

Assessing the Role of Civil Society Organizations in Promoting Good Governance: Case of Nagaad Network Hargeisa, Somaliland

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ABSTRACT : The study was carried out to assess the role of civil society organizations in promoting good governance in Somaliland. The study adopted case study research design and 50 respondents were sampled. Primary data was collected using questionnaires and key informant interviews with NAGAAD NETWORK members and employees. Data was analyzed using SPSS. It was revealed that, NAGAAD NETWORK has contributed a lot towards promotion of good governance in Somaliland especially supporting the participation of women in the decision making processes, fighting against gender based violence, increasing visibility of women in political leadership, raising awareness in communities to demand women rights, and improving women's economic empowerment. The study recommends that, the government of Somaliland should formally recognize the contributions made by civil society organizations and expedite active participation of civil society organizations in the national and international policy formulation and reforms.

Key words: - CSOs, promoting, good governance, Somaliland.

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of civil society has roots in Western Europe. In Africa, it has continued to gain more prominence especially in political and development aspects in the 21st century, this is partly due to continuous waves of democratization across the world including Africa. Civil society has been well recognized as an important third sector whose strengths have positively influenced state and market and it is an important agent for promoting transparency, responsibility, accountability, and openness (Kansiiime, 2019). Similarly, Edwards and Hulme (1996) regard civil society organizations as 'counterweight' to state power. Abrahamsen (2000) affirms that the rise of civil society organizations is linked with the paradigm shift in international development policy whereby by good governance and democracy became the foundation of development discourse.

One of the greatest challenges faced by developing countries is over-centralization of decision making and absence of stakeholders' involvement in day today running of the state. It is worth noting that this weakens policy processes, decreases efficiency and affects economic growth. This is where civil society organizations comes in to play a crucial role by contributing to transparency, accountability and generally good governance (Abdullahi and Gana, 2017).

Civil society organizations in Somaliland have played a crucial role in the rebuilding of the nation after the war, they have filled in for government by performing the role of service delivery to the citizens. They have done a tremendous job especially by speaking on behalf of the disadvantaged and voiceless like youth, women and the disabled (Rossi, 2014). They have filled governance vacuum and have provided vital services to the Somalilanders, these services include promotion of peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and democratization and have provided humanitarian aid. Even after the revival of functioning government, CSOs continued to act as watchdogs, facilitators, election observers and innovators (Safer World, 2018).

However, since 2010, their power has decreased and their capacity to collective action at national level has dwindled. Rossi further observes that most CSOs have been weakened by the current government which has recruited vocal CSO members into government positions. In addition, the current government has been co-

opting civil society; its independence has been visibly eroded and the human rights violations the government commits are not being addressed. It was further revealed that some CSO members have expressed fear that criticizing the government might affect international recognition process of Somaliland. Nevertheless, umbrella organizations like NAGAAD have persistently provided services to the disadvantaged groups (Rossi, 2014). It is worth noting that CSOs which are in advocacy are usually not in good terms with the governments. Such CSOs do challenge governments on issues that government regard as 'sensitive' and since most CSOs are funded by foreign donors, government in developing world become suspicious of their intentions. All these justify the argument that most governments especially in developing world do not tolerate groups, institutions, and organizations that try to challenge them even when they are legitimate (Kansiime, 2019).

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There has been proliferation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the last three decades in Africa and the entire world at large. In Somaliland, CSOs have been pivotal in rebuilding of the country after the war and have done a tremendous job in as far as service delivery is concerned. Their functions include: protection of citizens' freedoms; monitoring the activities of the state; advocacy; intermediation and facilitation between state and citizens; building communities through voluntary interactions among other functions (Edwards, 2009).

Despite their importance in the society, many of the civil society organizations in the country struggle to influence the government and policy makers on various issues of people's interest. The government continues to mistrust them and even misunderstand their roles. Their role of promoting good governance in Somaliland remains elusive. The point of departure in this study was to assess the role of civil society organizations in promoting good governance in Somaliland with focus on NAGAAD Network.

III. MAIN RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the study was to assess the role of civil society organizations in promoting good governance in Somaliland with focus on NAGAAD Network.

Specific Objectives

- i) To explore areas where NAGAAD NETWORK has been successful in advocating change in society.
- ii) To examine the NAGAAD network's role in promoting good governance.
- iii) To assess the mechanisms used by NAGAAD NETWORK in advocating for change in society.
- iv) To examine limitations faced by CSOs in promoting good governance in Somaliland.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted in this study was case study research design. Study population comprised of NAGAAD Network members and employees. Primary data was collected using questionnaires, key informant interview with NAGAAD Network members and employees and data was analyzed using SPSS. Secondary data was mainly obtained from textbooks, journal articles, official gazettes, and conference papers.

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Areas where NAGAAD NETWORK has been successful in advocating for change in society.

NAGAAD network has been largely successful in advocating for change in the society because efforts and emphasis have been put on helping rural women and most of NAGAAD projects focus on women's empowerment and getting their rights in terms of education economic empowerment and participation in decision making process. Thus, the impact has been felt in many communities where they operate. Due to NAGAAD's contribution on ground, currently, girl's enrolment rate is more than that of boys (in some urban areas). In the higher learning institutions, the number of female students has significantly increased, and for the coming years they may outnumber male students.

In addition, in Somaliland, a woman's right to own property was not understood due to historic and traditional norms, however, as a result of work done by NAGAAD women have become economically empowered and have ultimately become bread winners in some Somaliland families today. One official was quoted saying:

NAGAAD began to provide small grants for women's business start-ups and women's self-help groups in order to provide women with skills training such as sewing and tailoring. This has contributed to an improvement in their economic status and has enabled them to feed their children and thus improved their wellbeing, and access to financial management courses for women's better business management.

Furthermore, NAGAAD believes that women's participation in the decision making process can be a master key to realize a meaningful life, i.e. access to all other rights including equal economic opportunities and inclusive decision making for all social groups.

Table 1: Showing major areas where NAGAAD has been successful in advocating for change in Somaliland society

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Promoting women's economic empowerment	18	36
Improving women's and Girl's Education	12	24
Promoting participation of Women in the decision making processes	15	30
Civic education	5	10
Total	50	100

The findings above in the table illustrate that, Nagaad Network has been successful in advocating change in the society as the large portion of the respondents 18(36%) indicated that Nagaad network has promoted women's economic empowerment, in addition, 15(30%) revealed that Nagaad network has promoted participation of women in the decision making process, while 12 (24%) reported that Nagaad has improved women and girl child education, and 5(10%) indicated that Nagaad has been involved in civic education in Somaliland's society especially during elections.

NAGAAD network's role in promoting good governance

Findings revealed that NAGAAD network plays an important role in promoting good governance in Somaliland through public administration reform and anti-corruption crusades, it is the voice of the voiceless people especially women, it has been at forefront in ensuring that government remains accountable to its citizens. In addition, NAGAAD has been at forefront in fighting against gender based violence, child early and forced marriages, ape, etc. in all Somaliland regions. Nagaad empowers women and other community members with legal knowledge through training of paralegals, networking with legal aid service providers and capacity building of law enforcement officers with emphasis on female members of the police. Nagaad also advocates and lobby for legislative and policy changes; increasing access to legal aid services and ways of seeking redress for victims of violence, bridges the gap between justice and law enforcement institutions and provides psychosocial counseling.

NAGAAD NETWORK have also petitioned the ex-president of Somaliland to put in place women quota as a "parliamentary agenda" although the president has not made affirmative statement for women quota in the parliament, it remains unsuccessful attempt. NAGAAD also trains political female aspirants on how to effectively increase their capacity to contest political elections. NAGAAD campaigns for human rights for all social groups, but very specifically focused on the rights of women. It was further reported that Nagaad network plays a crucial in promoting good governance in Somaliland through taking part in elections monitoring and gives the community civic education and has published a Guidebook on Voter Education. It has participated in promoting women's quota as a "parliamentary agenda so that women can take part in decision making and amending laws which will increase their public visibility. In an interview with Human resource officer, he was quoted saying:

Nagaad network plays an important role in Promoting good governance in many aspects in justice sector we give training of paralegals, networking with legal aid service providers and capacity building of law enforcement officers. We also advocate and lobby for legislative and policy changes; increasing access to legal aid services and ways of seeking redress for victims of violence, Nagaad network also plays critical role for policy analysis and changes in the parliament we also strive that government should be accountable to its citizens (Human Resource officer, NAGAAD Network October 12th 2019).

Mechanisms used by Nagaad Network in advocating change in Society.

Network awareness campaigns is one of the mechanisms used by Nagaad to advocate for change in society. These awareness campaigns are conducted through the radios, media campaigns, house hold survey and Focus group discussions. They are conducted in rural areas where most of the government services don't reach. Similarly, NAGAAD uses meeting network platforms. These network platforms are organized by NAGAAD Network in the areas of their interventions. These meeting platforms include meeting with village committees and discussing their problems, and mobilizing community for action. A group of people meet and discuss about

a specific issues affecting the community for instance, in case of outbreak of diseases, issues related to elections, domestic violence, and child abuse among others. In addition, NAGAAD Network teams use this method to discuss about their interventions, how the project will succeed, what change they want to see happen. These were said to be very helpful in as far as gathering information pertaining the organization was concerned. It is through same platform that collective voice for women is enhanced. For instance NAGAAD Network mainly strives for women economic empowerment and also women to receive their rights. Therefore, NAGAAD Network collects the voice of voiceless women, girls and marginalized people and advocates for their rights. This is enhanced through capacity building whereby NAGAAD uses it to build and empower girls and youth through trainings, seminars and workshops in their schools to learn soft skills such as Technical, Vocational and Education and Training (TVET).

Participatory planning is one of the other mechanism used by NAGAAD in advocating for change in the society particularly in promoting women rights and empowerment. NAGAAD has been coaching number of people who are engaged with NAGAAD Network to empower women. These include journalists. This was further explained by the project manager during the interview:

NAGAAD uses participatory planning as one of the mechanisms in achieving its goals of advocating change in the society. We use participatory planning and advocacy strategy to assess the situation which needs to be solved. Planning is given high priority at NAGAAD on the ground that plan provides a framework of how the goals and objectives of organization should be taken so as to achieve the desired goals set by NAGAAD in advocating change in the society. (Key Informant interview, Project Manager Protection and Inclusion of NAGAAD Network October 12th 2019).

Collaborating and engaging with other activist organizations is another mechanism used by NAGAAD Network to advocate for change in the society. In this method, NAGAAD engages and partners with other activist organizations who are working in the same areas and projects as they share information and resources to each other so that their projects are effective. This implies that, NAGAAD realizes the importance of involving other civil society organizations to bring change in the country. NAGAAD Network has been cooperating with different civil society organizations in various matters like health, policy advocacy, gender issues, political issues and economic issues as well. There are different organizations that partner with Nagaad, these include, Nafis network, ADO, TASCO among others.

Media campaigns. In this method, NAGAAD uses social media and radios to spread messages and awareness. This awareness is usually about rights, elections, effects of immigration on youth, benefits of breastfeeding to young infants and gender based violence effects in the society, messages are disseminated through social media and radio. In the same way, NAGAAD composes strategic information and disseminates it through media in order to reach the majority concerning the women rights and empowerment in the society. This information is usually about gender equality, domestic violence and women awareness on their freedoms, etc.

CSOs limitation when promoting good governance

Table 2: Showing limitations faced by CSOs

CSO limitation	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of cooperation from government	14	28
Weak network among CSOs	4	8
Inadequate funds	16	32
Limited skills	4	8
All above	12	24
Total	50	100

The study found out that in-adequate funds is the major challenge faced by many CSOs in their quest to promote good governance. This accounted for 16(32%) of the total responses from the study participants. Like any other CSOs in the developing world, CSOs in Somaliland including Nagaad do not have enough resources to implement their activities related to good governance and some other obligations in the community. Most of the projects and operations are donor dependent, so, sometimes funds from donors, from diaspora communities and development partners are not enough. Furthermore, 14(28%) of the respondents were of the opinion that CSOs are not promoting good governance issues due to lack of cooperation from the government. It should be noted that government tend to work hand in hand with CSOs which are in service delivery like health and are adversary with CSOs which are in advocacy related services. Other respondents 4(8%) revealed that weak networks within CSOs themselves has limited their ability to promote good governance in the country. Limited skills by the people working in CSOs is another limitation that has in one way or the other crippled efforts

towards promoting good governance. A large portion of respondents 12(24%) revealed that all above limitations have collectively affected CSOs' quest to promote good governance in the country.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study fundamentally looked at the role of civil society organizations in promoting good governance. It is imperative to conclude that NAGAAD has been successful in doing so especially in four aspects namely: women's economic empowerment, improving girls' education, participation of women in the decision making processes and carrying out civic education. Worth noting is that to a great extent, NAGAAD'S interventions have been effective in promoting good governance in Somaliland citing a case where NAGAAD was involved in political reforms in justice and advocates for poor people to get justice, conducting trainings with paralegals and judges, participating in awareness about inhuman Female Genital Mutilation (FMG) and gender based violence among other activities. This study further concludes that NAGAAD has indeed played a great role in promoting good governance in Somaliland through various activities such as participation in public administration reforms and anti-corruption campaigns, being the voice of the voiceless people, ensuring that government remains accountable to its citizens. For instance, it has had many mechanisms where it has advocated for change but the most prominent ones being network awareness campaigns which are conducted through the radios, and social media campaigns. Above all, these were mainly conducted in the rural areas where most of the government services don't reach.

In this study, we recommend that the government of Somaliland should formally recognize the contributions made by civil society organizations and facilitate active participation of civil society organizations in the national and international policy formulation and reforms. In addition, government should strive to encourage and promote public awareness, advocacy and support the operations of civil society organizations. In so doing, the government should recognize the civil society organizations as cooperating partners in development rather than foes or adversaries, instead, the government should establish a mechanism of financing civil society organizations in order to promote this partnership in development.

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