

Non-governmental Organisations in the Education of Underprivileged Children

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By

Kajal Kumar Dutta and
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Dedicated to all the underprivileged children living in streets, slums and rural areas who are deprived of the basic facilities which are generally available to mainstream children and who face challenges from society, from their home/parents, and who get little or no access to education. This is also dedicated to the NGOs and their teams, especially the social workers who are wholeheartedly involved in nurturing the educational and emotional needs of the underprivileged children in spite of impediments from society and many other challenges.

*“Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world”
by Nelson Mandela, Nobel Laureate*

*“A poor teacher tells, an average teacher explains, a good teacher demonstrates, a great teacher inspires”
by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Nobel Laureate*

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FOREWORD

Education is a powerful tool in the fight against poverty, and this is evident when we look at India. States with higher literacy rates tend to have lower poverty rates, while those with lower literacy rates often struggle more with poverty. This shows just how important education is for the overall development of our society.

Making sure that everyone has access to education, especially under the broad goal of "Education for All," is no small task. It requires the combined efforts of the government, NGOs, educational institutions, businesses, and the community as a whole. The challenge becomes even more significant when it comes to meeting the educational needs of underprivileged children.

NGOs play a crucial role in this area, not only in education but also in fields like healthcare, the environment, and human rights. Despite many challenges, they continue to work tirelessly to improve the educational opportunities for underprivileged children, supporting the government's goal of ensuring education for everyone.

This book is incredibly relevant in today's context. It emphasizes the need for government bodies, businesses, schools, and NGOs to collaborate to ensure that every child, regardless of their background, gets the education they deserve. The authors, Kajal Kumar Dutta and Vandana Talegaonkar, have done an excellent job of highlighting the important role NGOs play in this mission, the challenges they face, and the critical support needed from corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

I highly recommend this well-researched book to university students, businesses, government education departments, and NGOs. It's a valuable resource that will inspire and guide all of us in addressing the educational needs of underprivileged children in our society.

James Murphy

Founder of StoryX and GeNext in the United Kingdom, a European leader of Al Gore's Climate Reality Project, and adviser to global businesses on sustainability.

PREFACE

The achievement of development goals demands the participation and contribution of multiple actors in society. These actors range from governments to inter-governmental organizations, donor agencies, international organizations, volunteer groups and the larger civil society. In the education sector, the challenges of the universalization of education under the broader framework of Education for All (EFA) is a huge task and calls for the participation of multiple actors. The challenge is serious when the educational needs of underprivileged sections of society are to be addressed. Acknowledging the presence and contribution of several actors in this, it is likely that some actors may have the potential to play a more significant role by virtue of their position, constitution and the rationale for their functioning. The position of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) presents a worthy case for study. NGOs are now recognized as key actors in the landscape of development, human rights, humanitarian actions, environment and many other areas of public action (Lewis, 2010; Priya International Academy, 2014; Baviskar, 2001). NGOs are being increasingly used as vehicles for development. NGOs have emerged to address social challenges like education, economic issues, public health issues, social inequality, child abuse and neglect, and environmental racism. Their flexibility, quick responses, access to target groups and ability to facilitate poor people towards self-reliance makes it easier for them to address developmental challenges (Kebede, 2015; Lewis, 2010). They work on issues of poverty, literacy, health, women's empowerment, the environment, community regeneration, rehabilitation, and emergency services like support to victims of earthquakes and floods (Schwabensland, 2016). NGOs have turned-out to be a main service provider in countries where the government is unable to fulfil its obligation/duties to all section of the society (UNESCO, 2009). NGOs mainly focus on creating opportunities and resources in areas such as education, skills, social networks, employment, community empowerment, and emergency services (UNESCO, 2009; Morgan et al, 2011; Lewis, 2020).

Though there is no immediate solution to these problems, the non-governmental organizations/non-profit organizations or various entities/institutions have turned into potential instruments for bringing about social transformation and building a society with equal rights

through educational development programmes for the underprivileged children. They have considerable potential for bringing about effective social change (CII, 2013; Deb et al., 2022; Dantwala, 1998; NEP, 2020). In recent years, NGOs have become very active in supplementing the educational goals set by the government of India (Vishwakarma, 2017). NGOs are working in diverse areas and play a vital role in the development of education of the underprivileged children (CII, 2013; Vishwakarma, 2017; Khandpekar, 2016; Nilika, 2018). However, NGOs are facing various challenges like recruitment, lack of skilled manpower in fund raising, retaining quality teachers, attrition/retention, infrastructure for vocational courses, teacher training and funds due to the unpredictability of donations from various sources and government support (CII, 2013; Jagannathan, 2001; Vishwakarma, 2017; Kebede, 2015; Temaluru, 2005).

It has been universally recognized that education is an important conduit through which development goals can be addressed and attained. Nelson Mandela once said, “Education is the most powerful weapon that can be used to change the world”. As per Goal 4 of the United Nations’ sustainable development goals (SDGs), education is an important goal. Education is also important in poverty reduction. In India, it has been observed that in states with the lowest literacy rates, the poverty rate is high, and that in states with high literacy rates, the poverty rate is less. For the state of Kerala, where the literacy rate is 94%, the poverty rate is 7.1% and for the state of Bihar, where the literacy rate is 61.8%, the poverty rate is 33.7% (Census, 2011). Therefore, the educational development of underprivileged children is essential to uplift the underprivileged section of the society and thereby the development of the nation. Since underprivileged children have little or no access to the privileges of mainstream society, their education is a challenge. NGOs have the potential to play a supportive role.

The major issue for underprivileged children throughout the world, irrespective of location, region or whether the country is developed, developing or underdeveloped, is that they are deprived of the basic needs such as healthcare, education, nutritious food, and hygienic living conditions which are generally available for the privileged children (Kebede, 2015; Dev, 2022). These children are vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and victimization and are deprived of their social and economic rights (Dev et al., 2022). It is because of these difficult situations that the underprivileged children are not getting the benefits of education as offered by the formal systems. The living conditions of the

underprivileged children and/or their parents/guardians are very poor. They live in cramped houses or shabby dwellings, without proper sanitation facilities, clean drinking water and electricity (Murrieta, 2010; Thomas, 2014; Mukherjee, 2014). The children do not go to school and play in the streets. Without schooling, they generally start working at an early age. The more they are busy with studies and other extracurricular activities, the less likely they are to get involved in anti-social activities. But, these underprivileged children, in general, do not receive motivation either from their parents or from the society towards education. Due to poor economic conditions, the parents engage their children in informal sectors or force them to beg or sell products in streets, railway stations, bus stands, etc. in order to add to their family income (Hosgor, 2012; Kebede, 2015). In order to address the above issues, the government of India has implemented various schemes to promote education among the underprivileged children. These are elaborated below.

The government of India has introduced policies and programmes to facilitate the education of the underprivileged children. On a general basis, NPE 1968, NPE 1986, NPE 1992 (revised), and NEP 2020 have emphasized equality, equal opportunities, and measures for supporting the education of underprivileged children. Specific schemes like the Mid-day Meal, the District Primary Education Program (DPEP), the Right to Education (RTE) Act, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), and monetary provisions have been implemented. Despite their contribution, more efforts are required (Tilak, 2000; Dev et al., 2022). The following study was conducted in Vadodara district of the state of Gujarat, India. For a better understanding, the section below enumerates social development aspects of Gujarat state and Vadodara district.

Gujarat has a rich tradition of NGOs due to its economic prosperity (Patil, 2023). NGOs have contributed to social reconstruction, and the continuing philanthropic proclivity covers a large field of development activities in the state. The NGOs have changed their role and the focus of their activities so that they are relevant for the national development (Iyengar, 2000; Patil, 2023). Vadodara district is an appropriate site for this study of NGOs educating the underprivileged children to be undertaken. One of the major reasons is that it is an industrial city with many underprivileged children present. Gujarat is among the fastest growing states in India since 2005. It is one of the leading states of India for industrial development, with high incomes and high growth. Among various major industrial districts of Gujarat, Vadodara district is one of the promising places for heavy/medium/small industries such as power, oil, pharmaceuticals,

fertilizers, chemicals, heavy electrical products, and aircraft manufacturing (in the pipeline). Apart from these processes and manufacturing industries, a number of multinationals/Indian conglomerates in the fields of engineering and technology, power and hydrocarbons, and software have established their business offices in and around Vadodara city. There are more than 2,062 reputed industries in and around Vadodara city, which are established in various industrial parks developed by Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC). As per the most recent census, the population of Vadodara district is estimated to be 4.8 million, up 14.2% from the figure in the 2011 census. Vadodara, a cosmopolitan city, is considered an important education hub and the cultural capital of the state of Gujarat. The above characteristics of Vadodara district/city turned it into an enticing proposition for the poor rural/urban population of Gujarat state and other states, in the quest for better wages, a better quality of life and other facilities which were not available in their regions of origin. However, due to poor urban planning and infrastructure, the underprivileged children of the city face various challenges, such as education, healthcare, nutritious food, hygienic environments, and social injustice. As per a 2016 survey by the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, it was found that 1,611 children lived on the streets of Vadodara city. A study by The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, in May 2019, on the street children of Vadodara city revealed that 61% of these children took to selling items on road to support their family and that 56% of children had never been to school. Out of children who had been to school, 53.33% had dropped out between grade 4 and grade 6 (The Indian Express, 2019). As per Census 2011, the average literacy rate of Gujarat is 78.03%, and that of Vadodara city is 78.92% - marginally higher than state average. However, the literacy rate of Vadodara is less than other major cities of Gujarat, namely Surat (85.53%), Ahmedabad (85.31%), Anand (84.37%), Gandhinagar (84.16%), Bharuch (81.51%), and Rajkot (80.96%), and is far behind than the average literacy rate of the state of Kerala which is 94%.

Through a preliminary field study of Vadodara-based NGOs, the authors found that curricula, teaching approaches for imparting education to the underprivileged children, and the management of resources played critical roles in the education of the underprivileged children. The authors have been involved in NGO activities for last ten years and have interacted with the underprivileged children, their parents and NGO volunteers/teachers. The observations and experiences gathered during the association with NGOs working for the educational development of underprivileged

children helped the authors in this study of the role of NGOs in educating the underprivileged children. This study explored the profile of the NGOs, the education systems, and curriculum components being followed by the NGOs for teaching the underprivileged children, and challenges faced in resource management by the NGOs for the sustainability of their operations. The findings of the study have brought out the suitable education system/curriculum components for the underprivileged children, best management practices of NGOs, risks in the operation of NGOs and their mitigation strategies, and the challenges NGOs face in their operations. The study's findings will be a good reference for the research scholars and social work students looking into the various phenomena related to NGOs and the education of underprivileged children. The study's findings will also give insights to policy makers, corporations, schools/institutions, NGO functionaries/volunteers (in India and outside), and professionals engaged in this field.

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We are immensely indebted to Dr. Juin Dutta, President of Srotoshwini Trust (NGO), Vadodara, Ms. Mousumi Datta, General Secretary of Srotoshwini Trust (NGO), Vadodara, Late Dr. B. C. Jain of Mahavir International (NGO), Dr. Vikram Patel, Chairman of Muni Seva Ashram (NGO), Vadodara, Dr. Sanjay Kothari of C. R. Kothari Memorial Charitable Trust (NGO), and Father Jolly of Xavier Kelavani Mandal Trust (NGO), Vadodara, for their relentless and unconditional contributions towards the social development of underprivileged children through education, healthcare, empowering underprivileged women, and other social activities. Their encouragement helped us to take up the study. We convey our sincere gratitude to Dr. Madhurita Chowdhary, Professor of English literature of The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, and Prof. N. Pradhan, Advisor to Department of Education, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, who were involved in different stages of this study from the beginning and were instrumental in shaping it. They all extended their help with all academic and non-academic aspects even when they all were hard-pressed for time. The authors are indebted to Dr. Arunim Bandyopadhyay, Professor, Centre of Russian Studies, Jaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi who generously made great contributions to the book by checking the drafts and formulating the ideas that permeate through this book. We are grateful to Dr. Debashish Sengupta, Professor of SL and Course Leader at the

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We would be failing in our duty if we did not acknowledge the support we got from our families and friends. With the emotional and physical help they provided us, we were able to pay utmost attention to the development of this book.

At the outset, we are extremely happy and immensely grateful to mention that Mr. James Murphy, Founder of StoryX & GeNext in the United Kingdom and a European leader of Al Gore's Climate Reality Project and adviser to global businesses on sustainability, has expressed his valuable views through his foreword to the book.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study is an exploration of NGOs that are engaged with the education of underprivileged children. Education is a critical conduit for development, as per the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4. Therefore, the book gives an understanding of NGOs, the education of underprivileged children, and the underprivileged children themselves. First, a brief overview of non-governmental organizations is enumerated below.

1.1 Non-governmental organizations and their emergence

NGOs have existed in various forms for centuries. For example, in 1910, some 130 international groups organised a coordinating body called the Union of International Associations. NGOs rose to high prominence in international development and increased their numbers dramatically in 1980s and 1990s (Baviskar, 2001; Lewis, 2010). Though it is difficult to know precisely how many NGOs are operating, it is estimated that millions of NGOs are actively working for the wellbeing of society worldwide. As per the United Nations' estimate, there were 35,000 large established NGOs in 2000. In 1995, the total aid value was USD 58 billion worldwide, which subsequently increased to USD 78 billion in 2004 (Lewis, 2010). The catalysis role can be defined as the NGO's ability to inspire, facilitate or contribute to improved thinking and action to promote social transformation.

The world of NGOs contains a variety of labels. While the term "NGO" is widely used, there are also many other over-lapping terms used such as "non-profit", "voluntary", and "civil society organizations". In many cases the use of different terms does not reflect descriptive or analytical rigour but is instead a consequence of the different cultures and histories in which thinking about NGOs emerged. "Non-profit organization" is used frequently in the United States of America (USA) where the market is dominant and where citizen organizations are rewarded with fiscal benefits

(not commercial). In the United Kingdom (UK), the titles “voluntary organization” or “charity” are commonly used, following a long tradition of volunteering and voluntary work that has been informed by Christian values and the development of charity laws. The acronym “NGO” tends to be used in relation to international or developing country work, since its origin lies in the formation of the United Nations in 1945, when the designation of “Non-government Organization” was awarded to certain international non-state organisations that were given consultative state in UN activities (Lewis, 2010; Priya International Academy, 2014). It helped to distinguish private organizations from intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), such as the UN itself. As per the World Bank, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are “private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interest of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development” (World Bank, 1995). A non-governmental organization is a non-profit making and social service developmental institution motivated to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged in society, either through direct services to the people or through facilitative indirect services to other voluntary organizations (Tilak, 2000). Voluntary organizations are constituted with a vision by an individual and/or by a group of like-minded people, committed to uplifting the poor, marginalized, and underprivileged (Tilak, 2000).

1.1.1 Genesis and development of renowned international NGOs

Some world-renowned NGOs such as Save the Children, Akshaya Patra, Amnesty International, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), and United Way Worldwide have existed for many decades. The genesis, development and functions of these world-renowned NGOs are enumerated below.

Save the Children:

Eglantyne Jebb was a philanthropic and outspoken individual who observed the suffering of children during the devastation of World War I. In 1919, he founded Save the Children, a non-governmental organization, and launched the Save the Children fund in London. It soon become the first global movement for the children and started child sponsorship programs. He drafted the historic Declaration of the Rights of the Child,

adopted by the Leagues of Nations in 1924. The organization started expanding its activities into many countries with the main objective of the protection of child rights. By 2016, Save the Children supported more than 13.8 million underprivileged/deprived children across 100 countries in the areas of education, healthcare, and the protection of children's rights. However, the journey of Save the Children was not smooth and it had to overcome many challenges, such as the generation of funds, resistance from societal/political authorities, cuts in aid budgets though the frequency and severity of humanitarian crises increases, a less stable and fragmented international system, a lack of global leadership, public indifference, and cynicism. However, the organization emerged stronger despite the above challenges by adopting new technologies, using innovative techniques to reach larger numbers of people at a much lower cost, forming new collaborations and partnerships, the careful evaluation of projects/areas needing investment, demonstrating a high level of governance, accountability and transparency, embracing innovation, being forward-thinking, and reforming. According to Save the Children, the major challenges faced by NGOs and how they can be mitigated are: a) lack of credibility – to overcome this, NGOs should demonstrate credible work to create trust in people; b) fund management – to generate the right quantity of funds to execute their projects; c) transparency – NGOs should be transparent to people about their work and financial statements; and d) being watched carefully by governments; NGOs need to maintain healthy relationships with government agencies – local, state level and central government – and be a partner with government wherever required. The NGOs should get the right people at board level for efficient and effective operation.

Akshay Patra:

The founder of Akshaya Patra, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, was walking in a village named “Mayapur”, which is located near to Kolkata, when he saw a group of children fighting with street dogs over scraps of food. From that simple but heartbreaking incident, was born a determination that no child within a radius of ten miles from the organisation's center should go hungry. In 2000, he set a vision, “*No child in India shall be deprived of education because of hunger*”, and launched the “Mid-day Meal” to 1,500 government schools in Bangaluru. Presently, it is one of the world's largest mid-day meal programs built on the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. The organization has entered into partnership with the Indian government and various state governments in India and has roped in many philanthropists as donors. Akshaya Patra is

now serving more than 1.8 million children in 19,039 government schools/government-aided schools across 12 states of India with mid-day meals. Though there are challenges, including criticism from the public about the quality of the food and other aspects, the organization has grown from strength to strength with good management, innovative technology, and smart engineering.

Amnesty International:

Amnesty International is another non-governmental organization, whose founder Peter Benenson was a lawyer in London. He was pained by observing the sufferings of prisoners in Britain. He initiated and set-up Amnesty International as a non-governmental organization in 1961, with the aim of securing amnesty (the name of the organization coined accordingly) for prisoners of conscience all over the world. Amnesty International is a world embracing movement working for the protection of human rights and the release of male and female prisoners who have been arrested for their political conviction, the color of their skin, their ethnic origin, or their faith. The organization consists now of 1,874 groups in 33 countries. During the journey of the organization, it has faced many challenges, such as criticism for opaque actions and placing restrictions on schools and NGOs for training on Human Rights Education (HRE). However, with strategic planning and innovative implementation policies, it has left behind all the criticisms and challenges and the NGO is now growing from strength to strength.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies:

Henry Denison, the founder of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), observed the suffering of people in the aftermath of World War I and founded the organization in 1919 in Paris. The organization launched many healthcare programs for the victims of World War I. The challenges faced are urbanization of warfare, new technologies of warfare, terrorism and counter-terrorism, and armed conflicts. However, the organization has continued to provide services in the healthcare sector and has supported millions of people across the world.

American Friends Service Committee:

George Margret Fell, a Quaker, observed the suffering of women and children and initiated philanthropic work in the USA by founding the

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in 1917. It implemented female empowerment programs and encouraged education and activities related to the protection of children's rights and to healthcare issues. The organization acts as a change agent, service provider, and community development organization. The AFSC is one of the corporate expressions of Quaker faith and practice. It is rooted in the conviction that each human life is sacred, each man is a child of God, and that expression through creative action is the only power that can overcome hatred, prejudice, and fear. The committee undertakes programs for relief services and education, ministering to both the physical and spiritual needs of men and women.

United Way Worldwide:

United Way Worldwide, which began its journey in Denver, USA, has grown and evolved with a simple yet significant history spanning more than 130 years. Post-1860, Denver suffered from the Civil War, wildfires, and heavy floods which destroyed many buildings and caused water contamination and many other challenges. The education standard declined and many people started suffering due to health-related issues. The living conditions deteriorated, which forced people to leave Denver. In 1887, a Denver woman, a priest, two ministers and a Rabbi got together and recognized the need to work together in new ways to make Denver a better place. The name of the organization evolved as "United Way". It is the amalgamation of the strength of individuals/groups/institutions to unite and serve the community better and in an effective way. They created an organization to collect funds from local charities, to coordinate relief services, to counsel and refer clients to cooperating agencies, and to make emergency assistance grants for cases that could not be referred. In that year, Denver raised USD \$21,700 for this greater good and created a movement that would become the "United Way". Today United Way is bringing people, organizations and communities together around a common cause, a common vision and a common path forward in the areas of education, financial stability and health. Over the years, United Way has engaged in services for more than 1,800 communities across 40-plus countries and territories. United Way has successfully created a platform wherein people innovate new ideas for serving the communities/beneficiaries in an effective manner by either donating or volunteering or speaking or in a combination of all.

From the above narratives of world-renowned NGOs, it is observed that: a) in the majority of the cases, the NGOs were founded due to the initiatives of an individual or, in few cases, the initiative of group of

likeminded people; b) the focus area identified by the founder is driven mostly by their educational/professional expertise, as by having subject knowledge in their own area, the founder could serve society in effective way; c) each founder and/or group of likeminded people observed the sufferings of the beneficiaries and felt the need to provide support in a structured way and with a long-term perspective; and d) the journey of the social services was not smooth but full of challenges which the NGOs overcame with innovation, dedication, and persistent endeavor. They never looked back but grew year after year and expanded their activities across the country and/or beyond their countries. The factors of influence for joining/opening an NGO by an individual or a group of likeminded people for the educational development of underprivileged children are given in Figure 1-1 below.

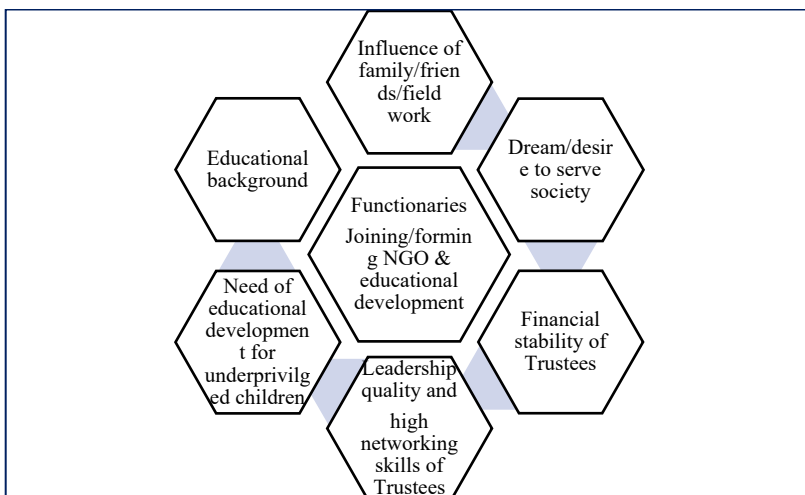


Figure 1-1

The factors of influence for joining/opening an NGO for the educational development of underprivileged children

In India the founders of the NGOs in this study observed the sufferings of the underprivileged section of the society and felt the need to provide social support for those deprived of basic facilities and lacking access to government facilities due to their illiteracy. In order to manage the operation of NGOs, resources such as manpower, machines, materials, and money play a vital role in a sustainable operation. With NGOs being non-profit organizations and with limited resources, resource management is

one of the major challenges for their sustainability. In India, NGOs are required to be registered with the relevant state authority as per state acts. The section below elaborates on NGOs in India and in particular in Gujarat, the state where the study was conducted by the authors.

1.1.2 NGOs in India and Gujarat

In India, many NGOs have emerged that are working to uplift the underprivileged sections of society. There are many large international NGOs operating in India: Amnesty International, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Oxfam International, CARE International, and Save the Children to name a few. All these NGOs emerged through the initiative of an individual or a group of likeminded people. There are NGOs local to the country also. The major NGOs which have been operating for more than eight years in India and have made a substantial contribution to social development include Save the Children, Child Rights and You (CRY), Katha, SAMAVEDA, Pratham Education Foundation, Childline India Foundation, Nanhi Kali, Goonj, Akshay Patra Foundation, Genesis Foundation, Smile Foundation, and Uday Foundation. These focus areas of these NGOs are education, healthcare, and advocacy/government policy for the underprivileged children and weaker sections of the society. See Table 1-1 and Figure 1-2 for more on these NGOs and their areas of activity.

Table 1-1

Major NGOs in India and their areas of activities

Sl. No.	Name of the NGO	Year of establishment	Areas of activities
1	Save the Children	1919	Education, health and nutrition, protection from harm and abuse
2	Child Rights and You (CRY)	1970	Child welfare, education, eradicating child labor and child abuse, child marriage, child trafficking, gender equality
3	Katha	1988	Education of underprivileged children
4	SAMAVEDA	1993	Offers special treatments and training facilities for mentally challenged students, dyslexic children and kids with fine motor disabilities. SAMAVEDA equipped these children with skill sets that

			can get them absorbed into the mainstream education system
5	Pratham Education Foundation	1994	Advocate change in Government practices and policies, strengthening the primary education system
6	Childline India Foundation	1996	24 hrs. free emergency phone service 1098
7	Nanhi kali (K C Mahindra Education Trust)	1996	Works for underprivileged girls. supports them with materials and educational programs and counseling
8	Goonj	1999	Disaster relief, humanitarian supplies like clothes, child welfare, addressing education need of remote areas, addressing child trauma
9	Akshay Patra Foundation	2000	Mid-day meal to 1.76 million children
10	Genesis Foundation	2001	Help for children with congenital heart diseases
11	Smile Foundation	2002	Education, healthcare, livelihood, female empowerment, skill development
12	Uday Foundation	2006	Healthcare, free food and dry rations
13	Make a Difference (MAD)	2006	Works towards child equality, organizes thematic campaigns for child development, offers English-language training to underprivileged children
14	Teach for India	2007	Build a movement of leaders who will eliminate educational inequality in India
15	Robin Hood Army	2014	Equip the children with the necessary tools so that they can join proper schools, help the children to get their official documents in order

Source: Compiled by the authors

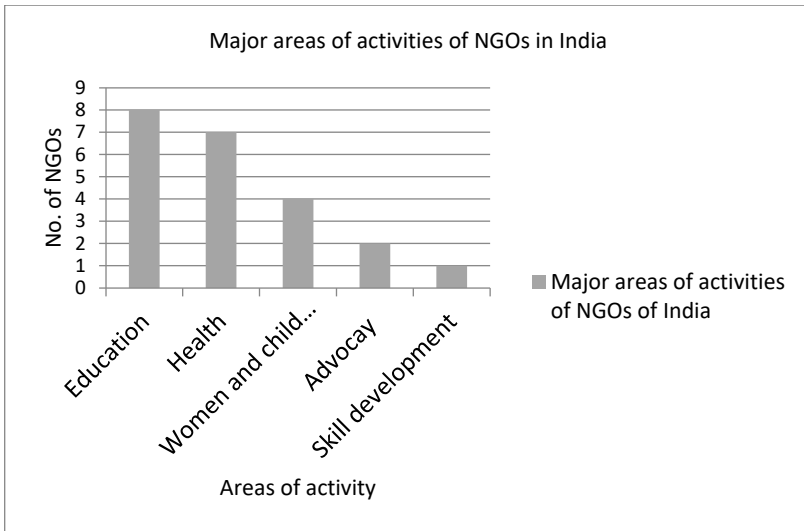


Figure 1-2: *Major areas of activities of NGOs in India*

Source: Compiled by the authors

From the above Table 1-1 it is observed that: a) 8 NGOs are working for the education of underprivileged children; b) 7 NGOs are working in health care; c) 4 NGOs are working towards female empowerment/protection/child welfare issues; d) 2 NGOs are working in advocacy/government policy; and e) only 1 NGO is working for skills development. The major focus area of the NGOs is education of the underprivileged children.

In order to support the NGOs in India, the Government of India (GoI) approves grants through its think tank the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog). Though there are nearly 3.2 million registered NGOs in India, only 77,936 NGOs are registered with NITI Aayog to receive government grants (ngodarpan.gov.in). Based on the annual budget of the Government of India, NITI Aayog grants funds to NGOs for social development works. Regarding Gujarat, around 3,537 NGOs are registered with NITI Aayog.

The growth of NGOs in the western part of India is mainly due to large-scale economic development and the tradition of the socio-reform movement. Gujarat has had a long tradition of voluntary work due to its economic prosperity (Patil, 2023). The Gandhian influence in social

reconstruction and the continuing philanthropic proclivity have helped to cover a large area of development activities in the state. The Gandhian influence began around 1920 and in the last 100 years, the NGOs have changed their role and the focus of their activities so that they remain relevant for the national development (Iyengar, 2000; Patil, 2023). The voluntary movement in the state continues to be under this influence. In the second half of the 19th century, people migrated from North Gujarat, Kachh and the Saurashtra region to Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore and Kolkata. Though there was rural-urban migration, the socio-cultural linkages with the native villages continued. The first welfare actions resulted in the construction of water huts, parks, gardens and benches for resting in public places. These philanthropic acts elevated the social status of the donors, satisfied their spiritual urges and were consistent with the religious dogmas of promoting wellbeing in the society. The Bombay Public Trust Act and the Society Registration Act of 1860 are indicators that there was felt to be a need to legalize these social organisations before the economic development activities were taken over by voluntary organizations in the country (Iyengar, 2020). With improved social awareness and the legal framework, the voluntary activities covered health, education, hospitals, dispensaries, school buildings, health education trusts, etc. Despite this strong voluntary sector movement, the state suffers and lags in various indicators of human development. As per the study of Patil (2023), 31.4 lacs households live below the poverty line. SC/ST/Marginalised groups represent a higher proportion of those below the poverty line compared to the general population in the state. As per Patil (2023), caste-based discrimination and atrocities against marginalized sections of society are high in the state. This indicates that continuous attention to these areas is required.

There are many NGOs in Gujarat, such as Saath, Gramin Vikas Trust, Shree Navchetan Andhjan Mandal, Samerth Charitable Trust, Charytar Arogyo Mandal, United Way of Baroda, and the Blind Welfare Council to mention a few. They are working towards the social development of the underprivileged section of the society through education/health/advocacy/emergency services, children's rights, female empowerment and rural development. Since 1980, the proliferation of volunteer groups has led to competition, conflicts and rivalry among the groups (Iyengar, 2000). The spirit of voluntary organization is fading, yielding to commercialization. All these trends do not augur well for NGOs and hence their capability is at stake. The state, with its bureaucracy, is by its very nature unable to design and deliver programs for the disadvantaged sections of the population. However, the state should give recognition and

encouragement to NGO initiatives. Fortunately, Gujarat has a relatively good environment for this purpose (Iyengar, 2000).

1.1.3 Strengths and weaknesses of NGOs

NGOs have several advantages. Being non-profit organizations, they are able to operate their various activities in a flexible manner. They are closer and more accessible to the target groups, flexible in administration, quick in decision-making, and timely in action and in facilitating the poor people towards self-reliance, ensuring their fullest participation in the whole process of development (Kebede, 2015; Lewis, 2010). NGOs have the capacity to innovate and adopt more quickly than national governments.

However, in order to institutionalize their organization effectively, the management of their resources, mainly manpower, machineries, materials, and money, is a very important factor. In a research study of six NGOs, the findings indicated that all the NGOs surveyed had various challenges, such as recruitment, training and retaining quality teachers, and manpower in fundraising, sales and marketing (CII, 2013). The NGOs do not have the infrastructure for vocational/skill-based training. The main challenge being faced by the NGOs is funds for the smooth running of their set-up. The major sources of funds are corporations, individuals and sometimes governments. But the unpredictability of the quantum of donations from the above sources due to conditions imposed on availing of the funds is a big roadblock for the NGOs and their efforts to raise adequate funds in order to meet operational and project expenses. The study also found that government funds from Sarva Shikshya Abhiyan (SSA) are difficult to receive due to reasons like delays in approval and conditions imposed by the approving authorities (CII, 2013; Temaluru, 2005; Vishwakarma, 2017; Dev et al., 2022). Though the CII study findings are limited to six NGOs, it appears that similar challenges might be faced by other NGOs, including those engaged in educational development activities for underprivileged children.

1.1.4 NGOs in the education sector

NGOs play a significant role in the education sector as education is important for development. Here efforts for the universalization of primary education under Education for All need attention. The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by all United Nation (UN) member States in 2015 rolled out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for

peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. The UN member States recognized that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth. SDG 4 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals emphasized ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunity for all (UN, 2015). The UN General Assembly in 1948 had also recognized education as a right for every child. In the UN declaration, it is stated that education plays an important role in the development of a nation.

In a study by the World Bank, it found that education pays a significant dividend in reducing poverty and contributing to the economic development of a nation (World Bank, 1998). The higher the level of education, the lower would be the proportion of poor people. Education is rightly regarded as an important focus of anti-poverty programs in many developing countries (Tilak, 2000). The inverse relationship between education and poverty is illustrated from the literacy rates and poverty rates of Indian states. As per the 2011 census, the average literacy rate of India is 74.04%, with male literacy at 82.14% and female literacy at 65.46%. The highest literacy rate is in the state of Kerala at 94% and the lowest literacy rate is in the state of Bihar at 61.8%. As per the Reserve Bank of India's data on the poverty rate (RBI, 2021), the poverty rate of India is 26.1%. The highest poverty rate is in Chhattisgarh at 33.7% and the lowest poverty rate is in Kerala at 7.1%. The poverty rate of Bihar is 33.7% and the poverty rate of Gujarat is 16.63%. It is observed in India that the states with high literacy rates have low poverty rates and the states with low literacy rates have higher poverty levels. Kerala, where the literacy rate is the highest at 94%, has a poverty rate of 7.1%, whereas the poverty rate of Bihar is 33.7% and the literacy rate is the lowest at 61.8% (Census, 2011). In India, many underprivileged children are not in school or have no access to education mainly due to the illiteracy of their parents, poor economic conditions, and the social structure. While there are various reasons for low literacy rates, one of the important reasons is the education of underprivileged children. This is so because they are a marginalized section of society and the socio-economic conditions of their parents make it difficult for them to access education and sustain it.

As per the government's Public Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2017-18 survey report, more Indians are finishing school than before and the illiteracy rate has slumped (PLFS, 2017-18). This may be due to the various government actions to promote education in the country under