

Unprecedented service by social - cultural organization(NGOs) and Civil Society during Covid-19 pandemic:

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The article highlights the Unprecedented service by the civil society and NGOs in the covid-19 period. They constitute the backbone of the collective expression of citizen interest in a democracy. So, read about the ways in which they can contribute in dealing with destruction due to pandemic.

The collective works by NGO, Private Sector and international development organisation

The enemy is unusual that's why the nature and scale of the crisis which the COVID-19 pandemic has led to is unparalleled.

In such a scenario, solutions are unlikely to come from past experiences or best practices.

The biggest source of strength now is the partnerships we have built over the years.

The situation at hand calls for stakeholders to come together, work side by side and support each other.

The fight against COVID-19 needed as many hands as were available.

The service was too big for the government to handle alone.

The strategy was to leverage vertical and horizontal partnerships: Vertical partnerships, which the stakeholders have built within their organisations and horizontal partnerships, which the government has institutionalised with stakeholders.

This is precisely what one of the Empowered Groups created by the government has been doing since it was formed.

Significance of social and cultural organization (NGOs)

The NGOs, given their deep connect with spatial and sectoral issues, were a natural partner in this endeavour.

There is nobody better placed than the NGOs to understand the pulse at the grassroots and engage closely with communities.

Around 92,000 organisations were urged to partner with district administrations and contribute to the response efforts.

How the NGOs helped?

Chief Secretaries of all states were requested to engage NGOs in relief and response efforts and designate state and district nodal officers to coordinate with them.

The approach was to leverage the strength and reach of the local NGOs in identifying priority areas for action and avoid duplicity of efforts.

NGOs have been actively setting up community kitchens, creating awareness about prevention, and physical distancing, providing shelter to the homeless, the daily wage workers, supporting government efforts in setting up health camps and in deputing volunteers to deliver services to the elderly, persons with disabilities, children, and others.

An outstanding contribution of NGOs was in developing communication strategies in different vernaculars which went a long way in taking awareness measures to the community level.

Rastriya swayamsevak sangh, Jai Gurudev Ashram, Akshaya Patra, Sant Nirankari Mission, Prajapati Ishwariy Vishwavidyalaya, Rama Krishna Mission, Iskon, Tata Trusts, Piramal Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Action Aid, International Red Cross Society, Prayas, Help-age India, SEWA, Sulabh International, Charities Aid Foundation of India, Gaudia Math, Bachpan Bachao Andolan, the Salvation Army, and Catholic Bishops' Conference of India are some partners who have embodied the whole-of-society approach in COVID-19 response management.

Important role played by startups

The crisis has brought out the best in the start-up space.

Many of them have risen to the occasion and accelerated the development of low cost, scalable, and quick solutions.

The results have been promising.

AgVa accelerated the development of ventilators which are low-cost, mobile, low on power consumption and require minimal training for operators.

Biodesign has developed a robotic product called ResperAid, which enables mechanised use of manual ventilators.

Kaaenaat has developed highly portable ventilators which can be used to serve two patients simultaneously and has a built-in battery, oxygen concentrator, and steriliser cabinet.

The products of a few non-ventilator start-ups too came to the aid of the COVID-19 fighting machinery.

The AI-enabled analysis of chest X-Rays developed by Qure.ai enables large-scale screening to identify potential cases.

GIS and geo-fencing technologies by Dronamaps enabled information cluster strategies for hotspots.

AI-powered online doctor consultation and telemedicine platform by Mfine connects diagnostics labs and pharmacies with doctors and patients.

The AI-enabled thermal imaging camera developed by Staqu facilitated large-scale screening at low cost.

These developments strengthen the argument that low-cost and scalable solutions designed and developed domestically must drive our country's transformation.

How the stakeholders operated through partnership?

The manner in which stakeholders have responded to the pandemic reinforces the power of partnerships.

In fact, they have operated through partnerships.

The social and cultural organizational leaderships created momentum throughout their networks and delivered the much needed response.

They also brought to the attention of the group the problems from the grassroots.

Multiple agencies of international development organisations designed and executed joint response initiatives, leveraging their presence across the country.

The coalitions which industry organisations such as CII, FICCI, and NASSCOM have built over the years brought people and resources together, identified problems at multiple levels, channelised ideas and solutions and facilitated innovations.

The role played by the government has been facilitative in nature.

This role was based on the institutional and informal partnerships built with the three groups of stakeholders over the years.

Adaptiveness of Indian Industry

Till the end of March months , not a single N95 mask or personal protective equipment (PPE) was manufactured in India.

India makes more than 110 domestic firms making PPEs and five manufacturing N95 masks.

Over 5.6 lakh PPEs and three lakh N-95masks are being manufactured in India, daily. Now a days India exporting PPE kits and masks exporting.

The Indians manufacturing of ventilators has strengthened manifold — orders for more than 60,000 units have been placed with nine manufacturers.

While it shows the adaptiveness of Indian industry, the shift to domestic production must happen on a larger scale for a wider set of sectors in the long run, as envisioned by Make in India.

Considering the question-“As facilitators, mediators, and advocates of collective articulation of citizen interest in a democracy, Civil Society and NGOs have put people before everything else during this crisis. In light of this, examine the role played by them in unparalleled crisis brought in by Covid-19 pandemic.”

Conclusion:

We believe in the peace mantra , "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah,Sarve Santu Niramayah" The common people, voluntary and non-government organizations constitute the backbone of the collective articulation of citizen interest in a democracy. It confirms that they can prove to be an asset in our fight against Covid-19 pandemic.

Back2Basics: NGO

The NGOs are private organizations defined by World Bank that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development.

NGOs are those organizations which operate independently from Government and are generally considered to be nonstate, nonprofit oriented groups who pursue purposes of public interest.

