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Exploring HR Operations in Non-Profit Organization at Yrgcare Practices, Chennai

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ABSTRACT: This study explores the role of human resource (HR) operations within non-profit organizations, with a specific focus on YRG CARE, a leading NGO in India specializing in HIV/AIDS care and research. The research examines core HR functions such as recruitment, training, performance management, and compliance, and how these influence employee satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. Through descriptive and exploratory research methodologies, including a survey of 180 employees, the study reveals high satisfaction with HR processes and highlights areas for improvement in policy communication, grievance redressal, and retention strategies. The findings underscore the strategic importance of HR in enhancing mission-driven outcomes within resource-constrained environments.

KEYWORDS: Non-Profit, Human Resources, YRGCARE, Employee Satisfaction, NGO, HR Practices, Recruitment, Training, Volunteer Management

I. INTRODUCTION

Human Resource (HR) operations play a pivotal role in the functioning of non-profit organizations (NPOs), which frequently operate under significant resource constraints and manage a diverse workforce comprising both salaried employees and volunteers. Unlike for-profit entities, NPOs are mission-driven and focus primarily on achieving social impact rather than generating financial returns. As a result, HR practices in this sector must be tailored not only to attract and retain talent but also to foster alignment with the organization's core values and societal goals.

Effective HR management in non-profits involves navigating unique challenges such as limited budgets, high employee turnover, volunteer engagement, and compliance with both legal and ethical standards. Moreover, the psychological demands of working in mission-centric roles—particularly in healthcare or humanitarian fields—can lead to burnout and compassion fatigue, further emphasizing the need for strategic and supportive HR practices.

This study investigates the HR operations of YRGCARE (Y.R. Gaitonde Centre for AIDS Research and Education), a leading non-profit organization based in Chennai, India. Since its inception in 1993, YRGCARE has been at the forefront of HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and research, serving over 22,000 individuals and collaborating with national and international institutions. The organization's hybrid workforce—comprising medical professionals, administrative staff, researchers, and community volunteers—makes it a compelling case for examining HR strategy in action.

By analyzing YRGCARE's recruitment, training, performance management, and policy frameworks, this research aims to uncover how HR operations contribute to mission alignment, employee engagement, and organizational sustainability in a non-profit healthcare context. The findings will offer valuable insights for both practitioners and scholars seeking to strengthen HR models in similar mission-driven organizations.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Human Resource Management (HRM) in non-profit organizations (NPOs) operates under fundamentally different conditions compared to the for-profit sector, often shaped by resource scarcity, mission orientation, and the reliance on a hybrid workforce of paid staff and volunteers. Numerous scholars have explored the implications of these distinctions for organizational effectiveness and employee well-being.

Akingbola (2006) emphasized the necessity for strategic HRM in non-profits, arguing that aligning HR practices with the mission improves service delivery and sustains employee motivation. Building on this, Bakker and Demerouti (2007) introduced the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which posits that burnout, a prevalent issue in non-profit work environments, can be mitigated through resources like training, supportive supervision, and role clarity. Their model has since been applied widely in non-profit settings to understand and reduce emotional exhaustion among employees.

Bhui et al. (2016) studied the impact of organizational stressors in the non-profit sector, finding that high workloads and limited institutional support significantly affect staff morale and retention. This supports findings by Ridder et al. (2012), who noted that while many NPOs perform basic HR functions, the absence of formalized systems reduces their strategic effectiveness.

Akingbola (2013) highlighted that volunteers require clear role definitions, structured onboarding, and recognition programs to remain engaged. Saksida, Alfes, and Shantz (2017) found that strong relational support between paid staff and volunteers enhances commitment and retention, particularly in value-driven organizations such as faith-based or healthcare-oriented NPOs.

Nickson et al. (2008), in their study of UK-based charities, discovered that non-profits tend to rely heavily on informal networks and localized recruitment strategies, owing to limited budgets. While effective in some contexts, such strategies often lead to inconsistency and bias in hiring processes.

Guo et al. (2015) found that larger, well-resourced non-profits in the U.S. are more likely to adopt strategic HR practices, such as performance-based evaluations and technological tools for HR administration.

AbouAssi, Makhoul, and Tran (2019), who found that investment in HR functions directly correlates with service delivery effectiveness. This underscores the strategic role of HR not merely as an administrative necessity but as a driver of impact, especially in mission-centric organizations.

Donorbox (2021) and Eddy (2022) emphasized the importance of HR flexibility, digital transformation, and employee wellness in navigating workforce disruptions during COVID-19. HR departments in NPOs were forced to adapt quickly, introducing remote work policies, virtual training, and online collaboration tools—all while maintaining organizational cohesion and

(Astron Solutions, 2023). Cappelli and Nehmeh (2024) note that non-profits must adopt metrics-based HR systems to address these challenges and ensure accountability.

Taken together, these studies provide a foundational understanding of HRM in non-profit environments. However, there is a notable gap in region-specific case studies that explore the implementation and impact of HR operations in Indian healthcare-oriented non-profits. This study aims to address that gap by analyzing the HR practices of YRGCARE, a leading Indian NGO in HIV/AIDS care, and by providing empirical insights that can inform both theory and practice in this under-researched domain.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the effectiveness of HR practices—such as recruitment, on boarding, training, and performance evaluation—in enhancing organizational efficiency in non-profit settings.
- To identify challenges in managing a dual workforce comprising both paid staff and volunteers, and examine how these challenges affect HR strategy and daily operations.

- To analyze how HR practices influence employee engagement, motivation, and alignment with the organization's mission and values.
- To evaluate the role of HR in fostering a positive organizational culture that supports inclusivity, collaboration, and psychological well-being.
- To examine the impact of HR policy clarity, communication, and consistency on employee satisfaction and retention.
- To explore the contribution of HR practices to organizational sustainability and long-term service delivery effectiveness in the non-profit healthcare sector.
- To investigate the extent to which modern HR tools and technologies (e.g., HR information systems, digital training platforms) are utilized in non-profit HR operations.
- To benchmark YRGCARE's HR practices against industry standards and best practices within the non-profit sector to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improvement.
- To understand how HR interventions during crisis periods (e.g., COVID-19) affected employee support, adaptability, and continuity of care services.
- To provide actionable recommendations for enhancing HR frameworks in non-profits facing similar operational constraints and social missions.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of Human Resource (HR) operations within the non-profit organization YRGCARE. The methodology has been carefully selected to align with the dual objectives of exploring nuanced organizational behaviors and measuring statistically significant trends in employee perceptions.

A combination of descriptive **and** exploratory research designs was adopted. The descriptive component aimed to systematically capture the existing HR practices and employee responses at YRGCARE, while the exploratory element was used to identify latent challenges and contextual factors influencing HR strategy in the non-profit healthcare domain.

Research Approach

The study followed a mixed-method (qualitative and quantitative) approach.

- The quantitative component involved structured surveys to gather measurable insights into employee satisfaction, engagement, and perceptions of HR effectiveness.
- The qualitative component provided contextual depth through open-ended feedback and interpretation of policy documents and organizational reports.

Sampling Design and Sample Size

The study employed a **stratified random sampling technique** to ensure representation across various departments and hierarchical levels within YRGCARE. Employees were divided into strata based on job roles and departments, and participants were randomly selected from each stratum.

A total of **180 employees** participated in the study, representing a significant cross-section of the organization's workforce.

Statistical Tools Used

Data analysis was conducted using the following statistical tools:

- **Chi-square test:** To determine associations between categorical variables (e.g., age and motivation).
- **Correlation analysis:** To assess the strength and direction of relationships between HR-related constructs such as communication and inclusion.
- **Regression analysis:** To evaluate the predictive power of HR policy clarity on employee advocacy and satisfaction.
- **T-Test:** To compare group means and assess gender-based differences in HR satisfaction.

These tools provided both inferential and descriptive insights, strengthening the validity and reliability of the research outcomes.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The analysis of primary data collected from 180 employees at YRGCARE offers several key insights into the effectiveness and perception of HR operations in a non-profit healthcare context.

The majority of respondents (72%) were within the age group of 20–40 years, indicating that YRGCARE maintains a relatively youthful workforce. This demographic composition suggests a strong potential for innovation and adaptability, but also highlights the importance of retention strategies and career development programs tailored to early-career professionals.

An overwhelming 81% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the organization's HR processes, while 80.4% confirmed that training programs were relevant to their job roles. These figures point to the overall effectiveness of the HR department in meeting employee expectations in critical functional areas such as training, on boarding, and employee engagement.

Approximately 75.4% of participants agreed that HR operations actively support community engagement, aligning directly with YRGCARE's mission in HIV/AIDS outreach and prevention. Moreover, 65.9% felt that organizational resources were allocated effectively, although this suggests room for improvement in resource planning and transparency.

The study also found that 70.2% of employees felt their contributions were recognized, and 68.4% agreed that HR policies are regularly reviewed and updated. These outcomes emphasize the importance of continuous feedback mechanisms and transparent policy communication to sustain high levels of employee morale and institutional trust.

Statistical Analysis

To validate and further explore the relationships between demographic and HR-related variables, multiple statistical tests were applied:

- **Chi-Square Test:** A statistically significant association was found between age group and motivation to perform ($\chi^2 = 24.286$, $df = 12$, $p = 0.019$). This indicates that employee motivation levels vary meaningfully across age categories, warranting age-specific engagement strategies.
- **Correlation Analysis:** A strong positive correlation ($r = 0.818$, $p < 0.001$) was identified between internal communication effectiveness and perceptions of diversity and inclusion. This suggests that improved communication practices contribute to a more inclusive and cohesive organizational culture.
- **Regression Analysis:** Policy clarity was found to be a significant predictor of employee advocacy. The regression model showed an **R² value of 0.656**, indicating that 65.6% of the variance in employees' likelihood to recommend YRGCARE as a workplace could be explained by how clearly and consistently HR policies were communicated.
- **T-Test Analysis:** There was **no statistically significant difference** in work-life balance satisfaction between male and female employees ($p = 0.518$). This suggests that gender does not play a major role in influencing employee satisfaction at YRGCARE in this area, reinforcing perceptions of gender parity in HR outcomes.

VI. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- The workforce is largely composed of individuals aged 20–40, comprising 72% of the respondents. This indicates a strong presence of early-career professionals and underscores the need for structured mentorship, upskilling opportunities, and long-term career planning to support professional growth and reduce attrition.
- A significant majority (81%) of respondents reported satisfaction with HR operations, especially in the areas of onboarding, training, and team coordination. This suggests that HR efforts are largely aligned with employee expectations and organizational values.
- Approximately 80.4% of participants found training programs relevant to their roles, and 76.5% acknowledged ample opportunities for collaboration and teamwork. Furthermore, strong internal communication was positively linked to perceived inclusivity and organizational engagement.

- While 65.9% of respondents felt that resources were allocated effectively, a significant portion expressed concerns about accessibility to tools and fair distribution. Moreover, only 45.8% agreed that grievance redressal mechanisms were effective and accessible, indicating a gap in conflict resolution and employee support systems.
- A Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.818$ was observed between communication effectiveness and perceptions of diversity and inclusion. This highlights the critical role of HR communication in shaping organizational culture and employee trust.
- Regression analysis revealed that the clarity and consistency of HR policies strongly predict whether employees would recommend YRGCARE as a workplace ($R^2 = 0.656$). Clear policies contribute not only to compliance but also to positive organizational branding.
- About 70.2% of employees felt their contributions were recognized, and 79.8% reported feeling motivated to perform at their best. However, a small but notable percentage remained neutral or uncertain, suggesting the need for more targeted recognition programs.
- The independent T-Test revealed no statistically significant difference between male and female respondents in perceptions of work-life balance ($p = 0.518$), indicating equitable HR practices in this area.
- While 68.4% believed that HR policies were reviewed and updated regularly, nearly one-third of respondents either disagreed or were unsure. This points to a need for more transparent policy revision processes and employee involvement in policy feedback.
- A high number of respondents rated inter-departmental collaboration positively, with 40% giving the highest rating on a 5-point scale. This suggests a healthy internal network that could be further leveraged for cross-functional innovation.

VII. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research findings and statistical insights, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen HR operations at YRGCARE and similar non-profit institutions:

Expand recruitment strategies by utilizing social media platforms and mission-driven branding to appeal to purpose-oriented candidates, particularly among Gen Z and millennial professionals.

Establish formal wellness programs and mentorship opportunities to reduce burnout and compassion fatigue, especially among healthcare providers and frontline staff.

Use analytics to monitor employee satisfaction, turnover trends, training outcomes, and policy compliance—enabling proactive and strategic HR interventions.

Review HR policies at fixed intervals, incorporate employee feedback, and enhance the accessibility and responsiveness of grievance redressal systems.

Collaborate with corporate partners to finance modern HR technologies, including applicant tracking systems, e-learning platforms, and performance evaluation tools.

Create structured career ladders and professional development roadmaps, particularly for early-career professionals, to foster long-term retention and motivation.

Implement volunteer-specific onboarding, training, and recognition programs to ensure their contributions are aligned with organizational goals and acknowledged regularly.

Introduce 360-degree feedback systems, suggestion boxes, and employee forums to strengthen two-way communication and build a participatory work culture.

Ensure hiring practices are inclusive, gender-sensitive, and accessible to underrepresented communities, in alignment with YRGCARE's values and community mission.

Incorporate hybrid or remote work arrangements, especially for administrative or research roles, to increase job satisfaction and accommodate diverse employee needs.

Develop structured internal communication protocols—such as monthly briefings, newsletters, and team-building workshops—to reinforce transparency and collaboration.

Regular exit and stay interviews can help identify both retention risks and success factors, offering actionable intelligence for shaping future HR strategies.

Equip managers and team leads with training in people management, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence to enhance workplace leadership capacity.

Create an internal repository of HR case studies and success stories from different YRGCARE units to promote cross-learning and replication of effective practices.

VIII. CONCLUSION

HR operations at YRGCARE significantly influence organizational effectiveness, staff motivation, and mission delivery. While the organization excels in training and employee recognition, improvements in grievance redressal and senior staff retention are needed. This study adds to the limited body of knowledge on HR practices in Indian NPOs and provides actionable insights for HR strategy in similar settings.

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