

Non-Governmental Organizations as Saviour of Human Rights with Special Reference to India

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Abstract

Human rights refer to those basic and inalienable rights which belong to an individual as a consequence of being human. At the both national as well as international level these rights have been recognised by a variety of conventions, acts and instruments. However, despite the efforts of the governments of different countries and several other agencies (including Non-Governmental Organizations) to defend people's rights the problem of human rights violation still exists as a major problem for the whole human community. In India also human rights violation is becoming a serious social problem day by day. The present study is an attempt to analyse the functioning of Non-Governmental Organizations towards protection and promotion of human rights. The study also tries to focus on NGOs movement towards human rights activism in India. Additionally, the study attempts to highlight on various strategies adopted by the Non-Governmental Organizations for the protection and enforcement of people's rights. Qualitative research technique is used in the study. The entire study is based on secondary sources of data. For collection of data the study primarily focused on books, journals, reports, e-materials etc. The study reveals that the Non-Governmental Organizations have been playing pivotal role in the field of human rights across the globe. The study shows how important Non-Governmental Organizations are for protecting people's rights in the society. The study assumes significance as it intends to highlight the working of Non-Governmental Organizations on a very crucial issue of present-day world, i.e., human rights violation.

Keywords: Human Rights, Non-Governmental Organization, Human Rights NGO, Protection, India.



Introduction

Non-Governmental Organizations, popularly known as NGOs are voluntary and service-oriented organisations. They are organisations of people which work for betterment of the society. They are the non-profit making organisations for which they are also called Non-Profit Organizations or NPOs (Dutta, 2019). “Like the state, the NGO is composed of individuals, but unlike the state, the NGO enjoys a relationship with the individual that is voluntary” (Charnovitz, 2006, p. 348). Individuals join and support an NGO out of commitment to its purpose.

NGOs operate as a bridge between the State and its citizens. They are very important as they can continuously carry out their policies and actions. Because of their flexible character NGOs can adjust quickly in any circumstances. The World Bank has defined NGOs as private organisations that pursue activities to relieve sufferings, to promote the interests of the poor, to protect the environment or to undertake community development (Manuel, 2015). NGOs have been established in almost all countries of the world. It has been estimated that in 1999 the number of NGOs worldwide was two million. In India it was estimated to be one million which is approximately half of the total number of NGOs (Agarwal, 2007). “There are over 14,000 NGOs registered under the Foreign Contributions Regulations Act. In all there may be over 30,000 NGOs in India” (Baviskar, 2001, p. 5).

The term NGO was first formalized within the UN system in 1945, with its inclusion in Article 71 of the UN Charter. The UN Charter in Article 71 makes one reference to NGOs which allows that the Economic and the Social Council (ECOSOC) “may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence” (Otto, 1996).

In today’s world NGOs have been making significant contribution towards the field of human rights. Considering human rights as the most essential rights for all round development of human personality, across the globe, several human rights NGOs have come into existence for the protection and promotion of people’s rights. “NGOs have been instrumental in shaping the moral and ethical appeal of global standards for human rights, rule of law and democratic governance” (Lai, 2011, p. 15). The World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna, Austria in the year 1993 has given recognition to the important role of NGOs in the area of promotion of all human rights as well as other humanitarian activities at the national, regional and international level. “Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, NGOs have consistently continued their efforts to strengthen the U.N. human rights system and have succeeded in influencing the formulation of different U.N. treaties and conventions, such as the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child” (Tuijl, 1999, p. 496).

Mention here is needed that the NGOs were instrumental in achieving the inclusion of the human rights standards in the UN Charter. In 1948, only forty one NGOs held consultative status with the ECOSOC and among those NGOs, very few focused exclusively on the human rights issues. However, since 1960s the number

of NGOs and their influence both nationally and internationally has grown exponentially. Approximately 500 NGOs had held consultative status with the ECOSOC in 1968. And this number increased to over 1000 by 1992 (Korey, 2004). The expansion of international norms, institutions and procedures for the promotion and protection of human rights has gone hand in hand with the increasing number of NGOs working in the field of human rights. NGOs played an important role during the drafting of the United Nations Charter by lobbying for the inclusion of human rights provisions in the Charter as well as for a system that would give NGOs a formal institutional affiliation with and standing before the UN organs (Singh, 2008).

Before indulging in analysing the functions of NGOs in the enforcement of human rights, it is necessary to have some understanding about human rights NGOs. Humanitarian NGOs, in general, are non-profit non-governmental organisations. They deliver humanitarian assistance to people which includes the provision of food, water, shelter, medical supplies and logistics as well as the reconstruction of critical infrastructure, mine clearance, the accommodation and rehabilitation of refugees and preventive action (Schneiker, 2015). Strictly speaking, human rights NGOs are no different from other types of NGOs. These NGOs do share the attributes or the common denominators. However, the orientation of human rights NGO is about human rights. They seek to promote, protect and enforce people's rights.

Literature Review

To prepare the framework of the present study a number of related books, journals, magazines, reports etc. have been reviewed both in international as well as national and regional context. The following are some of the important literature reviewed under the present research work:

William Korey's (2004) book "NGOs and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A Curious Grapevine" describes how the NGOs, officially accredited to the UN, have had a powerful influence in sensitizing mankind's conscience to the frequent violations of the UDHR, which was adopted by the UN in 1948. In this book, the author has demonstrated that it is the NGOs which have placed the human rights at the heart of human beings' current and future agenda.

Kaushlendra Mishra (2008) in his book "NGOs in the Human Right Movement" has talked about the increasing role of NGOs in upholding people's rights. In the book the author has also discussed about the characteristics and contributions of human rights NGOs with reference to India. The other chapters of the book focusses on the role of Transnational NGOs in global affairs and many other similar subjects of national and international importance.

Puran Chandra (2010) in his book "NGOs in India: Role, Guidelines & Performance Appraisal" provides an overview of the role of NGOs in rural development as well as in the protection of child rights. The author in this book has written extensively on the various roles that can be played by the NGOs for the development and

protection of children. Besides, in the volume the author has brought into focus various challenges facing by the NGOs in their effort towards protection and development child rights.

Another book “NGOs in India: A Cross-Sectional Study” written by R. Sooryamoorthy and K. D. Gangrade discusses (2001) about the NGOs that work for the development of rural areas as well as of women and children. The book traces the rise of NGOs in India. In a separate chapter of the book the authors have tried to discuss about the functioning of NGOs in the area of child care. In this volume the authors have also tried to analyse and explain the problems and difficulties experienced by the NGOs in their operation.

H. O. Agarwal’s (2007) book “Human Rights” highlighted the meaning, nature, kinds of human rights and its systematic development. In the book the author has dealt with the question of implementation of all categories of human rights such as civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The author has also highlighted various covenants and conventions relating to human rights. The fifth chapter of the book discusses about the rights of vulnerable groups like children, women, migrant workers etc.

“Child Rights in India: Law, Policy and Practice” written by Asha Bajpai (2017) covers wide range of issues relating to the rights of children. In this volume the author has tried to discuss about the basic rights of children such as right to family education, right to parental care, right against economic exploitation, right to protection against sexual abuse etc. The volume also covers various strategies adopted by the NGOs for the protection and promotion of children’s rights.

The article titled “The Role of NGOs in the Enforcement of Human Rights: An Overview” written by Vaibhab Goel and Manoj Kr. Tripathi (2010) is a very useful article to have some understanding about the prominent role played by the NGOs in the protection and enforcement of people’s rights in the society. Considering NGOs as the most active parts of the Civil Society Organizations (CSO) the authors in the article have opined that NGOs, particularly human rights NGOs have the greater responsibility of enforcing human rights at the both national as well as international arena.

In his “Critical Engagements of NGOs for Global Human Rights Protection: A New Epoch of Cosmopolitanism for Larger Freedom?” O. K. Lai (2011) has discussed about the working of NGOs towards protection of human rights. According to the author, the active engagements of NGOs in the local, regional as well as international arena has enlightened societies on human rights issues. The author also opined that the NGOs have challenged and embarrassed the status quo and the legitimacy of the pro-economic liberalization bodies and thus contributed towards the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights of people.

In “NGOs and Civil Society in India” B.S. Baviskar (2001) has tried to discuss about the important role of NGOs as a part of the civil society organisations. The

author in this article has also tried to provide the definition and classification of NGOs as well as their rise in the sphere of development since the 1980's.

In the article "Role of Civil Society and Human Rights" the author Vinod Prakash Gupta (2011) has tried to discuss about the concept civil society as well as analyse the civil society movement in India in the context of human rights. In the article the author has also tried to highlight on the challenges and various constraints facing by the civil society in their effort towards the advancement of the human rights movement in India and the world.

Objectives

- To analyse the functioning of NGOs towards protection and promotion of human rights.
- To focus on the NGOs movement towards human rights activism in India.

Research Questions

The study will through light on the functioning of NGOs in promotion and protection of human rights. The following research question can be condensed for the study:

- How NGOs work for the protection and promotion of human rights?
- What role NGOs play in the protection of human rights in India?

Methodology

In the present study qualitative method is used. All relevant information is collected from the secondary sources. For collection of data the study primarily focused on books, journals, reports, e-materials etc.

Discussion

In common parlance, human rights are those rights which belong to each and every individual as a consequence of being human. These rights are the birth rights of every individual. All human beings are entitled to these rights irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, sex and nationality. These rights of individuals should always be protected as these rights are very essential for all round development of the human personality. "The basic concept of human rights protection is that governments are accountable for upholding citizen's rights, and that human rights NGOs have a particular role to play in ensuring that this accountability happens" (Bell and Keenan, 2004, p. 334).

The main foundation for the international system of protection of people's rights was laid down by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948. This document provided a detailed elaboration of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of all people throughout the world. In addition to UDHR several other international organisations, declarations, conventions and acts have also recognised human rights as the most essential rights for all human beings and stressed the need to protect and promote these rights. However, in recent years there have been numerous instances of violation of people's rights almost in all parts of the world which has now become a very serious problem for all nations of the world. Mention

here is needed that in today's world with growing awareness about human rights people have realised the need and importance of protecting and promoting their own rights. As a consequence of this realisation all over the world a large number of humanitarian NGOs have come into existence with the aim of performing wide variety of functions to defend people's rights and fundamental freedoms.

It is to be noted that the International Committee of the Red Cross established in 1863 by Henri Dunant, a Physician of Swiss origin is known to be the first International NGO. After that it is due to the recognition extended towards the NGOs by the UN Charter under Article 71, there was tremendous increase in the number of NGOs in the 20th Century. Some of the leading International NGOs that came into existence were the International Commission of Jurists, Amnesty International, the Anti-Slavery Society, the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights etc. In some issue areas such organisations have acquired significant authority in the eyes of transnational authority. "International NGOs not only cross formal national boundaries-they also have created a direct and independent form of non-governmental diplomacy through networks of their own" (Clark, 1995, p. 508). The World Conference on Human Rights (1993) appreciated the contribution of NGOs to increasing public awareness of human rights issues, to the conduct of education, training and research in the field of human rights as well as to the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. In the Conference emphasis was given on the continued dialogue and co-operation between governments and NGOs. The Conference stressed that NGOs and their members genuinely involved in the promotion and protection of human rights should enjoy the rights and freedoms recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Protection of National Law (Levin, 2016). Further, the conference urged the NGOs to intensify their efforts in co-operating and co-ordinating their activities against the human rights violations in general and against the evils like racism and racial discrimination in particular. By recognising the human rights of women and of the girl-child as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of Universal Declaration of Human Rights the Conference also urged the NGOs to intensify their efforts for the promotion and protection of human rights of women and the girl child.

It is to be noted that NGOs have contributed significantly towards the field of human rights. At the national, regional as well as international level NGOs have been playing a leading role in the enforcement of human rights. NGOs in general and human rights NGOs in particular are engaged in a number of activities that would encourage the respect for human rights and enforcement of human rights. Human rights NGOs in fact plays a supplementary role in providing assistance to the government in its effort towards protection and promotion of people's rights by adopting a number of strategies. Some of these strategies are mentioned below (Goel and Tripathi, 2010, p. 781-786):

- Human Rights Education: All human beings in this world are entitled of rights and the rights to human rights education. Human rights NGOs play a crucial role in imparting formal as well as informal education of human rights to the people. Various international conventions, declarations like Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, (UDHR); International

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966; (ICCPR), Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, (CRC) etc. through a number of provisions have clearly reflected the need and necessity of human rights education.

- **Monitoring, Investigation and Documenting Human Rights:** Human rights NGOs perform wide variety of functions which lead to the enforcement of human rights both at the national and international levels. Among all those activities monitoring, investigation and documentation of human right are the most important activities of human rights NGOs. Human rights monitoring refers to a process which include activities such as assembling, presenting and dissemination of relevant information in a form that enables human rights performance to be assessed according to agreed upon international standard.
- **Advocacy and Lobbying:** Advocacy and lobbying are another most important toll used by the NGOs the aim of which is to bring about structural adjustment or change on certain issues and points. Almost all activities of NGOs have an advocacy character. Advocacy refers to pleading on behalf of someone else. It means actively taking up the case of a victim individual. Apart from advocacy, NGOs are also involved in lobbying authorities both at the national and international levels. In general, lobbying means informed communication from private individuals and groups to public decision-makers. It is the quintessence of the democratic process through which interest is articulated and aggregated. As NGOs are skilful organisations, they know how to make successful lobbying and advocacy through their observer and consultative status at the UN system and regional human rights system. Generally speaking, through the instrumentality of advocacy and lobbying human rights NGOs seek to identify areas and issues which require special attention and thus have immensely contributed towards shaping public agenda and framing the nature of rights discourse.

According to Agarwal (2007), activities of NGOs can be said to be spread worldwide or confined to one country but contribute substantially in different ways towards the area of human rights especially in developing and underdeveloped countries of the world. These organisations undertake wide variety of functions depending upon the purposes for which they are established. Some of the functions which they may perform in connection with human rights are as follows (p. 213-215):

- NGOs can play a very significant role in mobilising the opinion of people at different levels of the society. To do so they may arrange seminars, conferences and meetings on different aspects of human rights. In such seminars, conferences and meetings administrative officers, jailors, police officers, judges, advocates and journalists may also be invited by the NGOs to take part. This would make them more knowledgeable about international treaties on human rights and their implications.

- NGOs may prepare reports on survey conducted by them regarding the conditions of jails, treatment meted to prisoners, especially to undertrials in jails and the number of undertrials and their duration in prison. NGOs may circulate those reports to make the people and the government aware of the facts relating to human rights.
- NGOs may safeguard the human rights of people, particularly of the vulnerable sections who are the victims of human rights violation, by establishing direct contact with them and providing them the service that they require.
- NGOs can approach the governments of different countries through proper channel to respect international standards for human rights. They can put pressure on the government to control the growing problem of torture and inhuman treatment of police and jail authorities. They may also ask the government to submit their reports in time to the various international committees and put into practice human rights standards through their foreign policy.
- Again, NGOs may provide legal assistance to people. In this regard, they may take initiative to bring those cases before the courts of law where a victim of human rights violation has not taken any action to secure the redress either due to the lack of resources or due to his ignorance about available remedial measures.
- NGOs may file writ petitions before any court through public interest litigation (PIL) in order to provide access to justice to a large section of people who are deprived of their basic rights and privileges and to whom freedom and liberty are nothing but only two words having no particular meaning.
- NGOs may also work for processing of information, i.e., creating awareness among people about the extent of their rights and spreading information among them about the violation of human rights. To disseminate information NGOs may publish reports relating to violation of rights.
- Human rights NGOs may work to make people aware of their rights. It is a very important task which can be performed by the NGOs in various parts of the world where people are deprived of the formal education process.

Krishnaswamy has identified six functions performed by human rights NGOs. These are:

- Gathering, evaluating and disseminating human rights,
- Advocating human rights,
- Lobbying and mobilizing public opinion,
- Providing legal aid,
- Providing humanitarian relief,

- Developing human rights norms.

Assessing Lai's views on NGOs role in matter of human rights in the context of the current research it can be stated that NGOs (Lai, p. 8):

- serve as a focal point, platform and network for information gathering and research required to both challenge and create new policy advocacies for human rights;
- serve as a base for articulating particular human rights abuses/issues;
- works as an agency to mobilize and/or articulate various forms and modes of confrontational protests and demonstrations, targeting Inter Governmental Organizations and allied transnational corporations;
- works as networking forum for transnational advocacies and communication to push government bodies at the local, regional as well as international level to react to human rights abuses.

NGOs and Human Rights Movement in India

In India the term NGO itself is of fairly recent coinage. "Earlier the common term was voluntary organisations or agencies, referring essentially to organisations registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860 and equivalent legislation" (Sheth and Sethi, 1991, p. 50). "From an operational point of view, the term NGOs in India has been used to denote those organisations which are non-governmental, voluntary and non-profit making bodies, with a legal status such as a society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 (XXI) or under corresponding State Act or Trusts registered under the Indian Trust Act or Charitable and Religious Act, 1920 or Co-operative Act or Section 5.25 of the Companies Act, 1956" (Shirur and Shirur, 2007, p. 48).

It is remarkable to note in the context of India that in India both the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 (PHR Act) and the National Commission on Human Rights (NHRC) have recognised the positive role that the NGOs can play in furthering the cause of human rights. In its Section 12(1) the Protection of Human Rights Act has enjoined upon the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to encourage the efforts of the NGOs and institutions working in the field of human rights. The NHRC in its very first report clearly spelt out the three areas in which NGOs could provide direct assistance to it in its mission. Firstly, because of their grass roots contacts, NGOs can most effectively identify human rights violations, articulate them and seek redress from the Commission. Secondly, because of the relationship of the NGOs with the public, they can assist the Commission by helping its investigating staff as well as undertaking investigations of human rights violations on behalf of the Commission. Thirdly, the NGOs can also undertake research activities and other serious studies as specific problems and issues in view of their specialized knowledge. The Commission also encourages the NGOs for organizing seminars, training programmes and in generating awareness among common people (Joshi, 2006).

Historically speaking, in India although in the 19th century as well as in the pre-independence period voluntary efforts were undertaken, the NGOs came to occupy a prominent place in the post-independent era only, especially after 1970s. Since then till today NGOs have been playing a very active role for the welfare of deprived sections in India. At the grass root level these organisations have been working as the vehicle of social change and economic development of the Indian society. In the field of human rights in addition to the initiative of the government several NGOs have also been making sincere efforts to deal with wide variety of issues. These organisations have been contributing tremendously towards the field of protection and promotion of human rights of Indian citizens.

The concept of human rights in India has been modelled upon the definition given in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. Section 2 (d) of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 lays down the definition of human rights. According to it, human rights refers to the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India. The U.N. Declaration on Human Rights as well as other Human Rights Covenants have influenced very much on the Constitution of India and various Indian Statutes which cannot be overlooked.

It may be noted that the present movement of the NGOs in India towards human rights activism owes its origin to emergency era during the rule of Indira Gandhi and inherently to some of the leading events such as increasing weakness in professional efficiency of the State apparatus and many of the democratic institutions. The emergency was a period characterised by the curtailment of civil liberties as a result of which several individuals and organisations came to the forefront as champions of human rights. Jayaprakash Narayan's "Peoples Union for Civil Rights" was the most prominent organisation among all those organisations. A similar organisation that was established was the "People's Union for Democratic Rights". These organisations were very important in the sense that they were autonomous of the government and critical of its actions. Thereafter, a number of similar other human rights NGOs came into existence, fighting and promoting human rights at the grass-root level which ultimately lead to the progress of the human rights movement in India. For example, NGOs like Vigil India Movement (Bangalore), Citizen for Democracy (Aligarh), Prayas (Delhi), Human Rights Wing (Darbhanga, Bihar), Peoples Union for Civil Liberties (Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir), Human Rights Education Movement of India (Madras i.e., Chennai), Legal Aid Services (West Bengal), Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC) (Secunderabad), Association for the Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR) (Calcutta), Committee for the Protection of Democratic Rights (CPDRP) (Bombay), Citizens Committee for Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights, (Goa), People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) (New Delhi), Karnataka Civil Liberties Committee (KCLC) (Bangalore), Organizations for the Protection of Democratic Rights (OPDR), (Tenali, Andhra Pradesh), Indian People's Human Rights Commission, (Mumbai), The Indian Society for Human Rights for All, Equal Justice to Criminal and Victims are some of the trustworthy and prominent NGOs (Harsh, 2008).

In India NGOs have been playing a key role in responding the mass voice of weak, meek, poor, suppressed, downtrodden and exploited people. Because in the developing countries like India there are numerous gaps in the process of policy making, creating awareness among people and enforcement of laws related to human rights which NGOs try to bridge. To do so NGOs access the laws, organise awareness camps, deliver services at door steps of victims of human rights, teach human rights as a subject and fills up public interest litigations (PILs) in various high courts and Supreme Court (Pandey, 2011). NGOs in fact have emerged as a powerful protective mechanism which provides assistance to the needy persons in the field of legal battle. In this direction the dynamic and dedicated approach of some prominent NGOs is very important to mention. For example, Peoples Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR), Legal Aid Services, People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) etc. have invoked the judicial process by way of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) and by writing letter to the supreme court of India and other highest authorities. Thousands of arrested persons as well as under trials prisoners are benefitted by such actions undertaken by these organisations. The NGOs have also been providing necessary legal aid to the accused persons and thus contributing significantly towards protection and promotion of their fundamental rights. On the basis of the reports, mainly reported by various NGOs across India, the Supreme Court and National Human Rights Commission of India has taken action on several human rights violation complaints relating to accused person.

In India contributions made by the NGOs towards protection and enforcement of human rights can be discussed under the following heads (Mishra, 2008, p. 25-26):

- **Role in Expansion of the Rights Discourse:** in India human rights NGOs have been playing a very crucial role in expanding the rights discourse to include certain rights, which were previously not the part of the human rights discourse, due to the limited sense in which the State projected rights. As a result of this development, the State has been compelled to take steps for the implementation of human rights.
- **Role in Recognizing the Rights of Marginalized Groups of the Society:** human rights NGOs in India have played a major role in protecting the human rights of marginalized groups of people like women and members of oppressed classes. It is because of the efforts making by these NGOs that the rights of those people have been taken into account by the State and have also been widely recognized in society.

Conclusion

The problem of human rights violation is a worldwide and multidimensional problem. As members of world society people have shown their commitment towards promotion and protection of human rights. Various human rights instruments devised for the protection of human rights have entrusted the task of protecting, promoting as well as enforcing human rights on the states. So, in order to protect human rights efforts are being made by the governments of different nations at the both national and international level. From time to time, several laws have been passed and a number of policy initiatives have also been undertaken to

ensure safety and security of all human beings across the globe. However, despite these efforts many States in today's world have failed drastically to protect people's rights. Studies revealed that every day across the world large scale violation of human rights is taking place which has adversely affected the overall growth and progress of various nations of the world. It is mainly due to some socio-economic factors like poverty, illiteracy, conflict, insurgency, natural calamities and many other manmade causes' human rights violation is still taking place in today's society. As a result of this, throughout the world several human rights NGOs have come into existence which has the watch dog capacity to look into seriously and respond without delay to human rights conditions.

To be specific, in India also human rights violation is a major problem. In the post independent period the Government of India has made some significant commitments towards ensuring the basic rights of its citizens. To protect their rights various laws have been passed and a number of policy initiatives have also been pronounced by the government. Apart from the government, several other Civil Society Organizations including NGOs have also been working at the national, regional as well as local level for the promotion and protection of human rights in India.

In India NGOs have contributed tremendously towards protection and enforcement of human rights. Besides playing the role as the watchdog of government's activities NGOs have also become good actors in promotion of equality and indiscriminate in the society. By framing various policies and implementing different laws these human rights NGOs have been making concerted efforts for protecting people's rights. Further, these organisations have also helped in bringing instances of human rights violations to the notice of the government so that the government can take immediate action in that regard. Presently, NGOs in India have become instrumental in equipping marginalised groups including women and children.

It is to be noted that in today's world amidst large scale violation of human rights, the protection of people's rights has become an issue of prestige for all the nations of the world. The need and importance of human rights NGOs, therefore, is felt by everyone and everywhere at all levels of the society whether developed, developing or underdeveloped world. Because, without the contributions of NGOs towards the field of human rights protection it would have almost not been possible for the governments of different nations to achieve what they have achieved today in bringing changes in the lives of people. The world needs NGOs as they can operate outside the framework of the state's system in order to put pressure on states on a variety of fronts. These civil society organisations are very necessary to protect and promote human rights because of their ability to work simultaneously across different issues and different local, national as well as international spaces. Therefore, "It would be difficult to dispute the claim that the world would be a less pleasant place to live in today had there been no NGOs holding governments to account over the past 50 years" (Thakur, 1994, p. 17).

Limitation and Study Forward

The study is based on secondary data which is having a limitation of outlook. The study focussed on the functioning of NGO's as saviour of human rights. Further studies can be done on the basis of interview with stakeholders, survey with questionnaire, case studies etc. so as to gather more ideas about the ways of working of NGOs and the issues relating to their effort towards protection of human rights.

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