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HOW FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS CONTRIBUTE OR HINDER DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN - THE CASE OF AL-KHIDMAT FOUNDATION

Abstract:

Paper aims to explore the interactions between two different yet, linked aspects of the society; religion and development. The central idea of this paper is to look at how Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) draw on ideas and practices of development and religion, to carry out their social welfare activities and projects. Paper will be an attempt to explore the meaning, mission and trends of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and their characteristics, in terms of their nature, scale and affiliations with political or religious institutions in the contextual setting of Karachi.

The paper examines the emerging role of faith/religion in community development, as a counterpoint to modernization programs and projects based on Western models. It argues that FBOs occupy vantage positions over 'non religious' or mainstream organizations, in terms of recruiting staff/volunteers and funding, due to their affiliations with religion. However, although FBOs receive international recognition, stakeholders often tend to overlook the 'conservative approaches' adopted by these organizations. The conservative approaches adopted by FBOs often contradict the mainstream discourse of development. Thus, paper sheds light upon the role of religion in transforming and appropriating the mainstream development discourses and practices.

Thesis attempts to attain answers to research questions by employing qualitative methods of research. It focuses upon a case study of AKF, a welfare wing of Jamat-e-Islami, which is inspired by Islamic religious ideologies. It explores the organizational characteristics and its functioning, while contextualizing it in the broader theoretical framework of the subject.

Keywords:

Faith Based Organizations, Development, Al-Khidmat, Charity, Modernity

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ABSTRACT

Paper explores the interactions between two different yet, interlinked aspects of society; religion and development. The central idea of this paper is to look how Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) draw on the discourse of development and religion. Paper will be an attempt to explore the meaning, mission and trends within Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and their characteristics, in terms of their nature, scale and affiliations with political or religious institutions in the contextual setting of Karachi, Pakistan.

The paper examines the emerging role of faith/religion in development, as a counterpoint to modern programs based on Western models. It argues that FBOs occupy vantage positions over 'non religious' or mainstream organizations, in terms of recruiting staff/volunteers and funding, due to their affiliations with religion. However, the conservative approaches adopted by FBOs often contradict the mainstream discourse of development.

Research uses qualitative methods of research. It focuses upon a case study of a welfare wing of *Jamat-i-Islami*, a political party in Karachi, while contextualizing it in broader theoretical framework of the subject.

KEYWORDS

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INTRODUCTION

Relationship between religion and development has become a noteworthy phenomenon in the debates of international development. Implications of such relationship can be discerned in the practices of faith driven organizations, working for the humanitarian development around the world. Faith Based Organizations (FBO's) are the organizations, inspired by faith values, or affiliated with religious ideologies or institutions, to work for the betterment of communities. FBO's play a significant role in the developed as well as developing countries like India, Nigeria, and Pakistan, in providing services in health, education, development of civil society and socio political issues.

FBOs remained out of the development discourse, mainly because of their incompatibility with dominant modernization theories. Secularization, an outcome of modern thought, de-emphasized the role of religion in society, defining it as a superstitious phenomenon. As a result, mainstream development discourse, overlooked the role that faith plays in the field of development. A deliberate gap emerged between religion and development as a result of induced separation between religions and state. However, this trend has been challenged internationally since the early 1990's. As FBOs grow in size and number, religion is re-emerging as a central force – which mobilizes communities to carry out social welfare projects and deliver essential services to underprivileged communities. Religion in

this way, is *experiencing* resurgence in the modern world.

In Pakistan, a country founded on the basis of religious identity, religion remains a significant aspect of its socio-political fabric. It is estimated that almost one-third of the nonprofit sector in Pakistan is comprised by FBO's (Iqbal and Siddiqui, 2008). In spite of this, a very little is known about these organizations. Therefore, this study aims to highlight the ways in which FBOs contribute or hinder the processes of social development in Pakistan.

1. Conceptual Framework:

Many scholars have written about the relationship between religion and development, particularly analyzing Faith Based Organizations around the world. FBOs are generally defined as organizations affiliated with religious faith, working for the development of community. FBOs have institutional presence and rely mainly on voluntary contributions. There is a wide variety within FBOs themselves, extending from small community based networks such as, Edhi Foundation and Al Khidmat Foundation, to large internationally established organizations such as Caritas, Muslim Aid and local organizations. FBOs also differ in terms of their nature of work, and their political ideologies. Raney and Revelohirimisy (2016) argue, the term FBO should be seen as a multidimensional, heterogeneous categorization, spanning over many diverse types of organizations. It has been argued

that FBO is a wider term, constituting diverse types of organizations, differing in terms of their relation with religion and organizational characteristics. Sider and Unruh (2004) proposed five types of FBOs namely;

1. Faith permeated
2. Faith centered
3. Faith affiliated
4. Faith background
5. Faith secular partnership

Types that Sider and Unruh (2004) proposed specifically define different types of FBOs, and different scholar have applied it to FBOs worldwide. But these types may overlap when seen in the context of Pakistan, considering its diverse demography. Scholars like Mohammad Asif Iqbal, Saima Siddiqui and Nida Kirmani have also tried to conceptualize this term and categorize different types of FBO's which exist in Karachi particularly.

Defining FBO's or what characteristics classify any organization as FBO is difficult because of their multifaceted and ambiguous nature in Pakistan. For example, Islam underlies the ethics and missions of many religious as well as secular organizations, but that doesn't necessarily label all those organizations as Islamic or faith based. Mr. Mohammad Asif Iqbal, Deputy Managing Director-Research, of Governance, Civil Society Sector and Public Finance at Social Policy and Development (SPDC),

mentioned during an interview: "Religion is so embedded in everything in this country that it is difficult to draw a line between what is religious-based and what is not. Even the state itself is a religious institute, considering its identity "Islamic Republic of Pakistan".

On the other hand, there are organizations that do not expose themselves as Faith affiliated organization. For example, Edhi Foundation and Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), although have long history of philanthropy and faith motivated projects, do not consider themselves Faith based. In such a case, in Pakistan, it is complicated to categorize these organizations.

The study of FBOs and their identification is relatively new and complex. Kirmani (2010) suggested, organizations should be analyzed according to their degrees of religiosity i.e. the extent to which organizations are affiliated with religious ideologies. It is also the extent to which organizations are explicit or implicit about their religious identity. As Kirmani (2010) in her paper argued, religion is intertwined with every kind of organization, even if it is not an explicit part of it. Therefore, one should look at the degree of their religious affiliation i.e. religiosity. For example, organizations like Edhi Foundation or AKDN will be placed on the lowest end of religiosity spectrum, as they do not regard themselves as religious.

Identity of FBO helps in sketching the strategies and structural choices within organizations. Identity can be useful for FBO itself to get support and access to

communities. For example, as Benthall (2008) pointed out, the work of Islamic relief in Aceh, Indonesia was effective than other organizations, as they were able to reach Islamic communities due to their affiliation with religion. Similarly, FBOs sometimes become an obstacle in their way of getting funds and access to communities. As Kirmani (2009) highlighted, religious FBOs are often perceived to be linked with proselytization. Moreover, they are usually seen directed towards the same religious/political sect or group they are affiliated with, when it comes to service delivery. Many international organizations are also reluctant to give funds to religious organizations because of fear of religious radicalism and extremism.

It is therefore, knowing identity of an organization is significant in order to know the poetics and politics of an organization. As Kirmani (2010) highlighted, there is a vague relationship of organizations with religion. In Pakistan, there is no such thing as religious or secular. It is difference in affiliation degrees which determines the scope and nature of organization. Kirmani also points to the intermixing of religious and secular realms, particularly in the case of FBOs. This intermixing presents a challenge to classic notions of modernization and its product called; secularization – separation between state and religion.

In the era of modernity, role of religion was de-emphasized. However, in the contemporary period, religion is often a central force that motivates people for development and welfare work in the state. Thus,

religion is experiencing resurgence in the modern states. Justina Dugbazah (2009) argued, until recently, religion has always been marginalized from the discourse of development. It is seen as having to do with spiritual matters, and worldly development is a task for the state. Yet, in practice, religion and worldly development are both interwoven, as in the case of FBOs. Dugbazah (2009) argues, there has been a paradigm shift; religion, in many ways, feeds into development in the modern world. Hence, the existence of FBOs show that it is very difficult to pull out religion from the state. FBOs in this way, convince us to rethink the modernist ideological framework and challenge the secularization's idea of separating religion from the state.

Another important point that Kirmani highlighted is the blurred border between 'charity' and 'development'. She argues that many FBOs like AKF give charity and instant support to needy people, which is often regarded as 'development'. This intermixing of charity and development, serves as a gateway for further research on how FBOs actually perceive the meanings of 'development'. Her paper motivates one to inquire about the extent to which FBOs fulfil the long term development goals and align with the mainstream discourse of development. The Routledge Handbook of Religions and Global Development defined the role of FBOs in providing instant help and welfare to needy people across the communities. According to the author, local organizations work better at providing individual help and charity services such as food and clothing, instead of undertaking long

term development projects. Thus, FBOs are seen effective in short term humanitarian assistance, instead of producing sustainable alternatives. The book hence questions, the extent to which FBOs work on more projects such as infrastructure, employment, and sustainable ways of survival, instead of providing charity services to the needy people, which is not helping them to be independent enough for their long-term survival.

The working of FBOs solely for instant relief and charity further questions whether there has been any transition within FBOs from charity to more substantive 'development' work? *NGOization of Islamic Charity: Claiming Legitimacy in Changing Institutional Contexts* (2017) by Kaja Borchgrevink looks into this subject. Borchgrevinik talks about how it has become an international requirement for FBOs to move towards sustainable long term development goals instead of just focusing upon instant service delivery. Many FBOs have now introduced mainstream educational subjects such as science, commerce and technology in their Madrasahs which only focused upon religious teachings earlier. This particular transition has been followed by the 'institutionalization' of charity organizations in order to claim their legitimacy. Borchgrevink notes:

"...religious knowledge, texts and symbols have been complemented by technical knowledge and management expertise associated with development professionalism, drawing on the language and imagery of mainstream development

and humanitarian aid. Where Islamic texts and symbols were used to inspire and justify action and appeals, reference is now also made to development statistics and UN campaigns. One example of this is the focus on clean water” (page, 18).

This shift is also in order to attain international support, funds and legitimacy. It also helps them to ‘depoliticize’ themselves in the worldview. In this way, there is a change in nature of targeted projects and this change is accompanied by professionalization and institutionalization of these organizations.

Other than Kirmani and Iqbal, Masooda Bano’s “*Markers of Identity: Religious Political Parties and Welfare Work – the case of the Jamat-i-Islami in Pakistan and Bangladesh,*” 2009, is a case study which talks about an important aspect; the extent to which FBO’s are politicized. The ‘politicization of FBOs’ is the act of using welfare work to secure votes and political worth. Bano raises an important question; why do political parties have welfare wing?

Bano suggests, party draws its inspiration for welfare work from its religious commitments and is beyond patronage politics. It is to attain their ideological missions i.e. establishing a society based on God’s rule and Islamic principles. This mission provides motivation for seeking political power, leading them to engage in electoral politics.

Their welfare work also indirectly contribute to their vote bank.

In this way, the paper gives insight of how politicized FBOs can be a good source of political and religious proselytization through their provided services. For example; educational institutes like Madrasahs run by *Jamat's* welfare wings are likely to absorb *Jamat's* ideology and may thus likely to support their political agendas. In this way, 'welfare' has also emerged as an important tool of political mobilization.

Literature also points out the privileged reach of FBOs to rural and marginalized communities. FBOs are much more effective in providing instant services to communities, specifically where the state cannot reach. This is because FBO's are capable of social mobilization due to their affiliation with religion. They reach the poorest at the grassroots because religion remains at the heart of the community's life (Raney and Raveloharimisy, 2016).

Such grounding of FBOs in rural communities provide them enhanced access to these communities. Capillary reach of religion in the social domains reveals the vantage points FBOs have in marginalized communities. Wendy Tyndale, in her 2003 analysis of a World Bank survey that collected voices from around the world, found that "no other organizations are more firmly rooted or have better

networks in poor communities than the religious ones¹”

On the other hand, the report of “Berkeley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs” highlighted conservative approaches adopted by FBOs in terms of service delivery. Islam affiliated FBOs think that discourse on women’s right, reproductive health and family planning are inspired by the Western/modernist agenda. Thus, these topics remain out of their ‘development’ discourse and services. Subsequently, patriarchal gender roles are prominent in some FBOs, implicating gender inequality in the society. Madrasahs affiliated with FBOs, provide religious education with a very limited focus on worldly themes such as science, technology, commerce or even world history. This hinders the professional grooming of students, making them incompetent for job market and thus, imparting narrow worldviews. Other scholars doubt the emergence of radicalism due to molded religious education given at these madrasahs. Many madrasahs regard mainstream education as a Western plot, which is against the Islamic ideologies.

Another working paper from the department of Religion and Development, University of

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/jan/07/aid-without-faith-isthere-a-place-for-religious-ngos-in-the-21st-century>

Birmingham, stated that many FBOs including AKF, provide services such as Islamic education and sewing lessons to women. These organizations encourage Islamic education over worldly education for women, ultimately employing conservative approach towards development. More often, humanitarian assistance and conservative approaches towards 'development' go hand in hand in these FBOs. This is appropriation of discourse of development within these organizations. For this reason, it is important to identify what development actually is for these FBOs and how do they contextualize it in their own socio cultural frameworks?

The given review is a summary of what has already been written about the chosen subject. It gives theoretical and conceptual framework, for further analysis of a case study in Karachi. Paper uses the findings of ethnographic case study of AKF and how they get along with the broader debates revolving around FBOs, globally.

1.1 A functional definition:

Considering the aforementioned complexity of term FBO and diversity within FBOs in Pakistan, the paper employs a functional definition of FBO:

FBOs are part of Non-Profit organizations (NPOs), affiliated with religion, and focus on social services and development work. Their affiliation with religion must be identifiable in their work and discourse to be called a FBO.

In the light of proposed definition of FBOs in Pakistan, the paper chose AKF as a case study, for ethnographic and conceptual analysis. AKF works for the people of all sects/communities, regardless of their identity. It provides services in almost every area of human development including health, education, microfinance and disaster management etc. The organization was picked for analysis mainly due to its explicit relation with Islamic ideologies and presence across the country. The fact that organization is also linked with Pakistan's one of the most political parties; *Jamat-i-Islami*, also contributes to the areas of research which this paper aims to explore.

2. Methodology and Research Design:

The methodology builds upon the strategies and approaches adopted by scholars who previously studied FBOs in Muslim countries. Research methods employed in this study are mainly qualitative, including primary (interviews and participant observations) and secondary resources. It is a detailed ethnographic case study, contextualized in a broader theoretical and conceptual framework available on this subject.

As noted above, the study seeks to understand performance of FBOs in the context of Karachi. It conducts an ethnographic case study of AKF, to answer its main research questions. **The primary aim of this study is to analyze whether and to**

what extent, FBOs contribute in development sector of the city. This aim is addressed by answering the following research questions:

1. What are the approaches of faith based organizations in the field of development and to what extent do their approaches question the mainstream international discourse of “development”?
2. In what ways FBOs occupy a vantage point in the society, if they do?
3. What are the ways in which the rise in the role of Faith Based Organizations challenge notions of modernization?
4. Are FBOs politicized? Whether and to what extent the politicization of FBOs affects the work that they do?

AKF provided easy access to ethnographic research and analysis, due to its wide programmatic scope and wide reach to communities. AKF is an Islamic FBO and explicitly convey their identity as faith based. It is also affiliated with one of the most prominent political groups of Pakistan; *Jamat-i-Islami*. Its affiliation with political part, explicit Islamic identity, and wide range of social services being provided throughout the country, acted as a good field to examine the aforementioned research question and objectives. However, although

fieldwork provided good picture of its organizational characteristics and functioning of FBOs, it was difficult to record the impact of their instant or long-term development projects on beneficiaries and society as a whole.

2.1 Research Methods:

The conceptual framework for this research is developed by analyzing scholarly literature available on the subject. It provided basic ideas and tools for further in depth analysis of the themes, in the context of AKF in Karachi.

The primary methods of research used for this paper include, ethnographic field work, participant observation, structured and semi structured interviews with stakeholders, beneficiaries and volunteers. Fieldwork was supplemented by expert interviews and archival/document analysis including posters, websites and project files of the respective organizations. Ethnographic field study helped in understanding the nature, work environment and ethics within the organization.

2.2 Methodological challenges:

As mentioned earlier, the study of FBOs in Pakistan is relatively new. This fact also resulted as a potential challenge for qualitative research on FBOs in Karachi. It was difficult to find pertinent literature

which directly discusses the subject. As a result, the research heavily relied on ethnography.

One of the most pressing challenges of the research was the sensitivity around the question of religion itself. There is a general climate of fear amongst the public while discussing anything about religion, essentially when one is being critical about it. This hindered open negotiations about the ideological methodologies with organization stakeholders during interviews. Akin is the case with defining the political identity of organization. For example; Branch manager from AKF for Sindh frequently mentioned their independency from *Jamat-i-Islami* and unbiased services. He said: “although we were established as a welfare wing of political party, we are in no way directed to our supporters only, and work for everyone equally”.

Furthermore, the research couldn't sketch the long term impacts of organization for its beneficiaries. It is largely because of two reasons; first, many of AKF's projects are short term e.g. distributing Ramadan gifts etc. Secondly, the stakeholders were generally hesitant to provide much information about beneficiaries due to ethical reasons.

3. Research Findings:

3.1 Islamic Religious Ideologies behind AKF's missions and strategies:

AKF is an organization working in wide range of areas for development of communities. The organization works in seven major areas;

1. Disaster Management
2. Orphan care
3. Health
4. Education
5. Microfinance
6. Clean water
7. Community services

All of the projects and programs initiated by this organization are highly inspired by Islamic religious ideologies. Hence, its relationship with faith/religion is self-explanatory. Branch manager for AKF Karachi sub-office, Mr. Rashid Qureshi mentioned:

“During *Hijrat e Madina*, Prophet build a relation of *Akhuwat* (brotherhood). Prophet asked people of medina to be brothers of people from Mecca and share their facilities with them. We have adopted the same concept where we provide financial support through our microfinance department, totally in accordance with Islamic values”.

Hijrate-e-Madina was the first great migration of Muslims for their religious and social prosperity. When Muslims from Mecca came to Medina, the people of Medina welcomed them with love and sincerity, and helped them to settle down in Medina.

As Rashid Qureshi mentioned; their strong focus on *Akhuwat* stems from this event of the history. The inspiration that they borrow from Islamic history motivates them to work for brotherhood and support for needy people.

Other projects that AKF is currently involved in includes mosque rehabilitation, Ramadan packages and Quranic teachings etc. Organizations reliance on *Zakat* (almsgiving) for financial support itself shows the affiliation of organization with Islamic principles.

The organization's relation with Islamic values of brotherhood, sacrifice and charity is prominent in their rhetoric and nature of work. Within AKF, religion is the force which shapes perspectives on ideas regarding development. This kind of association with religion is what scholars regard 'Faith Based' or 'Faith affiliated' organization.

Relation of AKF – an organization working for public development, with religious ideologies and values shows the overlapping of religious and purportedly secular objectives. Providing clean water and building schools for underprivileged children is their religious duty for AKF, as well as part of the mainstream development discourse. Thus, their struggle for social justice emerges from both; religious beliefs and international development notions. The organizational characteristics such as the hierarchy within the organization, work environment, hiring of staff and official documents and websites are in accordance with mainstream

ways, employed by other non-faith based or 'secular' organizations. It is also due to the requirements of modern world, and international forums which are usually hesitant to support any religious organizations due to risk of religious fundamentalism. This convinces religious organizations to adapt mainstream ways of carrying out projects, stemming from religious inspirations.

In the light of this discussion, organizations like AKF convince us to rethink the ideological framework presented by the modernist thought. As Dugbazah (2009) argued, there has been a paradigm shift in thinking about religion and development; religion feeds into development of the modern world. Religion often shapes people's perspective about development. It shapes the worldviews of people and motivates them to participate in the development and humanitarian work.

As we face challenges that are beyond humanitarian control such as natural disasters, many look towards faith for developmental and rehabilitation solutions. Faith drives fight against injustice and inequality. FBOs, drawing their inspirations from religious ideologies, appear to be a relevant example of how religion is a significant part of worldly affairs. Kirmani stated: "Idea of religion is always intertwined with so called secular parties. The idea of zakat, charity is always there. There is no real, purely secular party in Pakistan".

In Pakistan, there is no clear separation between religion and secular. As South central Asia Berkeley

report highlighted: "Faith plays a prominent role in Pakistani life and society. A development practitioner suggested that faith is so deeply integrated within Pakistani culture that it is difficult to draw a line between "religious" and "secular" realms". Kirmani further stated: "... Even if an organization which is secular in nature, and does not identify themselves as religious based, it cannot separate itself from the fabric of society in which religion is an origin for almost everything". The case study of AKF shows that it is very difficult to pull out religion from country's socio-economic and political affairs. Thus, Pakistan is the state where secularization has always remained a failed experiment (Iqtidar, 2011).

Charity or Development?

Studies suggested that local organizations like FBOs work better at providing individual help rather than taking long term development initiatives (Tomalin, 2015, pg. 195). Sadqah Sallahudin, Manager of Indus Resource Center stated: FBOs are mainly welfare organizations, not development organizations like IRC and TRDP etc. (Kirmani, 2009). However, research findings question this argument;

Firstly, the extent to which FBOs are inclined towards long term development goals depends upon the size and nature of FBOs. Organizations like Saylani and Edhi are relatively small organizations in terms of administration, formal hierarchy, international links and organizational structures. AKF on the other hand, is very well

established. It has multiple offices, defined process for staffing and recruitment, and sustainable strategies towards development goals. They employ scientific and technical tools and have 'modernized' institutional characteristics such as computerized setup, and luxurious environment. It is relatively large, functioning in variety of areas with large number of volunteers and beneficiaries across the country.

The modern institutionalization and growth in size has enabled organization to work on larger issues. On one hand, AKF provides instant short term services such as community food drives. On the other hand, they have sustainable projects going on. More than 68 children are cared for under Al-Khidmat's "Orphan Families Support" program who participated in a worldwide painting competition titled "My dream car contest-2018" organized by Toyota Eastern Motor Company. Nine selected young artists will get a chance to visit Japan, with their parents or guardians, to inspect Toyota Motor manufacturing plant². They have many hospitals and organize monthly medical camps where quality treatments are provided at lower costs. Hospitals like Al Khidmat Hospital in Orangi Town Karachi

² <http://www.alkhidmat.com/my-dream-car-contest-2018-organized-by-toyota-eastetnmotor-company/>

are situated in urban areas, equipped with advanced necessary facilities. AKF's recently established Reverse Osmosis (RO) water plants in Karachi provide clean and safe drinking water to hundreds of people at very affordable rates. A security guard on the field mentioned, people can get one liter of filtered drinking water for 1 rupee only. Many people have this water filtration plant as their only source of safe drinking water. Thus, the distinction between charity/instant relief and long term development goals does not really apply to AKF which provides both.

This approach by AKF is part of an increasing trend among FBOs who have shifted their focus from charity to more substantive 'development' work. FBOs have gradually penetrated into broader areas of development such as disaster management, water provision, education and orphan care as discussed above. AKF recently inaugurated partnership with government as well as international organizations to gather social and international support. According to a representative from AKF Karachi, their development goals like clean water and education is also an international requirement to gather funds. Many international organizations are convinced to fund long term development projects instead of providing short term support. Hence, there has been a

significant transition that has occurred within FBOs.

To summarize, AKF although provides immediate relief support to communities, there has been a smooth transition from solely charity to broader development goals. The transition occurred firstly because organization itself grew in size. Secondly, to gather attention from global platforms.

3.2 Institutionalization of AKF:

FBOs have existed in this region since a long time; mapping goes back to pre-colonial times when FBOs existed as small religious philanthropic centers e.g., Sufi Khanqahs or Madrassahs. Several laws such as 1860 society registration act, the religious endowment act of 1863 etc. were introduced during the colonial period which institutionalized these organizations.

As stated, “the organizational culture of FBOs themselves is a product of development, and not just a network through which development happens” (Tomalin, 2012, p. 692). In the post partition era, Pakistan witnessed a rise in number of FBOs, including AKF. These FBOs emerged as a response to post partition crisis; they actively took part in helping refugees and providing instant service delivery to homeless. Initially, they used income collected from animal hides, to support their welfare programs. The organization

has gradually moved from community services to long term development goals, such as education and health. AKF was formally institutionalized in 1992, as a result of great influx of foreign funds and international attention in the milieu of post Afghan War crisis in the region (Kirmani, 2009).

As Mr. Rashid Qureshi, General Manager of AKF Karachi mentioned: “We were initially focused upon the rehabilitation and support for refugees or migrants from different countries. We were not institutionalized. Things have changed, and we work as more of an official organization now”.

According to Mr. Qureshi, AKF did not even have an office during its early period. However, not just that they have got offices, their offices are located in almost every region of Pakistan and are equipped with furniture, technological advancements, and computerized systems. AKF also adopted a systemized method of recruiting members and volunteers. Some of them on higher and managing positions are paid, while a big number of people also work voluntarily. Consequently, all of this transformation has led to ‘institutionalization’ of AKF. The institutionalization of an organization is a shift towards a professional, legalized and organized form of local welfare. As previously mentioned ‘institutionalization’ of FBOs also facilitated shift to long term development goals within FBOs.

All of these changes, have made the organization appear legal, transparent, systemized and thus, trust worthy and legitimate in the eyes of laymen as well as foreign stakeholders. For example, FBOs often find it difficult to assert their neutrality and legitimacy in front of international stakeholders. This is particularly due to their affiliation with 'religion' which makes them appear suspicious, especially in the post 9/11 era. The negative connotations and fear of militant Islam attached with the word religion undermine trust in these organizations. In such situations, to claim legitimacy, the organizations change their institutional environments by combining religious and professional authority.

While the ground level motivations are rooted in religion, they draw on the discourse and imagery of mainstream development and humanitarian aid. Their methods, websites and organizational characteristics present them as any other NGO.

Borchgrevink (2017) mentions: "Where Islamic texts and symbols were used to inspire and justify action and appeals, reference is now also made to development statistics and UN campaigns. One example of this is the focus on clean water. Giving water to the thirsty is a central teaching in Islam, and common undertaking of Islamic charity organizations. Over the years, the AKF has established some 2766 water wells and 1141 hand

pumps” (Page, 18). AKF regarded providing water as ‘*Sadaqah-e-Jariyah*’. *Sadqa-e-Jaariyah* refers to any charity that, once made, brings perpetual blessings to the giver/donor. At the same time, organization represents their work for clean water as one of the most significant tasks of the international development. For e.g. act of providing clean water is also linked to the United Nations (UN) World Water Day. Hence, it presents both, religion and worldly inspirations. The organization has also moved from alms to institutional funding from international donors.

As a result, organizations affiliated with religion/faith become religious as well as institutional NGO. Borchgrevink termed this ‘duality’ of FBOs as ‘Muslim NGOs’. The label NGO is represented as a legal term, used as a way of claiming legitimacy. Through this term, organizations indicate that they meet international standards of professional aid and development organization.

Politicization of FBOs:

Mr. Faisal Rizwan, General Manager for AKF Sindh mentioned: “I won’t deny the affiliation of AKF with *Jamat-i-Islami* but I’m proud that our work is never biased towards any particular party. Moreover, even though we are affiliated with an Islamic political party, our work is focused in a region where there is Hindu majority. Hence, there is no influence from any political or religious party on our work”.

Pakistan witnessed religion in almost every aspect of public or private life. The religion in this way has also been an effective tool in securing public support for political parties. In case of FBOs, particularly those affiliated with political parties, it is often assumed that work that organization does is merely a way of securing political privilege. Hence, the question emerges, are FBOs 'politicized'? If yes, then to what extent the politicization impacts the nature of work that a particular FBO is doing? Whether organization is impacted by its affiliation with political party was further investigated by interviews with volunteers and field surveys, which exposed more information regarding the hiring process. All of AKF's projects are based in diverse areas of the country including regions like Gilgit Baltistan and Tharparkar, regardless of ethnic and political population in these areas. The projects express Islamic values and principles which are not biased towards specific political or sectarian values. Although the organization receives massive Financial and voluntary support from Jamat, their services are not limited to any particular group. Even the Zakat that they receive is used, regardless of caste, religion or political aspects. The websites and brochures show that AKF's projects are based on religious motivations, employ purely Islamic discourse and approaches, without any mention of their affiliation with *Jamat-i-Islami*.

As Bano argues, the Jamat in Bangladesh and Pakistan are always seeking opportunities to help their community while remaining true to the tenets of Islam. Jamat's inspiration lies at the intersection of their religious commitments and the needs of the community. Therefore, for example, education is a large concern as was emphasized by the Prophet. The welfare work that organizations does is beyond any material gains or political greed; the welfare work is not to attract votes but to attain the higher mission of establishing a society based on Islamic principles. It is this mission of achieving Islamic ideological missions which also motivates them to run for political control, in order to impose *Shariah* and establish Islamic ways of life. As Bano mentions: "The Jamat's aims of establishing a society based on the rule of God provides a motivation for seeking political power, leading the party to engage in electoral politics. However, it is important to note that the capture of state power is considered as the means and not the end: the end is establishing God's rule, which implies establishing a just society" (Page, 13). Investment in social work is another route to establishing the rule of God on earth. Politics and welfare both are regarded as two sides of the same coin i.e. establishing a society based on Islamic principles.

Hospitals and schools run by AKF offer services at subsidized rates. They are not totally free of cost and charge certain amount

for all the beneficiaries, just like any other organization. Subsidized rates for beneficiaries, shows that the services provided are not sufficient in itself to ensure that beneficiaries vote for the respective party. A volunteer of AKF, who is also a member of Jamat, explained, his motivations to volunteer for AKF emerge due to organization's Islamic ideologies, and not because of his affiliation with party itself. When he was asked if he would still work for AKF if it was not affiliated with Jamat he said: "I work here at AKF because it gives me inner satisfaction for doing some good work for Allah, not for any political party". In fact, most of the AKF volunteers are not in any way involved in Jamat's political work. While spending few hours of volunteering with AKF's women wing, at no point I was asked about my political or religious background. They only preach about Quranic verses and the Day of Judgment. Motivation for welfare work is purely the desire for religious reward and fear. Within Islamic religious teachings, it is believed that those who give religious charity in any form (monetary or with time or knowledge) for welfare work in this world will receive certain rewards on the Day of Judgment. It is believed that Allah will shelter those who give charity and care for the poor, on the Day of Judgment.

Not just in Islam but in other religions like Christianity, religious charity in this world is considered to be 'gift to God' which will be

'treasure in heaven'. As Peter Brown, while discussing about Christian Bishops and charity in the early notions of Christianity, in his book *Through the eye of the needle* argued, the gifts to God implicit expectation of reward in the afterlife or in heavens. It was believed that what we gift as charity to churches will give us reward in heaven. This logic of religious exchange convinced people to give gifts in the name of God. The rich donated not only to get treasure in heaven. Similar is the case with Islam and organizations like AKF, where volunteers pave their services and donate because of their religious beliefs associated with charity and welfare. Thus, the matter is beyond any political influence.

AKF recruits ideologically committed members. Their members are required to donate 5% of their annual income to the Jamat fund. Sometimes, members take managerial positions at AKF without drawing salaries. The doctors who usually charge high amount of money for any other institute, charge low fees (at times no fees) for treating patients of poor communities. Head of the medical team in Sindh said: when he works for organization like WHO, he will charge a hefty fee, but working for AKF is the work for Allah (Kirmani, 2009). People on managerial positions like Mr. Rashid Qureshi himself, are affiliated with organization since their childhood. He says: "During *Eid ul Adha*, I never saw sacrificial of

my animals because I was always busy in collecting skins for donations. Because I had in mind; these skins might be a cause of any good for poor people. This motivation always kept me inclined towards volunteerism. This is what inspires volunteers to work". AKF also claims to be the NGO with biggest number of volunteers from throughout Pakistan. They claim to be the only NGO to take only 10% of donations for their own salaries and maintenance of their office. Even though, international laws indicate that NGOs can take 40% of the donations received as their admissible costs. These facts agree with Bano and Rosenblum who argued that the causes behind welfare work are beyond any material or political gains.

Masooda Bano (2009), discussed the extent to which FBO's are politicized. According to her, the 'politicization of FBOs' refer to the act of using welfare work to secure votes and political worth. She raises an important question; why do political parties have welfare wing? Is it merely in order to secure votes? Or is it truly for welfare purposes?

Bano's work is focused on analyzing the work of AKF, which is a welfare wing of one of the most prominent political parties of the time; *Jamat-i-Islami* in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Her study refers and supports the work of Rosenblum (2003) who argues that motives

behind welfare are much more complex than any material opportunism (Bano, Page 12) Jamat's welfare work is beyond patronage politics. Jamat draws its inspiration for welfare work from its religious commitments. Their welfare work is to attain their party's ideological missions i.e. establishing a society based on the rule of God. The welfare work including initiatives for equality, education and poverty alleviation are to attain a society based on Islamic principles. It is this ideological mission of attaining a society based on Islamic principles, which provides motivation for seeking political power, leading the party to engage in electoral politics. However, it is important to note that the capture of state power is considered as the means and not the end: the end is establishing God's rule, which implies establishing a just society.

Although the above analysis reveals that reason for party's involvement in welfare work is beyond patronage politics, their service delivery makes an indirect contribution to party's vote bank. The implicit possibility of increasing their electoral support through welfare work cannot be ruled out. As Bano explains while talking about the same phenomenon: "First of all it brings intellectual change in people; second [it] organizes them in order to make them suitable for the movement; thirdly, it reforms society through social and humanitarian work; and finally it

endeavors to change the leadership” (Page, 12). Thus, the ‘visibility’ of welfare work certainly impacts the overall functioning of their party.

Other than Bano (2000), many critics also contend that faith-based organizations mix philanthropy with proselytizing, intentionally or unintentionally. Additionally, they point out that religious morals could potentially get in the way of effective aid or treatment³. FBOs can be a good source of political and religious proselytization through their provided services and educational institutes like Madrasahs. For example, students at schools run by Jamat’s welfare wings are likely to absorb Jamat’s ideology and may support party as adults. Hence, research shows how ‘welfare’ has also emerged as an important tool of political mobilization in contemporary contexts.

3.3 Privileged Position in Society:

The offices of AKF can be found in remotest of places, where government services do not reach, for example in the interior Sindh or mountainous areas of Gilgit Baltistan in the country. All three offices of AKF in Karachi are located in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities.

³ <https://globalprosperity.wordpress.com/2012/02/14/in-god-we-trust-the-pros-and-cons-of-faith-based-organizations/>

These are the areas where government services seem to be least reachable or effective; poor road conditions, large slums and closely knitted communities. Its women's wing is located in the basement of a Mosque, and the nearby area is mainly populated by Pukhtun ethnicity, surviving in poor conditions. They can reach the poorest at the grassroots because religious institutions such as churches, mosques, and temples are at the heart of the community's life. In the case of AKF, their links with mosques and strong grounding in nearby communities grant them legitimization and vantage position in the societies, as people tend to trust these organizations more than government or any other organizations.

In Pakistan, mistrust in state-run social development projects has increased the significance of FBOs. Dominance of FBOs also reveal the inability of the state to reach the local communities in need in Pakistan. For example, the NGO sector flourished during 1980's as a result of state's incompetency to meet social needs (Kirmani, 2009). Although on one hand, rise in FBOs reveal state's inefficiency. On the other hand, they also reveal efficiency of FBOs, in filling the gaps which had been left by the state.

While explaining the process for recruiting volunteers, GM of AKF Sindh stated: "How we recruit volunteers is very simple; we just tell

them basic things about Islam and how significant it is for themselves and for the community. We just let them know the importance of 'Zakat of body' i.e. to serve with your physical abilities. If you can't serve financially, serve with your talents. Be it photography, medical services, designing or whatever. We tune up volunteers. We revive their love for people and community, and groom their affiliation with Islam". Similarly, when I visited Al Khidmat Women's wing, they were preaching women from 'elite classes' and posh areas about the importance of charity in Islam. They also preach these women the dangers of wealth in Islam. Naveeda Anis, representative of AKF Women's Wing explained: "I go to places and preach the purpose of life. I tell them about the higher aim of their life; why God created them. Why do we come to this world? To have fun? No. In Quran, Allah says: '*Aur nahi banaya mene jino aur insaano ko, magar is lye ke wo meri bandage karey*' (I created supernatural and human beings so that they worship me). What does '*bandagi*' (worship) means? *Namaz* (prayers)? *Roza* (fast)? That's not all. These all prayers have an aim. To realize that we have someone superior to us. Fast, so we realize the hunger of poor, thus, realization of conditions poor face is important. And it is important for us to help them". Considering what Ms. Naveeda explained, the higher aim of AKF's women wing is not just to help poor but also to connect people from elite classes

to Islam and Quranic teachings. The Quranic teachings which AKF promotes are based on their own subjective interpretation of Quran. This is also how they gather funding and voluntary support as well; by molding their work into the framework of Islamic ideological teachings.

Thus, the reason why FBOs have been effective enough to fulfil the gaps where govt. was not able to work efficiently, is their privileged positions that they occupy in Pakistan particularly. As discussed above, research pointed out the privileged reach of FBOs to rural and marginalized communities, due to their unique relation with religion and sensitivity to social needs which makes them look trustworthy. As a result, FBOs appear much effective in providing services to communities, where reach of the state is rather limited.

AKF's women wing attracts support from elites by making them realize the struggle of poor people. They take them on field visits to show them the work they do. As Ms. Naveeda says: "Women from elite class come here and we preach them how poor in this country survive. You can see a truck full of stuff outside which is ready to go to Tharparkar for the help of needy people. All these things come from upper class. Our one feet is in upper class and one is in lower class. We act as a bridge. We also take them to slums and show them the

sufferings of their lives. Then they come and their money also comes”.

It is this strong believe in religious values which strengthens the relationship of volunteers with AKF. Sometimes, volunteers prioritize AKF over their education and family commitments. A female volunteer from AKF women’s wing said that she has been working with AKF since a long time. Now is thinking about continuing her higher education but she is not convinced about leaving AKF. Continuing her education will require her to spend less time at AKF. Here, volunteers tend to have a personal commitment with AKF. The reason behind their strong attachment and commitment with AKF is their religious beliefs and ideologies.

In this way, religion tends to attract trust of people more than the secular state can get it. People often look for religious or faith based solutions in the crisis situations, rather than relying on state’s official services. Such grounding of FBOs in rural communities provide them enhanced access to these communities. Wendy Tyndale, in her 2003 analysis of a World Bank survey that collected voices from around the world, found that “no other organizations are more firmly rooted or have better networks in poor communities

than the religious ones⁴” Due to their religious affiliations, FBOs receive support from international forums and therefore, function more effectively than state and even any other non-profit organizations.

3.4 A Socially Conservative Approach?

AKF’s wide range of service delivery includes services such as Islamic education and sewing lessons, particularly for women. These services are carried out under separate wing of AKF which is dedicated to work for women only.

AKF women’s wing conducts religious sessions called ‘Dars’ for women recruited from elite and posh areas. In these sessions, they teach Quranic values in the light of their own interpretations. My visit to AKF women’s wing revealed that their higher aim is to connect these elite women with Islamic values, which also facilitate in terms of charity. Other than Islamic teachings, AKF women’s wing also provide sewing lessons for women, regardless of their age. When asked why women are not given education in the field of science, computer or technology, Mr. Qureshi

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/jan/07/aid-without-faith-isthere-a-place-for-religious-ngos-in-the-21st-century>

responded: "Because this kind of work is already being done by our sister organizations. In order to prevent replication, we have different projects to carry out".

Thus, the approaches to development is different when seen in the context of FBOs, particularly AKF. Sewing lessons indeed help these women to be self-sufficient to some extent, it doesn't help them to be able to compete in the job market and prepare themselves for globally advanced and scientific arenas. Women who come to these sewing lessons lack basic education and self-confidence. The organization also promotes patriarchal gender roles by providing assistance in dowry and marriage funds for women. They have a huge portion of their office dedicated for preparations of dowry boxes which include things like clothes, grocery and home appliances etc. The practice of dowry is purely cultural and conservative approach, against the international development discourse and feminist ideologies. The notions of women empowerment, are thus different, and product of their religious and ideological understanding of the term 'development'. AKF women's wing functions in a separate environment from its head office. It is staffed by women only and provides services to female members of the society for their marriages, dowry, education and domestic support. While other offices of AKF are staffed

by men only, no female volunteers or staff was seen in any other offices of AKF. Thus, gender segregation is an accepted norm within AKF.

AKF runs over 100 Madrasahs in Karachi only. They run 5 schools only. For these Madrasahs, majority of funds come from donations and majority of students are male (Iqbal, page, 28). These Madrasahs, focus upon religious education with a very limited focus on scientific, arts or other worldly educational themes. This is in contradiction with historical account of Madrasahs; subjects like astronomy, chemistry and mathematics were highly emphasized in the pre-modern and ancient eras. In fact, these subjects were regarded significant part of their religious education. However, scientific subjects, and themes like language, gender equality and banking are seen as 'Western' or anti-Islamic. Development practitioners argue that due to lack of grooming according to needs of the time, students from Madrasahs are unable to compete in job market. Consequently, have fewer economic and employment opportunities. This also hinders and have an impact on their worldviews. Due to their religiously molded worldviews, students are often seen as a threat and sign for increasing extremism and radicalism.

In Pakistan, government as well as development practitioners have been involved in a tug of war with religious scholars and extremists to reform Madrasah curriculum as

per the needs of modern times. However, they have been facing resistance. In this way, Madrasahs generally promote conservative ways of bringing 'development' in the society.

Nevertheless, it is also important to note that Madrasahs are crucial for education in rural areas because they are the only option for education available in these areas. During a casual conversation, a representative from AKF Women's wing mentioned that young girls in rural areas are not allowed to go to schools because of conservative mindsets of people over there. Madrasahs are more reliable options to educate these girls because of their strong religious foundations.

To summarize the above analysis, AKF which is relatively a large FBO, discourse on women's right, reproductive health and family planning remains out of the 'development' discourses within the organization. Gender segregation and patriarchal gender roles are prominent. Moreover, Madrasahs affiliated with FBOs, focus upon religious education with a very limited or no focus on broader worldly themes such as science, technology, commerce or even world history. This hinders the educational/professional grooming of students, making them incompetent for job market and thus, imparting narrow worldviews.

In the light of above mentioned analysis, humanitarian assistance and conservative approaches towards 'development' go hand in hand. FBOs appropriate the discourse of development in the light of their own cultural frameworks. While looking at the efficiency of work that FBOs do, we often seem to overlook the conservative approaches adopted by them. As the report of "Berkeley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs" highlighted, conservative approaches adopted by FBOs in terms of service delivery and participation present dilemmas which are against the notions of mainstream development.

4. Conclusion:

FBOs play a vital role in development processes of the country. FBOs contribute in the development of a society through its unique approaches, but sometimes they also become a hindrance due to their conservative approaches. To analyze such a diverse role of FBOs in the modern context, case study of one organization; Al Khidmat Foundation in Karachi enabled this research to answer some of the broader questions addressed in this paper.

FBOs and their vital role in the development sector questions the broader concepts of modernization; which advocated the

separation of religion and secular. The intertwined nature of religious and worldly affairs show that secularization never really happened in Pakistan – a country where religion is a significant part of its socio-political fabric. In the case of FBOs and AKF in particular, religious belief is the major force behind their welfare work. The strong presence of religious beliefs in state affairs and for the development of society in this way, presents a challenge to these modernization theories.

Paper analyzed the role of local FBOs in a global context. Practices like charity, instant help and short term services although help in local development, do not fulfil the international mainstream development goals. It is argued that the work that FBOs do is mainly immediate charity. However, as seen in the context of AKF, the organization's work is aligned with both charity and long term development goals. The research pointed out that there has been a significant transition towards long term development goals within organization; firstly because of the increase in their size and reach. Secondly, to attain international attention and fulfil requirements of international development and aid organizations, in order to attract financial and moral support. The organization's work for charity is also a response to contemporary needs hence, remains an important aspect of the work that AKF does.

Increase in the number of FBOs across the world, and in Pakistan in particular, shows the increased efficiency of these organizations. It also shows that FBOs obtain public trust more than any other governmental or non-governmental organizations. This is mainly due to their religious approach, which provides them certain advantages over nonreligious organizations. They reach poor communities easily. They are seen more trust worthy due to their rhetoric, eventually mobilizing faithful for volunteerism and charity. However, some negative connotations attached with FBOs include; risk of proselytization, fear of using religious identity in a negative way to attain sympathy and trust, and the risk of militant Islam. The organizations also stand in opposition to the mainstream discourse of development because of their conservative stances in case of gender and education. AKF perceives notions of development in its own cultural and religious context, employing conventional and traditional approaches for women development.

Paper looked at the affiliation of AKF with political party called *Jamat-i-Islami*. Research revealed that welfare work of *Jamat-i-Islami* through AKF is beyond any political gains. Scholarly work and ethnographic analysis showed that it is Islamic ideological aims that Jamat tries to attain from two different pathways; politics and welfare. For them, the

welfare work is to set a society based on their Islamic principles and values, instead of facilitating their political struggle. The political movement on the other hand, is an alternate way of achieving the same goal.

To summarize, FBOs on one hand are molding their strategies in the framework of mainstream development discourse in order to secure international support and legitimacy. While on the other hand, they also question the international phenomena of modernization and development in the context of the socially conservative approaches. The conservative stances within these FBOs show that the FBOs alter and appropriate the term 'development' in their own contexts, which either helps in eradicating many local societal problems, or resist the shift towards international development. In this way, study of FBOs is important to look at some of the most pressing aspects revolving around 'development' work in the rural and urban localities of the city. It is also important in terms of looking at how civil society or faith contributes in the field of development and how the term development varies as the cultural context changes.

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Dr. Nida Kirmani (LUMS)

Mr. Mohamad Asif Iqbal (SPDC)

Mr. Rashid Qureshi (AKF, Karachi sub head office)

Mr. Faisal Rizwan (AKF, Sindh sub head office)

Naveeda Anis (chairperson AKF Women Wing)

Anonymous, (Volunteer at AKF Sindh office)

Anonymous, (volunteer at AKF Women Wing)

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