

**Leadership at the Grassroots:**

**An observational case study of leadership styles and traits at SVYM and its community**

*Cornell ILR Global Service Learning Program*

**Claire Qian**

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to first express my deepest gratitude to my mentors, Mr. Sudarshan and Mr. Ramesh. Their continuous guidance has been invaluable throughout my time at the Vivekananda Institute for Leadership Development. Additionally, I would like to thank the rest of the V-LEAD team for being incredibly welcoming and supportive. This case study would not have been possible without their support.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement leadership and staff for their participation and encouragement. Their insights truly enriched my understanding of grassroots leadership.

Finally, I would like to thank SVYM's Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Team (WASH) and the Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement (GRAAM) for sharing their inspiring community observations and stories.

## **Introduction**

Leadership is often used as a buzzword to signify progress and development, whether it's in communities, organizations, or societies. However, leadership can take on different forms and characteristics depending on the setting and context. In the field of nonprofit work, grassroots leadership has emerged as a particularly powerful and effective approach to driving change from within the community. Grassroots leadership, which traditionally emphasizes community engagement and empowerment, has played a vital role in fostering development in both nonprofits and communities.

This paper aims to observe and analyze emerging grassroots leadership styles, traits, and trends within the Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement (SVYM), as well as the inherent leadership, ownership, and initiative that arise from the community itself.

Since its inception in 1984, SVYM has transformed from a small gathering of passionate individuals to a development organization servicing over 3 million people in Karnataka in four key areas: Health, Education, Socio-economic Empowerment, and Training and Research. The approach that SVYM adopted to successfully create transformative change in communities across Karnataka fundamentally centers communities in their own development. SVYM believes in fostering development that is both contextually relevant and culturally appropriate, striving to create "a caring and equitable society, free of deprivation and strife."

At the core of SVYM's mission lies the transformative power of grassroots leadership. Through empowering individuals and communities to take charge of their own development, SVYM has created and continues to create lasting change across Karnataka. With SVYM's organizational

values and mission being deeply rooted in the grassroots, distinct grassroots leadership styles have begun to emerge within the organization.

In the first part of this case study, the focus is on examining the emerging grassroots leadership styles and traits within the Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement (SVYM). Through observing the behaviors of leadership within SVYM, leadership styles and characteristic patterns are identified and analyzed within the context of SVYM's different sectors.

In the second part of this case study, the focus shifts to the leadership, initiative, and ownership exhibited by communities as observed by the Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement (GRAAM) and SVYM's Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Program Team (WASH). This part of the study analyzes the community observations made by GRAAM and WASH to gather insights into what type of leadership, initiative, and ownership qualities are emerging in communities.

Overall, by analyzing and observing leadership within SVYM and the community, valuable insights about emerging grassroots leadership styles and traits deepen our understanding of grassroots leadership and its transformative potential as well as its limitations.

## **Methodology**

This case study aims to examine leadership styles and characteristics emerging from the nonprofit sector and the grassroots community.

Over the course of the case study 7 grassroots leaders were, two primary locations were visited: the Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement (SVYM) Mysore Campus and the Saragur Campus

The following leadership roles were observed:

- 1) The Deputy Director Academics, VPUC
- 2) Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Community Health
- 3) Vice Principal, VSOE
- 4) Team Lead Relationship Management
- 5) Team Lead and Physician, Palliative Care
- 6) Manager, Palliative Care Centre
- 7) Hospital Administrator, VMH

In total, seven grassroots leaders from different SVYM sectors spanning education, health, and administration were observed and analyzed.

The methodology utilized in the study is a qualitative research approach and consists of three distinct phases: Observation, Discussion, and Analysis.

## Phase 1: Observation

Over the span of 1 week, I shadowed each of the seven grassroots leaders in their day to day schedules and observed how they managed their daily responsibilities and interacted with their coworkers, team members, and various stakeholders.

In order to ensure a standardized approach during the observation phase, two templates were used as a guide for observations: 1) leadership characteristics and 2) organizational culture. Through the use of these templates, relevant observations and insights observed during the field visits were systematically recorded.

During the observation phase particular emphasis was placed on 7 key characteristics:

- 1) Innovation and Risk Taking  
Innovation and Risk Taking reflects the organization and leadership's willingness and ability to explore and experiment with new ideas and approaches, as well as its ability to take calculated risks.
- 2) Attention to Detail  
Attention to Detail refers to the amount of focus and emphasis an organization and leadership places on accuracy, precision, and thoroughness in its work processes and approaches.
- 3) Outcome Orientation  
Outcome orientation places the focus on achieving certain results or goals rather than on the methods that are used to attain them. This means that the organization and the leadership place a strong emphasis on tangible results and measuring performance.
- 4) People Orientation  
People orientation refers to how much the organization and the leadership considers the impact of their decisions on employees, coworkers, or stakeholders. Organizations and leaders with high people orientation would prioritize the impact on employees during decision making.
- 5) Team Autonomy  
Team Autonomy refers to whether organizations and leaders organize work activities and tasks around groups or individuals, especially leaders. Organizations and leaders with high team orientation would organize work activities around groups to promote collaboration and teamwork among team members.
- 6) Competitiveness  
Competitiveness refers to the amount of emphasis and priority that the organization and leadership places on competition. Organizations and leadership with a high aggressiveness characteristic may actively promote competition among their workers to outperform each other or external competitions. In comparison, organizations and leaders

with low aggressiveness may place more emphasis on cooperation and harmony among the workers than competition.

7) Stability

Stability indicates to what extent the organization and leadership prioritize continuity and consistency over change. It reflects the organization's and leadership's ability to maintain its existing structure and work processes while withstanding external challenges or influences.

In the situation where one of the characteristics was unable to be observed, follow-up questions would be asked regarding those characteristics in Phase 2: Discussion

**Phase 2: Discussion**

After a day of observations, I had discussions with each subject where questions ranged from asking follow up questions about workplace practices, general schedules, responsibilities, to leadership approaches.

\*\*\*In addition to observing the seven SVYM leaders, I also had discussions with a representative from the Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement and team members of the SVYM's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) project. These additional discussions provided valuable perspectives and insights into how grassroots leadership emerged from the community themselves.

**Phase 3: Analysis.**

In the analysis phase, the qualitative data gathered from the observations phase and the discussion phase served as the foundation for meaningful insights to be drawn out related to the research objectives. The qualitative data were the basis for categorization of the leadership styles and traits.

**Key**

<b>Conditional Leaders</b>	<b>Directive Leaders</b>	<b>Interpersonal Leaders</b>	<b>Delegative Leaders</b>
----------------------------	--------------------------	------------------------------	---------------------------

<b>Low</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>-1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

	<b>Innovation and Risk</b>	<b>Attention to Detail</b>	<b>Outcome Orientation</b>	<b>People Orientation</b>	<b>Team Autonomy</b>	<b>Competitiveness</b>	<b>Stability</b>
<b>Director of Academics</b>	0	1	0	-1	1	-1	1
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation Officer</b>	1	1	1	-1	-1	-1	1
<b>Vice Principal</b>	-1	1	1	1	1	-1	1
<b>Relationship Management Lead</b>	0	1	0	1	1	-1	1
<b>Palliative Care Centre Technical Team Lead</b>	0	1	-1	1	1	-1	1
<b>Palliative Care Manager</b>	0	1	-1	1	-1	-1	1
<b>Hospital Admin</b>	0	1	1	1	1	-1	1
<b>Organization Culture</b>	0	1	0.143	0.714	0.714	-1	1

**Figure 1: Role-specific and general SVYM organizational culture**

Overall SVYM Organizational culture generally indicated:

Low competitiveness \*\*\*

Moderate innovation and risk-taking, outcome orientation

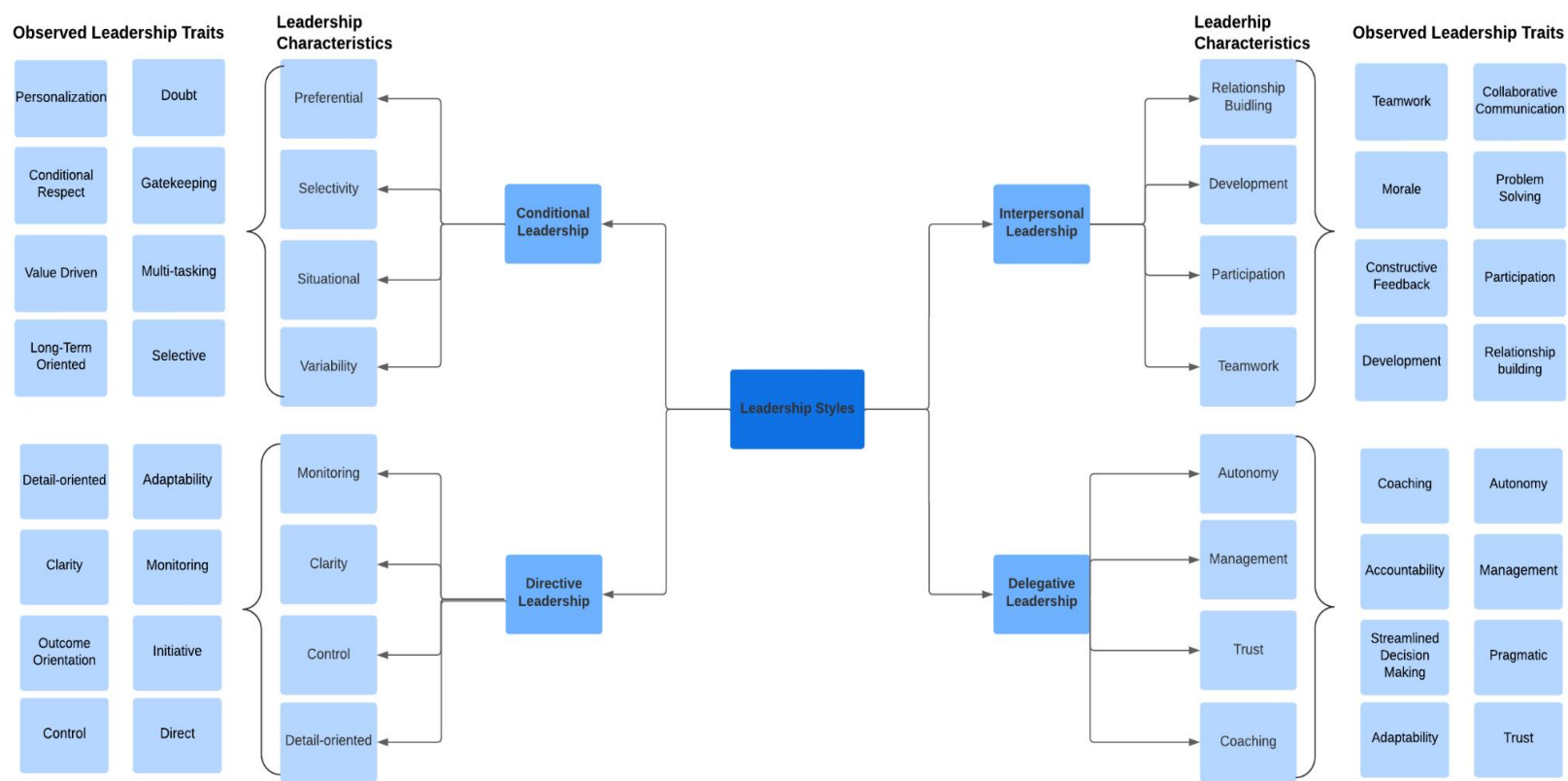
High attention to detail, people orientation, team autonomy, and stability.

\*\*\* It is critical to note that low competitiveness in a nonprofit context is not inherently negative. Nonprofits have different intentions than businesses, which is what traditional organizational culture frameworks are modeled around. Nonprofits do not need to foster competitive cultures within their organization or with stakeholders in order to be successful in upholding their values and fulfilling their mission. Therefore, competitiveness is not a crucial component of the culture of nonprofit organizations.

After observation data and discussion transcripts were analyzed, four main styles of leadership emerged:

Conditional Leaders, Directive Leaders, Interpersonal Leaders, and Delegative Leaders.

Among these four distinct leadership styles, different leadership traits were observed.



**Figure 2: Leadership Styles, Characteristics, and Traits at SVYM**

## **Part 1: Leadership Styles at Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement**

### **I. Conditional Leaders**

While the classical definition of a conditional leader refers to a leader who can only lead under certain conditions; otherwise, they are unable to lead, in the context of SVYM, conditional leaders are defined as individuals who exhibit leadership traits selectively. The conditional leadership observed at SVYM focuses on leaders who selectively exhibit leadership traits based on the situation, rather than being limited by specific conditions. Their leadership practices may not be consistent and are dependent on specific circumstances or conditions. Although their ability to adjust leadership traits depending on the situation allows them to navigate diverse or unexpected scenarios, the lack of consistency can create issues with maintaining standardization in interpersonal relations and also establishing trust with coworkers and stakeholders.

#### **Conditional Leadership Characteristics:**

##### **1) Preferential**

Conditional leaders have a preference for certain leadership approaches or behaviors depending on the situation. This preference can be influenced by the nature of the task or the individuals involved.

##### **2) Selectivity**

Conditional leaders choose when to apply specific leadership traits depending on the context. Instead of practicing a consistent leadership style across all situations and interactions, conditional leaders are selective with who or when they demonstrate their leadership traits.

##### **3) Situational**

Conditional leaders are highly considerate of situational dynamics when choosing which leadership behaviors to exhibit. By considering team composition, task requirements, and external factors, conditional leaders alter their leadership style to best fulfill their objectives.

##### **4) Variability**

Conditional leaders exhibit different traits or behaviors depending on the situation, which can result in a lack of consistency in their leadership. This variability can create challenges in maintaining standardization as well as predictability in interpersonal relationships and decision-making processes.

Characteristics of the conditional leader were observed in the Deputy Director of Academics and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer.

#### **Observed Leadership Traits:**

##### **1) Personalization**



Leaders exhibited keen awareness of the differences among workers and stakeholders and thus tailor their approaches and behaviors accordingly. Personalization can be observed through the leader's treatment of others based on observed characteristics.

**2) Conditional Respect**

Leaders showed respect selectively, based on specific circumstances or conditions. They may show respect to individuals or groups when it aligns with their immediate goals, expectations or needs. Conditional respect can undermine trust and create inconsistencies in interpersonal relationships.

**3) Value Driven**

Leaders were guided by their values. They prioritize certain values based on specific circumstances, which allows them to make decisions that align with their immediate goals.

**4) Long-Term Oriented**

Leaders placed more value on long-term goals than short-term gains. As a result, when interacting with coworkers or stakeholders, they prioritize long-term commitment to the organization over short-term value.

**5) Doubt**

Leaders may have some reservations about the abilities and skill sets of coworkers and stakeholders. These leaders may

**6) Gatekeeping**

Leaders controlled access to resources, information, and opportunities within the organization. They evaluate who gets access to what to ensure that it aligns with their own goals or priorities.

**7) Multi-tasking**

Leaders were involved in multiple projects and responsibilities on a daily basis. They managed competing priorities.

**8) Adaptability**

Leaders are capable of adjusting their approaches to suit different circumstances. They made necessary adjustments to keep their team or organization on track.

## **II. Directive Leaders**

Directive Leaders are individuals who place strong emphasis on setting clear objectives and giving explicit instructions. Directive leaders play an active role in closely monitoring progress and maintaining a structured work environment where the leader's directives guide the actions of team members. This leadership style is particularly effective in fast-paced environments with constantly changing or ambiguous demands. Directive leadership, however, does involve a significant amount of control over the actions of coworkers, which can potentially limit collaboration.

### **Leadership Characteristics:**

**1) Monitoring**

Directive leaders closely monitor the progress of individuals and team members to ensure that everyone is on track to meet set objectives. This monitoring allows directive leaders to identify any issues or situations where intervention and corrective actions are necessary.

**2) Clarity**

Directive leaders excel at clear communication. They clearly communicate expectations, and they provide explicit directions that minimize ambiguity and misunderstandings.

**3) Control**

Directive leaders maintain significant control over team members. They establish workplace structures that ensure that the work completed is consistent and up to standard.

**4) Detail-oriented**

Directive leaders pay very close attention to details. They emphasize precision and accuracy in instructions and also expect team members to do the same. Through their focus on detail, directive leaders minimize the chances of errors.

Characteristics of the directive leader were observed in the Vice Principal and Relationship Management Team Lead

**Observed Leadership Traits:**

**1) Detail-oriented**

Leaders paid close attention to details in everyday responsibilities. They emphasized the importance of thoroughness to ensure that tasks are complete with precision and accuracy.

**2) Adaptability**

When faced with unforeseen circumstances, the leaders adjusted their approach to address the situation while still maintaining control and structure.

**3) Clarity**

Leaders communicated clearly to ensure that everyone understands their roles, responsibilities, and the overall objectives. They strived to reduce ambiguity.

**4) Outcome Oriented**

Leaders focused on achieving specific outcomes and results. They set clear goals for their team members and prioritized efficiency in the process of achievement.

**5) Monitoring**

Leaders closely tracked the progress and performance and team members. They regularly checked in to ensure that tasks were on track and still aligned with overall objectives.

**6) Control**

Leaders exercised control over the actions and decision making processes of team members so that they could intervene whenever they deemed necessary.

**7) Initiative**

Leaders took a proactive approach in ensuring that tasks are completed effectively and efficiently by providing an organized structure ahead of time.

#### **8) Directive**

Leaders gave explicit instructions and guidance. They expected team members and stakeholders to follow them closely.

### **III. Interpersonal Leaders**

Interpersonal leaders prioritize relationship building and fostering the personal and professional development of team members. By emphasizing strong team relationships, interpersonal leaders enhance teamwork, communication, participation, and morale. However, there can be an overemphasis on harmony, which may lead to missed opportunities for critical evaluation and constructive feedback.

#### **Leadership Characteristics:**

##### **1) Relationship building**

Interpersonal leaders focus on building genuine and meaningful relationships with their team members. They invest time and effort to personally understand the strengths and needs of each member of their team. Through establishing a positive and supportive relationship, interpersonal leaders create a foundation of trust and open communication, thus fostering a collaborative team environment.

##### **2) Development**

Interpersonal leaders are committed to the growth and development of their team members. These leaders recognize the full potential of their team members and are dedicated to providing the essential guidance and mentorship for learning and skill development. Although interpersonal leaders ensure workforce development, this may be at the expense of workplace task efficiency and speed.

##### **3) Participation**

Interpersonal leaders actively encourage participation from their team members. These leaders seek input and engagement from every team member. By encouraging active participation within their teams, leaders leverage collective knowledge and skill sets that lead to more efficient decision-making.

##### **4) Teamwork**

Interpersonal leaders prioritize collaboration among team members. They promote cooperation by emphasizing shared goals among team members and creating a culture of open communication. Through promoting teamwork, interpersonal leaders enhance productivity and overall team performance.

Characteristics of the interpersonal leader were observed in the Palliative Care Centre Physician Team Lead and Palliative Care Centre Manager

### **Observed Leadership Traits:**

#### **1) Teamwork**

Leaders encouraged collaboration, cooperation, and mutual support among team members in everyday tasks and responsibilities.

#### **2) Morale**

Leaders were attentive to the morale of their team members. They strived to create a positive and supportive work environment.

#### **3) Relationship building**

Leaders invested in getting to know team members personally and developed close bonds with them. They placed emphasis on developing and maintaining relationships in the workplace.

#### **4) Constructive Feedback**

Leaders provided constructive feedback to their team members. They offered guidance, encouragement, and suggestions for improvement, in a collaborative effort with the person.

#### **5) Development**

Leaders were actively involved in the development of their team members. They provide opportunities for skill-building, training, and growth in work tasks.

#### **6) Collaborative Communication**

Leaders encouraged open dialogue and the exchange of different ideas and perspectives in both formal and informal settings.

#### **7) Problem Solving**

When unexpected issues arised, leaders managed the situation in a level-headed manner that maintained positive relationships within the team while ensuring that the issue was efficiently resolved.

#### **8) Participation**

Leaders actively sought team member's input in decisions and also created opportunities for team members to contribute their ideas and insights.

### **IV. Delegative Leaders**

Delegative leaders are individuals who monitor progress and outcomes but grant some individuals or teams higher autonomy in decision-making and management. Due to the increased autonomy, delegative leaders may not be directly involved in every decision, but they still hold accountability for the outcomes and possess a coaching attitude in situations that require their intervention. Delegative leadership is particularly useful in fast-paced environments where quick decisions need to be made, as it promotes employee development without slowing them down with micromanagement. It is most effective when there is established trust between workers. However, this limited intervention style of leadership can potentially result in miscommunication and misunderstandings among different team members, which may undermine team cohesion.

### **Leadership Characteristics:**

#### **1) Autonomy**

Delegative leaders provide individuals or teams with some control in decision-making and everyday tasks. By giving them some control over their own work, these leaders encourage team members to take ownership of their work.

#### **2) Management**

Even though Delegative leaders grant autonomy to team members, they still maintain accountability for outcomes and progress. Delegative leaders monitor and evaluate team members' work to ensure that it meets organizational goals and standards. Additionally, these leaders play a managerial role by providing guidance, resources, and support to team members when needed.

#### **3) Trust**

Delegative leaders that have confidence in team members abilities and decision making. Fundamentally, their trust in team members fosters a work environment that is capable of running independently without micromanagement.

#### **4) Coaching**

Delegative leaders adopt a coaching attitude if the situation calls for it. They readily provide guidance and feedback to their team members when challenges or issues arise. These leaders develop team members abilities , enabling them to make informed decisions and effectively manage their responsibilities.

Characteristics of the delegative leader were observed in the Hospital Administrator.

### **Observed Leadership Traits:**

#### **1) Autonomy**

The leader trusted team members abilities and stepped back when necessary to allow them to take ownership and initiative with their responsibilities.

#### **2) Coaching**

The leader provided guidance, support, and resources to their team members when needed. They primarily sought improvement through constructive feedback.

#### **3) Streamlined Decision Making**

The leader empowered team members to make decisions within their areas of responsibility. They delegated decision-making authority to the appropriate individuals to ensure that decisions are made both efficiently and effectively.

#### **4) Trust**

The leader established a foundation of trust with team members to allow for them to take initiative and ownership over their workplace tasks and responsibilities.

#### **5) Accountability**

The leader took overall accountability for all outcomes but also enforced an expectation of both individual and team responsibility that emphasized the performance of not only individuals but also teams.

**6) Adaptability**

The leader exhibited adaptability in their leadership approach. They recognize that different situations may require varying levels of delegation and intervention. They adjusted their leadership style based on the needs of the team and the demands of the situation.

**7) Pragmatic**

The leader prioritized immediate practical solutions and outcomes. They avoided unnecessary bureaucracy and provided the necessary resources for their team members to succeed.

**8) Management**

The leader monitored progress, ensure alignment with organizational goals, and intervene when necessary to provide guidance, support, or resolve issues that require their attention.

## **Part 2: Leadership, Initiative, and Ownership from the Community**

In addition to grassroots leadership within SVYM, there has also been grassroots leadership emerging directly from the community. Although Grassroots leadership is often associated with individuals who are formally recognized as "leaders, it is critical to note that leadership is an action that anyone can take. No one has to possess a formal label to exhibit leadership, initiative, and ownership.

In order to gain deeper insight into how leadership, initiative, and ownership emerge in the community, I sought the observations of the Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement (GRAAM) and SVYM's Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) program. Through their observations, we got an understanding of how leadership, initiative, and ownership can manifest in various forms within communities and how these qualities contribute to transformative, long-lasting change.

### **I. Observations from Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement (GRAAM)**

GRAAM is a Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement that operates in 4 main sectors:

- 1) Learning, Skill development & Livelihoods
- 2) Health & Wellness (Public Health)
- 3) Governance and Democratization
- 4) Indigenous Community Development

Within these 4 main sectors, 4 key observations about leadership, initiative, and ownership emerging from the community were highlighted:

#### **A. Observation #1: Community led Awareness**

Community-led Awareness was observed by GRAAM during the implementation of Project NISHTHA: Transforming Comprehensive Healthcare in India.

The NISHTHA project brought community members together in discussions and training about health monitoring and awareness and was implemented in an area with a large population of Indigenous people who were initially conservative and hesitant to engage with outsiders. However, during the implementation of the NISHTHA, GRAAM members observed members of communities taking ownership and initiative in spreading awareness about health monitoring and health care options.

The community took the initiative to actively participate in discussions and monitor their own health. Through the increased participation from the community, there was also increased awareness of personal health and healthcare options in the community as community members attending the discussions and training, took initiative to spread what they had learned to other community members.

#### **B. Observation #2: Community led Access**

The increased community awareness of personal health care monitoring and health care options resulted in higher footfall at village-level healthcare center. Ultimately, communities have increased access to health care as they are now aware that these resources were available to them in the first place.

The increased footfall to the health care centers also led the health care centers to increase the amount of health care options and resources available due to the increase in health care demand by the community.

#### **C. Observation #3: Breaking Stigma**

Project SAMVARTHANA: A Convergent Approach to Child Survival and Development aimed to improve child survival and development through the creation of a comprehensive and convergent implementation model that ensures essential services for adolescents, mothers, and children in selected villages.

During the implementation of the Samvarthana Project, specifically the process of educating new mothers about child immunization and nutrition requirements, GRAAM witnessed a community transformation occur. Previously, the community was not willing to share information or their thoughts about the matters of pregnant or lactating women. There was heavy stigma associated with open community discussions about such topics.

However, after the implementation of the project, mothers and other community members took initiative and started to openly talk about the health issues and challenges



they faced as new mothers. Due to the increase in discussion around health issues and challenges, the community became much more open to discussions about child survival and development. As a result, there was also a decrease in the stigma associated with openly speaking about these subjects. Overall, the community at large was helped as there was increased awareness about how to manage newborns properly.

#### **D. Observation #4: Intercommunity Identification**

In another situation observed by GRAAM, the community took ownership over resource distribution. Specifically, when a health center was able to provide some prosthetic arms and hands, the community took initiative in identifying community members in need. The community would then make them aware of the resources available to them at the health center. Through the community's initiative and ownership over resource distribution, members of their community were able to have their needs met which could lead to improvements in their livelihood.

## **II. Observations from SVYM's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) program**

SVYM's Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) program is an initiative aimed at addressing the issues of water, sanitation, and hygiene in a holistic way.

WASH works with schools, Anganawadi, Health Care centers, and Gram Panchayats in awareness generation, behavior change, communication, and capacity building to improve the health, dignity, and wellbeing of women, adolescent girls, and children through three main approaches:

- 1) Building Human and Social Capital
- 2) Family-centered approach
- 3) Identify local role models who become agents of change.

Through WASH's three main approaches, four key observations about leadership, initiative, and ownership emerging from the community were highlighted:

#### **A. Observation #1: School Mobilization**

At a school, SVYM's WASH project facilitated the setup of a school parliament where students are elected to positions such as "minister of hygiene" and then given responsibilities. Beyond their general responsibilities in the school parliament, students were observed taking ownership over their position and came up with their own ideas to improve and maintain water, sanitation and hygiene standards in their schools. The students then took the initiative to implement their ideas at their schools. As a result, through the school parliament, an entire school was mobilized to act to improve and sustain their water, sanitation, and hygiene standards. In many instances this has had a spillover effect in the student's homes and in their community.



**B. Observation #2: Training and community monitoring**

WASH brought in members from both the school development monitoring committees (SDMC) and also the Gram Panchayath and trained them. After the training, WASH observed notable change within the community as community members were able to clearly recognize their roles and would then give back to their community. Specifically, the community members took initiative to mobilize and pass on information to their communities.

**C. Observation #3 Community Contribution**

WASH requests communities to give a 10% community contribution to school projects and initiatives. Through this 10% community contribution, WASH observed communities taking leadership, initiative, and ownership in maintaining the projects. Since they contributed to 10% of the costs, the community feels responsible for maintaining the project so they ensure everything is not only properly maintained but also used in a useful way. Through the community's ownership of the project and the leadership they take in maintaining, communities are improved for the long term not just short.

**D. Observation #4 Community Participation and Monitoring**

WASH saw community participation and monitoring play out in the case of a school that had no toilet facilities and a lot of dropouts, among other problems. After the WASH team spoke with members of the community and the school, school teachers stepped up and said that they would take responsibility to monitor the work they do and also mobilize community members to be involved. The community took on a range of roles during the process of implementing toilet facilities in schools, such as becoming masons to monitor the construction work. By the end of the project to implement toilet facilities at the school, the community had also come together to ensure the facilities were properly maintained. As a result, there was a ripple effect in the community. Better school facilities lead to lower student dropout rates, which means that more students are educated. More educated students mean more educated parents, which ultimately results in an entire community benefiting.

Fundamentally, community participation plays a very critical role. Even if initiatives and programs are established, if the community does not participate, the initiatives will not be sustained over the long term. Without community participation and eventual community ownership, programs would have limited impact.

**Conclusion**

Throughout the course of this study, key insights about leadership styles, organizational cultures within SVYM, and leadership emerging from the community were observed, analyzed, and highlighted in the context of sustainable development.

In the first part of the study, the observed leadership styles, characteristics, and traits within SVYM were analyzed. Taking the observations into account, SVYM's organizational culture was perceived to have low competitiveness, moderate innovation and risk-taking, outcome orientation, high attention to detail, people orientation, team autonomy, and stability.

The analysis of emerging grassroots leadership styles and organizational cultures at SVYM has shed light on SVYM's strengths and limitations. While SVYM generally excelled at centering people in their decision-making, ensuring precision and accuracy in work, and creating a stable, welcoming work environment for its employees, it is critical to work towards consistent implementation of these organizational cultures across all sectors for enhanced cohesion.

During my observation of SVYM leaders, I noticed that every leader exhibited positive leadership traits at one point or another. However, for some leaders, there were inconsistencies in these behaviors as I observed their differing treatment of certain team members and stakeholders. Inconsistencies in leadership behaviors can undermine organizational cultures as well as stakeholder perceptions of SVYM. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize consistent and inclusive leadership, regardless of the individuals involved, to maintain a positive organizational culture and strong interpersonal relationships.

Additionally, a general theme that I observed in several grassroots leaders at SVYM was a prevalence of micromanagement. Although micromanagement ensured that work would be done in a timely and high-quality manner, in the long term, it may limit the potential of SVYM employees, as many workers were not given the chance to improve as they were directly given the "right answers" by their superiors. It is vital that SVYM does not overly focus on micromanagement but instead places more emphasis on employee skill development so that employees are empowered to be more effective and precise in their work.

In the second part of the study, the leadership, initiative, and ownership exhibited by communities themselves were highlighted. Through observations made by the Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement (GRAAM) and SVYM's Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Program Team (WASH), it is evident that communities are actively taking leadership, initiative, and ownership of their development and fueling long-lasting change. Both GRAAM and SVYM-WASH Project observations emphasize the importance of community-centered development and the critical role that communities play in creating progress.

In conclusion, grassroots leadership has the potential to be a powerful catalyst for transformative change in communities. This study reveals the foundations of grassroots leadership within SVYM and communities. By further developing the strengths of grassroots leadership and being aware of its limitations, organizations and communities can work in synergy to sustainably develop a brighter future for all.