Major Facets of NGOs' Impact on Culture and Society in Pakistan

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Abstract

As the civil society, which is largely represented by the NGOs in Pakistan,[1] has remained a weak sector, there is need to investigate into its nature, dynamics, and significance for the society at large. Though voluntary non-governmental organizations, were identified as 'NGOs' in the 1980s, yet the institutions which provided a legacy to the emerging NGO sector in the 1980s, have been working long before the new title was given to them. A study[2] was conducted to quantify and qualify the impact of non-governmental organizations on the society and culture of Pakistan. This paper is based on the findings of the same study.

At the outset, the paper provides methodology and theoretical underpinning of the study. This is followed by a section on major features of the change brought about by NGOs in the past four decades. In the end a model is proposed to understand the role of the NGO sector in Pakistan and countries having similar socio-economic and political conditions. This model explains the NGOs' impact in terms of mobility and elaborates various facets of this mobility.

Methodology

This paper draws upon the findings of the study which was based on perception data collected from a national sample in Pakistan. Two population groups were selected to elicit their views about the role of NGO sector in the post-1971 Pakistan. These sample groups – NGO

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[1]   Social Policy Development Centre, *Social Development in Pakistan Annual Review 2009-10* (Karachi: 2010), p.104.
[2]   Anwar Shaheen, 'The Changing Cultural Patterns of Pakistan (1972-2006) with Special Reference to the Role and Perceptions of the Non-governmental Actors', Pakistan Study Centre, University of Karachi, 2010, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation.

functionaries and social analysts[3] – comprised 120 and 60 respectively. Sampling was done through judgmental-sequential method, suited to the national sample living at far-off places. The data was collected through interviews by the author, trained investigators and by mail as well. One interviewing schedule/questionnaire was prepared for each group, but there was a set of questions common to both the questionnaires. The NGO functionaries represented views of 93 NGOs, which included international/regional (3), national (34), and provincial/local (56) NGOs. The second group of social analysts comprised 27 social scientists, 15 human rights activists, 11 journalists, and 7 employees of the social welfare department of the government as they have direct control over, and contact with, the NGO sector. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to analyze the data. This study represents answers to major research questions of the study.

Theoretical background
Major research questions of the study were drawn from the review of the available research and conceptual literature on the topic. The primary data was collected on the indicators selected to measure socio-cultural change, evolution, role and prospects of the NGOs and the government-NGO relations. Theories found most suitable included Modernization Theory, Dependency Theory, and World Social Systems Theory. Since the subject of social and cultural change has been popular with the researchers and theorists, a good deal of literature is available on the topic. The Modernization Theory explains the conditions related to traditionalism and those showing modernization. The Dependency Theory and World Social Systems Theory highlight the politico-economic conditions impacting the process of change. The indicators derived were grouped under four heads: traditionalism, economic activities, status and role of women, and socio-political aspects. These indicators were incorporated in the questionnaires in the form of a matrix question whereas some other questions were also added to elicit the perception through multiple types of questions suited to the purpose of study.

Review of literature
Various authors focused upon different dimensions of NGOs' work, but a few have written on their impact as a whole. A book, edited by Wood,

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[3]   The social analysts in this study were those persons who were considered expert and competent to comment on the role and working of the NGOs for socio-cultural change in Pakistan.

Malik and Sagheer,[4] contains ten articles dealing with different aspects of Aga Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP) in the northern Pakistan. Hunzai[5] explains that AKRSP has mobilized the rural communities and has created even the third generation of civil society organizations in a network of village organizations (VOs) and women organizations (WOs). The VOs are highly diverse in their functions and competence and they are trained to become independent of AKRSP in the future. The WOs have served as a platform for women's collective development. He adds that AKRSP has also contributed a good deal of investment in the development of economic infrastructure and creating options for people, leading to economic growth and livelihood security. Naseem also appreciates the role of rural support programs in delivering rural services and poverty alleviation. AKRSP has been the pioneer in this regard and its approach was replicated in five other programs in Pakistan.[6] These five programs included National Rural Support Programme as well, and its reports[7] document details of its projects and achievements. Naseem compares the NGO movement in Pakistan with those in India and Bangladesh, and asserts that, this movement in Pakistan has to work in cooperation rather than at odds with the government in a manner that would maximize benefits of government services to the poor.[8] He, however, holds that despite many drawbacks of the NGO sector, it has emerged as an important means to alleviate the impact of poverty and to implement programs of social action and grassroots mobilization.[9] He adds that NGOs have been a notable source of contribution to the expression of pluralistic ideas, and opening up debate on many issues, which have been neglected, such as poverty, women in development, health, education, and brain drain. According to him, media and NGOs have also opened up the public mind to new and persistent issues. They have helped in raising public consciousness on, and intense social

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[4]   Geof Wood, Abdul Malik and Sumaira Sagheer (eds.), *Valleys in Transition Twenty Years of AKRSP's Experience in Northern Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford, 2006).

[5]   Izhar Hunzai, 'The Way Forward: The Fourth Dialogue', *ibid*., pp.454-91.

[6]   For information on the programs and ten partners of NRSP, see: *The Rural Support Programmes Network* (Islamabad: NRSP, n.d.); *Imagine the Future* (Quetta: Balochistan Rural Support Programme, n.d.).

[7]   See, National Rural Support Programme, *NRSP 11th Annual Progress Report*, 2004-2005.

[8]   S. M. Naseem, *Dilemmas of Destiny: Domestic and Global Challenges Facing Pakistan's Economy* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1998), p.183.

[9]   *Ibid.,* p. 184.

concerns about, these issues and in liberalizing the atmosphere for public discussion.

A solid contribution of the NGO sector regarding raising awareness has been through its publications, which are of many types such as: newsletters, souvenirs, pamphlets, brochures, handouts, calendars, posters, information kits, manuals, conference/ seminar/ workshop reports, case studies, special project reports, as well as research reports. Their research activities can be self-initiated as well as donor-assisted. They have, in fact, covered those areas in research on which the academic and media professionals have not written very often.[10] The NGOs who are largely engaged in education/training and research are mostly found engaged in publication, too. NGOs engaged in following areas have especially focused spreading awareness through print material: family planning, environmental issues, impact of globalization, reproductive health, sanitation, low-cost housing, human rights, rights of women, children, minorities, labour and peasants, legal aid, women's political representation, and general political education. A small number of NGOs also print their annual reports, which provide statement of their finances and projects. Electronic material is also produced by a small number of NGOs and its popularity has increased day by day. A small number of NGOs have developed their websites, but lack of finances and skill and pressures of meeting other priorities definitely constraint NGOs' efforts for using print or electronic media for awareness or publicity. NGOs engaged in programs for education, health, and environment, in particular, have been trying to produce educational and awareness material. These items carry a good amount of information about the NGOs, their projects, approaches, data on achievements and finances, and evaluations[11] as well.

The literature shows that achievements in provision of education and health have been remarkable for the NGO sector. NGOs' impact in poverty reduction has also been discussed by Rehman[12] and Zaidi.[13]

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[10] For a review of research material produced by the NGOs see, Author's, 'Contribution of the NGOs to Social Science Research in Pakistan', in Inayatullah, Rubina Saigol, and Pervez Tahir (eds.), *Social Sciences in Pakistan: A Profile* (Islamabad: Council of Social Sciences Pakistan, 2005), pp. 427-58.

[11] See, Awaz CDS, *Precious Little Difference* (Multan: Awaz Foundation Pakistan: Centre for Development Services, 2005).

[12] Naheed Rehman, (writer), Aquila Ismail (ed.), *Social Impacts and Constraints of Microcredit in the Alleviation of Poverty* (Karachi: OPP-OCT, 2003).

[13] S. Akbar Zaidi, *Microcredit for Development* (Karachi: OPP-OCT, 2003).

Rehman, comparing the micro-credit programs of the Pakistani NGOs with those of the Grameen Bank (of Bangladesh), highlights major differences in terms of scope, lending style, context, and institutional philosophy. Rahman claims that the OPP-OCT[14] program has been largely urban, given to individual borrowers, for enhancing business productivity, but with no particular preference for women. Based on interviews with forty-seven beneficiaries and their families, she claims that the positive social impacts of the lending have been beyond business expansion, such as improving food quality and physical health, ameliorating social stress, and creating more opportunities for community participation and dignified work, thus making the borrowers more empowered citizens. The study analyzes the social impact, constrains, and core challenges, including the socio-cultural impediments, to credit-driven development. Zaidi asserts that microcredit helps the small family enterprises stay afloat and above the poverty line, but it is not necessarily a poverty-alleviation program as such. He finds that NGOs have changed the nature of development by supporting through their small-scale community based projects along side grandiose projects. NGOs have thus changed nature of development to 'be participatory, inclusive and more egalitarian and broad based than the earlier statist interventions'. He confirms that OCT[15] loans have made significant contribution in enhancing the livelihood status of the small and very small entrepreneurs, though he expresses his inability to quantify the impact of loans. Mahmood H. Khan[16] reports, analyzes and suggests many aspects of the rural support programs and their NGO component in Sarhad (Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa), Balochistan, and at the national level. Providing a rich context to the rural socio-economic and political set-up, Khan discusses the issues of transition in rural areas, and public participation and state policies regarding rural development.

A series of five volumes[17] presenting management case-studies of a large number of NGOs, explains the issues and achievements of a large number of NGOs as well. These five volumes deal with, concept,

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14   Orangi Pilot Project-Orangi Charitable Trust, the first being the mother organization, and one of the best known NGOs in Pakistan, and the second being an off-shoot of it specified for loan program.
15   Orangi Charitable Trust, an off-shoot of the previous Orangi Pilot Project.
16   Mahmood Hasan Khan, *Community Organisations and Rural Development* (Lahore: Vanguard, 2001).
17   Dawod Ghaznavi and Bashir Ahmed Khan (eds.), *Managing NGOs in Developing Countries* (Karachi: Oxford, Vol. I & II, 2005, Vol. III, 2006, Vol. IV, 2006, Vol. V, 2006), LUMS/McGills Social Enterprise Development Centre.

framework and cases (Volume1), management cases from Pakistan (Volume II), gender challenges (Volume III), caring for future generations (Volume IV), and health and environment (Volume V). PAVHNA,[18] an NGO, has also produced case studies regarding its own interventions, problems and the ways to brave them for success.

NGOs have been proposed as a means of alternative development, mostly taking up the jobs the governments were supposed to perform, but Zaidi[19] holds that the public sector can deliver and the idea of failure of the government is only partially true. He also finds that 'NGOs too, just as much as the state, barring a few oft-quoted exceptions, have failed to make a substantial impact upon the perceived beneficiaries…'[20] Contrary to this according to Arif Hasan,[21] a lack of compassion in the state circles about change is reflected in their ignoring it in the political and planning processes. Mostly, the non-state actors like NGOs and some academic institutions have also ignored the process of change.

Findings and interpretation

In the light of the data of the study, the major contours of the change brought about by the NGOs in the past four decades are presented in the following paragraphs.

The NGO functionaries reported that their NGOs were working mostly in the areas of economic uplift, health, education and training besides others. There present NGOs had also worked for betterment of non-material aspects of life, change in attitudes and capacity of people, awareness, ensuring realization of human rights especially women's rights, and creating a favorable socio-political environment for development.

As regards the perception about change in Pakistan and development of NGO sector, fifty-six per cent of these analysts expressed 'very much' change in Pakistan while thirty-seven per cent

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[18]   PAVHNA, *Courage to Challenge and Change* (Karachi: Pakistan Voluntary Health and Nutrition Association, n.d.).
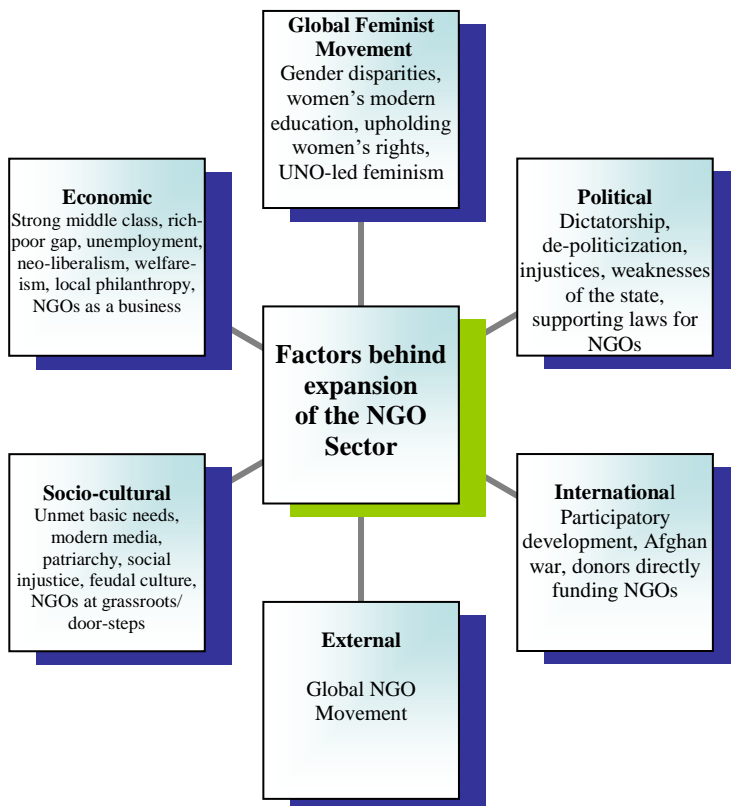
[19]   S. Akbar Zaidi, *Can the Public Sector Deliver? An Examination of the Work of the Sindh Katchi Abadis Authority* (Karachi: UNDP/City Press, 2001).

[20]   S. Akbar Zaidi, *The New Development Paradigm, Papers on Institutions, NGOs, Gender and Local Government* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.209.

[21]   Arif Hasan, *The Unplanned Revolution Observations on the Process of Socio-economic Change in Pakistan* (Karachi: City Press, 2002, Oxford University Press, 2009).

thought it was 'somewhat' change. 'No change' was not endorsed by any one. Rapid rise of the NGOs was considered by 48 per cent as a 'very important' change, 37 per cent considered it as 'somewhat important' change. The major reasons behind the growth of NGOs referred to emergent socio-cultural realities, domestic political and economic factors, external factors, and donor preferences. See Figure A. The respondents saw the largest area of action of the NGOs being women's rights, followed by education, healthcare, political awareness, and legal aid. Human rights were seen only by 8 per cent respondents as a major area of action by the NGOs.

Figure A: Social Experts' Perception about Major Reasons behind Growth of the NGO Sector in Pakistan

Global Feminist Movement
Gender disparities, women's modern education, upholding women's rights, UNO-led feminism

Economic
Strong middle class, rich-poor gap, unemployment, neo-liberalism, welfare-ism, local philanthropy, NGOs as a business

Political
Dictatorship, de-politicization, injustices, weaknesses of the state, supporting laws for NGOs

Factors behind expansion of the NGO Sector

Socio-cultural
Unmet basic needs, modern media, patriarchy, social injustice, feudal culture, NGOs at grassroots/door-steps

International
Participatory development, Afghan war, donors directly funding NGOs

External
Global NGO Movement

The respondents generally agreed upon the idea that the people's attitudes were the crucial determinant of the success of a development program. These attitudes, according to the NGO functionaries, could facilitate the process if these were grounded in their collective feelings. In this regard, the helpful attributes of the NGO included: sharing, communicating in the people's language, winning the trust of the people, offering support for life/survival, and having a good level of awareness, commitment, sustainability, transparency, and moral behavior. What facilitated developmental process was, in fact, the people's will to survive, to learn, and gain self-improvement. Moreover, it was thought to be involving: patience, democratic attitudes, openness, empathy, voluntarism, self-help, and a sense of responsibility. The impeding qualities for the NGOs' success were mainly conceived to be ignorance, rigid socio-cultural norms, conservatism, lack of trust and cooperation, inequitable distribution of benefits, dependence, prejudice, sectarianism, sharp class difference, and inability to avail resources. NGOs' approaches of depending upon donor funding and paid voluntarism also kept hampering the development process.

The subject of problems faced by NGOs in their way of effecting some basic changes has three major facets:

a) The issue of state-NGOs relations, as a problematic area emerged in the 1990s, and had its roots in the previous decades. The respondents mentioned the reasons as: strict and ruthless supervision or control; lack of trust and coordination; little recognition of NGOs' work; non-supportive legal framework; emphasis upon secrecy; bureaucratic hurdles; and negative perception of government functionaries.

b) People create problems for the NGOs due to their own negative perception and non-cooperation. Their crude disposition, conservatism, tribal/feudal values, and habit of receiving unearned benefits hamper their own development. Furthermore, mostly people are religious in outlook while NGOs are secular thus conflict arises.

c) NGOs themselves may lack in professionalism, and experienced and trained staff. NGOs may have poor vision and narrow approaches, poor discipline and commitment and an unsteady flow of resources. They have internal conflicts and they also follow their donors' agenda. They serve mostly the interests of their organizers and financiers rather than of the people.

The NGO functionaries have expressed that the government should show a more open and facilitating attitude, promote partnership with NGOs, make legal framework more supportive and increase development up to the maximum level. Figure B shows this three-

pronged strategy. In case the government is not supportive, the respondents suggested the NGOs link up more with the community and fellow NGOs, and sensitize the government functionaries to their concerns. The respondents taking a rigid position have called upon the NGOs to struggle for their own rights, promote advocacy, be transparent, and do not expect anything from the government.

Figure B: **Proposed Government's Role in Ensuring Better Government–NGO Relations**
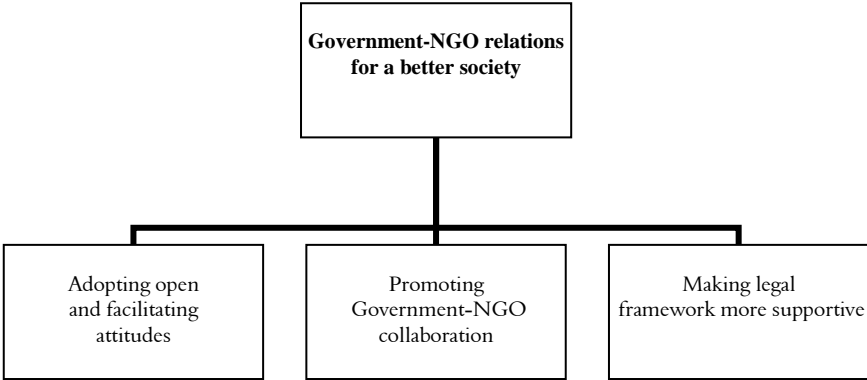
Answers to major research questions were calculated by selection of indicators relevant for that question and then calculating the percentage of positive responses to the total responses (obtained by adding up the positive and negative responses) and after that obtaining the mean of the percentages of selected indicators for calculating response for each major question. The findings are summarized in sixteen sub-sections below.

1. Magnitude of change in cultural patterns of Pakistan
The trends are summarized as follows:
a. In the domain of traditionalism, it became evident that the greatest degree of increase has been perceived in the trend of living in nuclear family instead of a joint family (76.1%), followed by the preference for small family and the increased rate of literacy and education (74.4% each), and freedom of individual for getting education and training (65%).
b. In the domain of economic activities, the highest degree of increase is observed in the mechanization of production processes (85.5%),

followed by women working in unconventional fields (80.5%) and the trend of seeking jobs abroad (79.4%).

c. Greatest increase in the domain of women's status and role is observed in the freedom to opt for waged work and interest in politics and political awareness (72.2% each), followed by the freedom to choose one's field of training and employment as well as to choose marriage partner of one's choice (67.2% each). The two factors seem linked as well, in that economic participation seems to encourage independence in decision-making about the most important and sensitive issue – marriage – for women. However, this assertion needs more research for confirmation.

d. In the domain of socio-political aspects of the society, greatest increase is observed in the rural-urban migration (83.9%), followed by the awareness of rights among the people (75%).

2. Reasons behind growth of the NGO sector in Pakistan

The major reasons reported by the social analysts include: past tradition of philanthropy, religious instruction for relief, out-migration, remittance and associated trend of spending and giving, breaking up of old structures of support for the needy, expansion of the middle class, and rising awareness. Among the political reasons mentioned are: weak state, bad governance, militarism, violation of human rights (particularly in the Zia regime), suppression of formal political activity and then allowing it in the 1990s. Also unhelpful were conditions of growing fundamentalism, rigid bureaucratic practices, elitist politics and economy. Easy laws for registration of the NGOs give the NGOs more independence for self-planning and executing development work. There was no effective check on the NGOs' growth and also no mechanism to discipline them. The NGOs started giving a voice to the voiceless, while working at the grassroots in the remote areas. The government encouraged the NGOs for depoliticizing the society to engage the good political workers with the NGOs. Young, educated and enthusiastic workers were available in the time of high unemployment. An exploitative and oppressive political and economic structure and a non-responsive state created space for the NGOs in the face of a rapidly growing population *vis-à-vis* the prevalent lack of resources. Some added reasons were corruption in the public sector, nepotism, non-participation of people in development programs, denial of rights to people, and the government's failure in providing basic needs. The important factors which helped NGOs to grow included: the NGOs' focus upon disadvantaged sections, growing trust in the NGOs, supportive role of media for the NGOs, advantages of collective action, global expansion in

the NGOs, large inflow of funds to Pakistan especially after the Afghan war. The donors showed mistrust in the competence of the government to deliver results and donors had pinned hopes on the NGOs' potential for bringing genuine development. The multinational corporations also encouraged the NGOs by extending help in the wake of privatization. Therefore, a good amount of funds available to the NGOs from the domestic and foreign sources transformed the NGOs into a flourishing business. (See also Figure A).

3. Significance of the NGOs as agents of change

The answer to this question is calculated by adding up the response to the role of NGOs for four major dimensions (operationalized with the help of 77 indicators) in the matrix question of the questionnaires used for both population groups. The findings are shown in Table 1, and Figure C.

Table 1: Perception about the Contribution of the NGOs to the Socio-cultural Change in Pakistan (1972-2006)

S. No	Dimension	Score (%)
A	Mean score on traditionalism	72.0
B	Mean score on economic activities	76.8
C	Mean score on status and role of women	81.0
D	Mean score on socio-political aspects	78.5
	Overall mean of the above four dimensions	77.1

Figure C: Major Dimensions of the NGOs' Impact in Pakistan (1972-2006)
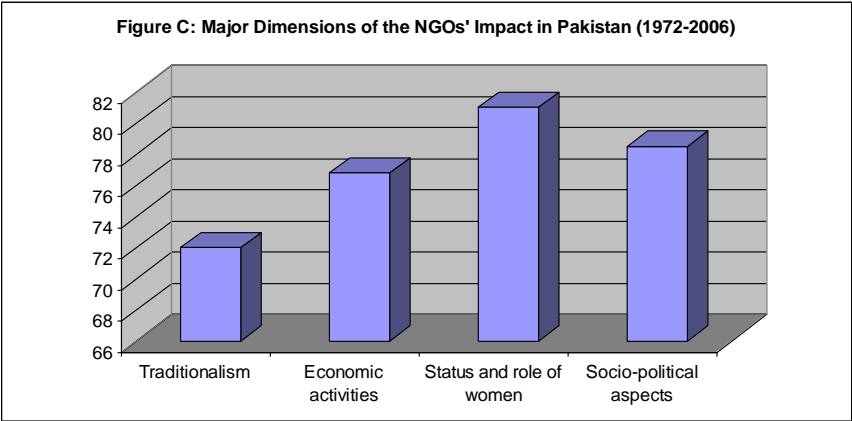
This data shows that NGOs have been an important agent of change in Pakistan regarding major dimensions of socio-cultural change as per perception of the respondents. NGOs' foremost impact has been

on the gender relations/system, followed by socio-political aspects, and economic activities. The domain of traditionalism has been affected least comparatively, yet in a noticeable manner.

4. Role of the NGOs in thwarting traditionalism
The NGOs have played a considerable role in thwarting traditionalism and encouraging individualism as is shown by the perception of the respondents.

5. Impact on gender norms and values
The activism of the NGOs has made a noticeable impact on gender relations and gender structure in Pakistan. This has been affected by engaging in activism which has affected gender norms and values. This is true in the light of the opposition meted out to the NGOs by the conservative elements who cannot tolerate any improvement in the status of women. These opponents have been using all possible means, including patriarchal interpretation of the Islamic injunctions, to justify their stance. Anyhow NGOs have adopted gender relations as their main domain of action, as is confirmed by the high score shown in the perception data.

6. Role of the NGOs in promoting modernization
The answer to this question has been provided by indicators dealing with a host of aspects mentioned by the theorists as essential for modernization. These aspects include: rationality, scientific and progressive outlook, no fatalism, individualism, personal achievement, open-mindedness, materialism, humanism[22], industrialization, urbanization, freedom of thought and expression, social, economic and political equality, social mobility, and raising consciousness of individuals of their existence and potentials, and motivating them to work for their own economic, social and political development. The result showed that the NGOs have been working largely to bring about changes which are generally taken as 'modernization' but are termed by some sections as 'westernization'. Thus those sections that oppose westernization, have been opposing the NGO activism as well.

7. Impact of NGOs' action on the core and peripheral cultural values

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[22]   Humanism here means uplifting all human beings regardless of their caste, creed, age, sex, race, etc.

The answer has been based on the indicators related to core and peripheral values. See Figure D as well.

Figure D: Impact of NGOs' Action on Core and Peripheral Cultural Values

Core values

Transitory
values
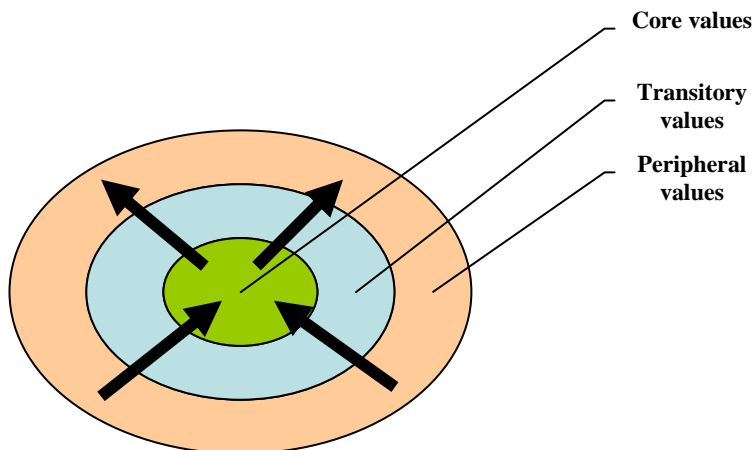
Peripheral
values

The NGOs have affected both the core values as well as peripheral values to a great extent, which means NGOs have affected main ingredients of the culture of the groups they came in contact with.

8. Change in patterns and prospects of economic activities

The NGOs have been actively working to affect the patterns and prospects of economic activities in the society, as is revealed by a high average score on relevant indicators.

9. Changes in patterns of need-fulfillment

In the context of an underdeveloped society, where at least half of the population is suffering from poverty, deprivation, disempowerment and in-articulation, the foremost questions of survival and empowerment that are relevant to their lives emerge. Both these can be translated as 'practical needs' and 'strategic needs' respectively. Theoretical formulations about the hierarchy of needs, underdevelopment, and dependency, all explain these issues. In this study, the concepts of practical and strategic needs are found relevant therefore these are analyzed in this sub-section.

It is seen that NGOs have been engaged in providing both types of needs – practical and strategic – and their score on strategic needs has been higher than that on practical needs. The result shows that working for strategic needs has been a special and preferred area of the NGOs' activity in Pakistan, though, historically, they had taken a start from fulfilling practical needs. Two types of NGOs or NGO activities are commonly identified: service-providing NGOs and right-based NGOs, corresponding to provision of practical and strategic needs, respectively. It is evident from the data and literature, that service-providing NGOs have been generally welcomed by the stakeholders, while NGOs which aim at strategic needs have been vehemently criticized for their activism. In the context of the Pakistani society, it is the NGO sector which has taken up the job of empowering people and bringing in strategic changes in the existing structure of power, along with working for survival (practical) needs as well.

10. Changing the dynamics of power relations among the classes, communities, and regions within the country

The data shows that the NGOs' activism has been focused upon changing the power dynamics among the classes, communities and regions in the country. This is in fact the strategic side of the NGOs' role, along with other aspects which deal with survival, social, or development needs whereas these needs also contribute to strategic needs in some subtle ways. This is the strategic implication of the NGOs' action due to which NGOs have been first of all resisted by certain powerful sections of the society which feel threatened by the changing distribution of power and the privileges and prestige it entails.

16. Future and prospects of the NGO action in the Pakistani society

As per findings of the study, the future of the NGO sector and prospects for its efficient working, depend upon many factors. These include: attitude of the stakeholders, NGOs' own merits and demerits, legislations regarding NGOs, and the direction of the process of social change in the society, among others. NGOs themselves need to exhibit the qualities of professionalism, transparency, sustainability, commitment, and participation of the target groups in their activities. Since NGOs have created a need for their existence in the society they are likely to continue in the future.

A mobility model of NGO action

Based on the findings of this study, a model is proposed to show impact of the NGOs' work on the communities, which is likewise applicable to individuals. It generally represents the case of NGOs engaged in development and rights-based action because NGO work for relief and rehabilitation itself cannot uplift the community in the long run.

The model proposes to understand NGOs' action in terms of mobility which has many dimensions. The word 'mobility' literally means the 'quality of being mobile' that means to be changeable, flexible, and movable, or able to 'move', which in turn denotes changing position, status, condition and characteristics. Mobility is the antithesis of rigidity which is a quality of traditional minds and groups. Action of the NGOs has largely challenged many traditions. This model describes mobility as the most important and noticeable aspect of the change brought about by the NGOs' action. That NGOs' action adds to individuals' and communities' mobility means that it enables them to move easily, speedily, more willingly, more forcefully and more confidently. It also enhances their capacity to compete and win. While focusing upon the impact of development NGOs and right-based NGOs, mobility would mean going forward and upward in a direction, perceived as desirable both by the NGOs and their target groups.

Eight significant dimensions of mobility, caused by NGOs, are represented in Figure E, which explains expanding horizon of people when they change their position and/or condition along any dimension shown in the diagram. Other less significant dimensions of NGOs' impact and mobility can also be identified. The major dimensions of NGO-induced mobility are explained as follows:

1. *Feministic mobility*: It is the impact directly related with ensuring equal status of women with men in social, political and other spheres of life. NGOs have tried to ensure through their action that women are provided equal human treatment from birth till death by their family and the society at large. NGOs have constantly tried to enhance participation and provide rights to women thus improving their status and chances to growth. It was predominantly the NGOs' action for highlighting honor-killing that finally led to passing of laws for protection of women. It is a kind of legal mobility of women, too, as their legal status is enhanced.

Figure E: Mobility Effect of the NGO Action

2. *Political mobility*: NGOs have claimed and aimed to work for ensuring social justice, equity, indiscrimination, democracy and supremacy of the constitution. Political mobility has become evident in enhanced awareness of political process operating in the society, awareness of rights, participation in the political process through political education and training of elected representatives, etc. Other dimensions are advocacy, filing petitions in the courts for public interest and other issues; providing legal aid to disadvantaged

groups, illegal immigrants, and prisoners; helping release of bonded labor, victims of crimes and injustice, and challenging cruel customary laws and traditional court systems (*jirga, panchayat,* etc.). Moreover, the participation of the NGOs in the civil society's events at the local, regional and international levels, responding to calls for action and follow-up activities all contribute in certain ways to raising political status of the people. NGOs' efforts to fight and combat crimes like trafficking, harassment, child abuse, bonded labor, civil liberties and freedoms are noteworthy, and these have also contributed to some extent in improving the situation of affected groups. The NGOs have been persistently highlighting the crimes against humanity/women/children and minorities to ameliorate their plight. The NGOs have also tried to hold public sector officials accountable to people, and have demanded transparency in financial matters. Some more arenas of struggle for the NGOs have been civil liberties, fundamental rights, social harmony, and peace and unity for improving the political conditions of the society.

3. *Economic mobility*: It refers to stepping up along the hierarchy of economic status/achievements through acquiring: better income, income security, employment, credit, access to markets, training for income-generating, production skills, and enterprise development. Destitute groups, female-headed households and unemployed persons are focused upon to improve their economic lot. The role of middleman is also reduced to some extent by the NGOs, thus relieving people from exploitation by the middleman.

4. *Social mobility:* It is closely associated with economic mobility by enhancing peoples' affordability and adaptability to a better life-style and a better quality of life. The people were enabled to procure cultural items and maintain standards of the classes higher to their own. Poverty-reduction programs have definitely brought upward-mobility outcomes. The focus of NGOs upon providing what people are deprived of, such as street theatres, movies, walks, festivals, and recreational programs intertwined with the propagation of NGO messages, have added to enrichment of their lives and culture.

5. *Cultural mobility:* It refers to changes in ingredients of culture such as values, norms, mores, beliefs, folkways, laws, and social institutions. NGOs have affected all these aspects in certain respects.

6. *Psychological mobility*: It is related with feelings, perceptions, attitudes, motivation and mental capability which lead to betterment of living conditions. NGOs have tried to bring about such results and have focused psychological well-being of the communities. They try to remove negative feelings of helplessness, dependency and the

feeling of being ignored or discriminated against. To defeat fatalism, the NGOs have largely worked with the spirit of self-help and voluntarism thus causing a shift from dependence to independence and interdependence. Development also has a psychological dimension, too. It is essentially related to cooperation, united action, trust, and sharing. So the development NGOs have tried to breed tolerance for difference and respect for humans regardless of their creed, class, caste, race or gender. Development also necessitates moral behavior. By promoting such attitudes, the NGOs have also focused upon creating responsible citizenship, a sense of rights and obligations, commitment and devotion to work for personal and collective betterment. Such an approach develops a conviction in collective action and confidence in one's own potential for change. Thus the people have become more development-oriented, and more hopeful as well as more assertive in demanding a better life. By changing their state of mind their desires are turned into demands and they wish to transform their dreams into reality. Such an involvement has undoubtedly created willingness for cooperation and hard work for the development of self and society.

7. *Intellectual mobility*: This is ensured through large scale academic and knowledge-related activities of the NGOs. Education and literacy have been priority concerns of a large number of NGOs. The intellectual level of people is improved due to the NGOs' action giving them new concepts, new ideals, and new approaches. They also suggest new strategies for solving problems, meeting needs and realizing dreams for a better life. NGOs have focused upon imparting knowledge about health and nutritional facts, environmental preservation, neighborhood problems, and the urgency to address needs of the deprived sections. The NGOs have also taught people about freedom of thought and expression, the right and need to associate with others, consciousness about rights, and have thus nurtured a conviction in democratic values.

8. *Spatial mobility:* It implies physical movement of people. It can be in the form of rural-urban migration, intra-community, intra-town, as well as inter-communities, inter-cities /towns/ districts/ divisions/ provinces movement for better jobs, better life conditions, better services, better security and better prospects for the future. NGOs have stimulated these forms of movements. The people come to the NGOs for seeking advice, education, training, and practical assistance to solve their problems. The NGOs have promoted volunteer action, made people seek justice, motivated them to form organizations, launched organized actions, and invited people to join

various NGO-initiated programs/movements. Such actions involve spatial mobility. Regarding women, it is obvious that their mobility outside the home for education, learning, earning, spending, health-seeking, or other social needs is enhanced because the NGOs have tried to create a culture which is more open towards women's presence in the public arena and for economic and political activities away from their home/towns.

The relevant significance of these dimensions depends upon the specific nature of the NGOs' action as well as characteristics of the target community. A certain NGO may be focusing on economic aspects, while another would be taking up a political education project but all these contribute to the process of enhancing mobility.

Some more reasons to emphasize the 'mobility' effect of NGOs are listed as follows:

a. The concept 'mobility' can replace the concept of empowerment which has previously been used for describing impact of the NGOs. This is so because empowerment reflects the impact on humans only. This is also useful because it can accommodate both the negative and positive effects of the NGOs' action. Empowerment is a limited concept because it addresses only the 'strategic' aspect of role of the NGOs, while the fulfillment of practical needs' aspect is also quite large as compared within the volume of NGOs' impact.

b. 'Mobility' can provide more comprehensive and tangible indicators and tools for operationalizing the effect of NGOs, as compared with empowerment.

This mobility model draws some of its concepts from Lerner, who explains the process of modernization with the help of concepts of mobility and empathy. Lerner points out that in the case of Western societies, physical mobility from farm to factories and rural to urban living promoted social mobility. During that process personal mobility assumed first order value and social mobility was accepted as essentially the ethics of social change.[23] In Pakistan, spatial (or physical) mobility is seen in the form of rural-urban migration and also migration of NGO workers from/to urban to/from rural areas. In this study, NGOs are seen promoting the concept of mobility as a value because everyone is said to have the right to grow, develop and achieve on the basis of his/her efforts and economic interdependence. This value of mobility is a feature of modernization process. The quality of 'empathy' develops in the process,

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[23]   Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society, Modernising the Middle East* (London: The Free Press of Glenco, 1958), p.48.

whereas empathy refers to 'a high capacity for rearranging the self-esteem on short notice'.[24]

In modernization, empathy is promoted among more and more individuals. In traditional societies, a highly constrictive personality is allowed but the modern society involves participation which requires expansive and adaptive self-system. Here one would see NGOs' enhancing the level of empathy among their target populations. One has to adopt new roles and to identify modern values with public issues. This typological transformation is called psychic mobility. Lerner explains that the conditions which define modernity form interlocking 'systems'. Similarly it is found that various aspects of mobility caused by NGOs are also interlocking. Thus economic mobility supports cultural mobility, which in turn supports psychological mobility, thus various permutations can be seen.[25]

Different types of mobility can also be explained with the help of 'participation' – another concept used by Lerner to explain modernity. Political mobility can well be seen in the greater participation in the political process taking greater interest and having awareness about the political issues of the day. Economic mobility largely refers to the participation of people in modern day professions, occupations and activities, with modern day skills of production, manufacturing, managing, and marketing the goods/services. Adopting such skills has resulted in the NGOs' income-generating and micro-credit schemes, and it is encouraged by marketing skills or facilities provided by the NGOs. Such economic participation has helped people to survive better and to progress in the modern economy. Cultural mobility refers to participation in cultural activities with various purposes and forms derived from both traditional and modern cultures of the people. Intellectual mobility can also be explained in terms of participation in educational/ literacy/ training/ awareness exercises, programs and projects of the NGOs, who have established large networks of schools/literacy centers and other institutional set-ups in the country as well. Informal education is largely the domain of the NGOs. Awareness campaigns, seminars, dissemination of literature, theatres, video shows, marches, and skillful use of media are examples of activities through which the NGOs have promoted awareness and triggered a thought process about a host of civil/political/economic rights, and contemporary issues. Political education programs (evaluation reports, participatory research and

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24   *Ibid.*, p.51.
25   *Ibid.*, p.55.

investigation into various issues) contribute to raise the level of knowledge, thus produce intellectual mobility.

The concept/word of mobility has been used by Sorokin[26] as central theme, but he has referred to the process of diffusion, shifting, and adoption. Sorokin explains four main directions of any change or process, namely, spatial, temporal, quantitative, and qualitative. Explaining these dimensions, he has tried to find out some uniformities existing in spatial, temporal, qualitative and quantitative changes. He asserts that uniformities exist in socio-cultural change, and these are rarely absolutely universal or unlimited rather they are '*limited uniformities*, valid only for certain cultural configurations of a given period or area'. Following Sorokin's argument, if one sees NGOs as agents of change and mobility, it can be argued that the change brought about by NGOs is also subject to these rules. They have brought about qualitative and quantitative socio-cultural changes, which are to a large extent specific to their environment, as is revealed in the survey conducted for this study.

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[26]   Pitrim A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Mobility,* n.p., n.d. [Original 1927].