Unit 30
Civil Society Movements and Grassroots Initiatives

Contents

Learning Objectives

This Unit will help you examine critically:

- meanings and dimensions of civil society;
- civil society as social movements;
- non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as civil society actors;
- relationship between NGOs and the government organisations; and
- role of civil society for empowerment of marginalised.

30.1 Introduction

In Unit 1 of Book 1 of this course we have briefly talked about the emerging role of civil society in contemporary development practices. In this unit we shall be discussing in detail the meanings and dimensions of civil society; its changing role and status in developmental processes. Civil society itself has emerged as a social movement in recent years, while it has always been part of larger social movements in society. The interface between the civil society and social movement has been a subject matter of curiosity to sociologists. We shall discuss this facet of civil society in this unit. Along with the state and the people, civil society has emerged as a partner of development.

The World Development Summit 1995 emphasised the role of civil society in the empowerment of the marginalised. Here, besides discussing civil society as a social movement, this unit also analyses the role of civil society in the empowerment of the marginalised people in society. While we are discussing marginalised people, it is imperative to discuss the process of marginalisation. A small discussion on the marginalisation and empowerment of the marginalised people is also part of this unit. This unit will also provide you a critical overview of civil society's role in development.

30.2 Civil Society: Meanings and Dimensions

The term civil society is derived from the Latin word *civilis societas* which means associations or communities that work above and beyond the state. Civil society thus consists of a host of institutions that look after the activities,

which are not taken up by the state. These may relate to various religious, cultural, economic and other activities of society.

The medieval church of Europe, Hindu *Maths*, Sikh *Gurdwaras*, Muslim *Mosques*, and other religious trusts in India, caste and kinship associations, business, sports, cultural associations, etc., represent the civil society.

It is important that civil society is also referred to for its moral value and authority; as the state is more akin to an administrative unit. Civil society, in opposition to the state, lays the moral foundation of society (NSI 1996). It is in this sense that civil society has widely been viewed as an epitome not only of moral authority but also as a bastion of culture against the state, the law and capitalism. However the dimension of opposition in civil society has been in a state of flux as its relationship with the state, the market and capitalism has not always been the same everywhere and every time. However, today we tend to see civil society as the home of culture, of freedom, of independence (all good things), which enables us to rein in the state (which can do us harm if permitted) (Ibid 1996).

Importantly, Civil society has long been playing a pivotal role in influencing the state's policy on social welfare, articulating views on current issues, serving as the voice of constructive debate, providing a forum for the exchange of new ideas and information, initiating social movements by way of creating new norms, identities, institutions (Cohen and Arato 1994). Civil society is, together with the state and the market, one of the three *spheres* that interface in the making of democratic societies.

Civil society is the sphere in which social movements become organised. The organisation of civil society, which represents many diverse and sometimes contradictory social interests, is shaped to fit the social base, constituency, thematic orientations (e.g. environment, gender, human rights) and types of activity. They include church related groups, trade unions, cooperatives, service organisation, community groups and youth organisations as well as academic institutions (UNDP 1993:1). Civic involvement has always been an inseparable part of the development process of human society. In Putnam's argument, higher levels of civil involvement gives rise to "social capital" which in turn makes possible more civic involvement (Putnam 1993).

In Gramscian (1998) sense, civil society is the terrain where the state, the people and the market interact and where people wage war against the hegemony of the market and the state. The status of civil society organisations has been widely explained in terms of their relationship with the state and the market. In Tocqueville's view, civil society represents a vision of politics and democracy that is non-state centered and that has taken root in contemporary social movements and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Smith 2001). However to the liberals and the neo-liberals, civil society is organised around the market economy (Taylor 1990) as a non-political privatised delivery system for services such as welfare, education, healthcare, clean water and so on. In recent years there has been a phenomenal proliferation of the civil societies all over the globe. Social scientists have attributed this phenomenon to the crises in the states on the one hand and the market triumph on the other. At times the state is beset with a legitimisation deficit that destroys the conditions of its own stability, paving the way for the civil society (Chandhoke 1995).

Notwithstanding such a debate on the pro or anti State stand of civil societies or that of State failure of legitimisation crises, civil societies have been viewed as a force for democratisation, counterweights to the state and economic power and have emerged as alternative vehicles of citizens' participation at both the national and transnational levels of governance. Their activism and

initiatives have also been viewed as a movement for transformation of regional, national and global politics and economics (Edwards 2000). Many scholars, however, see the civil society beyond the state and market syndrome, as the state and the market contribute something, but not everything towards the cohesion and the dynamics of the society (Beteille 2000).

Indeed there is a need to view the civil society both as a structure (of organisation, social and political space and relationship) and also as a process (the ways in which the elements of structure come into being, and interrelate)(Blaney and Pasha 1992). In the wake of globalisation, introduction of the structural adjustment programme and paradigm shift in the social development strategy there has been an attempt to redefine the role of the state and the civil society. In the emerging scenario the emphasis has been a) on the increasing roles of the civil societies " to take the burden off the state, by involving citizens and communities in the delivery of the collective goods" (World Bank 1997:3), and b) on "strengthening of the abilities and opportunities of civil society and local communities" to ensure the process of empowerment of the marginalised in society (UN 1995). However, in the contemporary development discourse, there has been a process of involvement of civil society organisations along with the state in the formulation and implementation of development initiatives. What have been the relationships of the civil society with the people on the one hand and the state on the other? We shall discuss this issue in the following sections of this unit. Let us begin with the relationship of civil society with social movements.

Reflections and Actions 30.1

What do you mean by civil society? Can a civil society be described independent of the existence of the state?

30.3 Civil Society as Social Movements

In the last block of MSO-004 we shall be discussing in detail various aspects of social movements and their transformation. In this section let us know very briefly what we mean by social movements and what are the relationships between social movements and civil society, initiatives or activisms. Conventionally, social movements have broadly been perceived as organised efforts to bring about changes in the thought, beliefs, values, attitudes, relationships and major institutions in society, or to resist changes in any of the above structural elements of society (H. Blumer 1976; H. Toch 1956; Haberle 1972; J.R. Gusfield 1972, J. Wilson 1972). Social movements are viewed as intended and organised collective actions based on certain defined aims, methodology for collective mobilisation, distinctive ideology, identified leadership and organisation. However, since the late 1960s, especially in the wake of the proliferation of new forms of collective protest, resistance and mobilisation, like the students, environmental, Black civil rights, women's, etc., movements in the United States and Western Europe, efforts have been made to identify new elements in social movements. It has been widely recognised that social movements help to generate a sense of collective identity and new ideas that recognise the reality itself. And redefine modes of collective existence and Melucci (1996) has emphasised on collective identity formation. To him, social movements grow around relationships of new social identity that are voluntarily conceived "to empower" members in defense of this identity (Melucci 1996). Eyerman and Jamison (1991) highlight that:

> by articulating consciousness, the social movement provides public spaces for generating new thoughts, activating new actors, generating new ideas. Thus by producing new knowledge, by reflecting on their own cognitive identity, by saying what they stand for, by challenging

the dominant assumptions of the social order, social movements develop new ideas that are fundamental to the process of human creativity. Thus social movements develop worldviews that restructure cognition, that recognise reality itself. The cognitive praxis of social movements is an important source of new social images and transformation of societal identities (Eyerman and Jamison 1991: 161-66).

Social movements are framed based on a collective identity of various groups, namely, women, environmentalists, students, peasants, workers, etc., who are organised on the basis of common identity and interests. To Allan Scott (1990), in a social movement the actor's collective identity is linked to his or her understanding of their social situation. To him "a social movement is a collective actor constituted by individuals who understand themselves to have a common interest, and at least some significant part of their social existence, a common identity" (Allan Scott 1990: 6).

However, participation in social movements may not always be for the quest of an identity; rather, it may be for the gratification of political and material interests. Tilly (1978), McAdam (1982), Tarrow (994) and many others are of the view that social movements manifest in response to the increase in the potential political opportunities and growing receptivity of the state to the activities of the challenging groups. In general, these scholars emphasise the various resources involved in the manifestation and operationalisation of social movements. This approach, known as resource mobilisation, assumes that collective actions are related to the specific opportunity structures. Here importance is given on the rationality of human action, whereby the participants in the social movement calculate the costs and benefits of their participatory action in collective mobilisation. In this approach social movements are seen either as the creation of entrepreneurs skillful in the manipulation or mobilisation of social resources or the playing out of the social tensions and conflicts. Thus the motivation of the actors is seen as rational economic action. The resource mobilisation theory, indeed, aims to interpret those sets of social movements that are the visible parts of the American social reality in management terms. It is linked to the policy problem of containment (Tilly 1978: 47).

Civil Society and Social Movement: The Interface

In the context of globalisation or otherwise there have been claims of universality of civil societies. It is argued at one point that specific economic, social and political conditions influence the growth and functioning of the civil societies and thereby it can't be universal. On the other hand, there has been the argument that as there have been universal processes like modernisation, secularisation, democratisation, globalisations and so on, the claim of universality of civil society has emerged to be a reality. In view of the emergence of global social movements viz. human right, animal right, ecological and environmental etc. global civil society has been a reality. Phenomenal expansion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has smothered the global emergence and networking of civil societies as a social movement. In this backdrop, let us examine the interface between civil society and social movements. There are important parallels between social movements and civil society initiatives. It is rather at times pointed out that civil society initiative is a variant of social movements. Here, before we go into identifying this variant(s), we should know the parallels.

- Both social movements and civil societies are having structures like organisations, a well-identified leadership and ideology.

- Civil society initiatives and social movements are social processes, which undergo several stages of progression from mobilisation to intensive collective action.

- Both structures and the processes have support bases or bodies of followers who are mobilised through diverse means to get their objectives fulfilled.

- In general both social movements and civil societies pledge for change in established order of the society. However, many civil societies or social movements also well work to resist change in society. For example, many religious organisations pledge for the fundamentalist position in society.

- Both civil society and the social movement occupy a civil space in society.

- The creation of a new collective identity is an essential part both of social movements and civil societies. Collective identities are evolved either based on certain issues or ideological choices. However, identities also get reconstructed or transformed through the processes of sustained mobilisation.

- Though a good deal of moral authority and idealism are attached to civil society activism and to social movements, at times both these processes are initiated by enterprising people for the maximisation of specific interests. Here both processes are amenable to caption by the state.

However, notwithstanding these parallels, social movements are broader categories or agencies. At times social movements look for a radical change by attacking the pre-existing power structure of society, e.g., the Naxalite movement. Civil society, on the other hand, looks for gradual change within the existing arrangement. Though civil society initiatives tend to be apolitical, many a time they ask political questions and political solutions through developmental activities. Indeed in the contemporary development discourse of development with empowerment, civil society division is very much involved in the political issues at the grassroots.

Reflection and Action 30.2

Analyse the characteristic features of social movements. What are the linkages between social movements and civil societies?

30.4 Non-Governmental Organisations as Civil Society Actors

It has been pointed out in the first section of this unit that there are several manifestations of civil society. So far as the developmental activities are concerned, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) have emerged as important civil society actors at the grassroots. Let us examine some of its features.

The non-governmental organisation or the private voluntary organisations are basically non-profit making bodies whose primary aim is to contribute to the reduction of human sufferings and the development of the poor and the marginalised groups. They are an integral part of both the national and global civil society as they include both local communities, cooperatives, church groups, trade unions, environment groups and consumer associations, women's groups, peasant leagues, as well as international organisations like Amnesty International, Oxfam, Friends of the Earth, etc. These organisations are best known for their relief, educational, lobbying, human rights, health, employment generation, and poverty reduction activities. They are growing at a very fast rate in the developing parts of the world due to the increasing disillusionment especially of the poor with the government. The market has also failed to serve the interests of these vulnerable sections of the population. As a result many hopes have been placed on the NGOs, also known as the "third sector".

NGOs are conceptualised as non-profit and non-governmental organisations. Anheier and Salaman (1999) highlight some of the common characteristics of NGOs. According to them NGOs are:

- organisations, i.e., they have an institutional presence and structure;

- private, i.e., they are institutionally separate from the state;

- non-profit distributing, i.e., they do not return profits to their managers or to a set of owners;

- self-governing, i.e., they are fundamentally in control of their own affair; and

- voluntary, i.e., membership in them is not legally required and they attract some level of voluntary contribution of time or money".

It is significant that the element of private is to be understood in a very limited sense. It means that NGOs are neither part of the government apparatus and public administration nor are they dominated by public officials (Anheier and Salaman cf. Symthe and Smith 2003). Nor are they a private enterprise to earn profit. Indeed they have the social objective of providing selfless service to the millions, especially in those areas of activity where the state has either not been able to reach out, or has not been effective in providing service as per the local requirement and has withdrawn. At times the state has looked for collaborative arrangement with the NGOs to provide much needed service to the people, especially to the marginalised section of society.

Paul Streeten (1998), after examining the functioning of the NGOs in the developing societies, claims that NGOs have certain advantages in promoting development at the grassroots. This is mostly because of the fact that

- NGOs are good for reaching and mobilising the poor and remote communities.

- NGOs are participatory in their approach and follow a 'bottom up' strategy for the implementation of projects at the grassroots.

- They are more innovative, flexible and experimental than the government's agencies.

- The NGOs' projects are cost effective and efficient.

- The NGOs promote sustainable development.

- They are potentially organising and representative bodies in civil societies.

However, there has been a wide gap between the ideal image of NGOs and their modes of functioning at the grassroots. Indeed, the ideal-typical image of the NGOs has been widely demystified by several researchers. It has been pointed out that even though the NGOs work in the name of the poor, in effective terms they reinforce the rule of the power elite, incur a higher administrative cost, impose an autocratic, top down and non-participatory approach to development. Again, NGOs are not financially independent. As most of the NGOs flourished under a charismatic leadership or are a body of dedicated workers, many of the project, collapse with the disappearance of such leaders and workers. It has also been pointed out that NGOs have no clear-cut objectives that they suffer from the problems of sustainability, and non-replicability; and being small they reach only a few people in developing countries. They fail to reach 80% of the 1.3 billion estimated to be living in extreme poverty. Even the much publicised Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, often cited as a model NGO, accounts for only 0.15% of national credit and all NGOs in Bangladesh together provide only 0.6% of total Credit (Streeten 1998 112-113).

It is important to mention that NGOs are to work in a context and to interact with various forces. They are largely dependent on the government and the international agencies for funds. They are also to interact with the local level politicians. At times their plans and programmes are framed, modified and executed under the influence of these politicians. NGOs' activities are also conditioned by localised culture and values of the marginalised people among

whom they are working. In the following section of this unit we shall be discussing the relationship of the NGOs with the government rather than with marginalised people.

Reflection and Action 30.3

Discuss the major features of NGOs and their advantages and disadvantages in representing the cause of downtrodden.

30.5 Relationship Between NGOs and the Government

The relationship between NGOs and the government has been rather very complex in recent years. While on the one hand there have been more and more recognition and encouragement for the NGOs' activism by the government, there have been severe criticisms of the government agencies by the NGOs for their rigid bureaucratic and traditional outlook. The government has also been trying to make the NGOs accountable to its, and to the law of the land, to ensure transparency in financial dealings, etc. The NGOs are also trying to make government officials, accountable to the people, to ensure impartial functioning of state organs at the grassroots level. However notwithstanding the contradictory position, there have been several areas of cooperation between the government and NGOs.

NGOs are mostly working on the legalised issues and on a small scale. The state policies on area development, desert development, tribal development, women's development etc., which are addressed at a local level need a vast body of local inputs and resources. The experience and the expertise of the localised NGOs usually come to help in a big way for the successful implementation of these polices. Again the NGOs also formulate innovative projects on these issues receiving expert help from government agencies (Streeten 1998). According to an estimate there are over 30,000 NGOs in India. The Indian state was initially indifferent if not hostile to NGOs' activism. The situation has changed since the Eighth Five Year Plan 1992-1997, and now the government openly encourages the participation of NGOs in development sphere (Bavaskar 2004).

However NGOs' relationship with the state has widely been dichotomous in nature. Though many of them supplement government plans and programmes, they are also simultaneously critical of government policies. Again, while on the one hand they have been defined in terms of negation of the state, on the other they have remained widely dependent on the state for funds. Policies of the NGOs are also at times guided and framed by state policies.

In recent decades there has been a process of internationalisation of NGOs' activism. While working on local and national issues, the NGOs have started getting serious attention and recognition from international agencies. At the international level, many NGOs also take part in the transnational campaign against various social evils like drug addiction, poverty, illiteracy, HIV\AIDS, child abuse, women's rights, environment protection, disarmament, violation of human rights, etc. NGOs also educate people in influencing government policies on several international issues. In the process of undertaking all these initiatives, NGOs have been part of global networking.

Over the years there has been a phenomenal growth of the transaction NGOs, with more working at the global level with larger issues. One of the reasons for such growth has been the crisis in the State caused by massive state deficits, financial crisis and economic restructuring. As the state functioning is going to be restructured along the lines of the corporate market model, and it is also withdrawing from the social sector, NGOs are emerging as important stakeholders and providers of services to the marginalised people.

In the developing countries many NGOs function by receiving funds from foreign agencies. There has also been a tendency to ignore the law of the land by these NGOs. Here serious questions are raised not only by academicians and policy planners but also by the common people on their accountability and mode of spending.

30.6 Marginalisation and the Marginalised People

In developing countries like India, civil societies like NGOs play a crucial role for the social development of the marginalised people. Again these groups of people have also developed a sense of expectations from the NGOs as the state-sponsored development initiatives have miserably failed to elevate their status in society. As discussed in an earlier section, in the contemporary development discourse, the concept of empowerment of the marginalised has got a special focus and civil society initiatives have been given an emphasis. As the role of civil society has acquired a special significance for the social development and the empowerment of the marginalised people, and it has developed a substantive relationship with them let us discuss first who are the marginalised people and how the developmental processes have contributed to their marginalisation in society.

Marginalisation in conventional parlance is a complex process of relegating specific group(s) of people to the lower or outer edge of society. It effectively pushes these groups of people to the margin of society economically, politically, culturally, and socially following the parameters of exclusion and inclusion. Sociologically there are several important dimensions of marginalisation and one is to understand it in the larger context:

Dimensions of denials and deprivations: The process of marginalisation economically denies a large section of society equal access to productive resources, avenues for the realisation of their productive human potential, and opportunities of their full capacity utilisation. These denials ultimately push these populations to the state of rampant poverty, human misery, devaluation of their work, low wage and wage discrimination, casualisation in the workforce, and livelihood insecurity. Thus they are provided with very limited space for upward occupational and social mobility, and are excluded from the range of economic opportunities and choices. Politically, this process of relegation denies these people equal access to the formal power structure and participation in the decision-making processes leading to their subordination to and dependence on the economically and politically dominant groups of society. Politically they emerge to be the underdogs, un/under represented and disempowered. In the continuous process of this relegation, they emerge to be culturally excluded from the mainstream of society becoming "part society with part culture", "outsider for within", "alienated and disintegrated". They eventually get a stigmatised cultural existence, an ascribed low social status and become the victims of cultural segregation. As a consequence of the economic, political and cultural deprivation, a vast chunk of the population of the country has emerged to be socially ignorant, illiterate, uneducated and dependent. Devoid of the basic necessities of life they are relegated to live on the margins of society with a subhuman existence.

Artificial structure of hierarchy: Indeed marginalisation is a man-made and socially constructed process which is permuted and continuously reproduced on the basis of on unequal relationship of dependency and domination. In this context, even the natural differentiation between men and women, linguistic or ethnic groups and so on are put in an order of hierarchy with the guiding principle of domination and subordination. This process of creating hierarchy has arranged social groups in steep ordering of people, with a powerful few at the social and economic command deciding the mainstream of the society, polity and the economy. On the other hand, within the same arrangement the vast majority has remained powerless, occupying the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy and surviving at the periphery of the social order.

Bases of legitimacy and reproduction: The process of marginalisation has also been historically embedded in a socio-cultural context. Significantly there are strong institutional, normative and ideological bases, steaming out of the primordial interpretation of the institutional and normative arrangements of caste, ethnicity, race, gender, patriarchy, religion and so on, to provide legitimacy to the processes of marginalisation. Again, the ongoing processes of socialisation, education, politicisation, enculturation, etc., contribute to their reproduction in society. Thus, over a period of time, the socially constructed marginalised categories tend to appear to be the empirical categories, viz., the low castes, tribes, women, blacks and so on.

Development strategy and marginalisation: The development strategies, which were implemented within the pre-existing structural arrangements of society, have not been able to bring an end to the deprivation of the marginalised groups, rather than have largely contributed to the social reproduction of marginalisation.

The *Human Development Report* 1990 highlighted ruthless, voiceless, jobless, futureless facts of development. Indeed the marginalised people have emerged to be the major victim of these processes of development. In every human society there are vulnerable sections of marginalised population who are deprived of socio-economic opportunities and choices for their minimum sustenance, and are victims of the artificial structure of hierarchy and social, cultural and political exclusion. In the Indian context, marginalised people are the rural poor, urban, slum-dwellers, manual workers in unorganised sectors, scheduled castes, tribes, women, and other such categories.

An analysis of historical facts reveals that the pre-existing arrangement of distribution of power is hierarchical in nature. This process of hierarchisation has arranged social groups in the steep ordering of people with a powerful "few" at the social and economic command, deciding the mainstream of the society, polity and the economy. On the other hand, within the same arrangement, the vast majority have remained powerless, occupying the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy and surviving at the periphery or the margin of the social order. Here power as an enabling provision has deprived the powerless of the chance to decide the course of their lives by themselves.

As conventionally development initiatives were implemented through the pre-existing institutional arrangements of society, the marginalised people had very little or no participation in those developmental activities. Again, those initiatives were channlised through the pre-existing power structure. The systemic arrangements have not only legitimised the process of their subordination and deprivation in society through several means, but also contributed to the process of reproduction of this inequality and social construction of marginalisation. Thus the process of marginalisation has remained historically imbedded, notwithstanding the state sponsored initiatives implemented for the upward mobility of the marginalised groups. As against this backdrop, there has been serious rethinking for the participation of the marginalised people in development. As the welfare or emancipation approach of the state has failed to integrate the marginalised people in the development process, an alternative has emerged to evolve the strategy for empowerment of the marginalised people. Let us explain in the next section what we mean by empowerment.

30.7 Civil Society and Empowerment of the Marginalised

Empowerment is a political process. Before we go into conceptualising empowerment, it is necessary to develop an understanding of the following interrelated dimensions of this process.

Dimensions of Legitimacy of Power: The centrality of the notion of empowerment is located in the dynamics of sharing, distribution and redistribution of power, which has a basis of legitimacy. In the sociological sense of Max Weber, power is one's capacity to have control over others; and as such, when this capacity to control is legitimised, it becomes authority (Julien 1968). Indeed the logic of empowerment essentially involves the dynamics of authority. While one talks of the process of distribution/ redistribution of authority or in that sense legitimised power, one naturally questions not only the bases of legitimacy for the authority, but also the societal arrangements through which power relations are operated. Following the same logic, powerlessness has also been legitimised within the given social order. Hence empowerment will mean a process of distribution of power through legitimised means.

Context of Use: While talking of authority (legitimised power) as the accompaniment of empowerment, James Herrick (1995) points out that authority in general is used in the following contexts: a) regulatory, based on one's formal position and status in relation to others; b) expert knowledge, where the expert may possess the power to define ordinary people or to withhold knowledge from those whose well-being is affected by it; and c) relationship ability or interpersonal skills, where power comes from interpersonal influence based on abilities to work with people. In human society, however everybody has no equal authority as people have unequal access to the resources that determine power. Indeed, those who have power are those who have control over material resources, knowledge and ideology. Hence the process of gaining control over self, ideology, material and knowledge resources, which determine power, may be termed empowerment (*Batliwala* 1993). Thus the process of gaining control over resources is to be seen within the given context of devisal deprivation, structure of hierarchy and the process of legitimisation and reproduction. Indeed the process of empowerment endeavours to construct an alternative context for equal access to the resources that determine power.

Dynamics of Power Relations: The meaning of power in empowerment practice needs to be examined in terms of power relations. First, that there should be the ability to exercise power in a given context as having power is not the same as exercising it. Second, the exercise of power takes in the objective reality of empowerment – the structural conditions that affect the allocation of power; seizing or creating opportunities in the environment, changing structural conditions. Third, power relations can be symmetrical or asymmetrical. Relations of symmetry are those where relatively equal amounts and type of power and authority are exercised and are based on reciprocity. Relations of asymmetry are those involving unequal amount and types of authority and are those of subordination and super-ordination. It is the latter case - power relations of asymmetry, which we suggest is the major stage for empowerment practice (Heller cf. *Herrick* 1995).

Principle of Change and Transformation: The process of empowerment challenges the power structures of subordination. In the words of *Sen and Crown* (1988) empowerment is concerned with the transformation of the structure of subordination. It implies a process of redistribution of power within and between families/societies (or systems) and a process aiming at social equality, which can be achieved only by disempowering some structures, systems and institutions. To Sharma it is having a specific focus for the disadvantaged sections (Sharma 1992: 29). The processes of demolition of the pre-existing structure of subordination and redistribution of power, however, are not automatic. These also involve participatory approaches that enable people to emancipate themselves (Konenburg 1986: 229), a process of the creation of new knowledge (*Colin* 1990), a process of conscientisation (Freire 1972) and new identity formation with alternative sensibility. Indeed the process of empowerment is a social movement that looks for a radical change in the systemic arrangements of society (SinghRoy 1995). Hence empowerment is

viewed not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end — a strategy to bring liberation from all domination. Liberation from all domination, to Freire, is the fundamental theme of this epoch. This liberation is not a mechanical process but the critical thinking of the socio-historical reality of the life; ability to intervene in reality with a commitment is the harbingers of liberation. To quote Freire:

> Men emerge from their submersion and acquire the ability to intervene in reality, as it is unveiled. Intervention represents a step forward from emergence, and results from the conscientisation of the situation. Conscientisation is the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristics of all emergences. By achieving awareness they come to perceive reality differently (*Freire 1972*: 81-85).

In developing countries like India, development practices were geared towards "growth with stability". In the fifties and early sixties with the basic thrust being for industrialisation, agricultural modernisation and expansion of infrastructure, education and mass communication. However in the backdrop of imbalanced economic development, increased class inequality, gender segregation and sharp downward mobility of a vast section of the population along with increased levels of poverty, illiteracy and ill health, development policy was reoriented in India in the early seventies to incorporate the philosophy of "social justice" in the development discourse. This reorientation of "development with justice" envisaged strategies to integrate the hitherto neglected "underprivileged", "weaker sections", "deprived and marginalised groups" into the mainstream of society by providing various state-sponsored economic (employment, access to productive resources, etc.) and social (education, training, healthcare, water, housing, etc.) benefits to them.

The development practice in India has been reoriented once again since the mid-eighties to associate the notion of empowerment with "development". This reorientation aims at ensuring the basic necessities of life to the people "by sharing power" with them through institutionalised means, i.e., laws, legal procedures and international obligation. The significant point of departure here is that while the earlier discourses saw the poor people as "beneficiaries", the emergent one has recognised them as "partners of development". Accordingly there has been a new coinage of the term "social/human development" since the mid-eighties with the recognition that the "human person is the central subject of development" (United Nations 1985). The context of this reorientation, however, has been globalisation and the structural adjustment programme that implicitly or explicitly looks for the reduction of state expenditure in the social sector - health, education, food security and other basic needs — and the encouragement of provatisation. Thus the state has emerged as "central to economic and social development not as a direct provider of growth, but as a partner, catalyst and facilitator" (World Bank 1997).

In this context, it is essential to examine the recommendation of the World Development Summit, 1995 which talks about "people initiatives", "people empowerment" and "strengthening capacities of the people". Regarding the objectives of development, it specifically mentions that:

> empowering people, particularly women, to strengthen their capacities is the main objective of development and its principal resource. Empowerment requires the full participation of people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and well-being of our societies. To ensure full participation of the people, it is pointed out that the state should provide "a stable legal framework" in accordance with the constitutions, laws and procedures consistent with international law and obligation; which promotes, among with other things, the encouragement of "partnership with free and representative organisations of civil society, strengthening of the abilities and opportunities of civil society and local communities to develop their own organisations, resources and activities (UN 1995).

It is in relation to the above that the World Development Report, 1997, emphasised the need on for effective role of the state for social and economic development, but in a new form. It writes:

> the state is central to economic and social development, not as a direct provider for growth but as a partner, catalyst and a facilitator … the world is changing, and with its our ideas about the state's role in economic and social development (World Bank 1997: 1).

In view of the collapse of the command and control economies, fiscal crises of the welfare states, explosion in humanitarian emergencies in several parts of the world, growing lack of confidence in governance among the marginalised groups, endemic corruption within the system, increase in poverty and various dramatic events, especially technological change in the world economy on the one hand and the growing discontent of the people, manifestation of grassroots mobilisation and increasing pressure of the civil society on the other, a redefinition of the state's responsibilities has been evolved as a strategy of the solution of some of these problems. According to the World Bank:

> This will include strategic selection of the collective actions that states will try to promote, coupled with greater efforts to take the burden off the state, by involving citizens and communities in the delivery of the collective goods … for human welfare to be advanced, the state's capacity - defined as the ability to undertake or promote collective actions efficiently, must be increased (ibid: 3).

It is apparent that within the given perspectives of the "stable legal framework", "strategic selection of collective action" (i.e., co-option of grassroots mobilisation) by the state, possible partnership of the state with civil society and state-sponsored initiatives of civil society to have their own organisation, the following three important dimensions have emerged very clearly: a) all initiatives for the empowerment of marginalised groups should be in accordance with the prescribed rule of the land; b) the state will selectively co-opt people's initiatives as and when required, and c) the non-government organisations (NGOs) would acquire a significant role to take the burden off the state for the empowerment of the marginalised.

Reflection and Action 30.4

Examine the role of civil society in empowering the marginalised in our society

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The NGOs are claimed to have emerged as equal partners in development along with the state in most parts of the developing world. There is no denying the fact that a small section of NGOs have done substantive work for the social development and empowerment of marginalised groups, opting for various innovative alternative channels of development. The efforts of the Self-employed Women's Association (SEWA), Ahmedabad, and the Bankura Project of the Centre for Women Development Studies (CWDS), New Delhi, may be cited as examples here. However, the experiences of SEWA, CWDS and a few such other institutions do not represent the whole story of NGOs' activism in India. A good section of the NGOs in India have emerged to be the "state in disguise" in many parts of the country mostly because of their hierarchical and bureaucratic structures and style of functioning, conventional outlooks, lack of dynamism and inability to generate a community of "change agents" from among the marginalised people. They mostly produce stereotypes and contribute to the prevailing power structure. Though most NGOs start with the promise of inculcating the "culture of change agents" through their interventions to break the age-old structure of subordination and marginalisation, in actual practice they end up inculcating the culture of "target group" beneficiaries who are passive recipients of benefits of various development schemes. Because of their dependency on the state for funds and other resources, they reinforce the state structure and in turn the various

structures of subordination of marginalised groups. Mr Ashis Kumar, activist of a prominent NGO, articulates his frustration:

> It is impossible to act as a change agent or to create a "community of change agents" within the given complexities of our society. The donor agencies have their specific expectations; you are to get your money channelised through government and bureaucracy. You are to negotiate at every stage. At the local level there are power dynamics - you are to accommodate their interest. At the grassroots you are to meet the immediate needs of the people. As an organisation we are to survive within the system.... Indeed we are to compromise at every stage as survival strategy. We are however, sure of one point very clearly that if we can survive within these processes, we can contribute to empowerment of the people by not creating alternatives, but by subscribing to the ongoing processes (cf. SinghaRoy 2001).

30.8   Civil Society Movements: A Critique

Though the NGOs begin with the philosophy of negation of governmental initiatives, they are guided by the economic and social policies of the government. In a system of structural dependency on the state, the NGOs without a committed manpower will provide only a limited space for the creation of alternatives. Many NGOs have even proved their inability to fulfill their commitment to the state. It was in 1996 that Central of Council for Advancement of Peoples Action and Rural Technology (CAPARD) blacklisted around 150 NGOs for not fulfilling their commitment. Though the process of proliferation of NGOs has been very sharp in recent years, their disappearance from the public scene has also been conspicuously marked. To whom are they accountable? To the state? To the people? In a scenario where the NGOs have been unable to either inculcate the culture of "change agents" or to form a new collective identity of marginalised groups at a substantive scale, it is very doubtful whether NGO activism will alone pave the way for the empowerment of marginalised groups. However notwithstanding all the criticisms and limitations, there is no denying of the fact that civil societies have been able to initiate a process of mobilisation at the grassroots. Historical evidence shows that such changes in the pre-existing power structure are possible only through sustained grassroots mobilisations, social movements, selfless interventions of civil societies (NGOs, people's cooperatives and progressive institutions) and well-articulated alternative policy formulations and their execution with a political commitment for the redressal of power imbalances at the grassroots. After all, the marginalised people cannot stand in isolation on an unequal footing compared with the state (SinghaRoy 2001). Collective mobilisation as a long-term political investment will pave the way for the empowerment of the marginalised. Hence there is a need to view civil society activism not with a vote of negation but constructive criticality.

30.9   Conclusion

In this unit we discussed the role of civil society in the development and empowerment of the marginalised groups in society. In the early part of this unit we discussed the meanings and dimensions of the civil societies and their linkage with social movements. The significance of the NGOs as civil society actors, their relationship with the state and the marginalised people are discussed in detail. In the context of the emerging discourse on "development with empowerment", the significance of civil societies is critically examined. The unit concludes that as the civil societies have emerged to be an important partner of development along with the state and the people, their roles are to be seen very critically.

30.10 Further Reading

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Glossary

Adult Education: Adult education is the practice of teaching and educating adults. It includes organised public educational programs, other than regular full-time and summer elementary and secondary day school that provide opportunities for adult and out-of-school youth who have not graduated to further their education. This is often done in the workplace, or through 'extension' or 'continuing education' courses at secondary schools, or at a college or university or as evening classes.

Agronomists: Agronomists are soils specialists who conduct research in everything from the very basic to the applied issues of soil and water management and land use to improve quality and yield of crops. They study interactions among plants, soils, and the environment. They use sophisticated research tools and techniques to develop new crop hybrids and varieties that grow more efficiently and are more beneficial to society. Agronomists research ways to produce crops and turf, and ways to manage soils in the most environmental friendly way.

Bandwidth: The data transfer capacity of a telecommunications channel, usually expressed in terms of the number of bits per second that can be transmitted (a bit being one unit of information). Narrow bandwidth would correspond to a dial-up modem with 2400 to 56,000 bits per second while broadband can extend to more than 10,000 times this rate.

Biodiversity: Organisms are organised at many levels, ranging from complete ecosystems to the biochemical structures that are the molecular basis of heredity. Biodiversity means the number and variety of different organisms in the ecological complexes in which they naturally occur. A large number of species signifies a healthy atmosphere and characterises the food chain, representing multiple predator-prey relationships.

Biopiracy: Biopiracy refers to the privatisation and unauthorised use of biological resources by entities including corporations, etc. outside of a country, which has pre-existing knowledge. It also means the smuggling of diverse forms of flora and fauna, and the appropriation and monopolisation of traditional population's knowledge and biological resources. Biopiracy causes the loss of control of traditional populations over their resources. Particular activities covered by the term are a) exclusive commercial rights to plants, animals, organs, microorganisms, and genes b) commercialisation of traditional communities' knowledge on biological resources, c) patenting of biological resources.

Broadband Networks: Broadband is a high-speed data transmission capability. It has a transmission speed in excess of 256,000 bits per second in both directions. The term is commonly used to refer to Internet access via cable modems, DSL (JetStream, for example) and increasingly, wireless technologies (WiFi).

Casualisation of Labour: This means expansion of casual/informal employment, which means part-time or temporary or contract employment. They may have to work with minimum wage with no social security cover and trade unionism to raise their work related issues. Casual workers excluded from many of the benefits enjoyed by ongoing, and fixed-term employees, such as legislative protections against unfair dismissal, job security etc.

Counter-culture: In sociology, counterculture is a term used to describe a cultural group whose values and norms are at odds with those of the social mainstream, a cultural equivalent of a political opposition.

Cultural Barriers: Events or occurrences based on culture that create communication problems between individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

Cyberspace: It describes the world of connected computers and the society that gathers around them. The term was coined by author William Gibson in his 1984 novel *Neuromancer.* Cyberspace is now used to describe all of the information available through computer networks and it is commonly known as the Internet.

De-industrialisation: Generally refers to an absolute decline in industrial output or employment rather than simply a decline relative to other sectors of the economy.

De-territorialisation: Some scholars define globalisation in terms of deterritorialisation. For them it is process that entails a reconfiguration of geography, so that social space is no longer mapped in terms of territorial places, territorial distances, or territorial boarders (Scholte 2000). Global relations, becomes trans-border exchanges without distance. Such relations are becoming more significant as communication and production increasingly occur without regard to geographic constraints. Transborder organisations of many kinds proliferate, and more people become aware of the world as a single whole.

Devaluation of Currency: Devaluation means the official lowering of the value of one country's currency in terms of one or more foreign currencies as a result of deliberate government action. This also means a reduction in a country's official rate at which one currency is traded for another. Devaluation makes a country's exports cheaper abroad by reducing their prices in terms of foreign currencies and makes imports more expensive by raising their prices in terms of the home currency. Devaluation can provide a short-term boost to an economy encountering balance of payments imbalances, by altering its price competitiveness, but generally has inflationary consequences.

Development Induced Displacement: Development-induced displacement is the forcing of communities and individuals out of their homes, often also their homelands, for the purposes of economic development projects. It is a subset of forced migration. It has been historically associated with the construction of dams for hydroelectric power and irrigation purposes but also appears due to many other development activities, such as mining, infrastructure development etc.

Digital Divide: The term digital divide was coined in the 1990s to describe the perceived growing gap between those who have access to and the skills to use ICT and those who, for socio-economic and/or geographical location, age, gender, culture have limited or no access. There was a particular concern that ICT would exacerbate existing inequalities.

Digitisation: Digitisation generally refers to the process of converting data and information in paper, analog sound tracks, graphics, etc. into binary coded files for the purpose of computer storage and manipulation.

Disinvestment: Disinvestments was a term first used in the 1980s, most commonly in the United States, to refer to the use of a concerted economic boycott designed to pressure the government of South Africa into abolishing its policy of apartheid, which was still in force at that time. In India since 1991 the term is applied to the privatisation of State-held assets by selling out equities.

Drip Irrigation: This is a water-conserving irrigation system where a system of tubes with small holes allow water to drip out onto the root zone of plants. This method results in very little evaporation or runoff, saving water by directing it more precisely, reduced transmission of pathogens, and fewer weeds.

Electronic mail: More often called E-Mail. This is a communication that requires an electronic device for storage and/or transmission. E-mail is a fast, easy, and inexpensive way to communicate with individuals or groups on networked computers and computers equipped for Internet access. Besides basic correspondence, with some systems you can attach and send documents and other files.

Fiscal Deficit: Fiscal deficit is the gap between the government's total spending and the sum of its revenue receipts and non-debt capital receipts. It represents the total amount of borrowed funds required by the government to completely meet its expenditure.

Foreign Exchange Reserve or Forex Reserve: Forex is the market where one currency is traded for another. It is one of the largest markets in the world. Foreign exchange are counted in US dollars. India's "forex reserves" recently passed the 100 billion US$ mark. India has built up this reserve after an unpleasant incident in the early 1990s, when the country's gold reserve had to be pledged because of a balance of payments crisis.

Fossil Fuel Power: Power generated from coal, oil or natural gas that result from the fossilisation of ancient plants or animals. Fossil fuels are the remains of plant and animal life that are used to provide energy by combustion which are produced by the decomposition of ancient (fossilized) plants and animals. These fuels have taken millions of years to form.

Genetic Diversity: Genetic diversity is heritable variation within and between populations of species. This is a property of a community of organisms of a certain species, in which members of the community have variations in their chromosomes due to a large number of slightly dissimilar ancestors; this property makes the community in general more resistant to diseases or to changing ecological conditions.

Genetic Engineering: This is the technique of removing, modifying, or adding genes to a DNA molecule in order to change the information it contains. By changing this information, genetic engineering changes the type or amount of proteins an organism is capable of producing, thus enabling it to make new substances or perform new functions.

Genetic Pollution: Uncontrolled escape of genetic information into the genomes of organisms in the environment where those genes never existed before. This also means the unintended transfer of genetic material from a genetically engineered organism to one that is not genetically engineered.

Human Capital: The stock of knowledge and skill, embodied in an individual as a result of education, training, and experience, that makes them more productive enable them to derive economic benefits from that. It is the stock of knowledge and skill embodied in the population of an economy. Human capital can be acquired formally, for example through schooling, or informally, for example through on-the-job learning.

Hydraulic System: A system designed to transmit power through a liquid medium, permitting multiplication of force in accordance with Pascal's law, which states that "a pressure exerted on a confined liquid is transmitted undiminished in all directions and acts with equal force on all equal areas." It is a mechanism operated by the resistance offered or the pressure transmitted when a liquid is forced through a small opening or tube.

Indigenous Knowledge: Indigenous knowledge refers to the knowledge belonging to a specific ethnic group, which is unique to a given culture or society. It is the basis for local-level decision-making in agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural resource management, and a host of other activities in rural communities. Indigenous information systems are dynamic, and are continually influenced by internal creativity and experimentation as well as by contact with external systems. It is the knowledge that people in a given community have developed over time, and continue to develop. It is based on experience, often tested over centuries of use, adapted to local culture and environment.

Inflation: The rise in price of goods and services, or Consumer Price Index (CPI), when too much money chases too few goods on the market. Moderate inflation is a result of economic growth. Hyperinflation (rising at rates of 100% or more annually) causes people to lose confidence in their economy and put their money in hard assets such as gold and real estate.

Information Processing: Organisations need to process a rapidly growing amount of information. Information processing is the process by which data are handled and stored to ensure the smooth and efficient handling of information. By typing text, entering data into a computer, operating a variety of office machines etc. all grouped into information processing. Those who engaged in information processing jobs are often called as word processors, typists, and data entry keyers, electronic data processors, keypunch technicians, or transcribers.

Intellectual Capital: Is the possession of the knowledge, applied experience, and professional skills which when properly motivated, translated into customer relationships and can provide the organisation with a competitive edge in the marketplace.

Intellectual Property: Intellectual properties are creation of the intellect that has commercial value, including copyrighted property such as literary or artistic works, and ideational property, such as patents, appellations of origin, business methods, and industrial processes. The term often used to refer generically to property rights created through intellectual and/or discovery efforts of a creator that are generally protectable under patent, trademark, copyright, trade secret, trade dress or other law.

As defined by Article 2, section (viii), of the Convention Establishing the World Intellectual Property Organisation, done at Stockholm, July 14, 1967, "intellectual property" shall include the rights relating to: literary, artistic and scientific works, performances of performing artists, phonograms, and broadcasts, inventions in all fields of human endeavor, scientific discoveries, industrial designs, trademarks, service marks, and commercial names and designations, protection against unfair competition, and all other rights resulting from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific, literary or artistic fields.

Liberalisation: In international terms liberalisation means trade between nations without protective customs tariffs or free trade. This implies trade or commerce carried on without such restrictions as import duties, export bounties, domestic production subsidies, trade quotas, or import licenses. Internal trade liberalisation means loosening of government restrictions in trade related aspects.

Life-long Learning: A continuum of the learning process that takes place at all levels - formal, non-formal and informal - utilising various modalities such as distance learning and conventional learning. This is a broad concept where education that is flexible, diverse and available at different times and places is pursued throughout life.

Livelihood Opportunities: A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living. The five types of capital asset that comprise a livelihood are financial, physical, natural, social, and human.

Modernisation: Modernisation implies an approach toward the institutions, structures, and values of Western society. Historically modernisation is the process of change toward those types of social, economic and political systems that have developed in Western Europe and

North America from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth and have then spread to other European countries and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the South American, Asian, and African continents (Eisenstadt, S. M. 1966). Generally, the classical modernisation means the historical process of the great changes of the transformation from traditional agricultural to the modern industrial society since the industrial revolution in 18th century.

Molecular Biology: This is a field of biology that studies the molecular level of organization, which means the study of the structure, function, and makeup of biologically important molecules. It studies the molecular basis of life including the biochemistry of molecules such as DNA/RNA and proteins and the molecular structure and function of the various parts of living cells.

Monopoly: Monopoly means exclusive control or possession of something. In economics, a monopoly is defined as a persistent market situation where there is only one provider of a kind of product or service. Monopolies are characterised by a lack of economic competition for the good or service that they provide and a lack of viable substitute goods.

Neo-classical Economics: Neoclassical economics refers to a general approach to economics based on supply and demand, which depends on individuals (or any economic agent) operating rationally, each seeking to maximize their individual utility or profit by making choices based on available information. Mainstream economics is largely neoclassical in its assumptions. There have been many critiques of neoclassical economics, both from within orthodox economics, and from outside of it, and often these critiques have been incorporated into new versions of neoclassical theory.

Network Society: The term Network Society was coined by Manuel Castells as part of his extensive analysis of modern society. The network society goes further than the information society that is often proclaimed. Castells argues that it is not purely the technology that defines modern societies, but also cultural, economical and political factors that make the network society.

Paradigm Shift: A complete change in thinking or belief systems that allows the creation of a new condition previously thought impossible or unacceptable. It just does not happen but rather driven by changes. A paradigm shift is the term first used by Thomas Kuhn in his famous 1962 book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* to describe the process and result of a change in basic assumptions within the ruling theory of science. It has since become widely applied to many other realms of human experience as well. Presently agents of change are driving a new paradigm shift. The signs are all around us. For example, the introduction of the personal computer and the Internet has impacted both personal and business environments, and is a catalyst for a Paradigm Shift. We are shifting from a mechanistic, manufacturing, industrial society to an organic, service based, information centered society, and increases in technology will continue to impact globally. Change is inevitable. It's the only true constant.

Patent: A patent is a set of exclusive rights granted by a government to a person the sole right to make, use and sell, for a fixed period of time in exchange for the regulated, public disclosure of certain details of an invention. The person applying for a patent does not need to be the inventor who created or authored the invention. Many audio and video technologies are covered by patents.

Privatisation: Privatisation is the process of transferring property, from public ownership to private ownership and/or transferring the management of a service or activity from the government to the private sector.

Radioactive Wastes: Radioactive by-products from the operation of a nuclear reactor or from the reprocessing of depleted nuclear waste.

Renewable Energy Resources: Resources that are continually being renewed and replenished and are unlikely to run out. They include solar energy, hydropower, wind, waves and tides. Renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies are key to creating a clean energy future. Most renewable energy comes either directly or indirectly from the sun. Sunlight, or solar energy, can be used directly for heating and lighting homes and other buildings, for generating electricity, and for hot water heating, solar cooling, and a variety of commercial and industrial uses.

Scientific Information: These are Factual inputs, data, models, analyses, technical information, or scientific assessments based on scientific data. This includes any communication or representation of knowledge such as facts or data, in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual forms

Service Economy: The service economy consists of all those economic activities not involved in the production and processing of goods and energy. Service economy can refer to one or both of two recent economic developments. One is the increased importance of the service sector in industrialised economies. Services now account for a higher percentage of GDP than just 20 years ago.

Social Exclusion: This is a term to describe marginalisation from employment, income, social networks such as family, neighbourhood and community, decision making and from an adequate quality of life, the various ways in which people are excluded (economically, politically, socially, culturally) from the accepted norms within a society.

Social Sector: Social sector of an economy includes those areas where any investment may not gain financial returns. Social sector investments lead to the accumulation of human and social capital in a society. Social sector mainly includes poverty eradication, employment generation, education, health, water supply, sanitation, housing, slum development, social welfare and nutrition, rural employment and minimum basic services.

Staple Food: A staple food is a basic but nutritious food that forms the basis of a traditional diet, particularly that of the poor. Although nutritious, staple foods generally do not by themselves provide a full range of nutrients, so other foods need to be added to the diet to prevent malnutrition. Staple foods vary from place to place, but are usually of vegetable origin, from cereals, pulses, corn, rice, millets and plants growing starchy roots.

Symbolic Analysts: Symbolic analsists solve, identify, and broker problems by manipulating symbols. They simplify reality into abstract images that can be rearranged, juggled, experimented with, communicated to other specialists, and then, eventually, transformed back into reality. The manipulations are done with analytic tools, sharpened by experience. These tools may be mathematical algorithms, legal arguments, financial gimmicks, scientific principles, psychological insights about how to persuade or to amuse, systems of induction or deduction, or any other set of techniques for doing conceptual puzzles (Robert B. Reich 1991).

Trade Deficit: Trade deficit is an excess of imports over exports. Trade Surplus is an excess of exports over imports. Balance of trade means both surplus or deficit. The Balance of trade is made up of transactions in merchandise and other movable goods. Balance of trade figures are the sum of the money gained by a given economy by selling exports, minus the cost of buying imports.

Trade Secrets: A trade secret is a confidential practice, method, process, design, or other information used by a company to compete with other businesses. It is also referred to in some jurisdictions as confidential information.

Vicious Cycle: A Vicious cycle is a cycle in which one problem leads to another, which in turn aggravates the first problem. For example poverty. A poor person may not be able to invest in the education of their children or to provide enough economic support this may in turn lead to the poverty of the younger generation also.

Water Conservation: Water conservation means the care, preservation, protection, and wise use of water with methods ranging from more efficient practices in farm, home and industry to capturing water for use through water storage or conservation projects etc.

World Wide Web (WWW): A hypermedia-based system for browsing Internet sites. It is named the Web because it is made of many sites linked together; users can travel from one site to another by clicking on hyperlinks. The World Wide Web is a portion of the Internet comprised of a constellation of networked resources. Its Internet servers utilise HTTP to transfer documents and multimedia files formatted in hypertext markup language (HTML). Not all servers on the Internet are part of the World Wide Web.

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