Chapter 3
Perspectives of NGOs
3.0. Introduction

This chapter addresses the first objective of the research project, i.e., to study the NGOs’ perspective of their accountability practices with multiple stakeholders at various spheres such as governance, programme management, and resource management.

3.1. Profile of the NGOs

3.1.1. Background

The three NGOs involved in the first (qualitative) phase of the first part of the study are Centre for Action and Sexual Health (CASH*), Association for Sustainable Development (ASD*), and National Development Association (NDA*)

CASH is a service provider at the community level and is located in Maharashtra. ASD is a support/capacity development organization at the state level, based in Kerala. NDA is a development promoter at the national level having offices in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai and Kolkata.

All the three organizations have at least 20 years of experience in their respective fields, namely health, development/child rights and capacity building. All the three organizations have done exemplary work and they have been recognised by their respective state governments and other agencies for their contribution to social development. The leaders and managers of these organizations have good insight and reflective ability. These organizations post their annual reports on their respective websites and are accredited/by agencies like Credibility Alliance.

(Note: * the names of the organizations and the research participants are changed to protect their identity).
3.1.2. Basic Information

3.1.2.1. Centre for Action and Sexual Health (CASH)

Centre for Action and Sexual Health (CASH) is a leading community based-health service NGO in Maharashtra. It is registered under the Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950.

CASH was formed by Roy and his friends, who were committed to the welfare of sexual minorities. Roy left his lucrative career in the media sector to lead the organization. He also managed to inspire like-minded successful young people from all walks of life to join his team as community volunteers and later as board members. Thus, CASH evolved as a community-based organization in 1989 due to the felt need for an organization for sexual minorities.

CASH emerged during a period when people with alternative sexual orientation were branded as abnormal and penalised. During the first five years of its functioning, the organization initiated a series of meetings on sexual health and produced a magazine on sexual health. Through these efforts, it tried to bring attitudinal change among the general population. In 1994, CASH was formally registered.

During 1994-2003, CASH took a lot of initiatives in the field of sexual health. A drop-in centre for sexual minorities was established in 1995, followed by the setting up of voluntary counselling and testing centres with support from the District Aids Control Society. The counselling programme had a unique three-tier staff structure, comprising community counsellors, professional counsellors and a superintending psychiatrist.

Following the success of these programmes, CASH collaborated with government hospitals to provide sexual health care to vulnerable populations.

Since 2004, CASH has envisioned itself as a leading community-based NGO on sexuality and sexual health. The organization has done a lot of research studies and has undertaken evidence-based policy advocacy on sexual minorities.
CASH is continuing to work in the community through its flagship programmes, namely psycho-social counselling, medical care, and providing nutritional support.

3.1.2.2. Association for Sustainable Development (ASD)

Association for Sustainable Development (ASD) is a leading state-level support and capacity-building organization in Kerala. The organization is registered under the Travancore- Cochin Literary, Scientific and Charitable Societies Registration Act, 1955. The core objective of the organization is to take science and technology to the rural population. The mission is to find sustainable solutions to rural problems.

Association for Sustainable Development (ASD) was founded in 1987 as a research and extension wing of the Progressive Movement (PM), a people’s organization. Initially, ASD was administered through one of the sub-committees of PM. But in the 1990s, members of the PM found it appropriate to formally register ASD under the Societies Act. Finally, ASD was registered in 1995. The initial support for ASD came from the Science and Society Division of the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India. The Department of Science and Technology awarded the core support grant under the STARD (Science and Technology Application for Rural Development). This initial support of the government helped ASD in consolidating its work.

ASD’s first attempt was development of fuel-efficient smokeless stove. Later, it extended its work in the area of low-cost housing, watershed management and mechanised pottery,. These programmes were a huge success. ASD also took up initiatives in the field of aquaculture, mushroom cultivation, nursery, azolla cultivation, vermin-composting, waste treatment, rain water harvesting and soap making. Other notable contributions include development of tools such as participatory resource mapping, watershed-based planning, and GIS-based district development information management system.
ASD has a team of scientists, technocrats, professionals, consultants and volunteer-experts. Currently, ASD’s work is carried out through its various departments (natural resource management; water management; energy; livelihood support; local planning; training and extension).

3.1.2.3. National Development Association (NDA)

National Development Association (NDA) is a prominent national-level NGO working on developmental rights of children. NDA was floated in 1979 by Reddy and six of his friends who were committed to ensuring all children enjoy the rights accorded to them by the Indian Constitution. The organization has dual registration. In 1978, it was first registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, and, in 1979, it was registered under the Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950.

Reddy’s dream was that no Indian child would be deprived of rights as basic as survival, participation, protection and development. To make this dream happen, the founders opted to make NDA an organization, which will spend most of its time mobilising resources. Thus, from the beginning NDA adopted its role as a catalyst between grassroots development organizations and donors.

NDA partners with different grassroots NGOs to achieve its goal of protecting the basic human rights of children. Partnership is established through grant making, capacity building, community mobilisation, networking, public/social policy advocacy and supporting resource organizations.

The interventions of NDA are designed to include the following:

- Direct action ameliorating immediate, critical needs
- Community mobilisation linking child rights and local pre-dominant issues
- Stringent planning, monitoring and evaluation

Over the past three decades, NDA has reached out to more than 15,00,000 children in 13,000 villages across 20 states.
NDA is now recognised worldwide for its work on child rights and child protection. The main strength of NDA lies in its ability to bring individuals and corporate houses to address children’s issues. Some of the famous companies such as Aviva Life Insurance, VITAL, e Clerx Services, Google, HPCL, MBD Group, Microsoft Inc, and Punjab & Maharashtra Co-operative Bank have financially contributed to NDA.

3.1.3. Organizational Structure in the Three NGOs

Organizational structure is the way in which an organization is designed. It deals with aspects such as lines of authority, communication arrangements, roles, powers, and responsibilities. There are centralized organizational structures, decentralized structures and informal structures. If an organization has a centralized structure, the top boss takes the decisions. In the case of decentralized structures, there are appropriate people at every level to take decisions. In an informal organization, decisions are taken causally without any set rules of business, etc.

In CASH, there are six major functions: targeted intervention, research, advocacy, training, finance management, clinical work and counselling. The targeted intervention is the biggest function and is headed by a director, who reports to the CEO. The other function heads also report to the CEO.

In ASD, there are six heads of departments who lead different specialisations. Similarly, there is an office of the registrar, handling administration. It is headed by the registrar, who reports to the director. A separate research coordinator oversees scientific research initiatives of the organization.

In NDA, there are four directors handling major functions and three directors taking charge of the regional offices. The job positions start with the assistant manager in most of the divisions and one has the chance to go up the ladder till the post of director of a major function. Thus, there is a scope for internal promotions and growth within the organization. The figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 give a clear picture of the staff structure in all the three organizations.
Fig 3.1: CASH Organizational Structure

- Trustees
- CEO
- Director (HIV & Health Programs)
- Research Manager
- Advocacy Manager
- Capacity Building Manager
- Finance Manager
- Clinical and Counseling Head
- T&I Supervisors
- OR Workers
- Pret Educators
- Research Associates
- Advocacy Officers
- Training Officers
- Accounts Team
- Community Counsellors
- Lab Technicians

Source: CASH Staff Hierarchy

Fig 3.2: ASD Organizational Structure

- General Body
- Executive Committee
- Director
- Registrar
- Fellows
- HOD (HRM)
- HOD (Finance)
- HOD (Research)
- HOD (Local Planning)
- HOD (Training and Extension)
- Accounts Officer
- Project Associates
- Project Associates
- Project Associates
- Project Associates
- Trainers
- Librarian
- Computer Team
- Accountant
- Cashier
- Office Assistant

Source: ASD Staff Structure
In all the three organisations, one can find a similarity, i.e., the presence bureaucratic mechanism with a certain degree of standardization. In two of the three organisations (CASH and ASD), there is a strong tendency of centralism. In NDA, there is an effort for decentralised decision making. The organizational chart/organogram of these three organisations show the fact clearly.

3.1.4 Board Composition of the Three NGOs

Board composition refers to three interrelated issues, namely board independence, diversity and the duality of the chief functionary.

The numbers of board members varied from one organization to the other. In ASD, there are twenty executive committee/board members. CASH has six trustees/board members and NDA has seven trustees/board members.

CASH does not have any female member in the board. In ASD, there is one female member in the board. The NDA board is balanced. It has three female members and four male members.
Professionals from various domains are part of these organizations’ boards. CASH board mainly consists of journalists, media professionals, and former business managers. ASD board mainly consists of retired school teachers and professors.

NDA board is very varied. It has a businessman, a finance professional, a legal professional, a writer, two public relations and communication professionals and a professor, who heads an academic institute. Table 3.1 provides a clear picture of the same.

Table 3.1: Profile of the Boards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Organization</th>
<th>Number of Board Members</th>
<th>Gender Composition</th>
<th>Professions of board members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CASH</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male: 6 Female: 0</td>
<td>Journalists, Media Professionals, and Former Business Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Male: 19 Female: 1</td>
<td>Retired School Teachers and Professors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDA</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Male: 4 Female: 3</td>
<td>Businessman, Finance Professional, Legal Professional, Writer, PR and Communication Professionals, and Professor/Director</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Annual Reports of the NGOs (2011)*

3.1.5 Income Details of the Three NGOs

Formal financial details of the organizations helps the external person to know the current financial conditions, cash flows and future thrust areas. It reflects the financial and administrative soundness of the respective organization. Hence is important for the NGOs to disclose their income details.

CASH has not disclosed income details in the annual report. There is no formal financial statement or informal abridged accounts statement from which one can deduce the information. ASD has given the complete details of its income.
The report also highlights the increase in income from the previous year. NDA has given the nearest approximate income. This shows that the financial disclosure practices are varied depending on the size and nature of the respective organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Organizations’ Income (INR)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CASH</td>
<td>ASD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>46,01,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>70,95,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>98,45,789</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Annual Reports of the NGOs (2011)*

3. 1. 6. Proactive Disclosures of the Three NGOs

Other than financial aspects, several other aspects could be disclosed by the NGOs. It is understood that the more the disclosure is, the higher the accountability is, in reality.

Disclosure can be classified as minimum and desired. Minimum disclosure includes information related to the organization, its identity, achievements in the particular reporting year, details of its programmes, media clippings / feedbacks from stakeholders groups, financial statements, and names of board members. Desired disclosure includes details of the governing board meetings, staff / volunteer details, staff salary (highest and lowest), distribution of salary according to levels, honorarium paid to board members, and details related to international and national travel.

Both ASD and NDA are able to follow minimum disclosure norms. However, CASH is only able to follow four out of the six basic categories. Unfortunately, none of the organizations are able to disclose desired categories.
Table 3.3: Disclosure- Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disclosure Level</th>
<th>Disclosure category</th>
<th>CASH</th>
<th>ASD</th>
<th>NDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>About the organization/ identity</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crux of the years’ achievements</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Details of the programmes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Media clippings/ feedbacks</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial statements</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name and details of board members</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired</td>
<td>Details of the governing board meetings</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff / volunteer details</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff salary (highest and lowest)</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distribution of salary according to levels</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Honorarium paid to board members</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International and national travel details</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Reports of the NGOs (2011)

3.1.7. Interview Participants in the Three NGOs

In total, 21 people participated in the in-depth interviews, which happened in the first phase. Eight were from CASH, seven participants were from ASD and six were from NDA. The table 3.4 reveals the details.

Table 3.4: Participants and their Designations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Trustee/ Chief</th>
<th>Managerial Level Staff</th>
<th>Grassroots Level Staff</th>
<th>Total participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CASH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21
3.1.8. NGOs which participated in the Survey in the second Phase

Thirty NGOs (chief functionaries) participated in the survey in the second phase. These NGOs were from Mumbai. Among the respondents, 24 NGOs had more than six years of existence. Three NGOs had three to five years of existence and three had two or less number of years of existence. The table below portrays the survey participants’ details:

Table 3.5: Years of Existence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 years or less</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 years or more</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2. Governance and Accountability

3.2.1. Vision and Mission Statements

Vision and mission statements are very important. Vision statement focuses on the future, and stimulus for the change it wishes to create. The mission statement on the other hand focuses on the present. It defines the target groups with which the organization works and the desired impact it likes to create with in a period of time.

All the three organizations have vision and mission statements. It reflects the philosophy and commitment of the organizations.

The vision of Centre for Action and Sexual Health (CASH) is “to strive for the wellbeing of the sexual minorities and for the provision of quality health services to gay and transgender people. The mission of CASH flows from the vision put forth by the founders. The mission of CASH is to adopt a holistic approach to health of sexual minorities and promoting rational attitudes on sexuality to the general population” (CASH Annual Report 2011).
Association for Sustainable Development (ASD) considers itself as a people-centred development and capacity-building organization. The mission of the organization is “to develop and adapt technologies and to diffuse the same to benefit the rural population, work out local level development plans, promote inventiveness, promote human resources, give due importance to research and training, encourage young scientists and innovators, and function as a non-profit making organization and work closely with the parent organization” (ASD Annual Report 2011).

The vision of National Development Association (NDA) is “to work on creating an encouraging environment for a happy, healthy and creative childhood”. The mission is to enable people to take responsibility for the situation of the deprived Indian child and to motivate them to seek resolution through individual and collective action, thereby, enable children to realise their full potential. Its mission is also commitment to action and change by enabling people’s collectives and movements to pledge their support to protect and honour the rights of India’s children” (NDA Annual Report 2011).

All three organizations display the vision and the mission statements in their respective offices. In NDA, the crux of the same is printed in the visiting cards and other mementos it presents to guests, donors and well-wishers.

Survey at the second phase reveals that 63.3% of the NGOs have a vision and mission statement. This is presented in the chart 3.1 given below

Chart 3.1: Presence of Vision and Mission Statements
3.2.2. Board- Executive Staff Separation

It is important to have separation of powers and responsibilities between the board and the executive staff. This is integral to good governance, as the separation of roles and functions gives clarity and creates a two-tyre structure where problems could be aptly handled at these different levels.

CASH is currently managed by the governing board consisting of six members, of whom three are full-time executive staff. Thus it clear that there is an overlap between board and executive staff. The board members of CASH draw hefty remuneration also.

According to Desai, the CEO and trustee, the reason why some board members are part of the executive staff is as follows:

“In the beginning, CASH was not able to have full time staff. Therefore, some of the board members, including me, committed their life to CASH by quitting successful corporate careers. Hence, three of the board members decided to take the leadership role in executing the programmes also.”

In ASD, the situation is different. ASD is an offshoot of the progressive movement (PM), which is primarily a membership-based organization. The governance and management of ASD is vested on the general body of ASD, which consists of members drawn from the 45,000 active PM members. The term of the general body is for two years, after which a fresh general body is nominated. The general body members select an executive committee every two years. According to Ravi (director), the general body meets once a year and the executive committee meets once in two months. He elaborates the point:

“The general body of ASD gives the vision, mission and policy direction. The role of the executive committee is to see to it that the mandate set by the general body is accomplished. At present, there are 60 members in the general body and 20 members in the executive committee.”
He continues:

“The membership in the general body of ASD is possible only if the prospective member is a primary member of the PM for more than a decade. Moreover, he/ she should be identified as a potential candidate by the PM leadership. Under such conditions, the PM core committee may nominate the prospective candidate to the general body of ASD.”

The general body members select the top management of the organization, namely the director and the Registrar for a period of two years. The director and the Registrar are also part of the general body and the executive committee. Hence, there is no clear separation between the governing body and the senior executives at this level in ASD.

Some of the powers and duties of the general body are as follows:

- To control the movable and immovable property
- To carry out the business by acquiring gifts, purchase, exchange and lease
- To receive grant-in-aid and accept other grants, gifts and donations

Thus it is clear that the mandate for the ASD is fixed by the PM, the parent organization. Maju (Registrar/ administrator) explains:

“PM sets the direction of ASD and plays a key role in deciding what project should be pursued, which funding organization should be approached, etc. Hence, the key stakeholder for which ASD is primarily accountable is the general body.”

NDA on the other hand is governed by a proper leadership structure, which consists of two bodies, a board of trustees and the managing committee. Currently, NDA is managed by a seven-member board of trustees. The trustees are drawn from various professions such as academics, corporate, etc. None of the trustees are on staff roll. The trustees act as guardians of NDA’s ethos.
At the executive level, NDA has a managing committee (otherwise called as mancom), which steers the organizations towards its designated goals. The CEO heads the managing committee. The other members of the managing committee are the function heads (development support; resource mobilisation, and communications; human resource management and administration; planning, finance, and IT) and regional heads—south, north, east, and west. (See figure 3.4).

Maria, the CEO, shares:

“In NDA, we have defined the role of each board member, CEO and staff and the competency required for each of the positions. We also made a resolution that no large donor agency representative will be on our board. This arrangement insulates the organization from donor-driven programmes. We also fixed the maximum number of terms for each board member”
The board meets once in three months in NDA. It receives information about the progress of the organization from the CEO. The collective form of decision-making is the hallmark of NDA. Maria explains:

“Along with the CEO, all the functional heads and regional heads are involved in the executive decision-making process in the organization. The committee of these senior staff is called the MANCOM (managing committee) in NDA. In the MANCOM, honest opinions are shared among colleagues while arriving at decisions.”

Thus, we find that there is a clear separation of board and the executive staff in NDA.

The survey conducted with the chief functionaries revealed that only 36.7% of the NGOs have a clear cut separation between the board and the executive staff. Chart 3.2 gives the details in this regard.

Chart 3.2: Board- Executive Staff Separation

From the data, it is understood in most NGOs (63.3%), there is no separation between board and the staff. Therefore board- staff separation, a key aspect in governance is missing in the NGOs.
3.2.3. Conflict and Resolution

It is very difficult for an organization to maintain homeostatic. At any moment, there is a possibility of conflict. Through conflict per say is not bad, and could indicate the health of the organization, it could be counter-productive also. Such conflicts could lead to policy paralysis, employee dissatisfaction, stress, and intimidating work climate for all the members. Hence a timely resolution is important to solve the issue. A conflict resolution policy can be developed in every organization to promote safe environment for open sharing of opinions and concerns, both within the board and outside.

In CASH, some board members are part of the corporate organizations, which may be potential partner organizations. So there is a chance for conflict of interest. Hence, to ensure that there is no conflict of interest and to avoid the potential bias, a conflict of interest manual was prepared and approved by the board members. The manual guides the board members in ethical decision making during conflict situation.

Desai recollects an incident:

“In 2007, CASH decided to make a short film, so quotations were sought from prospective film production companies. One of the companies that applied was related to a board member. Here, in this case, the conflict of interest manual restricted the concerned board member from participating in that particular board meeting. The point was conveyed to the member. The concerned board member immediately agreed and did not participate in that board meeting. Thus, a favourable climate is established to solve potential conflict of interest.”

From the narrative, it is clear that the organisation has a conflict of interest manual helps in making decisions.

On the other hand, in ASD does, there is no written conflict resolution policy. The argument given by the director for not having a written policy is as follows:
“ASD is an auxiliary of PM, our parent organization. Hence, any conflict that arises in the executive committee level is dealt with by the PM. Hence, there is no separate conflict resolution policy.”

Thus in ASD, the conflict are handled by the parent organization. There is no policy/practice within organization to handle the situation.

A conflict management policy is available in NDA. One of the commendable components in the policy is the prohibition on the employees to share confidential information without express authorization beforehand.

The board members also have to make it clear whether they may gain profit or derive direct or indirect interest in a contract. Thus, a conflict-free environment is attempted by the organization.

The survey with NGO chief functionaries at the second phase brought to light that that only 23.3% of the NGOs have a proper conflict resolution policy. The chart 3.3 given below gives a clear picture of it.

Chart 3.3: Conflict Resolution Policy
3.2.4. Beneficiary Participation in Board/ Decision Making

Beneficiary participation in the board, mainly in the decision making process gives legitimacy to the decisions taken by the organisation and in therefore acts an accountability measure.

According to Desai, the board meetings in CASH are held once in four months. He describes the meeting as follows:

“The date and agenda of the board meetings are circulated to the members well in advance by the chairperson. Each member has the right to make their points, but minimum decorum is maintained in the house. After the board meetings, the decision is made known to all the stakeholders concerned.”

According to Desai, sometimes during crucial times/ issues, beneficiaries, who have rich experience, are invited to board meetings. However, no documentary evidence was found regarding the same.

Although ASD gives much importance to beneficiaries, it faces difficulty to practically involve beneficiaries in the general body or executive committee meetings. Maju clarifies:

“In fact, we do not include beneficiaries in the general body meetings. One of the main reasons for not including them is because of the (membership) nature of the organization, which only allows members to participate in the general body.”

This policy of ASD heavily restricts the beneficiaries from involving in decision making process. This acts counter-productive to the participation values proclaimed by the organisation.

NDA has found it difficult to involve beneficiaries in the decision-making processes. Maria elucidates the reasons:
“NDA does not work directly in the communities or with beneficiaries. NDA is an enabling and grants-making organization, so it partners with grassroots organizations to fulfil its objectives. That is why NDA is not able to involve the beneficiaries directly in board decision-making processes. But that does not mean that we are complacent. Our staff is genuinely involved with the grassroots organizations they are assigned to. They bring the local people together and develop programmes along with the heads of these organizations. Thus, we understand beneficiary involvement not as rhetoric but as praxis.”

It is clear from the narrative above that NDA does not have the policy or practice of involving the beneficiaries in the decision making process of the board.

The survey with NGO chief functionaries at the second phase revealed that none of the NGOs have involved beneficiaries in the board. This is a significant revelation on the status of accountability claims of the organisations. In the NGO Management literature beneficiary participation is boasted. But the reality seems different.

3.2.5. Dissemination of Board Decisions to Stakeholders

It is important for the board to communicate the decision made in the board meetings to all the concerned stakeholders. The process of communicating decisions and program status is a form of stakeholder engagement exercise. It is very important to know that the decisions may affect the stakeholders in the positive sense of in a negative way. Hence establishment of proper communication channels is crucial and integral to management of NGOs.

The study reveals that the dissemination of board information is either limited (to internal members only) or to the staff. Seldom does the board reach to the core constituency, i.e, the beneficiaries.
Desai (CEO of CASH) shares his organisation’s practice:

“For example, if the decision is about a person, it is conveyed to him/her only through person or telephone or email. But if it is about the entire community, then the decision is disseminated through different forums like Google groups”.

In ASD, the decision of the executive committee/board is communicated through circulation of written minutes. But the limitation is that the member of the board and the larger general body gets the data/information. The registrar explains the limitations as follows:

“The limitation is that our minutes reach the general body members of the organization only. Other stakeholders are left out in this process. If the general public wishes to get access to information, they should approach through the proper channel. Such requests will be taken up in the executive committee meeting for discussion and the decision is made known to the person, who wishes to get the information.”

In ASD, there is major hurdle in communication of the board decisions because of the nature of the agency. The communication structure forbids the free flow of information. This habit of the organisation is not a health practice.

NDA has a process of sharing board decisions with different stakeholders. According to Maria, it is as follows:

“The CEO is given the responsibility of sharing the board decisions to the staff. Through internal confidential emails, the board decision is circulated to the staff. For the donors, an open sharing policy is followed. The finance team does the follow-up with the stakeholder group. The regional and the development support teams take care of sharing information about board decisions to the beneficiaries.”
The survey with NGO chief functionaries showed that only 36.7% of the NGO boards share board decisions with stakeholders. This shows the lack of interest among the NGOs to communicate the decision to the stakeholders. The chart 3.4 given below shows the facts.

Chart 3.4: Sharing Decision of the Board with Stakeholders

**3.2.6. Dissemination of Achievements and Financials**

The main instrument for disseminating relevant information to the stakeholders is the annual report. CASH produces an annual report every year and it is posted on its website, which can be accessed by all the stakeholders. The annual report carries the following sections:

- Vision, Mission, Objectives and History
- Overview of recent developments
- Activities in the last year (under different programmes such as medical care, nutrition, etc)
- List of donors and partners
Financial statement of CASH is not shared publicly. This is a major limitation of the organization. The head of the organisation agreed to share the information to individuals who formally write to the organisation to avail the data.

ASD has also been publishing annual reports since 1987. It is available on the website and is available in the ASD library as well. According to Ravi, the annual report is the most important tool through which the organization shares its financial and activity information. All the general body members and donors get a copy of the annual report through post. The important components of the report are as follows:

- CEO’s testimony
- Financial information
- Detailed activity description
- Appendices (information on the list of general body members, executive committee members, staff, etc.)
- Audited financial statement

For NDA, sharing financials and achievements is vital for the sustainability of the organization, as it mostly relies on local donations. The annual reports serve as the medium to share the following information:

- Introduction
- Trustees’ Overview
- CEO’s Report
- Programme details
- Financial Statements
The survey with 30 NGO chief functionaries in Mumbai showed that 53.3% of the NGO boards share achievements with stakeholders. The achievements are shared through annual reports. The chart 3.5 given below elucidates the fact.

Chart 3.5: Sharing Achievements through Annual Reports

3.2.7. Board and Strategic Management Process

The major task of a governing board of any NGO is the preparation of the five-year/strategic plan through a participatory process. Most importantly, the chairperson and the members of the board should take the lead.

In CASH, there are three phases in which the strategic plan is prepared. Desai explicates:

“In the first phase, a review meeting under the banner of ‘open house’ is called. Only beneficiaries/community people and grassroots level staff participates in the meeting. Following the review meeting, a three-day retreat is organised. During the retreat, all the staff and 25% of the community members, who participated in the open house meeting, participate. At the end of the retreat, a rough business plan evolves”.

Desai continues:

“In the next stage, in-depth interviews are conducted with stakeholders such as lawyers, funding agencies and government departments before finally preparing a draft strategic plan. The final strategic plan gives a direction for the organization in prioritising the needs and scouting for funding partners. The strategic plan is periodically reviewed by the board in relation to the objectives set out and achieved. The CEO also provides timely information to the board to perform its oversight function effectively.”

There is no history of an independent strategic planning process in the ASD. Maju sheds light on it:

“Our parent body is aware of the external environment and makes strategic and long-term sustainable plans for itself and its allied organizations. Hence, there is no separate strategic planning process for ASD.”

However, there is a research-planning process in ASD. Ravi, the director, explains the same:

“Our work is mostly research based. So a futuristic plan is prepared by the research advisory committee, which gives direction for future research and development activities. The research advisory committee consists of experts in rural development, science and technology.”

NDA does not have a standard five-year plan, but has a long term development strategy. Maria, the CEO, explains the same:

“In NDA, we prepare a ten-year plan, which is a vision-led goals statement for a decade. This plan is broken down into three-year plans. Further, annual plans are developed. The annual plan process starts from December of every year and ends by March”
She continues:

“In the first phase of the process, a comprehensive review of the past year is done. Key individual, regional, functional and organizational learnings are prepared. Followed by the review, an annual imperative (objective) setting exercise is conducted. The imperative setting is done at individual, regional, functional and organizational levels. Budgeting for each imperative is done in the next phase. Finally, the imperatives and the budget are placed in the leadership planning meeting. After approval in the leadership planning meeting, the CEO kicks off the plan implementation for the following year”.

Board members participation in the strategic planning process give a glimpse of the serious commitment they have given to the organization and its growth. Unfortunately, from the three NGOs, we find the commitment to be little less.

It is interesting to note from the survey with chief functionaries that only 36.7% of the NGO board members are involved in the strategic planning/long term development-planning process in their organizations. The chart 3.6 given below clearly shows the fact.

Chart 3.6: Board Members in the Strategic Planning Process
3.2.8. Performance Appraisal of Board and CEO

Formal appraisal of the performance of the board members and the chief executive gives legitimacy and credibility to the organisation. It enhances the accountability status of the organisation. But in the NGOs taken for the study such practices were not systematic and regular, if not absent.

CASH does not have a formal performance appraisal process, but it has an informal reflection exercise. Desai shares the details:

“Our annual board meeting is an informal reflection exercise. It is conducted once in a year. Beneficiaries from the community are sometimes involved in such reflections. The CEO is part of the board and so his/her performance is not separately evaluated.”

ASD has a formal process of evaluation, which has been practised since the beginning. Ravi presents the aspect:

“The general body appoints a panel of evaluators, who review the performance of the top management staff. The lower and middle level staff can also share their feedback about the top management during the bi-monthly open interaction meeting, chaired by the president of the general body.”

There is a policy in NDA to review the performance of the CEO and that of the board members. But, according to the CEO, it’s not practised. She shares:

“I tell the board members every year to review my performance, but somehow they do not feel the need for it. They find me to be a person with integrity. May be, next time, I’ll ask them to review the performance of the CEO and push them to work out a framework to evaluate the board members too.”
The survey with 30 NGO chief functionaries in Mumbai also showed poor results in this area. Chart 3.7 reveals that only a meager 10% of the NGO boards conduct regular annual appraisal of the chief functionaries and the board members.

Chart 3.7: Annual Appraisal

3.2.9. Election of Board Members

In a democratic set up, elections are very important. Regular elections are vital to good governance not only in the arena of state, but also in the civil society.

The study revealed that CASH has never had an election for the Governing Board. Desai relates this partly to the difficulty in recruiting appropriate board members. He clarifies about the protocol set for hiring prospective board members:

“The potential member must be from the community and be able to openly reveal his identity to the family and other stakeholders without feeling shy or being fearful. He should have a long association with CASH. The potential board member should have belief in the vision and mission of CASH and should not have criminal record and should have integrity in all business transactions.”
Desai continues:

“A list of few people who fulfil all the criteria set by the board is maintained by the board. In case any incumbent board member retires or passes away, a person from the list is selected.”

So it is clear that the organisation is not keen to have regular elections. Mostly handpicked members are able to enter the governance/management sphere in the organisation.

In ASD, the general body members are nominated by the parent body. The general body in turn nominates the members to the executive committee/governing board of the organization. Twenty members are generally nominated.

Maju, the registrar, finds the process to be in tune with the policy of the institution. He argues:

“We are supposed to be an agency that follows the mandate of the parent body, so there is no scope for having an independent process of inducting primary members in the general body. The rules of the organization clearly place the mandate of choosing the executive committee on the parent body. We are just following the procedures established.”

In NDA, the CEO discusses profiles of prospective trustees with existing board members. Based on the profile of the candidate, he/she is inducted as trustee. Maria clarifies:

“Every trustee will at least get one full term, which is two years. But the set of current trustees are extremely good and they are with us for more than a term. During the trustee meetings, they select a chairperson and treasurer, who would anchor the organization. This is in vogue for quite some time now.”
It is a compelling fact that among the 30 NGOs surveyed, only 20% held regular elections for the board. In most of the organizations where people were interviewed, board members have remained unchanged for a long time. The chart 3.8 given below clearly shows the fact.

Chart 3.8: Election in NGOs

3.3. Programmes and Accountability

3.3.1. Need Identification and Programme Planning

It is imperative for the NGOs to involve beneficiaries in the need identification programme planning and program implementation process of the organisation. Beneficiary involvements in these three stages are key accountability indicators.

According to Pimple (Programme Manager), every programme/project in CASH is developed based on the needs identified and prioritised by the community and the outreach staff. Pandu, a community volunteer, vouches for the fact that CASH has always been in touch with ground reality. He shares one interesting example about the introduction of face-to-face advocacy programme.
“Earlier, the sexual minorities were harassed by the police and railway authorities in the city. When the community brought out this issue, a programme for intervention was devised. CASH appointed grassroots advocacy officers, who would interact directly (face-to-face) with the concerned authorities and help the sexual minorities. This programme, in particular, was a huge success. This also brought the community closer to the organization.”

According to Maju, ASD conducts a consultative meeting in the community before developing any programme. This ensures that the community takes ownership of the process. Berlin (a field staff in ASD) shares his perspective:

“Although project proposals are developed prior to implementation, ASD does not stick to the project plan rigidly. There is flexibility and scope for revision in the project, based on the needs of the local community.”

However, community members/beneficiaries are not involved in the project during the research phase in ASD. Muthuram (head of department) explains the reasons for the same:

“ASD engages in technological research and there is not much possibility to involve beneficiaries directly in research. However, during the revamping or redevelopment of projects, beneficiaries are involved. For example, we offered a new mechanised pottery system to the potter community. They not only gave feedback, but also shared valuable information on how to make it more people friendly.”

NDA positions itself as an enabling organization. Hence, it does not directly work much in the communities. It develops partnership with like-minded grassroots organizations and passionate individuals to achieve its goal.
At present, there are six types of partnership systems in NDA. They are as follows:

- **Grassroots funding** (for local organizations working on child rights issues)
- **Field action fellowships** (for individual activists working on securing rights of children in remote villages)
- **Research fellowships** (for individual researchers working on child rights issues)
- **Support to resource organizations** (for training and support organizations)
- **Support for state alliance** (for networks on child rights)
- **Nodal support** (for NDA representative organizations functioning at remote locations)

Kumaran (general manager, NDA) confirms that the team helps the partner grassroots organization to involve beneficiaries in the need identification and the programme planning process. The survey showed that 56.7% of the NGOs involve beneficiaries in the need identification and the programme planning process. The chart 3.9 given below elucidates the fact.

**Chart 3.9: Beneficiary Involvement in Need Identification**
3.3.2. Programmes related with Vision and Mission

In order to be accountable to multiple stakeholders, it is important for the organisation to develop programmes in tune with the vision and mission statement of the respective NGOs.

Desai asserts that while developing programmes in CASH, the mission and vision of the organization is not compromised at all. He shares:

“In 2006, a funding agency wanted to do a random clinical research on the beneficiaries. The funding agency came forward with a huge amount of money. CASH was only asked to run the programme. But the organization did not go ahead, as it is not only ethical, but also against the vision and mission of the organization.”

Muthuram (programme manager) feels that there is a clear link between the mission and work/programmes of the ASD. He elucidates:

“The proclaimed mission of ASD is to create an alternative path for sustainable development. This is reflected in the goals of the organization. For example, the mission set for ASD is to reduce global warming. ASD, in its own capacity, works on reducing conventional energy sources and develops alternative and sustainable use of non-conventional sources. Thus, a strong linkage is established between the mission, goals and programmes of the organization”.

According to Kumaran, there is a direct linkage between the programmes and the mission of NDA. He says:

“The mission of NDA is to enable people to take responsibility for the situation of a deprived child, and the programme. For example, the ‘say no to child labour campaign’ organised by us sought to bring people together to challenge child labour.”
In carrying out work properly in the field, good partnership is required between the grassroots organizations and the enabling organization. Kumaran believes that the main task of his department is to identify the ‘right’ grassroots (implementing) organization, which ensures congruency between programmes and mission. He enlightens further:

“When we look for partnerships, we look at the vision and mission of the prospective organization. Sometimes, there will be an aligning vision and mission statement, but the practice of NGO will be different. In that case, we do not continue our partnership. Thus, the implementing organizations’ trustworthiness is taken into account before starting the partnership process.”

NDA follows a very stringent procedure to fund a new organization. Kumar shares:

“When every new organization, a pre-funding report is prepared by the co-ordinator who visits the NGO for the first time. The report will give a preview about the programmes of the organization and its relationship with the vision-mission of NDA. In the first stage, the report is sent to the regional committee. If the committee finds congruence between the programme of the organization and the vision-mission of NDA, the head of the grassroots organization is called for a preliminary meeting. After the meeting, a note is sent to the trustees. After that process, the file is put up with the regional committee for approval. Only then is the organization considered for grant sanctioning.”

He continues:

“The process does not stop here. Our co-ordinator conducts regular check-ups. For continued assistance, an annual review is held by the state head. Thus, there are clear linkages between the grassroots organization programmes and vision-mission of NDA.”
Thus in all the three organisations, there is an on-going effort to have the vision-mission- programmes connect. Interestingly, the survey also showed some positive signs as 70% of the NGO chief functionaries felt that their programmes are directly related to their vision and mission. The chart 3.10 sheds some light on it.

Chart 3.10: Programme related with Vision and Mission

3.3.3. Sharing Objectives with Beneficiaries

Any accountable organisation is supposed to share the programme objectives with the beneficiaries. According to Pimple, CASH strives to share the objectives of the programmes with the wider community through peers/community leaders. He elaborates:

“*When the clients visit the drop-in centre, information about new programmes and its objectives are shared. Once a year, a mega event is organised mainly to inform the community about the work of CASH in the past financial year.*”

One of the major activities of ASD is training the community/beneficiaries in various rural technologies.
During the activities, the objective of the programme is shared, so that all beneficiaries are aware of the project objectives. Muthuram explains:

“During the call for training itself, we give information on the overall objectives of the project. Some of the beneficiaries may not be aware about the alternative perspective we offer. But they understand it during the training...”

Kumaran vouches for the fact that beneficiaries are the core constituency of the NDA’s work. He explains:

“Before we start funding the grassroots partner, we do a comprehensive situation analysis of the community. The comprehensive analysis covers social, economic, cultural and political information about the community. Following that, specific data related to children in the community is collected. One such data is on the school drop-outs in the community. In the next stage, the community is involved in preparing programmes to tackle the issues faced by them.”

NDA does not push its own agenda of child rights vehemently on the community. It tries to address the felt needs of the community and later integrates the child issue with larger issues in the community. Kumaran gives the details:

“As a matter of fact, we try to solve peripheral problems of community such as health care, gender, and unemployment issues before addressing the core child rights issues. Thus, we believe in creating holistic change in the community. Also, we conduct group discussions with the women in the community before developing programmes. This not only draws the participation of women, but also helps in making the community aware of the objectives of the programmes.”
The survey showed that 73.3% of the NGOs share the programme objectives with the beneficiaries, either directly or indirectly. The chart 3.11 given below elucidates the fact.

Chart 3.11: Sharing Objectives with Beneficiaries

![Chart showing the distribution of NGOs sharing programme objectives]

3.3.4. Monitoring and Evaluation Process

Monitoring and evaluation are part of the participatory governance and accountability processes. It helps in knowing the current status of the programmes, final impact of the programme and the learning which could be fed to the future programmes.

According to Desai, the programme monitoring system in CASH is very effective. He shares:

“Every programme in CASH is monitored at three levels. At the basic level are the field supervisors, who monitor the programmes on a day-to-day basis, and at the middle level is the programme monitoring unit headed by a programme manager, who monitors it on a weekly basis and at the highest level, is the project director and the CEO. A well-defined management information system is used by the top management to monitor all the projects in CASH.”
Desai recounts an incident that took place a while ago.

“The management information system evolved in CASH after a long meeting in September 2002. The entire team deconstructed its various activities into nine components and derived various indicators of each component. This process became the foundation of the present management information system.”

At present, CASH has developed its own MIS software, which tracks the existing thirteen projects and trails over 200 indicators effectively. In fact, now CASH is training other NGOs to set up their MIS software and is helping them to increase the efficiency of their programmes and projects.

CASH conducts both internal evaluation and external evaluation. In the internal evaluation, the community play a major role. Desai explains:

“During the first stage of internal evaluation, a group discussion is held among beneficiaries in the absence of staff. Then, the opinion is shared in the project review meeting in the presence of staff, who also give their input. Then, the evaluation findings are shared with the community and staff. The external or expert evaluation, which takes place later, takes the internal report into consideration. Lessons from the evaluation are also fed into the strategic plan, developed once in five years.”

In ASD, programmes are monitored in a decentralised way. Muthuram gives the details:

“The head of each department is normally the person in charge of the activities in the department. He or she is empowered to assign a senior staff in the division to supervise the programmes.”

During the past few years, an evaluation (both internal and external) process has been developed in ASD. Muthuram describes the process:
“An internal evaluation committee is nominated for each project. This committee includes the director, senior staff from accounts department, head of the department concerned, few senior staff from other projects and the project beneficiaries. The committee evaluates the project and submits a detailed technical report. The report is available to all stakeholders for inspection. Along with the internal evaluation, an external evaluation is conducted by the agency, which funds the programme. The agencies decide on the nature of evaluation and normally send a financial and programme inspection team for the same.”

Monitoring and evaluation of the programmes are an important aspect of the work of NDA as well. According to Kumaran, monitoring of programmes is done on a quarterly basis by the respective coordinator. He elaborates:

“Once a year, an annual review of programmes and finance is done by the regional team. Once in three years, a thorough financial risk assessment and mitigation review is done.”

Evaluation studies are also done in NDA by external professionals through a proper ‘terms of reference' system. The survey shows a bleak picture on beneficiary involvement in the programme monitoring and evaluation stages. To be precise, only 30% of the NGOs involve beneficiaries in these processes. A look at the chart 3.12 given below illustrates the information.

Table 3.12: Beneficiary involvement in M&E

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<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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3.3.5. Long Term Impact Assessment

Long term impact assessment studies are very important. It gives clarity to the organisation as what the organisation/project has accomplished and what the long term impacts are. Such long term impact assessment studies are conducted by CASH. The study usually happens every five years and before the next strategic plan meeting. The last impact assessment study took place in 2008.

ASD conducts long-term impact assessment studies. Jeya (research coordinator) explains:

“Post graduate and research students from different universities across India and abroad come to ASD for project exposure. ASD uses their services to document the long-term impact of the ASD projects in the communities. Some of the studies are kept in the library for reference and dissemination purpose. The ‘user study’ is another form of impact study designed by ASD. Recently, a study was conducted on the potter’s wheel project.”

The findings of these studies feed in to the programme planning and product development process of ASD.

In NDA, the long-term impact is studied in the form of validation visits. Kumaran explains the process:

“NDA organises a validation visit after the project period to record the learnings. The input of the local community is also taken, during the visit. The objective of the validation visit is to understand the programme in a holistic way and not only on the basis of targeted interventions. The learning forms the basis of the long-term plans.”

The table 3.13 given below provides an overview of the 30 NGOs. It reveals that only 23.3% NGOs conduct long-term impact assessment studies. Thus, it is evident that the NGOs are far away from evidence-based practice and intervention.
Table 3.13: Impact Assessment

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<td>23</td>
<td>77</td>
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3.3.6. Complaint Management Mechanisms for Beneficiaries

Beneficiary voice, protection and freedom of expression are vital for the holistic development of the organisation. In line with this, it is important to establish complaint mechanisms for beneficiaries.

CASH does not have a formal process of managing complaints from beneficiaries. ASD also does not have any formal procedures. However, during the general body meeting, any beneficiary can put up his demand or complaint. NDA is working on a policy to handle and receive complaints from stakeholders on sensitive issues such as sexual harassment or financial fraud.

The survey revealed that only 6.7% of the NGOs have a formal and protective mechanism for the beneficiaries to share their complaints and grievances. A look at the chart 3.14 given below highlights the sad state of affairs. This implies that beneficiary voice, protection and freedom of expression are compromised in many NGOs.
3.4. Resource Management and Accountability

3.4.1. HRM Policy

The HRM policy of the organisations should have components of recruitment procedures, benefits, reporting relationships, social security provisions, etc. All these components along with staff compliant redressal systems establish accountability in the organisation and outside.

Mahesh gives the human resource management process in CASH:

“Sensitivity, empathy and understanding about sexuality are the core requirements for the staff who work with CASH.”

Based on these points, a human resource management policy was developed by the agency. The policy is reviewed after every five years. Some of the important aspects in human resource management, which is covered in the policy, include:

- Recruitment procedure, induction and continuous training
- Contract and notice period, salary structure, increments and bonus
- Reporting
- Health insurance, provident fund and gratuity
• Travel and accommodation
• Leave and overtime
• General rules and regulations

In ASD, human resources management falls under the preview of Maju, the registrar. According to Maju, there are five types of human resources employees in the organization, namely:

• Fellows
• Scientists and Associates
• Technologists and Associates
• Consultants

Administrative and Allied Staff Fellows are eminent persons, who are nominated by the general body. The other positions are filled by the office of registrar through a formal process. The Human Resource Management Policy of ASD outlines the personal and welfare administration procedures.

One of the key things NDA looks for in a potential employee is the commitment to the cause.

According to Sekar (general manager, HR), in NDA, the human resource management policy and handbook lists out the desirable behaviour expected from the staff. The HR policy offers a semi-flexible timings approach, allowing the staff to work eight hours, according to their convenience. The system is flexible to accommodate the field staff, who spends most of their time in work-related travel and field work.

NDA has four operating regions (north, south, east and west) and job restructuring is done every five years. Manpower planning is done every year. According to the current plan, there are 105 profiles (roles) and 247 job positions. Out of the 247 job positions, 190 positions are currently filled.
The survey with the chief functionaries revealed that 70% of the NGOs have a Personnel/ Human Resource Management policy. The table 3.15 given below reflects this.

Chart 3.15: Availability of HRM Policy

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<th>No</th>
<th>30%</th>
<th>70%</th>
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### 3.4.2. Recruitment Process

There are two types of staff in CASH - programme staff and research staff. For the programme staff, the vacancy is normally at the grassroots level, which is in the level of peer educator, community health worker or outreach worker. In such situations, the vacancy is publicised in the community and a date is fixed, on which the interested candidates come for the exam, group discussion and personal interview.

Mahesh explains:

“The prospective candidates have to appear in an exam (on sexual health issues and ethical awareness) followed by a group discussion. Candidates shortlisted in the above process are called in for an interview. The candidate, who shows keen interest and commitment to the cause, is chosen by the panel.”
The middle-level position is held by senior staff, who has worked with CASH for many years. Mahesh maintains:

“The middle level position in the programme side is occupied by people, who have worked for 5-10 years in the grassroots level. Senior grassroots level staff, who show supervisory skills, are preferred for the middle level position.”

He continues:

“As far as research positions are concerned, the vacancy is typically at the middle level of research associate. The research associate has to report to the research manager, who is usually a senior person from the staff, who has 5-10 years of experience in research. The research associate position is open for anybody who is interested in sexual health issues. The minimum requirement is a master’s degree in social sciences, with experience in handling software such as SPSS. Usually, candidates are shortlisted by the research team itself through an initial talk. The CEO finally takes a formal interview and selects the most suitable candidate, based on merit and previous work experiences.”

In ASD, recruitment is a very formal process. Maju explains the recruitment process:

“The first stage in the recruitment process is the identification of manpower need in every department of the organization. The identification is done by the head of each division. Then, the proposal to recruit is tabled in the executive committee. After obtaining permission, advertisement is given in leading newspapers.”
He continues:

“In the second stage, the applications are scrutinised and eligible candidates are called in for a written exam, group discussion and interview. For the post of consultant and administrative assistants, only interviews are held.”

Revathi shares her experience:

“I came across the vacancy through a newspaper and applied for the post. I was called in for the interview after 15 days.”

Revathi continues:

“The interview panel had three people. They tested my social awareness, aptitude for field work and communication skills. After selection, I was asked to work with senior staff in the community for two months. After that, I started to work independently.”

Maju describes the post-selection process:

“Once a candidate is selected, he/she is offered an initial contract of one year with a probation period of two to three months. During the probation period, the working ability of the candidate is closely monitored by the head of the department. After positive reports from the head, the candidate is placed on regular rolls. There is an annual appraisal process done by immediate supervisors. Based on the appraisal, the contract is either extended or terminated.”

According to Sekar, every position in NDA is clearly defined. He explains the recruitment process:

“At the first level, vacancy is advertised. We have recruitment facilitator software, which helps the recruitment team to shortlist appropriate résumés. It is necessary to have the software because we receive around 14,000 applications for 40-odd posts, which open up every year”.

He continues:

“At the second level, the line manager prepares the list of eligible candidates. At the third stage, a telephonic interview is done to access the initial aptitude and seriousness of the applicant. Then a formal call for interview is given through email/post. At the next level, the technical and HR interviews are conducted simultaneously. The line department verifies the technical qualifications and abilities. The HR department verifies job history and the attitude of the candidate. Finally, on a predetermined date, a behavioural event interview (BEI) is held to objectively verify the competency. Following the BEI, the final interview is conducted by the regional head of NDA.”

Manoj (assistant manager, development support) has worked with many rights-based organizations in the country. According to him, the recruitment process in NDA is a unique one. He explains:

“There are different interviews such as telephonic interview, HR interview, technical interview, behavioural event interview, and interview with regional head. These are very rigorous exercises and the entire process takes almost two months. This way, NDA gets the best staff.”

The survey revealed that 50% of the NGOs have a person in charge of the Human Resource Management function. But, unfortunately, in many of these NGOs, the designation- ‘Human Resource Manager’- is not given to the person taking care of the function. In small NGOs, administration officer/accountant takes care of most of the roles and duties of human resource manager/personal manager.

The chart 3.16 given shows the statistical information.
3.4.3. Staff Induction, Training and Development

Accountability can be cultivated in the new and experienced staff through the induction, training and development programmes of the organisation. Hence care should be given in the development and management of each of these programmes.

In CASH, all new members undergo an induction programme and are given handholding for a month or so by the seniors or the team leader. Staff is regularly trained during the staff development workshops to ensure they become competent and professional.

Prakash, Outreach Worker in CASH shares the following opinion:

“The training helped me deal with police, government agencies and public, who may attack sexual minorities.”
Prem, another Outreach Worker recounts:

“The sexuality training gave me the confidence and maturity to open up to my parents about my sexual orientation. I was able to handle their gruesome questioning and, today, I am happily living with them.”

Along with general staff development programmes, the educational support system developed in CASH is very useful. Mahesh shares his own experience:

“There was a requirement of a trained social worker in the organization. The trustees found that I have the right aptitude for it. Hence, they sponsored the educational expenditure and helped me obtain a social work degree from a renowned institute in Asia. Even now, I am continuing to work with them.”

Thus, the organizational and manpower need in CASH is met through capacity development of its own staff.

In ASD, induction training takes care of the ideological underpinnings to the work and the professional knowledge base. Berlin, a junior staff, comments:

“Once a staff member is inducted into the organization, he or she would be exposed to various professional development programmes, both within and outside the organization. Moreover, ideological orientation and training is imparted to them.”

Revathi identifies one basic quality, which ASD expects from its staff. She expresses:

“ASD is committed to social change. This is the core idea behind all the projects developed by the organization. Many staff members that have joined ASD were not aware of the progressive movement and its activities, but were somewhere committed for social change.”
She continues:

“Staff development and training programmes impart information on alternative development paradigm and help the staff understand the problems of the rural population. The programmes challenge us to use science for constructive and sustainable development.”

NDA conducts two to three day orientation programmes. At the end of the orientation, an overview of the functions and partners are given. After the orientation, the probation period begins. There are two stages in the probation period. The first two months are called the learning stage and the remaining four months are called the performing stage. Sekar explains the process:

“In the first two months, an orientation by ‘walking around’ technique happens. The newcomer is introduced to teams and functions. A project visit is also done. Some reading material and case studies of the work are also given to orient the newcomer to the field. In the next four months, key focus areas are identified for every individual newcomer. At the end of six months, the performance is measured in the key focus areas. Then, a report is prepared by the immediate supervisor. Based on the report, job confirmation is done.”

According to Manoj, the induction programme is very systematic as it gives the required information for performing better in the child rights sector.

NDA also organises internal function level training and core management training for its employees. These trainings are intended to increase the skill of the staff. However, NDA has not been able to send its staff outside for training and capacity building. Manoj remembers the PME workshop, PRAXIS training, and the finance and risk management workshop, which was part of the capacity-building initiatives of NDA. He feels that these trainings helped him to perform better.
It is interesting to note that most of the chief functionaries of the NGOs surveyed shared that regular staff training and development programmes are conducted for the NGO staff. The chart 3.17 given below shows that 86.7% of the NGOs has such programmes.

Chart 3.17: Staff Training

3.4.4. Organizational Culture, Feedback and Supervision

Feedback is the information of particular behaviours and action shared by a supervisor with the supervisee. The same is possible in a supervisory relationship. Such relations are important for establishing accountability in the HRM realm.

An important component of human resource management system in CASH is the feedback and supervision method. This method has been the backbone of CASH and has helped it maintain a higher retention level of staff. Prem speaks his mind:

“Feedback and supervision is an on-going process, where junior and senior staff interacts and help each other. In the ongoing process, none of the junior staff is put down in public for his/her performance. This method wins the appreciation of the junior staff.”
In ASD, organizational climate is very conducive to the overall growth of the individuals. Berlin elucidates:

“There is no pressure in ASD. We (the staff) are not given targets here. Instead, we are given the responsibility to act in a meaningful way. This enables us to pace the project in a way that makes the community comfortable.”

Revathi adds:

“The lack of targeted approach ensures that the staff is not pressurised. The learning environment and the timely recognition of good work lead to better performance of staff in ASD.”

In NDA, the feedback system is formal. Work-related feedback is given once a month and the performance is evaluated every year. There is no financial rewards scheme for top performance, but there is a rating system followed, which motivates the staff to do better each time.

According to Manoj, there is tremendous scope for learning in NDA. Personally, he feels that he is able to understand various perspectives during his engagement with his seniors.

Savitha is working with NDA for the past 14 years and Manoj has been associated with NDA for the past two years. One thing they both like about the organization in common is the openness and friendly atmosphere in the organization. Manoj admits that the cordial work environment has allowed him to perform without fear. Savitha comes from a management background. She explains her observations on NDA.

“In the organization I worked with before, I had to address my seniors as ‘sir’ or ‘madam’. There was a hierarchy in the relationships. But, in NDA, everyone is treated equally. This informal environment helps the newcomer feel relaxed and helps them to do their work without any pressure or intimidation.”
The survey with the chief functionaries revealed that 70% of the NGOs have a supervisory structure with reporting mechanisms in place. The chart 3.18 given below shows the fact.

Chart 3.18: Supervisory Structure

3.4.5. Accounting and Auditing Systems

Accounting and audit system form the basis of a sound financial management culture in the organisation. It helps the organisation establish accountability with multiple stakeholders.

The finance and accounts head of CASH believes that a sound financial management system is important for good governance. Hence, a separate department of finance was created in 1994. At present, there are 12 members in the finance department. Nine out of the 12 are assistant accountants, as the organization has ‘one assistant accountant for one project’ policy. This helps in recording the financial transactions on a day-to-day basis. All the assistant accountants report to the finance manager.

According to Robin (finance manager), there are four major tasks before the finance department, namely budgeting, accounting, asset management and auditing. All the project accountants are involved in these tasks for their particular projects.
Robin explains:

“Once a month, accountants submit the individual project finance report, which is consolidated by the finance manager. The consolidated report is sent to the CEO for verification and authorization, before it is submitted to the donors. Annual accounts are finally audited by a chartered accounting firm and are made available to all the stakeholders.”

According to Robin, internal audit precedes the external audit. He says:

“Board members participate in the internal audit exercise. This helps the board to have an eye on whether the organization receives funds in consistence with its mission and goals.”

In ASD, there are four people in the finance department. The head of the department is Kutty. He is ably supported by one senior accountant, one cashier and one office assistant.

According to Kutty, the finance department has the following functions:

- Fund Management
- Auditing
- Financial Reporting

Kutty explains the protocol followed in fund management:

“Firstly, the funding agency deposits the money in a separate account. Then, the head of the department sanctions the project advance. The staff claims the money from the cashier. The project staff spends the money for the particular purpose and submits the bills and vouchers to the accountant through the head of the department. Based on this, the accountant prepares the monthly statement for each project. The finance manager, then, prepares a financial report. Once in six months, a periodic project performance report is submitted to the executive committee.”
In ASD, there are two types of auditing. One is the internal audit headed by an executive committee member and the other is the external audit done by a chartered accountant. The finance manager compiles the audited statements and the details are included in the annual report.

In NDA, the finance department is one of the largest departments in the organization. It is lead by a general manager (finance). He reports to the director (finance, IT and planning). There are two major frameworks governing the finance department. One is the standard operating procedure and the other is the statutory accounting policy. These key policies help in streaming the national-level accounting processes in NDA.

The department organigram is presented below.

Fig 3.5: Finance Department Structure, NDA
According to Deepak, associate general manager ((finance- head quarters)), the finance department in NDA is ISO 9001 2008 certified. There are two types of audit in NDA, namely internal and external.

Deepak shares:

“The internal audits happen every month. During each month, a regional office or a department in the head office is individually audited as a unit. Based on the audit, a mitigation plan is developed. The concerned regional office or department develops a compliance plan, which is quickly followed up by the audit team.”

He continues:

“There are three kinds of external audits in NDA. One is the annual certification audit for the FCRA. The audit report is sent to the ministry of home affairs. The second is the statutory annual general audit. Thirdly, a systems audit is conducted by an external agency to check the IT/ software strength.”

NDA has a pro-donor policy, which obligates the staff to share information and act in an accountable manner. Deepak clarifies:

“As far as the finance team is concerned, the satisfaction of the donors is very important. We believe that the donors have all the right to know how their money is spent. So for every penny they give, a detailed cost calendar is prepared, which states the fundraising cost, administrative cost, and project actual expenditure. This gives a clear picture to the donor.”

The survey conducted with chief functionaries of different NGOs showed that all the organizations (100%) have a formal accounting and auditing system in place.
3.4.6. Fraud Prevention and Grievance Redressal Systems

Formal systems to register complaints and management of such complaints is important to establish accountability towards staff, the key stakeholders of the NGOs.

CASH does not have a formal complaint system to report internal fraud, corruption, and sexual harassment.

Even though there is no formal system of grievance redressal in ASD, the staff can make use of the open house meeting held once in two months to vent out their issues. According to Berlin, the open house is also a forum for discussing ideological and technical issues.

According to Kutty, so far, there has been no financial misappropriation or related issues in ASD. He is insistent that everything about finance is open in ASD. He discloses:

“There is no fraud incident in the past. However, an informal system of reporting fraud is available. The pursuer can complain in the executive committee meeting or can meet the chairperson directly. Action will be taken immediately.”

In NDA, the staff is free to express its grievances. However, both Manoj and Savitha, the staff interviewed, are not aware of a formal grievance redressal mechanism in NDA.

The survey with the chief functionaries in Mumbai also revealed that a very meagre 6.7% of the NGOs have a formal structures to report sexual harassment, corruption, harassment and fraud. The chart 3.19 given below shows the fact.
3.5. Challenges to Practising Accountability

3.5.1. View of CASH

According to Desai, the biggest challenge in practising accountability as an organization is the counter-accountability problem. According to him, the problem arises every now and then. Desai explains:

“If a funding agency gives ‘x’ amount of money to do “y” work, the NGO is responsible to carry out the action. The funding agency has the right to seek answers for its money. But if funding agency tries to invade into other programmes of the organization, it becomes problematic. For example, if the NGO pays 25% of a staff’s salary from a particular project, the NGO is accountable to the funding agency only for the 25%. The NGO can always go ahead and show where the rest of the staff’s salary (75%) comes from. But if the funding agency dictates how the employees have to be used, or how the new programme should be developed, then it is over stepping..”

Chart 3.19: Staff Complaints Management System
According to Desai, sometimes funding agencies in the name of accountability take over the agenda of organizations. He argues:

“The funding agencies bring in top-down measuring instruments and try to evaluative the performances. But seldom do they understand that targeted intervention approach is often driving NGOs to use and see community like objects.”

Desai recollects an incident.

“It is the right of the funding agency to know whether the money is spend on beneficiaries, but providing the complete list of people who seek sexual health services may potentially lead to the exposure of their identity, which may harm the reputation of the NGO within the community.”

Desai continues:

“May be, the funding agencies can use the medical stock register, and periodic visits as alternatives to seeking the complete profile of beneficiaries. So I think that participatory assessment of NGO performance is better approach than a top-down approach.”

According to Desai, sometimes, staff and community members are also irresponsible. Once there was an allegation on him which he vividly narrates:

“In 2005, I took a loan from a bank to purchase a second hand car. Soon after the purchase, there was gossip in the office that I might have misappropriated the funds. But I cannot go to everyone and say that I have not embezzled the funds. The only way out was to convene a board meeting, where I had to show all the papers. Finally, the board gave a clean chit and put an end to the speculation by holding a staff meeting in which the entire story was discussed.”
3.5.2. View of ASD

Ravi feels that any organization, which deals with public money, is accountable to all the parties concerned. ASD is no different from any other NGOs.

He asserts:

“Primarily, it is important for the NGOs to be accountable to the people in the community, the donors, who support the work, and the general body/ governing board of the organization.”

Ravi feels that the challenge of practising accountability comes primarily because of the informality of functioning. He begins:

“Most people say that maintaining informality in work is the major strength of the NGOs, as it increases the performance of the staff. But one should also remember that the same informality is responsible for many problems in the organization, including gossips, unproductive work and improper time management.”

Ravi adds:

“Although informality brings in the comradeship, the negative effect is also alarming. In my opinion, informality leads to lack of responsibility. For example, some of our colleagues are doing voluntary work. If we want them to write daily or weekly report of their work, they feel that the organization is behind them and lose interest in work. But report writing is an important part of work and is the responsibility of the colleague. But seldom do they realise the importance of it. This is a serious accountability issue.”

3.5.3. View of NDA

Maria, the CEO of NDA, uncovers the nuances of accountability in the following manner:
“In the corporate sector, there are regulations, which enforce accountability. The shareholders will hold the company accountable to them. But in the NGO sector, there is no such strong stakeholder. In fact, the primary stakeholder (i.e. the beneficiaries) is extremely disempowered that they can never have the power to hold the NGO accountable. May be, in the case of small NGOs, the large donors are so powerful that they enforce accountability. But in the case of big organizations like us (NDA), there is no such ‘one big donor’. NDA has hundreds of donors. So in that case, we have to drive ourselves to be accountable.”

Maria continues:

“We hold the state accountable to our primary constituency (children). We also realised that we have self-appointed ourselves on behalf of the primary constituency (children) so we are doubly accountable. Hence, in NDA, we literally sat down and wrote what we meant to be accountable, in 1998. Since then, NDA has been aware and responsive to the stakeholder needs.”

For Maria, the major challenge is to make the partners understand the importance of being accountable to others.

“The main challenge we have faced regarding accountability is with our partners. Most of our partner organizations are run by activists, who never feel the need to be accountable to others, because they feel that their intentions are good. We have made serious attempts to make them understand about accountability.”

Kumaran also supports the view. He explains:

“Most of our grassroots partner organizations are emotionally connected to the issue, but fail to understand the need for developing strong accountable systems. So the test is to make them conscious of the accountability challenges”.

He adds:

“We have to constantly keep a check on the mission and value systems of the partner organizations. In an era of funding dependency, some organizations tend to change these things for their existence, so we have to keep them motivated. This is another major challenge.”

Sekar finds accountability as a double-edged sword. He explains;

“Questioning every decision made for the sake of accountability hinders the senior management from taking decisions on its own. So questioning is a double edge sword, isn’t it?”

3.6 Summary

3.6.1. Accountability in Governance

- **Vision and Mission Statement**

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 21 participants in three NGOs. Thereafter, a survey was conducted with CEOs of 30 NGOs in Mumbai. From the data, it is evident that the staff knew about the statements. 63.3% of the NGOs surveyed in the second phase of the study have known the vision-mission statements.

- **Separation of Board and Executive Staff**

The three NGOs taken in the first phase have different governance systems. In CASH, three board members are senior level executive staff as well. In fact, the CEO is a trustee. He does not feel the need for clear separation of board from the executive.

In ASD, instead of a governing board, there are two entities, namely the general body (GB) and the executive committee (EC). The roles of these two entities are defined in the constitution and rules of the organization. The general body of ASD appoints the senior executive staff of the organization.
But the senior executive staff members are primary members of the progressive movement (PM), which is the parent organization of ASD. Hence, the line between the GB, EC and senior executive staff is thin and overlapping.

In NDA, the board and executive staff are differentiated. None of the board members can be executive staff. However, there is not much clarity on the task of the board members. The senior executive staff, namely the CEO, assumes most of the governance-related roles and functions.

Even among the NGOs taken for the survey, only 36.7% of them have a clear separation between the board and the executive staff. This reveals the crisis and the lack of proper governance systems in most of the NGOs.

- **Conflict Resolution Policy/ Process**

In CASH, there is a well-defined conflict resolution policy, which restricts a board member with conflict of interest from taking part in the decision making process during the concerned board meeting.

NDA has an oral tradition of managing conflict of interest. According to NDA members, no large donor representative is allowed to be part of the board. ASD does not have such policy. The survey conducted with NGOs reveals that only 23.3% of the NGOs have a conflict resolution policy. This is a key issue which needs immediate attention.

- **Beneficiary Participation in Decision Making Process**

In CASH, the board meets once in four months. Rarely, community members are invited for board meetings. In NDA, the board meets once in three months. Beneficiaries are not involved in the board meetings. In ASD, beneficiaries are not involved in the General Body or Executive Committee meetings. The survey results reveal that none of the 30 NGOs had ever made attempts to include beneficiaries in the board/ decision-making processes.
• Dissemination of Board’s Decisions to Stakeholders

According to the CEO of CASH, the board decisions are disseminated through mediums like Google groups. But whether they reach all the stakeholders is an unanswered question. In ASD, the minutes of the general body meeting are circulated only to the General Body members. So other stakeholders cannot access information related to the board decisions. In NDA, the decision is communicated through the CEO to the staff. In all the three organizations, there is no hard evidence to prove the same. Only 36.7% of the respondents agreed to have disseminated board information to stakeholders.

• Dissemination of Achievements and Financials

In all the three organizations, the annual reports and the websites are the main mediums for dissemination of achievements. All the three organizations produce annual report and they have uploaded the annual reports in their respective websites. But only ASD gives the details of financial transitions clearly to viewers. In NDA, the financial statements have the nearest approximation and not the real numbers. The survey results show that 53.3% of the NGOs share achievements through annual reports. However, the major worry is the lack of will among many NGOs to openly share the audited financial statements through the annual reports on their websites.

• Board’s involvement in the Strategic Planning Process

Strategic planning process allows for maximum stakeholder involvement in defining the vision, goals and objectives of the programmes. But barring CASH, the other organizations were not so keen about the same. In CASH, the board members are actively involved in the strategic planning process. In ASD, there is no history of strategic planning for the organization. The parent organization makes such plan. In NDA, there is not much involvement of the board in the strategic planning process. The CEO and the managing committee consisting of senior staff lead the process. Interestingly, some of these senior staff members are those who worked with the founder-trustee. Hence, their participation and leadership role is more than that of the board.
The survey results reveal that only 36.7% of the NGO board members are involved in the strategic/long term planning process. This brings to light the poor contribution of the board members in the strategic management of the NGOs.

- **Regular Performance Appraisal of Board and CEO**

The performance of the Executive Committee is not reviewed in ASD. However, the performance of the Director and Registrar is reviewed by a panel appointed by the General Body. In CASH, beneficiaries were sometimes involved in a reflection exercise (which is not a formal appraisal). In NDA, the board is reluctant to evaluate the CEO. There is no regular appraisal of its own work either.

The survey findings also highlight the poor state of affairs, as only 10% of the NGOs regularly have annual appraisal of the chief executive officer.

- **Regular Election of Board Members**

Election is an important aspect in governance. But in most of the NGOs taken for the study, elections did not take place properly. Some sort of selection or nomination process was observed in the organizations.

In CASH, there is no history of elections. The CEO cites the difficulty in finding appropriate board members as the main reason for not having regular elections. However, the argument does not have much merit. In ASD also, there is no history of election. The GB members are nominated by the parent body for a period of two years.

In NDA, the criterion for selection of new trustees is not very clear. However, a trustee once selected gets a maximum of two terms. Only 20% of the NGOs taken for the survey had regular elections. These findings reveal the lack of will among the NGO founders/incumbent trustees to conduct proper elections.
3.6.2. Accountability in Programmes

- **Beneficiary Participation in Need Identification**

Involving beneficiaries in need identification process is very important for the organizations. In CASH, programmes are developed based on the needs identified and prioritised by the community and the outreach staff. In NDA also, beneficiaries are involved in need identification. But in ASD, the need is identified through expert committees. The survey results show 56.7% of the NGOs involving beneficiaries in the need identification and programme planning process. The trend is very positive, as it helps the NGOs in gaining legitimacy in the community.

- **Programme related to Vision and Mission**

Vision, mission and value statement give direction to the organization. In all three organizations, the programmes developed are related to the vision and mission statement of the respective organizations. Even 70% of the NGOs surveyed had the programmes related to the vision and mission. This is an encouraging development in the voluntary and community organizations sector.

- **Sharing the Programme Objectives with Beneficiaries**

Sharing of the programme objectives with the beneficiaries will help in better understanding and participation. In CASH, objectives are shared through community leaders and peers. In ASD, not much effort is made to share the objectives prior to implementation.

In NDA, programme objectives are shared through women, who participate in the community groups. So there is diversity in all the three organizations. 73.3% of the NGOs taken for the survey admitted that they share programme objectives with beneficiaries.
• **Involvement of Beneficiaries in Monitoring and Evaluation**

Involving beneficiaries in the programme monitoring and evaluation gives a feeling that you are valued in the organization. In CASH, beneficiaries are involved in internal evaluation, but programme monitoring is completely done by the staff. In ASD also, beneficiaries are involved in internal evaluation. But programme monitoring was completely done by the staff. But in NDA, programme is monitored by staff and evaluation is done by external professionals. The survey results revealed that only 30% of the NGOs involved beneficiaries in the monitoring and evaluation process.

• **Long Term Impact Assessment**

Long term impact assessment helps organizations to find their actual impact on the field. Long term impact assessment studies are conducted by both CASH and ASD. In the case of NDA, instead of long term evaluation, institutional level validation visits are organised to understand the impact. But only 23.3% of the NGOs taken for the survey had any such practices.

• **Complaint Management System (for Beneficiaries)**

Establishing a sound External Complaint Management System (ECMS) is very important to gain the trust of the beneficiaries.

Unfortunately, there is no formal ECMS in all three organizations. But informal space is available in all the three organizations for the beneficiaries to share their grievance.

Only 6.7% of the NGO heads, who participated in the survey, confessed that they have a formal ECMS. This compromises the value of beneficiary voice. It reduces beneficiaries to passive aid recipients.
3.6.3. **Accountability in Resource Management**

- **Availability of an HRM policy**

Human resource policy set out formal rules and regulations with respect to hiring, training, assessing and rewarding human resources in the organization. All three organizations have a human resource management policy of their own. The policy was either developed internally or through external consultants. Almost 70% of the NGOs have a HRM policy for their respective NGOs.

- **Proper Recruitment Process**

To increase efficiency and to retain staff, a proper recruitment process in required in the organization. In all three organizations, there is a proper recruitment process in place. The recruitment process is guided by the HRM policies of the respective organizations.

In CASH, there are a set core criteria (the applicant should be a sexual minority or should have awareness on sexuality) for selection of the new staff. The recruitment is done according to the existing categories, namely programme, research and administration.

In ASD, there is no set criterion for selection. Candidates are selected on open merit basis only. On the other hand, fellow positions (a high rank with or without remuneration) are filled by the GB directly. The other positions are filled by the office of the registrar.

In NDA, manpower need analysis is done properly and profiles/ job descriptions are developed well in advance. Corporate style lengthier recruitment process (advertisement, listing, telephonic interview, preliminary interview, BEI final interview, etc.) is followed. Surprisingly, only 50% of the NGOs, which participated in the survey, have a proper recruitment process.
• **Proper Staff Training and Development Process**

Training and development is an important human resource management function.

In CASH, there is semi-formal induction training. Staff development workshops are also held often. The educational support programme (part of the staff development initiative) in CASH has helped staff members complete their formal education.

In ASD, there is induction training. Staff trainings are held often. The staff is sent for external training also.

In NDA, formal induction and orientation is given to the individual or to a team of freshers. Staff development workshops are conducted on key areas such as PME, financial risk assessment, etc. The only limitation is that all the trainings are in-house. There is no external training option.

Almost 87.7% of the NGOs surveyed have some form of staff training and development programme. This is an encouraging sign.

• **Proper Feedback and Supervision**

Feedback and supervision are two important aspects of staff management. In CASH, supervision is in the form of weekly monitoring. Proper feedback is given on performances. In ASD, specific responsibilities are given and the results are appraised. In NDA, formal feedback is given on a monthly basis. Job performances are ranked. But there is no monetary incentive for higher ranks. Around 70% of the NGOs had some form of a supervisory structure.

• **Internal Complaint Management System (for Staff)**

Irrespective of the size of the organization, a formal Internal Complaint Management System (ICMS) is much needed. NGOs should encourage complaints in two major areas, namely gender equity/sexual harassment and financial misappropriation.
In all three organizations, there is no ICMS or whistle blower policy to address issues of financial fraud/ corruption.

Only 6.7% of the NGOs, which participated in the survey, have a system to report complaints related to sexual harassment, violence and financial mismanagement.

- **Proper Accounting and Auditing System and Policies**

There is proper accounting and auditing system and policies in all three organizations. In CASH, monthly financial reports are prepared and send to donors. In ASD, along with monthly statements, six-monthly periodic performance reports are prepared. Auditing is done once a year. In NDA, internal audit is done for each department, region as well as for the entire organization. Moreover, three kinds of external audits are done, namely the FCRA certification audit, annual general audit and IT systems audit. All NGOs that participated in the survey had an accounting and auditing system in place.

### 3.6.4. Perceived Challenges of Practising Accountability

- **Perceived Challenges in the Donor and Beneficiary Circle**

The CEO of CASH states that accountability is a two way process. According to him, the biggest challenge is when others (stakeholders) do not reciprocate. He calls this as the counter accountability problem. Particularly, he complains that sometimes funding agencies overstep their roles in the name of accountability, but do not show responsibility towards the NGO.

- **Perceived Challenges in the Staff Circle**

The Director of ASD feels that the informality of the organizational functioning sometimes leads to non-productive work, which is a challenge to accountability. The HR manager of NDA opines that sometimes the staff tends to be irresponsible when there is lack of rigid hierarchy.
The CEO of CASH goes a step ahead and says that the irresponsible words and action of the staff leads to frustration.

- **Perceived Challenges from Within**

The CEO of NDA says that the challenge lack of strong stakeholder who/which can hold the NGO accountable. Hence, at most times, the NGO has to drive itself to be accountable.

### 3.6.5. Observations

From the data, one can infer that most of the organizations try to become accountable in terms of dissemination of achievements to all the concerned stakeholders; developing programmes in relation to the vision and mission statement of the organization; having a HRM policy, following basic recruitment procedures and conducting staff development trainings; providing feedback to the staff; and having regular financial accounting and auditing.

But in key areas such as beneficiary participation in decision making; performance appraisal of board and CEO; election; and in establishing formal complaint management systems for beneficiaries and staff, the NGOs are struggling to establish accountable practices.