

Regulatory Framework for NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Pakistan and SAARC Countries

A Research Paper produced by the 'Research & Publications Department' ICMA Pakistan

Preamble

NGOs which are a distinctive sector within the civil society, have now become a potent global force and a powerful player in global politics in view of their deep rooted access to the poor people at the grass-root level. The NGOs have become important actors in the world affairs and influence public policy at the UN Specialized Agencies, World Bank and other international fora. They now exert influence on policies and programs of the government in view of their expertise, capacity building and networking capabilities. The development NGOs, especially, have been engaged in almost all areas of social life e.g. humanitarian aid, relief work, human rights, women rights, education, health, environment, poverty alleviation, unemployment etc.

In this Research paper, we have examined the role and functions of NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), their historical evolution and legal and regulatory framework under which the NGOs are registered and operated, with special focus on the laws and regulations that have been framed or are in the process of enactment in Pakistan and SAARC countries to keep vigilance on foreign funded NGOs. This Paper is broadly classified under the following heads:

- a) Role of NGOs in Socio-Economic Development
- b) History of NGOs in Pakistan
- c) Registration of NGOs in Pakistan
- d) Certification of NGOs in Pakistan
- e) Analysis of Income and Sources of Funding of Pakistani Certified NGOs
- f) Recent Legislations in Pakistan and other Countries to monitor activities and utilization of foreign funds by the NGOs
- g) Draft Foreign Contributions Act, 2014
- h) A Look at Role and Legislation of NGOs in SAARC Countries (Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka)

- i) Suggestions for Government-NGO Partnership in SAARC Countries to achieve socio-economic development

Definition of NGOs – A non-state and non-business identity

The Non-Governmental Organizations, commonly termed as "NGOs" includes a diverse types of non-state, non-political and voluntary organizations such as civil society organizations; private voluntary organizations; aid agencies; development and policy advocacy organizations. The NGOs have their own independent identity and operate without any commercial or profit-making motive; focusing mainly toward humanitarian issues, especially social issues like

Types and Classification of NGOs

There may be different types of NGO, depending upon the nature of their activity such as:

Charitable NGOs – that provides charities to the poor segment of the society and fulfill their needs related to food, medicines, clothing, housing etc. Such NGOs also undertake relief work at the time of national calamities e.g. floods, earthquakes etc.

Service-delivery NGOs – that are involved in provision of services related to education, health, environment, water and sanitation, family planning, etc for the general public, implemented through their participation. They extend technical support to local NGOs.

Community based NGOs (CBNGOs) – that are formed through community initiatives such as educational or religious forums, village level clubs, sports clubs, women rights organizations etc. They operate at grass-root level and focus on welfare activities.

City-wide Organizations – such a Rotary Club, Gymkhana, Lions Club, Associations, etc.

National NGOs – they are formed to support the local NGOs such as Red Cross, YMCAs and other professional organizations.

International NGOs – Such NGOs provide funding to local NGOs and to implement projects related to development activities. They are normally large multi-national bodies with offices in many countries and having large development budgets at their disposal.

Supporting NGOs – These organizations extends financial and technical support to the intermediary NGOs and CBNGOs so as to make them efficient and effective.

human rights, women's rights; relief services etc. Though they may be associated with developmental projects initiated by governments, but they cannot be the representative of the government.

NGOs are neither part of government sector or any inter-government agency; nor they have any kind of influence from them. Sometimes, NGOs in view of their independence from government and business sectors, are also referred to as "third sector". The mandate of the NGOs are normally based on the needs of the people to whom it is serving and the interests of its funding agents which may be any foreign donor agency or government.

There is no generally accepted definition of an 'NGO'; however there are some fundamental features which defines the term of NGO in different jurisdictions and circumstances.

The **World Bank** defines NGOs as "private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering; promote the interests of the poor; protect the environment; provide basic social services or undertake community development".

The International NGOs / NPOs are required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Economic Affairs Division to get recognized legal status to start activities in Pakistan.

The **United Nations** defines NGOs as a "not-for-profit, voluntary citizen's group, which is organized on a local, national, or international level to address issues in support of public good".

Historical Evolution of NGOs

The history of NGOs dates back to 1775 when the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery was founded. However, the first international NGO called the "British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BF-ASS) was considered to be established in 1839 with commitment to worldwide abolishment of slavery. This Society continues till present with the name of Anti-Slavery International. Later, International Red Cross and Caritas were established in 1863 and 1897, respectively. The World Alliance of YMCAs was also founded in 1855.

After the two World Wars, there had been a marked growth in number of NGOs all over the globe, mainly engaged in relief work, poverty alleviation and other social areas. According to a study, after the second world war, around 90 international NGOs were formed annually as compared to only 10 per year in the 1890s. Out of them, majority could not survive.

In 1910, 137 international groups gathered at first World Congress of International Associations in Brussels (Belgium) to form a body called the "Union of International Associations (UIA)". Later in January 1920, a 'League of

Nations' was established after intensive lobbying by the Union of International Associations. In 1945, United Nations was created and under Article 71 of Chapter 10 of the UN Charter, the term NGO was coined and recognized to distinguish private organizations from Inter-governmental organizations (IGOs).

Under the Article 71, an Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was also created to maintain consultations with the NGOs. At present, there are over 3200 NGOs in consultative status with the UNESCO. This consultative relationship has enabled the NGOs to represent public opinion at the UN Council. UNESCO also granted associate status to UIA which maintains UNESCO's database of NGO.

Role of NGOs in Socio-Economic Development

NGOs role in shaping government policies and leading social movements

The international NGOs are playing a crucial role in shaping government policies in both the developed and developing countries by way of forming pressure groups or providing technical input to policy makers. By maintaining their political neutrality and organizational independence, they collaborate with the governments to take up common national projects related to social and humanitarian issues. They also involve maximum public participation to lead social movements on specific humanitarian or social issues such as environmental protection, climate change, poverty alleviation, child abuse and women rights. In present day world, the NGOs have also demonstrated a vital role in 'global social development' which has helped in many achievements in human development sector, which is measured by the UN Human Development Index (HDI). They are very much active in raising concerns about environmental, social and economic challenges and suggesting possible solutions to these challenges on a global level.

NGOs role in Sustainable Community Development

The international NGOs have been playing an important role in promoting sustainable community development through activities related to capacity building, micro-finance and self-reliance. In view of increased access to poor and remote society and their mobilizing and networking capabilities, the NGOs are comparatively in a better position than the government agencies to initiate and implement social projects more efficiently, thereby achieving sustainable development. These NGOs are also helpful in increasing local economic diversity and developing local markets and production capabilities, thereby resulting in self-reliance. The NGOs also assist in developing social, capital and human resources through public participation and motivation.

NGOs contribution to the Society and Social Development

The NGOs have been contributing immensely towards the social and sustainable development in the developing countries through mobilization of local peoples and resources to support projects that are intended to improve the quality of life of ordinary people and uplift of the society as a whole. Most of the NGOs focus their activities towards rural development and poverty alleviation by initiating various micro-finance programs for the betterment of the common people. By this way, the NGOs also enhance their own effectiveness in influencing national policy making and government mind-sets towards social, political, cultural and economic issues. In the international context, the NGOs also raise awareness about global issues like human rights, women rights, environment, climate change, deforestation, loss of bio-diversity and global warming.

NGOs role in creating national awareness on social issues

The development NGOs in Pakistan have played a significant role in advocating the concerns of the civil society aimed at social and economic betterment of the country. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the NGOs in Pakistan have been successful in creating awareness of issues like human rights, women empowerment, freedom of speech, child abuse, environment, family planning and gender issues etc. They have helped change the national perceptions and policy making of the government with regard to sustainable development.

NGOs role as bridge between People and Government

The NGOs have demonstrated over the last two decades that they can play the important role of a catalyst or an agent between the people and the governments to achieve common goals of bringing social change and economic progress. On one hand, they muster the participation of the people for implementation of national projects and on the other, they cooperate with the government by extending them technical support to initiate projects for the welfare of general masses. The NGOs, therefore, act as a spokesperson for the poor to advocate their cause and concerns at the government level through effective lobbying. The Governments also realize and accept the NGOs' role as a bridge between the government and general public, and partners with them in extending social services to citizens and promoting social development. Similarly, the NGOs has also a vital role in facilitating communication between the government and people. They apprise the government about people's concerns and thinking, and at the same time inform the people about the government's planning and implementation of welfare projects.

History of NGOs in Pakistan

At the time of independence of Pakistan in 1947, there existed only a few registered NGOs or Civil Services Organizations (CSO), and few others were formed after independence which initially concentrated their activities on refugee rehabilitation. Most of these NGOs were founded by educated women family members of the then government and political leadership such as:

- o In 1947, Quaid-e-Azam founded 'Pakistan Girls Guide Organization' for the development of girls and young women and nominated Fatima Jinnah as its Patron.
- o In 1947, the Pakistan Red Cross Society was founded which later in 1948 became a member of the International League of Red Cross Societies.
- o In 1948, a "Women's Volunteer Service (WVS)" was established by begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan to help in rehabilitation of refugees migrating from India to Pakistan.
- o In 1948, begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan also founded 'All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) to initiate long term programs related to women empowerment in the society.
- o In 1948, 'Pakistan Cottage Industry Association' was formed to help poor craftsmen and artisans to earn a

Of late, the governments in different countries like Russia, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan and others are now adopting the national policy and enacting legislations to regulate the NGOs and to keep check over their foreign funding and monitor their activities.

living. Rana Liaquat Craftsman Colony was also established in Karachi.

- o In 1949, Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan founded the "Pakistan Women's National Guard (PWNG) and Pakistan Women's Naval Reserves (PWNR) for women empowerment.
- o In 1949, Jamshed Nusra vanji Metha, the then President of Karachi Municipality initiated the 'Karachi Social Work Group' to undertake social activities in Karachi.
- o In 1951, Mr. Abdul Sattar Edhi laid the foundation of "Edhi Trust" which has now grown to be become the largest social welfare organization in Pakistan.
- o In 1953, 'Pakistan Family Planning Association' was founded by Begum Jehan Ara Shahnawaz which headed the family planning movement in Pakistan.
- o In 1954, Mrs. Mumtaz Umer Karamat founded the 'Family Welfare Cooperative Society of Lahore for

improving the lives of under-privileged women and children. Similarly, Begum Khurshid S.A. Hafiz Aziz founded 'Women's Refugees Rehabilitation Society' at Karachi.

- o In 1954, a 'Karachi Business and Professional Women's Club (BPC) was established under supervision of begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan to provide platform for professional women.
- o In 1958, a 'National Council of Social Welfare' was founded by the government to provide funding and coordinate the activities of social welfare organizations. This Council later became an advisory body under Director General of Social Welfare.
- o In 1961, a 'Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies (Registration and Control) Ordinance was promulgated to keep vigil on the activities of NGOs working in the country. In the same year, a "Family Laws Ordinance, 1961 was also promulgated for women empowerment.
- o In 1967, 'Behbud Foundation' was established which worked in the areas of education, health, community development and family planning.
- o In 1970, 'SOS Children's Village of Pakistan' was founded with the cooperation of SOS Kinderdorf International with aim to provide education, skills and security to orphans.
- o During 1975 to 1980, a number of women's organizations were formed such as Shirkatgah, Aurat, Women's Front and Pakistan Women's Lawyer Association.
- o In 1980, 'Ansar Burney Trust' was founded in Karachi by Mr. Ansar Burney, advocate by profession, to take up inhuman treatment to prisoners and other human rights issues.
- o In 1982, "Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER)' was established to mobilize workers through educational and social programs and advocate their cause.
- o In 1986, the 'Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) was established as a result of the International Declaration of Human Rights and other Charters.
- o In 2001, the "Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP) was established to promote philanthropy in Pakistan.

This is just a glimpse of the growth of voluntary NGOs and civil society organizations since the independence of the country. The government, from time to time, also played its part by starting different programs related to social and economic benefit of the people such as a 'National Rural Support Program (NRSP) was founded in 1991 and a 'Social Action Program (SAP) was launched in 1992 to improve social service delivery through funding to NGOs and CSOs. In 1997, a "Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) was established to help poor masses through micro-credit finance. Similarly, a good number of international NGOs are also operating in Pakistan such as Action Aid, World Vision,

Save the Children, Oxfam, USAID, British Council, CARE and others.

Registration of NGOs in Pakistan

The local NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) may register themselves in Pakistan under different Acts and Ordinances, some of which were enacted by the British colonial regime. The types of organizations that can be formed under these registration rules and regulations are:

- i. Societies can be formed under 'The Societies Registration Act (XXI), 1860'
2. Public Charitable trusts under 'The Trust Act, 1882'
3. Charitable endowment trusts under 'The Charitable Endowment Act, 1890'
4. Cooperative Societies under 'The Cooperative Societies Act, 1925'
5. Social Welfare Agencies under 'The Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies (Registration and Control) Ordinance, 1961
6. Non-Profit Companies under Section 42 of the 'Companies Ordinance, 1984'

If any NGO is registered under Section 42 of Companies Ordinance, 1984, it can operate at the national level whereas if it is registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 or Trust Act, 1882 or Cooperative Societies Act, 1925, it can operate within the boundaries of a Province, but can expand to other provinces with the prior permission of the concerned authority of provinces.

The International NGOs / NPOs are required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Economic Affairs Division to get recognized legal status to start activities in Pakistan. Such INGOs need not to be registered again under any of the above registration laws.

Certification of NGOs in Pakistan

The Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP) was authorized by the government in 2003 as the first NPO Certification Agency through issue of a notification vide SRO 1116(1)/2003 dated December 18, 2003. All grant of tax exemptions to NPOs and civil society organizations were statutorily linked with evaluation and certification by PCP (or another certification agency). The Income Tax Rules 2002 were accordingly amended to authorize PCP as the certification agency.

**Government of Pakistan
Revenue Division
Central Board of Revenue**

Islamabad, December 18, 2003

**NOTIFICATION
(Income Tax)**

S.R.O. 1116(I)/2003. - In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (g) of sub-rule (2) of rule 211 and sub-clause (vi) of clause (b) of sub-rule (1) of rule 220A of Income Tax Rules, 2002, the Central Board of Revenue is pleased to approve Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (a non-profit company registered at Islamabad under section 42 of the Companies Ordinance, 1984 (XLVII of 1984)) to act as a Certification Agency for the purposes of rules 211, 212, 213, 214 and 220A of the Income Tax Rules, 2002, with immediate effect and until further orders.

[C. No. 4(2)IT-Jud/02-Pt]

VAKIL AHMAD KHAN
Member (Direct Taxes)/
Additional Secretary

The Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy was established in August 2001 as an independent non-profit support organization, licensed under Section 42 of the Companies Ordinance, 1984, with a mission to promote volume and effectiveness of philanthropy for social development in Pakistan. In fact, a proposal was made to set up a permanent institutional vehicle to promote philanthropy for social investment, at a Conference on Indigenous Philanthropy held in 2000 in Islamabad. This idea led to establishment of PCP. The Board of Directors of PCP comprises of an experienced and committed group of eminent citizens, civil society representatives and corporate leaders.

The objectives of PCP Certification for NGOs / NPOs are to strengthen the civil society sector; bridge the information and credibility gap between the grant makers and grant seekers and to help professionalize grant making. The Certification process comprises of 80 evaluation parameters in three different categories i.e. Internal Governance (26 parameters), Financial Management (25 parameters) and Programme Delivery (29 parameters).

The mandatory certification by PCP brings benefits to both the government as well as to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). At one hand it helps government in identifying credible partners in development; linking certified NPOs with donor agencies; and promoting culture of good governance, transparency and accountability in the country. On the other, it helps the NGOs and CSOs by enhancing their credibility and value; improving their financial and governance structures and ensuring tax benefits from the government. The donor agencies like USAID, CIDA, AusAID and UNDP gives special consideration to PCP-certified NGOs/ NPOs for grant allocation.

Analysis of Income and Sources of Funding of Pakistani Certified NGOs

There is a general misconception that majority of the NGOs and civil society organizations in Pakistan are dependent on foreign funding which is not the case. The Research Department of ICMA Pakistan has analyzed (see below table) the data of 180 Certified Civil Society Organizations (including NGOs) compiled by the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP) in shape of Directory titled 'Gateway to Giving'. These 180 CSOs have been certified by PCP as of 28th September 2010. The Directory contains the brief profiles of these 180 CSOs and also their Income and sources of funding. ICMA Pakistan's analysis of these 180 CSOs /NGOs has brought to light following facts:

- a) The total income of 39 certified CSOs in Sindh Province was around Rs. 5.42 billion in 2009, out of which only 8.64% (Rs. 468 million) was foreign grants and donations.
- b) Around 78 certified CSOs of Punjab province generated a total income of around Rs. 9.62 billion in 2009. The share of foreign funding in this income was only 23.11 percent.
- c) The share of international grants and donations have

been received by the NGOs working in the Balochistan province which is gauged from the fact that the ten certified NGOs generated 91.25 percent of their income from international donor agencies during 2009.

- d) In Azad Jammu & Kashmir as well, the international donors have extended grants and assistance to the six certified NGOs which constitutes around 84.81 percent of their income in 2009. The total foreign funds received by these 6 NGOs were 52.32 million.
- e) A good number of certified NGOs are located in Islamabad which, perhaps with better coordination with international donor agencies based at the capital city, have been able to obtain foreign funds of Rs. 801 million, constituting around 42.81 percent of their total income in 2009.
- f) Fifteen NGOs working in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa received foreign grants of Rs. 388 million in 2009 which comes to around 13 percent of their total income generated during 2009.

S #	Province	No. of PCP Certified CSOs	Total Income (2009)	Share of Foreign Fund (2009)	%age of Foreign Funds in Total Income (2009)
1	Sindh	39	5,419,991,961	468,518,575	8.64%
2	Punjab	78	9,620,901,975	2,223,462,748	23.11%
3	Baluchistan	10	748,570,175	683,145,113	91.25%
4	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	15	3,008,733,393	388,700,338	12.91%
5	Islamabad	32	1,871,953,818	801,387,419	42.81%
6	Azad Jammu & Kashmir	06	61,679,156	52,315,746	84.81%
Total		180	19,538,655,178	4,617,529,939	23.63%

Recent Legislations in Pakistan and other Countries to monitor activities and utilization of foreign funds by NGOs

Majority of the NGOs operate as grass-root organizations and not representing any international donor agency, however they may receive funding from abroad for the local projects. Since such small NGOs face financial constraints, they also raise their finance through various national sources as well such as voluntary and private sources, donor agencies etc. Even other NGOs like CARE International and Oxfam also depend on government contributions for their funding requirements. It is a fact that the largest international NGOs have at their disposal aid budgets that exceed the national budget of many developing countries. For instance, the Amnesty International, a global movement for protecting human rights, based in London, has more than three million members or supporters with presence in over 150 countries of the world.

As far as Pakistan is concerned, a number of international donor agencies like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Union and the United National Children's Fund provide funding to the Government with conditions to engage the NGOs and private sector in delivering the social services, especially in the areas of education and health.

Of late, the governments in different countries like Russia, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan and others are

now adopting the national policy and enacting legislations to regulate the NGOs and to keep check over their foreign funding and monitor their activities.

(a) Recent Legislations in Pakistan

Like in other countries, there is also a general perception in Pakistani society as well as in the government that there are some unregistered NGOs which, instead of working for national cause, may be serving foreign interests by receiving foreign donations from other countries. Keeping this in mind, the government has recently taken initiatives to keep a check on all such NGO by introducing legislation and to promote NGO culture in Pakistan. In February 2012, Senator Tariq Azeem of the Pakistan Muslim League, introduced a draft bill namely "Foreign Contributions Regulation Act (FCRA)" with a view to allow the government to deny permission to any NGO which is found to be using the foreign funding for 'undesirable purposes'.

On 21st November 2013, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet, headed by the Federal Minister for Finance Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, approved a draft policy framework for regulating NGOs and other organizations receiving foreign contributions; streamlining activities of NGOs and bringing transparency in their working. Accordingly, in the absence of a policy framework, the Economic Affairs Division was restrained from signing any new MoUs with international NGOs, especially those with on-going operations and whose MoU were about to expire. The salient features of the draft policy framework are given below:

- o MOUs with International NGOs will be signed for a period of up to five years.
- o NGOs shall make full disclosure of their activities, operational areas, sources and utilization of funds to the government under the signed MoU.
- o NGOs shall obtain prior concurrence of the government for any additional funding or different source of funding other than that specified in the signed MoU.
- o Government will allow and encourage philanthropic activities by international NGOs in case of any calamity for which prior approval of government would be required.
- o NGOs shall maintain local accounts for their operational activities and shall also seek permission of the State Bank of Pakistan to open and operate foreign currency accounts.
- o NGOs shall be allowed to raise funds locally after getting prior approval from government. Such local funds shall be exempt from income tax, subject to the provisions of Clause (58) of Part I of the second Schedule to the Income Tax Ordinance 2001.
- o NGOs shall provide their complete information, as and when required by the government and utilize money, goods and services from foreign sources for its specified activities.
- o NGOs shall appoint a country representative or a senior personnel to implement projects; supervise staff and maintain contact with the government.
- o NGOs shall employ foreign nationals, not exceeding 10 per cent of total staff positions, and give preference to Pakistani nationals for key positions.
- o NGOs shall not employ expatriates who are in the country on any other visa and obtain prior permission from government for visits to prohibited areas by expatriate personnel.
- o NGOs shall ensure compliance of local laws and regulations as well as religious and cultural norms by its expatriate staff. NGOs shall also ensure payment of all kinds of taxes by its Pakistani staff, in addition to submission of written reports covering their activities.

The Cost Accountants, qualified from the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan should also be allowed to carry out special audit of the accounts of International NGOs. For this purpose, Clause 16 (a) of draft Foreign Contributions Act, 2014 may be amended. They may also be allowed to conduct cost audit of projects initiated by the international NGOs.

- o NGOs shall carry out annual audit of their accounts by chartered accountants registered in Pakistan and shall not transfer, rent or lease out its possessions or allow their use for purposes other than those specified in the signed MoU.
- o NGOs shall provide to the government on annual basis an independent or third party evaluation of its work and not indulge in distribution of any material or pamphlets causing, or likely to cause, religious resentment in the area of its activities.

The draft policy framework allows the government to cancel registration of any NGO and terminate the signed MoU in case its activities are found to be detrimental to national interests and also in case of non-adherence to any provision of the MoU. The NGO would, however, be given an opportunity of being heard before cancellation of its registration.

Draft Foreign Contributions Act, 2014

The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) has finalized the final draft of Foreign Contributions Act 2014, which is expected to be debated at the Parliament for consideration

and after its approval it will be presented to the Federal Cabinet for final approval. This draft law provides for mandatory registration of all international NGOs with the Economic Affairs Division and registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) of those local NGOs which intend to use foreign donations for welfare activities in Pakistan. In fact, the draft bills aims to streamline full disclosure of foreign funds received for welfare activities in Pakistan and shall be applicable to all Pakistanis outside Pakistan and persons within Pakistan and international NGOs working in Pakistan. The draft bill gives the authority to the government to make inspection of accounts and records of the NGOs on any suspicion; cancel the certificate and award one year jail sentence in case the NGO is involved in concealment of foreign contributions.

Now let's have a look at various aspects of the proposed draft Foreign Contributions Act, 2014:

Specified Purposes for Use of Foreign Contributions

The draft Foreign Contributions Act, 2014 defines a 'foreign contribution' as a 'donation of aid, in cash or in kind, received through any mode, whether directly or indirectly, from any foreign source in any currency, for specified purposes listed in Schedule 1, which, inter alia, includes the areas of (1) education, (2) health, (3) women, (4) children, (5) poverty alleviation, (6) relief work, (7) rural development, (8) welfare, (9) culture and (10) sports.

Registration of International NGO

Prior registration with the Federal Government would be mandatory for an International NGO desirous of utilizing foreign contribution within Pakistan. The application for registration shall have to be vetted by the Ministry of Interior, Provincial and/ or local government and other relevant stakeholders. The existing INGO already utilizing foreign funds shall, however, be required to get registered within a period of four months from the date on which this Act comes into force. An MoU shall also have to be signed by the INGO which shall be valid for upto five years from the date of signature. The government would be entitled to cancel or terminate the MoU in case of any violation of any provision of the signed MoU. Under the said Act, the government will be maintaining a 'register' of all such INGO registered under this Act.

Maintenance and Audit of Accounts of International NGO

Under Clause 5 of the proposed Act, an INGO shall have to declare to the Federal government details of all foreign contribution and bank accounts maintained by it. Further, the INGO shall also have to maintain accounts under internationally recognized accounting standards and get the same audited on annual basis by a Chartered Accountant, registered in Pakistan or abroad. Clause 13 (2) further mentions that where the foreign contribution is equivalent to Rs. 10 million or above, such audit shall be conducted by a firm of Chartered Accountant registered in Pakistan.

The Act requires submission of a copy of the audited annual accounts to the Federal government along with the certificate from the Auditors, certifying that foreign contributions were utilized for the purposes and in the locations specified in the signed Memorandum of Understanding.

Special Audit of Accounts of INGO

Under Clause 16 of the proposed Act, the Federal government or the SECP may order a special audit of the accounts of an INGO or person through a firm of Chartered Accountant.

Amendment required in Foreign Contributions Act, 2014 to allow the Cost Accountants to conduct Special Audit of Accounts of International NGOs

The Cost Accountants, qualified from the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan should also be allowed to carry out special audit of the accounts of INGO. For this purpose, Clause 16 (a) of draft Foreign Contributions Act, 2014 may be amended as follows:

16. The Federal Government or the Commission as the case may be, may: -

(a) For reasons to be recorded, order a special audit of the accounts of an INGO or person through a firm of Chartered Accountants within the meaning of the Chartered Accountants Ordinance, 1961 (X of 1961), or a firm of Cost and Management Accountants within the meaning of the Cost and Management Accountants Act, 1966 (XIV of 1966)

Addition of a new Clause in Foreign Contributions Act, 2014 to allow the Cost Accountants to conduct Cost Audit of projects initiated by International NGOs

A new sub-clause (3) in Clause 5 'Accounts and Audit' may be inserted as follows:

(3) An INGO registered under this Act shall conduct audit of cost accounts on annual basis through a firm of Cost and Management Accountants within the meaning of Cost and Management Accountants Act, 1966 (XIV of 1966). A copy of the said cost audit report shall be submitted to the Federal Government by the Cost Auditor as per relevant laws and rules.

(b) Recent Legislations in Other Countries

Let's have a brief look at the different legislative initiatives taken by few countries during the year 2012-2013 to impose policy restrictions on foreign-funded NGOs:

Egypt — The laws proposed by ministries in Egypt calls for creating a "Coordination Committee" to take decisions with regard to foreign funding with powers to either prevent international NGOs from operating in Egypt or to prevent them from accepting foreign funds. However, after removal of Morsi from the government in July 2013, the said law stands deferred.

Russia — A law was enacted in November 2012 which recognized all those NGOs conducting political activities and

receiving foreign fund to register as 'foreign agents'. Under this law, the Russian government, from March 2013, started inspecting records of over 2000 NGOs, including Amnesty International, HR Watch etc. to search for foreign agents. In October 2012, USAID was expelled from Russian with accusation of meddling in politics.

Sudan — From May 2013 onwards, all NGOs operating in Sudan are required to get prior approval from the 'Humanitarian Affairs Commission' for all foreign-funded projects and activities. The policy make only those NGOs eligible for approval grant, which are involved in 'humanitarian services such as relief work, construction of wells for drinking water.

Bangladesh — The NGO Affairs Bureau of Bangladesh issued a draft Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Act in January 2012 requiring all NGOs seeking foreign funding to get prior government approval by registering with the Bureau.

The SAARC countries should engage and develop long-term partnerships with NGOs and CSOs in setting up SMEs and cottage industries at the micro and grass-root level in order to meet the challenges of poverty alleviation and unemployment which has reached alarming proportions in these countries

India — The Indian Government had introduced a Foreign Contributions Regulations Act in 2010 to control the foreign donations received by NGOs. In December 2012, the Indian Home Affairs Minister stated that the government would revisit this Act to plug loopholes to control any kind of abuse by foreign intelligence agencies. In March 2013, the government cancelled registration of over 4000 NGOs after scrutiny by the Reserve Bank of India and the Enforcement Directorate.

Azerbaijan — The Parliament passed a number of amendments in several bills restricting NGOs to register donations with the Ministry of Justice of Azerbaijan and NGOs violating financial reporting requirement would be subject to fine and penalty.

Turkmenistan — A Presidential decree was issued in January 2013 whereby a new State Commission has been established with authority to approve and supervise all foreign-funded projects of NGOs. Twelve government ministries and state agencies are involved in issuing approval of projects of donors and beneficiaries.

British Virgin Islands — A new law was enacted in November 2012 whereby NGOs having more than five employees were required to appoint an 'Anti-Money Laundering Reporting officer to report any suspicious activity. Further, as per the law, any person operating

unregistered NGO would be subject to fine of US\$ 50,000 and / or upto three year imprisonment.

Malaysia — In October 2012, the Malaysian Parliament proposed a law requiring all the NGOs to declare their funds, whether local or foreign, to the Registrar of Societies, which oversees all registered organizations in Malaysia. In December 2012, the Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry announced that it would enact special laws to monitor NGOs.

A Look at NGOs' Role and Legislation in SAARC Countries

Bangladeshi NGO 'BRAC' tops the list of 100 global NGOs

The Top 100 NGOs 2013 Directory, published by 'Global Journal' places the Bangladeshi NGO 'BRAC' at first rank in the list of 100 NGOs around the world. Table-1 shows the complete list of top 100 Global NGOs, which include six Indian and two Bangladeshi NGOs from SAARC countries.

BRAC started its operation in 1972 as 'Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee' (renamed as 'Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee' in 1973). In 2001, it established 'BRAC University' and launched 'BRAC Bank Ltd'. BRAC started development works in Afghanistan in 2002 and in Tanzania and Uganda in 2006. With annual expenditure of US\$ 583 million and total disbursements of US\$ 11 billion (as of September 2013), BRAC has now become one of the top international NGOs, involved in wide range of activities such as microfinance, agriculture and food security, education, legal aid, climate change, maternal and child health, welfare work etc.

BRAC was registered in Pakistan as an NGO in 2007 and since then it has been actively involved in activities related to microfinance, health, community-based education and livelihood enhancement and protection institutional development in rural areas.

BANGLADESH

History of NGOs

In 1970, a devastating cyclone hit Bangladesh which led to emergence of many self-help NGOs to provide relief and rehabilitation services to the people. After independence in 1971, a good number of local as well as international NGOs started their operations for the reconstruction and development of war-affected economy. Since then, there has been mushroom growth in number of NGOs in Bangladesh, especially to cope up with consistent natural disasters, so much so that the World Bank in one of its reports published in 1995, termed Bangladesh as a 'land of NGOs.'

In 1972, BRAC (formerly Bangladesh Rural Advancement

Table-1 Top 100 Global NGOs 2013

Ranking	Name of International NGO's	Country	Sector of activity	Ranking	Name of International NGO's	Country	Sector of activity
1.	BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee)	Bangladesh	Development	51.	Search For Common Ground	United States	Peace Building
2.	Wikimedia Foundation	United States	Education	52.	WITNESS	United States	Human Rights
3.	Acumen Fund	United States	Development	53.	Friends of the Earth Middle East	Jordan	Environment
4.	Danish Refugee Council	Denmark	Humanitarian	54.	Cambia	Australia	Technology
5.	Partners in Health	United States	Health	55.	Common Ground	United States	Shelter
6.	Ceres	United States	Environment	56.	Viva Rio	Brazil	Peace Building
7.	CARE International	Switzerland	Humanitarian	57.	International Crisis Group	Belgium	Peace Building
8.	Médecins Sans Frontières	Switzerland	Humanitarian	58.	Habitat For Humanity	United States	Shelter
9.	Cure Violence	United States	Peace Building	59.	KickStart International	United States	Development
10.	Mercy Corps	United States	Development	60.	ZOA	Netherlands	Humanitarian
11.	APOPO	Tanzania	Humanitarian	61.	Friends- International	Cambodia	Children and Youth
12.	Root Capital	United States	Development	62.	Architecture For Humanity	United States	Shelter
13.	Handicap International	France	Humanitarian	63.	Concern	United Kingdom	Humanitarian
14.	IRC (International Rescue Committee)	United States	Humanitarian	64.	Center For Digital Inclusion	Brazil	Education
15.	Barefoot College	India	Development	65.	American Refugee Committee	United States	Humanitarian
16.	Landesa	United States	Human Rights	66.	ICTJ (International Center for Transitional Justice)	United States	Law and Justice
17.	Ashoka	United States	Development	67.	Interpeace	Switzerland	Peace Building
18.	One Acre Fund	Kenya	Development	68.	Geneva Call	Switzerland	Peace Building
19.	CHAI (Clinton Health Access Initiative)	United States	Health	69.	Rainforest Alliance	United States	Environment
20.	Heifer International	United States	Development	70.	Fawe (Forum for African Women Educationalists)	Kenya	Education
21.	Human Rights Watch	United States	Human Rights	71.	Code For America	United States	Technology
22.	Rare	United States	Environment	72.	Child & Youth Finance	Netherlands	Children and Youth
23.	Akshaya Patra Foundation	India	Children and Youth	73.	Asylum Access	United States	Human Rights
24.	Gram Vikas	India	Development	74.	YCAB Foundation	Indonesia	Children and Youth
25.	Digital Divide Data	Cambodia	Development	75.	Planet Read	India	Education
26.	Room To Read	United States	Education	76.	Dhaka Ahsania Mission	Bangladesh	Development
27.	Amnesty International	United Kingdom	Human Rights	77.	ICJ (International Commission of Jurists)	Switzerland	Law and Justice
28.	AMREF	Kenya	Health	78.	World Vision International	United Kingdom	Development
29.	Pratham	India	Education	79.	Movember Foundation	Australia	Health
30.	iDE	United States	Development	80.	PlaNet Finance	France	Development
31.	Riders for Health	United Kingdom	Health	81.	Free The Children	Canada	Children and Youth
32.	MERLIN	United Kingdom	Health	82.	Terre Des Hommes International	Switzerland	Children and Youth
33.	Fonkoze	Haiti	Development	83.	Trial	Switzerland	Law and Justice
34.	Helen Keller International	United Kingdom	Health	84.	International Bridges To Justice	Switzerland	Law and Justice
35.	Water for People	United States	Environment	85.	Skateistan	Afghanistan	Children and Youth
36.	Aflatoun	Netherlands	Children and Youth	86.	International Alert	United Kingdom	Peace Building
37.	Frontline SMS	Kenya	Technology	87.	Libera	Italy	Peace Building
38.	Marie Stopes International	United Kingdom	Health	88.	Krousar Thmey Cambodia	Cambodia	Education
39.	IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Federation)	United Kingdom	Health	89.	Greenpeace International	Netherlands	Environment
40.	Save the Children International	United Kingdom	Children and Youth	90.	Global Footprint Network	United States	Environment
41.	PLAN International	United Kingdom	Children and Youth	91.	Luz Portátil Brasil	Brazil	Development
42.	Tostan	Senegal	Education	92.	INJAZ Al-Arab	Jordan	Education
43.	Fred Hollows Foundation	Australia	Health	93.	CIVICUS	South Africa	Human Rights
44.	Transparency International	Germany	Law and Justice	94.	Generations For Peace	Jordan	Peace Building
45.	Saúde Criança	Brazil	Health	95.	Send A Cow Uganda	Uganda	Development
46.	Escuela Nueva	Colombia	Education	96.	Project WET Foundation	United States	Environment
47.	Open Society Foundations	United States	Development	97.	Instituto Da Criança	Brazil	Children and Youth
48.	Operation ASHA	India	Health	98.	Diplo Foundation	Malta	Education
49.	International Medical Corps	United States	Health	99.	Born Free Foundation	United Kingdom	Environment
50.	GAIN (Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition)	Switzerland	Health	100.	Akilah Institute For Women	Rwanda	Education

Committee) was formed for providing relief and rehabilitation services for refugees migrating from India.

In 1974, the international NGOs formed a combined platform by the name of "Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) to undertake development programs.

In 1983, the Grameen Bank was gazetted by the government as a specialized financial institution, though it has built its reputation worldwide as an NGO.

In 1990, the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) was established to provide one-stop service to all such NGO which operate with foreign funding and registered under the "Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Ordinance, 1978. NGOAB operates under the Prime Minister's Office as a regulatory body of the NGOs with the status of a government department and keeps record. As of 31st

March 2014, there are 2302 NGOs registered with the NGOAB.

All NGOs and CSOs are required to submit their activity reports, future plan along with audited financial reports to NGOAB every year, failing which the government is authorized to cancel registration or suspend activities of any NGO/CSO.

Legislations for NGO's Registration

In Bangladesh, the NGOs may register themselves under any of the following Acts and Rules:

1. Societies Registration Act, 1860
2. Trust Act, 1882
3. Companies Act, 1913 (amended in 1994)
4. Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies Ordinance, 1961

5. Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulations Rules, 1978
6. Microfinance Regulatory Law, 2006

It is mandatory for all the Societies to get registered with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies under the Ministry of Commerce. All Trusts are to be registered with the Registrar of Trusts.

The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, Ministry of Commerce is the registration authority for registration of non-profit companies under the Companies Act Of 1913. Similarly, the Director of the Department of Social Services (DOSS) under the Ministry of Social Welfare is the registration authority for registration of voluntary social welfare agencies and organizations.

All NGOs involved in micro-credit operations are required to get registered with the Micro-finance Regulatory Authority (MRA).

The Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Rules were promulgated in 1978 to keep check and control over the foreign donations and funds to NGOs, which was followed by another legislation in 1982 i.e. the Foreign Contributions (Regulation) Ordinance. The Bangladeshi government is now considering a proposal to amend the Foreign Donations (VA) Regulation Rules 1978 by integrating the 1982 Foreign Contributions Ordinance.

INDIA

History of NGOs

At the end of 19th Century during the British regime, nationalist movements started emerging in India which led to the formation of few voluntary organizations like the Friend-in-Need Society in 1858; Prathana Samaj in 1864; Satya Shodhan Samaj in 1873; Arya Samaj in 1875; National Council for Women in India in 1875 and Indian National Conference in 1887. In 1905, a secular NGO 'Servants of India' was established. Later, the Swadeshi movement' led by Mahatma Gandhi shifted the focus of development activities to economic self-sufficiency. In 1953, a Central Social Welfare Board was established to promote welfare activities in the social sector through the support of NGOs. In 1958, the Association for Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development (AVARD) was set up which was a consortium of major voluntary agencies.

During 1970s, there was a phenomenal growth in number of registered NGOs in India. The government, realizing the important role of NGOs, appointed in 2000 the Planning Commission of India as the nodal agency for NGO-State interactions. In 1986, the Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) was established to promote and assist voluntary activities to implement different rural development programs. Later, CAPART was decentralized with involvement of NGOs. The Indian Government later established institutions like Khadi and Village Industries Cooperatives, Central Social Welfare

Board, National Wasteland Development Board, etc for meeting funding requirement of the NGOs.

The 6th Five Year Plan (1980-1985) identified new areas of activity where NGOs were engaged to undertake development work. The next Five Year Plans included more participatory role for the NGOs as main actors to implement development projects under Public-Private partnership basis. The Watershed development program of the government resulted in formation of more NGOs which focused on rural development. In May 2007, the Government approved a national policy on Voluntary sector to initiate new working relationship with NGOs and voluntary organizations.

Legislations for NGO's Registration

In India, the NGOs may register themselves under any of the following Acts and Rules:

1. Societies Registration Act, 1860
2. Section 2(15) of Income Tax Act, 1961
3. Section 25 of Indian Companies Act, 1956
4. Articles 19(1)(c) and 30 of Constitution of India
5. Public Trusts Act, 1976
6. Public Trust Acts of various Indian States
7. Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976
8. Maharashtra Value Added

It is mandatory for all the Societies to get registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 which is a federal Act and applicable on whole of Indian territory.

In the context of SAARC region, there is need for the governments to create a consortium of NGOs with whom they can establish sustained partnerships and collaborations to implement development and people welfare programs in the region.

All kinds of trusts are to be registered under the respective Indian State's Act. However, if any State do have trust Act, the general principles of the Indian Trusts Act of 1882 shall be applicable.

Section 25 companies are required to be registered under Section 25 of the Indian Companies Act, 1956 which envisages formation of companies to 'promote commerce, art, science, religion, charity or any other useful object' with condition that the profit or income of that company shall have to utilized only for the company itself and no dividends is to be paid to its members.

In some cases, in addition to registration, NGOs also need to get special permission or licence from the government to undertake some activities such as work in restricted area for which a permit is to be obtained from the Ministry of

Home Affairs or by relevant local authority. Similarly, for opening an office or employing staff, the NGO need to get registered under the 'Shop and Establishment Act'.

An international NGO seeking to appoint foreign staff for its office in India, is required to register itself as a trust or society or a company and get an NOC from the Ministry of External Affairs and permission from the Reserve Bank of India.

SRI LANKA

History of NGOs

Sri Lanka remained in the grip of civil war due to Tamil conflict during 1970s. The NGO movement started in 1970s and later the number of NGOs rose considerably. In 1997, a Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA) was formed to coordinate work of NGOs in Sri Lanka. In 2000, peace organizations working in the country formed a common platform of 'Peace Support Group' and later a 'National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (NPC) was also established. A substantial increase in NGOs with inflow of foreign assistance, was witnessed soon after the Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster in 2004 in which around 400,000 Sri Lankans were killed.

In 1980, a 'Voluntary Social Services Organizations (Registration & Supervision) Act was promulgated by the government with the objective of monitoring the activities of NGOs. Later in 1996, a 'National Secretariat for the Registration of NGOs was established, initially under the Ministry of Health, Highways and Social Services and presently it is functioning under the Ministry of Defence, Public Security and Law and Order. The purpose of National Secretariat was to coordinate and monitor the activities of NGO sector. Despite opposition, it amended the VSSO Act in 1998 through enactment of a 'Voluntary Social Services Organizations (Registration & Supervision) (Amendment) Act for greater supervision of NGOs.

Legislations for NGO's Registration

In Sri Lanka, the NGOs may register themselves under any of the following Acts and Rules:

1. Trust Ordinance No. 17 of 1917 (for Trusts)
2. Voluntary Social Service Organizations [Registration and Supervision] Act No. 31 of 1980
3. Voluntary Social Service Organizations [Registration and Supervision] [Amendment] Act No. 8 of 1998
4. Voluntary Social Service Organizations Regulations No. 1 of 1999
5. Inland Revenue Act No. 38 of 2000 (for charity organizations)
6. Inland Revenue Act No. 4 of 1963 (for approved Charities)
7. Inland Revenue Act No. 28 of 1979 (for approved Charities)
8. Mutual Provident Societies Act No. 55 of 1949
9. Companies Act No. 7 of 2007 (for Non-profit organizations)
10. Regulations issued under the Act published in extraordinary gazette dated 15/10/1999
11. Circular Letter of the Secretary to the President dated 26 February 1999.

Under the Voluntary Social Service Organizations Act No. 31 of 1980, all organizations receiving government grants or requiring visas for foreign staff, are required to register themselves. Under the Companies Act No. 7 of 2007, both local and international NGOs can get themselves registered with the Registrar of Companies.

Under the Voluntary Social Services Organizations Amendment Act No. 8 of 1998 an Interim Board of Management is to be appointed to administer the affairs of any NGO which is found to be involved in any fraud or misappropriation of funds. The VSSO Regulations of 1999 laid down the procedure for board of inquiry and required that all NGOs should maintain records of financial accounts, membership, office-holders and minutes of meetings.

The President Circular issued in February 1999 required all the NGOs to re-register with the National NGO Secretariat and also declare their fund sources, annual expenditure and budgets.

Suggestions for Government - NGO Partnership in SAARC Countries for achieving Socio- economic development

- 1) Socio-economic development in the SAARC countries can be possible through combined efforts of the governments and civil society organizations. It is a fact that governments in almost all the SAARC countries are facing resource constraints to undertake social welfare programs for the people. Though the NGOs and Civil Society organizations are also supplementing the efforts of the Governments in this regard, but this role need to be expanded in order to respond effectively to the growing needs of the population.
- 2) The SAARC countries should extend support the NGOs and CSOs to improve the social conditions of the people so as to bring it at par with other regions of the world. It is a reality that SAARC as a region is far below in per capital income and growth as well as in social and human development indicators. A large population in these countries even lack the basic needs like education, health and access to clean water and food security issues.
- 3) The SAARC countries should engage and develop long-term partnerships with NGOs and CSOs in setting up SMEs and cottage industries at the micro and grass-root level in order to meet the challenges of poverty alleviation and unemployment which has reached alarming proportions in these countries. Unless these two main issues are not taken seriously, the socio-

economic conditions and the overall standard of living of the people in the region would not improve.

- 4) The governments in SAARC countries should take the NGOs and CSOs on board while formulating policies and social development programs for the general public. It is a fact the because of their deeper outreach with the poor population, the NGOs are more familiar with their needs and are in a better position to advise government about the local priorities. They can also act as catalyst in ensuring local participation on behalf of government to achieve social and economic goals.
- 5) The SAARC Governments must take initiatives to put in place a sound system of transparency, accountability and good governance in the NGOs and CSOs to gain credibility and to attract international funds for development projects in their respective countries. Certainly, all inflows of foreign assistance and funds should be with prior approval of the governments.
- 6) The Universities and professional institutions in SAARC countries should offer specialization in the management of Non-Profit Organizations so that the NGO sector could be strengthened by providing qualified professionals and managers to run these organizations effectively. It is a fact that jobs in corporate sector is saturating and professionals can seek employment opportunities in civil society organizations to help them build capabilities in support areas like good governance, HR, financial management, cost management, resource mobilization, etc.

Conclusion

The key role played by NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in both the developed and developing countries cannot be overemphasized. In the context of SAARC region, there is need for the governments to create a consortium of NGOs with whom they can establish sustained partnerships and collaborations to implement development and people welfare programs.

As a key facilitator in development process, the NGOs can supplement the governments' agenda to improve the lives and social conditions of people and eradicate poverty and unemployment from the society. They should be engaged by the SAARC government in developing poverty reduction programs. The NGOs and CSOs can also play a mediatory role in forging partnerships and creating synergy among the government, private sector and civil society in order to develop and implement projects, leading to economic growth and development.

The SAARC governments may also engage NGOs in tackling market-related issues, having impact on the common people, such as hoarding of goods, undue increase in prices of essential commodities by sellers, sale of fake and illegal products, etc. They may also be helpful in providing

vocational trainings to industrial skilled and unskilled workers so that they can contribute towards economic growth.

At the same time, it is also important that the NGOs and Civil Society organizations must ensure high standards of good governance, transparency and accountability to improve their credibility in the eyes of the government and private sector so as to build long term partnerships. They should also comply with the rules and regulations framed by the SAARC governments intended for registration, certification and financial reporting by NGOs. These legislations should, therefore, not be construed by NGOs as any kind of hindrance in their activities. The government must also ensure a level playing field for the NGOs so that they can partner with them to achieve social and economic advancement and improve the standard of living of the people in the region.

NGOs should comply with the rules and regulations framed by the SAARC governments intended for registration, certification and financial reporting by NGOs. These legislations should, not be construed by NGOs as any kind of hindrance in their activities. The government must also ensure a level playing field for the NGOs.

References

- 1) Overview of Civil Society Organizations in Pakistan - published by the NGO and Civil Society Centre of Asian Development Bank (ADB) in May 2009.
- 2) Civil Society Brief on Sri Lanka - published by the Asian Development Bank in 2013.
- 3) Civil Society Brief on India - published by the Asian Development Bank in 2009.
- 4) The Directory of 'Top 100 NGOs 2013' - published by the Global Journal in 2013.
- 5) 'Gateway to Giving' - A profile of 181 certified Civil Society Organizations, 2010 edition published by the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy.
- 6) State of Civil Society 2013 - Creating an enabling environment published by CIVICUS in 2013.
- 7) Global Trends in NGO Law - A quarterly review of NGO legal trends around the world published by the Swedish International Development Cooperation, SIDA in 2013.
- 8) Non-Profit Sector in Pakistan - Historical Background- published in 2004 by the Social Policy Development Centre (SDPC) in collaboration with the Agha Khan Foundation and Centre for Civil Society Studies, John Hopkins University, USA .
- 9) Draft Foreign Contributions Act, 2014 issued by the government of Pakistan
- 10) The Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Ordinance, 1978 of Bangladesh.
- 11) Sri Lanka Statement of Recommended Practice for Not-for-Profit Organizations.