

ABSTRACT

Title of the Thesis: Reengineering of Service Delivery Process: A study of NGO sector in Assam

Researcher: Bhaskar Jyoti Barthakur

Supervisor: Dr. Papori Baruah

Professor, Department of Business Administration

Tezpur University, Napaam, Assam, India Pin- 784028

Periodicity of research: The study covers a period of 2009 to 2015

Statement of the Problem: In modern development discourse, one area that has gained considerable currency has been the impact delivered by NGOs mainly because their work is understood to have direct and obvious effects on their lives of poor and marginalized people. Society has high expectations from these organizations. Though over the years large number of NGOs has mushroomed but yet they may not have been able to meet the expectation of the society to a greater extent. Lots of funds have been given by several organizations but it is still a question whether they could easily carry out their job properly. The NGOs might have able workforce and a good plan but was that efficiently executed? The problem may lie in organizational structure or the process etc. Despite these high expectations from the society it has been observed that service delivery process of NGOs require dramatic change. Hence it has become important to determine the obstacles which might be hindering effective delivery of services as per needs and wants of people. It has also been found from the literature that Re-engineering can be best tool to be used to make radical changes in the service delivery process of NGOs.

Objectives: The following objectives are proposed to be fulfilled through this study.

- i. To assess the strategic planning of the studied NGOs
- ii. To study the existing service delivery process of studied NGOs.
- iii. To determine the need for Reengineering in context to service delivery on the basis of strategy of the organisation and measures of performance.

Research Methodology: This study adopted case study research approach and is based on primary and secondary data sources. To select cases for the study, list of NGOs were

collected from different sponsoring and supporting organisations and on the basis of parameters set, twenty NGOs were shortlisted and out of twenty, nine NGOs were selected for the study on the basis of performance measurement criteria of CAPART. Various qualitative data collection techniques; like, focused group discussions, key informant interviews, document review were used and survey was used to get information from beneficiaries. To fulfill the research objectives the following methodology was applied:

Objective 1: Assessing Strategic Planning: Two models were used to guide the analysis. These were: the stages of development model (Becker, 31) and the ‘levels of complexity model’ (Olive Subscription Service, 30; James, 126-127). The ‘levels of complexity’ model was used to analyze the factors affecting the process of strategic planning in studied NGOs, while different versions of the stages of organization development model were used to analyze the roles and responsibilities of the key players in the strategic planning processes of the selected organizations.

Objective 2: Assessing Service Delivery Process: While assessing studied NGOs service delivery, the study considered ARCHSECRET model to understand service delivery quality from beneficiary perspective. ARCHSECRET is a model and instrument for measuring service quality of NGOs based on the assumption that service quality is critically determined by the difference between beneficiaries' expectations of excellence and their perceptions of the service actually delivered. Present study was undertaken to investigate the level of service quality shortfall experienced across the 10 dimensions of the ARCHSECRET model by the beneficiaries of the studied NGOs. ARCHSECRET service quality dimensions are Access, Responsiveness, Communication, Humaneness, Security, Enabling/Empowerment, Competence, Reliability, Equity and Tangibles.

Likewise, the challenges of service delivery was analysed with grounded theory, which was originally developed by two sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. Grounded analysis is well suited to answer “how” and “what” questions because it permit us to observe human interactions in different social settings, processes and changes, conditions and influences

Objective 3: Organisational performance Evaluation: Organisational Performance was evaluated with the help of Knowledge management infrastructure and Intellectual Capital. The three chosen factors of the KM infrastructure organisational culture, organisational

structure and IT support are well established and validated constructs with measures adapted from previous research. The need for reengineering was suggested on the basis of the findings of objective 1, objective 2 and on the basis of intellectual capital as well as implementation of Information Technology.

Sampling Design:

3.6.1 Target Population: The population of the study was drawn from the groups and communities; board members, staff of the studied NGOs, donors, members of direct beneficiary groups from the studied NGOs implemented projects, community members, local leaders, local government officers, households in the respective areas where projects have been implemented, civil society activists, and civic leaders as well as the local leadership at district and respective areas.

i. Element: Office bearers of NGOs, Sponsoring Agencies, Beneficiaries, and other related stakeholders covered during sample survey.

ii. Sampling Unit: The High Performing NGOs included in the research study are, Bosco Reach Out (BRO), Rashtriya Grameen Vikas Nidhi (RGVN), North East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS), Deshabandhu Club (DBC), Center for Rural Development (CRD) and Seva Kendra Dibrugarh (SKD). Low Performing NGOs included in the study are, Shanti Sadhana Ashram (SSA), Sipajhar Diamond Club and Community Center (SDCCC) and Tezpur District Mahila Samity (TDMS).

iii. Extent: The study is conducted in the project areas of the studied NGOs in Assam.

iv. Time: Survey was conducted during the period of December 2010 to March 2013.

3.6.2 Sample size: 930 respondents.

Sampling Techniques: Judgment sampling method was used to select the NGOs. Convenience sampling was used for donors, project staff, other stakeholders and beneficiary selection and snowball sampling was used for key informants.

Scope and Limitation of the study: The study was conducted in one of the North Eastern States of India, Assam. Present study tried to explore qualitatively, the service delivery process of nine NGOs, serving in different parts of the state for more than 15 years. The study attempted to identify various indicators that have direct impact on the functioning of NGOs, its resultant service delivery and beneficiary satisfaction. It also tried to study the

influence of strategic planning, knowledge management and intellectual capital on service delivery performance of the studied NGOs. The study attempted to assess the need for Reengineering, in context to service delivery of the studied NGOs.

The study concentrated only to the service delivery process; hence other areas which are not related to service delivery are not considered. The study has focused only on the studied NGOs' service delivery processes. The projects that are evaluated under the study are limited to the state of Assam only.

This section presents key methodological issues that were followed to conduct this research. Among the areas covered include; the nature of research design, the scope of the study, the population of the study, the sample size, sampling techniques and data analysis methods used.

Major Findings: The summary of the finding of the research is given below.

1. The implementation of the strategic plans was generally low in all the studied.
2. The NGOs that were proactive in starting their strategic planning processes were relatively more effective than those that were reactive or were told by a donor to go through the strategic planning process. This shows the importance of ownership for strategic planning processes.
3. The findings from empirical study established that the declining of sustainability of service delivery of NGOs was caused by the inequitable distribution of capable human and material resources, employee resources, poor management, poor financing strategies and the general lack of resources in the NGOs.
4. Beneficiaries' ratings exposed the service delivery quality of the studied NGOs. The ratings across dimensions were high for high performing NGOs and low for low performing NGOs.
5. This research has found out that projects implemented by NGOs are a replica of the donors' policy objectives and programs. The research found out that, groups/community based organisations were strategically created to attract donations that are defrauded by the very individuals who started them.
6. Nonprofit organisations which have a Hierarchy culture have a stronger IT support than nonprofit organisations which have an Adhocracy culture.

7. The study also found that nonprofit organisations with a centralised organisational structure have a stronger IT support than nonprofit organisations which have a decentralised organisational structure.
8. The study found that nonprofit organisations which have a stronger IT support have a higher level of relational capital than nonprofit organisations which have a less strong IT support.
9. The results of this study stress the importance of IT support in order to manage knowledge and with this to increase IC (human capital, structural capital and relational capital).

Conclusion: It can be concluded from the study that most of the NGOs activities are donor dependent. Starting with strategic planning, its relevancy, formulation and legitimacy; activities taken up are all dependent on donors. The goal of strategic planning in studied NGOs must be for more financially independent and less dependent on project based funding. This will give them the freedom to listen to the communities or beneficiaries more than the donors. Also, this study made the attempt to clarify the role of the KM infrastructure and its impact on KM processes and IC . As a result, it supports some of the existing findings within the knowledge management literature with regards to the relationship between KM infrastructure, KM processes and IC. In addition, the study extends the existing literature in suggesting interdependence between the main factors of the KM infrastructure (organisational culture, organisational structure and IT support) and stresses the importance of IT support as the main instrument for managing KM processes (creating, storing, sharing and applying knowledge).

Further the study suggested the need for reengineering to fill the gaps in strategy, service provision, organisational structure, organisational culture and IT in service delivery process of the studied NGOs. Here the study investigated major shortfalls in the areas that could affect service delivery process and its resultant impact on beneficiaries of the studied NGOs.

Contribution to the body of knowledge: The need for reengineering proposed by the study from findings can be a contribution towards the body of knowledge. Suggestions based on strategic planning, employees' perception on service delivery, existing service delivery process, and measuring organisational performance with the help of intellectual capital can

help NGOs in ascertaining the gaps in their service delivery process. As this study is a pioneering one in the field of strategic planning assessment, service delivery assessment and knowledge management among NGOs, the study has filled the gap in the literature. Furthermore, Suggestions can be taken by other voluntary and civil society organisations to assess their process inadequacies.

Scope for further research: The study has explored the service delivery process of nine NGOs based in Assam with the help of qualitative research method. More so study is conducted in the state of Assam. Research can be extended by adding quantitative research method and other parts of the country. The study has also opens up for further research on reengineering service delivery process.