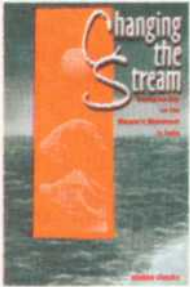
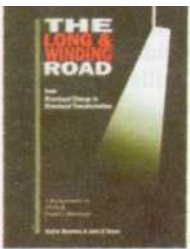


Changing the system



CHANGING THE STREAM

By Shubha Chacko
Pub: CED
Price: Rs190



THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

By Walter Mendoza and John D'souza
Pub: CED
Price: Rs250

The term, 'non-governmental organisation' or NGO, came into currency in 1945 because of the need for the UN to differentiate in its Charter between participation rights for intergovernmental specialised agencies and those for international private organisations. At the UN, virtually all types of private bodies can be recognised as NGOs. They only have to be independent from government control, not seeking to challenge governments either as a political party or by a narrow focus on human rights, non-profit-making and non-criminal. At times NGOs are contrasted with social movements. Much as proponents of social movements may wish to see movements as being more progressive and more dynamic than NGOs, this is a false dichotomy. NGOs are components of social movements. Similarly, civil society is the broader concept to cover all social activity by individuals, groups and movements.

It remains a matter of contention whether civil society also covers all economic activity. Usually, society is seen as being composed of three sectors: government, the private sector and civil society, excluding businesses. Most countries in the world recognise the increasing significance of social protest movements as newly emerging forms of organisation. In

fact there exists a symbiotic relationship between development NGOs and social protest movements. In order to provide an opportunity to understand and evaluate them individually and in terms of their inter-relationships, Centre for Education and Documentation has published two reference books on the movements that have played a significant pro-active role in the transformation of lives and livelihood, in our country.

Chacko's book is a background on the women's movement in India. The women's movement in India is a rich and vibrant movement which has taken different forms in different parts of the country. The term women's movement does not indicate any one uniform linear identity. It encompasses several movements working on different issues and using different approaches. It just means that despite these varied approaches, the goal common to all, is women's emancipation. The current document under review attempts to indicate where women have reached in their quest for emancipation, while taking a brief look at the beginning of it all. This background's aim is clear: to explore the issues involved and invite the reader to further references on each of the issues and themes.

Fifty years ago when India became independent, it was widely acknowledged that the battle for freedom had been fought as much by women as by men. Since and before, there have been countless battles waged by women both individually and collectively. This document also endeavours to fill us in on some of the interesting nuggets and asides that were very much a part of the struggle. The book begins by contextualising the struggle, talks about the movement and the ideologies governing it, traces the path of the struggle and zeroes in on issues affecting women in their day to day lives.

The book is well researched and has quite a bit of information on the

women's movement in India. The nuggets and asides are illuminating enough and tell us parallel stories of inspirational leadership and behaviours. Perhaps the most significant development for women in the last few decades has been the introduction of 33 per cent reservation for women in local, village-level elections. But this issue has not been presented in this book. Walter Mendoza & John D'souza have worked on a different agenda. Their book *The Long and Winding Road: From Structural Change to Structural Transformation*, a background on NGOs and people's movements, is part of a personal journey, an exploration of what NGOs have been attempting to do during the past three to four decades. The book aims to take us through an exploration of the NGOs and People's movements, dwelling on issues that affect their progression and building a case for a new overarching theory and perspective. They have tried to propound their belief in the emergence of a renaissance by taking us through it's invisible, peripheral, dispersed

beginnings, bringing together and taking off from current voluntary efforts, movements, agitations, experiments, constructive work, local governance systems and intermediary structures.

Both the books under review are part of an initial of three backgrounders, the missing link being 'Background to Globalisation'. These backgrounders are part of CED's efforts to those NGOs and People's Organisations, who have been trying to understand their work in the larger context. Both the books have separate sections

detailing reference material and the accession codes of documents are also mentioned. This is certainly an appreciative effort and will go a long way in providing a direction to ongoing and future movements and also aid the development of the NGO sector.

• JOHNSON THOMAS

Fifty years ago when India became independent, it was widely acknowledged that the battle for freedom had been fought as much by women as by men