Chapter-IV

Disaster Management: Role of Non-Governmental Organisations
In their broadest connotation, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are simply agencies or groups, which are different from government bodies. The term NGO first appeared in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) Resolution 285(X), 27 February 1950, which stated, “any international organization which is not established by inter-governmental agreement shall be considered an international non-governmental organization”. The World Bank describes NGOs as “private organizations that undertake activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect their environment or undertake community development”. NGOs are distinctive in containing a voluntary component, as they do not operate for profit. Non-governmental organizations thus embrace a wide array of agencies within and across different countries of the world.¹

NGOs are thus defined by their purpose of providing development assistance either in normal times or in the aftermath of a crisis or relief in the event of a crisis. In development parlance, the term is used to encompass a whole range of organisations, which differ in size, function, and geographical location. Thus the term can be used to describe small locally based and loosely established voluntary and largely grass root types of associations, as well as large, national and even transnational voluntary associations with formal constitutions employing hundreds of staff. They may be engaged in relief, emergency, or long-term development work or a mixture of all three. A distinction is also made between NGOs, which originated in and have their home base in the industrial countries, which are referred to as the ‘northern’ or ‘international’ NGOs, and those which originate in and operate within developing countries, which are termed as ‘southern’ NGOs. While there has been a steady growth in the number and

size of northern NGOs in the 1980s, there has been an explosion in the number of southern NGOs an appropriate example of which is Bangladesh.\textsuperscript{2}

The rapid increase of the northern NGOs has been a phenomenon of the 1980s marked by growing diversification and specialisation within the NGO community. It reflected a wide range of activities in which they are now engaged. As a result, it has become increasingly difficult to make generalisations about what northern NGOs do and about the particular role that they see for themselves in developmental efforts. Within individual industrialised countries, NGOs operate within different legal systems and with different public expectations of their role. Some important non-denominational NGOs whose interests include work on development were founded in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The British Save the Children was established in 1919. Others were formed during and after the World War II, initially with a focus on relief. Oxfam was established in 1942 and CARE (Cooperative Agency for Relief Everywhere) in 1945. In the 1960s there was a major expansion in the number of development NGOs, both secular and denominational. In the 1970s and into the 1980s, organisations were formed which had a more specific sectoral, technical or geographical focus.\textsuperscript{3}

\textit{NGOs from the North and South}

Northern NGOs are principally engaged in funding development projects and providing food and other materials for disasters and emergencies. An important distinction is whether they are operational or not: operational agencies implement projects directly in the developing countries using their own staff and resources, whereas non-operational agencies finance projects from their headquarters or regional office.


\textsuperscript{3} Helmt K. Anheier and Lester M. Salmon, n.2, pp. 18-20. Also see Riddley, n.2, pp.27-28.
often channeling funds through partner organisations with whom special relationships are frequently developed. Large US based NGOs like CARE, Plan International and UK based Action Aid and Save the Children Fund are essentially all operational NGOs. The trend is however, to move away from hands on involvement and to work directly with the NGOs.  

Many NGOs tailor their situation in particular countries. The non-operational approach is favoured more in South Asia and Latin America whereas in many parts of Africa NGOs continue to have in country offices which liaise with and offer support to indigenous NGOs in the form of training and exchange visits. In addition to providing financial support for development projects, many NGOs are involved in development education and advocacy work in their own countries.  

Funds are provided to NGOs through five major mechanisms: block grants for which no detailed accounting requirements are stipulated; matching grants for development projects (co-financing); food aid and disaster relief; support for volunteer programmes; and grants for development education. Project co-financing has grown to be the most important of these with matching grants providing NGOs with 50 to 100 percent of total project costs of co-financed projects. Official aid agencies use NGOs to distribute food aid and emergency aid, and some donors now sub-contract specific elements of bilateral aid projects to NGOs for implementation. USAID has relied on this mechanism for some years. Thus in CARE’s Food for Work Programme in Bangladesh, the NGO assumed responsibility for food distribution and supervision of public works

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under contract from USAID. Certain other donors have since followed suit. Canadian government in its in 'country-focus' approach, involves NGOs in the execution, and in some cases the design, of CIDA financed projects in the main recipient countries. Besides these different forms of financial support to northern NGOs, some donors provide funds directly to southern NGOs either bilaterally to individual organisations from aid headquarters or through diplomatic missions.6

The more positive attitude on the part of the donors and most host governments towards the NGO sector, have spurred the rapid growth of southern NGOs. The increased availability of funds from foreign donors including funds by INGOs and governments have consolidated this process. It has also been facilitated by the retreat of the extent of government services in many developing countries as manifested in much reduced role in welfare services. The steadily sharp reduction in public expenditure and a weakening of state’s legitimacy in the face of pressures for democratisation have in turn widened the potential for non-state initiatives.7

Certain southern NGOs now reach large numbers of poor people. The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh with over 2.3 million customers (95% of whom constitutes women), with 1,170 branches providing micro-credit to 40,000 villages has been an example. Southern NGOs vary enormously in terms of their approach and orientation, their size and location of operation, physical, financial and technical resources that are available, scale of their interventions, and the degree of support they receive from government. The socio-political context in which their interventions are located also differ a lot. They range from localised small NGOs working in a handful of villages in a single locality to


7 John Clark, n.4, pp.30-31. Also see Riddley, n.2, pp.32-33.
large NGOs working at a regional or national level. Most part of their funds are from external sources. In addition to these local NGOs, there are also large international NGOs (often working with local representation) providing funding and support to indigenous NGOs.  

A typical Southern NGO is a small agency with a handful of staff working in a cluster of villages in a particular locality. Relatively few NGOs possess the staff or financial resources to work intensively at regional or national level. However, these organizations are best known in government or donor circles. Most of these NGOs are engaged in promoting self-help activities, service provision, community organisation and poverty alleviation with funding from foreign NGOs and in some cases government sources. In vulnerable areas, it is still far from rare for development projects to be interrupted by the need to address emergency problems, at times resulting in emergency and development programmes running alongside each other.  

Common characteristics of most NGO interventions are working through groups although some interventions most notably emergency-type projects, work with the poor on a one to one basis. NGO groups range from informal community based organisations to formal membership bodies established, for instance, for the purpose of the project often facilitating credit or service schemes provided by the government, or else initiated by the NGOs themselves. They are bound together by voluntary contributions of time and resources and function for mutual benefit. These traits distinguish them from NGOs, which act as service providers or facilitators. In Africa these organisations draw cohesion and legitimacy to building on existing forms of social organisations and adapting their

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9 Riddley, n.2, p.33. Also see *Focus, Grassroots*, n.8, pp.86-90.
procedures to traditional norms of reciprocity. In Latin America, and more recently in parts of Asia, it is common for NGOs to promote and work with grass-roots organisations in order to create popular movements. Their growing power to influence government legislation in the interests of the poor and to strengthen democratic participation in the wider society has increasingly been noticeable. 10

There are other difference between NGO approaches, notably between the approaches frequently used in Asia and Africa, reflecting different historical traditions and political environments. In Bangladesh for example, NGOs pursue remarkably similar approaches to poverty alleviation, centered on the setting up of savings and credit groups. These provide the focal point not only for revolving loan schemes, but also for a range of other sectoral activities in the fields of health, education, income generation social forestry and irrigation. They also extend to relief and reconstruction in the event of natural disasters as demonstrated by the NGOs like Association of Development Agencies Bangladesh (ADAB), Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and Grameen Bank. 11

In many countries in Africa, the churches play a major role in NGO development activities. Many of them have shifted their focus from relief to development work in the past 10 to 15 years. Foreign NGOs tend to be operational more in Africa than in Asia, in part because of the relative weakness of indigenous NGOs and the lack of suitably qualified personnel. This further necessitated by the fact that in many

10 Riddley, n.2, pp.33-34. Also see John Clark, n.4, pp.31-32.
areas government services simply do not reach and as a result, any intervention tends to be relatively expensive.\footnote{12 Riddley, n.2, p.34.}

**NGOs in Bangladesh: Origin**

NGOs in Bangladesh are world-renowned. They can be traced back to the British colonial period. However, their emergence as organised citizen’s group raising a conscious voice regarding the country’s development agenda and overall course of action is an exclusive Bangladeshi phenomenon. NGOs in Bangladesh have grown very rapidly since independence. It now has one of the largest concentrations of NGOs in the world. Bangladesh’s NGOs are unique in their mandate, size and orientation. The traditional roles of NGOs and government have become blurred in Bangladesh. In most countries NGOs tend to be small, focusing on project specific issues of local interest, targeting interventions to specific local groups, promoting innovation and advocating and initiating change. The government’s activities tend to be larger in size and coverage and usually have a much greater impact on overall development. But NGOs in Bangladesh go well beyond the traditional NGOs strengths. Several of the large NGOs offer services that are superior in quality to public services and, taken together, larger in coverage. Their remarkable growth is not limited to only large, internationally renowned NGOs.\footnote{13 “Bangladesh: From Counting the Poor to Making the Poor Count”, A World Bank Country Study, The World Bank, Washington DC, 1999, p.43. Also see “Bangladesh: A Proposed Rural Development

Bangladesh has about 20,000 NGOs registered by the NGO Affairs Bureau, Department of Social Services and Women’s Affairs under the Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies Ordinance 1961. They range from very small NGOs to the very big working in a wide variety of areas. The NGO activities are guided by a ‘code of conduct’ outlined
by the NGO Affairs Bureau containing varied clauses/provisions ranging from non-engagement in political activities to engaging in profit making activities as long as profit earned is ploughed back into developmental activities. In 1997, the number of foreign funded NGOs, registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau, was 1,185 as compared to 382 in 1990.  

Table 4.1 shows the number of foreign funded and local NGOs in Bangladesh.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Local NGOs</th>
<th>Foreign NGOs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 1990</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>986</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


NGOs dominate non-governmental developmental efforts in Bangladesh. The success of NGOs in Bangladesh stems from the fact that they are able to concentrate on specific population groups, especially vulnerable groups in specific geographical areas. They are able to operate with lighter bureaucratic and decision making structures as opposed to mechanistic, top heavy and rigid governmental approaches to development. Another reason claimed for the success of NGOs is their capacity of imagination and innovation that has made them capable of adapting to local diversity.

Moreover, NGO-government partnerships have increased remarkably in Bangladesh. The relationship between the government and NGOs has not always been

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smooth. The government has been concerned about NGOs' cost effectiveness, accountability and heavy reliance on foreign funds. The NGOs, in turn, have criticised the government for being rigid and bureaucratic, for wanting to control rather than support NGOs and failing to differentiate among NGOs according to their performance. Many of these differences and problems plaguing their relationship have been diffused in recent years, leading to partnerships between the government, NGOs and externally funded projects in which NGOs are the executing agencies in the field. As NGOs' institutional and incentive structures provide much higher service quality, an increase in NGO activities and greater NGO-Public partnership in service delivery is always desired for. Community influence and participation are the hallmarks of NGO activities. They can well be integrated wholly into public service provision so as to create the conditions under which public services can also become much more responsive to user needs.  

The NGO paradigm of rural development has primarily centered on poverty alleviation by the poor. This has led to institutions and strategies for poverty alleviation through active participation of the poor and through establishment of grassroots democratisation for sustainable, people-centered development. The leading examples of different types of NGOs working in the field of disaster management as a consequence of two natural disasters floods and cyclones would be specifically dealt with.

**NGOs in Bangladesh: Composition and Orientation**

NGOs in Bangladesh can be classified for the sake of convenience into several categories depending on their main activities such as (Table 4.2).

- Research NGOs
- Awareness /Media NGOs
- Activist NGOs

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• Development NGOs
• Technical and Support Service NGOs

Table 4.2
Classification of Leading NGOs in Bangladesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research NGOs</th>
<th>Awareness/Media NGOs</th>
<th>Activist NGOs</th>
<th>Development NGOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)</td>
<td>-Forum of Environmental Journalists</td>
<td>-Pathikrit</td>
<td>-National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)</td>
<td>-Centre for Sustainable Development</td>
<td>-Coastal Area Development and Management Association (CARDMA)</td>
<td>-Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-International Institute for Environmental Studies and Disaster Management (IIESDM)</td>
<td>-Society for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)</td>
<td>-PRID-DIPS (Disaster Preparedness Information Services)</td>
<td>-Proshika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)</td>
<td>-Multi-disciplinary Action Research Centre (MAR)</td>
<td>-Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)</td>
<td>-Grameen Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-National Oceanographic and Marine Institute (NOAMI)</td>
<td>-National Oceanographic and Marine Institute (NOAMI)</td>
<td>-Gonoshasthya Kendra</td>
<td>-CARE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Uning International</td>
<td>-International Action Research Centre (MARC)</td>
<td>-International Action Aid</td>
<td>-CARITAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Winrock International</td>
<td>-National Oceanographic and Marine Institute (NOAMI)</td>
<td>-South Asia Partnership</td>
<td>-Action Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)</td>
<td>-Hellen Keller</td>
<td>-Local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)</td>
<td>-Nijera Kori</td>
<td>-Institute for Environmental and Development Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-International Institute for Environmental Studies and Disaster Management (IIESDM)</td>
<td>-Ubing International</td>
<td>-Hachte Sankha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The recent NGO initiatives include a larger conglomeration formed by these various NGOs. The State of the Environment Report (SOER) initiative involves a group of national NGOs including BRAC, BCAS, Proshika, Gonoshasthya Kendra, Grameen Bank, ADAB, VHSS CARITAS and Christian Community for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB), which have elected BCAS as its secretariat to develop a

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methodology and prepare a Citizen’s Report on the Environment that has been compiled and published by Unnayan Shamannay.18

**Evolution of NGOs in Bangladesh**

The early origins of the NGO movement can be traced to the post-liberation period. Initially, prior to the war of independence, the voluntary organizations inspired by religious and socio-cultural humanitarian spirits extended services primarily as missionaries. In the post independence period, the voluntary organizations came into being in response to crisis situations such as natural calamities and rehabilitation of liberation war victims. The 1970 cyclone and the war of liberation in 1971 caused untold suffering killing thousands of people and destroying their infrastructure. This worsened the plight of the poverty stricken teeming millions.

A large number of foreign organizations responded to the requirements of humanitarian services to save the war-ravaged nation. At this critical juncture indigenous initiatives by a few committed people were undertaken to establish some national organizations which are today known as the leading NGOs in Bangladesh, namely BRAC, CARITAS, GK, CCDB, etc. 19 With the establishment of these NGOs, the concept of voluntarism took a new direction. This injected a new dimension of professionalism thereby leading to formal organizational structures. As the country slowly rebuilt itself, these NGOs began the task of sorting through the needs of the country, prioritizing them and organizing to respond accordingly.


19 Based on interview conducted during the course of field-work of Dr. A. Mushtaque. R. Chowdhury, BRAC Deputy Executive Director and Director Research at BRAC, Dhaka. Also see Jowshan A. Rahman, n.18, p.204.
Intense relief and rehabilitation efforts marked the first generation NGO activities. At this stage they were involved in the field of distribution of food and medicines for survival, essential clothing, subsequently constructing houses for the homeless and mobilizing and restarting transport facilities. Charity and welfare services continued till mid 1973. The interventions were very micro in scope and immediate in time frame.  

The second generation NGOs represented a transition from relief and welfare related activities to developing self-reliant organizations for the poor. By 1972, the NGOs had realised that improvement in the socio-economic condition of the poor was not possible through the relief programme strategy above. They gradually shifted their focus from relief and rehabilitation to more development oriented programmes of assistance. NGOs search for a strategy of sustainable improvement of the marginal people culminated in the integrated development approach. This essentially included in it sectoral programmes like that in agriculture, fisheries, livestock, adult education, health and family planning etc.

The NGOs during this stage consolidated their gains by developing their expertise from lessons learnt whether this be a service or a product. They utilized all such learnings in favour of the beneficiaries. By 1975 NGOs provided technical assistance including demonstrations to enable the beneficiaries to properly use the inputs. Trainings were imparted to both men and women on usage of vocational skills. National NGOs concentrated their programmes and projects on the disadvantaged poor basing on the participatory development approach that gave rise to village level institutions of the poor. They were based on mobilizing and raising of their socio-

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economic awareness through education and conscientization and introduction of support services like micro-credit, income generation and health related activities.\textsuperscript{21}

The third generation of NGOs ventured into institution building. The transition from relief to integrated community development occurred gradually. It primarily focused on the participatory process of development and the target group approach. NGOs set up and formalized their training centers at times\textsuperscript{9} independently or in collaboration with the government. They developed curriculum and provided resource persons. They undertook activities amongst the target group at the field level by adopting various villages. Their activities ranged from environmental protection, social forestry, women's development, water and sanitation, disaster preparedness etc. This has considerably ensured vulnerability reduction. The process of disaster preparedness equipped the people to face the recurrent onslaught of disasters.\textsuperscript{22} The committed services by a significant majority of NGOs have resulted in their emergence as a distinct socio-economic-political entity, aptly called the 'third sector' (government referred to as the first sector and opposition as the second sector) as in the case of Philippines and Indonesia.\textsuperscript{23}

A direct link with the grassroots has given the NGOs necessary insight in dealing with social problems and inequalities. Their increasing professionalism has provided the basis for involvement of NGOs in coping with disaster situations.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{22} Abdullah Amin, n.l, pp.50-51. Iqbal Shailo, n.5, pp10. Also see Jowshan Rahman, n.18, p.204.

\textsuperscript{23} According to the BRAC, Director Research, some of the national NGOs like BRAC, Grameen and others are secular in character and usually refrain from political involvement, responding only during grave political crisis that causes disastrous socio-economic consequences, as their participation during the 1990-91 democratization processes and ouster of the Ershad regime would suggest. Also see the proceedings of the World Bank Future Leaders E-conference on Corporate Social Responsibility for an understanding of the Role of the NGOs in Philippines and Indonesia.

\textsuperscript{24} Jowshan Rahman, n.18, p.204.
The predominant characteristics of NGOs in Bangladesh are:

- They build private voluntary organizations by working as development catalysts by using the strategies of conscientization through organizing and developing local communities and through delivering needs based services.
- They are non-profit and service oriented.
- Autonomous and committed organizations.
- Subject to some form of registration and formal rules laid down by the government.
- NGOs roles are of: Catalyst, Initiator, Pathfinder, Provider of emergency relief.
- Partners of International NGOs.
- They are formal and informal both and may be project based, target group based or community wide organizations.  

The commendable role of Bangladesh NGOs and international recognition of the crucial role they play in building the coping capacities of the people in the pre-disaster as well as post-disaster stage apart from providing emergency relief can be attributed to the following distinctive features:

- They are participatory in nature and democratic in character.
- They are committed to work with the less fortunate and pledge bound to ensure their empowerment.
- They have creative qualities in common with the needs of the people they serve.
- NGOs generally involve their members in the participatory decision making process.
- They believe in the people-centred development approach.

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25 Inventory on Work and Output of the Organisations Active in Disaster Management, n.17. Also see Iqbal Shahilo, n.5, pp.9-30. Also see Muhammad Saidur Rahman, n.17. Also see Saleemul Huq and A. Moyeen Khan, n.17, pp.85-88.
• They have the capacity to evaluate their own role.
• They respect the dignity of their partners.
• They trust in the abilities and creativities of others. They are sensitive of the culture of the people.
• They try to be united in their goal, vision and strategy.
• They are receptive to new ideas.
• They are supposed to be accountable to the people they serve.
• They are flexible in their approach.
• They have intimate knowledge of local conditions.
• They undertake cost-effective projects.
• They have the potential to inspire trust and confidence in both the government and other development partners.26

*Donors*

A number of multilateral and bilateral donors have taken greater initiative and interest in the grave state of affairs as a result of frequent disasters. They have undertaken assessment of the various disaster affected situations and initiated development strategies to alleviate the sufferings of the vulnerable populace.

The major donors are stated below:

• DANIDA
• NORAD
• USAID
• WORLD BANK
• CIDA
• UNDP27

26 Ibid.
27 Saleemul Haq and Moyeen Khan, n.17, p.94. Also see Abdullah Al Amin, n.1, p.50.
The crucial role of NGOs in accelerating the process of economic and social development is widely recognized. NGOs have played an increasingly important catalytic role in ensuring the involvement of the grassroots people.\(^{28}\)

**NGOs in Disaster Management**

NGOs involved in disaster management activities represent a multiplicity of objectives, the most common components being family planning, maternal and child health, income generation, humanitarian, charitable, relief activities, awareness raising activities, oral rehydration, immunisation, non-formal primary education, expansion of girls education, creation of employment for rural women, environmental protection and extension for rural non-farm activities. Many NGOs have integrated the aforementioned women’s concerns in their programmes.\(^{29}\)

In Bangladesh the types of roles and response to situation of natural disasters by the NGOs can be broadly categorized into the following categories:

- Among the large relief agencies and NGOs, the main response is to provide material relief and rescue operations to the largest extent possible including medical relief during times of disaster.

- Engagement in long term reconstruction activities in areas ranging from physical infrastructure like roads, houses, community buildings, drinking water facilities etc. to providing educational facilities and continuation of medical aid (like, oral rehydration, immunisation, maternal and child CARE, etc.). In many instances financial aid in the form of micro-credit and other assistance such as provision of employment for rural women and extension of

\(^{28}\) Abdullah Al Amin, n.1, pp.50-53.

\(^{29}\) Abdullah Al Amin, n.1, pp.52-53. Also see Muhammad Saidur Rahman, n.17, pp.257-259. Also see Jowshan Rahman, n.18, p.205.
rural non-farm activities are provided to the affected people to start their traditional economic pursuits.

- The small and localized NGOs are engaged in initial response in the form of rescue and material relief or engage in generation of activities for rural people such as shrimp culture etc. In instances where other activities like reconstruction of houses, etc. are undertaken, they are usually dependent on support from the large relief agencies and international aid.

- Most of the larger agencies working in Bangladesh not located in disaster prone areas, withdraw after the initial phases of relief and reconstruction. Only a few prolong their presence in the areas for restarting some developmental activities. Government support is also restricted to relief and rehabilitation.

- Only a few external agencies stay back in the disaster prone areas for disaster mitigation, long-term development of the people of the area and especially for disaster preparedness before the next disaster strikes. This approach, till date can be seen only in a few rare exceptions.

- Local NGOs who also participate in relief and reconstruction activities during times of disaster revert back to their usual pre-disaster activities after the initial phase. The linkages between the usual development activities and the requirement for adopting a methodology where such activities will lead to a state of disaster preparedness of the community is rarely observed by most NGOs.  

While many NGOs in Bangladesh are off shoots of international NGOs, others such as BRAC, Grameen Bank and Gonashasthya Kendra, the national NGOs, were

30 Abdullah Amin, n.1, pp.49-51. Also see Jowshan Rahman, n.18, pp.203-216.
started by local development activities. These NGOs promoted self-sustained social and economic development of the poor to enable them to withstand the onslaught of disasters. These are basically done by securing effective peoples-participation through awareness generation to empower poor people, and building organizations at the grassroots to create solidarity and identity.\textsuperscript{31}

Other national NGOs like Proshika has taken up schemes for afforestation, housing, group irrigation and vegetable cultivation. Other than economic support, NGO strategy for group formation has encouraged a degree of solidarity amongst the poor. A few NGOs have gone beyond to mobilization of awareness about group rights. Banchte Shekha and Saptagram are two women’s organization, which have successfully supported mobilized groups to struggle for economic and legal rights. Others involved, have been Nijera Kori and Paikgacha.\textsuperscript{32}

These NGOs have effectively worked towards providing both short term and long-term relief by providing, to the disaster struck people, access to clean water, efficient health treatment and access to relief materials. The mass media has not been capable enough of solely providing warnings, creating awareness or providing aid in development in the post disaster scenario, especially in the interior rural areas, where people needed more convincing communication. NGOs have played an important role in this effort. Organizations and programmes such as BRAC’S ‘Oral Therapy Programme’, the governments ‘Expanded Programme of Immunisation (EPI)’ and the Grameen Bank’s ‘credit for poor women’ have been successful. Successful programmes are not only seen in their implementation record, but also in the extent of involvement of

\textsuperscript{31} Nazmul Haque, Flood Disasters and Vulnerability: The Role of NGOs, \textit{Grassroots}, July-September 1991, pp.4-7. Also see Iqbal Shailo, n.5, pp. 9-11. Also see Jowshan Rahman, n.18, p.205.

\textsuperscript{32} Jowshan Rahman., n.18, pp.214-215.
people at grassroots, where economic social and political growth takes place. The third sector, thus, provides the second channel, apart from the governmental channel, through which the people of Bangladesh have been able to further develop their capacity to cope.33

The innovative credit delivery systems and human resource development activities of these NGOs for the assetless poor, has proved to be effective and sustainable in its approaches. NGO efforts indicate that with appropriate encouragement and moderate support, they can not only expand programmes but also continue to innovate for wider participation of the poor in the development process.34

Role of the major NGOs in Disaster Management in Bangladesh

Association of Development Agencies of Bangladesh (ADAB)

An important aspect of evolution of NGOs has been the establishment of the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB), in 1974, a unique coordinating mechanism for NGOs with the following objective:

- Promote cooperation and coordination among NGOs as well as between the government and NGOs. Represent the NGO sector in matters relating to rules and regulations affecting NGOs and to encourage complementary initiatives of the NGOs with government at different levels
- Provide support services in terms of input supply, research, evaluation and training to NGOs for developing their operational efficiency.

34 Atiur Rahman, 1998, n.33, pp.4-7. Also see Jowshan Rahman, n.18, p.205.
• Assist in negotiating with donor agencies as well as establish linkages with donor agencies.

• Facilitate sharing of ideas and experiences and disseminate related information on participatory development.

• Promote growth of small and local level NGOs by rendering support services through ADAB chapters spread over the country.35

ADAB has played a crucial role in terms of making collaborative and coordinated efforts of NGOs during the cyclone of 1991 and 1997 and floods of 1988 and 1998. ADAB has been pursuing a policy of decentralizing its activities and promoting different sectoral fora of the NGOs. Catalysing activities, coordination and advocacy are the three main roles of ADAB and through its seven cells extends support and services to the following:

• Development of Local NGOs

• Training

• Information and Support Services

• Environment and Social Forestry

• Disaster preparedness and Management

• Women’s Development

• Development Communication and Publications36

_Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)_

BRAC, a national private development organization was established by its founder and Chairperson, Mr. Fazle Hasan Abed in the Sulla region of north-east


36 Abdullah Al Amin, n.1, pp.52-53.
Bangladesh in 1972. BRAC was initially established as a research organization to afford relief and assistance to resettle refugees returning from India after Bangladesh’s Liberation war. The task of immediate relief and rehabilitation, in course of time started focusing on long-term issue of poverty alleviation and empowerment of the poor in rural areas.37

BRAC with its objective of developing the capacity of the poor and disadvantaged millions of Bangladesh at present undertakes varied activities ranging from income generation of the poor, mostly landless rural people. It is mainly done through micro-credit, health, education and training programmes. BRAC operational area is spread across all the 64 districts of Bangladesh covering 3.7 million families in over 84,000 villages. BRAC rural development programme that has been recently named as BRAC Development Programme (BDP) focuses on enterprise development through credit facilities and capacity development of the poor, especially women. Under its rural development programme, BDP has organised over 3.7 million poor landless people (97.8% women) into 100,572 village organisations (VOs).

The VOs serve as the forum for creating awareness, mobilising, training and delivery of health and financial services. The interventions implemented are facilitated through 431 self financing area offices in area ranging from poultry and livestock fisheries, social forestry, sericulture, income generation for valuable group development, micro enterprise lending and assistance, human rights, legal education and services, essential health CARE and training in disaster management and preparedness. BRACs

interventions have been in both urban and rural areas. BRAC offers training, counseling and other support services to smaller NGOs as well.\textsuperscript{38}

BRAC activities in disaster management range from providing immediate relief to engaging in both short-term and long-term rehabilitation activities. The relief activities are primarily aimed at helping marooned people avoid starvation in both rural and urban areas as well as supply of essential medicines like ORS packets, water purifying tablets to help prevent outbreak of epidemics. The rehabilitation activities include engaging in micro-credit programmes to alleviate poverty with a flexible arrangement to collect savings and loan instalments during and after disasters keeping in mind the capacity of the people to repay. However, BRAC’s educational and health programmes need to include post-disaster rehabilitation inputs and training in disaster preparedness.\textsuperscript{39}

Micro-credit plays a pivotal role in improving life style and reducing poverty. BRAC’s credit programme initiated in 1976 has so far disbursed Taka 5,441 crore (US$1,222 million) to its VO members with 98% recovery rates. The group members savings with BRAC stands at Tk. 354 crore US$71 million as on 31 December 2000. In the urban areas BRAC has organised around 1,27,585 urban poor through 4,182 UPO (Urban Poor’s organisation) in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshai. As of December 2000, Tk. 96 crore (US $18 million) was disbursed as loans with 99.8% recovery rate. Their total savings with BRAC accumulated to Tk. 18 crore (US$3.6 million).\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.

Grameen Bank

Grameen Bank (established in 1976), through its provision of credit to the poorest people, has succeeded in changing the lives of one million Bangladeshis. The concept of empowering the poor through micro loans is manifested in the following fact:

- Borrowers automatically became shareholders in the bank by purchasing one share each for $3.
- Ninety five percent of all borrowers (approximately 2.3 million) are women, the poorest of the poor.
- The repayment rate is an astonishing 98%.

NGOs, which have followed Grameen Bank’s lead cannot doubt the capacity of people who use micro loans to build 120,500 houses, often show a credit balance of more than $20 million in their saving accounts.

As Mohammad Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank, aptly said, “when we change the concepts, when we subscribe to the tenet that credit is a human right, it is then that we begin to help the poor, it is then that we begin to develop people’s capacity for self-help, it is then that people’s capacity to cope is greatly improved.”41

Grameen Bank’s primary objective has been to help poor develop economic and social capacities to cope with the disaster. This derives from its endeavour to develop self-respect and self-confidence in the poor and discourage relief operations during crises. Grammen Bank encourages its members to borrow from the Group and Emergency Funds or Special Funds in the event of floods or cyclones. The repayment

41 The Grameen Bank’s activities have primarily involved providing credit to the poor people especially women of Bangladesh. Also see Atiur Rahman, Crisis Coping Capacities of the Rural Poor: A Look into the Role of Grameen Bank, Draft Report, BIDS, Dhaka, 1989. Also see Jowshar Rahman, n.18, pp.213-214.
schedules are rescheduled by few weeks as also greater flexibility and relaxation provided in the loan repayment for housing loans. Social development programmes like distribution of medicines, oral saline, life jackets, alum are undertaken intensively. Funds delivered during and after the floods will have to be repaid and these will constitute a revolving fund for coping with future disasters. In 1988 the Grammen Bank distributed 8776 metric tons of wheat provided by the World Food Programme for the flood victims not as outright relief but as loan in kind amongst its borrowers.42

CARE

CARE started its work in Bangladesh in 1949 much before its liberation. It established its first office in 1952. Prior to 1980 CARE Bangladesh focussed its activities mainly on relief subsequently becoming involved in development initiatives, while still carrying out relief activities when required. CARE Bangladesh has so far responded to 12 national and local disasters prior to the catastrophic flood of 1998. At present it is involved in around 20 projects. In 1993, CARE decided to establish a Disaster Management Unit (DMU) with the support of USAID based on an evaluation of CARE’s performance in the area of emergency response. The experience of CARE’s intervention in the 1988 flood and the 1991 cyclone had revealed that more success could have been achieved considering the resources invested.43

CARE has been in the forefront of disaster management activities in Bangladesh with its intervention areas in awareness building ranging from afforestation, plantation, social forestry, environment, health, sanitation, nutrition,

42 Atiur Rahman, n.41,
cyclone/flood preparedness to community participation. The relief activities include damage assessment, distribution of food and clothing, shelter materials, medicine/ORS/WPT, engaging medical team, providing telecom/transport facilities and preparing food. The rehabilitation activities involve food for work, health, education, providing house, rebuilding materials, agricultural rehabilitation, tools and equipments for self employment, sanitary facilities, water body rehabilitation, tube well repairing, refugee camp management to infrastructural repairs.\textsuperscript{44} The DMU of CARE has the following objectives:

- Enlarge CARE Bangladesh's disaster response outreach by working with selected NGOs.

- Enhance CARE Bangladesh's disaster preparedness.

- Coordinate with the Bangladesh government, UN agencies and key NGOs to strengthen the overall preparedness of the country.\textsuperscript{45}

Table 4.3 below indicates CARE's intervention programmes both pre and post disaster from 1970-1998.

\textsuperscript{44} Report based on Survey by DPIS-PRIP, n.17, pp.85, 165.

\textsuperscript{45} Report of CARE Bangladesh, \textit{Living with Flood Disaster}, n.43, pp.1-8, 25-30. Also see \textit{Inventory on Work and Output of the Organisations Active in Disaster Management}, n.17.
Table 4.3
CARE’s Intervention Programmes (1970-1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Awareness Building</th>
<th>Disaster Management Training</th>
<th>Relief</th>
<th>Rehabilitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970 cyclone</td>
<td>Afforestation</td>
<td>-Disaster management</td>
<td>-Disposal of dead bodies</td>
<td>-Food for Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983 cyclone</td>
<td>Plantation</td>
<td>training</td>
<td>-Damage Assessment of food/clothing</td>
<td>-Health Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987 flood</td>
<td>Social forestry</td>
<td>-Training of trainers on</td>
<td>-Distribution of food/clothing</td>
<td>-Providing house rebuilding materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988 flood</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>disaster management</td>
<td>-Distribution of food/clothing</td>
<td>-Agricultural rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991 cyclone</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>-Simulation Exercise on</td>
<td>-Distribution of shelter materials</td>
<td>-Tools and equipment for self-employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995 flood</td>
<td>Sanitation</td>
<td>disaster management</td>
<td>-Distribution of medicine/ORS/WPT</td>
<td>-Sanitary facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997 cyclone</td>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td></td>
<td>-Engaging medical team</td>
<td>-Water supply rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998 flood</td>
<td>Cyclone/Flood</td>
<td></td>
<td>-Providing food</td>
<td>-Tube well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparedness</td>
<td></td>
<td>-Providing medical</td>
<td>Repairing/Sinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>-Providing medical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Report of CARE Bangladesh, Living with Flood, Disaster Management Project, CARE Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1999. Also see Inventory on Work and Output of the Organisations Active in Disaster Management based on Survey conducted by PRIP-DPIS, sponsored by UNICEF for GOB-DMB.

CARITAS

CARITAS, (Latin word meaning charity or universal love) includes all aspects of humanity. CARITAS is national non-profit development organisation established by the Catholic Bishops’ conference of Bangladesh to carry out activities of integrated social welfare and development. It is registered with the Societies Act XXI of 1860 No. 3760-B/11 of 1972-73 and also with the NGO Affairs Bureau No. 009 of 1981 under the Foreign Donation (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Ordinance 1978. Founded in 1967 as an Eastern Branch of CARITAS Pakistan following the cyclone of November 1970 it was re-organised and became known as CORR (Christian Organisation for Relief and Rehabilitation) and took on the character of a national organisation on January 13, 1971. The name CARITAS was reintroduced in 1976.46

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CARITAS with its head office in Dhaka has seven regional offices. In all these places CARITAS is operational in integrated development, disaster management, and human resource development, under a central management. It integrated development work is restricted to 77 Thana (sub-districts). However, during emergencies, such as natural disasters, CARITAS is operational in all parts of the country. Its activities have been primarily oriented towards working with the poor, the marginal group and the landless, who comprise majority of the population. CARITAS focuses on rural poverty alleviation and human resource development.\(^\text{47}\) It attempts to ensure employment generation through an integrated programme in different sectors with 43 different components (generally termed as projects).\(^\text{48}\)

The CARITAS Disaster Management Programme (Sector-K/Project No.42) started in 1970 is based on the principle of Rapid Deployment to stand by the side of those stricken. The present phase of the programme is the third year of the third integrated plan (1999-2004) with (total expenditure of Tk. 80.85 million foreign partners’ contribution of Tk. 80.56 million and local partners’ contribution of Tk. 293,393).\(^\text{49}\)

Table 4.4 provides us with a list of the main emergency projects undertaken by CARITAS in the area of floods and cyclone for the period 1970-1998.

\(^{47}\) Development is understood in the framework of equitable distribution of resources and restructuring of power sharing in favour of the disadvantaged.

\(^{48}\) CARITAS Brochure, n.46. Also see Annual Report of CARITAS Bangladesh, n.46, p.115.

\(^{49}\) Annual Report of CARITAS Bangladesh, n.46, p.115.
Table-4.4
CARITAS Intervention Programmes (1970-1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Interventions in the event of Flood</th>
<th>Interventions in the event of Cyclone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 cyclone rehabilitation projects in Noakhali, Barisal and Patuakhali amounting to US $0.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>Flood and subsequent famine following the flood relief and rehabilitation programme amounting to US $0.9 million.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Flood rehabilitation programme amounting to US $3.17 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Flood rehabilitation programme amounting to US $0.47 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cyclone recovery programme in Sandwip, Urichar, Monpura, Moheshkali, Kutubdia and Kalapara amounting to US $1.82 million.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Flood recovery programme amounting to US $1.45 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Flood, Cyclone and tornado relief and rehabilitation programme amounting to US $3.71 million.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-98</td>
<td>Floods along with other interventions as discussed under cyclones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Flood recovery programme amounting to US $4 million.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The disaster preparedness planning and strategies for action of CARITAS entail immediate relief and both short term and long term rehabilitation of the victims of natural calamities at all levels of organisation through:

- Providing ready food, clothes and essential goods.
- Assistance for crop recovery, cash for work, repair and reconstruction of low-cost shelters.
- Assistance to refugees.
- Rehabilitation of destitute and disabled.
- Construction of flood affected shelters.
• Construction of cyclone shelters and school buildings\textsuperscript{50}.

\textbf{NGOs in the management of flood related disasters}

\textit{1988 Floods: Role of NGOs}

In the aftermath of the 1988 floods despite the apparent failure of the government to appreciate and utilise the capacity of the country, people from all classes continued to stand by the victims. According to a report, "NGOs and voluntary organisations initiated their response spontaneously. Private citizens, perhaps the largest source of relief reached the victims before any organised body could. There were valiant efforts made by poor workers and street sweepers of Dhaka city giving away their daily ration to feed the marooned victims in different slums of the city. Banana rafts often served as the only means of transport in marooned areas. Within days of recognition of the crises, relief camps sprouted all over the country majority of them located in Dhaka city".\textsuperscript{51}

According to an estimate, as many as 476 relief camps operated in Dhaka city alone to provide shelter to more than one million victims. These camps were run by organisations BRAC, Care, Caritas, Proshika, etc., on an average involving 26 volunteers per camp. One organisation made an appeal and received response from more than ten thousand youths from Dhaka city alone. Similar organisational efforts were also visible in rural areas. As many as 630 organisations were involved in relief activities. Evaluation of local administration and NGO activities revealed that despite of the dedicated role of NGOs their participation was often misconstrued as competitive rather than complementary by the government. Local administration moved slowly according

\textsuperscript{50} CARITAS has built 166 cyclone shelters and 57 school buildings.

to bureaucratic procedures, which failed to involve local groups and NGOs in formulating local disaster mitigation.\(^{52}\)

The sudden and unexpected onset of the flood resulted in individual NGOs trying to reach people in whatever way possible to meet the immediate needs. While some NGOs tried to bypass local administration, which sometimes resulted in duplication of efforts, government, on the other hand, became unnecessarily suspicious. This was due to a lack of institutionalisation and adequate disaster training and preparedness both at the macro and micro level. As a consequence, many remote areas were never reached by either set of organisations. Though ADAB did keep close contact with the government and NGOs to facilitate the works of its member organizations, ADAB in its report did admit a lack of coordination and duplication of efforts amongst NGOs themselves as well as amongst small NGOs and local administration. Voluntary Health Services coordinated the role of NGOs in the health sector. Moreover, the military ignored everyone and went about relief distribution on their own effectively reaching people especially in the immediate aftermath of the floods.\(^{53}\)

Apart from providing immediate emergency relief NGOs like CARE and CARITAS undertook extensive short-term and long term rehabilitation programmes. CARITAS rehabilitation Programme involving a total sum of Tk. 103,713, 328 comprised of three major lines of action viz., Test Relief Works—employment for the victims of calamity while repairing the basic rural infrastructures, Crop Recovery—distribution of seedings/seed of the lost crop and also for cultivation of alternative crops, House Repairing and Reconstruction—to reconstruct low cost house in case of poor

\(^{52}\) Atiur Rahman, n.51, p.359. Also see *Flood 1988, Bulletin No.2*, CARITAS Bangladesh. Dhaka. 1988, p.5. Also see ADAB Activity Report, n.35.

\(^{53}\) Atiur Rahman, n.51, p.359.
victims who could not build out of own resources and in some cases providing assistance for repair of the damaged houses.

**Lessons Learnt**

During and immediately after the floods it was observed that households with educated and skilled members responded much better in a disaster prone area than the others for example, women with certain awareness would take the necessary hygienic precautions like using alum distributed to purify water they would have to collect from tube wells, or give ORS to the children suffering from diarrhea. So there was a need for diverting resources to human development such as primary education especially for girls. This is because women were the worst affected by the deluge as women had to bear the burden of disruption of normal livelihood in terms of collection of safe water, response to nature's call, preparing and distributing whatever food they could manage (by begging, borrowing or standing in long cues for relief materials) as also cope with increased domestic violence due to unemployment and lack of income of the male household head. It was also observed that the poor enrolled in programmes such as conducted by Grameen Bank coped much better than those who did not belong to an organisation. This demonstrated a need for more organizational affiliations for the poor and vulnerable.54

NGOs have also tried to internalise much of their valuable experiences of the 1988 flood. ADAB (Association of Development Agencies of Bangladesh), the federating body of NGOs is now more organised to coordinate the NGOs as much as CARE, CARITAS, BRAC, Proshika, and others. Some of their development programmes have been reshaped to increase the capabilities of the people. For example,

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54 Atiur Rahman, n.51, p.361. Also see Kelly Haggart, n.51, pp. 205-218. Also see BRAC Research Monograph Series No: 15, n.39, pp.1-17.
Proshika has been providing the credit for housing programmes, group irrigation and vegetable production, which ultimately strengthens the coping capacity of the poor. Grameen Bank not exactly a traditional NGO, has always avoided giving handouts to its members and insists on improving their material and social base to face calamities through credit. A number of ‘lesson-learning’ workshops has been organised by ADAB with technical assistance from UNDP where NGO field officials were able to consolidate their disaster coping experiences. There has been a general increase in consciousness level among the poor people after the 1988 flood. However, the higher level of consciousness and the positive dimensions of their traditional coping mechanisms have not yet been properly integrated into mainstream development framework of Bangladesh policy makers.\textsuperscript{55}

1998 Floods: Role of NGOs

A total of 163 local, national and international NGOs actively participated in post-flood rehabilitation programmes of 1998. Most of these NGOs provided immediate relief in the form of food items, sanitation facilities, clean drinking water and medical assistance among the diarrhoea affected people in the remote areas. 871 medical teams organised by the NGOs actively operated all over the country. The medical teams served more than 2,50,000 people particularly women and children.

Table 4.5 roughly indicates the relief items distributed by NGOs to the flood victims.

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Table 4.5
Relief Items Distributed by NGOs (1998 Flood)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relief Item Distributed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice / Pulse/ Potato/Biscuits/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alum/ Water/ Baby Food/Milk/ORS/WPT/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe Drinking Salt / Clothes/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matches/ Polythene Sheet Candle/Kerosene Oil /Cooking Oil/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bleaching Powder/Sanitary Latrines/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Container/Tube well pipes/Bamboo/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash/etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In order to combat the devastating flood of 1998, NGOs undertook relief activities to the following extent Table 4.6. The relief activities ranged from taking care of the families, supplying them with ORS/WPT, pure drinking water in order to prevent the outbreak of water borne diseases and take care of those suffering from Diarrhoea and other related infections. They also undertook activities pertaining to the provision of basic logistical facilities like construction of sanitary latrines, decontamination of tubewells etc. In the field of health care for the disaster affected victims the NGOs, sent emergency medical teams equipped with necessary medicines and medical equipments for treatment of both people and their livestock.

Table 4.6
Relief Activities by NGOs (1998 Flood)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relief Item Distributed</th>
<th>Total Monetary Valuation (approx TK. 52 crore)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of beneficiary families taken care of (million)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For diarrhoea prevention and treatment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ORS distributed (packets)</td>
<td>72,11,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- WPT distributed (packets)</td>
<td>1,35,20,2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pure Drinking Water Supplied (gallons)</td>
<td>56,30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitary Latrine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Installed (nos.)</td>
<td>4,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Under Plan (nos.)</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Teams</td>
<td>871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Health Services provided (persons)</td>
<td>2,56,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment provided (nos. livestock.)</td>
<td>78,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tubewell decontaminated or cleaned (nos.)</td>
<td>1,34,408</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 discusses list of the operational procedure of ADAB during the flood. In order to tackle the flood situation ADAB undertook the following activities.

- Organise and coordinate emergency meetings of NGOs on flood.
- Organise meeting with donors.
- Send an appeal to the government requesting rescheduling of agricultural loans.
- Open a control room and information centre.
- Organise emergency meeting on the flood situation.
- Attend various meetings of government agencies, disaster forums, UNDP and donors.
- Send appeal to the government, donors and general public.
- Open relief material collection centres.
- Help in organising chapter coordination meetings.\textsuperscript{56}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|p{10cm}|}
\hline
\textbf{Year} & \textbf{Activity} & \textbf{Intervention} \\
\hline
20 July 1998 & Emergency meetings of NGOs on the Flood & Specific suggestions, recommendations and decisions to lessen the plight of the flood \\
\hline
delete column content\ 
20 August 1998 & Meeting with donors on Flood situation & Recommendations adopted that later played a pivotal role in the intra and post flood rehabilitation. \\
\hline
delete column content\ 
26 August 1998 & Appeal to the Government - Opened a flood control room and information centre & - Reschedule agricultural loans and provide further loans for agricultural rehabilitation on emergency basis for the flood affected victims. - Disseminated flood related information to NGOs and various agencies, prepared fact sheet on floods very alternate days highlighting the relief activities carried out by the NGOs and various post flood related messages and flood situation anlysis. \\
\hline
delete column content\ 
5 August 1998 & Appeals to Government, donor agencies and general public - Opened relief materials collection centre in its chapter offices - Invited project proposals from NGOs on post flood rehabilitation programmes. & - To undertake various post flood relief and rehabilitation measures and precautionary steps for tackling the deteriorating flood situation - Collected relief materials were distributed among the flood victims of the severely affected areas of the locality, \\
\hline
delete column content\ 
During the flood period & Current information on flood to all concerned & - Daily situation Reports - Facts sheet - Damage list - NGO operation list \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{ADAB Operational Procedure (1998 Floods)}
\end{table}


In view of the prevailing flood situation, the member NGOs stressed on the following measures to be undertaken in the immediate phase, short term and long term phase (Table 4.8). The immediate measures related to distribution of emergency relief materials like baby food, water, milk powder, dry food or provide for emergency health services. The Short-term measures ranged from schemes of employment generation to provision of micro-credit facilities, emergency health services, vulnerable group feeding and development schemes, etc. The long-term measures include agricultural rehabilitation measures, interest free agricultural loans, rescheduling of payments on loans guaranteeing flexibility and providing for schemes that would contribute to development of sustainable livelihoods.

### Table 4.8
**Intervention Measures in three phases by NGOs suggesting Disaster-Development linkage (1998 Floods)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immediate measures</th>
<th>Short term Measures</th>
<th>Long Term Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food, Baby Food, Emergency Health Services, ORS, Alum, WPT, Clothes Fodder, etc.</td>
<td>Temporary Shelter, Emergency Health Services, Micro-Credit, Employment Generation, VGD, VGF, Fodder, etc.</td>
<td>Agriculture Rehabilitation, Housing, Interest free Agriculture loan, Rescheduling of loan instalments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A comparative analysis of the major NGOs (CARE and CARITAS-international and BRAC and Proshika-national) detailing their relief and rehabilitation programmes in the aftermath of the 1998 floods is indicated in the table 4.9.
### Table 4.9
Comparative Analysis of Relief and Rehabilitation of major NGOs (1998 Flood)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Organisation</th>
<th>Name of the District</th>
<th>Relief Items Distributed</th>
<th>Rehabilitation Plans for Area Affected</th>
<th>Funding Source/Donor</th>
<th>Partner NGOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>Gaibandha</td>
<td>-Rice</td>
<td>-Agriculture</td>
<td>CARE-USA</td>
<td>Partner NGOs, USAID, GUK, TM, SS, NDP, RIC, GUP, BNIP, ES, C, WASA, coop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dhaka City</td>
<td>-Pulse</td>
<td>-Seed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Munshiganj</td>
<td>-Potato</td>
<td>-Crops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shirajganj</td>
<td>-Soabeen ---Oil</td>
<td>-House building</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Madaripur</td>
<td>-Salt</td>
<td>-Rehabilitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tangail</td>
<td>-Safe Drinking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manikganj</td>
<td>-Feeding Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Narayanganj</td>
<td>-Cooked Food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kurigram</td>
<td>-ORS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shariatpur</td>
<td>-Emergency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bogra</td>
<td>-Medicine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARITAS</td>
<td>Dhaka</td>
<td>-ORS</td>
<td>-Low cost</td>
<td></td>
<td>CARITAS Germany, Netherlands, Australia, Belgium, Hongkong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>Name of the Organisation</th>
<th>Name of the District</th>
<th>Relief Items Distributed Relief Items/Total cost (crores)</th>
<th>Rehabilitation Plans for Area Affected</th>
<th>Funding Source Own/Donors</th>
<th>Partner NGOs</th>
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<td>Proshika</td>
<td>Narayanganj</td>
<td>-Baby Food per family</td>
<td>-Tubewell Install and Repair</td>
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<td>-Milk Powder</td>
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<td>-HP Biscuits</td>
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Relief operations as indicated in Table 4.9 suggest that the leading NGOs undertook extensive distribution of relief material ranging from baby food, milk powder, dry food like biscuits, rice, cooked roti with molasses, ORS packets, alum for safe drinking water, medicines to stall diseases such as diarrhoea, skin infections, chest infections, other water borne diseases, etc. However, in many instances the quality of cooked food served was inferior and given the time and distance gap between the cooking centre and the place of delivery, the food at times got rotten resulting in secondary infections as a result of the rotten relief supplies.  

Table-4.10 suggests that severe damage caused to crops, life and livelihood suggested that NGOs

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57 BRAC Research Monograph Series No: 15, n.39, pp.17-18.
like BRAC, CARE, CARITAS, Proshika, etc., will have to step in to fill the gap by supplying seeds and seedling in its agricultural rehabilitation package as also cash inputs were required to enable people to go back to their original livelihood during post flood rehabilitation. BRAC, CARE, CARITAS, Proshika undertook major post rehabilitation activities on the basis of their past experiences ranging from food for Work, education in health matters, provision of credit for house building at flexible rates, agricultural rehabilitation package, water body rehabilitation, like making functionally operational and safe the usage of existing tube wells or other water bodies, infrastructure repair, refugee camp management specially in the slums and flood shelters.  

*Lessons Learnt*

Every natural disaster creates its own culture in terms of coping strategies of the people. The catastrophic flood of 1998 that caused colossal damage to crops, property income and livelihood especially among the disadvantaged communities caused immense misery to the affected people whose resilience and determination helped them to never give up under any extreme situation. Courageously and boldly the disadvantaged majority, the worst affected stood up to meet the challenge and develop innovative coping strategies which remarkable helped people survive the odds in many instances.  

According to a study conducted by BRAC in the aftermath of the 1998 floods, relief operations were much better during the 1988 floods as compared to the 1998 floods. Government relief was found to be insufficient compared to the NGO/Private

58 Inventory of PRIP-DPIS, n.17, pp162-168. Also see BRAC Research Monograph Series, No: 15, n.39, pp.23-28.

relief agencies. People reported instances of corruption in distribution of relief. Relief activities of BRAC were insufficient compared to the relief activities of NGOs such as CARE, CARITAS, etc. Many small relief organizations tried to individually provide help and relief from their own small resources and the help of the rich people of the community to the flood victims in the remote areas.

Political pressures resulted in relief being diverted to certain specific constituencies at the cost of others. even within specific constituencies there were partial distribution with at times only a few families getting the relief at the cost of the deprivation of others. Given their past experiences in relief distribution both during the 1988 and 1998 floods people preferred a decentralized relief distribution system, which would make it easier for them to collect relief materials rather than having to swim all the way and stand for hours in wet clothes to collect relief.\(^{60}\)

The devastating floods of 1998 had several important implications for the NGOs weakening the economic backbone of the programme participants of many national as well as local NGOs. The decade long gains of micro credit programme in alleviating poverty and empowering the poor appeared to have come under severe threat of withering away with major investments required by the NGOs to put development back on track and hold back the down-sliding of the beneficiaries.\(^{61}\)

**NGO in the Management of Cyclone related disasters**

**1991 Cyclone: Role of NGOs**

An analysis of the 1991 cyclone shows that NGOs responded with speed and spontaneity to the devastating cyclone and tidal surge. The extent of the death,

\(^{60}\) BRAC Research Monograph Series, No: 15, n.39, pp.17-18.

\(^{61}\) Ibid.
damages and disaster left the affected people entirely dependent on the relief provisions and services for succor and survival. According to the respondents of BCAS, the performance of local, national and international NGOs was much better than that of the local administration as evident from the analysis of their relief activities discussed forthwith.  

The Bangladesh Red Crescent, ADAB, BRAC, Gonoshasthya Kendra, CARE, CCDB, OXFAM, CARITAS, Nijera Kori and a multitude of other NGOs were engaged in relief activities in the affected areas. Gonoshasthya Kendra focused on health and sanitation. They offered free medical treatment to the affected people. CCDB, CARITAS and other organisations supplied clothes, food, water shelter materials and other essentials. NGOs distributed relief in collaboration with the government and local volunteers. Some NGO workers complained that their relief operation was handicapped to a certain extent by the interference of army personnel deployed for the purpose.

Relief operation of the Red Crescent Society was remarkably effective, according to local people. The Red Crescent had 62 shelters in the coastal areas and had planned to have at least 500 by 1995, each costing Taka 2 million with a capacity for sheltering 1000 people.

The first phase of the Red Crescent relief was immediate delivery of food (rice, lentils and oil), utensils and clothes to the worst affected. They set up 100

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63 Raana Haider, n.62, p.68. Also see Raana Haider, 1992, n.62, pp.5-10.

centres along the coast. Each centre was equipped to serve 600 families of 5 members each: 3,000 people with daily rations. The daily allotment, per person, was 350 gms of rice, 60 gms of lentil and 30 gms of oil for one month. Two doctors and two paramedics were assigned to each centre as well.\footnote{Raana Haider, n.62, p.68.}

In Sandwip island, there were 7 NGOs working in the rehabilitation programme. They were: CARE, CARITAS, BRAC, Proshika (MUK), Nijera Kori, Mukti Joddha Sangsad and Samaj Unnayan Sangstha. CARITAS in Sandwip aimed to serve 6,000 families. Its relief material included food, clothes and utensils for 6,000 beneficiaries.\footnote{Cyclone'91, Bulletin No.7, November 1991, CARITAS Bangladesh, Dhaka, pp.9-10. Also see Raana Haider, n.62, p.68. Also see Inventory on Work and Output of the Organisations Active in Disaster Management, n.17, pp. 160-186.}

In Kutubdia island, 5 NGOs worked in the relief and rehabilitation programme. They were BRAC, OXFAM, CARE, EDM and Gonoshasthya Kendra. Oxfam’s activities in Kutubdia included:

- Cooked food ‘khichuri’ distribution in feeding centres: 125,700 meals from 9 to 14 May
- Dry food for all persons in 2 unions, Uttar Dhurung and Lemshi Khali from 16 to 29 May. The food consisted of rice, lentil, potato, salt, garlic, onion, soyabean oil, turmeric powder, chili powder and kerosene oil.
- 1.6 million water purifying tablets. 40 deep tubewells of which 6 had been installed.
- 15 dewatering machines of which 7 were already operating to clean 22 ponds.
- 3,500 pieces of clothing: sari, lungi and towel.
- Donated old garments.
- 20,000 pieces of utensils.
- 3,500 sets of utensils, each set containing of 2 cooking pots, 2 spoons, 1 saucepan, 1 jug, 1 mug, 1 bucket and 1 frying pan.
• 18,000 pieces of baby clothes.\footnote{Inventory on Work and Output of the Organisations Active in Disaster Management, n.17, pp.160-186. Also see Raana Haider, n.62, p.69.}

After the cyclone, CARE Bangladesh undertook its largest disaster response programme ever, anywhere. Almost 30% of CARE Bangladesh’s staff, 435 people, were directly involved in planning and distributing relief supplies. In addition over 200 casual labourers were hired to assist them.\footnote{Raana Haider, n.62, p.69. Also see CARE Bangladesh Annual Report 1991, CARE Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1992, pp.1-10.}

In the period from 29 April to 15 August CARE-Bangladesh accomplished the following:

• More than 66,000 family emergency packages containing rations for five days were distributed by 31 May, meeting the immediate needs of over 40,000 people.

• 25% of CARE’s emergency packages, comprising supplies for about 100,000 people reached the beneficiaries within two weeks of the cyclone. Rather a major achievement considering the constraints posed by disruptions in communication and extremely poor weather conditions.

• 1,502 ponds were pumped clean of salt water contamination, and 90 deep set hand tubewells were installed in areas where they were most needed, providing clean water to over 500,000 people.

• Packets of quick growing vegetable seeds were distributed to 77,000 families to enable them to harvest crop as soon as possible.

• 587,000 kg. of saline resistant rice seeds were distributed to 29,350 farming families.

• Fish nets were distributed to 22,800 fisher-folk who had lost their nets

• 12,000 families with pregnant or lactating mothers and children under two years of age received 8 week food supplements of rice, pulses and high protein biscuits in June, July and August.
• Over 140,000 patients were treated, including 82,000 children under 5, primarily for diarrhea, dysentery and fever.

• Basic health messages were communicated to over 100,000 people who attended 4,500 health education sessions.

• 360,000 person days of labour were created for 18,000 men and women through a test relief programme which repaired roads and embankments and cleaned canals and ponds.

• Logistical support was given to the French voluntary organisation ‘Medecines du Monde’, enabling them to establish a field hospital for four weeks.  

Another NGO that rendered significant services was the Rangpur-Dinajpur Rural Services (RDRS) and is also involved in learning from past experiences.

• RDRS concentrated beginning 8 May, its relief efforts in three worst affected areas—Cox Bazar and Chittagong districts and Sandwip island.

• RDRS provided assistance through NGOs which have staffing and establishment in those areas, eg., CARITAS, CCDB, Nijera Kori. They are the lead partner NGOs for RDRS.

• A RDRS task force of 10 experienced staff were transferred from the field and posted in Chittagong for assisting in planning and coordination and supervision of relief activities with related NGOs.

• Through partner NGOs, RDRS distributed about 245 tonnes of relief goods through overseas and in country procurement.

• Overseas procurement (total 225 tonnes) and 5 charter flights were financed by Lutheran World Federation (RDRS Geneva headquarters) and related agencies in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany, USA, Canada and Australia.

• RDRS donated one day staff salary (Tk. 2,50,000) to the Prime Minister’s Relief Fund.  

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69 Ibid.

70 Raana Haider, n.62, p.70. Also see Inventory on Work and Output of the Organisations Active in Disaster Management, n.17, p.179.
In phase 2 of RDRS rehabilitation programme RDRS is focusing on the following areas:

- Pond dewatering
- Tubewell installation
- Tree planting
- Crop Recovery
- Roads/Embankments; repair and maintenance
- House repairs
- Repair Infrastructure
- Cash for education; 100 beneficiaries

The PRIP-DPIS work in Cyclone 1991 involved

- Grant to ADAB for NGO coordination.
- Contract to CITECH to develop a GIS/data base for cyclone area information coordination.
- Contract to NCL to develop a data base programme for NGOs to monitor their work in cyclones.
- Grant to HKI to extend distress monitoring system in cyclone affected areas.

Lessons Learnt

Despite the enormous contributions made by different relief agencies what has been unfortunate in this entire relief exercise has been the credit that everyone sought for their work as a result of which coordination suffered. While people from one area

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71 Raana Haider, n.62, p.70-71. Also see Inventory on Work and Output of the Organisations Active in Disaster Management, n.17, p.179.

72 Raana Haider, n.62, p.71. Also see Inventory on Work and Output of the Organisations Active in Disaster Management, n.17, p.178.
got relief from two teams, another area was totally left outside the ambit of relief operations.73

According to Enamul Haque of Oxfam, there were some alarming gaps in coordination between the NGOs and Government officials resulting in mismanagement of the programme of relief and rehabilitation. Goods supplied by the NGOs did not reach destinations in time. Sizeable amounts of NGO relief goods rotted at the airport for lack of timely lifting to the affected areas. The goods were not properly marked, so they were misplaced and disappeared. There was competition among NGOs in getting relief material transported to the affected areas. There were some favoured NGOs, which got preference in transporting the relief goods. Other NGOs were naturally discouraged and as a result, tension built up. People felt the access to relief goods was initially difficult as most of the relief goods had been dropped by the roadside. Only those who lived by the roadside had access to relief. People living away from the roadside could not get relief supplies during the crucial early days.74

Aerial dropping of relief goods was insufficient and government relief operations started 2 days after the event. Another problem in aerial dropping was misplacement i.e., much of the relief goods fell into the stagnant saline water and got lost or damaged. One Chatro Union volunteer was fatally hit by a tin of air dropped biscuits.75

According to Nijera Kori workers, there were irregularities in relief and rehabilitation activities. The relief goods were not distributed on the basis of a master

73 Inventory on Work and Output of the Organisations Active in Disaster Management, n.17, pp.160-186. Also see Raana Haider, n.62, p.68. Also see BCAS Field Report, BCAS, Dhaka, May 1991.
74 Raana Haider, n.62, p.69.
75 Raana Haider, n.62, p.69.
In many places there were overlapping of relief activities. Reportedly the same individual was getting relief supplies twice and even thrice a day. Nijera Kori maintained a card for each household since their activities in the region had begun in 1985. After the cyclone, they conducted a survey and obtained a figure for the number of dead. They entered code numbers for each card for the goods each family received. It established six relief camps in Sandwip. Save the Children Fund (UK) distributed relief material on the basis of cards as well.\textsuperscript{76}

CARITAS in Sandwip and OXFAM in Kutubdia were of the opinion that official figures of mortality were exaggerated in order to entice more relief. CARITAS sharply reacted to the relief-oriented psychology of the Sandwip people. It resented unionisation of Sandwip's labour, as a result of which high wages were demanded for any relief service performed by them. However OXFAM thought that in Kutubdia, the government's management of relief work was satisfactory. This was due to the involvement of the Assistant Commissioner in the relief work and the low profile of the Upazila Nirbhahi Officer and the Upazila Chairman.\textsuperscript{77}

Relief work and rehabilitation programme designers felt succor as inadequate. They felt more diversified and specialised needs should have been given adequate attention. CARITAS thought students should be supplied with books and paper to enable them to continue their studies. Oxfam felt the strong need of support for salt traders in Kutubdia was needed.\textsuperscript{78}

According to the complaints of senior relief workers in Sandwip though the NGOs seemed to be doing a good job, they were not reporting detailed plans to the

\textsuperscript{76} Raana Haider, n.62, p.69.

\textsuperscript{77} Raana Haider, n.62, p.69. Also see Cyclone '91, CARITAS Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1992, pp.13-17.

\textsuperscript{78} Raana Haider, n.62, p.69. Also see Cyclone '91, CARITAS Bangladesh, n.71, pp.13-17.
district coordinator. They particularly criticised the tendency of the defence personnel to hanker for publicity and wanting to be seen distributing goods. According to a senior relief worker, "the present local administration is not trained to perform the task of managing a crisis of this nature. Those who were only Circle officers in the 1970s are today working at district level. The weakness was due to the falling standards in education and training. Absolutely raw people have moved to the top and since they guide the Ministers, everything is conducted inefficiently. Relief had started coming in from 4 May. The Navy ships went back to Chittagong twice without unloading the relief as the sea was turbulent and they had not brought any landing boats". 

In the arena of rehabilitation both short-term and long-term CARE, CARITAS, BRAC, Proshika, Nijera Kori, has also drawn significantly from past experiences and identified future ways in which the impact of disaster vulnerabilities can be reduced and emergency response can be made more effective. PRIP itself organises workshops in Chittagong and Dhaka with NGOs on lessons learnt from relief phase and moving onto rehabilitation phase. Another NGO that rendered significant services was the Rangpur-Dinajpur Rural Services is also involved in learning from past experiences.

The 1991 cyclone also made CARE formulate a set of future plans in terms of ensuring Disaster Preparedness and reducing the vulnerability of the populace.

- Train a large number of field staff in simple but important health messages, principally the importance of pure water and oral rehydration salts and proper use of these.

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79 Raana Haider, n.62, p.69.
• Support the preparation of health education materials appropriate for use after a disaster.

• Work towards standardising the sizing and packaging of water purification tablets.

• Encourage the idea of rainwater catchments as a source of clean water.

• A disaster preparedness /response unit will be created as a permanent unit within CARE Bangladesh. The unit will review the Disaster Preparedness Plan in the light of experiences from the cyclone, train staff in Disaster Preparedness, network with other NGOs and other organisations and also play a leading role in future disaster responses.

• Develop in the Chittagong district an intended programme focused on health and agriculture that serves both to improve living conditions and to prepare people to deal with the disaster and its consequences.  

1997 Cyclone: Role of NGOs

The severe cyclone of 19 May 1997 code named Helen swept with full fury over the south-eastern districts of Bangladesh, viz, Chittagong, Cox's bazaar, Bandarban and Rangamati on 19 May 1997. Other areas including Bhola, Feni and Noakhali districts were also hit. However, the worst devastation was caused in the case of the districts of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar. The Bangladesh Meteorological Office tracked the movement of the cyclonic storm for nearly 4 days and its status was widely publicized at frequent intervals through the electronic and print media. Bangladesh Radio and Television constantly issued cyclone warning signals at the

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required intervals as received from the BMD, which finally reached danger signal no.10. 24 hours before its landfall on St. Martin Island / Teknaf coast, situated in the southern tip of the country.

A total of around 39 international, regional and national NGOs intervened for the purpose of providing disaster relief most of them for a period of 12 days, ending on 2 June 1997. Whereas the BDRCS played a crucial role in pre-disaster warning dissemination and ensuring timely evacuation the others like CARITAS, CARE, BRAC ADAB and Proshika played an important role in terms of relief and rehabilitation which involved huge financial and physical resources.

In the pre-disaster stage (dissemination of disaster warnings, awareness of requisite preparedness measures to be taken and pre-disaster evacuation) as well as subsequent stages the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society volunteers under the Cyclone preparedness Programme (CPP) played a commendable role both in Dhaka as well as in other districts. It is estimated that more than 1 million people were evacuated to 365 cyclone shelters and other places of safety, where BDRCS volunteers played a major role. Of them some 300,000 took shelter in 200 cyclone shelters and school buildings built by CARITAS.

ADAB as in the case of 1988 floods and 1991 cyclone played a crucial role in matters of coordination activities, information and data exchange in the event of a natural disaster both at the government-NGO plane and at the NGO-NGO plane. ADAB in the 1997 cyclone started its activities from 15 May 1997 immediately after cyclone warnings were transmitted by the BMD. As soon as the cyclone warning signal system reached danger signal number 10, ADAB decided to organise

coordination meetings involving ADAB Disaster Task Force and the concerned NGOs that continued till such time as necessary even in the aftermath of a disaster. The primary aim of these meetings were to take stock of the situation, share information amongst the participants and be informed of individual NGOs planned measures in the aftermath of the cyclone.\textsuperscript{82}

The cardinal agenda of discussion after the cyclone struck were, interaction on information available from the affected area, possible NGO disaster relief response in the light of Aerial Survey undertaken by the ADAB Task Force and NGO rehabilitation plan. By 22 May 1997 the ADAB Task Force under its convenor, Saidur Rahman had prepared for further discussions a primary sketch of the most affected areas, casualty-damage-loss parameters, people’s need and disaster relief and rehabilitation components with reference to cost and time frame.

In addition, 24 hour control room was established at ADAB head office at Dhaka as well as at Chittagong (ADAB regional office) and at Cox’s bazaar (BGS office) where 5 and 6 meetings were held respectively to constantly monitor and take necessary action. Press releases were issued at regular intervals detailing NGO relief operations and rehabilitation plans. ADAB participated at the NDMC and other committee meetings representing the NGO sector. It furnished timely reports based on ongoing NGO relief activities to the NGO Affairs Bureau and concerned donor agencies. It also ensured necessary link-up with potential NGOs in respect of operations in the field.\textsuperscript{83}

The total amount spent in relief in the aftermath of the 1997 cyclone by the NGOs of Bangladesh with international assistance was Tk. 2,56,49500 crore.


\textsuperscript{83} \textit{ADAB Activity Report on the 1991 Cyclone}, n.82.
A comparative analysis (table 4.11) of the role of NGOs in terms of relief and rehabilitation in the aftermath of the May 1997 cyclone reveals that relief interventions included supplies of food, medicines and basic daily necessity goods to help them tide over the immediate crisis and be able to avert secondary affects like diseases and outbreak of epidemics. Rehabilitation measures included housing by Proshika, agricultural rehabilitation, decontamination, desalinization of ponds and tubewells by BRAC, CARE and CARITAS, cash for work programme, repair of road and educational establishments, construction of cyclone shelters, by CARITAS and BRAC, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Organisation</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Relief Interventions</th>
<th>Rehabilitation Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CARE-Bangladesh</td>
<td></td>
<td>Relief items/ Amount (Taka)</td>
<td>Programme Area/Amount (in' 000 Taka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Moheshkhali</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rice- Housing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kutubdia</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pulse- Pond dewatering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cox Bazar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadar Thana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relief packets with utensils and daily necessity goods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4,181,800</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,436.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARITAS</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Banshkhali</td>
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<td>Anowara</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandwip Thana of Chittagong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chakoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moheshkhali Thana of Cox Bazar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Rice- Housing</td>
<td></td>
<td>96,675.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Pulse- Agricultural Rehabilitation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-Dry Food- Latrine Supply</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Medicine- Road reaping</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Daily necessity goods- Plastic Sheet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5,128,086</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>BRAC</td>
<td></td>
<td>-Dry Food- Tubewell Repairing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Banshkhali Thana of Cox Bazar district</td>
<td>-Medicine- Social Forestry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sadar Thana of Cox's Bazar district</td>
<td>-Housing- Housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Daily necessity goods</td>
<td>-Poultry- Repair of educational institutions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>365,328</td>
<td></td>
<td>-Economic Rehabilitation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-Cyclone Shelter</td>
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<td>Proshika</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pahartali</td>
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<tr>
<td>Banshkhali</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panchlaish</td>
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<td>Salkania</td>
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<td>Bandar</td>
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<td>Daboul Muring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sadar Thana of Chittagong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chakoria and Cox's bazar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thana of Cox's Bazar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Companigonj, m Hatia and Ramgoli than of Noakhali district</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Rice- Housing</td>
<td></td>
<td>17,500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Pulse-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Medicine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,760,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Lessons Learnt

As over 80% of the population of Bangladesh live in rural areas—where they have to be reached and convinced, the role of NGOs in Bangladesh become a formidable one and assumes special importance. Development has to reach out effectively to the vast majority of the people, the people most in need, the people on whom the future and well being of Bangladesh depends. The development process has to not only reach out to the majority but start from the grass root level in order to strengthen coping capacities to face the aftermath of disasters.84

The success of NGO programmes in terms of future reconstruction and rehabilitation to effectively reduce the vulnerability of the populace depends not only on their implementation record but also in the extent of involvement of people at the grass roots; where economic, social and political growth takes place. They thus act as the second channel through which the people of Bangladesh have been able to further develop their capacity and scope to face the onslaught of future disasters.85

The NGO managed schemes for micro-credit and social development have become world models as much as the success of NGOs such as BRAC’s, BDRCS and CARE’s education, training and health programmes as also Proshika and others in non-farm extension services, animal husbandry and poultry rearing. They stand out in sharp contrast to the poor quality of public sector delivery mechanisms. The key advantages of NGOs delivery are beneficiary participation, high staff commitment and constant programme monitoring. They also constantly use client feedback to modify and improve their programmes.86

84 Jowshan. A.Rahman, n.18, p.207.
85 Jowshan A.Rahman, n.18, p. 207.
Limitations in NGO Activities in the Disaster-Development Nexus

Despite the significant success of NGO programmes there exist various limitations. Critics point to the fact that NGOs are not accountable to the public and consequently there have been instances where certain NGOs have worked irresponsibly. To cite an example, BRAC in its study of the 1998 floods admitted the existence of significant flaws in its relief distribution mechanism and the need for a more coordinated disaster management mechanism with sufficient emphasis on all its stages. The failure to reschedule loan repayments, despite instruction, by many BRAC offices also threatened to offset the gains reaped by its member in micro-credit during 1998 floods. Moreover operational expenses of NGOs are extremely high in most cases.

As Bangladesh is a land of NGOs, donors do sometimes sarcastically mention that there are too many traders in poverty and disaster management in the country. Though the country receives international attention in the event of natural disasters with majority of the funds flowing in during crisis events, it is not unrealistic to estimate that the total number of NGOs, which get themselves involved in the post-disaster rehabilitation programmes, is actually much higher. NGOs working in health, education, sanitation, agriculture, rural development, fishery, livestock, and income generation normally take up integrated rehabilitation programmes after disaster. However, what is needed is a coordination of the package rehabilitation programmes of the NGOs working in the disaster affected areas. Their programmes should not be overlapping in terms of villages adopted by NGOs for sustainable development that would build the coping capacities of the people in the event of future disaster.\(^{87}\) The

\(^{87}\) During the course of my field work interview the BRAC, Director Research Mushtaque R. Chowdhury did agree that there are overlapping areas for instance where a particular village has been adopted by two large NGOs when one of them sincerely working in that village would have sufficed or
programmes should strengthen the local voluntary groups and NGOs along with the local communities to face future disasters.\(^{88}\)

The awareness of demanding what is right and just has grown to the point of influencing the change in political regime. Today after a cyclone or flood the people of Bangladesh organize themselves and come forward to demand assistance from the government or the NGOs. They are no longer passive victims, vulnerable to the wrath of nature.\(^{89}\)

A growing number of ordinary people now expect that in normal times they will have access to credit, in times of emergencies or stress the first priority on world’s resources for relief. These expectations have come, thanks to the generation of consciousness by the media of both national and international agencies, especially in response to natural disasters. The internationalization of disasters has improved the confidence of the impoverished, to demand and subsequently receive quick and proper assistance after a disaster. The profile of poverty in Bangladesh is extremely worrisome. The poor should be made capable enough to use their imagination to effectively solve the problems, which they face on a daily basis. This has to be recognized and supported by the NGOs working in the area of disaster management.\(^{90}\)

The other limitations that NGOs suffered from are:

during relief in the event of a disaster, surplus relief may have reached a particular area with another area being totally left out due to such overlapping.


\(^{89}\) Jowshan Rahman, n.18, p.215.

\(^{90}\) Jowshan Rahman, n.18, p.215.
• There has been limited coverage of the small and marginal farmers who are too rich to be eligible for micro credit, but too poor to be of interest to providers of institutional credit, fragmented coverage within a village, regional imbalance and narrow focus in targeting.

• NGOs are yet to reach the hard core poor primarily because the nature of the micro-credit and other income generating programs require possession of basic assets as well as social and financial skill and stable habitation. Such requirements leave out the extreme poor.

• The group selection of members, which is the source of group solidarity and good repayment performance means however, that those of the poor who are perceived by the community as ‘unreliable’ remain unserved.

• Coverage of a NGOs programme in a particular geographical area depends on its staff strength. The number of the poor may be much more than the capacity of the NGO to cover. As a result, within a geographical area, the poor are divided into beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of NGO programmes. Such fragmented coverage fails to secure an overall improvement of poverty in the locality.

• NGOs tend to concentrate their activities in certain regions of the country. This leads to a duplication of activities.

• The strategy of the NGOs to target only the poor appeared to be a well-defined and effective entry point into the development arena in the early seventies. However 20 years later, this approach, paradoxically, limits the effectiveness of NGOs in combating poverty. The ground reality is that there are segments of the rural population who are too rich to be eligible for micro-credit or other NGO provided services, but not rich enough or well connected with the rural power
structure to be able to access such services from the public sector or the market. These groups are the marginal farmers or the rural artisans such as weavers, dairy farmers etc. Most NGOs rigidly defined eligibility criteria exclude such groups and the evidence is that over time these groups have slid below the poverty line, thus increasing the number of the poor. Some of the NGOs now recognise these problems and are experimenting with pilot programs for marginal farmers and rural artisans.91

The planning and intervention in accordance with the form and content of disaster aid do not consciously incorporate the aspect of promoting disaster preparedness. Most responses have therefore, primarily remained in the form of relief. The form and content of disaster aid has only promoted this approach. However, given the greater degree of flexibility of the NGOs and their regular contact with the people residing in remote and disaster prone areas, their involvement during times of disasters and post-disaster activities have been very positive including efforts that have contributed towards long term vulnerability reduction of the populace. The relationship between the government and NGOs in efforts ranging from development to disaster management and vulnerability reduction have been oscillating from distrust to ambivalence to cordiality depending on the attitudes of the political government and the bureaucrats holding key positions. There has however come about considerable change in the attitude of government towards NGOs over the years. Governments have since the disastrous cyclone of 1991 increasingly become much

more supportive of NGOs than it has ever been before. The Chart 4.1 shows NGO-NGO and government-NGO coordination in the event of disasters.\textsuperscript{92}

\textit{Disaster with Development: NGOs Future Interventions}

Some of the major activities of the NGOs, which needs to be given adequate attention are:

\textit{Relief and Rehabilitation}

A more coordinated and just distribution of relief materials and the capacity to involve a larger number of volunteers from amongst the community for such operations. A much more effective disaster and post-disaster medical relief and health services accompanied by trained cadres should also be developed. The form of material relief being distributed after natural disasters in many instances have led to wastage and misuse since it did not consider the cultural and need aspects of the people in specific areas. These practices of non-acceptable material aid to distressed people still persist.\textsuperscript{93}

However, the rush to provide relief at the time of urgent need has had unintended effects resulting in duplication of relief efforts in certain areas and total negligence as far as relief is concerned in others. Given the need to incorporate a more comprehensive and multi-sectoral planning and adherence to stricter norms, support for physical infrastructure work has not yet not been incorporated in determining the

\textsuperscript{92} View based on Interviews conducted during field-work of people from both the governmental and non-governmental sectors.

Chart 4.1
NGO-NGO and Government-NGO Coordination in the Event of Disaster

Governmental Institutions:
Prime Minister and Cabinet;
National Disaster Management Council;
Inter-Ministerial Disaster Management Coordination Committee
Disaster Management Bureau

NGO Affairs Bureau
ADAB (NGO Coordinating Body)

Donors

NGOs
BRAC
CARE
CARITAS
Proshika
Grameen Bank
Others

BDRCS
CPP

District Disaster Management Committee

Voluntary Organisations
Professional Associations

amount and content of aid in disaster prone areas. What is required is a large participation of the community in the planning and implementation of relief and reconstruction activities synthesized with indigenous coping strategies—ensuring people’s participation. Effective mechanism should be designed to ensure better and more effective coordination and cooperation amongst NGOs, government and personal initiatives for even and equitable distribution of relief and implementation of rehabilitation measures.94

**Infrastructure Development and Provision of Sustainable Livelihood**

The kind of disaster aid provided by both the government and the NGOs and their subsequent actions have increased dependency of the local populace on relief at various levels. Very few NGOs have worked effectively towards reducing the level of dependence and increase the level of self-reliance and self-dependence through development of sustainable livelihood programmes. A greater degree of flexibility, adoption and modification of physical infrastructure development work is required to suit the local conditions and aspirations of the people. In this content, a great deal of experimentation by NGOs especially on modified forms of housing for special disaster prone areas needs special mention—e.g.: Housing in the flood prone districts of Bangladesh, the newly designed cyclone shelters and housing in the coastal areas of Chittagong, Cox Bazar, etc. The NGOs in few districts in recent years have also been largely involved in micro watershed development, forest plantations and other forms of micro conservation experiments in disaster prone areas.95

The total non-use and lack of maintenance of raised school buildings and multi purpose shelters after the 1988 floods and a similar fate to houses and cyclone shelters

94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
constructed after the 1991 cyclone. Moreover during the 1998 floods (flood shelters) and 1994 cyclones (cyclone shelters) the inadequacy both quantitative as well as qualitative of these shelters have raised many questions regarding their effectiveness in reducing the vulnerability of a disaster prone populace which was not evident during the 1997 cyclone. Resorting to eucalyptus and other exotic breeds plantations under social forestry programs have also had negative environmental effects. The aspect of protection of livestock (a crucial element of livelihood in rural areas) during national disaster and post disaster operations in aspects of animal health and development has been an area of neglect by both the government and the NGOs.96

In the arena of micro-credit both in rural and urban areas greater facilities and flexibility in terms of rescheduling of savings deposits and loan repayments, provisions of new loans for agricultural and other self-employment activities. This should be accompanied by generation of wage employment for agricultural labourers in rural areas and industrial workers engaged in small and medium scale enterprises in urban areas.97

Disaster Preparedness and Training Activities

Only few NGOs such as the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and CARE have been involved in training and awareness building amongst the local communities for disaster preparedness. However, further improvement of training systems for disaster preparedness is essential. The NGOs have also been involved in creating and promoting community funds, grain banks and other resource base amongst the community for disaster preparedness. All NGOs should have a disaster management

96 Ibid.
cell endowed with relevant programmes and future plans accompanied by a team of trained and dedicated cadres with grassroot experiences to execute them. Regular local workshops should be organized and suggestions incorporated from these into the planning and development process.

During normal times, regular drills and training activities should be provided to the local communities and these should be harmonized with their indigenous coping strategies. Educational programmes should be so designed as to supply vital emergency relief and rehabilitation inputs covering health, hygiene and other related issues of concern for the affected community. What is necessary is an integration of disaster preparedness and training activities with long term development needs of the Bangladeshi. Rehabilitation and reconstruction work has also to be in consonance with the long term development needs of the community. They should also incorporate and include disaster preparedness and training as a part and parcel of community’s normal time activities inorder to develop and strengthen the coping capacity of the people in the event of future disasters. 98