

**STUDY OF THE WORKING OF THE AIDED VOLUNTARY
AGENCIES IN SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMME - 1978**

1. The Study

Right from the commencement of the planning process, the Government of India has meticulously crafted various schemes for the welfare of the marginalised sections of the Society. This is reflected in increased allocation on social welfare programmes over the plan periods. Taking stock of the multi-dimensional problems connected with social welfare, voluntary agencies have also been assigned an increasingly important role in supplementing the endeavours of the Government. Voluntary agencies have grown manifold and are engaged in number of developmental and welfare activities. An assessment of the contribution made by the voluntary agencies was considered relevant to have some background for planning Social Welfare Services in the future. In view of this, the Planning Commission desired that a study of the working of the voluntary agencies in the field of Social Welfare should be undertaken by the Programme Evaluation Organisation. Accordingly, in 1971 the PEO conducted a study of the voluntary organisations associated with social welfare work in the country and its report was released in 1978.

2. Objectives

- i) To study the organisation and administration of the selected voluntary agencies.
- ii) To study the nature of welfare services provided by them and the extent of expansion of services effected with the help of grants-in-aid.
- iii) To analyse the problems and difficulties encountered by these agencies in the implementation of the programmes planned.
- iv) To suggest ways and means for better functioning of these agencies.

3. Sample Size/Criteria for Selection of Sample

Only those schemes on which an expenditure of Rs.5 lakh or more had been incurred during 1969-70, were selected for the study. On this criteria, four schemes namely General (Grants-in-aid) Welfare, Holiday Homes, condensed courses of education for Adult Women & Mahila Mandals were selected for the purpose of this study. Voluntary agencies functioning exclusively for SCs and STs and those engaged in the Integrated Programme for Family and Child welfare formed parts of the study.

One district was selected from each of the 15 States and the then Union Territory of Himachal Pradesh which reported the maximum number of voluntary agencies receiving grants-in-aid from the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB). Within each sample district one voluntary organisation was selected from each of the four selected schemes. Four workers (two voluntary and two paid), 10 beneficiaries and four prominent persons (2 officials and 2 non officials) were selected from each selected voluntary organisation. Thus, the final sample consisted of 66 voluntary organisations, 62 welfare institutions, 253 voluntary and paid workers, 264 officials and non-officials and 748 beneficiaries scattered over 15 States and the Union Territory of Himachal Pradesh.

4. Reference Period

The study was initiated during 1971 and the field data collected related to the year 1969-70.

5. Main Findings

1. Whereas 43 per cent of the sample voluntary agencies nominated their office-bearers, 41 per cent resorted to elections. These agencies preferred persons holding high offices/political positions with a view to secure public co-operation, administrative facilities, etc.

2. The mode of recruitment of the paid-staff varied between well-established organisations which usually recruited the staff by advertising the posts or through employment exchanges and smaller organisations which selected their staff through personal acquaintance or references. As a result, there was no uniform scale of pay or fixed salaries offered by various voluntary organisations in the country.

3. Barring some of the well-established voluntary agencies, most of the welfare organisations did not have adequate and suitable accommodation to conduct welfare activities.

4. Despite the creation of 20 additional posts of Assistant Project Officers, the supervisory visits and field counselling services of the CSWB officials remained thoroughly inadequate. The Board apparently disregarded the suggestions of the Renuka Ray Committee (1959) and the Balsara Committee (1964) to initiate effective co-ordination among voluntary agencies. Barring some sporadic attempts reported from Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, the forums for the exchange of experiences among voluntary agencies were not created.

5. The position of resource flows and utilization in these organisations was marked by (a) the failure of tiny organisations to attract matching contributions, donations etc. (b) financial difficulties triggered by the above failure coupled with the inadequacy of and the inordinate delay in the receipt of grant-in-aid and, (c) misutilization of the grant-in-aid despite the checks provided through the operation of joint accounts in banks, periodic, inspections, etc.

6. Voluntary agencies meant for the welfare services of the physically and mentally handicapped persons were crippled by limited resources and the dearth of suitably trained staff.

6. Major Suggestions

1. Recommendations on the resource front reiterate the need for; (a) providing grants to non-viable institutions for repairs and replacement of machinery, equipments etc; (b) giving grants on priority basis to those organisations operating for physically and mentally handicapped persons; (c) realistically assessing the financial and other needs of the voluntary agencies; (d) ensuring concerted efforts by the CSWB and the State SWBs to mobilise more public contributions; and (e) denying financial assistance to those agencies which are either defunct or are indulging in malpractices.

2. Need is also felt for closer supervision of the voluntary agencies and for their effective co-ordination by forming co-ordination committees at the National, State and District levels.

3. The managing committee should preferably be constituted through election. The beneficiaries of these organisations should be given representation in their executive bodies.

4. Other suggestions call for giving uniform pay for similar educational qualifications and duties, organising seminars and training courses for voluntary and paid workers and encouraging production-oriented programmes for tribal areas through voluntary organisations.