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Accounting for Not-for-Profit Organisation

Accounting Records of Not-for-Profit Organisations

As stated earlier, normally such organisations are not engaged in any trading or business activities. The main sources of their income are subscriptions from members, donations, financial assistance from government and income from investments. Most of their transactions are in cash or through the bank. These

institutions are required by law to keep proper accounting records and keep proper control over the utilization of their funds. This is why they usually keep a cash book in which all receipts and payments are duly recorded. They also maintain a ledger containing the accounts of all incomes, expenses, assets and liabilities which facilitates the preparation of financial statements at the end of the accounting period. In addition, they are required to maintain a stock register to keep complete record of all fixed assets and the consumables.

They do not maintain any capital account. Instead they maintain capital fund which is also called general fund that goes on accumulating due to surpluses generated, life membership fee, donation, legacies, etc. received from year to year. In fact, a proper system of accounting is desirable to avoid or minimise the chances of misappropriations or embezzlement of the funds contributed by the members and other donors.

Final Accounts or Financial Statements: The Not-for-Profit Organisations are also required to prepare financial statements at the end of the each accounting period. Although these organisations are non-profit making entities and they are not required to make Trading and Profit & Loss Account but it is necessary to know whether the income during the year was sufficient to meet the expenses or not. Not only that they have to provide the necessary financial information to members, donors, and contributors and also to the Registrar of Societies. For this purpose, they have to prepare their final accounts at the end of the accounting period and the general principles of accounting are fully applicable in their preparation on as stated earlier, the final accounts of a 'not-for-profit organisation' consist of the following:

- (i) Receipt and Payment Account
- (ii) Income and Expenditure Account, and
- (iii) Balance Sheet.

The Receipt and Payment Account is the summary of cash and bank transactions which helps the preparation of Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet. Besides, it is a legal requirement as the Receipts and Payments Account has also to be submitted to the Registrar of Societies along with the Income and Expenditure Account, and the Balance Sheet.

Income and Expenditure Account is akin to Profit and Loss Account. The Not-for-Profit Organisations usually prepare the Income and Expenditure Account and a Balance Sheet with the help of Receipt and Payment Account. However, this does not simply that they do not make a trial balance. In order to check the accuracy of the ledger accounts, they also prepare a trial balance which facilitate the preparation of accurate Receipt and Payment Account as well as the Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet.

In fact, if an organisation has followed the double entry system they must prepare a trial balance for checking the accuracy of the ledger accounts and it will also.