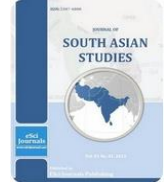




Available Online at ESci Journals

Journal of South Asian Studies

ISSN: 2307-4000 (Online), 2308-7846 (Print)
<http://www.escijournals.net/JSAS>



DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION: IS IT A NOVEL TECHNIQUE TO ENSURE VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN BANGLADESH?

^aMd. Shahriar Islam*, ^bRifat Mahmud

^aDepartment of Public Administration, University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

^bDepartment of Public Administration, University of Barisal, Kornokathi, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

ABSTRACT

The quality of governance is recognized as one of the central factors affecting development prospects in developing countries like Bangladesh. Citizens' voice and government accountability ('CV&A') are important dimensions of governance. Citizens' capacity to express and exercise their views effectively has the potential to influence the government including a stronger demand for responsiveness, transparency and accountability. Many formal and informal attempts have already been tested by both GOs and NGOs over the last one and half decades to ensure people's voice and government's accountability. At the same time Bangladesh has witnessed an elevated rate of diverse development efforts both from public and private/Community Based/Non-Government Organizations (NGO) in last twenty years or so. That is why it is seen that organizations have been concentrating on 'Development Communication' to secure voice of the people and to hold the government accountable. The objective of the paper is to portray the current condition of voice and accountability in Bangladesh and how development communication is playing its part in facilitating good governance by raising voice of people and holding government accountable. Through such analysis this paper tries to answer the question as to what extent we can call Development Communication a novel technique of ensuring people's voice and government accountability in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Bangladesh, Development Communication, NGO, People's Participation, Public Accountability, Voice and Accountability.

INTRODUCTION

Good governance is recognized as one of the central factors affecting development prospects in developing countries like Bangladesh (Monem, 2002; Khan, 2003). Good governance has now become a process that is more inclusive, democratic and participatory than in the past with the state no longer the sole actor in making decisions and delivering services (Azmat & Coghill, 2005). Thus citizens' voice and government accountability ('CV&A') are important dimensions of good governance (ODI, 2009). To achieve the objectives of good governance it is necessary to hold the government accountable for its actions along with the people's voice. But, traditional mechanisms, i.e. representative parliamentary system, used to ensure government's accountability in Bangladesh have not

seemed to work properly (IGS, 2008). In many ways, Bangladesh is reflection of mal-governance, where the central government has failed to ensure better governance involving the crisis in public administration, including the agencies of law enforcement (Sobhan, 2010). Corruption is pervasive in public institutions. Such as according to a survey carried out by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) 2010, nearly 72% respondents were forced to pay bribe in public institutions. Lots of pilferage and larceny as well as responsibility lapses and negligence of official duties are prevalent (Zafarullah & Siddiquee, 2001). Government's efforts to ensure people's voice in decisions and to answer for actions have been very much bleak ones (World Bank, 2002). In such scenario the rise and frequent engagement of NGOs and civil society organizations needs to be analyzed as an alternative mechanism of ensuring government's accountability and people's participation by raising their

* Corresponding Author:

Email: shahislam04@yahoo.com

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voice in different forums. Usually NGOs and civil society organizations (such as Transparency International Bangladeshⁱ and Shujan – Shushanar Janniya Nagorikⁱⁱ, BRAC NGOⁱⁱⁱ) assist in implementing public policies by involving the people in different phases of the implementation process. Civil society as a pressure group in a state puts much emphasis on the need to bring the popular voice into decision-making by opening up channels while intervening through development programs (Al-Amin, 2008). They try to follow the participatory approach to deliver the services to the citizen and they also do the advocacy function which includes the meetings with government authorities where people's demand are reflected very often (Gauri & Galef, 2005). It is widely acknowledged that citizens as well as state institutions have a role to play in delivering governance that works for the poor and enhances democracy by ensuring the reflection of people's demand in policy cycle (ODI, 2008). Thus in this paper, we put some analysis in search for an alternative or novel technique to build a better governance system through ensuring government's accountability and people's voice in every spheres that affect their life and progress. The objective of the paper is to portray the current condition of voice and accountability in Bangladesh and how development communication is playing its part in facilitating good governance by raising voice of people and holding government accountable. Through such analysis this paper tries to answer the question as to what extent we can call Development Communication a novel technique of ensuring people's voice and government accountability in Bangladesh. This article has reviewed available and relevant literatures on development communication, good governance, voice and accountability and NGOs role in Bangladesh. Literature review is the methodology used for this article.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Development Communication: One of the important tools that can enhance or flourish the chances of success of development projects carried out by various NGOs and development agencies is the strategic communication. Development Communication is the process of intervening in a systematic or strategic manner with either media (print, radio, telephone, video and the internet), or education (training, literacy, schooling) for the purposes of positive social change (McPhail, 2009). Development communication is a

primary, but as yet underutilized, instrument to facilitate good governance in an effective manner (Hass, Mazzei & O'Leary, 2007). In recent years good governance has been a major theme of discussion in various forums of both developed and developing countries (Khan & Islam, 2014). In such milieu, openness of government has been considered as a major pillar of good governance. In the ideal of open government, there is a synergistic relationship between transparency and participation: transparency ensures that the public gets access to information about the government and participation provides the public with access to that same government (Meijer, Curtin & Hillebrandt, 2012). Enhancing development communication strengthens the foundations for good governance by promoting more open government, increased accountability and the active engagement of people through NGOs (World Bank, 2005). Development communication can offer both a theoretical foundation and methodological approaches to support the necessary social and institutional transformations (Hass, Mazzei & O'Leary, 2002).

When the promises of the modernization paradigm failed to materialize, and its methods came increasingly under fire, and the dependency theorists failed to provide a successful alternative model, a different approach focusing on people's participation began to emerge (Mefalopoulos, 2008). It stresses the importance of cultural identity of local communities and of democratization and participation at all levels—international, national, local and individual. The participatory approach starts from the bottom-up and establishes open forms of communication based on trust in order to mobilize and organize participants based on common goals for change (Butner, 2003). It is possible to envision a world where communication networks and participatory approaches to development can help to close gap between the haves and have-nots so that most of all the world's citizens can benefit from products of human development (Butner, 2003).

The proponents of social marketing theory, a communication tool for development, were Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman initiated in the 1970s. Kotler and Andreason define social marketing as "differing from other areas of marketing only with respect to the objectives of the marketer and his or her organization. Social marketing seeks to influence social behaviors not to benefit the marketer, but to benefit the target audience and the general society". Among various

reasons, the emergence of social marketing responded to two main developments: the political climate in the late 1960s that put pressure on various disciplines to attend to social issues, and the emergence of nonprofit organizations that found marketing to be a useful tool (Elliott, 1991). Social marketing involves putting into practice standard techniques in commercial marketing to promote pro-social behavior. Social marketing's focus on behavior change, understanding of communication as persuasion ("transmission of information"), and top-down approach to instrument change suggested an affinity with modernization and diffusion of innovation theories (Waisbord, 2001).

Voice and Accountability: Citizen's voice and accountability are critical elements of good governance and ensuring transparency and effectiveness in public service delivery and it is widely acknowledged that citizens as well as state institutions have a role to play in delivering governance that works for the poor and enhances democracy. Governance is a multifaceted concept with wide ramifications (Khan, 2002).

"Voice" may be defined as the ability to communicate views, ideas, needs and priorities and demand actions, rights and entitlements of those in state power involved in policy formulation and implementation. Voice refers to the capacity to express views and interests and to the exercise of this capacity (Hudson, O'Neil & Foresti, 2007). Voice refers to the capacity to express views and interests and to the exercise of this capacity. For the purposes of this project, voice is about poor people expressing their views and interests in an effort to influence government priorities and governance processes (O'Neill, Foresti & Hudson, 2007). Goetz and Gaventa (2001) see voice as a variety of mechanisms – formal and informal – through which people express their preferences, opinions and views. It can include complaint, organized protest, lobbying and participation in decision making, product delivery or policy implementation. The focus of "voice" is not on the creation for its own sake but on the capacity to access information, scrutinizes and demand answers with a view to influencing governance processes (ODI, 2007). Whereas, accountability is the means by which individuals and organizations report to a recognized authority and are held responsible for their actions (Edwards & Hulme, 1996). It's the capacity to call officials to account for their actions. It does not only refer to government institutions but also the private

sector, however the public officials must be more accountable as they are directly involved in giving public services to the people. Making service providers and public agencies more accountable and responsive to citizens can promote democratic governance as well (Brown, Hughes & Midgley, 2008). Government's accountability, for this paper, we conceptualize as the accountability central government and the public institutions those deliver service to the people. Hence, accountability can be of two forms, horizontal and vertical (Stone, 1995). Checks and balances internal to a state are considered as horizontal accountability where state institutions are designed and to oversee and sanction other state institution. Vertical accountability is embodied in mechanisms used by citizens and other non-state actors to hold their representatives to account such as through voting. Effective accountability has two components, "answerability" and "consequences", if we can ensure the requirement to respond periodically to questions concerning of an official's action and have a predictable and meaningful consequences then accountability can be ensured (Goetz & Jenkins, 2005). Accountability is of three types; i) political (accountability of the government, civil servants and politicians to the public and to legislative bodies like parliament), ii) administrative (accountability which refers to making the civil servants answerable for their actions and inactions) & iii) legislative (accountability of the MPs, ministers including the prime ministers answerability to the parliament for their deeds) (O'Neil, Foresti et al., 2007; Bovens, 2007). Laver and Shepsle (1999) see accountability of government in a parliamentary democracy as the process in which people hold the government account through their representatives in parliament and the MPs are made accountable to the people through election. It is actually an indirect process through which people raise their voice and hold government accountable. Accountability not only brings the institutions like parliament into the framework but also it indicates that social relations are another way of holding government's account. Thus, Romzek & Dubnick (1998); Pollitt (2003) see accountability as a social relationship in which an actor feels an obligation to explain and to justify his conduct to some significant other. This indicates that people can hold government accountable both through formal and informal ways. Goetz and Jenkins (2005) also define social accountability as the more informal role of non-

state agents checking governments' powers via the media, vocal civil society organizations and popular protest. Societal accountability is expressed through associations lobbying governments, demanding explanations and threatening government with less formal sanctions, like negative publicity. It means people can ask answers from the government by their representatives in parliament and also by using other social interactive channels. Social accountability actually brings the NGOs into the discussion in which we search for alternative and novel ways of raising people's voice and holding government accountable.

STATE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN BANGLADESH: PEOPLE'S VOICE REMAIN UNHEARD AND GOVERNMENT GOES UNACCOUNTABLE

The democracy in Bangladesh is very much fragile which is reflected in the confrontational political culture among the political parties/alliances after the restoration of democracy, where the situation should have been the other way round thus the governance in Bangladesh is in a vulnerable condition (Khan & Islam, 2014). Citizens' capacity to express and exercise their views effectively has the potential to influence government priorities and processes, including a stronger demand for responsiveness, transparency and accountability (ODI, 2011). Now Bangladesh is marked by low levels of democratic participation by citizens. The political culture is characterized by a tight control over electoral processes, extensive use of security services by the executive branch, administration remains heavily centralized, and the government in power dominates both the executive and the legislature. This has resulted in weak governmental capacity at both national and local levels in terms of state responsiveness towards citizens. Such as, despite huge resistance and protest from all quarters of the country the government has continued to construct 1320 MW coal fired power plant in *Rampal, Sundarban*, where there is huge possibility that there would be environmental hazards which would endanger the biggest mangrove forest in the world. Although the government has firmly said that there would be no real significant hazards. However the experts have shown and identified various environmental problems however the government paid no heed, although there is need of power plant in order to solve electricity crisis in the country. During the last regime (2001-2006) there was news all-over the media, both print and electronic, that there was parallel government run from so called

"HawaBhaban"^{iv} and citizens were all aware of the fact, but the incumbent government did not initiate any major steps to stop corruption which took place due to that "Bhaban" and the result was reflected in the 2008 national election where the four party alliance were overwhelmingly rejected by the voters. This shows that our political alliances have always talked about democracy where the citizens hold the supreme power but the voices of the citizens have not been translated into policy formulation thus there has always been gap and lack of communication between the citizens and government resulting in lesser degree of economic growth.

The centralized nature of the administration leaves little room for effective local governance. Local elections are increasingly taking place but the elected local bodies have limited power, such as in the recent amendment in the Upazila parishad Act, Upazila-one of the tiers of the rural local government of Bangladesh, the body itself was not empowered rather the holder of the position, Chairman, has been empowered. There is no real decentralization, mere form of deconcentration is there, i.e. administrative in nature and the capacity of local governments to act responsively to needs in their local communities is often jeopardized by insufficient political and fiscal decentralization. Voice and accountability mechanisms are needed not only at the point of service delivery, but for tracing resource flows from the central to the local level. This would augment the development process as the needs of the rural people would be communicated along with the policy implementers to carry out their duties through proper allocation of resources thus development communication would be channelized (Azaad & Crother, 2012).

It is very important that both ministers and civil servants must be answerable for their actions; they must explain or justify what they do and why they do it. However it's important to note that if there is political accountability, as the electorates must be accountable to the citizens for all their actions, bureaucratic accountability is possible which would help to take into account the needs of the citizens' voices and to enhance the development process. In Bangladesh both political and public officials are not accountable and decision-making process is not transparent (Khan, 2007; Uddin, 2010). The parliamentary government has been far away from satisfactory (Ara&Khan, 2006). The legislature through a number of mechanisms such as

various committees, Article 76 of the constitution, keeps watch over the activities of the executive. When the Bangladesh Awami League (BAL) led Grand Alliance came to power in 2009 they immediately took some ground-breaking decisions such formulation of the parliamentary committees in the first session of the parliament in order to ensure both political and bureaucratic accountability (Zafarullah&Akhter, 2001; Ahmed, 2012). However one of the problems in our system of committees is that the committees can only recommend and they have no enforcing power of their decisions, such as the parliamentary Committee on public undertakings summoned ex-Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) chief HasanMashhudChowdhury but he refused to come before the committee thus executive accountability is not ensured by the legislature in practice. Therefore the member of parliaments (MPs'), who play an important role in the development of their constituencies, cannot directly make the executives, involved in the implementation of the public policies, to make them answerable of their actions. It is very important that the citizens' voices are ventilated. The current government has taken various initiatives to make sure that public offices are accountable for their duty such as the strengthening the Citizen Charter (CC) initiative, which was first initiated by the same government as a part of NPM action in 2000, as recommended by the Public Administration Reform Commission (PARC) (Khan, 2013a). On the other hand one of the important means of practicing accountability is to declare the annual personal assets and income/expenses by all members of parliament members, which were also, included in the election manifesto of the incumbent government however no body of the ruling party did so, only except for the finance minister. To make governments accountable, parliaments need public accounts and audit committees, powers to require disclosure of government documents, and the capacity to implement credible sanctions. Current government, like the previous one, did nothing significant in these areas (Rahman, 2007). Thus the much cherished development keeping in mind of the needs of the citizens is not taking place which has also been reflected in the economic growth which should have reached to 7%, now 6.32%.

Development communication can be an important mechanism for channeling the various development programs through participatory approach at the upazila

(one of the administrative tier of local government in Bangladesh) and union (lowest administrative tier of local government in Bangladesh) level administrations through efficient and effective distribution of resources and service provisions. This can only take place if the voices of the unheard and left outs are taken in considerations and both the civil administration and political people are made to answer and justify their actions. The key source of accountability practices and listening to citizens' voices comes from the patriotism and democratic culture- not from the dictatorial environment. And these democratic norms and values are to carry out by the political leaders as in any democracy it's the politically elected leaders can only make way for a developed nation.

USE OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION IN BANGLADESH: A LEAP TOWARDS ENSURING VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

As voice and accountability are two core elements of good governance and through responding to individuals' needs relevant to their circumstances along with the decisions being transparent and the service provider and public officials being answerable for their actions, development communication can assist in bringing about a positive social and economic growth in the country. The theory and practice of public administration is increasingly concerned with placing the citizen at the centre of policymakers' considerations, not just as target, but also as agent (Holmes, 2011). For development communication to be an important means for raising voice and ensuring government's accountability NGOs need to be more prone to participative in their activities. Such participative mode has already been seen in the activities of NGOs in Bangladesh since the beginning of the new Millennium. Traditionally the government, i.e. the government is involved in providing goods and services and the scope is increasing in leaps and bounds. The government has to carry out wide and variety of services, where as development agencies such as NGOs represents general public interests providing the social power of its networks of people where their ideas, information, services and expertise are used to press forward the interests of people by seeking to influence the state and the market (Haque, 2004). In recent years, Bangladesh has observed that the commitment of both NGOs and government remains same with both having the

common interest of achieving good democratic governance and development (Porter and Kilbay, 1996). Bessette (2006) defined development communication as a "planned and systematic application of communication resources, channels, approaches and strategies to support the goals of socio-economic, political and cultural development". In last three decades NGOs and other non-government development agencies vastly widened their activities and functions in areas like micro-credit, formal and informal education, training, health and nutrition, family planning and welfare, agriculture, water supply, sanitation, human rights and advocacy and legal aid (Blair, 2005; Biswas, 2010). This is why the people stay nearer to these organizations which always rely on development communication. Through such practices these organizations have been able to ensure participation of the people and accountability of the concerned government agents in Bangladesh. For example we need to mention Management of Aquatic Ecosystems through Community Husbandry (MACH), Nishorgo Forest Protected Area Project, Souhardo project and Hygiene Sanitation and Water Supply Project. These projects and interventions have ensured people's participation in different stages of the implementation and thus people could raise their voice and also could hold the concerned officials and government agents accountable for their action (Islam, 2013). Zohir (2004) notes that NGO in Bangladesh has been one of the key actors in ensuring people's participation in decision making process.

As NGOs are more close to people than any other sector they play a key role in engaging people in bringing about a positive social change in developing countries like Bangladesh. There is hardly any aspect in socio-economic life in Bangladesh where NGOs are not present (Iftekhazzaman, 2012). Tanner (2007) notes that NGOs and different development agencies with their knowledge and expertise can include the people, who are hard to reach by the government within the framework of service outcome, however this is where the NGOs intervene in raising the voice of the unheard. This is actually what Bangladesh is now experiencing as people prefer to take part in forums organized by NGOs rather than participating in national elections (Gauri & Galef, 2005).

One of the important means of ensuring efficient and effective public service delivery is through Citizens Charters at the local level. This is an important public

accountability intervention engaging public officials and service providers to promote transparency and accountability and raising the voice of the local people and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) is enhancing the effort and incorporating the development communication process. TIB Undertakes public awareness and communication campaign among the people at large about the Citizens Charters at suitable location in the presence of stakeholders, local administration and local people so that the mass people can raise their voice about their needs (Iftekhazzaman, 2012). TIB takes on the responsibility to track if necessary services are being provided as promised through citizen charter. This is done by observing the activities of the organization, people's views about the services are collected and a monitoring report is prepared for sharing it with the concerned public authorities. It's an effective tool for ensuring both social and public accountability by engaging all stakeholders, especially building a bridge between service providers and recipients in a participatory process and bolstering the development communication process, an effective means of ensuring public and social accountability and raising the voice of the local people in Bangladesh. NGOs have been successful to develop the communities in different areas of Bangladesh. Such success has been facilitated by the practice of advocacy through development communication. Statistics shows that NGO interventions on a range of health and nutritional indicators are striking. Cure rates averaged 85% in the tuberculosis program. Malnutrition rate dropped by about 20% among the poor due to the presence of NGOs in the community. In terms of education about 1.5 million children, approximately 8% of primary enrollment, are in schools run by NGOs, most in non-formal primary schools for which the NGO sectors is best known (Mahmud, 2012). Safa (2006) also pointed out that NGO has been successful in engaging people in social; forestry program.

The media (radio, TV, newspapers, internet etc.) plays an important role in promoting development communication and have unique role have a unique and role to play both in enhancing governance and accountability and in giving voice to poor and marginalized communities. NGOs in Bangladesh have been playing the pioneer role in formulating the civil society. Thus, media is quite keen to facilitate the activities of NGOs in recent years. (Buckley, Duer,

Mendel & Siochrú, 2008). Democracy requires the active participation of citizens (Bevir, 2010). It can improve governance by raising citizen awareness of social issues, enabling citizens to hold their governments to account and curbing corruption to bring about a social change which the process of development communication aims at. Media can provide a critical check on government misuse of power or incompetence, and enable citizens to demand good governance. Rahman (2006) importantly pointed out that NGOs in Bangladesh has shifted their focus to service delivery rather than improving the political participation of people. But it is important to note that, NGOs are making people aware of their voice and holding government accountable for the service they deliver to them. It means, NGOs are helping people to take part in the decision making process through different stages of social service delivery (Begum, Zaman & Khan, 2004; Gauri & Galef, 2005). However, recently the Election Commission of Bangladesh has signed a MOU with different NGOs for facilitating the voter registration process. It clearly shows that NGOs are further fostering the participation of people in political process. It really shows that strength of NGOs advocacy and communication while doing development projects (Election Commission, 2014).

Media in Bangladesh plays vital role in supporting public accountability and in raising voice of the people. 'Sanglap' is a Bangla word meaning 'Dialogue' and forms the title of a series of 'Question Time' style programmes launched with DFID funding by the BBC World Service Trust in 2005. The BBC Bangladesh Sanglap brings Bangladeshi politicians and other senior figures together in public where they can be questioned by citizens. Earlier Sanglaps were generally held in Dhaka and other cities, recent programmes have been organized in rural locations. This has allowed some of the most isolated/marginalized and impoverished communities to challenge politicians and debate issues affecting their needs. Recent research results found that 86% of the audience felt that the programme improved political dialogue in Bangladesh, 89% felt it explained issues in ways that people could understand, 91% believed provided an opportunity to raise the voice of the people, and 86% felt the programme established a good standard for political discussion on radio and TV (DFID, May, 2008).

What BBC Bangladesh Sanglap initiated is the application of mixture of both modernization and

diffusion theory. The programme was launched by DFID (UK government department) along with the support of BBC (British public service broadcaster) and aims to encourage greater public accountability from government and authority figures is just another means of imperialism, i.e. maintenance and continuation of the West's various development theories and good governance initiatives. As the third world countries want to bring about a social change but are slow to adopt their indigenous means the developed countries materialize these opportunities to put into effect their development practices and BBC Bangladesh Sanglap is just another of their development means to ensure accountability and raising the voice of the people in indigenous form to promote democracy and governance. This has become an important means to make the voices heard of the local people.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The world is changing everyday with people being much aware of their needs which are to be met; however the third world countries are still grasped with corruption, lack of transparency and accountability with no real participation from the part of the common people in decision making process (Heady, 2001). In Bangladesh there is huge gap between those involved in decision making/implementing and those who are the recipients of those decisions due to lack of involvement (Khan and Islam, 2014; Khan and Islam, 2013). This has become one of the main obstacles for development in Bangladesh as the actual needs of the people remain unfulfilled. Three (3) importantcore values for ensuring development involve- poverty alleviation, participation and empowerment. 24.5% of the population in Bangladesh lives below poverty line (Bangladesh Economic Review, 2013). Most policies are taken in Bangladesh without the benefit of citizens' involvement, to the detriment of communities (IGS, 2012; Rahman, 2005) showing that there is no real participation and empowerment as the common citizens do not have much control over the social, economical and political forces as a means of bringing a positive change in the society.

The NGOs in Bangladesh started its activities after the independence mainly to combat poverty and environmental problems, however after forty-three years of independence, 31.5% people lives below poverty level (Bangladesh Economic Review, 2013), even with the presence of some of the biggest NGOs in the world such as BRAC and Grameen Bank have raised

questions involving the viability of a regulatory framework developed when the size and scope of the NGOs was far more limited, the appropriate political and commercial spaces for NGO activities, trade-offs between NGO sustainability and pro-poor orientation, and the implications of different government-NGO partnerships (Haque, 2004; Hashemi, 2013). There have been allegations that while NGO intervention has helped significantly facilitated uplift of the poor, it is only a relatively much lesser portion of the resources that reach the real target group (TIB Report)^v. There has been little systematic review of the public policy implications of the changing character of NGOs in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh NGO sector and individual organizations within it stand out by virtue of their scale. There are an estimated 2302 (NGO Affairs Bureau of Bangladesh)^{vi} development NGOs operating in Bangladesh, and a small group of them are among the largest such organizations in the world. These big NGOs-- BRAC, ASA, and Proshika-- have nationwide programmes, with tens of thousands of employees and multimillion-dollar budgets. Most NGOs in Bangladesh are small, however, and have limited managerial and staff capacity. Relations of accountability between the main actors-- poor users of services, policymakers, and service providers-- ultimately determine the quality of services. This is where the NGOs have failed to ensure governance in their operations. Such as BRAC's swelling economic clout and increasing monopolization of Bangladesh's development sector is causing concern in some ranks. There are accusations that BRAC is acting like a parallel state, but one that is accountable to no one.^{vii} In theory, service users can influence public service quality through their political influence over policymakers, and NGOs can help by amplifying the voices of poor users through advocacy activities. However, when donors fund NGOs to provide services directly, this may weaken mechanisms of accountability between policymakers and service providers. The micro-credit program have brought benefits to the borrowing households, these have not been large enough to have had a significant impact on community level employment creation and growth, which is reflected in the Bangladesh's per capita income, which is only \$1,190 (Bangladesh Bureau Statistics)^{viii}. The strong emphasis on financial sustainability, vital to the sector's success, has led to controversy about purportedly the high interest rates. The comparative under-regulation of the

micro-credit sector also poses clear risks. As the time progressed, hundreds of NGOs are working in Bangladesh for years together with more resources and expanded network, yet the reduction of poverty is not visible. Rather poverty is increasing day by day while in the name of helping poor people the number of millionaire is increasing every year.

Despite such problems from the earlier discussions we have found that, NGOs and other development agencies which often try to communicate with the target group/people leading the polity of Bangladesh towards a better condition in terms of voice and accountability. Having analyzed both pros and cons of NGO functions in Bangladesh we argue that development communication can certainly however bring about a change in the lives of the common people. A bottom-up approach is needed obtained by the NGOs where the people from the grass-root level are able to raise their voice to their local representatives and field level officers. Field level officers are important player because they are the agents of government and do the task of policy implementation (Khan, 2013a, 2013b). As the government may not be able to reach to the most remote areas in Bangladesh, with the help of various non-government organizations (NGOs) they would be able to reach to the most marginalized people and their concerns and needs would be channeled. The rural population is now getting the opportunity to raise their voice in accommodating their needs to the policy makers. The media through their objectivity in presenting news tries to ensure that the government gets a better understanding of the various administrative issues which they carry out and about the service delivery provided and helps the government agency to rectify their action and ensure accountability towards the citizens. Despite having some critique development organizations is quite capable to promote public awareness and. Such awareness is contributing to ensure voice and accountability. This implies that dysfunctional system of ensuring voice and accountability in Bangladesh has paved the way for some new techniques. Analysis shows that lack of institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh has not made the formal and traditional ways of ensuring voice and accountability effective and efficient. In such condition people have tried to fetch some alternative path to participate and check the government for its activities. Thus we see the practice of development communication has enabled the people to put their

demands in right platforms and consequently to some extent government is being accountable to them (people). It means development communication is emerging as a novel technique of ensuring voice and accountability in Bangladesh.

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ⁱ Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) is an independent, non-government, non-partisan and non-profit organization with a vision of Bangladesh in which government, politics, business, civil society and the daily lives of the people shall be free from corruption. Retrieved from <http://www.ti-bangladesh.org/beta3/index.php/en/>

ⁱⁱ Shujan - Shushanar Janniya Nagorik - made its debut in 2002 as an initiative of a group of concerned citizens of Bangladesh with the purpose of promoting democracy, decentralization, electoral reforms, clean politics and accountable governance. Retrieved from <http://shujan.org/about-shujan-2/>

ⁱⁱⁱ BRAC, an international development organization based in Bangladesh, involved in empowering people and communities in situations of poverty, illiteracy, disease and social injustice. Retrieved from <http://www.brac.net/content/brac-bangladesh>

^{iv} Hawa Bhaban (also rendered as *Hawa Bhavan*, *Hawa Bhawan*) is the political office of the chairperson of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, and monitors party affairs on the chair's behalf. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawa_Bhaban

^v Retrieved from <http://www.ti-bangladesh.org/research/ExecSum-NGO-English.pdf>

^{vi} Retrieved from http://www.ngoab.gov.bd/Files/NGO_LIST.pdf

^{vii} Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2008/feb/20/internationalaidanddevelopment.bangladesh>

^{viii} Retrieved from http://www.bbs.gov.bd/WebTestApplication/userfiles/Image/National%20Reports/GDP_2013-14.pdf

