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## The Role of Civil Society Organizations and Political Participation of Youth in Pakistan

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### Abstract

*The focus of this study is to analyse the role of civil society in promoting youth participation in the political process. The methodology of the study includes a review of the existing stock of literature on youth participation in politics and the role of CSOs in the promotion of youth participation in politics, followed by collecting and analysing primary data from 200 Islamabad based university students aged 18-29, and interview from 10 members of CSOs working in Pakistan. CSOs lack financial independence and sustainability, their dependency on government rules, regulations, CSOs engaged in by arranging workshops, seminars, social gatherings, public speeches, and publish reports on it. The study concludes that CSOs play a limited role in promoting and enhancing youth political participation.*

**Key Words:** Civil Society, Political Participation, Youth

### Introduction

The concept of civil society and civil society organizations (CSO) are not new to the academic debate. In the modern democratic world, civil society organizations are emerging almost as vital entity that demonstrates various roles across the globe like dealing with humanitarian issues, development, poverty alleviating, contributions to democratic culture of governance etc. The concept and history of the evolution civil society and CSOs varies from country to country.

The concept of Civil society and its definition itself remains a dilemma in academia, and not so simple to be understood easily. However, the common characteristics of CSOs make it easy to understand like independent of the direct control of the government, nonprofit, voluntarily, legal entity etc. Generally, the term CSO is interchangeable with NGO, while NGOs are a subset of CSOs. The

roles of CSOs have become part of the development process since the inception of this concept. The role of CSOs includes as watchdogs (monitoring government and institutions), advocate (raising awareness for a change) and service provider.

Civil society organizations play an important role in the promoting, and development of democratic culture. It is considered as the engine of democracy that promotes and represents the most vulnerable and marginalized group of society. It usually understands the needs of the people of a democratic country and enhances the state/government awareness about the people needs. Civil society organizations are an intermediary entity, which stands between the private sphere and the state. It is considered the third pillar of democracy.

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Civil society organizations are considered the realm of organized social life as voluntary, largely self-supporting, self-generated, and autonomous from the state, bound by a set of shared rules or legal order. In general, civil society organizations involves citizens to act collectively in the public sphere to express their needs, interests, exchange ideas, achieve mutual goals, make their demands on the state and hold the government accountable. Civil society organization excludes officials, individual, profit-making business enterprises, or any political efforts to take control of the government or state. Actors in the civil society organizations need the protection of an institutionalized legal order to guard their freedom of action and autonomy. Thus civil society organizations not only restrict state power when it's come to citizen exploitation but also legitimates the state authority if the authority is based on the rule of law.

There are CSOs around the globe working on youth political rights and promotion of democracy. International CSOs like UN agencies and Commonwealth office efforts are prominent. Like any other democratic country, the role of civil society organizations in Pakistan cannot be ignored. Civil society organizations in Pakistan are mostly working in the humanitarian sphere of life focusing on the poverty alleviation, human rights, health, child labor along with women rights, education, and democracy etc. The civil society organizations in Pakistan are including social welfare organizations, faith-based organization, trade union, human rights organizations, women rights groups, and democratic-governance issues etc. The most notable Civil Society Organizations working for the youth welfare and political participation are Youth Parliament Pakistan, Barghad Organization for Youth Development, PILDAT (Youth Parliament), and College of Youth Activism (CAAYAD), UNDP Policy development Project, Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, Youth Front Pakistan, Youth Engagement Service Network, Voice of Young's Welfare and Development Society.

### Objectives of the Study

Like any other democratic country, the role of civil

society organizations in Pakistan is very important. In Pakistan, CSOs not only working as a service provider in the humanitarian fields, and advocate masses needs, demands, but also playing its role to monitor governance and institutions, and raising awareness for change. In this research, an attempt is made to explore the following objectives.

- To identify the role of CSOs in creating awareness among youth about political participation.
- To examine the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in facilitating and enhancing youth political participation in Pakistan
- To explore the relationship between the two main variables i.e. civil society organization (Independent variable) and political participation (dependent variable)

### Research Questions

The primary target of this research work is about the role of CSO's working for youth political participation in Pakistan. Hence this study is conducted under the following research questions.

1. What is the role of CSOs in creating awareness among youth about political participation?
2. How the role of civil society organizations remains effective in facilitating and enhancing of youth political participation in Pakistan?
3. What is the relationship between the two main variables i.e. civil society organization (Independent variable) and political participation (dependent variable?)

### Research Methodology

To address the above research questions, the researcher has been used mix method approach of both qualitative and quantitative. To measure the political participation of youth and their connection with CSOs, total of 200 respondents from 4 federal public universities of Islamabad were sampled in a quantitative survey. Besides to understand the role of CSOs in facilitating/enhancing youth political participation in Pakistan, a total of 10 interviews were conducted with the members of CSOs based in Islamabad. Both survey and Interviews gave the researcher a detailed picture of the issues under

investigation.

## Theoretical Framework

Some of Conceptual and Operational Definitions of the Key Terms and Main Variables of the study like civil society, civil society organization (CSOs), political participation, forms of political participation and political action are discussed under this section.

The concept of civil society is a key phrase usually used by human rights organizations, charitable foundations, journalists, corporate executives, politicians, and citizen. Today civil society is understood as a realm of social life, as a “third sector” [\(Edward 2009\)](#)

CSOs give us an insight into the general features of civil society and civil society organization such as:

- Within society, civil society/CSOs fits into the “public space”.
- within society, different from the family, market and state
- neither designate a homogenous group, nor isolated citizen
- Collective efforts of citizen for their respective centers of interest, aiming at reciprocal exchanges and the pursuit of common objectives.
- work as independent, and don't for the pursuing of functions of the state,
- Do not pursue state functions, but are only interested in independent political participation.

In the literature, the functions of civil society are found in various forms. Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk identified “seven basic functions of Civil Society” i.e. advocacy, protections, accountability, socialization, social cohesion, facilitation, services delivery.

The thematic areas addressed and dealt with by civil society cannot be completely delimited. First of all, no topic cannot be the subject of public discussion and become a focal point for the action of civil society groups. It can therefore be global themes, such as environmental issues or the world capitalist economy; but it can also be more limited, such as the role of women, domestic sexual violence or the mistreatment of the mentally

handicapped in everyday life. As small clubs and associations are also part of civil society groups and themes such as sport, art or other leisure activities can be the subject of social or civil engagement.

Civil society, therefore, includes in its work all the questions, interests and themes that concern individuals and groups of individuals in society. The latter are included in the societal debate, through the people and groups of people who represent civil society organizations; this is how their positions affect public opinion, can be discussed in public, and may even end up being accepted.

There are several forms of civil society organization. They all have as common characteristics autonomy, self-regulation or self-discipline, volunteering and solidarity, as well as different fundamental democratic values (freedom of opinion, freedom to meet, etc.), considered as the basis of 'organization.

The most well-known “forms of civil society organization are clubs or associations, unions, citizens' initiatives, self-help and mutual groups, as well as non-profit organizations and NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations)”.

CSO/NGOs hold a special place in the circle of these different forms of organization and are often referred to in the literature as “Drivers of civil society” [\(Boasiako, 2019\)](#). It is for this reason that, in this thesis, a special focus has been given to NGOs/CSOs and its role in enhancing youth political participation in Pakistan.

NGOs define themselves as voluntary, private, independent unions (of the State, parties or economic entities), which are not however governed by the particular interests of their members, and whose real objective is to take into account certain social and political interests which have been neglected, and which they want, in a way, to advocate [\(Young, Dhanda , 2013\)](#) .

From amongst CSO, the fields of action of NGOs can be broadly described as being “Advocacy” work. As NGOs represent certain social groups, which themselves have no possibility of adequate representation. In this context, all the actions of NGOs should be considered as advocacy and advocacy work. They are thus the advocates of those in society who have no say, or who have no

way of being heard, in the face of society, and the world of politics and the media. NGOs use different instruments and act in various fields. Their main activities are, among other things, “Campaigning”, the provision of their expertise, as well as “Lobbying” (Jordan, Tuiji, 1998).

The concept of political participation is seen as the involvement of members of a given community on an individual, class-group, national-ethnic, religious or another basis in the process of political-power relations. The participation of people in politics is one of the means of expressing and achieving their interests. Not all participation in public life is political. If people take part in solving industrial and professional problems, in managing equipment and things, without affecting the distribution of power, then such participation is not political (Verba, Nie, 1987).

Political participation is expressed in two main forms: direct (immediate) and indirect (representative). Direct participation takes place within small political communities, where the masses at meetings make decisions by a majority vote. With indirect participation, the masses choose their representatives to exercise political power: The larger the society, fewer political participation allows us to identify the real role of the citizen, individual layers, and groups, classes both at the local level and in the political system of society. If citizens take an active part in the formation of the elite, in determining the main goals of the policy, and monitoring its implementation, then such a political system can be considered based on participation. In such a society, political elites play the role of loyal servants of society, adequately representing the interests of the masses.

Civil society has an important role in democratization, especially at the local level. In young democracies like Pakistan, this function often remains dependent on the development of democracy at the national level, where citizen initiatives are also a concrete example. In this context, information sessions are often organized to inform public opinion on a particular subject. They thus contribute to the process of forming public opinion and will. Other (local) groups, which organize for example a weekly or monthly discussion session, belonging to civil society, also

produce active work in the service of this process of forming public opinion and will.

In this research paper the more focus is made on the democratization functions of the civil society and its connection with the youth of Pakistan for political participation.

## Literature Review

To date, the widest theoretical basis for studying the problem of political participation is provided by the work of Western, in particular American, political scientists and sociologists. In the western literature, methods and methods of this study have been developed and generalized; forecasts are made about the nature of the manifestations of political participation in various socio-political conditions. So, for example, the categories of political participation as the activities of a group of people guided by political interests are devoted to the works of S. Verba, M. Goel, G. Almond, R. Dahl, R. Cloward, M. Conway, L. Milbright, R. Mills, S. Lipset, F. Greenstein, N. Ny, F. Piven and others. These studies include analysis of a wide range of different ways in which the subject participates (or does not participate) in politics (both at the individual level and through the mediation of social institutions) and is based on a powerful empirical base.

Gariel Abraham Almond and Sidney Verba book *The Civic Culture: Political Attitude and Democracy in Five Nations*, represents a unique literature on the comparative politics and opens new methods of investigating in the theory of democratic politics, or political culture. It is one of the leading book in civic culture in the democratic society of the world; and compare the pattern of political culture in five nations across the globe i.e. US, UK, Germany, Italy and Mexico. His book is considered to represent political participation in a unique form. (Almond, Verba 1963)

Sidney Verba in an article represents a resource model of political participation, in which he outline that citizen of democratic societies participate in politics through their resources which include money, time, and civic skills, the essential for a political activity. He noted: “These skills are not only acquired early in life but developed in the nonpolitical institutional settings of adult life: the

workplace, organizations, and churches and synagogues.

This research work has adopted the Sidney Verba model of political participation and the variable is measured through voting, campaigns, making financial contribution (forms of electoral activities), attending public officials, attending meetings, and attending protests and getting involved either formally or informally on local issues (Brady, Verba, 1995).

Madan Lal Geol book *Political Participation in a developing Nation: India* is nice piece of work focused on the political participation of masses in the developing country India. In this book Geol has examined the political participation of Indian people through extensive research survey. The finding for this survey work reflects that in India, mostly in the cities the educated, professional and younger people are interested in politics of the country but that are reluctant to participate in the country politics by attending meetings and vote. He concluded that in India the modern member of the society are most disillusioned and apathetic to participate in actual politics of the country (Geol, 1976).

Robert A. [Dahl \(1994\)](#) article "A democratic Dilemma: System Effectiveness versus Citizen Participation" in *Political Science Quarterly* examined the democratic dilemma of masses political participation in democratic societies. He noted that "the people of a democratic nations are not only fully entitled to explore the trade-offs between system effectiveness and citizen effectiveness, but I believe that commitment to democratic values obliges them to do so."

M. Margaret Conway work, *Political Participation in the United States*, examined the political participation patterns of citizen and has offered five various explanation for those pattern of participation. This book is focusing on the political participation of masses i.e. who participates, in which form they choose in participation, and what people hope from their participation to accomplished? The reasons behind non-participation in the political activities of masses in the United States have also been identified in her book (Conway' 1999)

## Literature on Civil Society Organizations and Political Participation of Youth in Pakistan

An article "Civil society organizations and participatory local governance in Pakistan: An exploratory study", has examined the role of CSOs in the local governance through public participation. It noted that although the role of CSOs is very important in promoting democratic governance at local level in many countries, but in Pakistan it can be "finds that the effectiveness of CSOs is very low due to various institutional and political constraints. Motivations for CSOs seeking citizen involvement have been instrumental in nature rather than motivated by participatory principles". The paper failed to provide any assessment on the role of A Report on the "Role of Civil Society Organizations in Governance", noted that Civil Society Organizations have made a significant contribution to the process of poverty reduction, economic development and democratization in many countries of the world. As a part of civil society NGOs play a leading role in "activating citizen participation in socio-economic development and politics and in shaping or influencing policy". However in Pakistan, the role of CSOs has been limited to only developmental works and has rarely contributed to the political setup. She noted that "in Pakistan the new NGO Bill is a reflection of the continued efforts of the government to "keep a close eye" on the CSOs "[\(Pasha 2005\)](#)

An article "Engaging the youth – citizenship and political participation in Pakistan", written by Marie Lall has examined issue of youth political participation and explore the youth views on the politics of the country and how they disillusioned from the mainstream politics ([lall, 2014](#)).

A report of the Center for International Private Enterprise titled "Enhancing Youth's Political Participation in Pakistan" noted that the youth are enjoying equal right of political participation in Pakistan (aged 18 and above have the right for vote in elections). The youth of Pakistan includes students, professional, democrats and socialists; almost political active through various political movements but "often end up excluded from policy development and disillusioned with political leadership and institutions later on." Thus even having 60% of the total population, the voice of the

youth is hardly presented in the political setup of Pakistan ([Bhidai, 2005](#))

An article “the Role of Civil Society Organization in the consolidation of democratic system of Governance of Pakistan”, has examined the role of CSO’s for the consolidation of a democratic system of governance in Pakistan. The paper outlined that “the authoritarian regimes in Pakistan did not let the civil society create an impact on political action”. However in the last decade CSOs has “actively participated in all spheres of life, promoting democracy and protecting the interests of the society in general. At present, the civil society dominates political discussion and debates”...and “made a significant contribution in strengthening democracy” but the role of “CSOs has been negligible in the case of citizen empowerment and citizen participation, therefore, it can be concluded that CSOs in Pakistan are not able to work properly.” However, the article did not provide any discussion on the role of CSOs in promoting political participation of youth in Pakistan ([Habib Rafique, 2019](#))<sup>1</sup>

An edited book of G. Shabbir Cheema and Vesselin Popovski, *Engaging civil society: Emerging trends in democratic governance*, (2010) has noted that various CSOs are undertaking several unconventional role for strengthening democratic culture in Pakistan. Apart from elections where the role of CSOs is limited, it organized briefing session for the parliamentarian, “Some CSOs have started monitoring the performance of the parliament and the provincial assemblies. Other organizations are engaged in spreading awareness about democracy among young students in schools. The Youth Parliament project has been initiated by a CSO to groom young people for more political roles, promote political consciousness among the youth and provide a platform for youth to articulate their views in a democratic but structured manner.” Though this book is a nice work on the role of CSOs in Pakistani context but it deals only historical perspective and has rarely discussed the role of CSOs in enhancing political participation of youth in Pakistan ([Mehboob, 2010](#)).

The history of students’ politics is a long debatable issue in the Pakistani context, whereas so some extent they shaped and are shaping the

direction of government and state in Pakistan. With a huge population of youth in Pakistan, the government-state institutions and political parties are yet to reforms and bringing changes to their internal structures and outreach programs in order to engage with the youth of Pakistan. Along with the role of CSOs though claiming of promoting youth still need a lot more to engage youth politically to contribute to the democratic culture of Pakistan.

The non-availability of literature in the academia to handle the issue comprehensively is too missing. Hence a very serious problem of gap in knowledge and understanding of the phenomena can be seen to possibly overcome in the coming years. The political history of Pakistan reveals the influential and revolutionary role of student’s politics in the country affair. Two factors always influenced the students politics in Pakistan i.e. oppression by the state and the issue of corruption of politicians and political parties. Both the factors shaped and reshaped youth student’s politics to increase violence or decrease of student’s movements. The history of students union can be found even before the creation of Pakistan. Due to active student bodies of 50s and 60s, downfall of Ayub regime has been countersigned. In 1970, where leftist student groups were gave rise to Z. A. Bhutto mission, while the rightist student groups, were instrumental and active in downfall of his government. The ban on students union by Zia regime has severally affected the role of youth-students involvement in the politics of the country.

Student’s active role can be seen in Musharraf period, whereas they actively participated in the protests-rallies against his dictator government, and challenged his anti-democratic policies.

The lifting of ban on students union in 2008 by PPP gives a new strength to students union and they raised their voice against the civilian leadership who don’t meet the aspiration of the people.

### Challenges/Problems of Civil Society and Youth Political Participation in Pakistan

As explained previously, we attribute only a rather weak position to civil society in Pakistan, in daily social and political life. This can be demonstrated by the fact that, in many cases, it is always foreign



NGOs (experts from different European, American and other Western institutions) that are asked for advice when it comes to develop new solutions to problems, or, overall, when it comes to providing expertise. Pakistanis civil society itself still seems to lack the authority necessary to assert and show its role in the face of these foreign organizations / institutions.

Pakistanis CSOs are apparently not yet in a position to solve their problems and make an active contribution to charting the course of the country's development and democratization. Pakistanis civil society does not seem to (yet) have sufficient confidence, although it shows, on different occasions, more local knowledge and knowledge about the country, compared to experts from outside. What is the origin of this lack of confidence and this overall weakness in the position of Pakistanis civil society organizations? If we conducted a survey today to ask people in Pakistan, what they mean by "civil society", and how they would describe its role, there would probably be rather a majority of questioning looks or a simple shrug of the shoulders as an answer. Indeed, it is rare that someone can correctly answer the questions: "Civil society, who is it or what is it really?" And what exactly is it doing? "Regarding concrete political actions and events, above all, the population often does not understand what role civil society would have to play in these circumstances.

This ignorance is obviously the result of the lack of assertiveness of the organizations to which we alluded above, because a civil society, whose action is neither visible nor comprehensible to society, cannot have the consideration of the population, at large. And yet it is on this consideration that its existence depends, because, in the end, an organized civil society comes from the population and defends its interest's vis-à-vis the state and the economic sector. But if it does so only in theory or behind closed doors, that is to say that its messages

are difficult, if not impossible to decode for the people, no confidence can be established. Civil society in Pakistan must therefore work on a sharper profile and better lend itself to the game of public personality. It must assert its presence vis-à-vis the State, and above all, in public, determine, assert and explain its positions. This is the only way to build a position of strength sufficient to build a valid counterweight against the power of the state

In Pakistan, this understanding of the role to be played has so far been little developed and the role has been poorly fulfilled. It is often observed that, even following a political decision by the government, no judgment or simple reaction is issued, even by civil society organizations which deal with the specific themes addressed. Thus, no equivalent force capable of opposing the state can be formed. In addition, this behavior reinforces another problem: that of the consideration of civil society among the population.

Another factor that does not facilitate the integration of Pakistan CSO in decision-making processes is the lack of acceptance within the government. Indeed, it is not yet planned in this research work to consult CSO to advise the government on new projects, or to take advantage of their expertise. This often seems paradoxical, since the interests of government and civil society generally go in the same direction and could be protected more effectively, if government and civil society learned to work together. And yet, CSO continue to be considered as adversaries, presenting themselves as permanent opponents, to whom the right to speak should not be given too much. To still be able to participate in the decision-making process, several organizations then choose to build a coalition with the government, instead of working with their natural partners. They thus lose their primordial quality of independence and can no longer really assume the role of neutral and independent actor, hence, overall, a greater weakening of civil society.

Table I

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
CSO creating political awareness among youth of Pakistan	14 (7%)	30 (15%)	66 (33%)	56 (28%)	34 (17%)	200

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
CSO promoting youth political participation in Pakistan	4 (2%)	36 (18%)	62 (31%)	66 (33%)	32 (16%)	200
CSO motivate youth to engage with particular party	10 (5%)	34 (17%)	64 (32%)	78 (39%)	14 (7%)	200
CSO role to aware the youth about their political rights	6 (3%)	34 (17%)	82 (41%)	60 (30%)	18 (9%)	200
CSO encourage youth to participate in political activity	6 (3%)	20 (10%)	80 (40%)	74 (37%)	20 (10%)	200
CSO encourage youth to participate in political gathering	6 (3%)	22 (11%)	92 (46%)	58 (29%)	22 (11%)	200
CSO encourage youth to participate in peaceful protest	16 (8%)	14 (7%)	50 (25%)	90 (45%)	30 (15%)	200
CSO motivate people to cast their vote	4 (2%)	30 (15%)	46 (23%)	90 (45%)	30 (15%)	200
CSO can be influential to change political structure of Pakistan	10 (5%)	14 (7%)	90 (45%)	46 (23%)	40 (20%)	200
CSO role in strengthening democracy in Pakistan	6 (3%)	24 (12%)	54 (27%)	70 (35%)	46 (23%)	200

In addition to these problems, which are all linked to the understanding of roles, as well as to their execution, there are still other difficulties, which significantly influence the work of civil society organizations in Pakistan and make it more difficult.

One of the biggest difficulties that civil society organizations are facing in Pakistan has to do with their funding. Almost majority of CSO including local NGOs have virtually no equity. They therefore cannot even have offices or work materials, let alone salaries for their employees. Often organizations operate entirely from private funds and hold their planning meetings in places made available to them by private individuals. This further leads to a further weakening of their position. Indeed, for very practical reasons, an organization without a concrete headquarters hardly leaves a good impression of professionalism with possible cooperation partners, who will find it difficult to trust them.

In addition, NGOs are very limited in their work and their possibilities. They have no means of carrying out their projects in real sense, because volunteerism in Pakistan is rarely existed rather than foreign NGOs members just working for getting the salaries, and rarely available in the eras where they needed to reach the masses at large. Fundraising at

the start of each project takes a lot of work time. Theoretically, there are various promotion programs, which should financially support the work of NGOs. But in practice, the provision of these funds rarely goes without problem and on time.

### Findings of the Survey from Quantitative Analysis

Findings from survey showed that only 35% agreed on the enquiry related to the role of CSOs in strengthening democracy in Pakistan 45% respondents equally agreed the role of CSO in encouraging youth to participate in peaceful protest and motivate youth to cast their vote and 39% agreed that CSO motivate youth to engage with particular party.

### Finding from Qualitative Interview

The interviews conducted from the mainstream CSOs members to insure the connection between CSOs and political participation and the role of CSOs in promoting youth political participation in Pakistan. Members of CSOs i.e., Youth Parliament Pakistan, Barghad Organization for Youth Development, PILDAT (Youth Parliament),



College of Youth Activism (CAAYAD), UNDP Policy development Project, Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, Youth Front Pakistan, Youth Engagement Service Network, Voice of Young's Welfare and Development Society, were interviewed. The findings of the interview are:

### Connection between CSOs and Political Participation of Youth

CSOs provides platform for the youth, to rise by educating them and participate in the political activities. Though there is a connection between CSO and youth political participation because CSO like youth parliament are catalyst in youth policy formation but these policies never forward in assembly or parliament rather discarded plus at union level there is limited seats for youth in politics which is attached with women seats as well.

### CSOs Creating Youth Political Awareness

To elaborate their political role, sometimes CSOs arrange workshops, seminars for the youth. In any democratic country like Pakistan the role of CSOs is accountability and advocacy on government end to force them to play their role.

### CSOs Fostering Youth Political Participation

CSOs working on political participation domain is limited. Politics cover all elements of society but CSO mostly filling the gapes of social issues and problem which state and machinery unable to deal. Political parties and government is responsible to work on this paradigm of political participation of youth while CSOs major concern is dealing social and economic issues.

### CSOs Awareness of Youth Political Rights

CSO must raise voice against government for not fulfilling their role of creating political awareness.

### CSOs and Youth Political Activities (Party Affiliation, Gathering, Protest and

CSOs mostly put emphasis on vote casting which is fundamental element and a way towards all other political empowerment. In some cases they make up mock parliaments in which they follow the same

methods/processes to make them familiarize with them that as a result create interest and encourage them to comprehend the electoral process.

### CSOs Independent-active in Pakistan- Challenges it Facing to Create Awareness Promote Youth Political Participation in Pakistan

CSOs are not independent-active in Pakistan, as there's always interference by the government involvement in peeking over small things that don't matter a lot.

### Conclusion

Apart from playing its active role in the humanitarian field, the Civil Society Organizations are also promoting democratic culture across the globe. It promotes civic participation in the political process and demonstrates people needs for the democratic reforms. It mobilizes facilities and enhances youth political participation. In Pakistan, CSOs not only working as a service provider in the humanitarian fields, and advocate masses needs, demands, but also playing its role to monitor governance and institutions, and raising political awareness amongst the youth for change. Thus the primary objective of the research is to examine the role CSOs in creating awareness, facilitating and enhancing of youth political participation in Pakistan. A quantitative survey questionnaire was distributed to 200 university students aged 18-29, and Qualitative interview were also conducted with 10 members of CSOs to examine and analyse the role of Civil Society Organizations in promoting Youth political participation in Pakistan. Finding from the both Survey and Interview shows that like other democratic countries, there is a strong connection between the CSOs and political participation of youth in Pakistan, but limited numbers of CSOs are working on this particular domain. Though creating political awareness amongst the youth of Pakistan is the solely responsibility of politicians, but when political parties leaving spaces by not doing anything for the youth, then CSO usually come forward to fill the gap. But the question how many CSOs are there in creating political awareness, many CSOs are performing their social/ developmental sectors

role and mostly CSOs are less involving in creating youth political awareness. To elaborate their political role, sometimes CSOs arrange workshops, seminars, social gathering, public talks and

publishing its reports for the youth political empowerment in Pakistan. Thus the role of CSOs in promoting and enhancing youth political participation in Pakistan is limited.

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