women's work is unpaid or contributes to the maintenance of the household. Very few women are employed in the civil service or in higher management.

## **WOMEN LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION**

After the liberalisation of the economy, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has grown at about six to seven per cent per year. However, women's labour force participation rate (LFPR) has fallen from 42.7% in 2004–05 to 23.3% in 2017–18. Especially, this decline is more marked falling from 330 to 253 for rural women, according to data from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's National Sample Survey (NSS), 2014. The true potential of our demographic dividend cannot be harnessed if we do not ensure equal participation of women in economy by skilling, up skilling and reskilling them, and contribute to national development.

## **WOMEN AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

The majority of Indian farmers are women, so the challenge for Indian agriculture is to ensure that they derive the benefits of schemes for agriculture extension and cooperation. According to the National Sample Survey Organisation's 43rd survey ('round'), some 87 per cent of all economically active women derive their livelihood from farming, and 48 per cent of all self-employed farmers are women.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS**

Because much of the data available do not indicate whether the people involved are male or female, there is a dearth of information about the manner in which women are involved in schemes. This is linked to the issue of 'the feminization of poverty' There is currently no classification of poverty according to gender. Because of the concentration of women employed in



the informal sector, with different wage rates and unequal access to credit, plus the fact that women often do not have property rights, most development efforts bypass most women in most parts of the country.

## FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY

The term 'feminization of poverty' was coined by American sociologist Diana Pearce in 1976. She coined a term following the observation of women in America. She observed that two-thirds of the poor were women over the age of 16 and an increasingly large number were from economically disadvantaged groups. Women face a higher intensity of poverty than men in all nations.

There is currently no classification of poverty according to gender. Because of the concentration of women employed in the informal sector, with different wage rates and unequal access to credit, plus the fact that women often do not have property rights, most development efforts bypass most women in most parts of the country.

Feminization of Poverty is a collective effect of several factors, be it access to education or lack of health facilities that are available for women. Though access to education is the biggest factor, even today in many household parents think that it's better to invest in a male child than in a female child as sooner or later they will go away and be part of another family. Due to which women are not able to qualify the eligibility criteria for the job even if they want to work and sometimes, they end up with a very basic job or no job at all.

## SELF-HELP GROUPS

India has led the way with savings and credit association groups, known as self-help groups (SHGs), which manage and lend accumulated savings to their members. SHGs exist across the country and consist of groups of women lending to one another. With more than eight million groups across India, the government is now using SHGs as a delivery channel for government services

aimed at women. These efforts could be bolstered by initiatives to help women transition from working in the informal economy to leading small- and medium-sized businesses, which have been shown to fuel economic growth.

<https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-global-economy/case-studies/india/>

## **MICROFINANCE AND IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS**

Microfinance serves the rural population and focuses to generate income for them. Microfinance has a greater impact on poor households and general economy, as it strives to enhance quality of life among the bottom of pyramid communities and creates jobs in the rural regions. Most microfinance institutions(MFI) in India include women empowerment as one of the integral parts of their policy and develop products accordingly. MFIs consider women as responsible citizens and by facilitating women's access to finance creates a win-win situation for women empowerment and the growth of economic engine.

A vast number of NGOs work to organize women to enhance their incomes. They identify the women's needs, and set up skills training and production units as well as establishing marketing links. SEWA in Ahmedabad, the Working Women's Forum in Madras, the Cooperative Development Foundation (CDF) in Andhra Pradesh and MYRADA in Bangalore are some of the outstanding organizations. They have also established different modalities to make credit more accessible to women - for example, by setting up the SEWA Bank, accessing formal institutions through intermediaries, and organizing cooperatives.

## **INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM AT CENTRAL AND STATE LEVEL**

State government departments whose role is to deal with women-specific issues are called the Department of Women and Child

or the Department of Social Welfare. In addition, many states have established Women's Development Corporations, which finance women entrepreneurs. States have also set up Women's Commissions to protect women's rights. Needless to say, there are core departments or ministries - health, education, agriculture, forestry, rural development – where women's concerns have to be incorporated into all programmes of the sector.

State Social Welfare Advisory Boards are bodies, constituted under the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), whose chief functions are to approve schemes of the CSWB or recommend such schemes for approval. At present, they have no legal power, but some states are taking steps to register them under the Societies Registration Act or the Companies Act. This would enhance the autonomy of these organizations and enable them to raise resources at their own level.

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Through the 1970s and 1980s the women's movement focused on this issue. In India, 'in law' violence (violence after marriage by the husband's family) covers a wide range of crimes from teasing, molestation and rape to 'dowry deaths' (carried out by the groom's family because the dowry is deemed insufficient). According to the National Crimes Record Bureau, the states with the worst record (apart from Delhi) are Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan. There have been various landmark judgments by the Supreme Court covering subjects such as sexual harassment at work, the onus of proof in rape cases and sexual abuse of children. Legislation pertaining to the Criminal Procedure Code has also been revised.

SAKHYA, an Anti-dowry and Women's Guidance Cell was started by the College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai, at the request of and in collaboration with the District Vigilance Commission, Government of Maharashtra.

<https://sakyawgc.org/about-us/>

## DECLINING CHILD SEX RATIO

The sex ratio - the number of females per 1,000 males in India - has been declining progressively since the beginning of the 20th century. In 1911 it stood at 976, in 1951 (after independence) it was 947 and in the 1991 Census it was 927. It cannot be said that there is a correlation between the sex ratio and economic development and well-being; states such as Punjab and Haryana in the north have a high per capita income but also a low sex ratio. Moreover, women in the scheduled tribes no longer have a position of equality. These figures are an indicator of the nature of severe discrimination against girls - parents having a strong preference for sons, the neglect of girls and, in certain areas, female infanticide and foeticide.

Several government initiatives have been implemented to address the issue of the skewed sex ratio. The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Save the Daughter, Educate the Daughter) campaign is one such initiative, which aims to promote gender equality and the value of girls in society. The campaign was launched in 2015 and has been implemented in over 640 districts.

Another initiative was the hashtag #SelfieWithDaughter campaign, which was promoted on social media in June 2015, which started when Sunil Jaglan the Sarpanch of the village Bibipur, Jind in Haryana took a selfie with his daughter Nandini and posted on Facebook on 9 June 2015. The hashtag garnered worldwide fame.

## HIGH INFANT MORTALITY AND MATERNAL MORTALITY RATES

Although there has been tremendous improvement in over all infant health in the last 50 years (the mortality rate in 1991 was 70 per 1,000), age-specific death rates indicate that the number of deaths of girls aged 0-4 years is higher than that for boys; similarly, in the 15-30 age group, more females die than males. The maternal mortality rates in India are estimated to be 460 per 100,000 live births.

## CAMPAIGN AGAINST SEX-DETERMINATION

The high female infant mortality rates (Miller, 1985); the practice of sex determination, referred to as female infanticide (Krishnaswamy, 1988); the neglect of female children with regard to access to health services, nutrition, (Sen and Sengupta, 1983 and education (Mankekar, 1985); and the sexual abuse of girls (Bhalerao, 1985), were all perceived as manifestations of a deep-rooted patriarchal bias against women. This negative bias took an alarming shape with the utilization of the amniocentesis test for detecting the sex of the fetus, followed by a selective abortion of the fetus if detected a 'female'.

The examination of hospital records (Ramanamma and Bambawali, 1980) showed that 2.5 per cent couples consented to sterilization even though they did not have a son as against 15 per cent couples who underwent sterilization in spite of not having a female child. The majority of the couples underwent sterilization after attaining an average of 4.1 number of children.

[https://www.cwds.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/ss\\_sex\\_detection-1.pdf](https://www.cwds.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/ss_sex_detection-1.pdf)

As the gender testing becomes rampant, the Forum Against Sex-Determination and Sex-Pre-Selection (FASDSP) was formed in 1984 in Mumbai (then Bombay) with an intent to campaign against the misuse of the amniocentesis test. The FASDSP included concerned individuals from women's groups, civil liberties, health, and people's science movements. This group put together a systematic campaign, conducted research and surveys and spread information through workshops and seminars. Innovative protest marches were undertaken to raise public awareness.

In the 25 years since then, laws have been enacted against the practice but sex determination continues. It is a major challenge to fight the use of pre-selection techniques for son preference without jeopardizing women's right to safe abortion.

In 1997, Sabu George, the Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes (CEHAT), Mumbai and Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh

Mandal (MASUM), Pune filed a public interest litigation (PIL) that was fought on their behalf by the Lawyers Collective (Delhi). After consistent campaigning around the PIL, the Supreme Court directed all state governments on 4 May 2001 to make an effective and prompt implementation of The Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) (PCPNDT) Act.

[https://www.epw.in/journal/2011/21/commentary/long-battle-girl-child.html#:~:text=The%20Forum%20against%20Sex%20Determination%20and%20Sex%20Pre%2Dselection%20\(fasdsp,selection\)%20tests%20on%20pregnant%20women.](https://www.epw.in/journal/2011/21/commentary/long-battle-girl-child.html#:~:text=The%20Forum%20against%20Sex%20Determination%20and%20Sex%20Pre%2Dselection%20(fasdsp,selection)%20tests%20on%20pregnant%20women.)

## **NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS (NAWO)**

In India, the National Alliance of Women's Organizations (NAWO) was established in 1994. NAWO is a network that brings together various women's groups and NGOs to collaborate on issues related to women's rights and empowerment. It plays a crucial role in advocating for policy changes, legal reforms, and social awareness.

The Fourth World UN Conference on Women, held in Beijing September on 4-15, 1995 marked a significant turning point for the global agenda for gender equality. The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, adopted unanimously by 189 countries, is an agenda for women's empowerment and considered the key global policy document on gender equality.

It was during the pre-Beijing process that an NGO Advisory Committee was constituted with eminent women leaders and activists to give direction to the process and build up a consensus from the women's movement on the different and diverse issues that required focus at Beijing. The process saw a state and national level networking over a period of two years which finally saw its culmination in the Conference of Commitment (9 August 1995).

The Beijing conference built on political agreements reached at

the three previous global conferences on women, and consolidated five decades of legal advances aimed at securing the equality of women with men in law and in practice. More than 17,000 participants, which include 200 Indian women activists, 6,000 government delegates at the negotiations, along with more than 4,000 accredited NGO representatives, a host of international civil servants and around 4,000 media representatives were attended.

It was a landmark event in the history of women's movement in the world as it generated a great momentum which not only focused on women's critical concerns but also called upon all to, 'look at the world through women's eyes'.

<http://www.nawoindia.com/NAWO-History.html>

## **PROTECTING THE GIRL CHILD**

The inclination towards the male child is a phenomenon that is rooted in the country's patriarchal system. The strong preference for a son stems from the belief that the son will take care of his parents. In contrast, the daughters have no such obligation and often viewed as a liability.

To tackle the problem, the central government in October 1997 launched the Balika Samriddhi Yojana scheme. The objective of the scheme is to change prevailing values and attitudes regarding girls. At present it gives the mother a grant of Rs 500 on the birth of a girl, to ensure that she is able to access nutritious foods. Similar schemes already exist in many states, for example, Apni Beti, Apna Dhan in Haryana, also deposits a lump sum in the girl's name when she is born; this multiplies so that, by the time the daughter is 18, there will be money that can be used for her marriage or education.

Adolescent girls also constitute a vulnerable group. Under the Integrated Child Development Services, schemes have been formulated in some blocks to focus on their nutritional, literacy and self- development needs. Similar schemes have been developed by certain states such as Rajasthan.

## DAUGHTERS' RIGHTS

On September 9, 2005, the apex court had ruled that daughters will have equal rights to the ancestral properties, irrespective of whether their fathers were alive or not, and this resulted in the 2005 constitutional amendment. The judgment came in the case of Vineeta Sharma v. Rakesh Sharma. Before the 2005 amendment, only sons were eligible to claim their share in Hindu undivided family property “as a matter of right,” however a daughter did not have any right post marriage as she was taken as a part of her husband’s family.

## NIRBHAYA FUND

After the Nirbhaya case, the Centre created a non-lapsable corpus known as the Nirbhaya Fund in 2013. Since its inception, the government has pumped 1,000 crore into the fund every year, but the disbursement of money has been slow and lopsided.

One Stop Centre Scheme or popularly known as ‘Sakhi’. Sakhi came into being in 2015 with the ‘Nirbhaya’ fund.

The main aim of Sakhi or One Stop Centre Scheme is to provide shelter, police desk, legal, medical and counseling services to the victims of violence. It has been established at multiple locations throughout the country. It has an integrated with a 24-hour helpline. The toll-free number to remember is 181.

The Centres established across the country would provide integrated support and assistance under one roof to women including girls below the age of 18 years affected by violence irrespective of caste, class, religion, sexual orientation or marital status. For girls below 18 years, institutions and authorities established under Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection Act) 2000 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 will be linked with the OSCs.



## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Crimes against women are increasing at an alarming rate. Some common forms of violence against women are rape, dowry deaths, female infanticide, forced child marriage, abduction, and cases of acid throwing on women.

Women are not safe in public spaces, but that does not mean that they are safe in their private spaces. Various cases of domestic violence are being reported every day. Cases of domestic violence such as marital rape, dowry deaths, mental torture, bride burning, and female infanticide are reported daily. According to an analysis of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, nearly 22.8 lakh crimes against women were recorded from 2016 to 2021. Nearly one in every three reported crimes against a woman during this period pertained to the “cruelty” of her husband and/or his relatives, it says.

Dealing with this complex issue requires many different kinds of interventions and NGO involvement is itself multifaceted. It stretches from counselling work in police stations (Mumbai) to training, awareness raising and implementing programmes. There is also a strong advocacy role - influencing policy, challenging existing legislation and governmental positions by taking a proactive stance (e.g. Jagori, Sakshi, Forum against Violence).

The Lawyers Collective, Women's Rights Initiative (LCWRI), an NGO initiated a campaign for a new law on domestic violence in December 1999. Following this, a series of nationwide consultations were held with women's groups, where there was a consensus on the need for a civil law on domestic violence, and a proposed Bill was formulated. Subsequently using the LCWRI Bill as a blueprint, the Government of India formulated the 'Protection from Domestic Violence Bill, 2001' (Bill no 133 of 2001). There were several problems with the Bill. There was a lack of clarity on the definition of violence, and the bill included a clause that violence is not domestic violence if “conduct by the respondent was reasonable for his own protection, or for the protection of his or another's property.”

To address this, the women's movement advocated for a more comprehensive law. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 was brought into force by the government on October 26, 2006. The Act, for the first time, recognizes a definition of "domestic violence." With this the definition becomes broad and that includes not only physical violence, but also other forms of violence such as emotional/verbal, sexual, and economic abuse.

<https://www.epw.in/journal/2003/43/review-womens-studies-review-issues-specials/thirty-years.html>

## INDECENT REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

The contemporary women's movement had, at various junctures in the past three decades, protested against the depiction of women in the media. These protests have been premised on the depiction of women as sex objects and as servile subordinates in degrading roles. Part of the campaign included the demand for a law to regulate the depiction of women and, consequently, the Indecent Representation of Women Act, 1986 came into force. The legislation intended to regulate women's and representation in mainstream media, especially in print. It was implemented to ensure that women's representation in the media was not indecent through ads, magazines, publications, and illustrations.

Later, amending the 1986 Act, the government introduced the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Amendment Bill, 2012. The Bill had sought to widen the scope of the 1986 Act to cover new forms of communication such as the internet, satellite-based communication, cable television etc. And in July 2021, the government withdrew the 2012 Bill as it felt that the amendments were no longer required as the concerns have since been addressed keeping in view new emerging realities under the Information Technology Rules 2021, the Cinematograph Act 1952 and other provisions of the law.

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Since the concept of informed choice was adopted by India in the wake of the International Conference for Population and Development (ICPD) conference at Cairo in 1993, a general, untargeted, approach has been developed for population stability, with an increased emphasis on women's right to reproductive health and focus on awareness of sexual health and access to services for preventing and controlling sexually transmitted disease, especially HIV/AIDS. The federal government is funding NGOs for this work, but there are also donor and other agencies that are directly funding NGOs in India (eg PATH, Macarthur Foundation). Organizations such as CHETNA, Ahmedabad, and SUTRA, Himachal Pradesh, have developed a lot of material and communication methods in the field of general health and reproductive awareness.

## TRAFFICKING OF GIRLS AND WOMEN

The Government had adopted a multi-pronged approach to Prevent and Combat Trafficking of women and children for Commercial Sexual Exploitation. The Ministry of Women and Child Development administers the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA). The federal government had also made a comprehensive Plan of Action for the rehabilitation of sex workers and children forced into sex work, to be implemented by various departments, ministries and states. There are also, however, widows who represent 8 per cent of the total female population, as well as girls who are neglected and discriminated against. The individual states have developed schemes for rehabilitation and for dealing with iniquitous systems like the Devdasi system by which women are married to gods and then used as village prostitutes. Samskar an NGO run by Mrs Hemalata Lavanam strove to end the practice of Jogins in Nizamabad and Telengana region and rehabilitate them.

## PROVIDING AADHAAR AND RATION CARDS TO SEX WORKERS

In December 2021, the Supreme Court directed the Centre, States and Union Territories to issue voter, Aadhaar and ration cards to sex workers and continue providing dry rations to them. “The fundamental rights are guaranteed to every citizen of the country irrespective of his/her vocation. There is a bounden duty on the government to provide basic amenities to the citizens of the country. The Central government, State governments and other authorities are directed to commence the process of issuance of ration cards, voter ID cards and Aadhaar cards immediately,” the court ordered. The court was hearing a plea on the problems faced by the sex workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In another significant judgment on September 29, 2022, the Supreme Court had held that all women, irrespective of their marital status, are entitled to safe and legal abortion till 24 weeks of pregnancy under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act. The court also said that the meaning of “rape” in the ambit of this Act can be also held to include marital rape. A bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud, J.B. Pardiwala and A.S. Bopanna delivered the verdict on the interpretation of the MTP Act, and whether unmarried or single women can be “allowed” like their married counterparts the benefit of abortion up to 24 weeks.

The top court said the distinction between married and unmarried women under the abortion laws is “artificial and constitutionally unsustainable” and perpetuates the stereotype that only married women are sexually active. “Women must have autonomy to have free exercise of these rights,” Justice Chandrachud said.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

Support services for women cover a wide range of activities at various stages of their lives. Many are implemented by government and extend from the running of crèches, through the national programme Integrated Child Development Services (mentioned above), to dispensing widows’ schemes funded by

government but implemented through the non-governmental sector. Other schemes include short-stay homes for deserted or abandoned women or girls who are being forced into marriage, hostels for working women, family counselling centres through CSWB, and legal aid.

## **SERVICE DELIVERY**

Many NGOs provide support services for women; for example, short-stay homes, counselling and women's hostels. These are often funded by government. Some of the well-known organizations in this area are the All India Women's Conference, the All India Democratic Women's Front and the YWCA. Some organizations are specifically involved with education or health services, or working for the rehabilitation of marginalized groups of women such as prostitutes or widows.

## **INVOLVEMENT OF THE NGOS**

NGOs are involved in the sector of women and child development in many ways. The oldest association of NGOs with government has been through the Central Social Welfare Board for predominantly welfare activities. Today many NGOs are involved with women's issues and their approach varies widely. They may be involved with a particular sector, or they may be involved with the totality of women's lives and look at interrelated factors such as education, violence, legal literacy, issues of neglect and discrimination. A broad grouping is given below, but it must be noted that these categories often overlap.

## **ANTI-ARRACK MOVEMENT OF WOMEN IN ANDHRA PRADESH**

The anti-arrack movement of women in Andhra Pradesh was one of most historic and significant movements of the 1990s. The movement was created and grew out of the awareness brought

about by the mass-literacy campaigns of the National Literacy Mission (NLC), which officially launched in Nellore District from 2nd January 1990 and was implemented from January 1991. It recognized education as an instrument of change and empowerment of women. Hence a campaign approach was adopted to spread the message of literacy.

The movement began as a spontaneous movement against alcoholism in a remote village in Dubaganta, supported by the NLC in Nellore and adopted by the other districts of Andhra Pradesh. It is noted that there was no organized leadership to start with in the anti-arrack movement. Most of the groundwork was done with local initiative, with assistance from NGOs, women's associations and individual women. It was also able to mobilize women from different socio-economic backgrounds and together they organized street plays and dramas to spread awareness about the ill effects of consuming arrack. Finally, on 1st October, when the movement had gained momentum in three districts, the government had to buckle under the pressure and ban arrack in the state.

Mahila Dakiya, succeeded by Khabar Lahariya, was then India's only women-run ethical and independent rural news brand. It resulted from a government literacy initiative, Mahila Samikhya Program, and was set up with support from Nirantar Trust, an organization that focused on Gender and Education.

By 2002, Nirantar transformed the Mahila Dakiya experiment into a full-fledged newsroom, Khabar Lahariya, where women not just reported but edited, produced, and distributed the newspaper in neighbouring villages and towns, mostly on foot. Today, it reaches five million people every month through multiple digital platforms. It has evolved from a chain of local language newspapers to a digital-only, rural news channel with 557k YouTube subscribers and an average of 10 million views every month across all social media platforms.

## **CHETNA**

CHETNA, which means awareness, was established in 1980 by Mrs

Indu Capoor, who has been in the forefront of health training in India. Founded to improve the impact of supplementary feeding programmes for women and children in Gujarat, CHETNA's mission is to contribute to the improvement of disadvantaged women, adolescents and children to help them gain control over their own, their families' and their communities' health. It promotes concerns and issues vital to the health and development of women and children by sharing views, experiences and publications with the state.

Its approach to health embraces the life cycle of gender equity within the wide cultural, economic and political environment.

Continuum of care has been highlighted by international agencies and national and state government as an important approach of health programmes which aims to address women's health in context to reproductive, maternal, newborn, child health and adolescent health. CHETNA responds to this critical need for the continuum of care through empowering women, young people and children who have a stake in the issues affecting their own, their families' and their communities' nutrition, health and well-being. Over the years, the organization has reached out to more than 36 districts, 1930 villages in three States pan India through its programmes and publications, and has evolved into a unique resource agency that provides support to government, civil society organizations and corporates.

## MYRADA

MYRADA (Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency) was set up to rehabilitate Tibetan refugees who had fled to India following the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet in the state of Karnataka (formerly Mysore). Its mission was later changed to 'building institutions for the rural poor'. In 1987 MYRADA initiated the formation of self-help groups of women to facilitate their borrowing from public banks. It was called the self-help group-bank model and was based on three pillars: the group itself; the NGO, which identified the affinity group and trained it (self-help group training); and the leader bank that

provided funds to the group as 'revolving' funds.

Since 1992, several thousands of self-help groups (sanghas) have been linked to banks all over Karnataka and parts of Andhra Pradesh. Some of these links have evolved into a women's bank called 'Sanghamitra' (friends of the sanghas). Women are now able to obtain loans, using the money both for consumption and for work projects.

MYRADA's interventions in the area of health has been in the form of health camps and focus on drinking water and sanitation. It has also emerged as a major intervener in HIV/AIDS prevention and has pioneered the community-based approach to HIV risk reduction. Beginning with an intervention to spread awareness on HIV/AIDS in Belgaum district in 1994, the organization has fostered the formation of groups of people living with HIV as well as those with high risk of exposure to the disease viz, sex workers, etc

Training, capacity building and networking has been a critical part of MYRADA's approach to improve its interventions and to spread its proven strategies to other parts of the country and abroad. Part of its strategy is 'to recreate self-sustaining and environmentally clean habitat and the institutions to sustain it, based on a balanced perspective of the relationship between natural resources and the legitimate needs of people' This strategy has led MYRADA to initiate interventions that aid the poor to protect and nurture their natural resources.

**The organisation has grown over the past five decades and is now a total of 12 working Projects covering parts of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. It played a critical role in transforming ideas and learning into strategies for implementation and sustainability in the rural areas.**

**Urban slums**



## CFAR

The Centre for Advocacy & Research (CFAR) headed by Ms Akhila Sivasdas was evolved in 1998, from the 'Media Advocacy Group' that was using strategic communication to impact the gender and social development discourse. Its media advocacy activities include the daily tracking of national, state and district media reports on these communities and documenting of interesting, innovative and successful initiatives.

CFAR has been working with issues concerning the urban poor since 2005. It has been relentlessly advocating for social justice and safety net programmes for urban poor households. Its Urban Sanitation Project, which commenced in 2012 as a component of CFAR's Urban Poor Project, focused on strengthening partnerships between government and community structures to address the sanitation needs of marginal communities living in unauthorized and under-served settlements.

Besides, as part of the Central government flagship programme, Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), CFAR enhanced community participation at many levels to not only end open defecation but also to leverage the programme to improve access to safe sanitation. It also provide support to Government of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, National Health Mission, and to Technical Support Unit in UP and Bihar in strengthening health communication and media engagement for awareness building on RMNCHA+N and National Disease Control Programme, including COVID-19 control, in 113 districts in both states.

It has also been focusing on HIV/AIDS, women's rights and health, child rights, sustainable development and elimination of violence against women and children

Stakeholders and key constituencies, it works closely with include governments, civil society networks and coalitions, expert and think tank bodies, and last but the least, marginal communities. While working the Delhi government, it shared the experiences and evidences from the ground with the government that led to the introduction of the Mission Convergence program

in which the government redefined the criteria for identification of the urban poor and brought nine-line departments and 45 social assistance schemes under a “single window” scheme, at the district level. Today CFAR has more than 180 team members working across 11 states under various projects.

Besides the above, there are many organizations that work with women in urban slums or pavement dwellers, dealing with some of the social issues such as housing, violence and alcohol, as well as improving their access to health, water and technology. SPARC, based in Mumbai, started by looking at housing but has been able to influence many other factors as well. Women’s Voice in Bangalore has been focusing on the problems faced by women from oppressed castes (dalits).

## SPARC

SPARC (Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres ) was instrumental in the formation of National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF), of which Jokim is the President, and a women’s federation called Mahila Milan (MM). There are about 200,000 people living in pavement settlements around Bombay, most of them around Byculla where the Mahila Milan started in 1983. In a landmark case in the 1980s the Supreme Court withheld the city’s right to evict families from their dwellings on pavements around P D Mello Road in Bombay.

The Mahila Milan expanded to other areas and now works in Bangalore and Kanpur as well. NSDF and MM are the main wings of SPARC’s efforts to organize slum dwellers to obtain their natural rights against eviction and exploitation.

Both NSDF and MM also works on sanitation and has provided hundreds of thousands of individuals with individual or community toilets in several states and supports communities to explore a wide range of solutions which will improve the quality of their lives. Over the past 35 years, NSDF and MM have developed a set of core activities that built the organizational base, capacities and confidence of communities to develop and negotiate for development solutions. Some of these core

activities include setting up Area Resource Centres that serve as a meeting space and base for activities, encouraging households to join a community-level Savings and Credit program that builds financial assets and local capacity, and completing community-led Slum Surveys and Maps to create a powerful informational base for strategizing and negotiations. It also facilitates Peer Exchanges among groups on local, regional and national levels so that communities can learn from each other.

## **RESEARCH, DOCUMENTATION AND ADVOCACY**

Many women's groups are involved in research into the impact of certain factors on women's lives. They network with other organizations for advocacy and have also built-up valuable documentation centres. These include IWID and the Women Advocacy Group in Bangalore (National Institute of Advanced Studies).

### **CWDS**

The Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS), founded by Dr Vina Mazumdar, was established in April 1980 by a group of men and women tasked with preparing the first comprehensive public report on the status of women in India entitled Towards Equality (Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, Government of India). Subsequently, the group was associated with the Women's Studies program of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) and worked with them to expand research and advocacy.

CWDS perceives itself as a catalyst and facilitator towards enabling women exert agency and influence in the public and private domains. In order to develop, promote and disseminate knowledge regarding women's roles in society and trends influencing women's lives and status, CWDS aims to undertake, generate and promote primary and applied research regarding women and development. It also advances the idea of women as

active participants in politics and national development.

CWDS faculty is engaged with research on diverse themes, such as Globalization, women and work; Democracy, politics and governance; Rights of the child, and early child marriage; and sex ratios and Gender and conflict Faculty research areas reflect engagement with contemporary themes as well as newer areas of concern within the broad framework of CWDS objectives. Research by CWDS faculty combines qualitative and quantitative methods including micro-studies, macro-data sets, oral narratives and ethnography.

Some of the research projects it completed were: “Socio-economic Status of Suicide Affected Families of Farmer’s and Agricultural Workers in Punjab: An Enquiry into the impact on Women and Children’, (Funded by Punjab Farmers’ Commission), “Rapid Ethnographic Assessment of Time and Time-Use” (Phase – I) (Funded by ILO) and ‘Education Policy in Delhi: An Analysis and School Management Committees: Making of Educational Policy in Delhi, (Funded by CWDS-ICSSR).

Since inception CWDS had provided advisory and consultancy services on gender issues to institutions and organizations within and outside government, including development agencies. It undertakes activities consistent with CWDS objectives to facilitate social transformation for the full and effective participation of women at all levels of society.

## TECHNOLOGY

Another very important area, which has only recently been recognized, is the development of women-friendly technologies as well as enabling women to have control over the technology, including threshing machines and hand pumps.

## Other important NGOs

## ADITHI

ADITHI was started in 1987 by Mrs Viji Srinivasan, to work with the women in Bihar. ADITHI is set up to enable the empowerment of vulnerable communities through economic and social development focusing on women and girl children to eliminate violence, discriminations and exploitation. Centres were set up in Bhusra, Muzaffarpur, Dhumka and Sitamashi, initially to set up income-generation projects with women. Skill-based business units were formed, produced and managed by women. Some of the crafts that they took up were sikki (a golden fiber grass), sujuni (a kind of embroidery) and patchwork. In addition, fish farming and small-scale agriculture were promoted. Because such projects needed credit, a women's microcredit bank called Narinidhi was formed to lend funds to small units. ADITHI has also sponsored a federation of tribal women called Ayudare.

From livelihood issues they have moved to women's issues of domestic violence, dowry harassment and female infanticide. During its over three-decade long journey, ADITHI has, simultaneously, evolved to address various issues plaguing the society, thus growing to touch a slew of comprehensive set of themes for, practically, every section of the society in a women and girl children-centric way.

Headquartered at Patna, ADITHI has implemented its one or another activity over more than 8,000 villages of 23 Districts of Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh, impacting the lives of approximately, more than 8 million persons.

## URMUL TRUST

URMUL Research and Health Trust was founded in 1986 by late Sanjoy Ghose and his wife Shumita Ghose. It was helped in its early days by the URMUL Dairy to provide health care in the villages of the Bikaner District of Rajasthan. They started work in the Lunkaransar block of Bikaner, and expanded to include Nokha block and Bajju. The Trust has also carried out effective drought relief work in order to provide drinking water to remote

areas of the block. Working with midwives (dais), it has formed women's groups in all remote villages. URMUL's women's groups have brought local issues - from drinking water, employment and corruption in government bureaucracy - to the forefront of public knowledge.

It has facilitated three integrated development projects. They stand as important landmarks in the growth of the URMUL family. These integrated development projects cover around one hundred and fifty villages and settlements in the districts of Bikaner, Jodhpur, and Jaisalmer. Work at Lunkaransar expanded from six villages in 1984 to 22 villages in 1987-88. These were the beginnings of the first integrated development program in 33 villages of Lunkaransar tehsil (subsequently expanded to 40 villages) covering a population of 30,000 people in 1988. In 1988, the URMUL Trust expanded its activities to the command area of the Indira Gandhi Canal.

A branch of the Trust was set up at Bajju in Kolayat tehsil so as to provide community-based developmental services to the highly scattered population of the area. Initial activities included community-based health services to villages, enabling local cattle herdsman to make an occupational shift from animal husbandry to irrigated agriculture forced on them by the advent of the canal, and building up training infrastructure. In 1991, it was decided to take on the role of the nodal implementing agency for the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) in Kolayat tehsil of the district, which expanded the Trust's work in the Kolayat Block to 113 villages.

URMUL Trust has now spread into other districts and set up satellite organizations - URMUL Setu, Vasundhara, Khejri Sansthan- to carry forward the work.

## **HUMAN LIBERTY NETWORK (HLN)**

Human Liberty Network (HLN) is a strategically developed informal network of 16 grassroot NGOs and CBOs who work towards combating human trafficking in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. It aimed to create enabling environment by engaging the society

and facilitate and support the implementation of related policies and programs of government that aim to combat human trafficking in U.P and Bihar.

In October 2012 all implementing organisations for India Nepal Human Liberty Program working in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh came together and discuss their challenges on working on the issue of human trafficking and realized that it is important to have a coordinated effort to address the issue of trafficking and an informal Network known as “Indo Nepal Human Liberty Network” came in existence on 26th June, 2013. The core purpose of this network was to strengthen cross border coordination across program and collaborate with other stakeholder. This led to great results in restoration, repatriation, and rehabilitation of trafficked survivors. Later in January 2015 this network name was changed to Human Liberty Network and focus shifted to the issues of human trafficking from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.





Chapter 15:

# **Non-Profits and the Environmental Movement in India**

**VENETIA SHARANYA, BUSINESS  
AND COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
(BCF)- AUGUST 2023**

The environmental movement in India has achieved tremendous growth and influence over the years. It has become a powerful force driven by non-profit projects and communities to solve environmental problems, economic regulation and the promotion of sustainable development.

## FOREST PEOPLE

In pre-colonial times, natural resources were managed by communities through informal social mechanisms to ensure sustainable use (Shiva & Bandyopadhyay, 1986). This period is considered as a 'golden era' where humans lived in harmony amidst nature (Malhotra et al, 2001). However, this romanticisation of the past may have little to do with environmentalism, due to the absence of industrialization and modern pressure on resources (Tomalin, 2002).

The word "Adivasi" means "ancient inhabitants" (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2021) and refers to the many groups of people who are considered to be the original inhabitants of the country. About 8.6% of the total population of India are Adivasi also known as Scheduled Tribes. They make up 50% of the population of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Dadra, Nagar Haveli and Lakshad (Tripathi, 2016). These forest communities are part of natural ecosystems and thrive with the land in which they live. They depend directly on natural resources for their survival and protection of nature is embedded in their way of life. A study by Tripathi (2016) showed that regions with more ethnic groups have more forests compared to other regions.

Respect for the environment and biodiversity is believed to be deeply rooted in Indian culture, particularly in forest-dwelling communities. A Sacred Grove (SG) is a forest of sacred trees or a place where forest spirits are worshiped. SGs are traditionally protected by the community (currently, most of these SGs are under the jurisdiction of the State Forestry Administration). Here, extraction of resources may be restricted due to religious and cultural beliefs creating spaces for biodiversity to thrive. They exist across the Indian subcontinent across over 42,000 ha

of land (Malhotra et al, 2001). However, the exact information regarding the number of SGs and their extent is deficit. There are no reported SGs in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Jammu and Kashmir, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, Delhi, Goa, Punjab, and Tripura, this lack of information doesn't imply its non-existence in these regions (Malhotra et al, 2001). It is important to note that the traditional protection of sacred groves while supporting biodiversity conservation wasn't based on modern conservation ideals but to protect the trees being worshiped. In contemporary environmentalism, we see a shift in beliefs from, "It is sacred so it must be protected." to "It must be protected, thus it is sacred" (Tomalin, 2002).

India's first landmark environmental movement took shape in the forests of Rajasthan when King Abhay Singh of Jodhpur, in the 1730s, instructed his soldiers to extract wood for the construction of his palace from the Marwar region of Rajasthan. This was home to the Bishnoi community who believed that every living being is sacred and must not be killed by humans. Moreover, Khejri trees, found in the region are sacred to the community. The people of the community led by Amrita Devi, hugged trees to stop them from being cut, with over 300 villagers giving their lives to protect them. The Bishnoi movement resulted in the Maharaja issuing a royal proclamation prohibiting the felling of trees in all Bishnoi community areas. This movement inspired many other environmental movements in India including the Chipko Movement (1973) followed by the Appiko movement (1983) and more recently, the Save Aarey Movement (2014).

## **COLONIALISM AND THE DAWN OF INDUSTRIALIZATION**

The establishment of colonial rule saw drastic changes in forest management and the dilution of community rights (Shiva & Bandyopadhyay, 1986). Initially, free access to the forests for the people was not inhibited, but a sense of de-facto ownership of forests and 'wastelands' of the country by the State had begun by this time (Prasad, 2011). According to

British administrators, 'forests were considered as an obstruction to agriculture, and consequently a bar to the prosperity of the Empire.' (Bandopadhyay, 2015). British forest laws in the 1800s were drafted in favor of agriculture and industrial interests. It was the Forest Act of 1865 that imposed restrictions on the local forest-dwelling communities by defining forests as national property (Tripathi, 2016) and provided legal sanction to the forest administration in various provinces of India to acquire monopolistic control over India's forests. These laws were passed to aid the extraction of timber for industrial pursuits (Bandopadhyay, 2015). They acknowledged that forest resources were limited and had to be efficiently managed. The first 'Conservator of Forests' was appointed by the British administration in 1850, and the first Forest Department was set up later in 1864.

The Forest Act of 1878 was the one that categorized the Indian forest landscape into reserved, unreserved forests and village forests turning forest dwelling communities into 'encroachers'. The right to access forests was translated to privilege and fees were levied. However, The nail in the coffin of tribal rights was hammered in by the Forest Policy Resolution-1894. The British claimed authority to limit and regulate the traditional tribal rights over Indian forests (Husnain, 2009) to fuel their commercial interests. According to the Forest Act of 1927, people were expected to put in their claims over their lands and forest produce before the Forest Settlement Officer who was to enquire into these claims. By doing this, the subsistence economy of the indigenous people was severely destabilized by the State due to the restriction of communal ownership of forests, forcing many communities to look for alternate livelihoods or be rendered homeless. Laws like these drew a wedge separating humans from nature.

## LAW OF THE LAND

Independent India's forest policies are built on the foundation laid by our colonial past.

Post-independence, priority was given to agriculture and industries. The majority of forests in present-day India are owned by the government and any afflictions to the forests must be reported to the Forest Departments. In each state, the Forest Department continues to be headed by a Principal Chief Conservator of Forests. In terms of forest rights for the indigenous people, the policies of free India were considered worse than their colonial predecessor (Reddy, 1995). Post-colonial India, faced progressive encroachment by the State on the rights and privileges of the people to forest resources. The people resisted this encroachment of rights in various parts of India, mainly through the

non-cooperation method of protest, well-known as “Forest Satyagraha” (Shiva & Bandyopadhyay, 1986). Concerned citizens, activists, and organizations have begun to recognize the urgent need for conservation and environmental protection. The Central Forestry Board was set up in 1950 and the National Policy on Forests was passed in 1952. By this time, India had already lost a significant amount of her natural wealth. The policy called for conserving 33% of the country’s forest area. It was replaced by the National Forest Policy of 1988, which emphasized conservation and reforestation.

In the mid-1960s there was a rise in Non-Profits (NPO) and by the 1980’s a majority of them were Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Sen, 1992). NGOs have taken up a myriad of roles in the nation and on the world stage as advisors, agitators for environmental action, architects of governance, the seat of knowledge, diplomats, and entrepreneurs. They have since grown to become strong actors on issues such as biodiversity and conservation, desertification, transboundary air pollution, and climate change (Betsill and Corell 2007; Finger and Princen 1994). As a result, international cooperation on environmental issues has taken many forms (Nasiritousi, 2019). The 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden laid the groundwork for modern global environmental governance (Willets 1996) and was a key moment for NGOs. NGOs as experts played a key role in influencing the proceedings.

The Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, in her seminal speech at the conference, drew attention to ecological management and its relationship to poverty alleviation (DTE, 2022). During this time, the country faced conflict over natural resources due to the need for conservation and to satisfy the basic living requirements of the people on the one hand, and commercial demands on the other.

Severe ecological crises, including deforestation, air and water pollution, and loss of biodiversity, have made headlines.

India's forests have always been protected by the tribal and even in the Panchayati Act. They have been given special rights under the Gram Sabha and other local self-government laws. Despite this legislation, the Forest Department has been exploitative of tribal communities rather than involving them in wildlife management except in a few wildlife parks. Threats to wildlife in India include habitat destruction and fragmentation, large development projects such as linear infrastructure (roads, railways), dams, mines, human-animal conflict, illegal wildlife trade and poaching.

**The Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972** provides the statutory framework for protecting wild animals, plants, and their habitats irrespective of where they exist in the country and declared protected areas. This act later led to the creation of the National Tiger Conservation Authority, and the Central Zoo Authority, which laid down the framework controlling the trade of wildlife. It is interesting to note that it also explicitly states that 'wild animals, etc ., [Section 39, WPA, 1972]' are government property and not individuals with rights of their own. This separation of people and nature plays a key role in human-animal conflict mitigation, since villagers see the animal as 'belonging' to the Forest Department and not individuals whom they share the ecosystem with and thus, it is the duty of the Forest Department to keep their animals off crop fields. This vicious cycle creates aggression in some situations.

## CATEGORIES OF PROTECTED AREAS IN INDIA

Reserved Forests	Declared by the state governments. Hunting and timber extraction is prohibited without permission. Resources are protected for State use. Access is restricted to people without permission.
Biodiversity reserves	Protection is granted to the region and not just to flora, fauna, and human communities. The region can consist of multiple protected areas. Ex. Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (1980), Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve (1989)
Protected forests	Protected for usage by communities. Hunting of certain species and extraction of timber and non-timber forest products are allowed.
Conservation and community reserves	The land is controlled by communities for conservation purposes. Ex. Tiruppadaimarathur, Tamil Nadu
Wildlife Sanctuaries	Declared by the central government. Public entry is restricted. Destruction of any wildlife or habitat is prohibited. Cattle grazing is permitted. Ex. Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary
National Parks	Declared by the central government. Public entry is restricted, and destruction of any wildlife or habitat is prohibited. Cattle grazing is prohibited. Ex. Corbett National Park
Tiger Reserves	No human activity in core areas Ex. Pench Tiger Reserve

The subject of Forest was brought into concurrent list through the 42nd Constitutional Amendment in 1976, empowering the center to make laws concerning the matter. Through the Forest Draft Bill of 1980, which was later passed, people's rights over forestlands and produce were further reduced. The Central Government reserved all rights to declare any land to be forest land and, by extension, all forest produce was owned by the State. Dr. B.K. Roy Burman, an anthropologist, who came to be known as the walking encyclopedia, stepped into the picture. He led the Committee on Forests and Tribals and stated that a national forest policy should recognize the importance and positive role of the inhabitants in maintaining forests, which was the only long-run solution to afforestation, preservation, production, and management of lands (Burman Committee report, 1982). The Ministry Of Environment and Forests (MOEF) ( Now The Ministry Of Environment and Forests and Climate Change ) was formed and the Forest Department was transferred to its jurisdiction (previously the FD came under the Ministry of Agriculture) in 1985.

Following the Narmada Bachao Andolan, and several movements against the Forest Department by tribals and much advocacy by NGOs, the Forest Act of 1988 was passed. The act stated that the principal aim of forest policy must be to ensure environmental stability and maintenance of ecological balance including atmospheric equilibrium, which is vital for sustenance of all life forms, humans, animals and plants. Obtaining direct economic benefits should be subordinated to this primary goal. The Act introduced the concept of Joint Forest Management. Several people and non-profit led movements were in full force at this time and the government amended the Vth schedule known as the Panchayats Extension to Schedule Areas (PESA), 1996. PESA decentralized approaches to forest governance by putting the Gram Sabha in the spotlight and recognizing the traditional rights of tribals over community resources such as land, water, and forests. However, amendments made to the Wildlife (Protection) Act and the establishment of the Protected Areas Network pitted the need for forest rights and the need for wildlife conservation against each other.



The Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) headed by Prof. Madhav Gadgil was constituted by The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India in 2010 in order to assess the status of ecology, demarcate areas within the Western Ghats Region for notifying ecologically sensitive zones under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Gadgil committee consisted of eminent ecologists and, naturally, their report was in favour of the environment and not toward development activities. The committee, in the report, designated the entire hill range as an Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA). ESAs were divided into two zones, ESZA-1 and 2. ESZ-1 being of high priority, the committee recommended that almost all developmental activities (mining, thermal power plants etc) should be restricted in it.

They pushed for an indefinite moratorium on any new environmental clearances for mining in Ecologically Sensitive Zones and the phasing out of mining in the following 5 years. Additionally, it called for the phasing out of chemical pesticides and genetically modified plants. Additionally, the Gadgil Committee report specifies that the present system of governance of the environment should be decentralized and Gram Sabhas need to be given more powers. The Gadgil report was criticized for not being realistic and hampering development in the regions since it did not provide a solution to alleviate revenue losses due to the implementation of its recommendations. It is important to note that this report was not immediately made available to the public and, as a result, stirred unrest amongst the residents who feared relocation (George, 2023).

In August 2012 another High-Level Working Group on Western Ghats was formed under Kasturi Rangan to examine the Gadgil Committee report in a 'holistic and multidisciplinary fashion' in the light of responses received from stakeholders (George, 2023). Under the Kasturi Rangan report, only 37% of the Western Ghats were to be brought under ESA instead of the entire range with complete ban on mining, quarrying and sand mining activities. It recommended that the current mining areas in the ESA should be phased out within the next five years, or at the time of expiry of mining lease, whichever is earlier and no thermal power be allowed and hydropower projects can be allowed only

after a detailed study with a strict ban on red industries (Highly polluting). Additionally, the Kasturi Rangan report made several pro-farmer recommendations. This report was criticized for only using remote sensing and aerial survey methods for zonal demarcation of land in the Western Ghats without ground truthing and as a result, has several errors, like the inclusion of non-sensitive areas such as rubber plantations under ESA instead of those that are actually are ecologically sensitive zones. The report does not recommend decentralization. Activities such as mining and quarrying are expected to continue along with 'eco-tourism'. Residents of the region have not been given any assurances regarding land rights under the report (George, 2023).

## **SPECIES-SPECIFIC CONSERVATION**

Wildlife in India faces a multitude of threats that jeopardize its survival and ecological balance. Habitat loss due to urbanization, agriculture, and industrial expansion stands as a significant concern, fragmenting natural landscapes and restricting the living space for various species. Poaching and illegal wildlife trade persistently endanger species like pangolins and rhinos, driven by the demand for their body parts in traditional medicine and luxury goods. The human-wildlife conflict escalates as habitats get fragmented and land use patterns change, leading to incidents of crop damage, livestock predation, and occasionally, confrontations that endanger both humans and animals. Pollution, climate change, and invasive species further exacerbate these challenges, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive efforts to safeguard India's diverse wildlife heritage.

The passing of the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972 led to the creation of several species-specific conservation projects across the nation. These projects focus on the conservation of charismatic species, also known as umbrella species and, by doing so, indirectly protect all other species sharing their habitats. In recent times, the focus on understanding and conserving lesser-known species and landscapes has increased. Some NGOs spearheading the conservation of wildlife are the World Wildlife

Fund (WWF), Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT), and Centre for Wildlife Studies (CWS) to name a few.

Project Hangul (1970) was ahead of its time and was set up by the Jammu Kashmir Government, supported by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to conserve the endangered Kashmir stag, also known as Hangul. It is a subspecies of elk that is endemic (Found only in) India. They are found in the Dachigam sanctuary, Jammu & Kashmir, and small pockets in Himachal Pradesh. The number of individuals has risen from 197 to 263 individuals between 2004 and 2023.

The Himalayan Musk Deer Project (1981), was launched at the Kedarnath sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh (now in Uttarakhand) under the Threatened Deer Programme of the International Union for Conservation of Natural (IUCN) and Natural Resources with the cooperation of the Government of India. Once found throughout the Himalayas, the white-bellied musk deer was hunted down for its musk used in the preparation of perfumes and medicine.

Project Rhino (1987) was launched in Kaziranga Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam with the assistance of United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to save the greater one-horned rhino, which is the largest of the rhino species. Currently, nearly 85% of the world's one-horned rhinoceros population is concentrated in Assam. Assam's Kaziranga National Park and Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary are two of India's most famous Indian rhino sanctuaries. Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary has the highest density of Indian rhinos. Aranyak is a well-known non-governmental organization dedicated to wildlife conservation in the region.

Crocodile Breeding Project (1975)- India is home to three species of crocodile, the Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*), the Mugger (*Crocodylus palustris*), and the salt-water Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*). In the 1970s, there was a sharp decline in the crocodilian population due to hunting for leather and sand mining. With the assistance of the Government of India, they launched a crocodile breeding and management project, initially in Orissa in the year

1975. The Madras Crocodile Bank (MCBT) was set up in 1976 by Zai and Romulus Whitaker with support from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in Tamil Nadu. They were actively involved in captive breeding programs for reintroduction and worked toward the conservation of ecosystems. A 'gene bank' to prevent the extinction of crocodilians. As a result of the breeding projects and their management in twelve sanctuaries across India, the population of the three species has considerably increased. Presently, several NGOs are working towards the conservation of reptiles.

The Gir Lion Sanctuary Project was launched in 1972 by the State Government of Gujarat with assistance from the central government. The Asiatic lion which once existed in the northern and central areas of the Indian subcontinent is now confined to the Gir forest of Gujarat. This last remaining habitat of the species sustains about two hundred Asiatic lions which are under severe threat due to overgrazing by domestic livestock, depletion of prey species, etc. The biggest threat to the lions of Gir is inbreeding. Kuno National Park, among others, was identified as a potential site to relocate lions for conservation of the population and encourage genetic diversity. 24 villages comprising 1545 Sahariya tribal families were relocated by the state to establish the Kuno Palpur area as a Wildlife Sanctuary. However, the proposal for the translocation of lions out of the state was refused repeatedly by the government of Gujarat. Samrakshan Trust is an NGO working with lions in Gir.

Project Tiger was then launched in 1973-1974 with federal and state funding. The tiger reserves have the highest level of protection in the nation. In 1970, a national ban on tiger hunting was introduced. Concerns about the rapid depletion of forests intensified as tiger populations across the country have declined sharply to 1,872 (Panwar, 2014). The first reserves to be set up in the country are:

Tiger Reserve	State
Bandipur	Karnataka
Corbet	Uttarakhand
Kanha	Madhya Pradesh
Manas	Assam
Melghat	Maharashtra
Palamau	Jharkhand
Ranthambore	Rajasthan
Similipal	Odisha
Sunderbans	West Bengal

These reserves were divided into core and buffer areas. The core areas were 'freed' from all sorts of human activities and the buffer areas were subjected to 'conservation-oriented land use (Panwar, 2014).

Forest-dwelling and dependent communities were relocated, sometimes forcefully. Forty villages comprising nearly 6000 people were removed from the core areas (Panwar, 2014). All activities such as forestry and cattle grazing were stopped, and the Forest Department clamped down on poachers. The project has been criticized for its elitist conservation policy, which has targeted tribal and forest-dependent communities and has resulted in 'illegal encroachment' by the State due to forest rights violations and activities in the tiger reserves by the State (Bijoy, 2017).

The 2006 amendment to the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, also referred to as the Tiger Amendment, rushed in with an

order on 16 November 2007 to notify “Critical Tiger Habitats” (CTH). and the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) of the MOEF was formed. The passing of the Forest Right Act of 2006 was pushed for over a year by bureaucrats to allow for the much-criticized activities brought on by the NTCA where several people were removed from their forest homes to aid tiger conservation. Several NGOs and human rights groups, activists, environmentalists and other intellectuals took an active part.

The Forest Rights Act was passed to safeguard the land rights of tribal and forest-dependent communities who have been harassed, evicted, and accused of encroachment on their lands. The culmination of all these activities is determined by the population of animals. The total Indian tiger population rose from 1827 to 3015 between 1972 and 1979 (Panwar, 2014). As per the 2022 Tiger Census, the current population stands at 3167 individuals.

Project Elephant (1991) was started to protect and conserve the Asian elephant population of the country, the project was formulated almost on the lines of Project Tiger. Project Elephant aims to restore lost and degraded habitats of elephants, create migration corridors, eliminate human interference, and establish a database on the migration and population dynamics of elephants. In 2010, the Asian elephant was declared a national heritage animal. The welfare of elephants in captivity also falls under the ambit of Project Elephant. According to a recent census, India is home to a stable elephant population. As of August 2023, Project Tiger and Project Elephant have been clubbed under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEF&CC) as the Project Tiger and Elephant Division. Tigers and elephants do share habitats in some places, but their threats and conservation needs are different.

Project Cheetah (2022) The spotlight rests upon the cheetah as India reintroduces the big cat. In 2009, the Wildlife Trust of India began discussions to reintroduce cheetahs in India (PIB, 2022). Kuno National Park, which was chosen, is one of the only places with 100% relocation of forest-dwelling communities (PIB, 2022). The action plan states that “India now has the economic ability

to consider restoring its lost natural heritage for ethical as well as ecological reasons.”(Jhala, et al, 2021). Madhya Pradesh’s

Kuno-Palpur National Park (KNP) ranked high on the list of priority spaces for cheetah introduction considerations due to its suitable habitat and suitable prey base. Additionally, a lot of restorative investment had already been made at this site to introduce the Asiatic lions. Kuno National Park today is 748 km<sup>2</sup>, devoid of any human settlements.

The Asiatic Cheetah ranged from Iran to the Indian Subcontinent with the last remaining population in Iran. The Asiatic Cheetah is threatened by changing land use patterns, and fragmentation of habitat. Historically, in India, they were under pressure from shrinking grasslands and were eventually hunted to extinction. The project has been heavily debated and reintroduction received criticism from eminent scientists. A question looming in the backdrop is whether Cheetahs were native to present-day India or where they were brought here during the Mughal Period. Babur, in his memoirs, gives detailed descriptions of India’s fauna, from elephants to species of mice, but there is no mention of the cheetah. (AKHTAR, 1996). It is much later during the rule of Akbar that mentions of cheetahs begin since he enjoyed hunting antelope with the help of cheetahs. He had a record of 1000 cheetahs for coursing (AKHTAR, 1996). There were also mentions of Peshksh a ‘chita\* that had’ come into their hands’ from the Afghans at the battle of Maciwara (AKHTAR, 1996). Genetic work done by Rai et al 2020 showed that one of the last three Indian Cheetahs that were shot by Maharaja of Korwai showed strong ties to the subspecies found in southwest Africa, suggesting its importation into India in the 19th century (Rai, et al, 2020).

# Call for Action– India's Environmental Movements

## A LAND STUMPED

Events of deforestation and destruction of forests in the name of development have a long history in our nation, the effects of which are borne mainly by wildlife and forest-dependent communities. Trees play a vital role in controlling carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, regulating the water cycle, preventing soil erosion and landslides, providing livelihoods, and sustaining biodiversity. Deforestation has global implications. According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), 10% of global warming is caused by forest loss and damage. Large projects like mining, and the construction of dams, roads, and railways require a significant number of trees to be felled. When forests, especially old forests and mangroves, are chopped down, we are exposed to extreme weather conditions, natural disasters, and loss of biodiversity and livelihood. Forest laws are based on the ideology that wildlife and people cannot share spaces and restrict the rights of forest-dwelling communities. Commercial felling of trees is rampant with the Indian government leasing out forest patches to corporations that promised livelihood to local people. These were usually menial, labor-intensive jobs. Commercial logging resulted in increased events of landslides.

Following the Alaknanda floods of 1970, the people of Garhwal in Utrakhand began protesting commercial deforestation by hugging trees. This landmark movement came to be known as the Chipko Movement. This was a non-violent movement led by Gaura Devi, Sunderlal Bahuguna, and Chandi Prasad Bhatt but the majority of participants were women of the village. Chief Minister Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna set up a committee to look into the matter in 1974 which ruled in favour of the people.

Furthermore, the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi banned the felling of trees in the Himalayan region in 1980 for 15 years,'until



the green cover was restored.' The people of Chipko went on to protest the construction of the Tehri dam on the Bhagirathi River and founded the Beej Bachao Andolan (Save the Seeds movement) which exists to date.

About a decade after the Chipko movement, the Appiko Movement took shape in Karnataka. The people of the Sirsi Taluk requested the Forest Department to stop the felling of trees in the Bilegal forest in the Hulekal range in August 1983 and when their plea fell on deaf ears, environmental activist Panduranga Hegde along with the women and youth started the movement, following the principles of the Bishnoi and Chipko movements that preceded it. The movement protested the felling of trees, monoculture, and deforestation in the Western Ghats. Sahyadri Sanchaya, an NGO, was actively involved in supporting the Appiko Movement by raising awareness about environmental issues, conducting studies on deforestation, and advocating for sustainable forest management practices. The protests continued for 38 days and the state eventually gave in to their demands and withdrew the logging order. The movement succeeded in fulfilling its objectives of protecting the existing forest cover, allowing the regeneration of trees in degraded land, and the conservation of natural resources. These movements brought attention to the adverse effects of deforestation and commercial logging on the environment and local communities, influencing policy change.

The 1970s saw a shift in policy as an attempt to focus on the protection of forests with the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972. Later, the Forest Rights Act and the Forest (Conservation Act) of 1980 were enacted. The recent amendment to the Forest (Conservation Act), 2023 has stirred up the environmental community. The amendment has been criticized for diluting the original act. The amendment seeks to restrict the conservation scope of the original Act to only certain forest lands. It exempts the obligation to seek permission to clear forests to construct "strategic linear projects of national importance". In addition, it also allows some non-forest activities on forest lands such as the setting up of zoos and eco-tourism facilities. The areas like the Aravalli range and the Niyamgiri hill range stand to be affected in a significant way (Pardikar,2023).

In the 1980s, The Jungle Bachao Andolan (JBA) (Save Forests Movement) took place in present-day Jharkhand against the Indian government's plans to replace native Sal forests with commercial teak plantations, threatening the ecosystem and the livelihoods of Adivasi communities. The JBA was successful in stopping several large-scale commercial projects that threatened the forests by highlighting the link between the environment and the livelihoods of local communities. Their advocacy led to the birth of the National Forest Policy in 1988.

Much more recently, in 2014, with plummeting air quality and threats to urban green spaces, citizens took to the streets and used technology to lead movements like the Right to Breathe Protest and Save Aarey Movement. Aarey Colony is located near the Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP), within the city limits of Mumbai. It is a vast green space that includes a dense forest, grasslands, and wetlands and is considered a vital ecological zone within the bustling city. Research conducted by St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, indicated that 530 species of flowering plants can be found in Aarey alongside other biodiversity. The region is also home to the Warli Adivasi community who have been living there for generations. This community has been repeatedly moved to make way for development projects. The Bombay High Court dismissed several petitions, and Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) authorities, in haste, started felling trees on the night of 4 October. This was countered by strong protests in the course of which officials of the Mumbai Police lathi-charged protestors and detained many of them for several hours in various police stations across Mumbai. Vanashakti is an NGO that has been working to protect Aarey from development activities that could harm its ecological integrity. The organization's efforts are part of a broader commitment to safeguarding natural habitats and promoting sustainable development practices in the region.

## OH, DAM!

Dams alter ecosystems both upstream and downstream by blocking the natural flow of water and sediment. Aquatic animals, especially migratory species, are affected. Several species are

adapted to specific micro ecosystems created by the natural flow of rivers that are destroyed when damed. The flooding creates reservoirs upstream, and drowns large swaths of forest, killing plants and smaller fauna, while the rest are dispersed and migratory corridors blocked. The results from a study conducted on the Itaipu Dam, which was constructed on the border between Paraguay and Brazil in the 1970s and 1980s, showed a 70 percent loss of the region's biodiversity. Dam projects also displace forest-dwelling communities and restrict their access to natural resources (Diehn, 2020).

The Silent Valley, in the Western Ghats of India, gets its name due to the absence of cicadas (a noisy insect) in the forest. The rich biodiversity of the region is a result of over 50 million years of evolution with several species that are found nowhere else in the world (Parameswaran, 1979). The British government identified the Kunthipuzha River near the Palakkad region of Kerala as an ideal location to construct a dam for electricity generation in 1929, but it was only in 1973 that the proposal for the dam by the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) was sanctioned. The Silent Valley Movement (in the 1970s) was initiated by local communities and later led by the NGO- Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP). The movement gained the support of several environmentalists and other non-profits to protect the biodiversity of the region. The 'Save Silent Valley' movement culminated in the projects' cancellation and the Kerala government passed the Protection of Ecological Balance Act of 1979.

On the northwestern side of the country, another movement was taking shape, the Narmada Bachao Andolan in the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra against the construction of dams. After independence, India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, called for the construction of dams on the Narmada River to arrest 'excess' water flowing into the Arabian Sea. The Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal approved the Narmada Valley Development Project, which included 30 large dams, 135 medium dams, and 3,000 small dams including raising the height of the Sardar Sarovar dam in 1985. This was to be funded by the World Bank. The construction of these reservoirs will displace an estimated one million people, primarily tribal

communities such as the Bhils and the Gonds, and small villages (Karan, 1994). It will also submerge 350,000 hectares of forestland and 200,000 hectares of agricultural land (India Today 1992). Medha Patkar and Baba Amte were the leading spokespersons and received support from local communities, NGOs, and other professionals. The Narmada Bachao Andolan was successful in its consistent non-violent struggle, bringing issues like land for the displaced, the rehabilitation policy at a national level, and development planning without displacement to the forefront influencing

policy-making and mass movements. NBA has been adequate in its multiple strategies at the executive, legislative and judicial levels, campaigning against the destruction and displacement caused by large dams and for the rights of the affected people—farmers, laborers, fishermen, and others. Narmada Bachao Andolan won the 'Right Livelihood Award' that aimed at bringing justice to society at large (Nasrin, 2017). It resulted in the exit of the World Bank from Sardar Sarovar in 1993 and the withdrawal of foreign investors from Maheshwar dam, 1999-2001. There was a halt in the dams constructed between 1994-99. The Sardar Sarovar dam, however, was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2017.

## MINES AND MORE

Regions rich in natural resources are often those who face the most atrocities, especially in terms of land rights. India has witnessed several movements against mining activities due to concerns about their environmental, social, and cultural impacts. The Dongria Kondh tribal community in Odisha's Niyamgiri hills waged a successful movement against the mining project of Vedanta Resources in the region.

Vedanta Resources sought to mine bauxite in the Niyamgiri hills to extract aluminum ore. The project faced opposition from the Dongria Kondh tribe and various activists and environmental organizations. The community's cultural and spiritual ties to the hills, as well as concerns about deforestation and water

pollution, led to widespread protests and legal battles. Dr. NC Saxena in his fact-finding report had indicated to the Court that the land belonged to the Gram Sabha and many sites were worshiped by the Dongria Kondh community and there were several threatening acts by the company Vedanta. The movement resulted in a historic rejection of the mining project by the local communities in a democratic process. In 2013, the Supreme Court of India ruled that local tribal communities should decide the fate of the mining project through a democratic process called a Gram Sabha (village council meeting). The verdict recognized the cultural and religious rights of the indigenous community.

Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh is rich in mineral resources such as calcite, bauxite, limestone, and mica among others, and is also home to several tribal communities. The state government of Andhra Pradesh in the 1960s gave mining leases to small companies and individuals. Samata, an NGO, took up the fight for the rights of Adivasi communities who would be displaced and affected by private mining companies in the region. A PIL was filed in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh in 1993 because the government was also a 'person' and hence does not have the power to grant leases in a scheduled area to non-tribal (Khan, 1997). Some salient features of the Samata judgment were that minerals are to be mined by tribals themselves or by cooperative societies with the state's financial assistance. In the absence of absolute prohibition, at least 20 percent of net profits is a permanent fund for the development of the tribal community. Transfer of land in Scheduled Areas by way of lease to non-Tribal, aggregate companies, etc. It is prohibited in any way to avoid exploitation.. The judgment also stressed the need for reforestation and ecology conservation.

In 2020, Save Dehing-Patkai protested the National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) decision to allow North-Eastern Coal Fields (NEC) to opencast mine in 98.59 hectares of Dehing-Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary, also known as the 'Amazon of the East'. The project threatened the endemic biodiversity and increased the risk of human-animal conflict around it—Saleki reserve forest, which is a part of the Dehing Patkai Elephant Reserve. Kudankulam Anti-Nuclear Movement, while not directly against mining, protested

the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tamil Nadu, which relies on uranium mining for fuel. The movement was fueled by safety concerns, potential radiation hazards, and displacement issues. Activists and locals opposed both the nuclear plant and uranium mining operations.

## DAVID VS. GOLIATH- CITIZEN-LED MOVEMENTS AGAINST CORPORATIONS

A decade-long agitation was spearheaded by the local community comprising mostly Adivasis and other citizens against the Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages Pvt. Ltd in Plachimada, Kerala. To run their operations, Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages Pvt . requires large amounts of water . Around 60% of the population in the region is engaged in agriculture and is known for growing rice. As a result of the company's activities, the water table receded, and the quality of groundwater declined. Studies revealed high concentrations of calcium and magnesium ions. Moreover, colloidal slurry that was generated as a by-product was sold to villagers as fertilizer and later came to be known that it contained dangerous levels of toxic metals such as cadmium, which is a well-known carcinogen. The Coca-Cola Virudha Janakeeya Samara Samithy was formed by citizens who spread awareness, held vigils, and protested for the closure of the factory, in April 2002. Several villagers started picketing the factory and 'the cola giant' slapped charges against the leaders of the movement (Das, 2018). This resulted in the Perumatty panchayat refusing to renew Coca-Cola's license on account of the exploitation of natural resources, effects on public health, and agricultural yield. The company challenged this order in the Kerala High Court and later the Supreme Court. Following the 12-year struggle, Coca-Cola relinquished its license, stating in the SC that it did not intend to resume production from Plachimada (Das, 2018).

The Anti-Sterlite Movement was a significant grassroots protest movement that emerged in the town of Thoothukudi (Tuticorin) in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. The movement primarily centered around opposition to the Sterlite Copper smelting

plant operated by Vedanta Limited, a subsidiary of the Vedanta Resources conglomerate. The plant was one of the largest copper smelters in India and had been operating in Thoothukudi for several years. The movement gained prominence due to concerns about environmental pollution, health hazards, and the impact of the smelting plant on the local community. Residents and activists raised serious concerns about air and water pollution caused by the smelting operations, alleging that emissions from the plant were causing health issues among the local population and polluting the environment. Residents attributed respiratory problems, skin diseases, and other health issues to the emissions from the smelting plant. The movement highlighted the contamination of groundwater and the Thamirabarani River due to the plant's operations, which led to concerns about the impact on agriculture and drinking water sources. Tragically, the protest turned violent on May 22, 2018, when police opened fire on the demonstrators, resulting in the deaths of 13 people and injuries to many others. This incident garnered national and international attention and further fueled the movement, receiving support from activists like Nityanand Jayaram and other NGOs. The Tamil Nadu government ordered the permanent closure of the Sterlite Copper smelting plant on May 28, 2018.

The “Kodaikanal Won't “ or “Kodaikanal Unilever” movement refers to a campaign and protest against the Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) thermometer factory located in Kodaikanal, a popular hill station in Tamil Nadu, India. A large amount of mercury was deposited in the factory and it was seeping into the villages and streams around and was quite damaging. These results were documented by Palani Hills Conservation Council (PHCC). The movement emerged due to concerns about mercury contamination, improper waste disposal, and the impact of the factory's operations on the local environment and community. The health impacts included neurological disorders, respiratory issues, and reproductive problems. Activists and environmental organizations highlighted the improper disposal of mercury waste by the factory, which led to the contamination of soil, water bodies, and the local ecosystem. The Kodaikanal Unilever movement gained momentum through social media campaigns,

demonstrations, public awareness initiatives, and the efforts of residents, workers, activists, and concerned individuals.

The movement gained further attention with the release of a rap song titled “Kodaikanal Won’t” by Chennai-based rapper Sofia Ashraf. The song criticized Unilever for its alleged negligence and urged the company to take responsibility for the contamination. In response to growing public pressure and regulatory actions, HUL announced the closure of the Kodaikanal factory in 2001. The company also initiated efforts to clean up and remediate the contaminated areas. The movement led to increased scrutiny of corporate practices and environmental impact. The cleanup efforts and the health and well-being of the affected community have remained topics of ongoing monitoring and advocacy.

The Anti-POSCO Movement emerged as a notable grassroots protest against the proposed Posco steel plant project in Odisha, India. Fuelled by concerns over land acquisition, displacement, and environmental impact, the movement spotlighted the potential consequences of the steel plant on local communities. Activists emphasized the loss of agricultural land, disruption of traditional livelihoods, and environmental degradation as key issues. Indigenous and tribal rights were also central to the movement, with communities asserting their cultural connections to the land. The movement was driven by the community, Abhay Sahoo, Medha Patkar, and the Center for Science and Environment, among several others. Through protests, legal challenges, and international support, the movement shed light on the complexities of development, corporate interests, and community rights. The struggle for transparent decision-making, community consultation, and sustainable development resonates as a testament to the power of collective action.

## WINDS OF CHANGE

Today, we face the threat of climate change- melting glaciers, extreme weather patterns, and increased natural disasters that threaten life, livelihood, and food security. When it comes to choosing between mindless development and climate action,



the environment still takes a backseat. The people's cry to conserve the existing green spaces and safeguard biodiversity continues. Climate Action Strikes initiated by Greta Thunberg calling decision makers to action received great support in India from citizens. Amidst rising temperatures, erratic weather patterns, and the impact of global warming. People of all ages took to the streets to demand climate action. The movement also highlighted the importance of sustainable agriculture and water management. With a significant portion of India's population dependent on agriculture, there was an emphasis on promoting organic farming, reducing the use of chemical pesticides, and conserving water resources through efficient irrigation methods and rainwater harvesting.

Climate action in India encompasses a multi-faceted approach to addressing the challenges posed by climate change. Guided by the National Action Plan on Climate Change, the nation has undertaken initiatives spanning renewable energy expansion, afforestation, electric mobility promotion, energy efficiency enhancement, and waste management reform. Notably, India's ambitious targets for renewable energy deployment, its participation in international agreements like the Paris Agreement, and its engagement in global climate negotiations underline its commitment to mitigating emissions. Concurrently, climate adaptation efforts focus on building resilience within vulnerable communities, while research, innovation, and corporate responsibility contribute to sustainable solutions. Through community engagement, awareness campaigns, and sustainable urban planning, India's climate action endeavors mirror a holistic approach aimed at achieving a sustainable and climate-resilient future. As we move from the era of 'global warming' to 'global boiling' (Guterres, 2023) with July 2023 being the hottest month ever recorded globally, with a call for achieving net zero emissions and capping temperature rise to 1.5%. India's approach to climate change needs to reflect the country's commitment to addressing environmental challenges and not just development needs and priorities.

## NOT-FOR-PROFIT

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played a significant role in the nation's environmental movement, contributing to advocacy, awareness, implementation of projects, and community engagement. These NGOs work in collaboration with governmental bodies, international organizations, and local communities to address various aspects of climate change. In addition, NGOs often play a vital role during climate-related disasters such as floods, cyclones, and droughts. They provide relief, support, and rehabilitation efforts to affected communities. Below are some NGOs and people who have driven positive change through their work. They work in three main areas;

### A. NGOS IN ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE / FORESTS

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) was founded in 1961 in Switzerland and has since become a leading force in the global conservation effort, working across nearly 100 countries. In India, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has played a crucial role in advancing conservation efforts and raising awareness about the country's rich biodiversity. WWF India has been actively engaged in protecting endangered species such as the Bengal tiger, Asian elephant, and Indian rhinoceros, while also working to preserve critical habitats like the Western Ghats and the Sundarbans mangrove forest. The organization has collaborated with local communities, governments, and businesses to promote sustainable practices, mitigate human-wildlife conflict, and address environmental challenges. Through advocacy, research, and education initiatives, WWF India has contributed significantly to the conservation of India's unique ecosystems and wildlife, fostering a sense of responsibility toward nature among the Indian populace.

Wildlife SOS has been at the forefront of rescue and rehabilitation efforts. Founded in 1995, Wildlife SOS is committed to protecting and rehabilitating animals in distress, particularly focusing on

those that are exploited, abused, or threatened. The organization is renowned for its work in rescuing and rehabilitating elephants from abusive conditions in captivity, such as circuses and temples. Through their rescue centers and sanctuaries, Wildlife SOS provides these rescued animals with proper care, medical treatment, and a safe environment. Wildlife SOS places a strong emphasis on public awareness and education, working to foster empathy and understanding toward animals and nature among local communities.

The Ashoka Trust for Ecology and Environmental Research (ATREE) is a prominent research institute established in 1996 for environmental protection and sustainable development. ATREE conducts interdisciplinary research to address pressing environmental challenges, ranging from biodiversity conservation and natural resource management to climate change adaptation and policy advocacy. They have a strong emphasis on field-based research and community engagement .

The Foundation for Environmental Research and Education (FERAL) is a non-profit foundation founded in 1997 dedicated to resource management, environmental conservation and health issues at both the grassroots and political levels. Their Natural Resources programme along with The Frontier Elephant Programme and In Season Fish are making an impact at the grassroot level, working with communities, mitigating human-animal conflict and working on the landscape level. Their community-based conservation projects have fostered local stewardship for wildlife and ecosystems, while their policy advocacy work has contributed to strengthening wildlife protection.

The Indian Wildlife Trust (WTI) was founded in 1998 by Tara Gandhi, Vivek Menon and Ashok Kumar to respond to the multiple crises facing wildlife and wildlife habitats in India. They have achieved notable success in various aspects of wildlife conservation in India. One of their significant achievements includes their role in the successful translocation of critically endangered species like the Indian rhinoceros and the pygmy hog to new and safer habitats, contributing to the expansion of their

populations. WTI's anti-poaching efforts and training programs for enforcement officials have helped curb wildlife trafficking and enhance the protection of various species.

Dakshin Foundation focuses on environmental conservation and sustainable development, with a particular emphasis on the southern region of the country. Dakshin's work spans areas such as marine conservation, biodiversity research, climate change adaptation, and the protection of traditional knowledge. Through its efforts, Dakshin Foundation contributes to the preservation of South India's natural heritage and the promotion of sustainable development practices that benefit both people and the environment.

## **B. NGOS ON ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) is a prominent research organization based in India that specializes in sustainable development, environmental conservation, and energy-related research. Established in 1974, TERI has played a significant role in addressing various challenges related to resource management, climate change, and environmental sustainability. TERI researches climate change impacts, mitigation strategies, and adaptation measures. The organization provides valuable insights to governments, industries, and communities on how to address the challenges posed by climate change.

The Commission on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) is India's premier research body dedicated to addressing critical issues related to energy, environment and water. Established in 2010, CEEW conducts rigorous research and analysis to inform policy decisions and drive sustainable development. Their work spans a wide range of areas, including energy access, climate change mitigation, water management, renewable energy deployment, and rural development. CEEW's research contributes valuable insights into India's transition to a more sustainable and resilient future.

The World Resources Institute (WRI) is a global research organization dedicated to solving the world's most pressing environmental and sustainability challenges. Established in 1982, WRI works to promote responsible management of natural resources, sustainable development, and the protection of the environment. WRI is known for its significant contributions to climate change research and policy advocacy. They work to advance solutions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing climate resilience, and promoting the transition to clean and renewable energy sources.

### **C. NGOS IN RESEARCH, ADVOCACY, AND CAMPAIGNING ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES .**

Tarun Bharat Sangh, under the leadership of the Waterman of India- Rajendra Singh is a renowned NGO working since 1975 towards climate change mitigation and adaptation by promoting water conservation, sustainable agriculture, and rural development in the arid and semi-arid regions of India. Rajendra Singh initiated the revival of around 3000 johads. Johads are small earthen check dams that capture and conserve rainwater to meet water needs in the dry season. This traditional practice spread across more than 650 villages in Alwar district, Rajasthan, since 1984 and has resulted in a steady rise of the groundwater table by almost 6 meters and a 33 percent increase in the forest cover in the area that was destroyed by deforestation and mining activities. Thanks to the efforts, five seasonal rivers are now perennial. Tarun Bharat Sangh brought to light the importance of water literacy. Water literacy consists of three main stages. The first step is understanding water which means learning about all water sources from glaciers to groundwater and water cycle, the flora-fauna, and the socio-economic landscape dependent on these water sources. Second is practicing conservation of water through various measures including rainwater harvesting and wastewater management. The last step is to get others to understand and conserve water.

Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) is a well-known

Indian non-governmental organization (NGO) that focuses on environmental research, advocacy, and policy analysis. Founded in 1980 by Anil Agarwal and Sunita Narain, CSE has been a prominent voice in the field of environmental conservation and sustainable development in India. Through its rigorous research on diverse environmental issues, from pollution and climate change to sustainable agriculture and urban planning, CSE has carved out a distinct niche in the advocacy landscape. The organization's commitment to evidence-based advocacy and

data-driven solutions has led to influential campaigns that raise awareness, engage stakeholders, and drive policy changes. From promoting responsible urban planning and efficient public transportation systems to advocating for improved water management and sustainable agricultural practices, CSE's multidimensional efforts underscore its dedication to fostering a greener, more sustainable future for India and beyond. Their magazine 'Down to Earth' plays a crucial role in disseminating knowledge, raising awareness, and fostering public engagement on environmental matters, aligning with CSE's mission of promoting sustainable development and environmental protection.

The Palani Hills Conservation Council was formed in 1985 to promote sustainable development, environmental protection, and restoration. The group consists of ecologists, environmentalists, botanists, and wildlife enthusiasts. The Palani Hills Conservation Council works across several villages in the Eastern Ghats of South India on forestry and apiculture projects. PHCC has also been an activist group, taking up campaigns against unsustainable tourism, and monitoring water pollution and mercury waste from entering the ecosystem. Due to PHCC efforts in public awareness dissemination and lobbying further planting of invasive foreign species of plants has been terminated. They now work to reverse the ecological damage to the watershed.

Navdanya was formed in 1987 on the philosophy of Earth Democracy- Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, with no separations between nature and humans and no hierarchies between species, culture, gender, race, and faiths. Navdanya, led by Vandana

Shiva works on promoting sustainable agriculture, biodiversity conservation, and the rights of small farmers and indigenous communities. Shiva is also known for her activism against corporate control over agriculture, particularly her opposition to seed patents and biopiracy. Navdanya's activities include seed conservation, research, training programs, and policy advocacy. The organization operates seed banks to collect, preserve, and distribute traditional seeds. It also offers training and capacity-building programs for farmers in sustainable agricultural practices, emphasizing the importance of seed saving and organic farming.

People's Science Institute was founded in 1988 as a non-profit research and development organization. At PSI, Dr. Ravi Chopra and his colleagues have pioneered creative approaches to put science and technology in the service of India's poorest people. A key element in their approach is to build the capacities of the poor to plan their development, implement projects and then manage the assets created. The Institute is known in India's voluntary sector for its pioneering work in the fields of community-led watershed-based livelihood development, environmental quality monitoring, disaster-safe housing, and dissemination of appropriate technologies. Its stated mission is, "To help eradicate poverty through the empowerment of the poor and the productive, sustainable, and equitable use of available human and natural resources."

Toxics Link is an initiative of The Just Environment Charitable Trust. It emerged from the critical need to address knowledge gaps relating to the issues of toxicity and waste and their impacts on the environment and human health, especially on vulnerable and marginalized communities. The Director, Ravi Agarwal pioneered public advocacy-based work in the field of chemicals and waste. The organization works across domains including Waste and Sustainability, Chemicals and Health, and Information & Communication.

MC Mehta Environmental Foundation is an NGO that provides training programs for aspiring environmental attorneys. It was founded by the Green Avenger, MC Mehta, an Indian

environmental lawyer and activist known for his extensive work in environmental litigation and advocacy. His cases highlighted the potential of PILs to address environmental issues and set a precedent for subsequent cases. He fought some of India's landmark cases for the benefit of the environment. M.C. Mehta gained widespread recognition for his efforts to protect the Taj Mahal from pollution and degradation. His public interest litigation (PIL) led to court orders and directives to address air pollution and industrial activities that were causing discoloration to the monument. Some other important cases include the Oleum Gas Leak Case, Ganges Pollution Case, and Vehicular Pollution Cases. His work has helped shape policies, regulations, and public awareness around environmental issues in the country.

Nityanand Jayaraman is an environmental activist, writer, and researcher. His activism has been a resounding voice for marginalized communities affected by industrial pollution and environmental degradation. Through his campaigns, writings, and collaborations, Jayaraman has illuminated the struggles of those often overlooked, advocating for their rights and well-being. With a focus on issues ranging from coastal preservation to anti-corporate activism, his efforts underscore the need for sustainable practices and equitable development. By engaging with communities on the ground, participating in public discourse, and shedding light on critical challenges. He founded the Vettiver Koottamaippu (Collective). Jayaraman played a crucial role in several campaigns one of which was against the Sterlite Copper smelter plant in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu. The plant was facing allegations of causing pollution and health hazards to the local community. His activism and documentation of the health impacts on residents helped galvanize public support against the plant, eventually leading to its closure by the Tamil Nadu government in 2018.

Siddappa Ramaiah Hiremath is an Indian environmentalist, activist, and physician known for his contributions to environmental conservation, sustainable agriculture, and rural development. He works with the NGO- Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS). The organization focuses on addressing issues related to farmers' welfare, rural development, water



management, and sustainable farming practices. Additionally, KRRS has been a part of larger movements advocating for social and environmental justice, including the “Save Western Ghats” movement aimed at conserving the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats from various threats, including deforestation, mining, and unsustainable development. The movement has sought to promote the sustainable use of natural resources while preserving the biodiversity and cultural heritage of the region.

Ritwick Dutta is a distinguished Indian environmental lawyer and activist renowned for his substantial contributions to environmental law and advocacy. With a focus on utilizing legal avenues for environmental protection, Dutta has become a prominent figure in addressing ecological issues through litigation. His NGO, Legal Initiative for Forest and Environment (LIFE) focuses on environmental conservation, sustainable development, and legal advocacy for environmental causes in India. LIFE has been involved in various legal cases and campaigns related to forest rights, wildlife protection, pollution control, and other environmental issues.

Leo Saldanha is one of the co-founders of the Environmental Support Group (ESG). ESG is known for its impactful legal activism, utilizing Public Interest Litigations (PILs) to address environmental violations, advocate for sustainable policies, and secure justice for marginalized communities. Their focus spans urban and regional planning, biodiversity conservation, waste management, and pollution control. ESG empowers communities through education and engagement, actively involving them in decision-making processes. Through research, awareness campaigns, and collaborations, ESG effectively connects environmental concerns with legal action, policy influence, and grassroots empowerment, embodying a holistic approach to environmental justice and sustainable development.

Mines, Minerals & People (MMP) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) in India that focuses on issues related to mining, minerals, and their impacts on people, communities, and the environment. MMP aims to create awareness, empower communities, and advocate for sustainable and responsible mining practices that prioritize the well-being of people and

the environment. The organization's work encompasses various aspects of mineral resource management, social justice, and environmental conservation.

## THE FUTURE – WAY FORWARD FOR THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR

The current environmental movement in India reflects a diverse and dynamic effort to address pressing ecological challenges. From air quality to biodiversity conservation, the movement encompasses a wide array of concerns that impact both the environment and public health. NGOs in India's environmental space often bridge gaps in knowledge, and implementation, raise public awareness and drive innovative solutions. Their involvement is crucial for creating a holistic and comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges posed by these changing times.

Governmental initiatives like the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Campaign) and the National Action Plan on Climate Change demonstrate India's commitment to addressing environmental issues and are in collaboration with non-profits. However, challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles, enforcement of environmental regulations, and balancing economic growth with ecological sustainability remain.

The country now stands at a threshold, faced with challenges stemming from rapid urbanization. Issues like air pollution, water access and contamination, waste management, and loss of forest cover continue to cause strain. Initiatives such as Smart Cities and Swachh Bharat which focus on sustainable development are a light of hope. However, achieving a comprehensive and sustained improvement in the environment requires policy reforms that don't trade our rich biodiversity in the name of development. Governments need to work in consortium with Non-Profits and communities towards building a sustainable future for all.

A summary of timelines of major events which shaped the environmental movement in India is in the Table below

Some landmark events	
1730	Bishnoi Movement
1850	Forest Department was formed in Colonial India
1865	Forest Act restricted community rights
1878	Indian forests were characterized as reserved, unreserved, and village forests
1927	Indian Forest Act was passed
1952	The first Wildlife Authority called Central Board for Wildlife renamed as Indian Board of Wildlife was set up
1960	Rise in Non-Governmental Organizations
1972	The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 was passed. It was the first comprehensive Act passed for the protection of wild animals
1972	Stockholm Convention
1973	Chipko movement
1973	Silent Valley Movement
1973	Launch of species-specific projects
1976	Ratification of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora by India on 18th October 1976
1980	The Forest (Conservation) Act, of 1980 was passed, which aims to preserve the natural habitat of India's wildlife
1980	Jungle Bachao Andolan

Some landmark events	
1983	Appiko movement
1985	Narmada Bachao Andolan
1988	The Forest Act was passed- Introduced Joint Forest Management
1992	The Central Zoo Authority was constituted on February 3, 1992
2002	The Wildlife Protection Amendment Act was passed.
2006	The Wildlife Protection Amendment Act was passed and a new Chapter IVB titled "National Tiger Conservation Authority" and Chapter IVC titled Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau' were added
2014	Save Aarey Movement
2018	Anti-Sterlite Movement
2022	Project Cheetah
2023	Project Tiger and Project Elephant merger
2023	Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act

In the coming years with the tightening of the regulatory laws, it is likely to be more difficult for environmental NGOs to campaign for climate change and conservation. The lobbies for mining and extraction in forest areas are going to increase the conflict among people living in the forests whose only sustenance is from the forest itself. Pressure on the destruction of wetlands and rich biospheres is going to impact climate change and the biodiversity of the country. This will need an emphasis on NGOs to work harder to influence policy change to mitigate climate change. The debate will go on to save the planet and NGOs are at the cutting edge

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Chapter 16:

# **Digital NPOs: A Crucial Pillar in India's Growth Story**

**DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION**

The use of digital tools has been envisioned as an important pillar to spurt India's economy in the near future. It has been claimed that India's digital story is one of an ICT-led development that is affordable, inclusive and transformative.<sup>1</sup> India's digital economy generated about \$200 billion of economic value annually, 8 percent of Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2017-18. The major sources of digital value addition were Information Technology and Business Process Management (IT-BPM), digital communication services, e-commerce, domestic electronics manufacturing, digital payments, and direct subsidy transfers. With the existing ecosystem, India could generate about \$500 billion of economic value by 2025. However, the government plans to scale this growth of digital economy to \$800 billion-\$1 trillion by 2025 that would sustain 60-65 million workers. This would entail unlocking productivity, savings, efficiency across diverse sectors like agriculture, education, energy, logistics, manufacturing, and transportation, and creating a market for a number of digital services, platforms, applications, content, and solutions.

This tremendous growth in digital ecosystem with immense potential for scale has been the result of long-term efforts by many stakeholders. The government, with initiatives like the Digital India Programme that resulted in flagship schemes like Aadhar, etc., which covers about 135.5 crore residents of India; Common Service Centres (CSCs) that offer government and business services in digital mode in rural areas through Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) comprising about 5.21 Lakh CSCs in urban and rural areas, and 4.14 Lakh CSCs at Gram Panchayat level; Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMDISHA) that imparts digital literacy in rural India covering 6 crore rural households, out of which 5.69 crore candidates have been digitally trained; Unified Payment Interface (UPI) that led to 730 crore digital transactions worth 11.9 crores, has been the primary stakeholder.<sup>2</sup> Some other major schemes under Digital India Programme include for example, DigiLocker, etc., to provide an ecosystem of repositories to upload documents in digital repositories; Unified Mobile Application for New-

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<sup>1</sup> *India's Trillion-Dollar Digital Opportunity*, MeitY.

<sup>2</sup> *Achievements Made under Digital India Programme*, MeitY.

Age Governance (UMANG) to provide government services to citizens through mobiles; e-sign to facilitate instant signing of forms/documents by citizens in a legally acceptable form; MyGov to facilitate participatory governance; MeriPehchaan to provide citizens with ease of access to government portals; e-Hospital/ Online Registration System (ORS); Co-WIN to manage registration, appointment and manage the vaccination certificates for Covid-19, to name just a few.

These initiatives work on the assumption that people have equitable access to resources to avail the opportunities offered by these schemes. This assumption ignores the fact that people face various kinds of exclusions and need a prolonged handholding to come under the ambit of digital. For instance, there was an impressive surge of 560 million internet subscriptions in India in 2018. A very large number indeed; the second largest internet subscription market in the world, but it constituted less than half of India's population. When this number is with Aadhar subscriptions, which covers almost the entire population of India, and has been made essential for the delivery of many welfare schemes and entitlements, the reality is more sombre. Digital exclusion, now that most entitlements are availed through digital means, inhibits a large number of India's population from becoming part of the digital growth story. They lag behind in contributing to their full potential. It also then withholds the potential for the plan to scale value addition. The issue of digital exclusion becomes starker when we realise that more than 75 percent of women in villages do not have access to either internet or mobiles. Here, schemes like the CSCs have been instrumental in ensuring rural connectivity. Currently, the 4.14 lakh CSCs functional in rural areas are more than the number of Panchayats. This was made possible through the efforts of another important set of stakeholders - the Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) working for digital inclusion and offering digital solutions to the last mile. However, the road to complete digital inclusion is a long one that would require complementary efforts by the government and the NPOs.

Despite the many measures taken by the government and NPOs, digital exclusion and digital divide along the axis of gender,

economic status and caste still engenders India's digital story. There is a 30 percent gap between men and women in terms of owning mobile phones. While the number of men who owned a mobile phone by the end of 2021 was 61 percent, according to an Oxfam report, only 31 percent women owned a mobile phone in the same period. Additionally, digital literacy among the economically underprivileged sections was merely 17 percent whereas the top economic quartile section had 77 percent digital literacy. Caste-based inequality to avail digital inclusion is stark too. Only 4 percent students from Scheduled Tribes (ST), 4 percent students from Scheduled Castes (SC), and 7 percent students from Other Backward Classes (OBC) had access to computers with internet. On the other hand, 21 percent students from 'Others' group had access to computer with internet facilities.<sup>3</sup> In this context the role of NPOs in bridging the digital divide and making excluded population under the ambit of digital becomes all the more pertinent.

NPOs play an important role in creating Digital Public Infrastructures (DPIs) so that Digital Public Goods (DPGs) are effectively implemented. As a Rockefeller Foundation Study notes, "DPI systems will enable all people to have full participation in markets and government services equally, no matter a person's income, disability, gender, rural/urban location, or other status. A robust set of safeguards will protect people and businesses from surveillance, misuse of data, and exclusion from services, while still giving them the ability to access and use their data, and allow data in the system as a whole to be analyzed for legitimate research, advocacy, and public value purposes".<sup>4</sup> Some of the intervention areas of NPOs working on digital inclusion are:

## DIGITAL LITERACY AND INTERNET ACCESS

Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF), through its 2000 Community Information Resource Centres (CIRCs) across

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<sup>3</sup> *India Inequality Report 2022: Digital Divide*, OXFAM India

<sup>4</sup> *Co-Develop Digital Public Infrastructure for an Equitable Recovery*, [www.rockefellerfoundation.org](http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org)

135 districts and 24 states in India, has over 10,000 Digital Entrepreneurs or Soochnapreneurs who persistently impart digital education and ensure internet access in the most information dark regions of the country. These CIRC's have become the locus of disseminating the wealth of information that internet offers, ranging from government schemes, people's rights and entitlements, to opportunities for online education, online skilling, e-ticketing, telemedicine, filling of online forms, online entertainment, scanning, photocopying etc. They have become one-stop delivery point of everything digital. Since the first CIRC was established in 2007, CIRC's have digitally empowered about 15 million people.

In 2010, DEF in collaboration with Internet Society Foundation launched the Wireless for Communities (W4C) programme that provides internet access to remote communities across 150 villages in India. It involves a line-of-sight and low-cost Wi-Fi equipment, and uses the unlicensed spectrum bands - 2.4 GHz and 5.8 GHz - to create community-owned and community-operated wireless networks in remote regions of India.

NASSCOM Foundation, the CSR and Social arm of NASSCOM, the trade association of Indian IT and BPM industry, too has been working on ensuring digital literacy. In 2014, its National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) initiative was adopted by the Central Government. Its DigiSaakshar programme constituted a comprehensive learning management program that offers flexible digital learning options so as to equip marginalised communities with digital skills thereby enhancing their self-reliance. It also launched the 'Aspirational Districts' programme that provides subscriptions to informative pages and channels along with physical resources. Its digital literacy initiatives have till now impacted more than 7.5 Lakh lives.

The Women Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Programme of NASSCOM Foundation supported by Google.org reached more than 1 lakh women to support them in pursuing their entrepreneurial aspirations. It equipped more than 1500 women entrepreneurs to become master trainers who then trained more than 20,000 marginalised women, enabling them to leverage digital literacy and generate income opportunities.

## AWARENESS ABOUT RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS

The Soochna Seva Project, a joint initiative of DEF and European Union, launched in 2014, aimed at improving access to information of public schemes in backward districts of India. It set up 1200 public scheme information delivery and access points (Panchayat Soochna Seva Kendras). It helped the most vulnerable population avail benefits of government schemes like Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Old Age Pension Scheme, Widow Pension Scheme, Disability Pension Scheme, Kisan Pension, MGNREGA, Gaura Devi Kanya Dhan Yojana, Mukhyamantri Awas Yojana, Indira Awas Yojana, Janni Suraksha Yojana among many others. To ensure that all government schemes are stacked together at a single place and is diffused in the community, in 2018, DEF launched an in-house application called MeraApp to provide rural India's vulnerable population with a catalogue of welfare schemes, with comprehensive information on entitlements. Both these measures helped significantly alleviate rural poverty and contribute to rural economy.

IT for Change, an NPO envisioning a merging of developmental realities with technological possibilities, believes that internet is not just a technical platform but embodies our social realities and consequently inequalities. Thus, it undertakes extensive research and advocates national and global norms and policies that would entail recognising the internet as a force of equality and social justice.

## HELPING THE VULNERABLE ACCESS PUBLIC GOODS

One of the most marginalised communities of our country, the LGBTQ+ community face discrimination at various levels. NASSCOM Foundation, to ameliorate this situation, conducts workshops to raise awareness and sensitivity. NASSCOM Foundation's another initiative, the **ॐCARE** programme, aims to make healthcare accessible and affordable to all. It thus uses

technology for social good. It has till now deployed 14 startups offering innovating healthcare solutions in 10 states directly impacting thousands of lives.

## **EMPOWERING MSMEs DIGITALLY**

As part of its e-MSME project, DEF with support from DeitY launched the Chanderiyaan project in 2009 to enable integrated development of the silk weaving cluster at Chanderi, Madhya Pradesh. The town of Chanderi is world renowned for its handlooms. Its tradition of silk weaving dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. However, due to many historical, social and technical factors, this industry was in crisis for a very long time. It faced many challenges due to the intermediaries siphoning off most of the wealth generated by the weavers. The craft itself was on the verge of extinction because the younger generation was unwilling to learn the craft, since, weavers of the town, generating an annual revenue of Rs 1.5 billion every year when DEF launched the project, used to, on an average earn less than Rs 2000 per month. Digital literacy was almost negligible among the weaving families. However, after the launch of the Chanderiyaan project, average household earnings have more than tripled. The project, as a social entrepreneurship model, created a network of weavers through which they could bypass intermediaries and take their products directly to global markets. Using Computer-Aided Design Software, weavers, especially the younger family members, develop new and more accurate designs based on modern aesthetics to appeal to the global markets. The use of ICT tools significantly reduced throughput thereby increased productivity manifold. In 2014, DEF designed an online portal by the name Chanderiyaan for the weavers who operated under its Digital Cluster Development Program in Chanderi. This initiative provided a direct, interactive platform for weavers and end customers. Within two years of its launch, weavers made brisk online business and sales touched Rs 20 lakh, making their mark not just in the national market but also in the US, England, Australia, Canada and France.

NASSCOM Foundation's Women Entrepreneurship Programme, by enhancing their digital, financial, and entrepreneurial skills, and synergising it with markets has impacted more than 33,000 women in 2022 alone. It provided skill training in financial technology, government schemes, technology instruction, and skill enhancement. In one of its collaborations with Firstsource, a global BPM service provider, more than 150 women artisans from the Bagh community in Madhya Pradesh were provided skill training. As a consequence, the demand for Bagh printed products increased, leading to upscaling of their production.

## CREATING KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS

The eNGO programme, a joint effort by DEF and Public Interest (PIR), launched in 2009 aimed to digitally empower grassroots NGOs by accrediting them with ICT tools. It has, since its launch, enabled more than 5,000 NGOs by making their presence online through their exclusive websites with .org or .ngo domains. The project also trained NGOs, SHGs, CSOs, and CBOs with digital tools, assisted them in leveraging online donations to raise funds, and increased the global outreach of grassroots content produced by them. It also launched the eNGO awards to create an ecosystem to NGOs who use ICT and digital tools in the most innovative manner to benefit communities.

One specific intervention in this regard was an initiative called Green Prakriya that envisaged the attainment of the goal of Green India by practicing optimal utilisation of natural resources, a goal advanced by the Prime Minister's National Action Plan for Climate Change. Green Prakriya created a multi-stakeholder eco-web that acted as a repository of green ICT knowledge source for practitioners, policy advocates, policy makers, and other stakeholders. It facilitated communication for citizen monitoring and awareness of environment issues and encouraged multi-stakeholder collaboration for building sustainable relationship between ICTs and the environment.

NASSCOM Foundations MyKartavya programme provides opportunities for industry professionals to volunteer to build



capacity of NGO professionals, underserved communities, and employees of member companies. The programme has mobilised about 809 hours of volunteer work, serving 1124 NGOs and saving more than Rs 5.3 lakhs.

These are only some of the projects, programmes and initiatives undertaken by India's NPOs working in the digital sector.

The role of NPOs in ensuring last mile delivery, capacity building to empower marginalised communities, and utilising the full potential of digital opportunities cannot be stressed enough. These organisations, working directly with the community, ensure that the ICT and digital tools are adapted to solve specific local problems. They also help build synergies among different stakeholders to scale operations. NPOs also play a crucial role in policy-making providing feedback from the bottom up. The PM WANI (Wi-Fi Access to Network Interface) scheme, announced in 2020, closely resembles the vision of DEF on building community networks. Similarly, the consortium by NASSCOM foundation for National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) became a Government of India mission in 2014. Thus, NPOs working on digital inclusion, empowerment and sustainability contribute a major share in India's wealth generation, though not always in tangible numbers. Although this report has delineated some of the ways in which NPOs working in digital sector play their role in India's wealth creation, their contribution, as enablers of digital capacity building and inclusion goes far beyond narrowly defined numbers. With the active assistance and intervention of these organisations, India's vision to achieve \$1 trillion economic value generation in the digital sector is not a distant possibility. This growth would be more equitable and sustainable.



Chapter 17:

**Next Practices –  
Civil Society at  
the forefront of  
drinking water  
and sanitation  
in India**

My earliest memories of the contribution of traditional philanthropy to a basic service such as drinking water, are from Western Rajasthan, where philanthropists helped construct wells and set up 'pyau's' or drinking water stations for travellers and the public at large to get cool and safe drinking water, particularly during the hot summer months.

Post-independence, a host of civil society organisations have been at the forefront of innovating with regard to the provision of basic services – safe drinking water and sanitation. These practices, disrupted prevalent norms and practices in many instances influenced public policy and investments across the country.

This brief note, by no means exhaustive, seeks to share some of the examples of such efforts within the narrow themes of drinking water and sanitation, to illustrate their contribution to – what are increasingly the norm in the country.

The late, Dr Bindeshwar Pathak, the founder of Sulabh International, who was moved by the historical injustice meted out to communities emptying bucket toilets, in 1968, promoted pour flush twin pit toilets. By 1974, the Government of Bihar sought to adopt this across the state. Fifty years ago, Dr Pathak promoted pay and use public toilets and Sulabh Shauchalaya's have been ubiquitous in many parts of Northern India for several decades now. More recently, Swachh Bharat Mission embraced Sulabh's twin-leach pit toilets – a safe onsite-sanitation solution, in most ecologies – and promoted them across the country as part of the effort to make the country open defecation free. Bezwada Wilson and the Safai Karamchari Andolan has been at the forefront of reminding all of us about the injustice meted out to manual scavengers, the deep-rooted societal norms that perpetuate this, and our collective failure to provide a just and humane future and choices for these families to lead a safe and healthy life with dignity.

Between 2000 and 2003, the Tiruchirapalli City Corporation and Gramalaya embarked on a city wide sanitation effort to create public and community toilet complexes across the city. Possibly, the first such partnership at a city-wide scale in the country. Gramalaya, helped create a federation of women's self-help-

groups, the WAVE federation to manage these community toilet complexes. Even today, there are 167 community toilet complexes in Trichy, managed by the WAVE federation while we continue to lament the poor condition of our public and community toilets.

Seven years ago, less than a third of India's urban population was connected to a sewer network. Only 10% of our cities had more than 50 % of their population connected to sewer networks. Management of faecal waste in urban India was a challenge hitherto ignored. The faecal matter from septic tanks and single pit toilets, would be collected by vacuum trucks and emptied in open drains, water bodies or fields, indiscriminately. The Consortium of DEWATS Dissemination Society (now known as CDD India) recognised this challenge of safely managing faecal waste and the need for decentralised, low-cost and nature-based solutions to manage this waste. They set up the first faecal sludge treatment plant in Devanahalli, Bengaluru. This has inspired the construction of four hundred such decentralised faecal sludge treatment plants in the country.

In 1983, Gram Vikas, Odisha commenced the widespread promotion of bio-gas plants in rural Odisha. A decade later, Gram Vikas encouraged every household in five villages in Ganjam and Bargarh districts, to construct a toilet and bathing room. A village level piped water supply scheme in each of these villages provided every household with two tap connections. This subsequently became – three taps – one in the kitchen/cooking area, toilet and bathroom. Thirty years ago, Gram Vikas had altered the norm of what was acceptable for the provision of drinking water in a rural area – away from community stand-posts to a piped water connection in the household. The Water and Sanitation Management Organisation (WASMO) was set up in 2002 in Gujarat to facilitate the provision of safe drinking water in rural Gujarat. WASMO recognised the centrality of facilitating community ownership and participation, in drinking water schemes in the state and entered into partnerships with civil society organisations – as Implementing Support Agencies and as Sector Partners in their effort. This partnership, became the template for participation of civil society organisations in Jal Jeevan Mission – which seeks to provide every rural household

with safe drinking water through a functional household tap connection and representatives from Gram Vikas and Aga Khan Rural Support Programme – a partner of WASMO – contributed to significantly shaping the guidelines of Jal Jeevan Mission.

Today, a major concern, particularly in rural India, is with regard to management of waste water from households – bathing and washing i.e. grey water. As streets within our villages get paved and more importantly, the consumption of water increasing with the provision of drinking water through taps, the quantum of waste water being generated will increase exponentially. In the absence, of mechanisms for treating of this waste water, this water will accumulate in low-lying areas – causing a public health concern – and/or will accumulate in water bodies converting them into receptacles of waste water and possibly contaminating ground-water. Nirmal Gram Nirman Kendra, Nashik has been at the forefront of addressing this issue with its emphasis on decentralised treatment of waste water at the household level – with a view to managing this waste water close to the source and reducing the need for centralised treatment solutions for waste water.

Inspired by traditional rain-water harvesting methods in Rajasthan, in the mid-90's, Dr Vikram Vyas created 'Sim Tanka' - a software then available on a five and a quarter inch floppy disk – that enabled individuals and institutions desirous of harvesting rain-water and storing it in a '*tanka*' or water storage tank, to use the software to assess demand, and to plan on the size of structure they would require based on the surface area of their roof and rainfall data for their area. The Social Work and Research Centre, Tilonia (The Barefoot College) was among the early users and participants in this, and went on to popularise rain-water harvesting in rural Rajasthan and elsewhere.

In Chennai, Dr Sekhar Raghavan recognised the importance of rain-water harvesting in meeting decentralised requirements of water, in 1995. This led to the creation of the Akash Ganga Trust in 2002 and establishment of the Rain Centre that Dr Raghavan was the first Director of. It is believed that this was one of the inspirations for the creation of a State wide rule for water harvesting in all buildings by the Tamil Nadu Government

in 2002. Elsewhere in Karnataka, the Rainwater Club (now Biome Environment Trust) similarly championed roof-rainwater harvesting and this has since expanded to include the 'million wells' campaign in Bengaluru to revive traditional wells in the city and to recognise and support the livelihoods of traditional well diggers.

The efforts of Rajendra Singh and Tarun Bharat Sangh in Alwar, and their support, led to Siruthuli in Coimbatore being established in 2003 and they have restored and revived a series of lakes that contributed to the water security of Coimbatore. Similar efforts by the INTACH Foundation, New Delhi, Malligavad Foundation in Bengaluru and the Environmentalist Foundation of India, Chennai are at the forefront of efforts to restore our urban water bodies.

The Advanced Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (ACWADAM) Pune and Arid Communities and Technologies (ACT), Kutch are two civil society organisations that have supported participatory ground water management efforts over the past two decades in the country by demystifying and democratising access to the principles of hydrogeology. With their support, institutions like the Central Himalayan Rural Action Group (Chirag) and Peoples Science Institute, Dehradun adopted these principles to facilitate the recharge of springs in the Western Himalayas contributing to both drinking water security and irrigation. The impact, has led to expansion of the same principles to the Eastern Himalayas in India and to NITI Aayog recognising the importance of springs to water security not just in the mountains but downstream.

These are but a few examples, of the contributions made by civil society organisations to drinking water and sanitation in the country. By no means exhaustive, all these examples, only serve to illustrate the contribution of organisations not just to facilitating ownership and management by communities but more importantly, to innovate and lay the foundation of practices and processes that are not just 'best' practices in their time, but 'next practices' for others, including Government to adopt and embrace.

VK Madhavan





Annexure 1:

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Please Note: This is the first version & preliminary synopsis of India's non-profit sector report presented for public reference by all the collaborating partners and practitioners. More updated and iterated versions to come soon.

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