



Exploring Human Resource Strategies and Practices in Non-Governmental Organizations: A Case Study of TRF Foundation

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ABSTRACT

The efficacy of an organization hinges on its human resources and their inherent qualities, which are maximized through strategic utilization. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play a crucial role in various sectors such as literacy development, environmental protection, community support, health, women empowerment, employment, animal protection, and human rights, despite not being part of the government. With legal status and registration under specific government acts, NGOs rely significantly on human resources as a vital component for their functioning. Human resource management, encompassing the management of individuals within an organization, becomes paramount for NGOs dealing with diverse roles such as managers, employees, coordinators, project officers, and field workers. This study delves into the human resource practices that aim to enhance the potential of individuals, including training and development, performance appraisal, potential appraisal, career counseling, and employee welfare. The paper specifically focuses on TRF Foundation, exploring the role of human resources as an integrative force in the NGO service sector.

Furthermore, the study conducts an analysis of the organizational structure and performs a SWOT analysis to gain insights into the NGO's internal dynamics. Given the rapidly changing business environment, technological advancements, and evolving consumer trends, human resource planning has become an ongoing imperative for HR professionals in NGOs. The paper also addresses the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, examining the ability of NGOs, such as TRF Foundation, to navigate constraints like fund management and resource scarcity while maintaining an optimal environment for their human resources. This research contributes to the broader understanding of the intricate relationship between human resource management practices and organizational resilience in the NGO sector.

Key words: Management, Human Resource Management, Non-Governmental Organization, Talent Research Foundation

Introduction to Non-Governmental Organizations:

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are involved very much in the socio-economic development of any country. These organizations can be found both national as well as in international levels. NGOs function as legal, non-profit, non-political and are accountable of their all work in the society. In NGOs there are variety of organizations like charitable, cooperative, associations, religious, research institutions, social organizations, community based organizations, civil society groups and so on. The word "NGO" came into effect in 1945 because of the need for the UN to differentiate in its charter between participation rights for intergovernmental specialized agencies and those for international private organizations.

Rajesh Kothari defined NGO as "an independent, autonomous and vibrant sector which can work on social and development problems of the country with the freedom that the government institutions do not have and a sense of commitment and concern for the people, that the business sector does not much care for"

Roles and functions of NGOs and changing needs:

The role of any NGO is to contribute to development of the nation through involving in various issues like- Education, Health, Livelihood, Micro - finance, Human rights and many more. It is up to the NGO to decide issues on which they want to work for. We can find several good NGOs in parts of India which are working not only on charity model but also on Rights based model. The charity model of NGO involves charity interventions like providing immediate relief to the community. It can be in form of Food, clothes, medicine, etc. While the Right based model involves building the capacity of local communities to stand up for their rights and questioning the discrepancy in the system and keeping track of development as promised by the government.

Types of NGO and Their Development:

According to World Bank NGOs have been classified into four categories. They are :

Types of NGOs	Characteristics
1. Charitable NGOs	Service oriented NGOs
2. Participatory NGOs and Class Organization	Empowering NGOs
3. Community Based Organisation	Community Development Oriented Organisation
4. International NGO	NGOs which are working in more than one country

NGOs in India

NGOs India is committed to social justice, sustainable development and human rights. The right to communicate freely is a basic human right and a necessity for sustainable development. Access to information is essential to informed decision-making at all levels. NGOs India is committed to the dissemination of information and promotion of sustainable development initiatives, in response to the needs of underrepresented and marginalised sectors of society. For bridging the data gap and improving information availability NGO network is committed to develop and establish an ideal medium for the Participation and exchange of a trusted and accurate source of quality information.

NGOs in Karnataka

Karnataka Non Profit Organisations/ Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs/ NPOs/ VOs) are part of social development and welfare of the state people. NGOs in Karnataka has been actively working for genuine social development programmes and welfare activities of urban and rural communities. Karnataka NGOs are participating in social development and charitable issues organised by government and welfare groups. Karnataka NGOs are always ready to com ahead to work for the upliftment and betterment of the children, women development, education, social awareness and other objectives.

Non-Governmental Organisations in Karnataka are functioning for Child education, child welfare, child rights, women development, women empowerment, old age homes for old age persons, physically and mentally handicap persons, and upliftment of slum children and women, NGOs are well organising education, health, social justice, disaster management, natural resource management, agriculture development, social awareness, betterment of backward and deprived communities, poverty and distress relief programmes.

NGO has been implementing the programmes related to employment, female feticides, rain water harvesting, animal welfare, science and technology, sports, development of art, craft and culture, heritage protection, conservation of historical places, the issues like conservation and protection of environment, human rights, social equality, drinking water issues, legal awareness and aid, nutrition, right to information, rural and urban development, forming and supporting Self Help Groups, research and development are main part of the major active NGOs in Karnataka.

Human Resource Management

HRM generally denotes to the whole of the HR task, replacing the previous term 'Personnel Management' (PM). The rich and continuing supply of qualified manpower is essential in an organization. Human Resource Development viewed as a sub-set of HRM, dealing specially with its developmental objective – the enhancement of effectiveness in the person–organisation fit. True HRD is possible only when the organisation as a whole is constantly re-examining its jobs, positions, structures, and systems from periodic assessment.

Evolution of Human Resource Management

The personnel purpose in India originated in 1920s with the concern for labour welfare in factories. The Trade Union Act of 1926 gave formal recognition to workers' unions. The Royal Commission of Labour 1931 recommended the appointment of labour welfare officers and the Factories Act of 1948 laid down the duties and qualifications of labour welfare officers. Further, the Indian judiciary played an important role in expounding the correct scope of the protection envisaged to the working class by the legislation that was enacted in several spheres of IR as per the spirit of the Constitution. Consequent to the passage of a number of labour and industrial relations laws, personnel managers began performing industrial relations as a very significant role. The IR role of personnel managers formed such an important part of their work that they came to be known as children of the Industrial Disputes Act 1947 (IDA). All these developments formed the foundation of the personnel function in India (Balasubramanian, 1994; 1995) and paralleled the initial developments of the British personnel function.

The importance of Human Resources (HR) in a non-governmental organisation (NGO) as a means of ensuring sustainable growth for an organisation cannot be overemphasized, as it is the fundamental strength upon which people; strategies, processes and operations are based. Effective employee management should be on top of the list of priorities for progressive improvement of an organisation. A NGO must strive to attract, develop and retain

qualified and enthusiastic employees as they are the key to the success of one's business. HR in a NGO is no different to HR in any other sector, but the problems that HR professionals face within the NGO sector are quite unique.

Main problems concerning HR in the NGO sector today:

The first is the high unemployment rate which causes an exceptionally high number of under qualified job seekers to stream into the NGO environment, the reason for this can also be attributed to an industry that does not have the competitive advantage when it comes to salary benchmarking. This leads to shortages of qualified skilled employees in the industry; and The second is retaining highly skilled and qualified people and keeping them motivated. Learning and development are central to both the performance and development of employees. It can be beneficial for an organisation to offer employees equal and full access to learning and development opportunities that are aligned to their career development, as well as the skills and competencies required to meet business performance and growth objectives.

The challenges for managing HR in a NGO arena are kind of unique, wherein you struggle to get a job-ready-talent and once someone is ready, the next challenge is to retain that talent. The evolving economic and political scenario also has added to the volatility this sector already had, making it further difficult to attract good talent & keep them committed to the cause as part of the workforce.

Introduction to TRF

Talent Research Foundation (TRF) is one such NGO, which within a very limited period has made rapid progress towards addressing the issue of Muslim education and employment.

Talent Research Foundation, set up on 25th December 2005 with the objective of empowering Muslims in education, employment, besides strengthening communal harmony, has already carved its niche through its unique programmes. The organisation was established with the initiative of Mr.Rauf Puthige, a renowned social worker and entrepreneur. At present, this Mangaluru-based organisation has 13 dynamic young leaders striving to achieve the lofty goals of the organisation. TRF also setup an advisory panel consisting of expert academicians and renowned Scholars.

The one flagship programme of the TRF over the past eight years has been the "BACK TO SCHOOL CAMPAIGN" targeting young and not-so-young school dropouts and bringing them back to the world of knowledge and thereby to the arena of progress and empowerment. Through back to school campaign nearly 132 drop outs centers have been opened all over Karnataka, of which 1897 students attempted for exams and results was tremendous SSLC 37 percent, PUC 70% percent respectively.

Talent Research Foundation Objectives

- ✓ Upliftment of Muslims through education empowerment and communal harmony.
- ✓ Empowerment of Muslim women through programmes for girls' education.
- ✓ Providing modern and technical education to Moulavees of Deeni Madrasas and thereby trying to make them eligible for governmental facilities.
- ✓ Self-employment training program for the women.
- ✓ Motivating school drop-outs to pursue education through "Back to school campaign".
- ✓ Training women in home and cottage industry.
- ✓ Guidance and help in securing various government scholarships to the deserving students.
- ✓ Training programmes for graduates to face competitive examinations such as IAS, IPS, KAS and KPS.
- ✓ Career guidance programmes for high school and college students.
- ✓ Felicitation programmes to young achievers in order to turn them into role-models for the rest of the community.

TRF Empowerment programmes:

- ✓ Back to school campaign
- ✓ Graduates meet
- ✓ Computer training
- ✓ Mobile phone/electronic gadgets training for youth
- ✓ Home science training for women

- ✓ Orientation Training Programme for “Dropout school” teachers/faculty:
- ✓ Self-employment Training for ladies / house wives
- ✓ Personality development
- ✓ Career guidance
- ✓ Felicitations
- ✓ Future Plans
- ✓ Agricultural development
- ✓ TRF Events – Communal Harmony
- ✓ Educational awareness programme
- ✓ TRF Events – Health Awareness

✓ **The Outcome of Humble Effort Till Ramadan 2014**

Back to the school campaign	Total Centers 130	Total Students 1978
Self employment training for Youth & Women	Total Batches 18	Total Beneficiaries 656
Scholarship drive	Total Amount allotted to Students through Q or Service 3.65 Crores	Total Beneficiaries 4930
Marriage of women crossing the age of 30 Years	Total Assistance 36 Lakhs	Total Beneficiaries 74
Distribution of note books	Total Books Worth 26 Lakhs	Total Beneficiaries 11800
Housing for the destitute	Total Expenditure 15.74 Lakhs	Repair/Newly Built 16
Financial aid for deprived families	Total cost 4.60 Lakh	Total Beneficiaries 113
Salutation for Talents Achievers	Total Award 8	Total FeKcHations Conferred 1017
Assistance for Physically Challenged people	Total Disbursements of Assistance 3.21 Lakhs	Total Surveyed 144
Competitive exams training	Result (Cleared in Preliminary Exam) 6	Beneficiaries 174 Students
Petty shop & cycle for depressed families	Total Cost 1.5 Lakhs	Total Beneficiaries 14

- ✓ (Source: Annual report)

Literature Review

NGOs have to adopt good HR practices to provide quality work to the society and as an employer have to take care of employees' health and welfare (Divya M.S & T.N.Sreedhara, 2014) Human Resource Management role within the non-government organisation (NGO), volunteer and not-for-profit sector and its capacity to positively commit to volunteer well-being and build healthy communities has become topical among governments, professionals, management practitioners, scholars and communities across different national settings (Timothy Bartram).

The human resources within the country show a major part in its development. Human Resource Development is concerned with developing skills, knowledge & competencies of the people. It is people-oriented concept. Human Resource Development can be applied both at the national & organizational level. In society, people need competencies such as knowledge, attitude, values, and skills to perform various tasks (Dehkar R.G 2020).

The human personnel comprise permanent personnel, circumstantial partners and volunteers. Citizens and especially those that have expertise in the areas they operate in, are eligible to become members of NGOs, in order to help promote their goals. In the globalized reality, which leads to increased competitiveness, proper management of human resources is particularly important for all the executives of NGOs (Aspridis, George).

Need for the study

There are various studies are done on Management, financial management, General Management and Human Resource Management but few studies are done on Human Resource Management in NGOs. At the same time, NGOs has a limitation for the effective utilization of human resource in the organization. So there is a need for the study.

Objectives of the study

1. To know the role of Human Resource Management in NGOs
2. To understand various HRM tools of Human Resource Practices in NGOs
3. To study Human Resource practices in TRF Foundation.

Research Methodology

This paper concentrates on the case study of TRF, an NGO functioning in Mangalore. The human resource management data were gathered from discussions with the manager. The annual reports which are of secondary data and at the same to understand the existing research in the field. Thus books, journals and magazines are referred.

Data Analysis and Interpretations:

Table 1.1 Profile of the NGO

NAME	TRF
	3
Address	Vishwas building Kankanady Mangaluru
Name of the founder	Mr. Abdul Rauf Puthige
Year of Establishment	2005
Registration Detail	11/2006-07
Taluk / Districts -Locations	1
Branches of the organisation	Single location

(Source: Survey Data)

Table 1.2 Programmes and Special focus areas

PROGRAMMES	TRF
Related to Education	1
Awareness programmes on Health	5
Self employment & Vocational training	2
Sanitation & Hygiene	4
Women Empowerment	3
Awareness on human rights	8
Girl child Safety	6
Service for the old aged	7
Agriculture - support systems	9
Natural resource management	10

(Source: Survey data)

Observations and interpretations:

The above table describes on the TRF organization doing a yeomen service to humanity. It is found that they are more involved in uplifting human lives, empowering, and supporting in sectors like education, agriculture, self-employment/vocational training, and sanitation found to be of top priority. While women empowerment, girl child safety, natural resource management, awareness on human rights and services for the old age are also taken up in right earnest.

TRF: Education, Self-employment and Vocational training, Women Empowerment, Sanitation and Hygiene and Awareness programmes on Health and importance they give for Education, Women empowerment, agriculture support and support for self-employment and thereby to achieve one great agenda of uplifting the recipient's economic status and self-respect.

What this study has found different as a priority when having discussion on issues of priorities with leadership at **TRF**, they said it is mainly Education. They provide scholarships from primary to higher education. They help people to get government supported benefits for education of minorities- Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains. They provide training on career development to students and have a well-equipped library with books related to career and personality development. They have special unit in their premises, which imparts education-supporting activities only for Muslim women - free of cost, like- younger women get English speaking skills and others vocational and job oriented trainings. They also provide coaching to all groups of people on -'how to face competitive examinations'.

Table 1.3 Organizational Structure and Style

	TRF
Organisational structure	Functional
Leadership style	Paternalistic
Performance Report To	Government Founder of the NGO

(Source: Survey data)

TRF are formed under the trust act and are governed under the Indian Trust act. Hence, they report to government agency like Income tax department and donors get 80G benefit.

Table 1.4 Functioning of the Organization

	TRF
Frequency of Planning	Daily
Number of employee	
Top	1
Middle	4
Lower	3
Remuneration	
Top	Rs. 15,000 & Above
Middle	Rs. 10,000 & Above
Lower	Rs. 5,000 & Above
Method of communication	Personal Contact, by Mail, Newspaper, Posters, Announcement at the Mosque
Invite people from other NGO's	Yes
Service training to employees	Yes
Duration of the training period	
Top	
Middle	Less than one week
Lower	Less than one week Less than one week

Qualification of the employee	
Top	
Middle	Post Graduation
Lower	Graduation Graduation
Age group of employee	
Top	
Middle	30-40
Lower	30-40 20-30
Type of Recruitment	Personal Recommendation
Religion Considered for Recruitment	Yes
Gender of the candidate	No
Number of Staffs	09
Male	5

Female	4
Hindu	-
Christian	-
Muslim	9

(Source: Survey data)

Observations and interpretations:

Table shows the different styles of functioning of three NGOs. **TRF** plans daily, **CODP** fortnightly and **SKDRDP** once a year. As mentioned in the literature review on functional planning though day to day is preferred as operational as done by **TRF** it is impractical as the decisions here are taken by the Founder and if he is unavailable the meeting or decision taking is impossible.

In this study it has mentioned as:

Top level employees-it represents management staff who are in positions such Director in **CODP**(1) programme coordinators(6) and In **TRF** President(1) and In **SKDRDP** –Manger (1) project manager (1)

Qualifications – Top level- Post graduates

Remuneration- 15,000 and above

Age group- 30 to 45 years

Duration of Training: Less than 1 week.

Middle level: Receptionists, accountants, field staff, coordinators of activities.

Qualifications – Middle level- Graduates

Remuneration- 10,000 and above

Age group- 20 to 35 years

Duration of Training: Less than 1 week.

Lower level: Drivers, Sweepers, attendees, Kitchen staff, gardeners

Qualifications – Lower level- SSLC & PUC

Remuneration- 5,000 and above

Age group- 20 to 35 years

Duration of Training: Less than 1 week.

Observations and interpretations

NGOs convey the messages to the recipients of their services and it is done through:

- By person – personal awareness talks/ through group talks
- Through Local Newspapers
- Announcement at religious centers: Through temple, church or mosque announcements
- Through posters /banners/pamphlets/booklets
- Through Website
- By inviting other NGOs to address or form a common forum to address a issue.

Every NGOs target audience is poor and the needy. Hence, staff /leadership should listen more, be empathetic towards them, and be flexible and responsive to the needs of the poor. The staff that is closest to the poor, those at project operational level, to guide the organization in its programme design and implementation to allow the needs of the poor to be identified and met. They bring thoughts, feedback and identify problems and they need to be in a written documentation for further action.

Staffing:

Observations and interpretations

It is observed that the NGO follow a common pattern like- personal recommendations and walk –in interviews. TRF recruits candidates of Muslim origin only.

SWOT Analysis

Table:1.5 Strengths

TRF
→ Excellent Team work
→ Committed Staff
→ Visionary Founder
→ Focused on timely help

(Source: Survey data)

Observations and interpretations:

Above table on strength's- suggests that the NGO having committed staffs that are focused on the recipients of the programme benefits. They make them aware of the benefits, prepare necessary papers, fill them listening to recipients, and follow up on government schemes. It found them work as a team, collaborating and cooperating with each other. What it found amazing is the staff's willingness to listen and their patience to deal with most of poor and low-income group of individual recipients. **TRF** it found people have great admiration towards the Founder and they are motivated by his involvement and praise they receive.

Table: 1.6 Weakness

TRF
→ Delayed decision Process
→ Disagreement between the members
→ Lack of fund
→ Govt intervention
→ Gender Bias

(Source: Survey data)

Observations and interpretations

TRF talked about limitation to funds as recipients look for help or loans. Many a times the fund crunch never allows them to expand their activities and this curtails their reach. Further, they talked RBI regulations on fund transfer, which has kept many donors away. It also talked about government interference in NGO activities.

It has been reported in economics times Dt 18th April 2015, under the heading- " The NGO –Govt Showdown" The report talks about Action against – Green Peace India and an imminent crackdown on Ford foundation and Teesta Setalvad's NGO In Gujarat. It also reports that Union Home ministry issuing show cause notices on organisations receiving foreign aid and on filing returns and their foreign contribution regulation act (FCRA) licence cancellation etc. Also Deccan Herald Dt. 19th April 2015- reports about Green Peace India facing governments wrath. TRF talked about not having great linkage with government agencies. Government agencies do not disclose full details on schemes & programmes, which can benefit poor or target recipient for whom these schemes are drawn up. **TRF** conveyed the constraint of taking decisions on urgent issues as they are dependent on their founders, the decisions are delayed, and recipients may not get help when needed. It also talked about employee Attrition. Qualified employees look for better wage and growth opportunities. NGOs are having fund crunch may not be able to attract talent to remain with them as they cannot pay salaries what other commercial organisations pay. In addition, they cannot expand as funds are a problem and people will not get promotions easily. Female employees talked about gender bias as far as involving them in decision-making process. It is observed this need to be addressed immediately by all NGO managements as today women are equally competent and found to have multiple skills when compared to men.

Table: 1.7 Opportunities

TRF
Enough local demands
Cooperation
Support from religious communities
To conduct group activities
Govt benefits to students

(Source: Survey data)

Observations and interpretations

TRF says that there are enough local demands and they need to cash on them and make good of this opportunity. They feel that they find a great cooperation from their target recipient groups and this itself is a great opportunity for them to think innovative project for them in future also find great support coming from their religious communities and found they are ready backup for furthering the projects and asking them to bring innovation in their

projects. TRF find new government initiatives and funding plans for agriculture and education sectors and they plan to mobilise their target members and create greater awareness in them to secure these facilities and get benefitted out of it.

Table:1.8 Threats/Challenges

TRF
→ Opposition
→ Government interference
→ Fund Crunch

(Source: Survey data)

TRF feels a great opposition usually comes from the political class as many of their activities are for upliftment of poor and making them aware of their rights and seeking government intervention to alleviate their problems and the political class becomes the target of few protests undertaken. Like best example now Indian Government Vs the farmers of India on Land acquisition bill. It feels RBI regulations on fund transfer, which has been keeping many donors away and it has hit them badly in their fund collections. It also talked about government interference in NGO activities as reported in several newspapers at all India level; they feel government interference can come in the way of their growth and activities.

TRF is increasing their numbers and range of activities, their donor's number is remaining almost same, and they find crunch in funds, as there is more competition for funding too. If a NGO is over dependent on government aid or funding they find it difficult to speak out on issues which not so popular at local level and spearheaded by governments, hence they run the risk of losing legitimacy and Donors may hold them accountable for such actions. TRF in my study they face fund crunch and that does not allow them to expand their activities, grow faster and add new branches, which gives promotional chances for existing employees. Additionally they cannot pay higher salaries even though people have better qualifications.

Major Findings and Suggestions

- The Study reveals that, TRF NGO is a competent organisations and are driven through a vision and had a great resolve towards their mission.
- TRF has own strengths and weaknesses and they are found to be competing to mobilise the funds to provide good services to the community.
- TRF makes strategies different from the others since their focus on community development and self-sustainability. Study found is the satisfaction of recipient target group and effort from all three NGOs in their respective area of –Special focus is commendable.
- The study observed like any other organisation, NGOs also handle all the organisational resources. Hence, the basic principles of management are also applicable to NGOs. However, NGOs are not corporate and do not have organisation structure, that fixes authority-responsibility and relationship. NGO members work voluntarily and independently on the principle of affiliation and are flexible. NGOs are people's initiative for the purpose of social service for empowering society and building social capital. Unlike corporate, NGOs work in competition free environment. However, like corporate, NGOs too have vision, mission and objective. Application of concept of management is essential for accountability and good governance. Many NGOs also have a combination of paid staff and volunteers, making this a more complicated issue for human resource management as well. We all seem to agree about the high level of complexity of NGO management and need to have the principles of management applied for its functioning!
- NGOs as observed few are well organised as they have an international support system in place and the management style and functioning is transparent, as they have to follow the system and policies laid down by their supporting organisation. The scale and varieties of activities undertaken by the TRF NGO in this study indicate that they need to be monitored well to achieve better results and they have paucity of funds, probably because of that, they have been using paternalist decision process.
- Study observed they need to decentralise the decisive powers to few chosen supervisors after a thorough training to tackle localised issues. However, they can centralise decision on fund allocation through meetings conducted on a quarterly basis at the NGOs head quarters. An issue gender bias was observed, study suggests that the organisations should implement inclusive strategies and equal importance need to given to employees of opposite sex and they need to included in the strategic planning and decision-making processes.
- It is a fact that every organisation including an NGO needs a strategy, if they have to effectively achieve their mission for which they are created. The senior leadership of the organisation including the visionary leaders should own the responsibility for creating and managing effective organisations. They need to develop clear concepts, principles and framework and effective models that their employees can use to formulate and deploy strategy throughout the organisation. There need to be better coordination in the internal activities and there should be better communication and alignment with the external environment, which includes recipients of benefits, donors and governmental agencies. I feel all the three NGO need to embrace strategic planning tool as a tool for organisational change. They need to identify long-term goals and direction for the organisation.
- The study suggests that it is not only important to have a strategic plan but it is also important that it should be implemented. All people involved in the organisation do the implementation of strategy and they need training on processes and concepts, people orientation, governmental procedures, communication skills and team skills for performance improvement.

Conclusion:

A strong organisational strategy that shows how to gain competitive advantage should address all four elements of the SWOT analysis. It should help the organisation to determine how to use its strengths to take advantage of opportunities and neutralise threats. Finally, a strong strategy should help an organisation avoid or fix its weaknesses. If an organisation can develop a strategy that makes use of the information from SWOT analysis, it is more likely to have high levels of performance.

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