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**Changing Dynamics of NGO Accountability:
A Hegemonic Analysis of a Sri Lankan Case**

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ABSTRACT

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Key Words: NGOs, NGO Accountability, Sri Lanka, Sarvodaya, Hegemony, Accountability Forms, Consent, Civil Society, Community Development

This thesis underlies two central questions surrounding the issues of NGO accountability in development: (1) Did a process of hegemonic formation give rise to a particular form of accountability? If so, how did this occur and why? (2) Did this accountability form transform while hegemony was maintained, If so, how and why? The aim is thus to explore the formation, practice and transformation of NGO accountability. The study employed the case study approach and relied on the post-positivistic epistemological position. Empirical materials were collected from Sarvodaya, a Sri Lankan BNGO, through in-depth interviews, non-participatory observations and documentary reviews. In 1958, Sarvodaya emerged by performing a Shramadana (donating labour for social wellbeing) in a village and expanded its operations throughout the country to provide rural villages with myriads of humanitarian and community development activities. Consequently, in parallel with the State, Sarvodaya achieved social power in order to perform those activities, won the consent of the people and established its ideology. In the thesis, the Gramsci's theory of hegemony shed light on the analysis of creation and maintain of hegemony of Sarvodaya. The creation of hegemony and NGO accountability are both conceived as social processes taken place in the civil society. The thesis illustrates that Sarvodaya created its hegemony by using distinct mechanisms during the process of 'war of position' and then employed the same mechanisms in delivering its accountability, highlighting an inevitable affinity between NGO accountability and hegemony. The thesis argues that the accountability so developed is a socialised form as hegemonic processes are activated through gaining of social power in the civil society context. However, as thesis illustrates, hegemony faces a crisis in the face of socio-economic and political changes and subsequent responses on the part of NGOs. Thus, any hegemonic crisis drives the transformation of form of NGO accountability from the social to the functional. The thesis illustrates that hegemonic crisis is influenced by *paradoxical* procedures and processes, and re-enforced by management control mechanisms, accountancy-based reporting, and auditing technologies. It is paradoxical in the sense that, on the one hand, Sarvodaya sought the existence of a large organisation with donor funding, in order to maintain its hegemony in the community development field, while, on the other hand, the organisation could not survive in the context of neo-liberal economic policies without being commercial and professional. It is this paradoxical position of social vs. commercial that forced Sarvodaya to transform its accountability from a social approach to a functional one. Literature on accountability has only begun to deal with this paradoxical issue, but there is little reference to how accountability changes connect with the historical evolution of an organisation from a *war of position* to a *hegemonic crisis*. The contribution of this work is thus introducing a hegemonic perspective on paradoxes in NGO accountability, along with the ontological and epistemological possibilities for revealing underlying social and organisational dynamics.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	- Asian Development Bank
AGM	- Annual General Meeting
CBS	- Community Based Organizations
CIDA	- Canadian International Development Agency
DDS	- Dikwella Divisional Secretariat
DTO	- District Technical Officer
FAO	- Food and Agriculture Organization
FNS	- Friedrich Naumann Stiftung
GDP	- Gross Domestic Production
GROs	- Grass Roots Organizations
GSD	- Grama Seva Division
HDS	- Hambantota Divisional Secretariat
HELVETAS	- Swiss Association for International Cooperation
HQ	- Headquarters
IDRC	- International Development Research Centre
INGOs	- International Non Governmental Organizations
IREN	- Development Innovations and Network
JAFS	- Japan Asia Friendships
JVP	- Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (Peoples' Liberal Front)
MEP	- Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (People's Unite Front)
NFPOs	- Not For Profit Organizations
NGOs	- Non Governmental Organizations
NOVIB	- Netherlands Organization for International Aid
OWOP	- One World One People
RDD	- Rural Development Department
RDS	- Rural Development Services
RTA	- Rural Technical Advisor
RTS	- Rural Technical Service
SAPC	- Social Activity Programme Coordinator
SEEDS	- Sarvodaya Economic Enterprise Development Services
SL	- Sri Lanka
SLFP	- Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SNGO	- Southern Non Governmental Organizations
SRTS	- Sarvodaya Rural Technical Service
SSM	- Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement
UNDP	- United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNISEF	- United Nations Children Fund
UNP	- United National Party
USAID	- United States Agency for International Development
VSSO	- Voluntary Social Service Organization
WHO	- World Health Organization

DEDICATION

To my Father and Mother
with a great honour

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