

## ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY

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**Abstract :** Role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in rural development was analysed through a case study conducted on two NGOs in Thrissur District of Kerala State. Major rural development programmes of the NGOs were agricultural programmes, health programmes, human resource development programmes, community development and industrial and trade programmes. Majority of the beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, workers of NGOs and workers of other development agencies considered rural development works of the NGOs as effective for rural development.

**Key words:** Evaluative perception about NGOs, NGOs in rural development, NGOs, roles of NGOs, transfer of technology.

### INTRODUCTION

Non-government organizations with their advantage of non-rigid, locality specific, felt need-based, beneficiary oriented and committed nature of service have established multitude of roles which can effect rural development. In this context, the need to analyse how far the NGOs are effective in rural development, what their roles are, components of their development work, their consequences etc. was evident. With this objective, a case study was conducted in Thrissur District of Kerala State.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Two well-established NGOs of Thrissur District, Kuriakose Elias Service Society (KESS) and Apex Voluntary Agency for Rural Development (AVARD) were selected and their programmes and coverage were identified.

A sample of 50 beneficiaries from each of the organisations was selected through proportionate random sampling procedure to make 100 beneficiary respondents for the study. From the functional area of each NGO, a sample of 30 non-beneficiaries was selected as respondents following purposive sampling procedure. Thirty NGO workers selected at random from the two NGOs and 30 workers of development agencies other than NGOs in the selected area were identified as respondents.

Based on discussion with the implementing officials and authorities of NGOs, the major programmes and components of the programmes of these NGOs in rural development

were identified. The effectiveness of the NGOs was measured in terms of the reflection of the evaluative perception of the different respondent categories about their experiences and roles played by the NGOs in connection with them by measuring their Evaluative Perception Index (EPI). The index was formulated and standardised through identifying the major components of the programmes of NGOs, which consisted of 120 statements (on five point continuum - very strong, strong, neutral, weak and very weak) reflecting the components of the programme. The scores obtained by each respondent were summed to get the individuals over all evaluation.

$$EPI = \frac{\text{Actual evaluative perception score obtained by an individual}}{\text{Potential evaluative perception score}}$$

The evolved consequences of the programmes were also identified in relation to the major components of the programme and were measured by developing Perceived Consequence Index (PCI). The beneficiary respondents were asked to rate the components from their experience or on the basis of the benefits either as positive or negative. A score of one for each positive consequence and a negative score of one for each negative consequence were assigned. The sum of the positive and negative scores was taken as the actual score of consequences. The ratio of the maximum possible desired score and the score actually obtained by the beneficiary was taken as PCI.

$$PCI = \frac{[\text{Score for positive consequences} + \text{score for negative consequences}]}{\text{Maximum possible desired score}}$$

Table 1. Major programmes for rural development of the selected NGOs

Sl. No.	Programmes	Activities	
		KESS	AVARD
I	Agricultural programmes	Distribution of planting materials Distribution of diary cattle Poultry Demonstration farm Minor irrigation Lift irrigation Land development Contour bunding Community irrigation	Distribution of planting materials Sericulture Distribution of diary cattle Distribution of poultry Lift irrigation
II	Health programmes	Free medical care Safe drinking water by providing wells Smokeless choola Sanitary latrines	Immunization of children Health education Family counseling centre Sanitary latrines
III	Community development programmes	Housing Repairing of house IRDP model village Village development project Common well	Construction of house Land for landless Roofing of house Bore well
IV	Human resource development	Training programme Education promotion Earn while you learn programme Integrated community development projects Creches	Vocational training programmes Education programmes Creches and balwadies
V	Trade and industrial promotion	Fabrication works Wood works Umbrella assembling Beedi rolling Printing press Quarry Khadi Stabilizer assembling	Fibre and rope making unit Apex stabilizer industries Stabilizer assembling

Using a structured and pre-tested interview schedule, relevant data were collected from the selected respondents. The data were then statistically analyzed.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 shows that the major rural development programmes of selected NGOs are agricultural programmes, health and hygiene, human resource development, community development and trade and industrial programmes. Both the organisations put considerable efforts for rural development. A perusal of their programme activities provide a

view on the combination of delivery and service activities and employment generation activities in the case of KESS while AVARD had made more efforts in delivery services. It is to be mentioned that both the organizations have taken location specific activities, which were formulated after analyzing the needs and priorities of their target.

The study indicated that majority of the programme activities ultimately lead to progress in health and hygiene, education, technology transfer, employment generation, self reliance, economic development and behavioural changes. Importance to ecological preserva-

Table 2. Distribution of beneficiaries based on the Index of consequences of rural development efforts of the NGOs

Group	Class	Frequency	Percentage
Least beneficial	0.0-0.2	-	-
Less beneficial	>0.21-<0.6	-	-
Moderately beneficial	0.61-<0.9	10	10.00
Most beneficial	0.91 and above	90	90.00

Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on the index of evaluative perception of effectiveness of NGOs

Respondents	Least effective		Less effective		Effective		Highly effective	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Beneficiaries (n=100)	-	-	-	-	27	27	73	73
Non-beneficiaries (n=60)	-	-	11	18.33	31	51.67	18	30
NGO workers (n=30)	-	-	-	-	3	10	27	90
Development workers (n=30)	-	-	-	-	9	30	21	70

tion, safety and security feeling and community development was also there.

Table 2 depicts the distribution of beneficiaries of NGOs based on their consequence index of rural development efforts of NGO, which reveals that none of the respondents had considered the programmes of NGOs as least beneficial and less beneficial. Ninety per cent of the beneficiaries had considered the programmes of NGOs as most beneficial for them. This whole-hearted acceptance of the programmes of the NGOs can be equated with the acceptance of the NGOs themselves in the scene of rural development.

This high acceptance of NGOs among the beneficiaries can surely be attributed to many of the special qualities of NGOs. Voluntary organizations have special qualities in their style of functioning such as flexibility in operation, sensitivity to changing needs, high level of motivation of the functionaries and innovations. Dhillon and Hansra (1995), while discussing about the role of NGOs had indicted that the NGOs in general have first-hand experience and knowledge of local needs, problems and research at local level,

they are closer to the minds and hearts of the people and they are with commitment and zeal of voluntary action.

Table 3 presents a comparison of the evaluative perception by the different categories of respondents about the effectiveness of NGOs. About 73 per cent of the beneficiary respondents and 30 per cent of non-beneficiaries and 90 per cent of NGO workers and 70 per cent of development workers had high evaluative perception regarding the effectiveness of NGOs. These highlight the simple fact that the non-governmental organizations are accepted by the different sections as an effective machine for rural development.

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## REFERENCES

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