

## Chapter –4

### 4.1. The history of civil society initiatives since pre-independence in India.

4.1.1. The importance of civil society organization was never found central to the Indian Polity. The effort to build up good, humane society mainly circled with the voices of the mobile, dynamic social and political leaders or personalities in different times.

4.1.2. With regard to caste system in India, no civil society organizations were found to come forward strongly to eradicate the evils of caste system. Political Parties suffered each other from competing ideologies. The dominant congress party always suffered from dilemma. Later, different organization came into the fore.

#### **Individual Initiative:**

*Kandukuri Veeresalingam (1848-1919)* During the 1870's there was a lively controversy in Andhra Pradesh on the question of educating girls. To propagate his views effectively Veeresalingam started his journal Vivekavardhini in 1874 at Rajahmundry. To ridicule the opponents of women's education he wrote many satires, lampoons and dramas like '*Brahma Vivaham*', criticizing early marriages, Kanya Sulkam and marriage of old men with young girls. To practise what he had preached he started a girls school at Dawaleswaram in September 1874. It was the first institution of its kind in Andhra.

In 1881 he established another school for girls at Innispeta in Rajahmundry. He had also educated his wife Rajyalakshmi, so that she could help him in his

social reform activities. Besides the school for women, he started schools for Harijans and night schools for the working classes. He was the first in Andhra to encourage coeducation. Veeresalingam's pioneering work in the emancipation of the Andhra widows overshadows his achievements in other branches of social reform.

**Jyotiba Phule**, a dalit reformer, organized schools for lower-caste boys in Pune in 1852, recognized the fact of dalit oppression by Brahmins and the upper castes, and yet avoided any confrontation with the Brahmins who ran the Bombay Education Society and supplied textbooks to his schools. In the southern India, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Jyotiba Phule's Caste mobilization recognized the lower proportion of the upper castes as Bahujan.

**4.1.3.1** Later, **Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar** – a great pioneer managed to ensure 'reservations' for these people in the constitution of India. In 20<sup>th</sup> March, 1927, in Kolaba Dr. Ambedkar started campaign among the socio-economically backward class telling that everyone had the right to use the water of 'Chowdar pond' of Mahada. Ambedkar opened the new dimension of social justice in India. The day today is declared as '**Social Empowerment Day**'.

**4.1.3.2** However, it was **Gandhiji** who could have been able to bring different aged male or female to the path of struggle to fight for social justice. Gandhiji's call to 'eradicate untouchability' was certainly not a dishonest call for vote banks. Gandhiji's naming of 'Harijan' regarded these people as the important member of the society and polity.

**4.1.3.3** In the pre-independent India, with regard to rendering service through voluntary organizations (VOs), three great Indian thinkers and activists

gave three distinct models. They were: *Swami Vivekananda, Rabindra Nath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. Models were:*

- i) *Ramakrishna –Matth-Mission Model of Swami Vivekananda,*
- ii) *Santi Niketan-Sri Niketan Model of Rabindra Nath Tagore and*
- iii) *Sabarmati and Wardha Model of Mahatma Gandhi.*

Among these three types, while the Tagore and Gandhiji's inspiration brought the voluntary service into the limelight, Ramakrishna Math and Mission became the World Champion with its growing service and activities to the people. Not only the State or Union Government in India take the help and cooperation of Ramakrishna Mission but many foreign governments do the same in their own countries. The Mission provides service in a large number of fields like education, health, environment, culture, and sports etc. programmes for the service of the mankind in India and abroad.

**4.1.3.4 Rabindra Nath Tagore (1861-1941),** the famous World Poet and Nobel Laurettée, set up Brahmabha Charyashram in Santi Niketan in Bolpur in the district of Birbhum in 1901.

By establishing his historically famous village development center of '*Sri Niketan*' in 1922, Tagore communicated education with the practical work and service to the mankind. The process of organizing the villages in an integrated manner was started with centring the Sri Niketan.

*The name of Lenard Night Elmhurst – a British is closely associated with the formation of Viswa Bharati, Sri Niketan and the total development work for rural Bengal. Endrews and Peearson were the other foreigners who helped Tagore for such a work.*

*The source of inspiration of Elmharst was Sam Higginbottom. Sam was the principal of Naini Agricultural Institute near Allahabad. The Institute was engaged with the development of agriculture as well as the socio-economic development of the poor farmers.*

*Elmharst* was 'immensely struck by the natural majesty of Rabindra Nath Tagore'. In Sri Niketan, Elmharst was deeply involved to make the dream and plan of village reconstruction, village-service, cooperatives and ideal education of Rabindra Nath Tagore a real success.

*Dorothy Huwitni Straightsht* (Dorothy Elmharst), often extended financial help to Tagore in crisis especially for the successful implementation of the village development project. *Lenard* accompanied with, *Rathindra Nath, Santosh Chandra Majumdar, Kalimohan Ghosh, Goura Gopal Ghosh, Hemanta Kumar Sarkar* etc. persons visited a number of villages to understand the real condition and causes of backwardness.

Surul Samiti, which was truly a Pally Unnayan Samiti i.e.village development Association or centre, was set in 1992.

The cultivation of Zoar and Jute was started. Farmers were provided the technical knowledge of using manure for a prolific agricultural land. In Sri Niketan, besides Scientific Cultivation, they gave importance on rearing of animals and revived the cottage industry.

*Elmharst helped Tagore to plan for such an extension service of Sri Niketan.*

**4.1.3.5 Gandhiji (1869-1948)** taught the Indians to strengthen their backs, to raise their head and to face circumstance with steady gaze.

Civil Society movement in India can not at all be thought without Gandhiji .

In the colonial India, during the British period, the British encouraged the import of cheap machine-made cloth from Manchester and killed the handloom industry of India. Gandhiji repeatedly pointed out that the import of cheap British cloth had rendered the poor unemployed for six months in a year.

With a view to provide immediate relief, as well as to unite the countrymen to fight against the British, Gandhi promoted *Khadi* as a part of the National Movement. The practice of **Khadi** led the people against economic exploitation.

Gandhiji involved his followers for the eradication of untouchability, which was a severe curse for the caste-ridden Indian society. As for example the *Bhangis*, was the most under-privileged class in the Hindu society, condemned to a life of menial and degrading kind of work-handling dirt and human waste. These unfortunate men and women, regarded as ‘untouchables’ by conservative Hindus, lived in abject poverty accepting ‘untouchability’ as a part of their religious tradition.

Gandhi had already given a call to combat “this crime against man and God”. These people were poor outcasts, and had to build their wretched hutments far away from the main village. Shunned by everyone, they had no rights, owned no land, and went to no school. Gandhi pleaded with his followers not to regard the job of the Bhangis as undignified. He, in fact, exhorted his followers to clean their own toilets, by himself setting an example. The campaign of Gandhi to free these men and women from their degrading occupation was called the ‘*Bhangi Mukti*’, or the “*liberation of the Bhangi*”.

**4.1.4. Muralidhar Devidas Amte**, popularly known as Baba Amte was the best student of Gandhiji with this regard. Baba Amte launched effective movement in the northeastern part of the Maharashtra. Amte took up Bhangi Mukti challenge and started cleaning forth latrines a day.

Amte started also effective campaign to help those who suffered from the dreaded disease of leprosy; to rehabilitate them and to remove the horror and stigma which society attaches to this disease. The movement is no longer confined to the problem of leprosy but has acquired many other dimensions.

At Dattapur near Warora, is a colony-cum-hospital for leprosy patients who came up largely due to the inspired teaching of Gandhi who had made treatment and care of leprosy patients' part of his 'constructive programme'.

Muralidhar started living in this colony to learn of the problems associated with leprosy and look for solution. He built a little hut, housed some leprosy patients there, and finally, in 1948, started a centre for diagnosis and treatment of leprosy in his hometown, Warora.

In 1950, Amte founded the Maharogi Sewa Samiti for the care of leprosy patients. He soon saw that what was required was a place for the patients where they could live and get treated, be productive and independent, and get rehabilitated.

Economic independence is the basis of full rehabilitation. Muralidhar aimed at that. He asked for and obtained a piece of land in the Chandrapur forest from the local State government. The forest area near Warora town was full of wild animals and scorpions. With his young wife Sadhana, his two little sons- Vikas and Prakash, six leprosy patients and just fourteen rupees in his pocket,

Muralidhar came here to settle down. He put up bamboo huts, dug a well and started living here. This was the beginning of Anandwan, the '*forest of joy*'.

Muralidhar now came to be called affectionately as Baba Amte or simply Baba. With his fundamental belief that life must be full of joy and hope, *Baba Amte set about bringing joy and hope in the lives of leprosy patients. He strove towards treatment and rehabilitation of the affected.*

With independence, the horizon of the civil society movement gets rapidly wider day-by-day. Let us analyse some of the activities done by the individual, VOs, NGOs, CBOs and other relevant institutes organizations.

**4.1.9.** Likewise, the story of the *SEWA* movement can be traced directly to Mahatma Gandhi. After his successful Champaran Satyagraha in Bihar, Gandhi had settled down in his ashram at Ahmedabad. The textiles mills were an integral part of the industrial revolution in India. The wages of the labourers were poor, the working hours long, the conditions of work exhausting and the living quarters ugly and squalid. The chawls or the slums in which they lived were heavily overcrowded and there was an atmosphere of degradation.

These entire workers were the landless peasants whom poverty had uprooted from their villages and driven to the towns to earn a livelihood. Many of them found work in the ever-growing textile industry of Ahmedabad city. Gandhiji organized this textile labour into a labour union, and called it '*Majoor Mahajan*'.

*SEWA* is an indirect offshoot of this labour union – the Majoor Mahajan. Its founder – a trade unionist and campaigner for women's causes – is *Smt. Ela Bhatt, fondly known as Elaben*. Elaben organized *Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)* in the year 1969. Self-Employed men and women formed a

major segment of the poor and unorganized workers. They started meeting the women, individually and in small groups. In the group meetings, these women were encouraged to express their problems freely. All of them collectively tried to find solutions to their problems.

*SEWA organized the women for a common struggle. This obviously hurted vested interest of private moneylenders, local slumlords, big traders, alcohol kings or petty politicians. Therefore this agencies or groups were hostile to SEWA. SEWA was started as an urban organization in Ahmedabad city, but the message it conveyed had wider impact to other parts of India to tackle a variety of economic and social issues.*

#### **4.1.10. In the field of environment :-**

- a. *Medha Patekar, Arundhati* etc women stand as ideal and model activists for the people who agitated against the unscientific construction of the big dams to protect themselves from the danger of (unplanned) development. Patekar, Arundhati led the Indian masses in a number of events while the authority hampered ecology and lives. They are also vocal against nuclear programmes, commercial globalization. Medha especially works in several voluntary organizations (VOs) for the slums of Mumbai and was in charge of slum development projects in the 1970's and 80's. She joined the *Normada Bachao Andolan* in 1985 to protest against the construction of the *Narmada Dam*.
- b. *Persons like Bankar Roy of the state of Rajsthan and S.P. Gana Chowdhury of West Bengal won Amden Award for community welfare prize in the Green Oscar category in London in June 2003. Bankar*

*provided solar electricity in 136 remote villages in Himalayas and the credit for reusing of the energy went for S. P. Gana Chowdhury.*

- c. *In kolkata, the Jungles is an NGO working for forest and wildlife conservation awards the best guards at national parks. This is a classical example of private-government participation,*
- which both the centre and the state government are backing. Such an effort boost the morale of the guards of the 86 National Parks in the country, which the Ministry of Environment and forest and the state forest departments have approved the proposal.*
- d. *Vandana Shiva is a noted environmental activist. She is a pioneer activist in the field of ecofeminism. She received the Right Livelihood Award in 1993 for establishing and defining the connection between the environment and women. In 1982, she founded Research Foundation for science, Technology and Ecology in Dehra Dun. In a very short of span of time, it changed the ecological scenario of Dehra Dun. She launched Navdanya a national movement to protect the diversity and integrity of living resources, especially native seeds.*
- e. *Earlier, the Gopalpur and adjoining villages in the Alwar district of Rajasthan were plagued by an acute drinking-water scarcity. Residents left the villages to look for jobs elsewhere.*

*The dark zone of the 1980's is now the brightest spot on the parched map of Rajasthan. The credit goes to a watershed movement by the Tarun Bharat Sangh (TBS) under the leadership and auspices of*

*Mr. Rajendra Singh.* Mr. Singh's reward for his labours had come his way in the form of *Raymon Magsaysay Award*.

*Greenary* in the area has proliferated from a mere seven percent to 40 percent. TBS now has 7,000 volunteers and above 42 whole-timers and 230 apprentices. TBS has built 4,500 small dams and repaired 2,500 others. Reverting to the traditional knowledge they began constructing johads or tanks to store rainwater and the physical labour involved was voluntary.

f. *Sunita Narayan, Editor of Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)- No. 1 Magazine in environment and science in India keeps a genuine watch and agitates for the good environment for all. It is due to her initiative that compelled the Delhi government to use Compress Natural Gas (CNG) in the automobiles.*

g. *The Chipko movement* is a notable movement in the field of environment. Chipko is a hindi word which means 'to hug hard' or 'to cling'. The Chipko movement got its name from the fact that when some men came to cut the trees with axes, the village women of some sub-Himalayan districts in north India clung to the trees and told them, 'we will not let you cut the trees; first cut us down, then you can cut the trees'. These women were ready to risk injury and probably death rather than see the trees in their villages cut down.

h. The Chipko movement grew out of such daring and resolute action of illiterate, poor, rural women who are generally considered ignorant, weak and, therefore, incapable of playing any role in public affairs. The movement, started in 1971 was first inspired by the perception that the

people must organized themselves to save Nature, tress, water, air and the environment from degradation.

Two prominent men in the forefront of the Chipko movement were Chandi Prasad Bhatt and Sunderlal Bahugana and the movement started in the village of Gopewar in Chamoli district in present Uttaranchal.

The Chipko became a movement of the people, especially of the women. Months of mental training had prepared these simple people to offer non-violent resistance to what they considered unjust. It remained above politics, though several local politicians belonging to different parties supported it publicly because the movement had raised a fundamentally important issue. In the border context the movement was concerned with the conservation of the ecological balance in Nature.

#### **4.1.11. Civil Society Movement in the field of Right to Information:**

In Rajasthan, while the political parties maintained responsibility through the Panchayat Raj, an effort was started to fill the gap in the task of Panchayat Raj by the labourers and peasants and was supported by the intellectuals. Primarily, the movement was led by *Majdoor Kishan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS)* – a non-political organization in the 1990's in the remote village of Devadungi in the district of Rajsamund. *Smt. Aruna Roy, a former I.A.S., Nikhil De and Shankar started the movement to ascertain the wage of the labourers engaged in the government relief work.*

The MKSS volunteers began investigation to know the work done and the materials used so far in each governmental work. The M.K.S.S launched public hearing (*Jan Sunoi Abhijan*) campaign to collect the real information from the villagers with regard to money spent by the Panchayats.

*Mrs. Aruna Roy, the Magsesay award winner*, along with her four foreign educated followers started movement in the year 1993 from the district of Udaypur which later spread over other 5 districts of Rajasthan. Her movement consolidated the transparency and responsibility of the Panchayats in Rajasthan. The 'Public Hearing' Campaign checked the unscrupulous activities of some of the Panchayats. At last the government of Rajasthan too admitted the logic behind the right to information and one by one many states, even the central government made laws on the right to information.

The history of Aruna's effort can be a good example of inspiration in the history of civil society initiatives, if it is elaborated. Aruna brought forth the villagers together (of Pali, Rajsamund, Udaypur, and Vilwara, Ajmeer etc. districts that include Bhim, Kotkinara, Surajpura, Bhaoarkhas, Rawatmal, and Vijaypura etc. Panchayats). She published the accounts of these Panchayats in front of these villagers and the officers thereby proved how the corrupted government employees and the political leaders at the rural level had wasted the money in a rampant way.

People in each meeting listened to the meticulous description of account and burst into anger, or laughed, or protested because they never found such a proof between the actuality and the account written by the panchayat offices. Due to the pressure of the people, the district administration was compelled to arrest the convicted persons. The Panchayat Pradhans of Raywatmal and Surajpura

confessed their misdeeds in front of the people in these meetings and returned the money they looted earlier.

In Joaza Panchayat in Ajmeer, the Panchayat secretary went to the houses of each beneficiary and returned the money for *Indira Avas Yozna* amounted to Rs. 1500/- much in advance before starting the proposed *Jan Sunoai* in the respective Panchayat.

The whole operation was not an easy task for Aruna. At the beginning, the administrative authority could not provide the data to Aruna. Aruna and her followers had to sit in Dharna and protest in front of the officers day after day.

Under such constant pressure, the government of Rajasthan had been compelled to pass necessary law in the legislature in 6<sup>th</sup> April 1996. It stated that any person could collect the account of the Panchayat if he/ she can appeal with due process including fees.

Infact, passing of such a progressive law was not an easy task as it went against the vested interest including Mafia leaders and corrupted government officials. But Aruna's people's movement compelled the government to listen to the peoples demand.

Such event might have impact to the other states. In the states like Goa, Karnatak, Madhyapradesh, Maharastra, and Tamilnadu, Assam – the people attained the Right to Information. This would lead transparency of the Panchayats.

#### **4.1.12. Trust helps NGOs and the Government:**

*Aga Khan Foundation of Hyderabad* like a trust works with the government of India in the field of education, health and rural development, micro-credit,

financial services, humanitarian assistance and the promotion of NGOs. The trust has undertaken a variety of projects in the field of education, health and rural development sectors in India, concentrating on the state of Gujrat and Maharastra.

The Foundation has adopted 600 villages in Gujrat for their development. It also works in the field of culture such as restoration of Humayun's Tomb Garden etc.

#### **4.1.13. Government and NGO collaboration :**

Andhra Pradesh Government took up the theme of women's empowerment as one of the main agenda to tackle rural poverty and socio-economic issues. In the state, *MARI* – an NGO played a vital role in mobilizing women and forming *SRUJANA*

*MACS* and bringing government agencies together to access financial and other resources for establishing the unit.

This became a model for the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) partnership in developmental process. In the state, the NGO mobilized and motivated people to come together and government agencies extended necessary financial, technical, managerial and marketing support to establish an enterprise.

#### **4.1.14. Initiative on the part of media**

In Gujrat, *FULCHAB* is well known regional paper published from Sarasota. It played a role in the people's movement by running a campaign to promote water harvesting. Mark Tully, South Asian correspondent of British Broad Casting Corporation (BBC) in his book 'India in slow Motion' recounts the

contribution of Fulchab towards reviving the traditional methods of harvesting water in several villages or Panchayats.

Because of the people's movement, the villagers turned down any misleading propaganda and they built their own check dams and digged ponds.

#### **4.1.15. In the field of communal harmony**

*Mrs. Teesta Shitalbad, the Editor of 'Communalism Combat' awares people against communal practices.*

#### **4.1.16. In the political field but not politics**

Many civil society organizations in India work in the political field. The dissemination of information about a candidate's background before the polling day is vital, since voters would then be in a position to exercise the right choice.

Eminent citizens, civil society organizations (CSOs) and NGOs came forward together in several states to carry out citizen's election watches. Association for Democratic Reforms, an Ahmedabad based organization, members of which include *Jagdeep Chhokar, professor, IIM – Ahmedabad and S. Trilochan Sastry, Professor, IIM – Bangalore*, Scrutinized the track records of candidates of the main political groups in the Assembly elections to Gujrat in 2002 and Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhatisgarh in December 2004.

Similarly, *'India Initiative'* – an apolitical organisation led by former justice *V.R.Krishna Ayer* etc. persons is sometimes found active to create consensus of the public opinion on some contentious socio political even economic issues through organizing seminars. Once the Bengal chapter of the organization was found to organize seminar to attract foreign investors in Bengal.

#### 4.1.17. In the field of Scientific Awareness and Science Movement

*Indian Science Congress* started its journey since 1914. In 1976, in its 63<sup>rd</sup> session, under the aegis of *Dr. Swaminathan*, the Congress decided to link between National Interest and the science and technology. Since 1988 the congress was held regularly and it was actively participated by the volunteers associated with science, reputed scientists, technologists, and social scientists. In 1988, with a view to make the congress into an all India and pro-people character, the various science organizations in different parts of the country formed a joint forum – *JANA BIGNAYAN NETWORK*.

#### 4.1.18. Dependency and Culture

Intelligentsia like *Shabana Ajmi (M.P. Rajya Sabha)*, *Habib Tanbir (Drama)*, *Anand Pattabardhan; Rakesh Sharma (Cinema)* *D. Narayan Rao (producer)* etc. celebrities from different walks of life and Art in India are found very much active to combat against the consumerist culture of the West as well as globalization and enjoined in '*Asian Social Forum*'.

**4.1.19.** Activisms are found at all level, though the strength and width are little. In Delhi, the birth registration data showed that 819 girls were born for every 1,000 boys during the first half of the year 2004. This was an abnormal sex ratio.

Dr. Bedi, a foetal medicine consultant in New Delhi organized a group of doctors and activists who met the Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dixit in February 2005 to complain that public health officers have failed to track down and initiate proceedings against the wrongdoers. The group, representing the Citizens Against the Prebirth Elimination of Daughters (CAPED), has also urged a social audit and

public hearings to evaluate to extent to which the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PNDT) Laws have been implemented by public health authorities.

#### **4.1.20. In times of Calamities**

The existing civil society organization (CSOs) is not enough while sudden calamities occur. It needs more people, more organizations. *Rebati* – A female worker of Dream Foundation – an NGO continued its day-night service to help the distressed person affected in the Tsunami of December 2004, in southern India. Round the clock she was found busy to search for dead bodies and helped the victims by supplying medicines in Nagapattanam.

*Md. Younus* – a rich businessman and president of United Islamic Jamat of Kuddalore after losing all his belongings in Tsunami jumped into the social service by taking his fellowmen. Younus earned much respect and love this time which he did never get earlier during his businessmanship or leadership in Jamat.

In Paraya Kadabhu in the district of Kollam in Kerala, Mother Amrita Nanda Moyee took challenge to serve the distressed persons and extended her support to rehabilitation work by contributing Rs. 100/- crores from her Ashram fund.

Shahjahan – a fisherman in Kolachal in the district of Kanyakumari took the charge of 20 Relief Camps out of 50 camps run in the locality for the Tsunami victims. For this, Shahjahan had to perform painstaking work.

#### **4.1.21. Preservation of Heritage**

In Silchar in the state of Assam 'Chandan Bhavan' is regarded as the only historical symbol of the freedom struggle. Mahatma Gandhi, Bipin Ch. Paul,

Subhas Ch. Bose , Surendra Nath Bandhopadhyaya etc. greatmen frequently used to come in the house of late Arun Kr. Chanda, freedom fighter. Now the building is decayed and full of banian trees. The people of Silchar has been found tensed with the issue whether the government declares the building as heritage one and take care of it. In April 2005, the members of the "*Chandan Bhavan Suraksha Samiti*" agitated over the issue.

#### **4.1.22. With regard to National Service Scheme (N.S.S.)**

*Mahatma Gandhi* wanted to make education community based through his programme of Basic Education and Nai Talim. In the post-independence, emerging educational policies, attempts were made to link education with community. *Dr. Radha Krishnan* wanted to establish a linkage between campus and the community on voluntary basis. Pandit Nehru intended to make social service a mandatory provision in undergraduate studies. As per the recommendation of the Education Commission (1964-66), the *National Service Scheme (N.S.S.)* was born at the 100<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1969, under the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India.

The N.S.S. now remains the biggest voluntary students movement of the country with solid objective of social service programme and personality development through community service.

#### **4.1.23. Voluntary Action in the North East**

The North-East has a rich tradition of voluntary action According to a rough assessment, there are about 50,000 NGOs in the north-eastern region and half of these could be registered societies. Manipur has about 10,000 NGOs, the largest

number for a state of its size. The Young Mizo Association of Mizoram is considered among the largest NGOs in the world and many NGOs in Manipur and Mizoram are involved in sports and cultural activities. A sizable number are also in developmental fields.

The *Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)*, a Delhi-based NGO, conducted a survey of *Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs)* in Tamil Nadu, Delhi, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Meghalaya. The PRIA report on Meghalaya indicated that there are 8,757 Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) in the state and only four percent of them are in urban areas. The proportion of unregistered bodies is 41 percent. Education is the main activity of 47 percent of the NPOs in Meghalaya while 36.6 percent are in religious fields. Thus, only a small proportion is in the development fields.

A disquieting feature in the creation of what may be called '*effective political demand*', in the Northeast is the lead role of the students unions. These unions are formal and elected and have been providing an instrument of political action with politicians letting the students take the lead. Students' power has disrupted the university system, gravely weakened the institutions of governance and compelled many students to migrate to academic institutions outside the region.

The NGOs in the eastern region, because of their distrust and impatience, have failed to take any concerted effort towards improving the awareness on many issue including environment issues.

Available information on the quality of NGO activity is also extremely disheartening. In the list of good and valid NGOs prepared by the planning commission, only 23 NGOs of the North-East figure and just seven each in Assam

and Manipur. There are many cases of NGOs serving as private wings of politicians and officials and misutilisation of funds. As a result, the ministry of Home Affairs imposed severe restrictions of funding of NGOs in the Northeast.

### **In India as a whole:**

According to PRIA, India has 1.2 million or 12 Lakhs NPOs divided almost evenly between the registered and unregistered bodies. Promotion of education, sports and culture are the main activities of about 60 percent of the organizations while 26 percent is engaged in religion-based work.

It is clear that a fairly large number of non-profit institutions operate in the country at the present stage. However, the largest chunk of the sector consists of institutions established since the late 1970s. It grew from widely different urges in society at the time.

These institutions are engaged in almost all human endeavours, e.g. education, sanitation and health, environment, welfare activities like looking after the elderly, the destitute and orphans, people's movements, civil liberty and advocacy programmes, and even research. Obviously, the sector is highly heterogeneous in terms of the philosophies practiced by different segments, their areas of activity and the size of institutions.

PRIA Survey showed that there were more voluntary sector institutions in rural areas than in urban areas (PRIA 2003). Where 53 per cent of NPOs were rural, the proportion of such organizations in urban areas was 47 percent. Secondly, half the organizations (49.6 percent) in the sector were not formally registered, though they had an institutional character. The survey brought out that there was a preponderance of very small institutions in this sector. Almost three-

fourth, of the institutions employed one or no paid worker. It was discovered that institutions backed by finances from religions based institutions were predominant in numbers.

Apparently, plenty of charity money was available with religious institutions and there was scope for channeling these funds for the uplift of society. The NPOs involved in community social services as also those in education followed in order of importance, with both types having an equal number of institutions. A reasonably good number of organizations were found involved in activities related to sports and culture.

In India many of the roots of voluntary action can be historically attributed to associations dealing with cultural activities, e.g., traditional folklore, folk dance, religious groups, such as Durga Puja Samitis in West Bengal and Ramlila committees of north India and sports groups such as 'akhras'. It was found that the voluntary sector seemed to play a relatively smaller role in the delivery of health related services.

On the labor front, it was found that overall deployment of the labour force by Non-Profit Organizations in India was estimated by the survey at 19.4 million (about 2 crores) of which 85 percent of these volunteers were working in resident welfare associations, community societies, full-fledged hospitals, in rural areas, with deprived communities educating children, providing health care, looking after the environment and even imparting science education.

Most of these volunteers worked on a part time basis, a vast number of persons also worked on contractual assignments. It was found that the non-profit sector during the year 1999-2000 deployed 2.7 million full-time paid employees

and 3.4 million full-time volunteers, bringing total force engaged in the sector to 6 million persons.

Regarding funds of this sector (non-profit sector), it was showed that less than 30 per cent of the revenues came from grants and merely 7.4 percent of revenues were collected from foreign sources. The share of grants and loans, in total receipts would be only 36.1 percent.

Another source of revenues of the non-profit institutions were the money these institutions raised by themselves, i.e., self-generated funds. According to PRIA surveys as much as 51 percent of the total receipts in the year 1999-2000 was self-generated. A considerable amount of self-generated funds came from fees and service charges, which hospitals and educational institutions registered as non-profits had levied.

#### **4.1.24. Uplift of the tribals**

According to *Mr. J.B. Pati of 'Alternate for India Development'* – an NGO, which actively tried to economically empower tribal woman. “Tribal women could not be economically empowered earlier because of the existence of the barter system in the Jharkhand regions. The Barter system prevented tribal women from possessing any money.” Now because of NGO activities, tribal women in a few blocks of Jharkhand East Singbhum district steadily became self-reliant over the past few years and are actively involved in organizational activities geared towards development.

#### **4.1.25. Civil initiative through the VOs in Arunachal Pradesh (in the Educational field)**

Due to political reasons, the state of Arunachal Pradesh never came under the influence of missionary activity on any large-scale. Hence till today, the tribal identity of the state remains almost intact with Hindi and a broken Assamese being the only means of inter-tribal communication. The non-governmental efforts in educational development are confined to three *voluntary organizations (VOs)* – *the Ramkrishna Mission, Vivekananda Mission and the Dony Polo Mission.*

#### **4.1.26. In Tamil Nadu**

NGO movement in the state is moderately sound. In February, 2003, 'women and child welfare centre' – a Kolkata based NGO was found to make allegation that the sale of infants, particularly female babies, had gone up in several parts of Salem district. A worried administration swung into action that time instituting an inquiry and calling for an emergency meeting of at least 10 NGOs working in the region to eradicate female infanticide.

#### **4.1.27. Anti-drug-drive : An example in Manipur**

The society in Manipur is Matriarchial. Women go outside their home for work to maintain livelihood and the male members stay at home, engage with cooking and domestic work. Male persons like wine as their favourite. The housewives, as a result are found to organize processions to protest against the activities of the government to encourage any sort of arrangement of wine in the state.

'*MARIA PAIBIS*' is such a woman organization, which is vocal against anti-drug campaign for many days. There are other organizations too. These

organizations compelled the Ranbir Sing led United Front Government of the state of Manipur to prohibit license from wine selling at shops from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1991 onward.

#### **4.1.28. In the state of Bihar the role of Bhumika Bihar**

The Bihar, a genuine *BIMARU* state and poverty affected state suffers from frequent trafficking (sales) of women and girls child. **Bhumika Bihar** – an NGO works in this field. The organization works in the zone of Koshi- Mahananda where there are the districts of Kishanganj, Purnia, Katihar and Araria. The socio-economic conditions of the districts are very much vulnerable and it leads to the frequent trafficking of women and girl child. They are sold and supplied to Delhi, Punjab, U.P., Hariyana and West Bengal.

Bhumika Bihar tries to rehabilitate these victims and to bring a permanent solution by solving the socio-economic problems of these women Apart from giving financial help to these women, Bhumika Bihar tries to arouse consciousness among the people of these areas through awareness programmes. As a result, the women had responded to the fruitful work of Bhumika Bihar.

#### **4.1.29. In the field of tribal development in Orissa : The role of ISARA**

Ramgiri in Orissa's Gajapati district, situated in a hilly terrain, is a tiny hamlet that touches the Andhra Pradesh border in southern Orissa. Lush with virgin forests, it is home to one of the oldest tribes of India, the Soura or Sabar. Then people of Ramigiri had little access to information on basic rights such as education, health and government schemes for Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe communities.

These people are cheated of their ancestral land by unscrupulous officials and are barely able to eke out a living through farming and daily labor to provide an occasional square meal to the family. Regularly beaten up by drunk, frustrated husbands, the soura women struggle to keep the home fire burning while tending to their meager cattle and helping out in the field. Infant and mother mortality rates are much higher here than in other tribal areas.

Inadequate access to drinking water, no electricity and unmotorable roads make this part of world rather unwelcome to the government officials and most non-government organizations.

*On the other hand, at Kurukuru, Tumango, Kamladhia and Larada villages the women are now better dressed and a high degree of sense of confidence. There is a degree of prosperity here that had been missing in other villages. These villages belong to a chain of self-Help groups initiated by a small NGO, **the Institute of Social Action and Research Activities (ISARA)**.*

The organization has successfully generated awareness among tribal women about their own needs and a resolution to bring change in their living conditions. ISARA pursues a three-pronged policy of direct intervention to strengthen adivasi women economically. This is being achieved by upgrading their technical skills to add value to their work and provide them with a social shield by empowering them through self-help activities and micro-credit.

Isara has further reinforced the movement by forming Mahila Mondols in more than 60 tribal villages in Ramgiri and surrounding areas.

#### **4.1.30. Andhra Pradesh: Hyderabad : Protecting Adolescence**

The *Federation of Culture Upgradation and Social Services (FOCUSS)* – an NGO in Hyderabad works to wage campaign against kissing and petting in public places, especially parks. The members of the executive committee of the organization are the ex-servicemen. The organization picks out the errant teenagers in school uniform and counsels them. Such youngsters are often blackmailed and abused by local thugs who catch them getting physical. The organization works under the umbrella of the police, if needed, to nab the culprits.

#### **4.1.31. The need of civil society as stressed on the part of the high incumbency**

At the end of 2003, the then Prime Minister of India while visiting to Nagaland, called upon civil society there to come forward and mobilize the Naga Communities to restore peace and harmony.

It was found, in the country, each year a lot of food are found rotten in the godown of the *Food Corporation of India (FCI)* and it was *A. B. Bajpayee, the then Prime Minister of India called upon the civil society organizations to take the responsibility to collect those foods from the godown and distribute to the right persons.*

Indian President at different times was found to come out their traditional protocol to play a positive role for accelerating the civil society. *As for example, K. R. Narayanan the former first citizen of India was found to be active in voicing about the root cause of the problems. Narayanan in his pre-independence day speech exhorted the haves to spare a thought for the have-nots.*

#### **4.1.32. Initiative from the Non-Resident Indians (NRIs).**

NRI-Investment in India created an avenue for development. The government of India has given them various incentives including tax concessions investment facilities.

The launching of an Indo-NRI Chamber of Commerce and Culture deserves notice in this context. Its programme calls for the 'creation of an NRI lobby in the Indian Parliament.' NRIs have demanded from time to time the right to vote for and be elected to India's legislative bodies, including the two Houses of Parliament.

#### **4.1.33. Government led campaigns encouraged civil society activity**

Different government programmes or national level campaigns encouraged people including different community based organized to be integrated and interacted with this programmes. As for example, *Total Literacy Campaign (TLC)* in the 1990's sponsored by the *National Literacy Mission (NLM)* sensitized the organizations attached to social service. The state of Kerala and West Bengal took the task seriously. Unemployed youth, students, teachers, Professors, leaders of different political parties joined such a campaign and provided all of them their voluntary service to make TLC a real success. The people in the district of Ernakulam in Kerala launched a spectacular campaign with regard to literacy movement and the made it a grand success. The district first in India became a full literate district.

*Pulse Polio Immunization Programme* is another example with this regard which earned success by the effort of different VOs, NGOs etc. initiatives. The Polio Immunisation Programme is the India's largest and longest public health

drive. This is a decade old campaign started since 1995, have engaged the doctors, officials, volunteers of *NGOs, VOs, NSS, NYK* etc. organizations throughout the country. Pulse Polio Immunization programme is a joint initiative by the government. *World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, Rotary International and the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention*. The fact that the number of Polio Cases has come down from 1,600 in 2002 to 16 till June 2004 speaks of the efficacy of the programme.

Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) is another government-led programme where the involvements of the clubs, voluntary organizations, NGOs have made the campaign a successful one. The local clubs or the voluntary organizations played the role of Mart to prepare low cost latrine etc.

#### **4.1.34. Initiative of the people for restoring public resources**

Though public resources, such as forests, are under the control of governmental agencies, local communities often are an interesting group for benefit sharing. Much of forests in this country remain under the control of the Forest Department. Since the colonial times, the resources under the category have traditionally been exploited, and managed if at all, by the foresters. It is only in more recent times, with a greater realization that rehabilitation and management of these forest resources can not be handled by the foresters, attempts have been made to involve the forest dwellers into what has now come to be known as '*Joint Forest Management*' (JFM) plan.

West Bengal is one of the states in India where community woodlots under the social forestry programme have achieved some success. This was due to the interest generated amongst the rural communities, and their consequent active

involvement in the programme. In 1972, sal (*Shorea robusta*), an economically important and highly productive timber species, formed the species around which a regeneration project was initiated by the Forest Department in the Arábari area of southwest Bengal. The Forest Department granted to the villagers exclusive rights on all minor forest products, a 25 per cent share of the extracted timber, and supplemental employment programmes. The people in return provided free labor and guaranteed protection of over 600 hectares of sal forests.

The degraded forests regenerated very rapidly. This prompted over a thousand villages in the forest fringes to join and form their own *Forest Protection Committees (FPC)* covering over 15,000 hectares of degraded forests, by mid-1980. Since this protection is achieved through community effort, the cost of restoration of the degraded forest ecosystem was minimal.

Village communities were allowed to collect twigs for firewood, dried leaves of specific tree species for tableware plate making and for rolling bidis (a local cigarette) and medicinal plants. In mutually identified sites, they were even permitted to practice agriculture to a limited extent.

The approach for forest management was truly an integrated one and indeed improved the quality of life for them, providing an income up to about Rs. 3,500 per family (mid-1980 earning), based on access to one hectare of forest per family.

Since the West Bengal experience the concept of JFM has now been adopted more widely within the country, and many neighboring Asian countries have shown keen interest in this approach towards forest rehabilitation and management.

In India civil society includes trade unions farmers organizations professional associations, traditional group, pressure groups etc. Let us have look in this point briefly.

#### **4.1.35. Trade Unions**

There are more than 36,000 trade unions in the country. The *Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC)* the *All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC)*, *The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU)*, the *Hind Majdoor Sabha (HMS)*, and the *United Trade Union Congress (UTUC)* are the prominent among them. Despite mere appendage of political parties and are busy demanding their rights, these organizations have a broad - based welfare activities for their members sound of these unions act as the agents of mobilization than as articulator of group demands.

There are also numerous federations of unions, not affiliated to any central body of the Trade Unions. Such federations are: All India Bank Employees Associations. National Federation of Railway-men etc.

The Industry workers in textile and hosiery, ports and docks, are comparatively better organized and more powerful.

In spite of various limitations the trade unions have had a voice in the national and state legislation that affect their interest.

#### **4.1.36. Farmers' Organization**

India is primarily an agricultural country and the India peasantry make up above 70 percent of its population. Despite this, there is no all India organization of the farmers. Regional organization are, of course, well established – *The*

*Bharatiya Kisan Union (Punjab, Hariyana and Western U.P. ) Kisan Shabhas of Bihar , Pradeshik Krishak Sabha of West Bengal, Bharatiya Kisan Sangha (Gujrat), Kshetkari Sangathan (Maharastra) led by Sharad Joshi etc.*

Political dissatisfaction of the reach farmer with the re-distributive policies like the land reform, high cost inputs, merciless revenue collection machinery etc. Have led to the farmer's agitations in different part of the country. Their organizations have shown themselves capable of mobilizing million of peasants into militant campaigns. This has awakened the rural reach to realize the importance of organizing themselves into a powerful pressure group.

The country has seen *Sharad Joshi (Maharastra), Mahendra Singh Tikait (U.P.)* and peasant leaders of Punjab waging war on behalf of their newly aroused constituents who have acquired necessary economic muscle.

In West Bengal, it was observed by the researcher that **Pradeshik Krishak Sabha** was involved in constructive training related to scientific farming.

#### **4.1.37. Youth Organization**

**Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI)** was found involved at randomly organizing and donating blood in several blood donation camp through out the year.

#### **4.1.38. Professional Associations**

The professional associations, which stand out by virtue of their influence on government, are *Indian Medical Association, Bar Council of India, Federation of Working Journalist* etc. these organizations have extended the scope of fundamental right and develop new tools or remedies for dispensing justice to the

masses through public interest litigations. These organizations also organized many social service programmes on different basic issues.

#### **4.1.39. Traditional Groups**

India, like other Asian and African countries, has large number of community interest groups based on caste, tribe, religion, language and region. *Among numerous such groups the Schedule Castes Federations, the RSS, the Akali Dal, Kamtapur Peoples Party (KPP), the various parties of tribal, and the Muslim Organisations like Jamat –e-Islam, Tablig Jamat , Jamat-Ul-Ulema etc. are significant.*

#### **4.1.40. Insurgent Organizations**

The insurgent organization of the tribals or hill people viz, *National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA), the United Liberation Front (PLA) of Manipur, the Tribal National Volunteers (TNV) of Tripura and United Liberation Frontier of Assam (ULFA), Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) of North Bengal, The Greater Coochbehar Peoples Association. People Army (popularly known as Janayudha) in Jharkhand etc. is some of the well-known bodies, which have resorted to pressure politics with considerable militancy and terrorist activities. Among these groups Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) have attained their goal with Jharkhand state for the former and the Gorkha Hill Council in Darjeeling for the later.*

#### 4.1.41. Teachers' and Students' Union

Teachers and students have numerous organizations in the Indian Union. The college teachers have *All India Federation of Universities and College Teachers Organizations (AIFUCTO)* at the National level; there are *W. B.*

*C. U. T. A., JUTA, etc.* at the state level. The students have the countless students organizations at the national level. The notable among them are ; the *All India Students Federation (AISF)*, *National Students Union of India (NSUI)* and *Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP)* etc.

#### 4.1.42. Some new groups

The decline in public esteem for politicians at all levels of government has led to the growth of some new groups. A number of them are working to check the degeneration of public life in the country. They are fighting for the poor, oppressed and un-represented. Such well-known organizations are as for example *Citizens for Democracy (Delhi)*, *the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL)*, *Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR)* etc.

#### 4.1.43. Some other social action groups

Some groups are immersed in the country to bring about social reform and social changes. They are: *Gandhi Peace Foundation*, *Blumi Andolan (Bodhgaya)*, *Centre for Tribal consciousness (Pune)*, *Social Work and Research Centre (Ajmir)* etc. These organizations strive for the emancipation of the toiling masses.

#### **4.1.44. Women Organisations**

The women organizations fight for the good cause of the women. They are: *Mahila Mandol (Maharashtra), Shakti Kendra (Kanpur), Ganatantrik Mahila Samity etc.*

#### **4.1.45. Strategic pressure groups**

There are some groups, which are highly organized and well financed. They are: *Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FICCI), Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), ASSOCHAM etc.* make use of seminar formal representations and personal persuasion to wrest concessions from the government.

## **4.2. Historical setting of Civil Society Organizations in the state of West Bengal:**

Once Gopal Krishna Gokhale commented, '*what Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow?*' This is nothing exaggeration. During freedom struggle civil society organizations in the form of moderate, extremist or revolutionary organization, media organization, charity or philanthropic organizations were very much prevalent in and around Bengal. After independence a major upsurge was also found vibrant among the people of West Bengal. In fact, in West Bengal, there has always been a very active civil society. As for example, the year 1959 would be considered a landmark. The people, especially the students and the youths, were able to launch massive protest against the shortage of food of the then government of West Bengal.

In fact, the activism for doing something for the society began with Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Iswhwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Raja Rammohan Roy etc. activists and that were started from Bengal.

#### 4.2.1.

Kolkata, capital of West Bengal is the hub of voluntary activities by different organizations. The nobel laurettee *Mother Teresa's* the *Missionaries of Charity* of Kolkata credentially maintains a sustainable tradition of service and care to the poor. Vatican is one of the millions of admirers of the Mother's Organisation.

#### 4.2.2.

In West Bengal, *Ramakrishna Mission, established in 1896 by Swami Vivekananda* on the basis of the teaching and ideology of Ramakrishna Paramhans Deb truly, has laid the foundation stone of social service thereby inspired the civil society activities. It is truly a Federation of *Community-Based Organization. (CBOs)*.

Rama Krishna Mission has been involved in rural development programmes in west Bengal through Lokasiksha Parisad and the Agricultural Training Centre for more than 50 years. In terms of structure and community base, it has a network of more than 1700 active autonomous youth organizations covering most of the districts in West Bengal. It emphasizes the development of leadership capabilities among the youth to act as future change agents in the rural areas.

Ramakrishna Mission considers itself as an '*empowerment Organization*' rather than a service delivery agency, as it concentrates mostly on capacity building though training and demonstration, feed back, meetings, dissemination of information, development of decision-making abilities and cultural and value

orientation programmes. It has a self-help and sustainable development approach based on Swami Vivekananda's ideology.

Beginning with a students Home sheltering poor and meritorious students for their academic, moral, social and economic growth and with a small slum development work in 1952 (then located in Rambagan North Calcutta) the Ashrama (shifted to Narendrapur in 1956-57) has taken upon several responsibilities on its shoulders with the objectives of achieving development for the children, the youth and the community at large.

The Ashrama, through its development unit *Ramakrishna Mission Lokshiksha Parishad* has been engaged in the field of integrated development since 1956 and is presently working in several thousands villages in the state of West Bengal. Lokshiksha Parishad had focused its activities on total development of man from early childhood to his working life.

Programmes had not been arbitrarily chosen but carefully developed to fit in upholding Vivekananda's concept of potential divinity in every man. The extension wing of the Agricultural Training Centre in collaboration with the *Farming Systems Research Unit* of the Parishad had brought about revolutionary changes in the agricultural practices of the adopted areas thus augmenting the income generating capacity of the rural people.

Besides development work in the scattered rural and urban areas, Lokshiksha Parishad had been promoting the concept of area development in a few places like Gosaba area of sunderbans, Arapanch Group of villages in South 24 Parganas, Amarkanan area of Bankura district and about 100 villages in Purulia district. Focus of this area development was mainly agriculture and allied cottage industries like seri culture.

## Role of Swami Lokeshwarananda

*Swami Lokeshwarananda*, who pioneered the *Loka Siksha Parishad* opined that present development models had made the entire country look like a big slum with so much squalor and poverty all around. People had become self-centred and shy of hard work. Lokeshwarananda called this phenomenon *TAMASIKTA* and held it squarely responsible for all social ills. He called for resurgence of individual entrepreneurship and hard work which should be considered the true indicator of development and not intake of calories of power because small horticultural garden or a kitchen poultry firm can generate more social benefits than through big power projects. Lokeshwarananda was a good orator who inspired people especially intellectuals from Kanya Kumari to Arunachal Pradesh for a better civil society. (1).

There are Ramakrishna Mission Pallimangal and Ramakrishna Samaj Sevak Shikshaan Mandir both situated at Belur Math are entrusted with the task of training rural youth in socio-economic development as envisaged by Ramakrishna Mission.

### 4.2.3.

Darjeeling Health care: In Phansi Deowa (near Siliguri) *Balasan Unnyan Samiti (BUS)* – a voluntary organization is engaged with health care activities. It works many times with *West Bengal voluntary Health Association (WBVHA)*. *Darjeeling District Health and Family Welfare Association (DHFWA)* provided Ambulance to Balasan Unnyan Samiti through Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad.

In Alipurduar there is a Malaria Awareness Prevention Diagnosis and Treatment Center in Mahakalguri Mission at Shamuktala. The Institute was setup

jointly by the *Shamuktala Welfare Organization* and Department of Health Government of West Bengal.

#### 4.2.4.

*Rabindra Nath Tagore's thought on the development and the Reconstruction of the villages inspired the later activists.* He was a pioneer with this regard. He popularized the principles of cooperatives among the villagers. The poet first started health cooperatives in rural Bengal. He introduced *Hitoishi Britti* and '*Welfare Britti*' and the money collected were being spent for the development of land of the prajas (subjects). '*Hitoisi Sabha*' was the elected body of the subjects, which took the responsibility to spend the money.

Tagore opened an Agricultural Bank, named *Patisar Agricultural Bank*, in Patisar in Kali Gram Pargana. Tagore deposited for an amount of Rupees to 1 Lakh 8 thousand (the money he earned out of his Nobel Prize) in this bank. The poor farmers were given agricultural loan from this bank. Surul Samiti, then Department of Agriculture after that Sri Niketan was the Tagore's famous historical Village Development Centre which brought a wholistic development in some villages which inspired Kalimohan Ghosh, Rathindra Nath, Santhosh Chandra Majumder and many persons.

Tagore prescribed a set of activities in the field of education so that children going through the process could attain complete manhood. Tagore performed this experiment from 1901 to 1941 with commitment and dedication sacrificing part of his literacy activities and accepting financial constraints. This made Tagore earn the distinction of being one of the greatest experimentalist activists in education the world has ever seen.

*The aim of Tagore's model is harmonious development of individual faculties.* He introduced a better system, which has relevance with regard to psychological, intellectual, spiritual and social factors. It ensured proper development and leads to eternal joy or 'Anandam'. It helps generate self-employment opportunities, develop proper value system, which can skill social evils like dishonesty, corruption and terrorism.

*In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Rabindra Nath rightly realized that there is immense importance of health in the reconstruction of the village.*

Instead of being dependant on the state he invoked his country men to unite into organized groups to become self reliant

In 1919 at least 51.6 percent people were died of malaria. Rabindra Nath therefore, found it imperative to resist the disease.

In 1922 a number of malaria cases were found in an around Sri Niketan. People wanted to get rid of the danger of the disease. As first step, Health Societies were set up in many villages. At least 12 societies were set up. (2)

#### 4.2.5.

In the field of Literacy and Education, *Iswar Chandra Vidya Sagar* was one of the world famous constructive activists who popularized education among the common people in India. He made the people understand the utility of education.

Vidya Sagar, first in India introduced and started the concept of free mass-education with a view to make a success of the mass-education, Vidyasagar set up 35 schools for the education of women in 1857. While the then British government denied responsibility of these schools, Vidya Sagar himself took the

responsibility to carry it on. In 1853, Vidya Sagar on the basis of the donation taken from the working class people established Night Schools in the villages of Birsingha and Karmatar in the district of Midnapore.

He wrote letter to the then Governor in 29<sup>th</sup> November, 1959 soliciting cooperation of the government on the reason that the schools set up by non-governmental effort could fulfill only while the sophisticated and middle class people failed to understand the necessity of education, how can the utility of education be understood by the working and labour class?

Vidyasagar was against the filtering policy of Lord Macaley. Vidyasagar (whose another name was *Dayar Sagar* i.e. sea of kindness, or highly kind hearted person for rendering heavy service to the people) instead of his hectic social service activities wrote 32 books, of which 15 books were directly textbooks, which activated the education at the field level, both non-formal and

formal. In fact, Vidyasagar's contribution in the field of woman literacy made him great pathfinder in modern Bengal.

#### 4.2.6.

**Rammohan Roy** was a champion of the right of Hindu females to inheritance. He was interested in female emancipation and was the earliest feminist in modern India who revolted against the subjection of women and preached against modern encroachments on the ancient rights of Hindu females in inheritance. (3)

#### 4.2.7.

In the field Education: The activists like **Begum Rokeya** and her husband-**Shakhawat Hossain** took the leading role to imparting education among the people, especially the muslim women –an example is the famous Shakhawat Memorial School. Likewise, Lord Bethun despite being a missionary was the pathfinder in introducing education for the Indians—Bethun school and college stand as the symbol of her true voluntary activity. They were the constructive activists.

#### 4.2.8.

In the Independent India we have a lot of civil society organizations working independently providing service in the field of education, health, environment etc. These organizations bear variety of features in their structure and functions.

#### **Organisation for women and child.**

A) **CINI-** West Bengal is a place of many mother NGOs. As for example, Child In Need Institute (CINI) was established in 1974 with the primary objective of achieving sustainable health and nutritional support for the children of rural Bengal. CINI's health programme focused on reproductive child health. It worked through womens groups set up in the villages and trained local health workers.

Under CINI-ASHA urban programme, in and around Kolkata, it implemented programmes for street children, child labourers, children of sex workers and children out of schools in collaboration with a number of NGOs and CBOs at various locations in the city.

CINI developed a number of sister organizations over the years and a network of a number of NGOs and CBOs in both urban and rural areas.

**B) SACHETANA** - There are a number of womens group operating at different levels. In Kolkata, 'Sachetana' was the first apolitical feminist group among educated women in the early 1980's. Initially the group offered support to victims of violence, later it referred these cases to the NGOs. It organizes seminar and workshops focusing on women issues.

**C) SUNLAAP** is another NGO in West Bengal that focuses the issues related to prostitution. It is engaged with investigation and work to eradicate trafficking of women and girl child.

**D) Durbar Mahila Samannay Samiti.** NGO for the child and women of the prostitutes in West Bengal is found very active for the uplift of these sections. The samiti has a number of branches in all the districts, even at the subdivision level, work for the welfare of these women and their child. brought attention of government and other NGOs to their problem and has made a real movement in West Bengal.

**E) Maitree** is a network of women organizations and individual activists, which has had some success with taking up and lobbying for particular individual cases of violence against women. In terms of membership, it is a good example of an organization cutting across elements of civil society, with academics, media and development professionals joined together.

**F) In Kantai, in the district of Midnapore, Bikram Nagar Udayan Sangha** – a local club organizes 'Sishu Niketan' School for the prostitutes and their children. The sangha also organizes 'Sandhya Tara' – a library comprising of

story, novel, essay etc. based books. Such efforts are continued since 1999. The prostitutes learn stitching drawing handicrafts and basic education in the Sishu Niketan.

#### 4.2.9

Health is the strongest sector in terms of CSO coverage. **Janasashtha Raksha Committee (JRC)** was formed in Kolkata in 1983 with a view to bring a fair health care movement in West Bengal. The committee was integrated and renamed as **Janasasthya Committee (JC)** in 1985. However, initially the committee was not able to bring a wide movement for the people of West Bengal. In 1999, 27<sup>th</sup> March in the Meeting of Bangla Academy, **Janasasthya Chetna Prasar Samanway Committee (JCPSC)** was formed where representatives of the youths, students, women, farmers, labourer organization and all levels of organization including teachers organizations actively participating and now the new committee took a number of health awareness activities. The Samanway Committee became a link and platform of various peoples Organisations (POs). Primarily the main organizations, e.g. **West Bengal Bignayan Manch, Jana Sastha Committee of Kolkata and Shiv Shankar Seva Samiti of Burdwan** took the lead to carry out the responsibilities that were entrusted with JCPSC. The cooperating nodal organizations were **Center for Trade Union (CITU), Krishak Samiti, Association of Health Service Doctors, All Bengal Primary Teachers Association (ABPTA) and FMRI- the organization of the Medical Representatives, Mahila Samiti and West Bengal Voluntary Health Association.**

The (JCPSC) committee organized conventions, jatha, campaign, street cornering, slide show and health care related cultural functions in all the districts

in West Bengal. The activities of the committee took the shape of a movement with the cooperation of the people from all levels. The committee stated movement on the issue why 'Health for All' was not implemented in the Nation an abroad in 2000?'

Therefore, with a view to highlight the above-stated issue a greater network was formed. As a result, National health Assembly was organized in India and the first convention of the Assembly was held in Kolkata. Later, the importance of the Assembly was reflected in the world health Congress in Dhaka.

Janasastha Chetna Prasar Samanway Committee (JCPSC) now is trying to popularize its health movement phasewise and activated the character of the movement in a wholistic manner. Since 2001, the JCPSC publishes a health Bulletin regularly where there are reports of health activities done in the state.

The JCPSC organized seminar in Ganga Rampur (South Dinajpur) and in Kolkata on female foeticide to establish gender equalities. The representatives of all the districts actively participated in the seminars. The committee dealt issues like health of the female child, the problem of safe drinking water and sanitation, the infrastructure of the government health structure, life saving drugs its availability and the problem of use, patent laws etc in its seminars. (4)

#### **4.2.10. Bangiya Saksharata Prasar Samiti (BSPS)**

In the 1990's, inspired by the success of the literacy in Ernakulam District in Kerala, in West Bengal, the Total Literacy Campaign was started with great enthusiasm. Saksharata Samiti was built in different districts with students, teachers, intellectuals, unemployed youths, leaders of political parties etc. BSPS was formed with its districts branches under the patronization of Biman Bose,

Jyoti Basu etc. eminent persons of people's movement. The BSPS is one of the largest organizations in West Bengal having at least more than 50,000 branch organizations at the rural level.

In Midnapore, Midnapore Sakhsarata Samiti and Roag Pratisedh Samiti were tackling the two problems— illiteracy and health— The twin movement was continued spontaneously up to 1995 /1996. In 2000, the Samiti examined about six Lakhs students of the primary schools in the district of Midnapore. (5)

### **Vidya Sagar Fair :**

Since 1992 the fair is organized in Vir Singha Village (the birth place of Iswar Chandra Vidya Sagar in the district of Midnapore). The place of fair was changed to Kolkata in 1994 at Maidan. However, the fair continued simultaneously at Virsingha. The fair had gathered much popularity with the presence of literacy and other activities. Biman Bose handles it, the Chairman of the Left Front Committee and President of Bangiya Sakharata Samiti.

#### **4.2.11. Peoples Relief Committee (PRC)**

It is a unique voluntary organization. It was established on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1943. PRC was formed in the background of Second World War while 35 to 50 Lakh people died of famine. Mainly initiated by Mujaffar Ahmmed, and a non-political representation associated with Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, Prof. Niren Roy, Kshiti Prasad Chatropadhyay, Nousar Ali etc. PRC aimed to provide public service. The uniqueness lied with the organization with regard to help the distressed persons who are the sufferer from acute natural calamities like earthquake, diseases or man-made disasters like famine, riot, and war.

PRC inspired the people initiatives while providing service to the people, which made a mass footing for the organization. It has led to the opening of many new branches in West Bengal and these branch organizations have been kept busy with providing public service. These are spread in Bijpur – 24 Parganas, Berhampore, - Murshidabad, Uttarpara- Kotarang – Hoogly, There are also branches in Bandel, Chandan Nagar, Chinsura and Hoogly, Udaynarayan Pur, Sankrail, Howrah, Krishangar, Nadia and Nabadweep.

The success to the work of PRC has been proved total in a number of events. As for example, in 1971 when the flow of refugee from Bangladesh was an important event, PRC served those people whole-heartedly. Dr. Laxmi Saigal, freedom fighter, joined the service during these days.

The work of PRC attained such popularity, that it was learnt, the people of other side (in Bangladesh) of the border formed PRC too at their local level.

The service of PRC was notable after the riot in Tripura or Jundice spread in Kalahandi in Orissa.

The voluntanary service by the eminent doctors, and many branches of medical facilities like, pathology, x-ray, ultrasonography, Ecocardiography etc are being found in PRC with a very nominal charge.

#### 4.2.12.

*West Bengal Primary Development Council (Paschim Banga Prathamik Unnayan Parshad)* is an organization, which arranges each year scholarship examination at the fourth standard. It was born out of the protest movment by **West Bengal Siksha O Swadhikar Raksha Committee** in the 1980's, which was

enmass movement to reintroduce English at the Primary level and examination system at the Primary Institutions.

The government of West Bengal later understood its faults and reintroduced English. Though there is no governmental approval behind such organization (WBPDC), the students of each and every family take advantage of such examination with a cost of a nominal charge of rupees 12/-.

There are the arrangements of scholarship for the successful candidates, for which money come from the voluntary contribution of the people. Out of 53000 primary schools in West Bengal, at least 33000 primary schools participated these examinations in 2002. In 2001, the first 5<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> topper candidates among the states were come from the district of Cooch Behar.

#### **4.2.13. Chikitsa Brati Uddog**

NRI activity in West Bengal – A non-resident Doctors organization maintains modern and technologically advanced hospital in fuleswar in Uluberia. The organization intends to provide service for the common people at an affordable cost.

#### **4.2.14. Voluntary Action**

In Kalna in the district of Burdwan , at least 100 tribal families voluntarily came forward to perform rural development work in Dhatrigram—1 village Panchayat. These people built gravel road (Dhatripara to Baghnapara) by their voluntary labour. Local M.P. (Mehboob Jahedi) contributed only an amount to Rupees 50 thousand by which brick was bought. The people contributed voluntary labour.

#### 4.2.15.

In the same (Dhatri Gram-1) Panchayat the villagers of Badha Gachhi voluntarily built up two-storied primary school. This time also local M.P. contributed Rupees 50 thousand only.

#### 4.2.16.

*Bengal initiative* is shaped by a lot of ornamental intellectuals under the ageis of Amiya Gupta, Pabitra Sarkar, Subha Prasanna Sarkar, Saroj Ghosh, Saibal Gupta, Satyabrata Ganguli, Abhijit Sen etc. It visited Sri Lahka with a view to bring investors for West Bengal.

#### 4.2.17. Bharatiya Gana Natya Sangha

It was formed in 25<sup>th</sup> May 1943, whose slogan was 'people's' theatre stars the people'. It made the art as the real organizer for the liberation of the fighting masses.

#### 4.2.18. CSO involvement in the field of Environment

In North Bengal: In Balurghat, in South Dinajpur district '**South Dinajpur Environment Protection and Rural Development Society**', a Balurghat-based NGO is vocal against the deforestation in the locality. In 25<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2004, the organization submitted a memorandum to the south Dinajpur District Magistrate, demanding afforestation in South Dinajpur to counter large-scale cutting down of trees due to the proposed construction of the Gazole-Balurghat export Road under the Asian Development Bank (ADB) project. The NGO said it would itself work towards achieving this.

South Dinajpur has about 16 percent forest cover. Illegal encroachers at various places in South Dinajpur were largely responsible for illegal tree felling. The inadequate forest cover was responsible for the gradual extinction of many animals, such as rabbits, fox, mongoose and various lizards. The NGO demanded proper surveillance for existing trees and exemplary punishment for the tree thieves.

In Jalpaiguri district *Kamellia* – a drama group of the village Satkura consists of unemployed youth. The group campaigned for literacy movement by their drama 'Nidan Chaulia Mansir Katha'. The drama conveyed the message that the expansion of education would not only lead the development of the village but also it would solve their many other problems.

In Raiganj, drinking, local wine, gambling were the regular feature of the locality. *The people* protested the matter to the police through written memorandum but no action was taken.

Rosenara Begum and others of *Ganatantrik Mahila Samity* took Jharu in their hands and went to the risky place and ransacked the wine depot and threatened the anti-socials. After that police took necessary action.

## **Darjeeling**

Helping the destitute women : *Aasha* – the Voluntary Organization (VO) of the police in West Bengal (Darjeeling Unit) is related with 'family counselling' for the married but divorced or destitute women. Aasha investigates the matter and the level of torture and tries to solve the problem amicably. It organizes seminars to convey their messages to the women activities.

## **Presence of CSOs in Health related activities for mental patients**

### **4.2.19. Rehabilitation**

*Anjali* – an NGO carries out rehabilitation programme in Kolkata to those well-behaved and integrated patients of two state-run mental hospitals- Kolkata Welfare, Government of West Bengal. **Shamuktala Welfare organization** got the Ambulance from *GTZ – the German Health Project run in North Bengal*.

### **Malda District: Individual Initiative**

*Dr. Pinaki Ranjan Roy (Veteran eye specialist)* did a commendable service for the people of North Bengal with regard to free eye-examination and operation. Dr. Roy established *Thakur Sitaram Seva Kendra* in Malda where only a minimum cost is being taken for eye treatment.

### **Birbhum : Voluntary Action**

The villagers of Saugram in Dark Gram Panchayat had no road to enter the village. Manirul Islam, the Upa- Pradhan of the Panchayat took personal initiative to help the work financially, while **the villagers** gave their voluntary labour to finish the work of the village road.

The money allotted for the Panchayat was only for an amount to Rupees 2 Lakhs 34 thousand only. But the actual work (including road, latrine etc. works) done in the Panchayat exceeded for an amount to Rupees 10 Lakhs. Wherefrom the money come? It was indeed the villagers of the Panchayat gave their voluntary labour worth for an amount to 50 percent. Panchayat shared 25 percent. The solvent class of the village donated 25 percent money.

*NGOs are not always Kolkata- centred. In the district the NGO activity is noteworthy.*

#### **4.2.20.**

*South 24 Parganas: Vivekananda Seva Kendra O Sishu Udyan (VSSU)* was set up in 1983 in Ullone in Laxmikantapur in South 24 Parganas. It was registered as NGO in 1986. Kalipada Mondol, the General Secretary of the organization has spread its activities in 20 villages Panchayats, there are 20 thousand members in the organization. VSSU provides service in the remote areas of Sundarban.

It planted trees besides 210 villages and set up many inns, culverts and thousands of latrines in the locality. It has earned 8 crores 40 Lakhs Rupees through micro banking in the 1995-96 financial year. VSSU distributes milk, rice, pulse to the poor and old persons and shoulder responsibilities of education for a few hundreds of students.

#### **4.2.21.**

### **Jalpaiguri**

Toto is one of the ancient tribes live in the district of Jalpaiguri. *SAMATAT* – an NGO organized 12 Self Help Groups (SHGS), helped them to generate self-employment and socio-economic development programme.

Since May 2003, 'Toto Kalyan samiti' was also formed as an NGO.

Totos now can cultivate scientific farming on orange, banana, pineapple, spices etc. They have become advanced in animal husbandry and savings.

## **Malda:**

Helping Flood Victims: *Social Welfare Institutes* (an NGO) Stellar work saved the people of Ratua Block -1. The NGO in joint collaboration with the state government had provided relief and medical treatment to the victims of flood in Ratua.

## **Darjeeling :**

**Himalayan Nature and Adventure Foundation** – a Siliguri based NGO organized the North Bengal chapter of the National Bio-diversity strategy and Action (NBSAP) with Ramakrishna Mission (the state's nodal agency for the project). The NGO asserted that illegal felling of trees; excessive use of pesticides by tea gardens and farmers. influx of illegal immigrants was proving fatal for North-Bengal's Bio-diversity. Jan2004. Statesman.

## **South 24 Pargana:**

In Rangabelia. '*Tagore society of Rural Development*' (under the guidance of Tusar Kanjilal) is engaged with a number of rural development activities. The important achievement of the society is to arrange alternative way of earning, building self-reliant to the rural women, to produce crop thrice in a year etc.

Each year the society organizes 'Sunderban Fair' with the people of the surrounded localities.

The society and the government of West Bengal jointly organize 'Banbibi Utsav' each year. The society chooses to reach to the people through the fair.

## **Kolkata: Roopkala**

A sponsored organization of the Government of Itali and the government of West Bengal jointly organize '*Social Communication Festival*' each year with two phases one in Kolkata and another in North Bengal. It allows and encourages the regional culture and producer and directors of creative film at the regional level.

### **4.2.22.**

## **Kolkata: Health**

*Student health Home (SHH)* is the product of the strongest students movement in West Bengal. In March 1949, one post graduate student in the University of Calcutta felt ill due to tuberculosis. He, with the help of his friends, went to Christian Medical College, Madras and got cured. After that, these students thought to build up a health project for the students.

In 1955, in Creek Road, Kolkata, in the house of Dr. Nihar Munsri, Students Health Home (SHH) was set up. Persons like Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, Jyoti Basu, Triguna Sen, Nirmal Kr. Siddhanta, Rajkumar Chakraborty, Arun Sen, and Biman Bose etc. came forward to set it up in 1957. The proposal for setting up a hospital for SHH was formally approved.

Now different Secondary Schools, Colleges are the members of SHH. It has branches in each district. SHH maintains modern hospital, libraries, cares students either free or at a minimum cost.

### **Kolkata- Health: NRI- (Individual):**

*Dr. Mani Bhowmik, N.R.I., scientist and American dweller*, extended his cooperation to the poor but intelligent students of Bengal. He provided money through his *Dr. Mani Bhowmik Educational Foundation Scholarship*. A public fund was set up to assist brilliant students who belong to poor economic background.

#### **4.2.23.**

*APDR –Association for Peoples Democratic Rights* started its journey in 25<sup>th</sup> June 1972. It is champion with regard to human rights movement. It inspires the people and the other organization to unite and fight for human rights. As for example, in 27.12.2001 (Report of Statesman) at least 10 primary health centers in Banga Sub-division were in a dilapidated condition. Local people, led by the APDR formed a committee and urged the district magistrate to take immediate steps to improve health care in the area.

Earlier, APDR was vocal against the police torture on the Naxal rebels. Later, it concentrated its fights against all kinds of violation of human rights in West Bengal.

#### **4.2.24. Midnapore District:**

*'Village planning by the villagers'* was the popular movement in the district of Midnapore in the 1980's with a view to make it a grand success *'Midnapore planning and Development society'* – an NGO was formed which inspired the movement into each village in at least 40 blocks of undivided Midnapore district. One of the strategies of their work modalities was to survey the households effectively.

The NGO collected data of resources, problems, and the whereabouts of the individuals of each village. The planning taken by the NGO was considered as 'Samanwita Jana Uddog Saha Bhagi Parikalpana'. In Shalbani (West Midnapore) the planning was participated by 108 NGO volunteers of the People's Organizations (POs). (6)

#### **4.2.25. South 24 Pargana**

##### **Voluntary Action**

The population of the surrounded village in Nanda Kumar Gram Panchayat in Mathurapur Block 2 depended on Raidighi Road. In the remote area of Sunderban but the road was rough and incomplete.

*At least 10,000 people* extended their voluntary labour to build 10 Kilometre Road worth rupees about 2 crores.

#### **4.2.26. Howrah: In Uluberia**

*Aal- Amin Mission* Serves to brilliant but poor students of the Muslim Community to make successful candidates in the joint entrance examination. It maintains a Madrasa and two Higher Secondary Schools with a non-profit motive.

#### **4.2.27.**

*Bakreswar Power Thermal Unit (BPTU)* in Birbhum district created a record in terms of consecutive production of electricity not only in whole continent of Asia but for any where. The owner of this unit is West Bengal Electricity Development Corporation.

*The name of BPTU is referred here because this organization is born out of a movement of the left and democratic leaders of West Bengal. Jyoti Basu*

*invoked people to donate blood to raise fund to build up and protect the organization. People responded to the clarion call of Jyoti Basu. Therefore, BPTU stands as the symbol of voluntary action of the people of West Bengal.*

#### **4.2.28.**

**Kalimpong:** The Kalimpong Civic body appealed to resident to extend all possible help to ensure that development work in the municipal area continues.

*The Rotary Club of Kalimpong had renovated the Triangular Park and the Lions Club gave facelift to Dambar Chowk.*

#### **4.2.29. Confederation of Indian Industries (CII)**

*The CII, the State Industrial Development Corporation and Siliguri - Jalpaiguri Development Authority jointly organized convention 'North Bengal Calling' at Siliguri with a view to discuss the potentiality of establishing industries in North Bengal. (April 2005).*

#### **4.2.30. South 24 Pargana : Education : Voluntary Action**

In 21<sup>st</sup> February 2003, Jyoti Basu laid the foundation stone of Sarsuna College. It was reported that the government of West Bengal funded about 10 Lakhs 32 thousand rupees and the people of the locality collected two and half crore rupees.

#### **4.2.31. Darjeeling**

##### **Voluntary Action: Environment**

In Siliguri, January 2003, Siliguri Municipal, Corporation made *an arrangement to pay respect to the sentiment of the civil society of the city of*

*Siliguri* while implementing a proposal of the expansion of the Sevak Road; the corporation had faced trees over the road as the hindrance. The corporation did not take any decision by its own with a view to avoid the debate over the contentious issue to keep or cut the trees. The corporation took *the people's verdict by secret ballot*. Around 2,752 people voted in favour of cutting trees and only 322 voted against the motion. 39 votes were found cancelled.

#### **4.2.32. Jalpaiguri:**

##### **Voluntary Action**

In 23 Jan 2003 in Jalpaiguri in the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose about **900 villagers** voluntarily contributed their labour and built up four-kilometre canal in Bada Bari Panchayat 2. It provided irrigation for 2100 bighas of agricultural land in the locality.

#### **4.2.33.**

*Muslim V.O. - Amanat Foundation Trust* a Voluntary Organisation works for the eradication of Polio among minority (Muslim) community of Goal Pokhar Block 2 in North Dinajpur District.

#### **4.2.34. Kolkata:**

##### **Health: Peoples for Better Treatment (PBT)**

Dr. Kunal Saha (a United States- based non-resident INDIAN) formed a charitable organisation in Kolkata (51, A.C. Banerjee Road) The Organisation was established as a result of the death of Dr. Saha's wife Anuradha in 1998 who died of maltreatment by the doctor in a hospital in Bombay. The organization is

committed to fight against the corruption in Medical Practice. provides counseling for better treatment and legal advice to litigation related to maltreatment of the patients. The Website of the organization is [WWW.pbtindia.com](http://WWW.pbtindia.com).

#### **4.2.35. Jalpaiguri**

*Culture: Nature and Treckers club* in Jalpaiguri was formed in 1988. It motivates youth to climb to the hill and mountain. Bhaskar Das of the organization won Fluted Mountain 20,200 fit. The organization helped counting of wildlife in Neora

Valley National Park. It organizes workshop and train the local youth.

#### **4.2.36: Howrah: Raod : Voluntary Action**

In April 2003, in Bankra Panchayat Bankra-Mowkhali road was made by the **peoples initiative**. The Public Works Department (PWD) wanted to build up 18 feet. Broad road but it was not possible due to lack of land. The beneficiary committee appealed and made at least 30 sittings with the local people and then the people voluntarily responded to the programme, offered their land without demanding any money.

#### **4.2.37. West Bengal –Post Independent Day: NGO movement:**

In West Bengal- NGOs are found active in evaluating the functions of the governmental bodies.

In Darjeeling, the '*Darjeeling NGO Network*'- a conglomeration of local NGOs, was found holding seminar expounding on the 'development of the Panchayat system under the '*Darjeeling Gorkha and Hill Council (DGAHC)*'.

A representative of *Darjeeling Ladenla Road Prerna*- an NGO working in rural Darjeeling said in the seminar that the rural governances had not evolved under the DGAHC. The NGO noted that the gram Sansads of the hill Panchayats had 'poor track' records.

#### **Darjeeling: Siliguri : Cosmos**

An NGO organizes seminar on integration of non-formal education with *Sishu Siksha Abhijan* in Siliguri in October 2003. It has set up 10 centres in the district of Jalpaiguri and rehabilitated 608 children since the project was started in 1999.

Siliguri Bethgeda, *Damdama* and *Singhijhora* are the villages, long considered as the most 'trouble zone' are believed responsible for rampant feeling of trees in Baikhunthapur forest. Forest Protection Committees of three villages, the state forest department and *NESPON* – a Siliguri based NGO jointly established 'Eco-Friendly Park' (a project) in October 2003 aimed at weaning away forest fringe dwellers from timber smuggling.'

#### **4.2.38. PUCL: Peoples Union for Civil Liberties**

It is an organization, which fight for the protection of civil rights of the people. As for example, the organization was much vocal against the riots in Bhagalpur in Bihar.

#### **4.2.39. West Bengal Vingyan Manch (WBVM)**

The Manch crossed 19 years of its success period. It was formed out of social demand. The WBVM has published more than 65 valuable books on human and other animal life, such as, Biotechnology and Bio-ethics by Dr. R.N. Basu, the story of Bird by Jiban Sardar – an eminent orinthologist. The Manch organizes

science education for the children, science exhibition, eco-clubs etc. It organizes National Green Volunteers in about 3,000 schools in West Bengal.

The Manch maintains a number of activities for the farmers. These are building houses and a latrine at low cost, soil testing, preparation of bio-fertilizer, crop varieties, warns about the use of pesticides etc. The Manch monitors agricultural counseling centers at different places.

WBVM was established in 29<sup>th</sup> November 1986 with a view to commemorate the departed soul of Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy, an eminent Scientist and social reformer in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bengal.

Shaped by the ideology and influence of Acharya Roy, since the inception, the organization acted as the people's science organization. Manch believes to make a stable link between man and science. It aims to help building up a self-sufficient economy for the people with the help of eco-friendly science and technology and superstition-free scientific thinking.

#### **4.2.40. Federation of Scientists and Technicians (FOSET)**

In North Bengal, especially at Kalchini Block (Alipurduar), South-Menal Bari, Siliguri, Malda, FOSET is engaged with different types of development works. A notable work for the organization was to offer complete house for @ of Rs. 45,000/- keeping the needs of regional weather. The organization tries to popularize alternative source of energy in the region.

#### **4.2.41. Uttar Banga Anagrasar Muslim Sangram Samiti – (UBAMSS).**

For the last decade, the organization is engaged to aware the disadvantaged and backward sections of the Muslim community in North Bengal. The

organization recommends Muslim (Backward) people to include and attain the other Backward Class (OBC) certificates. It takes different welfare activities for these communities.

#### **4.2.42. Martyr Shiv Shankar Seva Samiti**

The Samiti Sincerely maintains its voluntary service in the field of public health since 1978 in Burdwan. Late Shiv Shankar Chowdhury was a freedom fighter that was shot by the miscreants in 1971. The people of the locality thus built up the organization to mark a respect to their beloved person. The Samiti has a pathological Medicine Bank, a blood Transfusion Centre for the Thalasamia Patients, a blood bank, and it publishes tri-monthly 'Health and people' regularly. It has a library too.

#### **4.2.43.**

Besides to these activities, it is to be noted that West Bengal, especially North Bengal is a fertile land of movements. *The Tebhanga Movement in 1946-47* deserves special attention in the field of organized agricultural labourers' movement in India. The theme of the movement was to hand over two-third of the agricultural produce to the farmers who yield and to give one-third to the land owner. The centre of the movement was Dinajpur, Rangpur and Jalpaiguri in undivided Bengal and in North Bengal.

Though the movement could not attain any formal legal recognition, the result of the movement accelerated another famous movement at Naxal Bari near

Sili Guri, popularly known as Naxal Movement .The revolted with arms. *Charu Majumdar was the leader. Later, Kanu Sanyal, Jangal Santal and others led the movement.* A few intellectuals supported the movement but the movement could no longer last soon as it was engaged with indiscriminate murdering of people including poor police personnel. The movement ignored the working class in Party activity. The aim of the movement was to attain political power.

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