

CHAPTER- 25

VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN RAJASTHAN

25.1 Till the mid eighties the government was the main agency responsible for development initiatives. Around that time, the voluntary sector was making its presence felt and bringing in new concepts and ideas that have proved to be crucial in evolving development policy. People's participation in development planning/ implementation and community centered development are ideas that became popular in the early nineties. An important outcome of this role that the voluntary sector played was the close collaboration that emerged between the government and the NGO sector. Rajasthan has seen a large number of successful initiatives of this collaboration in both the social sector and technical areas such as agriculture development and animal husbandry. New initiatives in health and irrigation are being developed and the possibilities of such collaboration/ partnerships are immense. The presence and role of voluntary organizations in social development process has become manifold and multidimensional in last couple of decades.

25.2 The opening up of the economy in the nineties and a renewed maturity in the private sector over the past few years opened up new ideas in development. In terms of infrastructure, the private sector has begun to play a major role in partnership with the government. These ideas are now expanding to cover other sectors including the social sectors. Healthcare and education are two such areas where the recent involvement of the private sector is changing with the way things are happening.

25.3 The efforts done by voluntary agencies are widely recognized, accepted and have been instrumental in bringing the disadvantaged into the development mainstream. These roles are being performed in key sectors of Rural Development. The value of the voluntary sector is identified in a number of government agendas including: strengthening the economy; building strong, safe and healthy communities; establishing confident democratic local self governance; delivering excellent public services; and sustainable development. However, there are some historically backward areas in terms of presence and outreach of voluntary initiatives.

25.4 The State Government has taken a number of initiatives to strengthen voluntary sector and to promote collaboration. Efforts are also being made by the State to build capacities of voluntary organizations. Focused actions taken in this regard are as under:-

Setting up of Association for Rural Advancement through Voluntary Action and Local Involvement (ARAVALI)

25.5 Association for Rural Advancement through Voluntary Action and Local Involvement (ARAVALI) has been set up by the state for advancement of the voluntary movement in the state, as a state level resource support organization. ARAVALI puts in its efforts to build capacities of voluntary agencies in general and small and medium sized voluntary organizations in particular. It also advocates for a facilitative environment for GO-NGO collaboration. It also helps voluntary organizations to undertake innovations in development interventions.

Setting Up of NGO Cell

25.6 While working on various collaboration issues, a need was felt to establish a forum wherein the government and NGOs can come together on a common platform and discuss various development issues. Considering the need the Government initiated a NGO Cell as state level collaborative machinery to institutionalize GO-NGO collaboration. State Level joint machinery in the form of Standing Committee has been constituted under the Chairmanship of the Development Commissioner with equal representation from NGOs, Voluntary Organizations and Panchayati Raj Institutions so as to ensure better coordination between the Government Departments and Voluntary Organizations / NGOs. As of now two meetings of the cell has taken place.

District level GO-NGO-PRI forum

25.7. As per the discussion during the NGO Cell meetings, it was realized that to fulfill this objective of effective collaboration, building mutual understanding, appreciation, acceptance, trust and shared learning between the Government, NGOs and Panchayati Raj Institutions at the block and the district level, it is necessary to facilitate regular interaction and dialogue between the Government, NGOs and Panchayati Raj Institutions for participatory development at the field level by harnessing strengths of all agencies. Based on this a concept a GO-NGO-PRI forum was initiated and an order was issued by Department of Rural Development to establish these forums in all the districts of Rajasthan.

Voluntary Agencies Database

25.8 To enhance the process of collaboration, ARAVALI has developed a comprehensive database of about 500 voluntary agencies working across the state. This list consists of geographical and programmatic outreach of voluntary organizations working in the state. It has been instrumental in building collaboration across the sectors, departments and donors. This directory is being updated on a regular basis and released in CD.

Capacity building of NGOs

25.9 ARAVALI is committed towards building capacities of voluntary agencies both in terms of institutional and sectoral terms. ARAVALI designs and develops various approaches to enhance the capacities. This includes organizing training in the areas of project formulation and report writing, accounting and financial management, account and transparency, human resource development and networking for providing much more intensive support in terms of handholding. All these initiatives are taken in a planned manner to provide a comprehensive support package to voluntary agencies.

Formulation of Procedure and Guidelines for involvement of Voluntary Organizations / NGOs

25.10 The Government has developed a procedure and guidelines for involving NGOs / Voluntary Organizations in various Government programmes. The criteria and procedures for involvement of Voluntary Organizations would facilitate meaningful public-private partnership. The guidelines focus on selection criteria, procedures, terms and condition of the partnership. The initiative has been taken up mainly by the Rural Development Department and Irrigation Department. The discussions with other departments are also in progress.

25.11 The National Rural Health Mission provides an ample opportunity for partnerships between the government and NGOs. However, the number of NGOs with the desired level of capacity to collaborate under the Mission is very limited. Looking in to the capacity building requirement of NGOs in health sector, ARAVALI has initiated a discussion with UNICEF. To start with, ARAVALI is designing a strategy to improve the quality of implementation of JSY in the state. This would help us in addressing capacity building issues of NGOs as well enable us to understand the dynamics of partnerships in health sector. The Medical & Health Department has also initiated a NGO desk, to facilitate effective communication between the Government and NGOs. Some other government departments have also appointed NGO advisors to deal with matters related to NGOs.

Strategy

25.12 In the Eleventh Five Year Plan, greater focus will be given on strengthening of voluntary sector especially in the remote tribal and desert districts, to achieve improved coverage in essential health care and nutrition. Special focus will be given to establish demand to improve service delivery system in implementation of various poverty alleviation programmes and other social welfare schemes through greater participation of voluntary sector in the state.