

Non-Governmental Organizations and Rural Health Care Programmes

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Abstract

In the field of rural development, various studies relating to social development suggested that without the participation of the NGOs at local level it would be impossible on the part of government to improve the quality of life of the people. The basic objective of all developmental activities is to provide minimum needs to the marginalized sections of the society life food, shelter and health. Government agencies just implement the policies and programmes chalked out by the higher authorities. The policies and programmes suitable for one geographical location may not be suitable for another geographical location. In order to meet the needs of the different sections in the society, the government encouraged and motivated (NGOs) to implement the government policies in a more effective way. NGOs generally undertake development programmes such as health, nutrition, family planning, education, water supply and sanitation and other related issues. NGOs in India are working in collaboration with the state and central governments and a majority of the NGOs are receiving funds from the government and even implement government sponsored scheme. NGOs operate in India to provide preventive and curative health care services to the needy people. The present study aims at examining health care services provide by the NGOs in Kanniyakumari District.

Key words: Non-government organization, health care, disease, services and development.

INTRODUCTION

“Health is the real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver” – Mahatma Gandhi

In the field of rural development, various studies relating to social development suggested that without the participation of the NGOs at local level it would be impossible on the part of government to improve the quality of life of the people. The basic objective of all developmental activities is to provide minimum needs to the marginalized sections of the society life food, shelter and health. The architect who planned the post independent India took stock of each and every resource available in the country and found that government alone cannot build a prosperous nation. They realized the need for the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the process of economic development through the technological development of the country. Government agencies just implement the policies and programmes chalked out by the higher

authorities. The policies and programmes suitable for one section may not be suitable for another section of the society. It may not be applicable due to the fact that there is difference in culture, caste, religion and languages in the society. In order to meet the needs of the different sections in the society, the government encouraged and motivated NGOs to implement the government policies in a more effective way by suitably modifying the policies and programmes so that the policies would fit into different sectors of the society appropriately. In the process of development, NGOs are playing an important role in empowering the poor by fostering greater mobilization and generating awareness among them. According to World Bank, defines NGOs as, “Private Organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services or undertake community development”. Now in India there are many NGOs working their sincere efforts in the field of rural development. 31 lakhs NGOs, more than double the number of schools, the total number of schools in the country is around 15 lakhs, as per date compiled by the Planning Commission of India, 2011. Uttar Pradesh tops the list more than 5.48 lakhs NGOs followed by Maharashtra with 5.18 lakhs. Kerala comes third with 3.7 lakhs followed by West Bengal with 2.34 lakhs. Out of these 21.3 per cent NGOs work in the area of community and social service and 6.6 per cent NGOs work in the health sector. As per estimates, NGOs provide health care to 5 per cent of the Indian population. The Government of India encouraged the NGOs in health sector for two main reasons: to train its functionaries and to implement its programme in the health care delivery.

“Good health and good sense are two great blessing” – Latin Proverb.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study are: to deal with the various types disease, to find out the causes of disease and to analyse the contribution of NGOs on rural health care programmes in the study area.

Methodology of the study

The data required for the study were collected from both secondary as well as primary sources. The secondary data have been collected from various books, journals, magazines and government records from District Register Office in Nagercoil. Primary data required for the study were collected from the sample respondents through personal interview according to the objectives of the study. Totally 384 sample respondents were selected from the beneficiaries of various NGOs in Kanniyakumari District.

Study Area

In Kanniyakumari District there were 434 major NGOs functioning with the help of internal and external financial assistance. Without financial assistance they are not able to stand with self support. The motto of all NGOs were almost similar, they are rendering services like education, health, sanitation, women empowerment, entrepreneurial development programme, training, counseling, childcare and science and technology to the poor people. Thus the research article was vested interest to analyse the performance of overall NGOs to highlight one of the programme of health care activity in the study area.

NGOs and Health Care Programme in Kanniyakumari District

Generally, people feel that the existing health care delivery system has never reached the needy ones. The poor section of the people in the society is not enjoying the health care facilities which are made by the government agencies. Thus the NGOs concentrate on health care programme. As a result a sizeable number of persons are benefitted. The research makes an attempt to find out the beneficiaries under health care facilities rendered by the NGOs of the study area.

Table 1 Types of Diseases

Types of Disease	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Physically handicapped		
Orthopedically challenged	24	06.20
Mentally retarded	4	01.00
Visually challenged	2	00.50
Hearing impaired	14	03.60
Others	4	01.00
Specific disease		
Cancer	4	01.00
HIV/AIDS	36	09.30
Tumors T.B	12	03.10
Common disease		
Fever	92	24.50
Stomach ache	58	15.10
Skin Disease	50	13.00
Anaemia	66	17.10
Other diseases	18	04.60
Total	384	100.00

Source: Primary data.

Physically handicapped

The query with regards to the physically challenged like orthopedically challenged, mentally retarded, visually challenged and hearing impaired among the sample respondents. Table 1 reveals that 44 respondents were affected by the physically challenged. Out of them, 6.20 per cent with orthopedically challenged, 1 per cent with mentally retarded, .50 per cent

visually challenged and 3.60 per cent hearing impairment and 1 per cent others with common disabilities.

Specific Diseases

The diseases which are of acute nature and are not easily recoverable are considered as specific diseases. Cancer, diabetics, blood pressure and tumors are of such types. Table 1 shows that 56 respondents suffered from various irrecoverable diseases. Out of them 1 per cent of the respondents were affected with cancer, 9.30 per cent suffered from HIV/AIDS and 3.10 per cent of them suffered from tuberculosis.

Common Diseases

People generally suffer from common diseases. These diseases are curable. These diseases are caused by poor sanitation and lack of awareness. The NGOs create awareness among the people to get away from diseases. Table 1 indicates that out of 384 respondents, 284 respondents were frequently affected by different diseases. Among them 24.50 per cent of them suffer from fever, 15.10 per cent of them suffer from stomach ache, 13 per cent of them suffer from skin diseases and 17.10 per cent of the respondents suffer from anaemia and 4.60 per cent respondents suffer from other common diseases.

Reasons for Diseases

An intensive effort is expected to be made by the NGOs to be the beneficiaries-disease affected persons. To find out the causes of the illness of the respondents by several reasons. It varies from person to person. The study makes an attempt to find out the various reasons for diseases.

Table 2 Reasons for Diseases

Variables	Scores									Rank
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total	
Poverty	1176	1112	1046	976	710	600	480	110	6210	I
Low diet	1152	1022	810	681	540	240	104	60	4609	II
Unhygienic	348	290	248	188	106	100	56	22	1358	III
Lack of medical care	140	124	104	54	46	52	20	58	598	IV
Lack of awareness	136	50	66	16	40	30	30	0	368	V
Lack of infrastructure	80	70	20	05	34	21	32	20	282	VI
Ignorance	40	20	10	0	25	60	18	30	203	VII
Other	0	0	0	0	35	49	28	84	196	VIII
Total	3072	2688	2304	1920	1536	1152	768	384	13824	

Source: Primary data.

The variables are analysed by weighted ranking and the reasons are ranked accordingly. As per the opinion of the sample respondents, the major reasons behind the occurrence of diseases are poverty, low diet, unhygienic environment, lack of medical care, lack of awareness, lack of infrastructure, ignorance and by some other unspecified reasons.

Contribution of NGOs on Rural Health Care Programmes

The contribution of NGOs in helping the mass to overcome the diseases is of vital and helps the beneficiaries a lot both to get awareness and also to protect themselves from diseases. The benefits enjoyed by the sample beneficiaries in connection with the medical aids are summarized as below.

Table 3 Health aids of the NGOs to the Respondents

Aids from NGOs	Number of respondents	Percentage
medicine	12	03.13
Continuous treatment	60	15.63
Preventive and protection measures	24	06.25
Medical counseling	56	14.58
Sensitization	200	52.08
Goverment support	32	08.33
Monetary assistance	-	-
Total	384	100

Source: Primary data.

The main motto of NGOs in Kanniyakumari District was to help and promote women and children, awareness of health and nutrition and environment. It provides social education to the needy to better life and prosperous status. It has achieved training centre to develop the health status of affected people through various programmes in the study area.

Promotion of good nutrition

One of the major requirements poor people is balanced diet. To ensure that the infected and affected people take nutritious food at an affordable cost, education sessions on nutrition and nutritive value of food are given.

Blood donors club

NGOs arranging blood donors from the donors group whenever there was a request from the deserving needy persons through blood donors club.

Voluntary Counseling and Testing Centre (VCTC)

NGOs provides counseling and testing services to individuals. The major activities include: pre-test and post-test counseling, blood tests, referrals to Government Hospitals (GH), tai clinic (mother clinic) and care and support services. Besides these, awareness meetings and medical camps were also organized in the intervention areas which helped the access to VCTC conveniently.

Rural Health Care Centre

NGOs has established health care centres for women and tuberculosis and cancer patients and distributed free medicines. Severe cases that need continuous medical treatment were referred to Government Primary Health Centres nearby or in the district headquarters. It also conducted free medical camps and health awareness seminars with topics on need for balanced diet and nutrition, environmental sanitation, water borne diseases and uniqueness of potable drinking water. It provide awareness about herbal medicine especially for pregnant women.

Intervention and prevention of HIV/AIDS

The main focus of NGOs was intervention and prevention of HIV/AIDS among WIP (women in prostitution) and community based care and support. Use of condoms was insisted to the participations of such programmes. To develop the capacity of the primary stakeholders, community members and staff in order to support people living with HIV/AIDs, children infected by AIDS (CIA), children affected by AIDS (CAA) and families affected by AIDS (FAA).

- To strengthen the existing community based care services and to create a conducive environment.
- To form community based structures towards community ownership and sustainability of the programme.

Promotion of self care and home care

One of the major needs of a disease affected persons was basic care for opportunity infections at the earliest. The best way is to manage them at the earliest in their home itself. To achieve this, they and their family members are provided with trainings on self-care and home care. They support the primary stakeholders by providing medicines, counseling and identifying sustainable resources. In emergency situation it extends its helps to procure prescribed drugs, ambulance services and funeral services. NGOs in Kanniyakumari district mainly focused on primary health care and rehabilitation, while most of the activity of the NGOs on health development and emerging response. NGOs works towards quality health care, keeping in mind a positive impact on the environment. It shows that social service and giving back to the community are feathers in our cap.

CONCLUSION

Since independence the Government of India is facing various problems relating to rural development. The involvement of NGOs in serving the rural poor and disadvantaged sections of the society in rural areas a healthy man can perform duties more perfectly and smoothly than a sickly person. Sickness disturbs the persons' body as well as mind. The sickness may be of different kinds caused by different reasons. The accessibility of getting cured from the diseases is quiet easy for someone and is very difficult for others due to money and other facilities. NGOs must endeavor to collaborate with relevant departments of government by playing roles both complementary and supplementary. In Kanniyakumari district where the NGOs or government collaboration is strong, the impact of the activities is greater and more sustainable.

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