

Full Length Research Paper

NGOs are Service Sector of the world: Information needs of NGOs: A special survey of Ramanathapuram and Sivagangai Districts in India

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As the roles and functions of NGOs have significantly expanded in recent years, there is a Growing concern over the need to transform the operation and structure of NGOs. At the center is the issue of improving managerial and service delivery efficiency as well as governance of NGOs. In so doing, many public policy analysts and practitioners have recently regarded ICTs as an important tool to reengineer NGOs. This article examines and identify the information needs of NGOs in Ramanathapuram and Sivagangai district, the target groups and role of NGOs, use of ICT and infrastructure to serve the community, know the fund raising method of NGOs, identify their sources of information; and to examine NGO satisfaction of using the ICT of Ramanathapuram and Sivagangai districts, Tamilnadu, India.

Keywords: NGOs Information and Communication Technology, Social Work, Agriculture, Internet, Television

INTRODUCTION

The information society is where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life (Olorunda, 2004). The main objectives of information society is to empower all the people through access to and use of information, but there is concern that some organizations, including NGOs, are more distant than other organisations from the opportunities presented by the changes being created by ICTs. A non-governmental organization (NGO) is an organization that is neither a part of a government nor a conventional for-profit

business. Usually set up by ordinary citizens, NGOs may be funded by governments, foundations, businesses, or private persons. Some avoid formal funding altogether and are run primarily by volunteers. NGOs are highly diverse groups of organizations engaged in a wide range of activities, and take different forms in different parts of the world. Some may have charitable status, while others may be registered for tax exemption based on recognition of social purposes. Others may be fronts for political, religious or other interest groups.

Definition of NGO as per the World Bank: The World Bank defines NGO as 'Private organization that pursues activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provides basic social services, or undertakes community development'. The terms NGO can be applied to any non-profit organization, which is independent from government. NGOs are

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typically value-based organization, which depends, in whole or part, on charitable donations and voluntary services. Although the NGO sector has become increasingly professionalized over the last two decades, principles of altruism and voluntarism remain key defining characteristics.

Role and Objectives of NGOs: Empowering community based organizations (CBOs) and the poor among the rural communities to use impact monitoring for project management; and thus contributing to the sustainability of their project activities. Empowering NGOs to further improve the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of their efforts by identifying best tools for impact Monitoring and Evaluation and best practices in the area of Savings and Credit. Making social changes more visible in implementing and funding NGOs thus improving the development policy work. Improving public recognition of NGOs and CBOs and their contribution to development.

Problem of the study

Library and information centres are playing a crucial role in the growth and development of the nation directly/indirectly by providing better services to the members of the society. NGOs have been respected for their role models, setting the tone and lifting the quality of public life by the professional and personal integrity, dedication to public causes, philanthropic disposition and commitment to public service. A large portion of members of the NGOs in Tamil Nadu are aware about the ICT, but they do not know all its techniques and applications. Further, considerable number of members of NGOs in the in Tamil Nadu still has no knowledge about the ICT and related applications. The aim of this study therefore is to examine the information needs among NGOs in Sivagangai and Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu.

Review of literature

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) (2013) reported the title of "Urgent needs of NGOs in education sector" in India. It found 71% of surveyed NGOs have highest needs around AV equipment and computer/desktop/laptops and 65% of surveyed NGOs expressed the need for specialized educational software. Most mature NGOs have an updated website and a number of email accounts for its permanent and volunteering staff. They are also self-sufficient to a great extent as far as enterprise software like accounting packages and MS Office programs are concerned. However, there is a crying need for latest computers and peripheral IT hardware, including projection and sound systems. A frequent feedback was about being stuck with

obsolete systems gifted by private corporations who retire them every three years.

Cynthia and Ben (2010) chapter published in the title of "NGO use of Information Communication Technology" in book of "A guide to NGOs for the military. They summarize NGOs use of vast array of technology and communications systems to manage emergency operations. NGOs almost exclusively use commercial off the- shelf (COTS) products that any civilian can readily obtain for a minimal outlay. NGOs implement field programs using satellite and cell phones, and manage intricate Internet networks designed specifically for multi-site applications using software packages that specifically assist NGOs in their work and early development, with very few projects reaching scale. Although technology is an integral part of daily operations for most NGOs, no two NGOs have the same communications and technology systems. Rarely do NGOs use true communications systems. Most often they use whatever technology is readily available to communicate from emergency settings, and the development of systems often depends on field conditions and operational tempo.

Vaccaro (2009), conducted a study of "ICT and an NGO: Difficulties in attempting to be extremely transparent". His study analyzes the opportunities offered by information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the related ethical issues, within the transparency practices of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Based upon a one-year study of a European NGO, the Italian Association of Blind People, it presents compelling empirical evidence concerning the main ethical, social and economic challenges that NGOs face in the development of more transparent relationships with the public and the related role of ICTs, in particular, the organization's website. This study shows that although the attempt to be completely transparent has great ethical value, ICT- enabled information disclosure is limited by privacy and security concerns and by pressure from financial supporters and benefactors and potential. And also provides some implications and suggestions for managers of NGOs and policy makers.

Jean-Paul van Belle (2009) conducted a study in the title of "NGO ICT and E-read lines self-assessment tool" in south Africa was commissioned by NGO connect Africa. This study found utilization ICT, and NGOs ICT infrastructure, NGO having own website, NGO Network infrastructure etc,

West and Garrido (2008) recounted the experiences of several NGOs that work in five eastern European countries. Through careful, relevant training developed with community participation, these NGOs contributed to young people's employability. Specifically, the study found that young people's involvement in ICT projects gave them work experience, which subsequently helped them find a job. These NGO projects also served as a

technological platform for youth to acquire the ICT skills required in the labor market.

Ali (2005) stated that range of NGO activities in his title of "An introduction to Non – Government Organization management ". He indicated the point about ICT systems requirements in light of changing programs and technologies. This may require the expertise of outside management and information technology consultants. NGOs have varying capacities to use ICT based on costs and internal expertise. Given the lack of data standards and technical standardization of telecommunication packages, exchanging information efficiently is challenging.

Andrew (2004) concluded in his " Information communication Technologies in developing world" A community is more likely to become aware of, rely on, and repeatedly use one website that provides a variety of health information (e.g., developed in modular form by a variety of NGOs) rather than 20 relatively specific websites, each sponsored by a different NGO. The costs of developing and maintaining integrated ICT applications and making an audience aware of the resource can be shared. If communities begin to rely on particular integrated sites, different NGOs and funders will have an incentive to add to the application to reach the audience (creating a sustainable source of funding).

According to Mohammad and Dhaka (2003), a national-level NGO, which has consultative status with United the Nations' ECOSOC and operational relations with UNESCO, has established the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE), ASPBAE Research on Information and Community Technology 13 Bangladesh ICT Case Study Ahsanullah Institute of Information and Communication Technology (AIICT) with a view to spread the use of information technology all over Bangladesh. The aim of the AIICT is to provide quality service to society in the field of dissemination of information technology gradually extending the network to the rural areas.

Using The World Bank's convention cited in Duke University (2001), there are two main categories of NGOs: i) operational NGOs - whose primary purpose is the design and implementation of development-related projects, and; ii) advocacy NGOs - whose primary purpose is to defend or promote a specific cause. The World Bank further classifies operational NGOs into three main groups: i) community-based organizations (CBOs) - which serve a specific population in a narrow geographic area; ii) national organizations - which operate in individual developing countries, and; iii) international organizations – which carry out operations in more than one developing country.

The NGO Forum (2003) reports that with the exception of traditional faith-based organizations, the NGO sector in Uganda is still in its infancy and most NGO are small. Many remain unspecialized and unfocused. Many

consider themselves holistic and favour capacity building, advocacy and lobbying to direct service delivery, particularly so at national level. The Forum believes that as the sector matures, and professionalism increases, there is likely to be greater concentration. In general, advocacy NGOs carry out much the same functions, but with a different balance between them. In practice, operational NGOs often move into advocacy mode and advocacy NGOs sometimes run projects to meet short-term needs.

NABARD (1998) continues to provide 100 percent refinance to banks at an interest rate of 6.5 percent per annum. Other support measures provided include facilitating training of the bank officials and the field staff of the NGOs. The federation of NGOs/SHGs and other related institutions through financial assistance, faculty support and the like. As many as 550 NGOs are participating in the programme. Women SHGs constituted about 94 percent of the total groups linked. On the whole, the programme benefited 5.60 lakh rural poor families in 280 districts.

Objectives of this study

To identify the information needs of NGOs in Ramanathapuram and Sivagangai district;
 To study the target groups and role of NGOs.
 To find out that use of ICT and infrastructure to serve the community.
 To know the fund raising method of NGOs.
 To identify their sources of information; and
 To examine their satisfaction of using the ICT.

METHODOLOGY

A survey method based on structured questionnaire was used to collect the data for this study. The questionnaire was consists 15 concrete questions. The questionnaires were administered directly to the registered NGOs administrators in Ramanathapuram and Sivagangai district. This study found three important elements of NGOs. Very first NGOs act, work, target groups, secondly fund raising method, types of information need, sources of information and finally ICT infrastructure, use of ICT and satisfaction level of using ICT. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed and 97 (80.8%) filled in questionnaires were received back.

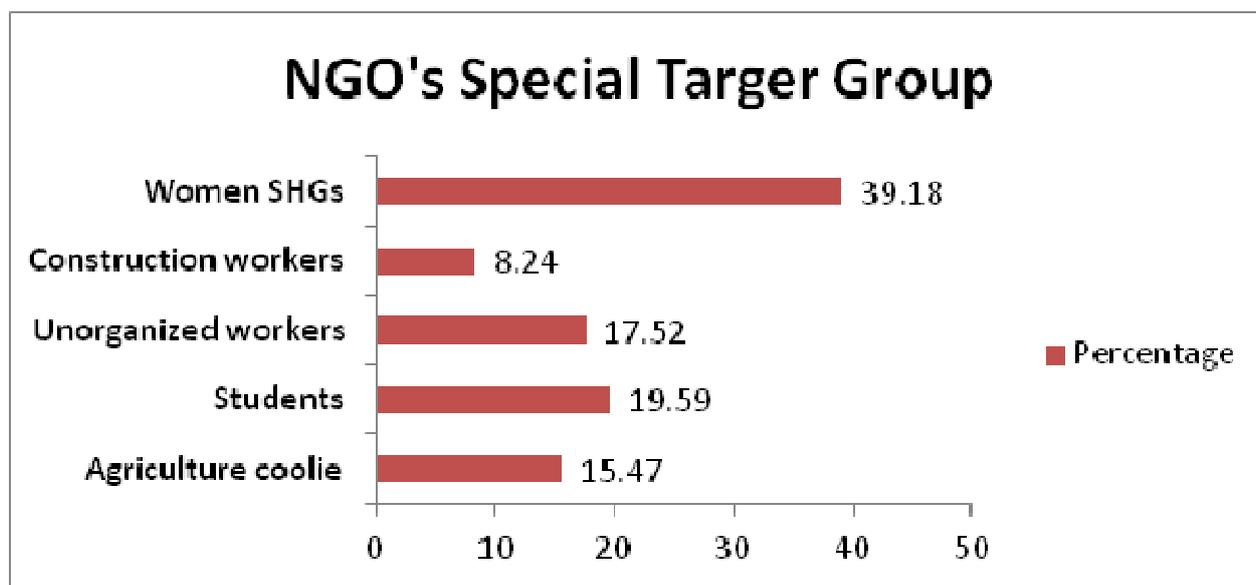
Table-1 highlights the detail of NGO's registration by the respondents. A majority of the respondents i.e.53.6 % registered in Trust Act followed by 34.0 % Society Act and only 12.4% registered Nonprofit Company Act. Table 2 and figure 1 show that the NGOs' special target group of community by the respondents and indicates that the majority 39.2% targeted women Self help groups. The 19

Table 1. NGO Registration

Details	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Society Act	33	34.02
Trust Act	52	53.61
Nonprofit Company Act	12	12.37
Total	97	100

Table 2. NGOs special Target group

Groups	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agriculture coolie	15	15.47
Students	19	19.59
Unorganized workers	17	17.52
Construction workers	8	8.24
Women SHGs	38	39.18
Total	97	100

**Figure 1.** NGOs special Target group

respondents (19.6%) target the students and followed by un-organized workers (17.5%), Agriculture coolie (15.5%) and construction workers (8.2%).

The distribution of NGO's according to their academic qualification is shown in Table-3. It could be noted that out of the total 97 respondents, 39% of them are post graduate degree holders, 26.8% of them are bachelor degree holder and 19.6% of them are Higher secondary level. Only 4.1% of them are High School level.

The respondents were asked question how the NGO serve with target groups. A study of data in table 4 and Figure 2, it is clear that most of the respondents 76.3% awareness and training program, 71.1% of the respondents social complain and rally, 45.3% conducting workshop and seminar, 43.3% of respondents doing other service. A few respondent serve to full fill the basic needs (25.8%).

Table 3. Academic qualification of the NGO respondents

Academic qualification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
High school level	4	4.12
Higher Secondary school level	19	19.59
Bachelor degree level	26	26.81
Post graduate degree level	38	39.18
Total	97	100

Table 4. How the NGO serve with target groups (Multiple responses)

Service	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Awareness and Training program	74	76.28
Social compain and rally	69	71.13
Workshop and Seminar	44	45.35
Fulfill Basic needs	25	25.76
Other service	42	43.28
Total	97	100

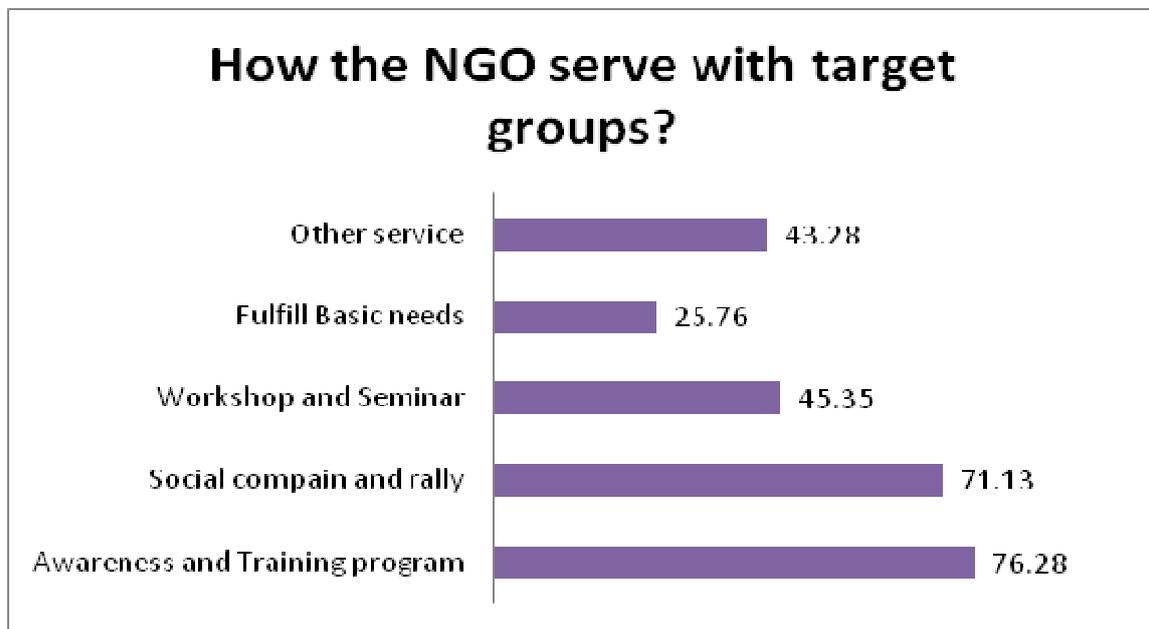
**Figure 2.** How the NGO serve with target groups (Multiple responses)

Table-5 highlights the exact works to the society by NGO's. A majority of the respondents i.e.100 % all NGO's are guiding to get the benefit form government schemes.88.7% of the respondents conduct the event management to reach the society and 80.4% of the

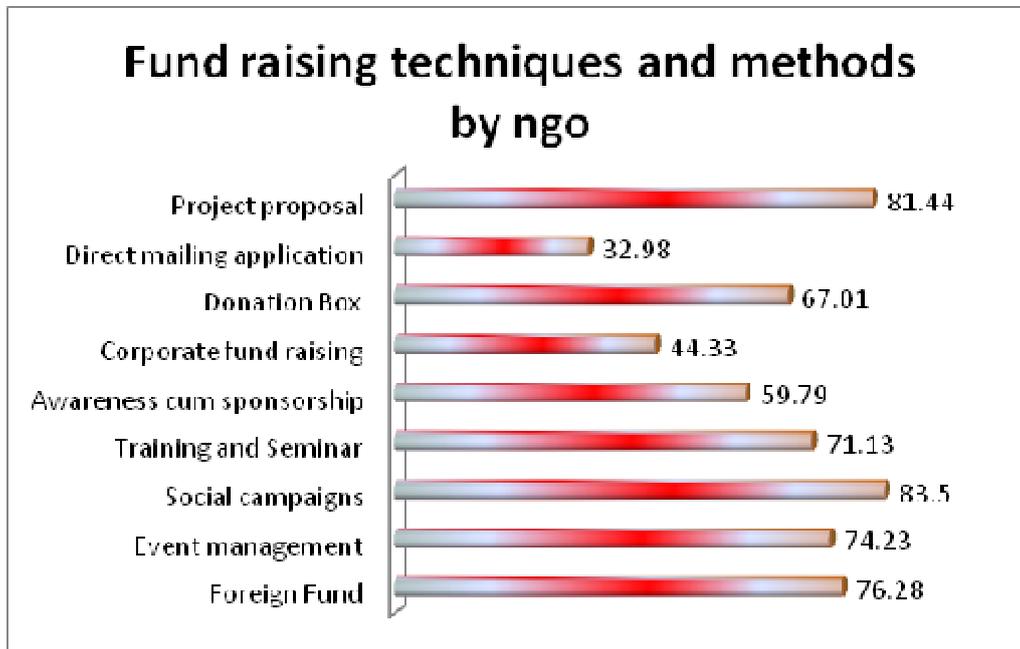
respondents are executive some projects to community development. Only 7% of the NGO's provide the fund to promoting the family status and encourage the poor family educational status.

Table 5. Exact works to the society by NGO

Work	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Provide fund	7	7.21
Executive some projects	78	80.41
Guidance to got benefit	97	100
Event management	86	88.66

Table 6. Fund raising techniques and methods by NGO

Method	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Foreign Fund	74	76.28
Event management	72	74.23
Social campaigns	81	83.50
Training and Seminar	69	71.13
Awareness cum sponsorship	58	59.79
Corporate fund raising	43	44.33
Donation Box	65	67.01
Direct mailing application	32	32.98
Project proposal	79	81.44

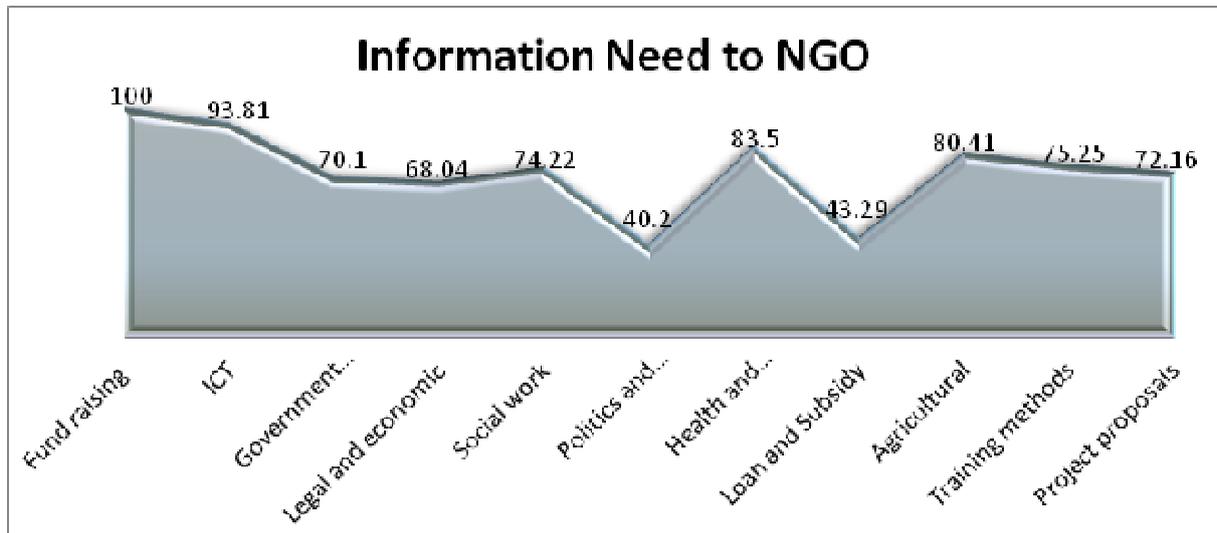
**Figure 3.** Fund raising techniques and methods by NGO

The respondents were asked question about the fund raising techniques and methods by NGO. A study of data in table-6 and Figure 3, it is clear that most of the respondents 83.5% are dictating social campaigns,

81.4% respondents are project proposal method, 76.3% respondents are foreign fund, 74% of respondents are event management, Training and seminar (71%), donation box (67%), awareness cum sponsorship

Table 7. Types of Information needs of the NGO (Multiple responses)

Types	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Fund raising	97	100
ICT	91	93.81
Government schemes	68	70.10
Legal and economic	66	68.04
Social work	72	74.22
Politics and Religious	39	40.20
Health and Education	81	83.50
Loan and Subsidy	42	43.29
Agricultural	78	80.41
Training methods	73	75.25
Project proposals	70	72.16

**Figure 4.** Types of Information needs of the NGO (Multiple responses)

(59.8%) and 44.3% corporate fund raising. Only 33% of respondent are direct mailing to the donors to using the technique of fund raising.

Research question asked "Types of information need of the NGO" and reasons indicated in table 7 and figure 4. 100% of the respondents need fund raising information, followed by Information Communication Technology information (93.8%), Health and education (83.5%), Agriculture information (80.4%), Various Training methods (75.3%), legal and economic information (74.2%), project proposal (72%). Government schemes information are need to 70% of respondents. Only 40.2% need social work information.

In response to the question sources of information to the NGO, the respondents have responded in different sources of information in Table-8 and Figure 5. Majority

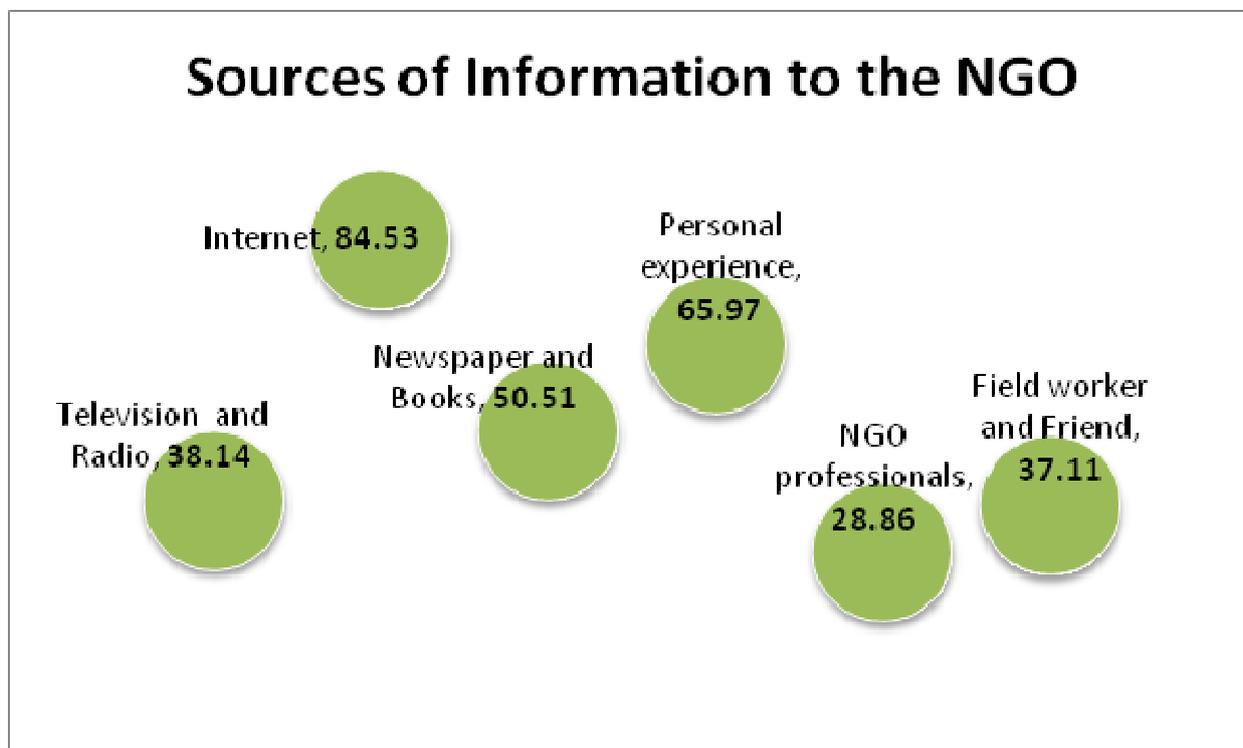
of respondents indicated the source of (84.5%), followed by personal experience (66%), Newspaper and books are 50%, Television and Radio are 38%, field worker and friend (37%). Only 28.8% respondents said the source of information to the NGO is NGO professionals.

This study contains a question to find out the ICT infrastructure of NGOs. 100% of the respondents having the ICT facility of digital camera / Mobile Phones followed by computer/laptop 91.7%, printer/scanner 78.4%, and Internet facility 70% and TV and Radio player 40.2%. Only 4% of the respondents are having multimedia projector (See Table 9 and Figure 6).

The respondents were asked question about the use of ICT services by NGO. A study of data in table-10, it is clear that 100% of the respondents use internet and email services. Followed by Social networking and own

Table 8. Sources of Information to the NGO Use

Subject	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Television and Radio	37	38.14
Internet	82	84.53
Newspaper and Books	49	50.51
Personal experience	64	65.97
NGO professionals	28	28.86
Field worker and Friend	36	37.11

**Figure 5.** Sources of Information to the NGO Use**Table 9.** ICT Infrastructure of NGOs

ICT Infrastructure	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Computer / Laptop	89	91.75
Internet Facility	68	70.10
Printer / Scanner	76	78.35
Digital Camera / Mobile phones	97	100
Multimedia Projector	4	4.12
TV and Video Player	39	40.20

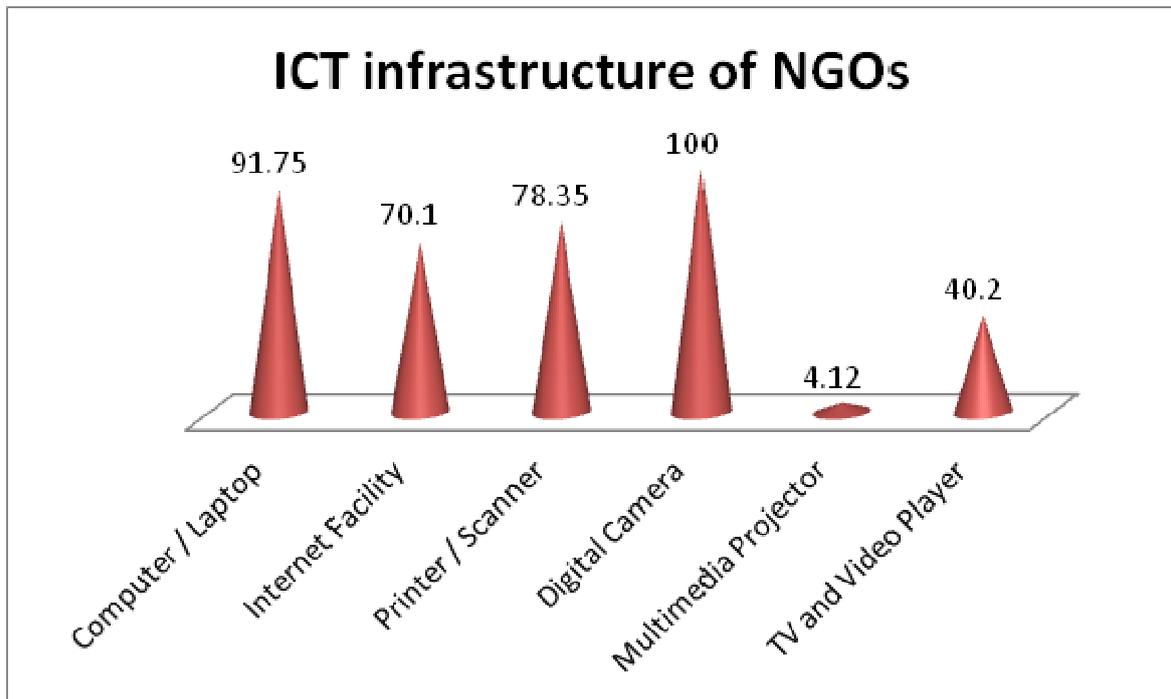


Figure 6. ICT Infrastructure of NGOs

Table 10. Use of ICT by the respondents

Subject	frequency	Percentage
Internet and Email	97	100
Social Networking	52	53.60
Own website and blogs	32	32.99

Table 11. Purpose and frequency of Internet use by NGOs

Purpose for using internet	Frequency	Percentage
Project proposal	76	78.35
E-mail	97	100
Download Ngo activities	62	63.91
Online advertisement and sponsorship	66	68.04
Prepare reports and publish website	89	91.75
Chatting and games	43	44.33
Find the donor	90	92.78

website and blogs. The response rate is respectively 53.6% and almost 33%.

The respondents were asked question about the Purpose of using internet by NGO's. A study of data in table-11 and Figure 7, it is clear that 100% of the

respondents purpose in email followed by finding donor (92.8%), prepare reports and published website (91.8%), sending the project proposal to various agencies (78.%), The 68% and 63% respondents purpose is respectively online advertisement and sponsorship and Download the

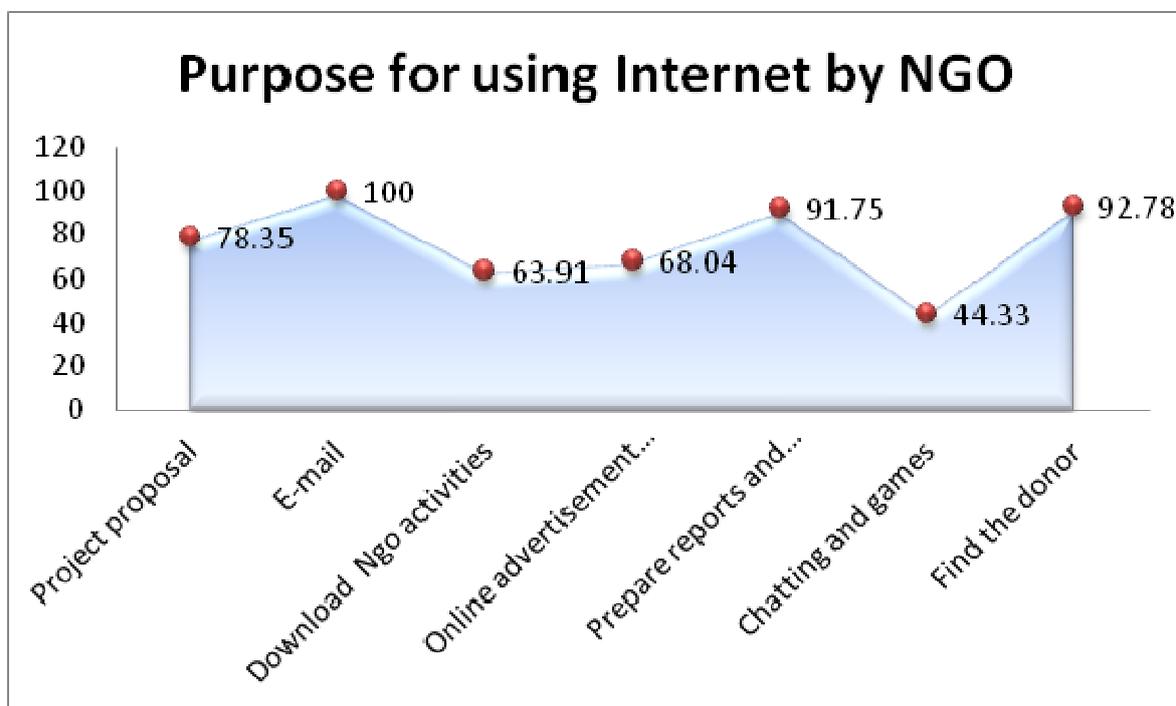


Figure 7. Purpose and frequency of Internet use by NGOs

Table 12. Level of Satisfaction using of ICT

Satisfaction	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Fully Satisfied	72	74.23
Partially satisfied	21	21.65
Partially dissatisfied	4	4.12
Fully dissatisfied	0	0
Total	97	100

Ngo activities. A few respondents said the purpose of using internet for chatting and games. The percentage rate is 44.3.

When the respondents were asked the level of satisfaction in using the sources of information and ICT, 74% of the respondents are fully satisfied and 21.7% of the respondents are partially satisfied. Only 4% of the respondents are partially dissatisfied the level of using the ICT (See table 12).

FINDINGS

100% of the respondents are need fund raising information followed by Information Communication

Technology information (93.8%), Health and education (83.5%), Agriculture information (80.4%). A majority of the respondent's i.e.100% all NGO's are guiding to get the benefit form government schemes. 88.7% of the respondents conduct the event management to reach the society. ICT infrastructure of NGOs: 100% of the respondents having the ICT facility of digital camera / Mobile Phones followed by computer/laptop 91.7%, printer/scanner 78.4%, and Internet facility 70% and TV and Radio player 40.2%. NGO serve with target groups through 76.3% awareness and training program, 71.1% of the respondents social complain and rally, 45.3% conducting workshop and seminar, 43.3% of respondents doing other service. Majority of respondents indicated the source of (84.5%) followed by personal experience 66%,

Newspaper and books are 50%, Television and Radio are 38%, field worker and friend 37%. The level of satisfaction in using the sources of information and ICT: 74% of the respondents are fully satisfied and 21.7% of the respondents are partially satisfied.

CONCLUSION

If we consider a family, or an industry, or an organization, or a country as a machine, and education as a training by which one can operate a machine successfully; then information is like a fuel that will run the machine. Information is needed everywhere and for everybody, but in a different way. Availability of information enables the individuals or groups to make rational decision and reduce their level of uncertainty. The study showed that although Government of India has taken many initiatives for NGOs development, it has overlooked the information need of NGOs. Government of India should concentrate on establishing public libraries and information centers in the rural areas. Academic libraries can also be established along with NGOs which will provide the necessary information for the individual development of the rural women as well as their family. Training on use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be arranged in NGOs centre as well as in public libraries, especially for the women of rural area so that they can get access to quick and accurate information regarding every aspect of their daily lives.

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