

Therole of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Protection And Empowerment of Marginalized Sections in Society

Dr. Priyesh C.U.

Associate Professor of Political Science, Maharaja's College, Ernakulam, India

Abstract-- This research paper explores the important role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in protecting and empowering marginalized sections of society. It examines how NGOs address the needs of various vulnerable groups. The paper analyzes the strategies and methods employed by NGOs to provide protection, advocate for rights, and promote social justice. This study highlights the successes, challenges and expertise of NGOs in supporting marginalized groups.

Non-Governmental Organizations have been playing an important role in contemporary world. NGOs vary in their methods and activities. Some acts primarily as lobbyists while others conduct programmes and activities focusing on certain under privileged groups. The origin of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century. They played an important role in freedom struggles all over the world. The NGOs have been playing a commendable job in the protection of bare minimum rights of marginalized groups in the society hence the study pertaining to NGOs has a unique place in social research.

The NGOs have able to protect the legitimate interest of marginalized sections in the society. They are able to protect the social justice of downtrodden sections like women, children and minorities in different societies.

Non-governmental organizations have become professionally managed organizations. NGOs have been able to provide distributive justice in different societies.

In a democratic, liberal and welfare society, NGOs have occupied a unique position. The NGOs perform a number of functions for the welfare of the society, the development of country and it is being done through process of integration and upliftment of the alienated groups into the main stream of the society. NGOs have been functioning to facilitate the various developmental activities aimed at the poor and the marginalized directly. The developmental activities consist of the delivery of a wide range of services and take various forms in our society.

I. INTRODUCTION

Non-Governmental Organisations play a significant role in modern civil societies. Their areas of operation extend from local levels to transnational level. NGOs exist in almost all countries and they have a variety of functions in the social and economic realms.

NGOs vary in their objectives, methods and activities. Some acts primarily as lobbyists while others conduct programmes and activities focusing on certain target groups. The term, 'Voluntarism' is derived from the Latin word *Voluntas* which means "will" or "freedom". The origin of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century. They played an important role in anti-colonial and anti-slavery movements across the globe. The phrase NGOs has come into popular use by the establishment of the United Nations (UN) in 1945. NGOs have contributed immensely to ensure social equilibrium in different societies. Acknowledging this the UN has given consultative status to INGOs through Article (71) of the Chapter 10 of the United Nation's Charter. The NGOs have been playing a commendable job in the fields of human rights, environmental protection, and protection of marginalized and alienated groups all over the world. They are able to protect the social justice of vulnerable groups like women, children and minorities in different societies.

In the age of globalization, professionalism entered into the working of NGOs. Liberalization of economy and global inflow of capital gave them boost. Now these are professionally managed organizations. NGOs have been able to provide distributive justice in different societies. The marginalized sections in such societies have been able to access justice delivery system due to the activities of NGOs. Hence the study with regard to the activities of NGOs and protection of social justice has immense importance in the contemporary world.

It is being internationally recognized that the term NGO encompasses a wide variety of organizational forms. A key World Bank operational document-1995 Working with NGOs defined NGOs as "private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services or undertake community development" (*World Bank 1995*). This World Bank view is broadly consistent with popular usage. NGOs are generally associated with charitable activities that promote the public good rather than advancing private interests.



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435(Online) Volume 15, Issue 01, January 2026)

According to Amartya Sen, NGOs can be defined as “organizations that are generally formed by professionals or quasi professionals from the middle or lower middle class, NGOs either to serve or work with the poor, or to channel financial support to community-based or grassroots organizations” (Sen, 1999). NGO, voluntary group of individuals or organizations, usually not affiliated with any government, which is formed to provide services or to advocate a public policy.

An NGO is a legally constituted body or organization created by private persons or organization with no participation of any government persons or representatives. Even if a government funds NGOs partially or fully, the latter retain their non-governmental/independent status by excluding any government representatives from its administrative framework.

On the basis of the structure, strategy and performance of NGOs it is possible to attribute certain features to these organizations. The NGOs should have specifically spelled out aims and objectives. The NGO must channelize its programmes for their fulfilment and achievement. The organization normally has an administrative structure. The NGO is an organisation initiated and governed by its own members. The organization should retain its power to take independent decisions, it will enable them to work freely for the dedicated cause. The NGOs should function on democratic principles. Tolerance is a major aspect of democracy and also the spirit of democracy will enhance the capacity of the organization to synthesize various points of view as far as the decision of the organization is concerned.

The organization raises funds for its activities partly from the exchequer in the form of grants-in-aid and partly in the form of the contributions or subscription from the members of the local community or from public spirited members of civil society. The more and more funds from voluntary sources will enhance the ability of the NGO to take independent decisions on important policy matters.

Marginality is an experience that affects millions of people across the globe. Those people who are marginalized have no control over their lives and also the resources available to them. This is an obstacle before them to make contributions to society. The downtrodden sections are prevented from participating in local life, which in turn leads to further marginalization. This has a tremendous impact on the life of these people and all of the society. As the objective of development is to ensure an enabling environment for people to enjoy a constructive and healthy life, it is essential to address the issue of marginalization in society.

Across time and place, development is always broadly understood in terms of mass participation. Marginalization deprives a large majority of people across the world from participating in the development. Various factors are responsible for marginalization of people in society. This complex and serious problem needs to be addressed at the level of administration.

"Marginality is defined as being outside the mainstream of productive and/or social reproductive activities" (Peter Leonard, 2012). *"'Marginality' is so thoroughly demeaning, for economic well-being, for human dignity, as well as for physical security"* (Latin, 2004).

These definitions show various aspects of marginalization. It highlights the structural inequalities that perpetuate marginality, suggesting that those who exist on the peripheries are often excluded from the benefits and protections afforded to central members of any society. This exclusion can be seen in various forms, such as poverty, social isolation and limited access to basic needs. When individuals are marginalized, their economic well-being is jeopardized, leading to poverty and uncertainty. The mental effects can be equally damaging, as marginality often taken away human dignity and undermines one's sense of self-respect. This degradation can culminate in a cycle of disenfranchisement, where individuals find it increasingly difficult to break free from the obstacles imposed by their marginal status in society. Moreover, physical security is often compromised for those living on the margins. Access to safe housing, drinking water, healthcare and employment opportunities can be affected, leading to a pathetic existence. This lack of security can contribute in to a cycle of marginality, as individuals struggle to meet their basic need, making it challenging to participate fully in society or improve their standard of living in society.

The intersectionality of marginality is also crucial to consider. Factors such as race, gender, class, caste and disability can exacerbate the experience of marginality, creating a compounded disadvantage for those who belong to multiple marginalized groups. For example, a disabled woman of lower caste background in India from a low-income group may face several obstacles that are more severe than those encountered by her upper caste counterparts. Understanding marginality in this aspect reveals the complex web of societal factors that contribute to exclusion and disadvantage.

In addressing marginality, it is vital to demand for systemic change that promotes inclusivity, equality and social justice.



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435(Online) Volume 15, Issue 01, January 2026)

Policies that focus on equitable access to resources, education, and employment can help bridge the gap between the marginalized and the mainstream. Community building initiatives that empower individuals and groups can also play an important role in reducing the effects of marginality in any society.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play a pivotal role in the protection and empowerment of marginalized groups in society. Marginalized groups, such as women, minorities, indigenous populations, differentlyabled and sociallydisadvantaged communities, often face systemic barriers that prevent their ability to access resources, opportunities, and basic rights. Non-governmental organizations bridge gaps where governmental and institutional efforts may fall short, providing essential support and advocating for systemic change across the world.

The non-governmental organizations have able to indulge in activities to raise awareness about the issues faced by marginalized groups. They often engage in advocacy work, highlighting injustices and pushing for policy changes that benefit these communities. By conducting research, organizing campaigns, and leveraging media, non-governmental organizations bring attention to issues such as gender inequality, racial discrimination, and economic disparity. This advocacy helps to shift public perceptions and create a more informed and empathetic society.

For example, NGOs like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch focus on human rights abuses globally, advocating for the protection of marginalized populations. Their work often leads to increased international pressure on governments and institutions to uphold human rights standards.

Non-governmental organizations frequently provide direct services that are crucial for the well-being of marginalized groups. These services can range from basic needs, such as food, shelter and healthcare to more specialized support, including education, legal aid and mental support. Organizations like (Doctors Without Borders) deliver medical care to underdeveloped regions. By addressing immediate needs and providing resources, NGOs help marginalized individuals to improve their standard of living and build a foundation for long-term empowerment. This service-oriented approach also often includes capacity-building programs that equip individuals with skills and knowledge necessary for self-reliance. According to the capability approach, Sen developed an action oriented and inclusive theory.

Capability approach intended to enhance the capability of the least advantaged in the society through social action (Sen, 1999). In Sen's views material resources should be extended to weaker sections such as handicapped people, orphans and destitute in the society so as to attain social integration by means of an efficient social network. Non-governmental organizations are able to enhance the capability of marginalized groups in society.

Education is a powerful tool for empowerment, and many NGOs focus on educational initiatives to uplift marginalized communities. They offer training programs, workshops, and scholarships aimed at increasing access to education and vocational skills. Organizations like Room to Read work to improve literacy and educational outcomes for girls and underserved children in developing countries.

By focusing on education and skills development, NGOs enable marginalized individuals to gain the qualifications and expertise needed to compete in the job market, pursue higher education, and become active participants in their communities. This educational empowerment fosters greater self-reliance and opens up opportunities for economic advancement and personal development.

Non-governmental organizations often work closely with local community organizations to amplify their impact. By providing funding, training, and resources, NGOs help these grassroots organizations to enhance their capabilities and reach. This collaborative approach ensures that empowerment efforts are tailored to the specific needs of the community and are more sustainable in the long run.

For instance, in many parts of Africa, NGOs collaborate with local women's groups to promote gender equality and economic development. These partnerships leverage local knowledge and networks, making the initiatives more effective and responsive to community needs.

Non-governmental organizations play a significant role in promoting social inclusion and integration. They work to break down barriers that prevent marginalized groups from participating fully in society. This involves challenging discriminatory practices, advocating for inclusive policies, and creating spaces where marginalized individuals can voice their concerns and contribute to decision-making processes.

For example, NGOs like Inclusion International advocate for the rights of people with disabilities, promoting inclusive education and employment opportunities. Their efforts contribute to creating a more equitable society where everyone has the opportunity to participate and thrive.



II. CONCLUSION

In the vibrant modern democratic states, policy activities of non-governmental organizations are directed against a governmental authority. The objective is to persuade the governmental action to create such conditions as would improve condition of the marginalized sections in the society. When a voluntary organization convinces social justice department, a public authority, to launch a program to rehabilitate juvenile delinquents in city slums, it is engaging in a policy-level action.

The NGO's involvement as advocacy groups is vital to sensitize policy decisions of the government. The NGOs can work as the agents of interest articulation in modern states, it is vital in the protection and empowerment of marginalized in society. The articulation of interest is important because it will bring about changes at the policy level.

Non-Governmental Organizations play a pivotal role in advocating for the rights and needs of marginalized communities, ensuring both protection and empowerment. These organizations act as crucial intermediaries between marginalized sections and larger societal structures, often helping in where state efforts may fall short. By indulging in grassroots initiatives, advocacy, and community engagement non-governmental organizations address structural inequalities. Non-governmental organizations promote social justice and facilitate social harmony in underdeveloped societies.

A unique contribution of NGOs is their ability to amplify the voices of marginalized groups. By providing platforms for these communities to express their concerns and aspirations, NGOs help to raise awareness about issues that may otherwise remain overlooked. This advocacy work not only mobilizes public opinion but also influences policy changes at local, national, and international levels. NGOs engage in lobbying efforts all over the world. Non-governmental organizations indulge in conducting research for the upliftment of marginalized groups. Non-governmental organizations have able to create awareness regarding the injustices faced by marginalized populations, thus fostering a culture of accountability.

Non-governmental organizations play an important role in capability building and skill development of marginalized sections in society. By offering training programs, educational opportunities and access to information, they empower individuals within marginalized communities to take charge of their own lives. This empowerment leads to greater self-sufficiency and resilience, enabling these individuals to advocate for their rights and participate actively in civic life.

Such initiatives also foster community solidarity, encouraging collective action toward shared goals.

NGOs also provide critical services that directly improve the living conditions of marginalized populations. From healthcare and education to legal assistance and economic development programs, these organizations fill essential gaps in service delivery. They always design their programs to meet the specific needs of the communities they serve, ensuring that interventions are culturally relevant and sustainable. This localized approach not only addresses immediate challenges but also builds long-term capacity within the community.

The non-governmental-organization have specifically spelled out aims and objectives. The NGOs have able to channelize its programmes for the upliftment of downtrodden sections in society. NGOs have the managerial skill and power to take decisions on policy matters on behalf of the weaker sections. The study reveals that the NGOs should retain its power to take independent decisions, it will enable them to work freely for the dedicated cause. The organization raises funds for its activities partly from the exchequer in the form of grants-in-aid and partly in the form of the contributions or subscription from the members of the local community or from public spirited members of civil society. However, there should be mechanism to ensure the accountability of these organizations with regard to spending of money.

In the country like India which has been facing the problems such as under development and uneven development, this study reveals that policy activities of NGOs have been instrumental in convincing the authorities to take favorable action on behalf of the marginalized groups to improve conditions of their living. The NGOs have able to convince the social justice department and public authorities to launch programs to protect and empower the marginalized sections.

This study reveals that the role of non-governmental organizations in the protection and empowerment of marginalized sections of society is indispensable. Through advocacy, capacity building, service delivery, and collaboration, NGOs not only uplift these communities but also challenge the structural barriers in society that perpetuate inequality. As society continues to evolve, the contributions of NGOs will be vital in shaping a more inclusive future where all individuals, regardless of their background, can realize their full potential and live with dignity. The ongoing support and recognition of the invaluable work of NGOs are essential for fostering a just and equitable society.



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435(Online) Volume 15, Issue 01, January 2026)

REFERENCES

- [1] Karin Lindblom Anna, (2006): Non governmental Organization in International Law, Stockholm: Cambridge Studies in International and Comparative Law.
- [2] Light, R. (1973): Abused and Neglected Children in America: A Study of Alternative Policies, New Delhi: Harvard Educational Review.
- [3] Puran Chandra, (2002): NGOs in India Role, Guidelines & Performance Appraisal, New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House.
- [4] Leonard Peter, (2012): Marginality: Addressing the Issues of the Involuntary Excluded, Alabama: University of Alabama press.
- [5] Kumar, S. (2003). *NGOs in India: A Critical Perspective*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- [6] Mathur, R. (2007). *Civil Society and Governance: The Role of NGOs in India*. New Delhi: Anamika Publishers.
- [7] Bhattacharyya, D. (2004). *The Role of NGOs in Development: A Study in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- [8] Sharma, A. (2015). *NGOs in India: Challenges and Opportunities*. New Delhi: Rawat Publications.
- [9] Rawls John, (1971): A Theory of Justice, New Delhi: Universal Law Publishing Co. Pvt.Ltd.
- [10] Rao, A. (2011). *Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policies: The Case of Marginalized Groups in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- [11] Sen, A. (2000). *Social Exclusion: Concept, Application, and Scrutiny*. Manila: Asian Development Bank.
- [12] Wacquant, L. (2008). *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- [13] UNDP. (2010). *Human Development Report 2010: The Real Wealth of Nations—Pathways to Human Development*. New York: United Nations Development Programme
- [14] Sen Amartya, (1999): Development as Freedom, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- [15] Saksena, K.P. (2003): Human rights and the constitution-Vision and Reality, New Delhi: Yan Publishing House.