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**Challenges to Social Accountability
And Service Delivery in Pakistan**

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Abstract

The study highlights the major challenges to social accountability in Pakistan. Based on a perception survey of 800 household level respondents from four provinces of Pakistan besides relevant focus group discussions and key informant interviews, the findings of the study reveal that the respondents have an understanding of which basic services they are entitled to and are not being facilitated by the public sector service providers. Owing to trust deficit between communities and state administration, there is a dire need for establishing and reforming formal and informal mechanisms to redress people's grievances. On the other hand, with over half of Pakistani population not having any formal education, communities need to be trained in social accountability tools so that they may get their rights and entitlements. The Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), which have been working in Pakistan for over two decades, urgently need to introduce innovative methods for community mobilization. The CSOs are also facing severe internal and external security threats, which are impacting the effectiveness of community level accountability exercises. While we take a stock of such challenges, there is a renewed hope that the government and donor community will support local level CSOs in mitigating the threats to sustainability of social accountability interventions.

Key Words: Social accountability, Communities, Pakistan, Service Delivery, CSOs

Introduction and Background

Social accountability relates to community-based initiatives intended to improve transparency and access to information by holding the state and its agents accountable (Gaventa & McGee 2010). Malena et al. (2004) discuss this concept in the context of demand for good governance; it is referred as strengthening the voice and building the citizens' capacity to call for greater accountability and responsiveness of authorities and public service providers. Social accountability is also closely linked with the concept of citizen-led accountability. social accountability is a demand-side effort of good governance and explains as to how the communities can best interact with local governments, service providers and state actors for demanding better service delivery in, for example, education and health (Agarwal et al. 2009).

The effectiveness of social accountability tools is highly dependent on the way in which they are initiated and exercised. National Institute of Administrative Research (NIAR), in its study, relates the effectiveness and success of social accountability mechanisms with their institutionalization. Indirectly, social accountability mechanisms try to improve the efficiency and performance of government officials and politicians (Bukonya et al. 2012).

Social accountability is a new buzzword for the development partners around the world in order to understand the state and society's synergy that can be helpful for better provision of public services (King 2014). In the long-term, the major advantages of social accountability are that it has the potential to lead to poverty reduction, enhanced service delivery, people-centric policies, empowerment of citizens and thus strengthening the democratic processes (IDS 2006). Social accountability is also closely related to the general concept of voice and accountability.

About the concept of voice, Brown et al. (2008) say it is actually the capacity of citizens to express their views, demand their basic rights and complain to those who are responsible and in control. Voice is more effective if it is done by lobbying, protest and through proper complaint mechanisms. Accountability, generically speaking, is the relationship between state (national and local levels) and its people (Foresti et al. 2007). Voice and Accountability are closely interrelated, but it doesn't mean they are the same; organized voices lead to accountability and vice versa.

Affiliated Network for Social Accountability (ANSA) provides a compact framework for social accountability (see Annexure 1). The four pillars to social accountability are 1) organized and capable public groups, 2) responsible government, 3) access to information, 4) sensitivity to culture and context. In order to achieve the smooth and well-functioning demand side mechanisms and functions, civic engagement is of high importance. Different social accountability tools used all around the world include (Khadka & Bhattarai 2012): citizens charter, checklist of entitlements, participatory budgeting, budget tracking, Right to Information (RTI), awareness of relevant laws, civic education, community score card (CSC), citizens report card (CRC), participatory planning and community led procurements.

Social Accountability in Pakistan

The concept of social accountability is new to Pakistan. It is being introduced by the international development partners and some local non-governmental institutions to improve the state of public service delivery in the country. The emergence of independent media in the country has also played the role of a catalyst in demanding rights from the state (Bhidal 2013). Recently, these pressure groups have forced the government to pass Right to Information (RTI) act, which gives communities and individuals an access to information and transparent mechanisms at national, provincial and district levels.

The state also realized the importance of social accountability mechanisms in the country when a formal notification to form School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) was passed in 1994. Earlier, the health management committees were also formed with the view to ensure the participation of communities in the decision-making processes (Khan 2001; Khan, Kazmi & Latif 1999).

Multiple accountability structures were initiated by the government to institutionalize the accountability mechanisms internally and externally. Bhidal (2013) discusses various social accountability tools used by major organizations. Table 1 below elaborates the same.

Table 1: Important Initiatives by Civil Society Organizations in Pakistan

Major Organizations	Partner	Social Accountability Approach/ Projects	Geographical Coverage
The Asia Foundation and Free Fair Election Network (FAFEN) and Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability (TDEA). Donor: USAID		Project Name: Strengthening Citizens Voice and Public Accountability (Citizen's Voice Project) ¹ Social Accountability (SA) tool: Multiple	All the four Provinces of Pakistan.
TDEA and The Asia Foundation Donor: Department for International Development (DfID), UKaid.		Project Name: Supporting Transparency, Accountability, and Electoral Processes in Pakistan (STAEP) ² SA tools: Civic Education, Participatory Planning, Social	All the four Provinces of Pakistan

¹ Available: <http://asiafoundation.org/project/projectsearch.php?country=pakistan#>

² Ibid

	Budgeting, etc.	
Affiliated Network for Social Accountability (ANSA) and Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) Donor: ANSA	Project Name: Equitable Education in Pakistan: Addressing Gender and Rural-Urban gaps in Lower Secondary Education in Pakistan. SA tools: Citizens Report Card (CRC)	Rawalpindi and Islamabad.
ANSA and Centre for Peace and Development Initiative Donor: ANSA	Project Name: Promoting Transparent and Accountable Regime for Public procurement Regime in Pakistan. SA tools: Right to Information (RTI) and Budget Tracking.	Rawalpindi and Jhang
ANSA and Shehri-CBE Donor: ANSA	Project Name: People and Land: Empowering Communities for Social Justice - A Case Study SA tools: Citizens Score Card	Rural Karachi
Centre for Civic Education in Pakistan	Projects: Multiple initiatives on civic education and involvement of communities. SA tools: RTI, civic education, etc.	

Source: ANSA, Centre for Civic Education, The Asia Foundation and SDPI.

The objectives of this study are:

1. To highlight the challenges to CSOs as well as the government in implementing social accountability mechanisms
2. To inquire about the state of service delivery in social sectors of the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including education, health, and water & sanitation
3. To identify the course correction in social accountability mechanisms currently in vogue

Our starting point is to identify the gaps in literature and how our study adds to the existing body of knowledge. Section 3 provides detailed methodology of the study followed by results from survey exercises and KIIs. In a separate section, we have also provided findings from FGDs. We conclude with specific recommendations to CSOs as how to design and implement social accountability interventions in social sectors.

Gaps in Literature

It is now encouraging to see a growing local literature on social accountability in Pakistan and South Asia. Bhidal (2011) has applied social accountability tools such as Citizens' Report Card (CRC) for the service delivery of education. Findings depict the dismal position of service delivery in education sector. They also show that the School Management Committees (SMCs) have failed to deliver. There is a dire need to redefine the work and processes of SMCs or some alternative approach to perform monitoring. Other recommendations include participatory budgeting and improved quality of education.

A baseline study for AAWAZ voice and accountability programme³ in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the Punjab provinces evaluates the perception of women and community members on service delivery in education, health, and water & sanitation. The findings of the baseline study shows that access to all these services has been a major issue for both rural and urban areas. A key recommendation is to put in place participatory approach, which means the communities must be involved in decision making processes which deal with local level resource allocation, quality of services and timely access (SDPI 2012).

CPDI (2013) has used Right to Information (RTI) legislation as its entry point for the promotion of greater transparency and accountability in public sector financial management. The goal here is to introduce greater value for money in the local government's budgetary processes. The same tools, however, can be applied at the national and provincial levels.

The challenges to social accountability in Pakistan, according to Bhidal (2013), include the state's resistance to service delivery reforms, overlapping layers of accountability, vested interests in important social sectors like education and health, implementation flaws in RTI legislation, decentralization of fiscal powers to the provincial governments, and absence of enabling environment for social mobilization due to security issues.

There is also some literature available on the challenges specific to the service delivery in the education sector of Pakistan (Watson & Khan 2005), accountability failures at local levels (Mohmand & Cheema 2007), and importance of decentralization for effective service delivery processes (Ahmad 2005).

³ AAWAZ is a voice and accountability programme, funded by DFID in Pakistan. It is operational in 45 districts of Pakistan.

Though the above-mentioned studies provide details on social accountability interventions in various sectors, we still lack literature where consolidated and sector-wise challenges to social accountability implementation by CSOs are inventoried. This study goes beyond the existing literature through:

- Categorization of challenges into immediate, medium and longer term time horizons. We then go on to suggest that immediate challenges, if addressed properly, may prevent many of the medium to longer term challenges or risks to occur.
- Taking into account the qualitative perception of individuals on the state of service delivery in social sectors, our aim here will be to i) inquire from the household and community as to how they would like CSOs to intervene and in which social sectors, and ii) inquire from the practitioners of social accountability the risks faced on ground and how these may be mitigated while going forward.

Methodology

A mix of qualitative and quantitative approach is used to access the potential risks and challenges to social accountability in Pakistan. We validate our results in the light of existing literature.

As part of our quantitative methodology, we provide findings from one of our household level survey (n=800) seeking information from people regarding key areas where service delivery is lacking. There are three main objectives of conducting this survey and FGDs with the households:

- There are existing social accountability forums at the local level, e.g. school management committees, health management committees and we wanted to know their effectiveness
- We also wanted to know what challenges (even threats) people face while they become part of the social accountability processes and what are major issues Pakistani society is facing and how they can be solved.
- Do people feel that their giving time and resource to social accountability activities is rendering on-ground results?

Respondents for KIIs and FGDs were selected on the basis of their expertise and experiences in the field of voice and accountability in Pakistan. KIIs were those who are helping in sustainability, efficiency and scaling-up of social accountability agenda in the country. KIIs (10 in number) and participants of FGDs are selected from five different categories, i.e. 1. Civil society organizations and experts, 2. Donor agencies in Pakistan, 3. Head of organizations working on social accountability, 4. Government officials, and 5. Business community.

Household Perception Survey: Sampling Methodology

We surveyed 800 households, selected through a well-structured process of random selection from urban and rural areas in the districts specified below. The sample includes four largest provinces in the country (**Error! Reference source not found.**) and demographic distribution was also taken into account (however ignores Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and tribal area). The questionnaire was subject to thorough pilot-testing and the feedback from pilots helped in improving the survey instruments further.

Table 2: Survey Sampling Methodology

Provinces	Sample Size	Districts
Punjab	300	Faisalabad and Multan
Sindh	300	Karachi and Sukkur
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	100	Peshawar
Balochistan	100	Quetta
Total Sample Size	800	800

Results-I: Institutional and Quantitative Analysis

Institutional Formation and Implementation

The government has institutionalized accountability structures for internal and external accountability in the country. There exist Auditor General Departments, Public Accounts Committee, Ombudsman, Federal Investigation Agency, Anti-Corruption Establishments and National Accountability Bureau. There are clear laws relating to the conduct of business for the public servant and for curbing the menace of corruption. These are Government Servant Rules, 1964, The Civil Servants (efficiency and discipline) Rules, 1973, Pakistan Penal Code XLV of 1860, The Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947, and Federal Investigation Act, 1974.

The implementation of above-mentioned laws remains uncertain and makes the system of accountability redundant (Guess 2005). In order to hold the state accountable for citizens' entitlements as per law, informal and formal mechanisms to organize communities have now been allowed after sustained activism. At the national level, social accountability structures have been facilitated through amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan. In the Constitution's Article 19-A, every citizen would have right to information in all matters of public importance. As part of the 18th constitutional amendment, the following article is added to the Chapter No: 1 of the Constitution, which is titled as 'Fundamental Rights'. The fundamental right to education is also guaranteed for all citizens of Pakistan by the Constitution. The Article 25-A of Constitution of Pakistan reads:

The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 5 to 16 years in such manner as may be determined by law.

Implementation and Effectiveness Issues

The major issues with accountability structures in the country are the loopholes in the systems and procedures. In Pakistan, accountability processes are complex and non-standardized and they are designed according to the needs of each department not for the public at large (Iftikhar 2010). In major public offices, procedures are cumbersome and operated manually.

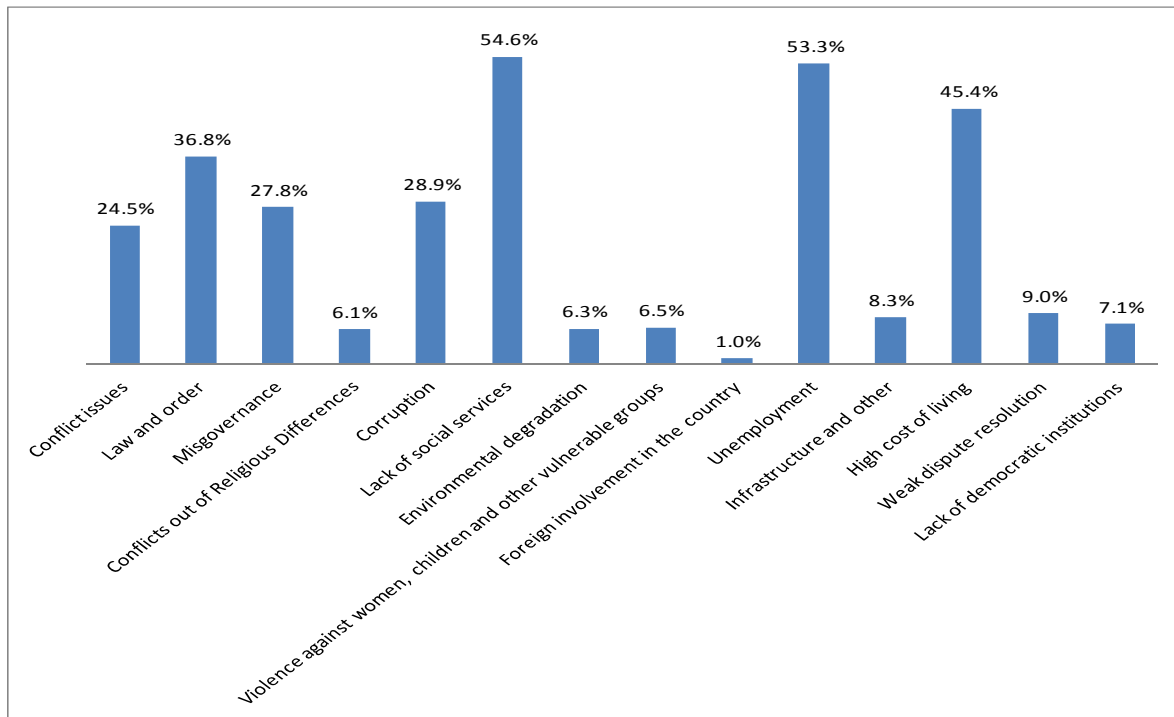
A study (KP 2011) provides issues and challenges to social accountability in the province. Few of them are: Credibility of the government is too weak, incentive void for bureaucracy to engage with citizens, weak government-private sector nexus, information and communication gaps, ineffective grievance redressal mechanisms, absence of benchmarks and baseline, weak culture of engagement, and the absence of local governments in the country. The dream of effective social accountability mechanisms cannot be fulfilled until or unless the government realizes the need and revival of local government system in Pakistan (Guess 2005). Local governments offer a direct contact between citizens and elected representatives. So, there comes the element of greater accountability and efficiency in the overall governance structure. There is a significant evidence to prove the argument especially in the context of Pakistan that the local government system had offered direct contact between the local policy makers and public and it served as a better channel to communicate their demands to the government (Hasnain 2008).

Relevant Survey Findings

Figure 1 exhibits survey findings related to major demand for public service delivery at large. Our results reveal that respondents have clearly highlighted the weak supply side of public sector service delivery as the biggest challenge to community engagement. For example, 54.6 % replied that lack of social services is the biggest issue, 28.9 % said corruption is the major issue, 53.3 % replied that lack of unemployment is the biggest issue, and 36.8 % responded that law and order situation in the country is volatile.

The relevance of this data with the social accountability frameworks can be seen in the highest percentage of responses associated with the lack of public service delivery. This survey reveals that social accountability mechanisms and initiatives would need to be tailored for each sector if communities are to be enabled in demanding better quality services from the public sector.

Figure 1: Issues Affecting Pakistani Society



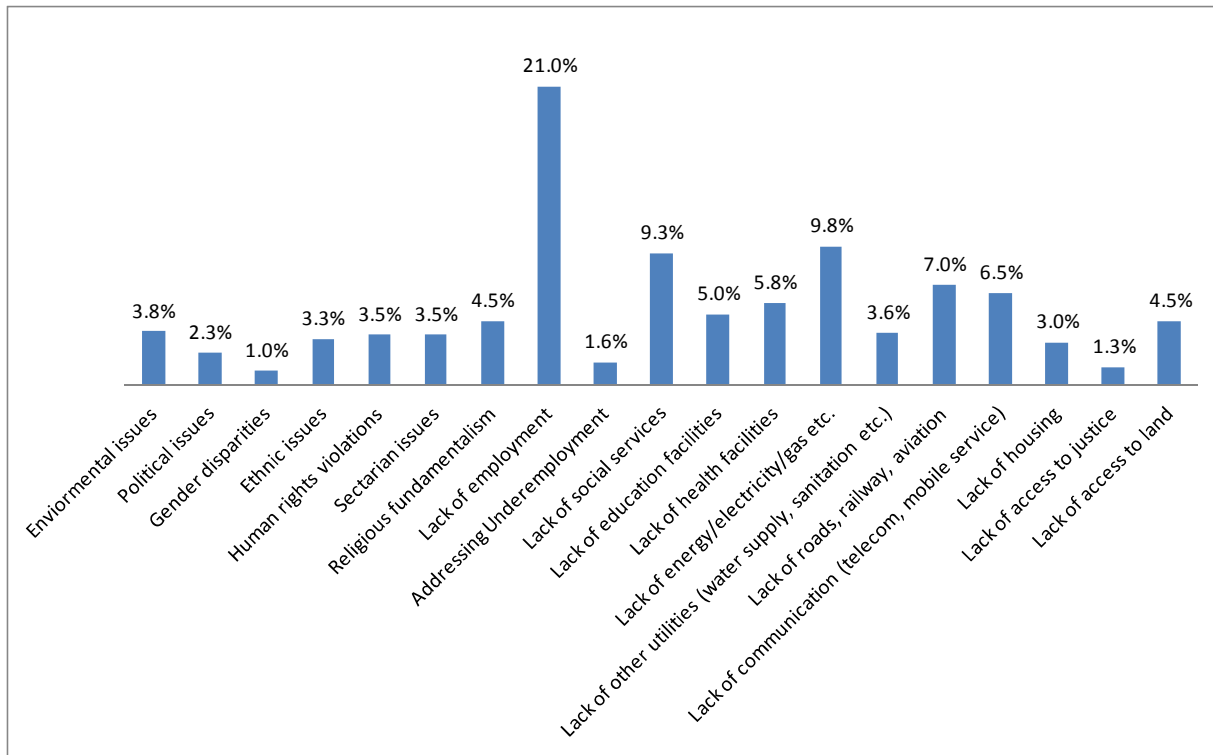
Source: SDPI Survey Unit, Pakistan.

Private Sector and Social Accountability

As the government revenue collection is meagre in most of the developing countries, therefore, it may not be sufficient to cradle all public goods. There is a case for limiting the government's role to socio-economic policy and regulation and let the management be in the domain of private sector. Figure 2 elaborates where private sector can be useful in dealing with the major issues confronting Pakistan. 21 % believed that they can be helpful in creating employment, 9.3 % felt that private sector involvement could improve social services, 9.8 % believed that competition and entry of more firms could benefit the energy sector and end the ongoing energy crisis, 5 % favoured private sector participation in education, and 5.3 % in health sector.

Ahmad (2008) also emphasizes that private sector can join hands with the communities for strong accountability mechanisms in the country, which might lead to better service delivery and good governance; the perception of the survey respondents strongly support this argument. Such a nexus is also in the interest of private sector as safe, secure and vibrant communities will imply rising future demand, free and fair markets and a more educated and skilled pool of labour force.

Figure 2: Where Private Sector can help?



Source: SDPI Survey Unit, Pakistan.

Results-II: Qualitative Results

Security and Safety Issues

Mainly all the Key Informants (KIs) were of the view that internal security is the biggest risk and a challenge to social accountability in Pakistan (see Figure 3 for detailed challenges to social accountability). The programmes and people, who are actively involved in strengthening social accountability, face security threats from the extremists, and terrorist groups. Pakistan has been facing this menace for over a decade, and now these threats have made a great dent on the smooth functioning of overall social accountability system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces. The security risk to social accountability remains from both security outfits and the extremists. Educating people is an undesirable activity in the views of extremists, which hamper service delivery in public sector schools and colleges (Buchanan & Tollison 1984).

Figure 3: Negative Impacts on Social Accountability Initiatives



Source: Authors own depiction from KIIs and FGDs.

Absence of Local Government System

During the last seven years, there has not been much progress on deepening the local government system in the country. The mainstream political parties in power are reluctant to hold the local government elections putting the devolution process in a shambles. In the past, devolution and decentralization helped the communities stimulate pro-accountability processes at local level. The basic idea behind decentralization was to take the public representatives closer to citizens so that they can be held accountable to the people (voters) and thus resulting in better use of resources (World Bank 2005).

A strong advocacy campaign involving active participation of citizens is required for the holding of local government elections in all the four provinces of Pakistan. Strategies aimed at achieving certain standards of social accountability won't be possible without the presence of local government system. AAWAZ voice and accountability programme is one example where women are being provided awareness regarding their right to vote.

Government's Priorities and Lack of Political Motivation

Unfortunately, clergy and traditional feudal lords still exercise substantial powers over formal and informal power systems. Similarly, parliamentarians and bureaucracy have their own political agendas and interests respectively. In Pakistan, governments does fear from adopting and adhering to the social accountability mechanisms at local level, majorly due the reason that vulnerabilities of the government might not get exposed. (Hasnain, 2008).

The government is only interested in leading those initiatives that are performing under its own umbrella but is not much interested in citizens led accountability frameworks, and thus is not ready to support and finance such initiatives. Pakistan does have political democratic systems in

place and the constitutional rights of citizens have been clearly defined but citizens led accountability initiatives are in too early stage (PRIA 2011).

KI also highlighted the fact that social accountability on occasions has led to retaliation by the government authorities. If the voice mechanisms are weak, the public representatives can harm those leading the social accountability exercises. In Pakistan, there are issues and threats when working on structural changes and reforms (Khan 2001). In certain areas, social accountability initiatives do require the government permission; it has been observed that the government is still afraid of such efforts by the civil society or the community.

There is apprehension that when the government changes, the next government would have political motives to follow, and in many cases it leads to waste of efforts that has already been done to generate social accountability in Pakistan (Khan 2001).

KIs also said that the government officials, when agreed with the programme and ready to work with CSOs and communities, are transferred. Once this happens, the community loses the entire social capital and rapport with the government. Development agencies need to learn how greater social accountability can be achieved and helpful under political-economic conditions (DFID 2011 & Bukenya et al. 2012).

Flaws in Supply-Side of Service Delivery

Though the laws and institutions are there, they are not really functional. There are certain risks and challenges to social accountability that are contingent upon the supply side of the system; these are lack of enabling environment, legal and regulatory frameworks, an accommodating political environment, and inaccessible government.

Practitioners, who are working for demand side, talk about rights of citizens, freedom of speech and right to information without highlighting the fact that those who are duty bearers doesn't care about these things. According to these practitioners (Ahmed 2008 & Khan 2001) while there are laws related to the above-mentioned rights, two issues hinder the receipt of such rights, i.e. lack of knowledge in claiming rights, and lack of community based platforms that can act as pressure groups.

Cultural Norms

Social accountability is highly stringent upon the cultural norms and practices. There is always a risk whenever social accountability initiatives are challenging the authority of those who are controlling the systems and think themselves as an authority and possessor of all the powers (Jejeebhoy & Sathar 2001). Even at places where informal decision-making institutions are in place, the tribal elders or influential figures, for example, feel threatened by CSOs that are trying to build on scientific methods and introduce social accountability interventions.

Within the context of Pakistan, there is a need for local level needs assessment for women and marginalized communities otherwise very often the voices will be raised but they would be

lacking the support from the people who are influential (Mohmand & Cheema 2007). Different social accountability programmes in Pakistan result in developing accountability committees and other relevant forums, but the issue with these structures is that they are mostly dominated by the influential people of that particular area and they often ignore the presence of women and minorities.

Information Gap and Lack of Research

KIs also suggest that there are information gaps that do not allow a strong social accountability framework. There is a great fear that the voices of people are not heard because of the reason that they are the wish lists from the society (Keohane, 2003). When these wish lists aren't fulfilled, they resultantly lead to disappointment, hyper responses and hostile environment. In demand side, there is a need to collaborate with supply side and these demands must be facilitated by research and some level of technical guidance. The major problem with social accountability practitioners both within and outside the government organizations in Pakistan is lack of capacity to conduct needed research and analysis (MaNeil & Mumvuma. 2006).

Another problem highlighted by KIs is that no proper research material and toolkits are available for local communities so that they could understand what the social accountability actually refers to. Communities are not well-trained for this job and they see the government institutions the cause of all ills in the society.

Among the funders and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), no exercise has been done to learn from the programmes. There is a risk of hostility when communities wrongly understand accountability (Pasha, Iqbal, & Mumtaz 2002). Channelizing the social accountability would be a challenge in the short-term. Most of the knowledge management toolkits, which are theoretically in place during programmatic work by CSOs, do not culminate in a strong documentation based on lessons learnt and experiences gained.

CSOs Acceptance in Society

In Pakistan, most of the programmes that social accountability entails are run by the civil society organizations. But, they really work under many restrictions, ranging from signing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the government to acceptability in the general public. Like rest of the world, these CSOs in Pakistan also have to face many restrictions in their formation and certain constraints on their functioning; efforts are being made to tighten the foreign funding as well (UNDP 2010).

CSOs acceptance within the government spheres is also fairly weak. One of the KIs said that now Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) wants NGOs to be registered with it. Donors have been given the impression that Pakistani laws are weak, so if they want to give funds to any CSO, it must be registered with SECP. In fact, SECP is portraying a negative image of the local CSOs before donors and funding agencies, he added. The laws and the registration

authorities don't want innovative and independent thinking in the society and the government machinery is still run by a mind-set having colonial framework, he said.

Legal complications related to any activity in the region have also constricted humanitarian efforts and accountability mechanisms that these CSOs are trying to develop (Pasha et al., 2002). As it is, many CSOs working in Federally Administrative Tribal Areas (FATA) have to go through extensive legal procedures and also seek approval from the Frontier Disaster Management Authority or the Provincial Disaster Management Authority via an NOC (No Objection Certificate). Thus, despite availability of funds, many CSOs face difficulties in initiating or implementing accountability programs in the region and portraying themselves as facilitators in and participant agent (Bebbington et al., 2008).

Impact Assessment and Flaws in Project Design

There is a challenge of evaluating and accurately capturing the impact of various social accountability initiatives in Pakistan and abroad. It is difficult to measure the changes which involve intangible changes in power relations, cost and benefit analysis and inclusive strategies (Holland et al, 2009).

Social accountability programmes and similar programmes like voice and accountability are aimed at reducing poverty. But, no sufficient evidence is available here whether these programmes did have an impact on reducing poverty in Pakistan. In the region, there are plenty of evidences available (ANSA, 2012). The key is monitoring the activities and this programme analysis on frequent basis. In particular, indicators that accurately capture the impact of various social accountability initiatives are needed, especially given that the legitimacy and reliability of the results will depend on the robustness of the indicators and tools being used. In other words, innovative and credible tools and methodologies are needed to make the results acceptable; therefore, skilled human resources are critical. The capacity of local level CSOs remains weak in conducting regular monitoring and evaluation after which feedback loops with implementation teams can be developed.

Flaws in Project Design and No Follow Up

Most of the key informants said that there can be challenge arising out of the design of the programmes that are being implemented in Pakistan. The donors have their own understanding of social accountability and its framework without taking into account the major risks and challenges that these programmes might face in the context of Pakistan. The theory of change framework followed by the usual log framing exercise for project monitoring does not comprehensively encompass risks to life, assets and even livelihoods (Watson & Khan, 2005).

Log frames once set are rarely changed during the project course as development partners fear a complete evaluation if they request for revisions in log frames. Funders approach is mainly concerned with the accountability of the CSOs in terms of their compliance with administrative

processes. Donors rarely check the actual impact of the programme after every year. Their main concern is the proper utilization of funds.

KIs are of the view that due to some flaws in the programmes aimed at social accountability, the follow-up of accountability interventions in later periods becomes difficult. The methodological developments in this field now allow tools that provide the follow-up framework for social accountability programs (e.g. CRC and CSC).

The development partners are still reluctant to fund long-term projects for social accountability interventions. This makes the sustainability of these interventions difficult and the confidence building with the local community is weakened (Bhidal, 2013). It was proposed by some that indicators to evaluate accountability interventions must include trickledown effect. Such indicators should be able to capture voices raised within a certain period of time. Finally, in most programmes, there are weak exit strategies. Both the funding bodies and the civil society organizations have been seen to exit in the manners, which prevent communities to self-upscale such projects.

Non-Homogeneity of the Demands

The capacity issues at the community level do not allow the people demanding public services to organize their set of needs and wants that should be communicated to the service providers. The fragmented manner in which communities approach the public sector does not put a pressure enough for change at the policy and practice level. Several community level forums have also been termed non-participatory as they exclude minorities and marginalized groups.

In some programmes, it has been a practice now to provide the community with an informal forum where they can sequence and time their demands before approaching the local administrative authorities. Over time such forums and their working templates are applied to diverse sectors such as education, health and electricity provision.

Duplication of Efforts

Many local area organizations fear that they are not aware of the similar projects being undertaken by similar organizations (Brown & Moore, 2001). While fragmented interventions and donor fatigue has also been seen in forms whereby several donors are putting in large funds for similar projects in turn affecting the pattern of accountability interventions. It is also important to acknowledge that CSOs over time become competitors in the same geographic area. Some have been working for decades yet no coalition of efforts is seen. This results in relevant department being reached by many different groups in turn diluting the message. Several local level CSOs complain that donors, who finance social accountability interventions are sticking to short-term project mode and not scaling up these interventions in a programmatic manner (Ebrahim 2003).

Media Engagement

It has been informed that social accountability interventions are not usually on the radar of media organizations whereas they allow little space to project such initiatives. Most of the media entities work from urban areas, and their understanding of civil society work in communities is weak. It was also felt that any impact or change at the micro level should be documented at print, electronic and social media so that examples and role models can be established.

Similarly partnership with media organizations, in a recent programme in Pakistan, has helped develop social capital with the communities (SDPI 2013). The communities feel empowered once they are made the part of a prime time programme on a leading television channel. Similarly, pictorials with communities have also been appreciated by the local level representatives. They feel that tools such as info-graphics speak louder than verbatim.

Results-III: Focus Group Discussions

This section describes the lapses in service delivery and provides a general entry point for various CSOs designing their social accountability interventions. We have conducted Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with *women* in six districts from the Punjab (Lodran, Sialkot, Pakpattan & Jhang), and Khyber Pakhtunkwa (Dera Ismail Khan & Upper Dir).

Service Delivery in Education

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, participants at the FGD said that they don't send their children in government schools, because there is no accountability of teachers there. In the boys school, they pointed out the problem of teacher absenteeism. "The teacher is not serious; he just goes around having meals at other people's homes, and does not teach." Teacher absenteeism is the biggest problem, which the schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa face. This is basically because of the lack of social accountability and disinterest of communities and their unawareness about complaint redressal mechanism.

In the Punjab, problems of education system and its service delivery are much different from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Female participants reported that there are plenty of government schools in KP, but people prefer to send their children to private schools, as children are given more attention there. Furthermore, enabling facilities, including washrooms and drinking water, are missing in girls schools.

Service Delivery in Health

FGD results from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa portray a bleak picture of health situations in the province. There are no proper hospitals, the staff working there is not very supportive, and long queues of patients can be seen there. Some of the participants said that there are no lady health workers in their localities. Weak monitoring systems in the public sector health system also undermine the effectiveness of grievance redressal mechanisms.

In the case of the Punjab, a lot of difference has been observed in rural and urban areas. People in urban areas report improvements in the hospitals in their areas especially in the emergency. Things improve in case of a good doctor, but as soon as he/she leaves, things fall apart again.

In rural areas, some of the irregularities have been reported by the female participants. They said that there are no medicines available in the hospitals. The situation is so bad. The likelihood of sustained disease or even death seems higher in case of female patients.

Water and Sanitation

Female participants from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reported that getting clean drinking water is quite a difficult task. Many of us have to go to fill cans from the river, which is 2 to 2.5 kilometers away from here. Mostly women in the community perform this job. As far as the issue of sanitation is concerned, there are no formal methods. Most of us have to go to fields for urination or defecation. Some people dig a deep hole in the ground and build a temporary shed on it for this purpose. Some schemes and programmes have been in place by the government but the respondents have shown dis-satisfaction over the condition of sanitation and clean water supply in urban and rural localities.

Sanitation and potable water is also a big issue in the Punjab. Female participants reported the supply of contaminated water in their areas. They said that their demands are not being heard by the government. During a focus group discussion, it emerges that there are no sewerage lines, and septic tanks, and when water is drawn from the ground, these tanks leave sewage into the grounds. Things are so bad that drinking water at times gives a stinking smell.

Conclusion

The access to public service delivery of basic social services remains a challenge for the people in the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This situation is further exacerbated by corruption in accessing entitlements, and sluggish resolution of localized conflicts. Our findings suggest that social accountability mechanisms need to be tailored for each of these issues if communities are to be enabled in demanding better quality services from the officials. The tailoring of such mechanisms should be aided by local political economy analysis.

The major challenge to social accountability is the volatile law and order situation across the country, fragmented government priorities, multiplicity of programmes by federal and provincial governments, flaws in supply chain of service delivery, political appointments in education and health departments, cultural norms preventing women participation in different fields, lack of local-level research on drivers of social accountability, less acceptance of CSOs in the society, difficulty in carrying out impact assessments of pilot social accountability initiatives, weak follow-up of existing initiatives, and lack of donor coordination on similar projects in turn threatening sustainability of existing initiatives. The households surveyed for this study at most of the locations were found ignorant about the grievance redressal mechanisms leading to a feeling of general helplessness.

We see in this study that the current strategies that are aimed at strengthening social accountability are short-term and they ignore the long-term determinants of success. There are multiple threats that have been ignored while formulating such strategies. There is a lack of trained human resources, enabling institutions, and trained CSOs.

The demand-side of accountability cannot achieve sustainability until and unless there is a responsive supply-side to support with. That's why CSOs need to work simultaneously with the state machinery in order to strengthen and shape up political will towards community development and to make both the communities and officials responsive towards their responsibilities. In this respect, the game changer could be a deregulated media now present in most of the developing countries, as media has the mandate to highlight the policy community matters. Presence of local government is the most important ingredient for strengthening social accountability framework in the country, which is currently not functional. There is a dire need for local bodies, where decision-making is done by the elected representatives and they are accountable to their voters.

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ANSA Framework

