



Rejuvenation of non- profits through idealism

Dr. Satya Mohan Mishra¹, Dr. Mayur A. Dande², Dr. Pavan M. Kuchar³

^{1, 2, 3}Assistant Professors, Department of Business Administration and Research,
SSGMCE, Shegaon, Dist- Buldana, Maharashtra

Corresponding Author- Dr. Satya Mohan Mishra

Email id: pmkuchar@gmail.com

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Opening lines

Non profit organizations are having their roots into the Latin word “Caritas”. It means being dear and valuable. This value still percolates to grass root level. NPOs are the cornerstones of a good life for most of the world. The nature of the offerings may differ but they tend to be indispensable. The evolution of NPOs can be traced back to Vedic times. Some of the portion of Rig-Veda elucidates the concept of collective/ social realization of the grief of fellow human beings. Hence donating was thought to be a noble concept those days. Maurya and Gupta reigns during fourth and fifth century witnessed deeper countryside social activities. Gradually this took the shape of “Philanthropy”. It has been transformed into much more an organized sector as NPOs currently. But the other side (which is perhaps troublesome too) of the coin is that NPOs are suffering from challenges/ problems some of which are drastic and have already happened to be with unwanted, negative aftermaths. Inadequate funds, inconsistency in fund raising, unorganized and unprofessional ways of functioning, absence of electrifying/ charismatic leadership, narrow networks and the allied reach, detachment from some segments, unskilled and untrained employees, null value addition, frauds, corruption, getting influenced by specific ideologies, below average infrastructure, failure in scanning/ grasping details of both micro and macro environments, dilemmas about strategic approach, no vision acting as a lighthouse, generalized and unrealistic objectives to be accomplished, oversight of the competitive analysis considering it irrelevant, negligent SCOT analysis, half thought segmentation, targeting and positioning strategies. These problems can be rectified through bringing fundamental changes in the ways non profits are being managed. The superficiality of technology know- how can be eliminated by adopting the inputs backed by experience of some exemplars.

1- Baba Amte

Biographical Details

Murlidhar Devidas Amte, popularly known as Baba Amte was born on December 26, 1914 at a taluka place named Hinganghat in Wardha district of Maharashtra (in the times of British India) He was basically a lawyer and social activist who dedicated his life to India's downtrodden, poorest, bottom of the pyramid and specifically to offer service to people suffering from leprosy. His was bestowed upon numerous international awards of which some were- the 1988 UN Human Rights Prize, a share of the 1990 Templeton Prize, the 1999 Gandhi Peace Prize. Baba Amte died on ninth of February 2008 at Anandwan, the heaven he founded in the state of Maharashtra, India). Baba Amte is hailed as the last of the true followers of Gandhi's philosophy. He not only

internalised the philosophies directed by the Mahatma, but also embraced the Gandhian way of life. He inherited the Mahatma's spirit of standing up for injustice in society and serving the downtrodden classes. Like Gandhi, Baba Amte was a trained lawyer who initially sought a career in law. Later, just like Gandhi, he was moved by the plight of the poor and ignored people of his country and dedicated his life to their betterment. In search of his true calling, Baba Amte relinquished his ceremonial dress and started working with the rag-pickers and sweepers for some time in Chandrapura district. When Gandhi came to know about Amte's fearless protests against some Englishmen disrespecting women, he gave Amte the title 'Abhay Sadhak'. He later focussed his attention towards serving

patients suffering with leprosy and spent most of his life aiming to provide better treatment facilities as well as social awareness towards the disease.

The Change

After an exceptional encounter with a person suffering from the disease of advanced leprosy, Amte's vigour and attention turned to that drastic disease. He got involved and studied leprosy and further worked at a leprosy clinic, and academically learned through a course on leprosy at the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine. Anandwan, a place dedicated to the service, medication, rehabilitation, and the most important-empowerment of leprosy patients was founded by Baba Amte in 1949. Gradually this place magnified functions by adding agriculture, handicraft, small-scale industry, environmental conservation and to offer services people with disabilities.

In addition to his work with lepers, Amte was involved in various other causes, including environmentalism and religious toleration. In particular, he opposed the building of hydroelectric dams on the Narmada River, both for environmental reasons and because of the effects on those displaced by the dams. In 1990 Amte left Anandwan to devote himself to this cause, but toward the end of his life he returned to the ashram. Amte's sons, Prakash and Vikas Amte, became doctors and continued their father's philanthropic work.

The Vision

The constructive changes in the society depend upon life, efficiency and experimentation in social/ non-profit organizations. The wisdom and emotions of youth are to be appealed in this regard. If youth chooses non-profit area as career option, even though it is not lucrative and fascinating in materialistic terms, scenes would change. Progressive cooperation of youth is thus essential. According to Hoyle-Narlikar theory, something which is destroyed at one instant, takes birth with a different form at another instant. Same theory can be applied to thoughts and emotions. The possible expression of thoughts and emotions affects growth of a NPO. Age, experience, expertise and other factors are not at all indispensable for foundation of a social organization. Carlyle says, "Experience as to intensity not as to duration." Hence finding a need and discovering a way to feel it is the prime concern. The preparation

phase of foundation of an organization includes inadequacies in society, unfulfilled needs and their observation and comprehension with burning hearts and cool brains.

A problem is pregnant with its solution. Making the problem clearer resides with the organization. Foundation of organization without realizing problems breeds newer and broader problems. Often, need identification in the context of NPOs is artificial and organizations rotate around persons as their centre and perish with those persons. They are short term like umbrellas in the rainy season. The roots of these organizations are not deep enough to tackle social needs. Therefore, the growth retards. Failure of NPOs is more obvious than commercial organizations. Venturesome actions should not be compared with failures. Ventures are not expected to be panic of results. Failures are in fact, launching pads for bigger endeavors. Many a times, failure avoids derailing and provides proper direction.

Let's recite pages of Mother Earth and find out the theory of organization. Consistent development is the first feature of any organization, specifically, a nonprofit or social organization. There are three dimensions to this development. 1. Cultivation of idealism rooted which is the foundation of organization. 2. Efficiency of organizational mechanism 3. Contentment of workers and beneficiaries of organization. But there exist negative, rather destructive forces right from the establishment. "*Sarvesham Avirodhen*" (Let all be unopposed) has been the desire on priority basis in the context of perfectionism. But the other truth is that there's a never ending struggle for the same.

Out of Box

An organization is the bee-hive of actions and the role of the Leader/ Director is that of the Queen Bee. The Queen Bee never displays autocracy. The respect and obedience towards her is because of her love, trust and care and not because notifications, ordinances and fear. The Queen Bee does not issue artificial bindings on rest of the bees in the hive. They are given freedom. Hence their work becomes play. The skill of the Leader/ Director lies in creating congruence between work and play. The least rules/ bindings and the most freedom are the backbone of the system. The Queen Bee breeds Worker Bees who chose The Next

Queen Bee when the former grows older. It's worth appreciating and practicing that the succession decision is made by The Worker Bees and not at all by The Queen Bee. Further, there's not internal disturbance/chaos in the bee- hive.

"Amantram Aksharam Nasti, Nasti Mulam Anaushadham,

Ayogyah Purusho Nasti, Yojakah Tatra Durlabha."

"There's not an alphabet that is not a part of a hymn. There's not a tree root that's not having a medicinal value. Similarly no human being is incapable/ inappropriate. The fact is that the Connector is rare." Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish- American industrialist and business magnate says, "My success is not to be attributed to what I have known or done myself, but to the faculty of knowing and choosing others who did know better than me. I did not understand steam machinery but I tried to understand much more complicated piece of mechanism- Man!"

The essence

Realizing a human being and arranging him to reap utility for organization or society is a pre requisite of a leader/ director. The mute intellect of hundreds of so called countryside, illiterate, handicapped, leprosy suffering agonized people has carved a virtuous monumental endeavor- "Ananadvan". At the end of a severe disorder, a patient is treated with 'gradual graded exercise'. Shouldering small responsibilities will finally generate the competence to accomplish greater responsibilities. "Not for the people but with the people." has to be the underlying principle of the organization. The work for well being of others through only persistence mostly collapses. "I should work to destroy fear, hatred, inferiority and incompleteness within me and not form an illusion of well being of others. Agony within me has to blast their pains. My sorrows and someone else's sorrows are the reasons for a blend standing firmly against massive sorrows.

The bad word of mouth artificially created by unnecessary competition/ rivalry is a matter of concern. It has to be dealt with the help of commitment to the organization and not by initiating a blame game. Good work is self sufficient. Expansion without consolidation is hollow. Production oriented social service is the need of the hour. Times demand for a social approach which is a brainchild of profits resulting from some sort of production. Why should an organization

working for betterment of widows and divorcees not have their own laundry, fruit processing and canning unit or a tailoring firm?

"Money makes money is itself an economic doctrine." Production is commanded by corporate and business conglomerates in the United States of America. But the cooperative system will be ruled by society and nonprofit organizations. The emergence of democratic communism will indeed be a socialist foundation.

2- Vinoba Bhave

Biographical Details

Vinoba was born on September 11, 1895 at the village of Gagoda in Raigad district of Maharashtra. Vinoba stands as a symbol for the struggle of the good against the evil, of spiritual against the mundane. He was a spiritual visionary, whose spirituality had a pragmatic stance with intense concern for the deprived. He was a brilliant scholar who could knowledge accessible to ordinary people. He was Gandhiji's ardent follower, who could retain originality in thinking. As S. Radhakrishnan pointed out, "Indeed his life represents harmonious blend of learning, spiritual perception and compassion for the lowly and the lost." His Bhoodan (Gift of the Land) movement started on April 18, 1951, he attracted the attention of the world. Untouched by publicity and attention, Vinoba had continued his efforts for a just and equitable society. In fact, his life is a saga of his commitment to nonviolent ways of bringing change, his yearning for the highest level of spirituality and his unwavering faith in human values and love.

The Odyssey

On June 7, 1966, 50 years after his meeting with Gandhiji, Vinoba announced that he was feeling a strong urge to free himself from outer visible activities and enter inward hidden form of spiritual action. After traveling through India, he returned to Pauniar on November 2, 1969 and on October 7, 1970, he announced his decision to stay in one place. He observed a year of silence from December 25, 1974 to December 25, 1975. In 1976, he undertook a fast to stop the slaughter of cows. His spiritual pursuits intensified as he withdrew from the activities. He breathed his last on November 15, 1982 at this ashram.

Vinoba's contribution to the history of non-violent movement remains significant. It has to be admitted, however, that the

achievement of Bhoodan - Gramdan movement in the material terms was much below the expected target. According to an estimate in total 41,94,270 acres was obtained, and the land actual distributed according to 1975 statistics was 12,85,738 acres. 18,57,398 acres was found unfit for distribution. Some of the remaining land got entangled in legal hassles and some was deserved to be written off. As against it has to be noted that Vinoba's movement rekindled faith in non-violence and human values advocated by Gandhiji. It presented an alternative to violence and a vision of non-violent society. It raised important questions regarding inequality prevalent in the society. Vinoba saw the land as the gift of God like air, water, sky and sunshine. He connected science with spirituality and the autonomous village with the world movement. He regarded the power of the people superior than power of the state. Many of his ideas remain relevant and inspiring in the strife-ridden modern times.

Inside Out

One more serious challenge being faced by Non profit organizations is the inclination, rather habit/ craze towards negativity of heart (thinking and feeling), mouth (talking) and body (acting/ doing). This denotes the key difference between number of successful commercial organizations and NPOs. Tri-component model of attitudes involving cognitive, conative and affective components. When actions are ceased, we human beings take shelter in talking and boasting. And what can be an everlasting topic to talk about? Something which conveys an imagined self importance, praise of the self and criticizing anyone else, anything else. There are two sides like a full moon day and a new moon day to every object. Hence the freedom of an intellect of a critic is not objectionable. "The Sun showers infinite light in the day but it does scatter darkness in the night." Such a single sentence may question the very reason behind existence of the Sun! If again a defect is to be critically detected, a day will be seen between two nights instead of seeing a night between two days. There will then be born a jurisprudence which draws inferences not based upon flames of fire but its smoke. Lord Krishna illustrates this fun in the "Bhagvad Gita". And Lord has categorized these "Krishna Bhakts" (devotees of black side/ negativity) into a separate class, the eyes of whom take pride in the

Sun's night, a new moon day and smoke of the fire. The religion of us human beings who see darkness in the day as eyes are closed and who see darkness in the night as eyes are opened is spreading like a contagious disease. May be because the iris is black or there's an attraction for the black shade, the black side fascinates us. It's thus essential to enquire of a medicine to cure this contagious disease.

The Solace

The first medicine is to show the psyche an inward "Krishna" (black/ negativity/ faults) and not the outward "Krishna" (fault) to this "Krishna Bhakti" (devotion for black side/ negativity) soaked in the heart. The habitual inspector of the world perhaps considers himself faultless, rather innocent. Once this illusion fades away, the stings and claws of inspection of we human beings will take a halt. There's a beautiful incidence in the Bible's New Testament. A woman committed some wrong. Judges were sitting for the final decision and justice. The fate of the woman pulled Jesus at the venue. The judges' decision arrived. "The woman is responsible for a severe crime. Make her body free by throwing stones." Jesus stood and appealed the crowd, "The one who is the purest of the pure should throw the first stone." The crowd stood still. Everyone gradually escaped. Jesus guided her and bid a farewell.

The second medicine is silence. The first medicine was to avoid seeing "Krishna" (black/ negativity/ faults) in others. But knowingly or unknowingly if "Krishna" in others is seen, the second medicine is of utmost utility. This medicine may cause restlessness as side effect in the beginning. There may emerge a few sleepless nights. But this will turn into calmness. The life-force will convert restlessness into sanctity.

The third medicine is work. One, who works wholeheartedly, does not possess an unproductive critical acumen inside. The way a farmer realizes the significance of each grain, a lover of work realizes the value of each moment. Any emphasis on "Karmayoga" is insufficient considering its impact. But in the light of current discussion over "Krishna Bhakti" (Devotion towards negativity), it's miraculously effective.

The Epilogue

The said three medicines seem to be bitter to tongue but are holistically sweet. The true self will not be healthy unless the negativity of heart (thinking and feeling), mouth

(talking) and body (acting/ doing) evaporate through introspection, silence and purity in work respectively. A medicine can't be denied because it is bitter. Moreover, this medicine is to be taken with honey. Honey will nullify bitterness. Love for all is honey. The honey cloaked dose will eventually sweeten the existence.

Entire realism needs an element of idealism. Here lies the gravity of exemplars. These two personalities from India had given the world a vision to resolve societal issues through unique ways. These ways stand as a lighthouse for non profits in every walk of their functioning.

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