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A Study of Challenges Related to Relevance, Effectiveness and Sustainability of Educational Intervention by Non-Governmental Organizations

Sumaira Majeed^{*}

Rizwan Ahmad[†]

Hina Iqbal[‡]

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Abstract: Pakistan is the 6th most populous country in the world. Owing to limited resources, some part of the population lives at an extreme poverty level. The public education system does not fulfil the needs of society. NGOs exist in developing countries in a large number and assist the government in a non-official capacity to contribute to the development of the country. They have to face a large number of challenges. There is a need to investigate the effectiveness of the initiatives completed by different NGOs. The research was based on a mixed-method approach. The design of the study was a case study. Data was collected after the completion of the initiatives of the selected cases. Multiple instruments were used to collect the data. The data of one initiative shows that it is not completed effectively, and the score of the other initiative shows that it is completed effectively. The members faced societal resistance, funding issues. Management of staff, communication gap, overload of work, the willingness of teachers, lack of interest of school staff and accountability issues and different government issues for the relevance of the initiative that must fulfil the needs of the society.

Key Words: Non-Governmental Organizations, Effectiveness and Sustainability, Initiatives

Introduction

Pakistan is the 6th most populous country in the world. Owing to limited resources, some part of the population lives at an extreme poverty level. The public education system does not fulfil the needs of such a huge population due to the shortage of resources. There is a prominent gap between demand and supply of resources. It is estimated that almost 22.6 million children are not going to school (The i-care Foundation, 2018). Owing to lack of basic facilities of education, according to United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report 2018, on Human Development Index (HDI), Pakistan stands on 150th number among 189 countries in the world. When the government fails to provide the basic services to the whole population and feels that it is not meeting its demands, it forms a coalition or partnership with private organizations. The concept of public-private partnership (PPPs) is used all over the world. In this partnership, the

private sector performs the activities of the public sector (Weihe, 2006). Owing to these reasons, non-profit organizations are working for the welfare of the people.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) since have been working in Pakistan independence with different titles. At that time, their role was as voluntary organizations to help the people. The number of these organizations remained static for a longer period of time, but in the 1980s, the number of these organizations increased. These organizations get financial and technical aid from different agencies for different purposes, especially for the welfare of human beings (Pasha, Igbal & Mumtaz, 2002). The exact number of these organizations is unknown because they are registered under different laws.

These NGOs in the developing countries did not complete their initiatives effectively for a variety of reasons. The initiatives are not effective



^{*} PhD Scholar, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

[†] University of Education, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

[‡] Visiting Lecturer, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

because sometimes their initiatives are not relevant to the needs of the society where the initiatives are implemented. The relevance of the initiative according to the needs of the society is very important for the effective completion of the initiative and also for sustaining the initiative (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). The initiatives run by these organizations are not sustainable and fade as soon as their resources no longer flow; they also have the little independent potential for decision making or action (Arellano-Lopez & Petras, 1994). There is a need to investigate the contribution of NGOs in educational and health development in the country owing to the fact that a huge sum of money is utilized through these organizations. There is a need to investigate the challenges faced by Non-Governmental Organizations in order to work effectively. The study of challenges faced by these organizations may help to improve the effectiveness of the NGOs.

Non- Governmental Organizations

NGOs refer to those organizations that are government, independent of and these organizations do not seek any challenge from the government or any other political party. These are non-profit making organizations. NGOs are nongovernment voluntary, non-profit, accountable and non-political organizations (Rahman, 2003). <u>Cleary (1997)</u> defined NGOs as the organizations which pursue activities to relieve the sufferings, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, and undertake community development.

NGOs vary significantly in their structure and in the nature of their operations as they are working in different dimensions. These organizations may be large or small and maybe working formally or informally. These are organizations with huge budgets and may also with a small budget as it depends on the capacity of each organization to get different initiatives from the donor agencies. Some NGOs are engaged in long-term community development work; others provide short-term emergency relief in response to natural disasters or human calamities created by conflict (Ismail,2012).

Relevance

Relevance is the extent to which some information is pertinent, connected, or applicable to the matter at hand. Relevance of initiative matters a lot for the successful completion of the initiative, and it also has an impact on the sustainability of the initiative. If the initiative meets the needs of the society, there are more chances of effective completion of the initiatives (Borlund, 2003). Relevance is a big challenge for the effective completion of the initiative and also for sustaining the initiative.

Effectiveness

McCann (2004) defines effectiveness as the

the criterion of successful fulfilment of purposes through core strategies. The initiatives are evaluated to ensure sustainability on the NGOs own and also by the stakeholders (Donor Agencies) who are providing the financial and technical resources to complete the initiatives successfully. The effectiveness of an initiative is concerned with the developmental worthiness or appropriateness of the chosen project goal (Crawford & Bryce, 2003). According to the World Bank. NGOs and civil societies are working more effectively as compared to the public sector for the development of society. These organizations are not only working effectively. NGOs are not only helping the poor's more effectively but also able to deliver basic services very efficiently in emergency situations.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a common concept in development. <u>Vilain (2002)</u> defines sustainability as maintaining well-being over a long, perhaps even indefinite period. There are a lot of hurdles in sustaining the initiative. It may be due to the ambiguous objectives, low amount of funding, communication gap, poor management of staff and lack of trained personals. Effectiveness is also a major hurdle for sustaining the initiative. According to <u>Liebenberg (2000)</u>, NGOs function as a catalyst for the development of society and design activities so that development can be sustained for a longer period of time. Society plays a very important role in sustaining the initiative successfully.

Challenges faced by Non-Governmental Organizations

The literature shows that NGOs have to face a large number of challenges to serve humankind. Some of the major challenges faced by these

NGOs. Are inadequately trained personnel, lack of well-defined objectives, lack of accountability, lack of communication, insufficient financial resources and management of staff. Due to a lack of funds or limited resources, NGOs are not able to give training to the employees (Latha & Prabhakar, 2011). Due to untrained personnel, the issues of effectiveness and sustainability of development initiative arises. Sometimes the training provided by different NGOs does not fulfil the purpose, or it fails to achieve the desired objectives which were set for the training. Due to the low quality of training of the members who are involved in running an initiative, they will not be able to work effectively (Ahmad, 2002).

Bromideh (2011) concluded that a lack of welldefined or well-structured objectives and goals of organization are necessary to work an successfully. The objectives of some NGOs are unrealistic. Most of the NGOs work in different fields such as education, health, agriculture etc. simultaneously. NGOs are working independently in different countries. The accountability of these organizations is very important for effective functioning. It is thought that accountability is more than an end-stage activity. The initiatives which are completed by these organizations are poorly evaluated (<u>Rahman, 2003</u>). Due to the poor evaluation of the initiatives run by different NGOs, their initiatives do not sustain for a long period of time (Lewis, 2009 & Mukasa, 2002). Accountability should be an ongoing process for the effective completion of different developmental initiatives run bv these organizations (Young, 2000, Moore & Stewart, 1998). Accountability is a serious problem for the donor agency. It is quite difficult for the donor agency to evaluate the routine activities which are designed to compete for an initiative successfully (Moore & Stewart, 1998).

Due to the lack of communication among the members of the organization who are involved in completing an initiative, conflict arises, and these conflicts become the hurdles to complete developmental initiatives effectively (<u>Lewis & Kanji, 2009</u> & <u>Mukasa, 2002</u>). Due to a lack of

communication with the other NGOs, some initiatives run on the same part of the society as it runs before by different organizations (Bromideh, 2011). Limited financial resources by the donor agencies is a hurdle in completing the initiatives successfully (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). Discontinuity in providing the financial recourses by the donor agencies also become the reason for failure in the successful achievement of the desired objective of initiatives run by different NGOs (Rahman, 2003). Management of staff is a difficult task, and it requires some skills and knowledge. Nwaiwu (2013) concluded that Human Resource Management (HRM) is another critical management challenge to NGOs for working effectively. Due to the lack of professional education or training of higher authorities are not capable of managing their staff. They become fail to place the persons in the right position according to their skills, and it causes a lot of problems for effective working. This causes failure in completing an initiative successfully (Vilain, 2002 & Malena, 1995).

Methodology

The design of the study was a case study. It was a multiple embedded case study because more than one case was selected.

Selection of Cases

Two cases were selected from two NGOs. These two cases were:

- 1. Strengthening women of rural areas through Basic Literacy and Life Skills (BLLS)
- 2. Comprehensive School Betterment Plan (CSBP)

The detail of the selected cases is given below to understand the context of these initiatives.

Data Analysis

The data generated by instruments were tabulated and analyzed through the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). According to the research questions, descriptive statistical techniques will be applied.

 Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Illiterate Adult Females on Literacy Test

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Literacy test	Ν	Pass*	Fail**				
Reading Skill	49	47 (95.91%)	2(4.08%)				
Writing Skill	49	42 (85.71%)	7 (14.28%)				
Mathematical Skill	49	37 (75.5%)	12 (24.48%)				

* = 50% and > 50% ** = < 50%

Table 2 illustrates the pass and fail ratio and the percentage values of the adult females on literacy tests. In the reading section of the literacy test, 47(95.91%) adult females passed. In the writing section of the literacy test, 42(85.71%) adult females passed. In the mathematical section of the literacy test, 37(75.5%) adult females passed.

CSBP	Ν	Mean	SD	Range
Student kits	53	6.58	.79503	4-8
Teaching Learning Material	53	8.90	.65821	7-10
Teacher Training	53	11.79	.59995	10-13
Missing Facilities	53	3.71	.68997	3-6
Summer Schools	53	2.51	.41120	2-4
Student Clubs	53	7.73	.48639	6-8
Accountability	53	1.94	.23	1-2

Table 3. Mean Values of Responses of Comprehensive School Betterment Plan (CSBP)

Table 3 depicts the mean and standard deviation values of different factors of CSBP. The mean value of 6.58 shows that "Student Kits" are not provided to the students of the school under CSBP. The mean value of 8.90 shows that "Teaching Learning Material" is not provided to the teachers of the schools under CSBP. The mean value of 11.79 represents that "Teacher Training" is not provided to the teachers of the schools under CSBP. The mean value of 3.71 depicts that "Missing Facilities" are provided to the schools under CSBP. Moreover, the mean value of 2.51 shows that "Summer Schools" are arranged in the schools under CSBP. The mean value of 7.73 illustrates that "Student Clubs" are not formed under CSBP. The mean value of 1.94 of "Accountability" shows that these schools are not accountable under CSBP.

Challenges of Comprehensive School Betterment Plan (CSBP)

Table 4 shows the challenges faced by the members who were involved in different activities of CSBP. Members of the CSBP Director programme, Programme Manager and District Manager respond that they faced society resistance to run the initiative effectively. Society is not willing to accept the change in order to develop society. The Programme Manager and Programme Coordinator faced funding issues with running the CSBP. Funding issues include insufficient funds to provide the facilities which are designed for CSBP. Funding issues also include discontinuity in funding. Discontinuity in funding causes discontinuity in providing the facilities under CSBP. Director Programmes, District Manager and Training Coordinator respond that they faced Government Issues with running CSBP effectively. Government issues include carelessness of government and lack of interest in the government. When the school is developed under CSBP, then it is handover to the government. Due to the carelessness of government, developmental changes do not sustain. They respond that when a developmental initiative starts, the government do not show interest for the development of schools which cause hurdle to complete the developmental initiative effectively.

Director Programmes, Programme Manager, District Manager and Training coordinator also faced mismanagement of staff. The staff to run the CSBP is limited due to limited financial resources. Peoples are not willing to work as volunteers, so; they have to face the problem management of staff.

The Programme Coordinator and Training Coordinator respond that they have to face a communication gap from higher authorities to lower authorities. Training Chief and Training Coordinator respond that they faced an overload of work. Due to the low number of staff, the

employees have to face over workload. Due to the workload, employees do not work effectively.

Training Chief and Training Coordinator faced the problem of the willingness of teachers. Government teachers are not willing to learn or adopt new strategies. District Manager, District Manager, Training chief and training Coordinator faced lack of interest of school staff to work effectively. Director Programmes and Programme Manager faced accountability issue. They have to face accountability issues how to evaluate CSBP initiative.

Hierarchal Members of CSBP	Funding Issues	Society Resistance	Government Issues	Mis- management of staff	Communication Gap	Overload of Work	Willingness of Teachers	Lack of interest of school staff	Accountability Issues
Director Programmes	-	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	-	-	-	-	\checkmark
Programme Manager	\checkmark	-		\checkmark	-	-	-	-	\checkmark
District Manager	-	\checkmark	-	\checkmark	-	-	-	\checkmark	-
District Manager	-	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	-	-	-	\checkmark	-
Programme Coordinator	\checkmark	-	-	-	\checkmark	-	-	-	-
Training Chief	-	-		-	-	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	-
Training Coordinator	-	-	\checkmark	-	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	-
Training Coordinator	-	-	\checkmark	\checkmark	-	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	-

Challenges of "Strengthening Women of Rural Areas through Basic Literacy and Life Skills (BLLS)"

Table 14 shows the challenges faced by the members who were involved in different activities of "Strengthening Women of Rural Areas through Basic Literacy and Life Skills (BLLS)". Members of "Strengthening Women of Rural Areas through Basic Literacy and Life Skills (BLLS)" Coordinator Literacy Education and Project Manager faced funding issues. They faced difficulty in getting funds and discontinuity in funds during the initiative. Coordinator Literacy Education and Training Coordinator faced the problem of limited time to run the initiative. Limited time is a big hurdle sustain an initiative because to sustainability required a lot of time.

Coordinator Literacy Education and Project Coordinator respond that they faced the management of staff issue. The number of staff is limited so, it is difficult to assign work to a low number of staff which causes burden of work on the staff members. The project manager responds that they faced the problem of availability of staff because the initiatives are run in distant areas where we do not get qualified members to run the initiative. Coordinator Literacy Education and Project Manager faced the problem of the curriculum because there is no prescribed curriculum for adult literacy.

Coordinator Literacy Education and Project Manager faced the problem of certification for adult literacy. It is difficult to convince illiterate people to learn reading, writing and mathematical skills without any certification. The Project Coordinator and Mobilizer faced communication gap issues. It includes communication gap within the member of the initiative "Strengthening Women of Rural Areas through Basic Literacy and Life Skills (BLLS)." and communication gap with the society.

The training Coordinator faced the problem of attendance. Adult females are housewives so, due to personal problems and home obligations, they do not attend classes regularly. Mobilizers faced mobilization issues. It is quite difficult to motivate the adults to attend the literacy classes, and community members also resist. Coordinator literacy Education and Mobilizer faced society resistance. Society resists the developmental change, and they are not willing to accept the change.

 Table 5. Responses of Challenges of "Strengthening Women of Rural Areas through Basic Literacy and Life Skills (BLLS)"

Hierarchal Members	Funding Issues	Limited Time	Management of Staff	Availability of Staff	Curriculum	Certification	Communication Gap	Attendance Problem	Mobilization Issues	Society Resistance
Coordinator Literacy	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	-	\checkmark	\checkmark	-	-	-	\checkmark
Education Project Manager	\checkmark	-	-	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	-	-	-	-
Project Coordinator	-	-	\checkmark	-	-	-	\checkmark	-	-	-
Training Coordinator	-	\checkmark	-	-	-	-	-	\checkmark	-	-
Mobilizer	-	-	-	-	-	-	\checkmark	-	\checkmark	\checkmark

Conclusion

Effectiveness of Comprehensive School Betterment Plan

It can be concluded that the initiative Comprehensive School Betterment Plan is not effective for the development of society. The distribution of responses shows that all the facilities were not provided to the schools, teachers and students which were designed to complete this initiative. Frequency distribution values show that uniforms, sweaters, stationary, health kits, science kits, sports kits and reading kits, subject-specific training, child-friendly environment training, orientation for the use of kits, boys and girls clubs, activities in these clubs and accountability sheets are not provided in most of the schools which were under CSBP for development purpose where government not taking attention. Only a few facilities training for professional development, health and hygiene training, ECE kits, missing facilities, special classes in summer vacation and Para teachers were provided in some schools which are under CSB. This shows that the initiative did not meet their desired objectives for the development purpose

because most of the facilities are not provided to the schools.

Effeteness of "Strengthening Women of Rural Areas through Basic Literacy and Life Skills (BLLS)"

It is concluded from the data analysis that the initiative titled "Strengthening Women of Rural Areas through Basic Literacy and Life Skills (BLLS)". It is completed effectively because most of the females got more than 50% marks in the literacy test, which was designed to assess the effectiveness. The percentage values of the pass and fail adult female learners show that more than 50% of adult female learners got more than 50%marks in different portions (reading skills, writing skills and mathematical skills) of the literacy test. Overall results of the literacy test show that adult female learners got more than 50% scores in the test, which are declared pass. The scores of the literacy test show that adult females are able to read and write and solve some basic mathematical problems in daily life.

Challenges of CSBP

The data collected through semi-structured

interviews show that the members who were involved in running this initiative faced different challenges. Relevance effectiveness and sustainability are themselves are the challenges for each other. They faced societal resistance and different government issues for the relevance of the initiative that must fulfil the needs of the society in order to develop the country. Due to such types of issues, the objective of the initiative could not be complete successfully. The members faced different issues like funding issues, management of staff, communication gap, overload of work, the willingness of teachers, lack of interest of school staff and accountability issues for completion of this initiative successfully, which are investigated through semi-structured interviews. According to the members of the members who were involved in completing the initiative, funding issues and government issues are the major challenges for the sustainable development of CSBP. Due to this large number of challenges, this initiative could not complete effectively.

Challenges of "Strengthening Women of Rural Areas through Basic Literacy and Life Skills (BLLS)"

It can be concluded from the data collected through semi-structured interviews of the members/employees who were involved in running this initiative that they have to face different challenges in order to complete this initiative successfully. They faced societal resistance and mobilization issues with starting this initiative in that places where there is a need for such a development. They faced time issues, management of staff availability of staff, curriculum, certification, communication gap, funding issues and attendance issues in order to complete this initiative effectively or to achieve the desired objectives for this developmental initiative. Furthermore, they also faced funding issues and time issues in order to sustainable development.

The members who are involved in completing the CSBP initiative face the challenges of government resistance. Government resist starting initiatives run by non-governmental organizations. The administration and school staff resist running the initiative. Members of the nongovernmental organization were unable to perform activities to achieve their desired objectives, while in the other initiative, the members who were involved in completing the initiative did not face such types of challenges, so they achieved their desired objectives.

Discussion

Effectiveness of Different Developmental Initiatives

The findings of the current study revealed that

some of the developmental initiatives are effectively completed, but some of the developmental initiatives are not effective to develop the society from the funds which we gain from different donor agencies for the development purpose of the country, especially the underdeveloped areas of the country.

The findings of the current study are related to the other studies. The finding of the study that different initiatives run by different NGOs are completed effectively is consistent with the previous studies (Naidoo, 2004; Hague, 2002; Liebenberg, 2000; Shalini,1988). These studies also concluded that the initiatives run by different NGOs are completed effectively. These studies concluded that NGOs are working effectively. The finding of the current study that some initiatives are run by different NGOs is consistent with the findings of the other studies (Young, 2000; Adair,1999). These studies concluded that NGOs are not effectively working because their initiatives are not completed effectively. The findings of the current study are also consistent with the previous studies (World Bank, 1995; Shalini,1988). They concluded that some of the initiatives completed by NGOs are effective, but some initiatives completed by these organizations are not effective due to some reasons. The former studies concluded that they are not working effectively in the field of education. In some countries, they are failed to provide the basic facilities of education and health.

Challenges faced by Non-Governmental Organizations

The findings of the current study are consistent with the findings of the previous researches. The current study finds that the members of NGOs faced the problem of social resistance, which is not consistent with the former studies. In Pakistan, due to the lack of awareness and education community resist starting developmental initiatives. The present study also found that the members of NGOs faced the problem of management of staff, accountability issues, communication gap, funding issues. These findings are consistent with the previous researches (Latha & Prabhakar, 2011; Bromideh, 2011; Lewis & Kanji, 2009; Rahman, 2003; Lewis, 2000; Mukasa, 2002; Ahmad, 2003; Vilain, 2002; Young, 2000; Moore & Stewart, 1998; Malena, 1995). Previous researches also revealed that NGOs have a limited number of staff due to limited financial resources (Lewis & Kanii, 2009). It is also revealed that due to the limited staff, it is difficult to assign the tasks to the members. It is difficult to assign the task according to the individual abilities of the members. These findings are related to the previous researches (Vilain, 2002 & <u>Malena, 1995</u>).

It is found that the communication gap is a big hurdle within the organization and outside the organization for effective working. This finding of the research is consistent with the previous researches. Previous researches revealed that a lack of communication among the members of the organization who are involved in completing an initiative conflict arises, and these conflicts become the hurdles to complete developmental initiatives effectively (Lewis & Kanji, 2009 & Mukasa, 2002). Due to a lack of communication with the other NGOs, some initiatives run on the same part of the society as it runs before by different organizations (Bromideh, 2011).

It is revealed that financial resources are limited. Due to the limited financial resources, it

is difficult to complete the initiatives effectively. Former researchers also found that due to limited financial resources, the activities designed for an initiative cannot be completed successfully. So, the desired objectives of different initiatives cannot be achieved. Discontinuity in providing the financial recourses by the donor agencies also become a reason for failure in the successful achievement of the desired objective of an initiative run by different NGOs (Rahman, 2003).

The present study found that accountability is a big challenge for the effective completion of the developmental initiative. The former study also found that the initiatives which are completed by these organizations are poorly evaluated (<u>Rahman, 2003</u>). Due to the poor evaluation of the initiatives run by different NGOs, their initiatives do not sustain for a long period of time (<u>Lewis, 2009</u> & <u>Mukasa, 2002</u>). Accountability is a serious problem for the donor agency (<u>Moore & Stewart, 1998</u>).

The present study found that the members of NGOs also faced the problems of curriculum, willingness of teachers, lack of interest of school staff, attendance problem and certification are the hurdles in order to complete an initiative effectively and to sustain the developmental initiative. These findings of the current research are not consistent with the previous findings because as the area changes, the problems also changed due to changes in culture and awareness of the people. The challenges also vary as the nature of developmental initiatives changes.

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