

UNCOVERING THE SYNERGY: KARNATAKA GOVERNMENT'S COLLABORATION WITH THIRD SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS (TSOs) FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT DURING COVID-19

ABSTRACT

Aims: Third sector organisations comprises of charities, social enterprises, and voluntary groups supporting communities at local level. The study has focused on the relationship between the State and Third Sector Organizations (TSOs) in delivering services to impoverished rural community. **Study design:** Mention the design of the study here.

Place and Duration of Study: Thirty TSOs were chosen from Kolar, Chikkaballapur, and Tumakuru districts, encompassing a variety of entities including NGOs, SHGs, and primary-level cooperatives, which collectively constitute the third sector comprising charities, social enterprises, and voluntary groups supporting local communities. The data pertains to the year 2021-22.

Methodology: To achieve the specific objectives of the study, descriptive statistics were employed to assess the service delivery dynamics between the State and TSOs.

Results: The findings revealed that during the unprecedented times of the COVID-19 pandemic, Third Sector Organizations (TSOs) have played a crucial role in extending support to communities in various spheres. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, TSOs extended educational support to 1,687 individuals, representing 2.06 per cent of the total beneficiaries. A significant majority (83.33%) of these organisations actively participated in implementation of Government-supported projects, maintaining a two-way relationship with the government (73.33%). The organisations had also taken financial help from Government in the form of funds (70 %), grants (33.33 %), and subsidies (33.33 %). The study also revealed that majority (66.67 %) of the organizations were having political interference in TSO. Furthermore, a substantial majority (90%) of the organizations anticipated timely financial support from the Government.

Conclusion: The study underscores the indispensable role of Third Sector Organizations (TSOs) in bolstering impoverished rural communities, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite challenges, TSOs actively engage in government-supported projects, fostering a symbiotic relationship. However, concerns persist regarding political interference within TSOs, highlighting the need for safeguarding their autonomy. Overall, the findings emphasize the necessity of consistent and timely financial support from the government to sustain TSO initiatives effectively. The study recommended the necessity of providing punctual financial support from the government to encourage TSOs in enhancing their service delivery to the rural poor.

Keywords: [TSOs, NGOs, SHGs, Primary level cooperatives]

1. INTRODUCTION

Third sector organisation means a value-driven, non-governmental organization that principally reinvests its surplus funds to further social, environmental, or cultural objectives and encompasses voluntary and community organizations, charities, social enterprises, co-operatives and mutual.

The third sector in India is unique because it represents a public space where social aspirations converge in a vast, complicated and heterogeneous terrain through the work of incorporated bodies, unregistered organisations, informal groups and non-formal community initiatives. The best organized and most familiar forms of voluntary initiatives include the cooperatives and non-government organisations (NGOs), whereas self-help groups, community organisations and associations of indigenous people are less formal and unregistered but have a wide geographic and functional coverage. Non-government organizations as a third sector institutional framework are playing a crucial role in providing strong support to the development issues (Rajendran, 2003). The third sector in India has a long history, varied sizes and diverse structure and functions—complementing the vastness and cultural intricacies of the country.

The growth of the third sector in India has a lot to do with the socio-religious features of the country. Faith-based giving has been deep rooted in the Indian culture. In India, the concept of Daana (giving/charity) goes back to the Vedic period. The Rig Veda (a sacred ancient text) makes ample references to charity as a duty and responsibility of the citizen and the benefits that one earns through an act of charity. The first half of the nineteenth century in Indian history witnessed the emergence and rise of social reform movements with the advent of the British rule.

A healthy relationship is only conceivable when both parties shares common objectives. If the government's commitment to poverty reduction is weak, NGOs will find dialogue and collaboration frustrating or even counter-productive. Likewise, repressive governments will be wary of NGOs which represent the poor or victimized. In such situations, NGOs will probably prefer to chart their own course, giving all instruments of the State as wide a berth as possible. Where the government has a positive social agenda (or even where individual ministries do) and where NGOs are effective there is the potential for a strong, collaborative relationship. As clarifies, this does not mean the sub-contracting of placid NGOs, but a "genuine partnership between NGOs and the government to work on a problem facing the country or a region... based on mutual respect, acceptance of autonomy, independence, and pluralism of NGO opinions and positions." The central government also needs to change policies to promote the development of NGOs, so that NGOs will be able to bridge the critical gap in service delivery that is not met by government agencies in emergencies (Yunong, et al., 2011). The characteristics of this relationship, focused on the attainment of governments' social objectives, collaboration between NGOs and the public sector and on issues that affect the efficacy if NGOs (Ani et al. 2014).

The NGOs should ensure that new technologies are introduced to help farmers improve and increase crop production. NGOs should create a condition in which the poor are either given or enabled to acquire their assets and a peaceful environment to benefit from those assets. Government should provide facilities for institutional building to the local NGOs this will encourage them to work sincerely towards poverty alleviation. NGOs should not rely on government for future projects instead they can raise funds through savings and donation from rich individuals (Muhammad et al., 2011).

Women empowerment could be achieved through social and economic intervention. This intervention involves improved competence, self-reliance and self- esteem. If women are

able to successfully achieve competence, self-reliance and self-esteem they could be in a better position to attain improved mental health as well as improved physical health. In addition, the politics of disengagement could help women to manipulate the formal or alternative sources of power to achieve equal rights as their male counterpart in the country (Robert et al., 2015).

India has nearly 34 lakhs NGOs with a coverage of one NGO for every 400 Indian citizens. In 2020, According to Nitti Aayog, there were 1,17,147 NGOs registered in the country. Among these 53 per cent are rural based and the rest are Urban based (<https://indianexpress.com>). There are several other NGO's in Karnataka that works towards the betterment of human lives. The total 8322 NGOs working in Karnataka for various social welfare activities (ngodarpana.gov.in, 2020). At recent estimates, 40,295 Anganwadi workers, 561 NGOs, 8 Regional Rural Banks, 20 District Central Co-operative Banks and many Commercial Banks are engaged in SHG promotion. Together they are estimated to have facilitated the creation nearly to 1, 95,000 SHGs in Karnataka. (Department of Women and Child Development, 2021).

In Karnataka out of 5546 PACS in State 5355 PACS are functioning and are affiliated to 21 District Cooperative Banks (DCCB) with 744 branches. The Central Banks secure refinance facilities from NABARD through Karnataka State Co-operative Apex Bank. The average lending per farmer is Rs.45008 and average advance per PACS is Rs.180.34 lakhs. (2019). In Karnataka there are many Third Sector Organisations are NGOs, SHGs & primary level cooperatives are involved in the rural development and socio-economic upliftment of rural poor. Keeping these facts in view, the present study was carried out in Kolar, Chikkaballapur & Tumkur districts of Karnataka to analyse the relationship between the Third sector organizations relationship with State/Central Govt. in delivering the services to the rural poor.

2. METHODOLOGY

Study Area

The present study was carried out in Kolar, Chickballapur, and Tumkur Districts of Karnataka. The three districts were purposely selected for the study due to the presence of a large number of Third Sector Organisations (TSOs) in all three districts.

Sampling Framework

The total number of Third Sector Organizations selected for the study from three districts was 30. Since, different types of TSOs are functioning in the study area, the sample comprised NGOs, SHGs & Primary level cooperatives. Primary data was collected from 30 TSOs. To fulfil the specific objectives of the study descriptive statistics including percentages were used. The data pertains to the year 2021-22.

Descriptive Statistics

After data preparations, all the necessary features such as good internal controls or poor reporting systems would be described. In this case, it is used to summarize necessary measurements and samples. The descriptive form would involve the use of this would show the outcome of the data.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Support provided by TSO during COVID-19

The support provided by TSOs (NGOs and SHGs) during COVID-19 is presented in Table 1. During the unprecedented times of the COVID-19 pandemic, Third Sector

Organizations (TSOs) have played a crucial role in extending support to communities in various spheres. This discussion aims to analyse the diverse array of activities undertaken by TSOs and their corresponding impact on benefiting members. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, TSOs extended educational support to 1,687 individuals, representing 2.06 per cent of the total beneficiaries. This initiative underscores the commitment of TSOs towards ensuring continuity in learning amidst disruptions caused by the pandemic. Employment, a critical aspect of livelihood, saw support from TSOs benefiting 6,770 individuals, constituting 8.27 per cent of the total beneficiaries. By providing opportunities for employment, TSOs contributed towards economic stability and resilience during challenging times. TSOs recognized the heightened food insecurity during the pandemic and responded by distributing food kits to 5,123 individuals, representing 6.26 per cent of the total beneficiaries. This initiative alleviated immediate hunger concerns, ensuring that vulnerable populations had access to essential nutrition. Health awareness emerged as a primary focus area for TSOs, with an overwhelming 66,391 individuals, or 81.12 per cent of the total beneficiaries, benefiting from such initiatives. These efforts included disseminating vital information about preventive measures, debunking myths, and promoting overall well-being. Recognizing the interconnectedness of various needs during the pandemic, TSOs combined food kit distribution with health awareness programs, benefiting 1,872 individuals (2.29 % of the total beneficiaries). This integrated approach addressed both immediate and long-term concerns, fostering holistic support for communities.

Table 1: The support provided by TSOs (NGOs and SHGs) during COVID-19

(n=12)

Sl. No.	Activities	No. of members benefited	Percentage
1.	Education	1687	2.06
2.	Employment	6770	8.27
3.	Distribution of food kits	5123	6.26
4.	Health awareness	66391	81.12
5.	Distribution of food kits & health awareness	1872	2.29
	Total	81,843	100.00

Third sector organizations relationship with State / Central Govt.

The relationship of TSOs with State / Central Government is presented in Table 2. The results revealed that, financial support emerged as one of the aspects of TSOs' response, with 20 organizations (66.67%) offering monetary aid to support communities affected by the pandemic. This initiative helped alleviate financial burdens and provided much-needed relief to individuals and families facing economic hardships. TSOs extended administrative assistance to manage organizational tasks and operations, with 18 organizations (60.00%) providing support in this regard. This support ensured the smooth functioning of TSOs, enabling them to effectively coordinate and deliver their services amidst challenging circumstances. Engagement in marketing and outreach efforts was undertaken by 13 organizations (43.33%) to raise awareness and generate interest in their programs and initiatives. These promotional activities played a crucial role in reaching out to the community

and garnering support for TSOs' initiatives during the pandemic. Nineteen organizations (63.33%) were actively involved in monitoring and evaluating activities to ensure compliance and effectiveness. This oversight helped maintain accountability and quality standards in TSOs' operations, enhancing transparency and trust among stakeholders. Twenty-one organizations (70.00%) enforced guidelines and regulations to maintain quality standards and compliance within their operations. This regulatory oversight was essential in safeguarding the integrity of TSOs' activities and ensuring adherence to relevant legal and ethical frameworks. TSOs played a pivotal role in implementing government-supported projects, with 25 organizations (83.33%) actively involved in such initiatives. This collaboration between TSOs and government entities facilitated the effective delivery of services and maximized the impact of interventions aimed at addressing the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic.

From financial assistance and administrative support to promotional activities, monitoring, regulatory oversight, and project implementation, TSOs demonstrated their agility and resilience in responding to evolving challenges. Moving forward, it is essential to recognize the invaluable contributions of TSOs and provide sustained support to strengthen their capacity in addressing future crises and promoting community resilience.

Similar studies found that the NGO organization are trying to give help to all the people of the village in which some are worker, farmer, or poor from India. So, by this organization, the "Akshaya Patra Foundation" has initiated to help them during the last four months. They are supplying meals packet, meal kit, and grocery kit to all the poor people. In this paper, we depicted the role of a foundation that gives huge support by providing relief to all the BPL workers, road workers, and rural communities of India. So, at this crucial stage, the "Akshaya Patra Foundation" is not only supporting the environment conservation but also helps the poor child, farmer, and wages worker through grocer kit and meals. (Vikrant, 2023).

Table 2: Relationship of Third sector organizations with State/Central Govt.

(n=30)

Sl. No.	Aspect	No. of TSOs	Percentage
1.	Provision of funding or monetary aid.	20*	66.67
2.	Support in managing organizational tasks and operations.	18*	60.00
3.	Engagement in marketing and outreach efforts to raise awareness or generate interest.	13*	43.33
4.	Oversight and evaluation of activities to ensure compliance and effectiveness.	19*	63.33
5.	Enforcement of guidelines and regulations to maintain quality standards and compliance.	21*	70.00

6.	Implementation of Govt. supported project	25*	83.33
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*Multiple responses

Type of relationship between State/Govt. and TSOs

The Table 3 shows the type of relationship the Third sector organizations have with the State/Central Govt. There are two types of relationship, one is one-way relationship and another is two-way relationship. The results showed that majority (70.00 %) of the organizations are having a two-way relationship with the Govt., followed by one-way (30 %) relationship. A one-way relationship occurs when organizations solely participate in government projects, whereas a two-way relationship involves mutual assistance. In the latter scenario, organizations engage in government projects and also seek governmental support for various activities such as registration, assistance during strikes, and completing legal procedures.

Table 3: Type of relationship between State/Govt. and TSOs

(n=30)

Sl. No.	Type of relationship	No. of TSOs	Percentage
1.	Two way	21	70.00
2.	One way	9	30.00

Forms of financial support by Govt. to TSOs

The Table 4 shows the forms of financial support by Govt. to TSOs in the form of funds, grants, subsidies, and other help. The results showed that majority (70.00 %) of the organizations are taken financial help in the form of funds followed by grants, subsidy (33.33 %) and other help (30 %) in the form of State support organizations to raise finance to undertake the organizational programs. Funds are provided by the State Govt. directly to the organizations. The purpose of grants to TSOs for the cost of publicity, training & other capacity-building initiatives is to meet out of this fund and to increase the scope of entrepreneurship among women and ensure their maximum participation in the resolve of self-reliant India. In the form of subsidy for TSOs to facilitate the machinery creation and infrastructural facility for the TSOs development.

Table 4: Forms of financial support by Govt. to TSOs

(n=30)

Sl. No.	Forms of financial support	No. of TSOs	Percentage
1.	Funds	21*	70.00
2.	Grants	10*	33.33
3.	Subsidy	10*	33.33
4.	Other help	9*	30.00

*Multiple responses

Impact of State on the activities of TSOs

The Table 5 shows the impact of State role on TSOs in different ways of positive impact, negative impact and political interference. The result shows that the majority (66.67 per cent) of the organizations are having political interference in TSO, followed by positive impact (53.33 per cent), negative impact (46.67 per cent), and Political interference in TSO leads to Positive impacts as well as negative impacts and positive impact in the way of helping the organizations to get more projects, funds, easy ways to complete the legal procedures, creation of good contact/ relationship with the beneficiaries, etc., negative impact leads to difficulty in the raising funds and poor relationship with other organizations, State, and financial institutions etc.

Table 5: Impact of State on the activities TSOs

(n=30)

Sl. No.	Impact of State role	No. of TSOs	Percentage
1.	Positive impact	16*	53.33
2.	Negative impact	14*	46.67
3.	Political interference in TSO	20*	66.67

*Multiple responses

Expectations of TSOs from the Govt./State

The Table 6 shows the expectations of TSOs from Govt./State. The results show that the majority (90 %) of the organizations are expecting in time financial support from Govt., followed by reduced corruption (36.67 %), more women empowerment programs (26.67 %), infrastructural facilities (23.33 %) to take up entrepreneurial activities by SHGs and for better management of stocks, better office facilities for PACS, machinery at a subsidiary rate (16.67 %). and marketing facilities (13.33 %). Financial support in the forms of more funds/financial facilities, in-time funds release, reduce interest rate, interest-free loans, funds for infrastructural facilities etc. Many of the TSOs are facing a problem of corruption to get projects and funds from the Govt., to get more projects from the Govt. organizations have to pay money for that. Many of the SHGs are involved in entrepreneurial activity with their own brand name at the local level, they are still struggling to market their

produce at a higher level so these SHGs are suggesting to Govt. and other agencies to help with the marketing activities for their produce.

Table 6: Expectations of TSOs from Govt./State

(n=30)

Sl. No.	Suggestions	No. of TSOs	Percentage
1.	In time financial support	27*	90.00
2.	Infrastructural facility	7*	23.33
3.	Reduce the corruption	11*	36.67
4.	More women empowerment programs	8*	26.67
5.	Machinery at subsidiary rate	5*	16.67
6.	Marketing facilities	4*	13.33

*Multiple responses

4. CONCLUSION

The findings underscore the intricate nature of the relationship between TSOs and the State / Central Government. The support provided by TSOs during the COVID-19 pandemic reflects their agility, adaptability, and commitment to serving communities in times of crisis. From education and employment to food security and health awareness, TSOs have played a multifaceted role in addressing diverse needs arising from the pandemic. Moving forward, it is imperative to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of TSOs and provide sustained support to bolster their capacity in mitigating the impacts of future crises on vulnerable populations. While positive collaboration exists in areas such as project implementation and financial support, challenges such as political interference and corruption necessitate careful consideration. Addressing these challenges and meeting the expectations of TSOs could lead to more effective partnerships and, consequently, greater contributions to rural development and community empowerment. The study recommended the necessity of providing punctual financial support from the government to encourage the TSOs in enhancing their service delivery to the rural poor.

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ABBREVIATIONS

TSOs – Third Sector Organizations

SHG – Self Help Group

PACS – Primary Agriculture Cooperative Credit Societies