Issues and Challenges of Civil Society Organizations (A Case Study of Balochistan)

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Abstract

Mandated is civil society to represent masses rights and interests for its protection and promotion in areas where major decisions are being taken such as National / Provincial Assemblies and Senate. This is a tricky and complex task due to two major reasons. First the entire issue and its associated challenges are multifaceted in their very nature, and secondly, the competitors are relatively more powerful and strong due to their political and financial support that they get from international financial institutions and Multi National Corporations MNCs. Civil Society as conscience of society is supposed to be highlighting issues, challenges and gaps in current world scenario and administrative arrangement as per its agenda to bring about changes both into actions and mindsets of actors and factors who are culprits of today's gloomy situation. Organizations of civil society of Pakistan, particularly, Balochistan seems alert to take up issues and challenges which restrict wellbeing of masses in general. Values such as democracy, peaceful coexistent and social harmony have to be promoted at all levels. This research paper is a first round attempt towards highlighting concerns and reservations of people of the province. Major stakeholders were met to get better inside of the prevailing situation. All possible efforts have been made to provide its readers with accurate data and information.

Key Words

Civil society organizations, volunteer association, governance, rule of law, accountability, transparency, sustainability and peace-building measures

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Introduction

Civil society is principally an avenue of volunteer association of informed citizens into efforts aiming to help masses to get proactively organized and take actions that are expected to provide them with ease in their live (Wikipedia 2018). While doing so civil society might simultaneously address various levels of policy and decision making mechanisms with different strategies and modus operandi. However, the prime goal of its efforts always remains the same i.e. protection and promotion of rights and interests of general masses, which is indeed "a respectable life, constitutional / legal protective shield and easy accessibility to basic social services (Roosvelt, A 2010). Widely bifurcated, there are two types of civil society organizations! Formal ones have hierarchal setup and are registered under any law of the country, whereas the informal ones function without formal organizational set up, but are mandated with social sanctioning and cultural acceptance. "Civil society's mandate is relatively more human than the other two powerful competitive and contemporary players. Public sectors within the context of nation state is characterized with being lethargic, inefficient, ineffective and indifferent as far as issues and concerns of masses/ citizens of a country is concern. Efficiency and effectiveness is tagged, for the most part, with private sector, however, its efforts and tactics are always questioned due to its inhuman agenda of profit maximization, which in no case is human friendly anywhere around the globe (Khan, N 2010).

Responses of Civil Society

No doubt, each and every human social issue has to be addressed by civil society organizations. But, among many there are some that needs immediate response as their types and nature is relatively more response demanded and urgent. There are various reasons for this urgency which ranges from public pressure to indisputably of the issue. Any urgent response also helps avoid wastage of time, resources and energies. In this regard, the following issues and challenges at this point of time need to be addressed on priority basis.
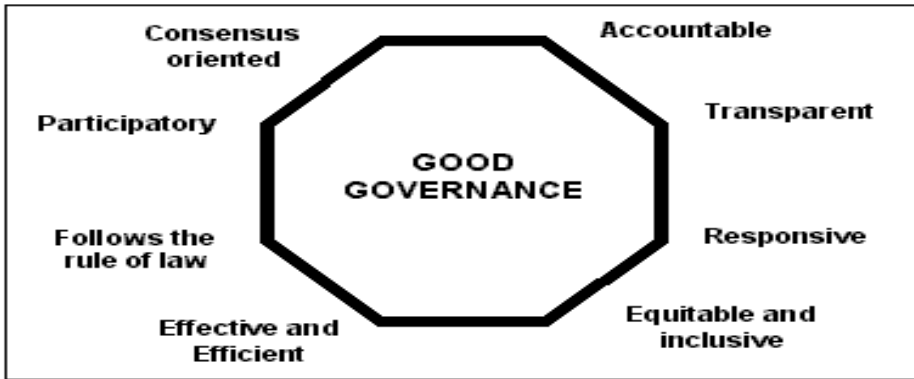
1. **Governance**

Governance has always been a major issue to be addressed by civil society to make it good. The term "GOOD" generic, but highlights a complete scenario associated to social justice, social harmony and for adaptation of measures that are required for achieving targets of sustainable development and meeting our commitment of international conventions and treaties. As far as its importance is concern, there has always been debate among

intellectuals and practitioners about it, which includes various aspects of it along with its positive and negative impact on human societies. So far the following points have received attentions to be deliberated upon. (Meetika Srivastava). As a human value, good governance has always been a major area of concern for both politicians and masses since independence in 1947. This has since long been lacking in almost all government department and organizations, which in return provide adequate space to private sector to get in with its relatively better governance system. There are certain reasons for its lacking, which include incompetence of both elected representatives and beaurucracy. The matter has to be addressed at all level in order to make decisions that are human friendly and people centered. Fragile state is a term which refers to a state of affair where government seems to have failed to provide citizens with basic social services, security and build public opinion state and government friendly. Pakistan unfortunately characterizes almost all indicator of a fragile state. "Governance refers to the formal and informal processes through which a society's rules are established, operate and evolve. The formal institutional framework of the state is important in determining how a society is governed, but governance is about more than this. In reality, governance is messy and context dependent, and entails the interaction between formal and informal rules, processes and relationships (Tsmmie O' Neil, 2007). While considering various matters highlighted in above narrated definition, one can conclude that prevailing situation of governance in Pakistan is poor, which requires immediate response from masses, particularly its representative bodies such as political parties, mass media and civil society organizations.

Since governance basically a complex process of decision and implementation mechanism, which have its affect on social institutions including culture, therefore, all aspect of social life is adversely affected. By making faulty decisions such as policies and legislations, everything drown from them will be faulty, defective and poor to be practiced. Prevalence of such as situation has already taken us to a scenario where public sector is considered ineffective, in efficient and lethargic, private sector is believed to confine to only profit maximization and civil sector is indifferent due to its inbuilt weak operational mechanism and foreign funded dependence.

The below diagram is self explanatory to highlight positive aspect of good governance.

Eight characteristic discussed in the diagram can be used to analyze state of governance in an organization, formal group or a country at large. It would help understand that governance is either good or poor with its impact over masses and performance of government.

a. Participation

Any decision being made and implemented must ensure participation of both genders directly and indirectly through people representative or mediatory institutions. Participation must be informed and organized in order to ensure freedom of association and expression. Any lack on the part of policy and legislators to oversight citizen voices should be considered a negative aspect of the decision.

b. Rule of Law

By the term rule of law as another major of characteristics of good governance, it is meant that legal framework is enforced efficiently by law enforcement agencies without compromising human rights, protection of minorities and any type of discrimination.

c. Transparency

The term refers to a state of affair where information with regard to decisions and their enforcement are freely available to individual citizen and can easily be accessed by those who might be affected by decisions and their enforcement. It also refers to obedience of set rules and regulation for policy and decision making mechanism

d. Responsiveness

Good governance requires that institutions and processes must be in accordance to the need of people. It must also serve all stakeholders with

a reasonable time frame. Any delay would be considered as a missing aspect of good governance

e. Consensus oriented

Since there is diversified opinion and point view among various segment of society with regard to any particular situation, therefore, sufficient time and resources must be allocated to build consensus prior to make decisions. It would help in achieving broader acceptance and minimize resistance and confusion about the decisions

f. Equity and inclusiveness

Providing people, particularly the most vulnerable segments of society, with the opportunity to actively participate and get appropriate benefits would definitely ensure equity and inclusiveness as an immediate result of a decision. Any feeling of exclusion at any ground will be judged as a negative aspect of governance.

g. Accountability

Accountability is the foremost requirement of good governance. All institutions and organizations irrespective of their nature of public, private and civic must be accountable to citizenry of a country. People representatives, in particular, are accountable to the people of their respective constituencies and general public because of their importance role as legislator and decision makers. Indeed, accountability will become almost impossible without transparency and rule of law discussed earlier.

h. Efficiency and effectiveness

Adoption of useful resource use pattern while catering essence of sustainable development is require to improve efficiency, whereas effectiveness is referred to need based responses. Both efficiency and effectiveness, unfortunately, are missing aspect of public sector organizations in Pakistan.

After having gone through these parameters to judge governance, it becomes imperative to suggest inducting it into course contents of teaching at higher education institutions. It would help not only promote a culture of evaluating performance of elected representatives, but also sensitize masses to ranked decisions of government.

2. Policy and decision-making mechanism

Policy making besides being an important part of governance is indeed broader guidelines that can lead towards actions which is mandated to promote the efforts while achieving national objectives in a country. If policies, laws and other relevant decisions are made according to the will and need of citizenry, its implementation will be owned by the masses which in turn will ensure sustainability of the effort. Interestingly, in our society decision making such as policy formulation is considered to be the responsibility of government offices, which curtails participation of relevant stakeholders in particular and of masses in general, consequently, each and every project and programs are faced with somewhat failure. This is the point where civil society has to intervene and promote people's concerns and reservations

3. International Commitments

Pakistan beside being an ideological nation state is also rectifier and signatory to various International Conventions and treaties such as Universal Declaration of Human Rights UDHR, Convention on Elimination of all kinds of Discrimination Against Women CEDAW, Convention on the Rights of Consumers CRC and Convention of Rights of the Child CRC etc. As signatory she is ethically bound to be making sure that various pragmatic actions are being taken in the country in the light of these conventions. These actions must include but limited to the following major activities

1. Policy formulation, which means that at national level the concerned quarter must formulate policy, which may guide its relevant action to ensure promotion and protection of that particular rights, let it be human, women, consumer or child rights.

2. Legislation or amendment of existing laws. After having formulated policy at national level the second most urgent action is bringing about reforms into the existing laws or making new laws. Legal protective shield is indeed a workable tool that help protect rights of masses from violation.

3. Institutional reform is the third most required action that a government must take to provide human friendly institutions for promotion and protection of the rights of people. If the existing organizations and government department lack rights friendly environment no policy or law can be truly implemented.

4. Mass awareness and sensitization of masses particularly their elected representatives and law enforcing agencies must be sensitized about

the need and importance of various conventions, the role of a signatory into it the responsibilities of various stakeholder should be made part of sensitization sessions.

4. Democracy and Human Rights

Human Rights and Democracy must be considered as human values. Internationally, both democracy and human rights help each other to be promoted. Democracy as a human value guides almost all sphere of human life while promoting the concept of peaceful coexistence and social harmony in a society, which is a pre-requisite for peace, progress and prosperity on a country. In a democracy, people have a wide range of choice between different candidate and parties who want the power to govern. The people can criticize and replace their elected leaders and representatives if they do not perform well. The people are sovereign --- they are the highest authority --- and government is based on the will of the people (what is democracy, 2015). Today every third country of the world has democratic type of government, while others are struggle to achieve it. Apart from the bookish definitional variation about the basic notion, the most phrased definition of the world famous self made individual and ex president of USA "Abraham Lincoln" ever stated that democracy is a government "of people, by the people, and for the people.

Democratic societies cannot and should not be confined to a type of governance only; it requires lots of efforts to induce it among individuals, communities and nations while providing them alternative to deal with their ethnically rooted cultural practices. For bringing about drastic changes in public and private sector interventions, civil society is expected to make a lot of effort, who at present is faced with social stigma of illegitimacy, powerlessness, authority and finances to become active and empowered

5. Peacebuilding Measures

Now for the past more than two decades, peace situation in the province, is gloomy and has been adversely deteriorating. The never ending issue of disappearance of people (missing person) and sectarian violence are two major indicators of deteriorating peace situation. Apart from armed struggle i.e. freedom movement of Baloch to separate Balochistan from the country, sectarian violence is relatively another alarming issue that has multifarious negative impact over the already under developed inhabitants of the province and its natural, physical and human resources. The problem is getting out of control of government and law enforcement agencies because of two major internal reasons. First, lack of political will to curb it, which encourages extremists and militant groups to get indulged into the issue both

for personal and political gains, and for fulfillment of foreign agenda of uncertain forces. Secondly, since a separatist movement is underway by Baloch militant groups against federal and provincial governments, the issue of sectarian violence does not received due attention to be addressed. Moreover, the issue has not yet been taken up by political parties to the level that it requires. Consequently, hundreds of individuals belonging to all fields of life were either assassinated through suicide bombing or target killing. Thousands other were left seriously injured to live rest of their life as physically and mentally disabled." More than 1500 individuals belonging to Hazara community got killed and thousands others left with very little or no source of income as a result of harsh waves of ethnic and sectarian violence. The affected families face great difficulty in receiving compensation by the government (Nayil, 2014). Indeed, mass migration as a result of sectarian has already lead us towards the major of brain-drain not only for the Hazara, but a great loss for the province.

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