



A STUDY OF EXPLORING SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION PROJECTS IN THE TRINCOMALEE DISTRICT

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Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a vital role as the driving force for positive change, and their contribution to sustainable management is particularly prominent in this fast-evolving world. In recent years, Sustainable management techniques have been given more attention by NGOs, highlighting their growing significance. Trincomalee faces challenges in implementing sustainable management practices in NGOs, leading to increased costs, delays, and reduced quality. The insufficient integration of sustainable management practices significantly contributes to project failures within these NGOs. Moreover, there exists a research gap concerning sustainable management practices, particularly within NGOs operating in the Trincomalee district. This research is an attempt to identify the best sustainable management practices applied to projects in Sri Lankan non-governmental organizations. It explores how sustainable management is focused on NGOs' contribution to accomplish the projects and highlights the unique aspects and focus areas of sustainability management within the broader management field in Sri Lankan non-governmental organizations. Furthermore, two sub-objectives emerge from this study. It aims to identify the sustainable management practices employed in projects carried out by non-governmental organizations in the Trincomalee district, and to assess the feasibility of integrating sustainable management practices into these projects. The research aims to utilize a qualitative approach. To achieve this, the researcher selected five non-governmental organizations currently engaged in projects within the Trincomalee district. Thereby, interviews were conducted with the project officers associated with these organizations. In addition to this it explores the importance of sustainable management practices in the environmental, economic, and social aspects of a project. It highlights the need for compliance with local regulations, efficient energy and resource usage, and minimizing waste. Environmental practices include awareness programs, training, and reducing non-biodegradable waste. Economic practices involve job creation, technological innovation, and the development of green products. Social practices focus on worker rights, safer working conditions, partnerships, and increased disclosure of information. These practices can improve the growth of organizations and lead to successful project output.

Keywords: project management, practices, sustainable management, non-governmental organization

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INTRODUCTION

Sustainability has become a widely used keyword in the past two decades, as everything can be matched or paired with it (Scoones, 2007). In project management, sustainability has gained significant attention (Tam, 2010). This is particularly crucial for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as they operate in diverse communities and aim to address various social, environmental, and economic challenges (Chofreh et al., 2019). According to Miller's statement, Social, economic, and environmental factors constitute the three pillars of sustainability. In Sri Lanka, projects are undertaken by both the public and private sectors. A study conducted on the projects undertaken by NGOs in the Trincomalee District of Sri Lanka revealed the need for a comprehensive approach to the sustainability of project management. The lack of such practices is a significant reason for the failure of many projects in Sri Lanka. Therefore, this research aims to raise awareness about sustainable management practices in NGO projects.

The aim of this research study is, to identify the best sustainable management practices in NGOs. Furthermore, sub objectives of the study are, to understand how NGOs pursue their sustainable management practices, to identify the benefits of using sustainable management practices in NGOs and to recommend the best sustainable management practices for NGOs. The purpose of this study is to investigate how the methodologies of sustainable management can be applied to these projects, aiming to identify practices that belonging the category of sustainable management and to deepen our understanding of the sustainable management practices utilized by NGOs. Finally it will introduce these practices and guide NGOs in applying them to enhance the success of both current and future projects.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, a qualitative methodology was employed to investigate the sustainable management practices of NGO projects in the Trincomalee district. Moreover, semi-structured interviews were used to collect primary data and thematic analysis was used to uncovering insights into people's views, opinions, knowledge, experiences, and values from qualitative data (Caulfield, 2019). The result has been generated based on the following coding for the selected NGO's (O) and respondents (R). LEADS and APAD are both situated in Trincomalee and have project officers designated as R1 and R2, respectively. Global Ehsan Relief Sri Lanka, Al Hikmah Foundation, and Serving Humanity Foundation are based in Kinniya, with respondents identified as MEAL Officer R3, Project Assistant R4, and Project Assistant R5, respectively. Each NGO has a specific respondent assigned, indicated by their code numbers and roles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

NGOs in emerging countries like Sri Lanka, particularly in Trincomalee District, play a vital role in promoting sustainable development and community resilience, highlighting the importance of sustainable management practices for their long-term success.



Q1 Projects Launched by Non-governmental organizations

This category explains in general; the term "projects" can refer to a wide range of initiatives or undertakings that involve the planning, development, and execution of specific goals or objectives. It can be large or small and can be focused on a variety of areas such as sustainable management, product development, research, marketing, and more. The project officers, who are also the respondents are practicing several projects in their NGOs.

NGO O1, R1, focuses on community improvement endeavours, conciliation and peaceful harmony, and SDG development. NGO O2, R2, is involved in disaster preparedness and educational support during the Covid-19 pandemic, emphasizing volunteer involvement. NGO O3, R3, undertakes projects related to water sanitation facilities (such as tube wells and deep wells), food aid distribution, orphanage welfare initiatives, support for the elderly and disabled, assistance programs for single mothers, emergency relief during the pandemic, and community infrastructure development. NGO O4, R4, provides financial and technical support during the pandemic, implements water sanitation facilities, engages in housing reconstruction and provision initiatives, runs livelihood rehabilitation programs for those affected by natural disasters, and promotes peacebuilding awareness and multilingualism. Finally, NGO O5, R5, focuses on creating inclusive employment opportunities, promoting equality through language programs, and conducting religious awareness initiatives.

Q2 Integration of Sustainable Management Practices in Projects.

This category explains that Many NGOs place a strong emphasis on sustainability and may consider sustainable management practices as an important aspect of their projects. From the responses, it can be assumed that the NGOs are considering sustainability management practices. According to the statements, four out of five respondents fully agreed that NGOs are considering sustainability management practices. R3 highlighted their approach in livelihood projects, mentioning, *"We provide sewing machines to single mothers, and after one or two years, we assess their progress to ensure sustainability."*

However, one respondent indicated that while they consider sustainable management practices for some projects, R4 *"It's not implemented across all projects"*.

Q3 Environmental, Economic, and Social sustainable practices in projects.

This category explains sustainable practices that are used in the NGOs to achieve the success of Projects. For NGOs to succeed in their projects, they need to use sustainable practices. These practices are key to making a long-term impact and supporting communities and the environment. The three main parts of sustainability are environmental, economic, and social. Each part helps NGOs reach their goals in an efficient and effective way (Shukree et al., 2020).

Table 03: Sustainable Practices in NGOs

Source: collected data by author (2024)

NGOs	Types of SMP	Sustainable Management Practices (SMP)
O1	Environment	Arrange the awareness program to the staff and the peoples to prevent the environmental pollutions.
	Economic	Introducing new economic systems.
	Social	Increases the relationship confidence among the service providers and the peoples.
O2	Environment	Train forces, Conducting awareness programs.



	Economic	Creating financial supporters or partners.
	Social	Conducting platform meetings every moth for the civil society and the public.
O3	Environment	Awareness programs to the people to get rid of disasters and prevention of the disasters, Considering geographical positions.
	Economic	Evaluating the sustainable management practices using periodic reports.
	Social	Encouraging people to participate in social events.
O4	Environment	Reducing the usage of non-bio gradable things.
	Economic	Implementing technological innovations.
	Social	Providing information about human rights, diversity of the society.
O5	Environment	Controlling pollutions.
	Economic	Implementing technology and innovation capacities.
	Social	Help to get the rights of the workers.

These practices ensure that their projects are not only effective in the short term but also beneficial in the long run. By integrating sustainability into their core strategies, NGOs can create lasting positive impacts on communities and the environment.

Q4 Implementation and Success of Sustainable Management Practices.

This category explains that the success of NGOs in implementing sustainable management practices depends on a variety of factors, including the resources available to them, the nature of their operations, and the level of support they receive from donors and other stakeholders. Some NGOs have been highly successful in implementing sustainable practices and have made significant progress in addressing environmental and social issues, while others may have struggled to fully implement these practices due to a lack of resources or other challenges.

O1R1: The respondents' findings demonstrate that NGOs have successfully implemented sustainable management practices. Sixty percent of families now use savings systems and strategies from environmentally responsible methods, reducing financial burdens. Training in rural areas has empowered locals to manage issues effectively, illustrating strong environmental sustainability. Additionally, education on rights has enabled communities to fight back against abuses of rights, emphasizing social sustainability. These efforts collectively demonstrate significant progress and lasting positive impacts in economic, environmental, and social areas. O2R2: The findings show that NGOs have reached 85 percent success by conducting training programs for school students and forces, improving disaster response and protection. Awareness sessions have also increased public understanding of disaster preparedness, showing significant progress in community resilience. O3R3: The findings show that NGOs have been implementing sustainable management methods through various projects. These efforts have enhanced disaster response, financial stability, environmental



management, and community resilience. O4R4: According to O4R4, this NGO has implemented 80% of sustainable management practices and achieved an equal level of success. This shows the effectiveness of their efforts in promoting sustainability across numerous aspects of their operations. O5R5: According to R5 statement, they were using 16 sustainable management practices and implementing them across various communities and youth groups. The findings show that sustainable practices lead to the success of NGOs. These practices help in many ways, like managing money better for families, protecting the environment, and making sure people know their rights. By using these sustainable methods, NGOs can do a better job of helping communities and making a positive difference in the world.

Q5 Challenges in Implementing Sustainable Management Practices.

This category explains that there are several challenges that NGOs may face when trying to apply sustainable management practices in their projects. According to Asogwa et al.,2021 some NGOs face challenges in implementing sustainable practices due to a lack of funding and resources, as well as resistance from local authorities. Strengthening coordination and collaboration between NGOs, governments, and communities is crucial to overcoming these barriers and driving more widespread and effective implementation of sustainable practices.

A view of O1R1, many people and NGOs have not prioritized long-term planning and sustainability in their decision-making processes. This can be due to a variety of factors, including a focus on short-term profits, a lack of awareness about the potential consequences of certain actions, or a lack of incentives that encourage more sustainable practices. Overcoming this barrier will require a concerted awareness of the importance of sustainability and the long-term consequences of certain actions, providing incentives or rewards for sustainable practices, and establishing regulations or policies that encourage sustainable behavior. According to O2R2, this organization faced economic crises, Climate change, a pandemic, and a lack of funders. Those factors frequently affect this organization and its operations. According to O3R3, important to consider the potential challenges and limitations when providing funding or resources to organizations, such as orphanages or NGOs. It is possible that the funds may be used for purposes other than what they were wanted. In addition, it is important to consider the current economic climate and the impact it may have on the cost of equipment or other resources needed for livelihood. This may require finding creative solutions or alternative sources of funding to ensure that the necessary resources are available. As stated by o4r4, when working on development projects, particularly related to issues of cultural sensitivity, conflict resolution, and financial stability, it can be difficult to build consensus and cooperation among different groups and to effectively manage risks and emergencies. There can also be misunderstandings or resistance to efforts to promote social equality. These are common challenges in development work, and finding effective ways to address them is an ongoing process. According to O5R4 an economic crisis can certainly create challenges for initiating new projects. During a crisis, businesses and organizations may experience reduced profits, tightening of credit, and uncertain market conditions, which can make it difficult to secure funding and resources for new initiatives. Additionally, economic downturns can lead to a decrease in consumer demand, which can make it riskier to invest in new projects.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The investigation into the problems that exist in this region and discovered that the primary problems are workforce shortages and financial difficulties. Therefore, many NGO's face many challenges in putting their sustainable management practices into practice. As a result, it is difficult to know whether or not the projects that non-governmental organizations are working on are successful, as well as what the end result will be.

Nevertheless, in regardless of these obstacles, these groups are providing tremendous assistance to the residents of this community by way of the many projects that they are carrying out. The following are some recommendations that the researcher has for overcoming these difficulties and implementing environmentally responsible management procedures: The organizations are required



to appoint a new committee that will be responsible for monitoring the sustainable management practices in real-time and will be required to provide ideas on a periodic basis. All NGOs are not using all practices listed under to improve the sustainable managements but in order to be very efficient they have to study and apply all in different ways. Training in the use of sustainable management techniques needs to be made practically available to project officers working for NGOs. It is important that non-governmental organizations have access to the facilities they need to carry out project-related technical officers and sustainable management practices and increase efficiency in the application of technology, which is currently underutilized in sustainable management practices.

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