

State, Market and Civil Society

Definition of Civil society:

The terminology *Shushil Shomaj* in Bengali is used for the English term civil society. The word Civil Society came from Roman word Civil. The origin of Civil is again from the word Civitas. In ancient Rome and Greece there were City-centric state. The city-centric states were called 'Civitas'. 'Civitas' or the residents of city-states were called 'Civil' or citizens of the state. On the other hand, society means forum or *Somaj*. So originally 'Civil society' means 'a society of citizens'. At present, we understand the civil society as a society of conscious citizens.

Any state has two main parts- government and people or civil. One of the links between this government and the citizen is the civil society. Civil society will cooperate the state by praising, criticizing and advising, the message of the government will reach out to citizens, and citizens too to the government as vise-versa. That's why civil society is needed.

Civicus World Alliance for Citizen Participation defines civil society as: "The arena outside of the family, the state and market where people associate to advance common interests". Civil society is also considered the 'third division' or third sector of a society, which is separate from the government and the trade or business sector. That means civil society has different types of relationship with the government and the trade or markets.

There are certain features that determine who is civil society, such as: 1. Civil society cannot be a part of the state or government, cannot take assistance from the government; 2. Civil society cannot be associated with any political parties, this does not mean that civil society will have no political thoughts or values;

Any state has two main parts- government and people or civil. One of the links between the government and the citizen is called civil society.

3. The goals and objectives of civil society should be specific and transparent. That means civil society will be a non-state organization, her position will be outside the political parties and its activities will be open and transparent against their declared programs.

The needs of civil society:

In an ideal democratic state at the present time, there are usually three departments called Law, Justice and Governance. For being an effective state, the effectiveness of these three sections is must. Civil society will advise the government to keep the relationships up between these three departments appropriate. Even they will monitor if necessary. Not only overseeing the executive branch, but also overseeing all other institutions and departments of the state is one of the basic functions of civil society. Where civil society is not effective, democratic states are largely remain ineffective.

The relationship between the government and the civil society:

What is the relationship of the civil society with the government, we can recall the philosopher Hegel, He says - Government in the modern state is becoming more and more strong that the person as citizen observes gradually shrinking space in securing their personal property rights. So the individuals take initiative to form different clubs and society on their own outside their families and state. These type of organisations are called Civil Society. Hegel

believed that the state should have control over civil society, just as civil society monitors the state. The Italian socialist philosopher Antonio Gramsci thinks that two kinds of relationships are important in society. One is 'Hegemony' and the other is 'Domination'. The state controls by domination. But the consent of the citizens is required to establish the dominance. Civil society often acts as an ally of the state, sometimes against the state control.

The idea of civil society can get by assessing the relationship with the government. The main functions of civil society are:

1. Advise the government in managing the state;
2. To strive for the protection of the interests of the mass people;
3. Present to the government what the people want. They criticize the government for its wrongdoing and also provide guidance to the people on law and order and development and prosperity issue of the country;
4. Contribute to the establishment of human rights, democracy, accountability, transparency, independence of the judiciary and good governance;
5. To inform the citizen where the solutions to the civic problem can be found and how can it be found;
6. Try to form public opinion to protect the socio-economic interests of the people;
7. Arrange open discussion to resolve civic issues;

Analyzing these works, we can find a clear relationship between the state and civil society.

Civil society will co-operate the government with constructive criticism and build relationship with the government and continues.

Market and civil society

There are two different theories concerning the relationship of market with civil society. Some believe that market should be supportive of personal rights of citizens, and in such, market related organizations should be a part of civil society. But groups believe that market is among those entities which also exploit the rights of individual. And so, individual and society have to fight the market. On the other hand, the trade associations work for profit and care the interest of businessmen. They do not try to establish the rights of common people rather often deprive their rights.

So, according to the opinion, market sector and organizations related to market sector should not be a part of the civil society.

From the above discussions, the role of civil society on the market sector is clear. In today's open market economy of a democratic state, it has less control over the market system. As a result, in many cases, the market situation turns against the public interest. And that's why the role of the civil society comes forward. In that situation, civil society would try to turn the market situation in favor of the public interest.

Development can only be sustainable in a state when the government, market system and civil society work in complement of each-other.

In today's open market economy of a democratic state, it has less control over the market system. As a result, in many cases, the market situation turns against the public interest. And that's why the role of the civil society comes forward. In that situation, civil society would try to turn the market situation in favor of the public interest.



National Secretariat

House 13, Road 2, Shyamoli,
Dhaka 1207