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Motivation to Work on Battlefield: Reason of Nepalese Non-Government Organization's (NGO) Intensified Work during Socio-Political Conflict¹

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Abstract:

Motivation is the enforcing element to do or not to do something. In context to Nepal, during deepen armed conflict Nepalese NGOs registration trend skyrocketed and so their working span. They are basically motivated to survive and grow – a basic motivation phenomenon in general. Besides this they worked for the sake of revival of peace and prosperity for their motherland. Desire to grow and lead n peace process also came hand to hand. Nepalese NGOs put forth a challenge to the established motivation theories that work in normal condition. A tendency depicted – Nepalese people and organizations tend to put the national agenda first when the nation was at the crossroad.

Keywords : conflict, motivation, Nepal, Nepalese, NGOs, peace

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Doing or not doing something is always influenced by human being's intrinsic forces that popularly known as motivation. World is full of miracles – supported by unmatched enthusiasm all are derived by motivation. Some people even can not think about the subject but few can people can change same thing into reality! So, what is the difference over there? Of course the answer is none other than motivation. Motivation of NGOs get funding colored by donors (Badu, 2004). Sometime, INGOs have hidden motivation to intervene in developing countries and do not like to disclose their purposes (Tvedt, 1998).

Motivation is a highly subjective, tailor made theme for every individual. It is contextual, emotion laden as well as highly diversified in nature. Time, age, situation and what not affects its sensitivity? More or less- degree could be different but every small factor could have big influences on motivation. Studies revealed that external intervention via monetary incentives or punishments may undermine, and under different identifiable conditions strengthen, intrinsic motivation seems also applicable for Nepalese NGOs (Jegen, 2001).

In general, people's goals play the key motivating role in conflict. They represent what people want and why thus people are in conflict (Borgeryd, 1999). Nepal faced 12 year long challenges of socio-political conflict. Nepalese people – despite of lots of grievances with the conflicting parties dragged their life during this situation. Not only that, people did not let their rays of hope vanished. They wept, laughed and survived – hoping for better future in the days to come! NGOs are growing in number and able to create their institutional space. However, various factors such as lack of effective coordination, weak financial base, lack of professionalism, and lack of monitoring and evaluation, lack of transparency, lack of commitment among the NGO activists, and also the absence of public surveillance are the key issues for affecting NGO governance in Nepal (Dhakal, 2007). NGOs working are also viewed as an alternative approach for development (Ghimire, 2003)

I aim to dedicate to salute Nepalese people's motivating factor in this article for the conflicting decade. From the high freezing Himalayas to sizzling Terai people kept their emotions alive and welcomed each day though smelling gunpowder and waved their hand for each sunset. Farmers, workers, entrepreneurs, service holders and all of the above public at large keep their acts moving and developed their new means of life. Nepalese development field especially community development sector was one of the hardest hit sector by the conflict. Government machineries were portraying development institutions as a complementary development vehicle next to government. This obviously meant expectation towards Nepalese development agencies like NGOs though they could support very little in context to running their operations. The laws and bye laws were confined within piece of paper that even did not have showing-off value. Expectation of people was fairly raised up especially of the natives of remote areas.

It was a remarkable masterpiece of work of Nepalese NGOs during the conflict period that they parallel development activities with the intensified conflict. I am not going to focus how they did it rather why they did. What was their deep rooted motivation that kept them moving? This will be my focused discussion in this study.

1.2. Objectives of the study

Study findings suggest that public and nonprofit managers are similar in terms of the importance of intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards. Public and nonprofit managers show both of the similarities and differences in terms of the consequences of motivation leading to increased job engagement and increased civic and volunteer activity (Word, 2009).

Reason behind the intensified working of Nepalese NGOs and its workers despite of the worsening armed conflict where threat of life and wealth were more common phenomenon was chief objective of this study. Other specific objectives of this study were:

- To test gravity of the conventional motivation factor in development sector during conflict period.
- To sense whether any new motivation factor emerged when people parallel development with socio-political conflict
- Trace whether individual and organizational motivation differs while working on conflict situation.

1.3. Rational of the study

Human beings or organizations have values are interests, which refer to an “interactive relation between an individual and certain aspects of his or her environment. Interests are content-specific, can be viewed as both a state and a trait, and entail both cognitive and affective components. There is a wealth of empirical evidence that connects interest with performance or achievement (Hidi, 2000). Studies suggests the causes of the stated Nepalese socio-political conflict is grievance rather than greed is the main motivating force (Gates, 2003).

Major chunk of development fund was channeled during conflict through the non-government organizations especially because government machineries were week to reach to the grassroots community. Most of the donor agencies even the Nepalese government was adopting NGOs as a major development vehicle at that time. NGOs also were enthusiastic to work but how they were being derived? Exploring the answer and suggesting for betterment was rational of this study.

1.4. Methodology

The study is based upon the primary survey among the NGOs workers ranging from volunteers, executives to employees. Respondents are 246 in numbers. Semi-structured questionnaire was prepared to collect the data. Collected qualitative data were categorized, tabulated and analyzed to trace the conclusions.

As a major part of the study, mainly to obtain the motivational state of mind, unstructured interviews were conducted where necessary to clarify and supporting for analysis.

1.5. Limitations of the study

This study is conducted based on the nationwide sampling of the NGOs. Different starta like geographical, nature of organizations, capacity of the individuals associated with NGOs are considered. The sample size may not capture and represent the wholesome characteristics of the all Nepalese NGOs and their working modalities. This study also had limited time and resources that prohibited digging out the data in the full extent.

This study focuses on motivational aspects that obviously is a psychological phenomenon and hard to quantify the explanations.

2. Findings

Many people perceive Nepali NGO runners are of risk taking nature. Despite of the deepening conflict they tend register more new NGOs so that they can work with the conflict affected community. Therefore, we can view them as risk takers. Behind the risk taking attitude what motivation did the people had? This is the centre theme of discussion of this article.

There is mixed bag of answers about the question of motivation of Nepalese NGOs. The NGOs are supposed to be non-profit organizations. They have their own by-laws and regulations that should not be contradictory with Nepalese laws. Being a non-profit, not religious, non-political organization, ideologically it must be a service delivery entity. Service to the nation, uplifting the marginalized, under developed people's life is major source of motivation to them. No one NGOs will deviate with this official version of their motivation source. However, from public at large, from donor's side and even the Nepalese government has allegation that NGOs differ from their declared objectives in practice. The allegation are : they work for profit earning, utilize the development money for their lavish needs like building and vehicles, window dress the activities they performed, camouflage their poor performance with good documentation etc. Center of all allegations has two fold conclusions, elite class collect fund and utilize for their private needs; middle class works through NGOs to manage for their livelihoods.

It is not in the scope of this research to finding fact of the allegations but explore the motivational factors of the Nepalese NGOs. Other way around, the allegations are associated with the motivational side of the NGOs.

Many donor agencies of Nepal blame Nepalese NGOs are being means of money making for specific groups is not completely baseless. Ranging from freelancer's article to international agencies like European Union, all more or less agree on the allegations. Notwithstanding the social aspects, this study is tried to concentrate more on psychological aspects, individual and organizational both – despite of the life threatening armed conflict is grooming up, why the Nepalese NGOs are putting more efforts to paralleling the development activities? Research study shows that Nepalese development workers – regardless of executive members or employees of NGOs are obviously more sensitive on their livelihood issues. Fulfillment of daily needs is still remains a great motivator for Nepalese people.

What could be their type of hidden motivation? This question may attract different dimensions of answers but this falls beyond this research objective and thus dropped off. Linking to the motivation factor of NGOs and their representatives working, why they are interested to set implied objectives in the organization is important. A critical question again, it was put optional whether they wish to answer but if they wish, honest answer was requested. This is because motivation is not limited to be influenced by official factors only.

In the findings, it was tried to categorize the possible reasons of having motivation though unofficial in an NGO. Many participants had opinion of the implied objectives has developed more domination of unofficial motivation in the NGOs working over their formal motto. Underdeveloped countries like Nepal, educated people do face survival problem by using their skills that opens up all the tricky ways. Less availability and access in resources boosts livelihood crisis that force to enter NGO founder to set up implied objectives.

Some participants responded that to fulfill NGO founder's high ambition in terms of not only livelihood but ranging to political will and efforts, NGOs are used as a means for their road map. In such case NGO founders purposefully deviate to formal goals of NGOs in practice.

Sometimes many situational factors like but not limited to; political, social, economical, life threatening situation during conflict period, institutional propaganda may lead to set implied objectives in organizations in practice. Over dominating bureaucracy can force to institutions to save their existence through deviating with formal objectives.

Major cause of Nepalese NGOs forcing to work by deviating with their official objectives seems situational factors. Though this word "situational factors" bears diverse meanings but in context to Nepal it indicates towards the 12 years long armed socio-political conflict. The security situation and law and order situation was terribly slackened during the research period. Nepalese NGOs were in the position of "do or die" for their existence that might compel them to adopt unofficial activities for survival.

Second major factor pointed is NGO founder's interest plays role to set implied objectives in an NGO. The founder's interest can be explained in different dimensions such as political will, high ambition of name and fame and so on. It is not much explored because it falls out of this study scope.

Official purpose of establishing an NGO though quite clear in constitution of NGOs, observers often complain they differ in practice. To make an honest assessment of goals, general perceptions about the nature of NGO's nature was sought so that a more realistic perception could be established. Whether Nepalese NGOs have more likely motivation factors as business entities i.e. making profit; or as social organizations i.e. purely social motive of somewhat alike blend of both were the given options for responding.

It was kept in mind that respondents may not will to give harsh answers that directly indicate they tend to make profit but may respond in a more tactical way qualifying nature of Nepalese NGO's motivating factor in general.

The responses of perceived nature in terms of working of NGOs were responded as following.

| Nature | % |
|---|-------|
| Like as purely business organization | 2.26 |
| Like as purely social organization | 41.51 |
| Like as blend of business and social organization | 46.42 |
| Others (to be specified) | 6.04 |
| Unanswered | 3.77 |
| Total | 100 |

Table 1: Nature of NGOs regarding their motivation factors

More specific responses in "others" category of the above mentioned table are as following aligned with their motivating factors. (Repeated ideas are clubbed together.)

- NGOs are mixing up social motives as well as reducing unemployment of their own to the some extent.
- NGOs are propagating as development vehicles but they tend to be gradually adopting business fundamentals. It is hampering their formal objectives and to the nation's social sector at large.
- Like getting employment opportunities for themselves through social service.
- Promotion of rights-based approach and social empowerment are taken as their motivating factors.
- Satisfying political wills through NGO activities.

The data clearly indicates that purely business entities like motivation factors in NGOs though exists but in minority. However, mixture of business and social like organizations motivation are substantial. This indicates purely social objectives as declared during the time of NGOs establishment cannot represent true cause of running NGOs. In a great extent, NGOs do have other factors of motivation than social factors.

There are very well established principals exist in motivation that explains why people be engaged in their act. However, motivation may differ in individual and organizational level. Organization, being a united entity of several thoughts, objectives, ideologies and actions is obvious to have different motivation factors than individual level.

We gone through some established principles of motivation in management and quickly compare the results drawn from this study.

More than organizational, motivation is stronger in individual's motives. Persons who are working for Nepalese NGOs obviously may have diverse motivation factors. We seek some qualitative data with the respondents so that we can have idea – what mostly

motivates them. We had given some common answers related to motivation to choose as well as state other factors of motivation if the closed options do not cover their choice. The responded answers are furnished under the table below.

| Reason | % |
|--|-------|
| For livelihood | 17.96 |
| Career building / enhancement | 22.29 |
| Service delivery to society | 47.06 |
| Time pass / waiting for better opportunities | 5.57 |
| Others (to be specified) | 5.57 |
| Unanswered | 1.55 |
| Total | 100 |

Table 2: Why people are working in Nepalese NGOs

As some respondents said that a single response cannot cover their working motto of association with NGOs, they were allowed to choose many as they are applicable to them. Likely, few of them do not like to answer as well. According to above table, most people have social reasons of working in NGOs. Anyway, despite of in any category the respondents fall, the social desire seems a major motivation factor to them.

Second most motivating for working individuals seems the hope of career building and enhancement. In Nepal, jobs in NGOs sector is relatively high paying than government sector, the better career option is also motivating to people.

Livelihood opportunity through working in NGOs takes third position as a motivating factor. Few people also perceive that it is a waiting through working till they get better opportunity. Other motivating factors of individuals uncovered by the closed options given in questionnaire are as following. Responses having same gist are clubbed into same categories.

- Helping to people by engaging them in income generation activities and help in conflict minimization.
- Self-satisfaction and sustainability of the organization.
- For positive change in society (it was explained that this is way different and noble than just social service)
- Enhancing of skill of working with community.
- Self capacity building and for progressive change in society.
- For personality development.
- For exposure and representation in international level.
- For right establishment of conflict-victims.

Intrinsic motivation is valuable to do or not to do something. This study was also aimed to find whether the respondents have ever experienced a well motivated situation during their professional life, we had questions relating to this. It was expected to answer this question only is "Yes" or "No" form. 88.8% respondents said "Yes", 9.60% respondents said "No" well-motivated situation they found while discharging their profession. 1.6% respondents remain silent by not answering the question.

Further stretching the factors of motivation – who responded they have experience of well motivated, we tried to dig out further what had motivated them that gave feeling of well-motivated. This was also a cross verification of the motivating factor related answer which was expressed by themselves previously.

| Situation | % |
|--|-------|
| When they fulfill their basic needs | 12.15 |
| When they fulfill their safety needs | 1.39 |
| When they got respect / leadership chance | 42.71 |
| When their love / affection need fulfilled | 3.47 |
| When they realized self-satisfaction | 34.38 |
| Any other situation (to be specified) | 4.51 |
| Unanswered | 1.39 |
| Total | 100 |

Table 3: When NGO people felt highly motivated?

This was a multiple option question and was somehow aligned with the Maslow's need hierarchy motivation theory. It seems the working people of Nepalese NGOs has given top priority of gaining respect, moving towards higher leadership; therefore this segment stands in top row. Self-satisfaction is the second most demanding factor for motivation. Basic need fulfillment grabs third priority.

On top of the individual motivational factors, we suppose that the level of motivation will depend upon on many factors and varies person to person. Other situation when people felt highly motivated mentioned are as under.

- Felt when self capacity has been enhanced.
- Highly motivated when freed from mental tension.
- "When I found I have done good social service."
- When the responsibility assigned was satisfactorily discharge.
- When public encouraged me for my work.

One of the meeting points of individual motivation and institutional motivation is the person's feeling that keeps someone motivating to continue working with the NGO. Certainly there will be organizational goals that not necessarily would be same as of the associated individuals with the NGOs. I tried to dig out the key component that is primarily responsible for motivation of either employees or other associated persons with NGOs. Following is the tabulated data of findings.

| Motivating Components | % |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Opportunity to lead | 26.32 |
| Monitory perks | 11.11 |
| Higher responsibilities | 20.70 |
| Career enhancement | 25.73 |
| Other (to be specified) | 4.39 |
| Unanswered | 1.75 |
| Total | 100 |

Table 4: Key organizational motivating components in NGOs

As this is a multiple choice question, respondents chosen more components they feel energized at their work. Opportunity to lead in organization is rated as most demanding factor followed by higher responsibilities in the work. Career enhancement is third most motivating factor to work in Nepalese NGOs. Monetary perks got relatively low rating for motivation generation. It shows that in Nepalese NGOs people are demanding more qualitative attributes rather than money.

Some people specified other points as well that motivates them in their work. They are furnished as under.

- Desire to minimize social backwardness.
- Work evaluation and praise for good job done.
- Achieving the set results.
- Trainings provided to enhance soft skills.
- Empathy for women.
- Public's faith on the organization.
- Self-satisfaction

Considering the above findings, it is no wonder if we say Nepalese NGOs paralleling development in the battlefield has their own set of motivation more inclined with the general motivation principles and haunting for individual livelihood, carrier development. It is further mixed with the organizational prosperity and love of nation and community.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

Nepalese NGOs worked under the life threatened conflict situation in Nepal we re motivated by the multiple factors like livelihood, eager to lead and service delivery to the society. Just one factor can not be over weighted. Hugely backed up by the personal / organizational well-being and sentiment towards society or nation are the two broad categories of motivation of Nepalese NGOs is crux of finding of this study.

Nepalese development arena could be benefited if the policy makers, government, donor communities could act accordingly. Pure social motive seems not sufficient to drive Nepalese NGOs. Either government subsidy system to meet the NGO's operational cost is sought or polishing the national policies allowing Nepalese NGOs to run socio-business operations can help to keep them running properly.

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