

**Civil Society Organizations and Peace-Building in Pakistan:  
A Case Study of Role of Paiman Alumni Trust in Identity Conflicts**

Muhammad Ejaz,<sup>1</sup> & Adil Khan<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:**

The insecurity created by the intra-state ethnic and religious identities has affected negatively the situation of peace in Pakistan. The state's responses failed to create harmony because identity conflicts cannot be resolved with traditional tactics. It created room for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The main aim of this research is to comprehend the role and activism of CSOs in identity conflicts and complementary aims are to discern their strategy and approaches and analyze the challenges they face in peace-building. The research is qualitative and analytical which employed documents, observation, and interviews for addressing the objectives. The Paiman Alumni Trust is adopted as case for in-depth and contextual study. The analytical framework for the CSOs functions in peace-building has been developed while taking major inspiration from Paffenholz (2010) and Orjuela (2008) which has two main themes i.e. protection and culture of peace. It is argued that CSOs have the capacity and potential to address the issues of protection and a culture of peace. The financial, structural, and ideological factors are disabling factors for CSOs.

**Key words:** Pakistan, identity, conflicts, civil society, peace-building, culture

**INTRODUCTION**

The post-Cold War environment has drastically changed the nature of conflicts and the traditional inter-state conflicts have been replaced by intra-state ethnic and religious identity conflicts. These conflicts have been termed as new wars by Mary Kaldar; protracted conflicts by Edwards Azar, deep-rooted by John Burton, and intractable by Benjamin Gidron (Gawerc, 2006). However, normally they are called as ethnic or identity conflicts. Due to their complex nature, they cannot be resolved by traditional theories and practices. The use of conventional diplomacy lost relevance because as Oberschall (2007) said these conflicts are not among state's armies but with local and regional factions. This exposure changed the focus of researchers and policy-makers and they understood that they cannot be dealt with effectively from the outside or from the above rather the local actors i.e. civil society organizations (CSOs) can resolve them. Rupesinghe (1995) remarked about their strength in identity conflicts, "they are the principal parties, owners of the conflicts and long term actors in overall peace process." The role of CSOs as peace agents has been recognized by the international community (Orjuela, 2008).

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Govt. Post Graduate College, Mansehra/ PhD Scholar (Pakistan Studies), Hazara University Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Email: meaabbasi85@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer, Department of Pakistan Studies, Hazara University, Mansehra.  
Email: adilseemab@gmail.com

The history of Pakistan is turbulent because of many crises. Foremost threatening component among them is the absence of stability, peace, and harmony. The state did not respect the cultural, regional, and linguistic diversity of the ethnic identities which politicized them. Furthermore, as Mustafa (2013) said that the interests and needs of identities are incompatible which have made them hostile to one another and of state. The Bloch, Muhajir, Sindhi, Saraiki, and Pashtun identities are involved with one another and with the state. The religious identities are more daring for country's peace than ethnic. The strategic entry in Afghan Jihad (1979-88) and popularization of their narratives by the state have made them contested to state's power. The religious actors are the Jihadi militants and the sectarians' militants which are the product of state's strategic interest (Qazi, 2013). These religious identities are struggling with one another and also have defied the writ of state by resistance and separatist tendencies. These identities have become intimidation for the fabric of the country, government institutions, growing economy, and the civilians (Mardland, 2014). The situation is explained by Bhattacharya (2018: 84) as "the entire country is under attack from within itself." The state responded with hard and military means which have made them more complex (Johnston, et.al 2016). As a result, as Majeed (2010) said that identities resisted, re-emerged, and appeared to be more dangerous and created unresolved conflictive situations. This left room for the CSOs to come forward and become peace agents because of their local knowledge and soft dealings.

This paper has investigated the role of CSOs in peace-building initiatives in Pakistan. The framework for the CSOs' functions, in peace, has been created on two themes i.e. protection and monitoring. The strategy approaches and the challenges to CSOs have also been discussed. The scopes of peace-building initiatives of the national CSOs are limited to intra-regional ethnic conflicts. The research revolves around the following questions: How CSOs are carrying out the peace-building functions in Pakistan? What are the disabling factors to the smooth functioning of CSOs? How CSOs overcome the challenges by adopting different strategies and techniques?

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This research is qualitative and analytical which is set to build the theory and opinions about the CSOs role in peace-building in Pakistan. The integrated approach for data collection is adopted. Data is collected from official documents, library sources, personal observation, and interviews. The documents are collected in form of books, published research articles, reports, and blogs and their internal and external validity has been checked before utilization. The activities of major nongovernmental organization (NGOs) and, particularly, of Paiman have been personally observed in major cities. A total of ten interviews were conducted. The interviewees were activists of peace CSOs and the Paiman officials based in Islamabad, Peshawar, Abbottabad, Lahore, and Mansehra. The open-ended interview list was developed for an in-depth conversation. The non-random purposive sampling technique was utilized. The recorded interviews were extracted, transcribed, and coded for connecting them with the main themes of the research.

## **CONTEXTUALIZING CIVIL SOCIETY AND PEACE-BUILDING**

Peace-building like many of the terms of "Conflict and Peace Studies" is contested; therefore, Miller (2004) called it "an undefined term." Schrich (2008) described it an umbrella and Meta term that overlaps with conflict prevention, mitigation, management, and resolution. Paffenholz (2010)

explained it as the process of achieving peace. Galtung (1975) called it a process for long-term justice, stability and bringing about sustainable development. This research, however, is interested in the conceptual analyses of Lederach (1997), Michae Barnett et. al (2007) and Schrich (2008) that termed it, long term project of sustainable peace which prevents violence in all forms i.e. direct, structural or cultural and nurture the broken relationships among people. The general perception of peace-building in Pakistan cannot be separated from security; therefore, peace in Pakistan is a combination of both negative and positive peace. The negative peace is the simply the absence of direct violence while the positive peace is the freedom from structural and cultural violence.

Like peace, CSO is also a contested and confusing term, therefore, Glasius et.al (2004) declared; “it can be all things to all people.” Most commonly, it is described as the realm of voluntary associational social life that exists independently between families, state, and market (World Bank 2006, 2). CSOs develop in different environments, therefore, their nature and growth are not same internationally. Zaidi (2006) argues CSOs are not wholly separated from state and economic sector as boundary among them is blurred. The organizations are not non-partisans as some have open ethnic or sectarian affiliations. There is no distinction between CSOs and NGOs rather they are treated as same as a respondent said “they are the one name of the same coin” (A. Rana, personal communication, January 30, 2021).

The role of CSOs has been recognized recently because military interventions in the contemporary internal identity-based conflicts proved a failure (Leeuwen, 2008). Following the success in some areas, the scholars like Belloni (2001), Fischer (2006), Orjuela (2008), Leeuwen (2008), and importantly Paffenholz (2006, 2010) developed the analytical frameworks of the CSOs functions of peace. Their functions revolve around reconciliation, protection, reintegration, culture of peace and dialogue, monitoring, psycho-social support, good governance, and creation of peace structures. As main theme “protection” is borrowed from Paffenholz (2010) while “culture of peace” from Orjuela (2008) therefore this research is largely inspired by their frameworks. However, the growth and capacity of CSOs and the nature of peace movements are not the same in Pakistan. Therefore, the sub-themes like reintegration, the movement for peace and media for peace reporting are inspired by Johnston et. al (2016) and Mirahmadi et. al, (2012).

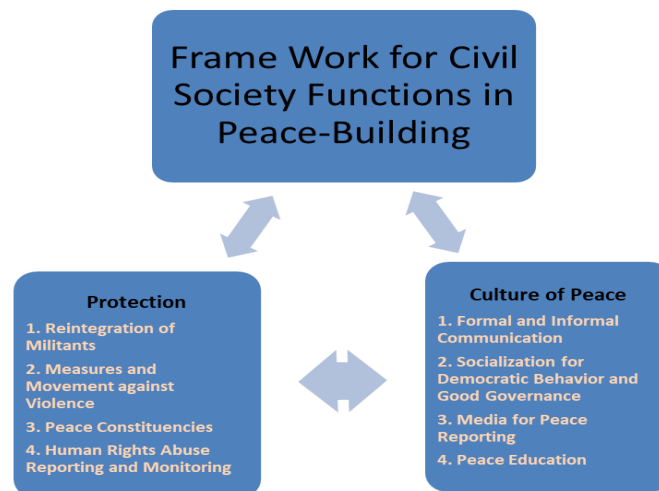


Figure 1: Framework for the Civil Society’s Role in Peace-Building

The main themes are protection and culture of peace. Protection is sub-divided into four sub-themes i.e. reintegration, movement against violence, human rights, and monitoring and creation of peace constituency. Culture of Peace is divided into four sub-themes i.e. formal and informal communication, democratic values and good governance, media for peace reporting, and peace education. CSOs have a unique capacity in the public culture of peace while it has a complementary position on the protection where it has to work along with the state (World Bank, 2006).

### **CONTEXTUALIZING PEACE-BUILDING INITIATIVES OF PAKISTANI CIVIL SOCIETY**

The peace-building agenda in Pakistan is still very young as Pasha et.al (2002) did not enlist any peace interventionist organizations in their types of CSOs. The situation, however, changed in the post 9/11 environment and now above 100 national CSOs are working for peace (Ahmed, 2012). These initiatives got international recognition. Johnston, et.al (2016) said CSOs have made some great programs which the government cannot overlook in any case. Lamb et.al (2015) concluded that CSOs have played a significant role in the implementation of peace initiatives through key activities and channels. CSOs are the better actors in identity conflicts as Qazi (2013) said their non-partisan nature, pragmatism, viable access, social sensitive approach, and local knowledge made them a potential agent. CSOs have played some worth mentioning roles and activists like Raza Rumi believes that they can build peace while activists like Shafqat Mehmood are still skeptical about their full capacity (R. Rumi, personal communication, February 18, 2021; S. Mehmood, personal communication, January 28, 2021). They have also made alliances for peace like the Pakistan Peace Network (PNP) which is the loose alliance of fourteen NGOs CSOs of Pakistan adopt diversified modes and approaches for performing the functions of peace. The common among them are resolution trainings and dialogues conferences, workshops, seminars, publications, strikes and demonstrations, peace rallies, and media activism (A. Rana, personal communication, January 30, 2021; M. Ratore, personal communication, November 20, 2020; S. Jawad, personal communication, January 04, 2021). They performed the functions of protection, peace education, individual de-radicalization, alternative narratives, reformation of religious seminaries, and promotion of inter-ethnic and inter-faith harmony and promote human rights (Gordon, 2013). The approaches of CSOs to peace also have problems as they do not make sufficient analysis of conflicts, do not take care of cultural sensitivities, do not counter propaganda of “Western Agents” on one hand and lack professional staff and proper dealing skills on the other hand (R. Tanoli, personal communication, January 06, 2021; K. K. Khattak, personal communication, October 15, 2020). Still, security of the activists is ever greater issue as many faced threats, kidnapping and harassments (Gordon, 2013). The public image of the NGOs has not been improved and trust deficient between the local communities and the NGOs is a bigger problem (Ahmed, 2012).

The existing literature on the peace-building largely deals with inter-state peace process. Some prominent researchers in this field like Mirahmadi et.al, (2012), Qazi (2013) and Johnston et.al (2016) have contributed but mainly they focused on de-radicalization of religious identities. The CSOs role in protection, their movement against violence, reintegration, advocacy, peace education and culture of peace are neglected areas that need empirical research to fill this gap.

### **Rationale of Selection Paiman as Case Study**

Case study is suitable when a researcher is seeking to get answers to how and why questions. It utilizes multiple data collections like documents, observation, and interviews for construction of validity (Yin, 2009). The Ragin's (1989) criteria of matching with objectives of the study and substantial work, peace activity at national level, effectiveness, national and international recognition are taken impartiality as selection criteria and Paiman explicitly and implicitly match the criteria for the selection of case of this study.

### **Locale of Paiman Alumni Trust**

Paiman is a non-profit voluntary organization that has a head office in Islamabad and regional offices in all four provinces, Azad Kashmir and former independent unit federally administered tribal areas (FATA). Currently, it is active in more than 36 cities and towns of the country, though its main hub for activities is the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and FATA. It was registered under the "Trust Act 1882" in 2004. Paiman is an Urdu word meaning "The Promise." The meaning of this promise according to Mossarat Qadeem is; "linking the different communities for broadening their horizons and to explore their potentials to the greater extent" (M. Qadeem, personal communication, January 30, 2021). It faced some problems initially, like the availability of building, professional staff, and financial resources. To overcome the financial challenges Mossarat Qadeem remarked that: "As we were working with spirit and cause, therefore, our struggle period was just three months and we got a project. I provided the upper story of my house to Paiman and in start we engaged a very small staff" (M. Qadeem, personal communication, January 30, 2021).

The initial aims and objectives of the organizations were humanitarianism but after few years' peace, good governance and advocacy have also been added. Qadeem (2021) remarked that, Paiman "is a dynamic organization and we have updated our areas of work and likely updated our objectives according to the need and time." The main objectives are the removal of conflicts, poverty, injustices, disharmony from the social structure and making awareness about the cultural, social, and economic diversity and improvement of governance and human rights (Zahra, F. *et. al*, n. d). The Paiman's peace is the effort for the removal of direct, structural, and cultural violence (International Civil Society Action Network [ICAN], 2017; R. Mughal, personal communication, January 28, 2021).

The basic approach to peace of the Paiman is non-violence because it believes that violence can only give birth to more violence (ICAN, 2017). It evolves working relationships and avoids unnecessary entanglement with authorities. Peace is a culturally sensitive issue; therefore, it takes the traditional and religious groups into confidence. Its societal role is non-partisan and non-political. Institutionally, it idealizes things, measures judge, check risks and resources and work with vision (Zahra, F. *et. al*, n.d.).

### **Protection**

Paiman has mentioned protection as its focus and peace function in many trainings and workshops. Reintegration, human rights protection, movements against violence, and creation of peace constituencies for the protection of citizens are the determinations of Paiman.

### **Reintegration of Militants**

Reintegration is the main concern of the Paiman and its methodology to assimilation and rehabilitation has two important phases. In the first phase, it searches and identifies the vulnerable and extremist youth. The second phase is related to making them normal.

The Tolana (peace groups) have engaged 75000 women and youths, which helped them to identify the vulnerable youths (R. Mughal, personal communication, January 28, 2021). Tolana members also identified them as they know some of them personally in their localities. However, the approach that got international currency is the involvement of mothers. The mothers' behaviours are transformed while utilizing religion and culture's peaceful principles. They are given livelihood skills for boosting economic status and then training against hatred and signs of radicalization. After becoming the part of Tolana groups, they recognize the early signs of radicalizations like anger, anxiety, and withdrawal from normal life in sons (Qadeem, 2018).

The earlier reintegration process is related to the awareness as Tolana members identify the people who distribute the hate material and convince them for the narrative of social cohesion. It works for reforms in male and female seminaries and disclosed the causes of radicalization like poverty, propaganda of foreign rule, lack of opportunities in education, and economics. The individual work includes the re-construction of mind while using the Quranic Verses that support brotherhood and oppose hatred, capacity building and education in critical thinking and dialogue on cohesion and harmony. In the second phase, they are given the skills and opportunities of livelihood and in the third phase, they are made the part of the Paiman's peace movement against violence (Qadeem, 2018).

By this process organization transformed and reintegrated 1450 youths into society. Those women and youths who were the informers and indirect partners of the Taliban and sewing suicide jackets are now working in hand printing, bag making, Samosa making, quilting, and mobile repairing workshops (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2019).

### **Measures and Movements against Violence**

The measures against violence contain awareness and communal harmony. The first is the awareness campaigns for the negative aspects of violence and positive values of peace for society. The target groups are sectarian leaders, religious sects, ethnic leaders, students of college and seminars, and representatives of religious minorities (Paiman, 2015). Inter-faith and communal harmony for ideological understanding and culmination of stereotypes against each other is another way. The religious actors, academicians, representatives of Islamic Ideological Council (IIC) are employed for this purpose (Paiman Alumni Trust, 2019). Paiman has certain peace movements for making peace as value and restricting violence. "Let's Live in Peace" and "Amman-o-Nisa" are two examples that are working for creating peace networks, counter narratives, tolerance, and understanding of conflicts in context (Myers, 2018). The third one is the "culture for peace" and it includes the solidarity with victims and cultural initiatives for peace like music, dances, poetry, and local stories. Bomb blasts, suicide attacks, and abduction are common in conflict zones. The state authorities usually refrain from visiting the houses of victim. Paiman started these initiatives. s

“It is incredible initiative, whenever there was a bomb blast in Peshawar and adjoining areas. Paiman arranged the visit of condolence for the victims’ for showing solidarity with them. It also supported the victims while collecting the funds from the communities” (Peace Insight, 2010).

### **Human Rights Abuse Reporting and Monitoring**

Human rights protection is essential because as its report said, “discrimination and violation of rights is the underlying causes of extremism” (Paiman 2016). Mossarat Qadeem said that “we are working for the rights of every marginalized group like religious minorities, ethnic minorities, women and youth” (M. Qadeem, personal communication, January 28, 2021). It had made full surveys and reports for the awareness about right, causes of violations and hurdles in the way of implementation. The rights that it protects in conflict zones are; life security, right of movement, privacy, education and health rights, religious independence, right of expression, free trial, and women rights (Paiman, 2016).

The monitoring includes early warnings and accountability. It has memorandum of understandings (MOUs) with police and district administrations and peace group members remain in touch with them via mobiles (M. Qadeem, personal communication, January 28, 2021). If Women and Youth Peace Groups see anything suspicious they inform the police and these groups have defied many terror attacks because of earlier information (ICAN, 2014). The Tolana members have prevented 13 bombing attempts, several suicide attacks and exposed 3 weapon stores of the terrorists (ICAN, 2017).

### **Creation of Peace Constituency**

Idler (2013) defines the peace constituency and peace structure as a collection of groups working for peace like practitioners, academicians, different organizations, and institutions strengthening the peace. Paiman as organization believes that CSOs cannot move in isolation because of the hostile structure of society. Qadeem told the author that PAIMAN is the chain of domestic and international groups and organizations. Paiman’s main agents of peace are the women and youths, religious leaders, parliamentarians, media personnel, activists, and teachers. Clergy has been involved in the construction of violent narratives in 1980s; it utilizes the same for de-construction. It involves the liberal religious actors, leaders of religious institutions, madrassa teachers, local imams from Sunni, Shia and Barelvi sects for tolerant and cohesive discourses. It has sensitized only the 287 madrassa teachers in 2012 (UN Women, 2012).

Paiman has made partnerships with NGOs, schools, colleges, universities, and women parliamentary groups. The selective NGOs and educational institutions have received training with Paiman for capacity building in de-radicalization and peace reporting. Mossarat Qadeem asserted: “we know that without making a coalition with NGOs social movement cannot get the vital goals.” It has signed MOUs with media organizations and has access to press clubs of many cities. The safe spaces with the global agencies, institutions, groups, and people are essential for self-protection, fundraising and promotion. Mossarat Qadeem stated: “I always tried to connect my local work with all the international forums” (M. Qadeem, personal communication, January 28, 2021). Paiman’s international collaborations extend from the UN, regional organizations, advocacy groups, think tanks, donor agencies, security institutes to mass media.

## **Culture of Peace**

Culture of peace is the main concern of the Paiman and entails peace education, advocacy, democratic attitude, and alternative media.

## **Formal and Informal Communication**

The advocacy in form of formal and informal communication is a method of culture of peace. The informal is directed towards the political apparatus that affects the decision making like diplomats, politicians, and state elites. As Shafqat Mehmood said “we play a non-partisan role and follow the state’s rules but we are independent in actions (S. Mehmood, personal communication, January 28, 2021). Paiman sometimes engaged state officials in workshops and trainings for their capacity building, issued the recommendations of reports for concerned quarters related to peace and security. The major influential group is the female parliamentarians, male MPAs and MNAs, Chairman of IIC, ministers, National Coordinator of National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), officers of police, officers of education institutes, Director, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and local government. Formal advocacy largely includes the peace deals, use of soft means, involvement of CSOs, implantation of security policies, implementation of peace education, gender empowerment, social cohesion, and role of state in the reintegration of militants (Paiman, 2020; Paiman, 2016).

The Paiman like human rights organization does not believe in agitation politics rather its advocacy is relaxed and soft. Mossarat Qadeem said, “we are pro-peace and security, we do not believe in agitations and strikes, we do not react we response.” She also said that,

We are not negative in our advocacy, we appreciate state on good moves, we oppose and criticize moves that may harm the masses but we do not go out rightly against state because we are facilitators not the competitors. We have mobilized the people, initiated peace rallies, solidarity marches and processions, issued so many press releases, reacted on negative things and started cultural movements for the national integration (M. Qadeem, personal communication, January 28, 2021).

About Paiman’s advocacy she replied; “We have built a peace movement with the name of Tolana which build the minds of people which make them able to differentiate between right and wrong and to understand their rights.”

Paiman’s major advocacy is for human rights and it advocated the personal, political, economic and democratic rights of the people (Paiman, 2016). The channels for human rights promotion are the publications, media, surveys, religious ceremonies, rallies and dialogue. Its advocacy has also links with the implementation of policies and programs like that NAP, control of weapons, and institution building for peace (ICAN, 2017). It may become assertive in its advocacy as it condemned the government for misguiding and making the people fool while dealing with the terrorists.

## **Socialization for Democratic Behaviour and Good Governance**

Democracy, good governance, political education, and leadership development are the declared themes and goals of Paiman. It’s one of the visions is “all Pakistanis should thrive and prosper in a democratic and liberal Pakistan.” About good governance said:



Good governance is the foundation in the organization and we have designed good governance groups in six regions of Pakistan who are working precisely on the performance and service delivery of local governments. These group with the public hearing record the apprehensions of the people and then interconnect them to the government (M. Qadeem, personal communication, January 28, 2021).

She further said: “Apart from that we have practically work in field and we have issued 10000 Citizens National Identity Cards and assisted people in registration of votes in voter list and made activism for the significance of casting vote and maximum participation” (S. Mehmood, personal communication, January 28, 2021).

She also remarked: “We have engaged 145 parliamentarians and accomplished a project on the capacity building and stated them about their actual role of deliverance and steadiness of democracy.” It has completed many projects as a partner with UNDP and FAFEN and independently on the issues of training of citizens on democratic norms, governance, and participatory democracy, electoral reforms, monitoring in elections and political system, and role of women parliamentarians. Qadeem concluded: “Democracy is pre-condition for peace and peace is pre-condition for democracy and governance therefore, apart from projects and the democratic management all of our movements for peace and de-radicalization ultimately beneficial for democracy and good governance” (M. Qadeem, personal communication, January 28, 2021).

### **Media for Peace Reporting**

A vibrant media is the catalysts of social cohesion, democratic governance, public communication, and the culture of peace. Pakistani heavily represented those who promote or support extremists’ narratives. Paiman’s peace reporting can be taken into four different perspectives that include presence in mainstream media, an invitation to media personnel in programmes, capacity building and sanitization of media persons, and creating alternate channels for peace reporting.

Paiman’ leadership has made a presence on FM Radios like BBC, TV Channels like Express News and Newspapers like Daily Dawn. The media persons provide coverage to the peace initiatives as electronic media helped the organization to introduce the activities of Tolana to the masses (ICAN, 2016-b). The role of the media fraternity in peace is important, therefore, Paiman called the roundtable conference of mainstream media for objective reporting on terrorism. It has also signed MOU with the media on a comprehensive strategy for peace dissenting (European Union, 2012). It has sensitized many media persons through advocacy sessions, orientation sessions, and training on peace journalism and gender reporting (UN Women, 2012).

Paiman like many other organizations created alternate channels for peace reporting. Its print media includes the Newsletter “Community Wagging Peace: Peace by Pieces;” project and brushers like “Community Waging Peace.” Social Media has become very important, therefore, it has a presence on Facebook and Twitter and YouTube with the name of “Pakistan Alumni Trust.” These accounts share the blogs, commentary on activities and alternative perspective on many things which are trending on the mainstream media. The folk media is also utilized and activities like exhibition of cultural stuff, poetry, fairs, music, religious activities, and dialogue are common for peace. Paiman’s alternative media has its importance and capacity but it needs to be modernized as the support base is relatively low.

## Peace Education

Peace education is one of the declared themes of Paiman and it believes that the vision of tolerance and vibrant society can only be accomplished while generalizing peace education and implementing it in the educational institutes. As one blog indicates: "PAIMAN considers that Peace education is significant for promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence and to create the condition conducive to peace" (Paiman, 2020).

Paiman has made advocacy for the inclusion of this education in educational degrees like B. Ed and M. Ed and also in the curricula of the religious seminaries (ICAN, 2016-a). Paiman has introduced a peace curriculum in certain seminaries and elite private schools in Peshawar which contain the messages of diversity, equality, and justice. It also built the capacity of the teachers of schools, colleges, and the madrassa in communication, critical thinking for transforming the minds of students and general public (Paiman, 2020). As Qadeem has written, "We made great campaign for the inclusion of peace education in textbooks while our meetings with ministers and sectaries" (Paiman Alumni Trust, 2019). Paiman for informal peace education organized the Aman Musharia (competitions of peace poetry), Lolk Mela (fairs of traditional equipment), Hujra Mehfil (discussion on old traditions related to peace), Atan and Sufi Raks (local and mystical dances) and also organized the exposure visits for the madrassa students to historical places and museums (see Facebook of Paiman). The conflict-prone areas are rural and have attachment with culture; therefore, Paiman uses these elements like Pashtunwali for the respect of the identity, acceptance of diversity, and removal of stereotypicals. To sum up, while using culture-building capacity of teachers and making advocacy for the peace education it asks for harmony and the contents that would assimilate the diversity of identities and safe spaces for each one (Qadeem, 2017; Qadeem, 2019).

Qadeem while in interview told:

We built the capacities of the concerns and also made the mind of the people about culture of peace but in spite of our great efforts KPK government did not make it the part of its curriculum while Punjab government introduced it as supplement and now have decided to introduce it in schools (M. Qadeem, personal communication, January 28, 2021).

## The Challenges to Peace-Building

Peace is not a value in society, therefore, the hurdles in the way of peace are natural (R. Rumi, personal communication, February 18, 2021). Though, Paiman by financial management, organizational structure, institutional arrangements, pragmatism, international support, reasonable relations with state and traditional have minimized the constraints but still the society's structure is not relaxed for the social sector and peace, therefore, as a peace and women rights' organization it faces many irritants. The power dynamics of the state is also an issue as Shafqat Mehmood said that the state sometimes feels that we are encroaching in their work or substituting their work and entering their domains. (S. Mehmood, personal communication, January 28, 2021). It faced many authoritarianisms of state and its activities were declared illegal and its offices were banned by the provincial government. Though, banned has been lifted by the High Court, Peshawar but still it affected its 83 ongoing projects ("High court allows," 2017; Amin, 2017). The extremists in religious

clergy are the critics of the Paiman's and do not allow the smooth working, as they have threatened and abducted the Paiman's activists. They have also given personal life threat to the Mossarat Qadeem. The conflicts-prone areas largely have traditional and uneducated people, therefore, dealing and working with them is not easy for the organization (Zahra, F. *et. al.*, n.d.). The financial constraints are also issues as Peace Insight (2010) mentioned that so many projects are halted because of a shortage of funds. In an interview, Qadeem said that funds are very limited, therefore, we have to utilize them effectively. The security of the staff is also a problem, therefore, they have to give trainings in cities most of times and not in the place of origins. The process barriers also dominant as it has to take NOC for every new project from the government and it is a hectic process that takes a lot of resources and wastage the time. It had taken 42 NOCs from 2010 to 2015.

## CONCLUSION

The internal security issues, because of ethnic and religious identities, are responsible for the dismal peace situation in Pakistan. The state's traditional response has further aggravated the situation. In this context, the CSOs intervened with the support of the international community to resolve the identity conflicts, particularly after 2001. This research has presented an in-depth analysis of the CSOs' role in peace while adopting the Paiman as a case study.

The research finds that Paiman is playing an important role in peace-building process in Pakistan. Though this research could not be generalized fully as it happens in case studies but the context and environment in which CSOs are functioning are same, therefore, the finding of this study can be generalized at some level. This study finds that CSOs can build the sustainable peace both as independent actors, and in partnership with the state. CSOs approach the conflict largely by adopting the sectorial approaches (working on one or two aspects of peace, for instance advocacy) and prominent ones consider the cultural and religious sensitivities. The strategies for building peace are publications, training workshops, awareness campaigns, involvement of media, and cultural programmes. The major barriers to peace-building in Pakistan include the authoritarian political culture, insecurity from the traditionalists and extremists, and financial constraints. This study also finds that CSOs could not systematically develop the dialogue with state authorities and the communities for the development of trust.

The development of peace alliance, strengthening the peace structure and constituencies at the national and international level, the development of more links with media for promotion and spreading of information, care of the perception and local needs of the people are the gaps where CSOs have to work for getting more success in their initiatives.

The identity conflicts in the country are difficult to resolve and this empirical research is a humble effort to identify and highlight the role of CSOs in peace-building in identity based conflicts. There are many grey areas like advocacy, reconciliation, facilitation, and mediation, and gender and youth development which need further exploration.

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Date of Publication	June 10, 2021
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