
UNIT 13 GANDHI, CAPACITY BUILDING AND EMPOWERMENT

Structure

13.1 Introduction

Aims and Objectives

13.2 Empowerment

13.2.1 Meaning of Power

13.2.1.1 Dimensions of Power

13.2.2 What is Empowerment?

13.2.2.1 Diverse meaning of Empowerment

13.2.2.2 Dimensions of Empowerment

13.2.3 The Process of Empowerment

13.2.4 Why is Women's Empowerment Important?

13.2.5 The Key Elements of Women's Empowerment

13.2.6 Empowerment Paradigm

13.2.7 Marginalisation and Empowerment

13.2.8 Economics and Empowerment

13.2.9 Personal Development and Empowerment

13.3 Capacity Building

13.3.1 Specifications of Capacity Building

13.4 Gandhi on Empowerment

13.4.1 Gandhi on Empowerment of Women

13.4.2 Women as Equal to Men

13.5 Constructive Programme

13.6 Summary

13.7 Terminal Questions

Suggested Readings

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Empowerment is now increasingly seen as a process by which the one without power can gain greater control over their lives. This means control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology. It involves power to, power with and power within. Some define empowerment as a process of awareness and conscientisation, of capacity building leading to greater participation, effective decision-making power and control leading to transformative action. This involves ability to get what one wants and to influence others on our concerns.

Sociological empowerment often addresses members of groups that social discrimination processes have excluded from decision-making processes through - for example - discrimination based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, or gender. Empowerment as a methodology is often associated with feminism.

With reference to women the power relation that has to be involved includes their lives at multiple levels, family, community, market and the state. Importantly, it involves at the psychological level women's ability to assert themselves and this is constructed by the 'gender roles' assigned to her specially in a culture which resists change like in India.

Aims and Objectives

After studying the Unit, you will be able to understand

- The specification of Capacity Building;
- The meaning of power and empowerment;
- The key elements, dimensions and process of women's empowerment;
- Gandhi's views on empowerment.

13.2 EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment has become an important concept today. Earlier the term was used by political scientists. They used it in a very restricted sense. Normally by power they meant political power or usually the power politically assigned to an institution by the Constitution or administrative rules. Later on the concept became a tradition of the social sciences. With the coming of the globalisation, empowerment is now being increasingly applied to the economically poor nations and the weaker and the subaltern masses of people. In the developing countries we often speak about empowerment of the blacks, the backward and the deprived sections of the society. During the period from 1960s to 1970s there has been a tremendous rise of feminisation. All over Europe, women came out against the male domination and patriarchy and voiced their concern for the empowerment of women.

13.2.1 Meaning of Power

Power could be defined as control over human, social, material, or intellectual resources. Social divisions, such as gender and ethnicity, are used to perpetuate this control. Power is not a finite commodity that is given and taken: there is the potential for 'win-win' and for all parties to gain. Michel Foucault says that power is nothing but knowledge. In other words those who have power have knowledge. On the basis of such an understanding of power and empowerment, we would refer to some propositions which emerged from the writings of Foucault:

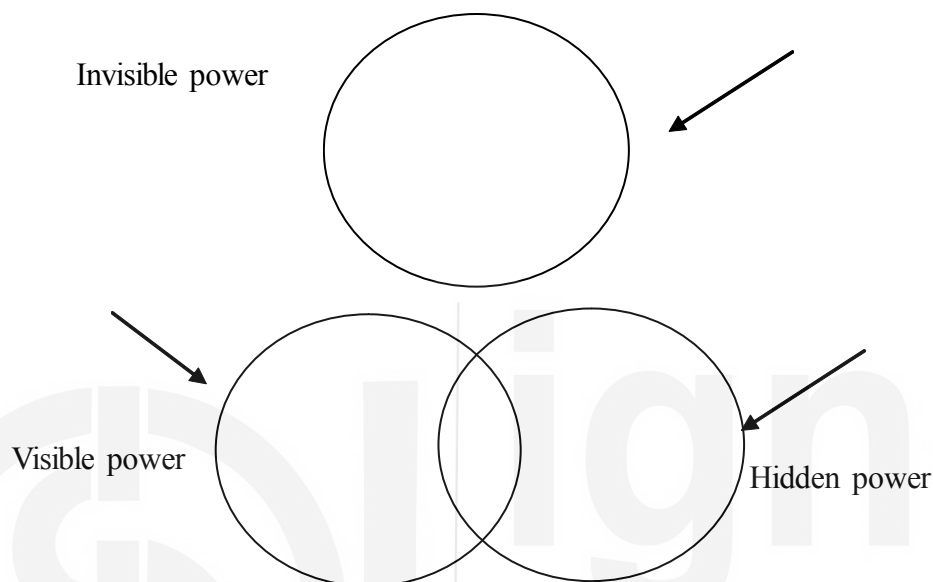
- Power is not something that is acquired, seized or shared, something that one hold on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points;
- Relations of power are found in economic processes, knowledge relationships and sexual relations;
- Powers come from below: that is, there is no binary and all encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations. One must suppose that manifold relationships of force that take shape and come into play in the machinery of products in families, limited groups and institutions;
- Power relations are both intentional and non-subjective.

13.2.1.1 Dimensions of Power

Power relations can be changed if we understand and focus on all three dimensions of power (rather than only on the power we can see), and if we think about the power we have in different ways.

An example of invisible power is the beliefs and attitudes that shape our understanding about who we are (socialisation).

The power that we can ‘see’, demonstrated in things like structures and behaviours.



The ‘rules’ determine who has power. Some people (i.e. those with power) know these rules and can see them; others cannot.

The circles above are examples of ‘power over’, and are characterised by dominance, control, and authority. But other types of power are available to us, such as:

- ‘Power with’ – collective power, if we all agree on something
- ‘Power within’ – internal power
- ‘Power to’ – the will to do things.

13.2.2 Meaning of Empowerment

It means different things for different people and groups at different levels, and in different places and times. We find its use in two ways: empowerment of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and women. The second meaning which is very popular with the government is the Seventy-Third Constitutional Amendment. The Panchayati Raj has given new powers to women at different tiers of the local government. It is very interesting to note that the sociology and social anthropology have not yet used empowerment in terms of the “new development” attained by the weaker sections.

Power in the traditional Indian society has been hierarchically distributed. There is always much power with the men than with the women. As a result of this kind of unequal power distribution the Indian society has empirically become male dominated. There have

been disabilities in society due to caste and gender inequalities. Democracy in this context is a new value structure which guarantees equal power to both the sexes. And thus, at least in theory gender status does not suffer from unequal power distribution. But this is all in theory. When the Seventy-Third Constitutional Amendment came into existence, it became clear that there is desire to break the unequal power distribution between male and female. The amendment thus became a historical occurrence. It is in this context that empowerment has become a popular word among political scientists, sociologists, and media.

13.2.2.1 Diverse Meaning of Empowerment

We cannot empower others on our terms, but we recognise that people's consciousness and awareness may change as their practical circumstances change. Empowerment is not something that is 'done' to people; it is about releasing their potential. Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Central to this process are actions which build both individual and collective assets, and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organisational and institutional context which govern the use of these assets.

According to Andre Beteille, "Empowerment is about social transformation. It is about radical social transformation; and it is about the people – ordinary, common people, rather than politicians, experts and other socially or culturally advanced persons, above all it is about power, although the concept of power contained in it is generally left unspecified" (Beteille, 1999, p.590).

13.2.2.2 Dimensions of Empowerment

Empowerment is both a means to an end in itself. The term adopts itself differently in situations and signification is both variable and fluid. Actually the idea of empowerment is drawn from the context of human rights. Human rights, in this sense, are broader. It includes basic needs, economic security, capacity building, skill formation and dignifies social existence. The Indian Constitution has created several rights. It allows a large number of rights for all members of the society irrespective of their social and economic standing. The constitutional amendments give right to the weaker sections and particularly scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Contextually, therefore, empowerment in the Indian context stands for transformation of people belonging to weaker segments. It means that hidden meaning of empowerment is not only political empowerment, but also social and cultural empowerment. In other words, empowerment relates to social transformation among the women. The idea of empowerment is thus, political, economic, psychological, social and cultural. It would be erroneous to think that empowerment consists of political power. It is hoped that with the attainment of political power through Panchayati Raj, the women will also acquire economic and socio-cultural power. There are a large number of situations wherein decisions have to be made at the family, caste, village and regional levels. The empowerment given to women would effect all these level of life.

Several dimensions are given as below:

Psychological:

- Self-Confidence
- Creating space
- Acquiring knowledge

Economic:

- Income security
- Entrepreneurial skills
- Ownership of productive assets

Social:

- Community action
- Action for rights
- Social inclusion
- Literacy

Cultural:

- Redefining cultural rules and norms (ethnic, gender)
- Recreating cultural practices

Political:

- Participation in political process
- Accountable governance

13.2.3 The Process of Empowerment

It is the process which enables one to gain power, authority and influence over others, institutions or society. Empowerment is probably the totality of the following or similar capabilities:

- having decision-making power of one's own;
- having access to information and resources for taking decision;
- having a range of options from which you can make choices (not just yes/no, either/or);
- ability to exercise assertiveness in collective decision-making;
- having positive thinking on the ability to make change;
- ability to learn skills for improving one's personal or group power;
- ability to change others' perception by democratic means; involving in growth process and changes that is never ending and self-initiated;
- increasing positive self-image and overcoming stigma; and
- increasing one's ability in discreet thinking to sort out right and wrong.

In short, empowerment is the process that allows one to gain the knowledge and attitude needed to cope with the changing world and the circumstances in which one lives.

A process of empowerment should lead to:

- Increased self-awareness
- Ability to organise
- Control over resources
- Assertion of rights/self-determination

13.2.4 Why is Women's Empowerment Important

It is important for reasons of both principle and pragmatism. It is the right thing to do because women have the same rights as men, but it is also necessary thing to do, because it will make the world better place and help us attain human development.

13.2.5 The Key elements of women's empowerment

The key elements of women's empowerment include both processes and outcomes.

Processes

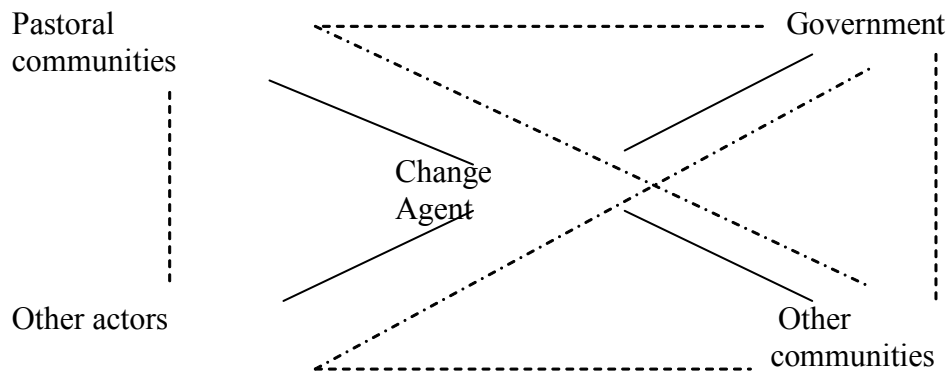
- Power is demanded not given; we cannot say that we 'gave' women power
- Analyse invisible, hidden, and visible power and how these are maintained and then develop a new definition of power ('power with' and 'power within', 'power to')
- Education is central
- An external force or stimulant is needed
- Create a political force of women that is listened to – a movement from the ground
- Spiral, not cyclical: every change brings greater changes
- Make separate spaces and time for women to go through the process (but eventually come back to the mainstream).

Outcomes

- Must be visible – we need to see that women have changed, and evidence of broad impact.
- Begins with the mind and with changing how women perceive themselves – their abilities, capacities and potential.
- Involves redistribution of power and control over resources
- Changes both women's position (in relation to men) and their condition (material, everyday needs).
- Benefits women in general, not just individual women (collective not individual effort).
- Transformation takes place at many levels – in women's minds; within development workers as change agents; in the creation of an enabling environment.

13.2.6 Empowerment Paradigm

Power lives in the relationships between people. In any situation there are many interdependent relationships, for example:



The ‘change agent’ that seeks to transform these relationships could be anyone – NGO, one of its partners, or a department within government.

The ‘change agent’s role is one of facilitation, and starts with trying to create a common understanding among these different players. Empowerment begins in the mind, and therefore each player’s understanding of power within these relationships holds the key.

13.2.7 Marginalisation and Empowerment

“Marginalised” refers to the overt or covert within societies whereby those perceived as lacking desirable traits or deviating from the group norms tend to be excluded by wider society and ostracised as undesirables.

Sometimes groups are marginalised by society at large, but governments are often unwitting or enthusiastic participants. For example, the U.S. government marginalised cultural minorities, particularly blacks, prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This Act made it illegal to restrict access to schools and public places based on race. Equal opportunity laws which actively oppose such marginalisation, allow increased empowerment to occur. It should be noted that they are also a symptom of minorities’ and women’s empowerment through lobbying.

Marginalised people who have no opportunities for self-sufficiency become a minimum, dependent on charity or welfare. They lose their self-confidence because they cannot be fully self-supporting. The opportunities denied to them also deprive them of the pride of accomplishment which others, who have those opportunities, can develop for themselves. This in turn can lead to psychological, social and even mental health.

Empowerment is then the process of obtaining these basic opportunities for marginalised people, either directly by those people, or through the help of non-marginalised others who share their own access to these opportunities. It also includes actively thwarting attempts to deny those opportunities. Empowerment also includes encouraging, and developing the skills for self-sufficiency, with a focus on eliminating the future need for charity or welfare in the individuals of the group. This process can be difficult to start and to implement effectively, but there are many examples of empowerment projects which have succeeded.

One empowerment strategy is to assist marginalised people to create their own nonprofit organisation, using the rationale that only the marginalised people, themselves, can know what their own people need most, and that control of the organisation by outsiders can

actually help to further entrench marginalisation. Charitable organisations lead from outside of the community, for example can disempower the community by entrenching a dependence on charity or welfare. A nonprofit organisation can target strategies that cause structural changes, reducing the need for ongoing dependence. Red Cross, for example, can focus on improving the health of indigenous people, but does not have authority in its charter to install water-delivery and purification systems, even though the lack of such a system profoundly, directly and negatively impacts health. A nonprofit composed of the indigenous people, however, could insure their own organisation does have such authority and could set their own agenda, make their own plans, seek the needed resources, do as much of the work as they can, and take responsibility – and credit – for the success of their projects (or the consequences, should they fail).

13.2.8 Economics and Empowerment

In economic development, the empowerment approach focuses on mobilising the self-help efforts of the poor, rather than providing them with social welfare. Economic empowerment is also the empowering of previously disadvantaged sections of the population, for example, in many previously colonised African countries.

13.2.9 Personal Development and Empowerment

In the arena of personal development, empowerment forms an apogee of many a system of self-realisation or of identity (re-)formation. Realising the solipsistic impracticality of everyone anarchistically attempting to exercise power over everyone else, empowerment advocates have adopted the word “empowerment” to offer the attractions of such power, but they generally constrain its individual exercise to potentially and to feel-good uses within the individual psyche. The concept of personal development is seen as important by many employers, with emphasis placed on continuous learning, increased self-awareness and emotional intelligence. Empowerment is ultimately driven by the individual’s belief in their capability to influence events.

Empowerment can be attained through one or many ways. An important factor in the discovery and application of the human “self empowerment” lies within the tools used to unveil the truth. It has been suggested that Yoga is one such tool that can be used for more than the obvious physical benefits. When Yoga is practised, consistency of the mind/body connection is apparent. Through this connection, the individual finds him or herself with a stronger sense of self and the ability to change areas where bad habits rule, negative emotions run rampant, even controlling addictions through understanding them for what they are. It is more empowering to gain control over the self.

13.3 CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building often refers to assistance which is provided to entities, usually developing country societies, which have a need to develop a certain skill or competence, or for general upgrading of performance ability. Most capacity is built by societies themselves, sometimes in the public, some times in the non-governmental and sometimes in the private sector.

By 1991 the term had evolved and become ‘capacity building’. UNDP defined ‘Capacity Building’ as the creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks, institutional development, including community participation (of women in particular), human resources development and strengthening of managerial systems, adding

that, UNDP recognises that capacity building is a long-term, continuing process, in which all stakeholders participate (ministries, local authorities, non-governmental organisations and water user groups, professional associations, academics and others). Capacity building as “activities which strengthen the knowledge, abilities, skills and behavior of individuals and improve institutional structures and processes such that the organization can efficiently meet its mission and goals in a sustainable way.”

According to Capacity Building – Agenda 21’s definition “specifically capacity building encompasses the country’s human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities. A fundamental goal of capacity building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation among development options, based on an understanding of environment potentials and of needs perceived by the people of the country concerned” (UNCED, 1972).

Capacity building is a continuing process that enables individuals to increase their response to the challenges they face. The attainment of one capacity leads to the recognition and urge to satisfy the other. Capacity building initiatives focus on two levels of organisational and sectorial, programmes. The initiatives that focus on strengthening civil society organisations to enable them to effectively carry out their programmes, strategies and missions are called organisational capacity building initiatives

The sectorial capacity building programmes emphasise the civil society as a sector, creating organisations and institutions that enhances the abilities of communities of civil society organisations (CSO) to affect development outcomes. The sector building programmes also enhance the ability of the sector to deal with other sectors. Organisations’ capacity building focus on a variety of issues such as organisational identity; programmes; planning implementations; leadership; organisational management and financial resources, etc.

This form of capacity building is usually undertaken to increase effectiveness and impact of organisations. Capacity building interventions at the sectorial level focus on strategically positioned organisations. The thrust is on educating the public about the importance of the concerned sector and there by enabling better coordination and boundary management. Therefore, capacity building is critical to local change and is also to promoting sustainable development. Training, Workshops, Seminars, Symposia, Exposure visits are all tools of capacity building.

13.3.1 Specifications of Capacity Building

Capacity Building is much more than training and includes:

- Human resource development, the process of equipping individuals with the understanding, skills and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively.
- Organisational development, the elaboration of management structures, processes and procedures, not only within organisations but also the management of relationships between the different organizations and sectors (public, private and community).
- Institutional and legal framework development, making legal and regulatory changes to enable organisations, institutions and agencies at all levels and in all sectors to enhance their capacities.

13.4 GANDHI ON EMPOWERMENT

Gandhi was not only a great political leader but also passionate lover of humanity. An implacable enemy of all injustice and inequality, he was a friend of the lowly and the downtrodden. The marginalised sections, women and the poor commanded his most tender attention.

13.4.1 Gandhi on Empowerment of Women

Gandhi had an instinctive understanding of women and their problems, and had a deep and abiding sympathy for them. In a letter written to Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur from Wardha on 20 October, 1936 Gandhi stated: "If you women would only realize your dignity and privilege, and make full use of it for mankind, you will make it much better than it is. But man had delighted in enslaving you and you have proved willing slaves till the slaves and the slave-holders have become one in the crime of degrading humanity. My special function from childhood, you might say, has been to make woman realize her dignity. I was once slave-holder myself but Ba proved an unwilling slave and thus "opened my eyes to my mission" (Jaya Jaitly, 1999).

Gandhi considered women as individual human beings with full and equal right to self-development and blamed men for their inferior status. He said: "woman has as much right to shape her destiny as man has to shape his." He treated women at an equal footing with men. Gandhi said: "Woman is the companion of man gifted with equal mental capacities. She has a right to participate in the very minutest detail in the activities of man and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him." (CWMG, Vol.14, p.205). He considered them supplementary to each other and emphasised that the well being of one was bound to influence the life of the other.

13.4.2 Women Equal to Men

Gandhi opined that though both men and women are equal in status and opportunities to develop their abilities, they are not identical. They are complementary to each other. They are inseparable pair and one cannot live without the other. But for him equality of sexes did not imply equality of occupation. They are different in nature, and aptitude and have varied interests and functions. Man is supreme in outward activities of a married couple and he should have a greater knowledge thereof; in domestic affairs women ought to have knowledge thereof; on the other hand, home life is entirely the sphere of women and therefore in domestic affairs women ought to have more knowledge. "Woman", he said, "is essentially the distributor and keeper of bread. She is the caretaker in every sense of the term" (Harijan, 24 February, 1940).

But insistence on the care of the home does not imply that women should consume in the slavery of the kitchen or bringing up of children (Gandhi, M. K., 1942, p.179). He instead, preferred part-time work for them so that home is not neglected. He wanted them to take some work which could supplement the income of the family. Spinning, according to him, was one of the best works they could undertake in those times. He described it as the widow's loving companion. Charkha, Gandhi believed, would enable them to safeguard their virtue. Women could work at Charkha while sitting at home. It was both constructive as well as remunerative work at their doorstep.

13.5 CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

What is more, in the process the sinews of civil society are weakened, virtually giving the wielders of the state power total freedom to act as they wish. Gandhi was of the confirmed opinion that instead of striving for power, we should channelise our energies for the benefit of the humanity. In keeping with this principled stand, he assigned a big revolutionary role to the constructive programmes. Some of the main items of this Programme are: Khadi work, development of village industries, national education, removal of the untouchability and Hindu Muslim unity. Subsequently, he set up a single purpose organisations like All India Spinner Association, Adimjati Sevak Sangh and Harijan Sevak Sangh and a host of other organisations. He also encouraged and helped in setting up of thousands of Ashrams largely manned by constructive workers. Thus, constructive programmes significantly contributed to uplift of the weaker sections of the society. In the process they strengthened the social fabric of civil society, while making solid contributions to social revolution.

13.6 SUMMARY

In essence, empowerment speaks to self determined change. It implies bringing together the supply and demand sides of development – changing the environment within which poor people live and helping them build and capitalise on their own attributes. Empowerment is a cross-cutting issue. From education and health care to governance and economic policy, activities which seek to empower poor people are expected to increase development opportunities, enhance development outcomes and improve people's quality of life. Empowerment without sharing is not possible. Sharing requires sacrifice. In short, this is the Gandhian formula of sharing and sacrifice. Nobody has done so much as Gandhi did to bring out the masses of illiterate women from the four walls of their houses. He wanted the capacity in them be aroused by making them conscious and aware to feel and realise at every step of their life that they are the builders of their nation and peaceful world.

13.7 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Discuss Gandhi's Views on Empowerment of Women.
2. How can the empowerment of Women and capacity building be achieved?
3. What is capacity building? How does it contribute to empowerment?

SUGGESTED READINGS

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UNIT 14 GRASSROOTS/PEOPLE'S INITIATIVES

Structure

14.1 Introduction

Aims and Objectives

14.2 Decentralisation

14.2.1 Different views about Decentralisation

14.2.2 The Pre-Independence Period

14.2.2.1 Approaches to Study the Concept of Panchayati Raj

14.2.2.2 PRIs for Decentralisation at the Grassroots level

14.2.3 Characteristics of decentralised co-operation in human development programmes

14.2.4 Characteristics of Decentralisation according to WHO

14.3 Strategies

14.3.1 Control from above

14.3.2 Encouragement and Information

14.3.3 Control from Below

14.4 Strength to People's Initiatives

14.5 Limits and Constraints

14.6 Dependence on the Public Funding

14.7 Summary

14.8 Terminal Questions

Suggested Readings

14.1 INTRODUCTION

During the last decades citizens have been frequently taking the initiative in reclaiming their rightful place as the catalysts of social change. The civil society is considered a “global mosaic” with new frontiers including the role of the women and youth, local community, micro-enterprise and participatory methods, which are considered indicators of a healthy society. According to the UNDP, “Civil society, together with the state and market, is one of the three “spheres” that interface in the making of democratic societies. Civil society is the sphere in which social movements become organised. The organisations of civil society, which represent many diverse and sometimes contradictory social interests...include church-related groups, trade unions, co-operatives, services organisations, community groups and youth organisations, as well as academic institutions and others” (UNDP 1993).

In the last years, a stronger attention to the problems of development and international co-operation has been given at the grass-roots level. Citizens organised in associations, groups or NGOs representing the civil society, have taken the initiative and concrete actions towards less developed countries or countries in emergency affected by either natural or man-made disasters.

The phenomenon of the citizens' participation in international co-operation activities has become more relevant than it was in the past. In the advanced industrialised societies every new generation shows more interest for the post-materialistic values than the previous one. Post-materialistic values are those oriented to "a less impersonal society" that "give more importance to the opinion of the people about the decision-making process in the working environment and in the community". These values "defend the freedom of word", give "priority to the ideas rather than money" and "try to make our towns and countryside more beautiful". On the other side, materialism aspires to "maintain a high level of economic growth" while fighting against the high cost of living". Its main objectives are to "keep a stable economy", "strengthen the defence of the country", "maintain the order of the nation", and "fight against the criminality".

Aims and Objectives

After studying the Unit, you will be able to understand

- The meaning of grassroots/people initiatives
- Approaches to the study of Panchayati Raj Institutions
- Main limits and constraints of grass-root initiatives.

14.2 DECENTRALISATION

Decentralisation brings government closer to the people. The existence of local political arenas makes it easier for ordinary citizens to participate and exert influence. When power is brought closer to the citizens, the political process becomes more tangible and transparent and more people can become involved. Decentralisation may also create a more open political system in that it implies a division of powers in society; many channels of representation and power sharing become available. This counteracts the monopolisation of power by certain elite groups, often the consequence of centralised political and administrative structures. A decentralised system is also more accessible to new political movements and minority groups in their attempts to influence politics. This is particularly important in ethnically divided societies, where political exclusion can have seriously polarising effects (Hadenius, 2001).

Decentralisation promotes participation and improves the controlling function held by the lower levels of the political system. Its greater degree of political inclusiveness may also have important conflict-dampening effects. Decentralisation—the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to subordinate or quasi-independent government organisations and/or the private sector—is a complex multifaceted concept. It is the process of dispersing decision-making governance closer to the people and/or citizen. "While frequently left undefined, decentralization has also been assigned many different meanings, varying across countries, languages, general contexts, fields of research, and specific scholars and studies."

A central theme in decentralisation is the difference between a hierarchy based on:

- Authority: two players in an unequal-power relationship; and
- An interface: a lateral relationship between two players of roughly equal power.

The more decentralised a system is, the more it relies on lateral relationships, and the less it can rely on command or force. In development jargon, decentralisation is still a

relatively new and not altogether becoming term, but it probably has the advantage of saying clearly what it intends. It implies, correctly, that past development efforts have too narrowly operated in the context of centralised inter-governmental co-operation. The concept of an 'exclusive club' still largely prevails, but international co-operation, in a decentralised mode, recognises that a "people's sector" has a growing place in development and solidarity efforts.

Currently, Decentralisation seeks to reflect the fact that genuine development involves actors beyond the mere government sector. The increasing place of "civil society", the informal groups and formal organisations and communities who have a stake in the national interest and in development, has been recognised, in large part as a result of their own efforts and contributions.

14.2.1 Different views about Decentralisation

Decentralisation and centralisation are themes that have played major roles in the history of many societies. An excellent example is the gradual political and organisational changes that have occurred in European history. During the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, Europe went through major centralisation and decentralisation. Although the leaders of the Roman Empire created a European infrastructure, the fall of the Empire left Europe without a strong political system or military protection. Viking and other barbarian attacks further led rich Romans to build up their *latifundia*, or large estates, in a way that would protect their families and create a self-sufficient living place. This development led to the growth of the manorial system in Europe. This system was greatly decentralised, as the lords of the manor had power to defend and control the small agricultural environment that was their manor. The manors of the early Middle Ages slowly came together as lords took oaths of fealty to other lords in order to have even stronger defence against other manors and barbarian groups. This feudal system was also greatly decentralised, and the kings of weak "countries" did not hold much significant power over the nobility. Although some view the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages as a centralising factor, it played a strong role in weakening the power of the secular kings, which gave the nobility more power. As the Middle Ages wore on, corruption in the church and new political ideas began to slowly strengthen the secular powers and bring together the extremely decentralised society. This centralisation continued through the Renaissance and has been changed and reformed until the present centralised system which is thought to have a balance between central government and decentralised balance of power. For the European Community, decentralisation is a development method (not a specific instrument), through which public funds support decentralised agents - NGOs and other associations working for the development of populations, representative local authorities - in their initiatives in designing and managing local or sectoral development programmes.

Decentralisation is based on a participatory development approach, centred on the needs expressed by the people concerned and their representative organisations and on how they wish to see these needs met. This enhances the grassroots democratic social fabric. Decentralisation is based on the logic of local development. It requires a programmed approach of envisaging development actions, as well as coherence between interventions by decentralised agents and governments, and co-operation between them, while respecting each other's role and autonomy.

For the European Commission, Decentralisation is a new co-operation approach: it is an action carried out by a local agent in a Southern country, defined, in the broad meaning of the term, as a non-state agent. Participation of a partner from an EU member state

is not indispensable and if there is one, the partner is not necessarily a local authority. The partner may be an NGO.

In several other countries, such as France, decentralisation is directly linked to the type of agent in the North. It is a form of co-operation undertaken by a local authority, theoretically, in partnership with another local authority in the South, Eastern Europe and also in the North. In practice, these partners are diverse and mostly associative. The different approaches may overlap due to consultations between local authorities and NGOs, in the North and South, with regard to development programmes that take into account the expectations of all citizens, especially those most marginalised. In this regard, the objectives of the different approaches converge, forming a common aspiration: development and local democracy.

At this point, it is interesting to describe the Italian point of view concerning Decentralisation. In fact, in the last years, scores of Italian local government institutions such as Regions, Provinces and Municipalities have been involved in humanitarian activities with other countries. Some activities of Decentralisation started on a small and isolated scale as twinning projects or solidarity actions. Some others have been co-ordinated by the Italian Co-operation (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) or UN organisations (UNDP and WHO). On several occasions, human and material resources belonging to the involved institutions have been integrated with the efforts of different sectors of the civil society engaged in international aid coming from the same geographical area. The Italian local government institutions have been able to mobilise technical and solidarity resources of their territory promoting human development at the community level.

The Italian model of Decentralisation links between local communities in donor countries and local communities in countries where multilateral human development initiatives are being implemented. Decentralisation is an integral part of these programmes and takes place within their overall institutional framework. The objective of these links is to create and consolidate long-term cultural, technical and economic partnerships between local communities in the North and the South as a tool for promoting human development objectives.

Decentralisation and local governance are central issues in India today. When India gained independence in 1947 it had a population of 360 million, living, apart from the Provinces under direct British rule, in 562 princely states that came together to form the Union of India under the Constitution adopted on 26 November 1949. In terms of plurality of religion, culture, language and diversity, India has no parallel. When India became a republic on 26 January 1950 it was considered a highly centralised system. In the last five decades, India has travelled a long road towards decentralisation, especially through institutions of local self-government.

14.2.2 The Pre-Independence Period

Self-governing village communities had existed in India from the earliest times. These village bodies of five persons were known as panchayats, a term that could best be translated as Village Councils. Panchayats symbolise the power of the people. Panchayats have been an integral part of the rural cultural heritage from the time immemorial in India. The term "Panchayat" literally means an assembly of five (Panch) persons, elected by villagers.

Village Councils and officials in India can be traced as far back as the Vedic age. They

looked after the affairs of the village, had police and judicial powers and were the lines of contact with higher authorities on matters affecting the villages. Custom and religion elevated them to a sacred position of authority. These panchayats were the pivot of administration, the centre of social life, and, above all, a focus of social solidarity. Besides these panchayats or village councils, there were also caste panchayats, whose role was to ensure that persons belonging to a particular caste adhered to its code of social conduct and ethics. Even during the medieval and Mughal periods, this characteristic of the village panchayats remained unchanged. So much so that Sir Charles Metcalfe, who was the Governor-General of India (1835-36), called the panchayats “the little republics”. Given the caste-ridden feudal structure of the village society of those days, these republics left much to be desired.

Dr.B. R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, did not think highly of these panchayats and, in fact, his own experience had given him a negative view of them. His well-known remark in the Constituent Assembly on 4 November 1948 that “these village republics” have been the ruination of India and that they were “a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism” has validity in several parts of the country even today. With the advent of the British, the self-contained village communities and their panchayats were replaced by formally constituted village administration. Local self-government in India – in the sense of an accountable, representative institution – was the creation of the British. Although not the first reforms of its kind, the Ripon Resolution of 1882 providing for local boards consisting of a large majority of elected non-official members and presided over by a non-official chairperson, is considered to be the Magna Charta of local democracy in India. Although the progress of local self-government on the lines of the Ripon Resolution was tardy, the term self-government had begun to gain currency and it triggered several resolutions aimed at strengthening the panchayats and local government on the part of the Congress Party, which was fighting for India’s freedom, including self-government as the political goal for the country. But most importantly, village panchayats became central to the ideological framework of India’s national movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. For him the village panchayat was a complete republic based on perfect democracy and individual freedom (Gandhi, 1942).

Mahatma Gandhi was among those who believed that for freedom to be meaningful, real power must rest with the rural communities. He wanted the survival of village Panchayats. “India’s independence”, he maintained, “must begin at the bottom”. As a result of their efforts, a provision was embodied in the Constitution to the effect that, “the state shall take steps to organize village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government.”

Gandhi wanted the village Panchayats to come together to form a strong broad-based network of republics spread all over the country, peacefully cooperating with one-another, primarily for mutual economic, social and political harmony and interaction. He further tried to examine carefully whether, in the present state, Panchayats are anywhere near the goal laid down by Gandhi and whether they are and will be proceeding in the correct direction. If not, where did we err and what should be done to rectify the defect?

14.2.2.1 Approaches to Study the Concept of Panchayati Raj

There can be two approaches for the formulation of the concept of Panchayati Raj – the normative and empirical. The Gandhian society, in its ideal form, does not approve of

vertical social positions. In an ideal Gandhian system there can be no high or low positions; there will be only social positions of equal prestige because in a classless society, where caste hierarchy is not recognised, there will not be any possibility for differentiations. All occupations will have the same ranking. The motivation for social actions will not be egoistic but altruistic. The community service will replace motivation for personal gain and competition. There will be no conflict between individuals because all actions will be non-violent. In such a society the unity of administration will be a Panchayat. Each village will be a self-sufficient, self-sustaining and self-administered republic.

14.2.2 PRIs for Decentralization at the Grassroots level

The PRIs in India are the prime instrument of decentralisation at the grass-roots level and the future hope of rural development in India lies on it. It is an institutionalised mechanism for empowering the people in general and women and weaker sections in particular. The Panchayati Raj System ushered the India in 21st Century to fulfill the new hope and aspirations of the people by incorporating Gandhian model of development with new science and technology. No model is immutable and valid for all times to come. What is, therefore needed is a trade-off between the pristine purity of Gandhian village model and the modern worldwide economic paradigms preserving some parts and not all of Gandhian model.

14.2.3 Characteristics of decentralised co-operation in human development programmes

Territorial: That is planning taking place in a well-defined area, small enough to permit the active participation of the local community and large enough to have the resources necessary to support local development plans and to constitute an authoritative interlocutor for national and international policies.

Connected: That is linked with sustainable human development programmes, which can guarantee linking local development to national and international policies. The harmonisation of micro and macro approaches is the premise for effectiveness and sustainability. By elaborating local development plans, specific projects can be inserted in a unified strategy.

Integrated: That is the necessary association of income, health, education, environment and human rights, as components of development.

Participatory: That is focusing on concerted decision-making processes between public institutions and civil society

Sustainable: That is maintaining economic and organisational support to development in linked communities, beyond the conclusion of a given co-operation project

Partnerships: That is relationships among communities in the North and South, with the different entities involved, in international development co-operation – governments, local authorities, NGOs, International organisations

Vision: That is conceiving the social development as a “common interest”, as a process which not only improves economic indicators but also the quality of human relationships and individual opportunities in all parts of the world (Italian Co-operation/UNDP/UNOPS, 1999).

14.2.4 Characteristics of Decentralisation According to WHO

The main characteristics of Decentralisation according to WHO experience are as follows.

Local Governments and Civil Society Together

The synergy between actions of local governments and civil society is a peculiar characteristic of Decentralisation. The local government (municipality, province, canton, region, etc.) is the co-ordinator of the active bodies in its area which may include citizen's associations, NGOs, trade unions, enterprises, social co-operatives, etc. As a decentralised institution, nearer to the citizens and rooted in its territory, the local government is better able to link the efforts of the different interested actors. The co-ordination role is accompanied by a specific involvement of the public services within which the local government is articulated. Decentralisation combines the expertise of the health and social services sectors with that of the economic, educational and cultural sectors.

Mobilisation of different resources

Besides the financial resources coming from local government, private organisations and the third sector*, human resources are another peculiarity of Decentralisation. Human resources are mobilised for specific activities such as training courses and technical assistance. Health and social services' expertise is used to assist institutions, which have to reorganise their work to improve efficiency and effectiveness. However, the exchange activities are stimulating all the potentials of human resources in Decentralisation. In fact, during the visits to health services, in the meetings and seminars as well as during the joint recreational activities, participants interact on both professional and social levels, opening their own experiences to each other. A bi-directional relationship among people with their relative expertise is established with mutual benefit in a long-term perspective.

Community involvement

Decentralisation, understood as local governments and civil society together, requires a participatory approach. The communities are involved because the co-operation is decentralised. Individuals, associations, institutions make part of the process in the two countries. As opposed to the rhetoric of international co-operation, the community involvement has become a common practice of Decentralisation. Community is seen as a partner in the implementation of the activities for planning and development and not a resource, which is replacing the role of public services and institutions.

Coexistence of micro and macro strategies

Decentralisation implies that the strategy of the activities is local. In fact, the community, the municipality, the canton are the main interlocutors. It is important for Decentralisation to have a specific territorial boundary taken into account with its problems and resources. However, the central level is well considered as the point of reference for policies, guidelines, and reform processes. The small and punctual initiatives implemented at peripheral level are connected with a general frame from a macro perspective. The role of UN organisations, especially that of WHO, in the health sector, is crucial to guarantee the link between the two levels.

Mediation and Negotiation

Decentralisation works through mediation and negotiation methods. Each of the parties previously involved in the armed conflict take part in the process. Former enemies joining in the participation of activities such as preliminary meetings, need assessments, planning exercises, or training sessions can strengthen the trend of reconciliation.

Sustainability

By mobilising human resources and undertaking exchange activities, Decentralisation is utilising low-cost resources, which can be used over a long period of time. This is due to the political and technical interests and, especially, human relationships. The links among people established through Decentralisation are not cold professional connections but interpersonal relationships with cultural differences and affinities, which develop a positive cycle of affection. Moreover, by activating the civil society and training the staff, Decentralisation creates better conditions within public institutions and non-profit organisations to undertake activities with their own resources.

14.3 STRATEGIES

The state government plays an important role in establishing the rules and standards to be applied. But not everything can be directed from the centre. Successful decentralisation is the result of interplay between central and local actors. What the centre can do is establish incentives and the rules of the game, thus encouraging new modes of behaviour at the local level. The trick is to initiate a local dynamic that works independently in support of political and administrative reform.

14.3.1 Control from above

Central government can do much to control local activities – both *ex ante* and *ex post*. There is a broad array of measures to be applied *ex ante* (that is, before local programmes are started). The central government can, for example, lay down specific criteria for choosing local programmes and for possible beneficiaries. It can also specify the decision processes to be applied. To ensure that local organs do things right, it is sometimes required that the central government (or its representatives) endorse local budgets, and even individual programmes. Such a requirement implies, however, that the local authorities enjoy only limited autonomy.

Another way for the state to intervene *ex ante* is to influence the recruitment of local personnel. In some successful programmes (Tendler, 1997), central government has taken charge of recruitment of the agents who should carry out the work in the field, with the intention of safeguarding an essential degree of professionalism and work-engagement among these field agents. This strategy also deprived local authorities of an important source of patronage, since the distribution of jobs is often a key factor in exerting political dominance. This was, of course, an intended consequence although no doubt, by intervening in local recruitment processes, the centre may create troublesome tensions between itself and local power-holders.

In controlling *ex post*, central authorities try by various means to supervise and monitor programmes that have been carried out. This, however, is not an easy task. As observed by Ostrom (1990), the supervision of local activities from the centre is seldom efficient, mainly because it is difficult to obtain reliable information on what really has been achieved. While people have been working (on paper at least) and money has obviously been spent, it is difficult to find out from a distance what has actually been done and what the outcome has been, especially if a number of dispersed small programmes have been operating simultaneously. New information systems that make it possible to trace economic transfers even at the local level may increase the degree of transparency (Nistads, 2001). Such systems are still scarce in poor countries, however. Besides, economic transactions are only one side of the problem. Other policy instruments that promote good performance are therefore also needed.

14.3.2 Encouragement and Information

Studies of successful reform programmes reveal that work ethics can make a big difference. Great efforts have sometimes been made to motivate field agents to perform well. It is important to create a feeling among those involved in a programme that it is not just a matter of doing a job (and getting a salary), but of carrying out a mission. An enhanced work ethic has also proven to be a side-effect of recruitment on merit. Employment on the basis of certain qualifications of a technical or personal character gives prestige to the staff in question, and this in turn tends to generate dedication in carrying out the job. When projects have got off the ground, official appreciation of good performance, e.g., by awarding prizes to successful communities and individual participants, is another way of boosting the work-spirit (Tendler, 1997).

Another important policy instrument is information to the general public about the goals of the programme, about the resources that have been invested, and about the achievements that have been made. This increases awareness in society, especially among potential beneficiaries, about the programme, and generates valuable popular support for the measures taken, thus facilitating the operation of the programme. Such publicity, moreover, tends to further the work-spirit of the agents. In addition, enhanced awareness among the general public makes it easier for society to exert control (Ibid).

14.3.3 Control from Below

The principal argument in Ostrom's study (1990) is that in order to bring about sustainable reforms, a process of change must take place in the local community. Central government can facilitate such a development in several ways, but it cannot accomplish the process itself; this can only be done by local actors on the ground. To a great extent, it is a matter of mobilising and empowering the local community. Hence, local democratisation is an essential part of the 'reform package'.

A basic weakness of centralisation is the fact that this mode of decision-making is inflexible to varying local demands and conditions. In addition, central actors are severely restrained when it comes to monitoring the actual implementation of programmes out in the field. Involving local actors with an independent responsibility for accomplishing certain activities may mitigate these drawbacks. This is a fundamental argument for decentralisation. The problem, however, is that existing local decision-makers often have their own policy agenda and are therefore likely to divert programmes for their own ends, to the detriment of the community at large (Manor, 1999). To counteract this tendency, it is necessary to inspire the stakeholders – the intended beneficiaries – to become involved in the process.

One important parameter is information, i.e., to bring knowledge about ongoing programmes to the local public. Another is popular organisation. Groups in civil society could be encouraged to become involved in the work. In the last decade there has been what almost amounts to euphoria about the significance of civil society as a vehicle for reform. Robert Putnam's study (1993) on democracy and governance in Italy has been very influential in this regard. A strong organisational life can certainly be a great asset, as it serves as a means of popular influence, and may also have important effects in the area of democratic schooling (Hadenius and Ugglä, 1996). Civil organisations can channel popular demands, and can also strengthen society's capacity for holding decision-makers accountable. Such organisations can even be made responsible for actually realising certain programmes. It should be observed, however, that civil society is a mixed bag. It may contain highly reform-minded elements. But it could also hold important elements that are

closely tied to a prevailing clientelistic structure that is mainly interested in preserving the status quo (Azfar, et al, 1999).

If reform-minded groups do exist – be they churches, unions, cooperatives, professional associations, business groups, human rights groups, etc. – it is natural to invite them to take part in the process. Sometimes however, such groups do not exist at all, or are poorly developed. Under such conditions it has at times been possible – in connection with a reform project – to establish new organisations of reform-minded local stakeholders, or to give support to existing feeble ones.

Another key factor is the existence of institutions at the grass roots level that can channel influence upwards. Community organs at the village or ward level can be supported and actively involved in the reform programme to ensure that measures meet the demands of the local community at large. Where such organs do not exist, they can be established. Some successful programmes of decentralisation have created and mandated new local decision-making bodies with broad social representation to handle certain issues (Tendler, 1997).

It is thus argued that a mixed strategy needs to be applied to effectively challenge prevailing structures of corruption, patronage and poor governance at the local level. Some kind of coalition should preferably be established between a reform-minded centre and supportive groups at the grass roots level (Johnston, 1998). Such a coalition puts the prevailing local elite – accustomed to running things its own way – under concerted pressure from both above and below. Under such pressure, it has been shown, even representatives of the 'old order' can gradually change their behaviour, either out of political necessity, or as a result of a process of socialisation into new viewpoints and attitudes (Tendler, 1997).

A major difficulty with regard to this mixed strategy is getting the rank and file activated. Political participation is often very low at the local level in developing countries; turnout in local elections is an indication of this. This is not primarily a question of a lack of support for democratic principles (Bratton and Mattes, 2001). Nor is it always due to a lack of political resources (as we know, poor people have also proved capable of forceful action). It would seem that a vital condition is lack of confidence in public organs and in what they can accomplish. Hence, it is necessary to demonstrate that public representatives can be trusted, and that political participation can really make a difference in terms of improved public services. This, in turn, presupposes access to resources and a critical administrative capacity on the part of the public organs in question.

In other words, there is a reciprocal relationship between state capacity (i.e., the quality of governance) and democratic activity. These factors mutually reinforce each other, often functioning as components in a vicious circle. Low levels of governance and state capacity breed low levels of democratic activity among the citizenry – which, in turn, makes it easy for the traditional local elite to stay in power and utilise public resources to its own advantage. We know, however, that such a circle can be broken and turned into a positive one. The interesting question is how such a dynamic can be initiated.

14.4 STRENGTH TO PEOPLE'S INITIATIVES

Political decentralisation aims to give citizens or their elected representatives more power in public decision-making. It is often associated with pluralistic politics and representative government, but it can also support democratisation by giving citizens, or their

representatives, more influence in the formulation and implementation of policies. Advocates of political decentralisation assume that decisions made with greater participation will be better informed and more relevant to diverse interests in society than those made only by national political authorities. The concept implies that the selection of representatives from local electoral jurisdictions allows citizens to know better their political representatives and allows elected officials to know better the needs and desires of their constituents.

Decentralisation as conceived by Gandhi has the basic philosophy of giving strength to small groups to be able to resist exploitation and unfairness. In another way, it gives strength to the people's initiative by actually participating in the working of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in socio, economic and political terms. Gandhi's concept of Panchayati Raj can properly work if Gandhi's ideas relating to Swadeshi, Swaraj and his views in other fields are implemented. PRI is one of the boldest and most interesting experiments of modern India.

14.5 LIMITS AND CONSTRAINTS

As a result of the absence of a specific and articulated legislative frame as well as lack of tradition and structured activities, Decentralisation experience reveals certain weaknesses and limits, referring both to the utilised approach and persons involved.

Generally speaking, there are two main problems:

1. Lack of initiative within the country on the part of the central and local governments to inform, train, co-ordinate the Decentralisation;
2. Lack of continuity concerning the engagement of Decentralised staff and sometimes-inappropriate professional skills.

14.6 DEPENDENCE ON THE PUBLIC FUNDING

Decentralisation should have a double balanced component between local government and civil society. Sometimes, the link with civil society becomes weaker due to the attraction toward public entities such local and central governments or international organisations. The state support is important; however the cultural promotion, the method innovation, the keen impulse and the creative proposals from the civil society can be limited if Decentralisation is depending too much on public funds and the links with the social context become weak.

14.7 SUMMARY

To open breaches, stimulate creativity, get out from abandon and solitude, and promote intercultural, decentralised and democratic networks. The basic idea behind this form of decentralisation is to encourage an increased opportunity for development in local communities by means of balanced exchanges in the following sectors: the economy, commerce, culture, health, education, technology, training, social protection and all other fields of integrated human development. In the process, it became increasingly clear that democratic, peaceful development was the only way to solve problems. It strengthened bonds between peoples and reduced the chance of degeneration into violence, a degeneration that is facilitated by the isolation and fragility of local populations.

14.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What do you mean by grassroots/people's initiative? Discuss their main limits and constraints.
 2. Discuss various approaches to the study of Panchayati Raj Institutions.
 3. What are the strategies that could be adopted to achieve decentralisation?
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SUGGESTED READINGS

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(Footnotes)

* "Third sector" is a controversial term, usually taken to refer to non-governmental, non-profit and voluntary initiatives in a society, including those in the field of social welfare and social protection. Seen in many texts as a vital addition to the two sectors of state/government/formal politics and market/economy

UNIT 15 MOBILISING VOLUNTARY ACTION

Structure

15.1 Introduction

Aims and Objectives

15.2 Development of the Society

15.2.1 Social Exclusion

15.2.1.1 Exclusion from the Society for the purpose of Development

15.2.1.2 Main Mechanisms of Exclusion

15.3 What makes Local Institutions Accountable?

15.3.1 The 'Role' of Civil Society

15.3.2 'Enabling Regimes' and Local Autonomy

15.3.3 Elections, Parties and Competitive Politics

15.4 Voluntary Action

15.5 Mobilising Voluntary Action through Social Movements

15.5.1 Social Movement

15.5.1.1 Types of Social Movements

15.5.1.2 Dynamics of Social Movements

15.6 Emergence or Need of Voluntary Action

15.7 Social Movements and Voluntary Action

15.7.1 Some Important Social Movements

15.7.1.1 Chipko Movement

15.7.1.2 Social Movement of Anna Hazare

15.7.1.3 Narmada Bachao Andolan

15.7.1.4 Other Social Movements

15.8 NGOs and Voluntary Action

15.8.1 Types of NGOs

15.8.2 Mixed Response of NGOs

15.8.3 Importance of NGOs

15.9 Summary

15.10 Terminal Questions

Suggested Readings

15.1 INTRODUCTION

After attaining independence most of the developing countries embarked on the path of modernisation to catch up with Western countries in the shortest possible time. The national elite in these countries bent their energy to accomplish this task. The experience gained during the first two development decades amply showed that the two concepts of modernisation and development were most inadequate to solve the problems facing the people in these countries. Although some economic growth was registered, the process

brought in its greater dependence on Western countries and widened the gulf between rich and poor in different countries. At some places this led to the emergence of powerful social movements. This invited a backlash from vested interests tending to promote parochial and obscurantist values which militated against the goals of modernity.

Aims and Objectives

After going through this Unit, you will be able to understand

- how to mobilise Voluntary action;
- the role of social movements for mobilising Voluntary Action;
- the role of NGOs for mobilising Voluntary Action

15.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIETY

Development is a social process through which human organised communities try to satisfy their needs. Development is considered to be “human” if its objective is the substantial satisfaction of everyone’s needs, and “sustainable” if satisfaction today does not prejudice that of tomorrow. Moreover, development has a low human content when it lets the normal human tendencies towards competition and selfishness degenerate into violence and prevarication; this occurs when the tendencies are not balanced by the other ones (equally normal) tending towards co-operation and social life. Thus severe imbalances are generated and the development determined actually benefits only a fifth of the world’s population.

15.2.1 Social Exclusion

Social exclusion must be considered as a precise indicator of development with low human content and so it is a phenomenon that concerns all citizens. Since exclusion is a clear signal of the lack of space and participation of a great number of people, it is also a clear sign of the low quality of the democratic processes that, instead, should be the basis of equilibrated and lasting development. Development would be the natural outcome of the adventurous and creative spirit of single individuals. It is principally the outcome of the guide-role of stronger persons, usually more bold and aggressive, that compete for success and associate to form strong groups. The competition between these groups would create development, benefiting all.

15.2.1.1 Exclusion from the Society for the Purpose of Development

Exclusion is not an occasional event. It is the supporting element of the present forms of social organisation. It is created by the fact that the individual qualities of human beings are opposed to the social ones, instead of being harmoniously combined. It is like if, during a storm, the helmsman would throw overboard all the rest of the crew to save himself. Probably, in this way, no one could be saved.

Exclusion deprives human society of the great potentialities that are generated from the natural tendency to associate to solve problems that singles could not solve alone. Nevertheless, many consider absolutely natural that those who have success in the struggle for life should assume the absolute guide-role excluding the rest.

The others are the ones who remain behind, the beneficiaries of the initiatives of the stronger groups. They are, substantially excluded, to various extents, from the most meaningful moments of development: information, development, decision-making, management

and evaluation. They are framed in programmes and actions not chosen by them. The various political systems try to capture their consent. Some in a rude way (authoritative and demagogic regimes), others more gently (the democracies which, through parties, election and parliaments, promote everyone's formal participation to social life). Substantially, though, the overwhelming majority of the people do not have the chance to be really active in the more general development processes. Social organisations based mostly on the individual's personal initiative generate systems in which some count meaningfully, and others have less and less importance, until they have none at all.

15.2.1.2 Main Mechanisms of Exclusion

Economic and social development is generally implemented with the lack of participation of the population. The following are the main mechanisms of exclusion.

- Centralism, that is the fact that all the most important decisions that concern a great number of persons that live in different and far away areas are taken in few central seats. Centralism can be corrected with decentralisation that allows public and private actors at the local levels to take a large amount of decisions on matters that can be solved locally and to be active in processes that imply central decisions.
- Hierarchy, that is the straight transmission from the top to the base of decisions regarding users and operators of public and private utilities; it can be corrected with the activation of various forms of information, communication, discussion and confrontation through which, whoever takes the decisions can keep in mind the different point of views of the operators that have to put them into practice and of the potential beneficiaries, while these can take into account the necessities of co-ordination, efficiency, cost saving etc., that managers face.
- Decision making, that is the fact that many decisions are taken without any consultation with the parties concerned, with the idea that it is better to respond, although in an imperfect way, rather than leaving matters unsolved; it can be corrected with the participation of the social parties concerned, adopting simple mechanisms which can avoid the rising of possible conflicts.
- Sectoralism, that is the fact that every aspect of economical and social life is treated separately, fragmentarily, in a simplified and non-communicative way; it can be corrected with an integrated approach, according to which, the different sectarian aspects can be treated as a whole, as function of the more complete solution of the problem that has to be faced.
- Welfarism, that is the fact that subsidies and aids are given to people in difficulty, increasing their dependence and passivity, incurring into extremely high costs; the welfare mentality is common to whoever thinks of poor, handicapped, weak groups and excluded as a dead weight for development and that their survival must be assured for pure humanitarian duties; the most severe degradation of welfarism is the institutionalisation, that looks upon a person as pure segregated objects. It can be corrected by adopting work methods that stimulate and favour the autonomy and the active role of the weaker disadvantaged, showing how, each person, notwithstanding the difficulties it faces, is a resource for development and can be viewed as an occasion for improving human relations.

The need to create a different model of development is generated by the indisputable

assertion that the models prevailing in the past have stimulated unbalanced development, which brings about a dangerous menace against pacific living and humanity's future. A defining feature of any democratic system is that decision-makers are under the 'effective popular control' of the people they are meant to govern.

15.3 WHAT MAKES LOCAL INSTITUTIONS ACCOUNTABLE?

Decentralisation – on its own – will not necessarily produce systems that are more effective or more accountable to local needs and interests. The three broad conditions under which local political bodies can be made more accountable to poor and politically marginal groups in society are:

15.3.1 The 'Role' of Civil Society

Central to much thinking about governance and accountability is the notion that effective and responsive governments require strong and vibrant civil societies to keep them in check. Perhaps the most recent and influential manifestation of this is Robert Putnam's assertion that societies with high levels of social capital (defined in terms of norms of trust and reciprocity and networks of engagement) will organise to demand better government. Underlying this proposition is the notion that 'civic engagement' – participation in a wide range of political and non-political organisations – correlates strongly with effective and responsive government. Civil society is often understood as a 'sphere' of voluntary action, which sits between the family and the state. Included here would be 'third-party' organisations (such as domestic and international NGOs), membership organisations (such as trade unions, farmers' associations, credit groups, water-user associations, etc.), political parties, Mafia arrangements, religious affiliations (formal and informal) and firms (i.e. organisations that engage in competitive economic exchange). The value of defining civil society in this way is that it attempts to differentiate between groups and relations that are organised on principles of hierarchy and control and ones that are based on the relatively altruistic motivations of the nuclear and extended family unit (Harris, 2001).

Studies of decentralisation suggest two important links between civil society organisations and local accountability. One emphasises the importance of local mobilisation. A second assertion is that external civil society organisations (i.e. organisations that exist outside of the affected communities) can empower poor and marginal groups in society (Crook and Manor, 1998). NGOs, for instance, have been shown to empower poor people by connecting them with a wider circle of allies, with whom they can mount a more effective political lobby (Johnson, 2001). Second, and related to this, they can absorb some of the costs of engaging in political action (e.g. transportation, communication and so forth). Third, and somewhat less tangibly, they can encourage what Samuel Popkin (1979, p.243) has described as 'new conceptions of identity and self-worth.' This they can do by encouraging poor people to engage in collective action (White and Runge, 1995) or by transmitting information about constitutional rights, potential allies and other political opportunities.

15.3.2 'Enabling Regimes' and Local Autonomy

Judith Tandler's study of governance and primary healthcare in Northeastern Brazil (1997) helps to illustrate the ways in which extended interaction between government health workers and local communities was able to foster a culture of accountability between

public officials and the rural poor (Tendler, 1997). Central to Tendler's analysis is the 'paradoxical' notion that the effective delivery of primary healthcare was dependent on external support from 'higher-level' echelons within government. This is consistent with a wider literature on decentralisation, which suggests that central governments can foster local accountability in a number of ways. First, as Crook and Sverrisson have argued, central states can provide an important 'counter élite' to groups that would resist efforts to make local bodies more democratic (Crook and Sverrisson, 2001, p.52).

Second, and crucially, they can structure incentives in a way that allows local participation and public accountability to take root. Such incentives would conceivably include career trajectories, 'earmarked funding' (Ibid, p.51) for local bodies and status within society (Crook and Manor, 1998).

Meenakshi Sundaram (1999, pp.66–7) argues that effective decentralisation is dependent on the existence of three necessary conditions:

- Strong political commitment from higher level authorities within government;
- Relative autonomy of the local body in decision making and implementation of local schemes;
- The availability of internally generated resources at the local level.

These are broadly consistent with the conclusions reached by Crook and Manor (1998), in which:

- Elected bodies at local levels had adequate funds;
- They enjoyed substantive autonomy; and
- Lines of accountability existed between elected representatives and citizens, and between nonelected bureaucrats and elected representatives.

In other words, devolution can foster accountability when local institutions have the autonomy to decide matters relating to local revenues and resource allocation. Tendler found that accountability and good governance were contingent upon the following conditions:

- Government officials spent extended periods of time with beneficiaries;
- This, in turn, created a situation in which officials were affected by ('embedded in') the opinions and sanctions of community members;
- Good performance carried high prestige, both within the community and within the civil service;
- Central government was instrumental in supporting these initiatives.

In theory, local taxation and the threat of the vote would strengthen the autonomy and accountability of local bodies. As Jha (2000, p.115) has argued, the logic behind transferring taxes which are local in nature to the local bodies is to endow these bodies with strong revenue base that can be utilised according to their own development plans.

In practice, however, the decentralisation of taxation may be a difficult undertaking. As Manor (1999, p.111) has argued, the central dilemma here is not necessarily the lack of taxable surplus (although this too is a problem), but the political and administrative costs

of collecting public resources, the reluctance among many central governments to grant the authority that activities of this nature would require and the (somewhat ubiquitous) reluctance among residents to in fact pay their taxes. Lacking a means of ensuring transparent budget allocation, there is also little guarantee that the creation of financially autonomous bodies will not simply perpetuate further corruption of local resources or, worse, encourage local politicians to eliminate certain services entirely (Crook and Manor, 1998, p.301). Such findings are highly consistent with the problems most commonly associated with decentralisation in India (Sections 3 and 4).

15.3.3 Elections, Parties and Competitive Politics

Crook and Manor's study of decentralisation in South Asia and West Africa (1998, pp.302–4) highlights the challenge of encouraging a culture of accountability in local political processes. Reflecting on the relatively successful case of Karnataka (India), they argue that accountability required the existence of:

- Competitive political parties;
- A widely distributed free press and
- A 'professional civil service,' in which officials were willing 'to develop a constructive but law abiding relationship with elected politicians.'

Reflecting on the findings of a USAID study of democratic decentralisation, Blair identifies six mechanisms:

- Free and fair local elections;
- Strong and competitive political parties;
- Strong civil society organisations;
- A vigorous and accessible electronic media;
- Public meetings;
- Formal grievance procedures.

As Blair has argued, periodic elections provide an important means of ensuring government responsiveness and accountability on broad social issues. At the same time, he observes, 'elections are crude instruments of popular control, since they occur at widely spaced intervals . . . and address only the broadest issues' (Blair, 2000, p.27). Elections therefore constitute an imperfect yet vital component of any democratic system. However, their ability to encourage effective responsive governance is highly dependent upon three important variables:

- the degree to which parties and politicians campaign on substantive policy issues, as opposed to populism or, worse, clientelism and vote buying;
- the quality of information voters have at their disposal; and
- the strength of civil society organisations.

15.4 VOLUNTARY ACTION

The modern notion of voluntary action has its origins in Protestant Christianity. Conceptually,

it just means anything we involve out of our own choice without any compulsion. Having a purpose or meaning in the action is important for an action to be voluntary. The need for voluntary action arises when individuals feel that the existing socio-political and economic structures of the society are not paying sufficient attention towards some aspects of the society. Or it could be that those structures are not in a position to respond to some issues arising in the society. The motivation to do such action is very often unrelated to one's self-interest.

However, Rajni Kothari argues that voluntarism is the essence of Indian civilisation. The core of the Indian civilisation is cultural rather than political. Historically, Indian states were always marginal and limited in their sphere of action. The real functioning of the society was enabled by voluntary organisations that are based on caste, religion and commercial interests. If one says that voluntarism has been an enduring feature of India, it only means that many people at many places are engaged in multifarious action without being asked to do so by an external agent-political, bureaucratic or market-propelled. The perception of a dichotomy between state-directed and voluntary initiatives has arisen only in recent decades after the modern state and its institutions either began to impede the voluntary ethos of Indian society or forced themselves on what people did on their own (Kothari, 1970).

15.5 MOBILISING VOLUNTARY ACTION THROUGH SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

15.5.1 Social Movements

Social movements are a type of group action. They are large informal groupings of individuals and/or organisations focused on specific political or social issues, in other words, on carrying out, resisting or undoing a social change. Charles Tilly defines big social movements as a series of contentious performances, displays and campaigns by which ordinary people made collective claims on others (Tilly, 2004, p.3). For him, they are major vehicle for ordinary people's participation in public politics. He argues that there are three major elements to a social movement: (i) Campaigns (a sustained, organised public effort making collective claims of target authorities); (ii) Repertoire (employment of combinations from among the forms of political action i.e. creation of special-purpose associations and coalitions, public meetings, solemn processions, vigil, rallies, demonstrations, petition drives, statements to and in public media, and pamphleteering); and (iii) WUNC displays (participant's concerted public representation of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitments on the part of themselves and/or their constituencies) (Ibid., 4).

15.5.1.1 Types of Social Movements

Who is changed	How much change		
		Limited	Radical
	Specific Individuals	Alternative Social Movements	Redemptive Social Movements
	Everyone	Reformative Social Movements	Revolutionary Social Movements

Based on Aberel (1966)

Sociologists distinguish between several types of social movements:

Scope

Reform Movements – movements dedicated to changing some norms usually legal ones. Examples of such movement would include trade unions, green movement advocating a set of ecological laws etc.

Radical movement – movements dedicated to changing value systems. Those involve fundamental changes, unlike the reform movements. Examples would include American Civil Right Movement.

Types of Change

Innovation movement – movements which want to enable particular norms, values etc. for example, the singularity movement advocating deliberate action to effect and ensure the safety of the technological singularity.

Conservative movement: movements which want to preserve existing norms, values etc. For example, modern movement opposing the spread of the genetically modified food.

Targets

Group-focus movements – focus on affecting groups or society in general, for example, advocating the change of political system by joining it or by remaining outside the reformist party.

Individual-focused movements – focused on affecting individuals. Eg. Religious movements.

Methods of Work

Peaceful movements – which are seen to stand in contrast to ‘violent’ movements.

Violent movements – various armed movements e.g. the Rote Armee Fraktion

Old and New

Old movements – movements for change have existed since the beginning of society. Most of the 19th century fought for specific groups, such as working class, peasants, whites’ atrocities etc. They were usually centred on some materialistic goals like improving the standard of living.

New movements – movements which became dominant from the second half of the 20th century like the feminist movement, environmental movement, nuclear movement, peace movement etc. Sometimes they are known as new social movements.

Range

Global movements are social movements with global objectives and goals.

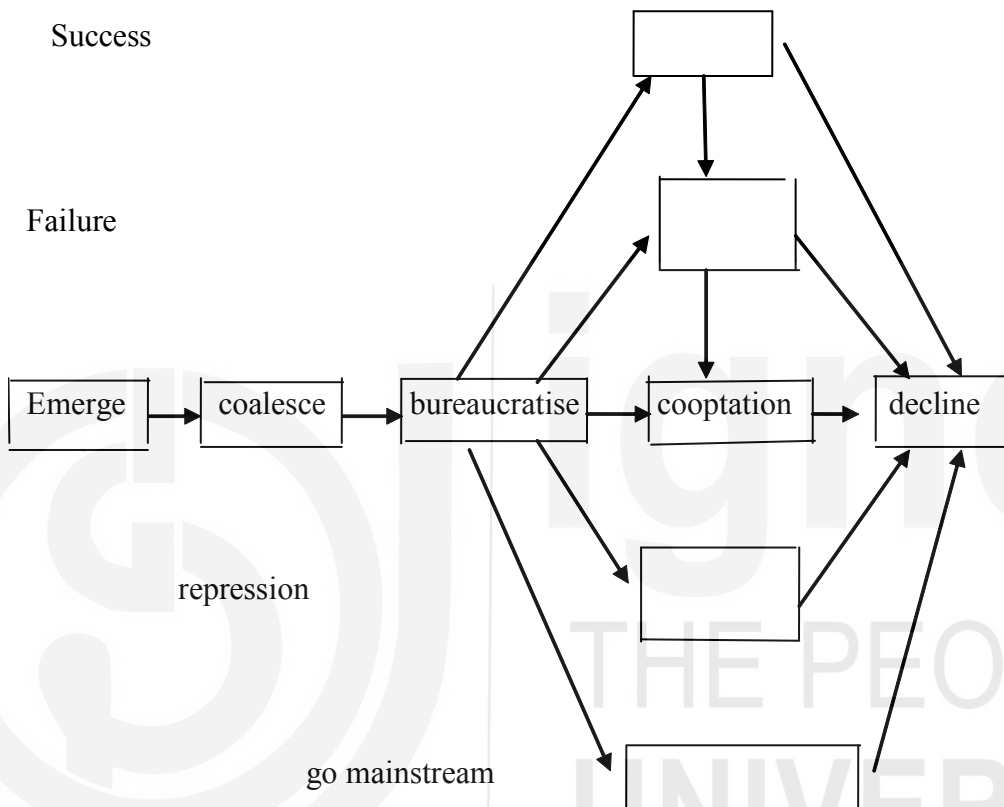
Local movements – most of the social movements have a local scope. They are based on the local or regional objectives, such as protecting natural area etc.

Multi-level movements – social movements which recognise the complexity of governance in the 21st Century and aim to have an impact at the local, regional, national and international levels.

15.5.1.2 Dynamics of Social Movements

Social movements are not eternal. They have a life cycle: they are created, they grow, they achieve success or failures and eventually, they dissolve and cease to exist. They occur in liberal and authoritarian societies but in different forms. But there must always be polarising differences between groups of people: in case of 'old movements' they were the poverty and wealth gaps. In case of the 'new movements', they are more likely to be the differences in customs, ethics and values.

Stages of Social Movements



Adapted from Tilly (1978)

15.6 EMERGENCE OR NEED OF VOLUNTARY ACTION

People's movements are emerging out of peculiar contradictions within societies and cultures in transition. They may also arise out of contradictions and weaknesses that appear in the role of the state and in the division of labour resulting from the intervention of transnational capital. These social movements are also bringing about the horizontal integration of people instead of hierarchical integration. Ecology movements constitute transnational, universalised and moral movements. Their basic commitment and fundamental ideology not only transcend the human categories of caste, class, race, religion and nations but also the categories of species divisions and the divisions of the organic and inorganic world also.

15.7 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND VOLUNTARY ACTION

The earliest of social movements in India could be traced to the Gandhian efforts of Sarvodaya. Gandhi recognised the need for social change. But he believed that the change

has to come from the bottom to top if it has to be non-violent, successful and permanent. Sarvodaya was the direct offshoot of Gandhi's Constructive Programme.

Since 1970s a number of social movements emphasising on a range of basic issues have come to animate the sphere of civil society. They are 'new' in contrast to the old trade union and working class movements, which were political in the sense of having an alternate political vision of the state itself with revolutionary ideals. But the people's movements, as they are called, are the result of broader-based people's responses to ecological or gender or caste conflicts. The distinguishing feature of these movements is that they are not homogeneous and differ in their origins. In many cases the local initiatives merge and give rise to the formation of a large-scale movement at the intervention of intellectuals backed with media support. Some of the people's movements have been sustained over time, others are eruptions and die down after a while. Similarly some of the grassroots experiments represent seeds of change, while others are mere bubbles. A seed can be identified with such broad aims as equality and access to resources; equality of social, political, cultural rights; real participation in all social decisions affecting work, welfare, politics etc; the end of division between mental and manual labour and the use of technology appropriate for this purpose. It is not, however, merely a matter of stating these objectives: genuine participation, self-production and self-management, autonomy, solidarity and innovativeness. A bubble on the other hand, is a soft process and may not last, for a variety of reasons. However, he alerts us to the fact that bubbles should not be outrightly dismissed as they may represent entry points to change and some can be transformed into seeds through additional sensitisation and conscientisation programmes, training of facilitators and change agents. Self-employed Women's Association (SEWA), the Chipko movement, the Kerala Science movement (KSSP) and the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) Samiti are seeds in point. There are innumerable other movements as well differing in degrees of mobilisation, conscientisation and organisation for development and democracy.

All these initiatives may not always proceed in a uniform pattern of development. Within the political space available, there have been interventions in the socio-economic system. In the case of smaller experiments, someone with an advanced consciousness initiates dialogue and a group activity, for example, landless labourers, poor women or a (youth) group trying to do something as a means of living, or a social activity, such as a health or environmental sanitation programme; the process can move forward to become a seed or stay as a bubble until it bursts.

15.7.1 Some Important Social Movements

Following are given some of the important movements that have highlighted issues of great concern to people and ecology.

15.7.1.1 Chipko Movement

First and foremost of all of them is Chipko movement. This movement started in the early 70s and got organised under the leadership of Sunderlal Bahuguna and later spearheaded the Anti-Tehri dam movement starting 1980s, to early 2004. In Hindi, "Chipko" literally means "to stick". Chipko movement later inspired Appiko movement in Karnataka. This being a non-violent resistance movement, embodies the Gandhian spirit of struggle. Bahuguna's noble contribution to that cause, and to environmentalism in general, was his creation of Chipko's slogan "ecology is permanent economy".

15.7.1.2 Social Movement of Anna Hazare

Another major social movement has been that of Anna Hazare who has been fighting since more than two decades for bringing about transparency in bureaucratic apparatus of the state. His movement has changed his village Ralegan Siddhi in Maharashtra into a model village. His movement emphasises the right of the common people to know the information regarding government initiatives and the implementation procedures of the welfare schemes. The government is being pressurised to enact the ‘Right to Information’ act. This legislation would entail the right of the people to gain access to government records and thereby bring transparency and accountability in the functioning of the government. This would ultimately serve to check corruption and rent-seeking practices.

15.7.1.3 Narmada Bachao Andolan

Another important movement of the present times is Narmada Bachao Andolan Samiti, led by Medha Patkar, has sensationalised the issue of building huge dams as a solution for growing stress on water resources. This movement has mobilised tribal people, adivasis, farmers, environmentalists and human rights activists against Sardar Sarovar Dam being built nearly to 3000 major and minor dams across the Narmada river, Gujarat, which would submerge an estimated 3,50,000 hectare of forest land and 2,00,000 hectares of cultivated land. About one million people are estimated to become ousters.

15.7.1.4 Other Social Movements

There have been a number of other struggles prioritising issues related to women, dalit empowerment, land use and pollution related issues. Women’s movements, though lacking a tradition equivalent to that of French and English feminist movements, have reached a point where they are able to identify common cause with all those movements which would further the advancement of the values of democracy and sustainable development. Dalit movements are also heading forward in the same direction.

15.8 NGOs AND VOLUNTARY ACTION

Non Governmental Organisations or NGOs is a legally constituted non-governmental organisation created by natural or legal persons with no participation or representation of any government perform multifarious jobs for the development of the people and society. These organisations are defined as “civil society organisations” or referred to by other names. They are non-profit voluntary groups organised at the local, national or international level. Non-governmental organisations either campaign or advocate sensitive issues, work on capacity building programmes, concentrate on social research, or provide significant networking opportunities. NGOs are not directly involved in the structure of the government but at the same time they cannot work without the support or help from the government. NGOs bring up issues and concerns of the people to the government and policy makers.

15.8.1 Types of NGOs

In India, there are several types of NGOs performing a particular job or jobs. The sectors have been wide spread across the country especially in rural and remote areas. The NGO type can be understood by their orientation (like charitable, Service, participatory and empowering) and level of cooperation (like community based, city-wide, national and international). Apart from these, NGOs in India include volunteer sector, civic society, grassroots organisations, transnational social movement organisations, private voluntary organisations, self-help actors, non-state actors and many other related organisations.

Non-government organisations are heterogeneous. A long list of acronyms has developed around the term “NGOs”. These include:

- BINGO: business-friendly international or big international NGO
- CITS: helping scientific community by motivating young talent towards research and development
- CSO: civil society organisation
- DONGO: Donor Organised NGO;
- ENGO: environmental NGO, such as Global 2000;
- GONGOS: are government-operated NGOs set up by governments, look like NGOs in order to qualify for outside aid or promote the interests of the government in question;
- INGO: international NGO, for eg. Oxfam is an international NGO
- QUANGOs: quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations;
- TANGO: technical assistance NGO;
- GSO: Grassroots Support Organisation;
- MANGO: market advocacy NGO;
- CHARDS: Community Health and Rural Development Society.

Therefore, NGOs cover areas that include welfare of street children, women and old people, youth, slum dwellers, child labourers, sex workers, and landless workers. India is estimated to have more than 2 million NGOs at present. The figure is continuously increasing. Some of the important NGOs in India are India Red Cross Society, Child Relief and You (CRY), CARE and National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD).

15.8.2 Mixed Response of NGOs

The co-opting of NGOs by governmental agencies in implementing its policies has evoked mixed response from the scholars. While some view it as a positive development, some do not share this view. They feel that this is an encroachment in the sphere of civil society by the state and it is done by the state for encouraging neo-liberal agenda. Sarah Joseph claims that “the spurt in voluntarism, or what came to be called ‘grass roots politics’, after the emergency in the late 70s provided the hope for a while that a new style of politics was emerging which would regenerate democratic institutions in India. A more participatory model of democracy would emerge it was hoped as a result of popular pressures and the work of voluntary organisations which were involved in organising and mobilising the people, was extolled. Their intervention could, it was felt, help to articulate the needs and priorities of the people and lead the state to devise more people-friendly schemes”. Though the governmental and the international agencies also have noted the phenomenon of grass roots activism and the role of NGOs, she points out that the official interest was in using them as sub-contractors for more targeted and efficient delivery since it was felt that they might be more committed and honest and acceptable to the people than the bureaucracy.

15.8.3 Importance of NGOs

The importance of NGOs in the developmental terrain does not, however, lie in the quantity of their work but in quality. The quality of NGO activities can be judged in the following manner:

- i) People's participation
- ii) Technical excellence
- iii) Cost-effectiveness
- iv) Equity-concern for the deprived, and for women
- v) Institutional, financial, and environmental sustainability
- vi) Accountability.

15.9 SUMMARY

Beyond these very basic principles, democracy also implies a wide range of rules, norms and customs through which citizens can exercise 'effective popular control' over public officials. Included here would be an independent judiciary, a free press, systems of transparency, and freedom of association and speech. The greater participation in local political affairs will improve the quality and reach of government services, particularly ones aimed at improving the lives of poor and politically marginal groups in society (de Souza, 2000).

15.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What do you mean by Voluntary Action? How will you mobilise it?
2. Discuss the role of Social Movement for mobilising voluntary action.
3. Discuss the role of NGOs for mobilising voluntary action.

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UNIT 16 **GANDHIAN CIVIL SOCIETY FOR GLOBAL PEACE**

Structure

- 16.1 Introduction
 - Aims and Objectives
- 16.2 Problem of Defining Civil Society
- 16.3 Gandhi's Notion of Civil Society
- 16.4 Gandhian Civil Society
 - 16.4.1 Gandhian Civil Society of His time
 - 16.4.2 Gandhian Civil Society after Gandhi
- 16.5 Gandhian Civil Society and Globalisation
- 16.6 Challenges to Global Peace
- 16.7 Gandhian Civil Society: An Answer for Global Peace
- 16.8 Summary
- 16.9 Terminal Questions
 - Suggested Readings

16.1 INTRODUCTION

Gandhi is one of the pioneers who were critical of the modern civil society at a time when nobody dared to do so. This he did it through his seminal work, *Hind Swaraj* on the one hand and by adopting constructive work based on non-violence on the other. This is where Gandhi becomes important for understanding civil society. In fact, in the recent past, Gandhi has become an important figure in this discourse, and also in the politics of civil society across the world. These civil societies are either in the form of social movements or in the form of non-governmental organisations. These organisations are led by Gandhians on the one hand and the different social activists on the other. In the latter case they largely invoke Gandhi in their struggle to bring ever lasting peace. Peace is now understood not only in terms of absence of war, but also in terms of removing hunger, poverty, domination, exploitation, hegemony, cultural dislocation, displacement and dispossession etc. It is true that Gandhi has grown beyond the boundaries of India -not only during his life time but also after his death. He has become truly global. This is obvious from the way the United Nations General Assembly, on 15 June 2007, declared to observe 2nd October as the International Day of Non-Violence. In fact Gandhi is very much apparent in the Global Peace Movement, Ecology movement, anti-war movement, anti-globalisation movement, and also movement against nuclear world. His influence has surpassed nation, nationalism, ethnicity including nationality too. This makes us to argue that there are “multiple Gandhis”- Gandhi of the State, Gandhi of the masses, Gandhi of the civil Society and Mythic Gandhi. It is true that Gandhi was for permanent global peace and was against tyranny and oppression. His engagement with Hitler and other

fascists during his life time clearly shows that Gandhi was against tyranny and authoritarianism and also that he believed in everlasting global peace.

Aims and Objectives

After going through this Unit, you would be able to

- Study Gandhian Civil Society during his time;
- Know the nature of Gandhian civil society;
- Analyse the anti-globalisation movement which espoused Gandhian principles; and
- Evaluate the problems facing everlasting peace.

16.2 PROBLEM OF DEFINING CIVIL SOCIETY

During his life time Gandhi led many struggles as part of nationalist movement. In fact there are arguments as to whether nationalist movement be treated as civil society movement or not. Couple of scholars argue that Gandhi led movement was nothing but “civil society” movement (Jayaram, 2004). On the contrary, others would argue that nationalist movement cannot be treated or categorised as civil society. This is because of the fact that there are no precise meanings to understand “Civil Society. It is quite often seen as a space between the State and Society. There are others who refuse to use the term civil society.-they would use the term” political society: instead of civil society. It is generally believed that civil society is a secular space, or a space meant to uphold democratic values, a space for dialogue, a space for discourse and a space to recognise the identities. Even there are arguments which believed that civil society is pitted against the State- particularly whenever the state goes against the interest of democracy, it becomes obligatory on the part of the civil society to uphold democratic values. Meanwhile it is also seen as a space which weakens the state too, as it tries to fill in the space left over by the State. There are others who would argue that more the number of civil societies, the State variably becomes open, secular, and democratic. Therefore it is argued that to strengthen democracy and to retain the individual identity it is essential to have large number of civil societies.

Second important argument centred on whether all forms of struggles – be it reactionary, fascist including radical movements – can be categorised as civil society. Incidentally many scholars have clubbed even anti-communist movement, fascist movement as civil society movement. For example, Solidarity movement in the Poland during late 1980s is termed as civil society movement. This is the reason why Gandhi-led Nationalist movement can also be called Civil Society Movement. Secondly, even the non-governmental organisations have been called as Civil Society.

16.3 GANDHI’S NOTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Quite often Gandhi’s civil society and Gandhian Civil Society are used interchangeably as if both are one and the same. In fact Gandhi can be called “First Critic of Modern Civil Society” particularly in the context of nationalist movement. Gandhi’s critique of Civil Society is very much apparent in his seminal work, *Hind Swaraj*. His argument about western civilisation “a civilisation only in name” can be seen as the beginning of his larger critique. Further his critique centred on modernity, western culture, and western institutions.

Gandhi's Civil Society had its own characteristics: it believed in dialogue among the social categories, absence of social conflict, unity among communities, non-violence, and stressed the need for constructive programme. Gandhi fundamentally believed in "reconstructing civil society". For Gandhi Civil Society is a site of peaceful co-existence, dialogue, and democratic practices wherein every individual's autonomy as well as identity is recognised. Gandhi believed that use of "force", growth of violent ideologies, and also "colonisation of mind" etc., are coming in the way of establishing a true Global Civil society. Gandhi believed that his notion of Global Civil Society should be grounded on the principles of peace, unity, harmony, dialogue, decentralisation, democratic practices as well as secularism.

16.4 GANDHIAN CIVIL SOCIETY

Gandhian Civil Society is not only those which are created or established by the Gandhians, but also those which are influenced by the Gandhis' philosophy. The latter is apparent in different social movements. In other words there are two varieties of Gandhian Civil Society: Non- Governmental Organisations and Social Movements, Gandhian NGOs which form the first variety of civil society that are different from Gandhian Civil Society, particularly social movements. These NGOs believed in constructive work, believed in social transformation from below. They involved in development activity. They indeed believed in transplanting Gandhian doctrine in its entirety. Their larger goal is to create global peace. This is done by dialogue, development activities, constructive activities etc. There are thousands of such NGOs working in different parts of the world.

Most important is the second variety of civil society. Gandhian civil society is apparent not only in peace or ecology movement but also anti-globalisation movement too. In the Indian context, one of the movements which strictly followed Gandhian principle is Chipko Movement. Its main concern was to protest the deforestation in the northern India. This movement was initially led by Chandi Prasad and later on Bahuguna. Its tactics of hugging the trees can be construed as Neo-Gandhian or Post-Gandhian in nature. Such Neo or post-Gandhian tactics are apparent in Narmada Bachao Andolan particularly when they adopted Jal Samadhi. The latter was resorted to in order to resist the immersion of land due to the altering the height of Narmada Dam. Such post-Gandhian tactics are apparent in other movements as well, for example, Gav Bhandhi by the farmers' movement or resorting to destroying the property of the Multinationals by the farmers' movement as well. Even destroying the sampling of plants resorted to by the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha during 1980s is also part of Neo or post-Gandhian tactics. Interestingly many of these social movements which came to envelop political scene during 1980s openly declared their allegiance to Gandhism. Infact the ideology that the New Farmers' Movement advocated during the decade of 1980s reflected the principles of Gandhi particularly in his seminal work of Hind Swaraj. These movements definitely critiqued the western world including the western capitalism for its hegemonic character and also its ulterior design to destroy the cultural practices and the identities of social categories of the non-western world. There are others too which ultimately stood for global peace through the restructuring of social relations, international institutions etc This makes us to observe that Gandhian civil society is not necessarily confined to non-governmental organisation but also social movements. However, the Gandhian Civil Society has a long history.

16.4.1 Gandhian Civil Society of His Time

Gandhi's influence on global civil society dates back to the period when Gandhi was alive

and actively engaged in nationalist struggle in India. This led to the growth of number of Gandhian Civil Society in the western world, particularly in the US and the UK. His major influence was felt in the Peace Movement of the US during 1920s. John Haynes Holmes, a prominent Unitarian reformer, and a pacifist of World War I was one of the major exponents of Gandhian Peace Ideas. As a pacifist, he serialised Gandhi's autobiography. This was followed by series of books on non-violence by Romain Rolland in 1924; by C.F. Andrews between 1930 and 1931; and Richard B. Gregg in 1934. There were others too who were influenced by the Gandhian ideas of non-violence. They include such pacifists as E. Stanley Jones, a Methodist missionary and Kirby Page. The latter was another peace activist for many years in the US. Incidentally they did support Gandhi's struggle of Salt Satyagraha.

Gandhi also influenced other civil society groups of his time in the US. They include Quakers (members of the Society of Friends who advocated peace). They incidentally had common interest in the practical side of religious experience as well as righteous rejection of violence. One of the personalities who was deeply influenced by the Gandhian ideas was Rufus Jones, noted philosopher and leader in Quaker affairs. He was the one who once remarked that "Gandhi was the greatest person now living on our planet".

Interestingly, the peace movement of 1930s had the socialist orientation and also believed in adopting non-violent methods. Incidentally the deep depression of 1920s and Hitler's growth as fascist influenced them to tilt towards socialism. However, they were all critical of Gandhian economic analysis; even some of them, particularly Reinhold Niebuhr had strong reservation about the Satyagraha, on the ground that it is a form of coercion than idealism. Despite reservations, he did argue in favour of adopting Satyagraha by the Blacks for the social justice in 1932.

During the decade of 1940s many civil society groups emerged which tried to emulate Gandhian principles. One of the groups was Committee of Racial Equality which later on became Congress of Racial Equality. This group was totally committed to non violent methods and discipline. Interestingly during the war period, a curious mixture of different groups came together with different ideological background, to look critically at the war: they included revolutionary Marxist, anarchist, Protestant activist, Quaker, American pragmatist and finally Gandhian. Such civil society existed even after the death of Gandhi

Despite the fact that Gandhi was relatively unknown in other parts of the world, he was appreciated in the Pacifist movement of Britain during his time. There were two perspectives about Gandhi: one Orientalist Hyper Difference- they were the critics of Gandhi and they portrayed Gandhi as Oriental mystic. Two, Western Over Likeness, declared Gandhi as the greatest saint in the history of mankind. They felt that his lessons personified the spirit of Christ- Satyagraha for example was a Christian thing. Interestingly, Peace Pledge Union became a hotbed of Gandhian thought; this is a pacifist organisation. This was an anti-war group established in the year 1932. They believed in non-violent resistance. However they could not achieve what Gandhi achieved, given the fact that they lacked the larger vision as that of Gandhi.

16.4 2 Gandhian Civil Society after Gandhi

One of the civil societies, Gandhian Civil Society for Human Rights, came into being after the death of Gandhi in the United States. This society was established by Martin Luther King Jr in 1962 at Washington. Its main aim was to support blacks and others in the form of legal defence and aid for victims of civil rights abuses. They believed in

propagating non-violent methods and voter registration activities, and financial assistance to other organisations for civil rights. Basically it believed in non-violent struggle.

In 1948 another civil society group emerged named as Peace Makers, against conscription and tax. They adopted the strategy of tax refusal. Even many of them became part of Jim Crow movement, refusing to be recruited to the segregated military units. Interestingly, in the 1949 World Conference on Peace, emphasis was laid to open Satyagraha Units in different countries.

The Gandhian influence in the anti-war time, particularly during Iraq and Afghanistan wars in recent years is very much apparent. Peace activists from Los Angeles to Canberra were in total opposition to the US policy of attacking these countries. Many joined, which include anarchists, Marxists, even Gandhians etc to oppose war. However the protagonists of war opposed peace activists using Gandhi on the ground that Gandhi advocated collective suicide as part of convincing the enemy. They believed that such idealism of Gandhi would not work in the present context.

During this period many groups came into existence. “Gandhi-Merton Pilgrimage for Peace and Non-Violence,” came into existence on September 7-11, 2006. This coincided with the terrorist attack on World Trade Center at New York. This was enacted by Interfaith Path to Peace in the US. It observed five day 52 Km long march to draw attention to the problems of violence that the world is facing. Non-violent Peace force was another civil society groups emerged during this decade. This is an international movement aiming at resolving the conflict through dialogue. The movement had its origin in 1999 in Hague Appeal for Peace. Their other objective is to replace military peacekeeping with civil peace keeping. In other words, the growth of Gandhian civil society for the world peace is evident with large number of civil society emulating Gandhian Philosophy, techniques, and strategies. This is evident in the increasing number of civil society groups adopting Satyagraha as a mode of protest and expression.

16.5 GANDHIAN CIVIL SOCIETY AND GLOBALISATION

Globalisation literally transformed the nature of civil society in the recent past particularly during the decade of 1990s. During this time, throughout the world, hundreds of civil society movements or what is called New Social Movements began to spread against globalisation. These anti-globalisation movements are also referred to as Global Justice movement, Anti-Corporate Movements or Alter Global movement or Anti Corporate Globalisation Movement too. They fundamentally believed that globalisation is basically meant to create spaces for global capital and also for Multinationals to appropriate natural resources, culture, lifestyles etc more than helping masses. The global economy or what is called New Economy that globalisation is introducing is nothing but “turbo-capitalism” (Edward Luttwak), “market fundamentalism” (George Soros), “casino capitalism” (Susan Strange), “cancer-stage capitalism” (John McMurtry), and as “McWorld” (Benjamin Barber). The current globalisation is called in different names: Corporate Globalisation, Globalisation from Above and so on. Further they argue that globalisation is basically anti-poor, anti-farmer, anti-women, anti-indigenous people, anti-tribal, and anti- ethnic groups. Even it has the tendency to dislocate, displace, dispossess thousands of people from their locality, cultural practices, and also from their environment. Further, it takes away the autonomy of social categories and transforms them into market dependent non-autonomous categories. Towards this end anti-globalisation movements believed in opposing the

institutions backing the globalisation such as WTO, IMF, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) etc including free trade such as North American Free Trade Agreement etc. Incidentally anti-globalisation movements are not homogenous; they include farmers' movements in India and abroad, Tribal movement against MNCs, Environmental movement, struggle of indigenous people in Latin America, etc. Some of the anti-globalisation movements include Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha in Karnataka, India; Narmada Bachao Andolan in India; The EZLN in Mexico; The Homeless Workers' Movement in Brazil; The Landless Peoples Movement in South Africa; Grassroots Global Justice in United States of America; and American Indian Movement of Latin America.

Their oppositions have been expressed in such places as Seattle, Prague, Washington DC, London, Canberra, Ottawa, Mumbai, Bangalore, Delhi, Dhaka, Karachi, etc. Incidentally anti-globalisation movements also have formed international networks or collectives, thereby demonstrating that they are truly global in character and that they can cut across the boundaries of nation and nationality. Peoples' Global Action, Via Campensia and World Social Forum are some of the international Collectives or net works. These networks or collectives as well as individual social movements derived inspiration from Gandhi quite often. This is where they can be conceptualised as Gandhian Civil Society too, although there are times when they improvised Gandhian Tactics. There are anti-globalisation movements which believe in non- Gandhian ideology of radicalism. In fact anti-globalisation movements are not homogeneous in nature; they are a loose coalition of hundreds of movements as they came from different streams and also the fact that they sprang up from different cultural settings. Gandhi cannot be visualised in radical movements, particularly in Zapatistas movement of Latin America. However he is very much present in other social movements opposing globalisation.

There are many reasons why anti-Globalisation movements both in India as well as at the global level used and believed in drawing references to Gandhi. Interestingly, some of them openly declared that they should follow Gandhi without any reservations. This is apparent in the call given by the former President of India, Dr K.R. Narayanan in the World Social Forum in 2004 at Mumbai: "To fight globalization, you need to fight the way Mahatma Gandhi fought with the strength of the masses. People's power is a new factor in international politics."

One of the reasons why Gandhi became important for anti-globalisation movement is because of the fact that they fundamentally believed that global peace is not possible in the midst of current paradigm of development that the globalisation is initiated from above; this paradigm, it is argued, is anti-people, anti-poor, and anti-cultural practices and anti-communities. This is the reason why they are very comfortable with the critique that Gandhi provided in his seminal work *Hind Swaraj* about modernity, western civilisation as well as western capitalism, although they may not agree with other issues in the *Hind Swaraj*. This text of Gandhi became one of the important texts of social movements during the decade of Globalisation. This is because it had convincing answers for the globalisation on the one hand; it also provided a space for reclaiming identity to the people of grassroots, including those who have been affected by the vagaries of globalisation. Secondly, these movements believed that only Gandhian techniques of non-violence will triumph in the political agitation against global capitalism rather than violence; although they adopted Neo-Gandhian methods such as teach-in, taking out Caravan, etc. Thirdly, they believed that the Gandhian concept of Swadeshi can be used as an alternative to the present day paradigm of development mediating through global capitalist

economy. Gandhis' concept of community empowerment through grass root action was also looked upon as best solution. This is where they advocated the bottom up approach than top down approach by empowering the people. They fundamentally believed in non-violent civil disobedience movement of Gandhi. They argue that Civil Disobedience should be used as a tool for social change and for global peace in three ways: one, educating uninformed people; make the policy makers to understand the cost of violence mediating through war, capitalism, and uneven development etc; and three, creating solidarity network among the social movements.

16.6 CHALLENGES TO GLOBAL PEACE

The present day world is known as globalised world in the sense that it has integrated different societies, conscripted time and space, and has created borderless world. At the same time, the globalised world has created more spaces for violence in different forms such as communal, caste, regional, intra state, interstate etc. Globalised world is not free from conflict, discrimination, contradictions, etc. The stockpiling of nuclear weapons, increasing division among rich and poor, increasing gap between developed and developing world all have contributed towards conflicts.

The global peace is slow but steadily becoming fragile- we are living in a situation of "disturbed peace" or "suspended peace". This is obvious if we look at the Global Peace Index. This index is an attempt to understand the relative peacefulness of the nations as well as the disturbances across the countries. It is strange that the Peaceful countries are those which are known for good governance. Peace Index gives the picture that New Zealand topped the Peace Index followed by Iceland and Japan. Interestingly the US stood at 85th place and India in 128. The last three places went to Bangladesh, Somalia and Iraq.

There is large number of issues afflicting global peace. War is not the only reason to understand the growing conflict, but growing poverty, hunger, malnutrition, homeless, ecological degradation, appropriation of natural resources, cultural displacement, etc. It is estimated that in the year 2010 itself, the number of people who are reeling under hunger will cross 925 million. The highest number is found in Asia and Pacific region with 578 million, followed by sub-Saharan Africa (239 million), Latin and Caribbean countries (53 million), Near East and North Africa (37 million). Even the developed world is not free from hunger (19 million). In the midst of increasing hunger, peace is becoming a difficult proposition.

It is true that hunger is related to poverty. In fact the increasing poverty is one of the major causes for the disturbed peace throughout the world (Vandana Shiva, 2006). It is argued that "The number of people living in extreme poverty [may have fallen from] 1.9 billion to 1.4 billion people between 1981 and 2005, however, if China is taken out of the calculation, this number actually increased from 1.1 billion people to 1.2 billion people." In addition, it is observed that in several countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Northern Africa and Central Asia, the actual poverty level had increased during 1981 and 2005. World Bank has estimated that there are nearly 1,345 million poor people in developing world living on 1/25 dollar a day.

Corollary to the previous argument, the increasing crisis in the realm of food or hunger, urban space, cleaner water, and environment also adds to disturbed peace at the global level. The recent food riots (*Peter Krauth, 2010*) in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Haiti,

Mozambique, Egypt, and some parts of India particularly in West Bengal reflects the growing food crisis; although food riots have come down, they may resurface at any point of time. In fact, in 2008 the UN's World Food Programme had warned of a "silent Tsunami" in the realm of hunger sweeping different parts of the world because of inflated or soaring prices, "it was a warning that the world's poor were being squeezed as increasingly higher portions of their family incomes were being spent on the food they required for their very survival" (Peter Krauth, 2010).

Further one cannot overlook the increasing disparity between the rich on the one hand and the poor on the other. The globalisation, in fact, more than becoming "panacea" has accentuated the disparity as well as differences. It is estimated that in the year 2000, one per cent of the super rich were controlling 40 per cent of the global asset. Similarly ten per cent of the global rich were controlling 85 per cent total assets during the same period; it is a paradox that "the richest 10 percent of the world's population's income is roughly 117 times higher than the poorest 10 percent". Such increasing gap has larger effect on the politics: the series of conflicts would translate into political riots.

It is estimated that in 2006 alone more than 36 million died of hunger, mainly due to malnutrition. The UN Special Rapporteur on Right to Food, in his report, argued that in the year 2006, mortality due to malnutrition accounted for 58% of the total mortality. In India alone there are 217 million populations, as per the FAO estimate, living as "undernourished". Similar is the case of increase in the homeless in 2005. It was estimated that 100 million people around the world were homeless people. At the same time nearly 884 million people are deprived of safe drinking water. Such global trend definitely goes against creating everlasting global peace.

16.7 GANDHIAN CIVIL SOCIETY: AN ANSWER FOR GLOBAL PEACE

This shows that there is no single Gandhi. In fact the eminent scholar Ashish Nandy argued that there are four kinds of Gandhi: Gandhi of the Indian state and Indian nationalism; Gandhi of the Gandhians; Gandhi of the ragamuffins, eccentrics and the unpredictable; and lastly, Mythic Gandhi. In the latter case, Gandhi became a symbol of non-violence, a symbol of resistance against tyrants or authoritarian regimes; he became the symbol of world change and finally global peace. To quote Ashish Nandy,

"When the Polish workers rose against their authoritarian regime in the late 1980s, they talked of Lech Walesa as their Gandhi, a description the Vodka-guzzling, tough speaking, trade union leader must have found difficult to swallow. But the Polish labourers were not interested in the historical, verifiable similarities or dissimilarities between the two; they were making a different statement. They were saying something about what they themselves wanted and about how Gandhi, with his weapon of militant non-violence, had become in our time a symbol of defiance of hollow tyrants and bureaucratic authoritarianism backed by the power of the state and modern technology. For above all, this Gandhi is a symbol of those struggling against injustice, while trying to retain their humanity even when faced with unqualified inhumanity. That is why when Benito Aquino of Philippines was assassinated, the demonstrators on the streets of Manila did exactly what the Polish labourers at Gdansk did. They shouted 'Benito, our Gandhi,' and if this seems only a coincidence, the Burmese students who rose against their military regime some years ago

also invoked Gandhi in the same way. Only their leader this time was Aung San Suu Kyi, who had not read Gandhi when she began to be thoughtlessly accused of being an uncompromising Gandhian. At different times, this epithet fit different people from Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan to Nelson Mandela". Gandhi is fast becoming messiah of masses of the world and the global peace. He is also becoming an answer to the vagaries of globalisation.

16.8 SUMMARY

The Gandhian Civil Society is the product of three important factors in the history: anti-colonial struggle, western civilisation and anti-globalisation. There are two genres of Gandhian Civil Society one can visualise: one, Gandhian NGOs who works to bring ever lasting global peace through constructive work; and two, Social Movements- the latter are more vibrant, more powerful in terms of addressing the issues at the global level. However, Gandhi too had the vision of a Civil Society which believed in dialogue, discussion, absence of conflict, unity, etc. His notion of civil society as a critique of western civil society reflected in his seminal work, *Hind Swaraj*. Nonetheless, during his life time itself, many Civil Societies which believed in his principles of global peace emerged particularly in the US and the UK. This trend continued even after his death. The recent decade of globalisation saw the growth of hundreds of civil societies upholding and accepting Gandhi for three important reasons: firstly, his critique of western modernity mediating through his seminal work as well as nationalist movement suiting the present day social movements; secondly, his strategy of non-violence has more currency than violent actions and finally his notion of alternative economy is becoming an answer to the "New Economy" as well as paradigm of development initiated by globalisation.

Nonetheless, one should not overlook the fact that at present we are witnessing a situation of "disturbed peace". This is not only due to war and ethnic crisis but also due to the prevalence of hunger, poverty, uneven development, unequal distribution of income and the growing disparity. Given the fact that Gandhi is becoming the messiah of social movements, and the marginalised masses, he will certainly be an answer to the global peace and the development.

16.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Discuss Gandhi's notion of Civil Society.
2. Analyse the Gandhian Civil Society of his time.
3. Evaluate the post-Gandhian Civil Society.
4. Critically analyse anti-globalisation movements.

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