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Dr. MS Chaitanya Kumari
Professor, Department of EECM,
College of Community Science,
ANGRAU, Andhra Pradesh,
India

M Siresha
Assistant Professor, College of
Community Science, ANGRAU,
Andhra Pradesh, India

S Mamata
Teaching Associate, Department
of EECM, College of Community
Science, ANGRAU, Andhra
Pradesh, India

Health care delivery system of NGOs in Krishna zone of Andhra Pradesh

Dr. MS Chaitanya Kumari, M Siresha and S Mamata

Abstract

Health is given a prominent role in the MDGs and critical for development. Health promotion can be seen as an umbrella concept including both promotion and prevention. The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the health promotion are providing services and health advocacy. They are independent from direct government intervention and play a key role as a catalyst between the community and the government. The present study is conducted to study the health promotion services of 18 NGOs working in three districts Krishna, Guntur and Prakasam. The study revealed that great majority of NGOs are registered (94.44%) and 50.00 per cent of NGOs are functioning with society fund and had an experience of below ten years. Health services, Education development and Environment protection were ranked 1, 2 and 3 respectively as major area of operation. The health services like establishment of health clinics (72.22%), mobilization for immunization (55.56%), conducting health education programmes (50.00%) are mostly carried out by NGOs. During the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic about 66.67 per cent of NGOs have rendered their services in awareness creation (72.22%), helping poor financially (61.11%), distribution of masks & sanitizers (66.67%), helping in quarantine centers (44.44%), working as warriors (38.89%) and supply of food to needy (33.33%). NGOs offered integrated services like medical, social, financial, educational and psychological support to the needy. Hence it can be concluded that NGOs play a vital role in health promotion during crisis and act as saviors for countless number of people without basic health necessities in their vicinity.

Keywords: NGOs, profile, health services, COVID-19, Krishna zone

Introduction

Health promotion is based around the saying “Prevention is better than cure” and it aims at preventing morbidity and mortality. Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. It is a positive concept emphasising personal, social, political and institutional resources, as well as physical capacities. WHO (1990). Health promotion is any combination of health, education, economic, political, spiritual or organisational initiative designed to bring about positive attitudinal, behavioural, social or environmental changes conducive to improving the health of populations. It aims particularly at effective and concrete public participation. This requires the further development of problem-defining and decision-making life skills, both individually and collectively, and the promotion of effective participation mechanisms.

The five key principles of health promotion as determined by WHO are as follows: Health promotion involves the population as a whole in the context of their everyday life, rather than focusing on people at risk from specific diseases. Health promotion is the process that enables people to improve or have greater control over their health. The aim of health promotion is to help an individual or group reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. It involves an individual or group being able to identify and realise aspirations, satisfy needs, change with the environment. It makes it possible for people to increase control over the determinants of health and thereby improve their health.

India has the longest history and the widest experience of NGOs working with the rural sector. Promotion of rural health has become a major agenda of policy makers. Rural communities have traditionally been underserved in regard to health services, and in areas where this is the case, health promotion efforts may be especially valuable. The main role of NGOs health system is providing health services and advocacy. Provision of services includes medical, social and psychological services as well as, integration activities, care and nursing, material and financial support, educational and information services and training.

Corresponding Author:
Dr. MS Chaitanya Kumari
Professor, Department of EECM,
College of Community Science,
ANGRAU, Andhra Pradesh,
India

In a country like India, the voluntary sector bridges the gap between the government and the population of the country. It identifies the needs of the community and provides its support and services, even in the most untouched and marginalized areas, where the government is not able to reach. In the very first week that India entered the lockdown in March 2020 to curb the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called on non-government organisations (NGO) to help the government — by providing basic necessities to the underprivileged, by supplying medical and protective gear and assisting with awareness campaigns on social distancing. Today, there are over 3 million NGOs working in a variety of fields ranging from disaster relief to advocacy for marginalised sections and play an important role in bringing social transformation. Since nonprofits are voluntary in nature, they depend on donations by individuals, funding by firms through CSR, aid from government agencies, etc. to fuel their missions. Their work is critical in helping India fight discrimination, poverty, illiteracy, disasters, pandemics and more.

In the social sector, particularly in the health sector, the role of non-governmental organization (NGOs) has been, highly acclaimed. NGOs experience in health care has not only contributed to health development but also has influenced the health care delivery system of the government. However, the major contribution of NGOs is the involvement of people in health prevention and promotion. This is possible as NGOs have been able to convince the people that health is an integral part of development process.

NGOs or voluntary organizations (VOs) are often called non-profit making, service oriented organizations working in various health and health related areas. Since India is a vast country with the second largest population in the world, there are various problems related to distance, language, culture, religion, belief systems, economy, illiteracy, etc. Government, however, efficient it may be, cannot provide the different types of health services which are required by the different communities, different states and age groups in the various parts of India. The Voluntary Organizations or NGOs play a complimentary or supplementary role in providing health services relevant to the different pockets of the interior areas of India. The main asset of the voluntary organizations is that they are in the midst of people, living with them and provide services to them.

The voluntary organizations are usually field level organizations who work closely with the community in the interior areas. They have the advantage of knowing all systems, formal and informal, in the community in which they work. By applying this knowledge, they can mobilize resources and establish creative working relationships to bring services to rural communities. Most of the NGOs are small groups working on specific issues like awareness creation, providing immediate relief during calamities like floods, outbreaks, drought, etc. Their main function is to involve people in their programmes, provide services at their door steps. There is a lot of human touch and devotion to the services they provide. On the contrary, the government with massive funds, huge infrastructure and a battalion of personnel, has its own problems of bureaucracy and is far away from the realities of the people in the field.

The primary focus of NGOs in the health sector are establishing healthcare institutions, fulfilling health and social needs of groups like women, elderly and vulnerable local communities, dealing with specific health issues such as

alcoholism, promoting health rights, performing preventive health programs, and managing health finance and administration. Some NGOs in India play an important role in providing health care at the times of emergencies like COVID 19 health crisis and natural disasters. NGOs with all their limitations they contributed remarkable service to the health sector particularly health crisis aroused due to COVID 19 pandemic.

Materials and Methods

Exploratory research design was adopted and 18 NGO/VOs were selected randomly for conducting the study. Three districts namely Prakasam, Krishna and Guntur from Krishna zone of Andhra Pradesh were selected for conducting the study. In order to assess the role of NGOs in health promotion a questionnaire was prepared and data was collected. The collected data was analyzed using simple statistical tools and presented using frequency, percentages and ranking.

Results

Profile characteristics of NGOs

Table 1: Profile characteristics of NGOs

Sl. No.	Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
1	Districts		
	Krishna	2	11.11
	Guntur	11	61.11
	Prakasam	5	27.78
	Total	18	100.00
2	Status of registration		
	Registered	17	
	Unregistered	1	
	Total	18	100.00
3	Experience/Age in years		
	Below 10	8	44.44
	Between 10-20	5	27.78
	Above 20	5	27.78
	Total	18	100.00
4	Source of fund		
	Society	9	50.00
	Government	1	5.56
	Trust	8	44.44
	Total	18	100.00

Results presented in Table 1 revealed that, 61.11 percent of NGOs were selected from the Guntur district followed by Prakasam (27.78%) and Krishna (11.11%) districts. The study also revealed that great majority of NGOs is registered (94.44%). The work experience or the age of NGOs presented in Table 1 showed that about 44.44 percent of the NGOs have below 10 years of experience where as an equal percentage of NGOs have between 10-20 years and above 20 years of experience categories.

Major area of work of NGOs

Table 2: Distribution of NGOs based on their major area of work

Sl. No.	Major area of work	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1	Education	5	27.78	2
2	Health promotion	7	38.89	1
3	Environmental protection	4	22.22	3
4	Women empowerment	2	11.11	4
		18	100.00	

The table 2 revealed that the major operational area of work was categorized into four categories namely education, health promotion, environmental protection and women empowerment. Most of the NGOs were offering services related to Health promotion (38.89%), Education development (27.78%) Environment protection (22.22%) and Women Empowerment (11.11%) and were ranked 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively in the area of operation.

Health services of NGOs

The health services offered by NGOs presented in the table 3

Table 3: Health services of NGOs

Health services	F	%
Establishment of free Health Clinics	13	72.22
Mobilization for immunization	10	55.56
Provision of portable water	7	38.89
Health education programs	9	50.00
Distribution of mosquito nets	1	5.56
Regular health camps	6	33.33
Disease oriented service i.e. HIV AIDs/Cancer etc.	7	38.89

Since health is the crucial, NGOs or non-governmental organizations are actively involved in combating various socio-economic issues. They include relief agencies, charities and community organizations, tackle countless challenges related to the environment, education, health, poverty, women empowerment, child protection, social justice, human rights,

showed that majority of the NGOs offered free health clinics (72.22%) followed by the mobilization of public for immunization (55.56%), conducting health education programmes (50.00%) as their outreach activities. Some NGOs also involved in offering Disease oriented service (38.89%) Provision of portable water (38.89) and conducting Regular health camps (33.33%). Very few NGOs (5.56%) have involved in Distribution of mosquito nets in order to mitigate the vector borne communicable diseases.

relief work and much more. Also referred to as nonprofits, these organizations in India work independently, in cooperation with the government or in partnership with national or international organizations.

Contribution of NGOs during COVID 19 crisis

Table 4: Contribution of NGOs during COVID 19 crisis

Sl. No.	Contribution during COVID 19 crisis	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Coordinated with Government agencies	11	61.11
2.	Awareness creation	13	72.22
3.	Distribution of sanitizers	12	66.67
4.	Distribution of masks	13	72.22
5.	Helping poor financially	11	61.11
6.	Supply of food to needy	6	33.33
7.	Worked as warriors	7	38.89
8.	Volunteerism in quarantine centers	8	44.44

With regard to contribution of NGOs during COVID 19 crisis, the results revealed that more than seventy percent of the NGOs have involved in awareness creation (72.22%) and distribution of masks (72.22%) followed by distribution of sanitizers (66.67%), helping poor financially (61.11%), Coordinated with government agencies (61.11%). Some NGOs have extended their service in Volunteerism in quarantine centers (44.44%), Worked as warriors (38.89%) and supplied food to poor and needy in their vicinity.

The above results revealed that irrespective of their major area of work majority of the NGOs have involved independently or in coordination with government agencies in creating awareness among society on Standard operating procedures (SoPs) like sanitization, wearing masks and maintaining social distancing. Some NGOs also distributed masks, sanitizers, food and money too. The NGOs whose main area of work is health promotion they voluntarily participated and acted as warriors and worked in quarantine centers to serve the society.

Conclusion

Preventive care is the most common activity offered by the NGO sector in India. NGOs provided integrated services like medical, social, financial, educational and psychological

support to the needy. Hence it can be conclude that NGOs play a vital role in health promotion during crisis and act as saviors for countless number of people without basic health necessities in their vicinity. Despite valuable contribution made by NGOs at different levels at different fields, there has not been sufficient documentation of their contribution, problems and difficulties, except for a few articles and reports. Process documentation is urgently needed for the NGO sector coupled with proper recognition for their limitless service.

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