

## Role Of Non-Governmental Organizations In Uplifting Other Backward Classes Community For A Viksit Bharath

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### Abstract

Backward Classes in India have faced historical injustices. This research paper examines the crucial role played by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in facilitating Backward Classes community development. It explores the strategies employed by NGOs to address the unique challenges faced by Backward Classes communities, the impact of their intervention and the policy implications for sustainable development. The findings highlight the significance of a collaborative approach involving NGOs, government agencies and Backward Classes communities to foster inclusive growth and empowerment.

Key words: Backward classes, NGO, Financial, Socio-economic, Educational status

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

As per the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) survey of 2006, the Other Backward Classes population in India stands at 41%. Despite being a predominant community, they have long been marginalized, facing persistent challenges such as poverty, illiteracy, inadequate healthcare and social exclusion. Despite efforts through various policies and programs aimed at Backward Classes community development, these challenges persist. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have emerged as vital players in supplementing governmental endeavors by providing grassroots-level interventions tailored to the specific needs of socially and Educationally Backward communities.

sustainable development from within.

### 2. Constitutional Provisions related to NGOs:

- 1) **Article 19(1)(c)** on the right to form associations;
- 2) **Article 43** which highlights that the State shall endeavor to promote cooperatives in rural areas;
- 3) **Seventh Schedule: Concurrent List in Entry 28** mentions about – Charities and charitable institutions, charitable and religious endowments and religious institutions.

### 3. Role of NGOs in Other Backward Classes Community Development:

As defined by the World Bank NGOs refer to not-for-profit organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development. A Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) is a non-profit organization, group or institution that operates independently from a Government and has humanitarian or development objectives. NGOs in India are formed under-

- Societies: Registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- Trusts:
  - Private trusts are registered under the central government's Indian Trusts Act, 1982.

- Public trusts are registered under the State legislation concerned.
- Charitable companies: Registered as non-profit companies under Section 8 of Companies Act, 2013.

According to 2023-24 Human Development Report (HDR) released by UNDP, India ranks 134 out of 193 countries on the Global Human Development Index. In Global Hunger Index released annually by NGOs “Concern Worldwide” and “Welthungerhilfe” India ranks 105 out of 127 countries in 2024. All these statistical data pinpoint the need for NGOs to take up a prominent role in uplifting the Other Backward Classes community.

**Education:** NGOs have significantly contributed to improving education among Backward Classes communities. They have implemented various initiatives such as promoting access to education, improving its quality and coming up with possible ways to deal with education-related issues, mobile schools, community learning centers, Scholarships and vocational training programs tailored to the needs of Backward Classes children and youth. These efforts have led to increased literacy rates (The literacy rate of India has grown by 7% from 73% in 2011 to 76.32% in 2022) and improved educational outcomes. They also promote life skills and values. These organizations mainly collaborate with the governments as well as the other relevant stakeholders to serve their goals. As per the HDI report released by UNDP for 2023-24 India witnessed a rise in expected years of schooling and mean years of schooling.

**Healthcare:** In healthcare, NGOs have played a crucial role in overcoming barriers between Other Backward Classes communities and healthcare services. They organize mobile health clinics, health camps and awareness programs, which have substantially enhanced access to medical care, leading to reductions in infant and maternal mortality rates and improved overall health outcomes within Other Backward Classes populations. Additionally, NGOs focus on spreading awareness about nutrition, hygiene and preventive healthcare practices, contributing to better health behaviors and outcomes. As per the HDI report released by UNDP for 2023-24 India’s average life expectancy reached 67.7 years in 2022, up from 62.7 years the previous year.

**Livelihood and Economic Empowerment:** NGOs have introduced various livelihood programs aimed at promoting economic self-sufficiency among Other Backward Classes communities. These initiatives include skill development workshops, microfinance schemes, and support for traditional crafts and agriculture. By creating market linkages and providing training, NGOs enable Other Backward Classes individuals and groups to generate sustainable income, thereby reducing dependence on external sources and improving their overall living standards. As per the HDI report released by UNDP for 2023-24, India’s **Gross National Income (GNI)** per capita has surged to USD 6951, marking a 6.3% increase over the span of 12 months.

**Social Empowerment:** NGOs conduct social empowerment initiatives that focus on building leadership skills, promoting gender equality and enhancing participation in local governance among Other Backward Classes communities. Through organizing community meetings, training sessions and advocacy campaigns, NGOs empower Other Backward Classes members to assert their rights and actively participate in decision-making processes affecting their lives. This not only strengthens the social fabric within Other Backward Classes communities but also fosters their integration into broader societal frameworks while preserving their unique identity and culture.

By addressing education, healthcare, livelihoods and social empowerment, NGOs play a multifaceted role in catalyzing holistic development within Other Backward Classes communities, contributing to their empowerment, resilience and sustainable progress.

#### **4. Challenges Faced by NGOs:**

Despite their significant contributions to Other Backward Classes development, NGOs encounter several challenges in their work with Other Backward Classes communities:

➤ **Limited Funding and Resources:** Securing adequate funding and resources remains a major challenge for NGOs working in remote rural or hilly areas. Limited financial support often constrains the scale and sustainability of their interventions, hindering their ability to address complex socio-economic issues effectively.

➤ **Bureaucratic Hurdles and Lack of Coordination with Government Agencies:** NGOs often face bureaucratic hurdles and a lack of coordination with government agencies, which can delay project implementation and create inefficiencies. Complex administrative procedures, red tape and inconsistent policies may hinder collaboration between NGOs and government bodies, impacting the effectiveness of development initiatives.

➤ **Cultural Barriers and Resistance to Change within Communities:** Cultural differences and resistance to change pose significant challenges for NGOs. Other Backward Classes Communities may be cautious about adopting new practices or technologies that are perceived as conflicting with their culture, traditions and customs dictated by the Indian caste system. Building trust and cultural sensitivity are essential for successful intervention acceptance and sustainability.

➤ **Rural and Urban divide:** Other Backward Classes Communities in rural areas reside in isolated colonies. In Urban areas those who are utterly underprivileged live in slums which make access difficult for NGOs and thereby hinder the delivery of services. Remote villages located in hilly or forested regions often lack basic infrastructure such as roads and communication networks, adding logistical challenges to NGO operations.

➤ **Security Issues in Conflict Affected Regions:** NGOs operating in regions affected by insurgency, conflict or unrest faces security risks. Political instability and violence can disrupt development activities, threaten the safety of NGO staff and community members and impede progress in addressing Other Backward Classes development issues.

Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from both NGOs and stakeholders involved in Other Backward Classes development. Strategies such as building partnerships, advocating for policy reforms, enhancing community engagement and adopting innovative approaches tailored to the local context can help overcome these obstacles and ensure more effective NGO interventions.

#### **5. Illustrations of NGO's working for Other Backward Classes Community upliftment:**

**a) NGOS 'Youth for Equality' and "Janhith Abhiyan"** file petitions separately in Supreme Court against constitutional Amendment for 10% reservation to Economically Weaker Sections(EWS). Such NGOs strive to protect civil and political rights of Other Backward Classes community.

**b) The Goonj foundation** founded by Anshu Gupta, an Indian Social Entrepreneur, awarded Magsaysay Award for his work on transforming the culture of giving in India and for highlighting material as a sustainable development resource for the socio-economically disadvantaged. Popularly known as the Clothing Man, Anshu founded Goonj, offering a sustainable economic model for eliminating poverty and related issues. Under his leadership,

Goonj created barter between urban surplus and village community labor, triggering large scale rural development work.

c) **Pratham** NGO works for quality education for underprivileged children in India.

d) **Akshaya Patra Foundation** implements **PM POSHAN INITIATIVE** to solve malnutrition.

e) **SEWA** (Self-Employed Women's Association) supports Other Backward Classes women workers in the informal sector through organized Other Backward Classes community women into cooperatives, skill training, financial services, market access and legal aid.

f) **PRADAN** (Professional Assistance for Development Action) PRADAN has been instrumental in promoting sustainable livelihoods among Other Backward Classes communities in central India through affirmative interventions like formation of self-help groups (SHGs), training in improved agricultural practices, facilitating access to credit and creating market linkages.

#### **6. Steps taken by Government of India to promote NGOs:**

❖ **Provision of Funds:** Central Government provides funds to State Governments/ UT Administrations for implementation of welfare schemes for Women and Children belonging to Other Backward Classes such as Swadhar, Ujjawala etc through NGOs.

❖ **Schemes of Ministry of Culture:** Various Schemes like Cultural Function and Production Grant (CFPG), Financial Assistance to Cultural organizations with National presence etc. aim to maximize participation in the field of promotion and conservation of traditional art, craftsmanship and culture among Other Backward Classes.

❖ **NGO Darpan:** It provides a unique ID to an NGO registered in the NGO Darpan portal.

#### **7. Policy Recommendations**

**A. Strengthening NGO-Government Collaboration:** Formal mechanisms for coordination between NGOs and government agencies are essential to maximize the impact of Other Backward Classes development efforts. This can be achieved by:

❖ Establishing regular forums or platforms for dialogue and coordination between NGOs, government departments and Other Backward Classes community representatives.

❖ Encouraging information sharing, joint planning and collaboration on project implementation to ensure synergy and avoid duplication of efforts.

❖ Creating policies that recognize and leverage the strengths of both NGOs and government agencies in Other Backward Classes development initiatives.

**B. Increasing Funding and Resource Allocation:** Adequate funding is crucial for NGOs to effectively implement development projects for Other Backward Classes. Policy measures to increase funding and resource allocation include:

❖ Providing additional grants, subsidies and financial incentives specifically targeted at NGOs working for Other Backward Classes community.

❖ Creating tax incentives for corporate sector contributions to Other Backward Classes development projects through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

❖ Ensuring transparent and streamlined processes for accessing funds, reducing administrative burdens for NGOs.

**C. Capacity Building for NGOs:** Building the capacity of NGOs is essential to enhance their effectiveness in project implementation and management. Policy recommendations include:

❖ Providing training programs and workshops for NGO staff on project management, monitoring and evaluation, financial management and community engagement.

- ❖ Facilitating networking opportunities and knowledge sharing platforms for NGOs to learn best practices and innovative approaches.

- ❖ Encouraging partnerships between NGOs and academic institutions or specialized agencies for skill development and capacity enhancement.

**D. Community Participation:** Active participation of Other Backward Classes communities is vital for the success and sustainability of development projects. Policy measures to promote community participation include:

- ❖ Ensuring the inclusion of Other Backward Classes representatives in decision-making bodies related to Other Backward Classes development planning and implementation.

- ❖ Conducting regular community consultations and participatory planning processes to identify needs, priorities and locally appropriate solutions.

- ❖ Providing training and capacity-building support to Other Backward Classes community members to actively engage in project planning, execution and monitoring.

**E. Addressing Structural Barriers:** Structural barriers such as land rights issues, displacement and inadequate access to basic services/ infrastructure like housing, sanitation, drinking water, access to roads for mobility significantly hinders Other Backward Classes development. Policy measures to address these barriers include:

- ❖ Implementing land reforms and ensuring secured land rights for Other Backward Classes communities to protect their traditional livelihoods and prevent land alienation.

- ❖ Developing resettlement and rehabilitation policies that prioritize the interests and well-being of displaced Other Backward Classes populations due to development projects.

## 8. CONCLUSION:

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) serve as catalysts for change in the development of Other Backward Classes communities in India, playing an indispensable role in addressing multifaceted challenges and fostering sustainable progress. Through their grassroots interventions, NGOs have made significant strides in areas such as education, healthcare, livelihood and social empowerment, positively impacting the lives of Other Backward Classes population across the country.

In education, NGOs have implemented innovative programs to improve literacy rates and educational outcomes among Other Backward Classes children. In healthcare, NGOs have bridged the gap between Other Backward Classes communities and healthcare services, enhancing access to medical care and promoting preventive healthcare practices.

Moreover, NGOs have introduced various livelihood programs aimed at enhancing economic self-sufficiency among Other Backward Classes communities, providing training, access to credit and market linkages to improve income levels and living standards. Additionally, social empowerment initiatives by NGOs have Other Backward Classes communities by building leadership skills, promoting gender equality and enhancing participation in local governance.

However, to maximize their impact, NGOs require enhanced collaboration with government agencies, increased funding and concerted efforts to overcome systemic challenges such as limited resources, bureaucratic hurdles and cultural barriers. By working in partnership with the government and Other Backward Classes communities, NGOs can leverage their expertise and resources to address these challenges more effectively and pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable future for India's indigenous population.

In conclusion, the collaboration between NGOs, government agencies and Other Backward Classes communities is essential for achieving sustainable development and empowerment among Other Backward Classes populations in India. By harnessing the collective efforts and resources of all stakeholders, we can create positive change and build a brighter future for Other Backward Classes communities, ensuring that no one is left behind in India's journey towards progress and prosperity.

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