

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Non-governmental organizations' service quality for development of basic education in Pakistan

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In this paper, the authors discuss the role of education in the upliftment of the society and the provision of educational opportunities to masses by government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The major purpose of the present study was to observe the emergence of NGOs in the development of basic education in Pakistan. This study was a survey type used to identify the areas of working, general organizational structure and the achievements and services provided at basic education schools/ centres established by NGOs. A stratified sample of twenty two NGOs was selected among the NGOs enlisted in the directory of NGOs (Punjab, Pakistan) with their identified areas of educational activities. Interview schedule was used to gather data from concerned personnel and further official records were also observed to validate perceptual assessment. Tentative conclusions were drawn regarding the general structure, areas of operation, services, enrolment and facilities at centres by NGOs along with their future plans.

**Key words:** Non-Governmental Organization, community participation, basic education, education system in Pakistan, promotion of education.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a basic 'human right' of every citizen. People need education to acquire a broad base of knowledge, attitudes, values and skill on which they can build their later life. Education is a basic source of upward mobility in society, and is considered as a vehicle for socio-economic development of the country and so they are taught on how to contribute to their own welfare and the welfare of the society to which they belong (Ahmed, 1997). In times to come, education and education alone will determine the place of a country in the committee of nations (Government of Pakistan, 1998). It is the constitutional commitment of any government to provide education to every citizen, so provision of education is above all a public responsibility. Pakistan has not yet succeeded in universalizing basic education, in that 13 million children (5 - 9 years) are enrolled out of about 20 million children (Government of Pakistan, 2008).

Pakistan is struggling to enroll 7 million out of the school children and achieve the target of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 2015 (Government of Pakistan, 2009). However, a lot of tasks are still remaining, which require our immediate attention in the vital area of basic education to keep abreast with the fast changing world of today. As the matter of basic education is concerned, it is not so much a matter of so many years of schooling, but rather, the acquisition by an individual (young or old, male or female) through formal or non formal means, certain basic skills, knowledge and attitudes. Different people have different perceptions about it, just like some regard primary education as basic education and others consider literacy as basic education (Bishop, 1986; Khan, 2000). Knowledge and attitudes learnt in school or out of school, which are necessary to enable the individuals (young or old) live a useful and productive life are concerns of basic education. It enables the individual to improve the quality of his life, in other words, to continue his education to the best of his abilities (Qaisrani and Khawaja, 1989).

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For universalizing the basic education, no government can make an appreciable headway with its rejuvenation schemes unless the people are willing to meet the government half way (Khan, 2000). Voluntary organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can play an important role in the achievement of required targets of universalizing basic education (Farooq, 1994). There is no universally accepted single definition, but the term NGO usually conjures up the image of a private organization which is led by volunteers. NGOs are defined simply as voluntary development organizations and their voluntary nature is emphasized as their main feature (Brown and Kortan, 1989). NGOs are voluntary social welfare organizations established by a group and are non-profitable in nature (Malena, 1995). Their purpose is to render welfare services and help in all such sectors of society, which aim to improve the life of the people in their community and make people solve their problems via self-reliance and self-help activities that support, compliment and supplement the work of the government. The NGOs can perform a major role because of having features for the promotion of micro-level development (Nzimakwe, 2008). The following are some major characteristics of the NGOs:

- (i) Any organization (international, national or regional) that is engaged in service-oriental, educational or development activities.
- (ii) Any organization which is registered under social welfare division and which receive money from foreign countries through external resources.
- (iii) Any organization, which receives funds from sources like: (a) State department/organizations of different advanced capitalist countries or (b) different international relief organization or (c) different religious institutions or from all these three or more than one sources.
- (iv) Any organization (through private) that work with the permission of the government and implements its different activities/programme in conformity with the principles adopted by the government or in accordance with the government's guidelines.

It is being realized that the NGOs can do things that government cannot and partly because governments in the 'western world' are viewing their activities as contracting because of bureaucratic and financial causes (Khawaja and Brennan, 1990). The 'sixth five year plan' (1983 to 1988) and National Education Policy (2009) advocated for providing liberal financial support to NGOs to participate in the nation-wide literacy campaign, whereas the seventh five-year plan (1988 to 1993) relied mainly on expansion of compulsory primary education and efforts of NGOs to increase the literacy rate.

Economical development alone cannot be termed as progress and prosperity, especially for those living in the third world countries. NGOs play a pivotal role in the development of the nation by taking on activities to help

improve the lives of people in a democratic and flexible way (Hall, 1986). The spirit or the mission of NGOs is to work for the benefit of humanity in increasing the participation of people in development projects and to advocate self-reliance. One result of their activity is the development of group formation, vital for any nation striving towards democracy. These tend to operate grassroots projects (UNESCO, 1996), when thought internationally (Hall, 1986) by utilizing existing funding, and extend the recourse base (UNESCO, 1993), thus providing proper instrument to reach the people (Sethi, 1993).

As the Government of Pakistan stressed the involvement of NGOs and all related agencies to educate the people at large, international donor agencies provided loans and donations directly to NGOs, so the number of non-governmental organization (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) increased rapidly (Kamal, 1991). Now, several NGOs are involved in the development work, which is integrated and which targets all sections of the community. As such, many have a specific focus on education. In Pakistan, the NGOs have long been involved in providing education to the disadvantaged sectors of the society before independence, and the need to supplement the effort of the government to provide education for all has resulted in the sporadic growth of NGOs offering varied educational programs targeting different groups in the society (Farooq, 1994). An attempt is made to study the different aspects of basic education launched by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), who are busily working to achieve the desired goal of universal basic education in Pakistan, especially in Punjab Province.

### **Objectives of the study**

The present research bears the following main objectives:

- (a) To identify the areas of work for NGOs' involvement in basic education.
- (b) To determine NGOs achievements in the field of basic education.
- (c) To identify the future plans/projects of NGOs in the field of basic education.
- (d) To study the general working structure of NGOs.
- (e) To collect suggestions for promotion of basic education in Pakistan.

### **Delimitations**

The study is delimited to

- (a) NGOs of Punjab, working for basic education
- (b) NGOs registered by Punjab social welfare department

(c) NGOs with verified educational programmes identified under the directory of NGOs in education (Pakistan).

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Population**

All the NGOs working for the basic education were the population of this study, whereas the registered NGOs among the directory of NGOs in education were considered as the target population. The target population was categorized into the following six levels, based on their working level:

- (i) Community level = 118 NGOs
- (ii) Tehsil level = 18 NGOs
- (iii) District level = 27 NGOs
- (iv) Divisional level = 02 NGOs
- (v) Provincial level = 13 NGOs and
- (vi) National level = 31 NGOs

### **Sampling**

A stratified sample of 22 NGOs (10% of target population) was selected randomly out of the total 209 NGOs, in Punjab, working for education. For this purpose, the total population was grouped into six strata. The size of each stratum was fixed according to its strength in the total population. Therefore, a sample of 22 NGOs from Punjab was formed including 12 'community' level NGOs, two Tehsil level NGOs, three 'district' level NGOs, one 'division' level NGO and three 'national' level NGOs.

### **Research tool**

The following research tools are used for data collection:

- (a) Survey: The researchers surveyed the official records at NGOs' offices. It also helped validate perceptual assessment, thus minimizing bias. Available documents such as manuals, brochures, pamphlets, organizational charts, annual reports, audit reports and material displayed at internet websites by NGOs among others were scrutinized by the researchers for added information. Only two NGOs refused to provide any material in this regard.
- (b) Interview schedule: The researchers interviewed the concerned personnel such as the president and general secretary, in-charge of educational activities and other contact persons of NGOs. The interview schedule consisted of five aspects:
  - (i) Part-I: Information about the general structure of NGOs, for example, dates of establishment, organizational structure, method of selection for officials and conditions of selection and aims and objectives regarding basic education, were targeted for the study;
  - (ii) Part-II: This part was used to identify the area of operation for the organization, the duration of the basic educational programme offered by the organization and the characteristics of the target group;
  - (iii) Part-III: This part was used to identify the enrolment at basic education units, schools or centers established and run by the NGOs;
  - (iv) Part-IV: In this part, information about services and facilities provided to staff, teachers and students were inquired;
  - (v) Part-V: This part consisted of open ended responses by organizations to have first hand knowledge in providing basic education, suggestions for the betterment of the situation and future plans of NGOs' in the field of basic education.

### **Procedure for collection of data**

Although, the number of sampled NGOs was 22 at farther regions of the province, yet much difficulty was not found in obtaining the required data. The researchers visited the offices of NGOs and conducted the interview schedule. Response from most of the NGOs was good, and they provided the required data and information. However, only two NGOs refused to provide any document for confirmation of facts and figures.

### **Analysis and interpretation of data**

The data collected through interview was tabulated, analyzed and interpreted in the light of objectives of the study. In this study, the researchers used simple statistical techniques and formula, in the treatment of data and so simple percentages were used to compare the frequencies of responses.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **General structure**

It revealed that 77% NGOs had similar type of general organizing structure and as such, their executive body comprised President, Vice-President-I, Vice-President-II, General Secretary, Joint Secretary, Finance Secretary and Propaganda Secretary. Among others, 9% have board of directors, 5% have advisory board, 9% have executive committee, 18% were run under the supervision of director, 5% were under the general manager, 9% were run by trust, 14% have the services of programmed coordinators, 5% were supervised by commissioners, while 5% were run under the Chairman/Chairperson.

### **Area of operation**

- (i) Levels of working: In Punjab, 55% NGOs in education were working at the community level, 13% were working at the national level and five percent performed their task at each provincial and division levels, while nine percent do their work at Tehsil level.
- (ii) Social groups dealing: It is found that 45% of NGOs were dealing with the poor groups at their preference level and 41% have no distinction of either the group may be poor or average, in this regard.
- (iii) Decade-wise establishment: Out of the total sample of the NGOs, 50% were established in the 1990s, 23% were found in the 1980s, 18% started working in the 1970s and only 2% have been established in the 1940s. However, it is clear that the establishment of NGOs in education remained most active in the decade of the 1990s.
- (iv) Selection of executives: It was found that 82% of the NGOs adopted election procedure for the selection of their executive body, while 13% of the NGOs considered the performance as the mode of selection and only 5%

have no fixed criteria to handle the task. So, sufficient numbers of NGOs adopted the well-defined procedure of election for selection of their executive body. It was also found that 55% of the sample have forced no condition of education, age, gender, locality etc. for the selection of their executives, whereas 27% use the condition of locality for selection of their executives and 23% use the gender condition for their executives. As such, the condition of age was not prescribed by any one.

(v) Age group dealing: It was found that among the sample, 77% of the organizations showed their dealing with age group 5 to 11, while 45% work for age group 12 to 15. However, there were 23% NGOs working without any restriction of age groups.

(vi) Restrictions of dealing: A majority of NGOs was working for the poor group in the society, while a sufficient number of NGOs perform their working without any distinction of social group. Among the sample, it was found that 86% of the NGOs have no sex discrimination for their educational services and 14% dealt with female only. It was found that the whole sample considered no distinction of ethnic grouping among masses for their educational services. The sample of NGOs performing their educational services restricted to urban areas and rural areas were 5 and 36%, respectively, while for both areas, it was 59%.

### **Basic education centers**

(i) Nature of education centers: It was observed that 68% of the sample's organizations were engaged in NFBE, while 59% were observed in primary education. However, 41% NGOs were working in each field of literacy, vocational education and religious education.

(ii) Schools/centers: It was found that the overall average number of BE centers/schools per NGO were 94. Although, at community level, the resources and area of operation remain limited, yet the average number of centers/schools was 18 per NGO, which is hopeful.

(iii) Shifts at schools/centers: It was observed that 41% of the organizations have adopted single morning shift for their BE centers, nine percent were running their centers at evening shifts, 27% of the NGOs were running their centers at double shifts of morning and afternoon, 18% at morning and evening and only 5% arranged educational services in the afternoon and evening shifts.

(iv) Working hours: It was observed that 50% of the sample's NGOs have arranged about four hours working at their centers, 45% spend more than four hours, while only 5% have made working hours less than two hours per day at BE centers.

### **Enrolment**

(i) It was found that existing average enrolment for year

2001 at BE centers/schools was 47 students per centre for Tehsil level NGOs, as the overall average number of students per centre was 31. Comparatively, at Tehsil and Community level, enrolment was above the average.

(ii) It was observed that NGOs have set targets for the enrolment of students in the next year.

(iii) It was found that NGOs have arranged the services of teachers/trainers on full time as well as part time. 2050 teachers were appointed on full time basis, while 337 teachers/trainers were providing part time services at the centers/schools.

(iv) It was observed that 68% of NGOs have set the rate of remuneration for their teachers/trainers up to Rs. 1000 per month, while 6% NGOs were paying above Rs. 1000 per month for every teacher/trainer and only 5% NGOs have gained the voluntary services of teachers/trainers.

(v) It was realized that more than 50% of NGOs among the sample have adopted different modes like publicity campaign, through messenger and door-to-door publicity, to attract the admission at their centers/schools.

### **Facilities**

(i) It was observed that among the sample of NGOs, 41% were providing the transport facilities, while nine percent of the NGOs arranged residence, hostel and medical facility to the staff.

(ii) It was found that 82% of the NGOs among the sample arranged for free education, 73% provided reading materials, 50% granted fee concession and scholarships were granted to 23% of the NGOs. Other facilities identified were Qarz-e-Hasna, transport, prize, hostel, medicine and games for their students/learners.

(iii) It revealed that 82% of the NGOs among the sample arranged training for their teachers/trainers, although the period of training varies from 3 to 21 days of duration. Most of them provide this training at their own training centers.

(iv) It was found that the overall ratio of teachers' qualification for Matric, Intermediate, Graduation and Post graduation for both male and female teachers/trainers was 325:141:129:1, respectively. Professional qualification among teachers/ trainers was identified as PTC, CT, PTOC, need base and field base trainings of the first level.

(v) It was observed that 68% NGOs gained their income from government grants, 55% collected community donations to raise the income and 32% collected students' fees to meet the income and some other source of income like loans and foreign funds. However, trust and printing work were used by some of the NGOs.

(vi) It reflects that among the centers/schools run by NGOs, 23% of the buildings were owned by NGOs, 59% were hired and 18% were obtained voluntarily. All the buildings have facilities of electricity, water, teaching rooms, toilets and desks/tats. A few centers have also

grounds, staff room, library, computer lab and common room.

(vii) It was observed that 86% of the NGOs among the sample arranged examination and certification process for evaluation. For those who arranged examination, 89% adopted written and external examination mode of evaluation.

(viii) It was found that ten NGOs make arrangements to publish materials for the progress of basic education at their centers. Seven NGOs issued pamphlets, two issued brochures and research papers, while four published story books and text books.

### Future plans

Almost all the NGOs had their future plans of having extension of their educational services at mass level, extend their enrolment and improve their centres. Some distinguished future plans were also reported by NGOs for their near future activities. Such future plans reflected the target trends of activities being planned in the field of education as follows:

- (i) To provide computer education and start computer a centre at primary level.
- (ii) To extend the area of working at upper level and cover more rural areas.
- (iii) Develop a resource group for training of teachers at community level.
- (iv) Start research work to access the basic education needs at private and NGO levels.
- (v) Develop a research and a centre for training and research for CBOs.
- (vi) Translation of books in local languages.
- (vii) Sound and syllable based literacy material development.
- (viii) To establish a platform of inter relationship in order to promote education by inter cooperation.

### DISCUSSION

To improve the quality of people by any nation, education is considered as an important instrument which may help to meet the challenges of the fast changing world (Dogra and Gulati, 2006). Targeting the maximum literacy rate, the government of Pakistan has struggled and so has supported NGOs efforts for all sectors of social development. The basic education has always been the priority of their focus. In Pakistan, a rapid growth of NGOs in education was observed in the 1990s, and it was a part of the international campaign to use education for uplifting the economic position of developing countries and to attain the universalization of basic education. Governmental policies during this period also supported the establishment of NGOs in education, whereas donor

agencies also involved NGOs for their direct process of working at community level. Majority of NGOs were run under their executive body, and a similar type of structure was adopted as per requirement of their registration. The study shows that majority of NGOs were adopting the process of election for selection of their executive body.

The study concludes that at the overall community level, NGOs were providing better services, although they had a smaller structure and lesser resource as compared to higher level NGOs. Therefore, all efficient NGOs at grassroots level which maintained high standard and have been able to provide educational output at their schools/centres would be given more freedom and adequate financial support. Besides the steps taken by the government, the NGOs themselves should be able to add their income. The developmental partners need to collaborate with the government in achieving a set target and hence financing only those NGOs which are assisting the government. The public should also be persuaded to take interest in contributing their best in financing and improving the physical facilities of the BE centres by NGOs. In the rural areas, people should help by providing land, material and free labour for constructing building and preparing equipment and furniture for such centers. Certain minimum qualifications should be laid down for being a member of the executive body of the NGOs, otherwise such NGOs should have an expert education adviser.

As female literacy is very low in Pakistan, proper attention from the NGOs is needed in the field of basic education. As such, each BE centre should try to increase the strength of girls at rural areas. The 'girl guide movement' has contributed a lot for literacy projects. Consequently, such successful NGOs' programme in basic education should be documented and replicated elsewhere, for example, a country like Pakistan, whose major population belongs to rural areas and who have poor literacy rate. Rural development is targeted to be dealt with at top priority, and as such, instead of considering it only as a process, a program or a method, it may be considered a movement (Nath, 2008). This study shows that 36% of the NGOs were restricting their services to rural areas along with 59% working for both urban and rural areas. Therefore, a sufficient number of NGOs were found to be performing their services for rural development through their contribution in basic education.

The management of tasks at the grass root level should be left to the NGOs and assistance should be provided to develop and strengthen their management capabilities. Master trainer programmes should be developed so that the NGOs could in turn provide training to CBOs in the field of basic education. There should be an effective planning, monitoring and implementation having a comprehensive working plan to avoid overlapping and duplication of work for promotion of basic education. More so, NGOs should be involved in promoting basic

education. It is also proposed that awards, incentives, medals and certificates should be given to prominent NGOs at community level. Students / learners of BE centers should be given proper and official certification of completion to make them eligible to enter the formal system. However, it is time we stop playing with the figures of data and start considering seriously, effort in meeting universal education involving NGOs as well.

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