

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: SITUATING CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN DEVELOPMENTAL PARADIGM

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Abstract

Youth development is possible if their participation is ensured in social, civic and political processes which are increasingly recognized as an important developmental objective. However, evidence shows that the extent to which youth participate in such processes and the factors that facilitate it remain inadequate in most developing countries including India. Hence civil society organisations came into continuation to catalyse the youth development. Civil society in contemporary times has led a wider impact in the society in the form of social and political mobilization. It has impacted people's participation in the democratic sphere of raising their voice for the rights which are often not fulfilled by the state. The role of civil society has influenced the youth and institutions to come together and bring social change in the form of advocating for their rights, demanding justice and execution of rights from the state and influencing public policies. The paper seeks to study the role of civil society in youth development vis-à-vis in the formation of vibrant society, which is proactive for their rights. It also attempts to analyse the perception of youth towards civil society. Besides, it examines the pro-active role of civil society in bringing social change and how civil society channelizes youth to participate in processes of social change & developmental process, as well as agents of mobilization among them in reducing disparity and access to justice.

Keywords: Youth Development, Civil Society Organisations, Developmental Paradigm

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Introduction

Youth is a valuable human resource in every country. They carry the aspirations and bear responsibility for change, progress and innovation. Youth can make or mar society. There is always a tussle between tradition and modernity because of which youth are often misunderstood by the older generation. Immaturity, inexperience and thoughtless actions are some of the characteristics attributed to them by their elders.

‘The term “youth development” can be seen in three different ways: as the natural process through which youth grow into adults; as a set of principles underlying youth programs that encourage thriving among youth; or as a set of practices that foster the development of young people’ (S.F. Hamilton 2004).

‘Youth development is a process that prepares a young person to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood and achieve his or her full potential. Youth development is promoted through activities and experiences that help youth develop social, ethical, emotional, physical, and cognitive competencies’

Youth form an integral part of any society and are an essential part of the development process. India is a ‘young’ nation with youth population of 465 million as per Census of India 2011.

Civil society in contemporary times has led a wider impact in the society in the form of social and political mobilization. It has impacted people’s participation in the democratic sphere of raising their voice for the rights which are often denied or neglected by the state. ‘The roots of an Indian autonomous civil society are not to be found in the contemporary rise of a modern state but foremost in the ancient and medieval history of the country’ (Mohanty 2004).

‘Indian society had been characterized in pre-colonial times by a form of insularity that thus ensured a certain independence from state power but also resulted in stagnation and an impossible unity of the population. However, the modern definition of an Indian civil society has to confront the radical transformation of the State and its consequences on the role of

the non-state actors' (Ibid). The role of civil society has influenced the masses and institutions to come together and bring social change in the form of advocating for the rights of the people, demanding justice and execution of rights from the state and influencing public policies.

Civil society has influenced youth development in diverse spheres thus mobilizing them for participation in social and political action. In recent times active participation of youth has resulted in a pro-active force voicing for the good governance and rights of the people. Youth participation in social, civic and political processes is increasingly recognized as an important developmental objective for them. Nonetheless, evidence that sheds light on the extent to which youth participate in such processes, and the factors that facilitate it remains limited in most developing countries including India.

Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework

The term 'civil society' is used in this paper to refer to social activists, social movements, social action groups, NGOs, and social workers. Civil society constitutes diverse agencies, advocacy groups, activists, professionals which form the network to bring social mobilization and good governance for the fulfilment of people's rights. Civil society as one of the stakeholders of development plays an influential role in public policies, programs and fulfilling entitlement of social, economic and political rights of the people. 'At an elementary level, the concept of civil society pinpoints and values associational life- interest group professional and other associations, voluntary agencies, grass root organisations, social movements and all other social orders- because it brings people together in networks and shared concerns' (Chandoke 2004).

'In the thirteenth century when the established Roman Catholic church exercised considerable hegemony over the social and political life the concept 'societas civilis' was coined to depict a zone which was free from papal influence and was governed by laws that were not of divine origin. As such, civil society symbolized the autonomy of the temporal realm in relation to the ecclesiastical. Within civil society, people had the right to choose their king and be governed by laws that pursued the minimum

shared interests of the people' (Colas 1997). In historical context civil society has been related to the conception of civil society engaged with politics, educating citizens, facilitating communication and making government more effective.

'According to the World Bank (1999a) civil society gives a voice to the people, elicits participation and can pressure the state. The World Bank (1999b) and the United Nations (1997; 1998) consider civil society to be separate from the government. Both focus on the number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) within a country'. Hence the role of the CSOs/NGOs is not only to disseminate awareness among youth but also to help youth as an Integral part of the society to form opinions and make sound decisions towards their development. In this way, the CSOs play an important role in governance of the nation as an essential part.

'The transition to independence was accompanied by the rise of a welfare state, extending state powers into areas that had been previously left to civil society. This intrusion of the State and its monopoly on new spheres as education, health or security resulted in a form of state monopoly in almost all public goods, giving to the state the role of the first employer of organized workers in the country. The generalization of taxes, the ownership of public utilities transformed the state into an arbiter between individuals. But this rise of a welfare state pointed out in the same time its dysfunctions and its failures' (Mohanty 2004).

'In India during the few last decades, political scientists have been repeatedly pointing to the declining legitimacy of the state. Commenting on the social and political erosion in the country in the late 1980's Kothari highlighted the polarization between a state increasingly unwilling to carry out its constitutional obligations and a people not knowing who else to turn to and identified this polarization as setting the stage for the growing incidence of violence, injustice, destruction of moderate modes of dissent and articulation of people's discontent and disenchantment' (Jayaram 2005).

'In India, the recent interest in civil society has arisen less from a natural curiosity about changes in the inner life of society than from a concern over the problems and prospects of Indian democracy. It has arisen because many

people have begun to feel that democracy is facing a crisis and that this crisis has been created or at least intensified by the State' (Beteille 2000).

'In contemporary social and political theory, civil society is almost associated with democracy. John Locke theorizes the civil society paradigm; the term 'civil society' became a part of the general political discourse in sixteenth century Europe. At this time theorists of democracy invoked this concept to define a democratic form of government rooted in the rights of citizens' (Mahajan 2003).

Political scientists related the 'theory of democracy' to the rights of the people, their participation in political and civil processes and to have liberty and freedom to follow their own perception, faith and paths. 'At this stage, civil society heralded the process of secularizations which paved the way for the construction of a democratic polity. It questioned the centrality that was previously accorded to religious institutions and religious explanations and allowed for the emergence of an alternative pattern of society and government' (Mahajan 2003).

Consequently, a political society in which the basic rights of citizens are not recognized or given priority by the sovereign does not constitute a civil society. 'Locke's theory provided a principle namely, the primacy of rights that was subsequently used to challenge existing patterns of social and political discrimination while simultaneously curtailing the arbitrary use of power by the political sovereign.

'As civil society signifies a collective body that cherishes individual rights and legally protects the freedom of its members, it symbolizes a condition that is necessary for the existence of a democratic state' (Mahajan 2003). The emergence of a political society that gives precedence to the natural and inalienable rights of citizens thus heralded the emergence of a secular democratic state- one where the concern for individual liberty could be combined with social equality.

In the luminosity of various survey literature, it can understand the sovereignty of the state, the identity of civil society, the perception of people about civil society and contribution to civil society in translating conceptual

provisions of rights into reality. Since youth as a vibrant and active group in itself is eager to identify its own role in the democracy it is important to research on the dimensions of youth and civil society. Therefore it is important to investigate the dimensions of civil society in bringing social change, hence the contemporary development discourse as well as gaps and limitations of civil society in Youth Development.

This paper specifically looks into the perception of the youth about civil society and agents of mobilization their active participation in reducing disparity and justice. Hence, it seeks how civil society is influencing youth. Afterwards, it explores the perception of youth about civil society organisations and their contribution in the development and empowering process. Finally, it attempts to draw linkages among driving forces of social change which are facilitating the participation of youth for development.

Nowadays, it is no longer litigious to say that without the active involvement of civil society organisation citizens of any State would be able to live in a world ridden with much more violence human rights violations, burdened with greater social injustice, unemployment and equipped with less sensitivity towards the social problems which they face.

In the 1970s social scientists, grassroots groups and nongovernmental development organizations (NGOs) began promoting popular participation in the construction and use of knowledge for social transformation. 'USAID defines participation as the active engagement of the partners and customers in sharing ideas, committing time and resources, making decisions, and taking action to bring about a desired development objective'(CIDA, 1997). Hence it is required to discuss strategies in belief that the involvement of civil society is vital in association youth for their development. It is the philosophy, however, that for dealing with this overwhelming problem of employment among unskilled youth the best position for civil society organisations is a coalition consisting of three pillars: government, the private sector and civil society. All three partners have to be involved for effective and sustainable livelihood through skill development.

Though civil society organisations increasingly become active where the government does not reach and where the forces of the market leave people

with unwanted results. It is conventional wisdom that the forces of the market are socially blind. They may produce untenable social inequality, even injustice, and, in the case of generating/promoting livelihood through skilling youth, they may become overwhelmed and destructive when they go unchecked by ethical standards and legally enforceable rules. Civil society also is a guarantor that the interests of those people governments claim to represent are not being neglected. It is the manifold groups making up a civil society which can remind governments and ensure that skilling youth for livelihood will in the interest of those that can least afford to defend themselves: the poor, the uneducated and illiterate, the unorganised and the weak. Finally, civil society is the watchdog, the whistleblower and the vanguard to warrant that government and – to a lesser extent – the private sector respect their borders in fig. 1.

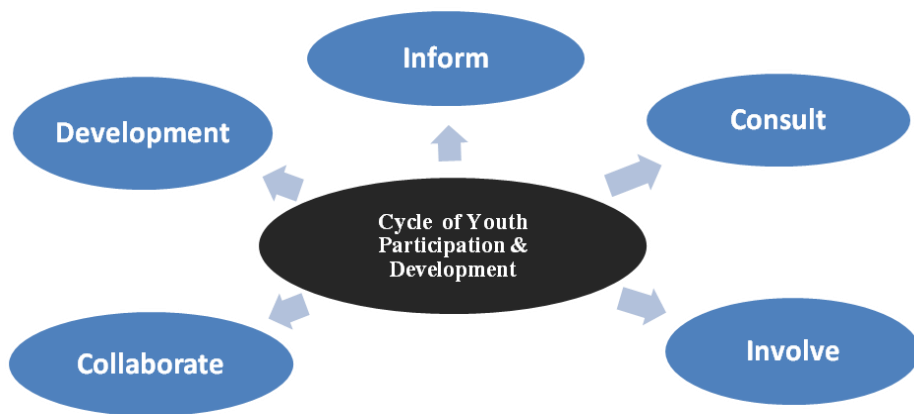


Figure 1: Levels of Participation

The issue of participation in youth development activities has been a matter of intense interest for civil society for the need to find ways to build the capacity of peoples which will mobilize people to participate effectively in decision-making process. Because in contemporary situation civil society has led a wider impact in the society in the form of social and political mobilization, it has impacted youth participation in the democratic sphere of raising their voice for the rights which are often not fulfilled by the state.

The definition of 'participation' has been widely contested, with widely differing conceptions offered by parties with dissimilar political, ideological and economic interests and perspectives. In this way participation can be defined as the organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations, on part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control and this is only possible when the process will facilitate by someone as researcher have studied the people's participation in the livelihood promotion because in that the mass mobilisation or people participation has taken place because of the facilitation process of civil society.

From the perspective of people's participation, the elements of power and control over key decisions are the core issue of participation. Participation necessarily raises questions about mutual influence and the control of resources and decisions. Civil Society which has diverse components of NGOs, advocacy groups, social action, awareness campaign, etc has a vibrant impact on the society and on the social, economic and political environment. 'NGOs and other CSOs play a crucial role in bridging the gap between people and different sets of structure existing in the different environment'. They bring people's participation by facilitating them through diverse mediums, to raise people's consciousness in order to receive their rights and function through them in different structures of the state, society, ecology and economic spheres. CSOs construct collective mobilization, individual mobilization, group mobilization to facilitate people's role in democracy, society and other areas.

NGOs and CSOs have facilitated people's role and participation through constructing, knowledge, awareness, valuing people's worth and existing cultural and societal relationships and their interaction in their respective environment. It is the result of power equations in different structures which manipulate people's natural worth to achieve higher social functioning and play their roles effectively. Civil society facilitates people to overcome such manipulations and bring upward social mobility and social functioning.

Research Methodology

Objectives of the paper: To find out the nature, characteristics and size of civil society organizations initiating in the process of youth development in Bilaspur. Afterwards, it aspires to know about the factors, nature and process of participation of civil society organization and people in the youth development. It also analyses the views and perception of civil society organization about the youth development in Chhattisgarh.

Research Design: Case Study Design has been used in this paper. Hence the major goal of this paper was to describe events, phenomena, and situations of selected NGOs working on issue of youth development. Therefore this paper describes the phenomena of youth participation in the movement and reflects on the multiple realities of the youth development as described by NGOs and youth who participated in the process.

Sampling: - Non-probability, purposive sampling technique has been employed. Therefore samples of Organisation have been purposively chosen.

Source of Data Collection: - There were two major sources that have been used in data collection.

Primary Sources: - NGOs functionaries.

Secondary Sources: - Books, Journal, and Reports related to the topic.

Tools of Data Collection: Self-administered Interview schedule has been used for collection of data.

Data collection and Data Analysis: The data has been collected with the help of a self-administered interview schedule employed to extract data from the office bearers and executive employees of the NGOs. The data is analyzed qualitatively on the basis of the objectives of the paper. Data has been analyzed on the basis of sub themes of the paper objectives and collectively analyzed the case studies developed through the interview. These case studies depict the nature, characteristics and major functioning of NGOs taken for the study. Hence they illustrate the area of functioning in area of Youth Development.

Analysis & Discussion

CSOs vis-à-vis NGOs: Youth Participation for Development (Profile of the Organizations):

PRIA-Participatory Research in Asia:

Established in 1982, PRIA (Participatory Research in Asia) is a global centre for participatory research and training based in New Delhi. PRIA has field offices in 5 states and linkages with 3000 NGOs to deliver its programmes on the ground. PRIA's work is focused on empowerment of the excluded through capacity building, knowledge building and policy advocacy. Over three decades PRIA has promoted 'participation as empowerment', capacity building of community organisations, and people's participation in governance.

SYM (Shikhar Yuva Manch):

SHIKHAR YUVA MANCH is located in BILASPUR Chhattisgarh. SHIKHAR YUVA MANCH is registered as a Society at BILASPUR of state Chhattisgarh with NGO unique registration ID 'CG/2009/0005037'. The NGO registration is done by Registrar of Societies with registration number 1983 on the date of 1997 December 16th its parent Organization is Paul Foundation. SHIKHAR YUVA MANCH NGO is working on Key Issues of Agriculture, Art & Culture, Children, Dalit Upliftment, Drinking Water, Education & Literacy, Environment & Forests, Human Rights, Legal Awareness & Aid, Land Resources, Panchayati Raj, Rural Development & Poverty Alleviation, Tribal Affairs, Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation Vocational Training among rural youth, and Water Resources.

Mathrubhumi

It focuses on self-help groups, youth skill development and working with unorganized labour. It also provides vocational training and providing employment. Moreover, it runs non-formal education centres and youth empowerment centres and provides linkage with found education.

MSKPP (Mahila Shiksha Kalyan evam Parikshan Parishad)

MSKPP is non-governmental, non-profitable, non-political and non-religious organization mainly working for the empowerment of women. It is established on 25th September 1986 and started work on self-employment, vocational training, and entrepreneurship development of both rural and urban women. The organization had been registered on 21/03/91 under Madhya Pradesh Society Registration Act 1973 with registration number 25273. MSKPP is registered under Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) 1976 on date 18/10/2002 with registration no. 327480011. MSKPP is committed to well being of women through their economic and social empowerment. It is targeted through engagement of women with income generating activities. MSKPP moves with capacity building, skill and entrepreneurship development among rural & tribal female youth and women that bring them into their sustainable existence.

MMKSS-Mitwa Mahila Kalyan Evam Seva Samiti:

Mitwa Mahila Kalyan evam Seva Samiti (MMKSS) is a leading non-governmental organization which works with grass root people, for grass root people aiming at their all-round development emphasizing on youth, women and children issues. It is a team of young and dynamic youth who are determined to bring social change through the behaviour change of people and to change of prospect. Now MMKSS extended its target to Bilaspur district. Its intervention is on child rights, sustainable livelihood, environment and gender equality. MMKSS believes in People's power so it works as a facilitator of people's power through empowerment and promoter of the alternative mechanism at grass root through PRIs and People's organizations.

Profile of the Respondents: The respondents consist of Executive Director, Development, Programme Manager, Founder and Project coordinators.

Analysis & interpretation: Five organisations are included in the study, of which four are located in Bilaspur and one is located in Raipur (i.e. PRIA).

Results

Table 1: Functioning areas of NGOs in Youth Development

Issues of Youth Development	NGOs working on Youth Development in Bilaspur					
	PRIA	SYM	Matrabhoomi	MSKPP	MMKSS	Total No of same issue NGOs working on
Advocacy	✓	✓		✓	✓	4
Capacity Building	✓		✓	✓	✓	4
Education & Literacy		✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Drinking Water		✓				2
Vocational Training		✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Water Resources.	✓	✓				2
Housing and homeless	✓	✓				2
Participatory governance	✓					1
Empowerment				✓	✓	2
Legal Awareness & Aid		✓		✓		2
Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation	✓	✓		✓	✓	4

Community mobilization, awareness			✓	✓	✓	3
SHG formation		✓		✓	✓	3
Livelihood Support & Promotion				✓	✓	2
Total no. of issues NGOs working	6	8	4	10	9	

Table No 01 depicts the various issues addressed by NGOs to promote Youth Development; hence it is clear that MSKPP, MMKSS & SYM are using all Issues of Youth Development.

Table 2: Approaches adopted by NGOs

Approaches of the NGO	NGOs working on Youth Development					No. of NGOs adopting the same approach
	PRI A	SYM	Matrabhoomi	MSKPP	MMKSS	
Rights based	✓	✓		✓	✓	4
Service delivery		✓	✓		✓	4
Community development		✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Networking	✓	✓		✓	✓	4
Total no. of approach of an	2	4	2	3	4	

NGO						
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The above table 2 explains the kind of approach adopted by the NGOs. Two of the NGOs adopt a single approach i.e. Rights based for both. 3 adopt a mix of 2 approaches- two adopt Rights based and Community development and one adopt Service delivery and community development. 4 adopt all three approaches – Rights based Service delivery and Community.

Table 3: Monitoring & Evaluating Mechanisms adopted by NGOs

Evaluating Mechanisms	NGOs working on Youth Development					
	PRI A	SY M	Matrab hoomi	MSK PP	MMK SS	No. of NGOs adopting same Evaluating Mechanisms
Feedback		✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Documentation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Research	✓					1
Record keeping		✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Meeting with target group	✓	✓		✓	✓	4
Survey					✓	1
Media reports				✓		1
Public Consultation	✓				✓	2
Total no. of Evaluating Mechanisms followed by NGOs	4	4	3	5	6	

individually						
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The above table 3 explains the mechanisms adopted by NGOs to evaluate their work. 4 NGOs use Feedback, 5 stake-ups up Documentation to evaluate their work, 1 NGO use Research, 4 NGOs use Record keeping, 4 meet with their target group, one use survey and one NGO evaluate through the media reports.

Findings

This section comprises the comparative analysis of the data collected from NGOs and youth who participated in the process of development. It reflects and discusses the major trends, techniques, tools and methods of participation of CSO's as well as people and also highlights the differences on views and perceptions of the different sample sets. The five organizations which have been the respondent group have a point of commonality as well as have differences in terms of opinion. These five organizations from the commonality in terms of participation for the unity and in support of civil society being an agent of participation and organizing to get a transparent and accountable system.

Out of these five organizations, three of them participated in public consultations and public debates apart from the presence of the members of the organization. The major reason for participation of other three organizations comprises the nature of the organization too as the other three are the social action group, a research group working on the objective of bringing transparency and accountability in the system. Therefore, they actively participated in the consultation and public debates. Though the strategy of Conscientization has brought participation of youth from each class NGO's responded that participation and Conscientization to different sections of society needed different approaches to bring the masses together. Out of these five three respondents feels that they are not sure about the results of the movement but believe that something better than the present system will be created, either in terms of transparency or the demands of the movement will be fulfilled to some length.

Suggestions

Youth and NGOs who are participating had a different level of consciousness. There are different agendas and different lenses to analyze and believe/disbelieve in the process of Developing. On one hand, NGO's have a point of disagreement with the process but they also have ways to contribute meaningfully e.g. consultation meetings, status, work of the organization within the ambit of civil society makes them more responsible entities to raise their voice for agreement or disagreement with the movement.

Whereas general youth are attracted by the strategies of the developmental process. Among the respondent group some level of consciousness, critical analysis and awareness are there but they are not aware of the multiple realities. They don't have a focus understanding of different approaches and bringing people's participation from all sections of the society, Therefore the role of civil society becomes extremely crucial and responsible. This paper itself is revealing multiple realities. NGO's have knowledge, skills and competency to make an informed choice. There is the difference in opinion of larger civil society. One section of civil society is leading, organizing and promoting the movement, where there is lack of comprehensive and critical analysis of diverse Indian society and the importance of their true involvement in the movement. The other sections of civil society can critically analyze multiple realities but still, there is a gap to come together. Civil society organizations make a difference in national development. They give caring assistance and basic services, innovate in service deliverance, build capacity and advocate with and for the youth. Recent years have also seen their role and spheres of youth development. By performing unaided, however, CSO collision is inadequate in extent, degree and sustainability. It can be seen that, eventually, effectual states are imperative for sustained developmental progress among youth. Progressive government strategy and efficient execution matter a lot. But there is mixed development across India towards congregation Youth Development. Effort remains to be ended to make plan and perform more pro-youth. CSOs require connecting with policy processes more efficiently as a pressure group. This also reflects how larger civil society or all sections of civil society, needs to develop, Democratic responsibility and just culture within them.

Conclusion

A major trend that can be seen is that the majority of the CSOs focus on youth development. This can be seen that high focus of areas related to youth development like livelihood, income-generating activities and employment is really helpful in holistic development of youth. It was found that all CSOs strongly believe in the rights of the youth towards their well-being. And the approach they have adopted is primarily rights-based approach and there are elements of service delivery and community development. Their rights-based approach can be reflected in the high level of participation of youth in different levels of their work; youth participates at all levels from the phase of designing of the programme till the evaluation. It was found that CSOs adopt an approach towards youth development and also for service delivery. Moreover, CSOs worked at all micro, mezzo and macro levels – that is individual, family, community, national, and influencing policy making related to youth development. Furthermore, it was also found that CSOs, both with major and common focus on health, education worked on micro and mezzo level. And one organisation worked in all levels except the individuals from family, community, city, state, national to influence policy making. Models of advocacy, lobbying, campaigns and movements, capacity buildings were adopted by all organisations to develop the youth.

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