

Non-Governmental Organisation

[UPSC Notes]

What is NGO?

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) refers to an organization that is not a part of the government and is not considered a convention for-profit business. Most NGOs are formed by ordinary citizens. NGOs are funded by foundations, businesses, governments, or private persons.

Laws and Regulations for NGOs

- Some constitutional provisions for Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) are enlisted below:
- Article 43 mentions the state's aims and the objective of encouraging cooperatives in rural areas. Article 19 (1)(c) involves the right to form associations. The Concurrent List in Entry 28 indulges Charitable Institutions, Charity, Religious and Charitable endowments, and religious songs institutions.

Role of NGOs

The activities performed by NGOs are not restricted to environmental, human rights work, social, and advocacy only.

- The NGOs work in favor of political and social change at a larger scale or sometimes very locally.
- They play a prominent role in improving the communities, developing society, and encouraging citizen participation.
- The contribution of NGOs in India has made the Right to Information or RTI possible in India.
- It also ensured the promotion of the Right to Shelter by introducing NGOs like SPARC and YUVA.
- It is observed that many NGOs are interested in Pilot Projects, and they encourage innovation and demonstration. Through NGOs, various welfare schemes come into act.

Role of NGOs in Indian Democracy

There are 3.4 million Non-Governmental Organizations(NGOs) in India. Their areas of expertise are expanded to many fields, from advocacy for disadvantaged and marginalized communities to disaster relief. The responsibilities and role of NGOs in India are mentioned below:

- **Bridging the Gap:** The NGOs work to fill up the gaps existing in the government's programs and offer services to the left-out sections. For instance, during COVID-19, migrant workers were provided with aid by NGOs. The activities linked with gender issues, human and labor rights, environment, education, healthcare, and legal aid are looked after by the NGOs.
- **Acting as a Pressure Group:** Several political NGOs mobilize the opinions of the public against the policies and actions of the government. The NGOs also work to create awareness among the public and assert pressure on public policy. NGOs are known to be a popular pressure in a democratic country. The main work of these NGOs is to impose a proper community system in terms of accountability on the works of grassroots government functionaries.
- **Role of an Enabler:** The self-help groups and community-level outfits are vital for creating change in the field. In the past, these grounded organizations came into existence by collaboration with huge NGOs and other research agencies that accepted foreign funding.
- **Acting as a Social Mediator:** The people of India are surrounded by different beliefs, faith, customs, and superstition. The NGOs work as catalysts and spread awareness among the people of India.
- **Role in Participative Governance:** The initiatives taken by civil society granted several laws for the country. It indulges Environmental Protection Act -1986, Forest Rights Act-2006, Right to Education Act- 2009, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), Right to Information Act- 2005, Integrated Child Protection Scheme(ICPS), and Juvenile Court. Most of the NGOs work with the government as partners and help implement several campaigns like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Challenges Faced by NGOs

The challenges faced by NGOs are given below:

- **Asymmetry of Power:** Some NGOs are of MNCs' characteristics as they have large-scale funding from companies, foreign governments, etc. On the other hand, a huge number of NGOs cannot even afford operational funding.
- **Siphoning of Funds:** Nowadays, NGOs are known to be a good way to channel black money, and tax evasion. Such NGOs are causing a loss to the Indian economy with the show of helping the poor people.
- **NGOs for Namesake:** It is calculated that nearly 1.5 percent of NGOs actually undertake developmental work.
- **Political Activism:** Some NGOs also participate in political activism with foreign funds. Several NGOs indulge partially in political campaigns advertising certain political parties.
- **Obnoxious Agenda:** The NGOs claim indulgence in social empowerment or human rights initiatives. These organizations are allegedly fronts for foreign-supported extremist and secessionist groups. A huge part of such funds is used for the purposes of religious conversions, which is restricted under the FCRA.
- **Absence of Strategic Planning:** Many NGOs suffer from the lack of a proper strategic plan that would ensure success in their mission and activities. This

makes them incapable of effectively raising and capitalizing on financial accounts.

- **Poor Governance and Networking:** Most NGOs have poor governance. The founders of NGOs may be so considerate of their own purposes and desires.
- **Lack of Social Work/ Volunteerism:** Lack of social work is seen among the young generation as they have unattractive career opportunities with low salaries. In fact, children are discouraged by their parents from engaging in social work.

Some Prominent NGOs in India

Below we have listed some of the most proponent NGOs in India.

CRY (Child Rights and You)

CRY is known to be India's most trusted NGO. They work laboriously to ensure healthier and happier childhoods for the underprivileged children of India. In 1979, Rippan Kapur founded CRY(Child Rights and You). Basically, CRY records children's crucial needs like healthcare, education, nutrition, and protection from child marriage and child labor. Over the last 42 years, this NGO has changed the lives of nearly 3 million children across 19 states in India.

Smile Foundation

Smile Foundation is an NGO located in New Delhi, India. In 2002, it came into existence and had branches in more than 25 states. It was founded by Santanu Mishra. According to the 2017 report, the Foundation helped nearly 4 lakh children and their families. The main objective of the Smile Foundation is to encourage the education of underprivileged children in India. Their major welfare programs include health, education, and proper livelihood for women and children. It also has some other programs like Smile on Wheels, Smile Twin e-learning programs, and Mission Education.

Give India Foundation

This is a non-profit organization existing in India. It was established in the year 1999 by Venkat Krishnan. Basically, it is an online donation platform, and its objective is to assure resources and channels to some trusted non-governmental organizations around the country. This web portal ensures the collection of funds and contributions from people outside India and then distributes the donations to well-known, trusted NGOs.

Goonj

Goonj is a non-governmental organization situated in Delhi, India. It works for disaster relief, community development, and humanitarian aid in nearly 23 states of India. The organization emphasizes clothes as a basic need of the individuals. It came into

existence in 1999 with Anshu Gupta as its founder. In 2012, by the Schwab Foundation (World Economic Forum Partner Organisation), Anshu Gupta was named India's Social Entrepreneur of the Year 2012. For his remarkable performance with Goonj, he was honored with the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 2015. The journey of the Goonj began with just 67 garments, and now it has 3500 tonnes of materials every year. This organization is also registered under Section 80G and the Societies Act.

Care India

Care India has been working deliberately for 68 years. It is a non-profit organization that focuses on reducing social justice and poverty. It was founded in the year of 1946 by Lincoln Clark. The main aim of the organization is to empower girls and women belonging to poor and marginalized communities and contribute to improving their lives and livelihood. Such well-doings are carried forward through well-planned strategies and comprehensive health, livelihood, education, disaster relief, and responsible projects. The organization in India reached up to 31.5 million people with the help of 43 projects in 14 states, reaching more than 90 districts.

Nanhi Kali

It is an Indian non-governmental organization that encourages education for underprivileged girls of India. Nanhi Kali was established by Anand Mahindra in 1996 it is supported by KC Mahindra Education Trust, and Naandi Foundation, part of the Mahindra Group's corporate social responsibilities. Nanhi Kali helps in educating girls and women for the welfare of the education sector of India.

Helpage India

This is an Indian organization emphasizing the concerns of aged people founded by Mr. Jackson Cole and Samson Daniel. Helpage India came into existence in 1978. The main goal of this organization is to work for the cause and care of under-aged elderly people and improve their standard of living. Helpage is working upon the actions against healthcare, universal pension, and elder abuse at the state, national and social levels with the help of the state, and central governments and enabling the availability of advocates for the needy. Helpage India comprises several age care programs. The purpose is to provide services to disadvantaged elders holistically to lead an active and healthy life.

Pratham

It is one of the most well-known and largest non-governmental organizations present in India. It was founded by Madhav Chavan and Farida Lambe. It encourages the provision of quality education for underprivileged children in India. Pratham came into existence in Mumbai in 1994 with the aim of providing preschool education to children living in slums. Pratham is present in 23 states and union territories of India and encouraged its various chapters in Britain, the United States, Britain, Sweden, and Germany.

Save the Children India

Save the Children organization is known to be an independent child rights NGO as it spread to 16 states of the country. The chairperson of Save the Children India is Deepak Kapoor. It was established on 27th December 2004 previously, it was registered as 'Bal Raksha Bharat' under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. According to the Foreign Contributions Regulations Act 2010 on 23rd April 2008, this NGO has immensely improved the lives of nearly 12.4 million children.

Oxfam India

Oxfam India assures Adivasis, Dalits, Muslims, and Girls to have secured and safe-violence-free lives, enabling the freedom to express their thoughts and actions and making them aware of their rights, with a future that will be free from discrimination. They conduct research to get the way out to eliminate the rising inequalities and help the marginalized communities in getting jobs, healthcare, and quality education.

