

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR NGOS IN REFERENCE TO THE STUDY OF NGOS OF NEPAL

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ABSTRACT: *Introduction: Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are working to facilitate and support the development activities in every sector to achieve the development goals of Nepal Government. While facing difficulty to reach different areas, contributions of NGO become the significant and milestone for the change and development of the society. This study was conducted in Karnali Zone, Midwestern Development Region of Nepal. Objective: The objective of this research was to develop the NGO assessment criteria. Methodology: This study was particularly based on the pragmatism philosophy. Deductive approach was used to test the theory. Cross-sectional descriptive and exploratory research design was adopted. Study was conducted among the beneficiaries, NGOs executive board, NGOs staff, Civil Society and Governmental Officials in Karnali Zone. A total of 562 respondents were selected for survey and 45 key informants were interviewed, 15 case studies were prepared, 15 focus group discussions were conducted and 56 observations were done in 56 NGOs and 15 communities. The qualitative analysis was done to develop the criteria. Results: There were four major indicators; structure, environment, value and impact. The total sub-indicators were 25 which finally increased to 33 but main elements were the same. Under the sub-indicators, there were 74 indicators in the Civil Society Index (CSI) which were applied in the field of research as a theoretical guideline of the study. the study developed 137 criterias; 14 indicators came from existing criteria of Civil Society Index, 70 new added, 53 modified and 3 existing criteria was removed. Further researchers can evaluate the impact of performance of NGO by using the NGO assessment criteria developed by this study.*

KEYWORDS: Assessment Criteria, Civil Society Index (CSI), Environment, Impact, NGO Structure, Value

INTRODUCTION

The study has focused to develop the NGO assessment criteria. The study was undertaken in Karnali Zone, Mid-Western Development Region of Nepal. Karnali zone has covered the five mountain districts: Dolpa, Mugu, Humla, Jumla and Kalikot. These all five districts are geographically located in hilly mountain from the development perspective; it is remained backward and marginalized districts. Human Development Index (HDI) is lowest from all zones and districts of Nepal. The people of these five districts are facing the crisis of basic needs also. So, regarding these problems, many governmental and non-governmental organizations are working there to develop the infrastructures and change the social life-style of communities. NGOs can be defined as "self-governing, private, not-for-profit organizations that are geared to improving the quality of life of disadvantaged people" (Vakil, 1997, p. 2060). According to the new model, development would now be promoted from below, and NGOs would be the ideal vehicle for reaching and including the "people" (Perry, 2000, p. 371). NGOs are today visible, noticed, and acknowledged (Tandon, 2000, p. 319). There are more than 35,000 registered NGOs in Nepal and many unregistered NGOs working on the environment

sector, forestry sector, wildlife sector and national development; poverty, human right, HIV and AIDS, health, etc. (Bhandari, 2014, p. 183). Nepali NGOs have a positive role for human empowerment, training, and democratization of the country. NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) emerged as an umbrella organization of NGOs in the aftermath of democratic political change and establishment of multiparty parliamentary system in 1990. Since its establishment in 1991, the NFN apart from defending NGOs' autonomy has been fighting for promoting human rights, social justice and pro-poor development. Today, it has evolved as a leading civil society organization in Nepal with 5,643 NGOs affiliated to it from across the country and has also received Special Consultative Status from UN Economic and Social Council (www.ngofederation.org).

A belief that the comparative advantage of NGOs - the quality of their relationships with beneficiaries, their capacity to experiment, and their capacity to be flexible in relation to local contexts -(Hulme, 1992, p. 80). Activists and NGOs are generally non-profit groups "organized primarily around ideas: around a collective commitment to some shared belief or principle" (Spar, 2003, p. 79). NGO advocacy has become more focused, more strategic, and has made more effective use of the media. NGOs have learned to gain access to and use the political processes, structures, and institutions of their home countries as well as those of the multilateral agencies (Anderson, 2000, p. 445). NGO (They) have had different and differing inputs into the development process. Not surprisingly they have different concepts of what constitutes sustainability. Even within the same community, there is diversity in the analysis and approaches, reflecting the complexity of the issues (Yap, 1989/1990, p. 98).

Although NGOs are non-party/politically affiliated organizations and have no explicate political missions, however, given the nature of their activities and funding dependency political significance of NGOs should not be under estimated (Ateljevic, 2008, p. 351). According to Hadenius and Ugglä, NGO groups are part of civil society, are constructed beyond the networks of kin relations, and constitute an ensemble of private institutions 33 that include NGOs as well as religious groups and organizations, schools, and other constituencies organized to meet the needs of the voiceless and excluded-women, the landless, and the urban poor (Feldman, 1997, p. 60). NGOs seem to affect social capital both positively and negatively, depending on their intervention approaches. For instance, some NGOs appear to limit or block social capital formation by providing direct services (Abom, 2004, p. 345). All development decades have their emphases. The 1980s were dominated by an economic ideology of adjustment, coupled to an institutional doctrine promoting private enterprise and encouraging non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Fowler, 1991, p. 5). One of the recognized strengths of NGOs is their ability to reach the poorest groups whom official aid and government channels cannot reach (Gibson, 1993, p. 188).

It is well visible that NGO are working in the hard to reach areas of Nepal and doing contribution in the socio-economic uplift of society. Though, it is the question that what is the degree of their contribution, their performances, their management and the sustainability of NGOs? There was the need of NGO assessment tools/criteria which can measure the performances of NGOs and can have constructive ideas to improve the policies, programs and activities of NGOs. By considering the importance of NGO assessment criteria, the study has aimed to develop the new criteria for NGO assessment on the basis of theoretical lens of Civil Society Index (CSI).

METHODOLOGY

The whole research was guided by the Pragmatic philosophy and deductive approach was adopted by using the trust theory, welfare state, Interdependence, Social Origin, Heterogeneity and Supply Side theory. A total of 562 respondents were selected from 5 groups: beneficiaries -400, NGOs Board - 56, NGOs staff – 56, Civil Society - 25, Government Official – 25. District wise, number of participation were Dolpa - 66, Humla – 82, Jumla- 146, Kalikot - 174 and Mugu - 94. Similarly, a total of 45 interviews (beneficiaries - 20, NGOs board - 5, NGOs staff - 5, Civil society representative – 5 and Government Official – 10) were conducted in the study areas. A total of 15 focus group discussions were conducted. Multistage Simple Random Sampling was used to deduct the size of study area on the basis of logical reasoning and simple random sampling was adopted to select the respondents. Under the random sampling, lottery method (two types of similar paper card was used having with symbol of '0' and '1' ('0' means not selected and '1' means selected) was used to select the respondents for survey and interview both. Concurrent mixed method was used to collect the quantitative and qualitative data. Survey was done to collect the quantitative data and interview, focus group discussion and observation rating were done to collect the qualitative data. A survey questionnaire was developed modifying the local context of Civil Society Index (CSI). Written consent was also taken from the each respondent during the survey.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There were five types of the respondents, 71.2% respondents were beneficiaries, 10% of the respondents were NGO board, 10% of the respondents were NGO staff, 4.4% of the respondents were government and 4.4% respondents were civil societies. Among the total (n=562) respondents in the survey by sex, 34 percent were females and rests were males. As per ethnicity 55% (n=309/562) of respondents were Chhetri followed by 19.4% (n= 109/562) Brahmin, 13.5% (n= 76/562) Dalit and 10.7% (n= 60/562) Janajati and others were 1.4% (n=8/562) participated in research study. As data of education level of respondents shows that majority 31% (174 respondents) of respondents had Intermediate level education followed by 23% (129 respondents) from the bachelor level education, School leaving certificate education 14.8% (83 respondents) 7.3% Master level education (41 respondents), Secondary level 6.4% (36 respondents), literate 10% (56 respondents) primary level education 5.2% (29 respondents) and illiterate 2.5% (14 respondents). A data shows majority of respondents (38.3%) were involved in service followed by 25.4% in agriculture, 15.8% were in study as a student, 11% in other occupation which were not stable work and changing in time and duration and 9.4% were involved in business.

From the whole discussion of quantitative and qualitative data, the study developed the revised assessment criteria for NGOs. To develop the assessment criteria, first, CSI indicators were modified based on Nepalese context relating to NGOs perspective for the questionnaires development. Then pilot survey was conducted to test the reliability and validity of instruments in the proper context of study areas. Instruments were finalized on the basis of result of pilot study.

The data presented in the table no. 1 showed the status of new assessment criteria of NGO. There were 3 main conditions used to develop the new assessment criteria of NGO during the data collection and analysis. These 3 conditions were: 1st, the existing criteria of CSI can be

accepted as it is, 2nd, new criteria can be added and 3rd existing criteria can be modified. The following table showed the application of all these 3 conditions.

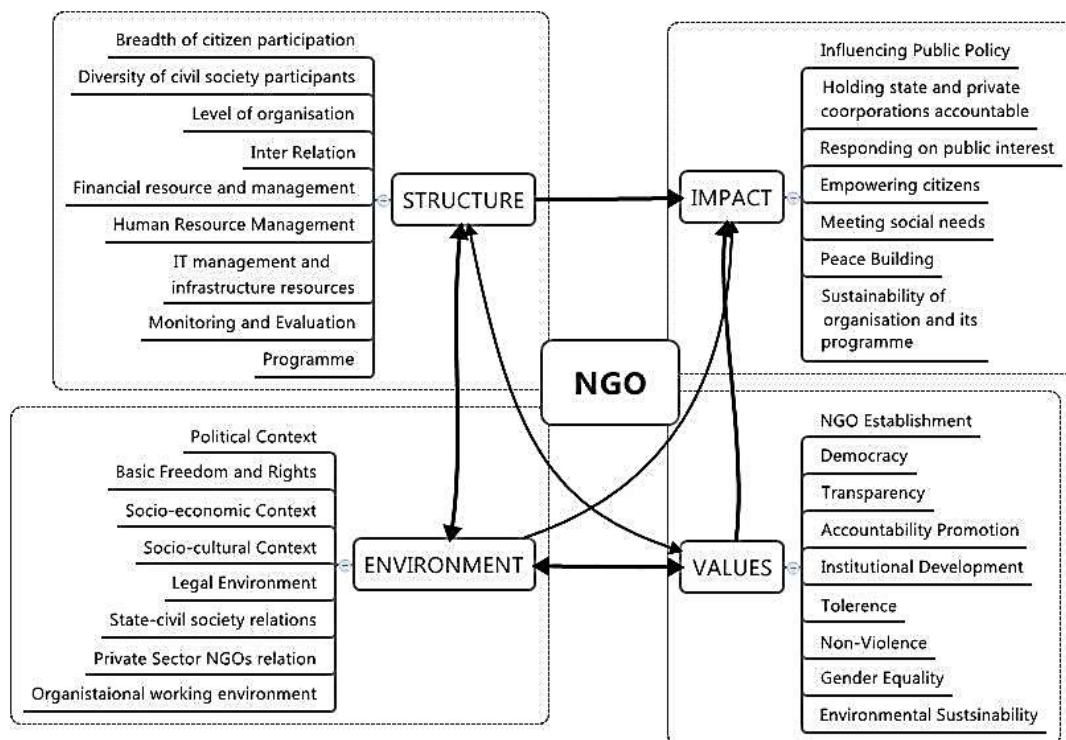
Table No. 1: Status of new assessment criteria

| Assessment Criteria | Sub Group | | Assessment Criteria | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | CSI Sub Group | Final Sub Group | CSI Criteria | Final Criteria | Existing as it is | Added New | Modified |
| Structure | 6 | 9 | 21 | 49 | | 34 | 15 |
| Environment | 7 | 8 | 23 | 29 | 14 | 6 | 9 |
| Values | 7 | 9 | 14 | 33 | | 20 | 13 |
| Impact | 5 | 7 | 16 | 26 | | 10 | 16 |
| Total | 25 | 33 | 74 | 137 | 14 | 70 | 53 |

Data source: Field survey 2014

There were 25 sub elements which increased to 33. Similarly there were 74 indicators in the Civil Society Index (CSI) which were applied in the field of research as theoretical guideline of the study. With the finding of the criteria based on respondents in the questionnaires, interview and focus group discussion, 138 criteria has been developed which 14 as it is, 53 modified, 4 criteria is removed 70 added.

There were 21 criteria in the **structure** and now it has increased to 49 criteria. Under the **environment** there were 23 and increased 29, under the **value** there were 14 and now increased to 33 and under the **impact** there were 16 criteria which increased to 26 criteria. The pictorial final developed NGOs assessment criteria is as follows:



The details of the accepted existing criteria of CSI, modified and rejected criteria of CSI and new added criteria to make the final assessment criteria of NGO based on the response of respondents:

Accepted existing criteria of CSI

There were four main criteria of CSI which was adopted as the same to develop the new assessment criteria of NGO also for this study. After analysis of data, only 14 criteria of 'Environment' was accepted as it is from the CSI and rest criteria were either modified or rejected. The assessment criteria accepted as it is from CSI are as follows:

Environment-under the sub-criteria, 'Political context', these criteria were accepted: Political rights, political competition, rule of law, corruption, state effectiveness and decentralization. Similarly, under the sub-criteria, 'Basic freedom of rights' these criteria: Civil liberties, information rights and press freedom were accepted. Sub-criteria, 'Socio-economic context was also accepted. Under the sub-criteria, 'Socio-cultural context', these criteria: Trust, tolerance, Public spiritedness were accepted. Finally, under the sub-criteria 'Legal Environment', the criteria Tax benefits for philanthropy was accepted.

Modified Criteria

The study showed that 53 criteria from the each 4 major criteria were modified. Modification was done in its meaning and theme on the basis of response of respondents. Because of the changing pattern of social structure and working modality of NGOs; the previously identified criteria was not applicable in the same meaning of CSI for the assessment of NGO's performances. The modified assessment criterias are given below:

Structure –there were total 9 sub-criteria finalized under the 'Structure'. One of the sub-criteria of Structure is 'breadth of citizen participation'. Some the criteria under the 'breath of citizen participation' were modified from the study which are as followed: Non-partisan political action, Charitable giving, NGO membership, Volunteering, Collective community action.

Under the sub-criteria, 'Diversity of civil society participation', the following criteria were modified: NGO membership, NGO leadership, Distribution of NGO.

Under the sub-criteria 'level of organization'; the following criteria were modified: existence of NGO umbrella bodies, Effectiveness of umbrella bodies, Self-regulation, Support infrastructure and International linkages. Finally, under the sub-criteria 'interrelation of the NGOs', the following criteria were modified: communication and cooperation.

Environment –there were total 8 sub-criteria finalized under the 'Environment'. On the sub-criteria was 'Legal Environment'. Under the Legal environment, the following criteria were modified: Civil society organization registration, Allowable advocacy activities and Tax laws favourable to NGOs.

Similarly, under the sub-criteria, 'State-civil society relations', the following criteria were modified: Autonomy, Dialogue and Cooperation / support.

Under the sub-criteria, 'Private sector NGOs relations', the following criteria were modified: Private sector attitude, corporate social responsibility and corporate philanthropy.

Values -there were total 9 sub-criteria finalized under the 'Values'. Under the sub-criteria 'Democracy', Democratic practices within NGO,NGOs actions to promote democracy, were modified.

Under the sub-criteria, 'Transparency'; Corruption within NGOs, Financial transparency of NGOs, NGO actions to promote transparency were modified. Similarly, under the sub-criteria 'Tolerance'; two criteria were modified: Tolerance within the NGO, NGO actions to promote tolerance. Under the sub-criteria 'Non-violence' Non-violence within the NGO and NGO actions to promote non-violence and peace were modified. Similarly, under the sub-heading, 'gender equality', these criteria, gender equality within the NGO and NGO action to promote gender equality were modified. Under the sub-criteria, 'poverty eradication', the criteria NGO actions to eradicate poverty was modified. Finally, under the sub-heading, 'environmental sustainability' the criteria, NGO action to sustain the environment was modified.

Impact—there were total 7 sub-criteria were finalized under the main element, 'Impact'. Under the sub-criteria, 'influencing the public policy', the criteria: Human Rights Policy, Social Policy and National Budgeting Process were modified. Similarly, under the sub-criteria: 'Holding state and Private Corporation accountable' these criteria: holding state accountable and holding private corporations accountable were modified. Under the sub-criteria, 'Responding public interest', these criteria: Responsiveness and Public trust were modified. Under the sub-criteria, 'empowering citizens', these criteria: Informing educating citizens, Building capacity for collective action, empowering marginalized people,empowering women, Building social capital and supporting livelihoods were modified. Under the sub-criteria, 'meeting social needs', these criteria: Lobbying for state service provision, Meeting pressing societal needs directly and Meeting needs of marginalized groups were modified.

New Added Criteria

The study found the new criteria of NGO assessment also from the field study. It was observed that the CSI criteria were not adequate to measure the performance of NGO so that respondents have given some new ideas of criteria which were finally included in analysis to develop the new assessment criteria of NGO. The study has added 70new criteria under each major 4 criteria.

The new added criteria were as below:

Under the '**Structure**', total 34 criteria were new added. - Under the sub-criteria, 'Interrelation' the criteria: Coordination was added. Similarly, under the sub-criteria, 'financial resource management', these criteria: Financial policies and procedures, Financial management system, Budgeting process, Approval system, Financial reports, Audit and improving system, Salary system, Legal compliance and Risk safeguard were added.

Under the sub-criteria, 'Human Resources and Management', these criteria: Personnel policies and procedures, and personnel development, Documentation of the recruitment, Social inclusion, Role and responsibilities, Personnel file management, Capacity building and Performance review were new added. Under the sub-criteria, 'Information technological managementand infrastructural resources', these criteria: Basic IT system, Use of IT, Social media and Physical facilities were added.

Under the sub-criteria, 'monitoring and evaluation', these criteria: M&E knowledge, Use of M & E, Documentation & Dissemination and Report preparation, Under the sub-criteria, 'Program management', these criteria: Programme development, Planning approach/design, Program sustainability, Program clarity, Program linkage, Funding partner Coordination with concerned stakeholders and Advocacy and lobby were new added.

Under the **environment**, total 6 new criteria were added. – Under the sub-criteria, 'Organizational working environment' these criteria: Formal well defined structure and practices, Mutual respect and dignified environment, Creative and innovative environment Enjoying and friendly environment and Capacity building and career opportunities Recognizing were new added.

Under the **values**, total, 20 new criteria were added. -Under the sub-criteria, 'NGO establishment', these criteria: Commitment and service motive, Vision and mission, Understanding of the organization and Strategic plan were new added. Similarly, under the sub-criteria: 'Democracy', these criteria: Participatory decision, Leadership development, Responsibility of board and staff were new added. Under the sub-heading, 'gender equality', the criteria: gender policy and ensuring mechanism and gender audit were new added.

Under the sub-criteria, 'Transparency', the criteria: Financial compliances was new added.

Under the sub-criteria, 'Accountability promotion', these criteria: Joint meeting, Public audit and hearing and Self declaration were new added. Under the sub-criteria, 'institutional development' these criteria: Organizational system and policies, Zero tolerance policy, Social justice, Operation of the board, Rule of law and Separation of power. Finally, under the sub-criteria, 'Environmental sustainability', the criteria: IEA & EIA in the project was new added.

Under the **impact**, total 10 new criteria were added.-Under the sub-criteria, 'Influencing Public Policy', the criteria: Local policies and practices was new added. Similarly, under the sub-heading, 'Meeting social needs' the criteria meeting social inclusion was new added. Similarly under the sub criteria 'Peace Building' these criteria: Create social harmony and Promote nonviolence activities were new added. Finally, under the sub-heading, 'Sustainability of the organization and its program', these criteria: Program sustainability, Program Funding, Own Income source, Physical assets, Vehicles and Bank and cash were new added.

Some Rejected Criteria of CSI

The study concluded that some criteria were found irrelevant to measure the performance of NGO so these criteria were rejected and not included in the new assessment criteria of NGO. Therejected assessment criteria were as below:

Some the existing criteria of CSI under the 'Structure' were rejected from the NGO assessment criteria. Respondents could not find the differences of breadth of citizen participation and depth of the citizen participation in the context of Karnali. Therefore, non-partisan political action, charitable giving and NGO membership under the depth of citizen participation were removed. Similarly, Gender equality practices within the NGO and Gender equality within the NGO seems same and no significant difference under the sub criteria of Gender equality. With the response of the responded Gender equality practices within NGO is rejected.

The Final NGO Assessment Criteria:

| S.N | Assessment Criteria | Assessment Criteria Indicators |
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| 1 | | STRUCTURE |
| 1.1 | Breadth of citizen participation | Situation of citizen's participation in non-government organizations |
| 1.1.1. | Non-partisan political action | Citizen's participation in unbiased political activities such as information letter to the media, submitting protest letter, participating protest gathering and meeting |
| 1.1.2 | Charitable giving | NGO and CBOs are receiving donations from citizen/community as charitable organizations |
| 1.1.3 | NGO membership | Citizens/communities are involved in the NGO as member and NGO is maximizing the membership of the organization |
| 1.1.4 | Volunteering | Citizen regularly work as volunteers in the NGOs and to perform its activities |
| 1.1.5 | Collective community action | Citizen's participation in community activities such as presence in community meeting, participation in the program, or collective effort in solving the community problems |
| 1.2 | Diversity of civil society participants | Diversity and representations of the civil societies in the NGOs. For example: equitable participation of different groups of society in NGO |
| 1.2.1 | NGO membership | All the groups of the society such as women, rural community, poor, and minority groups are represented in NGOs and its groups |
| 1.2.2 | NGO leadership | Diversity in NGO leadership i.e. women, dalit, ethnic group and minority have their representatives. |
| 1.2.3 | Distribution of NGO | NGO is spread in the wider area i.e. whole VDC/District/Zone/Region and nation |
| 1.3 | Level of organization | NGO is in structured. Types and infrastructure is well defined. |
| 1.3.1 | Existence of NGO umbrella bodies | NGO is associated or affiliated to federator Umbrella Organization or working sectors |
| 1.3.2 | Effectiveness of umbrella bodies) | NGO federations or umbrella bodies effective to achieve defined goals |
| 1.3.3 | Self regulation | Self-regulation mechanism in the NGO is effective and enforceable |
| 1.3.4 | Support infrastructure | An existence of support infrastructure for NGO is effective |
| 1.3.5 | International linkages | NGO has nationally/internationally linked or the members of international network and participated in international program. |
| 1.4 | Inter-relations | NGO has strong and productive relations among the NGOs and civil society actors |
| 1.4.1 | Communication | There is significant communication among NGOs and civil society actors |
| 1.4.2 | Cooperation | Level of cooperation among NGOs, civil society actors and key stakeholders on issues of common concern, and there is sectoral network and coalitions are identified for cooperation. |
| 1.4.3 | Coordination | There is smooth coordination among key stakeholders i.e. NGO, government agencies, community, funding partners, other key stakeholders |
| 1.5 | Financial resource and management | NGO have adequate financial managements system and best utilization of the resources |
| 1.5.1 | Financial policies and procedures | Financial policies, procedures/operational manual are exit and in effectively practicing in the organization |

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| 1.5.2 | Financial management system | Reliable software or web based accounting system maintained and entire require reports are produced from the account software i.e. cash count, bank reconciliation, trial balance, balance sheet, receipt and payment, budget Vs expenditure, |
| 1.5.3 | Budgeting process | Budgeting process leads/pull the funds to reflect and meet the organizational strategic plan/priorities and annual plan |
| 1.5.4 | Approval system | Approval of the annual and periodical management, program and project budget and expenses is taken from executive board? |
| 1.5.5 | Financial reports | Financial reports are produced as monthly basis and submitted to timely to concern key stakeholders and funding partners |
| 1.5.6 | Audit and improving system | Internal and external audit properly carried out and audit management comments implementation action plan developed and implemented effectively |
| 1.5.7 | Salary system | Salary sheet prepared on a monthly basis and it is reflected in master payroll (no double funding as well) and no any form of deduction from staff? |
| 1.5.8 | Legal compliance | Legal compliances such as tax deduction and deposit in the tax office/bank, independent auditor appointment, renewal, tax exemption and other local laws strongly followed |
| 1.5.9 | Risk safeguard | Adequate financial control and risk measure instruments developed and implemented |
| 1.6 | Human resources and Management | Human resource development and management of the NGO |
| 1.6.1 | Personnel policies and procedures | Written personnel policy and procedures exists and updated regularly |
| 1.6.2 | Recruitment and personnel development | Committed and proficient staffs are recruited through competitive/transparent process by recruitment team (Board, program and program support) |
| 1.6.3 | Documentation of the recruitment | Documentation of process of recruitment process (i.e. Written test, interview checklist, presentation) exist by recruitment team |
| 1.6.4 | Social inclusion | Women, disadvantaged and excluded groups given priority in hiring staff and giving vital responsibilities in personnel policy and practicing in the action |
| 1.6.5 | Role and responsibilities | Roles and responsibilities of the staff clear and understandable and periodically reviewed and practices of time sheet and leave records exist and duly followed up. |
| 1.6.6 | Personnel file management | Staff Personal file maintained (appointment letter, salary provision, leave, performance) and staff contract letter with job description provided to/accepted by staffs. |
| 1.6.7 | Capacity building | Capacity building, health and safety policy for staffs is exist and applied |
| 1.6.8 | Performance review | Performance evaluation of all staffs conducted by periodically |
| 1.7 | Information Technological (IT), management and infrastructural resources | Adequate is the level of technological and infrastructural resources of the NGOs? |
| 1.7.1 | Basic IT system | Modern IT system and applications are well equipped in the organization and its entire offices |
| 1.7.2 | Use of IT | Communication and consultation is used by IT instruments |
| 1.7.3 | Social media | Organization's website, face book, twitter and other social media is used to create public image of the organization |

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| 1.7.4 | Physical facilities | Offices are well equipped and minimum physical facilities are available for the better efficiency and create better working environment |
| 1.8 | Monitoring and Evaluation | Monitoring and evaluation policy/mechanism and framework exit and its indicator based monitoring tools are developed and operational zed |
| 1.8.1 | M&E knowledge | Executive board, management team and staff are known about monitoring policy, mechanism, tools and regular review and reflection carried out |
| 1.8.2 | Use of M & E | The practice of baseline report preparation and community-based and multi stakeholders joint participatory monitoring practice exits through program visit, review & reflection workshops and planning events |
| 1.8.3 | Documentation & Dissemination | Documentation and dissemination system exists within projects and organization and among the concerned stakeholders about reports, best practices, feed backs and reflection of the learning's |
| 1.8.4 | Report preparation | Program and institutional assessment, completion, evaluation reports are maintained, shared, published and disseminate |
| 1.9 | Programme | Program development and effective implementation |
| 1.9.1 | Programme development | Target people/communities and stakeholders are participating and actively involved to design the program/project to identify real needs, proposal developing and budget allocation with the prime focus of women, children, dalit and socially excluded groups. |
| 1.9.2 | Planning approach/design | Log frame and indicator based planning system and result/performance based implementation and out puts institutionalized in the NGO |
| 1.9.3 | Program sustainability | Sustainable mechanism has been developed for the sustainability of the program and interventions |
| 1.9.4 | Program clarity | NGO has clarity on objectives of the program planning and implementation approach amongst entire team of the organization (Board, program and management staff and CBOs) |
| 1.9.5 | Program linkage | Programs/projects contribute the organizational longterm plan/goals/objectives, local and national governments plans and priorities, and MDGs |
| 1.9.6 | Funding partner | NGO has diversified funding partners for the continuation and extension of the program and avoid the dependence on single partner. |
| 1.9.7 | Coordination with concerned stakeholders | Program design and implementation in coordination and collaboration among key stakeholders i.e. Government (DDC, VDC, Municipality and government institutions) , NGOs, Professional institutions, communities |
| 1.9.8 | Advocacy and lobby | NGO has developed advocacy strategy and for the issues based advocacy networking is established with other like-minded organizations for joint advocacy at all levels to link local issues |

2**ENVIRONMENT**

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|-------|-----------------------|--|
| 2.1 | Political context | Political situation in the country and its positive impact on civil society |
| 2.1.1 | Political rights | Civil and political rights freely can be realized such as participating freely in political processes, elect political leaders through free and fair elections, freely organize in political parties |
| 2.1.2 | Political competition | There is existence of main characteristics of party system such as multi-party competition, ideological debate etc. |
| 2.1.3 | Rule of law | There is rule of law embedded in this area |
| 2.1.4 | Corruption | Corruption is perceived as crime in the public sector |
| 2.1.5 | State effectiveness | State is capable to meet its defined activities |
| 2.1.6 | Decentralization | Government's expenditure is devolved to sub-national authorities. |

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| 2.2 | Basic freedoms & rights | Basic rights and freedom ensured by law and in practice. |
| 2.2.1 | Civil liberties | Civil liberties e.g. freedom of expression, association, assembly ensured by law and in practice |
| 2.2.2 | Information rights | Right to information is guaranteed by law and in practice |
| 2.2.3 | Press freedoms | Press freedom is ensured by law and in practice |
| 2.3 | Socio-economic context | Impact of socio-economic condition of country on civil society |
| 2.3.1 | Socio-economic context | Socio-economic situation has influenced in effective performance of civil society |
| 2.4 | Socio-cultural context | Socio-cultural context (attitudes, norms) is detrimental or favourable civil society |
| 2.4.1 | Trust | Level of trust among the member of organization |
| 2.4.2 | Tolerance | Members of the organization has tolerant |
| 2.4.3 | Public spiritedness | Sense of public spiritedness is strong among members of organization |
| 2.5 | Legal environment | Existing legal environment enabling or disabling civil society |
| 2.5.1 | CSO registration | NGO registration process is simple, quick, inexpensive, following legal provisions and consistently applied |
| 2.5.2 | Allowable advocacy activities | NGOs are free to engage in advocacy, criticize government |
| 2.5.3 | Tax laws favourable to NGOs | Existing tax system is favourable and broad to NGOs |
| 2.5.4 | Tax benefits for philanthropy | There is availability of tax deduction or credits or tax benefits to encourage individual and corporate giving |
| 2.6 | State -civil society relations | Nature and quality of relations between civil society and the state |
| 2.6.1 | Autonomy | NGO/Civil society exit and function independently in the district/state |
| 2.6.2 | Dialogue | State does dialogue with NGOs/civil society |
| 2.6.3 | Cooperation / support | \NGO/CSOs are able to receive state resources |
| 2.7 | Private sector NGOs relation | Relations between private sector and NGO/civil society is effective |
| 2.7.1 | Private sector attitude | General attitude of the private sector towards NGO and civil society actors positive |
| 2.7.2 | Corporate social responsibility | Notions and actions of corporate social responsibility is developed |
| 2.7.3 | Corporate philanthropy | NGOs/CSOs receive broad support from private sectors |
| 2.8 | Organizational working environment | Working environment of the organization |
| 2.8.1 | Formal well defined structure and practices | There is well defined formal organization structures exist in the organization |
| 2.8.2 | Mutual respect and dignified environment | There is mutual respect and cooperative environment among the team members |
| 2.8.3 | Creative and innovative environment | There is creative and innovation creation environment within the organization |

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| 2.8.4 | Enjoying and friendly environment | There is enjoying and friendly environment in the organization |
| 2.8.5 | Capacity building and career opportunities | There is significant capacity building and career development opportunities in the organization |
| 2.8.6 | Recognizing | There is practices of recognizing and rewarding system in the organization |

3**VALUES**

| | | |
|-------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 3.1 | NGO establishment | NGO is established for the service motive and clarity on the function |
| 3.1.1 | Commitment and service motive | NGO is established with the special motive to serve to needy community |
| 3.1.2 | Vision and mission | NGO has clearly articulated the vision, mission, goal and objectives , Vision, Mission, Goal and Objective effective implemented, Based on social values, Is NGOs activities are supporting to establish the values and encouraging to revolutionary and destroying the things, Capable and enable of self independent |
| 3.1.3 | Understanding of the organization | NGOs vision, mission, goal and objectives is understand by staff, community, key stakeholders |
| 3.1.4 | Strategic plan | Strategic plan is aligned with the vision, mission, goal and objectives as |
| 3.1.5 | Poverty eradication | NGO is active and visible action to eradicate poverty (Assets, livelihood, knowledge, culture, skills etc) through various programs in the community |
| 3.2 | Democracy | |
| 3.2.1 | Democratic practices within NGO | NGO practice internal democracy through AGM to elect leaders/executive boards'. Executive board members have control over decisions of the organization |
| 3.2.2 | Participatory decision | Decisions are made by executive board and management team by participatory way and implemented effectively |
| 3.2.3 | Leadership development | Executive board authorities and members have fix the certain duration and terms of the position? |
| 3.2.4 | Responsibility of board and staff | Authority, role and responsibility clearly defined of the executive board and staff and implemented without any conflict and conflict of interest |
| 3.2.5 | NGO actions to promote democracy | NGO actively promoting democracy at all level to promote and exercise democratic practices and democratic culture |
| 3.3 | Transparency | NGO promote and practice transparency |
| 3.3.1 | Corruption within NGOs | Zero tolerance policy and practices in the matter of corruption within organization and programs |
| 3.3.2 | Financial transparency of NGOs | NGOs make their financial accounts publicly available through budgeting, expenditures reports, annual reports, hoarding boards and sharing information in the various events |
| 3.3.3 | Financial compliances | NGOs timely conduct overall audit as provisions of the government and funding partner's policy and local law and dissemination the reports to publicly |
| 3.3.4 | NGOs actions to promote transparency | NGO actively promoted government and corporate (institutional) transparency |
| 3.4 | Accountability promotion | Improve accountability mechanism establish and promote through policies and procedures |

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| 3.4.1 | Joint meeting | NGO conduct joint meeting of the board and staff, staff and concern stakeholders and community and review the performances and collect the feedback and suggestions and mild complaints |
| 3.4.2 | Public audit and hearing | NGOs conducted public/social audit and public hearing in the community? |
| 3.4.3 | Self declaration | Executive board and staff member declare and verify wealth periodically to promote accountability |
| 3.5 | Institutional development | Institutional set up and practices of the organization |
| 3.5.1 | Organizational system and policies | NGO has standard organisational systems, policies and procedures i.e. Organizational strategic plan, various (Good governance policy, Program finance, administration, HRD, gender, dalit, child, sexual violation, logistic, IT etc) operation policies and manuals/guidelines which are well inducted to staff and board members |
| 3.5.2 | Zero tolerance policy | Zero tolerance policy strictly implemented i.e. against sexual harassment, child abuse, exploitation, misappropriation, fraud ec |
| 3.5.3 | Social justice | GESI policy (including women friendly policy to address women's specific issues) to mainstream gender and social inclusion in all levels i.e. general member, executive board and staff |
| 3.5.4 | Operation of the board | Regular board meeting, timely AGM, renewal membership and increased members |
| 3.5.5 | Rule of law | NGO stand and ensure rule of law in the institution and believe supremacy of statutes and law, non-discrimination and equal treatment by law. |
| 3.5.6 | Separation of power | Organization has established the system and applied practices of separation of power between board and management, maintain the check and balance and clear outlined responsibilities and authorities |
| 3.6 | Tolerance | Organization practice and promote tolerance |
| 3.6.1 | Tolerance within the NGO | NGO promoting and practicing tolerant in the organization in its program |
| 3.6.2 | NGO actions to promote tolerance | NGO actively promote tolerance at all level |
| 3.7 | Non-violence | NGO practice and promote non-violence |
| 3.7.1 | Non-violence within the NGO | Member of NGO expressing their interests in the public sphere with the use of non violence means among and within NGO |
| 3.7.2 | NGO actions to promote non-violence and peace | NGO support the non-violent resolution to promote a non-violent society such as violence against women, child abuse, and youth violence |
| 3.8 | Gender equality | NGO practice and promote gender equality |
| 3.8.1 | Gender policy and ensuring mechanism | Organisation has developed a written gender policy that affirms a commitment to gender equity |
| 3.8.2 | Gender equality within the NGO | The representation of women in the organization is increased in the board, senior management team and other staff level in the past few years |
| 3.8.3 | NGO's actions to promote gender equality | NGO is actively promoting gender equality to develop program planning and implementation at community level |
| 3.8.4 | Gender audit | Gender and social inclusion auditing system has been established and being carried out |
| 3.9 | Environmental sustainability | NGO is promoting and practicing environmental sustainability |

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| 3.9.1 | NGO actions to sustain the environment | NGO is active to sustain environment |
| 3.9.2 | IEA & EIA in the project | IEA and EIA need to be compulsion to implement the any projects |
| 4 | IMPACT | |
| 4.1 | Influencing Public Policy | Organization is active and successful in influencing public policy |
| 4.1.1 | Human Rights Policy | Organization is active and successful to influence human rights policy for the promotion and protection of human rights |
| 4.1.2 | Social Policy | Organization is active and successful in influencing social policy for the effective implementation and incorporate the community concerns to reform the social policies |
| 4.1.3 | National Budgeting Process | Organization is active and successful in influencing the national budgeting process to address the community needs/plan of the community |
| 4.1.4 | Local policies and practices | Organization is active and successful in influencing local policies and practices for the betterment of the community |
| 4.2 | Holding state and private corporations accountable | NGOs are active and successful in holding the state and private corporations accountable |
| 4.2.1 | Holding state accountable | NGOs are active and successful in monitoring state performance and state accountable |
| 4.2.2 | Holding private corporations accountable | NGOs are active and successful in holding private corporations accountable |
| 4.3 | Responding on public interest | NGOs actors respond to social welfare |
| 4.3.1 | Responsiveness | NGO effectively responding to priority social concerns |
| 4.3.2 | Public trust | Majority of the population trust NGOs |
| 4.4 | Empowering citizens | NGO is active and successful in empowering citizens for example traditional marginalized groups in making decisions that influence in livelihood |
| 4.4.1 | Informing educating citizens | NGO is active and successful in informing and educating citizens on public issues |
| 4.4.2 | Building capacity for collective action | How active and successful are civil societies in building the capacity of people to organize themselves, mobilize resources and work together to solve common problems? |
| 4.4.3 | Empowering marginalized people | NGO is active and successful in empowering marginalized people |
| 4.4.4 | Empowering women | NGO is active and successful in empowering women for example to give them real choice and control over their lives |
| 4.4.5 | Building social capital | NGO is building social capital among its members? NGO effectively compare trust, tolerance, and public spiritedness of members to those of non-members |
| 4.4.6 | Supporting livelihoods | NGO is active and successful to create employment and income generating opportunities especially for poor and women |
| 4.5 | Meeting societal needs | NGO is active and successful in meeting societal needs especially of poor and marginalized groups |
| 4.5.1 | Lobbying for state service provision | NGO is active and successful in lobbying the government to meet pressing the societal needs |

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| 4.5.2 | Meeting pressing societal needs directly | NGO is active and successful in directly meeting pressing societal needs to provide service or to promote self-help initiation |
| 4.5.3 | Meeting needs of marginalised groups | NGO is effective than the state in delivering services to marginalized group |
| 4.5.4 | Meeting social inclusion | Social inclusive and emphasis in values of the organization to reduce and eliminated any form of discrimination by NGOs i.e. touchable, race, colour, caste, sex etc |
| 4.6 | Peace building | Organization is active and achieve the visible result to promote peace |
| 4.6.1 | Create social harmony | NGO has created social harmony in the community |
| 4.6.2 | Promote non violence activities | NGO has promoted culture and practices of non violence activities |
| 4.7 | Sustainability of the organization and its program | Sustainability of the organization and its program |
| 4.7.1 | Program sustainability | Sustainable mechanism of the program interventions and institutionalization of the program |
| 4.7.2 | Program Funding | Long term funding commitment and program approval/agreement |
| 4.7.3 | Own Income source | Regular income source of the NGO |
| 4.7.4 | Physical assets | Building, land and other physical assets |
| 4.7.5 | Vehicles | Jeep, car, motorbike and other vehicle equipments |
| 4.7.6 | Bank and cash | Reserve fund or Bank balance and cash balance, |

NGO assessment criteria can be applied with rating scale/liquor scale and yes/no questions based on the researchers available resources and research objectives.

The power of NGOs in the third - value-driven - sector will depend to an important degree on their ability to form coalitions across ethnic, class, spiritual, geographical and national boundaries (Fowler, 1991, p. 16).¹ Board members are seen as essential for the continuity of the organisation. The board's role in terms of checks and balances and ensuring internal control mechanisms were less emphasised by Nepali NGOs (Ingdal, 2007, p. iv).

The effectiveness of NGOs is largely dependent on their leaders with the right skills in public policy negotiations, building social alliances, strategic planning and other competencies that enhance their capacity to bring about changes. In order to bring about changes NGOs need to be in the forefront of many innovations that have provided ideas and models replicated or adapted in other settings and situations (Ateljevic, 2008, p. 351). Non-profit service providers are said to be different from government because they are more flexible and diverse, less bureaucratic and costly. They are different from for-profits because they may produce services whose direct revenues do not cover their costs (James, 1997, p. 3). How can an NGO construct or draw its organisational 'bottom line'? One method involves carrying out a Social Audit, a process of independent social accounting being developed and tested by a UK NGO (Fowler, 1996, p. 62). In sum, the key to NGO organisational assessment appears to lie in identifying and applying as performance standards the factors and criteria which relevant people are likely to use when making a judgment. This approach to the problem of judging the organisational performance of 'non-profits' looks promising, and now needs to be tested with development NGOs (Fowler, 1996, p. 63).

CONCLUSION

This study had undertaken to development the NGOs assessment criteria examining the perception of the NGO executive board and staff member of the local NGO, beneficiaries, civil societies and representatives of the government agencies through Civil Society Index (CSI) in Karnali Zone. From the theoretical perspective, the study had adopted the Civil Society Index (CSI) indicators as the base of study to identify the NGO's status, its contribution and finally to develop the NGO assessment criteria. The study had developed the new NGO assessment criteria and proved that the existing indicators defined by CSI were not enough to measure the performances of NGO. So, finally, a new NGO assessment criterion was developed with the modified and new additional assessment criteria. There were 25 sub elements of the CSI which increased into 33 sub elements and 74 indicators in the CSI which were increased 138 individual criteria as NGO assessment criteria of this study.

On the basis of results obtained from this study, following recommendations are made for academician and stakeholders of NGOs for the future study and action:

1. The future researchers as well as development experts can evaluate or measure the performance of NGO by using the NGO assessment criteria developed by this study.
2. Policy makers of Governmental and non-governmental national and international organizations can adopt the NGO assessment criteria as the base of evaluation of NGO's performance in National and international level.

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