

Book Review

NGOs and Development. Anish Misra, 2011, New Delhi, Random Publications, ISBN978-93-81421-08-6, hard cover, pp. 262+vii+262, price: Rs. 860.

Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the Indian context are generally understood as independent democratic organisations, engaged in activities for the development and welfare of the society. NGO is a non-profit making, voluntary, service/development oriented organization either for the benefit of members or of other members of the population. The book under review tries to explain how the NGOs should be and what should be done for the better management of NGOs. The content also depicts the role, importance of NGOs, and its relevance in the development of nation.

This book has twelve chapters, starting with a prelude which briefs the idea of this book. The first chapter of the book discusses the NGOs, types, skill required, advantages and disadvantages of NGOs, and the components for strengthening NGOs. This chapter provides the basic information about NGOs but nothing about NGOs defund as the title indicates except a very small section that deals with source and flow of funds for NGOs. In the second chapter the author is trying to uncover the process of general understanding of grassroots organisations constructing various theoretical critiques. It also helps understand what stake it has for the State and ruling classes in propagating grassroots organisations. In the chapter, Civil society, Representation and Accountability, the first section is about the conceptual link between accountability and representation. It shows that the concept of accountability is intrinsically linked to the delegation of power by citizens to politicians. The second section analyses the relationship between civil society and representative institutions, arguing that civic organisations are located not on the representative but on the constituent side of the democratic bond. The chapter also discusses the issues of accountability of civic organisations and explores alternative ways to improve the institutional environment and organisational quality.

The fourth chapter, Traditional Versus New Approaches to Accountability, is divided into three sections. The first section sets out the global context and explores the accountability issues faced by different types of organisations. The second section explores the need for a new

and dynamic approach to the issues of global accountability, highlighting the one world trusts stakeholder-driven model of accountability and goes on exploring the transparency and governance of international NGOs. The third section looks into the future and identifies key challenges facing the international NGO sector. The organisations that are successful in this area are those that have faced the challenges proactively, and admitted their weakness and mistakes in an open and transparent ways and tried to rectify them. In the fifth chapter the author argues that there are two parallel universes in academic literature dealing with a third sector organisations in the North and South which are both different and separate such that they rarely acknowledge each other. This is a problem because the literature covers many comparable issues. The organisations and individuals in the North and South are working jointly to develop new approaches to development work. Bridging the gap in the literature would reflect these recent developments within the contemporary global third sector.

The chapter, NGOs and Participatory Management Styles, distinguishes the term management of organisation and the management of development. The author points out that the interest in 'participatory management' in NGOs is related to similar efforts within management more in the private sector and has similar goals of seeking to improve organisational effectiveness. The case studies in this chapter help in understanding the various participatory techniques or its management which may be useful for empowering the staff. In the following chapter, the author comes up with various tips like-never give up, be optimistic, fundraising is like fishing, read the sign for possible success, and then cast your hook and wait and hope for success.

Chapter eight is about global governance and development. In this chapter the author presents the importance of civic groups, their future role especially issues of structure, governance, and accountability that may erode their legitimacy in emerging global order. Currently, the civil society involvement in global regime tends to operate through a network of interest groups, rather than through formal representative structures. The role of civil society is to grow as global governance becomes more pluralist and less confined to state based system that are defined as territorial sovereignty. The content of this chapter is useful in understanding the concept of governance. The chapter on Success and Its Lesson, says that the lessons from the success stories could be used as instructions for the effective management of NGOs. In chapter ten, the author emphasises the

privatisation of public power and the rise of new actors. Privatisation and deregulation, the two key features of globalisation, have shifted the power away from the public bureaucrats. Shrinking state functions linked to social welfare broadly understood to relocate the growing range of responsibilities. The weakening of international public law and strengthening of market forces in the international system have produced growing inequalities in the socio-economic situation of the people worldwide. The contemporary initiatives of civil society organizations in many corners of the world in advocating and promoting transparency in governance are narrated in the eleventh chapter. The last chapter of this book focuses mainly on accountability of national government with regard to realising the millennium development goals which include key policies-debt cancellation, trade justice, a major increase in quantity and quality of aid and national accountability. The content of this chapter is helpful in improvement in research and formulation of policies and plans.

The book is useful for the understanding of development NGOs in a broader perspective. The book emphasises on organisational development by ensuring and enhancing the longevity, sustainability and capability of an organisation. The capacity building of organisation enhances long term provision of programmes and services. The contents of the book are resourceful for social workers, student community in social work and for the professionals working in the NGOs sector.

Sunita Kshapakaran
(mail2sunitaks@gmail. com)