

WORK OF DEVRAAI IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT:

NGOs activity in the field of environment is a welcome sign for making people aware about the environmental problems. Development Research, Awareness and Action Institute, DEVRAAI has been established in the year 1997. Devraai is a registered trust working in the state of Maharashtra. Devraai works in the field of environmental protection, research on the environment field, sustainable development and for this it focuses on organic farming, science, education, non-conventional energy and pollution from the vantage point of sustainable development. The objective of the present paper is to discuss the role of Devraai is a registered trust working in the field of environmental protection and conservation through its programmes and activities. The data were collected by means of a questionnaire coupled with personal interviews with the key office bearers.

Key Words:

Environmental NGOs, Protection, Conservation

Introduction:

Since 1970 NGOs have played an increasingly important role in promoting environmental awareness. NGOs are varied as the issues they confront ranging from small groups organized in a response in a particular issue of the local concern to large organizations spanning several countries and working on global issues. (Santra S. C. 2001: 1017). Devraai is a registered trust working in the state of Maharashtra. Devraai works in the field of environmental protection, research on the environment field, sustainable development and for this it focuses on organic farming, science, education, non-conventional energy and pollution from the vantage point of sustainable development. The objective of the present paper is to discuss the role of Devraai is a registered trust working in the field of environmental protection and conservation through its programmes and activities. The data were collected by means of a questionnaire coupled with personal interviews with the key office bearers.

About DEVRAAI:

Development Research, Awareness and Action Institute, DEVRAAI [As per popular understanding, the word Devraai means sacred

Groves or mini forest land of god preserved/ conserved and guarded due to influence of traditional belief systems.], has been established in the year 1997. Devraai is a registered trust working in the state of Maharashtra. This organization is established by highly educated and experienced people. It has its office with adequate furniture in R. K. Nagar area in Kolhapur city. Devraai's office building [in fact it is a residential bungalow of its founder member] is a totally 'zero waste' building, which is visited by representatives of other organizations, activists and ordinary citizens. Its executive body consists of three members. Besides, it has a cadre of eleven members (five male and six female members). In Devraai, there are no permanent paid employees. The organization has its own written constitution. The office bearers of the Devraai told that their organization and its volunteers get inspiration from well known institutions in the field of environment such as: Center for Environment Education (CEE) and Center for Science and Environment (CSE).

Objectives and Major Areas of Work:

The Major objectives of Devraai stated in its constitution include: 1] To work at National and State level in the field of environment, health, weaker sections, folk education. 2] To implement programmes aimed at environmental awareness, protection and sustainable development with the participation of youth and women 3] To guide voluntary organizations in the field of environmental protection and with their collaboration undertake action programmes. 4] To promote rational and judicious use of natural resources for progress and social justice. 5] To co-operate with the like-minded people and voluntary organizations. 6] To maintain environmental balance with the help of participation of people.

Devraai works in many fields of development interventions such as health, weaker sections, development of women and children; however, one of its major fields is environmental protection and conservation. Devraai works in the field of environmental protection, research on the environment field and sustainable development and for this it focuses on organic farming, science, education, non-conventional energy and pollution from the vantage point of sustainable development.

Though, the contribution of Devraai in various fields of its work is important, its work in the field of environmental conservation is of crucial significance and therefore an attempt is made below to present Devraai's work as a case.

DEVRAAI's: Work in the field of Environmental Protection:

For purpose of convenience of presentation, the work of Devraai is analyzed in the context of issues taken up by it, various types of activities undertaken and implemented, ways and means adopted by this group and significance of role played by the Devraai. The following account of the work done by the Devraai is based on the information given by the key activists of this organization.

The Issues taken up by DEVRAAI:

Since its inception, Devraai is continuously working in the field of environmental protection and conservation. It has worked on many specific issues. These issues include: Awareness generation about the negative impact of Plastic Carry Bags, Energy, Management of Water Solid Waste and its re-use, study of Forest, wildlife and Birds and creating awareness about environmental issues and problems in collaboration with other similar organizations.

Plastic Carry Bags:

In the year 1997, Devraai had organized campaign relating to ban on plastic carry bags and for promotion of use of cloth bags in Kolhapur, they have sold thousands of cloth bags at minimum price. Devraai has organized lectures and practical on the problem of plastic carry bags.

Energy:

Since 2001, Devraai has conducted around 400 workshops for women and youth for 'Saving Energy' with the cooperation of Ministry of Petroleum, New Delhi. Devraai has organized poster competitions on 'Energy Conservation' for the college students of Kolhapur, Sangli and Satara districts, with the cooperation of Ministry of Petroleum, New Delhi in 2009. It has distributed pamphlets on the subject of electricity consumption

Water:

Devraai is taking efforts for spreading message 'Save Every Drop of Water', with the help of ninety color posters and information posters. It has distributed eight thousand pamphlets on the theme of 'Save Every Drop of Water', impact of water pollution, electricity consumption and waste management etc. Devraai has organized lectures and practicals on water pollution and water literacy. It has published book entitled 'Water Problems: Cleanliness and Conservation', a publication

sponsored by Gokul Dairy and it was released by the president of Vanraai, Pune, Shri. Mohan Dharia.

Problem of Waste:

Devraai has organized one-day workshop and exhibition on domestic waste management, lectures and practicals on Solid Waste Management. In 2004, Devraai had organized one-day workshop on 'Water and Waste Management' for teachers of Ratnagiri district at Khare Dhere College, Guhagar. It has organized workshop and practicals for slum dwellers on 'Waste Management: Need of Time'. It has conducted one-day workshop for urban women on use of Bio- Disposal and waste management in 2001. Since last four years, Devraai has been producing Gandul Khat It has distributed pamphlets on the subject of waste management.

Opposition to Tree Cutting, Plantation and Conservation:

Since 1984, Devraai has actively participated in campaigns for saving Vanraais and protection of Rankala Lake. It has opposed attempts at cutting trees for road development project in Kolhapur city.

Awareness generation about Pollution at the time of Public Festivals and Ceremonies:

In the year 2008, Devraai has given guidance to 'Tarun Mandals' for avoiding pollution at the time of Ganesh Festival. Devraai has actively participated at the time of Ganesh idols immersion day for collection of donated idols and Nirmalya.

Wild Animals and Birds:

Devraai has conducted survey regarding bird and wildlife. It has conducted study of 'Conflict of Man and Wild-Animal' at Western Ghat.

Other Notable Environmental Programmes and Activities Undertaken by DEVRAAI:

In year 1987, Devraai was the member of planning and management body of save Western Ghat Movement. The trustees of Devraai have actively participated in programme for creating awareness among students and teachers regarding environmental protection. Devraai has organized workshops in South Western Maharashtra for various categories of people: Housewives, Social Activists, Political Leaders, Voluntary Organizations, Officers of Government and Non-Government, Teachers etc. Devraai has organized Discussions, camps, study tours, practicals and demonstrations in collaboration with voluntary organizations, educational institutions, and Government departments. Devraai has conducted various competitions for students; Essay Writing, Poetry and Poster Exhibition with the help of grants received from Ministry of Environment, Government of India, Center for Environment Education (CEE). These activities were relating to

environmental awareness generation, issues such as water, energy, women and child development, health education, solid waste management etc.

Research Work of DEVRAAI:

Devraai has participated in research projects sponsored by the international agencies such as, WWF (India), India and Canada Environment Facilities (ICEF). It has conducted research on socio-economic study of Khajan area of Maharashtra, sponsored by Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India. Study of effects on environment due to tourism at Sindhudurg district, Study of effects on environment due to mining at Western Ghat, Research on forest degradation at Western Ghat, submitted study report to central Government regarding Sahyadri Environment Sensitive Area (SESA), Participation in ‘Sahyadri Ecology Forum in 2009, Research and participation in survey of ‘Warna River Region for SOPPECOM (2010), Research and social survey on hazardous effects occurring on environment. In 2005, Devraai has done evaluation of ‘Nirmal Gram Award’ with department of Environment Science, Shivaji University, Kolhapur, and 87 villages of Raigad, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg and Kolhapur districts, Publication of environment journal of Subak graphics entitled ‘Margeshwari’.

Counseling Work of DEVRAAI:

The members of Devraai are involved in counseling work with regard to issues such as environment, wildlife, nature tours, waste management, water conservation, environment-oriented housing, urban development and sustainable development. Devraai trustees are guiding to college teachers who are teaching subject of environment. From 8th March 2007, Devraai has started counseling centers for understanding the changing systems of family and their problems.

Concluding Observations:

The Devraai is playing an important role in the field of protection and conservation of environment through awareness generation programmes and activities, research programmes and counseling work. Devraai has organized many awareness generation activities such as seminars, workshops,

campus, demonstrations, competitions and exhibitions on different themes relating to environmental protection. It is working as an agency of environmental education for children, youth, women, slum dwellers and students in educational institutions.

Devraai is working as a model organization in the field of environmental protection for other organizations in Kolhapur and adjoining districts. It is providing active support to strengthen environmental movements in Maharashtra. Thus, Devraai has been doing an impressive work in the field of environmental protection not only through its own activities but also by encouraging and motivating other organizations, groups and is influencing agencies of National and Global level. The trustees of this organization have played a key role in development of other NGOs such as: Maharashtra Pakshi Mitra Sanghatana (1981), Nisarg Mitra (1982) and regional unit of WWF (1987). Devraai has its own library which includes 3000 books, journal, articles, maps etc.

It has conducted research studies, completed several research projects funded by National and International agencies and published literature on different environmental themes. Devraai is connected with many other Governmental and Non-Governmental organizations and has undertaken collaborative activities. Devraai is having advisory committee consisting of experts in the field of environment and social fields and providing counseling services to other organizations and the institution is working as advocacy group.

Devraai has various strategies adopted for environmental protection and conservation by Devraai. This organization organize morchas with slogans, registering protest, organizing awareness generation by writing newspaper articles and making use of media on environmental issues. All the trustees and volunteers of the organization are engaged in creating environmental awareness and awareness about social problems.

References:

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