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### CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSOs): CAPACITY TO ABET COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

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#### **Abstract**

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are considered as the main tool for promoting citizen participation and to ensure good governance. Thus, for exploring the CSOs role to promote participation and establish good governance, there is the scarcity of research literature regarding specifically in case of developing countries and Pakistan is not an exception. This paper has filled this research gap by finding out the role of civil society in indorsing good governance and reconnoitering citizen participation. The qualitative research methodology was applied. Focus Group Discussions and in-depth interviews were conducted. For the data analysis, thematic analysis as guided by Braun and Clark were applied. The findings revealed that CSOs role in ensuring good governance, influencing decision making, impacting service delivery and promoting citizen participation. It was further found out that efficacy of CSOs to fulfill its goals and meet its designed objective in the local settings of Pakistan is very limited. This paper proposed that stakeholder engagement is the most important prerequisite for the success of CSOs. On the top of that, CSOs must introduce some mechanism to train themselves to engage themselves efficiently in the governance issues.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Civil society is a vital aspect in shaping and ensuring good governance affirmed by theorists and academicians. It has been argued in the research literature that civil society has significant potential to overcome any barriers in bridging the gap between the citizen and state. Civil society is also an important vehicle to alter any governance structure based on democratic values. It has been argued by McCarney et al (2010) that the civil society is strengthened with the aim of building and sustaining civic institutions outside

the government which enhance the capacity to fulfill the communal needs as well as to hold the public official accountable.

Efficacious governance and collective decision making are the byproduct of state, business sector (private sector), and civil society. Therefore, civil society is emerged as a vital entity today. Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary General, articulated the importance and strengthen of civil society as “The United Nations once dealt only with governments. By now, we know that peace and prosperity cannot be achieved without partnerships involving governments, international organizations, the business community, and civil society. In today’s world, we depend on each other” (Kofi Annan, 1999). Different roles are assumed by civil society and CSOs around the globe. The level and strength of civic institutions and CSOs vary from country to country and hence their level of empowerment and participation also differs.

A robust civil society determines the state and strength of democracy in any country. The notion of civil society is rooted in the work of Gramsci and later on literature of neo-Gramscian in 1980’s, state had hegemonic role backed by power of coercion, while civil society was recognized as agent of propagating democratization and play its role in setting limits in powers exercised by the state. Therefore, civil society was considered an important pillar for ensuring good governance and increasing community participation in the decision making as well as effective service delivery. In addition, CSOs take multiple roles by representing the diverse interest groups, widening access to and citizen engagement in public institutions and the processes (Muthien et al, 2000).

Whereas it has been observed that strong, empowered and vigilant civil society backs the surge in governance. Platform in the shape of CSOs is provided to people for effective participation through dialogues, knowledge sharing, and getting involved in the decision making. Both the state and the community can cooperate with each other which is made possible through a responsive and dynamic CSOs. Elliott (2003) has explained the civil society as an association/space between the state and the citizens characterized by the cooperation, apart from the market and the state institutions. In this wake, Muthiah Alagappa (2004) has defined civil society as a distinct association/sphere of the citizens operating on the principles of collective action utilizing civil means in influencing the government and its policies to further the interest of general public and achieve common good. The voluntary and non-voluntary CSOs pursue common interests through collective action. This highlights the role of CSOs to enlarge, assemble, and safeguard a political system that is conducive to build bonds between the social actors in numerous domains. Taking these facts into cognizance, civil society has its role in enhancing and building communities and reducing adversities which leads towards good governance (Civil Society: a framework for action, 2004).

Pakistan lacks effective and vigilant civil society and CSOs. The period of development and flourishing of civil society is marked with immense struggles and efforts. Therefore, the civil society has changed its role, scope and operations according to the changing times in the history of Pakistan. This research article fills this research gap by exploring the role of CSOs to promote good governance and community participation in case of Pakistan.

This paper has five main sections. The first section presents the introduction followed by literature and historical perspective of civil society. Third section covers the notion of civil society in Pakistan followed by section four signifying the role of civil society in strengthening democracy and promoting good governance. The last section gives the findings from the in-

depth interviews conducted to examine the role of CSOs in promoting democracy and good governance.

### **Civil Society: Evolution through history**

The concept of civil society has changed from time to time. This is not a new concept and has been prevailing from the Greek city states. In the ancient Greece, citizens used to live in small self-governing communities called Polis. The government functions were characterized by the active engagement of the citizens. The male citizens used to run the assembly with a council consisting of five hundred people functioning as executive steering committee. The assembly used to meet ten times a year (V. A. Zoeram, 2010). The earliest lucid articulation of civil society came forth in Greek city-states where individual's life was contemplated in sets apart from government domains as reported by Ehrenberg (1999). Thus, the conduct of public debates and collective action of the citizens resulted in the achievement of societal interest. It is further explained that Polis was considered as most sovereign association by Aristotle, as the main goal of the Polis was to improve the standard of life.

It is declared by Cohen and Arato that first version of civil society was presented by Aristotle in *politike koinonia* (political society/ community). According to him, free and equal citizens shape the political community within the legal boundaries followed by rule of law (Cohen and Arato, 1992). It is stated by Carothers (1999-2000) that the Roman lawyer Cicero, viewed civil society as equivalent of *res publica* (common wealth) which reflects that the laws and institutions unify the civic groups as well as individuals.

Civil society is viewed as the societal cooperation of citizens, by Montesquieu (1689-1755), but under the umbrella of monarch who exercised absolute power inseparable from the monarchy. He also distinguished government from the society. A more detailed concept of civil society was presented by Hume's (1711-1776) which is the interaction of economic, social and political activities. However, the modern concept of civil society has its roots in the concept of civil society by Hume as he incorporated the free press and informal associations in his earliest concept (V. A. Zoeram, 2010).

The concept of civil society existed in Europe for a long time (Rupert Graf Strachwitz 2007). Europe had its focus of discussions on the state and the market instead of civil society for the last four centuries. Nation state was built in several counties of Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century by several political theorists. Later on, the concept of believing in the society to be one, grasped its roots and gained importance to tackle with the challenges posed by the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It was late 1980's in Central and Eastern Europe when the notion of civil society was brought into limelight by giving voice in public affairs. Ultimately the concept gained universal importance and today's modern civil society is characterized by effective participation in advocacy, provides public services, conducts social accountability and all those function that contribute to the wellbeing of the society and societal goods.

Carothers (1999-2000) asserts that origination of term civil society is attributed to the work of Cicero amongst other Greek philosophers. The traditional usage of civil society was equivalent to that of the state. The scottish and continental enlightenment of 18<sup>th</sup> century gave birth to the modern concept of civil society. Civil society was declared a separate parallel domain from the state by the political theorists such as Thomas Paine to George Hegel. It was also asserted by them that when people come together for their personal interests and wishes, it also falls under the umbrella of civil society. In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, Civil Society was main topic of discussion. Meanwhile the industrial revolution shifted the focus of political philosophers to its social and

political consequences. The Marxist theorist, Antonio Gramsci, paid due attention to civil society after the Second World War through his writings. He explained the importance of civil society by declaring civil society a special nucleus which is central to independent political activity which struggles against the tyranny and dictatorship. Civil society was also encouraged by *Czech, Hungarian and Polish activists* with the aim of achieving common good. Due attention to civil society made it center of interest for the presidents to political scientists in 1990's. The universal trend for democracy propagated throughout the world including the countries marked by dictatorship, encouraging for the civil society.

Egbert Harmsen (2008) states that the concept of civil society is mostly explained in the context of contract to the state as they operate as voluntary, self-organizing and civic associations. This view of civil society developed in Europe in late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Keeping this view, three distinct but complementary categories of civil society were presented by Sulek (2008) in conventional jargon. The categories are associational life, public sphere, and good society. Theorists of associational life explain the civil society as a function of the various volunteer and non-profit organizations/ sectors. According to the theorists of public sphere, civil society is the site for public debates from independent media, civic forums to debates among citizens and demonstrations. Civil society is a normative concept according to theorists of good society where people idealize living as free and rational citizens. He further extended that all these concepts have been explained by Aristotle in his work. He referred associational life to the operations existed in the politics and Athenian constitutions. The debate in rhetoric and politics is reflected in the public sphere. He further ascribes that the citizen's engagement and participation is backed by the political regimes as they provide the conducive environment. This is due to their belief in synonymous use of political associations with the civil society in the theoretical conceptions. The goal of political associations was to seek and attain a good society.

Muller (2006) has described the four reasons of the rise of civil society in the western countries in 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as

- 1) Struggle against socialist authoritarian regimes
- 2) In 1980's the communist regime collapsed which resulted in the establishment of regimes democratic in nature.
- 3) there was an upheaval of welfare state after the collapsed of communist regimes in these countries
- 4) Reaction to new formations in social mobility, diversity, advancement in technology, changes in economic and cultural spheres

In today's world, the gap between state and the individuals is filled by the civil society. Several political theorists, lawyers, and government policymakers have done much work on the importance and positive role of civil society. Hence, the attainment of democratization, achieving good governance, maintaining rule of law, frameworks regarding environmental protection and regulation, ensuring gender equality, safeguarding labor rights and alleviating poverty is possible in the presence of strong and active civil society. Though, not all the problems can be solved through the strong civil society, but it provides space and direction for the good governance which can be more accountable, transparent and provide better services to the citizens (Andrew White, 2006). Civil society is vital tool to ensure civil liberties, human rights, transparency, and accountability which leads to economic prosperity and good governance. Beside this, ethnic conflicts can be resolved, and nationalism can be handled by supporting democratic institutions through strong civil society.

## State and Notion of Civil Society in Pakistan

Civil society has come a long way since the inception of Pakistan. Over the years, civil society's role, scope and operations have changed in the country. Civil society has been actively involved in the provision of service delivery and welfare to the marginalized poor segment of the society. At the time of partition, civil society has assumed not only the role of provider of basic social service but also became the source for providing both the professional and technical education. Anjuman Himayat-E-Islam, National Muhammadan Association, Dayal Singh Trust, Nadershaw Edulgee Dinshawjee Engineering College and Ganga Ram trust are some of the prominent civic institutions at that time (Shaukat, 2007). One of the most important document i.e. the objective resolution which is considered the guideline for the constitution of Pakistan, also highlights the importance of civil society and urges to take steps to strengthen it. It became part of all the three constitutions i.e. 1956, 1962 and 1973 to promote civil society and its role in assuring democracy and good governance.

The military, civil bureaucracy, feudal elites, ethnic and religious factors have built the structural narrative for the civil society and the state in Pakistan. Therefore, academics and professional blamed the asymmetrical power of the above-mentioned oligarchic structure that creates hurdles for the development of civil society institutions in the country (Khan, 2000).

Despite the positive role of CSOs in provision of basic services to the poor community, CSOs have faced the conflicting and hostile attitude of the civil and military regimes. Criticism by the civil society regarding corruption, governance, human rights, minorities' rights and Islamisation of laws which severely affected the women and religious minorities, has always made the government uncomfortable and insecure. The relationship of hostility is attributed to the active role of civil society in forcing the civil and military rulers to step down. It is now rooted in the psyche of Pakistani elite which thinks civil society as a continuous threat for them, through their advocacy agenda (Tahmina Rashid, 2011).

There are three generations of civil society organizations in Pakistan (Holly Sims, 1997). The first-generation CSOs are engaged in provision of relief and welfare activities. Majority of the NGOs in Pakistan can be placed under first generation. Second generation of CSOs are engaged in the community welfare and development activities. There is a range of mid and large size CSOs like the *Aga Khan Foundation*, *Aga Khan Rural Support Program*, *Edhi Foundation*, *Orangi Pilot Project*, etc. that assumed the role of building communities. Whereas the third generation of CSOs are ascribed to those making efforts for systemic sustainability, bringing institutional changes and providing input for the policy issues. Only a few CSOs come under the umbrella of third generation.

The gap between state and citizens can be bridged through a viable and sustainable civil society. The active role of civil society in accountability as well as political participation results in good governance. Civil society has not been appraised and recognized for its potential over half century of independence of Pakistan since there was no provision of conducive environment by the societal forces for the acceptance and growth of civil society. The authoritarian regime did not create any space for the civil society in political action. The democratic culture in Pakistan is fragile like many other countries and the reason is credited to the rule of military leaders for longer periods after the independence of Pakistan. Therefore, political governments have failed to complete their term of office over the years. In 2013, political government completed its term in office first time the history of Pakistan. This shows country's democratic experience has been inconsistent and shallow (Weinbaum, 1996).

Students unions and lawyers' associations have been the most vibrant component of civil society in the country. Both sections have played vital role in the civil society activism. Student organizations stood for the rights and the needs of the citizens against the military and civilian leaders. General public was out of political sphere under the rule of military dictators. Therefore, citizens have limited participation in the decision-making process. Civil society particularly women organizations were very active during General Zia regime to protect women rights and political space in the country.

Media has played an efficacious role in propagating education and keeping the citizens well informed of the government actions. The promotion of democratic culture and surge in political consciousness is due to the efforts of media. In 2007-2008 media had a pivotal role in reclaiming the freedom for independent judiciary. Media propagated the notion of supremacy of rule of law to mobilize the masses for joining the independent judiciary movement. The movement reflects the cooperation and collective work by the lawyers, CSOs, media and masses to promote supremacy of law and democratic culture. Civil society actors displayed their strength and work as a pressure group to ensure role of law and democratic culture in the country (Noor ul Haq, 2010).

NGOs and citizens' movements were successful in providing an alternative space for the people to restore democracy and enabling them to participate in the democratic process. Civil society provided another platform of political participation other than the party and government. It also held the power to offset the power exercised by government and safeguard interests of the society (Holly Sims, 1997). Civil society in Pakistan, for the last decade, has participated actively to strengthen democracy and protect the societal interest. At present, the civil society dominates the political discussion. It is actively engaged in the political process and influences the policies of the government. For instance, in 2007 the military ruler forced the chief justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry to resign from the office. The movement for the independence of Judiciary is marked as the finest movement by the civil society in the history of Pakistan (Zaidi, 2008). For sustainable development, the civil society organizations and the government joined hands together. A strong reaction was instigated from the civil society when Musharraf was involved in unconstitutional action against the Judiciary by attacking the chief justice. Ultimately, the civil society joined the movement to support independent judiciary and strengthen democracy. Besides this, CSOs are actively involved in the civic education programs particularly democratic values for the young generation.

### **Role of CSOs to promote community participation to ensure democracy and good governance**

Civil society and moderate political parties have played vital role to ensure democracy in the country particularly in two periods. In 1968, the country saw first time massive opposition against military dictator (Gen. Ayub Khan). This movement successfully abolished Ayub Khan government but failed to restore democracy in the country. Ayub Khan transferred power to another military dictator who imposed martial law in the country. In 1971, general election restored democratic governance in Pakistan. The political movement against Gen. Ayub Khan was unique. As Rizvi (1974) claimed that "it was a spontaneous movement marked by no planning and no unified direction. The scope and concentration of the movement left few institutions and concepts untouched." It was the failure of the movement to produce any alternate leader as the political actors were trying to get power over each other instead of establishing strong democratic culture. Whereas, military remained organized,

disciplined and cohesive which facilitated General Yahya Khan to takeover in 1969. Therefore, civil society also failed to get political space in the country.

The second and most recent civil society movement against Gen. Musharraf was started in 2007. Civil society and political parties joined hands together for the restoration of independent judiciary and democracy in the country. Therefore, lawyers' movement (anti Musharraf movement) combined various stakeholders for the institutional revival of the judiciary. On the other hand, political parties along with civil society groups fought for the restoration of democracy and forced Gen. Musharraf to remove uniform as well as call the general election in the country (Sheila Fruman, 2011). This movement was considered finest movement of civil society since inception of Pakistan. This has achieved the transition of dictatorial government to democratic government in the country.

In strong democracies, civil society is considered as an agent of convivial change, advocating reforms on communal concerns, arising public cognizance, and shaping public opinion as a conveyance for influencing decision-making process for societal good. Civil society also act as a watchdog to hold public institutions accountable like parliament, police, election communication etc which increase transparency the public institutions. Pakistani civil society have given input to the parliamentary committees in the formulation of new laws on sexual harassment in the workplace as well as on women rights including women participation in the political process. Pakistani civil society have gained some success to participate in the police making process. Therefore, effective engagement of civil society with law makers improve the quality of legislation as well as make the parliament more responsive to the societal needs. Both civilian and military governments have always hostile posture towards third generation (advocacy and policy base) civil society organizations in the country. Even this trend continues in the present democratic government as federal government banned number of NGOs in the country. 'Save the Children' is the prominent example. Apart from this, under national action plan government imposed very strong check and balance on the civil society organization to limit their scope and operation in the country.

Beside from various obstacles, CSOs are working to promote democracy in the country as well as involved in parliamentary oversight. Number of civil society organizations for example Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT), Free and Fair Elections Network (FAFEN), Center for Peace and Development Initiative (CPDI), and Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) have involved in parliamentary oversight and provide valuable feedback on the policies which enhances transparency and accountability.

As far as the contribution of Civil Society to promote good governance is concerned, civil society has faced ups and downs since the inception of Pakistan. Both the military and civilian regimes had shown hostile posture towards the CSOs operating in the domains of advocacy, human rights or input to the public policy making. Though, civil society had significantly impacted the policy change. Baqir (2007) asserted the direct and indirect impact of civil society on the public policy. For example, the government has adopted the *National Sanitation Policy* which was initiated by the *Orangi Pilot Project* (OPP). Similarly, in 2001, *National Shelter Policy* announced by the government was influenced by the work of *Tasneem Siddiqui* and *Saiban* working on shelter issues. In addition, *Aga Khan Rural Support Programme* (AKRSP) initiated a program of microfinance in three districts of Northern areas and Chitral which also gave direction to the government to take such

initiative. The government of Pakistan also took steps to start this program under the name of Rural Support Program (RSP). Number of civil society organizations are struggling to ensure human rights in the country. Pakistan human right commission is the prominent example in highlighting missing person issue in the country. Apart from this, independent media and civil society groups/ organizations are acting as a watch dog to ensure accountability and transparency in the country. We have seen some success of civil society in good governance. Civil society have to do much more to ensure good governance in the country. Government encourage civil society to collaborate with public institution to strengthen accountability and transparency mechanism as well as promoting equal opportunity in the country.

### **Role of CSOs in promoting Community Participation & Governance: Evidence from field**

To know the current state and role of CSOs in enhancing democracy and governance, 9 in-depth interviews were conducted with CSOs experts and government officials. Thematic analysis technique was applied to assess the transcribed data. For data collection, we have developed interview guide which was reviewed by the four experts from the field of citizen participation and civil society organizations. We have conducted interviews at the time and place convenient to the participants. Thoughts and ideas of the participants were recorded by taking hand written notes. The duration of interviews expanded to approximately 1 hour. Interviews were also recorded and were transcribed by the audio typist for verbatim. All the participants have answered every single question during the interview. We have double checked the transcripts against the recording to ensure the accuracy and remove errors if any.

The technique utilized to manage, code and analyze the data was thematic analysis on the guidelines of Braun and Clarke (2006). The patterns and themes from the interview data were identified, analyzed and reported through thematic analysis. The transcript of the interviews was reads multiple times. The concepts closest and most relevant to the set research objectives had been coded by the researcher into the theoretical nodes. With the emergence of new concepts, they were also incorporated and coded into inductive nodes. Nodes were then combined and separated to create themes and subthemes that were coherent, depicting consistency and distinctive in nature. Therefore, we have identified 15 nodes which set the starting point for the data analysis like CSOs decision making, sufficient information, public engagement, public confidence, decision making process, government priority, social trust, capacity building, efforts of CSOs, quality of decision making, citizen community boards, representation of interests, knowledge, resource allocation, and accountability.

Most of the experts were of the view that CSOs are unable to mobilize public to build pressure on the government for the effective service delivery as well as participatory decision making. This shows leak of citizen involvement in the political process. Therefore, most of the stakeholders claimed that CSOs are unable to provide sufficient knowledge to all the stakeholders including citizens. On the contrary, CSOs members and civil society activists claimed that civil society is playing vital role in civic education. CSOs are also providing key information on public issues including budget etc. Large number of CSOs are directly educating citizens on every aspect of life, whereas, few focuses on parliamentarians and politician's capacity building through training and development. Beside this, CSOs members are not happy with the attitude of the bureaucracy. As we have seen



above that both civilian and military governments have hostile posture towards third generation of civil society which are involvement in advocacy and policy input. Therefore, government machinery is reluctant to provide information to these organizations. On the other hand, government officials considered CSOs as a pressure groups and work on the specific agenda rather than communal issues. They have viewed CSOs as an agent of donor agencies as well as working on foreign agenda. Therefore, Government has banned number of NGOs like save the children. This shows, huge trust deficit between government and CSOs. Therefore, civil society should work on the factors to improve the trust and build positive image in the society which leads towards the constructive role of civil society in ensuring governance in the country. Therefore, it is evident that CSOs don't achieve success in civic education as well as educating all the stakeholder on communal concerns and citizen participation in all walks of life. CSOs are unable to reach wide public because most of CSOs are working in urban areas particularly in big cities. Therefore, CSOs have very limited interaction with rural community. Due to this, CSOs are unable to provide sufficient information to vast majority of the people on governance and service delivery which affect quality of governance in the country

The relation between CSOs and government is full of 'suspicious and tensed' (Makuwira, 2011). This distrust is owed to the failure of CSOs to serve the public interest in provision of service delivery. It is also deep root misconception that civil society (in other words NGOs) are working for donor agencies as well as on foreign agenda. Religious community has ideological chash with the civil society. They view civil society as a liberal component and forcefully highlighted this misconception for their political gains. However, CSOs provide effective information which help citizens to involve in government decision making and hold public office holder accountable (for example see, (Read, 2008; Salamon, 2004) but the case of Pakistan is contradictory as shared by stakeholders during in-depth interviews. Therefore, there is mix perception on the role of CSOs in ensuring good governance in the country. CSOs members argued that effectiveness of CSOs is not recognized by the public officials. They always undermine the effectiveness of CSOs because administration is reluctant to take the opinions and recommendations of CSOs. Mostly, their opinion is heard but ignore during the implementation of the projects. As mentioned by Abbas and Ahmed (2016) and Bhidal (2013) that the CSOs and social accountability face several challenges including resistance by the government in bringing reforms in service delivery, ignoring accountability, vested interests, flaws in legislations, security issues and less acceptance for the social mobilizers in society (Suleri, Ahmed, Zeshan, & Batool, 2014). Research literature also suggests some severe issues in the service delivery of health sector (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2014) and failures in accountability at local levels (Abbas & Ahmed, 2016; Cheema & Shandana, 2013; Mohmand & Cheema, 2007). This shows weak state of civil society which limit the role of civil society in ensuring good governance in the country.

Based on the extensive literature review and discussions on findings, we can conclude that CSOs are not successful to compel the government to incorporate good governance practices in the government decision making process as well as service delivery. The results also indicate that civil society and CSOs are unable to create effective democratic culture in the country which leads towards fragile democracy and weak rule of law. Therefore, CSOs and civil society is still facing hurdles in empowering citizens and holding public office holder accountable. This shows weak state of civil society in the country. It has also been found that CSOs had so many limitations particularly in the area of advocacy and policy input process. However, they

have got some success in convening the demands of citizens to the government.

### Conclusion

Vibrant civil society is the important vehicle to dislodge undemocratic government and bridge the gap between citizen and state. It is also vital tool to ensure good governance in the country. In the broader terms, civil society organizations can be classified into three generations of CSOs in Pakistan. The first generation of CSOs are engaged in relief and welfare activities Second and third generation of CSOs are engaged in community development and policy advocacy respectively. Both (civilian and military) regimes have supported the first and second generation CSOs because these organizations are sharing government burden in the provision of basic services to the unheard segment of the society. Beside this, both governments (civilian and military) have always hostile posture towards third generation of civil society organizations because these organizations criticize government policies as well as provide input in the policy and decision-making process. Therefore, military dictators sanctioned the vibrant components of civil society like student unions, lawyers' associations, and professional unions most of the time. Similarly, the government of Zulifqar Ali Bhutto prohibited CSOs from participating in governance which significantly limited the role of civil society in policy making and decision-making process and negatively affected their input in legislation. However, the last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century, civil society played a significant role in the formulation of laws for non-profit organizations/ CSOs in the country. General Mushraf government has forcefully removed the Chief Justice of Pakistan in 2007 which created window of opportunity for civil society actors to raise vise against undemocratic government. Therefore, in the recent history of Pakistan, the two most important movements initiated by the civil society were the movements for the independence of judiciary and the restoration of democracy. This movement paved the way for civil society to claim and create spaces for participation in governance process as well as strengthening democracy in the country. Political space and enabling environment to ensure the smooth functioning of civil society and make it more vibrant to promote democratic culture and ensure good governance practices in the country. civil society should actively participate in political process by advocating and providing policy option to government that promote the democratic culture and strengthen the parliament. Civil society should actively work on civic education which build public awareness on societal concerns. Civil society should play constructive role for all the key institutions, including parliament, media, election commission, police, judiciary, military, and government, to encourage transparency and accountability which promotes good governance in the country.

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