

Research Summary

By receiving more resources than the official development assistance (ODA) programs of any other country, Japanese non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have recently attracted much attention because of their trans-border spectacular activities in the arenas of humanitarian aid and refugee relief throughout Asia, Africa, Latin America and elsewhere, beyond their increasingly vigorous engagement in Japan's domestic front. Nonetheless, the presence of Japanese NGOs is somewhat limited in South Asia, admitting that Japan with enormity of its development aid has strenuously and consistently been supporting the South Asian developing nations for a long time. It is also obvious that the performances of NGOs based in North America and Europe outshine Japanese NGOs services in the South Asian region. Furthermore, no strong cooperation at local levels unluckily exist between the two sides, regardless of the fact that Japanese prefectural and local governments spend millions of yen every year on sister-ties with overseas cities and local councils. On the other hand, despite abundant donations from Japan, other bilateral partners, donor agencies and international NGOs, Bangladesh has still sizeable shortfalls in such key issues as poverty alleviation, basic education, public healthcare and environmental sustainability. Under this backdrop, the research attempts to explore the future prospects of the constructive role played by Japanese NGOs in bolstering sustainable development initiatives taken by the South Asian nations with particular reference to Bangladesh.

To carry out this project, a theoretical framework of 'NGOs, human security and sustainable development' has been sketched. As observation is an integral part of any sound research, the approach of the research included field-study trip to Tokyo. A field-survey in Dhaka has been accomplished as well. The research adopted entailed collecting data and information from diverse related sources. Besides, interviews were conducted with a variety of individuals with a view to collect reliable and factual input pertinent to the study. To draw the nature and extent of Japanese NGO contribution to the South Asian region, the research used a macro model, when offering an empirical case study from Bangladesh (the researcher's homeland).

In addition to 'academic value', the study merits 'social significance'. To be more specific: First, the research argues why Japan as the most generous development partner ought to irrevocably acknowledge that the South Asian countries deserve more contributions made by Japan's 'third sector' (*i.e.*, non-state actors including NGOs, civil society, volunteerism, etc.), when these non-state actors demonstrate their growing commitment to fostering their human security pursuits worldwide. Second, it proposes that collaborations among NGOs and civil society as well as twinning schemes between local governments should be strengthened in view of the accelerating weight of the role they have come to play in the new realities of globalization. Third, the research also suggests that Japanese 'third sector' as a decisive variable needs to further contrive to promote the newfangled forms of effective partnership and aid coordination together with other major donors, national and local governments as well as civil society of the developing countries of South Asia. Fourth, as the findings show, an enhanced role played by Japanese NGOs could valuably contribute to poverty reduction and sustainability efforts in such impoverished countries as the South Asian ones, where more than 35% of population still struggles to survive in acute poverty (*i.e.*, living on less than US\$1 a day). Finally, this piece emphasizes that Bangladesh must reap the fullest benefits from the promising role of Japanese NGOs, as it aspires to be a 'poverty-free, self-reliant and prosperous' nation in the 21st century.

Because of its abovementioned originality, uniqueness and value, this policy-driven research as an appropriate reference model might be of use to the concerned academicians, scholars, researchers, policymakers as well as professionals for their inquest about the emerging patterns of Japanese NGOs' representation in some selected developing countries.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

- **Date of conference:** 22-23 October 2009
- **Venue:** Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS), Hanoi, Vietnam
- **Name of conference:** The 2nd International Conference of the Japanese Studies Association in Southeast Asia (JSA-ASEAN)
- **Title of presentation:** “Making a Growing Contribution of Japan’s Non-State Actors to South Asia’s Human Security”
- **Presenter:** (Dr) Monir Hossain Moni, Associate Professor, Dept of Political Science & Japan Study Center, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

NA

Research Monograph (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)

- **Name of publisher:** Center for Japan Studies (CJS), Asia Pacific Institute for Global Studies (APIGS), Dhaka, Bangladesh
- **Tentative date of release:** 31 December 2009
- **Title of the special research monograph:** “Promoting Japanese NGOs’ Contribution to Human Security in South Asia and Bangladesh”
- **Author:** (Dr) Monir Hossain Moni