

Religions and Development Research Programme

Faith-based Organisations in South Asia: Historical Evolution, Current Status and Nature of Interaction with the State

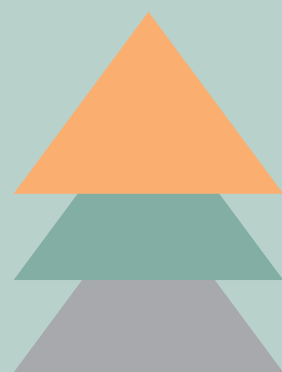
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Religions and Development

Research Programme

The Religions and Development Research Programme Consortium is an international research partnership that is exploring the relationships between several major world religions, development in low-income countries and poverty reduction. The programme is comprised of a series of comparative research projects that are addressing the following questions:

- How do religious values and beliefs drive the actions and interactions of individuals and faith-based organisations?
- How do religious values and beliefs and religious organisations influence the relationships between states and societies?
- In what ways do faith communities interact with development actors and what are the outcomes with respect to the achievement of development goals?

The research aims to provide knowledge and tools to enable dialogue between development partners and contribute to the achievement of development goals. We believe that our role as researchers is not to make judgements about the truth or desirability of particular values or beliefs, nor is it to urge a greater or lesser role for religion in achieving development objectives. Instead, our aim is to produce systematic and reliable knowledge and better understanding of the social world.

The research focuses on four countries (India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania), enabling the research team to study most of the major world religions: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and African traditional belief systems. The research projects will compare two or more of the focus countries, regions within the countries, different religious traditions and selected development activities and policies.

The consortium consists of six research partner organisations, each of which is working with other researchers in the four focus countries:

- University of Birmingham, UK: International Development Department, Department of Theology and Religion, Centre for West African Studies, Centre for the Study of Global Ethics.
- University of Bath, UK: Centre for Development Studies.
- Indian Institute of Dalit Studies, New Delhi.
- Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, Ibadan.
- University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan.

In addition to the research partners, links have been forged with non-academic and non-government bodies, including Islamic Relief.

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Summary

This paper is the first output from research into faith-based service providers and their relationships with the state. It documents that, despite a shared emphasis on charity and ‘helping the other’ within the dominant religions in South Asia, the practical manifestation of this ethic has taken a distinct form in each religious tradition. The consequence is a complex diversity of faith-based organisations (FBOs) in South Asia. Developing an historical account of the rise of FBOs in South Asia, this paper documents the numerous ways in which the state can affect the working of an FBO. The paper develops these arguments with a focus on changes in the working of FBOs in South Asia in response to colonial rule. The study shows that FBOs that are involved in religious education are more likely than others to attract state attention, as they exert power in the public sphere by promoting a specific vision of the world. In this context, the review notes that madrasas are one form of FBO in South Asia that has attracted state-led reform across India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. It also shows that all religious political parties in South Asia maintain a heavy emphasis on welfare work and often establish independent FBOs as part of their party networks. The madrasas and the welfare wings of the religious political parties are thus identified as two forms of FBO in South Asia that provide interesting opportunities to study the relationships between states and religious groups in the three countries.

1 Introduction

South Asia is home to diverse religious traditions constituting multiple forms of organisational activity. As part of ongoing research into faith-based service providers and their relationships with the state, this paper attempts to provide an overview of religiously inspired social service organisations, broadly defined as Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs), within the dominant religious traditions in South Asia¹. Its purpose is two-fold: one, to document the current status and role of FBOs in service delivery within South Asia, particularly in education, health, and water and sanitation; and two, to trace the birth, growth and changes in the working of the dominant forms of FBOs in South Asia, with a focus on identifying the institutional structures of the state that have contributed to these changes. The paper also briefly engages with the debate on defining 'FBOs,' and provides a brief account of the types of literature available on FBOs in South Asia. Finally, it identifies the FBOs and state relationships that are of research interest. The paper thus covers three main aspects:

- Historical evolution and current status of FBOs in South Asia
- Issues in interacting with the state
- Research questions

2 Historical evolution and current status of FBOs in South Asia

This section documents the key religious traditions of South Asia and provides an historical analysis of the rise and changes within forms of organisational activity in these religions.

2.1 South Asia: home to diverse religious traditions

It is difficult to understand the diversity or role of FBOs in service delivery in South Asia without first understanding the dense religious mosaic of the region: different religious traditions have evolved different forms of institutional structures to provide social services; they also differ in their target populations. In most religious traditions in South Asia, FBOs have primarily focused on servicing their own religious communities. However, some, especially Christian missionaries, have actively served non-Christian populations, though historically often with the intention of winning converts². This paper first provides a brief introduction to the dominant religions in South Asia and thereafter looks at the dynamics of the evolution of FBOs vis-a-vis the state. The focus is on India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

In term of religious affiliation, Pakistan is the most monolithic state, with 98 per cent of the population being Muslim. Bangladesh comes next, with a Muslim majority population but also having a 10 per cent Hindu population. Both these countries have Islam as their state religion. India, on the other hand, accommodates a religiously heterogeneous population, with a clear Hindu majority (64 per cent) but also significant percentages of religious minorities, including Muslims (12 per cent), Christians (around 2 per cent), Sikhs (around 2 per cent), Buddhists, Jains, Zoroastrians and Jews (Harriss-White, 2003).

Hinduism is the oldest and the largest religion in South Asia, followed in terms of number of followers by Islam, Christianity, Jainism and Sikhism. Over the centuries, Hinduism has given birth to related *Dharmic* religions: Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. On the other hand, the Abrahamic religions, including Islam, Christianity and Judaism, came to South Asia from outside. Much of the spread of these outside religions is attributed to the Sufi Saints in the case of Muslims, and Christian missionaries in the case of Christianity, but the prolonged Muslim Mughal rule and later colonial rule played a critical role in the institutionalisation of these religions within South Asia.

2.2 Shared emphasis: love of humanity

While each of these rich religious traditions has its own complex web of religious beliefs and practices, they all shared a common message: love of humanity. There is evidence of a great

emphasis on social service to fellow human beings in each of the dominant religious traditions. Hinduism places emphasis on charity and serving others. Within this context, there are elaborate religious rituals around giving. In the Hindu tradition, notions of charity can be gleaned from normative texts. The concept of 'charity' is first referred to in the Rig Veda (1500 B.C.), the most ancient known Hindu scripture, which encourages charity and propagates the belief that the one who gifts "...shine(s) most". According to some classical Hindu texts, in Kali era (when there is disease or hunger), charity is the only virtue.

Narayana Sewa, or serving God by serving the poor, is considered to be the highest form of charity. While self-control (*damyata*), giving (*data*) and compassion (*dayadhavam*) are the underpinning ethical values, service to others (*seva*) represents the overall notion of selflessness. However, all scriptures demand the highest degree of respect and honour to be paid to the object of charity. Spiritual knowledge is considered to be the most valuable gift and physical gifts the least important. Interestingly, worldly knowledge is considered to be second only to spiritual knowledge (PRIA, 2001). Historically, the religious duty of rulers as donors, especially in times of crisis, was considered a key virtue in classical Hindu societies (Sharma, 2001). Hinduism is also striking in its emphasis on gift-giving. The central position of gift-giving in inter-caste relations has received a lot of anthropological attention, starting from Marcel Mauss's popular text, *The Gift* (1957). These rich gift-giving traditions have been given different significance by ethnographers. Trautmann has called them a "central conundrum of Indian social ideology", Heeterman refers to them as "the inner conflict of Indian tradition", Dumont sees them as "a distinction between religious ideology and temporal power", while Marriott views them "as varying transactional strategies of Jats and Varnas" (Raheja, 1988, pp 24-36).

Similarly, Jainism and Buddhism, the two major religions that emerged from Hinduism, and subsequently Sikhism, all enjoin the practice of service to the poor. Based on the *Dharmic* philosophy, broadly meaning the 'right way of living' or the path of righteousness and duty, primarily in a spiritual sense, service to the poor is critical to the achievement of enlightenment and *moksh* or deliverance from the cycle of birth and re-birth. Thus, while an elaborate code of conduct in Buddhism that also included giving (*dana*), the alleviation of suffering (*dukkha*) and compassion (*karun*) motivated Buddhist monks to bring succour to the poor and needy. Similarly, Jainism believes in *ahimsa* and protection of the weak. Sikhism, on the other hand, believes that a good life means living in the

community while caring for others. *Vand Chhakkana* or giving, together with praying and earning an honest living, are the three duties that a Sikh must perform: *dasawandh* (pledging a per cent of one's income to charity) and *langar* (helping in the communal kitchen) are central to this belief.

Similarly, the *Quran* contains many injunctions to believers to take care of the poor (Kozlowski, 1998). *Zakat* is one of the five pillars of Islam, denial of any of which is considered tantamount to disbelief. *Zakat* is a compulsory tax on all affluent Muslims. A specified amount is to be deducted from their wealth each year. Occurring thirty-two times in the *Quran*, the word *zakat* is often joined with the command to offer prayer, the second key pillar of Islam, thus highlighting its importance to believers. Islamic jurisprudence maintains that *zakat* is the right of the poor to the wealth of the rich, as determined by God. *Surat-at-Tawba (Verses on Forgiveness)*, a passage in the *Quran*, states that the primary aim of *zakat* is to eliminate poverty and destitution from society. The dispensation of *zakat* is thus one of the basic religious duties of a believing Muslim, and he is supposed to personally dispense it if the state does not have a central system to collect it.

When Mughals ruled the sub-continent, they also engaged in numerous philanthropic activities. Muslim rulers and the Islamic gentry assumed a role as gift givers, which was closer to Hindu idea of a good king. In addition, sultans and Muslim rulers granted revenue-free lands to support people, thereby providing a public good (Sharma, 2001): Muslim rulers regularly donated land, established madrasas and built shrines in the name of Sufi saints (Gilmartin, 1988; Ewing, 1983).

Christianity places an equally great emphasis on charity, as epitomised by Christian missionary work. The Christian scriptures note that poverty will always be part of the human condition and that individuals should help others through charitable giving (Cohen, 2005): "There will never cease to be needy ones in your land, which is why I command you: Open your hand to the poor and needy kinsman in your land" (Deuteronomy 15:11 quoted in Cohen, 2005). Cohen (2005) further notes that, though the Catholic and Protestant traditions place an equal emphasis on charity and giving, Catholic societies have historically been more likely to develop charitable institutions in response to the needs of specific poor and vulnerable communities, especially those communities whose problems are assumed to be linked to sin. Examples of these institutions include: hospitals for abandoned children, pawn banks, which lent money to the needy at moderate interest rates; and convent-like institutions for

women whose honour was threatened or lost. Within the Catholic tradition, two distinct notions influenced giving: 'charity' and 'mercy' (Cohen, 2005). Charity could take place between equals, while mercy referred to transactions between the strong and the weak. Both were thought to be important to salvation. At a conceptual level charity, however, is a much more comprehensive act in Christianity than simply giving of items. As C. L Lewis argued,

“Charity means ‘Love, in the Christian sense’. But Love, in the Christian sense, does not mean an emotion. It is a state not of the feelings but of the will; that state of the will which we have naturally about ourselves, and must learn to have about other people,” (Lewis, 2002)

Indigenous charitable practices were well entrenched by the time the British came to South Asia and often drew their attention. For example, a survey of a village in Farrukabad conducted in 1820 noted that charity was mentioned in a list of village expenses (Sharma, 2001).

2.3 The differences

Despite the common emphasis on service to humanity, there is a marked difference in the actual manifestation of this giving and spending in each of these traditions. Admittedly, it is problematic to talk of the specific religious-based philanthropic practices of the various religions in isolation from broader Indian society, as none of the religious communities lives in isolation from each other. However, as Farhan Nizami (1983, 3-4) argues for the Muslim population: “Nevertheless, they (Muslims) did possess a distrust and well-defined identity and here it has seemed legitimate to concentrate on the Muslim religious elite and those facets of Muslim life which were conditioned by their religion.” The same has been argued for other religions.

Social histories of India show that philanthropic practices appear to be closely intertwined with the religious traditions. Haynes (1992), in his work on Surat city in India, highlights that the philanthropic practices of the Hindus, Muslims, and Parsis varied in line with their religious beliefs. Similarly, Sharma (2001) notes that many colonial observers differentiated between the charitable practices of Muslims and Hindus; further, they constantly evaluated them against the Christian notion of philanthropy and often were very critical of the local philanthropic practices. The toughest critique has been directed at the practices of gift-giving in Hindu tradition (Sharma, 2001). In 1910 the district collector, attempting to persuade residents to donate to a school run in memory of Edward VII, reasoned:

“Far better it is to lay out your riches on such lasting objects than to waste them on fireworks, in music and other extravagances, and yet I am assured that the annual expenditures in the city on fireworks alone is probably as great as will be required for the memorial we propose” (Haynes, 1992).

But, within their own religious traditions, Hindu notables spent huge amounts. This giving took the form of providing food in times of distress; building wells, rest houses, and temples; donating huge gifts to deities; and sponsoring substantial communal feasts and lavish spending on Divali. For instance the *Gosains*, a Hindu sect, is believed to have constructed several thousand temples and monasteries across the country for the benefit of the public; the *mahant* of Kalyan Gir monastery is believed to have built 21 rest houses for pilgrims, besides repairing several temples. Similarly, in 1935, there were forty-eight Hindu temples and eighteen Jain temples in Gopipura alone. There had not been a substantial businessman in the history of the city who had not left some evidence of his generosity on behalf of his family’s deities (Haynes, 1992).

Sikhism stresses the importance of doing good actions rather than merely carrying out rituals. It decrees that the followers of Sikhism should use their ordinary and everyday lives within the community as a way to get closer to God. Moreover, a Sikh can serve God by serving (*seva*) the community. Service to others takes the form of community work in the gurdwara or place of worship, where a Sikh may undertake chores ranging from working in the kitchen to cleaning the floor. The *langar*, or free food kitchen associated with the gurdwara, is also a symbol of community service.

Among the Muslim community, the kinds of philanthropic activities that are significant include establishment of *waqf*, building mosques, giving donations to shrines and mosques, and celebrating religious festivals. *Waqf* has constituted one of the predominant forms of Islamic giving. It is an endowment of movable or immovable property for Islamic religious purposes. Most *waqf* property is immovable. When a property has been made *waqf*, it becomes inalienable, meaning that it cannot be given away or sold, while its resources must be used for the purpose originally declared (Mann, 1989).

In contrast to these traditions, the Christian missionaries had a clear focus on social service provision, particularly education and health, from the very beginning of their operations in South Asia, mainly due to their close association with the colonial empire.

International literature on philanthropy also shows diverse patterns of philanthropic practices and social service activities within different religious traditions (Kozlowski, 1998). Given the common emphasis on serving humanity across the diverse religious traditions in South Asia, it is not a surprise that the sub-continent not only hosts a large number of FBOs, but that they have many distinctive features related to different religious beliefs. Before moving to a more detailed discussion of these FBOs, it is important to be clear what is meant by 'FBO' in this paper.

3 Defining FBOs

Academic literature on FBOs is limited. The most comprehensive papers to date are Gerard Clarke's, *Faith matters: development and the complex world of faith-based organisations* (Clarke, 2005; see also Clarke, 2006, 2007). Clarke (2005) shows that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, FBOs complemented the colonial state in the provision of health and education services in developing countries, running schools, universities, vocational training centres, hospitals, health clinics and care homes. However, he also shows that with the rise of the nation state in the post-colonial period, religion became associated with retrogressive values and FBOs were sidelined, especially between 1945 and 1980.

He goes on to argue that FBOs were allowed back into the mainstream international discourse under the government of Ronald Reagan, a 'born-again' Christian (Clarke, 2005, 2006). Through the 1980s and 1990s, the development agencies also started to engage with non-state actors in the development process, and in the past five years, the rising emphasis on FBOs is a reflection of the agencies' realisation that FBOs continue to be active players within civil society. The current US government has also given much importance to FBOs. During the last presidential campaign, both Al Gore and George W Bush called for enlarging the role of faith-based organisations (FBOs) in solving society's most deeply rooted problems. While Vice-President Gore was more measured in his support of FBOs, Bush's promise to rally the "armies of compassion" was integral to his philosophy of "compassionate conservatism," (Solomon and Vlissides, 2001). The fact that FBOs are being given increasing importance in today's planning is also noted in the *Global Civil Society Report* (Anheier, Glasius and Kaldor, 2004, p 45),

"there is no way we can understand the logic, strategies and dynamics of civil society anywhere in the Third World unless we bring the transcendental dimension back into our analysis. Religious devotion is a fundamental motive for many social movements in the South, from Latin America to Africa and South Asia."

This renewed interest in FBOs has also raised fresh questions about what it means to be an FBO. The most often quoted comments are about the emphasis on 'faith' as opposed to 'religion.' The term 'faith-based' or 'faith-based organisations,' as distinct from 'religion-based' or 'religious organisations' are largely American innovations of the 1990s, which were absorbed into development discourse in the late 1990s and the early years of the new millennium. The term religion normally refers to the values, rules, and social practices stemming from belief in a spiritual supreme-being and codified in a sacred

text such as the Bible, Quran, or Gita (Clarke, 2005). Faith is a more amorphous category, extending beyond the major or established religions.

Generally, faith-based social service coalitions are non-profit, tax-exempt organisations. Some, seeking a more specific definition, have argued for the following criteria: (1) defines itself as faith-based; (2) provides at least one social service, which could even be advocacy ; (3) is affiliated with at least one religious congregation in some manner; and (4) has its own board of directors (Ebaugh et al, 2005).

Clarke, on the other hand, develops a more broad-based typology, where the term FBO does not cover only service delivery religious organisations. In the context of international development, he identifies five types of FBOs: faith based representative organisations or apex bodies, faith-based charitable or development organisations, faith-based social-political organisations, faith-based missionary organisations, and faith-based radical, illegal, or terrorist organisations. He also shows that FBOs differ enormously in the way they deploy faith in their pursuit of development, humanitarian, or broader political objectives (Clarke, 2006).

Prior to the work by Clarke, Smith and Sosin (2001) and Sider and Unruh (2004) had developed typologies which recognised the fact that organisations incorporate religion “in a variety of ways and intensities” (Berkely Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, 2004). Smith and Sosin (2001) use the term “faith-related” instead of “faith-based” to describe such organisations, as they argue that the latter term prevents the inclusion of a wide spectrum of agencies with religious connections. While studying how social service organisations in two cities of the United States “couple” or tie up with faith and how this “coupling” impacts upon the organisation as well as the programme, they observe that resources, authority, and culture are of critical importance to agency-faith “coupling”. They conclude that, while agencies are relatively loosely tied to faith in terms of resources, they are more tightly coupled in terms of authority. Culture, on the other hand, was observed to play only a moderate role. Variance amongst agencies in this regard could, they suggested, be categorised in terms of the “mission, service focus, and bureaucracy” of the agency concerned.

Sider and Unruh (2004), on the other hand, proposed an inductively derived six-fold typology of organisations and programmes based on their religious characteristics. The typology itself is divided into two sections - organisations and programmes - implying that the religious characteristics of an organisation may be different from the programmes that it implements. The analysis of religious characteristics themselves is based on the “tangible” ways in which religion manifests itself in the organisation. A matrix locates organisations within six different categories: ‘faith-permeated’, ‘faith-centred’, ‘faith-affiliated’, ‘faith-background’, ‘faith-secular partnership’, and ‘secular’. Sider and Unruh then go on to define these organisational categories in terms of eight criteria: mission statement; founding; affiliation with an external entity; criteria for selection of the board, senior management and other staff; financial support and non-financial resources; and organised religious practices of personnel. Similarly, they locate programmes and projects in the same six categories but use different criteria to build up programme profiles: the religious environment and content of the programme, the form of integration of religious content with other programme components and expected connections between religious content and desired outcome. According to Sider and Unruh, this division between organisations and programme “...reflects the fact that organizations may run programs that have a different set of faith characteristics. An organization may also run several different programs, each falling into a different category”.

This paper uses the term ‘FBO’ more narrowly to focus exclusively on social service organisations working explicitly in the name of a specific religious tradition, i.e. category two as identified in Clarke’s typology. In focusing on this type of FBO, the paper requires that an FBO explicitly claims a faith-based identity. The reason for applying this criterion is that, in the absence of this condition, an overwhelming majority of secular voluntary social service organisations in South Asia qualify as faith-based, given that the majority of secular organisations are inspired by a specific religious tradition. For example, the founder of Edhi Foundation, the largest nationwide humanitarian welfare organisation in Pakistan, has repeatedly emphasised the religious beliefs motivating his work, although he does not present his organisation as an FBO. Also, a survey of the 20 largest voluntary welfare organisations in Pakistan shows that, in 80 per cent of the organisations surveyed, the initiators were religiously inspired, although the organisations did not explicitly define themselves as faith-based nor were they viewed as such by the public (Bano, 2005). Green and Sherman (2002), who developed a typology of the role of faith in the work of US service provision FBOs in fifteen States participating in government-funded programmes, also make the revealed commitment to a faith a critical factor in their typology.

3.1 The literature and data on FBOs in South Asia

A review of the literature on religious philanthropy and FBOs in South Asia shows that the topic has been of interest to social scientists but has rarely attracted in-depth scholarship. Literature focusing exclusively on FBOs does exist – for example work on Farangi Mahal and Deoband within the madrasa tradition, or the Rama Krishna movement within the Hindu tradition - but is limited and is normally available only for the very prominent FBOs in each of the dominant religious traditions. However, the subject has formed part of many socio-historical accounts of the region. This makes the literature from which information can be drawn quite extensive. Bits about a specific aspect of religious philanthropy can be found in works focusing on topics as diverse as the shaping of public culture in an Indian city (Haynes, 1992); colonial rulers' response to famine (Sharma, 2001); the politics of Sufism (Ewing, 1983); and historical accounts of specific religious movements like Deoband (Metcalf, 1978), the Rama Krishna movement (Beckerlegge, 2001) and Aligarh (Lelyveld, 1978). However, reconstructing the extent and nature of charitable practices in pre-colonial north India has proved more difficult for authors (Sharma, 2001).

A new body of literature, specifically focusing on FBOs in the development context, is now emerging. However, at a nascent stage, these are mostly in the form of case studies of specific development organisations (for instance case studies documented by the World Faiths Development Dialogue and UNFPA) that have been inspired by particular religious philosophies; while others focus on FBOs in the wider context of non-profit organisations (NPOs) (PRIA, 2001, Srivastava, et al, 2002, 2003). Also, the depth of analysis available on the issue varies from period to period. The most vivid picture of religious philanthropic practices and the rise of religiously inspired social service organisations is available for the colonial period, specifically related to the social reform movement in the context of Hinduism and the changing profile of madrasas and the position of the *ulemas* in the context of Islam.

Even today, the actual data on FBOs is limited; a fact noted in the comprehensive literature review of FBOs in India conducted as part of the Religions and Development research programme. For example, the Registrar of Societies does not have a database about the number of faith-based organisations which are engaged in developmental activities. Exploration of data on FBOs in Pakistan and Bangladesh reveals similar limitations. In Pakistan, there is no distinct government regulation that registers FBOs — they are registered under the standard Societies Act along with secular social

service providers. However, in the past year, there have been attempts to compile data on madrasas using information available from the five central madrasa boards, which exist for each of the five dominant Islamic schools of thought in Pakistan. More generally, one of the most quoted sources of international data on non-profit organisations in India and Pakistan is the survey of non-profit providers conducted by Johns Hopkins University. In Pakistan, it documents madrasas as the largest group of registered non-profit providers (Pasha et al, 2002a, 200b). In India, the survey similarly showed that out of 1.2 million NPOs in India more than half focus on religiously affiliated services.

3.2 The rise of FBOs in each religion

A survey of FBOs across the dominant religious traditions, across the three countries, supports the historical analysis that, despite the common emphasis on social service to the poor and needy, the actual form of service provided differs between the religions; also not all religions are equally involved in all social service sectors. Christian missionary and Hindu organisations seem to have been most all-encompassing: they are involved in education, health, the environment, etc. Among Muslims, on the other hand, madrasas remain the overwhelming type of FBOs in all three countries; the tradition of health-based FBOs among Muslims across the three countries is extremely weak, with very few examples of FBOs operating in this sector. The Unani Tibb associated with Muslim scholarship is prevalent as an alternative form of medicine across all three countries but is practised more commercially than through an FBO platform. On the other hand, in all three countries, there are examples of religious political parties having strong links with FBOs: either they are part of the party structure or are major funders.

Within Hinduism, the earliest form of FBOs appeared in the later Vedic age and took the form of Ashrams or Acharya Kula by the Sannyasis (Mishra, forthcoming). After becoming the centre of religious thought, the Ashrams played a pivotal role in developing literature, astronomy, mathematics, and therapeutics. The public came to know them on from the education provided by the Ashrams or Acharya Kula, which were all residential in nature. There were also *mutts* or cloisters attached to Hindu temples, which evolved as important centres of religious studies. The system continued in the medieval period and many of the Ashrams evolved into *pathshalas* or schools.

This evolutionary process of Hindu religious or religion-based organisations has continued through the medieval and colonial period to the present day. The evolution has been the result of various philosophical and metaphysical interpretations of life, the universe and religion, which in turn generated different schools of thought like the Advaita school, the Madva school, and the Vishita Advaita school of Indian philosophy. Thus over a period of history, different Hindu religious schools of thought emerged, each of which established its own *mutt* (Shankara Mutt, Ashta Mutt Parakala Mutt, etc.). In later years, during the colonial period, *mutts* were also established by the followers of Swami Vivekananda (The Sri Ramakrishna Mission), Sri Aurobindo (Sri Aurobindo Ashram) and Sri Ramana Maharshi (Ramana Maharshi Ashram), while the Ashrams of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, J. Krishnamurthy, Swami Chinmayananda and others developed even later, during the mid-twentieth century. These institutions have always worked on issues of religious and social awareness and have invariably been engaged in social activities of various kinds, including the establishment of hospitals, educational institutions and other welfare schemes, primarily in response to the specific needs of the times. With the emergence of Buddhism, Viharas established by the Sangha emerged as another form of FBO, close to the idea of the Ashram. Many Viharas or Mathas came into existence in cities like Rajagriha, Vaishali, Shravasti and Kapilavastu.

Within Islam, the earliest forms of FBOs were the madrasa and Sufi khankahs. The madrasa is one of the oldest institutions of learning in the Islamic world: it is the traditional school of learning in which the Islamic sciences are taught. Before the madrasa, the *masjid* (mosque) was the first institution of learning in Islam. In earlier periods, instruction in a madrasa was linked with the mosque; at a later stage the mosque-khankah complex developed, in which students were housed as well as taught. In Muslim India, the madrasas were establishments of higher learning that produced civil servants and judicial officials. There has also been a rich tradition of Sufi shrines. These shrines evolved around the tombs of the Sufi saints and provided shelter and free food to followers (Bano, 2005). During the early Muslim period, the concept of *waqf* or trusts for meeting the needs of philanthropic or social welfare establishments also came into existence. The better off generally donated land to the *waqfs* and these properties or the income from them were distributed to the needy. In India, the concept of *waqf* continues to this day and the properties have been brought under a State controlled semi-autonomous Board.

Thus, while individual acts of service and philanthropy were the main way in which non-profit services were provided during ancient and medieval times in India, organised and institutionalised social service is believed to have taken place within the religious institutions, like the ashrams and *mutts*, gurdwaras, dera and *waqfs*, khanqahs and madrasas (PRIA, 2001).

Within Christianity, from the very beginning missionary work in South Asia focused on provision of education and health services. In fact, as will be discussed later, this organisational form of missionary work contributed to the rise of modern day welfare organisations among Hindus and Muslims, as elites within these religious traditions tried to counter the Christian missionary influence by setting up their own organisations.

The Protestant missionary efforts to promote education in India began in the Madras Presidency. The first Protestant English Mission came to Madras in 1727 and started schools in Madras, Tanjore, Cuddalore, Plamkottah and Tricinopoly; while the Baptists came to Bengal in 1793 (Prabaharan, 2006). The Catholic Church also operated numerous higher education centres, as well as high schools, primary schools and technical schools. This education spread rapidly due to the local population's perception of the advantages of being able to speak English, especially after 1835, when English replaced Persian as the official and court language. Many institutions of higher education were established by Christian missionaries during this period and continue to date: Madras Christian College, 1839, St. John's Agra, 1850, St. Stephen, Delhi in 1881, Christian Medical College in Ludhiana, 1864 and at Vellore, 1918 (*ibid.*).

Buddhism also made a significant contribution to strengthening health services in Asia in the seventh and eighth centuries (Kumar, 2006). Many authors argue that traditional Indian medicine advanced in Buddhist monasteries (Finckh, 1978; Dummer, 1995; Donden, 1997). The Buddha's key teaching of the Four Noble Truths was based on a medical paradigm, therefore the blending of medicine and religion in Buddhism remains an essential aspect of this religious tradition even in the present day.

4 FBOs in the colonial period

Colonial rule was a turning point for the form of religious associational activity in South Asia. This section documents these changes.

4.1 Secular from sacred: new forms of associational activity

Colonial rule affected religious activities within the social sectors in two ways: one, the changed socio-economic and political conditions affected the working of FBOs themselves; and two, the changed context led to the rise of a new form of organisational culture which was often religiously based but expressed itself in new forms of collective platform. An example of the former is the dramatic changes that came to the madrasa system in British India, as madrasas were deprived of state patronage and students from affluent families got sucked out of the system as they moved towards the English system of education that led to better economic opportunities. The rise of the Deobandi tradition, which today is the dominant school of thought among madrasas in South Asia, was a response to these changes. Other faiths within India also saw rise of new movements in response to the colonial interventions. One good example is the Ramkrishna Mission, the Order that came into being after Sri Ramakrishna's passing away, to keep alive his ideal. The Mission was registered as a Trust in 1901, and as a registered society in 1909, twelve years after it had been started by Swami Vivekananda on 1 May 1897 (Gambhirananda, 1983). The organisation worked on various humanitarian activities including health, education, development projects for underprivileged poor and tribal people, and spiritual development through the dissemination of cultural and spiritual ideas. At the same time, the monks of the Ramakrishna Mission immediately rushed to disaster-affected areas to mitigate the suffering of victims. It also focused on services especially designed for women: maternity care services at its hospital, a Women's Home, girls' high schools, and training schools for nurses at Trivandrum, Vrindaban, Itanagar and Calcutta. The Mission continues to date; today it has 137 branches in and outside India (ibid.) and has expanded its scope of activities to include the modern day 'social development sector'. In fact, the Mission has played a pioneering role in participatory rural sanitation in India.

There were three main reasons for this rise of new forms of religious organisation. One, the colonial rulers encouraged the local religious elite to move towards more western notions of philanthropy in return for state patronage. Two, a new class of educated middle class men came forward and learnt

the benefits of organisational activities. Three, Christian missionary work was found to be a threat and organisations from other faiths emerged in response.

4.2 Charity or patronage

Bayly (1971, 1973) and Haynes (1987, 1992) highlight how changes in religious organisations had to do with the co-option of the local elite by the British Raj. Douglas (1992), while studying the shaping of public culture in Surat city between 1852 and 1928, highlights how all the notables in Surat, irrespective of their religious beliefs, spent money on social services and religious festivals in the area as a means of gaining social recognition and political power. This trend was visible in all three main religious communities in the city, namely Hindus, Muslims and Parsis (Haynes, 1992).

Haynes maintains that philanthropic charity (i.e. out of pure concern for others) did not have strong roots in pre-colonial mercantile traditions. In contrast, the historical record before 1800 is filled with evidence of *sheths* (rich merchants /businessmen) who engaged in acts of great munificence, such as the building of wells, temples and rest houses, and the sponsoring of festivals and Sanskrit learning. Yet these donors most commonly viewed their gifts as acts of propitiation or service to their deities and as deeds by which they could hope to acquire merit. The notion of humanitarian service, so intrinsic to the concept of philanthropy as understood in Western cultures, was at best muted in the conceptual systems of Indian businessmen.

Haynes suggests two motives for this giving. First, merchants in Surat consistently concerned themselves with maintaining their reputations through their gift-giving activities, whether they gave to local temples, paid tribute to their rulers, or contributed to educational institutions and hospitals. Such donations gave them special social prominence. Second, gifting also played a critical role in the exercise of political influence and the smoothing of relations with rulers whose origins lay outside the city. By making gifts grounded in the ethos of these outsiders, *sheths* could hope to appease members of the ruling groups in situations where conflict might otherwise develop, thus ensuring the continuity of their trade, the upholding of their family prestige, and the maintenance of the community's social and religious life.

As one ruling group replaced another or as the ideology of the ruling group changed, Surat's merchants altered their forms of gifting, adjusting their charitable choices to the idiom of gifting of the extra-local authority at the time. In the seventeenth century, local notables established ties with individual Mughal nobles by regular participation in the offering of tribute. During the nineteenth century, a number of *sheths* were able to create somewhat similar relations with British officials by engaging in philanthropic activities espoused by the rulers.

Haynes (1992) registers similar trends among Muslim gentry, though he does not analyse it in as much depth as for the Hindu *sheths*. During the 1860s and 1870s, the Sunni gentry had contributed heavily to public charities. But even here, there was a bifurcation between gift-giving that could win the patronage of colonial rulers and that directed toward maintaining status among immigrant Muslims. As associates of the Nawab of Surat and a few other prominent Muslim families sought to establish themselves as advocates for their coreligionists, a supposedly backward community, they gave increasingly to Muslim educational funds, largely through local chapters of the Anjuman-e-Islam and the Mohamdan Union (Haynes, 1992). In general, these efforts made more of an impression on the British than on the town's other Muslims, who were mostly traders, artisans and labourers with little interest in the cause of secular education. But the same families also provided monies in far larger quantities to mosques, shrines and Muslim religious festivals, which bolstered their status among their coreligionists (Haynes, 1992).

Parsi magnates engaged in nearly the full range of public causes advocated by the rulers of India, primarily because their community's traditions of social spending matched well with British conceptions (Haynes, 1992).

Bayly (1971), in his work on Allahabad, describes similar trends and explains how involvement in philanthropic activities in the cities enabled the upper classes to gain influence among the local communities, which they used to bargain personal favours from the British ruler. In the countryside the government needed a *zamindar*, a lineage head or tribal chief whose local influence and patronage was effective enough to contain disputes between village factions and maintain law and order. . Equally, in the cities, government needed locally informed political authorities able to mediate disputes. In small towns, the government often relied on the landed magnates to contain local disputes which

arose, for instance, from the clash of religious festivals. Major landlords were also appointed honorary magistrates.

In such areas, the wealthy classes engaged in religious or philanthropic charity to such an extent that they became urban notables in their own right. During this period, lists of donors to local charities were a means of defining notables in an area, along with coverage in the local press, family histories, and members of the committees of the municipal boards. As a consequence, during British rule many prominent educational institutes and hospitals were established by Hindus, Muslims and other religious elites: Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in Lahore is one such example. In addition, the charitable activity gave donors political power, the main characteristics of which were the abilities it gave them to mediate with higher levels of authority and to control webs of patronage beneath.

4.3 The rise of an educated middle class

Some historians like Seal (1968) maintain that changed socio-economic factors during the colonial period, including a common education and language, administrative reforms, opportunities for different kinds of jobs, and regional concerns promoted a basis for unity, beyond the traditional unities of family, caste and district. He argues that this led to the rise of new forms of local associations, which took a wide variety of forms: literary and debating societies, leagues for self-betterment, reading groups, societies for social and religious reforms, *vakils'* (lawyers) and teachers' associations, etc.

Bayly (1973) also attributes some of this change in religious activity between 1830 and 1880 in the Hindi speaking area of northern India as due to a growing sense of social and political security. Initially, these developments led to the revival of Hindu claims and challenges, which had lain dormant for several generations. Local societies, which were generally devoted to public improvement within a specifically Hindu context, started to emerge and attract a lot of philanthropic money. In Allahabad, the Hindu Samaj and the People's Association represented an alliance between urban monied interests and men in the professions. A similar trend of forming organisations to protect the interests of specific communities was also visible in Muslim communities. One of the key reasons for this was the concern for the deteriorating socio-political and economic conditions of Muslims. Muhammad Shah Din, in an article published in 1888, referred to the proliferation of Muslim societies in the Punjab in the preceding 20 years as evidence of the intellectual awakening of the Muslim middle class.

Among Muslims, the same factors played an important role in the rise of associations. Some were used as instruments for restoring and perpetuating traditional customs and institutions, such as preserving *waqf properties*, collecting *zakat* and sponsoring schools. These had deteriorated as a result of Muslim loss of political power and impoverishment, and in some instances they had been further weakened by governmental judicial, educational and settlement reforms (Churchill, 1974). The other type of associations aimed to enable the community to meet new political challenges. Such associations were embedded in the Muslims' concerns about their deteriorating socio-political and economic conditions.

Haynes (1992) argues that during the 1860s and 1870s the Sunni gentry had contributed heavily to public charities (see above). As Seal (1968, p. 194) highlights, however, although initially religious zeal or caste solidarity encouraged the propensity to form associations, during the course of the "century more of the associations in India were brought into being by groups of men united by secular interests."

4.4 Reactions to Christian missionary work

The Christian missionary campaigns in India generated responses within local religious groups. These associations initially drew support from students, or professional men, landlords, and merchants in a limited geographical area, but the more ambitious organisations expanded and began to search for ways of working together in India as a whole, a trend that culminated in the formation of the Indian National Congress (Seal, 1968).

The dramatic surge of such associations can be judged from the fact that the British introduced new legislation to regulate them. In 1860 the British Government passed the Societies Act, initially operative only in Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. The primary motive was to regulate the voluntary associations more strictly, especially the cultural societies that it blamed for the insurrection of the sepoys in 1857. Next, the Trust Act of 1882 was passed; which provided legal cover for private acts of charity and allowed the creators of the Trust tremendous powers and flexibility of operations.

These new organisations varied in their orientation. Some went completely secular, actually condemning traditional religious practices; for example, Vivian Derezio's Young Bengal. Others tried to

reform their existing values in light of modern realities; Brahma Samaj of Raja Rammohun Roy was the chief protagonist of this group. The Brahma Samaj tried to bring about changes in certain practices within Hinduism that it considered to be unequal and inhuman including Sati or the self-immolation of widows. Similar FBOs included Veda Samaj (1864) of Madras, Parthana Samaj (1867) of Maharashtra and the Aligarh movement of Sayed Ahmed Khan. The third dominant form was that of puritanical movements. Many of the religious organisations in Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism returned to pure Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism respectively. Within Hinduism, Arya Samaj (1875) of Swami Dayananda Saraswati belonged to this group. At the same time, Arya Samaj planned radical changes in indigenous traditions by challenging priestly orthodoxy, championing education and challenging social inequalities based on birth. The Arya Samaj under its founder Dayanand is credited with setting up several Sanskrit pathshala or schools and a network of educational institutions in India and abroad (known by the name of D.A.V schools). Closely related to religious-based organisations are the several caste-based organisations that also emerged during this period. These include the Kayastha Sabha in Uttar Pradesh, Sarin Sabha in Punjab and the Ahmediya in Aligarh.

5 Post-partition: FBOs and religiously inspired social service organisations

In the post-independence period both in India and Pakistan, the governments were secular and modernist and had little appreciation of religious organisations. Within Pakistan both Ayub and Bhutto tried to reform madrasas and viewed them as outdated and backward. In India, Nehru due to his socialist values, viewed religion as a retrogressive force. He, like most of the elite of the postwar modernising societies, took Weber's thesis that the foundations of modern capitalism lay in Protestantism quite seriously and by contrast, explored the ways in which the ideas of Hinduism were responsible for India's economic backwardness (Harriss-White, 2003). The idea was that with economic progress religion would be relegated to private life. Although in practice this did not happen, after independence religion was relegated conceptually into the private sphere, as a DFID-commissioned study notes:

“(India's)...default position was that religious activity was broadly and loosely tolerated. It allowed no role for religion in state programmes and frameworks, yet neither did it seek, systematically, to loosen the hold of religious institutions and practices in the nation. This public/private 'default solution' however became increasingly unworkable” (Centre for Development Studies, 2004).

The study observes that, while in principle India adopted secular politics at the national level, in reality “...links between religion, politics and communalism...” existed in sub-national contexts. The outcome has been long periods of “calm”, but more recently, regional and caste-based political parties have grown in importance.

Following partition, Pakistan was created as a home for South Asia's Muslims. Created in the name of Islam, the country, however, from the beginning had a secular leadership with the result that the extent to which the government and legal system should be secular or Islamic has been controversial ever since. Following the break up of Pakistan, the newly independent state of Bangladesh witnessed a similar push towards secularisation. The new constitution claimed Bangladesh to be a secular state, though later it was changed to declare Islam the state religion. Thus, throughout South Asia, secularisation remained an unfulfilled agenda and - as Harris-White notes for India - religion has not been relegated to the private sphere by the state, business or the working class (Harriss-White, 2003). This holds true for Pakistan and Bangladesh too. Even today, religion remains an important force, influencing politics, the distribution of economic growth and social values, and FBOs remain the dominant form of non-state service providers (NSPs). As previously indicated, according to the survey

conducted by the Johns Hopkins University, madrasas constituted the largest group of registered non-profit organisations in Pakistan and 52 per cent of the NPOs surveyed in India were FBOs.

Not only have the FBOs continued to provide services, in each country, there has been a push towards involvement of FBOs in mainstream politics by the religious parties. During the 1980s, Pakistan and Bangladesh witnessed the politicisation of Islam, as the military leaders tried to gain legitimacy through attempts to Islamize the societies. This drive has been more successful in Pakistan than Bangladesh. In India, this period also saw the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a Hindu nationalist party with a clear agenda to promote Hindu values in society.

Therefore, despite the aspirations of the initial leaders, none of the three countries has been secularised and FBOs identified in the various religious tradition continue to grow to date. India continues to present the most complex array of FBOs, given the diversity of the religious beliefs of its population. Bangladesh presents a much limited version of this diversity and Pakistan even less. Generally, within the Muslim population in each of the countries, madrasas remain the most dominant form of FBOs. Even in India, the Islamic Development Trust, All India Muslim Majlis-e Mushawarat, Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, All India Muslim Personal Law Board, the Movement for Empowerment of Muslim Indians, Charity Alliance (Jamia Nagar, New Delhi), Humanity First (NGO of Ahmediyas) - some of the Muslim organisations that are working for the welfare of the Muslim community - remain focused on madrasa education.

Next, the schools and hospitals set up by Christian missionaries remain the most important FBOs across the three countries. Although they form only 2 per cent of the national population, Christians exercise great social influence in India. Today nearly 15,000 Christian educational institutions, including kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, colleges and professional course institutes, serve 6,500,000 students. There are no similar data available for Pakistan and Bangladesh but the role of Christian schools and churches is prominent in both countries.

A paper on FBOs in Bihar serves as a good example to capture the diverse forms of FBOs that co-exist in India (Purushottam, forthcoming). The paper shows that there are more than 14,000 FBOs/religious trusts in Bihar, set up by adherents of the Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist and Jain

religions. However it is not possible to tell their exact number, as there has not been any survey. There were 3,658 trusts registered with the Hindu Religious Trust Board in undivided Bihar (in 1999 the southern part of Bihar was separated to form the new State of Jharkhand). After division, the registered number fell to 2,848, but the actual number of Hindu Religious Trusts in Bihar is many times more.

Among Muslims, religious trusts – mosques, khankah and dargah - have no registration traditions; only *waqfs* can be registered. There were 2,459 *waqfs* registered with the Bihar Sunni Waqf Board and 225 with the Bihar Shiya Waqf Board in undivided Bihar. After division their numbers were respectively 2,308 and 217. The number of madrasas registered with Bihar Madarsa Board was 1,119 in Bihar after division. Payment of salaries for the teachers of these madrasas is made from the state exchequer, while other expenditure depends upon donations (Purushottam, forthcoming).

Both the Roman Catholics and the Protestants have churches in Bihar. There are five Catholic dioceses, at Betia, Muzaffarpur, Patna, Bhagalpur and Purnea, while the activities of the Protestant group are relatively limited.

Bihar also has important Hindu temples and places of pilgrimage, and there are also 14 Sanskrit colleges and 33 Sanskrit High Schools. In addition, there are 50 Jain trusts registered with the Bihar Digambar Religious Trust Board and 8 with the Bihar Shwetambar Religious Board. The Buddhist temples in Bihar are at Bodh Gaya, Rajgir and Vaishali, and are mostly built and controlled by Buddhists living in different countries.

In addition to the Hindu temples, Hindu organisations established during colonial rule and the post-independence phase, like Arya Samaj, Ramkrishna Mission, Anand Marg, Prajapita Brahma Kumaries Ishwariya Vishwavidyalaya and Gayatri Mandir Pariwar, have made considerable contributions in the fields of school education and health. Arya Samaj started its activities in Bihar around 1901. Its aim was to attract people towards Indian literature, culture and civilization. It laid emphasis on the awakening of women and their education, establishing *gurukulas* and similar educational units. Two of the *gurukulas* continue to be engaged in educational activities today. Arya Samaj has been managing six middle schools, ten high schools and one college since the days of the freedom struggle.

Another phenomenon is the large and well-endowed religious trusts that have come into existence since independence. Some examples are the Hindu trusts associated with Tirupathi and Guruyayur in the southern part of India, and Vaishnovdevi and Gyanvapi in the north, Wakf Boards for Muslims and Siromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee for Sikhs. Many of these have established hospital and educational institutions and also run welfare schemes for the poor. They are in reality semi-government organisations and the state, at both the federal and sub-national levels, has from time to time tried to gain greater control of these trusts in the name of checking alleged corruption and political activities. Some legislation has been enacted to this end in different States, but it has often been severely contested (for instance, the Maharashtra temples or religious institutions - Management and Regulation Bill, which is currently under consideration by the State cabinet, and the Karnataka Hindu Charitable Endowment Act of 1977, which was implemented for some years.)

While Christian missionaries in India have been active in organised social work, primarily focusing on education and health, since the time they consolidated their position during the colonial period, in the last few years there has been a visible change in the way they work. While it is common to see church and church-based organisations working with the poor and marginalised in remote areas of the country, of late a trend has been for individuals (priests and nuns) within the Catholic Church to move out of active service within the Church and set up fully-fledged service organisations which have no visible religious elements except for the founders' links and an overall ethos of service closely linked with Christian values. The best known and oldest institution of this kind is the Missionaries of Charity, headquartered in Kolkata. There are several others, less known but equally active, especially in States like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

In Pakistan, as the John Hopkins study highlights, madrasas remain the most dominant form of FBOs (Pasha et al, 2002a). In addition, there are some health-specific Muslim FBOs, and a few working in disaster relief. The only other significant form of FBOs are the social service cells of the Islamic political parties. However, the tradition of Christian missionary work continues to be strong, especially in education. Within health, most of the highly reputed missionary hospitals have been taken over by the state and the military.

In Bangladesh also, madrasas remain the most dominant form of FBOs. In fact, Bangladesh hosts the largest number of madrasas out of the three countries. These are followed by Christian missionary work, in the form of schools and hospitals. In addition, because 10 per cent of the population is Hindu, there are some Ashrams and other Hindu and Buddhist FBOs.

Here it is also important to note that increasingly FBOs are becoming transnational. Not only is there a long tradition of Christian charity and church organisation in South Asia, which goes back to the colonial era, since the 1970s there has been a rise of international FBOs within the Muslim and Hindu traditions. Many of these have originated in the UK. Within the Muslim community, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid are two important examples. Some Hindu FBOs working internationally have been the centre of much controversy: organisations like Sewa International and Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh have been implicated in support for sectarian Hindu nationalism and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS, National Volunteers' Corps) Khalistan. However, others are non-sectarian, like Hindu Aid, which channels support from British Hindus to India on a non-sectarian basis.

6 Issues in interacting with the state

The above analysis of the historical evolution of FBOs in South Asia shows how state institutions play a key role in shaping religious activity. Looking at the FBOs across the four religious traditions, it is clear that religious ideology is not all that shapes an FBO: state policies, and the social and economic conditions of the population supporting a particular FBO also play a critical role. To illustrate the importance of the state for the working of FBOs, this section identifies the specific ways in which the colonial state influenced the working of madrasas in South Asia, both by altering the general incentives in society, as well as through specifically designed interventions, regulations or explicit reforms.

6.1 Direct control

6.1.1 Access to resources/ state patronage

The state can alter the working of FBOs by providing or denying access to public funds. Historical accounts show that the displacement of Muslim rule by British invasion led to changes in the working of madrasas and Sufi shrines. First of all, with the demise of the Mughal Empire, the official sources of support to these groups dwindled. The British government changed the policy around *Madad-i-Ma'ash* (revenue-free lands), which sustained various institutions of Muslim education and learning. This made the leaders of these madrasas even more dependent on the voluntary financial contributions of members (Nizami, 1983; Metcalf, 1978). These changes, along with the changing state structure, led to a reformist tradition within the madrasas in the form of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband.

The Sufi *khankahs*, as opposed to the madrasas, were less affected by the fall of the Mughal Empire, in terms of state patronage. The descendants of the major saints had already accumulated much land under Mughal rule, as the Mughal practice of granting revenue-free land to charitable causes was particularly geared towards the Sufi shrines (Sherani, 1991). Conscious of the influence of the Sufi saints on the general public, Mughal rulers found it an easy way to strengthen their rule. They brought the *sajjada-nishins* (the descendants of saints) under their control by granting them large properties and contributing to the building of the shrines. The descendants, thus, became representatives not only of God but also of a remote Muslim ruler. The consequence of this policy was that the descendants of the Sufi saints were more concerned with preserving their own status than serving the community (Gilmartin, 1988; Ansari, 1992). Recognising the political dividends, the British continued with this policy of their Muslim predecessors and made further grants to influential *pirs* or saints

(Sherani, 1991). They saw the *pirs* primarily in terms of their economic and political power and treated them in essentially the same way that they treated landlords and tribal leaders (Ewing, 1983).

6.1.2 State recognition of services offered by FBOs

The state, by being invested with the power to recognise the activities of an organisation, exercises much power over how an FBO is viewed in a given society. With the changes in the administration and economy introduced by the English East India Company, madrasa education lost much of its utility. Whereas earlier, Muslim education had relevance for both religious and secular needs, gradually it became increasingly otherworldly. Hence the Muslim educated classes became divided between the modern-educated and the madrasa-educated. The economic irrelevance of madrasa education under the new regime led it to attract increasing numbers of children from economically less resourceful families, as opposed to the old practice of serving the elite.

6.1.3 Using state resources to create alternatives

If the state wants to marginalise a particular form of FBO, it can invest public resources in developing alternatives. The colonial rulers were able to invest resources to establish alternative institutions of western education to replace madrasa education, which at that time was catering not only to Muslims but also Hindus, by training them for jobs in the court. This further marginalised the madrasas. Also, it affected the working of madrasas themselves: some Muslims who attended modern educational institutions, like the Delhi College, transferred the principles of these western institutional models to religious education in the post-1857 period. The idea of formal classes and a set syllabus, as introduced in *Darul Uloom Deoband*, as opposed to the old practice of flexible teaching between the *Alim* and the student, resulted from the influence of the western education that some of the initiators of madrasas had received at Delhi College.

At the same time, states are also seen to circumvent their own rules and regulations when they support religious organisations, as is seen in the case of madrasas in India. Although the Indian Constitution forbids state funding to purely religious institutions, the state appears to have used another constitutional mandate (to make literate all children between the ages of 6 and 14) to justify its engagement with madrasas.

6.1.4. Regulations

The state also has the important tool of regulation to control the working of FBOs. For example, the British introduced laws for registration of all non-state service providers, including FBOs, mainly to enable it to regulate and monitor them.³

6.2 Indirect influence

The broader socio-economic developments in society also affect FBOs. For example, in Pakistan in the 1980s, the government decision to deduct *zakat* from people's accounts has reduced the money available to members of the public to direct to the FBOs of their choice. Similarly, the economic policies of the state affect people's incomes, and times of economic hardship leave them with fewer resources to channel towards FBOs.

Given these complex layers of interaction between the state and religious organisations, FBOs' interaction with the state provides an interesting opportunity to analyse how states are or are not able to establish their writ vis-à-vis non-profit organisations. How states interact with FBOs and what strategies they devise to retain their own domination are important questions. Also, the interaction raises questions about what kind of opportunities or constraints arise for FBOs when the state seeks to regulate and control them, and what opportunities and constraints arise when the state deliberately attempts to co-opt them by providing incentives to promote its own agenda. In either case, question arises whether FBOs are able to maintain their own agenda and if so, how. Based on this review of FBOs in South Asia, a series of particular research gaps can be identified. These will be discussed in the concluding section.

7 Conclusion: potential research questions

This section draws on the review carried out in this paper to suggest ways of improving understanding of the relationships between states and faith-based service providers in South Asia. It proposes a focus on three types of FBO: madrasas, health-based FBOs, and FBOs affiliated with religious political parties. A focus on madrasas would enable us to analyse a type of FBO in which the role of ideological inculcation is very important, while health FBO are more ideologically neutral, and FBOs linked to religious political parties reveal the role of service delivery in political strategies. Because of their different ideological and political roles, each type of FBO is likely to interact differently with the state, with different outcomes.

7.1 The role of the state in shaping present-day madrasas in South Asia

As demonstrated above, in all three countries, religious organisations play an important role in education, for a mixture of reasons and motives. While Christian educational institutions associated with missionary activity have been important, especially in India and are relatively well documented (see, for example, John, forthcoming), more widespread and today potentially more interesting are Muslim educational institutions. Madrasas are a dominant form of FBO in South Asia. As documented, Muslims constitute the second largest religious group in South Asia, and madrasas remain to date the dominant form of FBO within the Muslim population. Also, they have become the subject of much interest and concern due to the militarisation of some madrasas in the region and their alleged links to international Muslim extremism. There is evidence to show that present-day madrasas have been exposed to much state intervention in all three countries: they are one of the few forms of FBOs which has been subjected to explicit reform policies by governments across the three countries under study. The aims of such reform may be to improve the quantity and quality of education available. However, views about the desirable content of education may differ between state bodies and religious providers, affecting the quality criteria used to judge the outcome of reforms. In addition, since education is closely linked to ideology formation, independent providers can at times be in conflict with the state, through contestation over the curriculum. The content and outcome of conflicts over the curriculum and related matters are likely to reveal aspects of deeper cultural and political power relations between religious and governance structures that may differ from country to country.

7.2 FBOs' involvement in health

While education is potentially highly contested because of its ideological content, other areas of activity, such as health, environmental protection or humanitarian relief, may be less so if they are seen as primarily welfare-oriented. However, one justification for a possible focus on FBOs working in the health sector, as opposed to other services like environmental protection and relief work, is that health constitutes a very important social service. Second, given that the tradition of FBOs working in health is strong in some religions and almost non-existent in Islam,⁴ it is worth exploring the reasons for this difference. Such an analysis could bring out how religious values actually affect the sectors an FBO is likely to enter. Third, the health sector provides an opportunity to study state-FBO relationships in a service area where religious values and beliefs might be less important. Therefore, it could help to test a hypothesis that FBO-state relations are likely to be more contentious in the education sector than in health. Finally, within both the Hindu and Christian traditions there is a rich array of FBOs working in health, so it is an important sector in terms of representativeness.

Although health care is often seen as an issue of improving welfare, in practice, religious values and beliefs are central to people's understanding of the causes of ill-health and thus to choice between alternative treatment regimes. This emerges both in the co-existence of different forms of medicine (most notably allopathic and ayurvedic in India) and in particular areas of health care, for example, reproductive health. Thus a topical and current reason to look at FBOs in the health sector is their fast-growing involvement in the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS. For instance, the Catholic Bishops Conference of India, as well as a coalition of inter-faith organisations, is active in the sector. And although religious ideologies may be less of an issue in the health sector, it would be interesting to look at (a) how different religious organisations approach a sensitive issue like HIV/AIDS and (b) how they engage with each other on a collective platform.

In the area of health, the choice is particularly interesting in India given the rich tradition of health FBOs in both Hinduism and Buddhism. For example, in addition to the traditional FBOs, the Tibetan Medical and Astro Institute Dharamsala has recently started doing research on different modern diseases like AIDS and other STDs. It has also started using allopathic instruments to advance its traditional medicine.

In Pakistan, on the other hand, the choice is limited to a Christian hospital that is still in the hands of missionaries (though most such facilities have been taken over by the government) and a few Muslim FBOs that work in health, for example, the Al-Rasheed Foundation, which is an Islamic organisation working to provide health and relief activities in the name of Islam. It has a network across Pakistan and is running dispensaries as well as hospitals.

Another example is the Hamdard Foundation, which is run as a *waqf*. Established as a sister concern of the biggest herbal medicine company in Pakistan, the Foundation runs a number of programmes. It also sponsors scientific seminars, which address physics, biology, and the practice of medicine. The conferences aim at combining modern Euro-American science with a revived awareness of the Islamic world's contributions to these areas of knowledge. Hamdard's biggest project is the building of the Madinat al-Hikmat (City of Knowledge/Wisdom). On a big tract of land outside Karachi, Hafiz Said (the founder of Hamdard Foundation in Pakistan) has supervised the construction of a complex of buildings, which includes a research library, the University of Tibbiyya (herbal medicine) and an orphanage. The board of directors/trustees/advisors includes many religious scholars (Kozlowski, 1998).

7.3 Religious political parties and related FBOs

Across the three countries in South Asia, there is a link between some forms of FBOs and religious politics. The Islamic political parties in Pakistan have from the start maintained a strong tradition of providing social services. Jamiat-i-Islami's Al-Kidmat Foundation is one of the best-established FBOs linked to a political party. In addition, there is much literature on the Bharatiya Janata Party's links with Hindu FBOs in India.⁵ The difference here is that, unlike in Pakistan, the organisations existed long before the party came into being, and hence we might expect that contestations for power and supremacy between the organisations and the party assume different dimensions. Similarly, in Bangladesh the religious parties use the same tactic of building inroads into the community by providing social services. A more detailed discussion of these issues is given below.

In Pakistan, Jamiat-i-Islami remains the dominant Islamic political party. This is also the party with the oldest tradition of social service delivery. It has a formalised branch called Al-Khidmat Foundation. The Foundation operates across the country and works in education, health, disaster relief, etc. Al-

Khidmat's services actually started with the inception of Pakistan when hundreds and thousands of families were driven out of their homes and hamlets without food, shelter or security, and it set up its branches all over East and West Pakistan as early as 1951. Thus the contemporary Al-Khidmat Foundation is continuing a half century old tradition of relief and philanthropic work by the party.

The Foundation took its present name and form in 1992 and was registered as an NGO with the Government of Pakistan under the Societies Act XXI of 1860. The Foundation attends to both Muslim and non-Muslim communities. It runs more than 1200 schools across the country and its dispensaries function even in non-Muslim majority population areas. It also has a women's wing and runs ladies' vocational centres, adult literacy programmes, women's empowerment projects, fully fledged hospitals, refugee care programmes, prisoners' welfare programmes, mobile dispensaries, orphan sponsorship projects, drinking water supply projects in remote areas, and subsidised vaccination programmes against Hepatitis B. It provides emergency relief in the form of dry rations, tents, blankets, building material, medicines, and medical aid and has renovated Nangarhar University in Afghanistan.

In India, the BJP has become closely associated with radical Hindu FBOs. It is documented to have close links with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS, National Volunteers' Corps), which has been closely associated with communal riots and virulent anticommunism. The organisation was founded in 1925 (Awaaz, 2004) and has an extensive network of affiliated organisations for students, workers, women and religious devotees that are both broader in membership and take up socioeconomic grievances specific to their clientele. A wide range of political, religious, women's, labour, educational, youth, cultural and welfare organisations are associated with it. They use different national, regional, and local names and work across a range of fields in Indian civil and political society (Awaz, 2004). The RSS presence is not immediately visible in its front organisations, but all of them are started, coordinated or run by RSS full-time propagators or volunteers. The RSS also works in health and provides dispensaries and medical facilities, and has massively expanded its schools across India from the mid-1990s. By 2004, it was estimated that it ran between 14,000 and 19,000 schools (Awaaz, 2004).

From its origins to today, the social composition of the RSS has been overwhelmingly urban petty-bourgeois: students, small traders, civil servants, and office clerks and managers. Although two-thirds of India's population is rural, there is no significant RSS-associated farmer-peasant organisation. RSS also has international affiliates especially in the UK. For example, SEWA International is an openly ideological and political project that promotes RSS and Hindutva ideas. It undertakes international fund-raising for RSS (Awaaz, 2004; Clarke, 2005). RSS's service delivery programmes are implemented through Sewa Bharati, which is the main recipient of funds from Sewa International UK. Sewa Bharati is the RSS service affiliate, founded in 1979. It became very important after 1989, when the RSS decided to expand its service sector activities, and runs a large network of RSS service projects in India. These often overlap with those of Vidya Bharati (the RSS education and school network), and one-teacher schools (ibid.). The fundamental aim of these projects is to penetrate communities through service activities in order to promote RSS ideology and the organisation. It has also been documented that out of the funds raised for Gujarat, about a third were sent for earthquake reconstruction and rehabilitation and the rest for building sectarian, highly controversial RSS schools.

The BJP also has close links with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), an off-shoot of the RSS, which is registered as a society for providing education and relief to the poor, etc. The VHP's goal is to make the global Hindu fraternity invincible. Established in 1966, there are several dimensions to the organisation's activities, with the overriding one being the propagation of Hinduism and the re-establishment of the Hindu *Rashtra*. The BJP and VHP together became a formidable force in the 1980s and early 1990s and the former rode to victory in national elections on a cleverly whipped up wave of Hindu nationalism. The BJP, together with the RSS and the VHP, thus make up a triangle which is not always free of internal tensions. In fact, the VHP is often critical of the BJP's relatively laid back stand against the temple issue at Ayodhya, while the VHP itself has been often accused of instigating communal riots and violence against religious minorities and the dalits.

BJP, since being in government, has continuously given RSS opportunities to extend its services. In some states, the BJP handed over state schools and hospitals to RSS-related organisations. For example, it was noted in Goa that fifty plus primary schools were handed over to various front organisations of the RSS (Taneja, 2001) The report argued that these schools were given to their new managers for a token one rupee. It also noted that most of these schools were Marathi-medium

schools in Goa's rural areas, where private-run primary education is not widespread and citizens are dependent on the state-run educational infrastructure.

Within Bangladesh the Jamiat-i-Islami has been increasing its hold. Like the Jamiat-i-Islami in Pakistan, this party runs social service programmes to build support within communities. Thus, FBOs linked to religious political parties play an important role in the provision of a wide range of services in all three countries. At present, no typology of the different types of FBOs maintained by the religious political parties exists. Selection of a series of case studies would throw light on the motives behind religious political parties' engagement with service provision, outcomes in terms of the types of services provided and needs met, and implications for relationships and power struggles within national and local political systems.

FBOs are particularly important contributors to the provision of education and health services, although their welfare activities are extremely varied. While this review has shown that the historical origins and characteristics of some service providing FBOs have been fairly extensively studied, there is little work on their contemporary dimensions and roles, and in particular on how their relationships with the state have changed in the post-independence era and are continuing to change in the context of contemporary political struggles. The information that is available reveals their continuing importance in welfare and service delivery, but also points to roles and motives that go well beyond welfare and religious practice. It can be hypothesised that the relations between FBOs engaged in service provision and governance institutions vary with their motivation, sector of operation and organisational affiliations. Research into contrasting types of FBOs in different faith traditions in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh will provide opportunities to examine the motivations and operations of FBOs in more detail and to assess whether and how they are manipulated to achieve both political and policy ends.

Notes

- 1 The research on faith-based service providers and their relationships with the state is coordinated by Richard Batley, International Development Department, University of Birmingham. It builds on a parallel research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council which is being undertaken in collaboration with the School of Education, University of Sussex and the Water and Engineering Development Centre, University of Loughborough, and that is investigating relationships between non-state service providers and states in the health, education, and water and sanitation sectors in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. See <http://www.idd.bham.ac.uk/service-providers/nonstateprovidersESRC.htm>
- 2 A shift towards inter-faith dialogue and collective efforts has emerged in recent years with the rise of new challenges posed by HIV/AIDS. These inter-faith groups have "...points of tensions..." but many nevertheless continue to work together (Lux and Greenway, 2006). For instance, recently in India about twenty organisations representing a range of faiths (Art of Living, Brahmakumaris, Ramakrishna Mission, Sant Nirankari Mandal, Diocese of Agra and Church of North India, World Vision India, Bharat Sokagakkai, Bahai National Spiritual Assembly, etc.) participated in an inter-faith workshop on the Millennium Development Goals, primarily to explore the formation of faith-based Communities of Practice (CoP) and create a network to work towards common objectives related to the MDGs. However, such collective efforts remain an exception.
- 3 In India an organisation that is exclusively devoted to serving the followers of a specific religion or sect cannot be registered as an NGO and is not recognised to receive support from the state. However, in some cases, while in reality propagating religious teachings, an organisation projects itself as a social welfare organisation, and in others, such as the madrasas, the state itself finds ways and means to justify its engagement with them. Such organisations hence are able to circumvent the barriers of both identity and support. Thus the Viswa Hindu Parishad (VHP), which actively promotes Hinduism, is registered as an NGO, while madrasas receive funds from the state.
- 4 In India, more specifically in the State of Uttar Pradesh, madrasas and the Muslim clergy have been involved in the polio eradication programme.
- 5 In India only a few religious political parties exist and that too with a limited regional base (the Sikh Shiromani Akhali Dal, the Muslim League, the Muslim Majils-e-Ittedaul Muslimeen).

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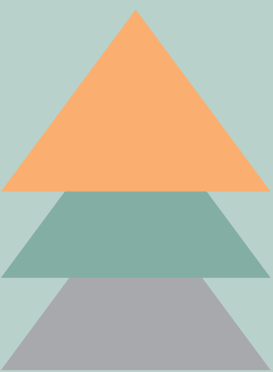
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