

Synergizing The Potential Of Civil Society Organizations (Csos) For Poverty Alleviation In Pakistan

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Abstract:

In the aftermath of the 2022 floods, the Health Department adopted a three-pronged strategy to address the crisis: restoring health facilities, coordinating with partners for a collective response, and monitoring disease outbreaks. As a signatory to the International Health Regulations (IHR) 2005, a collective response to outbreaks was necessary, leading to collaboration with organizations like WHO, UNICEF, and ICRC. Health facility clusters were established, and the government's strategy focused on Prevention, Detection, and Response. The department set up Provincial Disease Surveillance and Response Units (PDSRUs) and District Disease Surveillance and Response Units (DDSRUs) under the supervision of the DGHS and Deputy Commissioner. These units aimed to provide rapid action in case of outbreaks. This paper evaluates the operational gaps in health department responses, including monitoring, damage assessment, and surveillance of diseases. It critically examines leadership tenures and response effectiveness, offering conclusions and recommendations for improving health department operations.

Key words:

Flood response, Disease surveillance, Health facilities restoration, Provincial Disease Surveillance Units, Outbreak management

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Introduction

Poverty is a very complex global phenomenon. The World Bank defines poverty as:

“The inability to attain a minimal standard of living. It is hunger. It is lack of shelter. It is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. It is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. It is not having a job, it is fear for the future, living one day at a time. It is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. It is powerlessness, lack of representation, and freedom.” (World Bank, 2022)

The World Bank (WB) estimated that poverty in Pakistan increased from 4.4 percent to 5.4 percent in 2020, as over two million people fell below the poverty line. In September 2021, the government stated that 22 percent of its population lives below the national poverty line. Using the lower-middle-income poverty rate, the WB estimated that the poverty ratio in Pakistan stood at 39.3 percent in 2020–21 and 39.2 percent in 2021–22. (www.business-standard.com, 2021)

In Pakistan, the work of civil society organizations in poverty reduction initiatives is paramount. In addition to an organized network of Rural Support Programs (RSPs), Pakistan is among the few countries where citizens contribute significantly to philanthropic and charitable activities, helping the poor. The socio-religious context is also a major contributing factor to philanthropy and charity. These substantial supply factors have motivated CSOs to develop. The government has meager financial resources, and budgetary constraints are major fault lines in the fiscal policy that have limited resource allocation for poverty alleviation initiatives.

Experts contend that “CSOs are composed of voluntary and non-profitable associations and organizations of citizens, formed by mutual resolve, with the aim of achieving some civil goals.” (Michael Meyer, 2013)

There are an estimated 45,000 active nonprofit organizations (NPOs) in Pakistan, with more than six million members in their social mobilization networks and a quarter million staff members. Nevertheless, despite massive philanthropic efforts, the poverty indices show a rather stagnant position of poverty and disenfranchised populations over the past many years. (Ministry of Finance, 2022)

The stagnancy is demonstrated by no change in the statuses of SDG 1(No Poverty) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) in Financial Year 2021. Pakistan faces a unique paradox, where despite commitment of Government towards SDGs and massive philanthropic drives by CSOs, the same is not reflected as material change in poverty status. (Ministry of Planning ,Development and Special Initiatives, 2021)



(Ministry of Planning ,Development and Special Initiatives, 2021)

The national poverty scenario calls for a committed effort for synergizing poverty alleviation interventions by CSOs. Synergy as defined by Cambridge Dictionary is:

“the combined power of a group of things when they are working together that is greater than the total power achieved by each working separately:”

Synergization can be manifested in the form of synchronization, coordination and collaboration not only among the CSOs but also among the government structures, CSOs, donor agencies and the people.

Problem Statement

Poverty in Pakistan has almost reached endemic proportions in all its forms. It is much more acute and severe in rural areas, where around 63 percent of the total population is concentrated. Due to serious resource constraints, government structures cannot solely take effective remedial measures, and their performance largely remains quite deficient in reducing poverty. The domestic economy also has very limited capacity to ameliorate poverty by engendering economic growth. To fill this gap, a substantial number of CSOs are working in Pakistan for poverty alleviation.

Such CSOs can be grouped under many different categories, including organized rural support programs, charitable entities, faith-based NPOs, and NGOs set up by government support or GoNGOs.

The evident challenge of resource constraints in poverty alleviation, both in the public and private sectors, can be effectively tackled by joint resource mobilization through synergizing the potential of CSOs working for poverty alleviation. The strategically important agenda of synergizing the CSOs can be implemented by a variety of modes and means, including practices that promote inter-organizational coordination, collaboration, and cooperation. However, the different categories of CSOs working for poverty alleviation in Pakistan are quite diversified in terms of their orientation, focus, and modes of action. Such diversity becomes a great challenge when it comes to synergizing their potential, as it is evidently difficult to align diversified entities to work in unison. Although there is a lot of international literature available on the subject of synergizing CSOs, there are not many empirical studies that recommend specific and viable modes and means for synergizing CSOs for poverty alleviation in the peculiar Pakistani context. Hence, there is an evident need for greater research to identify precise and practical solutions for resolving the issue of synergizing the diverse CSOs working for poverty alleviation in Pakistan to ensure the most efficient results.

Scope of the Study

The study explores the issue of synergizing the potential of CSOs for poverty alleviation in Pakistan by focusing on the following main areas:

- The role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and donor agencies in poverty alleviation in Pakistan.
- The role of local NGOs like SRSP, Alkhidmat Foundation, and Akhuwat Foundation alongside INGOs in poverty alleviation in Pakistan.

- The impact of interventions by CSOs and Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in mitigating poverty in Pakistan.
- Review of the government structures responsible for the management of CSOs for poverty alleviation and public welfare in Pakistan.
- Identifying gaps in the policies and structures of the government to optimally tap the potential of CSOs for poverty alleviation in Pakistan.

The limitations of the study include the inability of the researchers, due to time and resource constraints, to physically inspect the projects being implemented by different CSOs for poverty alleviation and conduct on-spot interviews with public beneficiaries in the target communities in different parts of Pakistan, especially the far-flung rural areas.

Research Methods

The topic of this research purely relates to socio-economic spheres; therefore, both qualitative and quantitative methods, with a deductive approach involving interpretive research, have been used.

For data collection, secondary data has been gathered from available literature. Some primary qualitative data has been obtained from interviews with key informants, including upper and middle management of NRSP, Pakistan Center for Philanthropy, SRSP, Alkhidmat, and Akhuwat Foundation.

For analysis of the collected data, the following seven types of analyses were conducted:

1. Situation analysis
2. Comparative analysis
3. Impact analysis
4. Institutional analysis
5. Gap analysis
6. SWOT analysis
7. EETH analysis

Situational Analysis

The situational analysis of the role of CSOs and donor agencies in poverty alleviation in Pakistan has been conducted with reference to their role in synergizing activities targeted at the amelioration of poor rural communities, where the bulk of poverty is concentrated.

Situation Analysis of RSPs

In terms of synergized poverty alleviation, the Rural Support Programs Network (RSPN) is by far the most organized RSP network in Pakistan. RSPN consists of the following RSPs that follow a common outlook on rural development:

- Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP)
- National Rural Support Programme (NRSP)
- Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP)
- Ghazi Barotha Taraqati Idara (GBTI)
- Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP)
- Punjab Rural Support Programme (PRSP)
- Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP)
- Sindh's Graduates Association (SGA)
- Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO)
- Institute of Rural Management (IRM)
- Azad Jammu and Kashmir Rural Support Programme (AJKRSP)
- Foundation for Integrated Development Action (FIDA)

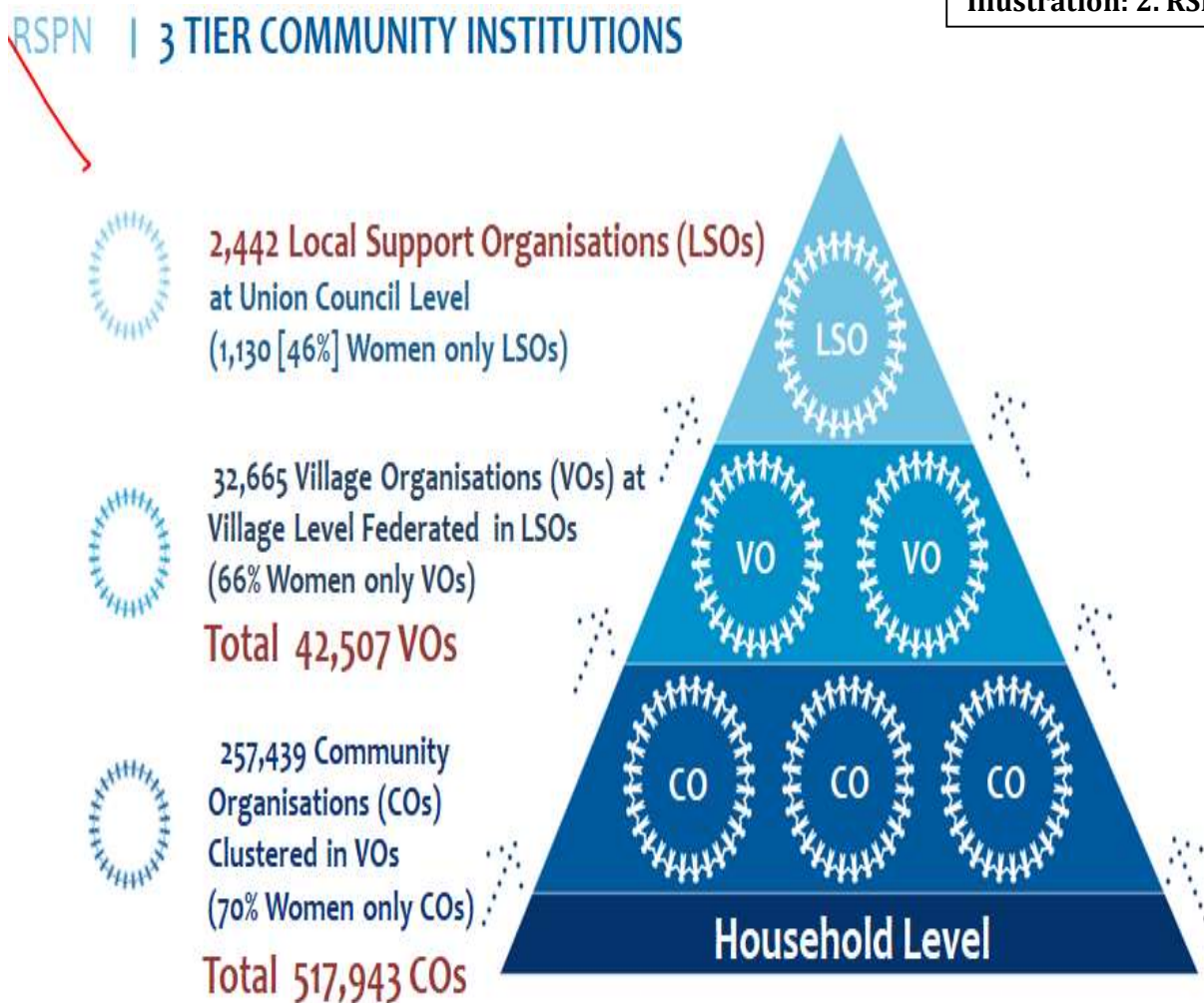
RSPN's main focus is to facilitate, strengthen, and support its member RSPs to foster sustainable institutions of the people. Its mandate is centered on ensuring that all RSPs follow the core social mobilization approach, and on improving coordination and communication between the RSPN network and key development partners – especially the government, donor organizations, and civil society.

The situation analysis of RSPN has been carried out with reference to the following seven vital factors relating to the network of community organizations (COs) established under RSPN, as community-based organizations (CBOs) are the greatest contributors towards synergizing pro-poor programs: (Pakistan Center for Philanthropy, 2022)

- Total number
- Area-wise coverage
- Population coverage
- Household coverage
- Membership
- Gender parity
- Tier-wise breakup

The results of the situation analysis reveal that the RSPN network now covers 4,693 union councils in 149 districts of Pakistan, including the Newly Merged Districts (former Federally Administered Tribal Areas, FATA). The total number of community organizations set-up under the RSPN network amounts to 517,943 with a membership of 8,846,984 community members. These COs cover a population of 54 million and benefit around 8,541,638 (8.5 households). In terms of their tier-wise breakup, the COs under the umbrella of RSPN comprise 32,665 Village Organizations (VOs) (66% women), 2442 Local Support Organizations (LSOs) with membership of 1,130 (46% women). (Pakistan Center of Philanthropy , 2022)

Illustration: 2. RSPN



Situation Analysis of Donor Agencies

The situational analysis of the role of donor agencies in poverty alleviation in Pakistan has been carried out with reference to the ecosystem of synergy among donor agencies, CSOs, and government entities. The factors used for this analysis include the involvement of international donors, as well as the number and cost of donor-funded programs that conform to the SDGs 2030 under the UN Sustainable Development Framework, which relates to synergizing poverty alleviation initiatives.

The Government of Pakistan signed the UN Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF). This framework is a medium-term strategic planning document with planned results focusing on ten key outcomes, which were identified through extensive consultation with multiple stakeholders and aligned with Pakistan's development priorities.

The situational analysis reveals that 26 donor-funded projects amounting approximately to 12 billion USD, being implemented across Pakistan, conform to SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals), SDG 1 (No Poverty), and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger). Moreover, the donors involved include six major ones, i.e., the World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and KfW Development Bank.

The projects also contribute towards synergizing CSO-led poverty alleviation by supporting the development of policies for sustainable infrastructure provision through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). The projects are aligned with the Midterm Review of Strategy 2020, in which PPPs are a key driver of change. (UNDP, 2021)

Comparative Analysis

The analytical framework used for comparative analysis of the role of local NGOs like SRSP, Alkhidmat, and Akhuwat Foundation, and INGOs working for poverty alleviation in Pakistan involves the consideration of the following four factors:

- Organizational orientation
- Community mobilization
- Outlook towards microfinance
- Donor preference

The comparative analysis reveals that in terms of organizational orientation, SRSP is a formally recognized rural support program, Alkhidmat is a charity-based foundation, Akhuwat specializes in micro-financing, while INGOs such as OXFAM focus on social uplift in terms of internationally recognized principles such as gender parity, human rights, and social justice by supporting local development partners. (Alkhidmat, 2021)

In terms of community mobilization, SRSP operates through a province-wise network of Community Organizations, Alkhidmat employs its volunteer base, Akhuwat makes use of existing religious places such as mosques and churches for community engagement, while INGOs like GIZ support the implementation of their poverty alleviation programs by involving local community organizations on a self-help basis. (Alkhidmat, 2021)

Apropos the outlook towards microfinance, SRSP offers interest-based micro-loans (up to 30% markup in some cases), Alkhidmat and Akhuwat provide interest-free loans on the Islamic principle of *Qarz-e-Hasna*, while INGOs charge rent on loans disbursed through their local development partners such as NRSP, which operates a licensed microfinance bank. (Akhuwat, 2022)

In connection with donor preferences, Western international donors such as DFID and USAID have strong preferences for partnering with local RSPs such as SRSP and INGOs such as CARE International, while Alkhidmat and Akhuwat are more aligned with faith-based humanitarian donors such as Muslim Hands UK. (Akhuwat, 2022)

The comparative analysis also reveals that though the RSPs, charity-based NPOs, and pro-poor micro-credit organizations might differ in terms of organizational orientation, community mobilization, outlook towards microfinance, and donor preference, they are strikingly similar in their focus on important development sectors such as microfinance, health, and education, and in their adoption of the self-help model for community-driven development. For instance, Akhuwat has disbursed 4.5 million interest-free loans amounting to PKR 128 billion (USD 798 million) to over 3 million families.

It also supports a network of over 300 schools and has provided financial support to over 34,000 small businesses through its Corona Support Fund. (Akhuwat, 2022) Similarly, Alkhidmat disbursed interest-free loans amounting to Rs. 54 million to 1,453 beneficiaries in 2021 and provided academic support worth Rs. 99 million to 8,402 beneficiaries. Alkhidmat is operating a significant country-wide network of 95 health facilities, including in rural areas. (Alkhidmat, 2021)

However, due to the lack of operational linkages and the absence of any specialized unit in the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation to check duplication of poverty-related projects, overlap and duplication in similar programs being implemented by the different categories of CSOs is inevitable. The nascent database, by the name of District Development Portal under the Data 4 Pakistan initiative by the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation, only provides development profiles of the districts in Pakistan but does not map the new and ongoing projects being undertaken by different CSOs for poverty alleviation in the districts. Thus, it cannot account for operational overlap and duplication. Developing an effective mechanism for detecting duplication in poverty alleviation programs is indeed crucial, as operational duplication is directly opposed to synergy.

Impact Analysis

For the purpose of impact analysis of CSOs and PPPs in mitigating poverty in Pakistan, the impact of projects implemented under the RSPN was compared with projects executed in the PPP mode under the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF). The PPAF was set up in April 2000, under the overall control of the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation. The comparative impact analysis was based on the following three broad areas of intervention due to their strong connection with synergizing poverty alleviation:

- Capacity building
- Community infrastructure
- Micro-credit

The analytical comparison reveals that in the area of capacity building, projects implemented under RSPN have contributed towards the capacity building of 7.5 million poor people, of which 59% are women, while projects under PPAF benefited 1,156,000 individuals, including 49% women.

Similarly, 173,687 community physical infrastructure schemes were executed under the RSPN umbrella, while 38,800 infrastructure projects were completed as a result of PPAF projects.

Finally, 14.3 million micro-credit loans were distributed, including 60% to women, while 8.4 million loans were provided under PPAF projects, including 64% to women.

The analysis of the impact of the poverty alleviation programs implemented under the RSPN and PPAF's PPP-based interventions strongly hints at a developmental paradox in the poverty alleviation sector. On one hand, the impact of the programs in the three core areas of intervention—capacity building, community infrastructure, and micro-credit—seems quite satisfactory, if not impressive. There is also an upward trend in terms of expanding coverage of poor communities in far-flung rural areas. However, the dismally declining national poverty indicators reported by internationally recognized bodies such as the UN and the World Bank present quite a contrasting situation. For instance, as per UNDP figures, Pakistan has a dismal score of 50% in terms of achieving targets relating to SDG 8, i.e., “Decent Work and Economic Growth,” against the regional average of 65.9%. A similarly poor national performance is reflected in the score of 50% with regard to SDG 6, i.e., “Clean Water and Sanitation,” against the regional average of 65.9%. Likewise, Pakistan significantly lagged behind in terms of per capita income in the year 2020, which was only USD 4,770, compared to Bangladesh's per capita income of USD 5,310. (Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, 2021)

This developmental paradox in the poverty alleviation sector—which is worrying and perplexing at the same time—needs to be investigated through objective evaluation of the poverty alleviation programs by the CSOs. However, there is only one institution in Pakistan involved in performance-based auditing of CSOs: The Pakistan Center for Philanthropy (PCP). PCP's audit regime is focused on verifying that the tax exemptions claimed by the CSOs are justified through their performance. The Federal Board of Revenue provides the legally allowed tax exemptions to the CSOs based on the audit-based certification by the PCP. The PCP has serious capacity issues, which hampers its nationwide coverage.

Institutional Analysis

For the purpose of institutional analysis of the government structures responsible for the management of CSOs for poverty alleviation and public welfare in Pakistan, the role of the respective institutions was analyzed with regard to the following four vital functions:

- Registration and licensing
- Signage of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)
- Issuance of No Objection Certificates (NOC)
- Synergizing CSOs working for poverty alleviation

Each of the above-mentioned functional assignments is discussed in detail with regard to the responsible government institutions, the modes and means adopted by them, and their legal framework.

Registration and Licensing

As per the different nature of CSOs involved in poverty alleviation, a number of governmental institutions have been tasked with the responsibility of their registration and licensing. Registration of CSOs by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) is carried out under Section 42 of the Companies Act 2017. The SECP has trans-provincial jurisdiction for the registration of CSOs in all of Pakistan under the said law. (Democracy Reporting International, October 2021)

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Charity Commission, Sindh Charity Commission, Punjab Charity Commission, and the Balochistan Charities Registration and Regulation Authority are mandated with the registration of charity-based CSOs under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Charities Act 2019, Sindh Charities Registration and Regulation Act, the Punjab Charities Act, and the Balochistan Charities (Registration, Regulation and Facilitation) Act, 2019 (BCRA 2019), respectively. (Democracy Reporting International, October 2021). Though all four provincial government entities claim that these commissions are essential for making effective provisions for the registration, regulation, and administration of charities, fundraising, and collection of charitable funds, it is important to highlight that none of these entities act as a primary registration body. All the charity commissions require that a CSO be registered under another law before it can be registered with them. However, registration with the commission is mandatory in all three provinces.

The respective provincial Industries/Labor departments and the Balochistan Charities Registration and Regulation Authority are empowered to register CSOs under the Trust Act 2020 and the Societies Registration Act 1860 (SRA 1860). (Democracy Reporting International, October 2021). In addition, the Provincial Social Welfare Department and the respective provincial Industries/Labour departments, along with the Balochistan Charities Registration and Regulation Authority, also register CSOs under the Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies (Registration and Control Ordinance) 1961 (VSWA Ordinance 1961). (Democracy Reporting International, October 2021)

Signage of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

CSOs, including both INGOs and local NGOs receiving funds from abroad, are required to sign an MoU with the Economic Affairs Division (EAD), subject to the grant of an NOC by the Ministry of Interior. (Democracy Reporting International, October 2021)

Issuance of No Objection Certificates (NOC)

Under the Policy for Regulation of International Non-Governmental Organizations in Pakistan (2015), applications of both INGOs and local NGOs receiving foreign funding, initially submitted to EAD, are subsequently referred to the Ministry of Interior for issuance of NOC to commence operations. The Ministry of Interior refers the applications to as many as 14 federal and provincial departments for verification. The decision about the issuance of the NOC is made after this cumbersome verification process. (Democracy Reporting International, October 2021)

Synergizing CSOs Working for Poverty Alleviation

Although there is no specific governmental policy for synergizing CSOs in Pakistan, the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), established in April 2000 under the overall control of the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation, has the strategic role of synergizing the potential of CSOs in the poverty alleviation sector through Public-Private Partnerships by focusing on building and supporting value-based institutions, using community-based development approaches, and engaging local actors to provide key goods and services. PPAF has been spearheading the promotion of synergy in poverty alleviation by aligning resource mobilization, and strengthening organizational effectiveness and partnerships. PPAF is currently collaborating with 137 partner organizations in 147 districts across Pakistan. (<https://www.ppaf.org.pk/>, 2022)

The institutional analysis clearly highlights the fact that the problems of multiplicity of governmental organizations tasked with the management of CSOs, cumbersome procedures for fulfilling legal obligations prescribed for CSOs, and the lack of dedicated entities focusing on synchronizing poverty-related interventions by CSOs have a cumulative adverse effect on synergizing their potential. Simplified procedures and uniform focus are essential for promoting synergy, while complex practices and diversified focus hamper it to a great extent.

Gap Analysis

Under the analysis for identifying gaps in the policies and structure of the government to optimally tap the potential of CSOs for poverty alleviation in Pakistan, the major lacunae in the Pakistani context were highlighted with reference to international best practices.

As clarified in the situational analysis, the lack of operational linkages between RSPs, charity-based, philanthropic, and faith-based organizations is quite apparent, which is indeed a significant hurdle in creating synergy among CSOs working for poverty alleviation. Interviews conducted with the middle management of the RSPN, Alkhidmat, and Akhuwat Foundation revealed that there is hardly any collaborative engagement or even information sharing among them in the context of joint resource mobilization for poverty alleviation, though all three networks focus on rural areas through similar kinds of interventions aimed at capacity building and strengthening targeted poor communities.

Contrarily, in the Philippines, the local wisdom of the concept of *pakikipagkapwa* (holistic interaction with others) has been utilized to create a synergized poverty reduction paradigm which connects NGOs, INGOs, faith-based entities including Catholic, Methodist, and Protestant missionaries, humanitarian organizations, philanthropic NPOs, pro-poor micro-credit organizations, and community-based self-help groups. The implementation of the *pakikipagkapwa* principle is indeed greatly conducive to engendering synergy among multiple stakeholders from diverse backgrounds involved in poverty alleviation. (Baiocchi, 2002)

In the context of synergizing poverty alleviation programs being implemented by CSOs, the involvement of the target poor communities is inevitable, as they are indeed the greatest force multipliers in the fight against poverty. Public involvement is essential in the domain of resource allocation for poverty reduction projects so that their budget allocation reflects the priorities of the respective poor communities. However, budgeting techniques that are based on consultations and feedback from the targeted poor communities are still quite restricted in their use and application by CSOs and government structures in Pakistan. Conversely, due to state-civil society reforms in Brazil for synergizing civil society, an elaborate system of Citizen Participatory Budgeting termed *Orçamento Participativo* has been institutionalized quite successfully in the major Brazilian city of Porto Alegre, where municipal programs for poverty alleviation by CSOs incorporate organized consultation with target poor communities to align budget allocation with public expectations and priorities. (Asian Development Bank, February 2013)

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established cross-functional synergizing platform for rural support programs i.e. RSPN Nation-wide Outreach network of Community Based Organizations. Extensive experience of working with International and local Donors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited scope of collaboration. Activities' impact not reflected in national poverty indicators. Non-alignment with Government Poverty Alleviation Policy
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope for tapping community driven development Donors' support and trust leading to greater chances for funding Supportive external and international thematic policies and Law. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overlapping poverty alleviation programs Public misconceptions about CSOs. Cumbersome NOC issuance for INGOs

SWOT Analysis of Government's Poverty Alleviation Structures

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Dedicated body for aligning resources i.e. PPAF</p> <p>Existing framework (GoNGOs) for Public Private Partnerships.</p> <p>Leverage over the CSOs as Registration Authority</p>	<p>Inconsistency of Policy.</p> <p>Multiple Forums for CSOs' registration.</p> <p>Absence of Binding Framework for CSOs' synergy.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Achieving meaningful public support through demand driven poverty alleviation initiatives.</p> <p>Social empowerment through transparent participatory governance.</p> <p>Gaining increased international support by effectively pursuing CDD.</p>	<p>Conflicting policies and objectives viz a viz Development Partners.</p> <p>Political instability leading to compromised decision making.</p> <p>Negative propaganda against collaboration with CSOs.</p>

EETH Analysis

Enhancement of strengths	Eliminating weaknesses
Inclusion of Charity based, and philanthropic CSOs in rural support programs network. (RSPN)	Expanding collaboration to both policy and operational spheres.
Extending coverage to neglected areas especially NMDs	Strategic and tactical realignment through objective impact assessment
International advocacy for greater donor support.	Synchronization of policy with government priorities
Taking Advantage of Opportunities	Hedging Against Threats
Gaining public goodwill.	Ensuring GIS based non-duplication
Cementing partnership with donors.	Targeted public awareness campaign for vulnerable populations
Availing Optimal benefit of tax exemptions	Diplomatic engagement for Simplifying NOC issuance by respective governments of INGOs.

EETH Analysis of Government's Poverty Alleviation Structures

Enhancement of Strengths	Eliminating Weaknesses
Strengthening PPP based poverty reduction interventions	Political will for Sustained policy direction
Improving cost efficiency through performance based audit	Legislative policy for one window registration
Coupling registration with synergy.	Cluster based synergizing
Taking Advantage of Opportunities	Hedging against Threats
Achieving much needed public ownership for successful execution.	Policy Synchronization with International SDGs
Creating public stakes in state run poverty related programs.	Building national consensus for poverty alleviation to thwart policy variation
Translating international support into Enhanced poverty based Donor funding.	Involving public opinion leaders to dispel negative perceptions

Conclusion

1. The non-inclusion of charity-based, philanthropic, and faith-based CSOs in the support network for RSPs inhibits the synergizing of rural-based poverty alleviation interventions by the different categories of CSOs.
2. The multiplicity of government structures for the management of CSOs is not conducive to a holistic understanding of the modes and means required for effective synchronization of poverty-based programs being implemented by the CSOs.
3. The discrepancy between the data regarding positive outcomes by RSPs as well as PPPs and the poor national poverty indicators hinders the objective evaluation of poverty alleviation programs and synchronized goal-setting by the government and the CSOs.
4. The overlap in the poverty alleviation interventions by different categories of CSOs leads to functional duplication, which is strongly opposed to operational synergy.
5. Owing to the lack of public ownership and support, poverty alleviation programs in the PPP mode, being jointly implemented by the government and the CSOs, are not demand-driven.

Recommendations

The following practical recommendations are made to address the negative implications of the issues and challenges highlighted in the conclusions:

Short Term

3. Immediate capacity building of the Pakistan Center for Philanthropy should be carried out by setting up its sub-offices in all provinces to ensure objective evaluation of the poverty alleviation programs implemented by the RSPs as well as through PPPs for uniform target setting.
4. A sub-portal may be added to the existing District Development Portal under the Data 4 Pakistan initiative by the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation, which not only provides the details of all new and ongoing projects for poverty alleviation by CSOs but also offers intelligent duplication identification features to detect any operational duplication.

Medium Term

5. A “Synergy for Poverty Unit” (SoPU) should be set up as a one-stop shop solution under the auspices of the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation to facilitate CSOs focusing on poverty alleviation, both in fulfilling the prescribed legal obligations and in creating linkages with potential partner organizations for synergizing poverty-related interventions.

Long Term

6. Government structures and CSO networks for synergizing CSOs working on poverty alleviation in rural areas should jointly work to create linkages among RSPs, charity-based, philanthropic, and faith-based organizations by replicating the “pakikipagkapwa” model in the Philippines.
7. Citizen Participatory Budgeting practices, inspired by the Brazilian “Orçamento Participativo” model, should be made an integral part of all PPP-based poverty alleviation programs, so that budget allocations for selected interventions align with the public expectations of the targeted communities.

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