

Contribution of Non-Governmental Organisations in the Development of Virudhunagar District : An Overview

DR. J. MEKALA DEVI

Assistant Professor, Department of History,
The Standard Fireworks Rajaratnam College for Women,
Madurai Kamaraj University, Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu, India.
Email : sandyrithuo9@gmail.com

Abstract: NGOs are defined by the World Bank as “Private organisations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services or undertake community development. NGOs are typically value-based organisations which depend in whole or in part, or charitable donations and voluntary service is also known as voluntary organisations. In Virudhunagar District, NGOs are well organising Education, Health, Social Justice, Disaster Management, Natural Resource Management, Agricultural Development, social Awareness, Betterment of Backward and Deprived Communities, poverty, Distress Relief and all kind of Welfare Programmes. NGOs are conducting AIDS Awareness programme. The issues like Conservation and Protection of Environment, Human Rights, Drinking Water Issues, Legal Awareness and Aid, Nutrition, Right to Information, Rural and Urban Development, forming and supporting Self Help Groups, Research and Development are the main part of the major NGOs in Virudhunagar District.

Key Words: NGO, awareness programmes, training, human rights, volunteers.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Non Governmental Organisations commonly referred as NGOs, are usually non-profit and sometimes international organisations independent of governments and international governmental organisations that are active in humanitarian, educational, health care, public policy, social, human rights, environmental and other areas to affect changes according to their objectives. They are thus a subgroup of all organisations founded by citizens, which include clubs and other associations that provide services, benefits and premises only to members. NGOs are usually funded by donations, but some avoid formal funding altogether and are run primarily by volunteers. NGOs are highly diverse groups of organisations engaged in a wide range of activities, and take different forms in different parts of the world. NGO have a long history in India. In the past, people in this country have been found to have provided help to others in trouble. Since centuries there exists the tradition of voluntary service to the needy and helpless in the country. Non- governmental organisations originally appeared in the mid nineteenth century. The development of International norms, institutions and procedures for the protection of human rights has gone hand in hand with proliferation of non-governmental International organisations working in the human rights fields. NGOs enable people to gain power and authority so that the assess and control over resources. They directly work on the question of community organisation and empowerment through educational interventions. These NGOs have begun to address a variety of development concerns – like drinking water, economic activities, literacy, adult and non formal educational and social issues against poverty, injustice etc., These are the popular education NGO’s who have contributed towards the development of many innovative approaches to strengthen socio-economic status of the poor and the deprived

The basis of human rights is that all human being born free and equal in dignity and rights. Human Rights are commonly understood as being those rights which are inherent in the mere face of being human. The concept of human rights is based on the belief that every human being is entitled to enjoy her/his rights without discrimination. Human rights differ from other rights. International human rights documents provide inspiring goals for human education. Learning about human rights is largely cognitive including human rights history, documents and implementation mechanisms. Learning for human rights means understanding and embracing the principles of human equality and dignity and the commitment to respect and protect the rights of all people¹.

Man is gregarious by nature all human associations indicate this spirit associations may be caste, creed, religion, language, culture, recreation profession, occupation, sports and trade. They were living together and caring for one another. Historical evidences prove that the fear of natural forces is the foundation of fraternity. Though man lived in group since the age of fishing and hunting they lived separately. As civilization, culture and education developed human perception of life also expanded². Agricultural age and industrial age helped man to employ human and non-human factors of production.

2. Non-Governmental Organisation:

NGOs are defined by the World Bank as “Private organisations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services or undertake community development:.. In wider context, the term NGO can be applied to any non-profit organisation which is independent from government. NGOs are typically value-based organisations which depend in whole or in part, or charitable donations and voluntary service is also known as voluntary organisations³. Although the NGO sector has become increasingly professionalised over the last two decades, principles of altruism and voluntarism remain key define characteristics.

Non Governmental Organisations commonly referred as NGOs, are usually non-profit and sometimes international organisations independent of governments and international governmental organisations that are active in humanitarian, educational, health care, public policy, social, human rights, environmental and other areas to affect changes according to their objectives. They are thus a subgroup of all organisations founded by citizens, which include clubs and other associations that provide services, benefits and premises only to members. NGOs are usually funded by donations, but some avoid formal funding altogether and are run primarily by volunteers. NGOs are highly diverse groups of organisations engaged in a wide range of activities, and take different forms in different parts of the world. Some may have charitable status, while others may be registered for tax exemption based on recognition of social purposes. Since the end of II World War, NGOs have had an increasing role in International development, particularly in the field of humanitarian assistance and poverty alleviation⁴. The number of NGOs worldwide is estimated to be 10 million. India is estimated to have had around 2 million NGOs in 2009.

The term non-governmental organisation was first coined in 1945, when the United Nations was created. The UN, itself an intergovernmental organisation, made it possible for certain approved specialised international non- state agencies to be awarded observer status at its assemblies and some of its meetings. Later the term became used more widely⁵. Today, according to the UN, any kind of private organisation that is independent from government control can be termed as NGO.

NGO have a long history in India. In the past, people in this country have been found to have provided help to others in trouble. Since centuries there exists the tradition of voluntary service to the needy and helpless in the country. Non- governmental organisations originally appeared in the mid ninetenth century. The development of International norms, institutions and procedures for the protection of human rights has gone hand in hand with proliferation of non-governmental International organisations working in the human rights fields.

Non-Governmental Organisations and Voluntary action have been part of the historical legacy. In early 20th century, several voluntary efforts were started in the fields of education, health etc. The NGOs became prominent after Independence, especially after 1970s. Development practitioners, government officials and foreign donors consider that Non-Governmental Organisations by the virtue of being small scale, flexible, innovative and participator are more successful in reaching the poor and poverty alleviating⁶. This consideration has resulted in the rapid growth of NGOs involved in initiating and implementing rural development programs.

A significant growth of NGOs started after India achieved Independence. Democracy was established and people had started understanding the meaning of freedom of speech, the charm of equality and the value of humanity and brotherhood. Also, on the other hand, the government started planning for development and in this effort, launched inter alia the schemes of Community Development Program and later on the Green Revolution. Thousands of NGOs have emerged in India making sufficient contributions to the processes of development of the society. NGOs have gained importance is the result of weakening of the role of state in upholding the welfare and well-being of its citizens and consequent development of the assertive role of civic society to ascertain social welfare and integration⁷. More than half a million voluntary organisations would perhaps to be working in the country.

NGOs enable people to gain power and authority so that the assess and control over resources. They directly work on the question of community organisation and empowerment through educational interventions. These NGOs have begun to address a variety of development concerns – like drinking water, economic activities, literacy, adult and non formal educational and social issues against poverty, injustice etc., These are the popular education NGO’s who have contributed towards the development of many innovative approaches to strengthen socio-economic status of the poor and the deprived⁸.

At present, about 1.5 million NGOs are working in India. This includes temples, churches and mosques, Gurudwaras, Sports Associations, Hospitals and Educational Institutions. Most NGOs in India are small and dependent on volunteers. According to a survey conducted by society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), 73.4% of NGOs have one or no paid staff, although across the country, more than 19 million persons work as volunteers or paid staff at an NGO. A PRIA survey also reveals that 26.5% of NGOs are engaged in religious activities, while 21.3% work in the area of community and / or social service. One in five NGOs works in education, 17.9% are active in the fields of sports and culture and only 6.6% work in the health sector⁹.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF NGOs IN INDIA:

A Non-governmental Organisation is a citizen based association that operates independently of government, usually to deliver resources or serve some social or political purpose. NGOs have become major players in the field of international development. Since the mid 1970's the NGO sector in both developing countries has experienced exponential growth.

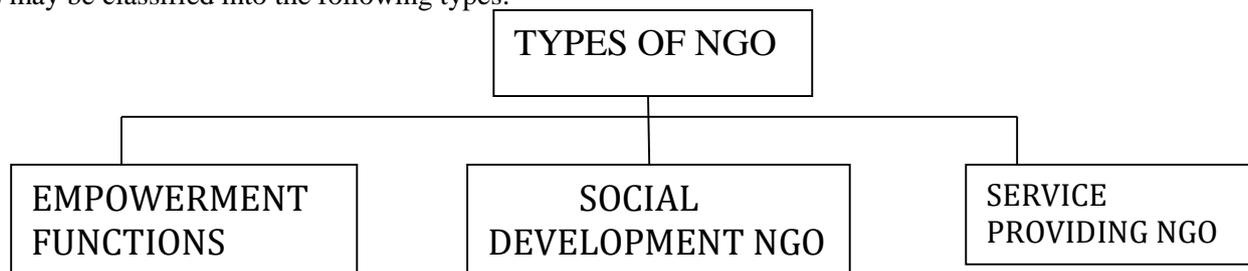
Charitable orientation often involves a top-down paternalistic effort with little participation by the beneficiaries. It includes NGO with activities directed towards meeting the needs of the poor people. Voluntary Organisation can play a crucial role in rural development by supplementing government efforts as they are close to the minds and hearts of the rural people. They have their roots in the people and can respond to the needs approaches to the rural development¹⁰. The success of the rural development depends upon the active participation and willing co-operation of the rural people through self help organisations and voluntary agencies. In recent years, the voluntary agencies have acquired greater importance and significance than before because the administration has not been able to reach the people, especially the poor and weaker sections.

In the Indian context, Voluntary Organisations are classified into four types, namely i) those having characteristics derived from the independence movement; ii) those based on Gandhian movements; iii) missionary organisations; and iv) professional organisations created for economic and social development.

After Independence, the numbers of Non Governmental Organisations are increased. They have been rendering service in the arenas of education, health, eradications of child labour, eradication of poverty, promoting health and sanitation, adult education, women development and sustainable development of the rural areas¹¹. The Union Government and the State Government of Tamil Nadu have been extending financial assistance to the NGO's for their various welfare schemes. Besides, the NGO's receive aid in kind and cash from philanthropic agencies in India and abroad.

Types of NGOs

The function of the NGOs are varied in accordance with programmes they undertake. The various activities NGOs may be classified into the following types:



Virudhunagar District consists of all the sections of people. Virudhunagar District has played an important place in the social history of Tamilnadu. More than 55 NGOs are working in Virudhunagar District for various social welfare activities. Here, NGOs are doing their best to strengthen the service better for the society. It focuses the rural women and farmers to achieve their socio-economic development through a process of organisation and participation. NGOs implements many number of socio-economic programmes with the support of agencies of the state and central governments and foreign funding Agencies including other Nationalized and Commercial banks¹². They are functioning for Child Education, Child Welfare, Child Rights, Women Development, Women Empowerment, Old Age Homes, Physically and mentally handicapped persons and upliftment of slum children and Women.

In Virudhunagar District, NGOs are well organising Education, Health, Social Justice, Disaster Management, Natural Resource Management, Agricultural Development, Social Awareness, Betterment of Backward and Deprived Communities, poverty, Distress Relief and all kind of Welfare Programmes.

NGOs has been implementing the programmes related to Employment, Female feticides, Rain Water Harvesting, Animal Welfare, Sports, Development of Art, Craft and Culture, Heritage Protection and Conservation of Environment. The issues like Conservation and Protection of Environment, Human Rights, Social Equality, Drinking Water Issues, Legal Awareness and Aid, Nutrition, Right to Information, Rural and Urban Development, forming and supporting Self Help Groups, Research and Development are the main part of the major NGOs in Virudhunagar District.

4. OBJECTIVES:

The main aim of the study is to understand the contribution of Non-Governmental Organisations and its impact on Education and Women Development, Health Care, Environmental Awareness and other services to the rural people in Virudhunagar District.

- The study attempts to analyze the functions of Non-Governmental Organisations in Virudhunagar District

- The study highlights the accomplishments of NGOs
 - The study intends to critically examine the impact of NGOs
 - The study focuses the part of NGOs for the development of society in Virudhunagar District.
 - The study gives clear participation of NGOs for maintaining Green Environment
- ✓ This is a pre-requisite to sustaining peace in a world which holds in its essence the beauty from the rich melange of disparate traditions.
- ✓ Aims To Bridge The Socio-Cultural Distances Between India And The World Through Various Programs

5. ACTIVITIES:

There are numerous classifications of NGOs. The typology the world bank uses divides them into Operational and Advocacy. NGOs act as implementers, catalysts and partners.

- ✓ NGO act as implementers in that they mobilize resources in order to provide goods and services to people who are suffering due to a manmade disaster or a natural disaster.
- ✓ NGOs act as catalysts in that they drive change. They have the ability to inspire, facilitate or contribute to improved thinking and action to promote change.
- ✓ NGOs often act as partners alongside other organizations in order to tackle problems and address human needs more effectively¹³.

6. CONSUMMATION:

AIDS AND AWARENESS:

NGOs are conducting AIDS Awareness programme. AIDS the major killer spreads faster in all world countries. We continuously combat HIV/AIDS with our awareness and prevention programme mainly in rural areas. Rather than cure, AIDS can be dealt only in preventive way. We brought out hand-bills, banners, brochures on prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Immunodeficiency refers to a lack or breakdown of immune system. The Immune system is the body's resistance or the body's defence force for fighting off infections. The virus attacks and eventually overcomes the body's human system, the BDF. The immune system is usually able to defend the body against many infections. A virus is a germ.

Even after almost a quarter of a century of global experience of HIV and AIDS, school programs remain somewhat haphazard¹⁴. Very few school programs have gone back to the roots to examine comprehensively how the subject of HIV and AIDS should be mainstreamed into a school setting, what this implies for curriculum content and delivery, and how teachers are to be prepared for their role in school which are part of a world with HIV and AIDS.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS:

Environment includes all living and non-living objects. We live in the environment and use the environmental resources like air, land and water to meet our needs. Development also means meeting the needs of the people. While meeting the ever-growing needs, we put pressure on the environment. When the pressure exceeds the carrying capacity of the environment to repair or replace itself, it creates a serious problem of environmental degradation. Therefore, there is a need to create awareness about environmental protection. While efforts are being made at the national and international level to protect our environment, it is also the responsibility of every citizen to use our environmental resources with care and protect them from degradation and the importance of environmental conservation.

Numerous resources are available to promote environmental awareness; group learning, informational and inspirational seminars, such as our awakening the dreamer program and environmental books and brochures are just a few of the tools that can get you involved in promoting the environment.

At present Indian farming is facing a crisis. More than 0.15 million farmers are forced to commit suicide due to commercial farming that has become economically unviable¹⁵. Vast stretches of farm land have become saline due to indiscriminate application of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in farming.

FARMERS MEETING:

According to a scientific study, all our food articles are contaminated with pesticides with pesticides in the limits prescribed by World Health Organization. The chemical based monoculture farming system has caused rural unemployment, migration and malnutrition. Children are deprived of childhood and education. To the contrary, organic agriculture benefits from decades of using ecological principles based on diversification and traditional wisdom¹⁶. It will depend on low external inputs, resources conservation and biological service.

LEGAL AWARENESS

- ✓ Fear of insecurity in villages

- ✓ Lack of physical facilities like accommodation, school, transport and medical facilities.
- ✓ The girls were forced to take care of the siblings when the parents are away at work.
- ✓ Girls were forced to do domestic chores which prevent them from attending school.
- ✓ Working to earn for the family prevent the girls from attending school.
- ✓ To develop a basic understanding on the genesis and process of laws with a feminist perspective.
- ✓ Detailed understanding of the laws related to women.
- ✓ To build capacities of the youth so that they can work as a catalyst in the incidences of violence against women.

ROADSAFETY

Road safety awareness is provided by the organisations near bus stand of all towns with the assistance of college NSS students, volunteers etc., NGOs distributed bit notices in Tamil to the public on safe riding of vehicles. They were also taught on simple road sign and symbols.

Factors influencing exposure to road traffic:

- ✓ Economic factors such as level of economic development.
- ✓ Demographic factors such as age, gender and place of residence.
- ✓ Land use planning practices which influence how long people travel and by which means.
- ✓ Mixture of vulnerable road user and high speed motorized traffic.
- ✓ Lack of consideration of the ways in which roads will be used when determining speed limits, road design and lay out.

AWARENESS GENERATION CAMP

Awareness Is A Key Ingredient In Success. If You Have It, Teach It, If You Lack It, Seek It.

They are giving awareness to the public like

- ✓ Competitive spirit should be instilled in the girls
- ✓ Selection and identification of the talented girls should be done correctly.
- ✓ Identify the candidate at college level for coaching
- ✓ Result oriented teaching is necessary
- ✓ Group discussions, quiz and seminars to instil confidence
- ✓ Teacher:student ration
- ✓ Monitoring by the teacher after class hours.
- ✓ Loan facility

COMPUTER TRAINING

NGOs are conducting Computer Training programme. Number of men and women participated in the programme. They learned the following skills.

- ✓ MS Office
- ✓ Internet use
- ✓ Excel use
- ✓ Photo shop
- ✓ Email and Web connections
- ✓ Web and Internet basics
- ✓ Power point presentation, world publication etc.,

EVENING FREE TUITION CENTRE:

NGOs are conducting free evening tuition programmes. Free tuition centres were started in many locations. Number of boys and girls are benefited due this programme. The area local educated youth were the teachers. The centres were helpful to get more marks and win in school level competitions.

- ✓ To inculcate schooling habit among non-school going children
- ✓ To check the high dropout in the schools at primary level
- ✓ To create awareness about the value of education in the community
- ✓ To increasing the enrolment in the school at primary level.

SELF HELP GROUP AND MONITORING:

NGOs conducting Self Help Formation and Monitoring programme. A Self Help Group is a group of more than 500 men and women who work for the capacity building of themselves. The goal of Self Help Group is to become effective agents of change. They serve as a platform to establish the banking with the poor which is reliable, accountable and a profitable business¹⁷. Self Help Group also enables livelihood opportunities for village women through micro-

credit with the existing banks in the area. They are meeting monthly and have also started savings. They started bank accounts in nearby branches from their location.

- ✓ Lack of support from male members as well as bank
- ✓ Large magnitude of the target group of poor people.
- ✓ Attitudinal rigidities
- ✓ Difficulty in creating awareness among people.
- ✓ Limited resources with the NGOs
- ✓ Large requirements of training and sensitization of issues.
- ✓ Limited number of experienced intervention agencies
- ✓ Diversities of situations due to wide coverage

MEDICAL CAMP

NGOs are organising medical camp programmes. Siddha, Ayurveda like Indian origin medicines awareness camp is organising by them and helping the poor and needy people. Indigenous systems of medicine that are truly Indian in origin are the Ayurveda and the Siddha systems. Ayurveda is practised through out India but Siddha is practised in Tamil-speaking area of South India. On significance in Ayurveda is the Tridosha theory of disease. The doshas or humors are veda, pitta and kapha. Disease is explained as a disturbance in the equilibrium of the three humors; when these are in perfect balance and harmony, a person is said to be healthy.

TAILORING TRAINING:

NGOs are conducting tailoring training programmes. Tailoring is a gainful self-employment for women. If self-employment is the aim, then agencies also need to provide business training in areas such as bookkeeping, profit and loss accounting, market expansion, marketing and product display. Every programme must take into account market opportunities and potential. Concrete possibilities for putting skills training to income-generating use must be assessed realistically¹⁸. The rule should be simple; no market demand, no training.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION

NGOs are conducting World Women's Day programme. Every year NGOs are celebrating IWD on March 8. All women from Self Help Group are participating in this programme. More than 5000 women are participating in this year event of IWD. At the end of the event, the participants took oath of unity and united action of women to protect their rights and children.

TREE PLANTATION

NGOs are motivating schools and college students in tree plantation. It is carrying out by the trained students. This activity got applied from all quarters as children are getting educated and trained on environmental education and helped to become eco-warriors in the future.

Global warming is the result of excess greenhouse gases, created by burning fossil fuels and destroying tropical rainforest. Heat from the sun, reflected back from the earth, is trapped in this thickening layer of gases, causing global temperatures to rise. Carbon dioxide is a major green house gas. Trees absorb CO₂, removing and storing the carbon while releasing the oxygen back into the air.

EYE CAMP

The day after arrival, the doctors examined the eyes of the patients set for that day and checked their blood pressure and blood sugar levels. Once cleared for surgery, the patients were given a number and one by one received drops to dilate their pupils had their eyes anesthetized and finally had the cataract surgery, which sometimes took only 15 minutes. The patients who are blind in one or both eyes are benefited by this camp¹⁹. In all cases, the surgeries to replace the lens of the blind eye with an intraocular lens were successful, but what really happened was much more than the mechanism of repairing an eye or both eyes and restoring sight.

Changes in Eye Pressure

- ✓ Excessive or decreased aqueous production
- ✓ Inadequate or increased aqueous drainage
- ✓ Long-term use of certain medications in particular corticosteroids
- ✓ Eye trauma
- ✓ Underlying eye condition such as pseudo exfoliation syndrome, pigment dispersion syndrome or corneal arcus or a thin cornea
- ✓ Eye surgery especially cataract surgery

VERMICOMPOSE AWARENESS AND TRAINING

Vermicompost is a modified and specialised method of composting. The process uses earthworms to eat and digest farm wastes and turn out a high quality compost in two months or less. Vermicomposting is not a bio fertiliser as is touted by some, merely improved compost. Vermi composting can also be used to make compost tea. Vermicomposting tea is useful as a prophylactic against pests and diseases, for pest repelling and as a foliar spray. A by-product of vermicomposting called vermishampoo also serves the same purpose. The purpose of the training was to raise awareness on combating global warming and climate change²⁰. This is helpful to increase their knowledge on biodiversity

Vermicomposting is a product of the composting process using various species of worms, usually red wigglers, white worms, and other earthworms to create a heterogeneous mixture of decomposing vegetable or food waste, bedding materials and vermicast also called worm castings, worm manure or worm humus is the end product of the breakdown of organic matter by an earthworm. These castings have been shown to contain reduced levels of contaminants and a higher saturation of nutrients than do organic materials before vermicomposting.

Containing water soluble nutrients, vermicomposting is an excellent, nutrient rich organic fertilizer and soil conditioner. This process is called vermiculture. It is nutrient rich source of organic compost used in farming and small scale sustainable, organic farming, the process of vermiculture is undergoing research as a treatment for organic waste in sewage and waste water plants around the world²¹.

NGOs are focusing on promoting human rights and democracy mainly and then the priority is given to environmental and HIV/AIDS. It seems the natural disaster benefits has been extended to all affected people by this NGO. The NGO has designed and executing effectively the Child Right Protection, Environmental conservation, promoting food security, eye camp, awareness generation programme of the people in Virudhunagar district. Implementing a policy on promoting participation of youth people in local democracy and good governance. Children were supported directly for their education, entertainment, skill development, co-curricular activities, health and nutrition. Academic engagement has been insufficient. It is necessary that universities and research institution prioritise these issues in their activities and thereby contribute to awareness raising and creative solutions. It is ultimately through the work of NGOs that the provision of the charter are converted into concrete and effective guarantees.

7. CONCLUSION:

NGOs are focusing on promoting human rights and democracy mainly and then the priority is given to environmental and HIV/AIDS. It seems the natural disaster benefits has been extended to all affected people by this NGO. The NGO has designed and executing effectively the Child Right Protection, Environmental conservation, promoting food security, eye camp, awareness generation programme of the people in Virudhunagar district. Implementing a policy on promoting participation of youth people in local democracy and good governance. Children were supported directly for their education, entertainment, skill development, co-curricular activities, health and nutrition. Academic engagement has been insufficient. It is necessary that universities and research institution prioritise these issues in their activities and thereby contribute to awareness raising and creative solutions. It is ultimately through the work of NGOs that the provision of the charter is converted into concrete and effective guarantees.

REFERENCES:

Books:

1. A.S. Kohli, Human Rights and Social work; issues, challenges and response, Kanishka publications, 2004, p.174
2. Ibid., p.186.
3. M.L. Janagambika, social work and human rights, Navyug books International, Delhi, 2010, p.214
4. Puran Chandra, NGO's formation and resource mobilization, Akansha publishing house, New Delhi, 2007, p.139
5. Ibid., p.191.
6. O.P. Goel, Strategic management and policy issues of NGOs, Isha books, 2004, p.270
7. Dr. Manjulata, changing role of NGO's in the 21st century, Jagat Prakasan Mahaveer and sons publishers and distributors, New Delhi, 2007, p.336
8. R.H. Gupta, NGO's development, Mahaveer and sons publishers, New Delhi, 2006, p.239.
9. Ibid., p.247.
10. Chander, violence against women in society, omega publications, New Delhi, 2013, p.189.
11. Vijayeswari Rao G., women and society, Himalaya publishing house, Mumbai, 2004, p.218.
12. Maya Majumdar, Social status of women in India, wisdom press, New Delhi, 2012, p.198.
13. Shanmukha Rao padala N.V.S. Suryanarayana Goteti Himabindu, sonali publications, New Delhi, 2016, p.237.

14. B.K. Singh, women empowerment through self help group, Adhyayan publishers and distributors, Delhi, 2006, p.245.
15. Dr. M. Lakshmi Narasaiah, women and industrialisation, discovery publishing house, New Delhi, 2007, p.155.
16. Ibid., p.191.
17. JoelsS.G.R. Bhowmik, NGOs and Rural Development Theory and practices, concept publishing company, New Delhi, p.184.
18. NGOs as Prime moves sectorial action for social development, Shivanin Dharmarajan, Kanishka publishers distributors, New Delhi, p.215.
19. UmeshButt, Human Rights achievements and challenges, Vista International publishing house, Delhi, p.277
20. Ibid., p.281.
21. UmeshButt, Human Rights achievements and challenges , op.cit., p.279