

## Role of NGOs (Gram Vikash) in the Development of Tribal Education in Ganjam District

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### Abstract

NGOs As potential partners in the development of economic and cultural services in an integrated manner because of their close proximity with the grassroot people to solve the problems of marginalized sections of the society in Odisha. In the state of Odisha more than 4000 NGOs registered and they are working different activities such as Education, health, IGP, SHG Formation, credit delivery and so on. During last two decades there has been an increasing trend of the numbers of NGOs in the state. They are working beyond profit motive which differentiate them from the Government Organisation. Most of the NGOs are working in the tribal pockets of the state out of which the present study deals with one NGO that is GRAM VIKAS of ganja district in the state and examine the educational activities undertaken by him towards development of tribal education.

### Introduction:

Development vision has taken a new turn with the second half of the Twentieth century. Failures of Top-Down developmental policies have created international crisis. The parameters of poverty, unemployment, pollution, environmental degradation, breakage of government machinery, threat to human security and social cohesion in the form of ethnic conflict, communal rising have grown steadily. Worsening of the world situation has enough reflected a defunct world system, which has undergone rapid changes. Given social development policies, plans and projects have become problematic and counter-productive. It has certainly marginalised and damaged the life of the poor. Normal professional paradigms of development theory and policies have witnessed a reversal of the paradigm. The indicators of development have substituted by the real-life situation of have-nots and keeping priority of the poor.

The concept of social justice, governance by the people, community participation and innovative researchers have totally turndown the concept of development theories. State was the main actor in the old pattern of development theories. In the recent days Non-State sectors like Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and civil society have emerged as the main actors of developmental activities. It is against this background the failed paradigm of the “normal professionals” that Robert Chambers (1995) developed a “paradigm of reversals” and called for a new professionalism to “put people before things” by putting the realities and priorities of the poor people in the forefront of development policy and practice (Dash, 1995).

It is an established fact that most of the developmental programmes intended towards education have failed to give the desired results due to problems like bureaucratic red-tapism, Political interference, Lack of accountability, Rigid official paraphernalia, Apathy of the people towards government programmes, etc. In this regard,

the programmes undertaken by NGOs proved to be more successful because of Close proximity with the people, Flexibility of organisational structure, Effective operational strategy, and above all the dedication of their grassroots workers.

However, despite all these achievements on their side, they are subjected to criticism. This is because, in recent years some bogus NGOs came into being in the name of social development. It is in this respect the present study is an attempt to find out the effectiveness of NGOs in the process of development of Education in tribal pockets of Odisha.

### **Importance of the Study:**

The concept of NGO has been in existence for decades, however, it gained momentum only recently due to the failure of most of the developmental initiatives of the government. In this regard, NGOs proved their mantle and established their identity as one of the powerful forces in the state. The developmental programmes taken by these organisations and their approach to various issues proved successful and obtained international recognition. Their area of operation became wide and the issues they cover are diverse. It is in this context, the present study which focuses on the role of NGOs in the process of development. The role of state and NGOs has undergone drastic changes in these five decades. From a role of facilitator, NGO has taken up the role of provider of developmental needs.

The role of voluntary organisations is considered very important because of following reasons:

- i) Voluntary organisations (VOs) have grassroots level experience and knowledge of local needs and problems.
- ii) Voluntary sector is expected to be more responsive than the government sector.
- iii) They are very close to heart and minds of local people.
- iv) NGOs keep direct contact with the local people.
- v) Government efforts can be well utilised if NGOs initiate people's participation.
- vi) The programme implemented by the voluntary organisations is more flexible less accountable to Government.

Undoubtedly, the background, level of operation ideology differs from organisation to organisation. Yet, their main motto is to obtain socio-economic development. As Tendler says, "NGOs share 'articles of faith' about the strengths they bring to the development process.

### **Objective of the Study:**

The main objective of the study is to analyse the role of NGOs in main stream development process. Some of the specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To analyse the developmental perspectives of Gram Vikas in southern Odisha of the State.

- To study the nature of activities/programmes being undertaken by NGOs for the development of education.
- To examine the role of Gram Vikas towards the development of education in tribal areas.

### **Methodology of the Study:**

Various methods have been adopted to study the role of NGOs in the development of education in tribal areas. Personal interviews were conducted with the beneficiaries. To elicit information intensive group discussion were made with NGO functionaries and beneficiaries. Data were collected from various literature, annual reports, manuals, of concerned NGO. Different newspapers, articles, magazines published national and international journals are also referred. Simple statistical tools and percentage methods has been used to analysis data. Since the NGOs are many it has not been able to cover all NGOs and programmes. The study is limited and confined to only one (NGO) Gram Vikash of Southern Odisha in Ganjam district.

### **Review of Literature:**

The study of NGO and development at best stress back to eighties and witnesses some of the literature from International, National and Regional level. Rao (1984) in his study concluded that the beneficiaries of the organisations are more articulate and created awareness among the people against exploitation. Deo (1987) has done a comparative study between NGOs and GOs in Indian context. Khan and Thomas (1989) contended that NGOs acted as partners in government efforts, advocated critics of planning and aimed at a bringing about structural change in rural areas. Das (1995) a sociologist from Utkal University has critically examined NGOs and Development; learning from failures from a theoretical angle. Chander (1996) studied three NGOs in the hilly region of U.P and concluded that they play an important role in ensuring people's participation in the development process. Manimekali (1999) has done a study in the area of women's development through SHG and micro-credit programmes in Tamil Nadu. Charyulu et al. (1985) had reported that the implementation of IRDP by the NGOs had made a good impact in the project villages. In terms of physical assets, the village had gained by receiving agricultural implements, milch animals, poultry, handicrafts, food, accommodation and shelter for women and children, etc. The beneficiaries also reported change in their occupations, increase in the number of days of self-employment and additional income. Further, the NGOs involved the people at both planning as well as implementation stage of the programme. Sachidananda and Prasad (1994) in their study of an NGO working in the field of tribal development observed that the biggest difficulty faced by the organization was lack of adequate funds. The organization found that securing funds from the government was not easy. The procedure was cumbersome and attitude of the government staff was not cooperative. Funds received from foreign sources were also not sufficient for their requirements. Shripati (1995) conducted a case study of two voluntary organizations of coastal region of Karnataka to evaluate their work as well as to assess the impact of their programmes on target groups. The result of the study showed that voluntary organizations are playing a significant role in rural development.

**Types of NGOs:**

Their involvement in major rural economic sectors was recognized. There is no standard method for classifying non-governmental organisations. According to Eldridge (1984), no operationally useful mode of voluntary organisations is available. Different writers have classified them in different ways in accordance with their field of affiliation and their own perceptions. NGOs may be classified according to their size, their internal structure, their independence and dependence on outside control, their functions, their sources of support, their location, the class and characteristics of their members, the bases of the incentives and the beneficiaries of their activities (Smith & Friedman, 1972).

Das (1988) classified the voluntary organisations working in West Bengal into 4 major types, namely, charity-philanthropic-relief type; development-charity minded type; ideology based including Gandhian type; and developmentalist and action group type.

Deo (1989) proposed a taxonomy of NGOs which can be graphically represented as:

<b>Type of NGO</b>	<b>Approach</b>
I Pre-modern	Relief-and-Charity
II Modern	Welfare-Oriented
III Post-modern	Promotional & Education oriented

He further classified each of these types into two structural categories, namely, high and low. While highly structured organisations had division of labour and a formally defined working relationship among members, the others had none of these features.

Pandey (1991) provides a threefold classification of NGOs based on their objectives. Of course, the three categories are not mutually exclusive. These are:

1. Social Service minded NGOs;
2. Development oriented NGOs; and
3. Activist NGOs.

**NGOs in Odisha: A Profile**

The state has highest concentration of NGOs in the country. Perhaps the state's demographic and socio-economic characteristics paved the way for proliferation of NGOs. Hence it is very difficult to study all the NGOs and the programmes undertaken by the different NGOs. The present study confined to Gram Vikash, a Non-Profit Organisation working for the upliftment of grassroot people through developmental activities. Hence a brief profile of the said NGO and his role for the development of education in tribal belts of Ganjam area is discussed below.

**Table-1**

<b>Odisha</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%age to total NGOs</b>
NGOS in KBK districts	1621	60.60
NGOs in Coastal districts	1054	39.4
Total	2675	100

**Source: People's Development Communication, BBSR**

Table-1 reveals that the state has highest concentration of NGOs in the country. Perhaps the states demographic and socio-economic feature paved way for the proliferation of NGOs in recent decades. The number of NGOs in the state is 2675 out of which 39% in coastal and around 60% in KBK districts of Odisha.

**Table-2**

<b>Districts</b>	<b>Total Number of NGOs</b>	<b>Percentage to total</b>
Ganjam	126	4.71
Balasore	105	3.92
Mayurbhanja	102	3.81
Keonjhara	86	3.21

Kandhamala	85	3.17
Sundergarh	50	1.86
Rayagada	47	1.75
Kalahandi	47	1.75
Sambalpur	46	1.71
Koraput	43	1.60
Gajapati	36	1.34
Nawarangpur	27	1.00
Malkangiri	19	0.71

Table-2 states that there are 13 tribal districts which constitute 30.53% of NGOs to total NGOs in the state. Though Ganjam is not a wholly tribal district yet it consists of the highest number of NGOs that is 126. Malkangiri district shows only 19 NGOs.

Source: Compiled from Directorate of NGOs in Odisha, PDC, BBSR

#### **Profile of Gram Vikash:**

Gram Vikas (village development), a non-partisan secular, voluntary organisation, is registered in the year 1979 in the Kerandimal hills of the Ganjam district. Its head office is at Mohuda village, eleven kilometres from Berhampur. The organisation was founded by a group of volunteers from the Young Students Movement for Development, Madras. At present the organisation directly reaches 40,000 households in five hundred villages in the seventeen districts of Odisha. The main target of the organisation is to look after the tribals, Dalits, and other economically backward communities in the rural region of Odisha. The organisation has a work staff of two hundred sixty and about four hundred village volunteers out of which seventy-five per cent of the staff are engaged in the field area. Main mission of the organisation is to promote a sustainable quality of life through various programmes. In the area of education, around 75 non-formal education centres

are under the supervision of Gram Vikash to empower the education status of more than seven thousand children.

All the NGOs working in the state engaged in different activities in the process of rural development. The programme components collected from different NGOs in different district reflects that most of the NGOS are concentrated on Education (54.81%), Health (49%), Environment (46%), Women development (30%) and Income Generating activities that is (20%).

### **Education and Gram Vikash:**

There is a close nexus between literacy and economic development of a society. The society which is very much developed in literacy level, obtains all development prospects. In Odisha though the total literacy has increased over the time period, yet the female literacy rate is very low and social attitudes towards women's education seems still to be rather negative. Data collected from Directorate of NGOs reflects that 55 per cent of the total NGOs in Odisha are actively involved in educational activities which include adult education, NFE centres, women's education, vocational training, development of integrated education etc. which is closely linked with the promotion of the educational status of women. Some of the important NGOs which are actively involved in promoting women's education are Janakalyan (Cuttack), UAA (Ganjam), Gram Vikash (Ganjam) CYSD (Khurda), Seva Sansad (Jagatsingpur), SEBA (Mayurbhanj), VISA (Puri), Agrabamee (Rayagada), Sova (Koraput), SWWS (Gajapati) and Yuga Nirmana (Bhadrak), etc.

In remote tribal villages of Ganjam, government schools either did not exist or were not functioning. Education levels were very poor and the exploitation of people because illiteracy was high. Gram Vikas started balwadis, non-formal education centers and adult literacy programme in the Villages. Soon it became clear that NFE would never give tribal children the opportunity to join the mainstream education system and fully reach their potential. To meet this need, Kerandimal Middle Education School, a residential school for tribal children was established at Konkia, (Ganjam) district in 1982. The four residential schools, managed now by independent trusts, cater to more than 1200 boys and girls from remote [[tribal]] villages. Mahendratanya Ashram School was established at Koinpur, Gajapati district in 1992. In 1995, the KME school was upgraded as the Gram Vikas Residential School. Gram Vikas Shikhya Niketan was established at Kumudabahal in [Kalahandi] district in 1998. Gram Vikas Vidya Vihar was started in Rudhapadar, [Ganjam] district in 1992.

### **Findings of the Study:**

Based on the field observations, analysis of data and interviews with the personnel of various NGOs as well as beneficiaries, the following findings have been emerged:

- The status of education in the southern district has been deplorable as compared to other districts of Odisha in terms of primary, secondary and higher education level.
- Although the number of NGOs in the state is increasing day by day, the output in terms of education development is not up to the mark.

- Educationally more developed districts have a greater number of NGOs than educationally underdeveloped ones.
- Though the main motive behind most of the NGOs is to promote educational development in rural areas but majority of NGOs are operating from urban centres.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Government should take necessary steps to eliminate bogus NGOs and should provide more support to the NGOs working relentlessly for the development of education.
- The gender sensitive approach and the operational strategies of the successful programmes undertaken by NGOs needs to be adopted and implemented at the national level.
- While implementing the developmental programmes particularly in rural areas, the government should take the local level NGOs into confidence and there must be proper coordination between the government officials and NGOs.
- The government should take necessary steps to create awareness educational programmes, provide training for skill development and income generating activities and develop proper infrastructure.
- There should be a separate autonomous body at the district level consisting of academicians, researchers, intellectuals, legal experts and representatives from NGOs to review and monitor the works of NGOs and to give proper direction for the healthy growth of these organisations.

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