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THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS) IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

In a large developing country like India, there are numerous gaps left by the government in the development process - sometimes by intention, sometimes due to lack of funds, sometimes due to lack of awareness. These are the gaps that many NGOs try to fill in modern India. Some of them may work in areas that the government does not want to get into - like fighting discrimination on the basis of caste. Most Indian politicians do not really want to upset the existing caste hierarchy in his or her Constituency, because the politician is dependent for votes on the dominant castes of that particular constituency. In the process, laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of caste are often ignored unless there is an NGO working in the area that is willing to take up the cause of those being discriminated against. To establish the range of activities and effects of health sector NGOs in development. The Present paper intends to analyses To find out the criteria used for assessing NGOs' contribution to development and document the processes currently used to monitor effects of NGO activities including indicators and it also examine the explore factors constraining measurement of NGO contributions to social development in India and the District level.

KEYWORDS

NGOS, Social Development, Fund, Discrimination, Factors.

INTRODUCTION & HISTORY OF NGOS IN INDIA

India has a long history of civil society based on the concepts of *daana* (giving) and *seva* (service). Voluntary organizations—organizations that are voluntary in spirit and without profit-making objectives—were active in cultural promotion, education, health, and natural disaster relief as early as the medieval era. They proliferated during British rule, working to improve social welfare and literacy and pursuing relief projects.⁴ During the second half of the 19th century, nationalist consciousness spread across India and self-help emerged as the primary focus of sociopolitical movements. Numerous organizations were established during this period, including the **Friend-in-Need Society** (1858), **Prathana Samaj** (1864), **Satya Shodhan Samaj** (1873), **Arya Samaj** (1875), the **National Council for Women in India** (1875), and the **Indian National Conference** (1887). The Societies Registration Act (SRA) was approved in 1860 to confirm the legal status of the growing body of nongovernment organizations (NGOs). The SRA continues to be relevant legislation for NGOs in India, although most state governments have enacted amendments to the original version. Christian missionaries active in India at this time directed their efforts toward reducing poverty and constructing hospitals, schools, roads, and other infrastructure. Meanwhile, NGOs focused their efforts on education, health, relief, and social welfare. A firm foundation for secular voluntary action in India was not laid until the governmental development agencies were established around this time, such as the **People's Action for Development of India**. Foreign-trained Indians entered civil society in greater numbers, leading to a professionalization of the sector.

India witnessed a rapid increase in and diversification of the NGO sector as a response to the national political scenario and increasing concern about poverty and marginalization. Both welfare and empowerment to rented organizations emerged during this period, and development, civil liberties, education, environment, health, and livelihood all became the focus of attention.

With community participation as a defined component in a number of social sector projects during the 1970s and 1980s, NGOs began to be formally recognized as development partners of the state. Their work was increasingly characterized by grassroots interventions, advocacy at various levels, and mobilization of the marginalized to protect their rights. The process of structural adjustment begun in the early 1990s—and the more recent approach of bilateral and international donors channeling funds directly through the government, NGO networks, and large corporate NGOs—have somewhat pushed peoples' organizations into the background. Small, spontaneous initiatives at the community level, as a response to social and economic exploitations at the community level, are no longer the hallmark of the NGO sector.

In this context present paper attempts to examine the Role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in social development: A study of health sector NGOs in Raichur district. The discussion in this paper is organized in five sections. In the First section, related to introduction and historical background of NGOs in India. And The second section deals with the Study area profile. In the Third section, the main NGO activities & constraints to NGO activities: are discussed. The Fourth section deals with the Recommendations, and the Last Section deals with the Summary and Conclusion.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is now over a decade since India adopted the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) sponsored Structural Adjustment Policies and Programs (SAPs). Although economic growth has been registered at a national level during this time, poverty is still a critical issue in much of India. Local NGOs and external organizations have played an essential role in social and economic development including efforts against poverty and toward alleviating some of the negative impacts of SAPs. The contribution of the NGO sector to national development is sufficiently important to justify measures aimed at reinforcing and promoting the sector. There are, however, some limitations.

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study explored the following research questions:

1. What are perceptions of key stakeholders about potential variables for assessing the contributions of NGOs to social development at district level?
2. How can NGO contributions be assessed (especially in ways that permit comparisons)?

The study focused on health-related NGOs and aimed to yield suggestions from multiple stakeholders about how to assess, and improve co-ordination of NGO/government interactions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To establish the range of activities and effects of health sector NGOs in development.
2. To find out the criteria used for assessing NGOs' contribution to development.
3. To document the processes currently used to monitor effects of NGO activities including indicators.
4. To explore factors constraining measurement of NGO contributions to social development.

TABLE 1: STUDY RESPONDENTS

Category of Respondent	Number
Central Level/Raichur District Officials	8
District Officials- Raichur	6
NGO Representatives-Raichur	20
Local, Opinion Leaders and Elders-Raichur	16
Community Members- Raichur	30

The above table shows the clear picture of study respondents in the raichur district. Central Level/Raichur District Officials number 8, NGO Representatives – Raichur 20, Local, Opinion Leaders and Elders 16 and Community Members 30 are choose for the study.

TABLE 2: VARIABLES AND INFORMATION DESIRED

Variable	Information Desired
Activity and Geography	NGOs activities vs. district priorities; influence of activity by the presence of other NGOs; NGO plans and activities compared to district plans; NGO participation in district planning.
Impact	Social and cultural impact: perceptions of change in income distribution, health, education, gender roles and community participation. Economic impact: perceptions of change in consumption, savings, and asset levels.
Performance of NGOs	Criteria used by NGOs, districts and communities being served.
Equity	Equity of activity vs. need; geographical equity within the district, and equity for various population groups, for example, by age, gender, disability or other aspects of marginalization or vulnerability. Perceptions of greater social equality, existence of non-hierarchical relationships among people.
Quality	Quality (and its measures) was explored from the different perceptions of the district leadership, beneficiary communities and from the NGOs.
Sustainability vs. NGO Self-propagation	NGO contribution was assessed, i.e., whether it was encouraging sustainability or ensuring demand for the services provided; flexibility and adaptability to prevailing needs in the target area or population.
Policy	Existing policy guidelines/regulations, effect of guidelines on NGO activity, facilitation or inhibition. Perceptions of government, district and NGOs about policy needs.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Data was collected using qualitative methods and tools, which included the following:

- An assessment form/checklist about the study NGOs
- Key informant interviews
- Focus group discussions with community persons
- A review of documents produced by or about the study NGOs were reviewed, e.g., project documents, needs assessments, routine reports, etc.

DISTRICT PROFILE OF RAICHUR

Raichur district is situated in the north-eastern part of Karnataka, which is also popularly known as Hyderabad Karnataka. The district lies between 15 09' and 16 34' North latitude and 75 46' and 77 35' East longitude and at about 1311 feet above mean sea level. To the north of the district is Gulbarga district, Bijapur district to the west, Bellary district to the south and Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh to the east. Its area is 8.386 sq. kms and has five blocks- Deodurga, Lingasugur, Manvi, Raichur and Sindhanoor.

The district has a historical importance; it is believed that Ashok's empire extended over this region. The stone inscriptions of the Ashok period are situated at Maski of Lingasugur taluk.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the majority of the people in the district. The soil is black and crops like paddy, jowar, maize, groundnut, sunflower, cotton, and grams are grown. Agriculture is mostly rain fed. About 18% of the agricultural land is irrigated by the left bank canal of Tungabhadra Project. The taluks Sindhanoor, Manvi, Deodurga and Raichur are being provided with irrigation facilities from the Krishna River. The neighboring people from Andhra Pradesh who have expertise in the cultivation of paddy are moving to the district. This has resulted in the new habitations coming up very frequently.

TABLE 3: THE POPULATION OF THE DISTRICT ACCORDING TO 1991 AND 2001 CENSUS IS AS UNDER

Area	1991			2001		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Rural	5,12,804	5,06,954	10,19,758	6,17,332	6,11,871	12,29,203
Urban	1,70,454	1,61,597	3,32,051	2,15,020	2,03,989	4,19,009
Total	6,83,258	6,68,551	13,51,809	8,32,352	8,15,860	16,48,212

Source: Census 2001.

The table.3. shows the population of the district according to 1991 to 2001 census in rural area 5,12,804 male and 5,06,954 are females and its increased in 2001 accordingly 6,17,332 male and 6,11,871 and in urban area male 1,70,454 and female 1,61,597 in 1991 census and this figure also increased in 2001 was 2,15,020 male and 2,03,989 female.

TABLE 4: THE POPULATION OF THE DISTRICT BLOCK WISE FOR THE YEAR 2001 IS AS UNDER

Block	Area	2001		
		Male	Female	Total
Deodurga	Rural	91,789	90,293	1,82,082
	Urban	11,304	10,688	21,992
	Total	1,03,093	1,00,981	2,04,074
Lingasugur	Rural	1,25,037	1,22,289	2,47,326
	Urban	37,710	35,843	73,553
	Total	1,62,747	1,58,132	3,20,879
Manvi	Rural	1,46,931	1,46,054	2,92,985
	Urban	19,074	18,481	37,555
	Total	1,66,005	1,64,535	3,30,540
Raichur	Rural	1,04,597	1,03,350	2,07,947
	Urban	1,15,556	1,09,061	2,24,617
	Total	2,20,153	2,12,411	4,32,564
Sindhanoor	Rural	1,48,978	1,49,889	2,98,863
	Urban	31,376	29,916	61,292
	Total	1,80,354	1,79,801	3,60,155
Total	Rural	6,17,332	6,11,871	12,29,203
	Urban	2,15,020	2,03,989	4,19,009
	Total	8,41,840	8,27,922	16,69,762
State		2,68,98,918	2,59,51,644	5,28,50,562

Source: Census 2001.

Table 4 shows the population of the district block wise for the year 2001 according to the 2001 census. Deodurga block was have lowest population(2,04,074) in the district and highest was Raichur block 4,32, 564 and Sindhanoor block was in the second place its population was 3,60,155 and Manvi block is in third place its population was 3,30,540 and the lingsugur in fourth place its population was 3,20,897.

DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHY

SEX RATIO

The sex ratio has slightly increased from 979 (991 census) to 983 (2001 census)

LITERACY

TABLE 5: THE LITERACY IN THE DISTRICT IS GIVEN UNDER

Category	1991	2001	% Of decadal increase
Male	46.75	62.02	15.27
Female	21.70	36.84	15.14
ALL	34.34	49.54	15.20

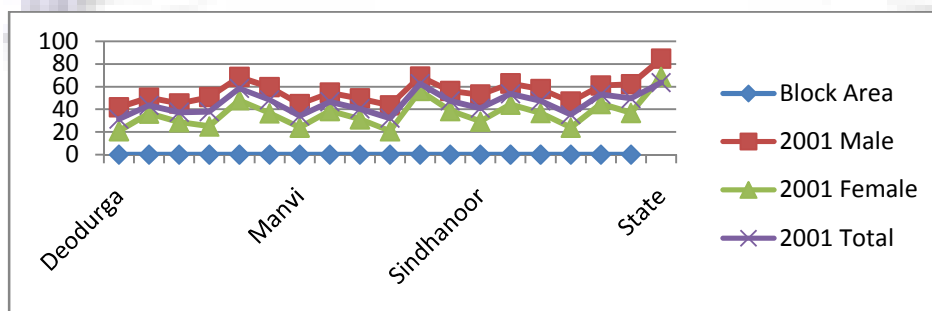
Source: Census 2001.

The above table shows that the literacy has increased by 15.20% over the decade. But still it is much below the state average of 63.42.

TABLE 6: LITERACY OF THE DISTRICT BLOCK WISE FOR THE YEAR 2001 IS AS UNDER

Block	Area	2001		
		Male	Female	Total
Deodurga	Rural	41.69	20.89	31.37
	Urban	50.12	36.30	43.40
	Total	45.10	28.59	37.38
Lingasugur	Rural	50.58	24.92	37.88
	Urban	68.39	48.00	58.45
	Total	59.49	36.46	48.16
Manvi	Rural	44.42	24.00	34.24
	Urban	54.51	38.60	46.68
	Total	49.46	31.30	40.46
Raichur	Rural	43.35	20.78	32.13
	Urban	68.79	56.11	62.63
	Total	56.07	38.45	47.38
Sindhanoor	Rural	52.75	29.20	40.94
	Urban	62.69	44.20	53.67
	Total	57.72	36.70	47.31
Total	Rural	46.55	23.95	35.31
	Urban	60.90	44.64	52.96
	Total	62.02	36.84	49.54
State		84.48	68.48	63.42

Source: Census 2001.

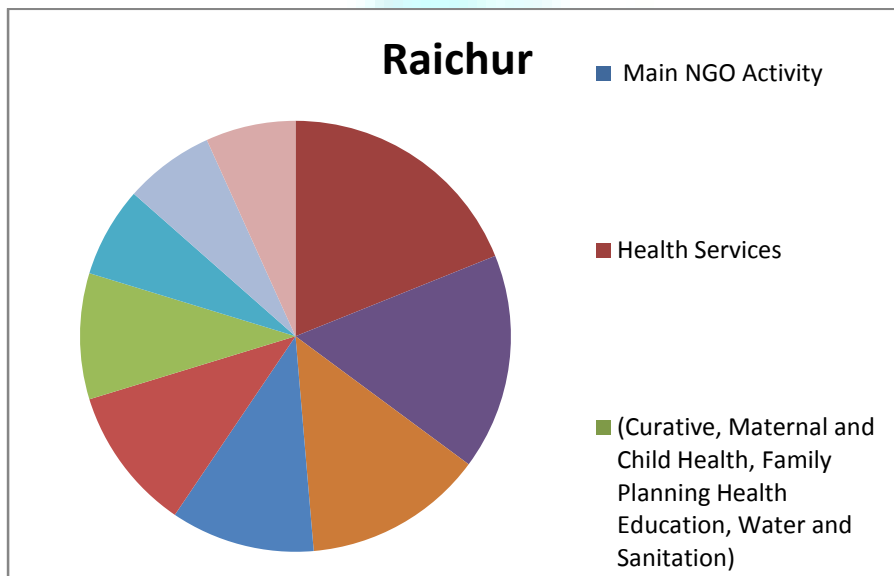


The above table shows that the literacy of Deodurga block is the lowest in the district especially in the female literacy. However the female literacy is remarkably low in almost all the blocks of the district compared to that of the male literacy.

THE MAIN NGO ACTIVITIES & CONSTRAINTS TO NGO ACTIVITIES

TABLE 7: MAIN NGO ACTIVITIES

Main NGO Activity	Raichur	
	Number of NGOs	Rank
Health Services (Curative, Maternal and Child Health, Family Planning Health Education, Water and Sanitation)	14	1
AIDS activities (IEC, Treatment of PWAs, Social Support to PWAs, HIV Testing and Counselling)	12	2
IGA/Credit/saving (Education, Provision of Loans)	10	3
Evangelism	8	4
Education (Formal, Informal)	8	4
Provision for Needy Groups (Shelter, Food, Clothing)	7	5
Agriculture/Nutrition/Environmental Services (Education, Provision of Seeds, Food Supplements)	5	6
Rehabilitation/Resettlement Displaced Persons	5	6
Infrastructure Development/rehabilitation of Health Units, Schools, Roads	5	6



1. General Health Services

NGOs are involved in the provision of general health services, including the provision of drugs and sundries, training health workers, and health education of communities on domestic hygiene, water and sanitation.

2. Maternal and Child Health Services

The Private Midwives Association and Namunsi Birth Attendants Association of Raichur are involved in improving the health of mothers and children through mobilizing pregnant women to attend antenatal and postnatal clinics. At these units, family planning services are provided and high-risk patients are screened for referral. Also provided are immunization and health education services, education on nutrition for mothers and their children, personal and domestic hygiene, water and sanitation activities and control of diarrheal diseases through the preparation of oral rehydration salts (ORS).

3. AIDS Activities

At least 15 NGOs are involved in various AIDS activities, including preventive education on HIV transmission, provision of condoms, care of People With AIDS (PWAs) (treatment, counseling and home visits) as well as support to AIDS orphans. Some of the NGOs in both Raichur districts that are involved in AIDS activities are doing so in collaboration with other NGOs working in the same geographical location, as one local leader observed:

4. Water and Sanitation Activities

There were two main forms of assistance for water and sanitation – construction and health education. The NGO is providing external resources (corrugated iron sheets and money), while communities provide other locally available resources, such as sand, bricks and labor.

5. Economic Activities

Although the sampled NGOs were chosen principally for their work in health, many of them were involved in various activities to assist communities with improving their economic status. Some economic benefits have been direct, for example, Salem Brotherhood has provided employment to community members (clinical officers, nurses, teachers and watchmen are employed at the NGOs health units and schools).

6. Agricultural/environmental Activities

Some NGOs are involved in environmental protection activities, especially tree planting of fast growing trees such as eucalyptus. The timber is subsequently sold and the proceeds shared or used by members in the construction of their own homes. One local leader observed thus:

IMPLICATIONS

The NGOs visited in both districts are engaged in a broad range of activities beyond the narrow definition of health. Their activities aim at solving specific problems as well as improve the health, social and economic wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

CONSTRAINTS TO NGO ACTIVITIES

*Unmet Community Needs and Expectations

**Inadequate Mobilisation and Involvement of Communities by NGOs

***Non-Involvement/Low Involvement of Communities in NGO Plans

**NGO-Related Problems:

1. Physical Location and Activities of NGOs: Some NGO coordinators reported lack of adequate staff, equipment and supplies to run their activities. This reportedly results in creating little or no impact on the intended beneficiaries.

2. Organisation and Staffing: Key informants at district and national level explained that NGO staff members are occasionally secretive about their functions in a given area, especially about funding sources and amount procured.

3. Inadequate Funding of NGO Activities and Dependence on External Donor Funding: Many NGO staff in both Raichur. Explained that some of their activities are not carried out as expected due to inadequate funding. This arises from delayed funds, less than expected release of funds from donors, or the absence of alternative donor sources. These financial problems arise from poor planning of activities and, therefore, inadequate support from both the communities and other agencies in the region. Community members in Raichur said some NGOs and CBOs have a donor dependency syndrome and are unable to sustain their activities when funding from these donors ceases.

4. Non-sustainability of NGO Activities

5. Unaccomplished NGO Objectives: Both central level and community respondents said some NGOs come to communities promising certain activities for them but these are not always fulfilled.

6. Government/District Related Problems: Community members mentioned lack of a government policy guiding the establishment and activities of NGOs, both at central and district level.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE POLICY MAKERS

1. Improve Access of Services to Target Communities:

- Physical access should tally with local demand and needs for services, location and equity; and
- Economic access should take into consideration the affordability of services to the majority of target population.

2. Improve Community Participation in NGO Activities:

- Promote community involvement at all stages, i.e., planning, implementation and monitoring, as observed:
- Enable bottom-top involvement and capacity building of the communities to ensure sustainability of activities when the NGO completes its life span.
- Promote effective community participation and involvement at the grassroots level where the NGO operates. This was explained thus:

3. Improve Accountability and Transparency of NGOs:

- To improve accountability and transparency of NGOs to the community they serve, to district and national authorities through submission of regular reports to these categories of stakeholders.

4. Improve Policy Environment for NGOs

- Improve government policies relating to NGO operations both at district and national level to ensure less bureaucracy in the process of NGO registration, equity of service, access to services (both physical and economic) and reconciliation between planned NGO activities and community needs. Thus:

5. Networking:

- Form and strengthen NGO networks.

6. Sustainability of NGO Activities:

- Provide for sustainability.

CONCLUSION

In a large developing country like India, there are numerous gaps left by the government in the development process - sometimes by intention, sometimes due to lack of funds, sometimes due to lack of awareness. These are the gaps that many NGOs try to fill in modern India. Some of them may work in areas that the government does not want to get into - like fighting discrimination on the basis of caste. Most Indian politicians do not really want to upset the existing caste hierarchy in his or her Constituency, because the politician is dependent for votes on the dominant castes of that particular constituency.

Finally this study has highlighted some of the areas of further research, both nationally and at district level. For example, comparing national, district and community needs versus NGO resources and interests to further refine the possible role of NGOs in development.

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