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Exploring the Role of Non-Governmental Organizations during COVID-19 Pandemic in Pakistan

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Abstract: *The purpose of this research was to examine the role of NGOs during COVID-19. Covid-19 pandemic was substantially more than a health crisis, it's also a significant financial crisis. Qualitative data was collected in this research through interview guide from administration of NGOs. In this research working of NGOs, challenges confronting to NGOs, nature of coordination of NGOs with different stakeholders, strategies used by the NGO's, response of people regarding the services, how NGO's managing their resources for providing services during COVID-19 pandemic was studied. It was found that NGOs were providing assistance to the patients of the Covid-19 as well as facilitating them in all respect related to treatment of Covid-19. It was recommended that NGOs should have to build up their electronic communication capacity, build up their site and discuss consistently with NGOs individuals.*

Key Words: Covid-19, NGOs, Stakeholders, Power of Partnerships, Pakistan

Introduction

Civil society organizations (NGOs) have been working to minimize human miseries in the human history. Informal emergence of volunteerism may be traced back to even the period when humans learned to live in groups (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). With the advancement of civilization, the role of non-governmental organizations has been increased manifold. The non-governmental organizations are increasingly occupying new spaces and opportunities of citizen engagement in the overall process of policy development.

Functioning of NGOs within non-governmental sector has always been supportive to uplift societies and achieving development targets set by the governments (Mercer, 2002).

While the shift of power and reliance from government to civil society is becoming more evident, there is a mist of skepticism around the effectiveness of its role in the developing countries. The loud buzz of civic rights keeps resonating the social and political landscape of the country during every moment of crisis, yet there is different opinion even within the academic circles regarding the value that the NGOs has been able to bring on

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ground. It is, therefore, a pertinent question if the role of NGOs can be banked upon or should the social organizations and movements have to be redefined in the context of social environment. The emergence of organized civil society and of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as organizational manifestations of broader social movements has dramatically altered the global political-economic landscape ([Teegen & Vachani, 2004](#)).

The role of Non-Governmental Organizations in the context of its theoretical discourse comes with an aim of transforming the pattern of exclusion and injustice in the society. NGOs serves as a bridge between the people and the government. With the advancement of information technology, the world has shrunk into global community transforming local issues into global problems. The effective use of the role of NGOs may add to the patterns of success of civil society from one region to another by mere replication of successful models of development. [Salima \(2020\)](#) explained that the frequencies of COVID-19 cases are slowly expanding; in any case, the case casualty rate was generally lower in Pakistan when contrasted with developed countries.

The public authority has made enormous moves, regarding lockdowns, isolate homes, testing facilities, conclusion of schools, and mass get-togethers at places, to battle COVID-19. The measures appear to be lacking because of the dread and shame joined to it and the low financial conditions. The public authority has dispatched activities, as Ehsaas cash dissemination program, for the oppressed families to address their essential necessities; and humanitarian associations are likewise approaching to help these families. The spread of the pandemic was steadily expanding in Pakistan.

Covid19 Pandemic started in 2019 is now turned into a global catastrophe. It is a unique disease that has spread the fastest across the world and has claimed lives from all the continents of human habitat. The spread of virus is like a wildfire and has over-stressed the resources available in public health sector even in the developed countries. While the government is trying to do its best

possible efforts to help the affected people, there are certain issues that require far more resources and capital than what the government has to offer. Within this gap between resources and societal demands of development, NGOs come into play their effective role ([Banks & Hulme, 2012](#)).

[Waris \(2020\)](#) stated that the line countries of Pakistan incredibly impacted by the disease including China, where the COVID-19 episode experienced first time. In the west, Italy with most imperative number of COVID-19 mortalities while in the north, Iran a high number of mortalities after the Italy. The principal instance of COVID-19 in Pakistan has been certified by the Ministry of Health on February 26, 2020 in Karachi, Sindh domain. Around a similar time, another case confirmed by the Pakistan Federal Ministry of Health in Islamabad. Inside fifteen days, the amount of supreme avowed cases (COVID-19 Positive) came to twenty (20) out of 471 theorized cases with most imperative numbers in the Sindh area followed by the Gilgit Baltistan. The aggregate of the insisted cases had continuous travel history from Iran, Syria and London.

Although respective governments have launched media campaigns to increase public awareness about all precautionary measures related to Covid-19 but still the effectiveness and significance of the role of NGOs cannot be denied. This is because NGOs working at grass root level are well versed with indigenous communities and sociocultural sensitivities of the areas. Therefore, it becomes more vital to explore and analyze the role of NGOs in facilitating communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This past year, the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) sector (including ENGOs) has been severely impacted. They have faced challenges not only in carrying out their activities, but also in dealing with broader social issues such as health and financial constraints ([Euroopenowjournal.org 2020](#)). The Alkhidmat foundation and the Chughtai Foundations both are non-Governmental organizations served in the crucial situation of COVID-19 in Pakistan.

Al Khidmat Foundation

Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan was one of the main, non-benefit association, completely committed to compassionate administrations since 1990. Alkhidmat laborers and volunteers keep on turning out resolutely for the alleviation of influenced individuals across Pakistan and around the world. Their services incorporate environment management, services of health, schooling, care of those who donot have parents, fresh water, Mawakhat (interest-free loan) and other local area facilities.

In the midst of flooding number of COVID-19 (Covid) diseases across Pakistan, Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan was rapidly setting up modest and effectively available testing facilities for Covid as a feature of Alkhidmat Diagnostic Labs Network. The basic role behind the foundation of these facilities was to give prompt help to the oppressed fragment of society which can't stand to go through costly COVID-19 tests accessible at private clinic and labs.

Chughtai Foundation

Chughtai Foundation was truly outstanding pathology labs in Pakistan. It was established by Dr. A. S. Chughtai in 1983 in three rooms which contained only four staff members. Organization began the first lab outreach program in Pakistan on Jail Road, Lahore. Committed to helping the humankind, Lahore Lab began blood donation center services with donating screening in 1986 and hepatitis and chemical testing in 1987. Following two years Lahore Lab began Fine Needle Aspiration administration, a symptomatic technique used to explore lumps or masses.

In 1989, semi-computerized science analyzer was introduced, which helped in getting quicker and more solid outcomes. Lahore Lab proceeded to serve and extended its organization in Lahore lastly was retitled as Chughtai Lahore Lab 1997.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study was to determine the working of Lahore Based Non-Government Organization during Coronavirus pandemic. Covid

was an enormous cluster of infections that effect the human body in unison. Covid was supposed to be that virus which transferred from animals and infection can be transferred from animals to human body. The studies have shown that cats and camels are those animals from which virus was spread to people. There are other Covid that have impacted animals have not yet people.

There are a couple of signs of illnesses that could be seen when a human body gets the disease these fuses; respiratory issues, pneumonia, dissatisfaction of kidney and could in any event, achieve the death of the people. As this virus was new so individuals need to mindful about the spreading of this infection. When considering the contaminated individuals or survivors of Corona infection, the first question emerges in my mind was about the facilities which was given to those individuals. Health facilities are given to them or not. Masks, ventilators, corona kits, sanitizers, prescriptions, isolated wards and food are given to contaminated individuals or not.

Objectives

1. To investigate the working of NGOs during COVID-19 pandemic in Lahore
2. To examine the challenges confronted to NGOs during COVID-19 pandemic

Review of the Literature

[Fauci \(2020\)](#) stated that the most recent risk to worldwide health was the current outburst of the breathing illness that was termed as Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19). Coronavirus was perceived in December 2019. It was quickly demonstrated to be brought about by a novel coronavirus that was fundamentally identified with the infection that causes severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). From past 18 years, two examples of covid were already exist; severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) (2002 and 2003) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) (2012 to the present). The Covid-19 outbreak has presented basic difficulties for the general wellbeing, exploration, and clinical networks.

[Tarro \(2020\)](#) explained that in Wuhan, a pneumonia outbreak was accounted to World Health Organization (WHO) on the last week of 2019. Another Covid (2019-nCoV) was recognized seven days after the fact. World Health Organization (WHO) has set up the guide for all nations to get ready for the new viral contamination. After some weeks, the specialists affirmed the transmission of the infection starting with one individual then onto the next. In the interim, different COVID-19 patients have been accounted in different countries. After a month, the quantity of individuals tainted was more than 20,000 and the casualties were 425.

[Cao \(2020\)](#) enlightened that a recently arisen respiratory infection Corona Virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) brought about by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2). It has recently become pandemic. Most people who suffered with COVID-19 show mild to moderate signs and symptoms, however around 15% advancement to extreme pneumonia and about 5% in the long run create acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), septic shock or numerous organ disappointment. The backbone of clinical treatment comprises of indicative administration and oxygen treatment, with mechanical ventilation for patients with respiratory disappointment. Although a few antiviral medications are effectively tried, none has been explicitly affirmed for COVID-19.

[Fong \(2020\)](#) described that coronavirus generally cause gastrointestinal and respiratory tract diseases and are intrinsically classified into four significant sorts: Gamma Coronavirus, Delta Coronavirus, Beta Coronavirus and Alpha Coronavirus. The initial two sorts principally contaminate birds, while the last two generally taint mammals. Six sorts of human CoVs have been officially perceived. Serious Acute Respiratory Syndrome Covid (SARS-CoV) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Covid (MERS-CoV) are known to be extremely pathogenic and spread from bats to palm civets or dromedary camels and ultimately to people.

[Pradhan \(2020\)](#) said that the current inaccessibility of a viable antiviral medication and endorsed immunization, worsen the circumstance

more serious. The only alternative left to balance CoVID-19 was the usage of a viable preventive measure. The different preventive measure, for example, a reasonable choice of surface disinfectants, fitting hand sterilization, and enabling the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that could be a likely intercession to battle against CoVID-19.

[Perlman \(2020\)](#) described that bat are the essential reservoir for the infection. SARS-CoV was transferred to people from animals in business sectors or markets, while MERS-CoV was transmitted from camels to people. In both cases, the familial hosts were most likely bats. Regardless of whether 2019-nCoV was sent straight forwardly from bats or by methods for transitional hosts was imperative to comprehend and will help characterize zoonotic transmission patterns.

Methodology

This research design was qualitative and exploratory in nature. It was a case study i.e., in depth analysis of the role of NGOs in the situation of COVID-19. Case study research was conducted to examine the interventions made by major NGOs on case-to-case basis. The NGOs working in Punjab, Pakistan was selected as population for the research study. The target population was only those NGOs registered with Social Welfare Department and Bait ul Mall. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample size. In-depth interviews were conducted from representatives of NGOs; working during the Covid-19. After in depth study of the literature, tool for data collection for interviews was developed. Data was analyzed through thematic analysis because it emphasizes identifying, analyzing and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data.

Results and Discussion

Themes were developed to analyze the data.

Basic Purpose for Running the NGOs

The main purpose of these organizations is to serve for the humankind with no segregation and endeavor hard to satisfy their commitment towards the social cause. This organization is the remedy for

every one of the individuals who experience the ill effects of catastrophe, disaster and mishap. The year 2019 end up being another jewel in the crown of NGOs as they contacted in excess of 10 million poor and destitute individuals of Pakistan. We didn't serve the nation in the country yet in addition the Muslim Ummah across borders.

NGOs came to serve humankind in Myanmar, Syria and different parts of the world where NGOs helped the powerless with the caring help of donors and volunteers. NGOs set up a team including exceptionally energetic and objective arranged individuals to set the strategy and observing during the mission. The primary reason for running the NGO is improvement of the underestimated, weak networks with no segregation of race, doctrine, sex, and religion helpless.

[Manzoor \(2020\)](#) described that in Pakistan, fear of self-infection, huge number of deaths, peer pressure, absence of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) negatively affected psychological wellness care suppliers. Health care experts and laborers grasped suffering by contracting COVID-19 while battling as forefront champions in administration of debilitated and suspected patients. Failure to recognize asymptomatic population has been the greatest challenge around the world. Government choices about smart lock down and travel limitations were not followed carefully which prompted development of high number of cases where especially people in general didn't follow SOPs of social distancing and wearing masks further adding to existing difficulties.

Working of NGOs during COVID Pandemic

NGOs set up a team including exceptionally energetic and objective arranged individuals to set the strategy and observing during the mission. All through the mission, the taskforce proactively spread out a guide for the volunteers' facilitators, and checked each alleviation movement to guarantee achievement of against COVID-19. Loaded up with courage and assurance to serve the mankind, group of volunteers strolled in the roads to serve the country.

Old residents jeopardized their lives to partake in alleviation exercises and arrived at house to house to convey apportion bundles to poor people and destitute. NGO's relief campaign shows the fellowship past strict limits. Anil Singh was a forefront hero who prepared food to be conveyed to the destitute. Physically challenged, multiple times public weight lifting champion, a genuine hero Muhammad Mustafa serve individuals in pandemic and conveyed food bundles at the doorsteps.

NGOs also do Corona tests in Pakistan and NGOs also do Corona tests to those people who travels from one country to another. NGOs have made animated videos to aware people from the prevention of Corona virus. NGOs have made social media content. NGOs have shared photos in social media to show the working of their employees. NGOs developed messages related to hygiene and shared that message in media and in social media. NGOs provide support to government to led hygienic initiatives.

Water Aid installed 58 handwashing stations in hospitals, they provide 30,000 soaps, 5000 masks and 1000 kits. NGOs aware people online. In COVID-19 pandemic, the best way to aware people about corona virus was through internet because lockdown was implemented in almost every country. NGOs conducted live sessions and made videos for people.

[WHO \(2020\)](#) reported that more than 37 million COVID-19 cases and 1 million deaths have been reported from 30 December 2019 through 11 October 2020 from all around the world? Almost half of these cases (48%) and deaths (55%) keep on being accounted for in the Region of the Americas and some nearby countries. It representing the greatest quantities of new cases and deaths in the area.

Challenges face to NGOs

As COVID-19 was new for all of us. Nobody was known to this new virus. In this theme, researcher want to about the challenges which NGOs face during their working in Corona times. Quite possibly the most troublesome parts for NGOs were

that many fundraising efforts take place in-person and during the spring and summer months. Along these lines, associations have taken to making virtual adaptations of their mainstream occasions.

While it is important to keep up yearly occasions, particularly in the event that they are the foundation of a cause's subsidizing plan, it isn't sufficient to just move an action on the web. The challenge NGOs looked during corona pandemic was a direct result of lockdown. It was hard for us to venture out and to move toward the penniless. Second, voyaging was prohibited. So, NGOs confronted challenges in making a trip to different urban communities. As NGOs have their some more branches in different urban communities.

NGOs representatives were very little prepared in working on the web. Numerous things were moved to online which was additionally the challenge for NGOs. It was likewise hard for NGOs to prepare their workers as this was the new infection. No one was known to it. As NGOs are working in numerous nations and their working is connected together, so moving of things in lockdown was hard for us since voyaging was not permitted practically in each country.

To aware people about the COVID-19 to the drugs addicted individuals was likewise the challenge for us. For NGOs, the main challenge during COVID-19 was to approach needy and poor people. As travelling was prohibited, everything was shut down. So, in this situation, finding penniless people and approaching them was the difficult task for NGOs. The main challenge to NGOs was to installed handwashing stations during lockdown but government cooperated with us.

Balmford (2020) said that toward the beginning of July 2020, it had just killed over a large portion of 1,000,000 individuals internationally. In the USA Covid-19 deaths presently surpass the quantity of US military passing emerging from all contention. This loss of life was just the very disheartening tip of a lot bigger icy mass of disturbance that Covid-19 has caused and keeps on causing. Affirmed cases across the world presently surpass eleven million and the genuine contamination rate was likely far higher. Each case forces a genuine expense on each tainted person.

While side effects may sound harmless, including a dry cough, fever, and sleepiness, longer term this horribleness was probably going to force huge expenses on victims' wellbeing, including conceivably perpetual lung harm or fibrosis related with impacts upon the heart, kidneys and cerebrum, which are all liable to have negative ramifications for future prosperity and profitability.

Coordination with other Stakeholders

Donors are important for NGOs. So, in this theme researcher need to know about the organizations and companies which donated NGOs in the hard time. How much and from which procedures are they donating to NGOs. The worldwide association which gives to NGOs association are APPNA, World Care Foundation, Just Human, Zakat Foundation of America, UK Islamic Mission, Charity Australia International, Usman Trust, Bard Foundation, Islamic Cultural Center Norway, Corporate Pakistan Group, PEPSICO, Nestle, Unilever, Roche, Lotte Chemical Pakistan, SK Zic Motor Oil and Al Baraka. Exness, Fast Cables, Matrix, Superior College, Olympia Lube Oil, SRC, Don Valley, Starlet, Xavor, Confiz, Bank Alfalah, MCB Islamic, Bank Limited, PTCL, Peak Freans are the corporate area of Pakistan.

Significant accomplices who backing to NGOs association on the year 2020 are UK aid, Unicef, US Aid, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Sindh Government, Balochistan Governemnt, Punjab Government and Government of Pakistan. An NGO, HANDS has just about 6300 accomplices who backing and work with the association. These accomplices give for the welfare of mankind.

Topical subsidizes like UNFPA Supplies, the Maternal Health Trust Fund, the Humanitarian Action Thematic Fund and the Population Data Thematic Fund reinforce longer term objectives with the goal that UNFPA keeps on conveying on its groundbreaking outcomes. Joined Nations-pooled and between office components like the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Program to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage; the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Program on Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation; and the Spotlight Initiative to

dispose of savagery against ladies and young ladies. Issue-based, local or multi-country projects and activities. Nation level, staggered pooled financing instruments.

Conclusion

Both the foundations having vast setup as a Non-Governmental Organization and working for the serving of the needy people in the daily routine life effectively. In the disaster and tragic situation, the responsibility and the activities are too much extended. These organizations also worked during earthquake in 2005 very efficiently. The services in floods are also remarkable for the serving of humanity in the country.

These organizations in view of past experiences have much understanding to cope with the havoc situation. COVID-19 is a different type of pandemic but the past vast experience has led to encounter these worse situations. Providing from awareness, different tests for the infected persons, carrying peoples to hospitals using ambulances, providing home treatments and oxygen cylinders, intensive care in the houses, providing food and grocery items to needy peoples to their doorsteps along with help of finances to daily wages workers/laborers.

Coordination between different organizations is not found. Each organization is working separately in its domain and also in the same areas. It will be much better, if these organizations have some setup for linkage and exchange of services and areas, the services may be much improved and expanded.

Recommendations

1. Non-Governmental Organizations should set up their working online.
2. NGOs ought to set up a monitoring and evaluation framework to empower different NGOs and the general population to know their commitments to public improvement in different geological and substance regions.
3. Non-Governmental Organizations must improve their access to government funding and financing.
4. Non-Governmental Organizations ought to accept a critical part in advancing work by various NGOs to the Government, Business and General Public. Since by their normal understandings and help, they can beat this sort of emergency.

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