Evolution of Voluntary Sector in Modern Andhra: Past and Present

- **Sundar Kompalli, Ph D (HCU)**
Director, Samskar, Atheist Centre, Benz Circle
Vijayawada 520 010, AP

I

The evolution and growth of voluntary sector/programmes over historical periods suggest seven major trends in the process flow.

Traditional Mindset

The age old customary practice of donating for the cause of poor has been in vogue through different periods of Indian cultural life. Culture primarily includes religious thinking in this context. The long trail of human magnanimity towards fellow humans as enshrined in the so called Hindu religious ideas received its first and major structural treatment at the hands of Mauryan King Ashoka. He, as a paternal despot tried his hands at formalising and formatting service programmes and several of his rock edits and inscriptions set the mandated tone for state's social service. His act can be equated with the present day corporate thinking where service programmes meander through mandated structures and predefined operational contours.

Colonial Conundrum

Under the British colonial rule in India social work and service activities proceeded along the same religious lines where indigenous religion was replaced by Euro-centric religion. By the beginning of 19th century the activities and funding for Christian missionary work was on the rise. Christian missionaries pioneered social work in the country and installed a structured process for social development work. The oft-quoted phrase *soup, soap and salvation*-(symbolising food, health and religious education guided the stream of their social initiatives (*1. H. Sharp, 1920 & J.F. Richey, 1922*). Their work was formatted differently and structured from the view of point of exclusive concentration on specific social segments. The religious underpinnings were vehemently opposed by Indian sections. As time progressed one can discern a distinct dialectical process of colonial initiative and indigenous protest (socio-cultural mode) from mid 19th century. The whole process constituted counter hegemonic efforts against the overarching colonial hegemonic tirades on crucial aspects of Indian social and cultural life. Details of various forms of social action (including protest) of people are presented elsewhere in the essay. Dynamics of people's action were purely voluntary in nature and sowed the seeds for formal nature of voluntary activities in our society.

Gandhian Endorsement

In the post-independent era, the government of India extended patronage for continuance of Gandhian constructive programmes in the country. The pre-struggle programme operations of Gandhian constructive philosophy which often remained purely voluntary in nature received state's support after independence. Organisations like Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Khadi and Village Industries Commission, Gandhi Peace Foundation, Harijan Sevak Sangh, ABRS (Akhil Bharat Rachanatmak Sangh) etc are some of the notable examples. In addition, first generation leaders under the influence of Gandhi set up their own organisations to take forward constructive programmes as defined by Gandhi himself during his lifetime. Even Vinoba Bhave undertook his historical foot-march (*Bhoodan Padayatra*) from Andhra

Pradesh under the influence of Gandhian principles. Gora (Goparaju Ramachandra Rao) sowed the seeds for atheist social work from a pure Gandhian voluntary perspective. B V Parameswara Rao of BCT (Bhagavatula Charitable Trust) too acted on the same principles and founded the basic principles and tenets for self-help and village reorganisation in coastal regions. These activities formed a different stream of voluntary work in Andhra Pradesh.

Planned Mandates of Democracy
Policy planners of post-independent India realised the importance of participatory democracy within the first few decades of independence. First Five Year Plan emphasised on public cooperation in national development. Second Plan stated that public cooperation and public opinion constitute the principal force behind country's approach to planning. Third Plan recognised the fact that success of plans rest solely with initiative and organisational ability of people, not of legal provisions and sanctions. But the Fourth and Fifth Plans lost sight into this aspect and ignored the thrust to be put on public cooperation and involvement. However, the Fifth Plan witnessed a historical shift from welfare to development. Sixth Plan reemphasised on people's participation and people's organisations. It was Seventh Plan that categorically declared the intention of the government to involve VOs to supplement government programmes. The emphasis was to continue later. Eighth Plan emphasised on the importance of building people's institutions and recognised the fact that active participation from people can romp home better results as compared to government efforts. Ninth Plan included PRIs and self-help groups along with NGOs in participatory democracy (*2. Steering Committee, 2002: 2-3*). Tenth Plan adopted a rights-based approach to social development programmes (*3. Position Paper, 2006: iv-v*).

Civil Society Perspective
Civil society is a very broader term that it can include every social activity under its definitional jurisdiction. But the specific and emphasised talk on civil society and its contributions are in circulation in recent times (purely rights-based approaches) in the wake of velvet revolutions across globe viz., the post-Egypt developments where pro-democracy movement attracted attention of global community and had a contiguous impact on other neighbouring countries (*4. http://www.isec.ac.in/MADRID%20PAPER.pdf*). On the other hand, world bodies like Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and Social Watch etc too constituted opinion of civil society barring criticism from those who were critical of some of their agendas and activities.

Civil society is defined in various ways. In fact, the term has been so vaguely overused that it has almost lost its core meaning. Recent studies identified three major definitions of civil society. Political theorists study the term from these three perspectives (*5. Ibid*): Lockean notion of civil society which a has a cue to estimate that civil society is prior to state; Montesquieu- de Tocqueville stream attaches importance to the notion of civic associations and associational life; Hegelian perception of civil society as the domain between the family and the state and Marx incorporates market and economic realm into the definition. The debate on the democratization processes in the third world during the 1980s revolved not only around establishing democratic polities and societies, but also focused on broadening the frontiers of democratic processes and deepening their reach to cover and include those hitherto left out from its purview (*6. Ibid*).

CSR's Gamut

Corporate Social responsibility (CSR) is a recent phenomenon in the country and region. The economic liberalisation of India's economy from the last decade of 20ᵗʰ century had a deep impact on corporate business routines. It was a kind of peripheral thinking witnessed by corporate sector once profits from enlarged business transactions began filling the vaults of these corporate houses. There is an implicit assertion of this trend when the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) stated that *lately there is a marked increase in the willingness of Corporates to undertake activities related to impacting societal and economic development and collaborate with the voluntary sector as the vehicle for last mile delivery* (*7. http://www.cii.in/Sectors.aspx?enc=prvePUj2bdMtgTmvPwvisYH+5EnGjyGXO9hLECvTuNugJuO9h/k9vnVi/ +uRQjYe*). This development, however, needs to be differentiated against the corporate involvement of a few business houses from the beginning of 20ᵗʰ century. The industrial houses of Tata, Bajaj, Birla etc (first generation national capitalist groups) were actively involved in social activities during the national liberation struggle. Their presence is still felt in development and social service sectors on a large scale in the country today.

Corporate Social Responsibility is seen as *the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the community and society at large* (*8. ogram/business-role/previous-work/corporate-social-responsibility.aspx*) in the respective geographical locations or countries. From the beginning of 21ˢᵗ century the CII has envisaged a National Movement for Mainstreaming CSR for Sustained Inclusiveness as part of its Social Development Agenda. The CII National Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility & Community Development was constituted in 2001 to make CSR an actionable business agenda (*9. www.cii.in/Sectors, op.cit*). The Committee develops CSR guidelines and promotes the sharing of CSR experiences and best practices. The CII Development Initiatives ensures the continuity of these programmes, particularly with respect to women empowerment, industry-NGO partnership, and persons with disabilities.

In Andhra Pradesh, CSR is emerging as an essential component in delivering the better business performance and image. Many organizations are actively engaged in supporting skills up gradation, promoting primary education and healthcare. CII, AP has come up with a publication 'SAMVRIDDHI' carrying several examples of CSR Journey of select major organizations (*10. Ibid*). Successful business firms like Amararaja Group, Bharat Biotech International Limited, Creamline Dairy Products limited, Dr. Reddy's Foundation, GMR Varalakshmi Foundation, infotech Enterprises, Lanco Foundation, Ramky Foundation and Visaka Industries are the notable examples from Andhra Pradesh contributing their mite to the field of education, health, promotion of science and technology, livelihoods, water and sanitation, environment etc (*11. cii.in/WebCMS/Upload/Samvriddhi%20Final.pdf*).

Government's Ante

Eleventh five year plan (2007-2012) officially, through a public policy acknowledges and recognises the fact that cooperation between government and CSOs / NGOs (emphasis on cooperation between NGOs and PRI) could be encouraged for joint implementation of projects (*12. National Policy on the Voluntary Sector, 2008: 11-12*). Incidentally NGO is described as the *third sector* by the government (*13.Report of the Steering Committee, op.cit*). It is significant to note that government of Andhra Pradseh had taken the definition to a different logical end and made a forceful entry into the shoes of its own definition. The government of Andhra Pradesh retired into a gamut of alternative thinking at the beginning of new Millennium and

the release of Vision 2020/VELUGU Document is a case in point (*14. http://www.serp.ap.gov.in/SHG/aboutus.jsp*). It registered a separate society under the name SERP (Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty) and shaped itself as the most influential *third sector*, almost in the form of the biggest NGO- a new development in the country. It now operates under the name IKP, *Indira Kranthi Patham*. The main tool of operation is women self-help groups (SHGs).

Commencing in early 2000, it took a number of significant steps to develop a strategy to operationalize Vision 2020, and to build widespread ownership of the process. It read more like a corporate mandate than an official paper. One of the very important and key performance indicators under the programme, among others was household perception of the improvement in quality of and access to basic services: education, health, integrated child development services. This development in Andhra Pradesh is a perverted paradigm shift in the annals of development in the state after independence. Andhra Pradseh was the first state to usher in a new era where government appeared to be gearing up to accelerate rural development process in the form of the biggest NGO. Activities of SERP are funded by World Bank and other such international bodies. At the operational level, complete control rests with the government and the programmes are administered in a contractual manner.

II

The role of voluntary efforts towards social issues dates back to ancient past in Indian history. The nature, dimensions, manifestations and forms have exhibited change over a period of time. The efficacy of the efforts of the voluntary actions was different subject to time and space. Nevertheless voluntarism had been influenced by indigenous traditions (religion or religious philosophy emphasised), inspiration of individuals or institutions and specific needs of time. The colonial rule in India inaugurated many changes in Indian social and economic fabric including voluntary work. Apart from the introduction of missionary work, other policies of the colonial state in India had a spiralling effect on various social developments which again heralded a new era in the area of voluntary efforts.

The advent of political independence to colonial countries heralded a watermark in the history of voluntary efforts and the role of voluntary sector. Last six decades can be called age of development. The word *development* in voluntary sector (as well as public domain), as it unfurled over the last six decades in the world, appears to be a misnomer. It was promoted, laden with a heavy agenda and to stand opposed to communist methods of promoting social and economic progress. The use of the phrase, *non profit* had its initiation in 1950s and 1960s in USA (*15. Peter Frumkin, 2002: 15*). The agenda for the *underdeveloped* (the *Third World* freed from the colonial yoke) was given by the American state in the post second world war. The indigenous notions of public charity within the respective cultural milieu were either overlooked or overlapped or subjugated to the introduction of idea of development which beggars a definite and certain definition. Development has shaped itself as a shapeless creature, but certainly ineradicable. Any discourse on development is self-defeating because it has no content of its own except that it allows any intervention (into society) to be sanctified in the name of a higher goal (*16. Gustavo Esteva, 1997: 8-10*). Old ideas of charity are often based on religious or traditional considerations of the indigenous societies in the world. Under colonial dispensation state's intervention into social / cultural and economy sector was seen as a historical necessity. There was no single colonial country in the world where the state did not influence society, economy and culture. Often, social / cultural interventions

were channelled through religious institutions (church) and political economy was under direct dispensation of the colonial state (17. Marianne Gronemeyer, 1997: 75-76).

Development was introduced by US as a tool to stall progression of socialist mode of taking up social and economic development issues. The phrase, *The Third World* coined by the French Colonial State in early 1950s refers to the embattled territory between two world super powers (capitalist US and communist Russia). It is criticised by Western scholars themselves that the hidden agenda of the so called development was nothing else than Westernisation of the world. Our estimate of voluntary sector needs to consider these historical developments before an effort is made to delve into the nature and contribution of these organisations in free Indian society. It is examined in the current paper the evolution and contribution of voluntary bodies and the contemporary contexts within which they operated and the issues undertaken by them during the same period.

In the erstwhile colonial countries dichotomy between the *given* and the *indigenous* interventions into public welfare existed. While the given (top-down) aspects of state's intervention were represented by the institutions supported by colonial government (like church), the indigenous modes of operation were represented by local charitable houses / institutions. A time was soon to come when the colonial state had to enact separate legislation to monitor (control) these charitable houses / institutions floated by the local people. Societies Registration Act 1860, the Indian Trusts Act 1882 and the Charitable and Religious Trusts Act 1920 have been the colonial inventions in India (18. *Neema Kudva,* 2005: 8-9).With little or no difference, these are followed till date and the colonial intellectual hegemony has come to stay.

The British colonial period in India witnessed continuation of voluntary efforts not only in service sector (social service) but also in political sector where the efforts appear to be politically-motivated but their basic nature was voluntary. These efforts were pitted against the colonial state in various fields of operation. This is almost a paradigm shift in terms of the agenda points before the voluntary organisations or their efforts. This understanding becomes historically necessary as the traditional meaning of voluntarism often points to one set of activities towards the welfare of common people and poor. The colonial conundrum had its telling effect on the nature of voluntarism and voluntary efforts in Indian society during 19th and 20th centuries. The current but brief analysis of the historical divide enables us to have a concurrent estimate of the genesis and growth of voluntary efforts, organisations and specific voluntary bodies with a pre-defined purpose. At times voluntary efforts took a negative manifestation vis-a-vis colonial state and this leaves us wonder whether voluntary sector necessarily needs to be defined as positive social action.

III

Voluntarism and Colonial Experience

Several aspects of nineteenth century Indian society under colonial rule are still unexplored. It was a period of transition. Economic, social and educational reforms introduced by the British resulted in structural changes in Indian society. The outcome of these changes is significant as the reaction from indigenous society started building up along with them. A study of this transition becomes a significant area for the historian. It is to be noted that the initial manifestation of voluntary efforts and voluntary bodies in the colonial era assumed negative manifestation against some of the measures unleashed by the colonial state in Andhra region of the erstwhile Madras Presidency. As stated above, the negation of what was

seen as anti-people resulted in proliferation of efforts in different forms of social action and in the process the efforts launched were neither forced from above nor funded nor devoid of public agenda. In terms of present day understanding, the footing of issues and fighting for peoples' problems were reminiscent of pure advocacy and campaign efforts. In other words, seeds for a healthy historical tradition for intense advocacy campaigns and networking for peoples' cause were sown firmly during this period and opened wide vistas for social action programmes in the years to come. The transition period as ushered in during the colonial period and the resistance cum voluntary efforts from the indigenous groups have redefined the role and nature of voluntary efforts and organisations. The historical legacy still continues in various forms today.

The introduction of new education and rise of new middle classes in Andhra became one of the most important factors in the growth of a new set of professionals taking up journalism on voluntary basis. In the initial stages vernacular press remained confined to specific middle class concerns. However, it assumed the historical role of enlightening people on issues of public concern including reform issues and acted as an instrument of public protest (19.Vivekavardhani, 1878; 23-34). Apart from being one of the potent factors in the growth of press, educated sections were actively involved in establishing voluntary public societies, debating clubs and public libraries where public issues were discussed (20.V Ramakrishna, 1984). These developments provided a platform for people to demand their rights from the colonial state.

Another fact of the spread of new education was the popular resistance to teaching methods. The religious instruction in schools by Christian missionaries invited severe opposition from all classes in contemporary society. When the Madras Government paid scantly attention to public protest, people began searching for alternatives. As a part of this programme they established separate Hindu schools and withdrew children from missionary schools. Though by no means these efforts did equal the educational activities of the missionaries, they timely warned the government about undesirable religious interference (21.G.O. (public), 1044: 9.7.1859). Missionary educational institutions were established in many districts of Andhra region. The London Mission Society established schools in Cuddapah, Kurnool and Bellary districts. The Church Missionary society began its work in Machilipatnam in 1841 and later on spread its activities to other coastal towns like Vijayawada and Eluru. The Pennsylvania Synod Society under the leadership of C.F. Heyer organised by 1841 various schools in Guntur, Prattipadu and Nallapadu. Around the same time the American Baptist Missionaries began their work in Guntur district establishing their centres at Guntur, Gurajala, Palanadu and, Ongole town (22. Anima Bose, 1978: 223-30). The American Baptist Mission and the Free Church Mission initiated their work in the neighbouring Nellore district also *(23.Kenneth Ingham, 1956: 48)*. In the Godavari region the North German Missionary Society was active in its work by 1840 and Rajahmundry became their centre *(24. Henry Morris, 1878: 24-38)*. Almost all these missionary societies clubbed religious propaganda with their educational activities.

Resistance to the proselytising educational activities formed one of the important aspects behind the voluntary establishment of Rate Schools which were supported by voluntary contributions in the form of additional land tax or water cess. This was one of the significant voluntary aspects of modern Andhra (*25. G. N. Taylor, 1854*). This development symbolised the growing urge among local people towards self-enlightenment and social improvement. Though the work of Christian missionary societies cannot be underestimated, their educational activities invariably concentrated on religious teaching and conversion of people

under instruction. The Madras Government extended its support to missionary activities in the field of education as it was firmly believed that inculcation of Christian morals among the beneficiaries of English education would ultimately serve the imperial political interests. Nevertheless most of the time their activities, both social and educational, have been exaggerated, ill-informed and hostile towards indigenous traditions. Consequently there were objections and organised protests against missionary activities. The introduction of new English education with its attendant missionary aspect provided ample scope for germination of counter and voluntary reactions from society.

Spheres of Early Voluntary Activity

The significant contribution of new educated middle classes was seen in their efforts in spreading enlightenment in society through voluntary reform and, social, educational and political activities. The reform tendency of this period was undertaken from two different angles. First aspect was the introduction of reformist ideas in literature. The earliest work in this direction was Hitasoochanee written by Samineni Muthunarasimha Naidoo of Rajahmundry *(26. V Ramakrishna, 1994: 54-55)*. This work best represents how educated intelligentsia was voluntarily drawn towards social problems under the influence of emerging social and intellectual movements across the country.

The second sphere of voluntary activity was social reform. Father of social reform in Andhra, Veeresalingam was influenced by prevailing social conditions and Brahmo Samaj movement of Bengal. His efforts in the field of women's education and widow remarriages left behind them a great legacy which had its influence on reform efforts in 20th century also (*27. S. Inna Reddy, 1992*). Some of his students at times showed over enthusiasm and used to "hang their sacred threads to a tree outside the college premises in order to provoke the passersby" (*28.Valluri Suryanarayana Rao, 1936: 165-167*). Activities of educated middle classes were more visibly reflected in journalism and various public associations after mid 19th century. These spheres of activity truly became vehicles of public opinion in the contemporary society. Though they were limited to a few concerns of educated sections yet they covered various other issues of public importance.

IV

Period of Fructification

The missionary aspect of Western education caused a furore in society and drove people towards voluntary efforts in establishing schools run by their own contributions. This was proved by emerging new trends in educational history in the form of Rate Schools. These schools were maintained by voluntary contributions to which teachers and inspectors would be appointed by government. The idea of Rate Schools initially emerged from mid-peasant and trading castes in Godavari delta region. Motivation in founding these schools was purely voluntary and indigenous reflecting the inherent urge of people towards self-improvement. This was the beginning of idea of self-help. The experiment gave them fruitful experience in managing their educational requirements under the changed socio-economic conditions of colonial era. This legacy was to continue for long and the emerging mid-peasant castes increasingly associated themselves with popular movements by late 19th century.

The Rate School experiment was first tested in Nursapore division of Rajahmundry region. Three schools were established in 1826 at Coconada, Nursapore and Rajahmundry by the Collector, Bayard and they lasted for ten years (*29. Henry Morris, 1878: 92*). Another school was established at Nursapore in 1852 by T. Durmaroya Mudaliar (*30. G.N. Taylor, 1854*). Sub-

Collector of the region, G.N. Taylor was instrumental in extending his support to the experiment and voluntary effort of people. By 1860 there were 102 such schools with total strength of 1957 students. The success was due to a voluntary will present among common people towards introduction of English education for their children (*31. Reports of Department of Public Instruction, Tamilnadu Archives*). Elaborate guidelines were devised guiding the work, management and accounts of these schools. However, there were minor variations in these guidelines from region to region.

In Vizagapatam district applications for Rate Schools were received from Achalapalem (Sarvasidhi block, Narsipatnam taluq), Salur, Parvatipur, Gajapatinagaram, Rajam, Rayavaram, Pendranki, Kottam, Meranghi and Rayagada. In Krishna district similar initiative came from places such as Avanigadda, Jaggayyapeta, Purushothamapatnam, Kaikalur, Gudivada, Nizampatnam, Mangalagiri and Repalle. People from the places of Kavali, Chinaannalur, Allur, Kaligiri, Brahmanakraka, Gudur, Udayagiri, Rapur, Naidupeta, Kandukur, Varigonda, Nellore town, Kullur and Venkatagiri of Nellore district requested the government to apply the education Act of 1863 to their places. In Cuddapah district requests for rate schools were obtained from Jammalamadugu, Proddutur Pullampet, Sidhout, Madanapalli, Kadiri, Voilpadu, Royachoti and Wontimetta. It is very significant that people form 108 villages surrounding Jammalamadugu and 64 villages surrounding Proddutor sent request petitions to establish two schools at the aforesaid towns. In Kurnool district there were applications from Cumbum, Pattikonda, Yeldury and Nandyal. In Bellary district requests for Rate schools were received from Gutti, Kudlighi Tadipatri, Harpanhully, Hindupur etc.

The growth of new English education in Andhra during the 19th century presents a complex picture. It created a new urban-based middle class which was responsible for growth of journalism, spirit of public consciousness, social reform, public associations and ideas of protest though in a mild form. Missionary aspect of new education resulted in a strong resistance and protest from all sections of Hindu society as religion was a sensitive aspect given the complexity of contemporary social conditions. Such religious protest drove people in some areas towards establishing their own educational institutions. Above all the Rate Schools and their operations shed light on an altogether different motivation emanating from the neo-rich mid-peasant castes. That the legacy of this novel experiment percolated down to some of the most backward social groups is attested by the fact that tribal groups inhabiting Godavari delta region, Koyas and others, requested Madras Government in 1889 that arrangements should be made to educate their children. (*32. Hindujanasamskarini, January 1889: 69*). An analysis of these different strands in the history of education in 19th century helps us in concluding that Western education in the process of its progression created resistance and protest in society. The consciousness emerged out of these changes was reflected in future social and political developments in Andhra.

Period of Negation
The rumblings of discontent as expressed and reflected by people symbolised growing unrest in the society of Andhra during 19th century. The canvas of such voluntary will and social consciousness was wide and, covered almost all aspects of the colonial society under which it was made to operate. The reaction of people was changing from milder forms of protest to much vigorous forms of organisational fight in the course of time. Such reaction and popular protest involved both educated and other sections of the contemporary society. These two parallel streams had their own modes of petition, protest and fight. They were neither

contradictory nor conflicting to each other in their objectives. One of the earliest public bodies, Madras Literary society was established at Madras in 1812 and it had seven members on the rolls from Masulipatam (*33. N.S. Ramaswami, 1985: 35-85*). The beginning towards establishment of a public debating society was made in 1851 at Masulipatam. Seshia Sastri, Thasildar of the town established a Debating Society (*34. B.V. Kameswara Aiyar, 1902: 81-89*). The Society was established with the avowed objectives of self-improvement and cultural development.

Establishment of branches and support extended to the agents of Madras Native Association at Guntur, Chirala and Sarvepalli (Nellore district) brought common people and peasants into the arena of public life. A study of the establishment, nature and objectives of the Madras Native Association helps us in consolidating our position on the growing voluntary action programmes in the then Andhra society. The Madras Native Association was established in 1852 by G Lakshminarasu Chetty and his friends. Right from early student days, he used to attend debates in debating and literary societies of that period and gave vent to his personal ideas. This contact with learned societies brought him within the fold of reformist tendencies. He was one of the very few Indians to be represented on the Madras Chamber of Commerce (*35. Madras Almanac, 1857: 438*). He soon realised the ineffectiveness of mere literary debates and matured plans to found a separate organisation to fight for public causes. It was the famous Madras Native Association.

The association developed a well-knit strategy to carry out its programme. By the time he established Madras Native Association Lakshminarasu Chetty was highly successful in organising the Indian community at Madras. He even convened a large public meeting in 1846 to protest the missionary activities (*36. Secret Department Consultations, 1847: Tamilnadu Archives*). Such organisational ability now helped him in consolidating Madras Native Association. He realised that support of members from Indian society was irreducible minimum want without which any agitation would be ephemeral. Subsequently, a number of branches were established at various places of the Presidency. Agents of the Association were employed in these places to collect information from victims of the government oppression. In order to give wide publicity to its programmes he founded a journal by name 'Crescent' in 1844.

The establishment of Madras Native Association was not an isolated incident. It was rather culmination of voluntary efforts of people who had been very active in both intellectual pursuits and public life. Importance of the Association lies in the fact that it never acted as a mouthpiece of a few educated and mercantile sections. Neither had it confined itself to scholarly debates and pursuit of mere knowledge. Rather it was established with specific political and economic objectives. Common people who had been crushed between oppressive taxation and conscious neglect of basic amenities under the colonial rule began associating themselves with the Association. In Andhra region of the Presidency, agents of the association started working at three different places viz., Guntur (*37. Reddy and Jagannnadham, n.d: 14*), Chirala (*38. GDR, vol. 6753: 323 and CDR, vol. 5298: 447- 49*) and Sarvepalli in Nellore district (*39. Petition Registers, vol.59: 2933*).

Government machinery in the respective districts of Andhra was highly alarmed by the arrival of the agents. The Acting Sub- collector of Guntur sent a report to the Commissioner for the Northern Circars upon which the latter issued a lengthy circular to all his subordinates to check any such activities. Following the instructions from the Governor of the Presidency,

the collector was asked to obtain if possible, possession of any writings which the agents of the association issued at all. A ban was imposed on the activities of the agents and, local peasants were strictly prohibited from lending pecuniary assistance to the Native Association. The association submitted a comprehensive petition to the British Parliament in 1853 on the problems faced by common people.

Period of Negotiation
Late 19th century witnessed growth of public activities in a vigorous manner. The Diva Samaj Society at Masulipatam, a public body promoted by the proprietors of a journal, Purusharthapradayini was in existence around 1872 and used to arrange discussions on various social and religious matters. (*40. Purusharthapradayini, January 1872: 29*). Prominent citizens of the town took part in these deliberations and the text of these discussions was published in the succeeding issue of the journal. Around the same time the Sanjivani Association, promoted by another Telugu journal, Andhra Bhasa Sanjivani (published from Madras) used to involve people in matters of public importance and called upon them to give their opinions on topics such as English education, employment of higher cadres in public and judiciary etc. A reading room was established at Vizagapatam on 1-6-1875 in connection with Total Abstinence Society of the town (*41. Sakala Vidyabhivardhani, February 1876: 55-56*). The Society had fifty five members on its rolls including women. The Masulipatam Association, established around 1876 was highly critical of the British rule as was reflected by the choice of topics in the lectures arranged by the Association (*42. Purusharthapradayini, July 1876: 1-2*). Around the same time, another public society, Swadharma Prakasini Society, Masulipatam, was taking an active part in public activities. During the same period there was, in active existence, at Rajahmundry a society known as Videa Ananda Bharata Samaj. The members were exclusively devoted to the educational developments.

The Kakinada Literary Association was established in 1877 in the mofussil town of Kakinada. It was initially established under the name of Native Students Association (*43. V Ramakrishna, 1984: 58*). The Raja of Pitahpuram was the moving spirit behind this body and donated Rs.1250 towards the construction of a suitable building for the Association and its library (*44. Sriram Veerabrahma Kavi, n.d: 251-258*). It was committed to social and political development of the people. In 1882 it appealed to the Madras Governor for the introduction of local self-government and pleaded in favour of political education to the subjects of the British. The Association was actively responding to issues of national concern too. The Kakinada Literary Association was active for only a few years and became defunct by 1894 (*45. Native Newspaper Reports, 1894*). The Adwaitamata Samaj was established around 1881 at Peddapuram (*46. Prabandha Kalpavalli, 1881*). The aims and objectives were literary, educational, religious and social development. During the same period Kumara Vara Samajam at Casimkota and Sakala Vidya Samaja Sabha at Chodavaram were in existence. The objectives of these societies were literary and educational improvements among people. The Debating Society at Rajahmundry that existed around the same time was taking interest in educational developments in the town and used to pass resolutions towards the same end. The Vizagapatam Debating Union of the same period also was involved in educational and social activities (*47. Edhardhavadi, 1884: 13-14*). An important aspect of the Society was that it attached greater significance to vernaculars and the speakers at its meetings were asked to speak in Telugu.

The Rayalaseema region too witnessed growth of voluntary associations. Bellary had established lead in this field and the first Reading Rooms was established in the year 1863 (*48. P. Yanadi Raju, 1988: 212-19*). In the course of time other prominent places in the region established various organisations. The Native Club of Bellary (1880), the Chittor Association(1881), Tirupathi Literary Society(1885), Sanmarga Samaj Reading Room and Bellary Rate Payers Association (both in 1886) and the Debating Club at Bellary (1889) were actively involved in public life. Most of them were promoting literary, moral, social, and political improvements and used to arrange lectures on these topics. Apart from all these bodies there were a number of public associations with definite social, literary and political concerns. The Archival records, along with vernacular sources, reveal that such associations were widely spread throughout Andhra towards late 19th century and early 20th century. It is recorded that there were 40 such voluntary associations in different regions of Andhra by the end of 19th century (*49.Reports of Director of Public Instruction (DPI), Tamilnadu Archives*).

Almost all these public societies have been run by voluntary subscriptions raised by the members only. The time period of these voluntary public associations coincided with the growth of secondary and higher education in Andhra. Most of the members of these associations were drawn from educated sections of the society. The vigorous spread of Rate School system which, for the first time, enunciated the idea of self-help in the form of voluntary contributions also coincided with the establishment of various public bodies. All these factors played a major role in mobilising public opinion and the consequent sprouting of voluntary action forums in various parts of the Andhra region. General spread of enlightenment in society is visibly reflected by proliferation of these public voluntary associations at the grass-roots level. For example Palkonda (1882), Parvatipur (1883), Bimilipatam (1882), Bapatla (1882), Vinukonda (1883), Narasaraopeta (1885), Dachepalli (1881), Tadipatri (1882), Penukonda (1884), Jammalamadugu (1881), Proddutur (1884), Pattikonda (1882), Pyapali (1883), Nandyal (1885), Cumbum (1884), Markapur (1885) and Palamaner (1884) are all grown-up villages where these voluntary agencies were established.

Some of the associations had specific objective of social reform. In case of Bimilipatam, the Association emphasised on social, religious and political instruction to the members. For Penukonda Club, literary and social betterment remained chief objectives. In case of Chittor and Palamaner associations, social advancement along with moral and cultural development occupied their agenda. The Pattikonda Literary Society was specific that diffusion of knowledge and enlightenment on social reforms through periodical lectures should be its main motto. Most of these bodies concentrated on issues of public importance and public good. The Masulipatam Club, Bezawada Club and Gooty Literary Society had on their agenda problems pertaining to the people in society. The Hindu Associations at Vinukonda, Narasaraopeta and Dachepalli aimed at social and moral improvement of the people. By the turn of the century Theosophical Lodges were established at important towns in Andhra (*50. Divyagnana Samaja Darsini, 1970: 10-30*). Under its influence a few public associations began to reflect the same concerns of Theosophy. All these issues on the agenda of various public and voluntary forums are important for our analysis as they primarily concentrated on the general improvement in society and began to sow the seeds of public consciousness and advocacy at the village level.

Social reform in Andhra went hand in hand with religious reform as it was believed that all the social evils had religious sanction. The educated sections who spearheaded social reform movements took the initiative in the field of religious reform also. The Prarthana-Brahmo

Samaj movement in Andhra was a part of such religious reform movement. The efforts of people like Mannava Butchaiah Pantulu and Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu helped the growth of voluntary social movement in Andhra and the first Prarthana Samaj was started at Rajahmundry in 1878 by Veeresalingam. The combined efforts or Veeresalingam and Venkataratnam Naidu in the sphere of social and religious reform considerably influenced founders of early public associations throughout Andhra.

Some of the associations could rise above local concerns and began to advocate higher aims and ideals of the national nature. For example, an urge towards knowledge of other parts of India was the major aim of Chicacole Newspaper Club. The same interest was visible among the members of Kurnool Native Reading Room and Kurnool Literary Society. The Berhampore Association was far ahead in its concern and its sole objective was political, social and intellectual advancement of the country. After 1885 various associations were established at Vizianagaram, Yelamanchili, Kakinada, Gutti, Bobbili, Bhimavaram, Cuddapah, Kundurpi, Atmakur etc. The complementary and contributory aspects of these voluntary associations truly established channels of communication between regional, metropolitan and national levels. The spread of enlightenment in society was facilitated by the growth of educated middle classes. They heralded an era of social reform campaign which provided a useful backdrop to the sphere of public awareness. Genesis and growth of various public associations during the latter half of 19th century acted as a powerful factor in organising public opinion. This in turn paved way for a greater political campaign for public demands in future.

Period of Demands
The culmination of voluntary peoples' action and advocacy skills reached their peak during the announcement of Lord Ripon's local self-government scheme. It appears that the scheme was intended to be a convenient excuse for the colonial rulers to escape from the growing public pressure for a while. On the other hand, this provided the much awaited opportunity to make known people's mind to the rulers. The very announcement of the scheme was to signify the fact that these reservations could not be continued for long. Furthermore, it reveals how people were demanding control over their own destinies as expressed in their claim to local self-government. Given the colonial backdrop the present demand and advocacy efforts assumed definite political overtones and stood opposed to the British dominance in this field.

The announcement of Local Self-Government scheme opened a new chapter in the history of emerging public consciousness. The announcement was followed by a series of public meetings at various places where people demanded control over local institutions which was hitherto denied by the colonial state. These public meetings provided linkages between different and scattered strands of consciousness in Andhra. Most of these public meetings were organised in semi-urban towns like Bimilipatam, Bapatla, Repalle and Ponnur. This suggests the participation of semi-urban people in the contemporary public movements. Moreover, meetings at places like Visakhapatnam, Guntur, Bapatla, Ponnur, Machilipatnam, Ongole and Cuddapah were largely attended by peasants of the respective localities (*51.Public Department Consultations, Sundries, Vol. 130, 131 and 133; Tamilnadu Archives*). The rural base of popular voluntary movements that was created earlier by the Madras Native Association was further strengthened during this period.

V

Evolution in Modern Period

NGOs, in modern era had their roots in the immediate historical past. They are viewed as gap-filling agents when business houses and government fail to deliver some of the public needs in post independent era. Another dimension is the role of NGOs in taking up advocacy, empowerment and mobilisation issues outside political processes (*52.Peter Frumkin, 2002: 21*). The legacy and spirit of social work and early voluntary bodies had a logical continuation in the post-1947 period too. But the continuity had different facets of manifestation in terms of extent, content, coverage and support systems. The water divide in the entire process is the political freedom for the country in 1947. Freedom in political terms had its direct bearing on the perceptions of people as well as social workers who continued the tradition.

Free Indian state vis-à-vis the earlier Colonial state is now considered as the harbinger of change and social tranquillity in the indigenous society. The new era of democratic polity had necessarily conveyed an impression to general public that the state would serve as a tool of social change and development. The Colonial state too had left the same impression in the late 18th and early 19th centuries when the social movements were picking up necessary social acceleration. But the support system, extended both at ideological and material levels, tumbled down very soon at the dawn of a realization that such a support system would ultimately question the cultural and social foundations of colonial governance system in India. For, the gradual merger of social movements into a broad-based national liberation struggle hinted the colonial set-up in India that extension of any further support to them would be no more negotiable. Consequently the colonial state conveniently abandoned the agenda of social change and turned away from the hitherto role of so called modernizer.

In the immediate pre-independence era voluntary bodies were playing role as Gandhian organisations. Soon after this period, they began covering different aspects of public life. Growth of VOs in India was shaped by two major influences – indigenous traditions and value systems, and interface between Indian society and the western world (*53. Report of the Steering Committee on Voluntary Sector for the Tenth Five Year Plan, 2002: 2-3*). Philanthropy and individual acts were the major forms of social service. However, institutional forms such as Ashramas, Maths (Hindu), Waqfs and Khanqahs (Muslims) and Gurudwaras and Deras (Sikhs) were acting within the respective religious domains. The basic nature of social service remained religious in nature (*54. Joel S G R Bhose, 2003: 24-27*).

Secular voluntary activity started with the advent of the British. Indian bodies like Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj and Ramakrishna Mission are noteworthy in the country. Gandhi developed the idea further and included constructive programme in the form of spinning, cottage industries etc. Many activists and authors attempted at classification of NGOs. To cite one is the classification that identified NGOs as traditional associations (religious in nature); special movements (civil society agencies promoting social and political change); membership organisations (labour unions, farm workers, consumer cooperatives, cultural organisations, sports clubs, self-help groups); intermediary Organisations like bureaucratic bodies, judiciary bodies etc (*55. National Policy on the Voluntary Sector and Eleventh Five Year Plan, 2008: 11-12*).

It is recognised by the government that VOs are – closer to people; highly motivated; stimulants in society; effective tools to bring about people's participation; less bureaucratic and rule-bound; bodies with larger scope for innovation; multi-sectoral players; catalysts in

creating social cohesion. There are around 14000 VOs which are either perceived as credible institutions or in receipt of considerable government / external grants by the end of 2002 (*56. Report of the Steering Committee, 2002: 7-9*). Voluntary organisations, according to a government estimate are known for – promoting participatory democracy, credibility in constructive role, more outreach and focussed work patterns, better assessment of needs at the grassroots level and direct approach coupled with contextual action plans. Year 2001 was declared by UNO as international year of volunteers (IYV). NGO is described as the *third sector (57. Ibid)*.

The post-independent India presented a new canvas for the social workers to operate. The enlightened landed elite of the colonial era was co-opted into democratized political set-up after independence. This was a major departure from the past where the local ruling families (for example the royal houses in Vizianagaram and Pithauram etc in Andhra region on the Bay of Bengal coast) extended their support to social movements of the colonial era. The co-option of the former ruling houses into independent democratic polity of India initially reduced space and scope for any continued action in this regard. For, people with social zeal were kept wondering whether the Indian democratic state would step into the shoes or relinquish the legacy of social movements while retaining the social welfare modes of public action programmes. The social workers at the individual level found a void in terms of support for the movements.

At this juncture individuals and organisations committed to Gandhian ideals continued their constructive work through a Gandhian perspective. This perspective, as is known, has been a mixture of religious morals embedded into social action programmes. In modern Andhra (post independence), Gora of the Atheist Centre symbolised a break with the traditional Gandhian perspective. Social movements beyond religion and caste or without any reference to the same variables heralded a new era in the domain of social and development action programmes in South India, that too in Andhra Pradesh region.

Gora was responsible for a major shift in social action programmes and heralded an era of secular social work in Andhra society. Though he was schooled in the Gandhian modes, his operations in the field naturally exhibited a reformed scenario in terms of content and mode of social action programmes. The early 20th century politicisation of caste groups got further hastened in the post-independent democratic polity. Along with the same, interests and aspirations of various other social groups have become more pronounced. This process had its own bearing on the growth process in the Indian society. Amidst these developments it was difficult either for continuation of earlier trends of social movements or the rise of new. As stated earlier, the ideological gamut within which social movements operated in the post-independent India changed considerably. In southern parts of the country, particularly in Andhra region, the change was explicitly manifest by Gora.

Gora was a great admirer of Gandhi and had close association with him for a long time. Gora also had entertained a Gandhian perspective in his social programmes (for example - convictions, peaceful conflict resolution and humanised approach to social problems). However, his philosophy of social action was operative almost in a tangential direction to Gandhian mode. Looking around prevailing post-independent situation and also realizing the inbuilt limitations in the state sponsored social action, Gora decided to open a new front. He did this by opening night schools in dalit colonies of Krishna district (vis-à-vis the Gandhian mode of temple entry) with an eye on social liberation of the oppressed populace. Secularization of social action programmes was almost a major shift achieved by Gora in the

post-independent Andhra Pradesh. In other words, it was a serious effort in de-linking social development efforts from religious framework and traditional modes.

The shift was carefully nurtured and promoted by his followers in the years to come. Two major strands of social work were seen operative in the post-independent Andhra Pradesh viz., the Gandhian constructive work for social change and the secular mode of social work of Gora. Though there were a few takers of Gora's operational modes, yet he was responsible for sowing seeds for a different framework. At the outset it might appear that some rudiments of early social movements were present in independent India. It cannot be denied that the pace and acceleration of the efforts, either individual or institutional, have shown a gradual descent after 1950. The social base of 19th century reform movements became almost defunct in post independent phase. For, most of the middle class intellectuals were either co-opted into state bureaucratic machinery or remained passive in terms of their support for reform efforts after 1950. The void created by the exit of middle class intellectuals was taken over either by the democratic government or Gandhian voluntary agencies or private international donor agencies after 1950. The support from the state was however confined to extension of administrative support from the bureaucracy or legal agencies.

A new triangular model of support structure for development programmes emerged after 1950 wherein the local voluntary associations, private (both national and international) donor bodies and the elected governments played their respective roles. For example, successive governments (both at Union and State level) between 1970 and 2005; international donor agencies like Oxfam, Hivos, CARE, Ford Foundation, Unicef, Save the Children Fund, Helpage (UK), EZE (Germany), Norwegian Humanist Association (HAMU), India Friends Association, USA, International Labour Organisation, New York Community Trust, USA, Bruce Trust, UK, Plan International, UK, Christian Children Fund, Action Aid, Aide-et-Action; private Indian corporate houses like Infosys Foundation, Sri Dorabji Tata Trust and Ashraya Hastha Trust extended a major support to various voluntary agencies to continue their social and development work. (*58. Compiled from the brochures and publications by the three organisations – BCT, RASS and Samskar*).

Agencies / NGOs in Andhra Pradesh too received support from these agencies during the period under study. For convenience the current study selects three major voluntary agencies from Andhra Pradesh viz., Bhagavatula Charitable Trust (BCT) from Visakhapatnam district in Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rashtriya Seva Samithi (RASS) from Chittor district in Rayalaseema and Samskar from Nizamabad district in Telangana region of the state. Reasons for selection of these three organisations are not arbitrary. The selection is based on a few considerations. First, all the three represent a logical extension or continuation of Gandhian social and constructive work programmes from the past (national reconstruction programme as envisaged by Gandhi during freedom struggle); secondly, all these three organisations are working for rural development engaging their efforts at the door step of the needy and poor; thirdly, India is often described a *village continent* and hence the selection of rural organisations serves the present purpose; fourthly, founders of these organisations more or less (whether registered their organisations technically or not) have been active from late 1950s and early 1960s; fifthly, each organisation is selected from one geographical region of the state of Andhra Pradesh so as to enable the reader understand and appreciate the diversity and methods of approach of these organisations to local problems in the state; sixthly, all the three organisations have almost remained rural development/change/advocacy agencies for the last four decades; lastly, the central concern of the current study is to narrate and assess

the activities of rural development organisations and hence the selection of these organisations (which have completed around three decades of their work in the area) is considered logical. Added, sectarian organisations (religion-based or sect-based agencies) are excluded so as to paint an impartial picture of the social and rural development work of voluntary agencies.

VI

Bhagavatula Charitable Trust (BCT)

The Bhagavatula Charitable Trust, reputed as BCT represents a few departures in the arena of development interventions in post independent India and Andhra Pradesh. It symbolizes the entry of non-resident Indians into the field in late 1960s, a decade when it was too early to predict such interventionist drives from those educated non residents abroad. This departure stands in contrast to the traditional approaches to development and social work in India during the period. For, the influence on Indian voluntary sector till then was either Gandhian constructive programme or faith-based approaches.

The timing of formation of BCT was reminiscent of these early days of development debate in the country. Also, the timing (1960s) was an immediate extension of the legacy of the national liberation struggle. The self-spirited motives and self-ordained national mission among innumerable Indians were still extant among the immediate generation of all those who participated in the liberation struggle. This legacy of national movement and the profile of home villages, conceived as entities meant for development interventions among those individuals had its powerful say on the entry and continuation of new actors in development sector. Though counted as an individual pioneer, B V Parameswara Rao represents this churning of mind, continuation of legacy of national liberation movement, a strong will among the educated middle classes towards rural development mission and an urge to contribute their own mite to nation rebuilding exercise (*59. The Week, 1988: 8-10*).

BCT and its founder had a vision firmly rooted in this process. BCT rather ushered in a vision for future and transfer of technology to the doorstep of rural poor. This is a shift from the hitherto existing notions of development approaches in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Technology transfer to the doorstep and, capacitating the rural poor (focus on women) in free use of the transferred technology were valuable contributions from the BCT. Its firm faith, almost a blind faith to describe, in the opinion that mere literacy would not render people fit for development without getting the know-how of the parameters for village development was another shift in the mindset of the development workers. 'School for community and community for school' is the programme direction of BCT where the focus is on life skills and vocational skills which process the organization calls 'train the trainer paradigm' (*60. Annual Report, 2005-06: 10-15*).

The categorical declaration that, '*it is the villagers who are developing themselves and BCT is only streamlining their work*' (*61. The Week: op.cit*) was almost setting the rudimentary foundations for participatory development in the state of Andhra Pradesh in the immediate period following the liberation of the country. From this vision, the concepts - of literacy drives juxtaposed with training elements on farm production; of working through unorganised sectors of populace; of self-help through women thrift groups; of watershed development; of working through farmers' cooperatives and of natural resource management – germinated over a period of two decades (*62. Bhagavatula Charitable Trust- Souvenir, 2007: 79-83*).

BCT began its efforts in right earnest with the idea of helping people think and act by themselves. People do not form an exclusive mass in society and remain a no man's island. The other actors of civil society have their own role to play and have a say. The organisation appears to suffer from a lack of cohesion in its linkages with civil society, in particular the democratic polity. The experiences of the organisation working with democratic set-up (government and bureaucracy) have been dissatisfying. The spoils system that permeates the corridors of power played truant in case of BCT. The experiences as narrated by the founders as well as those associated with the organisation have a valuable lesson to take home. This necessarily raises the question about the government institutions and the ways of their wayward behaviour in helping the voluntary agencies or NGOs despite a policy declaration on NGO involvement in government programmes.

Like any other non profit agency, BCT too suffered from the common stock of issues that often affect these associations – erratic flow of funds, locating and retention of qualified staff, turnover of staff, community preparedness affected by political fancies, and issues of institutional sustainability. In the midst of these concurrent problems, the organisation could not take its development vision to its logical conclusion though it set the fundamental parameters for development process in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The originator, BCT suffers. On the other, the smaller organisations (rather second generation development NGOs / organisations) that take cue from the development vision inaugurated by BCT thrive well. For, the differentiating line is the ability of manoeuvrability or management techniques that BCT lacks.

Perhaps BCT needs to add nothing to the innovations in development sector. Its mission as envisaged at the time of inception of the organization is historically justified more than the expectations. Notable here is the fact that BCT inaugurated a historical perspective of future development in 1960s itself for the sector to follow. The elements of this historical vision are today either duplicated or replicated or applied in a modified form or adapted to local contexts.

Rashtriya Seva Samithi (RASS)

Rashtriya Seva Samithi (earlier *Rayalaseema Seva Samithi*) was conceived and organised in 1981 by a Sarvodaya leader, G Muniratnam Naidu of Chittor district. It represents a healthy era in GO-NGO relations in the state and perhaps, serves as a shining example for joint operations with the government. The canvas, nature, versatility of programmes and liaison with almost every government line department vouchsafe for the efficacy of the organisation in the field of poverty alleviation programmes and development interventions in the region. The scale of operations and quantum of inputs into various activities make it a very special and different NGO in the annals of the history of voluntary agencies in the post independent era. It is the second largest recipient of government grant during the recent period (*63. Report of the steering committee on voluntary sector, op.cit)*.

An interesting mix of Gandhian spirit and the western model of development had been churned out by the organisation in the state of Andhra Pradesh. In light of conflicting views expressed on development frameworks and controversies surrounding the selective discrimination used by government in choosing partners, Rashtriya Seva Samithi offers a good example of how an organisation with its roots firmly entrenched in rural areas could extend its presence to the national level. It considers itself as a national level community based organization.

Rashtriya Seva Samithi was officially registered under societies registration act in 1981 with its headquarters located at Tirupati. Over a period of time it extended its operations to five states in India viz., AP, Karnataka, Orissa, Tamilnadu and Delhi. It covers 2560 villages, 3.10 million people and has a staffing strength around 4000 employees. Rashtriya Seva Samithi is at present manages around forty different development programmes funded by government. It remains secular in nature despite its large scale operations and coverage. Today it can be referred to as a semi national NGO. The core focus of the organisation was on - women and children in difficult circumstances and engaging them in development work; working for gender equality through participation in development and making them own the process (*64. Rashtriya Seva Samithi, Silver Jubilee Souvenir, 2006: 1-5*).

Rashtriya Seva Samithi began its work in rain shadow region of Rayalaseema covering Chittor, Kadapa (Dr. Y S R District), Anantapur and Kurnool districts. It had a staunch belief that poverty breeds isolation (of women and children) and in the process the role of NGO was crucial, but not total. Its disbelief in the overarching and eternally self-imposing role of NGOs into people's problems had a direct relation to Gandhian spirit of village reconstruction where people are the owners. Extending the same logic the organisation makes it an institutional mandate that it would make efforts towards making common people participate in socio-environment projects, economic progression and agricultural innovations. The organisation sees poverty as a social phenomenon. There is a realization that empowering poor is a long process and cannot be measured. Efficacy can be seen only when people become self-reliant through participation in the process of development interventions (*65. Brochure, Balaji Bala Vikas: 2006*). These basic ideas and fundamental attributes of the organisational thinking paved way for Rashtriya Seva Samithi to evolve as an agency driven by a historical conscience, contextual considerations in the process of development continuum, a clear perspective on the role for *self* and *other* and faith in democratic action and legislative support.

Consequential to its basic ideas, Rashtriya Seva Samithi fructified its vision into one that visualizes itself as a peoples' initiative for protecting their rights, without discrimination on the basis of caste, colour, creed, region or religion. Its mission statement also echoes similar objectives. It declares that involvement in promotion of human rights, dignity and gender balance through peoples' social, economic, political participation and human capacity building are the bedrocks of social action. As sequels to vision and mission, the organisation set the programme strategies and objectives – A. bottom-up planning; (participatory planning and development approach); programme implementation through peoples' collectives; multi-disciplinary approach; stakeholder capacity building; community resource management; linkages with government; creation of social capital. B. organizing people through community-based institutions; capacity building of vulnerable population; mobilizing people towards good governance; networking; economic empowerment through collective action; playing the bridge role between people and government; promoting sustainable development; advocacy and lobbying.

As a development agency RASS did not leave anything untouched under various government schemes. It almost operates forty projects with active support from various ministries of Government of India. It is even represented in high level government committees. Despite its substantial presence in the domain of development sector, the organisation does not seem to inaugurate sustainable models for replication. Some of its efforts in this direction are in

sedimentary stages the efficacy and sustainability of which, are a matter of future assessment and considerations. Though magnitude of programmes is commendable the organisation suffers from lack of professional staff to man the projects. As the number of projects of the organisation is on very large scale, there is a felt need to improve upon infrastructure. The versatility of programmes and wide-ranging projects are not properly documented leaving a scope for valid criticisms. Most of the NGOs (including those under consideration in the present study) ignore research, analysis and documentation components either due to a lack of interest or lack of appropriate persons to shoulder the task. RASS, as already mentioned above has a conviction that NGO is no total solution for development issues. This is not matched by any exit strategy of organisation (institutional exit strategy).

The project-flow charts of RASS indicate that it has consciously or unconsciously stepped into a number of interventions. One inbuilt contradiction present here is the possibility of dilution of focus. Like many NGOs, RASS is silent on building / naming second generation leadership (second line leadership) to take the cudgels on. Many of the institutions fall under their own weight for some these deficiencies in approach. There is a traditional mindset among many promoters of NGOs that does not allow others much needed freedom to act. The conditional atmosphere often weans away talent from the institutions. This centrifugal nature has a heavy potential to cripple the activities of organisations. Sometimes these deficiencies result in internecine frictions or squabbles within the organisations.

SAMSKAR
Samskar, the flagship organisation of the social reformer couple, Lavanam and Hemalata was officially registered in 1983 with the sole mission and objective of dealing with socially abandoned sections in the state and their rehabilitation. The problem of criminal or denotified tribes of Stuartpuram and Jogini women in Telangana was taken up by the organisation. Since the extent of interventions and operations are very large in Nizamabad district, the present study considers the work of Samskar in Telangana. The founders of the organisation were active from the advent of freedom to the country in the realm of social reform and rehabilitation. This is a different voluntary agency that had a basic belief in social change / reform followed by contextual rehabilitation measures (development initiatives). The association of founders with Gandhian movement, Sarvodaya movement, Vinoba Bhave and Loknayak Jaya Prakash Narayan made them stick to issues of social change. Their organisation was the first of its kind in the post independent era that had an exclusive focus on reform of those sections ignored by government as well as indigenous society.

Efforts of Lavanam and Hemalata through Samskar heralded a historical shift in terms of social base of the social reform movements. The early social reform movements were largely confined to middle classes among the traditional and agrarian families. Most of the social reform engagements were seen operative within the religious fold of the Hindu belief system. Religious orientation to social reform issues was no more a common feature of the post-independent endeavours of Samskar. The singular contribution of the organisation lies in the fact that it was responsible for putting the socially secluded and abandoned sections on the agenda of social reforms in the post independence period in India. Jogini women *(later re-named as Jogini Sisters by Samskar)* who earlier were conveniently ignored both by government and mainstream society were made an integral part of the reform movement after 1950. This represents a major historical shift to the extent of bringing the hitherto ignored social groups into social reform framework. The basic references in the efforts of Samskar have been invariably non religious approaches, humanist perspective, human rights angle and

revival of mainstream status for the socially excluded sections of the society (*66. Vakulabharanam Ramakrishna & K H S S Sundar, 2006: 180-182*).

There are, however, a few bottlenecks in the movements taken up by the organisation through two major and historical social reform issues. The success of mainstreaming efforts has been partly partial and remains incomplete. For, acceptance of tagged social communities into the mainstream society requires some more time before a smoother socialisation process takes place. The efforts in bringing civil society into the gamut of their social reform movements and the attendant mainstreaming remained incomplete in nature. The limitation in doing so can be viewed from the weak organizational structures. Samskar rather inherited an informal approach to social issues. When social reform still remained a personal concern of a few enlightened individuals, the framework of its social manifestations and operational details cannot be different. While the casual approach and informal orientation in social reform drives can be seen as a weakness in terms of mainstreaming and civil society relations, it is, on the other hand, a strength in itself because prefixed and premeditated timetables do not work well with social reform approaches.

The post-reform rehabilitation drives have been viewed by some observers as insufficient. Lack of a scientific approach to alternate livelihood initiatives and a deeper understanding of the issue in relation to surrounding environmental and ecological forms has been a major impediment in the process. Though land donation to the reformed families was undertaken on large scale during reform movements with the help of Government of AP, the related agricultural operations were never viewed from a real development perspective. Rather the organisation considered land as status symbol and as an instrument that retrieved the lost social status for the reformed persons. As a result the donated land served a symbolic / iconic purpose than a development purpose. Another important variable in the issue is the mismatch between the alternate livelihood system and the earlier modes of livelihood through the tradition or custom. The non-preparedness of reformed individuals to take up a new initiative during this phase was a major impediment in the smooth transition to land-based agricultural economy. Added, the external support to the development and mainstreaming aspects was not adequate. For, most of the development donor agencies were taken by surprise when Samskar mooted the *Three Generation Approach* proposal in order to bring the members of reformed families into mainstream through development programmes (like livelihood, education, networking etc).

The social base of the reform movements launched by Samskar in Andhra was confined and exclusive in nature. The so-called denotified tribes and Jogini women have been socially excluded from the routines of mainstream life for centuries together. And hence their exclusivist nature in social, economic and cultural terms was itself a limitation inbuilt into the social base of these reform movements. Though socially excluded categories were brought into the mainstream social reform agenda they, at the same time, also served as an internal limitation of the movement. It was an interesting social dynamic. The social base of the reform movements was a strength as well as a weakness in itself.

In any social reform issue, working through different generations is a sure road to success. The efforts of Samskar have already proven this through their programmes in the last quarter century. In any reform programme, the first generation of the reformed form the last generation of the direct victims of a social evil. Their children, on one hand belong to the first generation to breathe free air and, on the other hand they are the indirect victims of the last

generation. For, they are born into affected families. Thus both generations pass through a twilight zone as far as individual and social transformation is concerned. Both are important. The mothers/fathers should not fall back into the old mind set and the children should not feel that they are not properly admitted into the new society. There is thus a need to monitor and support change in case of the first and second generations. It is only the third generation children who will finally be out of past memories as well as social stigma attached to their ancestors. It is this phase when the organisation could safely withdraw from the movement. This understanding has been named as *3G Approach (Three Generation Approach)* by Samskar and its founders (*67. Vakulabharanam Lalitha & Kompalli H S S Sundar, 2007: 168-176*).

The unique contribution of Samskar lies in the understanding of the post-reform social dynamics and operatives of the reform process which was absent during earlier phases of social reform in India. The visionary ideas and prospective thinking of the reformers made the reform movements viz., criminal tribe reform at Stuartpuram and other such colonies and Jogini reform movement in Nizamabad and Medak districts sustainable in nature and continuity. Samskar likes to continue its efforts till the reformed Jogini sisters and reformed criminal family members and their children are well settled in life (put together - three generations). One question that confronts us is the possibility of replication of the 'model' that Samskar created in Guntur, Nellore and Nizamabad districts of Andhra Pradesh in India. While it is debatable whether this was a model at all, it is also equally notable that Samskar could do it so far successfully. And hence, replication or duplication is a thing of future dynamics when some organisation will have to adapt it and apply. The existing evidence with Samskar and the long trail of its success invariably hint at one possible direction. That their experience or 'model' of social reform dynamics can be applied subject to suitable alterations in respect of local specificities.

VII

Non-profit and voluntary action shares complex and conflicting desires, but at the same time affirms idea of public sphere shaped by shared goals. Defining non profit or voluntary defies our attempts as their aims sometimes overlap with that of government and business foundations. The non profit organisations contributed to democratic spirit around the world promoting expression of collective voice (*68. Peter Frumkin, 2002: 1-3*). Range of these non profits is varied. Main features of non profits can be summed up as – they do not coerce participation; they operate without any profits to stakeholders; they often exist without clear lines of ownership (second-line absent; multiple nature of stakeholders like board members, staff, executive committee etc) and accountability (*69. Ibid*).

Non coercive nature of NGOs makes them different from government. Government (state) is already criticised as oppressive operates by some. Government as a welfare state seems to be the biggest NGO in any democratic set-up. Non profits take different names and shapes. For example, NGOs, civil society organisations, voluntary sector, charitable trusts, non profit bodies promoted by (even) political parties and politicians. The acronym, NGO or NPO is popular in world.

Often a need is felt that NGOs question the top-down approach of donors who thrust upon their agendas on grassroots civil organisations (*70. Gustavo Esteva, 1997: 8-10*). Acceptance of funds and projects from other agencies (government too is external agency vis-a-vis NGOs) led to stratification of values and personnel within the non profit organisations. This means non profits act as instruments of others to promote or deliver certain agreed targets. This

instrumentalism makes the sector less innovative and a prisoner of conscience of its own. In recent period, rise of corporate social responsibility and its institutionalisation pose questions on the efficacy and validity of exclusive non profit sectors promoted by those outside the circle of profit-earning avocations.

The exclusive domain of charitable work and organisations is encroached upon by corporate business houses. Hence, sustainability of fund-based and donor-based NGOs is posing questions. In the mad rush in the name of social responsibility, material dimensions like outcomes and outputs delivered overlap the value-based interventions of NGOs. Gandhi had warned against the material development modes of development interventions. Gandhian spirit of constructive programme is basically related to social and cultural changes (behavioural changes emphasised in a traditional social order) and his programme like temple entry and removal of untouchbility were aimed at this. Gandhi and Ambedkar had produced a road map for Indian social work wherein both of them categorically emphasised on social development (change) without which material developments had no meaning for traditional Indian social order. In the post-independent era a clash of values, aims, targets and operational methods can be observed after the entry of international donor agencies in the name of development interventions.

The categorical declaration and promise of government of India in Seventh Five Year Plan (*71.Report of the steering committee on voluntary sector, op.cit: 8*) on involvement of voluntary agencies in government projects and programmes unleashed an era of NGO proliferation across the country. This can be seen as sheet anchor of history in the growth of NGOs. Following the declaration, second generation NGOs vis-a-vis the voluntary bodies (existed during and after national liberation) emerged on the scene vying for development funding. In the process a major dichotomy between change-oriented development and material-based development appeared in India. The shift began reflecting the uneasy calm between the forces in favour of social change and those in favour of mere material development issues. The measurement of progress was shifted from changes in social values to delivery of material outputs.

It is said that these development interventions tell a common story that they did not perform (*72. Wolfgang Sachs, 1997: 1*). The communist wings of India in the post-independent era too are criticised that material resources and power equations have been controlled whereas political agendas always worked basically with landless and illiterate poor drawn from lower strata of society. Another problem is excessive professionalism in the voluntary sector. Discretion regarding where and how to introduce corporate systems is absent. Three problems flow from this – inability of people to understand and respond to local concerns; rise of specialist services even in the service / voluntary sector; threat to institutional values, commitments and innovation. Professionalisation or corporate systems bring with them a whole set of preconceived notions / ideas about the nature of work to be performed. The conflict now is perceptible – value-driven work of voluntary / non profit sector vs. donor-driven agendas. The top-down approach in development sector has been subject to a critical insight. It is equated with philanthropy in the form of donations and is considered a tool of oppression aimed at merely perpetuating interest of the wealthy (*73. Peter Frumkin, 2002: 108*).

At the ground level, the operations are interesting. Most often NGOs suffer from lack of adequate funds and hence they tend to accept the same along with certain tags (conveniently called agreements between two partners). On the other, the donors need local partners to

profile their agendas. A mutually aided development process operates under this approach. Very recently, the large corporate houses are opening their own foundations under the corporate social responsibility. The trend has considerably reduced scope for NGOs to thrive well or new NGOs to come up. Though the corporate houses are aiding some of the local partners, the shift from international donors to national donors is the new trend to be noted here. In the process, the non profit agencies or voluntary bodies end up as takers of support but not as fund raisers. The demand-supply mode cripples the autonomy of NGOs (donor-driven agendas while funding is given to NGOs) and hence independence comes after funding ceases or the demands of the donors are met. What remains after funding period is the crux (*74. National policy on the voluntary sector,op.cit:11*). One view suggests that NGOs or non profit bodies can be considered as critical buffer to deliver services and goods to those who are left behind or uncovered. But the role of state and support agencies in the process is controversial. In late 1980s American state had a provision that federal states might provide welfare services via contracts with religious groups. India is no exception to this. The approach has been subject to severe criticism in the country (*75. Ibid, 7-17*).

NGOs working for empowerment of people are pitted against the role of state. For, state itself is a welfare organisation. Scope for conflict can be located here. For example, the colonial state in India supported social reform so long as the newly generated awareness did not take political overtones. In a traditional society like India, there is always a trade-off between charitable interventions. Social development is still a felt need in Indian society. Without proper social development (social change), material interventions do not convey any long lasting meaning for common people. It is a question about society-building vs. facility-building. Added, there is a proliferation of NGOs vying with each other for grants in order to address diverse problems in different sectors and, most of them are, in other words, means-intensive or investment-intensive. In the process insight into taking up social issues for affecting behavioural changes (a perceived precondition for a smooth and balanced material development) is either lost or neglected. Left ideology and intellectuals too did not make a dent here.

Left movements did not have a direct impact on social and development sector. The gap is still left. Political dimensions, troubles, internal fissures, ideological drifts etc from early 20th century onwards left no major scope for left wing functionaries to cut deep roots in the development sector. Though different shades of pro-active public presence of the left parties are felt in the field of political, economic, educational and cultural area, they are more seen as useful accessories for the left wing political manoeuvres. At best they are considered sectarian approaches to developmental issues as these programmes have been pivoted around political pedestal. Specific social and development issues (NGO perspective) received scanty consideration from the left movement and initiatives. Though the influence of left and rational ideology is attested by some of the ignored and excluded population groups in Andhra Pradesh, there were no visible efforts in giving a shape and institutional form to grassroots work routines in social and developments sectors by left intellectuals.

In the corridors of development sector Muslims still appear to be suffering from psychology of fear (*76.Qualitative Research Study, 2011*). NGOs or CSOs of various shades and dimensions (floated by Hindu and Christian sections) are visible in the arena of development sector. But the visibility of those working for empowerment of Muslims is either blurred or hidden. With a few exceptions like Confederation of Voluntary Associations (*77.COVA Annual Report, 1998-99*), other NGO/CSO organisations doing an exemplary work in Andhra Pradesh on secular

and non-sectarian lines are under a kind of forced hibernation (*78.Qualitative Research, op.cit*). National developments like demolition of Babri Mosque and anti-social/violent activities of a few misinformed and misguided Muslim groups across the nation had their devastating impact on the democratic patterns of social and development work of the Muslim educated youth. For example, in districts like Warangal Muslim-headed NGOs report that the secular and democratic spirit in the region is influenced by rationalist movements, literature and left ideology (*79.Ibid*). These scattered and isolated examples of NGO activities at the grassroots remain buried in contemporary ignorance. Inclusion of these organisations in the mainstream sector of development initiatives and networking on par with other non-sectarian NGOs is expected to undo a historical misgiving among important stakeholders. As the secular and rationalist influence of left wing ideology is already acknowledged by progressive sections among educated Muslim youth, there is disguised hint for left intellectuals on the future course of action in the state.

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8. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) endorses this definition. See ogram/business-role/previous-work/corporate-social-responsibility.aspx.   Also   see http://www.mallenbaker.net/csr/definition.php. European Commission defines CSR as *a concept whereby companies decide voluntarily to contribute to a better society and a cleaner environment. It is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis.* See *Ibid*
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11. See for more details on development interventions of these corporate majors in AP cii.in/WebCMS/Upload/Samvriddhi%20Final.pdf
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50. By 1890 Theosophical Lodges were fairly spread throughout Andhra, Rayalaseema regions and a few branches were established in the Nizam's dominion – Berhampore, Adoni, Bellary, Guntur, Nellore, Anantapur, Kakinada, Cuddapah, Bezawada, Ellore, Masulipatam, Rajahmundry, Visakhapatnam, Bolaram, Hyderabad and Secunderabad. For details vide *Divyagnana Samaja Darsini (Telugu)*, 2nd reprint, 1970, pp. 10-30.
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71. *Report of the steering committee, op.cit*, p.8.
72. Wolfgang Sachs (ed.), *op.cit*, p.1.
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74. *National policy on the voluntary sector*, *op.cit*, p.11.
75. *Ibid*, pp.7-17.
76. Many of the NGOs/CSOs established by Muslims remain less profiled and aloof from mainstream. Reasons for such a kind of hibernation are not properly explained. Mutual suspicions in areas where religious sentiments rule the roost can be the influencing factor. A recent study project, *Qualitative Research Study on NGO/Civil Society Organization (CSO) initiatives for the Development & Empowerment of Muslims in India* (2011) commissioned by Sadbhavana Trust, New Delhi sheds light on this aspect. Ms. Farah Naqvi is the national coordinator for the study and *Yugantar* organisation at Hyderabad was AP's nodal agency conducting research in the three principal regions (Coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telangana). Findings of the study are under print at present. Current estimate and observations are sourced from field notes of the author who was a member of the core research team in Telangana region during the study mentioned above. The study unfolded a few more social realities: role played by women activists and development workers at grassroots level towards development interventions and social activism; role of educated and professional Muslim youth in recent past invariably refers to the existing mood among those to work for social development and empowerment of present Muslim generations; efforts by some of the Muslim NGO heads to bridge gaps between traditional/religious elements and mainstream social developments; rise and growth of SHGs have thrown doors wide open for Muslim women to enter the mainstream development activities in the recent past.
77. *Ibid*. For details vide, *COVA Annual Report 1998-99*. COVA was initiated in 1994 and registered as a society in 1995. Its journey in Hyderabad began as a response to communal violence and its prevention, and moved on to building and strengthening communal harmony through community involvement in social and economic development interventions. The organization has evolved over three distinct phases and has retained its focus on strengthening the sense of citizenship amongst the people in the poor neighborhoods of the Old City through its various programmatic interventions. COVA is the first NGO to work in the Old

City of Hyderabad and it is also the first organization which focused on socio-economic interventions in the poor neighborhoods of the Old city along with a message of communal harmony as the basis for empowered citizenship practices. It has been successful in creating lasting images of women fighting for communal harmony and in bringing development issues to the foreground in the agenda of the dominant political party in the Old City, the Majlis Ittehadul Muslameen (MIM).

78. *Qualitative Research..., op.cit.* For example, the study brings out a five-layered structure of organisations that had a focussed attention on empowerment and development of Muslim in Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh: National/state level bodies operating at local level; Organisations being operated by traditional Muslim sections; CSOs being managed by educated and progressive Muslim sections; NGOs being headed and run by educated/forward-looking Muslim women; NGOs operated by non-Muslims / other minority groups.

79. Profile of *Goodway Voluntary Organisation* in *Ibid*. Chief Functionary of the NGO, Mr. Ishaq Khan narrates, in an interview organisational experience as well institutional learning while working for Muslim empowerment in the district. It is acknowledged that surge of literary activism (emphasis on production of rational and revolutionary literature) in the district of Warangal is seen as a major influence on the rise of more secular activities and prevalence of the spirit of accommodation in the contemporary society.