

## Role of Ngo's in Pakistan: An Overview

**Ishtiaq Ahmad Gondal**, Assistant Professor

Sheikh Zayed Islamic Center, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

### Abstract

In previous century with the development of modern state and industrial society NGO's played significant role for the betterment of society as well as NGO's were considered as strong factor to establish welfare society. In this regard role of NGO's is studied in variety of social sciences like Sociology, Economics, Social work and political science. In developed countries contribution made by NGO's is remarkable with noticeable credibility. Welfare states encourage the objectives, agenda and activities of such organizations therefore very inspiring and transparent system supplement the performance. On the other hand in under development countries though NGO's have been working with good zeal and passion but it is not easy to make things happen according to their slogans and goals. Same is the situation in Pakistan where NGO's started working in almost all spheres of life since the creation of country even state made different programs and projects but after more than six decades whether NGO's are successful to maintain credible image and perform in the desired direction or being questioned negatively. This paper is an attempt to investigate and analyses the complex role of NGO's in Pakistan. The strengths and weaknesses need to be identified but it is notable that the work being done requires stable political system, better law and order situation, social justice and favorable support from state. Unfortunately Pakistan is lacking in all above mentioned dimensions. It is equally important to examine the performance of NGO's keeping in mind the particular historical and ideological perspective of society. It is very easy to declare and recognize any developed country secular, progressive and liberal but any study in case of Pakistan is not easy job to define whether it is religious or liberal. This confused and blurring picture is very considerable challenge of this study. Though variety of research work is available but this paper throws light on the complex challenges and difficulties being faced by NGO's at state and social level as well as it is critical study of NGO's role in different walks of life.

**Keywords:** NGOs; Pakistan; Social Science

### Research Methodology:

Pakistan as an important atomic power with significance Geo-political location is eye catching and burning issue of research not only in

international affairs but academicians from all areas of social sciences have studied its society and state therefore role of NGO's has been focused for couple decades in print and electronic media. Research departments of think tanks, research centers and universities provided lot of food for thought and identification of grey areas to make our topic understandable. On line data and published reports of international and national institutions was very helpful, purposeful and productive for our study. Present century has been entitled as information age therefore regularly being conducted conferences, forums, seminars and discussions publish their proceedings to facilitate the researchers. All available information and data is impossible to get studied and probed therefore ranking and categorization was made but fresh information, data and newly published reports and books were preferred. It had been complicated process to differentiate between biased and unbiased sources because society and state in Pakistan is not easy to declare secular or religious. In this regard this study considered only credible sources.

### **Introduction:**

Pakistan is population wise 6<sup>th</sup> largest country in the world with highest growth rate.(1) Extreme poverty and under development in Pakistan obscure the reality of a country which has variety of resources and entrepreneurial skill to help economic growth. Political instability and devastating floods are major obstacles in this regard. The country's arable land is out standing by potential but only 25% of the total land area is under cultivation. Share of agriculture at the time of creation of Pakistan was around 53% and after 65 years a significant decline is observed, now it is 26% of G.D.P(2) Exploitation of natural resources has been slow due to shortage of capital and domestic political constraints. Pakistani energy grid has become a great challenge which is failing to meet the growing needs. Literacy rate is very low.(3) Violence is another burning issue of the society.(4) Despite all these Pakistan is mismanaged country because ruling elite has failed has failed to set examples of basic honesty and decency. Lacking of coherent and inspiring political culture is the basic short coming and crisis.

In this regard for the last few years Pakistan is supposed to be considered as a failed state among the countries over the globe.(5) Depression, frustration and fear are prevailing throughout the society.(6) People are deeply concerned about their religion but exploitation in the name of religion is another serious issue.(7) Despite keeping in mind all above mentioned points optimism on the part of Pakistanis can make a difference because they are just disorganized and depressed. Majority is good but it is being led by few dishonest dominants in all leading walks of life particularly in state institutions.(8)

### **State of Civil Society in Pakistan:**

Civil society as a concept is not new to Pakistan. It has long deep and ingrained historical root that go back to Indus Valley civilizes. The art of articulating together for common purpose as old as the human civilization itself; and “voluntarism” for some social cause or for self-help is not new to this part of the world. The archaeological findings in Mohenjodaro (near to Sahiwal city of Punjab Province) and Hurrappa (in Sindh Province) people of that time had civic sense of living together. Aryans introduced new civic order in 1500 BC.

The next stage where social order had shown a significant change was Muslim rule in India. The Muslim invaders introduce a new culture. It was only the spirit of societal voluntarism which made possible for two distinct civilizations lived together for centuries.

During the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century British colonized India, introduced new administrative set up according to their own needs and requirement. Industrial revolution, American Revolution and French revolution introduced the new ideas of nationalism and concept of sovereign nation state based on new philosophies in political and economic fields. These few changes brought changes all over the globe.

Movement started in colonies for their independence and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is married with social changes in Indian subcontinent. The credit for Muslims reformation goes to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan who through his political and educational ideas laid very foundation of community identity. He formed different societies aimed at achieving higher standards of excellence for Muslims in scientific and Modern knowledge. He laid foundation of scientific society in 1864 and Aligarh Muslim College in 1877, which later on provided the nurturing grounds of independence movement from colonial powers.

The western notion of the civil society was very much there at eve independence of Pakistan in 1947. It would be true that leaders in colonial India, who were educated in imperial colleges and taught all western political theories of the great enlightenment thinkers, based their philosophy on western notions. These leaders started to approach different segment of society like workers, peasants, and press for mobilization and to resist colonial oppressive policies. When these groups were unified for the broader cause, it transformed into nationalist struggle for political sovereignty. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Jawahir Lal Nehru can be sighted among those leaders.

The power structure in newly fragile state of Pakistan was cantered round the distinct classed i.e., bureaucratic, military, and feudal elite. These groups ruled the country through last 5 decades. “The bourgeoisie backed

by the military–bureaucratic oligarchy. The nature of the ruling elite conditioned the form of the economic growth process. However, the later in turn influenced the form in which state power was exercised. Economic growth was kind of affluence to the few at the expense of many. The gradual erosion of social infrastructure, endemic poverty and growing inequalities between regions undermined civil society and accelerated the trend towards militarization.

Although there was rise of the merchant class during the 60s but it also joined hand with the troikas of powerful elite structure in Pakistan. There is another powerful force, which affected the social fabrics of Pakistan, which is force of religion. One can assume that civil military bureaucratic elites and Islamic remained two fundamental factors in power politics of Pakistan. The civil bureaucracy that has learnt the art of surviving in all sorts of government found it safe and secure, since Islamization has not substantially altered the socio-political realities in Pakistan.

The brief socio economic fabric of Pakistan showed that there was a strong need for the civil society organization to fill the vacuum, which was needed for human development in Pakistan. Pakistan's civil society is characterized by hybrid forms, multiple inheritances and the unresolved struggle between the practices and values of pre-capitalistic society and new modes of social life, between authoritarian legacies and democratic aspirations.

Its cultural manifestations appear as a hotchpotch of incoherent voices, conflicting worldviews and opposite interests. While some social forms such as council of elders, neighborhood associations and shrines continue from previous phases of society, many new groups have been created “organically”, to borrow a *Gramscian* term, through the development of capitalism. “Such are the dynamics of an evolving civil society, caught between the throes of a dying social order and the birth pangs of a new one.”(9)

### **Types of NGOs:**

According to Dr R. K. Gupta NGO types can be understood by their orientation and level of cooperation.

Charitable Orientation often involves a top-down paternalistic effort with little participation by the “beneficiaries”. It includes NGOs with activities directed toward meeting the needs of the poor – distribution of food, clothing or medicine, provision of housing, transport, schools etc. such NGOs may also undertake relief activities during a natural or man-made disaster.

Service Orientation includes NGOs with activities such as the provision of health, family planning or education services in which the programme is designed by the NGO and people are expected to participate in its implementation and in receiving the service.

Participatory Orientation is characterized by self-help projects where local people are involved particularly in the implementation of a project by contributing cash, tools, land, materials, labour etc. in the classical community development project, participation begins with the need definition and continues into the planning and implementation stages. Cooperatives often have a participatory orientation.

Empowering Orientation is where the aim is to help poor people develop a clearer understanding of the social, political and economic factors affecting their lives, and to strengthen their awareness of their own potential power to control their lives. Sometimes these groups develop spontaneously around a problem or an issue, at other times outside workers from NGOs play a facilitating role in their development. In any case, there is maximum involvement of the people with NGOs acting as facilitators.(10)

#### **NGOs Types by Level of Operation:**

Community based organizations (CBOs) arise out of people's own initiatives. These can include sports clubs, women's organizations, neighborhood organization, religious or educational organizations. There are a large variety of these, some supported by NGOs, national or international NGOs or bilateral or international agencies, and others independent of outside help. Some are devoted to rising the consciousness of the urban poor or helping them to understand their rights in gaining access to needed services while others are involved in providing such services.

City wide Organizations include organizations such as the Rotary or Lion's Club, chambers of commerce and industry, coalitions of business, ethnic or educational groups and associations of community organizations. Some exist for other purposes and become involved in helping the poor as one of many activities while others are created for the specific purpose of helping the poor.

National NGOs include organizations such as the Red Cross. YMCAs/YWCAs, professional organizations etc. some of these have state and city branches and assist local NGOs.

International NGOs range from secular agencies such as Redda Barna and Save the Children organizations, OXFAM, CARE, Ford and Rockefeller Foundations to religiously motivated groups. Their activities vary from mainly funding local NGOs, institutions and projects, to implementing the projects themselves.

## **Classifying NGOs:**

**Size:** some (e.g. Greenpeace, Oxfam, International Committee of the Red Cross, Medicines Sans Frontiers) are large multinational bodies, with offices in many countries (and often multiple branches within a single country) and large full-time and salaried extreme, I know of a number of NGOs that are in practice one or two person operations, dependent on and run by entirely voluntary (perhaps even part-time) effort.

**Thematic scope:** in other words the types of events or activities they are primarily concerned with – is it environment / human rights / social issues other? Are they campaigning groups? Watchdog organizations? Are they primarily concerned with education? Emergency relief and Reactive priorities or emergency prevention and Proactive priorities? Are and very focused issues, or do they have a broader, multi issue portfolio?

## **GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE:**

Compare large bodies such as Greenpeace who take on issues from global to local (but anywhere in the world\_ scale, with, for example, a European NGO whose work focuses only on a specific country or region or issue overseas (e.g. there is an Irish NGO which focuses on development issues and human rights in East purely local NGOs, concerned with purely local “on our own doorstep” issues (e.g. protesting against a specific waste dump or factory).

## **ROLES OF NGOS:**

Among the wide variety of roles that NGOS play, the following six can be identified as important, at the risk of generalization.

### **Development and Operation of Infrastructure:**

Community-based organization and cooperatives can acquire, subdivide and develop land, construct housing, provide infrastructure and operate and maintain infrastructure such as wells or public toilets and solid waste collection services. They can also develop building material supply centers and other community based economic enterprises. In many cases, they will need technical assistance or advice from governmental agencies or higher level NGOs.

### **Supporting Innovation, Demonstration and Pilot Projects:**

NGOs have the advantage of selecting particular places for innovative projects and specify in advance the length of time which they will be supporting the project-overcoming some of the shortcomings that government face in this respect. NGOs can also be pilots for larger government projects by virtue of their ability to act more quickly than the government bureaucracy.

### **Facilitating Communication:**

NGOs use interpersonal methods of communication, and study the right entry points whereby they gain the trust of the community they seek to benefit. They would also have a good idea of the feasibility of the projects they take up. The significance of this role of the government is that NGOs can communicate to the policy making levels of government, information about the lives, capabilities, attitudes and cultural characteristics of people at the local level.

NGOs can facilitate communication upward from the people to the government and downward from the government to the people. Communication upward involves informing government about what local people are thinking, doing and feeling while communication downward involves informing local people about what the government is planning and doing. NGOs are also in a unique position to share information horizontally, networking between other organizations doing similar work.

Technical Assistance and Training:

Training institutions and NGOs can develop a technical assistance and training capacity and use this to assist both CBOs and governments.

Research, Monitoring and Evaluation:

Innovative activities need to be carefully documented and shared effective participatory monitoring would permit the sharing of results with the people themselves as well as with the project staff.

Advocacy for and with the Poor:

In some cases, NGOs become spokespersons or ombudsmen for the poor and attempt to influence government policies and programmes on their behalf. This may be done through a variety of means ranging from demonstration and pilot projects to participation in public forums and the formulation of government policy and plans, to publicizing research results and case studies of the poor. Thus NGOs play roles from advocates for the poor to implementers of government programmes; from agitators and critics to partners and advisors; from sponsors of pilot projects to mediators.

### **Skills Required of an NGO:**

#### **A. COMMUNITY ORGANIZING**

Community-based organization and cooperatives can acquire, subdivide and develop land, construct housing, provide

- Group dynamics
- Community integration
- Problem identification
- Community investigation
- Facilitation

- Mobilization
- Communication
- Role Playing
- Objectivity, monitoring and evaluation

**B. PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH**

- Identification of research problem
- Identification of different research tools
- Data gathering
- Analysis of data
- Consultation with the community and validation of data
- Drawing of conclusions
- Making of recommendations

**C. BUSINESS SKILLS**

- Planning
- Participatory (circular) management
- Accounting and bookkeeping
- Marketing and purchasing
- Negotiation
- Monitoring and record keeping
- Technical Skill in micro-computers
- Organizing cooperatives/ credit unions
- Handling labour problems
- Understanding legal aspects.

**D. DOCUMENTATION, DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION**

- Small group formation
- Clarification of values and vision
- Group dynamics
- Different kinds of media production
- Communication skills and visual aids
- Concretization/ senticizing skills
- Advocacy
- Networking an linkages

**E. TRAINING METHODS**

- Use of cultural forms
- Use of media
- On-the-job training-participant observation
- Workshop organization
- Group dynamics
- Practice – Theory / Action – reflection
- Exposure programme
- Group discussion and synthesis, brain-storming



- Self-learning kits and modules.(11)

### **Legal Regime of CSOs/ NGOs in Pakistan:**

There are various legislations at national and provincial levels under which civil society organization can be registered.

At National Level.

- The Societies Registration Act 1860
- The Charitable Endowment Act 1890
- The West Pakistan Control of Orphanages Act, 1958.
- The voluntary Social Welfare Agencies (Registration and Control) Ordinance, 1961.
- The Cooperative Societies Act 1925.
- The Companies Ordinance, 1984.
- The Trust Act, 1882.

At Provincial Level:

- The Punjab Children Act, 1952.
- The Punjab Supervision and Control Homes Act, 1976.
- The Sindh Darul Atfaul (Supervision and Control), Act 1976.
- The NWFP Darul Atful (Supervision and Control), Act 1976.
- The Balochistan Darul Atfal (Supervision and Control), Act, 1976.

In recent decades there is mushroom growth of NGOs forced the central government to bring them in new set of legislation at national level.(12)

### **Present Scenario of CSOs/ NGOs in Pakistan:**

In last decade, there is considerable debate in the development of civil society in Pakistan had generated new approached about ways to strengthen socio-economic development process for the disadvantaged sections of the society.

Pakistan society is both homogenous and heterogeneous in character. It has similarities at national level but having divergent culture at community level. Civil society has been seen as important contributor to constructive social change.

At the time of independence there were only seven register CSOs in Pakistan. Now there are approximately 12000 registered NGOs and unregistered are more than 60000. Government of Pakistan National council of Social Welfare conducted a survey about the registered NGOs up to 30<sup>th</sup> June 1997, which present the following situation:

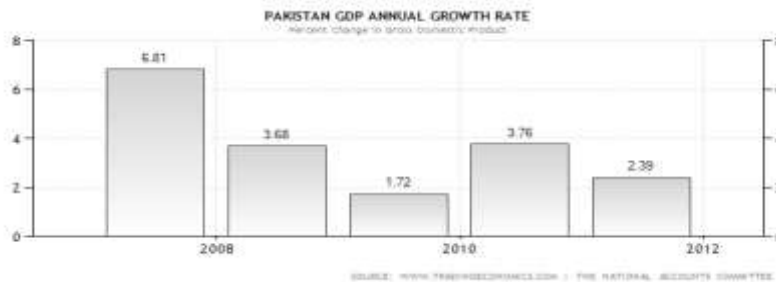
<b>Growth of NGOs 1947-2002</b>	
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Year</b>
7	Before
265	1947-1961
1151	1962-1969
3517	1970-1979

8360	1980-1989
11114	1990-2002

It was during the military regime of Zia-ul-Haq when Pakistan was under the economic sanction of USA; direct foreign funding was started in Pakistan. It was not only Pakistan, which suffered from this new phenomenon of CSOs/ NGOs but change, was eminent in almost all over the South Asia and least developed countries round the globe.(13)

Province / Capital / Northern Area													
Punjab	No. of NGO	Sindh	No. of NGO	NWFP	No. of NGO	Baloch	No. of NGO	IB D	No. of NGO	Northern Area	No. of NGO	AJ K	No. of NGO
Bahawalpur	437	Hyderabad	486	Banuwala	83	Kalat	66	IB D	250	N.A	127	AJ K	157
D.G. Khan	355	Karchi	2024	DIKhan	38	Makran	63	--	---	---	---	--	---
Faisalabad	500	Larkana	565	Hazara	311	Nasirabad	35	--	---	---	---	--	---
Gujranwala	1034	Mirpur Khas	886	Kohat	59	Quetta	446	--	---	---	---	--	---
Lahore	1076	Sukker	128	Malakand	213	Sibi	51	--	---	---	---	--	---
Multan	356	---	---	Mardan	169	Zoab	56	--	---	---	---	--	---
Rawalpindi	860	---	---	Peshawar	392	---	---	--	---	---	---	--	---
Sargodha	425	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	---	---	---	--	---

Pakistani society is very complex including many ethnic groups. Like other social and state run institutions NGOs are also lacking in credibility. Initially people come forward with high aims and objectives to NGO sector but after a short period such groups themselves need support to exist. Success story is with very few NGOs. In developed world NGOs are run by rich donors or philanthropists as well as common people support their projects. Pakistani people are contributing significant amount but in general financial sustainability is serious threat to NGOs because lay man's living standard itself needs a lot to be done. As compared with developed countries Pakistani GDP is very low only \$410.(14)



How people can support NGO's when challenge is beyond the capacity. Mostly NGOs in Pakistan have not good documented track record.

Canadian International Development Agency states less than 100 effective NGOs in Pakistan.(15) Having high aims and eye catching agenda, most of the NGO, have very limited outreach and resources with narrow target groups It is very difficult to comment on funds issue because state institution fails to develop any transparent check and balance in this area. Many NGO's do not report regularly to state departments some areas like income generation, micro finance, poverty reduction, vocational and technical education, institution, child and woman health are less focused by NGO's while emergency relief, health and rehabilitation are on priority comparatively. Some sectors in Pakistani society are supposed to be considered domain of government like water sanitation, irrigation, urban development, environmental issues and roads.

Capacity building is the common and dire need for NGO's in Pakistan. First of all leadership running these NGOs should understand the basic shortcoming of capacity to get the work done. People associated with the top management and operations should be educated properly. Some NGO's are even lacking in proper and formal organizational behaviour. NGOs need to set long term goals and managerial skills to achieve these goals. Therefore capacity building should be given proper attention. In few cases board of directors come from one influential and rich family. Such NGO need opening for new blood to ensure transparency and accountability.

Pakistan NGOs Forum (PNF) was established in 1986 to strengthen NGO sector.(16) This forum made good analysis of all major issues concerned. PNF asked its member NGOs for audit and democratic elections. Very practical agenda was set to develop PNF as an effective platform and common voice. Advocacy, net working, lobbying with govt. and donors and unity are part of agenda.(17)

NGO's and state relationship is another complex phenomenon. State could not provide proper rules and regulation to facilitate and control NGOs and badly failed to maintain trust. NGOs are reluctant to proceed with govt. because state control means exploitation. Registration is the only key in the hands of govt. but this process is available in five different departments having no mutual harmony among them. Even state does not have any legal agreed upon definition of NGO. NGOs make their own constitutions. Sometime a group of people develop an NGO to get benefited from funds available for govt. and international agencies. Few governments made support policies but obstacles like bureaucratic procedures and political instability did not allow to proceed in right direction. Though we have mentioned total no of NGOs up to 35,000 but an Indian news agency Thaindian News reported almost 100000 operational NOGs in Pakistan. So it is always very important issue to portray proper & accurate picture of NGO's role.

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