



EMERALD POINTS

MANAGING NGOS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Insights from HIV/AIDS
Crisis Response

**FARHAD ANALOUI
SHEHNAZ KAZI**



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BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*We would like to dedicate this volume to NGO managers
and the frontline care workers dealing with pandemics, HIV/AIDS
and marginalised group members of the society who are the
real heroes and heroines in the developing world.*

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INTRODUCTION

As we enter a new era challenged by the COVID-19 epidemic, individuals and communities search for harmony and coping mechanisms for altered and new ways of living, hoping that this newcomer on the block will not be like the human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS). During the late 1980s and early 1990s, in India, masses of people from all social, economic and diverse community backgrounds collectively followed the ancient Sanskrit-Vedic, philosophical and holistic ways of life, connecting with the ‘Mahabarat’ and ‘Ramayan’. It allowed the population to forget traditionally specific trends and traits for a while, hoping to find solace in a time of great distress as the HIV/AIDS pandemic spread across the country like wildfire.

At the time of writing this volume we are experiencing yet another pandemic which like HIV/AIDS may stay with us for years to come. COVID-19 like other pandemics does not recognise boundaries, and it is not a coincidence that it will affect the poorest and marginalised members of society the hardest.

In India, like other developing and densely populated countries, millions of HIV/AIDS sufferers and marginalised groups will become increasingly reliant on what is often the only source of support, the non-governmental organisations (NGOs), for their survival. We have already witnessed the daring attitude of front-line NGO workers in India and elsewhere who disregard the social popularity and risk being stigmatised by society when rushing to help the most marginalised members of the communities often on a volunteer basis. These NGOs are literally the lifeline for millions of people in need. Thus, as one of the participant NGO managers emotionally put it, “*their [managers’] effectiveness matters*”.

Management theorists and writers remind us that the effectiveness of the organisation is indisputably associated with the effectiveness of their management and their human resources. In NGOs, managers as leaders play a crucial role in developing people and organisations. Managerial effectiveness is not aimed at creating surplus rather; it is to extend the scope and quality of services to those who are most needy in our communities and society as a whole. Paradoxically, the NGO managers are provided with the

least financial resources and are expected to reach the most targets effectively. Unlike their counter parts in other sectors their mission is not profit maximisation rather; it is provision of service in the most effective way possible.

Despite the importance of this organisational phenomenon, little empirical research is carried out to explore the very nature of managerial effectiveness especially in the third sector. The question, how can we recognise and improve the effectiveness of NGO managers hitherto, has not been the subject of a systematic empirical study. The managers' effectiveness has often been assumed and taken for granted rather than studied.

In the late 90's, for the first time, the concept of managerial effectiveness was explored in the public sector in a developing country (Ghana). The results indicated that effectiveness is not as illusive as it was thought to be and indeed, its behavioural influences (parameters) can be identified and used to improve managers' and their organisations' effectiveness systematically.

Several studies in the developing and developed worlds replicated the results in private and public sector organisations and reported the crucial impact of the contextual influences such as wider socio economic and cultural forces (See Chapter 1). However, little was done in NGOs especially those who work in a developing country and deal with not just underprivileged but also the marginalised groups and tabooed members of society. This study, guided by the concept of parameters of effectiveness, explored the concept in a most complex and diverse society where a large number of NGOs deal with millions of HIV/AIDS sufferers and marginalised groups in India (See Chapter 2).

What does constitute managerial effectiveness is best unravelled by understanding the perception of those involved in the act. Desk research cannot delve deep enough to explore the fears and aspirations, views and feelings of the individuals in charge of the people and operations in the field. Thus, the philosophical choices available pointed to employing an inductive approach which regards the managers not as helpless mere respondents, rather as participants who are capable of exercising a choice, and agents whose views and explanations can only be understood in context of the socially constructed meanings in their cultural settings. To achieve this ambitious goal necessitated meeting managers and their co-workers in their natural setting in India.

Since understanding an organisational phenomenon requires more depth than quantification, the four most suitable NGOs were purposely selected for this unique first-time research. Whilst the in-depth interviews revealed the perceptions of managers, the findings of the focus groups corroborated the accounts provided by the managers. Since it is almost impossible, and arguably

an irresponsible act, to train a computer's software to understand the meanings attributed to human behaviours, the data was subjected to thematic analysis (See Chapter 3). The findings were intriguing and pointed to the presence of parameters of effectiveness and contextual influences which shaped managers' behavioural influences at work.

Detailed analysis of the identified themes and issues led to the discovery of a pattern of behaviour specific to NGOs. The findings indicated the presence of a hierarchy of contextual influences where cultural influences were the most dominant varying force in shaping managerial effectiveness in the studied organisations. The complexity involved could only be understood by considering the characteristics of the managers, parameters of their effectiveness and the identification of the contextual influences at work (See Chapter 4).

Would the result of this study have implications for future growth and development and effectiveness of NGOs? We believe the answer is a resounding 'yes'. Not only are there salient implications for policy formulation and procedural practices at all levels, including international and national agencies, government and related health organisations, there are striking implications for theorists and researchers involved in the process of a systematic search for exploring an organisation's phenomenon (See Chapter 5).

The action levers, questions and links included assist the practitioners, students and researchers alike to dig deeper and think harder when faced with the concept of effectiveness, managers and NGOs alike.

This brief introductory section acts as a road map to guide the readers in their journey to an extraordinary study of the managers who make these NGOs effective.

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MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS

This introductory chapter begins with demonstrating the academic sustained concern for the illusive notion of ‘managerial effectiveness’, discovery of its ‘parameters’ and the succession of exploratory imperial studies, except in the third sector, which led to this present imperial study of human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and community development–related non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in India. The premise of the present study is set out by exploring the importance of the role of the third sector in India and explaining the guiding concept of ‘parameters of managerial effectiveness’ and its principles for the present study. Finally, the methodological challenges related to the study of NGOs associated with deprived and marginalised groups of people are discussed, and a brief description of the content of the volume is provided.

1.1 MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS AND NGOS: AN OVERVIEW

Arguably, the effectiveness of organisations and how humans are organised across the business, government and voluntary sectors are irrevocably associated with the effectiveness of the management (Drucker, 1973, 1988). As early as the 1970s, management thinkers and writers began to acknowledge the importance of managerial effectiveness (Reddin, 1970; Dunnette, 1976) and the need for research into this least known organisational phenomenon (Mintzberg, 1973). Nevertheless, it remained, by and large, an elusive and difficult concept to define (Brodie and Bennet, 1979; Langford, 1979).

In the 1980s with the work of Drucker (1988), research into the effectiveness of managers at work began in earnest, both in developed countries (Dunnette, 1976; Willcocks, 1992) and least developed economies (Kiggundo, 1989; Analoui, 1995, 1997; Labbaf, 1996). Yet, little was known about the aspects of this complex organisational phenomenon, how it was perceived, what behavioural influences were involved and how it was impacted by contextual factors in the work and wider environment.

In 1999, the result of an exploratory empirical study into managerial work revealed the parameters of 'managerial effectiveness'. It was shown that there are a number of parameters or behavioural influences at work that do not equally impact the effectiveness of managers, but their degree of influence is contingent upon the contextual background in which managers' operate (Analoui, 1999, 2002). Other empirical studies replicated the framework in other cultural settings and sectors (Ahmed, 2008; Bao, 2010; Al-Hajji, 2011). Whilst the concept of managerial effectiveness has been explored in both developed and developing countries (Srivastava and Sinha, 2007; Bamel et al., 2011; Marouf, 2014), it has never been applied to third sector organisations. In 2018, an empirical study of 'managerial effectiveness' was carried out with the aim to explore the effectiveness of NGO managers and their organisations associated with HIV/AIDS sufferers and marginalised groups in India (Kazi, 2018; Kazi and Analoui, 2019).

It is noteworthy to add that in India effectiveness and successful leadership originates from Sanskrit practices and knowledge of the ancient Vedas, which are still heavily present within various organisations and workplaces, and NGOs are not exceptions. The importance of managerial effectiveness in NGOs cannot be ignored (Kazi and Analoui, 2019), particularly for NGO managers who work in challenging conditions and provide support to tabooed HIV/AIDS individuals in a developing country like India (Edwards and Hulme, 1995; Fowler, 1997; Rahman, 2003; Hailey, 2006; Padaki, 2007). The third sector continues to play a balancing role between the state and its people, ensuring that fundamental rights and governmental schemes are easily accessible (Srivastava and Sinha, 2007). Moreover, gender specific issues, marginalisation, stigma and discrimination, backwardness and the need for societal education and development into HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention are among some of the specific issues that NGO managers in India are challenged by (Ganesh and Kulkarni, 2012; NACO, 2017a; Kazi, 2018). Hence, looking at the magnitude of these challenges, investing in improved effectiveness of those in charge of these sensitive and much needed organisations is of paramount importance.

NGO management is a relatively recent debate. The functions and structure of NGOs are far more complex than that of the profit-making organisations

(Rahman, 2007; Bhogal, 2014; Brunt, 2016); these organisational challenges relate to internal and external issues (Bromideh, 2011), and evolving structures and models (Ganesh and Kulkarni, 2012). The main difference being that NGOs, by and large, adopt a humanistic approach, while other sector organisations prioritise the level of profit in the operations of their organisations. Edwards and Hulme (1995) and Hudson (1999) aptly argue that the debate to design the management system of NGOs in developing countries like India needs to be distinct from that of the private and public organisations, and both human resource management and human resource development are important functions for the NGOs as the focus is primarily on efficiency, accountability, capacity development and effectiveness that need to be incorporated as a task of the manager. In the West, the works of Drucker (1988), Brown and Koten (1989), Hudson (1999), and Hailey (2006) have contributed towards improving the management crisis in the NGO sector, which has resulted in trial and error practices and adapting strategic management approaches. In the South, despite the Simplified model (Asian NGO Coalition ICVA, 1987) and the complex Chakra model (Asian Institute of Technology AIT NGDO, 1999) which incorporate core elements of ancient Indian Sanskrit ways of life and work, culture and society do co-exist and have profound implications for the Indian NGOs. They are evolving in response to varying challenges as they contend with continuous multi-faceted complexities in their environment. According to Rahman (2003), Southern NGOs encounter the problems of human resources, financial management, information, networking, resource management, development and operations management to name a few. Ankodia (2012) found that NGOs in the northern state of Rajasthan followed inadequate human resource procedures, and Bhogal (2014) emphasises focus on adequate capacity building, training and development and mentoring for the NGOs' workforce as vital. To cope with these concerns, NGOs have been heavily dependent on corporate sector management and methods, which mostly have neglected the values of the third sector especially in a developing country like India.

NGO managers face extraordinary challenges at both personal and organisational levels. They work long hours usually with limited resources in uncertain and volatile political and socio-economic circumstances to help the marginalised and disadvantaged members of society. The complex challenges NGO managers contend with are described by Fowler (1997), Hailey (2006) and Padaki (2007), as demanding and distinct from those experienced by managers of the other sectors. It is paramount for NGO managers to be moulded according to their inner convictions, values, distinct tasks, experiences and contexts. The quality of their managerial leadership is highly personalised and is critically a vital element for effectiveness and viability. Research into NGOs'

managerial effectiveness is non-existent; hence, the need for better understanding of the complexity of this phenomenon in order to develop a coherent framework for future development of the sector.

1.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF HIV/AIDS NGOS AND THEIR MANAGERS IN INDIA

In contemporary and modern India, '*daana*' (giving), '*seva*' (service) and outreach work carried out by NGOs form literally a lifeline for vulnerable and high-risk group members of society. Primarily dependent on government funding and policies, the restrictions for service users ultimately determine the degree of success or failure of the organisation. Manian (2017) examined the HIV/AIDS epidemic in southern India through the experiences of those marginalised by their sexuality, gender, social and socio-economic circumstances and advocates for the re-examination of government policies, practices and cultural attitudes for enhanced inclusiveness and institutional capacity development and effectiveness.

Despite complex pressures and processes, there is an evolving history of initiatives dealing with NGO management issues, which consequently signifies the potential and importance to invest and encourage research in the area of managerial effectiveness among NGO managers. As interest in civil society and NGOs has rapidly increased in India, seemingly the emphasis is gradually shifting from the notion of NGOs as the '*magic bullet*' for poverty reduction (Edwards and Hulme, 1995), and instead the emphasis is being placed on the efficiency, accountability and effectiveness (Fowler, 1997). By the same token, there is a need to adopt various aspects of modern management, incorporating performance appraisals for NGO managers, implementing adequate capacity building, training and development and mentoring (Bhagal, 2014).

Managers' own self-development is vital (Analoui, 1995) and inevitably, effectiveness is associated with training and development, as Drucker (1988) confirms that organisational purpose and goals are attained when workforce effectiveness is developed. It will avert the preoccupation of weaknesses with the exploitation of strengths. Thus, the issues of training and development for Indian NGOs have gained interest from multi-agency initiatives such as Building Resources Across Communities (BRAC), and the World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS). Participatory research in India is carried out by the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA, 2002), which conducts limited NGOs' training and research programs to address critical