Role of NGOs in Protecting and Ensuring Human Rights in Bangladesh

Md. Ashabur Rahman

1. Introduction

The establishment of Bangladesh as an independent state is the consequence of a fight against violation of human rights. Despite enough potential progress, the country is still faced with abject poverty, which is perhaps the most powerful enemy of human rights. Government is trying heart and soul to protect human rights. Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) are assisting the government with financial aids and other developmental services. No discussion about protection of human rights, ensuring equality or legal empowerment is complete without considering the role of such NGOs. Without protecting human rights, ensuring good governance is impossible. The human rights condition is determined by the social and political activities whereas most of the people of Bangladesh lead their life below the poverty line. The condition of human rights of Bangladesh is mainly detected by the condition of women, children, minorities and the role of security forces. The Constitution of Bangladesh provides enough space for rights of every individual human being. However, the role of the NGOs are particularly based on legal aid, legal awareness activities, legal education, protection of human rights through Legal Aid Clinics and other human rights activities. Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it is independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.” But to protect human rights, legal provision itself is not sufficient without the help of social awareness. Moreover, there is a need to broaden the base of the human rights pyramid by starting with the eradication of poverty, and to acknowledge the link between social & economic development and human rights.

2. Problem Statement

There are some problems which will be discussed in the research. Such as human rights violations, challenges for NGOs to uphold human rights, barriers to provide legal aid and other legal matters relating to human rights etc. In which way NGO’s are working to protect human rights in Bangladesh and their legal aid services will also be noted in the research. The human

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rights condition is determined by the social and political activities. Weak respect for the rule of law leads private individuals as well as government officials to violate human rights with impunity which is a great impediment for good governance and welfare state.

3. Rationales and Justification of the Study

It is hoped that this study will make a significant contribution to the concepts of the role of NGO’s to protect human rights whereas the policy makers, legislators and researchers will be able to know about the problems and prospects of the NGO’s for such activities in Bangladesh. The findings of this study will help the government and non-government organizations to improve their contribution for protecting human rights. It is expected that this recent issue can be treated as an important and valuable source for the workers on this subject. This research work may also be helpful for the students of law and social science to enrich their knowledge.

4. Objectives of the Study

The study has explored the real condition of human rights in Bangladesh and initiatives taken by the government and private organizations. However, the purpose of this study is to explore the role of NGO’s for protecting and ensuring human rights in Bangladesh. In view of the studies the goal is formulated;

(i) To discuss legal aid and legal awareness activities provided by human rights and humanitarian organizations,
(ii) To show human rights activities of non-government organizations and international organizations,
(iii) To explore effective measures taken by the NGO’s and government for protecting and ensuring human rights,
(iv) To discuss the protection of human rights through legal aid services program.

5. Research Questions

In this study, two questions will be answered regarding the role of NGOs in protecting and ensuring human rights in Bangladesh; one is normative – human rights activities of the NGOs and the other is operational – legal aid services provided by the NGOs.

6. Research Methodology

This research is predominantly qualitative in nature which is supported by the information provided by some NGOs through visiting their offices physically and browsing websites. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches are used for validity and reliability of research work. In order to explore effective measures for protecting and ensuring human rights, a comparative study is held.
7. Review of Relevant Literature

In order to study on role of NGO’s for protecting and ensuring human rights in Bangladesh the researcher has to review literature. By the literature review, the researcher has come to know about the NGOs who work to maintain human rights and their role. Offices of different NGOs were visited for collecting data about legal aid services. Websites of different NGOs and newspapers were browsed to get relevant information and reports. Relevant articles from online journals and books on human rights issues were read through internet.

8. Sources and Materials of Data

Necessary data for the study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of data for this research were different documents, reports and the interviews provided by the NGO officials who work on such issues. The secondary data were collected from relevant books, journal articles, research reports, official publication, thesis, dissertations, newspapers and different websites. For the purpose of collecting authentic data, researcher carried out conversation with the concerned authority. The collected data and information from the sources were carefully reviewed, edited, scrutinized and analyzed on the basis of research questions and objectives. Data were also cross checked for validity and reliability.

9. Limitation of the Study

The research is limited within non-governmental organizations human rights activities. Rajshahi unit office of BLAST and BRAC were selected for data collection which covered only the district of Rajshahi of Bangladesh. It helped to get an overall view of the situations of legal aid programme in Rajshahi. The researcher collected more data about the NGOs on the human rights activities through their websites because it saved time and cost. The research explored the reality faced by the people in obtaining legal aid and the socio-legal impact of the functioning of NGOs legal aid programme. It is hoped that, this research will fix certain substantial facts that can help to bring typical changes in the existing functioning of NGOs legal aid programme and other human rights activities.

10. Human Rights Situation in Bangladesh

Human rights violation has become very common episode in Bangladesh. In fact, it becomes more serious when police denies and avoids all allegations instead of investigation. Human rights violation is not a matter of discipline that can be rectified by monitoring. It is a set of functions. However, there are some remarkable progress in different sectors like poverty elimination, enhancing education, reducing the death rates of mothers and children, improving standards of living, progressing democratic values and human rights etc. Amid these achievements, the attacks on minority communities, women and children, militant attacks on bloggers, killings at the borders by the BSF and the horrible incidence of “Holy Artisan Attack” were among the big
concerns. The NHRC, with limited financial support and small number of staff, is engaged in defending human rights in Bangladesh as an effective watchdog. Recently the government declared legal recognition of a third gender category for hijras which is a great achievement for establishing their rights. The NHRC has recently hired a Hijra (transgender) person and two persons with disabilities. NHRC Chairman Kazi Reazul Hoque said, “as a part of NHRC’s commitment to promote and protect human rights, this step is taken. There is no doubt that such initiative will encourage other institutions to recruit such vulnerable persons in their institutions. Apart from these, the Bangladesh government has recently reformed the law for protecting the rights of workers, which is the positive effort of the government to protect human rights. Human rights violation by law enforcement agencies has become very common issue in Bangladesh. Authorities failed to hold security forces responsible for serious human rights violations including secret detentions, enforced disappearances, torture, and extrajudicial killings. In a verdict, the High Court issued a 15-point directive on section 54 (arrest without warrant) and 167 (seeking remand) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) to the government and asked police officers, magistrates, jail officials and sessions’ judges to ensure that citizens’ human rights were not violated.

In 2017, there were at least 30 assaults on journalists, including the February murder of Abdul Hakim Shimul, a reporter for the daily Samakal newspaper, while he covered political unrest in Shahjadpur; whereas in early September, police detained two Burmese journalists reporting on the Rohingya crisis and held them for a week before releasing them on bail. Although the government was very cordial to them; and dropped the charges against them. Later they were allowed to return home. From December 2016 to February 2017, the government and garment manufacturers cracked down on workers for demanding higher wages, dismissing workers and arresting union leaders based on vague or repealed offenses from the draconian Special Powers Act of 1974. Later the government solved the problem through an agreement with the garment manufacturers’ association and the global garment union IndustriALL. After that the arrested workers and union leaders were released. An estimated 720,000 Rohingya children, women and men have fled to Bangladesh escaping violence in Myanmar since August 25, 2017. There was an urgent need for emergency shelters and relief items. Bangladesh government provided shelters to them and took help of humanitarian workers and international communities to

8 Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services and Trust and others vs. Bangladesh and others, No. Writ Petition No. 3806 of 1998 (n.d.).
9 “WORLD REPORT 2018.”
10 “WORLD REPORT 2018.”
provide them relief items. However Bangladesh government is being praised by the international communities for their humanity.

11. Human Rights and Humanitarian Organizations Working in Bangladesh

Human rights are Natural Rights, Basic Rights, Universal Rights and Legal Rights, which are universally applicable to all without any discrimination based on Sex, Race, Religion and Region. At present many organizations are working in Bangladesh for ensuring economic development and protecting human rights. Generally the office of the District Commissioner coordinates all development related works in district level. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) provide an alternative way for development. Many donor agencies prefer to work with NGOs for their ability to reach places and people left out by the central State. Their activities are much appreciated by the government as well as donor agencies. Up to June 2018, near about 2625 NGOs are listed in the NGO Affairs Bureau of Bangladesh who are actively working in Bangladesh among them Bangladesh Human Rights Foundation, Bangladesh Jatiyo Mohila Ainjibi Samity (Bangladesh Women Lawyers Association), Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), CARITAS-Bangladesh, Bangladesh Shishu Adikhar Forum, Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), BRAC are mention worthy. On the other hand, up to June 2018 near about 259 international NGOs are listed in the NGO Affairs Bureau of Bangladesh who are actively working in Bangladesh among them Article 19, Christian Aid, Handicap International, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Save the Children, SOS - Children's Village International in Bangladesh, Terre-Des-Homes, Amnesty International, Winrock International, Water Aid are mention worthy. Apart from these many international organizations are working in Bangladesh like the United Nations (UN), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), USAID etc.

12. Human Rights Activities of Non-Government Organizations

There are many organizations in Bangladesh who work with human rights issues. Among them BLAST and BRAC are the leading organizations whereas BLAST and Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) provide access to legal aid across the spectrum, from the frontlines of the formal justice system to the highest court. Whereas, the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) works to promote environmental justice and contribute towards the development of a sound environmental jurisprudence; it also works to ensure environmental protection through due processes of law\(^\text{16}\). Through legal mechanism BELA works to address environmental injuries. But BRAC has many human development programmes; legal aid service is one of them. Such NGOs prioritise support to women, men and children living in poverty or facing disadvantage or discrimination. They also provide legal aid, advice, education and representation across a range of areas. BLAST undertakes strategic litigation or public interest litigation as a key part of its advocacy for law and policy reforms to ensure effective legal protection of human rights. BRAC’s work is premised on a rights based approach to human development. BLAST’s mission is to make the legal system accessible to the poor and the marginalized\(^\text{17}\). BRAC’s mission is to empower people and communities in situations of poverty, illiteracy, disease and social injustice. Its interventions aim to achieve large scale, positive changes through economic and social programmes that enable men and women to realize their potential. And its goal is to protect and promote human rights through legal empowerment especially for the poor and marginalized. BRAC’s vision is to make a world free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realize their potential\(^\text{18}\). Rajshahi Legal Aid Clinic of BLAST was established in 1994. It provides awareness raising training on legal issues among the women and the students of law. The activities of Rajshahi Legal Aid Clinic are shown below through chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number/ Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cases Filed</td>
<td>4750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Under Trial</td>
<td>942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Financial Transaction in Cases</td>
<td>84, 11, 836 Tk. &amp; 5 Kathas Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cases Referred to Supreme Court</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Received Applications</td>
<td>8890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Solution through Shalish</td>
<td>2127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Solved Cases</td>
<td>3808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Financial Transactions through Shalish</td>
<td>77,66,912 Tk.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Successful activities of BLAST in Rajshahi unit (1994-2012)\(^\text{19}\);


\(^{19}\) “Successful Activities of BLAST, Rajshahi Unit” (Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, Rajshahi Legal Aid Clinic, 2012 1994).
Protecting workers rights is the main objective of the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) and it strives to promote just and worker friendly policies and laws in Bangladesh; it also plays a catalyst role in bridging trade unions, civil society and the government on labour market issues. BLAST and Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) are run by lawyers who work in district bar association offices. They primarily assist the victims of violation of human rights by extending legal aids with the intention of restoration of their infringed rights. BRAC is a holistic organization which tackles poverty on multiple fronts, one of which is legal empowerment. BRAC is one of the world’s largest national non-governmental organizations (NGO) having offices throughout the country. BRAC’s programmatic focus is broad. It operates a modest legal empowerment program at the micro level. So the activities of NGOs are very much essential for ensuring human rights. Furthermore, BLAST has gained proven expertise in providing legal aid to poor and disadvantaged clients in 57,467 cases to date whereas it has filed over 80 public interest litigation cases before the Supreme Court of Bangladesh as part of its advocacy for law and policy reforms. BLAST regularly arranges awareness raising programmes for the marginalized people on various legal rights issues including on family matters, fundamental rights and remedies etc. BRAC’s HRLS operates over 400 legal aid clinics in 61 of 64 districts across Bangladesh and is the largest NGO-led legal aid program in the world. BRAC as well as other organizations have a good contribution in the protection of human rights in Bangladesh. Bangladesh government is working with the national and international NGOs to uphold human rights.

13. Human Rights Activities of International Organizations in Bangladesh

Bangladesh faces great challenges to sustain and build on the achievements of its targets under Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) where UNDP plays a vital role in different sectors including justice sector. With regard to good governance, GIZ focus on making the national and local criminal justice system more transparent and reducing the number of under-trial prisoners as well as case backlogs; it also offers support in minimizing recidivism and promotes alternative dispute resolution mechanisms whereas the Paralegal Advisory Service works to ensure timely and appropriate legal assistance to poor and vulnerable prisoners, reduce incidents of re-offending, restrict case inflow through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms (such as mediation and restorative justice), and empower people through improved access to legal information. USAID addresses human rights violations by reducing the high prevalence of violence against women and child marriage; it also prevents human trafficking by training government officials to better care for survivors and more effectively prosecute the perpetrators. In addition, to increase access to the country’s formal justice system, USAID educates underserved citizens about existing legal aid services and provides training to the

justice sector to more efficiently serve the public\textsuperscript{25}. Actually the organizations sometimes work through partner NGOs and sometime work with own staffs. They play a vital role in criminal case quick disposal and providing legal aid.

On the other hand Article 7 of the Charter of the United Nations says that (1) there are established as principal organs of the United Nations: a General Assembly, a Security Council, an Economic and Social Council, a Trusteeship Council, an International Court of Justice and a Secretariat and (2) such subsidiary organs as may be found necessary may be established in accordance with the present Charter\textsuperscript{26}. Similarly, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of UN organs devoted primarily to human rights matters, as well as a major increase in the time allocated by some of the existing organs to the human rights component of their mandates\textsuperscript{27}. Such UN organs and treaty bodies are working to raise awareness regarding human rights whereas the role of such treaty bodies and UN organs in monitoring human rights is a landmark for the government.

14. Protection of Human Rights through Legal Aid

Human Rights being essential for all-round development of the personality of individuals in society, be necessarily protected and be made available to all the individuals\textsuperscript{28}. In a democratic country it is a prerequisite that all citizens get economic and social justice. In addition, it requires a legal culture comprising both the legal consciousness of the judiciary and ordinary citizens which is committed to upholding the underlying values of human rights and freedoms\textsuperscript{29}. Therefore, as long as poverty exist in the society, legal aid will be necessary to uphold human rights and equality. It is for this reason that the benefit of legal aid has been extended to the deserving members of the society not as a charity but as their civil right, having the Constitutional backing and support. Legal aid is an instrument to achieve protection in law is also embedded in the Constitution of Bangladesh. For ensuring welfare state, the issue ‘legal aid’ is very important. However, all citizens are equal before law and are entitled to have equal protection of law\textsuperscript{30}. In the case of Dr. Neelima Ibrahim vs. Bangladesh, it was held that the principle of audi alteram partem (hear the other party) unless expressly excluded by law or by the nature of the objects of any particular law is to be implied to have been proved in every statute\textsuperscript{31}. But the fact is that due to financial constraints and social inequality not all are equally privileged to get the benefits of law. The former Chief Justice of India P.N. Bhagwati observed: “Where one of the parties to a litigation belongs to a poor and deprived section of the community, and does not possess adequate social and material resources, he is bound to be at a disadvantage as against a strong and powerful opponent under the ‘adversary system of justice’ because of his

\textsuperscript{25} “USAID.”
\textsuperscript{27} “International Human Rights: A Perspective From India,” 25.
\textsuperscript{28} “International Perspective to Protect the Human Rights of Religious Minorities- A Critical Study.”
\textsuperscript{30} “The Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh,” § Article 27 (n.d.).
\textsuperscript{31} 32 DLR (1980) 201 (n.d.).
difficulty in getting competent legal representation, and more than anything else, his ability to produce relevant evidence before the Court." 

Legal Aid means free legal service to those who are unable to bear costs of legal proceedings. It is the responsibility of the state to ensure equal protection of law and equal access to justice for the poor. Legal professionals use the phrase ‘legal aid’ to mean any or more of the following three issues: (a) Providing monetary aid; (b) Counseling on any legal issue; or (c) Defending a person in a Court of law. In Rajshahi, BRAC’s Human Rights and Legal Aid Services Programme is working very effectively. Under the field personnel, the HRLS programme utilizes a vast network of communities and proactive partners to detect, handle, and report, human rights violations. The legal aid services of BRAC’s Human Rights and Legal Aid Services Programme are shown below through chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number/ Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Complain</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Solved Complain</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Filed Cases</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cases under Trial</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Judgments</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dower and Maintenance Transaction (Lac Taka)</td>
<td>4.70 Tk.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Legal aid services of BRAC’s HRLAS programme in Rajshahi unit (March, 2014)

BRAC’s Human Rights and Legal Aid Services Division launched the Property Rights Initiative project in 2011 to address the issues related to land ownership and conflict for creating a new class of Government-certified BRAC Surveyors who were trained by BRAC to measure land where as the project made land measurements more accessible to the poor and reduced land related disputes by measuring land. On the other hand, there are many poor convicts whose jail appeals are not properly cared and conducted in the courts. Some private lawyers are being engaged to conduct such jail appeals in courts. Under this law, programs have been taken to motivate and sensitize people about human rights. The linkage between government and NGOs legal aid is a relative issue. With the enactment of the Legal Aid Services Act, 2000 and forming committee’s for disposal of cases, the government has started to take necessary initiatives regarding legal aid. National Legal Aid Services Organization is established through section 3 of this act whereas under section 21A Legal Aid Officers are appointed in district level to give legal advice among the poor litigants. Moreover, BLAST provides legal aid service under

33 Abdul Halim and N.E Siddiki, The Legal System in Bangladesh (Page- 346, n.d.).
36 Abdul Halim and N.E Siddiki, The Legal System in Bangladesh (Page- 348, n.d.).
Community Legal Services (CLS) program in its Rajshahi unit. The statistics of the services is given below in table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Achieved</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Complain Received</td>
<td></td>
<td>759</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Legal Advice</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cases</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Solved Cases</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Under Trial</td>
<td></td>
<td>326</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Financial Transaction in Cases</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6,07,000 Tk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Solved through Shalish</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Financial Transactions through Shalish</td>
<td></td>
<td>36, 32,000 Tk. And more than 2 Kathas Land (Presumed valuation 1,17,000 Tk.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Activities of BLAST, Rajshahi unit (January, 2013 to March, 2014)\(^{38}\).

So the NGOs as well as the government provide legal aid among the poor litigants in both civil and criminal cases. Therefore, the NGOs can play a proactive role in implementing the legal aid programme by concluding human right violation, making the government answerable, bringing into notice the gap between the inadequacies of law and practice of the government legal aid, putting pressure on government by public interest litigation where government fails to the respond to the need of the for legal aid, promoting social dialogues an literacy programme to uphold the importance of legal aid, assisting government programme by to providing expertise on concerned issues.

15. Recommendations

There are many important matters which are completely silent in the law. But the opportunity of the NGOs must be protected by laws. Some findings can be mentioned below.

a) The victims face difficulties to afford their conveyance cost, as they have to visit the court from the remote areas of the district. The conveyance cost should be included in the purview of the legal aid.

b) All NGOs should have a documentation team who will collect data of human rights abuses published in the major national dailies.

c) NGO’s fact-finding activities cover instances of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment and abuse of some specific laws leading to human rights violations, repression against innocent people; application of unnecessary force by law enforcement agencies.

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\(^{38}\) Rajshahi Unit, “Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST),” May 11, 2014.
d) The Research Unit of NGOs should preserve the archives of the fact finding reports and maintain communication with the international and regional human rights organizations.

e) Arranging campaign against human rights violations and putting pressure on state actors for swift remedy for the victims.

f) NGOs should respond to the urgent appeals sent by the victims or other organizations.

g) Providing training to the lawyers, civil society members and other people concerned with the legal aid program.

h) The fees paid to the panel lawyers for representation of legal aid beneficiaries should be revised to enhance.

i) The government should make it compulsory for the TV channels to telecast special program featuring legal aid services. Apart from this, the newspapers also should publish special supplements on legal aid programs.

Mainly this research has tried to express the role of NGOs in protecting human rights. However it is clear that the government is not the only actor to ensure human rights but NGOs have a vital role behind the protection.

16. Conclusion

The government legal aid program is a new dimension to the measures adopted by the government for ensuring access to justice. In this context, NGOs helps effectively to ensure human rights. The state should encourage NGOs to play wider role in local and national governance which will ultimately help the government in bolstering its image if the quality of life actually improves. There is, therefore, a need for redirection of research and as well as NGO attention to the mobilized poor as potentially very important segment of the civil society in Bangladesh39. However an effective implementation of human rights and freedoms requires a multi-layered institutional infrastructure for legal decision-making, such as a hierarchy of courts and public authorities, which facilitates the incorporation of human rights into the domestic law, but also safeguards the due process rights40. The NGOs are co-operating the government to incorporate human rights laws into the domestic laws. Moreover, there is no legitimate defense for the suspension of human rights on the grounds of national security, military necessity, or states of emergency. At most, rights protections can be suspended in cases of ultimate necessity, but these suspensions of rights must be justified before legislatures and courts of law, and they must be temporary41.


40 Halliday and Schmidt, Human Rights Brought Home.

It is the duty of the government to ensure legal aid for the marginalized and vulnerable section of the society. But it is impossible for the government alone. In all spheres of development, NGOs are reported to have created a landmark in the history of Bangladesh. Because the NGOs in Bangladesh have been actively working to protect and uphold human rights, particularly the rights of women and children for several years. They are very active in creating awareness among the policy-makers and actors working among the general masses. They assist the government to reform laws to eliminate social, legal and political discrimination on the basis of gender, class, ethnicity, race and religion. They carry out advocacy at different levels i.e., local, national and international through awareness building, lobbying and mass communication. Actually all NGOs have an advocacy elements and most of them exist for that purpose to protect human rights. NGOs fight to create or influence standards and how those standards are implemented or enforced\textsuperscript{42}. At a time, the NGOs were totally dependent, at the time, upon the willingness of governmental delegations to sponsor one or another of their ideas\textsuperscript{43}. But now they work as unofficial advisers to the various delegations by supplying them essential ideas and suggestions. Many NGOs provide legal aid to the poor and victims, particularly to women, workers and children in the forms of counseling, mediation and litigation; and some other work for protecting human rights by providing basic needs to the backward sections of the society. However, awareness facilitated by the NGOs about rights and responsibilities is the key means to protect rights and establish justice.


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The Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, § Article 27 (n.d.).


Appendix

Table No. 1
Table No. 2
Table No. 3