

tens of thousands of unregistered village councils, women's associations, and youth clubs formed under the aegis of the Community Development Program. To be recognized by the Government of India, NGOs must be non-political, non-profit, secular bodies. Under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, NGOs are also required to register with the Home Ministry of the Government of India if they intend to receive overseas funding. The Home Ministry monitors the receipt and use of overseas funds to ensure that NGOs are accountable for the funds they spend.

The earliest NGOs focused on social reform. They strove to change discriminatory practices against particular groups, such as *Harijans* (Untouchables), women and children. They lobbied for legal measures to protect human rights and to establish service institutions to provide such things as education and medical services. The Gandhian and *Sarvodaya* (development of all) NGOs supported sustainable and self-reliant development, including the formation of *Gram Sabha* and village *Panchayat* (both meaning village organization and self-government), economic development based on indigenous technology and local resources, voluntary land reform based on *Gramdhan* (gift village) and *Bhoomidhan* (gift land) principles and non-formal adult education.

The social action groups that emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s called for political change and dealt with issues of poverty and social injustice. They wanted bottom-up, alternative approaches to development, not top-down economic development and service-oriented programs that reinforced dependencies. They worked more on creating demand from the people, educating, mobilizing and organizing them to go after government benefits. However, this led to conflict with government functionaries. Many NGOs began implementing economic development programs because of pressure from government agencies and the need to fulfill local communities' expectations. They received government subsidies and grants as well as bank loans.

Since the 1970s, there has been significant growth in the number and size of NGOs, particularly in Southern India and the states of Gujarat and Orissa, the latter being the poorest state in spite of being richly endowed with natural resources. The growth produced several different kinds of NGOs. Many of the large, city-based NGOs focus on specialized fields such as the environment, health, rural development, agriculture and non-formal education. The rural-based NGOs undertake integrated programs, with each NGO implementing several program components.