PREFACE

The Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) has been engaged, for some time now, in a rather voluminous exercise on mapping the nonprofit sector in India. The exercise aims to generate systematically as much of the information as feasible about the sector including the size, scope, areas of interest, sources of revenue, expenditure patterns, etc. The study, being carried out at the behest of the Center for Civil Society Studies (CCSS) at the Johns Hopkins University (JHU) in the United States, would help in developing a better understanding of the role these organisations play in social and economic development process of the country. A series of working papers, as envisaged in the JHU guidelines, have been prepared for wider dissemination of the project output under the overall guidance of Dr. Rajesh Tandon and an Advisory Committee. The present paper, third in the series, elaborates historical background of the nonprofit sector in India.

Beginning with pre-colonial era, the paper covers a historical account of more than 2000 years to capture the forms of nonprofit institutions and nature of voluntary activities during different phases of Indian history. It delineates the changing nature of relationship between nonprofit institutions, the state agencies and different social organisations that has taken place over the years. The analytical section deals with a whole range of issues and factors affecting the nonprofit sector (NPS) in India. The paper concludes with some reflective remarks on the Social Origins Theory in the context of NPS in India.

We are grateful to the Institute for Policy Studies, Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, for inviting PRIA to undertake the Study in India. We gratefully acknowledge continuous guidance of the core project team at the JHU and that of the Indian Advisory Committee. The overall leadership to the project has been provided by Dr. S.S. Srivastava, Principal Researcher.

The first draft of the document was prepared by Dr. B. K. Joshi, Executive Director, Centre for Himalayan Development and Policy Studies and Dr. Manoj Panjani. Based on the feedback and suggestions by the undersigned and the Core Research team of the JHU, it was subsequently worked upon by Dr. Shailendra Kr. Dwivedi.

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Dr. Rajesh Tandon
President, PRIA
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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE NONPROFIT SECTOR IN INDIA

India’s complexity as a country lies in its religious, political, ethnic, social and cultural diversity and its long history of civilization. Therefore, describing the history of nonprofit sector in India is a challenging task because no single underlying theme and pattern characterizes the development of the sector in India. The roots of nonprofit sector in India may be located in philanthropy and religious obligations enjoined on individuals to help the needy.

The history of nonprofit sector in India can, for the sake of convenience, be comprehended in four phases: the pre-colonial phase (1500 BC to late eighteenth century); the colonial phase (late eighteenth century to 1947 AD); the post-independence phase up to the emergency of 1975; and the post-emergency phase. It may, however, be noted that like all categorizations this one too is quite arbitrary and overly neat.

I PRE–COLONIAL PHASE

Voluntarism is an integral part of Indian society, and dates back to 1500 BC when it has been mentioned in the Rig Veda. In fact, the Rig Veda devotes an entire chapter on charity, where the God Rudra is praised because He is the giver of many gifts. To encourage charity, the Rig Veda says, “May the one who gives shine most”. Similarly, Upanishads - another revered ancient text in Hindu philosophy, enjoin the practice of charity on householders. The Taitriya Upanishad, for example, declares that it is better not to help at all than to help without showing due respect to the object of charity. It further says that of all gifts, spiritual knowledge is the most precious. Next in order of importance is the gift of secular knowledge. The least important is the gift of means to satisfy physical

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1 Vedas are the most ancient Hindu scriptures; especially four collections called Rig Veda, Sam Veda, Yajur Veda and Athrva Veda.
2 Manu is considered to be one of the highly revered Hindu scholars of Ancient India. Manu Samhita is collection of his verses expounding a whole range of issues relating to the socio-political system, the family and role of individuals etc.
3 Refers to the contemporary phase of human history in Hinduism; preceded by three other phases, namely Satyuga, Treta yuga and Dwapar yuga respectively.
needs - food, clothing etc (Raja, 1962). The Manu Samhita\(^2\) constitute another important ancient Hindu text which declares that in Kaliyuga\(^3\), charity is the highest virtue.

During pre-colonial phase, responsibility for welfare activities and social service was largely shared between the state, religion and social organisations. The Kings and rulers used to take care of indigenous culture and arts, recreation, education, health etc. For example, Chola (an ancient Tamil Kingdom on the lower east coast of India along the banks of river Kaveri), used to have village and district councils with a considerable measure of local autonomy. Besides administration, they were also engaged in welfare activities. The inscriptions left by Cholas testify to their splendid social and governmental organisations. Their schools of sculpture and architecture of metal workers particularly are outstanding (Walker, 1983).

Charity inspired by religious beliefs and values continued to remain popular and fairly widespread in pre-colonial India. The married members of the Dashnami Akhara (a sect within Hinduism), called Gosains; were actively engaged in the fields of education, religious administration, charity, construction-work for public utility, and civil administration. The total number of temples and monasteries of the Gosains spreading all over India, exceeds several thousands. Maharashtra, Berar and Hyderabad are the provinces most rich in Gosain monasteries, temples and ghats\(^4\), all of which are meant for the public benefit and utility (Sarkar, 1959).

In the city of Poona, more then 40 Hindu monasteries were counted around in 1818. The Mahant\(^5\) of Kalyan Gir monastery was famous for his charity from Benaras to Rameshwar. He also built 21 dharamsalas (free rest-houses) for pilgrims, and made large donations repairing old temples. The free distribution of foods held by the Poona Gosains was one of the wonders of the past. Humam Giri, a householder Gosain and jewel merchant, built the fine ghat on the Sangam\(^6\) at Poona. Dasnami Gosains have harmonised themselves to the advancing needs of the present civilised age, by founding schools of Hindu learning and moral life at Benaras, Allahabad and many other cities (Op. Cit.).

\(^1\) River beds constructed for public use.
\(^2\) Custodian of temple properties and performer of rituals.
\(^3\) Meeting points of two or more than two rivers.
Religious institutions in ancient India (up to 12th century A.D.), were also actively engaged in the field of education. There are accounts of small residential ashrams as educational establishments used to be run by a teacher who admitted only a limited number of select pupils. During medieval period (from 12th century A.D. to 16th century A.D.) the old systems of imparting education continued with slight variations. The pathshala or primary schools, and the residential institute of Sanskrit learnings were the two main pillars on which medieval scholastic traditions were supported. The matha or cloister attached to a Hindu temple was also an important centre of religious studies as was the akhara a Saivite monastic traditional establishment.

The emergence of Buddhism (during 600 B.C.) provided a new approach to the concept of voluntarism and social service. Buddha founded Sangha or monastic order, consisting initially of 1250 monks. He later established an order of 500 nuns. No formal qualification was necessary to join the monastic order, but more than seventy percent of early monks and nuns came from cities and many of them belonged to upper classes. Besides ministering to the spiritual needs of the people, the members of the Sangha were engaged in service to the poor and needy.

The ancient educational institutions during Buddhist period grew out of the monastic settlements formed for the study of the Law. An elaboration of these institutions was the Vihara or monastery, a term loosely applied to many kinds of Buddhist monastic establishments such as the Chaitya or Chapel and the larger universities such as the huge aggregations of mahayana buildings and monks’ settlements. Some of the important universities in ancient India were, Taxila (in Gandhara), Nalanda, Sarnath and Amravati which were primarily Buddhist; and Banaras, Kanchi and Ujjain which were largely under Hindu influence. In western India, Valabhi the Maitraka centre was a foreign Gurjara foundation and Ujjain famous from early times for mathematics and astronomy. Vikaramsila, a great Tantric university established in AD 810 by the Pala king Dharampala (Walker, 1983). The colleges of Kasmira in the vicinity of the cities of Srinagari and Parihaspura produced a succession of scholars of the early and medieval schools. Ratnagiri in Kalinga was an important centre for learning in Kalinga, Orissa (Warder, 1970).

In Jainism (600 B.C.), there are account of religious organisations of the Sramanas engaged in charitable and welfare activities. Hospitals are freely mentioned in Jain literature. The Nayadhammakaha mentions that a hospital was built on hundred pillars where a number of physicians
and surgeons were employed who treated various kinds of patients with various kinds of medicines and herbs (Jain, 1947). Similarly, during the Mughal dynasty, Muslims were enjoined to give a fifth of their income for the poor members of their community; Parsis cared for their poor through their Panchayat and a strong tradition of community service; and the Sikhs through their Gurdwaras.

The foregoing account on the concept and practice of voluntarism during the pre-colonial phase suggest that they were closely intertwined with social and religious values, which in turn were derived from the contemporary rulers to a large extent. Changes in the ruling dynasty influenced social values as well. The most notable change that occurred at the end of the pre-colonial phase (around the beginning of thirteenth century) was the establishment of the reign of Muslim kings culminating in the establishment of Mughal dynasty. With the growing influence of the new religion - Islam, the traditional ways of providing social services also started changing.

Voluntarism and social service, during the pre-colonial phase also played an important role in the sphere of social and economic development. They operated in the fields of education, medicine, and culture and in situations of crisis such as droughts, floods, epidemics, foreign invasions and depredations by robbers and criminals. The disadvantaged and the poor were taken care of by social institutions and practices outside the political system, viz., joint family\(^7\), caste groups, guilds, and religiously motivated philanthropists. The joint family was, perhaps the most important source of social security and support in times of distress.

The age-old traditions of entertainments as the panchali-natka or puppet play, the chhaya-natak or shadow-play, the yatra or religious procession and folk dances were invariably supported and propagated by some kind of associations or professional groups. Village shows which are popular till today combined song, dance, poetical recital, special satire and dramatized episodes of epics. There are hundreds of other regional dances performed on special occasions, such as the war dance, devil dance, rain dance, harvest dance, marriage dance, which are characteristic of various groups, tribes, castes and rural communities all over the country. For example, Raslila and Ramlila are some of the popular forms of folk dances and plays of which many variants are in vogue.

\(^7\) In structural terms, joint family implies living together of members of two or more elementary families both lineally and laterally.
Similarly, there were guilds of architects presided over by a *sthapal* (the master builder or chief architect) and consisting of *sutra-grahin* (draftsmen), *lepaka* (masons), and *sutra-dhara* (carpenters). The whole region of Chandella dynasty (800-1204 A.D.) was rich in pre-historic associations, including the architectural centre of Khajuraho. Artisans also formed guilds and some of the wealthy guilds played a prominent part in the life of the community making contributions to the building of shrines and temples (Walker, 1983).

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<th>Sreni- A Classical Example of a Nonprofit Institution in Ancient India</th>
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| In most part of India craftsmen were organised into guilds (*sreni*) usually based on caste. The ancient guilds of ivory workers, silk weavers, metal workers were often very wealthy and influential in the affairs of community. Although there are isolated references to some sort of guild organisations even in the Vedic literature, they acquired prominence during the Buddhist phase. By the time of the composition of Buddhist scriptures guilds existed in every important Indian town, and embraced almost all trades and industries.  

The guild united both the craftsman’s co-operative and the individual workman of a given trade into a single co-operative body. It determined rules of work and wages, standards and prices for the commodities in which its members dealt, and its regulations had the force of law and were upheld by the king and government. The guilds exercised control over its members, which was also recognized by the state. The guild had power over the economic as well as the social life of its members. It acted as a guardian of their widows and orphans, and as their insurance against sickness. A chief (usually the oldest person) or a group of elders headed the guild. A small council, or *sreni* members, assisted the elder persons called *Jyesthaka*.  

Inscriptions, recording the donations by guilds to various religious causes are to be found all over India. The source of income of the guilds were regular subscriptions paid by its members and fines levied on members violating its rules. There are references in the literature to guilds acting as bankers, accepting deposits, and lending money on interest to merchants and others. They often acted as trustees of religious endowments. Pious people paid money to a guild for performing sundry services like ensuring that a lamp was always kept lit in a temple, or providing new robes every year to the monks of a Buddhist monastery.  

(Ghosal, 1971)

Other organized forms of pre-modern institutions that possessed a distinct organisational character were the workmen’s co-operatives and guilds. These guilds or corporations were variously called *Nigama*, *Sangha*, *Sreni*, *Puga* and *Nikaya*. Each guild had its head or president who was called *Jethaka/Jyesthaka*.

Environmental protection was another important arena where institutions of nonprofit in nature were active. Here also, religion played a crucial role in protecting forests and medicinal plants. Evidences from the sacred literature of the Hindus and Buddhists, and from archaeological sites of this phase show that the practice of protecting trees having a religious connotation was prevalent among Hindus and Buddhists. For example, the institution of *Kavu* (a sacred grove) was widely known as the abode of the
Snake God. Not only was it protected, the people also worshipped the Snake God every year. Similarly, the Pipal tree appears among the pre-historic finds in Indus Valley in three forms: leaf, branch with leaves and whole tree. Buddhist literature refers to many legends about the sacred Bodhi tree. Huen Tsang mentions a great Pipal tree of Peshawar near which Kanishka built a great stupa. This tree was known to have existed and revered down to the time of the Mughal emperor, Babar.

With the advent of Mughal rule in India, Muslim religious and social life started setting the rules and conventions with regard to different forms of charity and philanthropy, viz., Zakat. The main purpose of Zakat was assistance to the needy, but it could also be used for the maintenance of learned people and for promotion of education. It was customary for philanthropists to feed the hungry, establish free kitchens called Langars, either on a permanent basis or temporarily during festivals, build road-side wells, piyaos (drinking water booths), sarais (inns), mosques (which also served as schools), orphanages, hospitals, bridges etc. The practice of creating waqfs or trusts, which almost invariably took the form of an assignment of land, had started very early among Muslims and the expenditure of most philanthropic establishments was met out of the income of waqfs. Rulers who wished to provide for maintenance of scholars of the khanqahs (heads of religious institutions) or of sufi saints assigned revenue-free land to them.

Christianity and the colonial rulers brought in the modern notions of voluntarism and philanthropy to India. The formal-organisational form of voluntarism had its origin in the phase of Portuguese (from 1500 AD till the end of 16th century AD) and British rule. Like Buddhism, Christianity too created an order of monks vowed to chastity and elimination of misery in response to the urge among men to dedicate themselves to the service of God through service of human beings.

II COLONIAL PHASE

Development of the nonprofit sector during the colonial phase (started during late eighteenth century) is closely linked with the social reform and freedom movement. At the same time the British colonial administration also supported some religious and private organisations engaged in providing social services. The early nineteenth century saw the emergence of a small but dynamic group of Indian leaders who were influenced by liberal and progressive ideas of Britishers. Their initial effort at social reform
was directed at cleansing Hindu religion of what they perceived to be its shortcomings. Slowly, elites belonging to other faiths also came forward and adopted similar approach.

The activities in the nonprofit arena during late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, were shaded with nationalist sentiments. Many nonprofit institutions were engaged in awareness generation, conscientisation and mobilisation of the masses to struggle for self-rule and self-reliance. Later on, Gandhi combined the nationalist sentiments with constructive work at the grassroots level. The following sections deals with the changing nature and role of nonprofit associations during the colonial phase.

**Christian Missionaries and Indigenous Reform Movements**

Contact with the west brought new ideas and systems of thought based on rationalism, liberalism and democracy. The English educated upper middle class, especially in Bengal and western India, were the first to be influenced by the new ideas. They started building groups and associations, and initiated a process of collective reflection and action on the problems of Indian society. This marked the beginning of indigenous NPOs engaged in social reform and change-oriented activities in the modern period. Simultaneously, the efforts made by Christian missionaries in the field of education and health-care constituted another form of NPO intervention. Although their religious activities caused concern among non-Christians, especially the Hindus, their social service activities elicited considerable admiration. Many contemporary social reform movements were influenced and inspired by the efforts made by missionaries and initiated a wide range of social activities. The case of Ramakrishna Mission, for example, illustrates a pioneer effort, which carried out a wide range of activities ranging from providing service to the poor to meeting developmental for need of the people.

In the year 1828, Raja Rammohan Roy founded *Brahmo Samaj* which started an era of serious effort to bring about the social, political and economic transformation of Indian society. It was one of the earliest reform movements in modern India launched basically to purify the contemporary form of Hinduism as practiced during that period. It laid emphasis on human dignity, opposed idolatry and criticised social evils like practice of *sati*. Regretting the contemporary state of religion, he commented,

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8 The former Hindu practice of a widow immolating herself on her husband's funeral fire.
I regret to that the present system of religion adhered to by the Hindus is not well calculated to promote their political interest. The distinctions of castes introducing innumerable divisions and sub-divisions among them has entirely deprived them of patriotic feelings, and the multitude of religious rites and ceremonies and the laws of purification have totally disqualified them from undertaking any difficult enterprise. It is, I think necessary that some change should take place in their religion, at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort.

(Chandra et. al., 1988, p.82).

Written at a time when Indians had just begun to experience the intellectual and cultural turmoil that characterized social life in the nineteenth century India, this represented immediate Indian response. The British conquest and consequent dissemination of colonial culture and ideology had led to an inevitable introspection about the strengths and weaknesses of indigenous culture and institutions. Numerous organisations sprang up all over the country for bringing about this transformation.

The spirit of reform beginning with the efforts of Raja Rammohan Roy in Bengal embraced almost the whole of India. Apart from the Brahmo Samaj, which had branches in several parts of the country, the Paramhansa Mandal and the Prarthana Samaj in western India and the Arya Samaj in north India were some of the other important movements among the Hindus. Prarthana Samaj (prayer society) as an important offshoot of the Brahmo Samaj of Rammohan Roy was started under the leadership of Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade in Bombay in 1867. It was greatly influenced by the well known contemporary social reformer Keshab Chandra Sen. The organisation had four avowed objectives - to oppose the caste system, to introduce widow remarriage, to encourage female education, and to abolish child marriage. With almost similar objectives, Dev Samaj was established in the year 1887 by Dev Atma.

There were several other regional and caste-based movements like the Kayastha Sabha in the United Provinces and the Sarin Sabha in Punjab. The Ahmediya and Aligarh movements, the Singh Sabha, and the Rehnumai Mazdeyasen Sabha represented the spirit of reform among the Muslims, Sikhs and Parsees respectively. Despite being regional in scope and content and confined to a specific religion, the
general perspectives of all these efforts were remarkably similar - they were regional and religious manifestations of a common consciousness.

In Maharashtra, for example, even the backward castes were actively engaged in social reform activities. One of the most remarkable social reformer of the 19th century in the region was Mahatma Jyotirao Phule who founded the Satya Shodhak Samaj in 1873. The organisation believed in equality of men and gender. He opened the first school for the untouchables in 1852 in Poona. He advocated widow remarriages and led a vigorous movement against the barbarous custom of shaving off the heads of widows. Mahatma Phule also started a home for orphans and babies begotten out of wedlock. He fought for the rights, equality and justice of the oppressed and common man. Similar efforts were also made by the Narayan Dharma Paripalak Sabha in the Malabar Area to improve upon the socio-economic conditions of the weaker and backward castes. Educational centres were established in large numbers with the primary motive of initiating social reform process. As far back as 1836, Lt. Shartrede started village schools in Purandar circle of Poona district, to which evening classes for adults were attached. The Bombay Education Society started English schools before 1885. Vithal Ramji Shinde founded the Depressed Class Mission Society in 1906 and started a school for backward class boys at Parel. Later on, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar opened the Siddharth and Milind group of colleges at Bombay and Aurangabad respectively, offering special facilities to the backward class students (Khandekar, 1997).

Although, on the face of it, most of these reform movements appear to be driven by religions, they were strongly humanist in inspiration. Instead of emphasising the idea of other-worldliness and salvation they focused on worldly affairs. Raja Rammohan Roy, for example, was prepared to concede the possible existence of the other world mainly due to its utilitarian value. Akshay Kumar Dutt and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, the other contemporary social reformer from Bengal were agnostics who refused to be drawn into any discussion on supernatural questions. However, some other social reformers of the contemporary period like, Bankimchandra Chatterjee and Vivekananda emphasized the secular use of religion and used spirituality to take cognizance of the material condition of human existence.

In the 1880’s, Arya Samaj made spectacular advances particularly in North India under the leadership of Swami Dayanand. It achieved great success perhaps because of its very ambiguity, for it combined sharp criticism of many existing Hindu practices (idolatry and polytheism, child-marriage, the taboos on
widow remarriage and foreign travel, Brahmin dominance and the multiplicity of castes based on birth alone) with an extremely aggressive assertion of the superiority of purified Hinduism based on *Vedic* infallibility over all other faiths - Christianity, Islam or Sikhism. The *Arya Samaj* soon over-shadowed other streams in the contest for the loyalties of reform-minded educated young men of Northern India. The *Arya Samajists* (the follower of *Arya Samaj*) also struck deep roots among the trading castes and most of their prominent leaders in Punjab, viz., Guru Dutt, Lala Hans Raj, Lala Lajpat Rai, and Lala Munshi Ram, came from these castes. The membership of this organisation rose from 40,000 in 1891 to 92,000 in 1901 and half a million by 1921. Several Sanskrit *pathsalas* (schools) were started by Dayanand himself. *Arya Samaj* has got a network of educational institutions numbering about a thousand all over India, mostly in the north, and several places in abroad. These D.A.V. schools and colleges for boys and girls, and *Gurukuls* including the Gurukul University at Haridwar have been functioning for about a century (Vable, 1983).

Another noteworthy nonprofit institution established during early 20th century was *Radhasoami Satsang Sabha*. They are grouped and organized into branch *satsangs* (religious associations) district associations and regional associations. The *Sabha* or the Radhasoami Educational Institute managing committee runs the educational institutions and social welfare associations established by the *Sabha*. Old Boy’s Association, Dayal Bagh Mahila Cooperative Association Limited, Sir Sahebji Maharaj Charitable Trust, Radhasoami Charitable Society and Dayal Bagh Medical Relief Society are some of the examples. The society also runs ayurvedic, homeopathic and unani dispensaries. Five homeopathic dispensaries in Andhra Pradesh, three in Bihar, two in UP and one in Punjab are run outside Dayal Bagh (Mathew, 1974).

The Southern India also witnessed the emergence of a variety of social reform groups, caste-based associations and institutions initiated by women. Virasalingam of the Telegu speaking province, founded the Rajahmundri Social Reform Association in 1878 to promote widow remarriage as its principal objective; K.N. Natarajan started the influential journal *Indian Social Reformer* in 1890 in Madras. Allied to the journal, a Hindu Social Reform Association was also started in Madras in 1892 by the *Young Madras Party*. For the first time an attempt was made to launch an all-India social reform movement when Justice Govind Ranade organized a National Social Conference.

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*9 Traditional institutions for imparting education.*
In Andhra Pradesh, the dominant castes of Reddys and Kammas formed their own caste associations. One of the early activities of these associations was establishing educational institutions for village youths. Interestingly, the first hostel association for Kammas was actually started by a Reddy school teacher living in a Kamma area of Krishna district. The association built four hostels in towns of the delta at a time of increasing agricultural prosperity when many peasant youth were seeking education. The Reddys of the former Hyderabad state started mobilizing along these lines somewhat later. At a marriage in 1930 a group of Reddy landlords residing in the city felt sorry at the lavish spending and waste of funds and decided to contribute money to a hostel. A Reddy who had risen in the Nizam’s (the provincial ruler) police service took up the project, and using his wealthy connections, gathered funds for a hostel with accommodation for 150 youths in Hyderabad city.

Caste-based Associations of Nadars from South India

During the late 19th century caste based movements emerged in South India when certain castes tried to raise their status within the hierarchy of the Hindu caste system. The most significant of such movement was among the Nadars, who lived in a social limbo somewhere between the Sudras and the outcaste untouchables. In the 19th century the Nadars lived mainly in Aruppukottai, Palagampatti, Virudhunagar, Tirumangalam, Sattankudi and Sivakasi - the famous six towns of Ramnad. Owing to their lowly social status, the Nadars became a special target of the Christian missionaries effort at conversion. The Nadars saw the European missionaries as protectors, and sensed the possibility for economic change and advancement in aligning with them. With the rapid spread of education among the community of new converts, many sought to abandon the arduous occupation which had degraded them in the eyes of high caste people. Increasingly, with the aid of missionaries, Nadars secured small landholdings and took to intensive cultivation of garden crops.

The traders of the six towns, mentioned above created the mahimai or the ‘common good funds’. As the wealth of the community grew, the mahimai was used for the welfare of the community as a whole. The poor among the caste group were fed and clothed, and jobs were secured for the able bodied. Wells and public buildings for the use of the community were constructed. Perhaps the most important use of mahimai was for establishment of schools by the Nadar uravinurais (councils which include the head of every household in the community). The Virudhunagar uravinurai in 1890, for example, founded the Kshatriya High School, one of the first free schools in Tamilnadu open to the children of all castes and communities.

In December 1910, Kshatriya Mahajana Sangam was established as an association of Nadars. Ever since its inception, education became one of the primary concerns of the Sangam. Among the early activities of the Sangam was providing financial aid to needy students. In 1921, the first scholarship loans were awarded. By 1964 a total of 3024 students had received scholarships amounting to more than 400,000 rupees. The Sangam also assisted villages and towns in establishing their own schools and played an important role in founding new colleges, e.g., the Senthikumara Nadar College in
The activities of these associations were initiated primarily by elite members of the castes - people with sufficient land and money to donate, and who understood the employment potential of education. Their contribution was important as an expression of solidarity between wealthy members of the caste and the poorer members who were the beneficiaries of their work. Their efforts were a significant contribution to making education available to youths whose families did not maintain city residences. For a time the Reddy hostel in Hyderabad even provided a meeting place for the incipient Communist Party led by one of these youths (Iliot, 1970).

In the year 1902 Bandaru Acchamba started the Brindavan Stree Samajam (a women’s association) in Andhra Pradesh. In 1903 she traveled all over the state, setting up similar women’s organisations. Acchamba provided shelter to women who needed it, and there were always four or five children living with her and going to school. Similarly, in 1923, Durgabai Deshmukh started the Balika Hindi Pathshala at Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh. Its basic aim was to promote the learning of Hindi. During 1940-42 she organized the Andhra Mahila Sabha in Madras. The Sabha provided education to destitute or deserted women and widows to enable them to take the matriculation or secondary school leaving certificate examination. To help them earn their livelihood they were also involved in spinning, weaving and other economic activities.

During 1930s, summer schools on economics and politics were organized for peasant activists in Andhra Pradesh. These training camps, held at Kothapatnam, Mantena varipalam and other places were addressed by many of the leading communist leaders of the time including P.C. Joshi, Ajoy Ghosh and R.D. Bhardwaj. A series of lectures were delivered on Indian history, the history of the national struggle, Marxism, the Indian economy etc. Money for the training camps was collected from the peasants of Andhra Pradesh.

In Kerala, Karshaka Sanghams (peasant associations) were set up. The main forms of peasant mobilization were formation of village units of the Karshaka Sanghams conferences and meetings. These Sanghams organized a powerful campaign around the demand for amending the Malabar
Tenancy Act of 1929 which envisaged exploitative measures like charging advance rents from tenants, eviction of tenants and imposition of feudal levies.

Faced with the challenge of the intrusion of colonial culture and ideology, an attempt was also made during the nineteenth century to reinvigorate traditional institutions, and to realize the potential of traditional culture. The initial expression of the struggle against colonial domination manifested itself in the realm of culture largely because the principles on which the colonial state functioned were more retrogressive than those of the pre-colonial state. The concern for defending indigenous culture embraced the entire cultural field including the way of life and all signifying practices like language, religion, art and philosophy. It had two characteristic features: the creation of an alternate cultural ideological system, and the regeneration of traditional institutions.

Such tendencies resulted into ideas and activities of the movements taking on a conservative and a revivalist character. They formed an integral element in the formation of national consciousness. Some of these tendencies, however, were not able to transcend the limits of historical necessity and led to a sectarian and obscurantist outlook. The cultural-ideological struggle, represented by the socio-religious movements, was an integral part of the evolving national consciousness. This was so because it was instrumental in bringing about the initial intellectual and cultural break that made a new vision of the future possible. Secondly, it was also a part of the resistance against colonial cultural and ideological hegemony. Out of this dual struggle evolved the modern cultural situation (Sarkar, 1983).

**Upsurge of the Nationalist Movement**

Alongside the social reform movements, the national movement in the nineteenth century led by eminent persons like Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and R.C. Dutt developed an objective critique of colonialism. The Indian National Congress formed in 1885 was one of the forums through which these leaders articulated their ideas. The critique of the colonial rule developed by these leaders became the core ideology of the national movement. As the base of the Indian National Congress expanded these ideas were disseminated to the Indian masses. The formation of the Indian National Congress represented the culmination of the efforts of politically conscious Indians, who saw themselves as representatives of the national interest against foreign rule. From 1885 to 1946, the Indian National Congress continued as a nonprofit organisation, except for a period of
twenty-eight months when it formed governments in many provinces (with the exception of Punjab and Bengal) in 1936. The Congress also participated in the interim government at the Central level constituted in September 1946.

Many English educated Indian elites made considerable personal sacrifices by taking part in the social reform and national movements. Many others worked to extend the benefit of education to large numbers of people by opening private schools and colleges in their own towns or villages, after the government reduced aid to higher education following the recommendations of the Hunter Commission (1882). This was in fact the principal way in which education spread in India. The number of private unaided colleges went up from 11 to 53 between 1881-82 and 1901-02 (Chandra et al., 1988).

Press in Colonial Period - An Active Nonprofit Institution

The nationalist press, which emerged in the 1870s, basically operated in the nonprofit arena. During the period 1870-1918, the national movement had not yet resorted to mass agitation nor did political work consist of the active mobilization of people in mass struggles. The main political task still was that of politicization, political propaganda and education, and formation and propagation of the nationalist ideology. The Press was the chief instrument for carrying out this task: arousing, training, mobilizing and consolidating nationalist public opinion. The Indian National Congress also depended on the Press during these years. Incidentally, nearly one-third of the founding fathers of the Congress in 1885 were journalists.

During this period powerful newspapers emerged under distinguished and fearless journalists. These were the *Hindu* and *Swadeshmitran* under the editorship of G. Subramaniya Iyer, *Kesari* and *Maharatta* under B.G. Tilak, *Bengalee* under Surendranath Banerjee, *Amrit Bazar Patrika* under Sisital Kumar Ghosh and Motilal Ghosh, *Sudharak* under G.K Gokhale, *Indian Mirror* under N.N. Sen, *Voice of India* under Dadabhai Naoroji, *Hindustani* and *Advocate* under G.P. Varma. There were important regional papers and journals like *Tribune* and *Akhbar-i-am* in Punjab, *Indu Prakash, Dnyan Prakash, Kal* and *Gujarati* in Bombay, and *Som Prakash, Banganivasi* and *Sadharani* in Bengal. In fact, there hardly existed a major political leader in India, who did not possess a newspaper or was not writing for one in some capacity or other.

The influence of the Press extended far beyond its literate subscribers. Nor was it confined to cities and large towns. A newspaper would reach remote villages and would then be read out by a reader to tens of others. Gradually library movements sprang up all over the country. A local library would be organized around a single newspaper with a table, a bench or two or a charpoy (cot) constituting the furniture. Every piece of news or editorial comment would be read or heard and thoroughly discussed. The newspaper was not only an instrument of political education; reading or discussing it also became a form of political participation.

Newspapers in those days were not business enterprises, nor were the editors and journalists professionals. Newspapers were published as a form of national or public service. Invariably, financial support to them came from philanthropy. The work of a journalist was often indistinguishable from that of a political worker as it involved considerable self-sacrifice. It was not very expensive to start a newspaper, though its editor usually had to accept a very hard life at
almost a semi-starvation level, or earn his livelihood through other means. The *Amrit Bazar Patrika* was started in 1868 with printing equipment purchased for Rs. 32. Similarly, Surendra Nath Banerjee purchased the goodwill of the *Bengalee* in 1879 for Rs. 10 and the press for another Rs. 1600.

The first mass movement against British rule was the *Swadeshi* (or indigenous) movement in Bengal launched as a protest against Lord Curzon’s decision to partition Bengal on communal lines in the year 1905. An important aspect of the *Swadeshi* movement was the great emphasis placed on self-reliance or *Atmasakti* as a necessary part of the struggle against the Government. Self-reliance in various fields meant re-asserting national dignity, honour and self-confidence. Self-help and constructive work at the village level was envisaged as a means of bringing about the social and economic regeneration of the villages and of reaching the rural masses. In practical terms this meant social reform and campaigns against evils such as caste oppression, early marriage, the dowry system, consumption of alcohol, etc.

Voluntary *samitis* (associations) and organisations proliferated in Swadeshi Bengal in bewildering number and variety. They organised efforts to promote self-help in economic and social life, and the development of *samitis* with a wide range of activities. In 1905 the three leading organisations of this type were the British Indian Association of the big landlords, the Bengal Landholders’ Association and the Indian Association. District associations were setup in many districts of West Bengal which called for self-help and sustained social and political work through village associations. They promoted *swadeshi* industries and agriculture, national education and arbitration courts, cooperative banks, community grain stores and sanitation measures in the villages. The *samiti* movement touched virtually all sections of the Hindu *bhadralok* (elite) community, but seldom reached beyond its frontiers. Another major limitation of the *samiti* movement was the absence of any effective central coordination or planning (Sarkar, 1973).

One of the major planks of the *Swadeshi* movement was national education. Rabindranath’s Shantiniketan, in this context, represented a poet’s imaginative reaction against the factory-like atmosphere of conventional urban schools. Children should be given the chance, he eloquently pleaded, to learn from nature herself under open skies. The *ashram* ideal of ancient India attracted him strongly, with its austere simplicity so natural to a poor country like India and its close personal ties between the *guru* (teacher) and his pupils. Taking a cue from Tagore’s institution at Shantiniketan, the Bengal National College was founded, with Aurobindo Ghosh as the principal. Scores of national schools sprang up all over the country within a short period.
In August 1906, the National Council of Education, consisting of virtually all the distinguished persons in the country at the time, was established. The objective of the Council was ‘to organize a system of Education-literary, scientific and technical – on National lines and under National control’ from the primary to the University level. The main medium of instruction was to be the vernacular to enable the widest possible reach. For technical education, the Bengal Technical Institute was set up and funds were raised to send some students to Japan for advanced learning.

Gandhian Era of Non-Profit Activities

In the nationalist politics of the pre-Gandhi era, there was a debate on the relative importance of social reform and political advancement. Some of the early nationalists were zealous social reformers too. Till 1895 the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress and the Indian Social Conference (founded by Ranade) were held at the same venue. Some leaders like Tilak, who believed that political advancement was more important than social reform, objected to this practice. The dilemma was resolved with the emergence of Gandhi on the Indian political scene. Gandhi stood for Swaraj (self-rule) which he interpreted in a very wide and comprehensive manner. In fact he made it quite clear that Swaraj meant much more than merely replacing one government by another. In January 1922, he enunciated the concept of his ideal state, which he called Ram Rajya. Ram Rajya was to be a social and political order in which “the poor (could) hope to get protection, women to live in safety and the starving millions to see an end of hunger” and there would be a “resurrection of the spinning wheel, decrease in the poison of communal discord and eradication of the practice of untouchability, so that the so-called untouchables may look forward to being treated as our brothers…” (Navjivan, 1970). Eradication of untouchability, emancipation of women, promotion of communal harmony and the amelioration of the impoverished masses through the means of khadi were the four passions of Gandhi.

In the year 1925, the All India Spinners Association or the Charkha Sangh was inaugurated at Patna. By the end of 1926 the association had on its record 110 carders, 42,959 spinners and 3,107 weavers who together earned nine lakh rupees. By 1946 the working capital of the Association stood at twenty-five lakhs. During this 21 year period it had distributed over seven crores of rupees as wages among four and a half lakh poor spinners and weavers, spread over twenty thousand villages of India.
By 1934, Gandhi had decided to resign from the primary membership of the Congress and throw himself into the revival of development and constructive activities. Apart from spinning, he emphasized the development of village industries. The All India Village Industries Association was set up for this purpose in 1934.

Gandhi set up his new ashram at Sevagram in Wardha where he was assisted by activists like Mirabehn, Vinoba Bhave, Mahadev Desai and Pyarelal who were also actively engaged in constructive work in the nearby villages. Villagers were given practical training in the art of sandal-making, spinning and weaving. Inspired by Gandhian mode of village reconstruction, Renuka Ray, wife of an Indian Civil Service officer, started a project in 1936 for rural upliftment in Comilla district of Bengal. The revival of rural handicrafts was an important component of this project. In 1938 Gandhi devised a programme on Basic Education, known as the Wardha Scheme or Nayee Talim. This was a programme of education through handicrafts. Gandhi believed that the education introduced by the British in India was extremely expensive and could not be afforded by the large mass of the Indian populace. Speaking at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London on 20th October, 1931 Gandhi said:

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I \text{ say without fear of my figures being challenged successfully, that today India is more illiterate than it was fifty or a hundred years ago, and so is Burma, because the British administrators, when they came to India, instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out. They scratched the soil and began to look at the root and left the root like that and the beautiful tree perished. The village schools were not good enough for the British administrator, so he came out with his programme. Every school must have so much paraphernalia, building, and so forth. Well there were no such schools at all. There are statistics left by a British administrator which show that, in places where they have carried out a survey, ancient schools have gone by the board because there was no recognition for these schools, and the schools established after the European pattern were too expensive for the people, and therefore they could not possibly overtake the thing. I defy anybody to fulfill a programme of compulsory primary education of these masses inside of a century. This very poor country of mine is ill able to sustain such an expensive method of education. Our state would revive the old village school master and dot every village with a school for boys and girls.}
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The Beautiful Tree ed. by Dharam pal, 1993, p. vi.

In the late 1930’s Gandhi worked out the scheme of basic education with a view to build an education system to which the poor could have access. The central feature of the new plan was education of the

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10 hand-spun and hand-woven cloth
child through a useful productive craft, the application of the idea of productive work to education and the recognition of the child’s natural love for activity. Things produced in schools were to be marketable articles. Thus both the teacher and the pupil were to be engaged in production in the very act of teaching and learning. By this process the schools could become self-supporting. Gandhi said in 1945, “My Nai Talim is not dependent on money. The running expenses of this education should come from the educational process itself. Whatever the criticisms may be, I know that the only education is that which is self supporting” (Dhawan, 1951, p. 319). During the year 1945-46 the pay of the teachers employed in the basic school at Sevagram could be met from the income generated by the teachers and children through spinning, weaving and gardening.

The activities of nonprofit sector in colonial India were variegated. Through it a parallel hegemony vis-à-vis the colonial state emerged. The ideology of nationalism connoted a value-system. A true nationalist had to be socially progressive apart from being anti-colonial. He had to share the vision of a free India envisaged by the founding fathers of Indian nationalism. However, this legacy did not strengthen the

Nonprofit Sector and Women’s Movement

The Gandhian phase of the national movement facilitated the emergence of a vibrant and a dynamic women’s movement. The 19th century social reform movement perceived women as handicapped, whose plight was a slur on society and therefore, they had to be allowed to lead a life of dignity. The principle of gender equality or women’s rights was emphasized. In 1917 Annie Besant founded the Women’s India Association at Adyar in Madras. Its main aim was to help Indian women realize that the future of India lay in their hands, for as wives and mothers they were responsible for training, guiding and forming the character of the future rulers of India. Even though the ideals of the Women’s India Association represented no advance over those of the social reform movement of the late 19th century, yet it was the first association with many branches all over the country. By 1919 it had forty branches.

Gandhi assigned women a vital role in the struggle against colonial rule. Unlike the 19th century social reformers, he encouraged women to work for their own uplift and set their own agenda. Participation in the national movement gave women the confidence to articulate their ideas and concerns. The anti-purdah (veil) campaign launched in Bihar in 1928, the passing of the Sarda Act in 1929, which raised the minimum age of marriage for girls to 16, the setting up of the Rau committee, which recommended the granting of inheritance rights to women were some of the achievements of the women’s movement in colonial India.

Issues like women’s right to have control over their fertility, economic independence of women, their right to divorce, and the gender bias in the educational curriculum were raised by women like Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya, Mridula Sarabhai, Lilavati Munshi and Shyam Kumari Nehru. As women began to take interest in their own affairs, the women’s question tended to acquire a somewhat radical colour. A set of ideas emerged, which could subsequently be used as a potent instrument to attack traditions and values responsible for enslaving women.

(Panjani, 1996)
nonprofit sector in India after independence. The reason being that those who worked in the nonprofit sector before independence came to form the government. Since the urgent and immediate priority of the new government was economic development, the issues like literacy, health, social welfare and sanitation etc. suffered during the process.

POST INDEPENDENCE PHASE TILL 1975

Independence of the country from British rule in 1947 marked a new phase in the evolution of nonprofit organisations. Independence generated great hopes and expectations among all sections of the people. This optimism was widely shared in the country. At the same time the joy of independence was marred by the gloomy shadow of partition and the sectarian riots, mass killings and the massive exodus of people in both directions across the newly created border between India and Pakistan. The holocaust of partition was soon followed by armed conflict over Kashmir in 1948. Since than the two neighbours have fought three bloody wars in 1965, 1971 and 1999, and since 1998 they have also acquired nuclear weapons. In 1962 there was also an armed conflict between India and China over the boundary issue.

When India emerged as an independent country, the international scenario was also undergoing major changes. The cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union was hardening. Newly independent countries like India were expected to choose sides in the cold war. This was the famous Dulles Doctrine: If you are not with us, then you are against us. India tried to chart an independent course by adopting the policy of non-alignment and building an alliance of the newly independent countries in Asia and Africa around the policy that rested on opposition to all military alliances, colonialism, imperialism, all forms of discrimination like apartheid and the right of each country to choose its own path of development and change. This was the Non-Aligned Movement. The United States dubbed the policy as immoral and accused India and some other non-aligned states of being members of the Soviet camp.

The net result of all these developments in the immediate aftermath of India becoming independent was that a powerful sentiment was created within the country for a strong state capable of meeting the multifarious internal and external challenges. The Constituent Assembly that was drafting the Constitution for the new state also seemed to be influenced by these sentiments. The Constitution which finally
emerged in 1950, though federal in form has strong unitary features and vests in the state (read the Union) wide powers not only in the political sphere but also in the economic and social spheres. This naturally curtailed the scope for non-state actors, especially voluntary agencies and nonprofit organisations.

Simultaneously, the shape which the post-independence state and political formation took, was also instrumental in restricting the space for non-state or voluntary action. After independence many members of the Congress Party, who had earlier been active in Gandhian constructive work, became part of the new state. Even otherwise, the dominant idea in the new state was that the leading role in the field of development, and indeed in many other areas of social and cultural life, should be that of the state. This idea was partly a legacy of the freedom movement whereby nationalist opinion was committed to using state power after independence to correct the distortions of colonial rule, and partly a product of the dominant post-war consensus favouring active state intervention in economic life. The latter had two ideological bases. The milder version was based on Keynesian ideas and the more extreme one on the example of the Soviet Union. The Congress government after independence seemed to be moving from the milder version of state-led development to the more extreme one. Thus many activities that had earlier belonged to the nonprofit sector were brought under the purview of the state. For instance, khadi and village industries that had been an important part of Gandhi’s constructive programme and a means of mobilizing the masses, became a government programme under the aegis of a state institution, the Khadi and Village Industries Commission.

The state also took responsibility for many new areas in the social and cultural fields that logically should have been the arena of non-governmental action. New organisations created and controlled by the state in these areas were set up. Some of them are the Central Social Welfare Board, Sangeet Natak Akademi (for the performing arts), Lalit Kala Akademi (for plastic arts), National School of Drama, Film and Television Institute etc. This phase also saw the state taking control of some important institutions established by eminent Indians during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The most important of these were the Viswa Bharati University, Shantiniketan established by the Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, and the Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi established by eminent Muslims led by Dr Zakir Hussain (who later became the President of India) under inspiration of Gandhi’s ideas. These have now become state supported Universities. Later, institutions like Nehru Yuvak Kendra and Indian Council of Cultural Relations were set up by the state to involve the youth in development activities and to promote cultural exchange with foreign countries respectively. Several all-India level voluntary organisations like
Kasturba Gandhi Memorial National Trust, Indian Council of Child Welfare, Indian Council of Social Welfare, Youth Hostels Association, Association of Social Health etc. became active with funding support from the state.

Even while the state expanded its role to encompass new responsibilities in the fields of social development, welfare, art and culture, the activities of some of the older nonprofit organisations continued. These included religious bodies like the Christian missionaries that were active in provision of education and health services, especially to the poor tribal population in central, eastern and north-eastern India; the Ramakrishna Mission which had a strong commitment to education and upliftment of the poor and was actively involved in providing relief to victims of natural calamities; the Arya Samaj which through DAV organisations was involved in educational activities, mainly in Northern India, and a host of similar organisations in various parts of the country. Many committed Gandhians also, continued the tradition of constructive work all over the country through Gandhian organisations like Sarvodaya Societies and Gandhi Ashramas. Voluntary or nonprofit work in the early years of independence was largely organized through these channels and through educational institutions. The latter could be classified into two kinds: Gandhian institutions like Gujarat Vidyapeeth (Gujarat) and Gandhigram Rural Institute (Tamil Nadu) and western-influenced ones like Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), SNDT University, Bombay, Delhi School of Social Work, Baroda School of Social Work etc.

With the achievement of independence, the press, especially the vernacular press, and some English language papers that had been openly aligned with the national movement, gradually moved away from their role as a mouthpiece of nationalist sentiments into purveyors of news and views on national and international affairs. Since business houses owned the larger newspapers, especially the English language ones, they tended to articulate their owners’ opinions on crucial issues. As the *raison-de-etre* of the press was no longer the need to project the nationalist cause, many small vernacular papers that had played a major role in the freedom movement either closed down or transformed themselves into their modern-day versions. In general the newspapers and periodicals came to depend more and more on advertising revenue to sustain themselves - a process that has acquired greater salience in recent years, especially after the 1980’s when the first steps towards liberalization of the Indian economy were taken.

The state, on its part, tried to bring the press under its control and influence. The main instruments used for this purpose were the power of accreditation, control over official advertisements and control over
supply of newsprint, besides the usual use of state power and patronage. In the initial years after independence, the state was a major source of advertisements. This proved to be an effective means to influence recalcitrant newspapers and journals to shed their excessively critical stance. Similarly import and supply of newsprint, which was a state monopoly, also served the same purpose: loyal papers could be rewarded with generous and timely supplies of newsprint while the critical ones could be pressurized by either withholding agreed-upon quotas or delaying supply. Publications favoured with generous supplies could also make extra money by selling some in the black market. The state also took on the role of an honest broker in disputes and conflicts between journalists and managements of publications, and was generally seen to overtly protect the interests of the former. One of the means used for this purpose was the appointment of periodic wage-boards to recommend wage-structure for working journalists.

The press, on the other hand, created its own associations and organisations to protect its interests. Prominent among these were the Press Council, All India Newspaper Editors Conference, Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society, Editors Guild, All India Small and Medium Newspapers Society, India Federation of Working Journalists, National Union of Journalists etc. These associations, it may be noted, represented various groups connected with the press: managements, editors and journalists. While all sections were united in protecting the freedom of the press, the journalists also sought protection from the pressures exerted by owners and managements to toe a certain line in news reporting and editorial comment.

By the end of the early post-independence period (i.e. by the mid-seventies) the powerful state system erected after independence came under attack. There was general dissatisfaction with the results of development. The problem of poverty persisted while inequalities tended to increase: the age-old problem of the rich getting richer and the poor becoming poorer (relatively, if not in an absolute sense). Disillusionment with the capacity of the state to come to grips with genuine problems of poverty, deprivation, unemployment, lack of access to power ran deep. Popular discontent took various forms ranging from Maoist-inspired leftist movements believing in armed struggle (the Naxalites) to movements of students and youth against corruption and bad governance (the Gujarat and Bihar movements). The latter culminated in the Jaya Prakash Narayan led movement for total revolution.
In the year 1975, a state of emergency was clamped by the government of India following the decision of the High Court at Allahabad which set aside the election of the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The government suspended fundamental rights of the citizens and imposed a host of restrictions on the press (censorship) and political activity. The popular discontent that had preceded the Emergency, however, could not be eliminated by the authoritarian measures of the emergency period. They were simply pushed underground. When elections to the Parliament were called by Mrs. Gandhi in 1977 all these forces came out in opposition to the ruling Congress Party led by Mrs. Gandhi and successfully replaced it form the power. For the first time after independence the Congress party lost control of the levers of power at the central level. The newly formed Janata Party, a combination of heterogeneous groups including erstwhile socialists, ultra-right Hindu nationalists, Gandhians, and break-away Congressmen united by their opposition to the Emergency came to power.

THE POST–EMERGENCY PHASE (1977 ONWARDS)

The Janta period lasted only till 1980 when the Congress party led by Mrs. Gandhi came back to power in a new election. Though brief, the Janta regime brought about the re-establishment of democratic ideals and institutions. For our purposes its importance lies in the new lease of life that it gave to voluntary and nonprofit organisations. There was a virtual efflorescence of non-government activity in various fields - development, education and literacy, health, environment, civil liberties etc - with a strong emphasis on the poor, deprived and weaker sections of the society. This period also saw the rise of peoples’ movements on various issues, e.g., abolition of bonded labour and child labour and on environmental issues (Chipko, opposition to Silent Valley project and later in the eighties against large dams especially Narmada and Tehri). Organisations and movements espousing these causes came into existence. Many educated urban youth, who had taken part in the Naxalite movement or the struggle against the Emergency or other peoples’ movements of the time, became actively involved in the new breed of voluntary agencies.

The foundations of voluntary nonprofit activity laid at this time have continued to the present day and grown stronger with time, despite the fact that when the Congress party returned to power at the national level in 1980 it tried to target some of the more important organisations that had been vocal in their opposition to the Emergency. A Commission of Inquiry (Kudal Commission) was appointed to investigate charges like misuse of funds against Gandhian bodies like the Gandhi Peace Foundation, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and All India Sarva Seva Sangh and the Association of Voluntary Agencies for
Rural Development (AVARD). One of the charges against these organisations was that they were getting money from foreign sources.

Nothing much came of this effort, except the enactment of the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act - 1976 (FCRA) that sought to regulate receipt of foreign funds by Indian organisations, including voluntary and nonprofit ones. The Act made it mandatory for all Indian organisations to get clearance from, and be registered with, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India for receiving any money from foreign sources. Institutions and organisations permitted to receive foreign funds are also required to maintain separate bank accounts and account books in respect of all foreign money received by them, and to submit regular reports in this regard to the Government of India. The objective of the FCRA, clearly was to ensure that the government should be in a position to monitor (i) the sources of foreign funds to Indian organisation; (ii) the Indian organisation receiving such funds; and (iii) the quantum of funds received by the organisations and the use to which they were put.

The flow of foreign funds to the nonprofit sector increased manifold towards the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties. In the past, only a few foreign fund-giver organisations like the Ford Foundation, Oxfam etc. had been operating from the country. In the post-emergency phase a large number of such funding agencies established their base-office in the country. Their number has continued to increase ever since. Perhaps the growth in the number of nonprofit organisations and the emergence of a conducive environment for their functioning was instrumental in attracting foreign funding agencies to the country. However, there is another line of argument which claims that it was the increased availability of foreign funds that led to the mushroom growth of the nonprofit sector.

During the 1980’s, Government of India also started direct funding to the nonprofit sector. In fact some funds were being channeled to nonprofit organisations in the past too through the Peoples’ Action for Development India (PADI). PADI had been set up by the government to channelise foreign funds and funds received from bilateral agencies to the nonprofit sector. In 1986 PADI was amalgamated with the Council for Advancement of Rural Technology (CART), a body set up to promote rural technology by providing research grants and development assistance to Universities, research and training institutions, nonprofit institutions etc. The new body came to be known as the Council for Advancement of People’s Action and Rural Technology (CAPART). It combined the functions of the two merging organisations.
The total funds channeled to the nonprofit sector through CAPART increased considerably compared to the pre-1986 levels.

By the end of the eighties, nonprofit organisations were increasingly being associated by the government in the implementation of many development programmes. Mention may be made of the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme, construction of housing for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Non Formal Education Programme, Adult Literacy Programme, Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) etc. In fact, inspiration for introducing the TLC on a nation-wide scale came from the excellent work done by the Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad, a nonprofit organisation, in Kerala in the field of mass literacy. Thus an era of cooperation and collaboration between the nonprofit sector and the state began towards the close of the eighties. This relationship has not always been smooth and problem-free. Some of the important issues in this regard have been well summarised in a publication by the Society for Participatory Research in Asia:

The overall experience seems to indicate that availability of resources from the state for the work of voluntary organisations is unique and useful, on the one hand, but has been limiting, controlling and dependence-creating on the other. No significant change has been made in this approach of funding; in fact, it has been used to support those who have not raised significant voices against the state or its agents and representatives. In situations where such voices have been raised and local or state level vested interests have been challenged, government funding has stopped in the middle - what can be called the crisis of the 'second installment'. The second installment of grant-in-aid to voluntary organisations is stalled because of its work. The overall impact of this has been a carrot-and-stick approach, where funds have been given to those who do not 'rock-the-boat' or are willing to fit their work and activities within the programmes and schemes of the state, its strategies or programmes, agents and representatives through their own work. It seems that increasing bureaucratization and control over mechanisms of funding has considerably undermined their autonomous functioning and, therefore, those voluntary organisations in a recipient-donor relationship with the state find themselves in an uneasy situation.

(PRIA, 1991, p.49)

While nonprofit organisations have in general, been a bit wary of coming too close to the state power and being identified with it for fear of being co-opted or even corrupted, they are also lured by the availability of funds from the state. It may be noted that in India there are not many channels of fund-raising available to the nonprofit sector. The practice of raising money directly from the people is not very common.
Philanthropically inclined individuals prefer to either spend their charity money on their own or give it to religious bodies. Many corporate houses too have set up their own development organisations. Nonprofit organisations thus have had to turn either to the government or to foreign funding agencies for support. The government, on its part, has also tried to control nonprofit organisations either directly through legislation like FCRA or indirectly by attaching conditions to grants and use of funds or by mooting, from time to time, ideas like a code of conduct for such organisations. The idea of a code of conduct does seem laudable and worthy of implementation, but the nonprofit organisations have been understandably suspicious of a government-sponsored code. They have, however, opened themselves to criticism by failing to evolve a code on their own and regulating themselves collectively. The reason probably lies in the great heterogeneity that characterizes the sector. To that extent they are only reflecting Indian society in which they are rooted.

**Globalisation and NPOs in India**

During the decade of 1990’s the nonprofit sector in India developed along many new directions simultaneously. Its activities now span a very wide gamut from development action at the grassroots level to policy advocacy at the national and international levels, mobilizing the poor and exploited people for protection of their rights, campaigning against violation of human and civic rights, mass movements on important issues affecting the people, consumer education and consumer rights, advocacy and political education for decentralized local governance to name just a few. Nonprofit organisations seem to have matured in many parts of the country while in others they are still in their infancy.

The policies of liberalization and globalisation followed by the country since 1991 have also had an impact on the sector. At the ideological level many organisations, especially those working at the grassroots level are still trying to understand the full implications of these developments.

The decade of the nineties has brought to the fore another development of considerable significance to the nonprofit sector in India. This has its roots in the fiscal crisis of the state on the one hand and the economic opportunities available in the liberalized and globalised world on the other. Governments, both at the central and state levels, having over-extended themselves in the past are now faced with serious and persistent fiscal deficits. The situation calls for tough measures to bite the bullet and bring in much
needed fiscal discipline and responsibility in the system. Unfortunately, the nineties have also been the
decade of political uncertainty and instability with a succession of coalition governments at the center
and in many states. This fact has prevented governments from taking the tough economic and fiscal
decisions and curbing populism and profligacy that the situation demands. On the contrary they have
found it convenient, and politically rewarding, to continue with their old populist ways.

The continuing fiscal crisis has meant reduced availability of resources for investment in development
projects and programmes. Government’s response to this has been to invite private investment,
including foreign investment, by creating a conducive policy environment. This, however, does not solve
the problem of new investments in public goods like health, education, environment, drinking water
supply, urban services etc. In these cases governments have tended to go for project assistance, in the
form of loans, from multilateral and bilateral agencies like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank,
European Commission, UNDP, UNICEF, USAID, DFID etc. Accordingly a large number of foreign
funded projects in diverse fields like education, health, family planning, watershed management, forestry,
drinking water supply etc., have been launched in recent years in different parts of the country. In most
of these projects the funding agency insists on involvement of NGOs either in mobilizing people’s
participation and support or in actual implementation. In some cases the funding agencies have desired
that the entire project should be the responsibility of an NGO. The government has got round this
stipulation by registering a new body under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, the law under which
most of the NGOs and nonprofit organisations are registered, but under its control. Such organisations
have been dubbed as Government NGOs (GONGOs), a classic oxymoron!

On a superficial view, the insistence by foreign funding agencies on involvement of nonprofit
organisations in projects supported by them may appear to be a positive development from the point of
view of the nonprofit sector. It certainly shows a high degree of confidence on their part in the ability
and capacity of these organisations to carry out the responsibilities envisaged for them in the project.
For the organisations it implies an opportunity to get first-hand experience of working in partnership with
state agencies and being involved in the implementation of large projects, not to mention the extra
money that it brings. Everything is not all bright and well with the experiment, however. It has generated
intense debate, introspection and soul-searching among and within many of these organisations. They
have started questioning whether it is proper for them to be associated with government agencies on the
one hand and foreign funding agencies on the other in the implementation of projects in whose
formulation they have no say. There is a feeling among many organisations that their participation in some of the projects has reduced them to the status of contractors or sub-contractors of the project agencies. Though they may be doing qualitatively better work, the feeling is strong that they have been involved because their costs are lower than that of the governmental system. Many organisations are not very happy with the subordinate and secondary position they are given within the project hierarchy. Conformity to bureaucratic structures and rules is also irksome to many nonprofit organisations.

The liberal availability of funds (Indian and foreign) for nonprofit work in diverse fields means, in practical terms, a shortage of nonprofit organisations willing and able to take on these different responsibilities. This has resulted in two different outcomes, both of which are a cause for concern. Organisations that perform well in one project, say education, are keenly sought by the funding and project agencies to get involved in other projects, say forestry or rural drinking water supply, as well even though these may not be their areas of concern and expertise. This happens because in any given geographical area the choice of nonprofit organisations capable of working in development projects is quite limited. Thus if project agencies are under pressure to involve such organisations they have little choice but to fall back on the few that exist, provided of course their past record is not against them. Another kind of problem arises when organisations either change their priorities according to the availability of project work - education today, health tomorrow, watershed management the day after and so on - or are formed specifically to take advantage of the availability of project funding in a specific programme area. Both these developments are a cause of serious concern to many organisations as they raise doubts about the commitment of the nonprofit sector as a whole to their programme areas. The debate is still on.
ANALYSIS

The origin and development of the nonprofit sector in India has been shaped by two major influences: one rooted in indigenous traditions and value-systems, and the other a product of the interface between Indian society and the western/modern world. Indian traditions and value-systems are in turn rooted in religion that prescribes a code of ethics for the individual and the principles governing social life. Hinduism is the dominant religion, as it is practiced by over 80 percent of the population. There are in addition other religions followed by smaller but significant number of people. Some like Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism are indigenous and off-shoots of Hinduism, while others like Islam are foreign in origin. Zoroastrianism, practiced by a small number of people, though originating in Persia can, for all practical purposes, be considered an Indian religion as most of its followers are to be found in India, especially western India, and adjoining parts of Pakistan.

A noteworthy feature of all major religions has been the emphasis they place on charity and sharing wealth with others, especially the poor. In Hinduism serving the poor is considered equivalent to serving God (Narayan Sewa). Contrary to popular opinion, Hinduism does not have a disdain for worldly pursuits and creating wealth. It is against excessive consumption and attachment to things worldly. In the Bhagawat Gita, which presents the essence of Hindu philosophy, Lord Krishna asks his followers not to shun right action but attachment to the fruits of action. In other words while action is necessary and even liberating, attachment to the fruits of action is enslaving. From this it follows that it is not the creation of wealth (of course by right means) that is at fault, but its accumulation and over-consumption. Wealth is supposed to have three ends: accumulation, consumption and charity. Of these, charity is considered the best use of wealth followed by consumption and accumulation. Other religions too place an equal emphasis on charity. Helping the needy is generally viewed as the supreme duty of the individual. Buddhism prescribes an elaborate code of conduct for its followers based on the principle of the golden mean - avoiding all extremes. Like Hinduism it too does not frown upon creation of wealth but upon excessive consumption, arguing for moderation in all activities. It makes alms-giving obligatory for all its followers. As an organized religion, it used the institution of the Sangha to provide service to the poor. In Islam, as already pointed out, charity took the obligatory form of Zakat enjoined upon all Muslims.
In order to discharge their *Zakat* obligations all Muslims are required to earmark a part of their income to help the poor and needy.

Thus charity and obligation to help the poor and needy are values, flowing from religion, that are deeply ingrained among people belonging to diverse religions and backgrounds. Combined with a belief in a simple life, devoid of unnecessary ostentation and consumption, it provided a fertile ground for philanthropy and dedication to serving the poor and needy. Philanthropy and individual acts of social service have, historically, been the main forms of nonprofit activity in India. Institutionalised social service activities existed largely within the domain of religious institutions: *Ashramas* and *Maths* among Hindus, *Waqfs* and *Khanqahs* among Muslims and *Gurudwaras* and *Deras* among Sikhs. Throughout the ancient and medieval periods, nonprofit activity – whether individual inspired or state supported – found its natural expression through religious institutions.

The concept of secular nonprofit activity hardly existed. With the advent of western, mainly British, influence in India things began to change. Close contact with a new civilization, culture and religion that soon acquired political and economic dominance in India created turmoil among the people, especially the new middle class that emerged with the spread of English education. Christian missionaries accompanied British political domination. The early British rulers and their missionary allies sincerely believed that the future of India lay in the spread of Christianity in India. The early Christian missionaries had nothing but contempt for Hindu religious practices. They made little attempt to understand its philosophical and metaphysical basis. Where Christianity and the missionaries scored over the traditional religions of India was in their superior organisation, especially as it related to serving the poor. The work of Christian missionaries in the field of education and health care, especially in remote tribal areas, stood out as examples of dedicated service to the poor, even though the motivation may have been to win over these people to Christianity.

The example of Christian missionary work exerted a great influence on the new English educated elite that emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The organized form of charity and service to the poor practiced by the Christian missionaries impressed many who tried to emulate them. Mention has already been made of the activities of the *Brahmo Samaj* in Bengal, *Arya Samaj* and the DAV movement in north India and the Ramakrishna Mission in different parts of the country. No doubt these efforts in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries represent a new (i.e. more organized) approach to
nonprofit work in India; yet they were still firmly rooted within the framework of religion. At the same time, the emergence of this new breed of nonprofit activity did not extinguish individual works of charity and philanthropy.

Mahatma Gandhi further developed the tradition set by these early nonprofit religious organisations. He not only set up an Ashram (recalling the religious roots of the organisation) but also laid stress on non-political constructive work, including spinning of Khadi, by all political activists fighting for national independence. He set a personal example of an ascetic life-style and expected all his followers to do likewise – a clear adoption of an old and widely accepted precept of personal conduct having its roots in religion. Though religious in form, the content of Gandhi’s programme was secular: spinning, promotion of cottage industries, decentralization of power and an economy based on the satisfaction of need rather than greed.

One significant characteristic of Indian society that has shaped the nature of institutions, including nonprofit organisations, is the strong emphasis on individual salvation or Moksha as the purpose of life. This naturally inhibits collective or group activity that is the basis of vibrant nonprofit organisations and affects all facets of organized public life: the economy, society and polity. Under its influence organisations have only a temporary life; they are constantly being formed and re-formed with individuals breaking away to chart out a new course for themselves. In politics, factions formed around individuals and owing allegiance to them, are the building blocks of political parties. Loyalty to factional leaders takes precedence over loyalty to the parties. Fractional leaders too put their own interests above that of their parties. Hence parties keep breaking up or merging with others with remarkable frequency. Individuals too change party labels without any feeling of remorse or regret. The over-riding consideration behind all these changes remains individual gain, the counterpart of salvation, that justifies everything.

SOCIAL ORIGINS THEORY - SOME REFLECTIONS
This section attempts to analyse the nonprofit sector in India in the backdrop of social origins theory, which provides an alternative approach to explaining patterns of nonprofit development cross-nationally. While doing so, the ‘social origins’ approach focuses on broader social, political, and economic relationships. Based on two key dimensions: first, the extent of government social welfare spending; and second, the scale of the nonprofit sector, it identifies four different “routes” of third-sector development, viz., the liberal, the social democratic, the corporatist, and the statist.

In the liberal model, low government social welfare spending is associated with a relatively large nonprofit sector. In the social democratic model, however, the state-sponsored and state-delivered social welfare protections are quite extensive and the room left for service-providing nonprofit organisations is quite constrained. The corporatist and the statist model are characterised by strong states. In the corporatist model, the state is induced to make common cause with nonprofit institutions so that nonprofit organisations function as one of several “premodern” mechanisms that are deliberately preserved by the state in its efforts to retain the support of key social elites. In the statist model, the state retains upper hand in a wide range of social policies, and exercises power on its own behalf, or on behalf of economic elites, but with a fair degree of autonomy. Unlike in the liberal regimes, both social welfare protection and nonprofit activity remain highly constrained.

The social origin approach argues that certain circumstances are more congenial to the blossoming of nonprofit institutions than others, and the shape and character of the resulting nonprofit sector is affected by the particular constellation of social forces that give rise to it. It may, however, be noted that the approach is basically an exporotely attempt to provide an alternative explanation to the growth and development of the nonprofit sector.

In terms of the four models of nonprofit sector development mentioned above, the Indian case can best be described as fitting the social democratic model from immediately after independence to the mid-seventies, and a gradual movement away to the liberal model since then. This movement has accelerated somewhat since the early nineties. In spite of this the social democratic features remain fairly strong and the balance is still heavily weighted in favour of the state.
As already explained in an earlier part of this paper, the state that came into existence in 1947 after independence of the country primarily consisted of elements and groups that had constituted the nonprofit sector during the colonial period. The emergence of India as an independent state also generated great enthusiasm and expectations among the people. The ideological underpinning of the national movement had been the belief that most of the ills from which India suffered, especially in the economic and political fields, were the creation of British colonialism. Hence it was logical to hope that with the attainment of independence the new state would be able to solve these problems.

Certain other developments, both internal and external, also favoured a strong activist state in the period immediately following the country’s independence. As pointed out earlier these were the partition riots and the conflict with Pakistan over Kashmir and the cold war between the USA and the USSR. It is also relevant to mention that the leaders of the national movement, especially Jawaharlal Nehru the first Prime Minister of independent India, were highly impressed by the spectacular economic achievements of the Soviet state. Hence they too adopted a model of development influenced by the Soviet example. This was defined as the “socialistic pattern of society” based on a mixture of private and public sectors (the so-called mixed economy) with the latter controlling the commanding heights of the economy. The result was the creation of a sort of command economy with emphasis on centralized planning. The scope for nonprofit action was correspondingly restricted within such a framework.

The situation started changing in the early eighties under the influence of liberalization policies - gradually at first but more rapidly after 1991 when India went in for structural adjustment loans from the IMF and World Bank following a serious fiscal and balance of payments crisis. The conditionalities attached to these loans necessitated the adoption of liberal economic policies at home and greater integration with the world economy externally i.e., acceptance of and adjustment to globalisation. Furthermore, the state too was becoming less capable of shouldering various responsibilities it had come to assume over the years. The end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties brought it face to face with a severe resource crunch and worrying levels of fiscal deficit. As the fiscal crisis of the state persisted throughout the nineties, it became imperative for the state to shed many of the functions it had acquired in the first three decades after independence. This meant acceptance of a larger role for private enterprise in the economic sphere, privatization of state enterprises and encouragement of nonprofit enterprises. Thus we find that by the end of the nineties the activist state was definitely on the decline. The space vacated by it
was being increasingly filed by private enterprise and in the public arena to a lesser extent by nonprofit organisations.

So far this latter movement is only at an incipient stage and not very well marked. Perhaps the reason for this may be that as yet there is little political support for the withdrawal of the state from an active role in the public sphere, especially areas concerned with poverty alleviation and protection of the weak and vulnerable sections of the society. Thus, while there is greater acceptance of a larger role for private enterprise in the economy, popular support for nonprofit activity at the cost of state action is not that strong. The situation is still very fluid. Possibly the Indian case may evolve in an entirely new direction. What that direction will ultimately be is not easy to predict or delineate.

It may be noted that, the Social Origins Theory is based largely on the experience of western, industrialized countries. It remains to be seen whether it would hold up in the light of evidence from developing countries, especially India. Variables which may affect the theory could include: independent role of caste; confusion arising out of the juxtaposition of class and caste stratification which may overlap to some extent and be independent in many cases; absence of an organized church as a force in civil society; increasing role of foreign funding agencies.

Religion, no doubt, has played an important role in promoting philanthropy, but mainly as an individual effort. Religion as an organized institutional force, like the Christian church, has not been part of the Indian (or Hindu) tradition. The closest parallel that we have is the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee (SGPC) among the Sikhs and even in this case the non-religious activities of the SGPC have more to do with politics, especially in Punjab and in relation to the Akali Dal, than with social and welfare activities. Since religion, by and large, is an individual matter, philanthropy inspired by it also tends to be individual based.

The role of foreign funding has been an important feature of nonprofit activity, especially in the field of social programmes and development, during the last quarter century. In fact many nonprofit organisations literally owe their existence to the availability of foreign funds. Foreign funding for nonprofit activity has had its share of problems as far as the state is concerned. At various times the state has stepped into control/regulate foreign fund flows into the country generally, and the non-profit sector in particular. One example of this is the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act (FCRA) of 1976, which
makes it obligatory for all organisations seeking foreign funds to get prior permission from, and be registered with, the Government of India. As a result they would then be obliged to conform to all regulations and requirements of reporting.

On the flip side, foreign funding is highly susceptible to political forces. For example, when India conducted its nuclear tests in 1999, many countries suspended economic assistance to the country. This also affected many non profit organisations who had been receiving funds from these sources. The social origins theory would have to accommodate these features, specific to countries like India, in order to become comprehensive.
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   Bhubaneswar
Ahmedabad

PRIA Research Team

1. Dr. Rajesh Tandon
   President, PRIA

2. Dr. S.S. Srivastatva
   Principal Researcher

3. Ms. Atreyee Cordeiro

4. Dr. K. Amarendra Singh *

6. Dr. Shailendra K. Dwivedi **

7. Mr. Sanjay Gupta

HOPKINS CORE TEAM

1. Dr. Lester M. Salamon
   Director
   Centre for Civil Society Studies
   Johns Hopkins University
   Baltimore, USA
   Project Director

2. Mr. Leslie C. Hems
   Director
   Centre for Voluntary Sector Policy
   University College of London
   London, UK
   Coordinator, Data Collection Strategy

3. Ms. Regina List
   Centre for Civil Society Studies
   Johns Hopkins University
   Baltimore, USA
   Project Manager

4. Dr. Stefan Toepler
   Centre for Civil Society Studies
   Johns Hopkins University
   Baltimore, USA
   Coordinator, Legal Aspects

5. Dr. Wojciech Sokolowski
   Centre for Civil Society Studies
   Johns Hopkins University
   Baltimore, USA
   Data Manager

6. Ms. Mimi Bilzor
   Centre for Civil Society Studies
   Johns Hopkins University
   Baltimore, USA
   Communications Associate

* Till 29 May 2000

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Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), a non-profit voluntary development organisation based in New Delhi, India, has been promoting people centred development initiatives within the perspective of Participatory Research. It aims to strengthen popular knowledge, demystify dominant concepts and promote experiential learning and people’s participation. For nearly two decades, this has been the basis of supporting empowerment of the poor and the oppressed in PRIA’s work. It learns about challenges of promoting people’s participation and democratic governance through local grassroots action via systematic documentation. It facilitates learning through sharing of its research findings and capacity building, by promoting a conducive environment and supportive public policies towards this end. PRIA operates locally, nationally, regionally and globally.