

## **Practices of the Community Development Projects towards NGOs in Punjab Province, Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper focuses NGO (Non-government organization) registration through the government run community development projects (CDPs), post registration facilitations by these projects for NGOs, requirements made by the NGOs and the CDPs' dealings with registered NGOs. Though, the CDPs facilitate NGOs registration, the registration process is noticed lengthy and complicated. The funding role of the CDPs is quite low as compared to other facilitations provided while NGOs mostly require funding assistance. These development projects operate in participative and authoritative way while working with the NGOs. The study discussion suggests that improvement in NGOs registration process, funding increase for NGOs' development projects and participative and cooperative dealings of the CDPs could enhance performance of both NGOs and the CDPs.*

**Keywords:** Community development, CDPs, NGOs, registration, facilitation

### **I. Introduction**

Governments and development organizations adopt suitable community development (CD) approaches which could address their existing problems and meet felt needs in better way. After creation, Pakistan had to face various socioeconomic problems in addition to management, political and refugee settlement issues. The government of Pakistan alone was not capable to resolve those multiple and outstanding problems with limited financial and technical resources available at that time. The voluntary welfare and religious organizations came forward to address the community problems and needs at local level on self-help basis. Also, the government had to request the United Nations for technical assistance in the early 1950s. During 1950s, Government introduced set up of the CDPs (community development projects) which was first major effective community development and welfare programme. First demonstration CDP was set up in Karachi

which not only served to aware the local communities but also guided and assisted them for problem solutions on self-help basis. These government run CDPs got success and were established in different urban and rural areas throughout the country. With the passage of time, many changes and developments took place in the CDPs' mode of operation. These projects got an important official responsibility to register NGOs during early 1960s after promulgation of the Voluntary Social Welfare Organizations (Registration and Control) Ordinance, 1961. During 1950s and 1960s, NGOs' number was small and the CDPs did not deal with all matters of the voluntary organizations. Rapid growth of NGOs' number automatically expanded role of the CDPs regarding NGOs practices. Besides NGO registration, the CDPs also provide post registration guidance and assistance to organizations, monitor them and work jointly with organizations in local communities. A departmental committee of Social Welfare conducted evaluation of the CDPs in Sindh Province in the early 1970s but did not investigate the practices of the CDPs in connection with NGOs registration, post registration facilitations and ways of dealings towards registered organizations. Since then, no comprehensive research has been conducted to address the CDPs' role towards NGOs. This paper is part of PhD study which focuses role of the CDPs for NGOs registration, registration process duration, post registration services for NGOs, NGOs requirements and ways of the CDPs dealings towards NGOs. The research was conducted in Punjab Province of Pakistan.

## **II. Relevant Literature**

Although, community development term is controversial and debatable, it has been and is practiced in both developed and developing countries (Pople, 2007). According to Chile and Simpson (2004) and Gray and Mubangizi (2010), community development is collective welfare and improvement in community lives as result of joint efforts of community people. In addition to solution of community problem (Frank & Smith, 1999), it also enhances capacities of grassroots level people (Gilchrist, 2003). Community development programmes have been and are initiated by governments, local communities and voluntary welfare organizations alone or jointly. According to Pople and Quinney (2002), United Kingdom witnessed both the top-down and the bottom-up community development practices. During 1960s, the government started Young Volunteer Force Foundation (Craig, Mayo, Pople, Shaw, & Taylor, 2011) and 12 Community Development Projects (Pople & Redmond, 2000). Germany and Scandinavian countries also launched different development and welfare programmes (Hendriks, 1972). Nongovernment organizations provided many services in local development sector in Ireland and the number of NGOs was calculated 300 in 1978 (Lee, 2003). Similarly, hundreds of NGOs were engaged in welfare and development at local level in Czech Republic after rise of democracy (Henderson & Vercseg, 2010). Dunham (1972) has listed many government and NGOs' initiated CD programmes in different regions during different times in America. NGOs in Guatemala (O'Gorman, 1994) and local communities themselves (Barrig, 1990) in Peru stepped forward to solve their local level problems. As far as African countries are concerned, local government in Nigeria (Hay, Koehn, & Koehn, 1990), both government and voluntary organizations in Kenya (Prosser, 1970) and government in Zambia (Silavwe, 1984) initiated community development projects. The role of governments is witnessed more prominent for introducing CD programmes in Australia (Graycar, 1974) and New Zealand (Chile, 2006). Early community development practices give a reflection of the colonial system in Asian countries (Nanavatty, 1988). Governments of mostly newly independent countries

launched development and welfare programmes but voluntary organizations separately or jointly with governments, initiated many self-help programmes at the grassroots level. In 1947, Pakistan had to face various socioeconomic, political, administrative and refugee settlement issues (Rehmatullah, 2002). In the early 1950s, both rural and urban community development programmes were introduced with the guidance and assistance of the UN advisors. Community Development Projects (CDPs) were set up in big cities on an experimental basis (Hak, 1959). The projects served as both for problem solution at the local level and for training of university students. The government got motivation to set up more CDPs in other areas when got success from the pilot projects. According to Kabir (1964), the CDPs were taken as the most important component of social welfare in Pakistan especially in five year development plans. Currently, 214 CDPs render their services under provincial social welfare departments in Pakistan (Khalid, 2006). Literature analysis finds no initiation of new CDPs after the Fifth Five Year Plan (1983) in Punjab Province where this research was conducted. There are total 133 CDPs in Punjab Province (116 CDPs and 17 RCDs).

### **III. NGOs and CDPs**

As mentioned earlier, government alone was not capable to combat different nature of socioeconomic problems. With increase in number of CDPs, the government also took steps for growth and promotion of NGOs (Ahmad, 1979). The staff and trainees at the CDPs were also given a task to aware and mobilize local people for start of voluntary organizations. Establishment of NGOs got a rapid increase after encouragement and government financial assistance for development projects at local level. Number of NGOs reached from 200 to 4000 during 1955-1965 (Government of Pakistan, 1957).

The CDPs got official role to process NGOs' registration after enactment of The Voluntary Social Welfare Organizations (Registration and Control) Ordinance, 1961 (Government of Punjab, 1982). This NGOs' registration legislation is controlled mainly by the Social Welfare Department which is higher authority of the CDPs also. The NGOs getting registration under this law are considered eligible to get funds from the Social Welfare Department for their development schemes (Asian Development Bank, 2009). The CDPs play an important role in the NGOs registration process as they are local level gateway towards the Social Welfare Department. The CDPs receive NGO registration applications, verify those applications, verify NGOs' offices and performance and forward registration files to higher authorities for further processing. Besides NGO registration, CDPs' objectives include accelerating NGO registration, guidance and facilitation of registered NGOs and monitoring of NGOs and their development projects. The number of NGOs registered through the CDPs in Punjab Province was calculated 5216 in 2007 (Punjab Social Services Board, 2007). As far as the NGO registration process is concerned, Baig (2001); Mufti (2001) and Saeed (1999) pointed out lack of registration guidance, difficult registration procedure, too much paper work and slow process as major problems. After getting registration, mostly organizations expect funding from their registration authorities, government departments and also from private donors. According to Iqbal, Khan, and Javed (2004), the NGOs registered under the Voluntary Social Welfare (registration and Control) Ordinance, 1961 are eligible for funding from the Social Welfare Department. The CDPs play liaison role between the registered NGOs and the Social Welfare Department and NGOs apply funding through the CDPs. There are some tensions between NGOs and government regarding NGO

registration, development projects and funding of the projects. In 1996, Standing Committee of National Assembly discussed a proposal to change NGO registration legislations as organizations were found violating registration rules (The Nation, 2009). The role of CDPs is very critical in all this scenario as these offices deals most of the matters related to NGOs registered with the Social Welfare Department.

#### IV. Methodology

A survey research method was applied to explore the current role of the CDPs for NGOs' registration, post registration facilitation and their mode of operation with the registered organizations at the grassroots level. One questionnaire was developed for the Deputy District Officers (DDOs) appointed as government officers at the CDPs and one for the representatives of NGOs registered with the CDPs. All 36 Districts were taken as geographic universe. Questionnaires were distributed to all DDOs and sample of 10% was taken from registered NGOs using proportionate systematic random sampling technique.

#### V. Results

The data obtained through questionnaires was processed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data is presented in simple and multiple response tables easy understanding of the results. The results describe the duration of NGOs registration through the CDPs, post registration facilitations for organizations, NGOs requests for assistance from the CDPs and the way of CDPs dealing with the registered NGOs.

**Table 1: Views about NGO Registration Process and Duration through the CDPs**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Easy and short	28	30.8
Easy but lengthy	53	58.2
Complicated and lengthy	7	7.7
Complicated but short	2	2.2
Total	90	98.9
Missing	1	1.1
	91	100.0

**Table 2: Views about NGO Registration Process and Duration through the CDPs**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Easy and short	86	20.2
Easy but lengthy	76	17.8
Complicated and lengthy	207	48.6
Complicated but short	22	5.2
Total	391	91.8
Missing	35	8.2
	426	100.0

Table 1 and Table 2 present views of the DDOs and the representatives of NGOs about duration of NGOs' registration. Almost four fifth officer respondents claim that NGOs get registration from the Social Welfare Department easily (**Error! Reference**

source not found.). While, only nearly 10% DDOs consider the registration process complex. More than half officers admit that CDPs and higher authorities of Social Welfare Department take long time to process registration. On the other hand, nearly one third respondents view duration of the NGOs' registration short.

The results in Table 2 present perceptions of the representatives of NGOs about registration process. More than two third respondents report that registration duration is lengthy. Besides that, more than half representatives consider that NGOs registration process through the CDPs is complicated. The rate of responses about short and easy registration duration and process is noticed very low. Only more than one third respondent finds registration process easy and a very small number describes the registration duration as short (25.4%). Table results show that some respondents did not respond to the question. It could be argued that complex and too long registration process can affect the performance of both CDPs and NGOs.

**Table 3: CDP Facilitation for NGO Functioning after Registration (DDOs)**

Response	Number of responses	Percent of respondents (N=91)
Funding for NGOs	37	40.7%
Trainings of NGOs	60	65.9%
Legal aid for NGOs	25	27.5%
Counseling for NGOs	90	98.9%
Provision of awareness about any changes in government bureaucracies	13	14.3%
	225	

**Table 4: CDP Facilitation for NGO Functioning after Registration**

Response	Number of responses	Percent of respondents (N=413)
Funding for NGOs	86	20.8%
Training of NGOs	201	48.7%
Legal aid for NGOs	15	3.6%
Counseling for NGOs	356	86.2%
Provision of awareness about any changes in government bureaucracies	72	17.4%
No facilitation	51	12.3%
	781	

Table 3 and Table 4 show the multiple response results about different kinds of assistance provided by the CDPs to NGOs registered with the Social Welfare Department. Counseling and guidance services for the registered NGOs seem very satisfactory as a vast majority of respondent officers ranks it very high (98.9% respondents). The second major facilitation of the CDPs is the provision of trainings for registered NGOs as mentioned by the 65.9% respondents. More than one third DDO respondents claim funding facilitation by their CDPs for development and welfare projects of the registered organizations (40.7%). Multiple response results also mention that CDPs offer legal aid services for NGOs in their jurisdictional areas (27.5% respondents). It is obvious that newly registered organizations need to know legal and

technical aspects related to office and development projects' management. The respondent officers (14.3%) claim to update registered organizations about any changes and developments taking place in government bureaucracy. It makes sense that the CDPs being a liaison between NGOs and Social Welfare Department inform the registered organizations about any changes at the government level. Multiple response results clearly indicate that a CDP provides different nature of facilitations for the registered organizations at same or different times.

The results in Table 4 show 781 multiple responses of the 413 representatives of NGOs registered through the CDPs. Major assistance provided by the CDPs for organizations is seen as counseling and guidance (86.2%). Nearly but less than half NGOs representatives (48.7%) report trainings as second big facilitation by the CDPs. Response rate about CDPs' funding assistance for registered organizations is seen low (20.8% respondents). Further, the CDPs aware the NGOs about changes and updates of the Social Welfare Department (17.4% respondents). Though, counseling and training facilitation rate is satisfactory, the results point out the weaknesses of the CDPs with special regard to funding for NGOs development projects. In addition, it is worth noting that 12.3% representatives of NGOs negate any kind of facilitation from the CDPs to their registered organizations. This negation marks question on the performance of some CDPs.

**Table 5: Kinds of Assistance Requested by the Registered NGOs from the CDPs (DDOs)**

Response	Number of responses	Percent of respondents (N=91)
Direct funding from the CDPs	44	48.4%
Guidance about funding	73	80.2%
Training on project proposal writing	47	51.6%
Office management training	37	40.7%
Programme management training	29	31.9%
Record keeping training	57	62.6%
Coordination with other NGOs	51	56.0%
No assistance is requested by NGOs from the CDPs	1	1.1%
	339	

**Table 6: Kinds of Assistance Requested by the Registered NGOs from the CDPs**

Response	Number of responses	Percent of respondents (N=403)
Direct funding from the CDPs	294	72.9%
Guidance about funding	318	78.9%
Training on project proposal writing	179	44.4%
Office management training	193	47.9%
Programme management training	140	34.7%
Record keeping training	135	33.5%
Coordination with other NGOs	125	31.0%
No assistance is requested by NGOs from the CDPs	21	5.2%
	1405	

On the other hand, the results also speak about the requests made by the registered NGOs for assistance from the CDPs. Table 5 presents 339 multiple responses of the respondent DDOs. It is seen that NGOs request and expect mainly three kinds of facilitations i.e., financial assistance and guidance, different trainings and coordination with other organizations. According to 80.2% respondents, registered organizations contact CDPs to obtain guidance on funding for their welfare and development projects. Nearly half respondents view the NGOs applying funding directly from the CDPs (48.4%). While responding about trainings, the respondent officers view that NGOs ask the CDPs to provide record keeping trainings (62.6% respondents). In addition, they also approach the CDPs for project design trainings (51.6%), office management trainings (40.7%) and project management trainings (31.9%). Besides funding and trainings, the registered organizations seek assistance from the CDPs to develop coordination with other NGOs engaged in welfare and development at grassroots level in their areas (56.0%).

Table 6 shows 1405 multiple responses given by 403 representatives of NGOs about the kinds of assistance NGOs request from the CDPs. Funding needs and requirements of the NGOs seem as top priority. The majority of respondents report that registered organizations seek guidance from the CDPs about funding sources for development projects (78.9%). The possible sources may include government departments and national and international private donors. The organizations also request direct funding from the CDPs to run their programmes (72.9%). Apart from funding, the NGOs contact the CDPs for different kinds of needed trainings. The Major training request made by these organizations is seen as office management (44.4% respondents). Other training assistances requested from the CDPs include programme management training (34.7% respondents) and NGO record keeping training (33.5% respondents). It could be argued that the CDPs play an important role to facilitate the registered organizations for trainings. Further, the organizations get in touch with the CDPs to assist them in developing contacts with other NGOs working at local level (31.0%). Few respondents disclosed that their organizations do not seek any assistance from the CDPs (5.2%). High number of multiple responses (DDOs and NGOs) indicates that registered organizations depend on the assistance and guidance of the CDPs to run their office and project matters.

**Table 7: Different Ways by which the CDPs Interact with NGOs Engaged in Community Development**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Participative and leading	46	50.5
Participative and led by people in communities	43	47.3
Do not know	2	2.2
Total	91	100.0

**Table 8: Different Ways by which the CDPs Interact with NGOs Engaged in Community Development (NGOs representatives)**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Authoritative	141	33.1
Participative and leading	186	43.7
Participative and led by people in communities	69	16.2
Do not know	17	4.0

Total	413	96.9
Missing	13	3.1
	426	100.0

The CDPs interact with NGOs directly or indirectly to provide welfare and development services at the grassroots level and this connection gives effective results in local communities. Table 7 and Table 8 present results about ways of working and dealings of the CDPs towards registered organizations engaged in community development at local level. On one hand, CDPs' interaction with the NGOs is seen satisfactory as they deal in a participative way which is basic principle of community development. Nearly all respondents officer claim their participative attitude towards development organizations (97.8%). The results indicate both top-down and bottom-up approaches of community development in Table 7. Almost half of the respondent officers admit CDPs' leading role during interaction with the registered NGOs (50.5%). This leading role mentions the top-down practice adopted by the CDPs. While, nearly but less than half (47.3%) officers claim that they follow the local communities and organizations during any development projects initiated at the grassroots level. Apart from the participative role, the results also indicate dominating way of dealing of the CDPs towards the NGOs.

More than half NGOs representatives view the participative role of the CDPs towards their organizations during development activities (59.9%). Among these respondents, majority reports that CDPs play a leading role during participation (43.7%). While, only 16.2% admit that CDPs follow organizations and local communities during contacts. Besides the participative interaction, the CDPs authoritative role is also reported by a considerable number of respondents (33.1%). According to more than three fourth respondents, CDPs interact with the NGOs in top-down style which indicate CDPs more powerful and dominant. This is very important finding which makes CDPs performance questionable.

## VI. Discussion

Difference of opinion and contrast is seen clearly from in the study results. The officer respondents seem to keep the CDPs in a balanced position as they are government employees and head officers of these offices. On the other hand, representatives of NGOs seem more critical considering CDPs as the major responsible in all matters related to NGOs registration and assistance. Besides the difference of opinion, officer respondents and representatives of NGOs report important points which could be discussed and presented for conclusion and improvements.

We can see a difference of opinion about NGOs registration through the CDPs. Though, the majority of officers find it easy to register organizations through their offices but they also admit that the registration process is long. While the majority of NGOs' representatives find it difficult and lengthy. Here, we cannot ignore the fact that NGOs' registration is routine job for DDOs and they have experience after dealing number of NGOs registration cases. It could be argued that they take it an easy process owing to their regular practice. While, people seeking NGOs registration are supposed to have less knowledge about registration. They may take the process as complicated. On the basis of both literature and study results, we can argue that NGOs registration process through the

CDPs is not easy and have complications. As far as duration of the registration process is concerned, both officers and NGOs' representatives describe it lengthy and it is also evident from the literature that an attempt was also made in 1996 to increase the registration period (Mufti, 2001). Possibly, some other factors could delay NGOs' registration and make it complicated which include lack of awareness on the part of people seeking registration, poor performance of the CDPs' staff, delay from higher authorities and complications in legal process of registration.

A majority of both the officers and NGOs' representatives agree that registered NGOs are provided counseling and guidance from the CDP offices. This guidance may include awareness about community problems, solution of those problems and about working of the CDPs. Though, percentage number varies but both DDOs and NGO representatives report provision of training as second major facilitation for registered organizations by the CDPs. The role of the CDPs for funding to NGOs is seen weak. More than one third DDO respondents claim this facilitation from their offices to NGOs but only one fifth NGOs representatives report it. It could be argued that CDPs also have to follow policies of Social Welfare Department and higher authorities. The offices themselves are not in position to fund all development projects of NGOs. On the other hand, NGOs consider the CDPs as a gateway for all kinds of facilitations to registered organizations as they mainly deal with the CDPs rather than the higher authorities. We can also see a contradiction between the views of the DDOs and NGOs' representatives about legal aid facilitation by the CDPs. Few NGOs representatives admit legal aid service provision by the CDPs in comparison to more than one fourth officer respondents. While both admit the CDPs role to aware registered NGOs about any developments and changes in government departments and bureaucracies. This awareness includes information about working of Social Welfare Department, its institutions, legal changes, management level changes etc. Here, it is essential to point out that many NGOs' representatives deny any kind of facilitations from the CDPs. This indicates the poor performance of not many but some CDPs.

The results seem to agree with Iqbal et al. (2004) and Asian Development Bank (2009) that NGOs get registration from Social Welfare Department to be eligible for funding. Both the DDOs and NGOs' representatives are on the same page that major demand and need of registered organizations is regarding funding assistance for development projects. Apart from funding guidance from the CDPs, the NGOs' representatives rank direct funding from the CDPs as the second major assistance requested by the NGOs while the officer respondents find record keeping training as second top priority demand of NGOs. In addition to that NGOs seek assistance for trainings on project designing, office management and programme management. The results also point out the importance of the CDPs to develop connections and coordination among local level organizations. Though, the CDPs have limited powers and funds to fulfill all requirements of the registered NGOs but these projects are seen as important channels to get in touch with Social Welfare Department and to provide different kinds of assistance for NGOs. It could be a view about those NGOs not requesting any assistance from the CDPs that those organizations are well established and rich organizations or they expect poor performance or no response from the CDPs.

The practice and dealing of the CDPs towards registered organizations portray both top-down and bottom-up community development approaches. Both the DDOs and

NGOs' representatives view CDPs as participative during interaction with registered organizations at the local level. This participative attitude of the CDPs gives a satisfactory and positive impression. Although, the officer respondents also claim that the CDPs follow local NGOs or local people during development projects and activities but dominant and leading role of these offices is reported by the majority of both DDOs and NGOs' representatives. The major difference of opinion between the DDOs and NGOs' representatives is noticed about the authoritative practices of the CDPs. One third NGOs' representatives find the CDPs authoritative towards organizations while all officers negate any authoritative role of their offices. It is obvious that the organizations reporting CDPs' authoritative practices are not satisfied which makes CDPs' performance questionable. The authoritative way of dealing of the CDPs could make top-down community development more worst which in other words, keeps NGOs away from participation.

## **VII. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Results and discussion bring us to conclusions that NGOs' registration process is complicated and lengthy, especially for people seeking their organizations' registration. The Provincial Social Welfare Department needs to revisit the NGOs' registration legislation and process and to identify factors involved in registration delays. It becomes very clear that grassroots level registered organizations have limited finances to design and run development projects which compel them to apply funds from the CDPs. On the other hand, the results make sense that CDPs are not equipped with sufficient finances for NGOs' development projects. Although, the CDPs provide proper counseling services and needed trainings but the NGOs seem unsatisfied with financial assistance by the CDPs. Higher authorities and policy makers of Social Welfare Department should address the financial needs of the CDPs and the NGOs. They should increase and if not possible to increase, publicize NGOs financial assistance budget to avoid any difficulties for NGOs, CDPs and their department. These government run offices are playing role to update the registered NGOs about changes and developments in government departments and also make connections among local NGOs. They should also take necessary steps to monitor the CDPs' facilitations for NGOs as some of the NGOs representatives negate any assistance from the CDPs. The CDPs play a participatory role while interacting with the registered organizations which strengthens credibility. On the other hand, NGOs claims about authoritative practices of the CDPs could not be ignored. The CDPs and the higher authorities should ensure the participative and democratic dealings towards the NGOs and the local communities which is true sense of community development.

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