

# CHAPTER VIII

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### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

We are in the age of modern organizations. The majority of human needs are fulfilled by these organizations. The contribution of the same organizations is significant in meeting societal needs and development of the society. There are basically two categories of organizations--commercial organizations and social organizations. The present study has been confined to social organizations only which cover wide variety of organizations such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Voluntary Organizations (VOs), Action Groups, Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) and so on. The numerical strength of such organizations is huge and diverse in the society. Therefore, the Non-Governmental Organizations, for the study purpose, have been selected to understand their contribution for welfare and development of society in general and dalit empowerment in particular.

The available literature finds difficulties in explaining the convincing definition of NGOs. There is no uniform definition of NGO phenomenon, the reason being the variety of small social organization comes under the concept of NGOs and moreover they are not homogenous in character. The scholars have made an attempt to define NGO keeping in view its motives of existence and dependence on internal and external mechanism to pursue their mission. For the purpose of present study, the NGOs defined as 'registered voluntary institution or organization manages own affairs with the help of independent executive council and paid staff and implements developmental programmes for the benefits of the people at the local, district and

state level.' The study has considered those NGOs who are involved in the empowerment of dalits and other marginalized communities.

The available literature finds several classification or types of NGOs, their nature of work and area of interventions. According to available literature, there are three generations of NGOs: *the first generation of NGOs* are relief (charity) and welfare NGOs, which are more predominant in the developing countries and often keep close working relation with state and international funding organization for recognition and financial support and do not involved in political activities. *Second generation* NGOs are development NGOs involved in local community development work and organize community people to solve their local developmental issues like water, land-issues, public health, indebtedness, agriculture, etc. The development NGOs makes community people self-reliant at the same time they challenge local traditional elites. *Third generation* NGOs explicitly focus on administrative and political constraints and engaged in people's mobilization and conscientization. Their focus is on networking and co-ordinating various peoples organization against states repressive policies and building up wider social movements. (Elliot, 1987; Korten,1991). These NGOs operate at local, regional, national and international level and cater services to their different target groups such as poor and weaker sections of the society. The present study has been carried out among the third generation of NGOs.

There are also several reasons behind the emergence and proliferation of NGOs. These include great tradition of philanthropy and charity, voluntary service for the upliftment of underprivileged section, Christian Missionaries institutions and church extension programmes, two world wars and emergence of UN system, failure of state

as welfare state/developmental imbalances, breakdown or gradual deterioration and decline of existing structures and institutions of modern nation-states, socio-political reform movements and ideologies, rise of neo-liberal political economy, emergence of International Monetary Fund and World Bank, emergence of middle-class intellectuals turned social activists, animators, professional individuals and groups act in the interest of Human Development for personal gain, advantage and employment, etc (Dhanagare,1988; Baviskar,2001; Dhabi,2004).

In the Indian context, the emergence of NGOs more or less influenced by above-mentioned factors. However, the Modern British Education System, Socio-religious reform movement, Indian Freedom Movement, emergence of different ideologies and Corporate Social Philanthropy are also included as crucial factors. The literature reveals that the Indian NGOs basically falls under two main types: first, the Government sponsored NGOs (GONGOs) i.e. CAPART, IRDP, DWACRA, which implements government welfare programmes and schemes and second, Non-Government Organizations, funded by government, foreign funding organization or public sources but function as an autonomous body under strict government surveillance. These NGOs further classified into welfare NGOs, development NGOs and empowerment NGOs. They are involved in performing various activities from welfare to development, increasing people's participation in decision making, conscientization, social awakening and building people's movements, etc. The studies available highlight the contributions of NGOs in the welfare and development of weaker sections in India. But, the same studies deal only with few success stories of NGOs in isolation. There are various issues addressed by NGOs, those neither

explored in detail nor have received due importance. Consequently, there are allegations on NGOs that they have not reached to actual deprived section and made little efforts to address the various issues of dalits. Hence, there is very limited literature available on, how do NGOs perceive dalit problems? How do NGOs plan to mitigate caste-based discriminations, practice of untouchability and atrocities committed against dalits? How do NGOs contribute to social, economic, educational and political empowerment of dalits?

In order to get some insights into these aspects, the present study has been designed and conducted on Contributions of NGOs in Dalit Empowerment in the state of Gujarat. The reason for selecting Gujarat state is due to high proportion of NGOs in Gujarat (Hirway, 1995; Iyengar, 2000). It has been found out from the unpublished sources that there are almost 4000 NGOs in the state of Gujarat. The state is highly influenced by Gandhian ideology and values of social reconstruction and philanthropic tradition, which has helped to build strong voluntary movement in the state since 1920's. However, despite of Gandhian influence and almost 85 years of strong voluntary movement the state suffers and lags behind in various dimensions of human development. As per the estimate 18.4 per cent of the people live below poverty line in the state. The incidence of poverty is unevenly distributed among various social groups in the state. It is much higher among the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) than in the general population (Hirway, 1995, Thorat & Mahamallik, 2006). The problems related to land reform, redistribution of common community resources, practice of untouchability, caste-based discriminations and atrocities committed against dalits are high in various parts of the

state (Liou,2002; Navsarjan, 1998; Shah,2000). The state ranks 6<sup>th</sup> after Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu where high levels of atrocities are committed against dalits (Crime in India, 2001). Moreover, the review of literature suggests that there is no regional or state level study available on the contributions of NGOs in Dalit Empowerment. The available limited literature at the state level (Franko and Parmar,1996) shows that NGOs are playing pro-active role and providing an opportunity and strategy to dalits to fight against caste-based discriminations. Sommer (2000) reveals that NGOs are committed to fight against caste-based discrimination and addressing different issues of dalits such as land, water, minimum wage, scavenging, legal matters, etc. The available literature highlighted the efforts of NGOs in regards to dalits; however, the same literature doesn't reveal different strategies of NGOs in mitigating caste based discrimination, practice of untouchability and atrocities, and programmes for dalit empowerment in Gujarat. In this context, the present study has tried to examine the contributions of NGOs in Dalit Empowerment in Gujarat. It has made an attempt to understand the socio-political factors behind emergence of NGOs in dalit empowerment, their nature and growth in specific geographical areas of Gujarat, historical background of NGOs, issues of dalits addressed and their contributions, etc. The aim of entire exercise is to trace out the contributions of NGOs in dalit empowerment in the larger canvass of Gujarat state, where the economic growth is high, Gandhian influence is strong, NGO sector is large and violation of dalit human rights are common.

An Exploratory Research Design has been used for the present study. The study has been carried out in the four phases. *In the first phase*, secondary data related to socio-

political factors influencing emergence of NGOs in Gujarat, profile of dalits in Gujarat and the contributions of NGOs in dalit empowerment have been gathered through extensive literature review. *In the second phase*, the addresses of NGOs were collected and a list of 42 NGOs working for dalits in Gujarat was prepared. Out of 42 NGOs, total 20 NGOs that are engaged in Dalit Empowerment and located in the districts such as Ahmedabad, Anand, Banaskantha, Gandhinagar, Junagarh, Rajkot, Sabarkantha, Surat as well as Surendranagar were identified and contact had been established with them for the purpose of the present study. Finally, the four out of 20 NGOs were selected by using purposive sampling to make an in-depth case study to examine their contribution in dalit empowerment. The two NGOs such as Behavioural Science Centre (BSC) and Navsarjan Trust (NT) were selected from Ahmedabad district and Ashadeep Human Development Centre(AHDC) and Banaskantha District Dalit Sanghatan were chosen from Anand and Banaskantha districts respectively to carry out the present study.

*In the third phase*, the pilot study has been made for a week to test the tools of data collection, establish rapport with staff of four NGOs, selection of two villages from each NGOs to have Focus Group Discussion and Sarpanches response. Similarly, the Police Station, Block Development Offices were identified to get the response and funding organizations from abroad has been contacted through emails and persuaded to send their written response. *In the last phase*, the four NGOs such as AHDC, BSC, BDDS and NT were studied in details. The case study method was used to understand and examine each NGOs and their contribution in dalit empowerment process. The total 118 respondents of different categories were interviewed to collect detail

information. The collected data have been analysed and interpreted by generating different themes and categories relevant to the topic and presented by descriptive writing.

Now, the main findings and issues, which have been observed in this study, are being discussed below:

### **1) Socio-Political Factors and Emergence of NGOs in Gujarat**

The Chapter- 4 described the various socio-political factors led to the emergence of NGOs in the state of Gujarat. The factors such as social philanthropy, British modern education system, socio-religious reform organizations, Christian missionary, Indian Freedom Movement, Gandhian philosophy, economic prosperity and industrialization, co-operative initiatives, emergence of educated middle class etc. in general responsible for strong NGO sector in Gujarat. However, the growth, nature and types of NGOs remained heterogeneous in the different region of the Gujarat. It is found that central or plain belt of Gujarat such as Ahmedabad, Anand, Kheda, Vadodara, Bharuch, Surat and Valsad districts comprise largest numbers of NGOs due to influence of Christian missionary, British education system, social reform initiatives, political consciousness, Gandhian philosophy, co-operatives, economic prosperity, high industrialization and urbanization. The NGOs again in this region are varied in size and falls under categories such as Gandhian Organizations, Service Delivery Organizations, Professional Organizations, Developmental Organizations and Mobilizational Organizations. Contrary, The Saurashtra and Kachchh region has very few NGOs due to geographical isolation and conservative socio-cultural



practices. There are no big NGOs in this region, majority of them are charity or welfare NGOs.

The Eastern belt of Hills and Forests is full of tribal populated belt. Paradoxically, this region has many NGOs, which work among tribals. They are by product of the Gandhian Reform Movement and Christian Missionaries. In the recent past, the young educated tribals also established NGOs for mobilization and development of tribals. One of the important developments in this region is many of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and BJP sponsored NGOs work among tribals and inculcating the values of Hinduism among tribals. The tribals in this region getting influenced by four different philosophies and values propagated by NGOs i.e. Gandhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and secularism amidst their own culture.

## **2) Rise of civil society among Dalits**

The socio-political factors that have led to the rise of civil society among dalits in Gujarat were also discussed in the Chapter IV. In the pre-independence period, emergence of dalit educated section, ideology of Dr. Ambedkar, formation of Gujarat Scheduled Castes Federation, movements against casteism, dalit literature and dalit movement in Maharashtra influenced to the rise of civil society among dalits in Gujarat. Moreover after, independence, reservation policy, socio-political consciousness among educated dalits, dalit panthers movement, Ambedkars ideology, rise of middle class among dalits, etc. influenced the rise of NGOs among dalits in Gujarat. It is interesting to note that some of the findings of the present study have similarity with the study conducted in the Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir (Pundir, 2004). For instance, the study of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Jammu

and Kashmir (Pundir, 2004) shows that different factors such as socio-political consciousness among dalits, rise of dalit middle class, etc. led the emergence of NGOs among dalits.

### **3) Distribution of NGOs for Dalits**

The distribution of total number of NGOs in Gujarat in general and among dalits in particular has been highlighted in the Chapter III of the present study. In the second phase of data collection, it is found out that there are total 4000 NGOs registered under the charity commissioner of office of Gujarat. Out of these NGOs, total 42 NGOs addressing the issues of dalits and only 20 NGOs among them engaged in dalit empowerment process in Gujarat. This chapter has clearly brought out the fact that only 1.05 per cent NGOs addresses issues of dalits and 0.5 per cent NGOs engaged in dalit empowerment process. The majority of these NGOs are situated at the central belt (Golden Corridor of Gujarat) such as Ahmedabad, Anand, Vadodara and Surat districts of Gujarat. It means, Dalit NGOs also prefer to work in socio-economically developed areas. This kind of trend has an implication for the accessibility and availability of services. As results of this trend, the dalits of other areas remain deprived of NGOs' services. Joshi (2000) and Sarkar (2005) found the similar trend in Gujarat and West Bengal respectively. In Gujarat, the NGOs are in large number in Ahmedabad, Anand, Vadodara, Surat and Vapi districts (Joshi, 2000). In West Bengal, it was found, the majority of NGOs were centralized in Kolkatta, Howrah, South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas and Hoogly districts (Sarkar, 2005).

#### **4) Ideology of NGOs**

The Chapter V explored, all the four NGOs under study were inspired by different ideologies, which further helped to shape the vision statement for the dalit empowerment process. It is found out that Behavioural Science Centre (BSC) and Ashadeep Human Development Centre (AHDC), both are church-based organizations highly influenced by the direction of General Congregation (GC) 32 of the Society of Jesus on liberation theology and writings of the Brazilian philosopher, 'Paulo Freire'. On the other hand, the Banaskantha District Dalit Sanghatan(BDDS) is inspired by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's ideology of Equality, Liberty and Fraternity, and Navsarjan Trust (NT) follows the ideologies of Dr. Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi, Paulo Freire amidst their own ideology of 'dalitism' to address the dalit empowerment process.

The selected NGOs under present study chose ideologies that advocate freedom and justice of oppressed sections. They are ideologically committed to address dalit issues, which make them suitable for dalit empowerment process. However, it is found out that all the selected NGOs cut across their original ideological spectrum and adopt mixture of all ideologies in dalit empowerment process. Importantly, this finding is highly relevant to the study conducted on the seventeen Community Action Group (CAG) of India, working exclusively in the field of rural and tribal development, women's concern, legal aid, environment, health, technology and communication (Pandey, 1991). The study has highlighted Gandhian groups turned to conventional income generation schemes and several radical groups have adopted conventional development programmes (Pandey, 1991).

### **5) Target Group**

The present study found out that the selected NGOs' main target group is dalits (Scheduled Castes). But, they also address issues of other oppressed groups such as tribals, OBCs, minorities and women. This is important finding, which indicates that the majority of NGOs works with dalits have 'group-based approach' to address issues of all oppressed groups. This approach is significant from NGOs' point of view to build trust, alliances, and collective force among sub groups of dalits and other oppressed groups to fight against casteism, communalism, patriarchy, etc. However, the researcher believes that the group-based approach has inherent limitations and may not always work in the favour of dalits due to fact that different castes/community people have different interests and find it difficult to meet their interest in the same organization. For example, in case of atrocity committed against dalits by OBC, the OBC castes may not support dalit victim and will feel loyalty to their caste member due to fear of isolation from their own caste. Thus, the researcher strongly believes that issue-based approach towards problems of other oppressed group is appropriate than group-based approach adopted by the selected NGOs of the present study.

### **6) Types of Organization**

There are different ways in which NGOs can be classified such as types of activities, levels of operation, coverage of population and so on. In the present study, the selected NGOs have been classified as per the types of activities and grouped them into seven categories. such as Religious Organizations, Service Organizations, Development Organizations, Human Rights Organizations, People's Movements,

Advocacy/ Action Group, Research and Consultancy Organizations. It is found that each NGO involved in multiple types of activities. However, it is also found out that dalit empowerment process mostly carried out by Development Organizations and all the four selected NGOs fall under the category of developmental organizations.

### **7) Organization Structure**

The Chapter-V presents the different organizational structure of selected NGOs. For example, BDDS, BSC and AHDC have simple and vertical organizational structure as compared to NT's complex organizational structure. The BDDS and AHDC have very limited coverage and simple organizational structure. The BSC has wide coverage but its organizational structure is simple. Contrary, the NT's organizational structure is more complex and covers wider areas for interventions. The diverse organizational structure of selected NGOs, presents the fact that the all NGOs do not contribute equally for dalit empowerment.

### **8) Staff Profile**

It is found in the Chapter V that the NT recruited highest number of staff i.e. 267 for the implementation of different activities and programmes. The BSC and AHDC have moderate numbers of staff members i.e. 54 and 33 respectively. There are only 10 staff members recruited by BDDS. It is also found that all the four NGOs recruited majority of staff members from dalit communities and equal representation is given to dalit women and various sub-groups of dalits. The special preference for dalit as a staff is based on the notion that the dalit understands dalit problems better than other community people. The commitment and sincerity towards dalit cause is the important criteria adopted by the selected NGOs to recruit staff for dalit

empowerment process. It is important finding under the study that dalits are preferred as staff members by NGOs for dalit empowerment process. This kind of trend has positive implication to develop future leadership among dalits at the grass root level. However, what kinds of problems dalit staff while advocating the dalit empowerment process encounters and how they cope up with it, are some of the important questions for further research in this area.

### **9) Funding Sources**

It is observed in the Chapter V that the selected NGOs under study generate funds from variety of sources. For the present study, the funding sources divided into nine categories such as Central Government, State Government, Central Social Welfare Board, CAPART, National Funding Agency, International Funding Agency, Corporate Sector Funding, Public Donations/Contributions and membership fees. It is found that BSC, AHDC and NT collect funds from International/foreign Funding Agency, State Government, Public Donations/Contributions and membership fees. The share of International/Foreign Funding is high in case of BSC, AHDC and NT. Contrary, the BDDS doesn't receive external funds and it collects major funds through membership fees. This trend indicates that all four NGOs apart from external funding source have created alternative local funding source for financial self-reliance. It will make them less dependent on external sources of funds and help them to survive long for dalit empowerment.

### **10) Extent of Dalits Participation**

The Chapter VI and VII show that dalits' participation in strategy formulation and programme planning is limited. It is found out that selected NGOs consider dalit

views and opinions in the strategy formulation process against caste-based discrimination, practice of untouchability and atrocities. However, dalits' participation in programme planning and fund management is very limited. Their participation is sought only during programme execution or monitoring or evaluation. It is also observed that dalits participate in NGOs' programme by attending programme, providing physical infrastructure (i.e. place for educational activities), community mobilization for programme, arrangement of resources for events, etc. This kind of trend has an implication to create dependence of dalits on NGOs and slow down dalit empowerment process. The researcher strongly believes that providing an opportunity to dalits to participate in programme planning process will build their self-confidence, self-dependence and initiate real empowerment process among dalits.

### **11) Strategies of NGOs**

It is observed in the Chapter VI that all four NGOs such as AHDC, BDDS, BSC and NT have strategies to mitigate caste-based discrimination, practice of untouchability and atrocities against dalits. It is also observed that NGOs adopted single as well as multiple strategies, and their few strategies are similar to each other irrespective of their heterogeneous characteristics. The important finding of the study is that the strategies such as education and conscientization, long term systematic efforts, building alliances across caste and communities and use of constitutional legal provisions for the protection of dalit human rights are emerged as 'realistic strategies' adopted by NGOs. This trend indicates that the selected NGOs believe in constitutional values, solidarity, people's participation and sustainability, while

addressing dalit empowerment process. These are positive indications from NGOs to strive for dalit empowerment by democratic and socially approved means.

### **12) Programmes for Dalit Empowerment**

In the Chapter VII, the selected NGOs' programmes for dalit empowerment have been discussed on the basis of ten criteria. These criteria are: a) basic information of programme, b) process of planning for programme, c) process of resource arrangement and utilization, d) programme execution process, e) nature of local participation in programme, f) dalit empowerment aspects in programme, g) decision making process, h) monitoring, i) evaluation and j) sustainability of programme. The chapter has shown that all four empowerment programmes of each NGO are contributing positively to social, economic, educational and political empowerment of dalits. It is observed that programmes of NGOs are systematically designed, executed, monitored, and evaluated to address dalit empowerment. It is also observed that all the programmes of NGOs are implemented on the sustainable basis. However, it is important finding of the study that NGOs' programmes are contributing more effectively to the social, educational and political empowerment than economic empowerment of dalits. This trend indicates two important aspects: (a) NGOs in dalit empowerment are less successful to uplift economic status of dalits and (b) NGOs need to design constructive programmes for economic empowerment of dalits.

### **13) Perception about NGO**

The Chapter VII discusses the perception of people such as Dalit Beneficiaries, Sarpanches, Police, BDOs, and Programme Officers' of funding organization about the NGOs' programme and contributions in dalit empowerment. By and large people



have better perception about the contributions of NGOs in dalit empowerment. They acknowledge that the existence of NGOs is great moral support for dalit community and NGOs strive for protecting dalits' rights. They also express that NGOs have systematic programmes, which contribute positively to the social, economic, educational and political empowerment of dalits. However, the majority of dalit beneficiaries admit that the contributions of NGOs are more significant in social, educational and political empowerment than economic empowerment.

The present study has given many new insights that are important for the current social work practice. The same insights are discussed below:

### **Implications for Social Work**

The key findings and observations of the present study demonstrate the relevance of 'New Social Movement' and 'Structural Social Work' perspective in dalit empowerment process. More specifically, the findings of the study propose the crucial need for a holistic social work practice. It strongly advocates a common concern i.e. social care and social change for the dalit empowerment process. The study illustrates that the selected NGOs have been working to strike a balance between the social care and social change in dalit empowerment. This is demonstrated by their involvement in social care activities such as Bal Vikas Kendra, Child Development Centre, Bhim Shala and saving and credit co-operative society. Simultaneously, the NGOs initiated programmes in social change activities such as legal action, protest march, sit-ins, hunger strike, rally, community organization and evolving strategies against caste-based discrimination, practice of untouchability, atrocities to bring social transformation, etc. Thus, the present study articulates that

the importance of 'structural social work' as holistic social work practice for empowering the marginalized and oppressed section such as dalits and describes NGOs are viable instrument, which can pursue both social care and social change simultaneously for dalit empowerment.

The findings and observations of the present study have greater relevance to current social work practice. The different ideologies, value orientation, approaches, strategies, programmes and radical field experiences found in the study are relevant to the body of knowledge of social work. These different aspects and experiences of the study are useful information for the social worker committed to the pursuits of social justice and equality. The successful operationlising of structural social work by NGOs for dalits empowerment will inspire social worker and civil society around the world to take initiatives against the racial discrimination, caste-based discrimination and so on. It will develop faith among social work students and practitioners that the structural social work practice is not mere ideology but has potential to establish social justice and equity in the society.

Finally, NGOs holistic approach in dalit empowerment raises issues before current social work practice to adopt structural social work practice, if it really believes in the core professional values of social justice, equity and commitment to marginalized groups in society. Thus, the present study is the important source material for the social work education to adopt structural social work perspective as model to address the issues of marginalized and oppressed section and promote social justice in the society.

## **Conclusion**

In the context of oppression and discrimination, the NGOs have emerged as effective instrument for empowering the oppressed group. The NGOs involved in the dalit empowerment provides valuable learning pertaining to relevance of new social movement and structural social work for social justice, non-discrimination and equity. The present study indicates that despite of heterogeneous background and characteristics, the NGOs are committed to dalit empowerment process. They have systematically initiated efforts by suitable ideologies, value orientation, approach, target group, staff, funding source, strategies and programmes for dalit empowerment. Importantly, it is found that NGOs contributed more in terms of consciousness raising, confidence building, collective protest and mobilizing dalits against the act of injustice rather than actually bringing change in the economic condition of dalits. This kind of trend proves that NGOs have inherent limitation to change the economic condition of oppressed section and they are best suited to raise socio-political consciousness. Thus, it is also important to note that NGOs are potential 'third sector' to bring change in the life condition of oppressed section but it should be supported by 'state' as well as 'market' to achieve effective overall empowerment of the oppressed. At last the present study suggests to initiate further research in the following areas: (a) Quantitative Survey of Civil Society Organizations in Dalit Empowerment in Gujarat (b) Evaluation and Impact Assessment of NGOs in Dalit and Tribal Empowerment in Gujarat (c) Quantitative Study on Nature and Work satisfaction of staff members of NGOs in Dalit and Tribal Empowerment (d) National Level Study on NGOs in Dalit Empowerment, etc.

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