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ROLE OF NGOs IN
BASIC HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION

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ROLE OF NGOs IN BASIC HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION:

The term Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) normally refers to organizations that are neither a part of Government nor conventional for profit businesses. Usually set up by ordinary citizens, NGOs may be funded by Governments, foundations or businesses. Major sources of NGOs funding include membership dues, the sale of goods and services, grants from international institutions or national governments and private donations. NGOs and civil society groups are not only stakeholders in governance, but also a driving force behind greater international cooperation through the active mobilization of public support for international agreements. The involvement of nongovernmental organizations with issues of health and development in education is more important and it identifies the range of that commitment and what is needed to translate it into action. 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.” The institutional and financial capacity of Indian government can no longer serve the most difficult to reach areas of the countries NGOs work close to communities, especially disadvantaged communities, because that is where they see the most need for their assistance. Historically, NGOs have played a critical role in promoting and facilitating health and educational activities in India. Prior to independence, religious bodies set up a number of educational institutions, health facilities and other charities. These movements were often led by charismatic individuals, driven by a sense of missionary zeal. Many NGOs were born in response to major disasters and crises with the aim of providing emergency relief and rehabilitation. Since independence, there has been a meteoric rise in the profile, breadth and range of NGOs in the country. In India Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have equipped themselves adequately and come up enthusiastically in providing services like relief to the blind, the disabled and disadvantaged and helping the government in mother and child health care, education and the role of creating awareness on HIV/AIDs in the country. Greater roles for the NGOs were seen to ensure health for all through the primary health care approach both in urban and in rural of the country. NGOs play a vital role in the prevention of HIV/AIDs through creating awareness especially among the rural population in India.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To achieve complete literacy and to work for promotion of education
2. To promote basic health care

METHODOLOGY:

Empirical evidences from various works of NGOs and few data were drawn from education of all- Country report of MHRD were considered for this study.

1. To achieve complete literacy and to work for promotion of education:

It has been more than half century since India achieved freedom. Observing the big amount of illiteracy, the constitution of India Under article 45 made it obligatory on the Government, to achieve 100 percent literacy within ten years from the enforcement of the constitution in 1950. The article 45 states that “The state shall endeavour to provide free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years” with free and compulsory education, in India should have become a reality by 1960. But, it never became reality even after 60 years. In 2001, India could achieve 65 percent literacy at national level. However, the ‘Union Human Resource & Development’ (HRD) Ministry announced in 2001 that India would achieve that target only by 2010 (MHRD). NGOs extend education to underprivileged children in India, and develop innovations that improve the quality of primary education. Education gives real meaning to human lives therefore, those working for the promotion of education are the best people and the NGOs involve in education are the best ones in the world. Empirical studies reveal that the NGOs active involvement in improving primary education, adult education and education for all with other agencies and with support of government, achieved the education at greater heights in India.

Table 1: Literacy rate (1951 – 1991)

Year	Literacy Rate (%)		
	Persons	Males	Females
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86
1961	28.31	40.40	15.34
1971	34.45	45.95	21.97
1981	43.56	56.37	29.75
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29

Source: Education for all - Country Report 2000 (MHRD)

Note: Literacy Rates of 1951, 1961 and 1971 relate to population aged five years and above.

The rates for the years 1981 and 1991 relate to the population aged seven years and above.

Table 2 Number of Primary Schools

Year	Number of Schools	
	Primary	Upper Primary
1951	215036	14576
1961	351530	55915
1971	417473	93665
1981	503763	122377
1991	566744	155926

Source: Education for all - Country Report 2000 (MHRD)

Table 3: NGOs/Volunteer Agencies participating in NFE

Year	Number of NGOs implementing Non Formal Education (NFE)	Number of NFE Centres run by NGOs
1992-93	363	-
1993-94	410	7310
1994-95	440	-
1995-96	544	-
1996-97	590	37,808
1997-98	741	-
1998-99	816	58,788

Source: Education for all - Country Report 2000 (MHRD)

The data in table no.1 shows that the literacy percentage has gradually improved from 1951 to 1991. However the female literacy has not improved considerably during that period. According to It can be seen from table No.2, number of Primary and Upper Primary schools has gone up between 1951 and 1961. Overall increase of both primary and upper primary may be seen with the support of Government, NGOs and other sectors in India. Number of NFE centres run by NGOs has increased from 7310 to 58,788 in 1998-99 and implementing has gone up from 363 to 816. The participation of Non Governmental Organization and other voluntary agencies has been given an important place in the implementation of basic education programmes. Involvement of NGOs mainly on one side and other individuals and agencies implementation of basic education on the other side

certainly bring tractability and design into basic education programmes. At national level NGOs conduct innovative programmes in for primary schools. Significantly, the noteworthy involvement of NGOs in the adult literacy programmes at the national level is appreciable. India has not been able to fulfil its constitutional pledge for providing free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14, nearly 50 years after it was made; NGOs have not limited their education activities to service delivery. They are also involved in lobbying and advocating for educational reform, working individually and through networks to participate in policy dialogue at national level. Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) in India is still a distant prospect. The statistics of this non-achievement are only too well known. Half of all women and nearly one third of men are still illiterate. There are wide disparities in educational attainments across States and between genders. The Government of India should create an atmosphere of NGO-Govt. alliance to achieve universal primary education as an urgent need.

Non-Government Organizations, normally referred to as voluntary agencies in India, also involves in Education for All (EFA) programmes. A large number of voluntary agencies are implementing non-formal education programmes to meet the educational needs of out-of-school children. Many NGOs concentrate on economically and socially backward areas and marginalized sections of the society and particularly concentrate on education of girls. Some NGO's concentrates on providing education, health and nutrition to children in urban slums. They conduct innovative programmes for formal primary schooling and involve in adult literacy programmes.

There are some NGOs namely Saharsh, Creda and Mahita have promoting education and health among children in India. Saharsh supports the less privileged children of society educated. As far as government programme is concerned Creda NGO implementing a special school programme for child labourers in the carpet industry. This programme was being supported by the Ministry of Labour, Government of India since 1989. Their experience have shown that if adequate opportunities are provided to working children and potential child labourers to go to school, children will not go to work. Another NGO Mahita is also striving hard to initiate development interventions in the urban slums.

The importance of NGOs work has grown over the years, with many NGOs demonstrating successful and cost-effective ways of addressing problems in education,

whether it is to expand access to the disadvantaged or to find innovative methods to improve the quality of schooling. Official statistics put the number of child labourers in India around 17-18 millions, where as unofficially, there are an estimated 44 million working in India. Significantly MV foundation a NGO starting its work in 1991 in three villages in Ranga Reddy district of Andhra Pradesh has withdrawn 80,000 children from work and has enrolled them into schools. Four thousand bonded child labourers have been liberated and put into schools. NGOs can do play a strong role in assisting the state. Their participation strengthens the community link, increases the transparency of Governmental interventions and enhances the accountability of the schooling system to beneficiaries. Apparently the National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) invited consultations with NGOs in this initiative for revising the national curricular framework for the primary years.

Most of NGOs who are working with the people in rural areas and urban slums are providing non-formal education. NGOs primary goal is not education, but they take up non-formal education as prerequisite to teach the people about health, family planning, environment etc. Local NGOs Have generally initiates small programmes with support from international NGOs. As various survey revealed that the experimental approaches of the NGOs have successfully tackled many shortcomings in schooling. In India overall NGOS involvement in education increases the accountability of the schooling system to the beneficiaries. The effectiveness of NGO action is best in evidence in the successful schooling of underprivileged children, communities in remote locations, scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and other children that face social barriers to education.

2. To promote basic health care:

The UN charter on Human Rights, Article 25 states “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of oneself and one’s family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care”. The idea of basic is healthcare being right to all. NGOs have a history of active involvement in the promotion of human well-being. In particular NGOs provide important links between the community and government. In the field of health, NGOs have long helped to set standards for practice, training, and continuing education and to define the role of health workers in national programs. In all stages in the development of primary health care programs, NGOs can be effective. Recognition by government of the contributions, NGOs can make in support of primary

health care will ensure maximum benefits of these contributions to the national health program.

Good co-ordination of health care and good regulation of aid is important to make sure that health care is provided to everybody at standard level. Organizational effectiveness requires learning, communication, initiative and risk-taking. NGOs can work for greater understanding and positive attitudes towards primary health care by a) Promoting dialogue both within and among NGOs; b) sustaining dialogue with governmental authorities; c) Providing information and creating new ways of explaining primary health care to the general public and d) Strengthening means of communication to accomplish this. The aim of many health NGOs is to improve access to and coverage of health services to the poorest communities, and they are often the primary service providers for vulnerable groups such as the disables, women and children. NGOs have equipped themselves adequately and come up enthusiastically in providing services like relief to the blind, the disabled and disadvantaged and helping in mother and child health care, creating awareness on HIV/AIDS and education programmes. NGOs are playing a vital role in creating awareness on HIV/AIDS and STD in urban and rural parts of the country. NGOs are working diligently to educate the public about the prevention of AIDs and provide support and counselling for HIV infected persons. Their role is significant in advocating against stigma and discrimination of the people living with HIV/AIDS. They are also the key players in conducting RCH programmes along with the government agencies. NGO through training, workshops, resource mobilisation and technical support is to improve the maternal and child health status in the country. Efforts focus on increasing immunisation, the coverage of complete antenatal care and institutional deliveries among pregnant women, increasing the spacing between children, increasing acceptance of family planning methods. At national level few NGOs programme provide solutions for the reduction of child mortality and improvements in maternal health.

NGOs have made significant contribution in the health sector by their innovative approach in the areas of public health, family welfare and in arresting the spread of communicable diseases. The National AIDS control programme has recognised the importance of NGOs participation in the programme for providing community support to people living with HIV/AIDS and their families and for providing the required care and counselling. Health NGOs provide a range of services: basic health services, provision of medical or health supplies, health promotion and exchange, health policy setting, resource

mobilization and allocation, health advocacy and monitoring the quality of healthcare services. There is an opinion that NGO output was influenced by both external (environmental) and internal (organizational) factors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The education system not only needs to 'let a thousand flowers bloom' but also to imbibe lessons from NGO activities to improve the quality of education at large. Successful approaches to education have emerged from NGOs. In some projects NGOs have demonstrated effective grassroots action to enhance the quality of basic education and have also influenced mainstream education through replication of their models and through policy dialogue with the Government. While NGOs are best associated with small projects and micro level interventions and a growing strategic role for the NGOs to support and enrich education programmes of a national dimension and to collaborate with the government in a macro setting. Few studies has established that the NGOs can and do play a strong role in assisting the state to complement the public education system and to improve its effectiveness. Many effective programmes are conducted outside of formal institutions or conventional formats. This allows NGOs to reach broader range of participant's To-day; NGOs are also focusing on increasing the effectiveness of teachers and parents in providing education, strengthening all aspects of a community to institute better education in is seen as necessary for long run success. In Turkey, NGO is implementing programs that focus on building the capacity of parents and teachers to provide education to preschool children. Rural Reconstruction Network (RRN) works in poor rural areas of Nepal to increase the access of marginalized and vulnerable children to education. The program works with local educators to provide better school management and strengthen curriculum and skills of teachers. MVF is an NGO having span of 18 mandals covering about 500 villages in India. Over 8000 youth volunteer, 1600 education activists, 1500 Government teachers, 3000 women's group and hundreds of elected representatives and members of parent teachers association are associated with its program.

In promoting health care services NGOs play a central role in the provision of health services to people in the developing world (Pfeiffer, 2003). NGOs are commonly viewed as more efficient and effective service providers than governments, especially when it comes to reaching poor people (Meyer, Sollis, 1992 & Vivian 1994). In most countries, there national

and/or local citizen's movements, self-help groups, cooperatives, and other associations, some organized on a tribal or ethnic basis, others to meet special needs. In the field of health, NGOs have long helped to set standards for practice, training and continuing education and to define the role of health workers in national programs. Others have concentrated on a particular disease or activity. (E.g. Cardiovascular diseases, leprosy, tuberculosis, program for the disabled, etc.). The diverse programs and competencies of numerous NGOs not directly involved in health care, but contribute in one way or another to total human development. They include projects to improve nutrition, food production, and housing, provide safe water, promote literacy, provide educational and instructional materials, etc. In short NGOs are helping to create conditions conducive to the protection, promotion, and maintenance of health and the prevention of illness. In India there are many NGOs creating awareness about HIV/AIDS & STDs, its mode of transmission, prevention including the use of condoms, correction wrong believes and exercised to change the attitude of the community towards the people living with HIV/AIDS & STD.

When Western donors regard a government as bureaucratic or corrupt, they often prefer to give their money to international NGOs instead. However, there is no proof that international NGOs work more cost-effective and efficiently. On the contrary, they have very high expenses compared to governments and local NGOs, mainly due to the high administrative costs (overhead costs account usually for 30-40% of project funds). Research from East-Timor, India and Bangladesh shows that the work of international NGOs is associated with high costs and more people will benefit against lower costs if work is handed over to the government or to local NGOs.

CONCLUSIONS

NGOs, in this era of globalization, have gained popularity to work in the developmental fields such as health, education, income generation, environment, micro finance, social forestry, rural development, etc. Many NGOs are beginning to work with people in local and grass root levels more effectively often when governments don't. NGOs cannot replace the state, but may perform complementary as well as supplementary role. The programs and projects NGOs are implementing are unique and successful; there are still apparent gaps to fill. These gaps exist for many reasons – funding difficulty of providing such programs and the lack of attention to these areas. In order to achieve education and

health care sectors more attention to be paid in the future. The NGOs have accessed the needs of the population, and come up with programs, of non formal, primary and secondary education that can increase education and literacy. To meet the goal at national level, more money and focus must be put towards for health and education. To create sustainable health care and effective education system they should cooperate with the state. However, NGOs should use the experience of governments to establish a long term plan. As a broad policy, the country proposes to promote the role of NGOs at all levels in the social sector with a view to achieving participatory development and unburdening the administration which is unduly loaded with implementation of development programmes.

SUGGESTIONS

1. NGOs need to build networks among themselves for greater effectiveness.
2. Involvement of NGOs at the policy making level through regular interaction and adequate representation in national and state level bodies.
3. Involve in training and capacity building programmes to empower them to take up the responsibilities.
4. Innovation at the mass level will help the NGOs to move from micro action to macro applications.
5. More involvement needed in creating awareness in RCH programmes and also on communicable diseases.

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