

Who is an NGO?

(12)

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The Concise O.E.D defines a volunteer as a "person who spontaneously undertakes a task." In other words, "a person acting on one's own free will: not under compulsion." ^{But a volunteer is compelled to work too.} Of course, compulsion experienced by a volunteer is one of inner urge to serve his ~~brothers~~ fellow human beings; it is a compulsion born out of the conviction that, ~~working~~ ^{collaborating} with his fellow ~~the~~ his fellowbeings in their daily struggles, sharing and adding colour to their dreams. It is a compulsion which has its genesis in the empathic quality of the person who desires to work with his companions

A volunteer (and ^{obviously} its logical extension voluntary agency), is empathic enough to know that he is NOT there to HELP or to work FOR his society. He has the ability to identify himself mentally with his & fellow beings and understand the meaning of what life is to them. He is capable of introjecting the feelings of the common man and project his conceptions and dreams to bring in a new meaning to the life of common people.

In the work of a voluntary agency (Volag from now on) then, people enter the development process as responsible ⁶⁶ "subjects." Persons who know and act. Not just as objects, who are worked upon; who are dictated upon. It sees that ~~people feel and~~ people are sensitised ~~to~~ and feel joy in participating the works — which are motivated upon by it; not guided by it.

This sensitisation to participate is of two fold. For a Volag ~~not only~~ builds in an appreciative attitude to work in the Community programmes, ~~but also~~ by one and all; also, it textures its programmes in such a way that, ~~at~~ each every member of the Community participates in the decision making process too. An informal structure is maintained & for all practical purposes, which focuses on canalising the potential Common sense approach of the everyday life into the process of development. So, it is the motive of Volags, to borrow from Baba Amte, ⁶⁶ "work builds, charity destroys." Like Mahatma Gandhi, it rejects the pretence of government — that ~~it~~ know better than the people about what is good for them.