
UNIT 28 ROLE OF THE STATE AND OTHER ASSOCIATIONS

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28.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you should be able to:

- discuss the concept of State as an association;
- describe the role of the State;
- distinguish between the state and non-state associations, voluntary organisations (VOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs);
- discuss the role of the VOs in development;
- identify problems faced by VOs; and
- suggest ways to promote voluntary efforts.

28.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding three units of this block, we talked about the resources of land, water and forest and discussed access to them and their control and management by people. In all three units, we reviewed the role of the State and of other associations in the control and management of these resources.

We will take up in this unit the theme of ‘role of the State and other associations’ in greater details, so that we become aware of the alternatives available for

solving problems related to ecological imbalance. (About the concepts of ecology and ecological imbalance you are advised to read Unit 37 of Block 8 of ESO-02). This will also create in us an awareness of **our role** in solving social problems in India. As Unit 28 is that last unit of both of the course (ESO-06) and of the Block (Ecology and Resources), it addresses to concerns of both the course in general and the Block in particular. In other word it deals with social problems in general and with ecological problems in particular. Taken together both ecological and socio-economic and political problems provide a context of most of the activities and associations. Participation in the processes of both the State and other association interests the individual and the wider society. It is interesting to understand how this happens. Unit 28 will explain this process.

The Unit begins with a brief discussion on viewing on viewing the State as an association and its role. Then we proceed to explain the concept of other associations which play an equally important role in the process of development. This is followed by identifying the problems faced by voluntary organisations and suggestions for promoting voluntary efforts.

28.2 STATES AS AN ASSOCIATION

Before discussing the role of the State, we need to say a few words on what is the State? A preliminary definition can be that it is an association. You may ask-what is an association. You may ask – what is an association? The answer is that association refers to a group of persons who associate and organise themselves for a common goal. In this sense, the state is an association just like the family or political party or business firm. It comprises a group of members who are organised in a certain manner and for certain goals. You may also ask how is the State as an association different from an institution or society of community? For the answer of this questions see Box 28.01.

Box 28.01

The state is found within society. But the state is not a form of society. The state is a system of order and control and its business includes to the conservation and development of human abilities and of economic resources. Society is, on the other hand, a relational concept insofar it is viewed as a chain of social relationships. It is not a substantial concept and it does not denote a concrete reality, rather it refers to social relationships.

To explain the difference between association and institution, it will suffice here to say that an association refers to a group of persons who associate and organise into a unity of will for a common goal. The term institution does not denote persons. It denotes the form along which those persons, activities are related.

Lastly, let us also look at the difference between association and community. One spends only a part of one's life within an association. But one's whole life is spend within one's community. As organisation of the state is not all social organisation, we can say that the state is a partial unity and in that sense it is an association. Communities, like a country, city, village, nation, tribe, are integral unities.

The common point between the state and other associations is only that both comprise groups of members, who are organised in a specific manner for

common goals. Because of its special features the State is different from other associations. It is an association of a type of its own. Other or non-state associations do not share with the State those special features which make it a category by itself.

These features are as follows:

- i) One feature is that the state includes under its control all those who live within its territory. It does not matter whether these people are deliberately its members or not. The state maintains social order within a territory.
- ii) The second features of the state is sovereignty which is an attribute of common will. In its aspect of sovereignty, the state has the decisive right of force.
- iii) The state has coercive framework of political law and, therefore, has a permanence and fixity.

These characteristics apply only to the state and not to other associations. As the state is an associaton which forms a type by itself, its role in relation social problems is not similar to that of other associations. Because of this difference we have, in this unit, first discussed the role of the state and then taken up the role of other association. But remember that both the modern state and other non-state associations play an equally important role in regulating and managing societies.

28.3 ROLE OF THE STATE

In broad terms, the state upholds social standards and prevents exploitation and injustice. It works towards the removal of socio-economic problems and improving general well-being of its members. The role of the state is not fixed, rather it changes with the conditions. Such Marxists as Lenin argued that the State does not work for general well-being of all its members. It represents only the private property owners and there by becomes an instrument of promoting the interests of dominant classes in a society. You may or may not agree with this point of view but you will certainly agree with this point that even Marxists hold that the state plays a comprehensive role in modern societies. You may further raise a point that if the state plays such a major role, there is perhaps no need for other associations to enter the scene. Is it that the state is unable to perform its comprehensive role and, therefore, other associations step in?

Scholars like Bhambri (1987: 36) hold that the existence of non-state associations in developed countries represents the rejection of the modern state system, which has over time become oppressive and dehumanised. In developing countries, the state is considered to play an active role in removing the burden of backwardness. It is held that only the state can perform this role. According to him, planning process of the Indian State has already broken the 'the essentials of a stagnant economy'. The Indian state has provided 'a social space' to its disabled and deprived strata. Bhambri (1987: 397) holds that 'the hold of the state is visible in whatever limited successes have been achieved by the poorest of the poor'. For him, other associations like voluntary agencies 'are a footnote in India development' and the 'the problems of development of India require more of state intervention and not less of it'. In Unit 25, 26

and 27, we have also discussed at length the land, water and forest policies of the government and legislative measures adopted from time to time in matters related to the control and management of these resources. Clearly, the role the state in the case of India is very such similar to what Bhambri holds. We should however questions his view of other associations as 'mere footnotes in India development'. It is not a questions of either one or the other. Taking a balanced view of the giving relative importance to both, we find that both the State and non-state associations play significant role in the socio-economic well-being of a society. Again, roles of both the state and other associations work for particular and sectoral interests. But they are not opposed to each other. Only in certain situations, when voluntary organisations involve themselves in confrontationist action, they may take a posture of direct opposition to the State. Similarly, when a State becomes too oppressive and dehumanising, non-state associations may take a distance from it or even oppose it. These possibilities apart; we need to consider the role of both, especially in the context of Indian society. In India, the state plays a major role in changing the existing social power structure when other associations are there to challenge the pressurise the State to accelerate its machinery for preventing exploitation and injustice.

Among the chief roles of the state we may have here consider promotion and regulation of such physical conditions as hygienic requirements, housing, occupational recreational conditions of health. These are closely linked to conservation and economic utilisation of the natural resources. As we have already noticed this role of the state is manifest in the planning and general control of urban and rural development. The state has a command over resources and it is expected to curb the selfish aims of those who waste resources for immediate gains. The state can undertake vast construction whose benefits can be enjoyed by all for a long time. It has the authority of preserving the natural resources which are threatened by the growth of industrialism. It is a separate matter if a state fails to carry out these activities. There is no political principle to stop the state from playing the role of a legitimate protector of the natural resources and of exploiting natural resources only in judicious manner, in an-environmentally conscious manner.

In conserving and developing human capacities as well as economic resources, the State in expected to promote education and cultural life. In this fashion we can go on describing the state's role because its range as a social agent is vast and limited by only the instruments at its command. One conditions of an ordered society is that it shall be protected by a power which can punish violations. The State has a negative role to play when it has to use force. The force at the State's command makes the community to learn and to entrust to the state the right of enforcement. In a way, the state's role is also to prevent, by using the weapon of force, interruptions in its work. So you can say that the state has both a positive and negative role to play.

Within the comprehensive structure of the state, from time to time, appear temporary collectivities. They lead separate and independent life in the form of associations. They serve the interests for which the state does not or cannot play role. We will now turn to the role of these associations.

Activity 1

Describe, in a note of 300 words, the Indian State's role in solving the problems of illiteracy, overpopulation, low standard of health, poor state of medical facilities and disregard for environmental issues. For preparing the note, read daily newspapers and weekly magazines. Also, interview politically active leaders in your area.

28.4 NON-STATE ASSOCIATIONS

Neither parts of the state nor its mere subjection, non-state or other associations exist in their own right. In certain cases, role of the state and that of other associations overlap. For example, in the sphere of education, the Constitutions insists on universal education and the State is expected to make provision for primary education. At the same time we find also the existence of independent voluntary bodies imparting elementary education through various methods. Further, some areas in which other associations have traditionally played a role, have been transferred to the state. For example, previously trade unions provided relief to the unemployed. Now in many societies the State has taken over this responsibility.

One can assert that the state plays an overwhelming role in development with social justice and promotion of the interests of the disadvantaged. This does not, of course, imply that the role of the other associations is reduced to insignificance. In most areas of social problem, the importance of efforts of other associations has in fact increased, and not decreased. Let us now discuss the nature of other associations.

i) Nature of Other Associations

Associations other than the state are recognised by their voluntary nature. Taking part in the activities of voluntary associations, like political parties, trade union and professional bodies is considered a way of forming a link between the marginal groups and the rest of society. In countries such as the United State of America, voluntary associations are held as significant components of participatory democracy. They integrate the individual or family with the wider society. By the voluntary nature of an associations we mean that it members participate in its activities as a result of their own volition. But you should not equate voluntarism with people's participation in the process of socio-economic development/change.

ii) Difference between Voluntary Effort and People's Participation

Often, associations mobilise people to help themselves by exploring their own potential to solve their problems. But people's participation should not be treated as identical to voluntary effort. It is possible to find that some individuals decide to form an association for undertaking a certain programme. The association many work out its plans and strategies to carry out the programme. This would be known as a voluntary effort. Only when in addition the association seeks participation of members of the community and gets it in full measure, we can legitimately add the term people's participation to the voluntary effort of some individuals. Keeping this important distinction in mind, its is hoped that you will not use the two terms interchangeably. Let us now turn to the main characteristics of voluntary bodies.

28.4.1 Features of Voluntary Organisations

Associations formed on the basis of voluntary efforts are generally called voluntary organisations (VOs). In the terminology of the United Nations, such organisations are known as non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Many use the two terms interchangeably. It is true that both VOs and NGOs are non-state associations; but the element of voluntarism is not necessarily present in all the NGOs. We shall first look at the features of voluntary organisations and then at the differences between VOs and NGOs. Material on both these points is based on Unit 1 of Block 3 of an IGNOU course on Rural Development Planning and Management: RD. D-3. You are advised to consult Block 3 of RD. D-3 for further information on this topic. Voluntary organisations are characterised by the following features.

- Voluntary membership
- Non-profit making
- Formed by the initiative of those inspired by social consciousness about the welfare of the disadvantaged people of society.
- Own set of rules and regulations and outside the administrative control of the government
- Registered VOs are entitled to receive grants-in-aid from the government. They may have to accept terms and conditions of the grants-in-aid provisions.

Often it is assumed that most VOs are familiar with the social problems at the grassroots and, therefore, they are also closer to the people. Further, they are supposed to be more committed and zealous than the bureaucratic systems of the government. For the same reason, VOs are also supposed to be more cost-effective than a bureaucratic body. You may have to find out for yourself as to what extent particular VOs conform to these assumed roles. Let us now examine how VOs are different from NGOs.

Check Your Progress 1

i) In which ways are voluntary organisations different from the State?

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ii) Give five examples of voluntary organisations and of non-government organisations in India.

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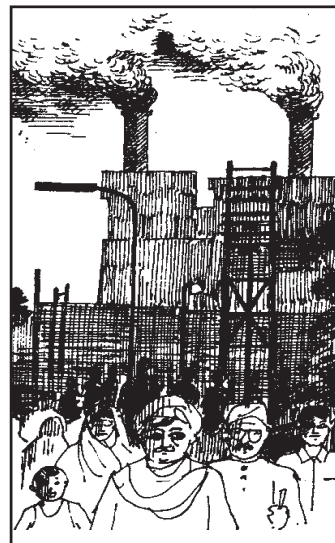
28.5 ROLE OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

As we mentioned above, voluntary organisations may be both non-political and politically oriented. In this section, we will be discussing mainly those voluntary organisations which are non-party and non-state. Pre-independence efforts as voluntary action turned out to be politically motivated action. Today, India has a wide range of voluntary organisations. Some are directly political groups while some others operate under the government's directives. The rest are of the non-political type. Kothari (1987: 441) calls that first two 'agency style groups' and the last one as 'small groups working at the grassroots'. We are going to focus on the activities of non-political small groups working at the grassroots. Involvement of voluntary organisations in the process of development is a kind of strategy of the government for mobilizing people's participation in developmental programmes of the State. In this context, voluntary action in development and social transformation has assumed a variety of roles. We will now discuss some of these roles of voluntary organisation..

28.5.1 Voluntary Organisations and Ecology

As we have already learnt in Units 25, 26 and 27 the developmental strategy through industrialism has altered the relationship between nature and human beings. This alteration threatens the survival mechanisms of nature. In the name of protecting forests, the tribal groups have been denied access to their traditional habitat. Due to the government's insistence on building large dams as 'temples' of industrial India, millions have been displaced, without receiving adequate compensation for their losses. It is quite clear that modern industrial growth disturbs the ecological balance which have been evolved by different cultural patterns of living. Most industrial civilisations are now found to be inherently anti-ecological (see illustrations below). The irony is that the very people who worked to nurture their natural environs are now forced to destroy them for the sake of their own survival (See Unit 27)

POWER STATION POLLUTION



We have to also look at the social implications of technologically inspired industrial growth. In developing countries, of such development are inequitably distributed. Consequently, many voluntary organisations have sprung up at the grassroots to ask for better compensation and rehabilitation programmes.

In fact, among the developing countries, India has the largest number of voluntary groups involved in environmental issues. Many of them are concerned with

- i) creating awareness of issues relating to the environment
- ii) protesting against public/private sector projects which are harmful to either the environment or to the people dependent on it.
- iii) solving such environmental problems as deforestation , depletion of grazing land, creation of wastelands, desertification etc.

Among the groups which focus on (i) we can name the centre for Science and Environment, Kalpavriksh, Delhi Science Forum, Lokayan, Bombay Natural History Society. There are also groups involved in but are scattered all over the country, opposing the present forest and wasteland policies , big dams, nuclear stations, missile testing ranges. Organisations such as Appropriate Technology Group, Lucknow; ASTRA, Bangalore ; MCRC, Madras; DGSM, Chamoli, are involved in using technologies which are environment friendly and ecologically benign. They can be grouped as those involved in (iii) of the above listed concerns. The Kerala Shastra Parisad is an example of a group which is involved in almost all of the above three concerns.

Apart from the above mentioned better known groups, there are many small ones operating to save endangered species, preserving old monuments, planting useful trees and repairing old tanks and bunds.

Groups involved in voluntary action to focus interest on environmental issues use a wide range of strategies, ranging from the media to protest meetings, petitions in court and building networks. Stopping of the proposed Forest Bill in 1982 was the result of such strategies. The debate on the construction of the Narmada Valley Project, Tehri Dam, the Munna Dam and Inchampalli Dam or the Koel Karo Dam is another example of voluntary efforts at the grassroots. The efforts are aimed at giving a direction to development which is pro-people and pro-environment. Efforts of DGSM at Chamoli have demonstrated how a mixed species tree plantation scheme with people's participation can provide an alternative to government sponsored and unsuccessful schemes of afforestation. This description should not give you an impression that all is well with voluntary groups working for environmental protection. Like all other voluntary groups they too face many problems which we will discuss in section 28.6 of this unit. We will now move on to the voluntary organisation's role in the area of social problems faced by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

28.5.2 Role of Voluntary Organisations for Development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

You have already learnt in Block 6 of this course about the problems of denied opportunities in the case of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. As shown by Prasad (1987: 588-612), among these groups, missionaries have played a remarkable role in areas of education, health and human rights. For example, the American missionaries opened schools in Nagaland as early as 1830. Lutheran missionaries opened schools in the latter part of the 19th century for both boys and girls in the Chotanagpur area of Bihar. They started dispensaries to serve the Christian and non-Christian public (see Vidyarthi 1977: 40). Later, the Roman Catholic missionaries began their work in the Chotanagpur area.

The missionaries did initially make an effort to convert the people to Christianity. They did not succeed in these efforts. So, to attract the tribals they began to help them in such non-religious affairs as land rights and services. They even took their cases to court and won them in favour of the tribals. This established their credibility in the eyes of the Chotanagpur tribals. According to Roy (1931) the tribals were also protected by missionaries from the clutches of moneylenders. Father Hoffman, a Catholic missionary, organised a cooperative society in 1909. The network of this society in the whole of Chotanagpur provided a strong foothold to the Catholic missionaries in this area. In the tribal area of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, the missionaries worked for improvement in education and health of the tribals.

Later, during the freedom movement, in 1921, Thakkar Bapa, a Gandhian, established an Ashram at Mirakhedi in Panchmahal District. He set up another organisation, known as Bhil Seva Mandal at Dohad in Gujarat. Not only these two, he established 21 such institutions in various parts of India. Dhebar (1961: 303) has described the history of his role in social service as 'a romance of social work in India'. Thakar Bapa's organisations worked in the field of education and public health. Following this, voluntary efforts to solve the socio-economic problems of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Bihar were initiated at Seva Kendra. In the 1939 session on the All India Congress at Ramgarh, national leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Patel resolved to work for the well being of the primitive and backward sections of Indian society. Rajendra Prasad and his colleague, Sri Narayanji, started Seva Kendra and encouraged people to learn to read and write.

The Banvasi Seva Mandal at Mharajpur in Mandla, another voluntary organisation in Madhya Pradesh, was established in 1945-46. It worked in the area of education among the tribals. It managed also an agricultural farm, three cooperative societies, a mobile dispensary, a training centre for Panchayati Raj etc.

We find that throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, voluntary efforts played significant role. This role was primarily in the area of religion. But in order to increase its appeal, action took place outside the realm of religion. Such organisations as Harijan Sevak Sangh, Nai Talim Sangh and Leper Society represented the humanistic tradition in voluntary action (Prasad 1987: 593).

In India, voluntary efforts after 1947 received a further impetus from governmental support. The government made efforts to work with voluntary agencies for solving the socio-economic problems to backward communities. Many organisations came to the forefront in the tribal areas. These organisations received financial support from the government and the public. For example, Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh was established in 1948 with the purpose of bringing tribal communities into the mainstream of socio-cultural development of India. This institution had its affiliated bodies all over India. It played a significant role in the formation of government policy for tribal welfare.

Further, organisations such as the Ramkrishna Mission, the Servants of India Society, Seva Sangh, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Kasturba Samarak Nidhi, Bharatiya Lok Kala Mandir have made a noticeable impact on public life in India. Educational and medical institutions run by these organisations are quite well-known for their successful role in producing well-trained personnel in the areas of education and health.

Most voluntary organisations play a role in aiding participatory democracy. They take away much of developmental effort from the governmental to the voluntary sector. If allowed they play a successful role in planning, implementation and evaluation of development projects. It has been felt that voluntary organisations can further play important roles in several field of development of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. For example, as Prasad (1987: 607) suggests, they can work for correctly recording the landholdings of tribals. They can identify the nature and extent of bonded labor in the tribal areas of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Ecological study of primitive tribal groups by voluntary organisations would tell us about their social organisations and the relationships they have with their physical environment. They can also look in the agricultural practices of shifting cultivation in the tribal and hilly areas. There are very few studies of tribal women, who have not yet benefited from developmental efforts.

We have, in the above two sub-sections, discussed the role of voluntary organisations in ecological movements and in the development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Now we will look at the nature of problems faced by voluntary organisations.

Activity 2

Select a voluntary organisation of your choice and find out about its activities. Write a note of 250 words on its objectives and method of functioning.

28.6 PROBLEMS FACED BY VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

We find that voluntary efforts in India are represented by a variety of groups and individuals. Differences in size, ideology, concern, focus and impact characterise the voluntary sector. Functioning of voluntary organisations is often sporadic and appears in interrupted sequences. This reflects poor planning of ill-conceived programmes. As soon as some kind of momentum is gained and a take-off stage is reached, there comes a long spell of inactivity. Often, voluntary effort remains alive as long as outside help is forthcoming. It stops with the withdrawal of outside source of support – financial or organisational or inspirational. Why it is so?

A striking fact about voluntary action in India is that nearly all of its initiated by outsiders who have to sooner or later leave the place. By and large, as soon as the outside element departs, the developmental effort crumbles and vanishes. Old structures reappear and the status quo is once again ruling the scene. In order to avoid this, it is necessary for voluntarism to grow at grass-roots. The leadership need to come from within the group rather than outside it. Besides this major problem, other factors in the way of voluntary action are as follow:

- i) Most voluntary organisations are happy to work among accessible and relatively better-off groups. Here, they need to make little effort to get results. They do not take on challenges of acute poverty-ridden areas.
- ii) Majority of voluntary groups lack in independent source of income. They depend on an external financial base. Haunted by lack and uncertainty of funds, many of them are compelled to stop functioning mid-way. Whenever funding comes from the government, perennial delays and

cumbersome procedures in the bureaucracy hit the smooth functioning of their projects. Even well planned projects suffer from delays at the implementation stage.

Today we have a very large flow of funds from foreign donor agencies to non-governmental organisations in India. Such bodies, in order to receive funds from foreign agencies, have to register with the Home Ministry. According to Maheshwari (1987: 506), in 1984, foreign contributions to Indian voluntary sector were Rs. 254 crores and increased to 350 crores in 1986. the major donor countries were USA, West Germany, Great Britain, Switzerland, Canada, Holland and Italy. In India, the states of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal, Karnataka, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were the main recipients of foreign funds. In case any misuse of funds is proved, the Home Ministry can revoke the registration of the erring agencies. For example, in 1986, registrations of 27 voluntary groups were revoked for violation of rules. It is alleged that often foreign funds are a cover for spy-activity and/or religious conversion efforts. Voluntary organisations in this situation are faced with a real dilemma of accepting or not accepting foreign funding.

- iii) At present, voluntary action is not always initiated by inspired individuals. It has now acquired the status of professionalism. Its focus has shifted from individuals to communities, demanding various skills of trained personnel. Professionalised experts with appropriate training have come to expect corresponding high returns for their skills. Not all organisations can afford them. With the emergence of a certain pattern of employment in the voluntary sector, many young persons join a voluntary group only to move up the ladder. Some of them have little regard for the needs of their particular projects.
- iv) Maheshwari (1987: 567) has pointed out that voluntary organisations are often harassed by the governmental machinery. Only a common platform from by solidarity of bodies may force the governmental bureaucracy to behave more responsibility. In some areas, local landlords, state level legislators and other power holders have threatened voluntary agencies which happen to challenge their unjust supremacy in all spheres of life. Again, in such circumstances, an isolated voluntary body can do little to survive while of federation of voluntary bodies may successfully support its member organisations.
- v) In the case of environmental movements, voluntary bodies are often faced with the problem of lack of expertise and knowledge of environmental problems. Awareness about the problem of ecological balance is of recent origin. Lack of systematically recorded data about ecological disasters in terms of the depletion of forests, soil erosion and over consumption of natural resources dilute many arguments offered by voluntary groups against the government's so-called development projects. Usually, voluntary groups have limited budgets and cannot undertake surveys and environmental impact analyses. For example, voluntary groups, active in the case of Bhopal gas disaster, could not even test samples of water, plant life and food, affected by the gas leakage.

The small size of environmentalist voluntary groups denies them a sympathetic hearing. For example, groups agitating against the building of

dams over the Narmada have been active for the last ten years. Their leaders are arrested and released after a few days and the authorities do not seem to take them seriously. Protest efforts of some groups are considered anti-national, a threat to law and order. The state comes down on them with punitive action.

- vi) Strategies of protest and public interest litigation (see Key Words) by voluntary groups prove to be of little use. This shows the little impact of voluntary action on very important issues of public concern. For example, the government of India gave a clearance to the construction of Tehri Dam while a case against its construction was listed for hearing in the Supreme Court. There is little public debate on issues taken up by voluntary organisations. Many such bodies are active in asking for the rehabilitation of persons displaced due to development projects. No public debate has taken place on the multiple displacement of 150,000 people in the Singruli region (see Jain 1993).
- vii) The politics of utilisation of the natural resources is played by very strong lobbies of powerful interests. The voluntary sector is not able to acquire a 'hearing space' in this power-game. Environmentalists try to explain that issues related to the natural resources are not only those of just distribution. They are fundamentally linked to our understanding of human survival and nature. In a mad rush for consumption oriented cultural practices, nobody wants to give a hearing to environmentalists. This takes voluntary groups to a dead-end. They have to remain satisfied with their efforts to sensitise the public and policy makers to the negative impact of development projects. More than this they cannot expect. They cannot expect to modify governmental policies about its cherished development projects.

Problems faced by the voluntary sector are many as well as formidable. The question is what can be done about this situation. In the next section we will discuss some of the strategies voluntary bodies can employ to improve their effective

Check Your Progress 3

- i) In your opinion, should a voluntary organisation receive funds from foreign donors? Give reasons for your answer.

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- ii) Has the State already played an important role in solving the problems of socio-economic backwardness of the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes? Give reasons for your answer.

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28.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR PROMOTION OF VOLUNTARY EFFORTS

Our discussion so far has focused on the role of voluntary organisations in the area of socio-economic problems. We have also looked at difficulties faced by the voluntary sector in India. In the last section we spoke about the need of a common platform which can be formed by a federation of voluntary bodies. In fact, in states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, voluntary agencies have formed a federation. This will bring about a feeling of solidarity among them, giving impetus to gather some clout for gaining influence in political terms. Let us see in what other ways they can strengthen their efforts.

i) **Culture and Community Orientation**

People's participation in the Chipko movement (see Jain 1984) has proved that grassroots can provide a strong and sustainable basis to a movement. Without a widespread organisational structure and without a top heavy pattern of leadership, this movement has successfully achieved its objectives of conserving forests and providing the local people control over community resources. The common people of the area have been able to impress upon the outsiders that forests are not a resource for commercial exploitation. The forests are givers of life, livelihood and of water and healthy air. This world-view of Himalayan people has provided them the strength to fight the outsider who have destroyed the culture of their area. The Chipko movement has now risen above the mainstream discourse. It is solidly keeping alive the cultural traditions of the area and undertaking ambitious programmes of afforestation. We can say that this is a way of finding one's way out of the problems mentioned above.

ii) **Organisations of Beneficiaries**

There has been a tradition of voluntary organisations entering certain territories for their activities . Perhaps now the time has come for voluntarism, to grow form within. Those who wish to derive benefits from welfare action need to organise themselves. They need to demand at a political platform and pressurise the administration to provide them amenities and other benefits. For example, agrarian laws have in many states remained mere showpieces. Small and marginalised farmers need to organise and demand effective implementation of agrarian laws.

iii) **Inbuilt and Ongoing Evaluation**

Groups interested in not only the improvement of socio –economic conditions of the deprived sections of society but also in the way of functioning of those involved in the work need to have a process of inbuilt and ongoing evaluation of their projects. In addition a time bound and overall evaluation of projects can provide a cumulative assessment of achievements over a project of time. The final judges of a project and its success are the people themselves. All evaluatory exercises bring to the forefront problem areas and a need to improve on performance by all concerned. Techniques for evaluating such tangibles as economic status, improved health are available and must be used by voluntary bodies to examine their performance. It is necessary to develop methods to evaluate intangibles such as people's participation and democratic processes of decision making, greater awareness of issues etc.

Further, it is important for voluntary agencies to strike a balance between qualitative and quantitative analysis of issues. When a group's focus is on material development, quantitative analysis will be more useful. Similarly when the focus is on people's growth and their organisation, the group will need to undertake qualitative analysis. As material development and the development of people's awareness of their rights and corresponding duties go hand in hand, it would be advisable to pay sufficient attention to both the qualitative and quantitative analysis. Every material gain for the deprived sections must also accompany the ability of the people to receive benefits and to increase their bargaining power. Often, voluntary organisations reject one aspect in favour of the other. But to be effective in the long-run, they need to have a balanced approach of combining gains in economic development with corresponding gains in the organisational power of the beneficiaries.

Activity 3

Imagine you are planning to start an environmental group which will get involved in recycling of waste material. What kind of waste material would you first collect? What will be your order of priorities if you are going to recycle three types of waste material? Write a short note on your plans.

28.8 LET US SUM UP

We started this unit with a discussion of the state as an association. The state was defined as a special category of association. Its characteristics distinguish it from other associations. This was followed by a discussion of the role the state plays in maintaining laws and order within a territory and in maintaining the general well being of its inhabitants. Then we examine the nature and role of non-state or other associations.

Differences were explained between voluntary and non-governmental organisations. We selected two areas, environmental movements and development of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes, for illustrating the role of voluntary organisations. Then we discussed some of the problems facing voluntary bodies. Finally suggestions were offered to promote voluntary efforts in India.

28.9 KEY WORDS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Association | : An organisations of persons with a common interest. |
| Ecology | : A branch of science dealing with the interrelationship of organisms and their environments. |
| Participatory Democracy | : Active partnership of the common people in a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people. |
| Public Interest Litigation | : Intervention by a social action group to make judicial system or courts accessible to the deprived, the poor and victims of social oppression. |

Voluntarism	: Intentions or motives of those who are assumed to act by their own will and not as determined by the social structure.
Sovereignty	: An autonomous state, free from external control.

28.10 FURTHER READINGS

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28.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) The state is not like other associations. It is a category by itself. It is because the state has certain characteristics it does not share with other associations. These are (i) territory, (ii) sovereignty, (iii) coercive power.
- ii) The state is found within a society and, therefore, the state is a narrower entity than a society. It is possible to find a state which encompasses several societies within its territory. Society is also taken as a concept which refers to the chain of relationships between individuals, between individuals and groups and between one group and another. In that sense, the concept of state refers to only particular types of relationships.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) A voluntary organisation seeking funds from foreign donors is the one which has no or little sources of income of its own. Such a body has to depend on funds from national/international donors. In the light of the globalisation of issues, particularly ecological issues, it makes good sense to pool both resources and efforts for creating a better ecologically balanced world.
- ii) It is neither proper to expect the state to solve all the problems of any group of society, nor it is possible for the state to solve all the problems of any group of society. In this sense, we do not find that the state has already solved the problems of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Their problems are many and they need to be solved by both the state and voluntary efforts.

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