



Research Article

Potential Role of Local NGOs in Rural Development of Agricultural Communities: A Case of Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract | In Pakistani, due to a lack of income and resources, farmers in the selected area were still forced to take out loans to satisfy their basic needs, and the requirement of collateral places them at the mercy of the black market. Mostly people in that rural areas were depending a lot on NGOs for their basics needs. So, the Purpose of this research was to identify the possible role of NGOs in Pakistan's Agriculture sector. The experience of non-Governmental and community-based organizations were reviewed in this research. Pakistan occupies a unique position in the world as a poor agricultural country with few obvious indicators of poverty. The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the "function of NGOs in agriculture." The aim of this research was to see if non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are having a good impact on Pakistan's agriculture industry. The study used simple random sampling procedures to select 160 respondents as the study's sample. The questionnaire was utilized by the researchers to gather data. Statistical analysis was done to see the either NGOs were playing their best role in Agricultural Sector or not. To examine the research hypothesis, a chi square test was also used. The findings revealed that NGOs had a favorable impact on agriculture.

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Introduction

Poverty in rural areas is exacerbated by several fundamental issues (Habib, 2021). Financial resources, such as wealth, employment, and infrastructure, as well as social assets such as agricultural resources, healthcare services, educational institutions, and transportation, are distributed unequally. Things characteristics suggest that not

everyone has the same possibilities to obtain these, and that not everyone has the same information on how to progress their agricultural, which is where NGOs come in handy. Another major factor is environmental degradation, which many people in the agriculture industry are unaware of but which has serious consequences (Aftab *et al.*, 2002; Siddiqua *et al.*, 2019).

Since a long time, agricultural defecation has been a significant issue. It has now become a big attraction. Perhaps the globe will face significant challenges in the food sector in the coming years, but no one seems to be concerned about this. It is going to be a major problem. When we look at the agricultural sector in Pakistan, we can see that there has been very little improvement in this area (Habib *et al.*, 2018).

The concept of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is far from novel. In Pakistan, most people reside in rural areas and have little knowledge of agricultural modernization and reform. As a result, NGOs play a critical role in guiding small farmers to improve their agriculture sector. NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) play a critical role in Pakistani agriculture, raising awareness through their various programmes in rural areas and offering their best services at the grass-roots level (Huang, 2005).

NGOs have direct contact with the local population, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of their surroundings and needs, allowing them to better reach the poor and act more effectively. This review endorsed local NGOs as new agricultural actors. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are more successful in reaching the poor and alleviating poverty because they are small, flexible, inventive, and participative. In comparison to public organizations and the government, NGOs are more cost-effective and efficient service providers. They were successful in reaching those poor people who had previously been overlooked by the market or the government. As a result, NGOs have become more influential in the agriculture industry.

The researcher wanted to know how different non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a role in Pakistan's agriculture industry. The goal of this research was to discover if there was a link or association between various types of initiatives provided by various NGOs and improved performance in the Pakistani agriculture sector.

In the agriculture industry, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a critical role. When we look at the results of the SRSP and the Rural Development Program, we can see how these NGOs in the agricultural sector have helped many families alter their life. Microcredit is now available in

Pakistan's distant areas, per-urban offices, and urban offices via village Branches (Habib and Muhammad, 2014).

Finally, we can say that NGOs can advocate for small farmers' interests in agricultural, communicate their problems and create awareness on how agriculture, particularly smallholder agriculture, can promote rural development. They can establish institutional linkages and affiliate with international networks to improve their access to different media and better information.

Statement of the problem

The functions of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Pakistan's agriculture sector were the subject of this study. In Pakistan, around 67 percent of the population live in rural areas, and their livelihoods are dependent on agriculture; nevertheless, poverty is increasing daily because of this. Many times, the agricultural sector is overlooked, but because agriculture is Pakistan's backbone, there must be some visible strategy with a direct link to agriculture. This research examined the various ways in which non-governmental organizations (NGOs) might assist farmers in improving their lives. The researcher chose this research topic since no studies on the function of NGOs in agriculture have been undertaken. This research was aimed to assist people in understanding their abilities and effectively utilizing them.

Objectives of the study

Overall objectives of the study were to examine the role of NGOs in Agriculture and then based on the research to suggest some policy guideline to relevant stakeholders.

Literature review

Agriculture has been described as the "backbone" of any country. Agriculture, according to the expert, entails providing material goods and opportunities to earn money to address basic difficulties. The government should aid small farmers in rural areas. Finance, training, irrigation, marketing, educational and medication facilities, and the legal environment are all intended to help disadvantaged farmers (Rajasekhar, 2002).

Microfinance has gained popularity in Pakistan as a tool for social mobilization and poverty reduction since the late 1990s. International Financial Institutions,

for example, aided both public and private sectors by contributing to the development of the country's microfinance sector (Habib *et al.*, 2017). In 2000, the Pakistani government took a giant step forward by creating the Microfinance Sector Development Program.

The Pakistani government is emphasizing microfinance by making it more advanced and accessible to the poor. The main goal of the Microfinance Sector Development Program is to provide disadvantaged people with financial aid so that they can pursue their dreams in agriculture, which would benefit the country. In addition, the Pakistani government enacted the Microfinance Institutions Ordinance 2001 to support the microfinance sector's development (Abbas and Abbas, 2015).

In Pakistan's agriculture sector, NGOs play a critical role in raising the aspirations of poor agrarian family units for everyday amenities. NGOs see agriculture as a critical aspect in Pakistan's rural areas. They have begun a variety of empowerment programmes in Pakistan's rural areas to help disadvantaged farmers (Tahir and Tahir, 2015).

Agricultural reforms or knowledge is a process of increasing pay and socioeconomic strength to speed up the fulfilment of basic needs and managements while also constructing a range of benefits that will reduce family unit vulnerability to physical, communal, and economic shocks. This sector is extremely important to small-scale farmers (Bamwesigye, 2008; Siddiqua *et al.*, 2019).

Empowerment theory

She considers empowerment to be a personal development, according to (Rowlands, 1997). She also considers empowerment to be a three-dimensional concept (Rowlands, 1999). Empowerment on a personal level means that an individual has confidence in himself, while empowerment on a collective level means that all concerned people work together to attain a common goal. To raise the standard of living, livelihood, and environment, or to focus on household requirements.

Application of the theory

Most social problems are caused by unfair resource allocation or a lack of adequate knowledge. Empowerment can help developing countries like

Pakistan make more effective reforms in agriculture and reduce poverty. The most important thing for any individual is to allow him to do whatever he wants in life. All that is required is to present him with some information and opportunities to choose to live the life he desires, which can only be accomplished through empowerment. Pakistan is a developing country with around 39% of the population living in poverty and 67% of the population living in rural areas (Habib *et al.*, 2016). The main cause of poverty, according to him, is unequal resource allocation; people lack faith in their ability to transform their circumstances, particularly in the agricultural sector. Even though microfinance institutions play an important role in agriculture and helping poor farmers improve their living standards. In this way, NGOs empower people by providing them with resources such as funding and information.

Materials and Methods

Research technique is an essential component of any investigation or study since it directs the research. It is an overarching design for conducting research that emerges from the points and objectives of a study. Methodology refers to the systematic steps taken by a researcher from the first identification of an issue through its resolution (Kumar, 2019).

The current study focused on the function of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in agriculture. The conventional data analysis techniques of quantitative research were used to investigate the association between various quantitative variables (Tahir and Habib, 2013; Zahra *et al.*, 2017). The data for the study came from a primary source. A comprehensive questionnaire was created to examine the relationship between NGOs and Pakistani agriculture, and a sample of 160 respondents was selected using a simple random sampling technique. The data was analysed using the computer software (SPSS), Statistical Package for Social Scientists after it was collected. To determine the association between NGOs' role in agriculture in the research area, the Chi square test was used. Individuals were not the target population in this study; instead, only NGOs' beneficiaries were.

Results and Discussion

Mostly Male respondents were chosen for this study

since the agriculture industry is primarily carried out by men in society. Females were also hesitant to meet a stranger. Females were also involved in this story, although they were not eager to meet someone they had never met before. Another finding revealed that most of the respondents had worked as a farmer. They were quite interested in taking out a loan, and they were well informed of how to use it and how it would be used. Most people were content with NGOs' participation in agriculture, according to the data, and they were satisfied that NGOs work in a variety of agricultural fields, which is a positive indicator for the rural sector. Many individuals rely on these organizations to improve their agricultural production. Some of the respondents were educated, but the most significant thing was that they were aware of the problems they were facing in the agricultural sector. As a result, these people made most of the family decisions because they were aware of the facts.

They understand their issues and how to solve them. They were also aware of the benefits of using a microcredit loan in agriculture. Money is the world's most powerful force. For any individual, it is the finest evaluator. Most respondents expressed satisfaction with the work of various NGOs in the agrarian society. It demonstrates that the government and business sector were putting forth their best efforts in the field of agriculture, which was the only way to alleviate poverty. So, based on my research, I have concluded that the agricultural sector was steadily improving, which was a positive indication for the country.

Like my research (Habib *et al.*, 2022) determined that the goal of agricultural support was to offer multiple essentials of life through financial empowerment. In the case of Pakistan, agriculture was a critical component of the country's development. In Pakistan, a large section of the population was reliant on this sector. This was a completely ignored area a few years ago, but now some NGOs were working to modernize the agriculture industry and bring it up to world standards.

Table number depicts that 6.9 percent respondent responded that they were Strongly disagree about the provision of technical opportunities to farmers in their area, 28.8 percent were in disagree and 33.8 percent were neutral, 23.8 percent responded in agree option while 6.9 said about strongly agree.

Table 1: *Microcredit NGOs are providing technical opportunities to farmers in your area.*

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree (SD)	11	6.9
Disagree (D)	46	28.8
Neither agree nor disagree (N)	54	33.8
Agree (A)	38	23.8
Strongly agree (SA)	11	6.9
Total	160	100.0

Table 2: *Your monthly income After getting Advancement from NGOs.*

	Frequency	Percent
Better	83	51.9
Same	71	44.4
Worse	6	3.8
Total	160	100.0

Agricultural poverty in Pakistan is a growing socioeconomic issue that poses severe issues for the Pakistani government to address. According to estimates, 39 percent of Pakistan's population lives in poverty. As a result, a large portion of Pakistan's population lacks adequate food. The financial strength of the agrarian family unit was our main descriptive variable. Financial strengthening has been shown in experiments to significantly improve poor farmer outcomes.

The purpose of this study was to look at the Role of NGOs in Agriculture, with the universe for the study consisting of small-scale credit borrowers or NGOs' trainee farmers. The results shown by this research provided a proof that Small-scale loans provided by NGOs to farmers was the key source of agricultural innovation in the selected areas.

Testing of hypothesis

Hypothesis: Association between types of programs and better performing regarding agriculture.

Null hypothesis: There is no association between types of programs and better performing regarding poverty alleviation.

Alternate hypothesis There is an association between types of programs and better performing regarding poverty alleviation.

Table 3: Do you think that NGOs performed a better role regarding Agriculture? * How NGOs improve agriculture in your areas? Crosstabulation.

		Count				Total
		How NGOs improve agriculture in your areas?				
		Through social mobilization	To give the basic needs	To give the micro credit	To provide technical trainings	
Do you think that NGOs performed better role regarding agriculture?	Yes	10	8	106	5	129
	No	8	3	15	5	31
Total		18	11	121	10	160

Table 4: Chi-square tests.

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	17.457 ^a	3	.001
Likelihood ratio	15.142	3	.002
Linear by linear association	3.516	1	.061
N of valid cases	160		

a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.94.

The Table depicts the relationship between performance and agriculture as seen through the eyes of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The extracted results indicate substantial results; there was a strong significant link between Do you think NGOs played a better role in agriculture? and Do you think NGOs played a better role in agriculture? What role do NGOs play in agriculture? As a result, the alternative hypothesis statement can be taken as true, and it is concluded that NGOs played a better role in agriculture.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The current study focused on the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in agriculture and the services they provide to people through credit or technical instruction. We also considered the services provided to the individual. According to our research, organizations were effective because farmers were so happy; in fact, most of the respondents in the survey belong to the lowest class of farmers. They were heavily reliant on farming, and their agricultural output income was low, but they have a high level of faith in non-governmental organizations. Individual strengthening was used by NGOs to alter the lives of poor farmers who were given loans. This research explained that non-governmental organization (NGO) programmes were effective in engaging disadvantaged farmers.

Overall, evaluations by this research confirm that international NGOs have been effective in their ability to work at the grassroots level and to operate in remote areas, or those sectors that did not have efficient development activity. Their role in sensitizing governments and development organizations to the environmental considerations of projects was well documented. But there were limitations in the area of management, local staff training, and the ability to replicate projects and collaborate at appropriate levels with governed services.

Based on findings of the study following recommendations are suggested

Based on this research our research concluded with these remarks that Majority of the benefices of the NGOs were unskilled and needed operational help for leading effective farming. So, NGOs working in agriculture must have to play their best role in this favor and operational help to benefices must be provided. With this training program must be started where farmer could learn something new. Last but not the least most important point we learnt in our research was that NGOs must take responsibility and lead the business under their very own supervision based on organization with the benefices.

Novelty Statement

No one research has been done on this topic, so it was a new phenomenon in Agriculture Field and at the end we saw that NGOs are playing their major role in Agriculture of Pakistan especially in the selected areas.

Author's Contribution

Asim Zubair: Overall, Topic, sketched the main body of the paper and wrote abstract and introduction.

Iffat Batool: Helped in data collection, data handling

and mainly in conclusion writing.

Ghulam Akbar Malik: Helped in research methodology and literature review.

Conflict of interest

The authors have declared no conflict of interest.

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