

THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERISM IN THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF PAKISTAN, A STUDY OF PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT: Pakistan is one of those countries which is really low in the Social development index. Due to many reasons, Pakistan has been moving on the ladder of Social development but unfortunately downwards. But in the past few years, people are working really hard to work for the betterment of the country at all levels. They have realized that every individual should work for the progress of the country in his/ her own capacity. So, then the real volunteerism came into existence. People from all walks of life started working voluntarily for the social development of Pakistan and it is showing fruitful results.

The study is taken to check the people's perception of volunteerism as a tool of social development in the country. A sample of 1000 respondent is taken from all walks of life and representation from every province of Pakistan is taken. Half of the respondents are volunteers in any way and half are not doing any volunteer work. A well-structured questionnaire was distributed and the results showed that people of Pakistan believes that volunteerism is the source of inspiration and social development of the country. This paper is only about the perception of the people and will lead towards next set of research on this topic. It will pave ways to extended future research on how volunteerism is making in-roads in the development of Pakistan and how it will define the future development.

Keywords: Volunteerism, Pakistan, social development, perception, volunteer, volunteerism

INTRODUCTION:

Volunteering means different things to different people. A study by Handy, F., et. al, in 2000 [1], found widespread differences between countries in public perceptions of what constitutes a voluntary activity. In some countries giving blood was seen as volunteering, in others being involved in a political party or trade union was counted. For some people the defining characteristic of volunteering was the absence of financial reward; for others lack of coercion was the main identifier. Volunteering takes on different forms and meanings in different settings. It is strongly influenced by the history, politics, religion and culture of a region. What may be seen as volunteering in one country may be dismissed as low paid or labor intensive work (or even forced labor) in another. And yet despite the wide variety of understandings it is possible to identify some core characteristics of what constitutes a voluntary activity. In fact it is essential that we do so. Without some shared understanding of the common elements of volunteering the term would be meaningless and would make redundant attempts by government to promote it. Although it is clearly not possible to come up with a hard and fast definition of volunteering that will take into account the variety of contexts in which it operates, we can construct a broad conceptual framework which will allow for significant differences in interpretation within clearly delineated boundaries.

A definition which is taken as a standard in many countries can be:

“Volunteerism is performing an act of kindness, freely giving of your talent, time and effort for the simple fulfillment of community expectations.”

People, who volunteer for any purpose, don't get any kind of monetary or any other benefit. Most people used to do volunteer work for their self-satisfaction. The world is bending towards the volunteer work because of many

reasons. Some of the reasons behind joining volunteerism are: [2].

- Sense of achievement
- Recognition and Feedback
- Personal Growth
- Giving something back
- Social Development
- Family Ties
- Networking
- Frustration
- Self-Satisfaction
- Killing time
- Exposure

There can be many other reasons why people join volunteerism but the above ones are the real driving force behind it [5]. One of the most important reasons behind people joining volunteerism is the social development [10]. They believe that if they work voluntarily on the important issues of the society, they could become a catalyst for change and their society could improve. So, keeping this thing in mind, people in European countries are working voluntarily for different causes and that's why their society is developing.

Pakistan is an under developed country and people used to blame Government for this state. People believe that it's only because of the Government that our country is not progressing, because it is not doing the task which it is supposed to do. For many people, the situation of Pakistan cannot get better if everything goes the same way. People of Pakistan need to get involved in the activities of the country with full zeal and zest and stop blaming the Government of the country. People are responsible for the country's success and in Pakistan; people are not doing their part. They need to work in their capacity to make positive changes. Social

Development of a nation is really important when it comes to the overall prosperity of the country. We need to work on our HDI (Human Development Index) in order to have a prosperous society. Education, Health and Human Capital Development are the parts of the HDI, so people need to work on these issues. Pakistan is lacking behind in all these parts of HDI. Now people have started working on these issues in Pakistan which is a good sign.

This research study is conducted to see people's perception of volunteerism culture in Pakistan. We wanted to see whether people are backing the concept of volunteerism in Pakistan or not. My study will show the people's perception of all the provinces of Pakistan as well as overseas Pakistanis about the volunteerism and its effects on the social development of the country.

Objectives

This research paper will serve the following objectives:

- What is people's perception about the culture of Volunteerism in Pakistan?
- Will Volunteerism eventually leads to Social Development in Pakistan or not?
- What the volunteers think about 'Volunteerism as Catalyst for Social Development'?
- What Non-Volunteers think about 'Volunteerism as Catalyst for Social Development'?
- What is the perception of people from different provinces of Pakistan about the culture of Volunteerism in Pakistan?
- What is the perception of Overseas Pakistanis about the culture of Volunteerism in Pakistan?

Significance and Purpose of Research

The main purpose of this paper is to find people's perception about the culture of volunteerism in Pakistan. It is to find whether people think that through volunteerism, Pakistan could lead to social development or not. An effort has been made to take the input of all the concerned stakeholders i.e. Input of all 5 provinces and also the overseas Pakistanis to have a broad kind of understanding and productive finding. Results reveals the perceptions of volunteers and non-volunteers about the culture of volunteerism and the gap between the two sets of people. It is a very first study of its kind in Pakistan and certainly will open new horizon of understating to get benefited from the global perspective.

Literature Review

UNV (United Nations Volunteers) research on Volunteerism (V) and its effects on Social development explain that it has a positive effect on the social development. The study reveals V has been successfully used as a tool of social development by the countries like Denmark, South Africa and Italy. Study has uncovered some benefits by the peoples when it comes for a personal, national or global cause.

Volunteer Center in Canada conducted a study during 1992 and emerged with two novel schools of thoughts; the first one is that volunteers do make good recruiters as they gauge the value of their work and their experiences are persuasive. Secondly, volunteers are the children of volunteers [4]. Recruiting new volunteers doesn't just fill a present need; it's an investment in our future communities. They felt some organizations fail to give enough funds and support to their volunteer programs. They saved their real anger, however, for

a recessionary economy and government cut-backs that allowed good programs to be cut [3]. Participants were aware of the competitive nature of volunteer recruitment and support. Programs that offered achievement and room for personal growth and a caring support system were clearly the winners in their eyes. Other organizations, they advised, would simply have to try harder.

A study was conducted by two professors [12], conducted a research that demonstrate "why people volunteer". The study confirms prominent role of Volunteers in the charitable provision of goods and services. Along with a list of possible motivations, latest research has focused on altruism, reputational concerns, and material incentives. A study was conducted in Asia in 2010 [13]. The research has presented the modern challenges and emerging perspectives in international volunteerism in Asia. According to them verification from the Asian region is negligible as compared with Europe and the Americas, yet an increasing trend and new forms of partnerships is developing in the Asian region. The need for a comprehensive review on Asia is highly recommended. The original research question was whether there is a distinct or unique 'Asian' approach to International Volunteer Service (IVS). However study reveals difference in terms of culture, history, economy, and political context within Asian countries, while many unique approaches are found within Asia.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

After watching closely the trend of volunteerism in Pakistan for a decade, a study was conducted on the impact of volunteerism in social development of Pakistan. We took the sample of almost 1000 out of a huge population of the country which is 180 Million, which according to many is not the real representation of the population. According to many social sciences researchers, the sample size should be a true representation of the whole population not in the matter of size but in other factors like area, gender, normality, the outreach of the data, coverage of all the strata etc. [10]. For this very reason, given below research methodology is opted.

Sampling Procedure:

Firstly, we selected samples for the research together data from all the 5 provinces of Pakistan and also the data of overseas Pakistanis. After acquiring data, performed the Random Probability sampling and distributed questionnaires to those selected people. The sample was taken from 18 years old to 40 years old people from Pakistan only, who were professionals as well as students and volunteer [7].

A combination of three sets of research i.e. Exploratory, Descriptive and Causal has been attempted. First topic of the research is explored and nature of the study is analyzed. Research concept is taken out from the existed feasibility study followed by the descriptive research. Interrelation of different queries (who, what, where, when and how) was critically analyzed. Finally, the causal research was conducted by finding answers of the problems i.e. how one variable affects other variables and vice versa [8]. Dependent variable for **Social Development** and Independent Variable for **Volunteerism** were used for experimental research

By using a Questionnaire designed on Likert scale as a tool, total 20 Questions were asked. Some demographic questions

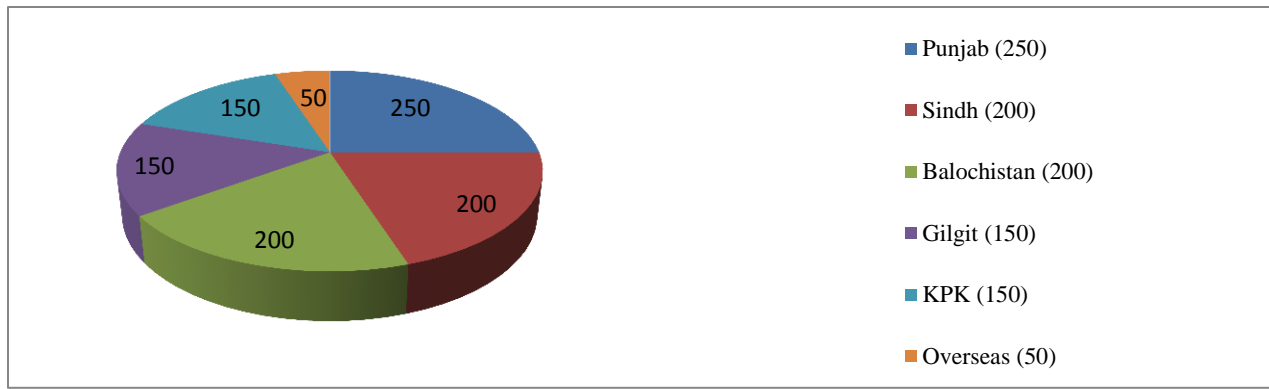


Figure 1 Graphic presentation of gathered Province wise response

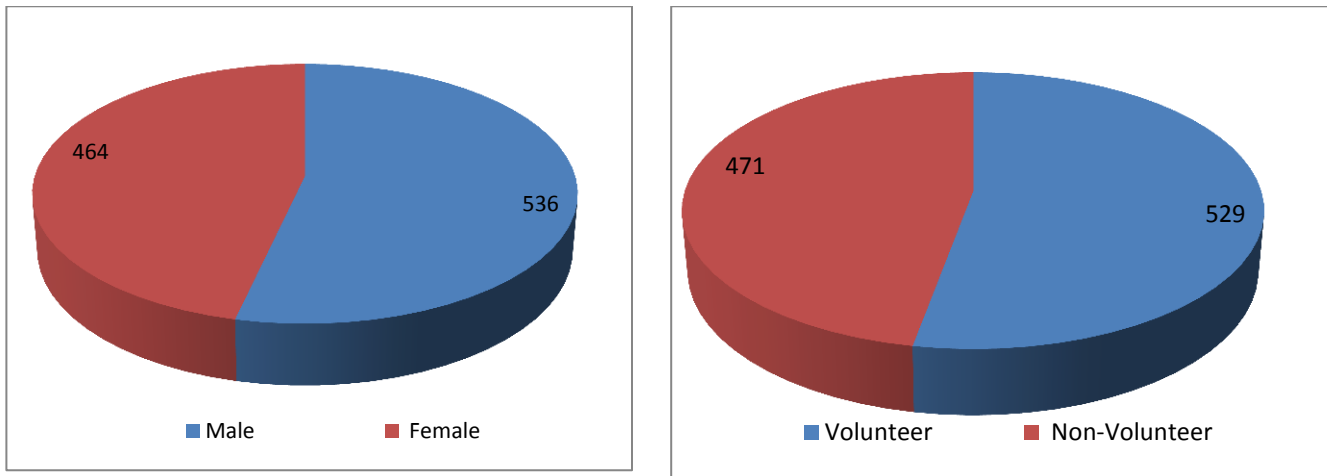


Figure 2 Graphic presentation of Genders and Volunteer or Non-Volunteers

were also added. A total of 1000 questionnaires were filled by people both national and overseas. The data processing tool which is used to analyze the data is SPSS 17.0. All the acquired data was put in SPSS and run different tests on it.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

We have sent 1150 questionnaires to people and we got response for 1009 questionnaires. A fairly good response rate was 87.79% that is an indicator of a friendly response (Figure 1, 2).

The distribution of the questionnaire was as follow.
 Punjab = 250, Sindh = 250, Balochistan = 200, Gilgit = 150, KPK = 150, Overseas = 50

By applying different tests on the gathered data from the Questionnaires, the results were interoperated as follow.

Cronbach’s Alpha:

We have developed the tool by our self because the tool for this kind of research was not already developed. So, we worked on the tool and came up with the tool to check the results of our hypothesis. It is recommended to check the reliability of the tool which we have developed, so we had to run some kind of test. The test which we ran was CRONBACH’s ALPHA, which is used to check the reliability of the tool developed. It showed encouraging results as the results of **CRONBACH’s ALPHA was 0.812**, which shows good on the index, and is acceptable (it surely

need some improvement, which we recommended for further research).

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha
 No. of Items
 0.812
 20

The result of CRONBACH’s ALPHA gave us the confidence to use the questionnaire to get our responses. We then, sent our questionnaire to the respondents to see the real impact of the hypothesis and to draw some kind of conclusion. The results are as follow.

Descriptive Analysis:

To make the most out of the research and to analyze the responses which we got, we put all the data in SPSS Version 20 for analysis. After consulting from the literature and other resources, we came to the conclusion that we should do the descriptive analysis to get the result. After completing the beta test of the questionnaire and getting the results in acceptable region, we distributed the questionnaires to the respondents and get the responses within the time span of less than a month, then came the most important part of the research i.e. the analysis.

We asked different questions from the respondents which lead to the check the hypothesis in the end. There were total 20 questions and we used Likert scale to get the responses from the respondents. Each question was interpreted

separately and then the combined result was drawn. After a comprehensive analysis, we are able to draw a graph of the hypothesis answer, to have a clear picture of the result.

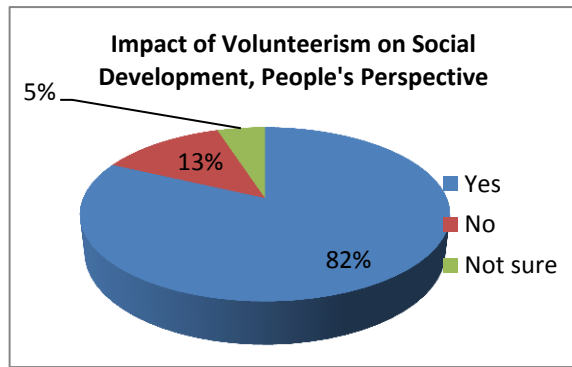


Figure 3 shows impact of volunteerism on the social development.

Figure 3 clearly shows the result of analysis and accepting the hypothesis that according to the people of Pakistan, There is a positive impact of Volunteerism on the social development of the country. There are a very low percentage of the people who think that there is no impact of volunteerism on the social development of the country. So, we accept the hypothesis.

CONCLUSION

The culture of Volunteerism is prevailing in Pakistan society and according to survey results; it is good for the society development. The hypothesis for the research has emerged as follow.

H₀: Volunteerism has no impact on the Social Development of Pakistan

H₁: Volunteerism has a positive impact on the Social Development of Pakistan

We have concluded this research as follows:

- According to research, more than 60% of people strongly agree with this hypothesis that Positive trending of Volunteerism, will actually leads to social development of the country.
- According to the respondents, people in Pakistan are in strong favor of Volunteerism to be prevailed in the society for the betterment of our country.
- Respondent’s response, volunteerism is not having any negative impact on the youth of Pakistan and the organizations which are working in our country have no negative agendas.
- Respondents believe that volunteerism can help youth in giving hands on experience in their career which is very helpful for them and the culture of volunteerism is good for the health of the society.
- Many respondents showed strong belief that volunteerism is the outcome of frustration of youth which came due to the Government’s disability to work.

On the basis of the study it is concluded that people in Pakistan are bending more towards volunteerism in the past 5 years. As a result, the Volunteerism is having a positive impact on the social development of the country and society.

Recommendations for Further Research:

This research study has opened the new horizon in the area of volunteerism in Pakistan. We can take this forward and can

lead to a new direction. Some of the recommended research studies can be initiated as follows:

- Why people choose to be a volunteer in a developing country like us?
- Broaden this research’s spectrum up to the South Asian or even to the world level as well
- The outcome of volunteerism in the country in the past 10 years.
- Variation between results of volunteerism in past 10 and past 5 years.
- New research techniques to recruit volunteers in society
- The types of volunteerism in Pakistan
- The driving force for the volunteers and comparison with the other countries(Case studies)

Due to ignorance of the concept and a new area of research prevailing one in Pakistan, a lot of gaps have been identified that can be taken in future as food for thought. It would surely weigh this research as a first drop for knowledge seeking. Present research has identified various gaps. Due to ignorance of the concept and a new area of research prevailing one in Pakistan, this research is a first drop in the ocean of knowledge that can be taken in future as food for thought. It would surely weigh this research as a first drop for knowledge seeking.

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