

POSITIVE IMPACT OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs) ON HUMAN RIGHTS – A CASE STUDY OF A VILLAGE IN SPSR NELLORE DISTRICT

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Abstract:

Human Rights are those rights which are inherent in human existence and belong to all human persons irrespective of gender, race, caste, ethnicity, religion etc. The ‘Oxford Companion to Philosophy’ says that in their strongest sense, rights are justified claims to the protection of person’s important interests. Human rights are not the gift or bounty of any political superior. The laws are meant to reaffirm and recognize human rights and to provide the mechanism for their enforcement. The upholding of rights is essential for maintaining human dignity. The objective of the paper is to study how the NGOs can contribute for the welfare of the weaker sections, particularly the scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs) women in respect of Human rights. The study is based on the primary data collected from a village ANANTHAPURAM of Marripadu Mandal SPSR Nellore Dt. The specific reason for choosing this village is that antiarrack movement was taken up by the women of this colony with the initiative of the NGOs “REMEDY”. The NGOs ‘Remedy’ has educated the women about their rights and as a result of this, Anti arrack movement has been emerged, and finally brought significant change in the socio-economic conditions of the poor SC and ST families.

Key words: Human Rights, NGOs

INTRODUCTION

Human Rights are those rights which are inherent in human existence and belong to all human persons irrespective of gender, race, caste, ethnicity, religion etc. The ‘Oxford Companion to Philosophy’ says that in their strongest sense, rights are justified claims to the protection of person’s important interests. Human rights are not the gift or bounty of any political superior. The laws are meant to reaffirm and recognize human rights and to provide the mechanism for their enforcement. The upholding of rights is essential for maintaining human dignity.

Louis Henkin regarded rights as ‘claims’ rather than appeals to charity, Ronald Dworkin regards them as ‘trumps’ that set limits on state action whenever it encroached upon individual liberty. Jack Donnely pointed out that human rights are the new standard of civilization. ‘All human rights for all’ is the goal of the century and the aim is to ensure that human rights are universally accepted and respected.

International Non- governmental organizations (NGOs) play an important role in promoting and protecting the rights of persons belonging to poor. They are either directly or through their national affiliates close to situations of tension and possible sources of conflict. They are frequently involved in mediation, and they are able to sensitize international as well as national public opinion when the rights of poor and underprivileged are neglected or violated. NGOs can have a significant impact in the field of social welfare through research, the publishing of reports and by serving as channels and platforms for groups on the one hand and, on the other, by providing timely and factual information to governmental and inter-governmental bodies on situations involving poor and downtrodden.

Against this background, with a view to know the impact of Alcohol consumption on the socio-economic conditions of the rural poor, one Colony of Anantapuram Village in Marripadu Mandal was taken for data collection and analysis. The specific reason for choosing this village is that anti-arrack movement was taken up by the women of this colony, and with a great struggle they were able to succeed. Now the colony is liquor free. The study aimed at the following objectives.

Objective of the paper

The objective of the paper is to study how the NGOs can contribute for the welfare of the weaker sections, particularly the scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs) women in respect of Human rights. The study is based on the primary data collected from a village ANANTHAPURAM of Marripadu Mandal SPSR Nellore Dt. The specific reason for choosing this village is that antiarrack movement was taken up by the women of this colony with the initiative of the NGOs "REMEDY". The NGOs 'Remedy' has educated the women about their rights and as a result of this, Anti arrack movement has been emerged, and finally brought significant change in the socio-economic conditions of the poor SC and ST families.

Objectives of the paper:

1. To study Socio-economic conditions of the people before and after anti-arrack movement in Anantapuram village in Marripadu mandal of SPSR Nellore district..
2. To identify the conditions which led to anti-arrack movement in the village.

Findings

Comparison has been made before and after Alcoholic prohibition movement with the intervention of the NGOs, considerable change in the socio economic conditions is noticed. The income of the families has increased significantly. Now residents of this village are living in peace and harmony. They are now able to send

their children's for studies. Savings have increased. Health conditions improved a lot. Mindset of the people have drastically changed. Women and men are found participating in community development programmes in association with NGOs.

Methodology:

The study is based on the Primary data. One village viz., Anantapuram in Marripadu Mandal in SPSR Nellore dist is selected for this study, where the anti-liquor movement has taken place some two years ago. Now consuming liquor is a taboo in that village. A sample study has been conducted in that village, using a well designed questionnaire. Of the 80 households, 20 households (25 Per cent of the population) are taken using systematic random sampling technique. Help of one Anganvadi Teacher V.Ramanamma, a leader of the anti-arrack movement was sought in the data collection. All the respondents were very courteous and co-operative in disclosing the information and the difficulties they have undergone with their drunken husbands. Every possible care has been taken to extract the information without hurting their feelings.

About the Village:

Anantapuram is a hamlet village of Padamatinaidupalle Panchayat, in Marripadu Mandal of SPSR Nellore district. It is about 20 Kms away from Mandal Head quarters, 80 Kms from the District Head quarters on Nellore-Kadapa high way. The village is in the loop line of 3 Kms away from the main road. The village is free from all types of pollutions and covered under the natural greenery of Agricultural crops, having 90 Scheduled Caste households, with 570 population-300 Male and 270 Female. Agriculture is the major source of income of these people. Most of them work as Agricultural labor. Very few have small land holdings of 1 or 2 Acres of dry land. Mirchi, Paddy, Sunflower, and tobacco are the common crops grown in this village. There is one elementary school started in 1950. They go to nearby Kadirinaidupalle and Chenchulur for High School studies. For Higher Studies they go to Badvel, Atmakur and Nellore. Almost all the residents are literates. Most of them got literacy through informal education. One NGO viz., REMEDY started Night Schools to the illiterate persons particularly for women. Thus all residents of the village became literates.

The villagers are good in saving activities also at present. They have seven Savings groups, each group consisting of 11 persons on an average. Very recently three groups got a loan of Rs.1.5 lakhs each, sanctioned by the Andhra Pragati Grameena Bank of Marripadu and the loan amount said to have been invested on the development of Agriculture, Purchase of Buffalos, Business, Goat rearing etc.

How Arrack is marketed?

Tardy and Arrack were the chief items of consumption here. Tardy and Arrack merchants used to bring it from nearby Chunchulur village, where it is manufactured every day evening. Local brokers were distributing the Arrack among the local people.

Situation before the Anti-Arrack Movement:

Words are inadequate to explain the turmoil the women have undergone with their drunken husbands. '*We were unable to sleep, we were not eating our food properly, no day was left without a quarrel, slapping and beating was a common thing in our house almost every day*' said the respondents Achamma, Penchamma, Suneetha etc. '*Fed up with husband, I have decided to end up our life by consuming poison said Padmavathi before agitation*'. One Kamma *abandoned her husband for more than two years and staying with her parents to bring change in her husband*. This is not the story of one day. It was going on for the last 20-25 years.

All the respondents had 20-25 years of drinking habit. Most of them have agreed that they have started drinking due to peer pressure. Elections also have promoted the drinking habits among this people. Surprisingly all the members of this village have adequate employment all throughout the year and able to earn Rs.100-200 per day. 70-80 per cent of their income is spent on consumption of liquor. Thus, every one used to spend Rs.100-150 or sometimes even more on alcohol. Male persons give at will Rs.20 or 30 to their wives to maintain their families.

How the Anti-Arrack Movement started?

One NGO 'REMEDY' has started night schools to the illiterate people of this village with the prime objective of empowering the rural women. Among the illiterates attending night schools, females were more in number. The night school has become a common platform for all the women to come together and discuss the inconvenience they were undergoing with the drunken husbands. They all got vexed with their husbands. The literacy movement possibly enlightened them to try seriously for relief. The moral support extended by the REMEDY an NGO has also been added like fuel to fire. All these three factors/ reasons made the women to start non co-operation with their husbands at one side and at the other side all of them collectively waged war against the liquor merchants, who were regularly supplying cheap liquor/Arrack and Tardy to the local markets. The agitation went to an extent of breaking the liquor bottles and tardy pots. The revolution of women emerged out of the discontentment the women have undergone for some decades. Constant revolt and non co-operation finally made the husbands come down to their wives and agreed to stop consuming liquor. Women have taken their husbands to a nearby 'Achamma' temple and obtained the oath that they would be away from consuming alcohol hereafter. Thus the women of this village succeeded in their fight against Alcoholism.

Impact of the Movement on the Socio-Economic Conditions of the villagers:

Now the villagers are proudly declaring that their village is liquor free. Their husbands are very co-operative and feeling the responsibility of maintaining the family and children. Children's education is now taken care of. Most of them are sending their children to nearby English Medium Schools. The anti-arrack movement brought very good change in their health and life style also. '*For the first time we have celebrated Sankranti happily in our life without any quarrels*' said Achamma. Villagers have started saving money. Most of the families are now engaged in profit making ventures like taking land on lease basis, cattle development, Goat rearing, business etc.

The surplus income is properly saved in Podupu groups. Seven Podupu groups are working very effectively. Of the 20 sample households, 18 households have started constructing Pucca houses. All the houses have come to the stage of Slab level. 'My long cherished desire of building my own house is going to be fulfilled after my husband stopped taking liquor' said Manjula of this village.

Conclusion:

Rural development depends on the well being of the rural poor. Govt., schemes are of little help unless the leakages are plugged. Govt., is spending so much on the poverty eradication programs, but the impact is insignificant. Most of the rural labor is addicted for liquor consumption and extravagancy. Unless devils of liquor consumption, illiteracy are thrown out from the society, fruits of development and welfare measures could not be enjoyed by our rural poor. NGOs have active role to play in this direction. It is not exaggeration to compare our women with 'Bhadrakali' goddess of power. If our women come out of their houses and enabled to meet on a common platform to think and discuss their problems, in no time they would come out with a solution. Therefore, efforts should be directed towards making women literates and bringing changes in the mind set of the rural poor particularly with regard to Alcoholic consumption. Prohibition of liquor should be re- imposed by Govt., in letter and spirit to bring light in the lives of poor people, which in turn change poor India- a Golden India.

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