



INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

Initiative in Education & Lifelong Learning

Certificate Programme

Civil Society Building

Unit 1

Civil Society: Meanings, Origins, Functions and Interpretations

Units Of Certificate In Civil Society Building

Unit 1: Civil Society: Meanings, Origins, Functions and Interpretations

- Historical And Cultural Roots Of Civil Society
- Wider Aspects Of Civil Society
- Civil Society Organisations In South Asia

Unit 2: Civil Society And Other Actors

- The Trinity – State, Market And Civil Society
- Civil Society And The State
- Civil Society And The Market
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Introduction

The first section is an introduction to the historical and cultural roots of civil society. We shall understand the concept of civil society, beginning with a working definition and situating the concept within the discourse of development and democracy. This is followed by insights into the historical origins of the concept in western philosophy and political theory. We shall briefly trace the historical roots of the concept in India and learn some recent global trends that have influenced understanding of the concept in contemporary times.

The second section shall explore and unravel the multi-dimensional aspects of civil society – the different perspectives of civil society; its functions and some emerging issues related to the concept shall be addressed. A categorisation of civil society organisations (CSOs) in South Asia, as an illustrative case, shall deepen our understanding of civil society.

Learning Objectives

After completing this Unit you will be familiar with:

- The historical, cultural and intellectual roots of the concept of civil society, with reference to both developed and developing countries
- Perspectives on the definition, purposes, functions and scope of civil society, and, within it, of civil society organisations
- A categorisation of civil society organisations

1.1 Historical And Cultural Roots Of Civil Society

1.1.1 Introduction

Civil society as a concept has acquired much attention in recent decades by practitioners, activists, politicians, academicians, media, business leaders and policy makers. Edwards (2004) notes it is impossible to have a conversation about politics or public policy these days without someone mentioning the magic words, 'civil society'. It is one of the most enduring and confusing concepts, he adds. People think they are clear what they mean when they use this term. Unfortunately, a precise, clear and rigorous meaning is elusive.

While the above point might appear to suggest otherwise, it is possible for us to begin this course by setting out a working definition of civil society. Like many definitions it is perhaps over-generalised and over-simplified, and while one of the major purposes of this Unit is to explore the complexities of the term in more detail, it is useful to start with a definition, as provided by Tandon (2003): "Civil society is a collection of individual and collective initiatives for the common public good" (p. 63).

Within this definition, we can clarify the keywords and expressions used in it in the following ways:

- The expression 'common public good' is used to mean those things that benefit society as a whole, rather than only specific groups or individuals within it.
- 'Individual initiatives' for such public good take multiple forms: from simple 'good neighbourliness' and day-to-day respect for and tolerance of others, to structured volunteer work.
- Similarly, 'collective initiatives' also take many forms: people work together with others for the common public good in many different associational and organisational settings – from small informal community groups and associations, to formal and institutionalised voluntary organisations.

The important thing to recognise is that civil society is primarily about people – what they do and how they contribute to the good of all. As one examines civil society in more detail, it becomes clear that it is about participation, justice, mutual tolerance, other civil conducts and circumstances that affect people's lives. In turn, it also becomes clear that the existence and good health of civil society is an essential prerequisite for other features generally agreed to be needed in societies, if they are to function and flourish – development (which we discuss in Unit 3), democracy (which we discuss in Unit 4), and social cohesion.

As regards social cohesion, we know that societies are rarely homogenous, and their heterogeneity makes them inherently fragmented and therefore unstable. For example, in India as well as in other South Asian countries, this fragmentation is around caste, religion, gender, ethnicity, age and language. The same is true of some other societies, while, in yet others, different forms of fragmentation are apparent, e.g., between indigenous and immigrant populations, or between tribal groupings. This inherent fragmentation needs to be counter-balanced in some way, if society is to be sustainable, stable and coherent. This is the key function of civil society.

Other functions also become apparent. In many developing countries, despite decades of social and economic development, poverty, illiteracy and marginalisation of the poor and women continue. It is, therefore, increasingly being recognised that the government alone cannot bring about growth and development and solve the various problems that arise in society. Something else is needed, i.e., the individual and collective actions that come from civil society.

The forms of democracy adopted in many developing countries have also been shown to have limitations. Citizens around the world are becoming mistrustful of democratic processes and, as a result, more apathetic about playing their part in it; borne of the feeling – indeed the reality – that the only role they appear to have in a democracy is to cast a vote every few years. Something else is needed: the individual and 'collective initiatives' of civil society take not only the form of actions

directed towards development, but also of the discourse and debate that are at the very heart of democracy. This, too, is a function of civil society.

From all this, it will be obvious that it is difficult to understand civil society, and therefore build it, without reference to the state. The state and civil society are both needed for the governance of society to be complete – the state provides and represents the structures of governance and civil society creates the values and democratic discourse without which such structures cannot be effective. The two are, thus, mutually constitutive of each other. If we take another aspect of concern – people becoming more and more dependent on the state for their welfare (even though, as noted, they have become more and more distrustful of it) – we can see that not only are state and civil society mutually constitutive, but also that both need to be strong and effective.

Chandoke (2003) sees civil society as an essential prerequisite for any democracy and as a sphere in which citizens can monitor the state as well as the monopoly of power within itself. There is another key actor in society – the private sector. It too plays, through the dynamics of the market, a key role not only in the economic functioning of society, but also in limiting and defining state power and responsibilities, although it is being recognised that too much market power can be as harmful as too much state power.

As a result of all this, there is now a general recognition that civil society, along with the state and the market, needs to be present and active in societies if they are to be stable, sustainable and coherent, or in other words 'good' societies. We will discuss the role of the three sectors and the interplay between them later in this Unit and also in Unit 2. Here, we discuss the characteristics of civil society.

As has been noted, civil society is about what people do for the common public good – both individually and collectively. Let us examine the collective aspects of this in a little more detail. More commonly, these days, this collective action – working together with others – takes place through what is termed civil society organisations, or CSOs. These organisations take a variety of forms – from small informal

community groups and associations (often called community based organisations, or CBOs) to formal and institutionalised voluntary organisations (often called non-governmental organisations, or NGOs or 'intermediary CSOs', many of which are also called voluntary development organisations, or VDOs, reflecting their emphasis on the development-oriented functions of civil society that we have noted).

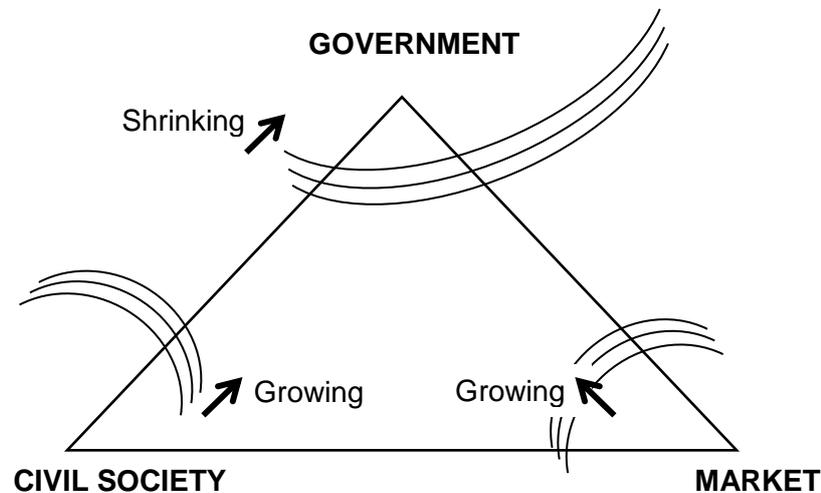
Until quite recently, development orientation was the main function of many NGOs and CBOs in most countries. But now, the objectives and work of civil society organisations span the entire spectrum of social, economic and environmental policy and practice. As a report of the Commonwealth Foundation (1995) points out, CSOs are engaged in almost every conceivable aspect of human need and endeavour, at every level from local to global, and their methods and practises span the spectrum from 'care and welfare' (i.e., mostly development-orientated functions) to 'education and advocacy' (where activities are much more about public discourse and debate). Over the decades, since the report was published, this widening of the scope and purpose of CSOs has continued.

As a consequence of these trends, increased attention has been given to the ways in which ordinary people involve themselves, individually and collectively, in solving problems related to their lives, not just through actions, but also through discourse. There have been moves towards the increased participation of citizens in development interventions as well as in bringing about more inclusive and participatory forms of democracy and governance. CSOs and associations, including VDOs, are emerging as important players in new forms of development activities and new approaches to participatory democracy.

1.1.2 The 'Trinity'

As has been stated, we can view society, as a whole, being comprised of three entities variously described as 'sectors', 'forces' or 'actors'. These three entities need to be present in societies, if they are to be stable, sustainable, and coherent or, in other words, 'good' societies. These entities are: the 'public' (state; governmental) sector, the various functions of which include that of ensuring that there is an enabling environment for the other sectors; the 'private' or 'market' sector,

characterised as the engine of economic development and driven by individualism and self-interest; and 'civil society', characterised by its striving for the common public good. The interplay between the three is shown in the following figure.



(Knight, Chigudu, & Tandon, 2002, p. 14)

We will discuss this in more detail later and in Unit 2, so as to get a deeper understanding of what civil society means in the current context. To begin with, let us look at the historical evolution of the term.

1.1.3 Historical Roots In Western Intellectual Discourse And Political Theory

The nature and role of civil society has been most systematically studied and written about in the European and North American contexts. A brief overview of the western intellectual discourse is thus relevant before turning to its evolution in other regions of the world.

It is impossible to mention here all the many and varied strands of thinking about civil society in Western intellectual discourse, but among the more prominent, mentioned very effectively by Chandoke (1995), are the following:

- In the society of ancient Greece the individual was considered an integral part of the political process. There was no distinction seen between the 'civil' and the 'political'. Citizens were expected to involve themselves in both.
- Discourse about the meaning and nature of civil society first emerged between the 17th and 19th centuries. Hobbes and Locke, major theorists of early modernity, sought to distinguish between civil and political life, although, at times, both used 'civil' and 'political' interchangeably. They argued that individuals have rights that are independent of state; that the relationships among individuals and between individuals and the state are contractual; and that the state's primary responsibility is to protect the rights of individuals. They believed, however, that without overarching sovereign political power, civil society would lapse into chaos and conflict.
- The school of classical political economy that emerged in the 18th century brought civil society into the mainstream of political and economic theory. Members of this school included Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith, Say, and Malthus. These scholars emphasised that economics is primary to the lives of individuals, with society and politics being secondary. They saw civil society as the 'space' where individuals meet in order to satisfy their own needs, both through free competition and peaceful social interaction. The extent to which such space for civil society existed was seen as a measure of the progress of a society. The role of the state was seen as that of protecting the life, liberty and property of the citizen from external aggression and internal chaos; and of providing systems of justice and of public works and amenities. Civil society was independent of the state, yet protected by it.
- Into such theories of the classical political economists came those of the liberal theorists, who included J.S. Mill and De Tocqueville. They too saw civil society as the sphere of rights, individualism, property, and market. The early liberals argued that in civil society individuals can be both creative and productive and that the sphere should be left alone (by the state) and thus seen as a neutral space in which the state does not interfere. Later political economists, including

J.S. Mill and De Tocqueville, however conceptualised civil society as having a more positive dynamic, where individuals actively and collectively organise themselves to 'limit' the power of state. Much influenced by what he had seen in America, De Tocqueville also saw civil society as a space where social associations brought isolated individuals together and thus contributed actively to political and civil as well as social life. He identified three realms of society – that of the state, of private economic activity, and of civil society, where association takes place. In many ways, therefore, De Tocqueville was the 'father' of the concept of the trinity.

- The liberal theorists placed their trust in civil society working through the rational action of individuals in a self-regulating manner. They did not recognise the disruptive possibility and the result of individualistic and self-centred behaviour. Three political theorists – Hegel, Marx, and Gramsci – asserted in the 19th and early 20th centuries that if civil society is to achieve its mission, it has to be organised; it requires wise-control and direction; and it needs proper leadership. However, the three differed on how this control and direction would come about and be exercised.
- For Hegel, it would come about through the subordination of civil society to the state. He expanded the notion of the civil society sphere being distinct from the political and not too identified with the economic sphere. For him, civil society was a transitional zone between the family and the state. He felt that it had to be organised both pedagogically and institutionally. According to him, the state can and must subordinate civil society in the institutionalisation of ethical life.
- Marx saw civil society as a stage in the process of historical evolution, creating space where individuals could find freedom and self-determination. This, Marx felt, could only be achieved by revolutionary transformation from within civil society itself. He inserted the poor/working class and their rights into the discourse of civil society; seeing them as its primary constituent because they were uncorrupted. So while Hegel subordinated civil society to the state, Marx restored the primacy of civil society and saw the state as subordinate to it.

- Observing that the revolutionary transformation predicted by Marx had not taken place, and that capitalism and hegemony by the 'bourgeoisie' had remained, Gramsci developed a modified analysis. He felt that the state meant not just 'government', but was comprised of what he saw as 'political society' and 'civil society', with the two not separate but overlapping. Civil society, Gramsci felt, needed to develop its own culture, so as to challenge the notion that the cultural values of the ruling bourgeoisie represented the 'natural' and in consequence caused those to be modified (Chandoke, 1995).
- In the later part of the 20th century, there was renewed academic interest in the subject of civil society. An American, Robert Putnam, carried out studies of associations in Italy and elsewhere (Putnam, 2001). Drawing upon the ideas that De Tocqueville had first framed, he showed the importance of civil society as a network of associations working in the space between the state and the family. According to Putnam, such association produces 'social capital' (habits of cooperation, trust, social networks and norms) and is a prerequisite of democracy – through being a way in which citizens learn and practise participation in civic affairs (Chandoke, 1995).

1.1.4 Historical Roots In India

While civil society has been redefined over the years, and continues to be so, the pursuit of the 'common public good' is still its recognised main purpose. The different interpretations of what such common public good actually can be seen in the history of civil society in India. Here, the main story begins towards the end of our account of the Western intellectual discourse. Tandon (2002) has traced the following historical roots of civil society in India.

Religious institutions

In ancient and medieval times civil society found its expression through religious faiths and their associated institutions in India and more broadly in South Asia. All of them had in-built concepts of charity, sharing wealth, and helping the poor and the needy.

The social reform movement

During the 19th and 20th centuries, i.e., the colonial period, social reform movements developed. Such social reform was seen as another form of 'public good'. In 1828 Raja Rammohan Roy founded the *Brahmo Samaj* to bring about social, political and economic change, including the eradication of prevalent social evils, such as child marriage and *sati*.¹ There were other important social reform movements, such as Dayanand Saraswati's *Arya Samaj*, and Mahadev Govind Ranade's *Prarthana Samaj*. The movement also addressed issues such as gender equality and education for dalits.² It criticised many existing Hindu practices, such as idolatry, taboos of widow remarriage, and Brahmin dominance.

The period also saw the rise of workers' movements and peasant uprisings. While initially sporadic and unorganised, these activities eventually merged into the national struggle for independence in the 20th century. Literary associations (including the *Royal Asiatic Society* and *Gyan Prakash Sabha* as early as the 1830s), vernacular newspapers and periodicals also came into existence in support of the social reform movement. They highlighted the ideas of freedom, dignity and liberty, and brought diverse people with common objectives together.

By the beginning of the 19th century, a large number of social reform institutions had been established. This led to the enactment by the British Indian Government of the Societies Registration Act in 1860 to legally register these institutions. As we will discuss in Unit 2, this legislation still defines the legal status and rights of voluntary organisations in India.

¹ Sati was an act of self-immolation where widow women used to sit on the burning pyre with husbands

² Caste is a unique Indian social phenomenon. It consists of closed, endogamous social groups arranged in a fixed hierarchical order of superiority and inferiority. The lowest category is the untouchable or outcaste. Mahatma Gandhi gave low-caste people the name *Harijans*, which means 'Children of God'. Administrative parlance now employs the term 'scheduled castes' for this section of population that has, since ancient times, suffered social, religious discrimination and exclusion. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, one of the architects of the Indian constitution of 1950, first coined the term Dalit. Dalit Panther Movement, which organised to claim rights for 'untouchables', used this term in the 1970s. Rights activists and the population more generally prefer the term *Dalit*.

The Freedom Struggle

In the early part of the 20th century, a political struggle developed as an off-spring of the social reform movements with the goal of the achievement of a new 'public good': independence from colonial rule.

Leaders such as Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, and R.C. Dutt were the pioneers, with the Indian National Congress (founded in 1885) providing the base for the articulation of their critiques. The struggle passed through various phases. The early emphasis was more on the creation of national unity than on direct struggle. Later, criticism of the colonial economy – trade, industry and finance – developed. From this evolved the concept of *swadeshi* (*Swaraj* or self-government) as a means of economic and political independence (Tandon & Mohanty, 2002). In 1905, the *swadeshi* movement was launched in Bengal to protest the decision to partition the then Bengal presidency. This led to a nationalist upsurge.

Mahatma Gandhi's entry in the second decade of the 20th century further transformed the nature of civil society action in India. His approach involved the mass involvement of the rural and urban poor in voluntary action (including the industrial working class, peasants, the urban poor and the educated middle classes). He emphasised the need for linkage between political action and what he called constructive (social) work to help the needy and the poor in rural and urban areas. Such constructive work included education, sanitation, protection and promotion of *khadi* and village industries, fight against untouchability, illiteracy and drinking, and enhancing the leadership of women in voluntary action.

The Post-Independence Period

National reconstruction was the primary focus of 'public good' in post-independent India. Within it, economic development was a major concern.

1950s: In this period, there was a decline in civil society action in the country. With the focus on national reconstruction and economic development, the new

constitution giving the national government scope for welfare activities, and the leaders of the freedom movement joining the government in various capacities, such a decline was inevitable. While some civil society associations, including 'Gandhian-inspired' voluntary associations, such as the *Gandhi ashrams* and *sarvodaya samities* continued to remain independent of the state, many others came under direct government control, and others were funded by the government through bodies such as the Khadi and Village Industries Commission and the Central Social Welfare Board. While there was also an emergence of a number of rural development institutions and schools of social work in civil society, the state also began to control organisations in the field of performing arts, culture, music and literature. The cooperative movement also came under government influence, through systematic financing and control.

1960s: By the late 1960s, the model of development adopted by the new nation-state had begun to show signs of mal-functioning, with poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion becoming a reality. There was in consequence an upsurge in the civil society sphere in the 1960s, including protest movements, the most visible of which came to be called the *Naxalite* movement.³

1970s: Jayaprakash Narayan's call for total revolution in 1974 led to a significant shift in the nature of voluntary action. Youth and students were mobilised to participate directly in the reconstruction of society. The 1970s also saw growing pressure by social scientists, grassroots groups and NGOs to make people not objects of the development process, but active participants in it. New ways of addressing social and economic needs and concerns, with a shift in the relationship between state and civil society, began to emerge.

The national emergency of 1975 and the subsequent authoritarian actions of the state also contributed to a major transformation in the spirit and nature of civil society

³ The Naxalite movement owes its origins to an uprising in Naxalbari sub-division in West Bengal, India in 1967. Largely informed by the Maoist school of communist thought, it began as a militant peasant movement to assist in seizure of land illegally held and its distribution to the landless and poor peasants. The movement believed that, through an armed revolution, a change in the social and political order could be brought about.

action and concerns. The emergency led to the undermining of many democratic processes, including the curtailment of fundamental human rights, and the loss of freedom of the press. Public meetings were banned. During Emergency, the then political leadership enacted the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) in 1976 to be implemented by the Ministry of Internal Security. This is another Act that continues to this day as one of the key problems in the relationship between civil society and the state in India.

1980s: During the early 1980s, the state created a systematic process of intimidation of voluntary associations associated with Gandhian inspiration and those supporting the ideas of Jayaprakash Narayan and other leaders of the period. New institutions for regulating government funding to voluntary associations also came into existence. Nevertheless, new forms of CSOs emerged. There was a growth in individual, informal, community-based voluntary action. International development organisations began to acknowledge and support the contribution of voluntary organisations in bringing about sustainable development. Linkages between Indian voluntary associations and their counterparts in other regions of the world began to grow.

The 1980s also witnessed the emergence of a number of new CSOs being founded by a new generation of young development workers. These CSOs focused on a wide and diverse range of issues in fields such as literacy, primary health care, housing, drinking water, sanitation, human rights, bonded labour, environmental degradation, deforestation, rural poor, tribals, and women. At the same time, a number of social movements, making claims for livelihood and social justice, were organised nationally and internationally. People's struggles for rights and control of their own destinies gained ground. People's movements, such as the *Chipko* (initiated by women from the hilly terrains of then Uttar Pradesh, now Uttarakhand, in India) were organised, focusing on the issue of people's access to and control over natural resources. Other people's movements focussed on the contentious issue of dams, and on the rights of women, dalits and minorities.

The post-emergency period was thus a new phase of the emergence of civil society action in India. Development became the prime thrust of many voluntary associations, as there was continuing distrust in the capacity and intentions of the nation-state and its agencies to address the real problems of poverty and exclusion. Thus, a broader and more diverse notion of human and societal development as a 'public good' emerged.

1990s: There was growing recognition on the part of international aid organisations and national government agencies of the need to regard CSOs as important partners in development. At the same time more and more CSOs, in spite of the restrictions imposed on them by legislative instruments, started to place more emphasis on the raising issues for debate and discourse through enhancing their education and advocacy activities. In part, at least, the effects of globalisation on civil society were responsible for this (discussed in more detail in Unit 6). The functioning of democratic institutions and processes also came to be on the agenda of CSOs (Tandon, 2002).

1.1.5 Four Recent Trends

While every country has its own 'story' of the role and evolution of civil society, at a global level four recent trends can be observed:

- *First trend:* This concerns civil society's role as adversarial to, and even in some circumstances, as a force in overthrowing the state. This strand, evident historically in the Western discourse in the views of Marx and Gramsci, and in the period of the struggle for freedom in India, has lived on in more recent times where there have been popular uprisings and rebellions against dictatorial and authoritarian states –for example, fall of the Berlin wall in 1989; subsequent overthrow of centralised communist regimes in East/Central Europe and the former Soviet Union; the overthrow of military dictatorships in 1970s and 1980s (i.e., the Philippines in 1986; Argentina and Chile in late 1980s, more recently in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011); as well as the bringing of the end of colonial regimes in earlier decades. The success of the Anti-Apartheid movement in

South Africa in the early 1990s and the end of single-party undemocratic regimes in many countries, especially in Africa, have also been credited, in part at least, to civil society. Chandoke (2003) observes, “Whenever states bottle up freedom of expressions through denial of civil and political liberties, societies explode with some disastrous consequences for state power” (p. 31).

As new, independent, democratic countries emerged, notably in the former Soviet bloc countries in the 1990s, the recognition grew that their continued stability as societies and nations depended not just on the adoption of democratic forms of government and market-driven economies, but on the existence, too, of vibrant civil society. Whether it was possible to ‘create’ such a civil society, on the bare bones of previously ‘underground’ groups alone became a matter of debate.

- *Second trend:* This is the increasing recognition of the role of civil society as a space where the development of ‘social capital’ takes place. Through its role as a place where association takes place, it is viewed as the ‘breeding ground’ of democratic participation and the ‘bedrock’ on which the more formal structures and processes of democracy must be built if they are to function properly and effectively. Here the continued influence of the Tocquevillean concept of associations, given renewed attention by Putnam’s research, is clearly evident. In India, the social movements that began in the 1980s, drawing as they did on the historical tradition of the social reform movements in the previous century, need also to be seen as part of this trend. People themselves *want* to be more involved. This was documented by the Commonwealth Foundation (1999) from consultations with 10,000 ‘ordinary’ citizens in 47 countries, both developed and developing. Among the findings of the study (others are set out elsewhere in this and in other Units) was this:

The demand from citizens was that they no longer be treated as mere beneficiaries of government schemes or as voters who, only occasionally, participate in the electoral process. They now want active, sustained participation to determine their own future. These

voices, in collaboration with policy makers, public leaders and development workers can help strengthen different aspects of governance and enable citizens to address their concerns in a sustainable manner (Knight, Chigudu, & Tandon, 2002).

- *Third trend:* From the 1980s onwards economic theorists stressed that economic growth needed free markets and open competition, with less intervention by governments. The rise, during the 1990s, of ‘globalisation’ further fuelled this tendency of governments to step back. While the market filled the space left, civil society too, has as a result, found more space for its activities.
- *Fourth trend:* The final decades of the 20th century saw many nations and many parts of the world facing issues and problems that could not be ‘treated’ by governments alone, no matter how strong and well-resourced. Some of these problems were ‘new’, including the HIV/AIDS pandemic and climate change, while others were more sharp escalations of older problems, such as war and refugees, and drug and human trafficking and abuse. The necessity of involving civil society in addressing them quickly became apparent to governments.

THINK TANK

Using an internet search engine, such as Google, enter the word ‘civil society’ and go to five different sites (not necessarily the first ones in the list) to see what you can learn.

Make brief notes on up to ten things you discover about the meaning of civil society in two columns as follows (you don’t necessarily have to end up with the same number of things in each column):

I’m clearer about these things

I’m even more confused now than I was before about these things

NOTE BANK**Civil Society And Social Movements**

The relationship between social movements and civil society has not always been the same. The dynamics of their interaction has been affected by many other socio-economic and socio-political factors. Their relationship has ranged from being conflicting to co-operative.

Some people understand civil society as a broader concept of which social movements could be one of the modes of co-ordinating collective action (Diani & Bison, 2004; della Porta & Diani, 2011). The main difference between the two concepts, as noted by many social movement analysts and civil society analysts, is based on the criteria of conflict. Social movements, it has been observed, revolve around conflict of power. Civil society, on the other hand, prioritised issues that were more consensual and did not attract largely conflicting public opinions (della Porta & Diani, 2011). Consequently, the tactics used by social movements is more confrontational with the aim of wanting to capture public attention. On the other hand, civil society works through more peaceful media laying stress on civility, tolerance & mutual respect despite differences (Keane, 2003; della Porta & Diani, 2011).

But this binary in defining civil society and social movements has also undergone changes. The development of 'new' social movements in the 1970s (those that don't associate themselves with nationalist or workers' movements), have made it more difficult to trace these lines of difference. This era saw both parties stressing on the notion of autonomy of some kind of domination or the other (e.g., Feminist movements, LGBT movements, etc.)

But today's trends suggest that both social movements and civil society activism find themselves going back to the streets in an attempt to spark alternative discourses in political thought and building a formidable critique to what has been termed as 'hegemonic neoliberalism' (della Porta & Diani, 2011, p. 73). Both social movements and civil societies have moved into the virtual world. Many are apprehensive of the effectiveness of the Internet and networks formed through it, but it is clear that this trend is here to stay.

All in all, there is a dire need to have better engagement between social movement activists, civil society actors, social and political theorists and analysts to enhance understanding on social change and transformation.

1.2 Wider Aspects Of Civil Society

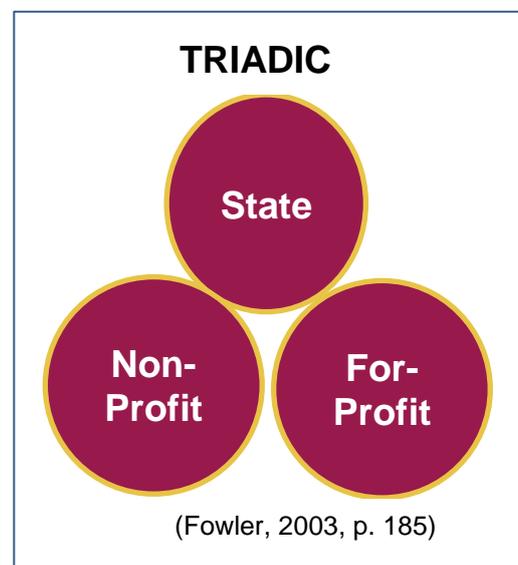
The framework of the trinity we have outlined in the previous section – state, market and civil society – has come into use in recent times to explain the role and place of civil society vis-à-vis the state and the market. Previously, terms such as the ‘voluntary sector’ and the ‘non-profit sector’ were more commonly used as general descriptions, and indeed still are.

While we offered a simple working definition of civil society in the previous section, its meaning is a much-debated concept. Researchers, academics and practitioners have produced a vast literature on the subject and here it is only possible to mention some of them. While our working definition sees it as any form of public-good orientated effort, some consider civil society as a ‘space’, others question whether it is a definable sector, while yet others see it as simply a set of values (as in ‘acting in a civil way’). In addition, the term acquires different nuances and meanings related to different ideological or cultural contexts. While there is the danger of confusing the understanding you are trying to gain, in this section we look at some other perspectives of civil society and civil society organisations, and conclude by discussing the issues these raised.

1.2.1 *Three Other Perspectives On Civil Society*

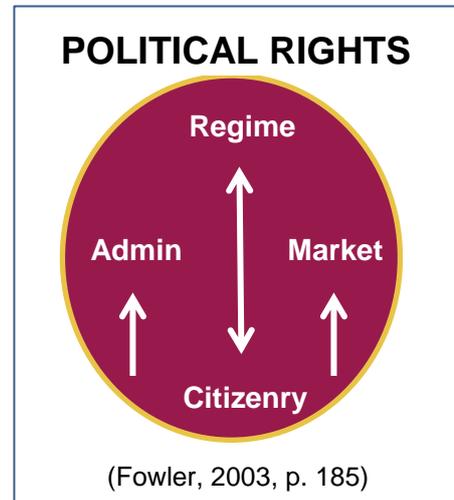
Fowler (2003) has outlined the following three ways of seeing civil society:

- *The ‘triadic’, or three-sector perspective:* While at first this looks similar to the ‘trinity’ we have outlined in the previous section, it is different. It originated in the 1960s, when US scholars developed the original ‘dyadic’ distinction between the state and civil

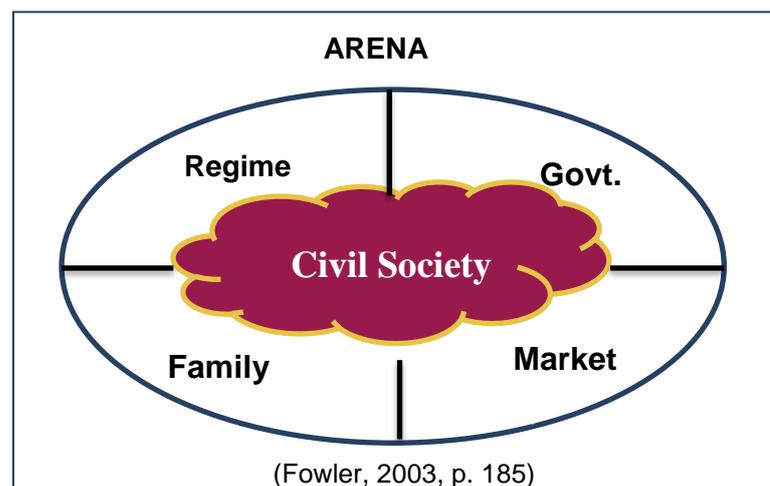


society (which included the market), but separated the latter into ‘for-profit’ and ‘not-for-profit’ components, as is seen in the figure. This categorisation, thus, sees associational life as related to economics. In this framework there is relatively insignificant crossover between the three sectors with little attention to overlap or ‘grey areas’. Each sector is also seen as static.

- Political rights perspective:* This view sees politics as the key dimension of civil society by emphasising the importance of citizenship and human rights. Whatever their institutional location (public, private, or civil) people have an identity and rights and obligations as citizens. In this framework, power relations between different types of agents and the centrality of the modern identity called citizenship are explicit.
- The arena perspective:* In this model, civil society is seen as a fluidly defined ‘arena’ (or space) within which various functions, varied transactions and power relations exist. The boundaries of such space may be country or community specific – historically determined and continuously evolving because of external and internal forces. In this perspective, while citizenship remains central, collective/ associational action rather than individual action is the focus of attention.



Edwards (2004) notes three schools of thought on the meaning of civil society and their strengths and weaknesses:



- *Civil society as associational life:* The problem here, as Edwards puts it, is that 'real associational life is home to all sorts of different values and beliefs', some of which would be seen as distinctly 'uncivil' (such as the National Rifle Association in the United States, which asserts the rights of citizens to bear arms; or groups espousing terrorism and other forms of extremism). A second problem is that it can be argued that civil associations are by no means the only places in which people 'learn' about values, beliefs and democratic behaviour. Indeed, some would argue that there are many other places in which people do this learning – from the family, from religious faiths, and from educational experience.
- *Civil society as the 'good society':* There is, Edwards argues, a danger in seeing civil society as 'good' and the other sectors as 'bad'. Historically, he points out, achieving a 'good' society has not been achieved merely by civil society, but rather through social contracts negotiated between government, business and citizens.
- *Civil society as the public sphere:* Acknowledging that the 'public good' is central to civil society's purpose and meaning, Edwards points out that it is therefore a political arena, in which the 'public good' is worked out through processes of broad-based debate, resolution of differences, and practical problem-solving that are not polarised in the way that institutional party politics have become. These latter tend to reduce policy options to simple 'this way or that way' debates, often resulting in impasse. Where such debates take place in civil society, this polarity and the resultant 'gridlock' is likely to be avoided. (This role of civil society – essentially an arena for political debate in which party lines are not drawn and narrow dogma avoided – is a further feature of civil society viewed with suspicion by governments, and by politicians in particular, where they feel that the political debate, outside general elections, is not a matter for the wider public.)

The conclusion is that civil society is not any one of these aspects alone. It is, at the same time, something to achieve (the good society), findings ways and means to the achieve it (the associational life) and a method of engaging citizens with each other about theses ways and means (the public sphere of debate and discourse) (Edwards, 2004).

In many countries of the South, the state-led model of development was given primacy in the years following their gaining of independence after the World War II. This has resulted in the state being termed as the 'first' sector of society. In many countries of the North, the market has been a primary agency of economic development and is therefore termed the 'second' sector. As noted previously, the concept of the trinity has begun to emerge only in the last two decades, overcoming the polarity of the state and the market. Civil society, therefore, has been called the 'third' sector. But, noting that this is taken by some to mean the 'residual' or 'left-over' sector (or, in other words, anything and everything that cannot be properly located in the other two sectors), Tandon (2002) points out that it should be kept in mind that historically, since civil society is older than the nation state, it must be regarded as the first sector.

Summing up, although the literature about the subject is vast, civil society, according to Tandon (2002) can be seen simultaneously seen as a:

- Set of 'values', inherent in 'public good' purposes (including altruism, voluntarism, etc.) in a 'good society';
- 'Collection of organisations', through which citizens come together for common public good purposes through self-help groups (neighbourhood associations, local sport groups etc.); membership groups (trade unions, cooperatives, faith groups, professional associations, etc.); and intermediary organisations that aim to enhance and support the capacities of smaller organisations and the voices of citizens;

- 'Space' that is free, open and accessible – where values, perspectives and norms are developed, debated, accepted and contested, and where subaltern and unarticulated views are expressed;
- 'Movement' for advancing different causes, such as women's rights, human rights, child rights, etc., including movements against policies and institutions which are held to be contrary to the public good;

THINK TANK

You meet your old friend again and s/he tells you that s/he has been thinking about what you told him the other day and has a question.

"What's the question?" you ask.

"The 'residents association committee' of the colony, where I live, has just passed a resolution that requires all of us to stop playing any kind of loud music after 8 pm every night. Is that what you call civil society?"

Give yourself a few minutes to think about this and then note down your answer in no more than 50 words.

1.2.2 Functions Of Civil Society

Let us now look at what civil society actually 'does'. Three of its overall functions were stressed in the previous section and will therefore be clearly evident by now: through it, development takes place; it also plays important roles in ensuring true democracy; and it is an important force in building and maintaining social cohesion and stability in heterogeneous societies.

Two detailed functions out of the many that are implicit or explicit in such overall functions, as highlighted by Chandoke (2003), are:

- Civil society performs the function of social, civic and political educator. It brings together people in a web of associational life, assists in the development of sociability and the cultivation of civil spirit and engagement, and by being an open space, where discourse and debate takes place, is a formative ground for the development and expression of opinion and choice.

- *Civil society is a process through which citizens and their associations constantly monitor the state, the market, and the power arrangements within civil society itself. People voice their interest on how a good society needs to be arranged. They discuss the desired state of society (how diverse people should live together and co-exist) and desired state of polity (state accountability to implement this vision).*

Van Rooy (2000) takes an even simpler approach:

“[Civil society is] both an observable reality (civil society as a collective of conflicting, inter-dependent and inter-influential organisations) and a good thing (having a civil society, warts and all, is better than not]” (p. 30).

1.2.3 Civil Society Organisations

While, as noted, civil society is comprised of much more than organisations, it is necessary to have an understanding of what such organisations (which we have referred to as CSOs) are.

The term civil society organisation (CSO) is increasingly used in place of the previous term non-governmental organisation (NGO). The term NGO actually came to embrace a vast and bewildering range of organisations, ranging from INGOs (International NGOs) to community based organisations (CBOs) at the grassroots level. In between are voluntary organisations (VOs), voluntary development organisations (VDOs), intermediary voluntary organisations, community associations, and an array of others.

Since the fields of work and interest embraced by CSOs have tended to widen, as we have discussed, it is, therefore, not exactly a substitute term for NGOs, which tend to be more associated with organisations working in the fields of welfare and development. Nonetheless in understanding CSOs, it is useful to begin with how NGOs have been defined.

Illustration: Key Defining Characteristics Of NGOs**Voluntary**

- a) They are formed voluntarily: there is nothing in the legal, statutory framework of any country which requires them to be formed or prevents them from being formed; and
- b) There will be an element of voluntary participation in the organisation: whether in the form of small numbers of board members or large number of members or beneficiaries giving their time voluntarily (*see Note: 1*).

Independent

Within the laws of society, they are controlled by those who have formed them, or by Boards of Management to which such people have delegated, or are required by law to delegate, responsibility for control and management (*see Note: 2*)

Not-For-Profit

They are not for personal or private profit or gain, although:

- a) NGOs may have employees, like other enterprises, who are paid for what they do. However, in NGOs, the employers – Boards of Management – are not paid for the work they perform on Boards, beyond (most commonly) being reimbursed for expenses they incur in the course of performing their Board duties.
- b) NGOs may engage in revenue-generating activities. They do not, however, distribute profits or surpluses to shareholders or members. They use revenues generated solely in pursuit of their aims (*see Note: 3*).

Not Self-Serving In Aims And Related Values

The aims of NGOs are as follows (*see Note: 4*):

- a) To improve the circumstances and prospects of disadvantaged people who are unable to realise their potential or achieve their full rights in society, through direct or indirect forms of action (*see Note: 5*); and/or
- b) To act on concerns and issues which are detrimental to the well-being, circumstances or prospects of people or society as a whole.

Notes of importance

- 1) *The word 'voluntary' distinguishes NGOs operating in democratic societies from government – i.e., statutory – agencies. It thus has two meanings in the definition. Insofar as the formation of NGOs is concerned it means non-compulsory, or non-statutory – i.e., formed voluntarily. It also means that there is an element of unpaid voluntary work contributed to the organisation, most commonly by the Board members not receiving payment for their work (see Note 3 below), but also (and possibly on a large scale in some organisations) by voluntary, unpaid work performed by members and/or beneficiaries. It should be stressed, however, that it is wrong to assume or require that all NGOs are or should be characterised by being entirely or largely dependent on voluntary labour.*

- 2) *The term 'Board(s) of Management' is used as a general descriptive one. The constitutions of individual NGOs and/or the laws under which they register and function may use other terms.*
- 3) *Depending on the nature of the organisations, Boards may be selected or elected. Boards may also include, as voting members, paid employees of the organisation, usually in a minority, or co-opted to be attendance without having voting rights. In such cases they are, like other Board members, not paid for their attendance or work on Boards but for their other duties.*
- 4) *These aims gives NGOs clear values and purposes which distinguish them from other organisations existing primarily to serve the interests of members or individuals.*
- 5) *This includes self-help and people's organisations formed by or among disadvantaged people in order to help themselves and reduce inequalities between themselves and other sections of society.*

(The Commonwealth Foundation, 1995, p. 19)

NGOs are therefore seen as having four characteristics – voluntary, independent, not-for-private-profit, and not self-serving. These four, however, form only a loose way of defining CSOs nowadays. Organisations that are commonly counted among the ranks of CSOs include trade unions, faith-based organisations and professional associations, many of which are, at least in part, self-serving in their purposes.

A further way of illuminating what CSOs are is to classify or categorise them in some way. This can be done in various ways, such as by their subject/ target focus, size, activities, structure and governance arrangements, but no definitive, universally-accepted typology has yet been attempted.

In its report on NGOs, the Commonwealth Foundation (1995) suggested drawing a basic distinction between 'private' NGOs (organisations controlled privately by their founders or their nominees) and 'participatory' NGOs (organisations or associations having more democratic governance by being controlled by bodies elected or otherwise representative of their members)

Brown and Korten (1989) grouped NGOs into four types:

- Voluntary Organisations (VOs) – described as 'value driven' organisations
- People's Organisations (POs) – run by people themselves

- Public Service Contractors (PSCs) – organisations operating in the market and driven by its forces
- Hybrid Government/Non-governmental Organisations – formed and directly or indirectly controlled by government

Tandon and Mohanty (2002) identified five basic categories of CSOs in South Asia:

- Traditional associations
- Religious associations
- Social movements
- Membership associations
- Intermediary organisations.

1.2.4 Issues

It must be stressed that there is nothing 'water tight' or definitive about the above elaborations on the meaning of civil society and the nature and work of CSOs. Both are fluid concepts and, as has been discussed, civil society is highly heterogeneous. From that statement alone, many issues follow.

Consequences Of Heterogeneity

The heterogeneity of CSOs means that it is far less 'organised' as a sector than either government or the private sector. Although the private sector, like civil society, is comprised of very varied (in terms of size, function and nature) organisations, it is, by and large, able to find a common voice when it needs to, and it is clear about what it wants. This is by no means always the case with civil society: what is held to be the 'public good' by some organisations within it, is by no means necessarily shared by others. Thus, while at the local level, CSOs may well be able to find a 'common voice' and agree on what the 'common good' is, this becomes less and less likely and achieved with more and more difficulty as the level moves from the local to the national, regional and global level. On many issues, civil society is deeply fractured and hierarchically structured, wherein some groups and individual possess

greater political, social and material power. It can also become a ground for struggle between democratic and anti-democratic forces (Chandoke, 2003).

How Civil?

Related to this is the issue of how 'civil' a CSO actually is. This issue has several dimensions. It is possible, but difficult to 'map' CSOs on the tri-sectoral triangle set out earlier. Some CSOs are so close and related to government that some would claim they are part of the governmental sector, for example, national councils of women or youth exist in many countries, established by government, funded by government, but having 'independence' in decision-making. Are they, therefore, CSOs or governmental off-shoots?

To take another example, this time looking at the boundary between civil society and the private sector, is a chamber of commerce (established to serve the interests of its member businesses) part of civil society or of the private/market sector? Is a foundation established by a corporation (for charitable purposes), such as Tata or Ford or Microsoft, registered within the same legal framework as other CSOs, truly a CSO? Or is it really part of the private sector?

Or, to take a third example, is a professional association, say of doctors or architects or veterinary practitioners, again established primarily to protect and advance the interests of its members (which may or may not be compatible with what constitutes the 'public good'), truly a CSO? Do religious/faith based organisations (these are, as noted, commonly seen as CSOs by most observers) really advance the public good, or merely the good of their congregations and followers? The same question could be asked of sports clubs or 'hobbyist' groups, and indeed of trades unions and 'cultural associations'.

What about the private voluntary organisation (PVO)? While in West Africa, all voluntary organisations are known as PVOs, elsewhere the word 'private' has more sinister connotations. In many countries the laws and requirements of establishing and legally registering a CSO are far from onerous. Three people can set up a charity. They can then solicit funds from the public and donors, and use such funds

not for 'public good', but merely to enrich themselves. These used to be called 'mom and pop' NGOs, or 'briefcase' NGOs, terms descriptive enough to need no explanation. Are they, then, CSOs?

What all this means is that the 'civil' in 'civil society' is not an absolute 'have it or not' quality. Just as there are degrees of 'public-ness' and degrees of 'private-ness', so too are there degrees of 'civil-ness'. There are 'hybrids' which display the characteristics of, and indeed operate in the space of more than one sector, just as there are corrupt governments and 'rip-off' companies, so too are there rotten apples in the civil society barrel.

Legitimacy And Accountability

Another issue of importance in any debate about civil society and its organisations is that of transparency, accountability, and legitimacy. This will be fully discussed in Unit 5, but it is appropriate to raise the issue briefly here.

While what is called the 'democratic deficit' (citizens losing trust in the democratic process) weakens their argument somewhat, governments argue that they are legitimised by, and thus accountable to citizens and the public generally through the ballot box and through such institutions as parliament. Similarly, private companies (or at least the larger 'public' ones) can argue that they are accountable to their shareholders and stakeholders, and that they stand or fall on the trust they generate among the consumers of their products and services in the competitive market place.

What of CSOs? Being in the 'public sphere' there is a general accountability to the public, but this can be tenuous. The accountabilities of those CSOs with membership structures and governance processes whereby such members ultimately determine policy are quite clear. As has been noted, CSOs can and do adopt very simple forms of incorporation in which the control and running of the organisation is vested in the private hands of a very small number of people, as few as three, who can then determine the conduct and policies of the organisation without reference to anybody else. All that is required is for the principals to make some form of annual report. If

the organisation voices an opinion about any matter, or advocates for a particular change in some aspect of society, then the questions arise:

- Whose opinion is being represented?
- On whose behalf is the opinion being represented?
- How legitimate therefore is this viewpoint?
- And thus, to whom or what is this organisation accountable for its actions and opinions?

These questions are compounded by financial considerations. Those organisations that derive all their financial resources from membership fees can claim to have strong legitimacy and accountability. However, many CSOs derive their income from other sources and where this is the case, their accountabilities change and questions about legitimacy and accountability begin to increase. Where and when governments themselves provide funds to CSOs, whether through grants or contracts for services, it is argued by some that this erodes their more direct 'public accountability' as well as possibly subverting their aims and objectives.

External Influence

The issue here comes to its most extreme form over the question and impact of the funding of CSOs in developing countries from external sources – whether through INGOs or directly by foreign governments as part of the foreign/overseas aid programmes. For example, in India the FCRA, referred to earlier, has for some time made this a very pertinent issue, and indeed in other countries in the developing world too, both in South Asia and beyond. The issue can be simply and starkly put: at an international meeting of CSOs in 2005, the President of an African country was asked his opinion of CSOs. His brief (and entire) reply was: “foreign funded, not trusted”. Unfortunately these kinds of observations fuel the mistrust that many governments have about civil society generally, rather than just about particular types of CSO.

This was merely an introduction. These and other issues concerning CSOs will be discussed more fully in other units of this course (especially in Unit 5), as they are integral to any discussion of capacity-building, whether of the sector as a whole or of organisations and individuals within it.

NOTE BANK

Social Entrepreneurship

There have been various drivers for the rise of social entrepreneurship. Technological advancements have helped people understand the need for social entrepreneurship. There has also been a rise in the demand for 'social provisioning to emerge from business and allowed a new language of social provisioning to emerge that re-imagined public goods as best delivered by innovation outside-but contracted to-the state' (Nicholls A. , 2011, p. 82). The need for funding, especially due to recessions during the period of 1990-91 and 2008-10 have forced civil societies to look for more innovative ideas for fund generation, like social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurship is a phenomenon in need of a distinct definition (Nicholls, 2010; Nicholls, 2011). In its infancy, there is no agreement as to how it is to be defined. But this, 'rather than undermining its legitimacy, this lack of precision has only added to the mystique and power vested in the social entrepreneurship phenomenon' (Andersson, 2012, p. 1).

There are three criteria identified as being factors that define social entrepreneurship and social enterprises (Nicholls & Cho, 2006; Nicholls, 2011):

- Sociality
- Innovation
- Market orientation

There have been various critiques of the rise of social entrepreneurship. Firstly it is a new field and its too early to suggest whether it is the way ahead for traditional CSOs. Analysts of social enterprises rely too much on 'hero worship', which stress on some individuals. This does not substantially contribute to setting a positive image of social entrepreneurship and an economic sector (Andersson, 2012). Finally, many civil society activists believe that this sector is a way of co-opting the independence of civil society by larger economic and political forces (Nicholls, 2011) and should be taken with a pinch of salt.

1.3 Civil Society Organisations In South Asia

Internationally, CSOs have been classified and categorised in various ways. In South Asia, five main categories have been identified and these are set out in the following chart. A fuller account is provided in one of the required readings.

A useful way to understand the mosaic of CSOs is by viewing them as different associational types. Using such an associational framework, CSOs can be seen as presenting a wide array of interpretations of the 'public good'.

Categorisation Of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) In South Asia

CSO Type	PURPOSE	Nature	NOTES AND EXAMPLE/S
1. Traditional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in regulation of social relations of families and communities Governance and protection of natural resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exist around a social unit either defined by a tribe, ethnicity, or caste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Goshthi</i> and <i>samaj</i>
2. Religious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charity, assisting the poor and social service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides education, drinking water, health, and other social welfare services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ashrams, churches and zakat committees
3. Social Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reform of society, institutions and governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be temporary, ideologically driven, high-level of voluntary participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social movements focusing on need of particular group: rights of tribals, dalits, women, etc. Social movements against set of practices, institutions, policies, i.e., liquor,

CSO Type	PURPOSE	Nature	NOTES AND EXAMPLE/S
			<p>dowry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social movements against eviction and displacement; for sustainable development • Social movements for governance and state accountability
4. Membership Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping their members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly laid down criteria and methods of recruiting members and providing services to members • The degree of formality and of exclusivity vary greatly 	
4a. Representational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent and advance common interests of particular category of citizens vis-à-vis the state and industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate at local, regional and national level • Strength of members vary; tendency to be mass-based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade unions, unions of rural labour, farm workers, vendors, women workers • Mass based peasants organisations • Business associations and traders' associations
4b. Professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To advance their professional/ occupational identity • Provide opportunities for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exist as membership organisations around a particular occupation and/or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership associations of lawyers, teachers, journalists, doctors, nurses, engineers, managers, etc.

CSO Type	PURPOSE	Nature	NOTES AND EXAMPLE/S
	exchange/ support to members,	profession	
4c. Socio-cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet the social, cultural recreational needs of their members 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural associations -modern music, theatre and dance groups Sports clubs
4d. Self-Help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address problems facing their communities Some also serve the needs of their members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share resources, enable mutual aid, and support and build collective strength. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mohalla committees in urban neighbourhoods Community initiated or project initiated CBOs Micro-finance groups or self-help groups
5. Intermediary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To advance a wider societal cause or broader public good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serve an intermediary function among individual citizens, and between them and macro-state institutions like the bureaucracy, judiciary, legislature, police, etc. 	
5a. Service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide services, like education and health care, drinking water, sanitation, micro-credit, etc. 		
5b. Mobilisational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise and empower local 		

CSO Type	PURPOSE	Nature	NOTES AND EXAMPLE/S
	communities and marginalised sections; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May also include service delivery 		
5c. Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to other CSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support functions include research, information sharing, capacity building and networking activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be specialised in thematic, sectoral, target group specific or in generic areas
5d. Philanthropic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources to other CSOs 	
5e. Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating a particular cause 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on issues, such as environment, gender, human rights, child labour, governance, accountability, etc. 	
5f. Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend their collective voice and strength 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associations of other intermediaries and act as networks • Some focus on theme, while some cover geographical area 	

(Tandon & Mohanty, 2002)

Given the diversity and complexity of South Asian CSOs, there will be cases of overlap. This classification leaves out individual initiatives; it does not specifically capture transient organisations such as a disaster relief committee, nor certain

hybrid types. The analysis also does not capture the different degrees of autonomy, effectiveness or voluntarism in such associations. The profile helps, however, in building a broader conceptual as well as empirical understanding of CSOs.

THINK TANK

Think of five CSOs that you know of, and place them in the above categorisation if you can, and/or suggest new categories where they would fit more easily. Make notes of any points of difficulty that arise.

List the organisation and categories you have assigned them to in the following table:

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Existing or new category</i>	<i>Notes</i>

Now attempt an alternative classification of CSOs, on the basis of your own understanding and experience.

Summary

The history, foundations and conceptual basis for defining what civil society is have been informed by modern political thought from Locke to Marx and Gramsci. Civil society, although referred to as the third sector, has a history older than the democracy itself, with religious and traditional organisations having been active since the pre-colonial era. There is heterogeneity present among civil society organisations; there are diverse ways through which CSOs have been defined. South Asia has a specific history for CSOs that is different from the rest of the world, coming from social requirements peculiar to this region.

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