



Role of NGOs in Education from Pakistani Context

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Abstract: This paper presents a review of NGOs working for rural poverty alleviation in Pakistan and current situation of Pakistan particularly in rural context. The research has been conducted using qualitative method. The findings of research show that condition of poor has not been much improved across the country particularly in rural areas of Pakistan. The study is of good value as there are number of controversies among different stakeholders including government regarding NGOs while NGOs claim total success in their work areas particularly rural areas. The study will suggest further research on testing such claims made by NGOs.

Keywords: Pakistan; Rural poverty; NGOs; Government agencies

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INTRODUCTION

The role of education can't be something that can be ignored in social and economic development of any society. Adequate provision of education to people of a society can result in raise of income elevation of quality of life in a society. Keeping in view the case of Pakistan, although government is taking measures for imparting education at all levels but due to particular economic and political situation of country, these efforts are not up to the level required. Private sector is also contributing to this cause but a large proportion of population comprises of people who have low incomes and they are unable to get education for their children through private sector while government sector is unable to cater the needs so a large proportion of population is dependent upon the NGO sector for education needs according to Asian Development Bank ^[1].

METHODOLOGY

The study used a qualitative method by content analysis of literature on the subject. Researcher found the relevant literature and used systematic literature review method and content analysis to present the findings.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS-DEFINITIONS

"NGO is an organization that is not based in the public sector and is not created to earn profit". UNDP (2013) defined NGOs as "the private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interest of poor, protect the environment, provide the basic social service or undertake community development" ^[2].

Whatever the definition may be, it may be stated that NGOs run to fulfill social responsibility of which education is one of the major objective. The dissatisfaction of people from public sector education explains a great part of less development in Pakistan.

1. Educational situation in pakistan

The adult literacy rate in Pakistan as reported by UNDP in 2013 is just 54.9% while if we look at primary school drop-out rate, it is at a higher level of 34.8%, moreover the less females attend the school as compared to boys. Government's expenditure on education is only 2.4% of GDP and there is no attention towards quality of education at all levels. Low quality of education provided by the government schools also discourages the parents from sending their children to these schools and the education provided is unable to contribute properly to the social and economic development. Instead, people keep their children for earning skills so that they can contribute towards their household income. On the other hand, it has been observed that parents trend to send their children to schools if they receive quality education. Mostly the schools being run by NGOs are cost effective with a nominal fee structure and better education standard.

Education has become the most critical tool for long-term development. The immense benefits of education correlate with social, economic and environmental quality. Health care is another important development tool, as it provides both short-term and long-term benefits. The connection between education and health care is important, as not only does access to family planning services correlate with access to education, they are both usually found together ^[3]. Also, access to health care and education usually correlate to the adoption of contraceptive practices and, therefore, to fertility decline.

Another important aspect regarding the issue came up that the delivery agents of public services should be expanded to Governments and Non-Governmental Organizations ^[4]. Many studies suggested it as a new dimension in Public service delivery ^[5-6]. As a new dimension, number of studies including many researcher ^[7], and as per World Bank (1997), the notion of partnership between government and NGOs has been explored more widely ^[8]. Some other important studies on the topic suggested that partnership is normative ^[9-10].

Results of another study summed up that during the first decade of 21st century, NGOs have become increasingly major players in Pakistan particularly in Education sector and they range from small scale voluntary funded organizations to very large fully funded by foreign agencies organizations working across the country ^[11].

Table 1 Pakistan, Area and Population-Region wise

| Province/Region | Area (KM ²) | Population |
|-----------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Punjab | 205344 | 96545293 |
| Sindh | 140914 | 42887165 |
| KPK | 74521 | 23770386 |
| Balochistan | 347190 | 9063767 |

2. NGOs in pakistani context and relevant laws

A report published by Asian Development Bank and some other sources concluded that with a proposition that Pakistani NOGs with some very few exceptions lack a proper system of transparency, accountability and governance. They look towards Pakistani Public sector or private sector for funding or they rely on international donor agencies ^[12].

As per Government of Pakistan Gazette (1988) Pakistani government has always been positive to the NGOs as depicted in first five year plan (1950-1960) and for the purpose a permanent social welfare section was established with planning board which has been now called as Planning Commission of Pakistan ^[13].

As for as laws and regulations are concerned, there are five laws for NGOs in Pakistan as reported by experts if the field and researchers ^[14], The Societies Registration Act (1860) is for professional, educational and cultural organization.

The Trust Act (1886) provides legal protection and cover to the private acts of charity meant for public in Pakistan. The Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies Registration and Control Ordinance (1961) regulate and coordinate the development of NGOs undertaking public welfare responsibilities. On the other hand there is a Companies Ordinance (1984) that allows NGOs to get them-selves registered as not for profit companies.

3. Evolution of NGOs in Pakistan

The evolution of NGOs in Pakistan can be divided into different phases on timeline as reported by the Asian Development Bank (2009) as the preliminary voluntary organizations that remained busy in rehabilitation work and thus helped newly established country and government in 1947^[15]. Till 1970's the pattern of NGOs remained same. In 1970's after separation of Eastern wing of Pakistan, there was a major upsurge in government's philosophy tilted towards socialism and public services were considered to be government's responsibility ^[16]. Another study

concluded that during 1980's NGOs reorganized themselves and got full government support and funding as a result of Afghan war and US participation in every walk of life in Pakistan ^[18].

The number of NGOs in Pakistan is very difficult to be estimated as per UNDP (2010) as the NGOs can be registered under five different laws and at provinces and districts but number ranges between 8000 to 12000 organizations ^[19].

State Bank of Pakistan Annual Report (2012) classifies NGOS in five categories on the basis of their working namely organizations involved in lobbying and advocacy, policy issues and debates, involved in relief, rehabilitation and disaster management and those involved in development and other activities ^[20].

As per UNESCO (2011) 80% NGOs receive no donation while 60% NGOs don't have any income from their operations. Some NGOS have worked exceptionally well in Pakistan and a prominent example is FPAP ^[21].

4. Govt.-NGO Relations

While studying the literature on Govt. relations with NGOs, it has been evident from the literature that Govt. of Pakistan is quite positive and tries to provide congenial environment to NGOs as depicted in Social Action Plan (2010) phase-II and the Eighth Five Year Plan (2010) ^[22]. Pakistan in terms of NGOs relation with government is quite an advanced country in the terms that Government wants to extend its full cooperation and support to NGOs ^[23]. Another study found that the middle level bureaucracy sometimes create hurdles in the relations of NGOs and government ^[24].

A study by suggested that there are four major trends in NGO-Government relations in Pakistan, Small NGOs seek donation and guidance, well established NGOs look Government as partners, third "new-breed" NGOs pose government as corrupt and they pose themselves as replacement while fourth type of NGOs is those who setup their operations overnight, receive findings and get disappeared subsequently after absorbing the funds and don't want to have any relation with government ^[25].

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

The literature shows a great importance of NGOs and the role that they can play in uplifting of education in Pakistan particularly in the less developed semi-urban and rural areas where public sector is still unable to provide the required educational facilities. There is a need to conduct studies on having some uniform rules and regulations for registration of NGOs in Pakistan as currently the structure of NGO registration is complex and confusing. Another aspect of NGOs is their accountability. Currently there is no effective process of NGOs accountability. Some NGOs work with government and get funding from government. Such NGOs should submit proper record of what they got and how they spend it.

On the other hand there are some NGOs who don't receive any donation from government and they rely on private or foreign donations. Such NGOs should be audited by efficient process to make sure that their source of income is not against the country or illegal one. On the other hands some NGOs deem government to be corrupt and they think themselves as an alternative. Another type of NGOs is there that only works for funds generation and as soon as the generate funds, they just disappear.

Keeping in view the facts described, it is needed to conduct a comprehensive study on NGOs working for education in Pakistan and to suggest the appropriate measures for their accountability as well as their working. NGOs are however performing a great duty and are helpful to the government of Pakistan in many functions, most importantly the impartment of education to the deprived ones. That's the reason that such NGOs become more and more important for Pakistan.

CONCLUSION

The above discussion shows the importance of NGOs for Pakistani education sector while summarizing the historical evolution of NGOs in Pakistan right from the establishment of country in 1947 after the end of British rule in Indian sub-continent. The NGOs right after the establishment of new country, started their operations and helped the newly established country. The study also presented different rules, regulations and laws governing the NGOs and different categories of such organizations. The study also suggests future implications for NGOs as well as government by looking into the NGOs role in education sector of Pakistan. The empirical study should be conducted to check the satisfaction level of stakeholders of NGOs including the beneficiaries of these organizations.

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