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Leadership Practices in NGOs: A Case Study of BAPS Organization

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Abstract:

Through an analysis of the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS), a worldwide socio-spiritual organization, this case study investigates the leadership strategies of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This study analyzes the leadership tactics utilized inside BAPS to accomplish its purpose of social improvement. The study uses qualitative research methodologies such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. The findings indicate a combination of charismatic, servant, and transformative leadership styles. A dedication to values-based leadership, community involvement, and organizational excellence distinguishes these styles. This study contributes to a better understanding of effective leadership practices in organizations driven by their purpose by providing insights on the dynamic interplay between leadership, spirituality, and social impact inside non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Keywords: Economics and Business, Leadership Practices, Management, NGO, Social Sciences, Social Impact.

Introduction:

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are at the forefront of solving the myriad of difficulties that are present worldwide. These challenges range from the alleviation of poverty and access to healthcare to the protection of the environment and defense of human rights. When solving social, economic, and environmental challenges, these groups work in various situations, ranging from local communities to international arenas. They play an essential role in filling gaps left by governments and enterprises.

Effective leadership is essential to the performance and effect of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). To successfully navigate complicated contexts, organize resources, excite stakeholders, and create significant change, leaders inside these companies are required to do so. Leadership in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) comprises more than just standard administrative duties; it also includes lobbying, coalition building, vision formulation, and cultivating a culture that values creativity and responsibility.

As a noteworthy example of a socio-spiritual institution that has a global reach, the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) stands out as a significant example. BAPS has built a diverse network of activities that spans education, healthcare, environmental sustainability, and community development. These efforts sprang from the ideals of compassion, service, and spiritual upliftment, which served as the foundation for the organization. With millions of followers worldwide, BAPS can substantially



influence social conversation and promote change at the grassroots level.

BAPS is an attractive subject for studying leadership techniques within non-governmental organizations (NGOs) because of its distinctive combination of spirituality and social action. Approaches to leadership within the organization reflect its spiritual ethos, which emphasizes humility, honesty, and selfless devotion toward others. By diving into the leadership tactics utilized by BAPS, the purpose of this research study is to unearth insights that have the potential to both enlighten and inspire leadership in other organizations that are driven by a mission.

Literature Review:

Diaz, D. A., & Rees, C. J. (2020). Checks and balances? Leadership configurations and governance practices of NGOs in Chile. A correlation has been established between the introduction of governance techniques in the non-governmental organization (NGO) sector and the growing degrees of organizational complexity. This study investigates the development of executive director jobs in Chilean non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in terms of organizational functions, organizational dynamics, and external influences. This is done in light of Chile's growing civil society sector and the rise of formalized governance procedures.

Singh, K. (2014). Servant leadership in non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Through their so-called "sustainable" operations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have emerged as powerful development agents in developing countries over the last few decades. In the city of Kuching, this study aimed to investigate the leadership styles of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Data was obtained from one hundred people working for thirty different non-governmental organizations. The Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA), which was designed by Laub (1999), was the instrument that was utilized within the process of measuring servant leadership. The results of the Cronbach Alpha evaluation of the instrument reveal that the reliability score is greater than 90, which suggests that the level may be considered satisfactory. According to the findings, servant leadership is the most common kind of leadership in non-governmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs can benefit from the insights provided by this study on servant leadership.



Kim, H. H. (2016). Transnational Movements: Portable Religion and the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha Case Study. A basic room at the Swaminarayan temple guesthouse was filled with suitcases everywhere. There were several places where these bags might be found: the floor, the space between and around the two single beds, and the outside restroom area next to the room with the built-in clotheslines. This suitcase belongs to a family who traveled to the BAPS Swaminarayan temples in Gujarat and New Delhi. The last stop on their tour was Ahmedabad, Gujarat, their objective. Even more bags were waiting to be packed in the closet that ran down one side of the room. This luggage was surrounded by garments that were already packed. Additionally, in a particular section of the closet, there was a collection of stainless-steel pressure cookers arranged in an unexpectedly lovely heap on top of a suitcase resting flat. As it found out, they were not brand-new purchases designed to be used on stovetops at a location not in India.

Methodology:

Research Design: The Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) serves as the case study for this investigation, using a qualitative research approach to investigate leadership behaviors inside non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Qualitative methodologies have been selected to obtain nuanced insights and contextual knowledge of leadership dynamics inside BAPS because of their applicability.

Case Study Approach: An in-depth investigation of leadership practices within a particular organizational environment is made possible via the case study technique, which provides a wealth of insights into the intricacies and subtleties of leadership in action. BAPS has been chosen as the organization to serve as the case study because of its global significance, socio-spiritual orientation, and varied influence across various sectors. The case study technique makes a comprehensive investigation of BAPS's leadership frameworks possible. This investigation takes into account both official and informal leadership structures that exist within the organization.

Data Collection Methods: Some examples of data gathering methods are:

1. **Semi-Structured Interviews:** BAPS conducts in-depth interviews with critical stakeholders, such as organizational leaders, senior executives, program managers, and frontline personnel. These interviews are performed to gather information. The purpose of these interviews is to investigate the participants' viewpoints about leadership practices, organizational culture, and the influence of



leadership on the organization's goals and objectives.

- 2. Observations:** Participants are observed during events, meetings, and activities that take place inside the organization to gather first-hand knowledge on the behaviors, interactions, and dynamics that are associated with leadership within BAPS. Data gathered through observations supplement the insights obtained through interviews by offering a more in-depth comprehension of leadership in action.
- 3. Document Analysis:** A variety of organizational documents, including mission statements, strategic plans, annual reports, and internal communications, are examined in order to gain a deeper knowledge of BAPS's leadership philosophy, values, and strategic goals. The triangulation of data obtained from interviews and observations is made possible by document analysis, which provides extra context.

Case Study (BAPS):

Overview:

Based on the teachings of Hinduism, the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha, or BAPS, is a worldwide social and religious institution. BAPS was initially established in 1907 by Shastriji Maharaj as a tiny spiritual community in Gujarat, India. Since then, it has expanded into a massive multinational network with millions of adherents worldwide. In addition to offering humanitarian aid, advancing moral and spiritual principles, and serving the underprivileged, the organization aims to improve society as a whole.

History:

Shastriji Maharaj established BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha) to disseminate Swaminarayan's teachings. However, the organization encountered criticism from Vaishnava sampradayas and other groups and organizations. The teachings of Swaminarayan, which emphasized the ontological essence of Swaminarayan and Gunatitanand Swami, his chosen follower, were considered to be those of God (Purushottama) and played an essential part in the ultimate liberation program.

The BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha's followers think that Swaminarayan used the mandirs he built to propagate the same teachings. In the central shrine of these mandirs were the murtis of a principal god and their ideal devotee. However, there was division since many within the dioceses of Vartal and Ahmedabad



did not hold this opinion.

According to Shastriji Maharaj, Gunatitanand Swami was the first Gunatit Guru in the line of enlightened gurus who were chosen by Swaminarayan to carry on his life on Earth. The lineage of Gunatit Gurus has continued to reveal their successors; Pragji Bhakta, Shastriji Maharaj, Yogiji Maharaj, and Pramukh Swami Maharaj were revealed by Gunatitanand Swami. As a result, Akshar's bloodline is still alive today. In more recent times, Mahant Swami Maharaj has revealed that Pramukh Swami Maharaj is the lineage's current and succeeding Guru.

Philosophy:

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BAPS Charities:

Established by the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottama Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS), BAPS Charities, formerly known as BAPS Care International, is a charity organization that operates on a global scale and is not affiliated with any one religion. Its primary objective is to assist the community. It is possible to trace



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the origins of their humanitarian efforts back to Swaminarayan (1781-1830), who established almshouses, constructed shelters, fought against addiction, and outlawed the practice of sati and female infanticide to alleviate suffering and bring about constructive social change. The message that "every individual deserves the right to a peaceful, dignified, and healthy way of life" is included in the organization's vision statement, emphasizing the importance of providing service to the community. Furthermore, by enhancing the quality of life of the individual, we are enhancing the quality of life of families, communities, the planet, and our future.

This objective is accomplished by BAPS Charities through a number of programs that provide support in the areas of health, education, the environment, and natural disaster recovery. The organization's global operations are managed by a community of more than 55,000 volunteers, the bulk of whom are BAPS members. These activities are funded by donations and directed by the organization. The majority of the organization's activities are run out of its mandirs, where volunteers collaborate with people of the neighborhood and other nonprofits. Shastri Yagnapurushdas founded a group in the year known as the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS). The organization's volunteers engaged in charitable endeavors focused on assisting the underprivileged and battling addiction at this time. They carried out this action as an expansion of their spiritual practices and beliefs. To engage in more extended social and humanitarian endeavors, the BAPS founded a charity section in 1950.

Pramukh Swami, also known as Shastri Narayanswarupdas, added to the original idea and highlighted the value of serving society as a continuation of spiritual pursuits. He stressed the need of preserving family harmony, giving back to the society, and living a life free of addiction while touring the globe.

Activities:

The Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) is involved in various activities to foster spiritual development, community development, education, healthcare, environmental protection, and humanitarian assistance. The organization's dedication to holistic development and its aim of promoting a more compassionate and harmonious world is reflected in these activities. Listed below are some of the most important activities that BAPS participates in:



1. Spiritual Discourses and Worship Services:

At its mandirs (temples) and socio-spiritual complexes worldwide, BAPS regularly holds religious events, worship services, and spiritual talks. These meetings provide invaluable chances for spiritual development, moral elevation, and communal connection.

2. Educational Initiatives:

BAPS runs a network of schools, colleges, and other educational institutions to provide children and young people with a high-quality education. These educational institutions provide students with the information and skills necessary for personal and professional success, which offer a combination of academic achievement and moral values.

3. Healthcare Services:

BAPS operates hospitals, clinics, and medical camps to provide medical services to populations not adequately served. These establishments provide medical treatment, preventative care, and health education initiatives, which are of great assistance to thousands of people who are in need.

4. Social Welfare Programs:

BAPS organizes many different social welfare programs. Some of these programs include food distribution drives, clothing distribution efforts, and housing projects for people who are homeless. These initiatives are designed to accomplish these goals to reduce poverty, provide fundamental needs, and improve the quality of life for disadvantaged individuals and families.

5. Environmental Conservation Efforts:

The BAPS is dedicated to preserving the environment and is actively involved in different efforts to protect and preserve the environment. Planting campaigns, water conservation projects, waste management programs, and lobbying for sustainable practices are examples of initiatives that fall under this category.

6. Youth Development Activities:

We encourage young people to become responsible and ethical leaders in their communities by providing opportunities to participate in character-building activities, leadership training seminars, and youth



development initiatives offered by BAPS. Integrity, compassion, and willingness to serve others are some of the characteristics that are emphasized by these projects.

7. Cultural and Religious Festivals:

Diwali, Holi, Janmashtami, and Swaminarayan Jayanti are only a few of the cultural and religious celebrations celebrated with great zeal and grandeur by BAPS. Participation in these festivals allows individuals to engage in religious devotion, cultural interaction, and communal enjoyment.

8. Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Aid:

To provide disaster relief and humanitarian help to communities impacted by natural catastrophes, BAPS marshals its resources and recruits volunteers during times of crisis. These activities include providing aid to those in need, providing shelter, distributing food, and providing medical treatment to those who have survived a disaster.

9. Community Development Projects:

BAPS is responsible for initiating community development initiatives in rural and urban regions to enhance infrastructure, sanitation, and access to critical services. These programs allow communities to become self-sufficient and resilient in adversity.

10. Youth Outreach and Social Engagement:

Youth outreach initiatives, social media campaigns, and community outreach events are ways that BAPS interacts to raise awareness about social concerns, encourage volunteerism, and inspire positive change. The purpose of these activities is to encourage young people to become agents of social reform and to contribute to the common goodness.

Leadership Practices in BAPS:

The Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) demonstrates a diverse array of leadership methods characterized by charismatic, servant, and transformative leadership styles. This section aims to investigate the manifestation of different leadership styles inside the company and examine their influence on organizational culture, community involvement, and social impact. The data for this area was



acquired through interviews, observations, and document analysis.

1. Charismatic Leadership:

The spiritual leaders of BAPS, known as Mahants and Swamis, are recognized to have an inspirational presence and impact, which is evidence of the charismatic leadership within the organization. Because of their magnetic charisma and spiritual power, these leaders can draw followers and inspire devotion from those who follow them. They attract the hearts and minds of devotees utilizing their energetic discourse, exemplary conduct, and personal charisma, which in turn motivates devotees to adopt the principles and ideals of the organization.

2. Servant Leadership:

Another one of the defining characteristics of BAPS's leadership practices is the concept of servant leadership, which is defined by a dedication to selfless service, empathy, and humility. Those who hold positions of authority within BAPS exemplify the principles of servant leadership by prioritizing the requirements of others before their own, acting as examples of compassion and concern for the community.

3. Transformative Leadership:

There is an inherent element of transformative leadership within the leadership practices of BAPS. A dedication to social change and empowerment, a visionary view, and innovative thinking define this leadership style. The leaders of BAPS motivate their followers to go beyond their limitations, question the current quo, and strive for a better future for themselves and the communities in which they live.

Discussion:

This conversation dives into the transformational influence of leadership techniques within Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS), demonstrating how charismatic, servant, and transformative leadership styles may be harmoniously integrated. Leaders of the BAPS, particularly spiritual personalities such as Mahants and Swamis, radiate charm and inspire devotion, highlighting the organization's spiritual character. Their servant leadership ideal helps cultivate a culture of humility and service, which resonates profoundly within the community and drives collective action. Furthermore, the characteristics of transformational leadership reveal themselves in visionary outlooks, which encourage creativity and empower communities to make beneficial changes. Using these principles not only enhances



the organization's cohesiveness but also amplifies the social impact of BAPS. This highlights the significance of values, spirituality, and community participation in the leadership of an effective non-governmental organization. In addition, the debate emphasizes the need to maintain investments in leadership development and research that spans cultural boundaries to advance companies motivated by their missions toward sustainable growth and improving society.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the research article offers insightful perspectives on leadership techniques in non-governmental organizations (NGOs), with BAPS as a case study. Through the examination of the leadership frameworks of the organization and the influence those frameworks have on the success of the organization as well as its social impact, the research provides light on the dynamic interaction that exists between leadership, spirituality, and social change. Regarding furthering the purpose of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the findings highlight the necessity of values-driven leadership, community involvement, and transformational action. Moving forward, there is a need for more studies to investigate the applicability of BAPS's leadership practices in various organizational situations and to discover techniques for improving leadership effectiveness in companies motivated by their purpose.

The research results shed light on the relevance of leadership practices in driving organizational success and social impact inside non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as BAPS. The study uncovers how leadership impacts corporate culture, community participation, and social transformation inside BAPS. This is accomplished by evaluating the interaction between charismatic, servant, and transformative leadership styles inside the company. BAPS's leadership methods are a compelling example of a holistic strategy incorporating spiritual ideals, ethical principles, and visionary leadership. This approach serves as a model for other organizations driven by a goal.



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