

ROLE OF NGOS – IMPACT ON NATIONAL SECURITY OF BANGLADESH

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INTRODUCTION

Economic liberalization and the increased role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as global phenomena predated the end of the Cold War and the recent attention focused on civil society and processes of democratization. But in 1989, with the opening up of Eastern and Central Europe, an NGO discourse, infused with notions of public participation, greater representation of the poor, and more equitable access to resources, gained currency. NGOs have been especially credited with changes in women's status. Targeting women as their primary recipients, NGOs have provided credit and training and have contributed to declines in fertility, increases in income, and the rise of important institutional settings that have brought women together for collective discussion and exchange. In Bangladesh, as elsewhere, NGOs also have played a key role in the struggle for democracy by providing a venue for discussion and debate around issues of poverty, equality, literacy, access to credit, and more representative government. Bangladesh is a small, third world country with a huge population and a host of problems where poverty, gender inequality, illiteracy, corruption, etc are more pronounced. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) can complement the government to meet these challenges. Because of the flexibility and grassroots level organizing ability, NGOs are capable of administering micro-level development programmes aimed at poverty alleviation, socio-economic and health development of the disadvantaged, their demographic restraints and women empowerment. By playing an important role in development, this sector has earned its own identity all over the world and gradually became partners of development paradigm along with public and private sectors.

NGOs in Bangladesh are engaged in diverse activities where micro-credit is the most common and popular. Apart from this, other programmes include education, healthcare, family planning, environment, human rights, relief and rehabilitation etc. On the other hand, the elements of national security has multiple facets like territorial integrity, political independence, security of core values, internal security, protection of basic rights and economic and environmental security etc. However, there is a growing concern that some of the NGOs are engaged in some alleged controversial activities which are detrimental to the national security matters. These include involvement in partisan politics, illegal business, anti-social activities, misappropriation with donation, preaching

religion, promoting religion centric extremism, biasness in selection of target group, lacking in financial transparency and accountability and so on. These allegations pollute their contributions, which must be taken into cognizance for expected socio-economic development of the country without jeopardising the national security. Proper monitoring by the government can regulate the NGO activities to keep them out of question. It is now important to identify the threats emanating from NGO activities and find means of regulating NGOs' effort in the socio-economic development of the country. Henceforth the problem statement of the research is to identify the controversial roles of NGOs affecting national security and how best the NGOs can be regulated to contribute to the socio-economic development of Bangladesh negating their alleged controversial roles which often might pose threat to the National Security.

Aim

The aim of this study is to identify the threats to national security emanating from NGO activities and suggest the ways to address the threats.

OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE OF NGO

Micro credit and Poverty Alleviation. In respect of poverty alleviation, principal instruments of NGO programmes involve micro credit, skill development and employment generation. With a view to reducing dependency on the usual moneylenders, NGOs arrange micro credit for individual or collective enterprises which is the most successful innovative effort of the NGOs in Bangladesh.

Women Empowerment. NGOs in Bangladesh do not see women's economic empowerment as its only goal, but encourages uniting the poor women in-groups as part of a larger struggle. Credit based income generating activities are the main tasks for most of the NGOs. The women have access to money through the credit group.

Healthcare and Nutrition. NGOs have strengthened the existing healthcare system and developed appropriate institutional structures and mechanisms. The primary attention of all these NGOs is focused on reducing the incidence of infant, child and maternal mortality. The NGOs have also made remarkable contributions in the nation-wide immunization programme to combat the high incidence of infant and child mortality. Within a decade they have increased the ratio of Expanded Programme for Immunization from 5 percent to 85 percent (Aziz 2003).

Curbing Population Growth. NGOs have been actively supporting the activists of family planning in private sector thus playing a vital role in curbing population growth. NGOs are working with the government in making family planning service increasingly available at the community level and in educating the clients. Until 2003 they covered over 4 million eligible couples in the country (Aziz 2003). NGOs have encouraged female workers in the field of family planning and found them efficient and cost effective for making the population control programme a success. Success in reducing population growth rate has therefore been considered as a remarkable work of NGOs.

Development in the Field of Water and Sanitation. Water and sanitation is the greatest health factor. NGOs contributed significantly to health outcomes by providing water and sanitation services with notable success in community-based programmes that also created behavioural change among common population (Rahman 2008).

Education Sector. The NGOs perceive education as an integral and indispensable part of democracy and also consider it to be a basic human right. The NGOs have concentrated their efforts on eradicating illiteracy through functional education for both men and women with special emphasis to children. They are experimenting not only on the means and methods of making education more appealing and useful for the poor, but also on minimizing the rate of drop outs which is found to be alarmingly high.

Environment Sector. The programme of NGOs has been laid primarily on deforestation, water and sanitation, and aquaculture. NGOs have exhibited notable success in aforestation on homesteads, embankments, school grounds and similar other places. In the aforestation programmes, NGOs have provided seedling and sapling of fruit and fuel wood trees to the beneficiaries for plantation.

Agriculture. Bangladesh is an agrarian country and major fraction of the population depends on it. Outstanding contributions have been made by NGOs in agriculture sector. NGOs have introduced new, high-breed, anti-insect and sustainable crops especially in respect of soya beans, maize, vegetables which are remarkable. Agricultural productivity has increased as several NGOs arranged training, provided technical assistance and quality seeds to the farmers.

Advocacy Issue. NGO's advocacy activities have been intensified since the return to the democracy in the 1990s than that of 1970s and 1980s. More number of NGOs is now involved in social awareness programmes and advocacy issues (BRAC annual report 2008).

Fisheries, Poultry, Livestock and Sericulture. Provision of necessary expert and gears including credit support by the NGOs have motivated poor people to undertake activities such as fisheries, livestock, poultry etc which eventually has become a profitable means of income. NGOs also have significant success in the field of sericulture in North Bengal which became a good income generation source for many (Rahman 2008).

Relief and Rehabilitation Sector. NGOs were born in this country basically for conducting relief and rehabilitation program and for a long time they played a significant role in distributing relief among the distressed people along with the government. A review of NGOs relief work indicates that NGOs emergency responses are immediate, large scale and effective (Rahman 2008). After Cyclone Sidr, BRAC distributed emergency relief materials to over 180,000 families (BRAC Annual Report 2008)

Other Roles. According to an evaluation study carried out by the Netherlands Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 1998, the other sectors in which NGOs are operating have been identified as integrated rural development, income generating and training, legal aid, human and civil rights, and child development (Ahmad 2007: 159).

NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS OF BANGLADESH- AN OVERVIEW OF THE TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL THREATS

Perception of National Security

Security Perception. Security of a country is a matter of perception. National security implies that a nation being free from all components of insecurity. The Security of a nation today is no longer restricted to armed forces only; it involves the entire nation as a whole. Threat to national security is a matter of concern not only to armed forces or the government but to every citizen. National security involves preservation of some core values of a nation. It encompasses all fundamental interests of the state. It deals with matters of security issues relating to the existence of the state. It includes economic emancipation, resource control, ecological equilibrium etc. After the Second World War the term “national security” had purely military aspect, but since the end of the Cold War era, the security issues have been widened to cover the whole economic, social, ecological and demographic aspect.

Threat Perception. Security is a concept which does not give any meaning without some identification of threats. Threat is an implicit or explicit determination. The source, type and the level of threat are mostly situational and complex. Threat to the state comes in diverse forms which cannot be easily weighed off against each other and which are frequently in a state of constant evolution. These threats define its insecurity and set the national security as a policy problem. The threat to national security can be broadly categorized as traditional and non-traditional threats (Khan 2001). The National Security of Bangladesh is susceptible to both military and non military threats. The details of traditional and non-traditional threats (internal and external) will be explained in the subsequent paragraphs.

Traditional Threats. Intervention by other countries or insurgency within the country is the traditional threat. Detail discussion on traditional threat is not within the scope of this paper. Therefore, this paper will focus only on non-traditional threats (internal and external) some of which may be emanated from the alleged controversial activities of NGOs.

Non-Traditional Threats. In the context of Bangladesh the non-military security threats are likely to be more vulnerable than that of the military. Non-traditional threats may be further divided into two broad categories: external and internal. Internal threats may include unstable political situation, poor economic condition, environmental hazard, ethnic crisis, religious extremism, drug addiction, population problem and unemployment problem. External threats may encompass cultural aggression, economic suppression, diplomatic domination, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, international terrorism and water sharing disputes etc (Rahman 2008, Khan 2001).

Nature and Sources of Threat to Security

Security has got its intrinsic positive elements-presence of values, satisfaction of needs, feeling secure and striving unhindered for growth and development. At the contextual level, the conventional militaristic external oriented definition of security fails to capture the magnitude and variety of the problems of the countries like Bangladesh. The threat to Bangladesh's security is essentially indirect, i.e. economic strangulation through stoppage of river waters and by encroachment of its maritime interest. Tribal rebels supported by big neighbour in the CHT along with terrorist activities by religious fundamental groups are also matter of concern for the government. Gono Judha Bahini (SORBOHARA) mostly in south western districts is also hampering the security (Hossain 2009).

Economic problems are the most substantive aspects of the security of small states because they are of immediate relevance to the people at large and also the state itself. Threats to economic security mainly include small resources, high dependency on foreign aid and technology spiralled with extreme debt burden. Internally, poverty, uneven rural and urban development etc largely affect the security. The economic security if ensured can provide health security, education security, food security etc. On the otherhand Bangladesh is the worst sufferer of the climate change. Environmental degradation due to green house effect, deprivation of river water by upper riparian country etc. posing a great threat to the security of the people. These environmental effects are the main threats to security of our country (Hossain 2009).

THREAT EVALUATION – IDENTIFY THE THREATS EMANATING FROM NGO ACTIVITIES

Activities of NGO Affecting National Security

General Allegation against NGO. Since, the NGOs are deeply involved in many national development programmes, so their alleged controversial roles are likely to have negative impact on the national security of Bangladesh. The recent disputed and defaming allegation against some of the NGOs has questioned the credibility of NGOs in Bangladesh. With the increasing availability of donors' funds, some NGOs tend to undertake programmes, which are determined by donors' demand and expectation

Controversial Activities of NGOs. Next few sub paragraphs will highlight few of the alleged controversial roles played by the NGOs in Bangladesh which are likely to pose threats to national security. This analysis will be done from both developmental view point and governmental view point.

- a. Interfere and Involvement in Politics.** Some of the NGOs are found politically involved. They started taking part in mass movement from 1990. NGOs' participation in the 1996 mass movement under the sponsorship of their coordinating body created a major concern, which has affected NGO credibility as a neutral force. The magnitude of involvement in politics by these NGOs is a serious concern for the country and also undesirable. They may pose threat to the political security.
- b. Lack of Accountability.** There is a perception among different segments of the population that NGOs, especially the big ones, in Bangladesh are not accountable for their activities (Khan 2002: 423). NGOs generally have no one particular body to which they are accountable, and unlike governments

or businesses, NGOs have no readily acknowledged “bottom line” against which performance can be measured (Ahmad 1999:75). The NGOs are accountable neither to the government nor to their clients but merely to their funding sources. This leads to the aspect of accountability and transparency of the NGOs which is so much desired and demanded globally in democratic governance (Rahman 2008).

- c. **Lack of Financial Transparency.** The government plans to shut down 2,931 NGOS in 16 districts of the country owing to what it considers their inactivity, and absence of transparency in fund-related matters (The Daily Star 2010, 04 April). It is found that most of the NGOs are not transparent in their financial matters.
- d. **Involvement in Profit Oriented Business.** As non-profit organization NGOs are not supposed to be involved in profit oriented business. But it has been observed that NGOs sometimes get involved in such business and misusing the money they get to use for the betterment of the people. Bangladesh Business Forum has already complained that the NGOs are fetching money from abroad and running their business with it, but they do not pay any interest, revenue, duty or income tax. Some of the big and small NGOs have already established number of profit making outfits (The Daily Star, 04 April, 2010).
- e. **Misappropriation of Donation.** In spite of the various socio-economic developments there is an allegation against NGOs that less than 60 percent of the current received for poverty alleviation are actually spent for that purpose. About 500 NGOs out of the total 1500, received foreign fund in the name of poverty alleviation and other socio-economic development programmes. But a major portion of these was used in their own business (Aziz 2003).
- f. **Promoting Christianity.** Many of the foreign-funded missionary NGOs are accused of preaching Christianity. Most of these NGOs are operating in remote and highly concentrated extreme poor habitations of the country (Kashem 2002, Rahman 2008). The NGOs convert poor into Christians by exploiting their vulnerabilities.
- g. **Promoting Religious Extremism.** Few NGOs, overtly or covertly started patronizing or conducting terrorism (Hossain 2009). Religious NGOs and extremist organizations like Shahadat al-Hikma, Hizbut Tawhid, Bangladesh Islamic Manch, and Hifajate Khatme Nabuwat Andolon were also blamed to be involved in violent activities (Hossain 2009). Investigators formally charged the head of a British charity and 10 Bangladeshi agents with financing terrorism in the guise of operating a religious school in Bangladesh (Hossain

2009). In the district of Bhola a cache of arms was recovered from a madrasa (religious school) and orphanage run by the Green Crescent charity, accusing its voluntary organisation head Faisal Mostafa and his 10 Bangladeshi associates (Hossain 2009). Security analysts, including government policy makers think that foreign money is funding Bangladesh's RNGOs that are fuelling militancy in the country.

- h. Changing Cultural and Social Values.** In the name of empowering women and stopping fundamental activities in the society few NGOs instigated the rural poor helpless women to defy their husbands saying "I do not comply with others wish and I do not follow religion". Some of the NGOs some time got involved in mobilizing the prostitutes (Rahman 2008). "Banchte Shekha" in jessore propagates and displays such slogans which may seriously affect the culture of lower-middle class and middle class society (Personal visit to the NGO). In the name of empowering women and development, few NGOs are disregarding our existing social values, which are creating an adverse effect in our total socio-cultural environment (Kashem 2002).
- j. Connection with Insurgency.** Many NGOs in CHT maintain close political liaison with Jana Shanghati Shomiti and UPDF. And in many occasions, these are being funded by donors without the consent of the government. Alo, Trinomul Unnayan Shangstha, Kabidang, Jabrang Kallayan Shomiti etc. from Khagrachari, and Centre for Indigenous People Development, Social Advancement Society etc. of Rangamati are likely to be involved in this event (Rahman 2008).
- k. Unscrupulous Activities of Some NGOs.** In the absence of adequate measure of transparency and accountability, some of the NGOs – particularly of the local types – often indulge in dishonest practices of cheating poor and the illiterate people in the name of taking up development activities for them. The reports of such cheating incidents are often published in the newspapers. The victims of such dishonest practices are always the poor segments of the population, often thousands in number (Chowdhury 2002).

Survey on Islamic NGOs Who Promote Militant Activities. A research study on "Radical Islam and Development Aid in Bangladesh – Preliminary Research Study: Islamic Activism with case studies of Islamic Militancy" was carried out by Dr Maurits S. Berger LL.M, Netherlands Institute for International Relations 'Clingendael' the Hague in 2007. The study was conducted in cooperation with Dr Abul Barkat, Human Development Research Centre, Dhaka. During their study they conducted survey on 231 Islamic NGOs of Bangladesh and could prove their direct or indirect involvement to promote Islamic militant activities in the country.

Interview and Discussion

Discussion with the DG NGOAB. This agency was established in 1990 to oversee the Foreign Donation Regulation (FDR) and Foreign Contributions Regulation (FCR) Ordinances. NGOAB has almost the same number of staff in 2010 as in early 1990's – approximately 65 – yet the number of registered NGOs has tripled. NGOAB lacks capacity in the most fundamental aspects of its ability to perform its functions. Present structure and manpower of NGOAB is not adequate to perform its role effectively. The regulatory and monitoring structures of NGO at the field level are weak and not very effective. In order to perform the role of regulator, facilitator and monitor effectively NGOAB needs more manpower, accounting expertise, and IT assistance.

Discussion with NGO Executives. Over the past three decades NGOs have contributed positively to the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. But due to certain drawbacks in the regulatory framework, multiplicity in registration procedure and lack of capacity of regulatory institutions few NGOs (especially in CHT and RNGO) may get involve in some controversial activities violating the existing regulations. There may be a central agency to coordinate activities of all the NGOs. The current legal framework for NGOs in Bangladesh is outdated and in need of revision.

Discussion with the Chairperson and Director, ADAB. ADAB, as a unique network of NGOs, has developed over the last two decades or so and emerged as a model for the development NGOs. It brings together its members working within the broad framework of people-centered sustainable development. It has been playing active roles in strengthening inter-NGO relations, exchanging ideas and experiences, expanding fields of co-operation, developing organizational skills and enhancing functional relations and communication with government, donors and various groups of civil societies. In promoting internal governance standards of NGOs ADAB may perform the role of Apex Organization. But ADAB could not function properly since 2001 due to the political interference. If ADAB current capacity is developed and strengthened and enforce a code of conduct for the NGOs, it may bring about a positive change in NGO activities.

Correlation Between the Threat Emanating From NGOs and National Security. From the Above discussion, it is vivid that the development activities of NGOs are not always directed to achieve the noble cause. The parochial interests of the vested quarters are always a concern for the security of the country. (Rahman

2008). Alleged controversial activities of some of the NGOs may have impact on the non-traditional security of Bangladesh, i.e. economic, political, social, human, cultural security.

Threat to Economic Security. The dependence on external donation denies the prospect of self reliance of the poor. Again this dependency has discouraged hard work and resource mobilization. Thereby the country is not being economically self-reliant. Due to the weakness in economy of the country, today the donors are interfering with economic policy-making and impose aid conditionality. Besides, NGOs involved in commercial activities are not paying tax and many NGO high officials avoid income tax. (Rahman 2008).

Threat to Political Security. Studies have shown that the external donors became active in shaping the political power structure and allure the state administration to participate in the corruptive practices. Thereby, the NGOs are breaking down government institutions (Rahman 2008). It is found from the study that the secular and western NGOs keep intimate relationship with NGOs taking stances against the so called fundamentalist party. And the Islamic and middle east based NGOs maintaining liaison with pro Islamic parties of the country (Rahman 2008). However the NGOs with different ideologies are successful in arraying the people of the country into two distinct political entities. This would obviously vitiate the partisan politics and keep the political arena always unstable.

Threat to Human Security. NGOs often utilize the poor people of the country as a means of getting donations. They do not want them to be self-reliant and solvent rather want to keep them poor for their future use. NGOs are using the foreign donation elsewhere than that of the place it was intended to. The target group may not get its share of the donation and remains as vulnerable group.

Threat to Socio-Cultural Security. High level of dependence on foreign aid and the limitations of contractual relationship make it very difficult for the NGOs to expand into real value based action (Rahman 2008). In playing the role of parallel government, often NGOs act as masters to the rural people rather than a service providing benevolent partners. Actually, through these the social dynamics is affected. The social cohesion and fabric starts getting wear out. The increasing craze of rural women of being empowered, in many cases is breaking the age old family relationship. They are defying their husbands and are being divorced. This category of village women is sexually exploited. This is the biggest threat to nation's socio culture at present (Rahman 2008).

EXISTING REGULATORY FRAME WORK AND WAYS TO ADDRESS THE THREATS TO SECURITY POSED BY NGO

Existing Legal and Regulatory Framework of NGO. In Bangladesh, the regulatory framework for the NGOs has two parts: firstly laws under which the NGOs are incorporated and given a legal identity; and secondly, laws regulating the relationship of the NGOs with Government of Bangladesh. Besides, there are few other organizations which are responsible for monitoring and supervising the NGO activities. In the subsequent paragraphs existing legal and regulatory aspects of NGO will be analysed in order to identify the weaknesses and suggest ways forward to address the threats emanating from the NGOs.

Legal Platform. A number of rules and regulations exist in Bangladesh that are intended to control and regulate NGO activities. These have provided the legal and regulatory framework which allows NGOs to secure legal identity and seek assistance from the government and also regulate their relationship with the government (Khanam 2010).

Registration Policy and Accountability. There are probably more NGOs in Bangladesh than in any other country of comparable size. Registration is not mandatory unless the NGO wishes to engage in transactions with the government. Most NGOs are registered as voluntary agencies with the Department of Social Welfare, but significant numbers are also registered with the Registrar of Societies, with the courts as trusts, or with the Ministries of Religious Affairs, Youth and Sports, Women and Children Affairs, Cooperatives, and Health and Family Welfare etc. In addition to any of the above, registration with the NGOAB is also necessary in order to be eligible to receive foreign funds (Aziz 2003).

Regulatory Institutions. Bangladesh Government is increasingly aware of its limitation in trying to bring about sustained development especially in the field of poverty alleviation and social delivery services, and has recognized the complementary role of NGOs in development intervention in these areas. This recognition has prompted the government to take several measures for controlling, regulating, and promoting relation between the government organizations and NGOs (Ahmed 2003). Besides NGOAB, DSW, DWCA, and Joint Stock Company these measures include the establishment of Government NGO Consultative Council (GNCC), The Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB), NGO Federation of Bangladesh (FNB) and The Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) (Ahmed 2003, Rahman 2008).

Lacking in Existing Regulation and Monitoring. Over the years a very large number of unscrupulous individuals have undermined the NGO concept through setting up their own NGOs, which eventually turned out to have been fake ones. Quite clearly, there exist a multiplicity of government organizations where registering NGOs is concerned. That in turn leads to an overlapping of functions as well as general confusion, the result being that the government as a whole remains unaware of the actual situation on the NGO front (The Daily Star 04 April 2010).

Ways to Address the Threats to National Security. Bangladesh has its own religious beliefs, social values, culture, social norms and way of life. They live within a sovereign political entity. In any development work these characteristics are to be taken into consideration. Some times, NGOs take programs and float ideas which are not conforming to the beliefs and values of Bangladeshi society. In order to negate the impact of alleged controversial roles of NGOs', few suggestions/options are appended in the subsequent paragraphs.

Strengthening Legal Platform. Laws that regulate the NGO Sector are backdated and NGOs are exploiting many of the loopholes of these laws. A new set of Rules or Acts should be enacted by the government addressing diverse types of NGOs and their activities. The laws should bar the NGOs from taking part in politics either directly or indirectly. Commercial activities must not go beyond the limit bounded by the government and must be taxed with existing rules.

Setting Up of NGO Commission. An autonomous NGO commission should be set for monitoring of the entire NGO sector. This is a medium term initiative which should be taken by the government. Under this commission, registration, monitoring, controlling and other interrelated works will be done (Rahman 2008).

Strengthening NGOAB. NGOAB started its operation in 1990 with a meagre number of staff to register, monitor, implementing project proposals of the NGOs. The number of NGOs has increased to a significant degree since then but the bureau still works with the same manpower (DG, NGOAB). Early steps should be taken for infrastructural improvement, logistic benefit, skill development and capacity building of the NGOAB staff backed up by sufficient resources and incentives (DG, NGOAB).

Accountability to Stakeholders, Government and Donors. The NGOs are to be made accountable to stakeholders, government and donor. The development

partner, along with providing fund to a project, should monitor and evaluate the activities of the concerned NGO. They may stop their fund immediately if any irregularities are found (Rahman 2008).

Financial Transparency. NGOAB, donors and the NGO itself should bridge the difference of salaries between higher and lower level especially field-workers. The information on the salary and other benefits of the employees must be made open for all. The yearly budget of every program must be disclosed. In this regard stakeholders, local citizen, journalists, researchers and government officials may be informed.

Improving Government – NGO Collaboration. Effective collaboration between GO and NGO can bring the best result in socio-economic development of the country. Collaboration ensures Poor's participation in the development process and ensures public services to the poor. It also ensures utilization of knowledge and ability of both the counterparts. Optimum utilization of scarce resources can be ensured by it.

Revitalizing Government-NGO Consultative Council (GNCC). GNCC will provide a better forum for strengthening relations between government and NGOs and this council should be revitalized to create more opportunities for effective GO-NGO collaboration. This will obviously maximize the NGOs contribution to the socio-economic development of the country.

Access to Information. All information of an NGO should be made accessible to the public, especially its stakeholders. Information dissemination should be institutionalized rather than being dependent on one individual. Efforts should be made to develop own NGO website which should be updated regularly.

Opening Monitoring Cells in every Division. Under the responsibility of NGOAB monitoring cells should be opened in every Division to monitor the activities of NGOs in that particular area. In the district level the Deputy Commissioner may be empowered for such monitoring under his jurisdiction.

Provisioning of Proper Security Vetting of the Donors. Many NGOs are backed financially by foreign funds. The donors may have got a specific goal to achieve through these NGOs. During registration at NGOAB all factors related to the donors' programme, their intentions and related issues should be taken into consideration. Keeping in view the national interest and national security, a proper vetting procedure has to be carried out.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following recommendations are made to maximize the role of NGOs in the socio-economic development of the country negating the impact of their alleged controversial roles to the national security of Bangladesh:

- a. An autonomous NGO Commission should be set up for monitoring the entire NGO sector. Under this commission, registration, monitoring and other interrelated works will be done.
- b. Early steps should be taken for organizational change, and infrastructural improvement of the NGOAB.
- c. The effort to reform the current legal and regulatory framework for NGOs in Bangladesh should be undertaken by a Law Reform Task Force.
- d. A system of social audits may be introduced under the proposed NGO commission or the umbrella bodies of NGOs.
- e. GNCC may provide a better forum for strengthening relations between government and NGOs. Therefore, this council should be revitalized to create more opportunities for effective GO-NGO collaboration.
- f. At every level NGOs activities should be supervised by the appropriate authority. Under the responsibility of NGOAB or NGO commission, monitoring cells should be opened in every division to monitor the activities of NGOs.
- g. Both ADAB and FNB may be recognised as apex bodies of NGO sector. They may be allowed to function without the political interference.

CONCLUSION

NGOs are playing an increasingly important role for the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. The NGO community in Bangladesh consists of almost all categories of NGOs available in today's world. NGOs in Bangladesh are engaged in diverse activities. Micro credit is the most common and increasingly popular type of operations. NGOs arrange collateral free credit for individual or collective enterprises to reduce the dependency on the usual moneylenders. They enhanced the opportunity of employment and income generation through various projects such as poultry, fishery, livestock, sericulture, agriculture, etc.

National security of Bangladesh may be conceptualized as the combination of traditional and non-traditional security. Non-traditional threat is most expected to the national security of Bangladesh. It may originate from the vulnerabilities like acute poverty, political and social instability, demographic pressure, illiteracy, disrespect to law and order and degradation of environment etc. As the NGOs are

deeply involved in socio-economic development programmes, so their alleged controversial roles are likely to have negative impact on the national security of Bangladesh.

NGOs in Bangladesh are doing excellent job in socio-economic development of the country. Though there are some allegations of wrong-doing by the NGOs which defames their contributions but effective monitoring can check the NGOs of committing such wrong-doing. NGOs are considered as an efficient actor to achieve the goals of development. To address the threats posed by the NGOs a set of actions are necessary. An autonomous NGO commission may be set up for monitoring the entire NGO sector. A new set of rules should be enacted by the government addressing the diverse types of NGOs and their activities.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADAB	-	Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh
ADP	-	Annual Development Programme
ALO	-	Assistance for the Livelihood of the Origins
ASA	-	Association for Social Advancement
BIISS	-	Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies
BLAST	-	Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust
BOD	-	Board of Directors
BRAC	-	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CDL	-	Community Development Library
CEO	-	Chief Executive Officer
CHT	-	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CIPD	-	Center for Indigenous People Development
DAM	-	Dhaka Ahsania Mission
DG	-	Director General
DGFI	-	Directorate General- Forces Intelligence
DSCSC	-	Defence Services Command and Staff College
DSW	-	Department of Social Welfare
DWCA	-	Department of Women & Children Affairs
FCR	-	Foreign Contributions Regulation
FDR	-	Foreign Donation Regulation
FEMA	-	Fair Election Monitoring Alliance
FNB	-	Federation of the NGOs in Bangladesh
GO	-	Government Organization
GOB	-	Government of Bangladesh

GO-NGO	-	Government & Non Governmental Organization
GNCC	-	Government NGO Consultative Council
GSS	-	Gana Sahajjya Sangstha
HDRC	-	Human Development Research Center
IMDO	-	Indigenous Multiplex Development Organization
IT	-	Information Technology
JSS	-	Jana Sanghati Samiti
MDS	-	Masters in Defence Studies
NDC	-	National Defence College
NFPE	-	Non Formal Primary Education
NGO	-	Non Governmental Organization
NGOAB	-	Non Governmental Organization Affairs Bureau
NSI	-	National Security Intelligence
PKSF	-	Palli Karma Shahayak Foundation
PM	-	Prime Minister
RNGO	-	Religious Non Government Organization
SB	-	Shanti Bahini
TIB	-	Transparency International Bangladesh
UCEP	-	Underprivileged Children's Education Programme
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme

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57. Chairman, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS), Dhaka.
58. Concerned Directors, Research, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS), Dhaka.
59. Abdul Matin, Chairperson, ADAB and Executive Director, International Voluntary Services – Bangladesh.

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