

# Volunteering Activities in Developing Countries: A Study of Youth Participation in Pakistan

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## Abstract

In recent decades there has been numerous and growing interest of researchers in volunteering. Where there are a substantial number of studies in the developed countries, not much work is present on developing countries. This paper studies the types of volunteering activities among youth in selected areas of Pakistan and analyses the various perspectives of volunteerism in Pakistan. Data was collected from two different provinces of the country through questionnaire. Then through SPSS software data was analyzed. The research shows that people are not much introduced to volunteering or formal volunteering whereas they think they do have time and lesser commitments and do want to volunteer. People are more motivated towards general areas of volunteering like volunteering in medical centers or educational institutions and have been involved in volunteering religious activities in the area however other areas should be introduced to them. Although volunteerism provides young people with opportunity to get engaged in constructive activities, we have found lack of volunteerism opportunities and awareness. There is need for seminars and programs to be held to make general public aware of volunteering, its uses and benefits to them and the society. The research can help organizations and researchers to study the volunteering activity according to specified volunteering areas. Volunteering activities can be increased by focusing on the individual areas.

**Keywords:** Volunteerism, Types of Volunteering activities, volunteering in developing countries, Youth, Volunteer Management, Volunteer Motivation,

## 1. Introduction

In recent decades, there has been a burgeoning interest in the study of volunteering, and the number of publications devoted to volunteering has grown exponentially (Hustinx, Handy, & Cnaan, 2011). Not only the individuals but organizations (like Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Faith Based Organizations (FBOs)) and Governments have been involved in introducing, promoting, encouraging, motivating, facilitating and enforcing volunteering activities among general public. Several benefits of volunteering has been studied and realized to the individual volunteers as well. In the developed countries, organizations and Governments are more actively involved in measurement and declaration of volunteer work in the country. Because of awareness among public, availability of data, and interest of the researchers there are many studies on the volunteers of developed countries. This paper studies volunteering activities in the developing country (Pakistan). There has not been much work on volunteering in the developing nations. Butcher (2011) writes that there is a need to seriously interrogate the forms of volunteer participation in developing nations. Volunteering is not among common activities in the areas of the country under study (Pakistan). There is lack of awareness about formal volunteering among students and public. Formal volunteering is defined as any unpaid contribution of time to activities of organizations (Wirtschaft, 2014). However some religious and welfare organizations do enjoy services and roles from volunteers in achievement of Organizational Objectives. Butcher (2011) also emphasizes that efforts should be made to understand, foster local customs and enhance volunteering in developing countries. This paper is a step towards understanding and awareness of volunteering in the country.

Volunteering not only benefits the organization or society but it also has numerous benefits for individuals (Booth, Park, & Glomb, 2009; Handy & Brudney, 2007; Sherr, 2008). Focusing on the individuals and what the individuals can get by volunteering, for Example, Veitch (2013) wrote networking, skill development and belongings, Casey (2014) wrote new knowledge, developing new skills or honing existing ones, networking, advancing one's career, and making new acquaintances and friends. Many websites on the internet have collected different benefits of volunteering to promote volunteerism. An Example is Saisan, Smith, & Kemp (2014) who wrote that volunteering connects with others, helps make new friends, increases social and relationship skills, increases self-confidence, combats depression, helps stay physically healthy, can provide career experience, teach valuable job skills and help advance in the career. Other benefits include a good health (Byrd, 1984), developing a sense of confidence, achievement, and fulfillment, and making new acquaintances and friendships, working with children, personal and religious satisfaction. According to report in 2010 by Corporation of National & Community Health Service of USA, people who volunteer live longer. Volunteering

also teaches self management and social awareness. Research shows that these characters positively affects entrepreneurial orientation (Padilla-Meléndez, Fernández-Gámez, & Molina-Gómez, 2014). There is no doubt that Volunteering would not only benefit the Organization or employer but also individuals choosing to volunteer.

In order to analyze the volunteering activities in the country, this study is carried out according to different areas focused by Volunteers. Authors have written papers in different areas of volunteering as volunteers give their time according to their area of interest. A few have studied the volunteering behavior in all the areas or have analyzed the volunteering activities among different areas. We have, in this paper, tried to cover all the areas of the volunteering so that a thorough analysis of the volunteering activities in the country can be analyzed. To study the volunteering activities in Pakistan, we have focused on five research questions.

## **2. Research Questions:**

Question 1: What are the areas of Volunteering currently active in Pakistan?

Question 2: What areas have been more focused by Pakistani volunteers?

Questions 3: Are the youngsters in the country motivated to volunteer?

Questions 4: Do the youngsters have time to volunteer?

Questions 5: Are youngsters well introduced to volunteerism?

The research questions mentioned help to study the volunteering behavior of the youth in Pakistan and explores which areas are more focused by volunteers; if people want to volunteer out of their busy schedules and if they are/were introduced to volunteer activities. Findings show that a few are involved in formal volunteering whereas as more are involved in informal way of volunteering. The volunteers believe that they do have time to volunteer or they should volunteer however they are not introduced to volunteering activities. The area wise analysis of the responses helps the related bodies to focus the less attentive areas of volunteering. Awareness can be increased by holding Seminars or events. By focusing on the respective areas to promote volunteerism according to interests / subjects of the students or youngsters, overall volunteering activities in the country can be increased bringing improvement in individuals, society and the country.

The remaining part of the paper consists of literature on Volunteering, Volunteering in developing countries and in Pakistan, the benefits of Volunteering and the areas of Volunteering, followed by Research Methodology, Results and Discussions and Conclusion.

## **3. Literature Review**

### **3.1 Volunteering and Youth**

There have been multiple approaches followed to understand what the word Volunteer can mean. Different authors have defined the word in similar and different ways. To recognize the meaning of volunteering is far more contextually determined that is commonly assumed (Butcher, 2011). Researchers have put big emphasis has been on the absence of monetary benefits whereas some authors have studied the usefulness of little token of appreciation to volunteers in the short run (Lacetera, Macis, & Slonim 2014). In many cases, although a clear financial payment at market rate is not present in case of volunteering but providing volunteers with something of financial benefits like reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses, travel allowance, payments for costs incurred, stipend etc. which might be fixed in some case, or varying or just a present from the senior/boss can be found in various cases.

Volunteering can be defined as some planned activity carried out with free will, for betterment of humanity and society and involves (little to) no monetary compensation. It is also sometimes confused with altruism. Haski-Leventhal (2009) explains the difference between the two in his work "Altruism and Volunteerism" by defining formal volunteering as one of the important aspects of human altruism consisting of organized and long-term activity, for the benefit of others. Batson (1991) defines altruism as "a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare". Patel & Wilson (2004) states that altruism as a "selfless" act does not occur, because to deny helping if one can do so is to deny one's sense of self. Hence it is sort of co-operation and not altruism as altruistic activity should be considered when it benefits the recipient and harms the helper (Sigmund & Hauert, 2002). The current literature, however, focuses on volunteering activity without considering who is being benefited more or less. Helping with expectation of being helped on time is also not considered neither included. Offering services by Pakistani nationals (in this study of volunteerism) to others with no to little money is considered volunteer work but helping for a little time in times of needs is not included in formal volunteering.

The term Youth has been explained with multiple definitions and age brackets. According to United Nations definition, people in between 15-24 years of age are considered as youth while others including USAID, assume 10-29 years as Youth (USAID, 2012). Meanwhile, we would follow the Pakistan's official definition which considers people from 15-29 years of age lying in the category of Youth (National Youth Policy, 2009). It is the best approach to engage youth in constructive and learning oriented activities through volunteerism.

### **3.2 Volunteering in developing countries**

Walt (1988) and Schneider, Hlophe, & Rensburg (2008) have noted various communities involved in services primary health care especially in developing countries that contain services from volunteers. Researchers have written on volunteering in the developed countries (like U.S and the United Kingdom) however not much has been analyzed on volunteering in developing countries. World giving index (2014) by Charities Aid Foundation shows that Turkmenistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Uzbekistan are four top countries with respect to percentage of people volunteering i.e., 53%, 51%, 50% and 46% respectively. They are followed by USA, Canada, New Zealand and Tajikistan with 44%, Bhutan (43%), and Ireland, Malaysia and Nigeria (41%). In Pakistan, the volunteer activity is said to be only 16% ranking it 78<sup>th</sup> in the world. This data also shows that the awareness of volunteering encourages people to volunteer despite the economic condition of the country.

### **3.3 Types of volunteering Areas / Opportunities**

Authors have written researches in different areas of volunteering as volunteers give their time in volunteering according to their area of interest. For example Ibsen (2012); Nichols, Taylor, Barrett, & Jeanes (2013); Reeser, Berg, Rhea, & Willick (2005); Warner Newland, B.L., and Green, B.C., (2011) have studied volunteering in sports, Pi, Lin, Chen, Chiu, & Chen(2014); Silverberg, Marshall, & Ellis (2001) have studied public Parks and recreation volunteers, Bielefeld & Cleveland (2013); Hill & den Dulk (2013); Johnston (2013); Spring & Grimm (2004); Unruh (2010) have studied faith based areas, Hallett, Klug, Lauber, & Priebe (2012); Handy & Srinivasan (2004); Hotchkiss, Unruh, & Fottler (2014) studied volunteers in hospitals etc. A few have studied the volunteering behavior in all the areas or have analyzed the volunteering activities among different areas. Among those who have studied different areas of volunteering, Strauß (2008) divides areas of volunteering as Sports, Children, religion, social welfare, leisure/culture, local community and politics. Gage & Thapa (2012) divides volunteer organizations into Political, Environmental, Recreational, Cultural, Human services, Educational and other. We have, in this paper, tried to cover all the areas of the volunteering so that a thorough analysis of the volunteering activities in the country can be analyzed. Seven Categories of volunteering areas are studied as:

1. General Services (Educational, Medical and other welfare services)
2. Emergency Services (Ambulance Services, fire brigade, leagues/movements)
3. Environmental Services
4. Recreational Volunteering (sports, parks etc)
5. Political Volunteering (volunteering to support a political party)
6. Religious / Faith Volunteering (volunteering to bring religious/social change in oneself and society)
7. Recommended or Imposed Volunteering

#### **3.3.1 General Services (General Volunteering)**

General human services for volunteers include volunteering in medical centers created by NGOs or FBOs to provide free or cheap medical facilities to especially poor in the society. It also includes the volunteering in hospitals and clinics owned privately or by government. Volunteers have also been working in health clinics and hospitals since ages and benefiting them. Handy & Srinivasan (2004) writes that getting new volunteers for a hospital is always attracting as it gives benefits in term of cost / expenses management of the hospital and improvement in quality of care. The work of Hotchkiss, Unruh, & Fottler (2014) shows that the use of volunteers provides significant cost savings to the hospitals and can potentially affect profit margins. Moreover his study shows that use of volunteers in hospital also enhances other quality indicators like patient's safety and satisfaction.

#### **3.3.2 Emergency Services**

Emergency services include volunteering in companies (NGOs or others) providing emergency services like fire brigade, ambulance. Sometimes leaders also call for movements (as has been seen in the history) which is also included in this category. Gensicke, Picot, & Geiss (2005) studied a population of people under 25 in Germany and writes that people are more often engaged in youth clubs, sports clubs and fire brigade than average population.

#### **3.3.3 Environmental services**

Environmental services include volunteering in companies working to improve our environment that can best serve public. Dávila & Ambientales (2009); Martinez & McMullin (2004); Ryan, Kaplan, & Grese (2001) are some of the authors who studied environmental volunteers. Ryan et al. (2001) states that the environmental movements would not exist if there were no help from thousands of dedicated volunteers and that many of improvements in past three decades were made by volunteers.

#### **3.3.4 Recreational Volunteering**

Many volunteers around the globe volunteer in public and recreation parks, forests and Olympic Games. Recreation agencies and public parks also heavily rely on volunteers (Silverberg et al., 2001). During mega-events, Olympics and other large athletic events, many sports-event volunteers are seen in action (Reeser et al., 2005) and sports events largely rely on volunteers (Fairley, Kellett, & Green, 2007)..

### **3.3.5 Political Volunteering**

People are an important resource in political campaigns. Many people having time and resources with passion of politics regularly join political campaigns that encourage citizens to engage in open-minded thinking (Kam, 2006). Volunteers get involved in political campaigns either because they see some societal or national benefit for supporting the leader or because of personal benefit. Sometimes volunteers see future financial benefits for supporting and volunteering in political campaigns like decrease in taxes (McKee & McKee, 2012) however it can also be for betterment of the society.

### **3.3.6 Religious / Faith Volunteering**

Faith volunteering is also a big sector of volunteering as Religion has been in a strong relationship with Volunteering. Many youngsters start volunteering in their local mosques from childhood and later may volunteer in other areas as well (for example in general area of volunteering). According to Taniguchi & Thomas (2011) Religious inclusiveness has promoted both religious and secular volunteering. Local religious centers promote volunteering not only in this area but also other social areas. Religiosity is positively related to multiple civic outcomes (Lewis, Macgregor, & Putnam, 2013). Berger (2003) stated that religious NGOs (RNGOs) have been representing a unique hybrid of religious beliefs and sociopolitical activism at all levels of society.

### **3.3.7 Other Volunteering**

There are also some cases where some volunteers are mandated, legally by the courts, as a punishment on their criminal offense related to substance abuse, child abuse, domestic violence and mental disorders. These volunteers are relatively considered as hard to reach, unmotivated and resistant volunteers by the social work associations / practitioners (O'Hare, 1996). It is also observed that these volunteers are less cooperating and have lack of interest because they neither chose to volunteer in the task nor did they accept to do it. Hence the satisfaction level of these volunteers would be quite low. Sometimes medical doctors also recommend their patients to volunteer to gain social interactions and other benefits. This type of volunteering, however, is not included in survey as it targets specific population.

## **4. Research Methodology**

Literature review of journal articles was carried to a comprehensive level to identify articles on different areas of volunteering, the benefits of volunteering and the role of volunteers in each area. The motivation and constraints of volunteering were studied however not included in detail in this study due to extensive literature to manage for one study. Research review was conducted from December 2014 to March 2015 using the article databases of *ProQuest*, *Springer*, *Sagepub*, *Science Direct*, *EBESCO* etc however there has been background knowledge and work of authors in the field of volunteering. Search terms for this study included volunteerism, volunteering areas, Volunteering in hospitals, Volunteering in parks, Environmental Volunteering, Faith Based Organizations, Volunteering in FBOs, Volunteer Constraints, Volunteering in developing countries, Recreational Volunteering, Court-Ordered Volunteering.

For Collection of data, researchers and their designated lecturers held seminars at different cities and areas of Pakistan. Attendants were asked if they were aware of volunteering and volunteering activities in Pakistan. Less than half of the attendants were either volunteering or had volunteered in past and rest were looking for volunteering except a few who did not participate to answer. Attendants were explained the concept of volunteering with the purpose of giving them a thought of formal volunteering and make them understand about benefits of volunteering. At the end, questionnaire was distributed to be filled up at the same time. Any questions asked were answered. Those who had not volunteered before were requested to assume and answer to the questions by choosing or grading their possible option in case they had or would volunteer. Moreover the same questionnaire was put online to attract volunteers who had not attended the seminars. Their responses were also included in the analysis. Total of 243 responses were finalized for this research.

### **4.1 Preparation of Questionnaire:**

Firstly some informative data was collected by asking questions to volunteers including their past volunteering experience, how much time they allocated, if they had volunteered in last year, volunteering areas where they had volunteered or would be interested to volunteer, their method and way of volunteering etc. The same or similar questions were available in questionnaire of earlier researchers included in literature review like Gage & Thapa (2012) and Mutawa & Ali (2012). Another important question inquired about the areas where attendants had volunteered (or the area of interest for volunteering). Where scaling was used, respondents were given options to choose between 1 and 7 where 1 meant the least important or totally disagree and 7 stood for totally agree.

### **4.2 Data Processing:**

The Data collected was analyzed with the help of SPSS software and Microsoft Excel.

## 5. Result Discussion and Findings

### 5.1 Profile and Characteristics of Respondents

After data cleaning, 243 responses were analyzed out of which 169 (69.5%) were male and 74 (30.5%) were female. 233 (95.9%) of the participants were aged below 30 years. 87.7% of the population had passed the high school (were university students) whereas 69 (28.4%) had bachelors and 47 (19.3%) had masters degree or above. 178 (73.3%) of the respondents were students and 58 (23.9%) were employees and only 7(2.9%) were self-employed. 2 of the respondents included in students were also involved in business of their own.

### 5.2 Areas of Volunteering in Pakistan

The respondents who had volunteered in past or were currently volunteering were asked in which areas they had volunteered. The results indicated all types of volunteering areas as studied in the literature however the interest of the population studied (even being from different areas and of interest) was more towards specific kinds of volunteering areas and not to rest comparatively.

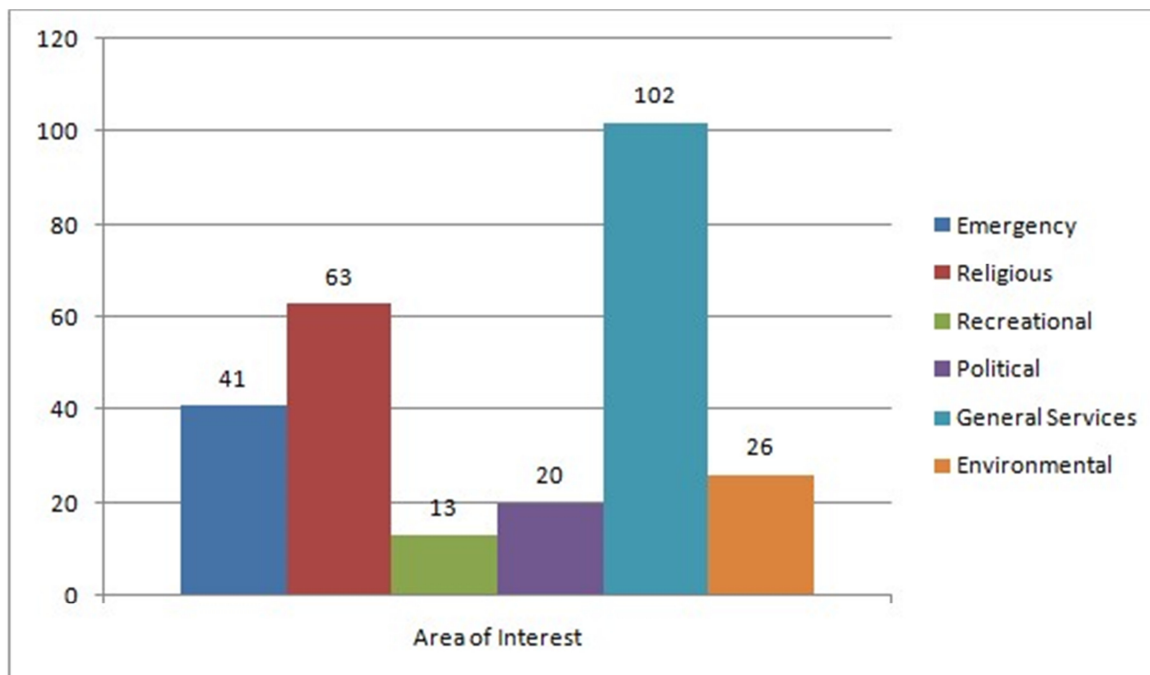
### 5.3 Areas focused by Pakistani volunteers

The respondents were asked if they had volunteered in past or they were currently volunteering or if they were looking for volunteering. 9 respondents did not choose any. From the remaining respondents (234), 14.7% had been involved in formal volunteering and 8.7% were currently volunteering. Formal volunteering is unpaid contribution of time to activities of organizations whereas Informal volunteering is assistance given directly to non-households individuals (Carson, 1999; Lee & Brudney, 2012; Wirschaft, 2014). The percentage of informal volunteering was higher that included, in most cases, short term volunteering activities to help juniors in education or volunteering on religious festivals to arrange religious programs in the areas. 40.9% of the respondents were interested to volunteer in different areas either formally or informally. Other details are provided in the table below:

Volunteering Area	N	Volunteered in Past				Currently Volunteering				Looking for Volunteering			
		Formal (14.7%)	%	Informal (26.2%)	%	Formal (8.7%)	%	Informal (9.4%)	%	Formal (19.2%)	%	Informal (21.7%)	%
Emergency	41	9	21.43	13	17.33	4	16.00	4	14.81	3	5.45	8	12.90
Religious	63	10	23.81	21	28.00	6	24.00	7	25.93	7	12.73	12	19.35
Recreational	13	2	4.76	3	4.00	2	8.00	1	3.70	1	1.82	4	6.45
Political	20	2	4.76	6	8.00	1	4.00	2	7.41	3	5.45	6	9.68
General	102	14	33.33	19	25.33	9	36.00	8	29.63	33	60.00	19	30.65
Environmental	26	3	7.14	8	10.67	1	4.00	3	11.11	5	9.09	6	9.68
Miscellaneous	21	2	4.76	5	6.67	2	8.00	2	7.41	3	5.45	7	11.29
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100</b>

The results showed that overall Informal Volunteering has been more than formal volunteering in past and present. The same is trend for people looking to volunteering except the area of general volunteering. In General Volunteering people do look forward to volunteer through some organization.

A graphical representation of respondents who had volunteered, were volunteering or are looking for volunteering in specific areas is given below. Some respondents chose more than one areas.



#### 5.4 Do the youngsters have time to volunteer?

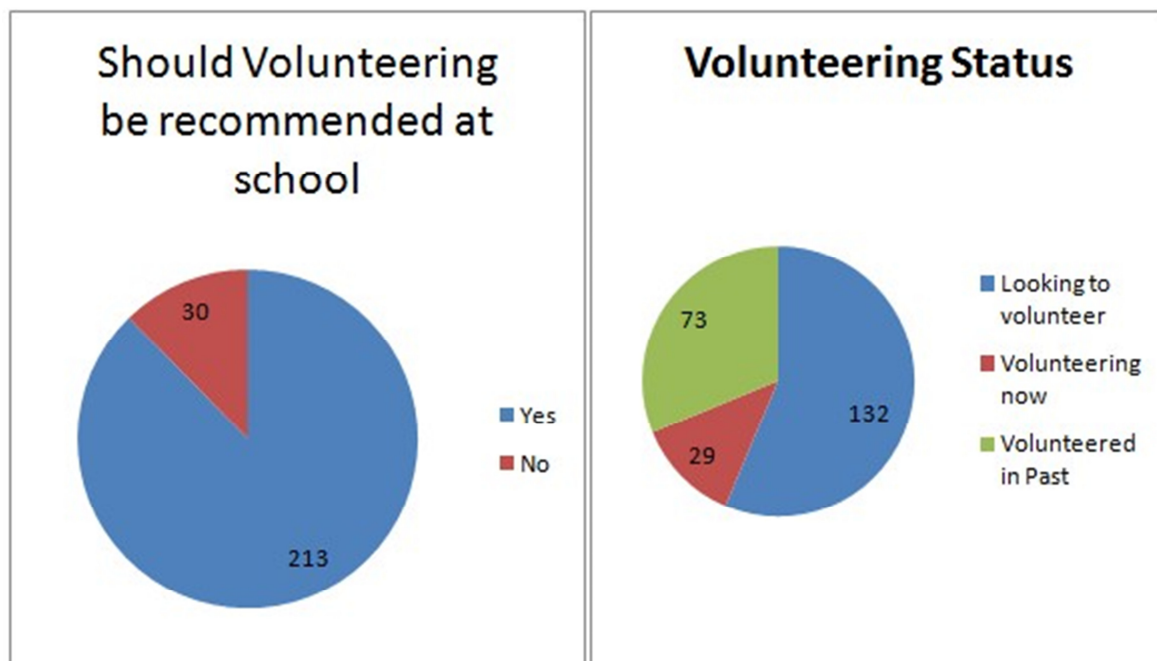
Normally it is assumed that young people have no much time for social activities because of their tough school schedule and studies routine. This research, however, shows that youngsters believe they have time and lesser commitments. Introducing them to volunteering can be a useful for their own and the country's future. Two questions were asked in this regard i.e., "I have no time to volunteer" and "I have too many commitments". Respondents were asked to rank their answers between 1 and 7 as 1 being totally disagree and 7 being totally agree. The results are shown as below:-

	Mean		S.D	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
		S.E				S.E		S.E
I have no time to volunteer	2.5226	.10977	1.71120	2.928	1.009	.156	.193	.311
I have too many other commitments	3.1564	.10416	1.62376	2.637	.609	.156	-.469	.311

The results show that respondents disagree to both the statements with averages being 2.5 and 3.2 out of 7 respectively.

#### 5.5 Are the youngsters in the country motivated to volunteer?

We studied if the respondents were motivated to volunteer. Two questions were asked in this regard i.e., "Should Volunteering be compulsory at school?" and "What is your Volunteer status?" 213 respondents (87.7%) recommend that volunteering should be compulsory at school level whereas 30 thought it will be a burden or it should not be compulsory for some reason. 41.9% had been involved in formal or informal volunteering and 54.3% wanted to volunteer.



### 5.6 Are youngsters well introduced to volunteering?

The study shows that volunteering is not made compulsory during the education level of the students as only 14% said that volunteering was / is compulsory during their education. Furthermore 71.3% of the respondents were never introduced to (before the seminar) or asked to volunteer. The results were analyzed according to the areas of Volunteering.

Volunteering Area	Volunteering was compulsory at school						
	Yes			No			
	Not Asked to Volunteer	Asked	%	Asked	%	Not Asked to Volunteer	%
Emergency	0	4	9.52	21	50.00	17	40.48
Religious	0	6	9.38	5	7.81	51	79.69
Recreational	0	3	23.08	2	15.38	8	61.54
Political	0	2	9.09	19	86.36	1	4.55
General	0	19	18.45	16	15.53	67	65.05
Environmental	0	3	11.54	7	26.92	16	61.54
<b>Total (267*)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>37</b>		<b>70</b>		<b>160</b>	

\* Some respondents chose more than 1 option in the Volunteering areas.

Results show that people may involve in religious volunteering and general volunteering more likely without being asked to volunteer compared to political, emergency, recreational and environmental areas. It is also evident from the data presented in the tables above that there is much need of creating awareness for volunteerism especially among Youth who complain of not being introduced to the world of volunteerism by the elders.

### 5. Conclusion and Future Research

No doubt, Youth Volunteerism provides a great opportunity to young people of the society to engage themselves in their personal and social development. This culture of selfless services inculcates the best habits among youth who can grow up to be good and active citizens. The research shows that people are not much introduced to volunteering or formal volunteering whereas they think they do have time to volunteer and have lesser commitments. People are more motivated towards general volunteering like volunteering in medical centers or educational institutions and other areas should be introduced to them. A significant proportion have also been involved in volunteering through faith based organizations and local mosques. The reason behind can be their religious background and attendance to local mosques leading them to involve voluntarily in the religious events. More Organizations should get involved to promote Volunteering. This can provide them cost effective work force to work for the fulfillment of their Organizational objectives. The NGOs, FBOs and Government bodies

should play their role in respective areas of volunteering by dividing responsibilities among organizations to promote formal volunteering and arrange informative events to promote both formal and informal volunteering as the research shows a need for seminars and programs to be held to make general public aware of volunteering and its uses.

This was a basic and general study; however there is need for authors to focus on hurdles for youngsters to volunteer. The hurdles been studied and controlled or reduced can help increase volunteering. Furthermore studying the motivation of the volunteers in developing countries can be useful. Study of possible role of government and organizations can also help promote volunteerism in the country. Moreover, this research is geographically limited to Pakistan only and may or may not represent every developing country. Data was collected from two (Punjab and Sindh) out of four provinces. The research was not funded by any external body, person or organization.

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