

Community Engagement: Role of NGOs in Creating Global Peace and Awareness on Community health with special reference to COVID-19

ABSTRACT

COVID-19 pandemic had impact on global peace. People across the countries experienced havoc in their lives because of the global pandemic. It disturbed all the segments of the society at the local, national and international level. COVID-19, a major disaster became the global social problem and concern too. COVID-19 caused the great level of unrest and created a fear among people. For the global peace, it is required to combat COVID-19 pandemic. Many experts claimed it to be a bio weapon, which was disastrous for the world. COVID-19 not only affected the nations' physical health but also social, economic and mental health. As COVID-19 held the world, it put to test our total adaptability to the global pandemic. One can not purposely disregard this impacting world solicitation which has impacted the economy as well as changed us to how we work and adjust to our everyday schedules. In such a circumstance, plans are likely not going to come if everybody is working in storage facilities. The fight against COVID-19 required anyway many hands as are open. For an impressive time span, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are successfully drawn in with engaging hardships associated with the physical and mental health, environment, child protection, youth development, women empowerment, elder care, social equality, and economic stability. Subsequently, when the pandemic hit the nations, NGOs are given their significant partnership in battling COVID-19 and its associated problems. This paper aimed at exploring role of NGOs and public health departments in combating the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring community health and well-being of the people across the nations. Community engagement is the pre-requisite to ensure community health, mutual exchange of information helped community people to respond to COVID-19 pandemic in a better way. Local, National, and international NGOs worked vigorously and at the grass root level for creating global peace and awareness on community health regarding novel coronavirus.

Introduction

COVID-19 known as global pandemic had created unrest among people in many ways. Global peace suffered because of the pandemic as well as associated problems related to COVID-19 pandemic. People were suffering from illnesses, hunger, unemployment, violence, and conflict. The individuals, societies, organisations, and nations had carried out many initiatives and interventions to respond to all the crises. It has been realized that community engagement is one of the best practices to battle with pandemic situation and associated problems. During COVID-19, the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) tried to mobilize the community to combat the entire odd situation. NGOs had their already established rapport with the communities so, it was easy for them to take up the community engagement to battle COVID-19. They promoted community participation in dealing with the crisis especially when it comes to food security and health infrastructure. COVID-19 brought illnesses, co-morbidities, and fatalities. Many temporary COVID care centers were initiated through community engagement. NGOs reached to the beneficiaries in all the best possible ways in physical, via social media, telephone, posters, pamphlets, and through volunteers. Although WHO reported the lack of community participation during COVID-19, but still NGOs came to the forefront and formed linkages with the local leaders, key persons, health workers, community based organisations and faith based organisations in ensuring the following-

- NGOs' Strong Rapport with the community to help the needy and COVID-19 affected and impacted individuals and families
- Awareness on COVID-19 Do's and Don't
- Awareness on mental health concerns
- Food Security
- Health concerns and emergencies-distribution of masks , sanitizers, sanitary pad, PPE Kit
- Addressing other health concerns (HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, diabetes, cancer)
- Child care and protection
- Helping women against Domestic Violence
- Tele counselling
- Setting up COVID care centres
- Networking with other organisations

Methodology

COVID-19 became a matter of global concern. In the present paper, the reviewer had considered the research articles written in the area of community engagement and COVID-19. The objectives of the study were-

- To explore the role of NGOs and public health departments in combating the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring community health and well-being of the people
- To create global peace and awareness on community health regarding COVID-19

Community engagement: Role of NGOs in creating Global Peace and creating awareness on community health

COVID-19 pandemic created a disastrous situation across the world. Government and non-government organisations (NGOs) along with community participation tried their level best to combat all the challenges occur because of the pandemic. The crisis encountered by everyone in the society related to physical health, mental health, protecting self from getting COVID-19. Co-morbidity had also aggravated the problem and resulted in fatalities. COVID-19 pandemic affected masses globally without any discrimination. People were praying for the welfare of masses and wellbeing of everyone. Governments and non- government organisations (NGOs) came together to respond to the crisis nationally as well as internationally.

It was realized that non-government organizations can help the country with engaging what was going on by spreading care among people and guiding them rather than only making caution. It was noticed that standard checking were done at railway stations, transport stands and air terminals. Intra-state, Inter-state and international travel was restricted. People stayed at home for whatever amount of time as could be anticipated. It was requested by the government and NGOs to avoid sending fake messages on social media and only to circulate government notice and messages.

India entered lockdown in 2020 in order to control the spread of COVID-19. It was a challenging situation for many people especially the daily wage earners. It was a difficult phase for people in terms of economy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi mobilized the NGOs to help the government by helping the community of their area of concerns. NGOs formed linkages with the local leaders, individuals, community based organisations and faith based organisations to spread the awareness among the community people. NGOs facilitated the process of ration collection from the philanthropist and distribution among the needy and destitute.

The NITI Aayog data show that more than 90,000 NGOs assisted in food distribution and ensuring the health facilities. The High Court, on a relative note, cheered the commitment of NGOs in drawing closer to help laborers and other daily wage earners by giving food, water and transport during the difficult time of Corona virus. With upgrades in people and skewed centralization of people in metropolitan locale, it is battled that NGOs “have the entryway and the commitment to expect an essential part in status, response, impact balance and movement to decrease the consequences” (Mahmood, 2009) of a virus, mainly among down and out individuals and feeble get-togethers. NGOs have the essential incidence, cutoff and understanding to have the choice to supply during endemic status. Analysts perceive that NGOs can supply nearly all in areas of health, financial associate, arranging and neighborhood wisdom. The World Health Organization (WHO) stated that how nations ought to answer outbreaks of global significance. It states, "There is authentication of the unprecedented control of public and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the space of health, exploring for the control of outbreaks. NGOs offering assistance that would not in any event open, particularly in showing up at poor populations" (Giorgetti, 2010).

Scientists' pick four frameworks for diminishing the possessions of any epidemic — vaccination, antiviral prescription usage, checkup and general health structures. NGOs can aid on-ground to both supposition and status via information dispersal, bearing, and health services. On a system point, they can enlighten decisions via discernment, and by seeing areas of interest, for instance, ghettos, high thickness private settlements, or insufficiently ventilated districts. They can correspondingly beat any deterrent among govern bodies. Extensively, they can vanquish any breaking point among govern bodies and occupants and are organized to see the basics of a region, those that are attempting to attain.

In obviously the fundamental multi day stretch of lockdown in 2020 in India, PM Modi progressed toward NGOs to aid the administration in trade with the epidemic (Indian Express, 2020). He forced them to give key requirements to the infected, for instance, medical and careful stuff and, shockingly, more generally to spread information on care missions like washing hands, wearing masks and staying aware of social distancing. During the Covid-19 pandemic, various NGOs allocate and further foster information concerning vaccination centers, neutralizer responsiveness, immunizer achievement, and to help individuals requiring oxygen or blood. NGOs correspondingly used their organization to join experts on electronic stages, to give free medical direction to those influenced by COVID-19. As NGOs are known and trusted in by the communities where they work,

they have been helping people with combatting the disgrace, while arranging water compartments for hand-washing, giving safe house, and setting up neighborhood for those in a tight spot.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit the complete health structures across the world. Health infrastructure was badly affected due to COVID-19. Rapidly increased number of COVID-19 infected cases amassed by fear, misrepresentation and cutoff points on the treatment of people and medical supplies that upset the state of health care for all people. Exactly when health systems are overwhelmed and people disregard to get to required treatment and health facilities contributed to both direct mortality and indirect mortality. From there on out, NGOs have been working persistently on the ground and offering essential sorts of help COVID-19 infected and affected people. They have been instrumental in supporting the government and perceiving the coronavirus related problems and issues as a matter of concern for the well-being of the masses. Understanding the gravitas of the situation, NGOs were the first to reconfigure themselves and pushed for new drives to give medical assistance to the country over. NGOs began to work in emergency and targeted to save the lives of humankind, united with one another to channelize the available resources related to medical care and necessities. NGOs gave assistance to nursing homes, and various workplaces through specific assistance and medical teams.

For people including the more established and children, individuals with handicaps, transgender, the desperate, and everyday pay workers, NGOs have been the fundamental point of view during the constant pandemic. The COVID-19 started lockdowns made a financial crisis on top of an overall health emergency. It upsets the employments of various and set them in basic streams ill- suited to bear the expense of food and other utility products like face-mask, cleaning agents, and sanitizers. With the rising cases of coronavirus NGOs role was acknowledged by everyone. Working on the extreme forefront, NGOs in different communities have been giving food and other basic utility items to needy individuals and the destitute. Civil society organisation responded rapidly to COVID-19 pandemic. When the communities were facing problems of shortages of health logistics, hunger, and security, under community engagement initiatives many organisations served the communities in needs-

All Hands Meet (AHM)- All Hands Meet was an initiative of the Department of Social Work, University of Delhi. All the faculties, students and alumnus volunteered and tried to mobilize the resources for the needy and deserving people affected during COVID-19. Arrangements of oxygen concentrators, medicines were done through tele-consultations, tele counselling provided to the

people with psychosocial problems, food arrangements were done through networking with the NGOs.

Voices Society- Jeevan Rakshika by Voices Society was an initiative of Aditi Mahavidyalaya, University of Delhi to respond to COVID-19 pandemic. Many awareness generation session were organized on COVID-19, vaccination centre was set up in the college, face-masks were generated through local resources and distributed among the needy people.

Mission Oxygen- Mission oxygen was an initiative carried out by community of founders and entrepreneurs. People came together to facilitate the process of timely medical interventions, oxygen cylinder supply, medicines, and other health logistics. They formed linkages with the hospitals, nursing homes, medical stores (Team Sahyog, 2021).

Organisations like **Plan India**, took care of many services to the community during COVID-19 like-

- Food Distribution
- Awareness campaigns to prevent self from COVID-19
- Awareness campaign for the vaccination- dealing with the myths and misconceptions related to vaccination
- Distribution of PPE Kits for the health care professionals, police personnels and other COVID-19 warriors
- Ensuring medical supplies like oxygen concentrators for the infected persons
- Setting up COVID care centers
- Ensuring medical care to HIV positive people during COVID-19 pandemic

NGOs, Education and COVID-19- Pratham an NGO known in the field of education launched a Student Mentoring Programme (SMP) in the few villages in Mysuru district in 2017. The SMP was delivering the positive results. But as the COVID- 19 hit the nations, the Model Village Programme came to a halt. The schools were closed and it had negative repercussions on students' performance. Pratham Mysuru decided to change the strategy and then they provided the printed lessons to children at their home. Short videos were developed and given access to the children having smart phones at home. When the schools reopened in February 2022 after a gap of nearly two years, an assessment indicated the positive results of the Student Mentoring Programme (The Hindu, 2022).

Action Aid India-Action Aid India reached to the COVID-19 Economic Response Task Force, led by the Finance Minister, Offered all support to the High-Level Committee for Engagement of Private Sector, International Organisations, NGOs and other Development Partners constituted by the Government of India, under the Chairmanship of CEO, NITI Aayog. Published series of documents titled ‘Isolate. Don’t abandon’, capturing recommendations pertaining to the most vulnerable groups for consideration of the Union and State Governments and the district administrations. Aimed to highlight the vulnerabilities of informal workers, vulnerable communities, women and children, and to secure immediate as well as long-term support for them.

Red Cross Society-Red Cross society worked at national and international level. Apart from other services mentioned above, Red Cross extensively work on arranging and providing-

- Oxygen Concentrators,
- Ventilator,
- Bedside monitors,
- Fabipiravir/Coronavir
- Oxygen Cylinders
- Cylinder Steel Rack,

Oxfam International- Oxfam was providing services to the poorer countries with weak public health systems. Oxfam targeted the population who were already facing the crisis and conflict especially the refugees. They were struggling to get food and health care. The countries targeted by Oxfam were-

- Yemen- Volunteers were trained to create awareness among conflict-affected communities. Provided cash to displaced families, distributed hygiene kits and clean water supply to refugee camps.
- Cox’s Bazaar, Bangladesh- Millions of Rohingya living in extremely overcrowded conditions- Oxfam worked towards hygiene promotion and water and sanitation facilities. Distributed soap and clean water and developed innovative tools-contactless hand-washing stations.
- Iraq- Network of local partners helped to train large numbers of community volunteers to respond rapidly to Covid-19. Supported vulnerable families with emergency food baskets. Provided cash assistance to help mitigate against worsening poverty.

- Burkina Faso- where 780,000 people were internally displaced (IDP), ensured access to safe, clean water. Aimed at improving community knowledge on COVID-19 and prevention measures. Fostered community engagement in the face of the pandemic (Oxfam International, n.d.).

Gautam Gambhir Foundation- The Gautam Gambhir Foundation played a vital role in organizing the relief task during COVID-19. The foundation distributed ration, food, facemasks, and other protective medical kits to the downtrodden sections of the society, who were not capable of accessing the basic utility items.

Uttishtha Foundation- Uttishtha Foundation planned to work with the elderly and provided them facemasks, sanitizers, hand wash, tissue papers. The foundation also distributed ration and soap to the community people. Cooked meals were provided to the homeless people, in slums, and daily wage earners.

Many initiatives were taken by the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) alongwith government organisations to combat COVID-19 pandemic and creating global peace and awareness on community health through community engagement initiatives.

Conclusion

All the national and international bodies endorse the importance of community engagement in dealing with the biomedical and epidemiological situations. The need is to work towards social mobilization at every level for creating global peace. The present paper reflects that COVID-19 pandemic brought poverty, unemployment, grief and bereavement, failure of health systems and a lot more. It has always been observed that the importance of community participation, involvement and decisions should be highly regarded for dealing with any kind of stressful situation. COVID-19 resulted in heavy death toll and created panic situation for everyone without any discrepancies. Health matters to everyone. Sound health and mind can contribute socially and productively. COVID-19 affected people worldwide and crisis management at the global level can be successfully done by community-based interventions. NGOs effectively and efficiently deal with the social crises by encouraging people's participation. NGOs participate in government programs and decisions through their organisations and associations. Hence, for creating global peace, and

awareness on community health, NGOs play a vital role at local, national and international level. Community based organisations and faith based organisation also facilitate trust among community people and motivate them to be socially useful and helpful to others.

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Dr. Manju Goe,
Assistant Professor
Aditi Mahavidyalaya
University of Delhi

Dr. Sunita Bahmani
Associate Professor
Department of Social Work
Aditi Mahavidyalaya
University of Delhi