

## **Intervention of Voluntary Organization in Disaster Affected Areas with special reference to North East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS)**

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*In the present era an alternative development model which stresses on people centred development with maximum people's participation is recognised as a new development paradigm and this is nothing other than Non-Governmental Organization. There is no denying the fact that Non-Governmental Organizations play crucial role in providing support and help to the victims of natural calamities such as flood, earthquake etc. This paper attempts to probe the role of a Voluntary Organization in Disaster Affected Areas of Upper Assam. The authors of the paper investigated the intervention programmes of NEADS (North East Affected Area Development Society), a voluntary organization located at Dhekiakhowa in Jorhat District of Assam and their impact on the people. The study is carried out in five districts of Upper Assam, i.e. Golaghat, Jorhat, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts.*

**Keywords-** *Voluntary Organization, Alternative Development.*

### **Introduction**

Compassion towards the suffering people is an inherent quality of human being. An individual is emotionally surcharged when she/he looks at the person in distress. Suffering produces physical, mental and psychological pain. It is mainly due to this reason, no one likes to suffer. Because of this basic impulse (compassion toward suffering people) some individuals come forward on their own will to help people in distress.

The factors which motivate some people to take voluntary action or the sources of voluntarism may be identified as religion, government, business, philanthropy and mutual aid. The missionary zeal of religious organizations, the commitment of government to public interest, the profit making urge in business, the altruism of the 'social superiors', and the motive of self-help among fellowmen are reflected in voluntarism. As observed by Bourdillon (1945) individuals volunteer their services because there is always an element of betterment of compensating inequality. The social services are designed in such a way that they help in compensating for the inequality. William Beveridge (1979) advanced the idea of social welfare cake by enunciating the concept of social insurance against the giant evils of wants, disease, ignorance and squalor and the individual rights of welfares, and some kind of social security against misfortunes<sup>1</sup>. Therefore Bourdillon

and Beveridge consider mutual aid and philanthropy as the two main sources of voluntarism. Individual and social consciences are both responsible for the emergence of voluntary social service organization. The other factors may be personal interest, seeking benefit such as experience, recognition, knowledge and prestige, commitment to certain values, etc. (Bhattachacharya 2012).

### **Voluntary Organization-A brief introduction**

Voluntary organizations are those organizations which provide service to the deprived section of the society on their own will and accord out of the natural feeling of compassion for wellbeing of others. For doing this, they don't expect any kind of tangible material gains in lieu of the work done. In other words voluntary organizations provide direct or indirect help or service individually or collectively out of their feeling of compassion to assist others especially those who are the victims of poverty, ill-health, illiteracy, oppression, exploitation etc. They also plead for alternative agenda like human development, community development, sustainable development, capacity building (Ghosh 2012).

In a democratic, socialistic and welfare society, voluntary organizations are indispensable and they perform a number of functions for the welfare of its members, the development of the country and integration and solidarity of the society and the nation. A pluralistic society with a democratic system requires multitude of independent, voluntary non-government organizations as buffer between the individual and the state preventing the government from developing monopoly in various fields. Voluntary organizations involve citizens in noble affairs and avoid concentration of powers in the hands of government and thus serve as power breakers. The following characteristics may be drawn if we talk about any voluntary organization-

1. Voluntary Organizations are **Formal organizations**. They are registered under a specific act/law as prescribed by the state/country.
2. These organizations are **Private organizations**. They are not a part of the government.
3. Voluntary organizations are **Self-Governing**. It has its own decision making system and usually a formal constitution with procedures to be followed by each member.
4. Voluntary organizations are normally **Non-Profit-Making** and also **Non-Political** in nature.
5. Voluntary organizations are geared by an element of involvement of **volunteers** in the form of voluntary groups, community based organizations (CBOs) etc.

### **Non-Governmental Organization as Voluntary Organization:**

Non-Governmental Organizations are commonly known as voluntary organizations (VOs). These are popularly called so because they are free from governmental control in their functioning. It is also argued that this 'third sector' fight for the 'enlargement of people's choices' as well as

'people-friendly' grassroots movement (Ghosh 2012). They are democratic and open to all those aspiring to become member of the organization and serve the society. NGOs have immense role in bringing about social change and development and it is being experienced from different parts of the country. Development as we know is a multi- faceted process, which essentially involves the aggressive participation of the people that would not be possible unless they are educated, awakened and motivated. NGOs are taking up this job sportingly and successfully. Following are a few areas in which we witness active and appreciative role of NGOs in India:

1. NGOs are active in promotion of education particularly among that section of population which has remained bereft of any welfare measures adopted by the government.
2. NGOs are active in uplifting the socio-economic status of the under privilege group of the society up to an equivalent position with the other sections.
3. NGOs are also rendering great service in restoring dignity to the deprived and marginalised sections of the people in the society like women suffering from gender discrimination, and lower caste people suffering from various types of discriminations.
4. NGOs are active in providing help and support during the time of disasters to all the section of the society irrespective of class, caste and religion.
5. Another area in which NGOs are very active is promotion of sustainable livelihood among the deprived and weaker section of the society. They initiate a number of income generating activities in which people are becoming self-reliant and self-dependent.

### **About North East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS):**

In this paper an attempt has been made to analyse the intervention areas of an NGO of Jorhat district of Assam. Data for writing the paper were collected during the month of April and May, 2016. The authors of the paper visited some operational areas of the NGO where they held Focused Group Discussions and also participated with the group's activities so as to know the involvement of the people in the project activities. The name of the organization is North East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS). This organization was established in the year 1985. NEADS is located at Dhekiakhowa of Jorhat district of Assam. The organization is registered under the Society Registration Act, 1860. We have specifically investigated into the areas of intervention taken up by NEADS. Interestingly, since inception this organization is involved in ameliorating the sufferings of the flood affected people in its operational area. It is to be noted here that flood occurs more or less in all parts of Assam. Multiple floods are a regular phenomenon in the state. Often the havoc caused by the mighty river Brahmaputra is in the news but much of the severe damage is caused by its tributaries. In every year millions of people in Assam are affected by floods. That is why flood is the most devastating natural hazard faced by most of the rural people of Assam and is one of the major factors responsible for the underdeveloped nature of state's economy.

## **Vision & Mission and Objectives of NEADS**

Vision of NEADS is to visualize a Society free from Poverty, Inequality, Injustice and Social Exclusion. In order to achieve these goals, NEADS is trying to promote equitable social structures, connecting people to resources and services within the social environment which can offer people security and development. Among the different activities carried out by NEADS some of them are: strengthening coping mechanism of disaster prone communities to identify, assess and reduce the risks of disaster, trying to make quality education accessible to the children belonging to the weaker section, empowerment of women to eliminate gender based violence, increasing livelihood opportunities for small and marginal farmers through sustainable agriculture and livelihood programmes, improving market access of the products and develop a market-led production system.

At present NEADS with the help of some other Government and Non-Governmental partner organizations like Action Aid Association, Oxfam India, Aide-et Action, Save the Children, UNICEF, Centre for Social Development, ARIAS Society, Govt. of Assam, TDH Germany, NABARD, Voluntary Health Association of Assam, National Rural Health Mission (Assam), Reach India is operating in the five flood affected districts of upper Assam namely Jorhat, Golaghat, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts.

Let us now focus on the pre and post disaster intervention programmes of NEADS.

### **Pre Intervention activities of NEADS:**

As pre intervention activity NEADS is engaged in different capacity building programmes at village level in all the flood affected districts. For example, in the event of any disaster, NEADS has promoted one voluntary committee named as 'Duryug Bebothapana Samiti' at the village level. This committee prepares Village Level Community Action Plan and conducts training in collaboration with Civil Defence unit of the district level. In between 2012 and 2016, NEADS trained 50 volunteers in the 5 districts mentioned earlier. The training includes methods and tools of disaster preparedness and mitigation. In the year 2014, NEADS conducted two mock drill programmes in the Jorhat district.

Scarcity of safe drinking water during occurrence of flood is one of the major problem occurred due to which people suffer from various health problems like dehydration, diarrhoea, cholera and the other water borne disease like jaundice etc. Raised handpump is a flood resilient source of drinking water which is being used as effective measure for the flood affected areas. NEADS in association with Oxfam India installed 10 raised handpumps in Jhanjimmukh area. The handpumps are raised upto six feet as per its requirement as the flood water level in the affected places was almost six feet.

Another pre disaster intervention programme of NEADS is to arm the villagers of the flood affected areas by providing training to them. NEADS conducted training programme on different Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) measures like Flood resistant shelter construction, raised elevated

platform with handpump, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) issues, School based DRR programme, emergency measures to be taken during and after earthquake etc. During 2014-15 NEADS conducted these DRR awareness programme in different villages. In 2016, NEADS selected Sivasagar district for awareness programme and 3632 villagers of 10 villages were trained on DRR measures.

### **Post Disaster Intervention by NEADS:**

The researchers by interacting with different officials of NEADS and other stakeholders came to know about the post intervention activities carried out by the organization. These areas of intervention are -

1. Disaster Risk Reduction and Humanitarian Response
2. Promotion of Sustainable Livelihood
3. Education and Child Welfare
4. Gender and Development

In the following discussion, we have highlighted the activities that have been carried out by NEADS in their intervention areas and also the impact of the intervention programme on the people of those flood affected areas.

### **NEADS's intervention as Disaster Risk Reduction and Humanitarian Response:**

NEADS with the support from its partner organizations is implanting a number of activities in the flood affected areas of upper Assam. As a part of the DRR and Humanitarian Response programmes so far NEADS has carried out the following activities-

**I. Emergency Relief to the Flood Affected People-** Within the coverage of the intervention area of NEADS, one very common and quick service is to provide emergency relief to the flood affected people of the 5 districts. During flood NEADS provides the basic minimum needs so that the affected people can stay alive. Apart from food grains, it also provides Tarpaulin, Natural Food Baskets, Healthcare supports by conducting health camps. Every year NEADS provides such supports in 13-15 blocks of the 5 districts in which they cover 128-130 villages covering around 9600 households. NEADS also provided Search and Rescue Kits to the worst affected villages. For this, NEADS promoted Disaster Risk Reduction Committees in 14 villages of Jorhat and Golaghat districts and distributed Search and **Rescue Kit**<sup>3</sup>. The objective was to help the affected community to be prepared and equipped for flood emergency response at community level.

**II. Implementation of Cash for Work Programme -** The devastation caused by flood also worsen the condition of the roads and other existing infrastructures. As roads are the main medium of communication to the outer world, it is very important that it should become functional as early as possible. Therefore, NEADS introduced one new scheme during 2012, i.e. cash for work programme. This is a short term intervention used under Humanitarian Assistance Programme

to provide temporary employment to the most vulnerable segment of population affected by flood. The work programme includes repairing of roads, clearing debris or re-building infrastructure in disaster worst affected areas as an interim employment generation and livelihood support option. First this programme was introduced in some selected worst affected blocks of Sivasagar district in which 200 people were employed and later the programme was introduced to other 4 districts by employing 520 people. As a result, the following works could be done: road repairing, community hall repairing, shelter construction, village cleaning drive, hand pump chlorination, school repairing, high raised platform construction etc.

**III. Restoration of Livelihood-** In order to restore the livelihood option among the flood affected people NEADS is taking some extra initiative with different target groups. First, NEADS is promoting kitchen garden among the farmer group in which they are providing a basket of vegetable seeds like mustard seeds (8 kg), pea (2 kg), carrot (100gm), radish (100gm) etc. In the year 2012, this support was extended to 295 families in Sivasagar district and later on they covered other districts also in which 975 families were benefitted. NEADS has also distributed different types of fishing net among the people engaged in fishing business. It is gathered that in 2012 as many as 360 persons were benefitted under this scheme.

**IV. Arrangement of Safe Drinking Water Facility-** Scarcity of safe drinking water during the flood is one of the major issues of affected people. Due to this, people suffer from various health problems like dehydration, diarrhoea, cholera and also outbreak of water borne disease like jaundice etc. Raised handpump is a flood resilient source of drinking water which is used as effective unit for the flood affected communities. NEADS installed a total 20 Raised handpumps in different villages of Jorhat and Sivasagar districts during 2012-13 and 10 nos. during 2014-15. The hand pumps were raised upto six feet as per its requirement. In the year 2015, NEADS carried out a hand pump decontamination campaign in its 25 operational villages as it was observed that these pumps get contaminated after flood. In this campaign, NEADS covered 600 hand pumps in which chlorination was done with the support of the community volunteers. During 2012-13, this chlorination campaign was held in 7 operational villages in which 198 hand pumps were covered and chlorination was done.

These are some of the major interventions of NEADS in the area of Disaster Risk Reduction and Humanitarian Response in the five flood affected districts of upper Assam.

### **NEADS Intervention in Promotion of Sustainable Livelihood**

We have mentioned earlier that the intervention area of NEADS is the flood affected areas of 5 districts of upper Assam. The people living in this region are mostly SC and ST people. Main source of their livelihood is agriculture and some are engaged in the fishing profession also. From the very beginning, the major concern area of intervention of NEADS is to promote sustainable livelihood opportunities among them. For that NEADS is implementing one project titled Assam Agricultural Competitiveness Project (AACP) in joint collaboration with the Agriculture

Department, Govt. of Assam. The objective of this programme is to increase the productivity and the market access of targeted farmers and community groups. The project also aims to empower the poor farming communities (as clusters/ groups) by providing knowledge-tools-financial support for achieving higher agricultural productivity and facilitate efficient linkages with agricultural commodity markets for better remunerative prices and thereby ensure an increase in farm family income. Under this project, NEADS has so far carried out the following programmes-

**(1) Support to Farmer Groups-** NEADS with the support of the state Govt. Agriculture Department is helping the farmers of its targeted area to practice updated technologies in the agriculture sector. NEADS has provided around 1063 STW (Shallow Tube Well) pumps and 96 Tractors among the farmers of these flood affected areas. In order to implement this scheme effectively, NEADS has promoted 'Pothar Parichalana Samitis' in all the blocks of the 5 districts. 'Pothar Parichalana Samiti' is a 10 member farmer group in which they produce food grains and the Samiti maintains and looks after their own field. NEADS has developed Water Shed Drainage project in 7 blocks to facilitate the farmers during agriculture production.

**(2) Support to Women Livelihood Groups-** Apart from promoting kitchen garden practice among the different women groups, NEADS is actively engaged in developing the skill of preparing handloom items of different women groups. In Tinsukia district, NEADS has promoted one Women Weaver Centre in which they provide training on weaving and manufacturing of traditional cloths like 'Gamosha', 'Sadar Mekhela' etc. NEADS is working on to build a linkage with the market in which these women groups are selling their products as per market rate. At present the price of each 'Gamosha' is Rs. 120/ and one pair of 'Sadar Mekhela' is Rs.1000/. Because of NEADS' intervention at present as many as 45 women are self-employed in Sadiya sub division of Tinsukia district. The same project was extended to Majuli sub division of Jorhat district and Mohuramukh area of Golaghat district. NEADS has promoted a number of Self Help Groups (SHGs) in these area and the women who are engaged in this weaving profession are earning Rs. 2000/ to Rs. 3000/ per month. At present NEADS is focusing to link these products with the market at the district headquarters of these districts.

**(3) Goat Farming by Women Livelihood Group-** During 2012-13 NEADS promoted 9 women groups in Tinsukia district for goat rearing. Each group was formed with 35 women members. NEADS provided one female goat to 315 member and 6 male goats to another 6 members for cross breeding. According to the programme, each member of the group receiving a female goat had to hand over one infant goat after reproduction to interested families of the community who did not receive such goat earlier. Through this process each village woman got empowered economically with goat as livestock asset. As a result of such scheme, the total number of reared goats has increased to 1164 among 600 families.

**(4) Dairy Development Programme-** NEADS launched this project in Jorhat and Golaghat districts during 2012 and later on this project was extended to Tinsukia and Sivasagar districts. In

2012, NEADS identified 48 existing dairy cooperatives in these districts and found 1300 dairy farmers. In addition, NEADS formed another 17 new dairy cooperatives and 23 dairy self-help groups by which another 550 members were covered. NEADS conducted different training programmes regarding dairy farming and Animal Husbandry such as animal health, feeding, preparation of fodder, organic food etc. At present, about 1900 dairy farmers are promoted by NEADS in these 4 districts.

## **NEADS Intervention in the field of Education and Child Welfare**

Another important intervention area of NEADS is education and child welfare. Our study has revealed that NEADS has taken up certain schemes to establish educational institutions for the children belonging to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe in places where there is no facility to access education. The following actions are taken by NEADS to help the children belonging to marginalized groups -

**a. Promotion of Quality Education-** NEADS is already engaged in the backward regions of Golaghat and other districts of Northern Assam inhabited by various tribal communities for providing facilities in the spheres of health, education, sustainable livelihoods etc. It has been observed that NEADS is actively engaged in promotion of quality education among the children of tribal communities residing in different flood affected areas of its intervention districts.

It is gathered that in the Golaghat district, the project covers four panchayats comprising 28 villages. The number of primary schools, middle and high schools in the project area are 27, 20 and 9 respectively of which 10, 7 and 5 are venture schools. It may be stated here that the 'venture schools' do not get government assistance of any sort. Although the level of people's participation in initiating and delivering education service in the state is commendable, it is nevertheless a fact that the educational institutions are plagued by a host of problems. In order to ensure peoples' participation in the education system, NEADS has formed Village Development Committee to act as large umbrella in the project where they have established a mutual co-ordination between the other groups like School Managing Committee, Sanmilita Nari Adhikar Suraksha Mancha, Teacher's Resource Group, Mother's Group etc. We came to know that two VDC federations were also formed during the year 2012 in 2 village panchayat areas.

**b. Establishment of School to make Education System Accessible-** In the year 2009, NEADS established one primary school in Ambikapur in Sadiya sub-division of Tinsukia district. Before that there was no education facility in that remote village. It is learnt that due to remoteness, children used to drop out after attending a very few classes. During the first few years, the enrolment was not so high; but later 65 children were enrolled in this school till April 2016.



**c. Support to Children and other Schools-** NEADS intervention in Golaghat and Tinsukia districts is helping a number of children from the poor families to continue their basic education. From the year 2012 till now NEADS is supporting a total of 1725 children in Sadiya sub-division of Tinsukia district and Mohuramukh area of Golaghat district. These beneficiaries belong to Mishing tribe and they are living in river bank areas of the river Brahmaputra. This community is very badly affected by flood. In fact the condition of the school building and other infrastructure are also in very bad shape. That is why NEADS is helping the existing schools by providing material supports so that these schools can function after the disaster created by floods. In between 2012 and 2015, NEADS has targeted 5 schools in each year and by 2016 they have successfully covered 15 schools (primary, upper primary and high school which are not supported by government) in these two districts. It has also provided infrastructural **support**<sup>4</sup> to these schools. Because of such intervention, these children are able to continue their education even after losing everything.

**d. Development of Child Friendly Spaces and Joyful Learning Centre for Children (JLCC)** -At Sadiya sub-division of Tinsukia district, NEADS is promoting Child Friendly Spaces and Joyful Learning Centre of Children (JLCC) in order to help the children of those communities to carry out some extra curriculum activities which are essential for every children. At present NEADS is running 10 Child Friendly Space Centres which conduct different activities like workshops, awareness campaigns, arts and sports activities, exposure visits, and children festivals called 'sishu samaroh'.

A series of fine art workshop is also conducted by NEADS among the children. The objective behind this was to enhance knowledge on craft and drawing. In such kind of workshops, the students express their creativity by using paper, local material and spray painting. This is still continuing and to rouse interest among the children NEADS is conducting one workshop in every year. NEADS in collaboration with Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission and the state education department has conducted a number of awareness programmes on the Right to Education Act, 2009 and the functioning of SSA in different blocks and villages. The objective was to involve the community in the education system and also to educate them regarding their role to implement the schemes of SSA successfully. During this process NEADS tried to strengthen the School Management Committees (SMCs) and encourage them to play a vital role in the education system. These 10 Child Friendly Spaces and Joyful Learning Centres of Children (JLCC) conduct arts and sports activities every year. They conduct different competitions like drawing, singing, poem recitation, extempore speech, debate competition, different sports like running, high jump, long jump etc. Along with the Child Friendly Spaces and Joyful Learning Centres of Children (JLCCs), NEADS has promoted 'Sishu Manchhas' which participate in these competitions. Prizes are given to the winning groups which again work as motivating force to participate in these activities.

**e. Formation of Teacher's Resource Group-** One innovative intervention of NEADS is formation of Teacher's Resource Group at Sadiya sub-division of Tinsukia district and

Mohuramukh area of Golaghat district. The objective of formation of this resource group is to have a co-ordination and well monitoring of the school to ensure quality education among the children. Teacher's Resource Group is the strongest group which has direct contact between children and the parents. These teacher's resource groups even conduct exposure visits for the teachers, students and school managing committee members with the support received from NEADS. NEADS with the support of DIET, Titabar of Jorhat district trained up the teachers of Jorhat and Golaghat districts on 'Multi Grade Multi Level Learning' which is being implemented by UNICEF. The objective of this project is to train up the teachers to run school independently and how to manage single teacher school with more than 100 children without any difficulty. UNICEF is implementing this project after getting positive result in state like Tamil Nadu. It has come to the knowledge that as many as 35 teachers were trained up from the two districts on this Multi Grade Multi Level Learning project and they are implementing it successfully.

### **NEADS intervention in the area of Gender and Development:**

Gender sensitization is another important area of intervention of NEADS. It needs no explanation to highlight the fact that in a patriarchal society the female sex is discriminated, neglected and exploited. NEADS, in order to give due status to the female members of the society, has taken up a number of activities which are discussed below-

**(i) Responding to Gender based Violence cases through Sanmilita Nari Adhikar Suraksha Manch-** 'Sanmilita Nari Adhikar Suraksha Manch' is a women centric grass root organization promoted by NEADS in all the targeted districts and it is committed to achieve gender equality and build a gender sensitive society that responds to and prevents gender based violence. This forum has established a network of community based women volunteers working for a gender just society and works in a collective approach to prevent violence through counselling support, community sensitization and mobilization. During 2014-15, a total of 26 cases related to violence against women had come to the forum and out of these 12 cases were successfully settled. The rest were referred to court for legal intervention (NEADS Annual Report 2014-15, Page 32)<sup>3</sup>. At present, 42 branches of this Manch are actively working in these operational districts. NEADS along with the Manch promoted 4 SHG federations which are actively working for self-sustainability. These four federations are consisting of 40 SHGs.

**(ii) Establishment of Nirbhaya Kendra (One Stop Crisis Centre) -** Another initiative of NEADS to empower and protect the women folk in the region is the establishment of a Nirbhaya Kendra. This centre was established on 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2014 in the office premises of NEADS which is in Jorhat district. This Nirbhaya Kendra is a step forward to provide crisis intervention service to women survivors of gender based violence in upper Assam region. This intervention centre is a first of its kind initiative of NEADS in Assam in which government officials, medical practitioners, social activists and members of civil society organizations are working together for the same cause. The centre is providing support, care, treatment, security and legal advice to

women who face atrocities. The centre is also providing its services to all survivors of violence such as domestic violence, caste based violence, sexual assault, trafficking, dowry, rape etc. This centre is also supporting by linking the survivor with the government scheme for their economic rehabilitation and injury compensation as post intervention.

**(iii) Promotion of Women Right Forum Cell in Ambikapur Gaon Panchayat-** NEADS has promoted one women right forum in Sadiya sub-division of Tinsukia district. The members of the forum are actively involved in various right based actions for empowerment of women from time to time. In fact this forum takes part in micro decision making processes in the community and Panchayat. There are examples in which apart from the panchayat members, the local administration of the sub-division level meets this women forum for different consultations in Gram Sabha meetings. In the year 2012, this forum was established in Jorhat district also. In 2014, 35 Domestic Violence cases were registered in Teok Anchalik Panchayat of Jorhat district. Out of these, 10 cases had been registered in the police station and with protection officers. It is further known that one woman who became the victim of Domestic Violence was resettled in her home after coming back from shelter home.

**(iv) Balika Zindabad Abhiyan and Campaign on Violence against Women-** NEADS started this campaign in the remote pockets of the districts of Golaghat, Jorhat, Sivasagar and Tinsukia in which the girl's dropout rate is comparatively high as compared to others. The aim of this campaign is to defeat patriarchy and bring about social justice for women and girls who are forced to face this unjust system and to challenge the patriarchal institutions. The campaign is designed to specially target women and adolescent girls, parents, panchayat members, school students, teachers and community collectives. In order to attain the goal, NEADS reached out to grass root associations of women, Self-Help Groups, Community based Institutions and appeal to make gender equality a lived reality.

**(v) NEADS' support in Income Generating Activities among the Women Groups -** Apart from the above mentioned intervention programmes, NEADS is also guiding the women groups and forums to take up different income generating activities among themselves to get economic sustainability. The 'Sanmilita Nari Adhikar Suraksha Manch' which was promoted and financially supported by NEADS so that such kind of forum can build up capital for their own forum. In between 2012 and 2015, NEADS supported 30 members under the goatery scheme and now they are becoming experts in goat rearing. It is also gathered that one forum of Amguri branch of Sivasagar district is supported for weaving as the members have established a common production centre where 120 women are working.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

This article has focused on the role of an NGO in providing various services in the pre and post disaster periods to the targeted population and implementation of programmes for enhancing socio-economic status of the victims of disaster viz. floods, marginalized groups and economically

backward sections of the society. The NGO 'North East Affected Area Development Society' (NEADS) located at the fringe of Jorhat town in upper Assam since its formation has actively engaged in mitigating the sufferings of the flood victims of its operational area and also providing sustainable livelihood to the marginalized communities such as ST/SCs, promotion of quality education among the children of the families belonging to economically backward section and to prevent gender based violence in order to achieve gender equality. The analysis of the intervention programmes of NEADS suggests that in a democratic and welfare state like India, NGO has much role to play for the overall development of the people. It further reflects that the NGO under reference has rendered yeoman service to the targeted groups which in turn brought succour to many lives. Notwithstanding certain negative evaluation of NGO activities by some scholars as well as news about blacklisting of NGOs by the government for their negative role, this case proves that the NGO movement has the potential to create alternative avenues of development particularly for the marginalised sections of our population where as other options become bleak.

### Notes:

1. With regard to misfortunes W. Beveridge refers to the situation in which actuarial risks such as those of death, old age, sickness occurs.
2. Rescue Kit consists of one Mega Phone, two Life Jackets, 10 kg. Nylon Rope (Thick), 5 kg Nylon Rope, two First Aid Kit, one Trunk / Box, one Torch / Flashlight, six Whistles, one Lock and Key set, one Hammer, one Canvas Bag, four Rain Coats, one Wire Cutter and four Hand Gloves.
3. NEADS has provided one school kit consisting of Almirah – 2, Globe – 2, Map- 15, World atlas – 5, Atlas of India – 5, Green Chalk writing board – 1 with stand, Suggestion Box – 1, Wall clock – 3, Alphabetical Tools – 5, Story Book of great persons – 5 Nos, A4 Copier Paper – 5 Packets, Calendar Poster – 5, Calender / Poster for Health and Hygiene – 5, First Aid Kit – 2 Box, Duster wooden – 5 Pcs, Chalk – 5 Packets, Sketch Pen – 5 Pcs, Green Chalk Writing Board 4X6- 4 Nos. to each 5 schools after washing away everything by the flood. At the same time NEADS has provided education kit consisting of Ball Pen – 10 nos. Copy Book – 16 nos. Water Flask – 1 no. Pencil – 10 nos., Eraser – 2 Pieces, Pencil Sharpener – 2 nos., Scale – 1 no. Umbrella – 1, School Bag – 1 no. to 1725 children who lost everything in flood.

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