

# YOUTH PERCEPTION REGARDING NGO FUNCTIONING: A SURVEY BASED STUDY IN DELHI-NCR

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## Abstract

The NGOs have been instrumental in the past few decades in shaping the realities of human lives across the world. The developing world has been benefitted more in terms of the efforts put in by the NGOs and also the outcome. The nature of the contribution of the NGOs has been different in the developing world in comparison to the developed world. This also means that the challenges and expectations have been different as well. The existing literature also confirms these trends prevailing in the sub-continent. Majority of the studies are based in the developing world but with relatively fewer in the Indian context. Moreover, the existing studies have mostly been case studies of the successful NGOs which have transformed the lives of the people. However, majority of the studies are ignoring the macro-view of the NGO functioning, viewing it from the general people's perceptions who are important stakeholders in the entire idea of development. This study tries to find out what the people belonging to a specific age group (18-30 years) feel about NGOs and their efforts in ensuring urban and rural development. This is a survey based study of 120 respondents with structured questionnaire as the tool for data collection. The statistical tests used in this study include Chi-square Test for independence and Mann-Whitney U-Test. The results indicate no

difference in the perception of the respondents belonging to different gender and working status regarding the functioning of NGOs for rural and urban development, and the use of media for this purpose. In general it can be said that the perception is same across respondents which is mostly tilted towards dissatisfaction.

## Paper Identification



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## Introduction

NGOs are instrumental in making sure that people's lives are dragged out of the vicious circles of miseries. Developing and underdeveloped countries that are late in the race for material development are usually entrapped in the problems that permeates the life of the people living in those countries. The outcome is the shattered economic life, troubled social life, almost absent political existence and least control over the resources and key decision making in almost all spheres of life. NGOs for decades have been able to instill the idea of development amongst such population with dilapidated zeal, toiling in the lanes of

fatalism. This has brought tons of hope and optimism in not just the affected population but also amongst the people who have aspired for a better world. All this sounds too optimistic but there have been fingers pointed at the NGOs as well. While heavy funds diversion towards the NGOs is witnessed across the world, the outcome has been far less relatively. The mismanagement of funds, crippled working styles and methods and almost unconscious zeal for change amongst some NGO functionaries have been some of the many concerns raised about the functioning of NGOs. Delisle et.al. (2005) have talked at length about the role NGOs play and claim that NGOs not only help in the creation of the appropriate infrastructure but also helps in bringing the system back to the place from where the development journey can be easily initiated. Though the study is focusing on the healthcare development, it can be rightly fitted into any kind of development. This study lays emphasis on the infrastructural development for any other type of development to follow the lead but still emphasizes the role communication can play in it. The NGOs need to prepare appropriate communication strategies for facilitating the process of development amongst the stakeholders. For this, there has to be a constant and consistent brainstorming considering the dynamic character of communication and fast changing communication needs. This is where the stakeholder perception comes handy. Stakeholder perception is something that would always be present. What is more important is how it is recorded and then used as a guiding force to keep altering the nature of communication and media usage for dissemination of development message (Ibrahim & Gambo, 2019, n.d.). Aldasehv & Navarra (2018) further claim that development communication through development NGOs is assumes a very unique character due to it being a very pragmatic and purposeful communication strategy. NGOs not only communicate or rather advocate for change, rather they also intervene that

helps in ensuring that the society is led onto the right path that takes them towards the oasis of development from the desert of misery. D'Mello (2017) has emphasized on this aspect of NGO functioning through a case study of SIRRA.

Communication helps not only in creation of the environment that is suitable for development, but it also allows emphasis on the aspect of accountability which ensures that the rights of the beneficiaries are protected. It highlights the significance of communication in protecting the beneficiary rights directly via promotion of the culture of accountability (O'Dwyer & Unerman, 2010). The beneficiary perceptions and its role in shaping the NGO functioning in India and Russia is advocated further by Yesudhas & Rubtcova (2015, n.d.). This study also emphasizes on the need for communication and its use to ensure recording and utilizing the beneficiary perception for improvisation. This is not limited to only India and other developing economies. Rather, Sorce (2021) claims to resonate similar viewpoint in the global context. Twersky et. al. (2013) rightly lays emphasis on the beneficiary perspective in the study titled "Listening to those who matter most, the beneficiaries". It is possible by nothing other than a judicious use of communication.

Sheombar et. al. (2018) have called social media critically important in the light of the role it is playing where it is used to reflect the aspiration of the people who matter the most i.e. the beneficiaries. Seddoh (2017) further talks about stakeholder perceptions on the factors that influence the collaboration with the government. Though it does not talk directly about the role of communication but indirectly reflects upon the factors that may help in creation of the perceptions and further dissemination of the perceptions that may play a role in the further collaborations and tie-ups.

In a nutshell, there appears to be ample studies based on the perception of the beneficiaries that affect the

way NGO operates and contributes towards societal transformation.

### Objectives

- To study the perception of the respondents towards the NGOs efforts for rural and urban development
- To study the perception of the respondents about the usage of media by the NGOs for the development of society

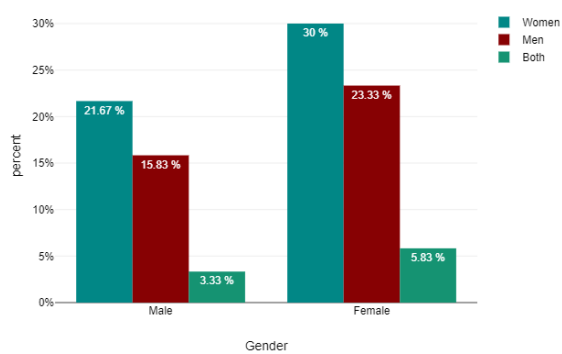
### Research Methodology

It is a survey based study conducted on 120 respondents (sample size N=120) with structured close-ended questionnaire as the tool for primary data collection. The data has been further analyzed using Microsoft Excel and DataTab online software for analysis. The statistical tests include Chi-square Test for independence, Mann-Whitney U-Test and Spearman Correlation.

### Data Summary

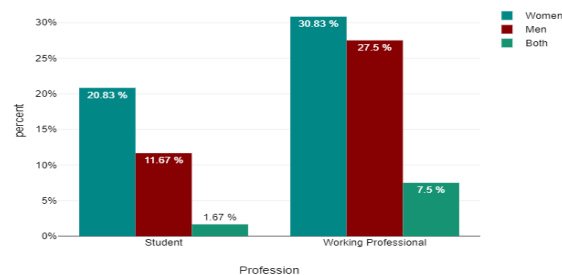
The data collected from the responses included some key information some of which is shown in the form of the graphs as shown below.

Figure 1



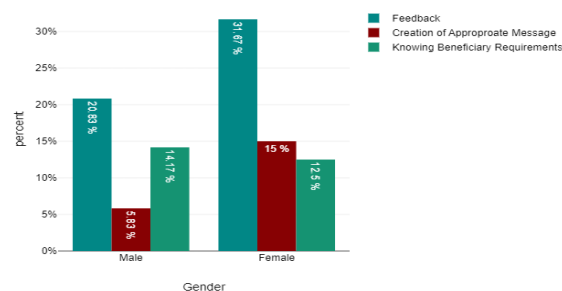
### Gender and Communication Primary Target Cross-table

Figure 2



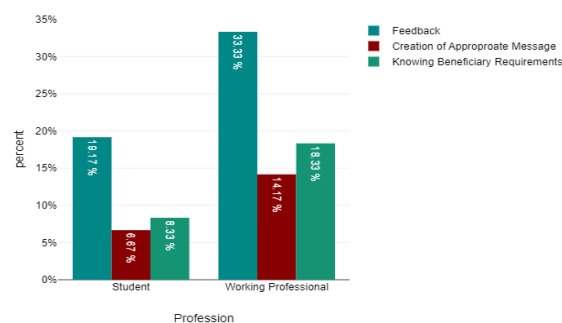
### Profession and Communication Primary Target Cross-table

Figure 3



### Gender and Communication Element Needing Immediate Attention Cross-table

Figure 4



***Profession and Communication Element Needing  
Immediate Attention Cross-table***

**Data Analysis**

The respondents comprised of 59.17% female respondents while the remaining 40.83% comprised of males. In terms of the working status of the respondents, 65.83% comprised of working professionals while 34.17% were students.

The data further shows that majority 30% of the total respondents claim to be not at all satisfied with the NGO efforts directed towards the urban development. The second highest percentage of respondents forming 20.83% of the total respondents claim to be slightly satisfied only. 18.33% claim that they are moderately satisfied while 15% are very satisfied and 15.83% are completely satisfied. This shows a leaning towards the ones who are less satisfied with lesser leaning towards complete satisfaction. The scenario is the same with respect to the rural development. Majority even in this case forming 37.5% are slightly satisfied. Meanwhile 21.67% are not at all satisfied. 28.33% claim that they are moderately satisfied while 7.5% are very satisfied and only 5% are completely satisfied.

On being asked about the primary targets of the communication plans of the NGOs for development projects, majority of the respondents forming 51.67% claim that women should be the primary target. 39.17% claim men should be the main target. The target here refers not to the targets of the projects but the communication of those projects. Only 9.17% claim that it should not have a specific target audience and both should be targeted at once.

The media and communication is a very dynamic concept. It requires consistent planning and improvisation at the time of implementation. While there are chances of NGOs getting entangled in dull

and ineffective pre-planned communication strategies, it is important for them to change it consistently. This however is not what the respondents appear to believe it. Majority 54.17% respondents claim that media use should not change frequently and consistently while corresponding to that only 45.83% claim otherwise. The results of the survey also show that feedback is considered to be the most important aspect of NGO communication that requires immediate attention and rectification. 26.67% respondents claim that knowing the beneficiary needs is most important. Third in this list is creation of appropriate message that has been chosen by 20.83% respondents.

**Statistical Test Analysis**

Further cross-tables were prepared and statistical tests were applied to find out the deeper meanings emerging from the collected data. A Mann-Whitney U-Test of gender and efforts of the NGOs towards urban development shows that the difference between male and female with respect to the dependent variable named efforts of the NGOs towards urban development was not statistically significant,  $U=1,692$ ,  $p=.795$ ,  $r=0.02$ . This shows no difference in the perception amongst both males and females.

Similarly for the rural development, the Mann-Whitney U-Test showed that the difference between male and female with respect to the dependent variable named efforts of the NGOs in rural development was not statistically significant,  $U=1,644$ ,  $p=.594$ ,  $r=0.05$ . This also shows that the male and female think alike regarding the NGO efforts towards rural development.

Mann-Whitney U-Test was then conducted over profession and the NGO efforts directed at urban and rural development respectively. The result showed



$U=1,531.5$ ,  $p=.617$ ,  $r= 0.05$ . With  $P<0.05$ , there appears to be no difference in the opinion of students and the working professionals. Same is the case regarding rural development with  $U=1,483$ ,  $p=.429$ ,  $r= 0.07$ . Here also there appears to be no difference in the perception of students and the working professionals.

Furthermore, a Chi2 test was performed between genders and the data of the respondents regarding whether should the media use be improvised often and consistently. The result showed no statistically significant relationship between gender and the other variable, with Chi-square value at 2.76,  $p = .097$ . It showed that there was no statistically significant relationship between two and thus the two are independent of each other.

Similarly, a Chi2 test was performed between profession and the data of the respondents regarding whether should the media use be improvised often and consistently. The analysis shows that there was no statistically significant relationship between the two with Chi-square value  $\chi^2(1) = 0.09$  and  $p = .76$ .

The next question asked from the respondents included the communication aspect that needs to be taken most immediate care of for making the communication more effective. A Chi2 test was performed between gender and the aspect of communication that needs most immediate attention for more effectiveness. It was seen that there was no statistically significant relationship between gender and aspect of communication that needs most immediate attention for more effectiveness,  $\chi^2(2) = 3.74$ ,  $p = .154$ .

Similarly this was tested with the profession and the result showed that there was no statistically significant relationship between profession and aspect of communication that needs most immediate attention for more effectiveness,  $\chi^2(2) = 0.33$ ,  $p = .849$ .

Furthermore Spearman correlation was conducted to test whether there was association between the perceptions over the efforts of the NGOs in urban development compared to the perception over the efforts of rural development. The result of the Spearman correlation showed that there was no significant association between the perception regarding efforts of the NGOs in Urban Development and Rural Development,  $r(118) = 0.16$ ,  $p = .073$ .

It was also seen that there was a low, positive correlation between the two variables in question with  $r= 0.16$ . Thus, there is a low, positive association between perceptions over the efforts of the NGOs in urban development and the perception over the efforts of rural development in this sample.

## Findings and Discussion

The starkly visible urban rural divide in the developing economies is something that makes people convinced about the NGO efforts being skewed in the favor of one and against the other. There is general perception regarding even the corporate intents which are believed to be in favor of the urban population than the rural population due to the potential market for the brand consumption. It nowhere means that the rural population is not a market but the buying capacity makes urban population appear to be more close to the development intent of the corporate and sometimes even the state. The results however do not resonate the general popular belief with both the students and working professionals having similar opinion that is also supported statistically. Also the male and female respondents appear to think alike. While the popular notion claims the women to be siding with the development issues naturally due to them being more marginalized in comparison to men, the data claims otherwise. Irrespective of gender, the response is

statistically not different amongst the males and females.

Communication is a dynamic concept. The digital era has transformed the audience psyche to the extent that the static communication strategies are not potent anymore. The brands are constantly looking into improvisation of communication strategies to make the brand more popular. The governments are doing the same, trying to be dynamic in their communication approaches to make the people swivel on their sides. This however is not reflected in the data collected from the 120 respondents. Statistically, it is seen that people of different gender and working status think alike when it comes to their perception regarding how often and frequently does the communication strategy need to change. Which means that they probably see the NGO functioning differently from how the brands function. While the idea of brand is to allure people and then make them sustain through any means, NGOs cannot bring the real transformation until they help in making people internalize what is right for them. In this case, a consistent communication approach is needed. In this case, the communication may appear to be not fetching results but the NGOs need to stick to them for long term sustainable results. This is what is reflected in the response received from the respondents. The respondents were further asked about the communication aspect that NGOs need to take care of immediately. The feedback emerges as the most chosen option. Feedback in communication is theoretically and traditionally considered as the most important aspect. The analysis of the response of the respondents claims the same and this cut across all irrespective of their gender or working status. It also says that knowing the beneficiary needs and requirements is also of paramount importance.

## Conclusion

The NGOs are the torchbearers of change and are believed to be seen differently by people generally. The NGOs are also seen to be carrying with them a very stereotypically occurring rural urban bias. It is however not the case. The people of different working status and gender are same in their belief regarding NGOs interaction with rural and urban population. The consistent communication is also the expectation of people. Even though it may not appear to be ensuring results in the short run, but consistency is the key. One needs to sustain with the communication plan till it brings results. It is also important to look into how the communication plan is working based on the feedback. It allows planning more effective communication strategies later for ensuring results. The NGOs need to work on the feedback aspect and also the preparation. The preparation involves knowing what the beneficiaries want. Without knowing what people want, the communication strategies cannot be directed at them effectively.

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