



Non-Governmental Organizations in the Kurdistan Government Anti- Corruption Policymaking: Achievements and Obstacles

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ABSTRACT

The government national anti-corruption strategy has been formulated recently by the Kurdistan regional government. The strategy is proposed and drafted by the anti-corruption NGOs and adapted by the anti-corruption policymakers. It is adapted by the government and considered as a government policy to fight against corruption. Yet, the government national anti-corruption strategy is unimplemented properly. Thus, this paper aims to investigate and explore why the strategy is not implemented or lack implemented. Accordingly, qualitative case study research design has been adopted to conduct the study, and semi-structured face-to-face interview has been nominated to collect data. Nine respondents have been chosen to be interviewed including NGO members, policymakers and experts. Besides, the national anti-corruption strategy has taken as a case study due to the strategy is fully drafted by the NGOs. Consequently, the study found that, the NGOs listed three demands during the strategy formulation process. Their first and second demands have been achieved however the third and most important demand did not achieve which is the strategy implementation. Accordingly, the paper found several factors which negatively contributed to the NGOs' lack of achievements. Lack of government political will, NGOs' lack relationship with government, bureaucracy, lack of human resources, lack of using media and NGOs' financial problems were the factors which restricted NGOs to achieve their fundamental objective. Thus, the paper concluded that the anti-corruption NGOs failed to achieve their demands in the national anti-corruption strategy since the strategy is unimplemented.

Keywords: National Anti-Corruption Strategy, NGO, Achievements, Obstacles, Factors

INTRODUCTION

The Kurdistan regional government is an official government in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Since the first cabinet several problems challenged the government including corruption, which is considered as serious problem in the region (Smail, 2014; Transparency International Index, 2019). Recently, the level of corruption in the government institutions raised and the government suffered from the negative consequences of corruption (Jameel, 2016). The role of the political parties in the governance system in Kurdistan region created risks of nepotism and clientelism based on political party's affiliation (Karem & Chomani, 2017).

Political and family connection played a negative role in recruitment for the public sector. For instance, in public sector 37% of civil service appointed based on political party's affiliation, 18% employed based on family member relationships, and 6% based on tribal affiliation (UNODC, 2015). Besides, more than (100,000) employees receiving salaries from KRG, but they are considered as ghost employees and all of them political parties' members and affiliations (Globe, 2015; Rudaw TV., 2017). Similarly, in private sector, several huge companies owned by political parties' family members. For instance, telecommunication companies, huge construction companies and oil companies in the Kurdistan region owned by both political parties' families. Despite, several companies registered which are indirectly belong to the political parties' family members. Moreover, most of the huge construction contracts must be given to those companies who directly or indirectly owned by political parties' affiliations (Pring, 2015; Kurd Daily, 2015). Accordingly, the government and non-government actors attempted to fight the phenomenon. For instance, several anti-corruption strategies have been designed by the government to tackle the phenomenon. Meanwhile, the anti-corruption NGOs initiated several anti-corruption tools in order to be applied in the government institutions. One of the significant anti-corruption strategies has been proposed by the NGOs and submitted to the government in order to reduce corruption in the region. Government National Anti-Corruption Strategy (GNACS) is one of the strategies which fully drafted by the NGOs. The strategy is lack implemented or unimplemented properly, however the NGOs demanded to implement the strategy. Thus, this paper attempts to investigate why the GNACS has not been implemented and what factors contributed to the NGOs' lack of achievements. Accordingly, the paper employed qualitative case study research design and face to face in-depth interview adopted to collect the desired data. Besides, the paper interviewed 9 participants including three NGOs, three anti-corruption policymakers, and three experts. The respondents selected purposely based on their participation in the strategy formulation process.



Besides, the GNACS has been adopted as a study case due to the NGOs intensively participated in the formulation process. In addition, the paper attempted to review the relative literature particularly the developing countries' literature. Finally, the paper endeavored to analyze the study findings, discussion and conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the developing countries the NGOs' role have been increased recently, particularly in influencing policymaking (Elliott-Teague, 2007; Silva-Leander, 2015; Anzia, 2017). Previous studies established that the interest groups engaging in policymaking is crucial to the functioning of democracy (Booth, 1994; Fisher, 1998; Nelson, 1995; Clarke, 1998; Lewis, 2001; Silva-Leander, 2015; Anzia, 2017). However, several scholars argue that such participations avoid democratic outcomes (Elliott-Teague, 2007). Nonetheless, the interest group theory concludes that the interest groups, particularly NGOs are important to be involved in policymaking process. Moreover, the theory argues that good policies depend on the dynamic contribution of interest groups participations (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; Elliott-Teague, 2007; Martini, 2012; Silva-Leander, 2015). Therefore, in the developed countries' literature the NGOs' role of NGOs significantly have been acknowledged. Yet, their roles have been almost neglected in the developing nations. However, few studies conducted in the developing countries concerning the NGOs' role in policymaking, particularly political policymaking (Elliott-Teague, 2007; Silva-Leander, 2015). Among the few, a significant study has been conducted regarding the NGOs' role in anti-corruption lawmaking in Indonesia. Silva-Leander (2015) states that the anti-corruption NGOs significantly engaged in anti-corruption lawmaking in the Indonesia. She further declares, anti-corruption NGOs crucially contributed in the law enacting process and influenced the parliament to enact the anti-corruption law in time. Similarly, Elliott-Teague (2007) mentions that the NGOs influenced the Tanzanian parliament to enact environmental law. However, they are failed to achieve their objectives since the Tanzanian parliament unenacted the law. Moreover, in Uganda the NGOs importantly influenced and participated in the government policymaking in the agricultural loans, and soil and water conservation policy formulations. They have also significantly participated in National Fertilizer Policy (McCormick, 2014). Besides, Mohd and Lee (1999) mention that the Malaysian NGOs effectively

influenced the government to develop a policy to protect environment and reduce pollution.

Moreover, the NGOs' literature, particularly developed countries' literature has classified the contributed factors significantly. Betzold (2013) claims that political environment in every country controls the organization's behavior whether engage in policymaking or not. Besides, Gais and Walker (1991) categorize several different factors that drive groups' behavior such as; human resources, financial support and focus of the groups. Nonetheless, Grant (2000) in his "Research on British Groups" claims that the main factor is when groups gratify with regulations and laws set by governments. Further, he declares two secondary factors which are; the reliability of the group's justification to convince policymakers and recognizing groups by policymakers. Additionally, Ljubownikow and Crotty, (2016), and Cruchten, (2016) reference that the legal boundaries are an extreme factor which destructively affect the NGOs' initiatives especially in developing nations. Similarly, Wolton, (2016) and Silva-Leander (2015) consider the good relationship among NGOs and policymakers as an important factor which facilitate NGOs' achievements. Consequently, this paper designed to investigate the factors which contributed the NGOs lack of achievements in the GNACS, since the NGOs did not achieve their objectives accurately because the strategy has not been implemented properly. Thus, the findings importantly contribute to the developing countries' body of knowledge, especially Kurdistan literature.

FINDINGS

The level of corruption marked extremely high in the Kurdistan region in last decades. Accordingly, several laws and strategies have been formulated by the policymakers to tackle corruption in the region. Meanwhile, the anti-corruption NGOs influenced the policymakers to fight against corruption and participated in the anti-corruption policies formulation. More importantly, in the government national anti-corruption strategy, the anti-corruption NGOs contributed and participated in the strategy formulation process. They have drafted the strategy and influenced the policymakers to adapt their strategy draft. Consequently, the NGOs' draft has been adapted by the anti-corruption policymakers and the strategy became one of the government policies to fight against corruption in the government institutions.

Additionally, the anti-corruption NGOs listed their three fundamental demands and objectives, since



the strategy formulation process has been started. They have submitted the demands to the anti-corruption policymakers and influenced them to accept their demands to achieve their objectives. The collected data revealed that, the NGOs` demands partially achieved. The first and second NGOs` demands have been achieved properly, however, the third and most important demand which was the strategy implementation did not achieve accurately. Clearly, the collected data discovered that the NGOs first demand which was lack of national anti-corruption strategy in the government institutions has successfully achieved, since their strategy draft has been adapted by the government and considered as government`s tool to fight corruption. Moreover, the study also revealed that, the NGOs second demand also achieved which was increasing coordination among the anti-corruption institutions and the government institutions. Nevertheless, their third and fundamental demand which was implementing the strategy was not achieved properly, since the strategy lack implemented or unimplemented. Accordingly, the study found that several factors contributed the NGOs` lack achievements during their participations in the strategy formulation.

NGOs` Negative Factors

Since the anti-corruption NGOs did not achieve their demands and objectives properly, several negative factors contributed as mentioned by the informants. The collected data revealed that several factors negatively contributed the NGOs` lack of achievements as following;

- I. Lack of government political will
- II. NGOs` lack relationship with government
- III. Bureaucracy
- IV. Lack of human resources
- V. Lack of using media
- VI. NGOs` financial problems

The mentioned above factors contributed negatively to the NGOs` role in the national anti-corruption strategy.

Lack of Government Political Will

The Kurdistan regional government`s lack of political will considered as a negative factor which effected the NGOs` achievements. The study found that the fighting corruption in the government institutions was not governments` priority assignment. However, corruption in the government institutions marked high and the government suffer from corruption`s negative consequences. In order to reduce it, several anti-corruption strategies have been formulated by the government. Nevertheless, non-of the anti-

corruption strategies implemented properly as mentioned by the respondents. Informants 1 confirmed that *"the government has several significant anti-corruption strategies including the national anti-corruption strategy. Nevertheless, the strategies lack implemented or sometimes not implemented at all. A huge amount has been spent to design anti-corruption strategies. Yet, the strategies were not implemented properly, this is because the government did not attempt tackle corruption"* (informant 1, NGO). Similarly, informant 9 who is an NGOs` expert mentioned that *"the government unwilling to fight against corruption in its institutions. However, there were several anti-corruption strategies which highly designed to tackle corruption including the national anti-corruption strategy which designed by the NGOs. Yet, the strategies unimplemented properly. Moreover, when the NGOs were designing the strategy, I was thinking that this strategy will not be implemented too due to governments` lack of political will. Thus, one of the main reasons which the government national anti-corruption strategy has not implemented properly, was lack of government`s political will"* (informant 9, NGO`s expert).

Additionally, informants 2, 3, and 8 argued that the lack of government`s political will was one of the main restricts behind implementing the anti-corruption strategies including the national anti-corruption strategy. They further claimed, the government does not concern about tackling corruption, however, corruption still high in the government institutions (informants 2 & 3, NGOs; informant 8, NGO`s expert). Informant 2 stated, *"during our initiatives to fight against corruption in the government institutions, we realized that the government unwilling to tackle the phenomenon. More importantly, during our investigation in the government institutions, we faced several restrictions particularly from the ministers. I remember one of the ministers told me (whatever you do the strategy will not be implemented), another one said (we have best strategies which are unimplemented, so why do you disturb yourself). Thus, I realized that the government does not want to fight against corruption"* (informant 2, NGO). Similarly, informant 3 also mentioned that *"the government never reject any initiatives which particularly come from NGOs. They want to show that the government willing to tackle corruption. However, the initiatives will not be implemented. For instance, the government national anti-corruption strategy has been adapted by the government and the strategy considered as a main government`s tool to fight against corruption.*



Although, the strategy is not implemented properly" (informant 3, NGO).

In conclude, the government national anti-corruption strategy has been adapted by the anti-corruption policymakers and it is considered as a main government's tool to tackle corruption in the government institutions. However, the strategy is not implemented properly. Accordingly, the study found that the lack of government's political will was one of the main factors which negatively affected the NGOs' lack of achievements. The respondent argued that the Kurdistan government unwilling tackle corruption in its institutions. Therefore, the government national anti-corruption strategy unimplemented properly.

NGOs' Lack Relationship with Government

The good relationship among governments and NGOs considered a significant motivation for the NGOs to achieve their demands and objectives. Nevertheless, such a good relation is not existed in the Kurdistan region as mentioned by the respondents. The study found that, there was a lack of relationship among NGOs and the government in terms of fighting corruption. Accordingly, such a lack relation contributed negatively in NGOs' achievements in tackling corruption in the government institutions. Informant 3 stated that, *"the government rarely consult NGOs regarding the strategies particularly anti-corruption strategy. Although, the anti-corruption NGOs influenced the government to be consulted. Nevertheless, their advices and demands not be concerned. Thus, such a lack relationship reflected on the NGOs' achievements especially in fighting corruption initiatives" (informant 3, NGO).* Similarly, informant 2 also mentioned that *"there is a lack of trust among the NGOs and the government as well. The government did not consider NGOs as a part of solving social and political problems due to lack of trust. Whatever the anti-corruption NGOs initiate, the government will not consider about. Thus, such a lack of trust negatively affected the NGOs' achievements, particularly in the national anti-corruption strategy" (informant 2, NGO).* Further, the informant 3 also stated that *"the local NGOs is not trusted by the government. The government considers the NGOs as disturbers. Therefore, the local NGOs needed to coordinate with one of the international NGOs to have better influence" (informant 3, NGO).*

Additionally, informant 2 acknowledged; *"we conducted a research to evaluate the relationship between the NGOs and the government. The research revealed that, the relationship is lack and*

the government does not concern about NGOs initiatives. More importantly, the research concluded that, the NGOs rarely participated in the government's decisions. However, there are several policies which NGOs participated, but the initiative came from the NGOs not the government" (informant 2, NGO). The anti-corruption policymakers also demonstrated that there is a lack of relationship among the NGOs and the government. Informants 4 and 5 who are policymakers mentioned that the NGOs rarely participated or consulted in the government decision makings (informants 4 & 5, government policymakers). Moreover, informant 4 stated, *"I rarely consult with the NGOs in my daily assignments particularly in fighting corruption. However, sometimes the NGOs initiate to be consulted and I have a good relationship with them but unofficially" (informants 4, government anti-corruption policymakers).* Similarly, informant 5 who is a government anti-corruption policymaker confirmed that *"the local NGOs are not trusted by the government. Therefore, the government rarely invite them to participate in the government decision making unless the NGOs influence the government to be consulted" (informant 5, NGO).*

Consequently, the lack of relationship among the NGOs and the government considered as negative factor which negatively contributed in NGOs' achievements. The study concluded that there was a lack of relationship among the anti-corruption NGOs and the government which is reflected on the NGOs' lack participations in the government anti-corruption decision makings. More importantly, the paper concluded that the government does not trust the local NGOs. Therefore, the anti-corruption NGOs rarely consulted and participated in the government policymaking unless the NGOs influence by themselves.

Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy is extremely high In the Kurdistan regional government institutions as stated by the respondents. The study found that, bureaucracy as a negative factor which negatively contributed to the NGOs' achievements. Informant 1 argued that the government routines negatively affected on the national anti-corruption strategy formulation process. He further stated, *"one of the negative factors which directly affected on our achievements was government bureaucracy. For instance, the strategy draft has been accepted by the government in May 2016, after 7 months which means on December the government created a committee to adapt the strategy draft (informant 1, NGO).*



Additionally, informant 3 who is NGO member also declared; *"accessing the government high position officers takes time especially for the NGOs due to lack of relationship among the NGOs and the government. Accordingly, the NGOs' objectives take long time to be achieved if they do not have a linkage with the government policymakers. For instance, during the government national anti-corruption strategy formulation process, bureaucracy was one of the factors which restricted the NGOs' achievements. This was because the NGOs' did not have a good relationship with the government policymakers and they had to follow the regulations to meet them"* (informant 3, NGO). Similarly, the informants 2 and 9 also confirmed that, the government bureaucracy was one of the negative factors which banned the NGOs' successes in the anti-corruption strategy formulation process (informant 2, NGO; informant 9, NGO's expert). Furthermore, informant 2 argued that, *"access to information in the government institutions was a difficult task. According to the government regulations, the NGOs have to follow several rules and laws if they need an information in the government institutions. Such a process considered as a high bureaucracy and it is negatively contributed to the NGOs' achievements in the national anti-corruption strategy"* (informant 2, NGO).

In short, the Kurdistan regional government's bureaucracy considered as one of the NGOs' restrictions during their influences and participations in the national anti-corruption strategy formulation process. The respondents mentioned that there was a lack of relationship among the government and the anti-corruption NGOs. Thus, such a lack relationship enforced the NGOs to follow several routines which negatively affected their participations and initiatives. Besides, the paper also concluded that accessing to information also takes a long time in the government institutions due to high level of routines. Therefore, the situation negatively contributed to the NGOs' achievements in the anti-corruption strategy.

Lack of Human Resources

The lack of the NGOs' human resources considered as a negative factor which contributed negatively in NGOs' achievements in the government national anti-corruption strategy. The collected data revealed that, those NGOs who influenced and participated in the national anti-corruption strategy were lack in terms of human resources. The organization's staff was not professional and trained. Informants 1, 2, 6

declared that, the anti-corruption NGOs particularly those who influenced and participated in the anti-corruption strategy were inappropriate in terms of skilled staffing, number of subordinates and professional trainers (informants 1 & 2, NGOs; informant 6, NGO's expert). Moreover, informant 2 mentioned, *"usually skilled staffs are not exist in the volunteer works, because the NGOs unable to pay them high salaries. Therefore, typically NGOs suffer from lack of human resources or skilled staffs. We had the same problem during our influences and participations in the national anti-corruption strategy formulation process. Our staff was lack in using proper tactics, however we used several significant tactics"* (informant 2, NGO).

Additionally, informant 1 also stated, *"our organization's financial problems restricted us to pay good salaries to the skilled people to work with us during our influences. However, we obtained funds from international NGOs, nevertheless, the amount was not propriate to finish the project and employ skilled staffs. Thus, the lack of skilled staffs and financial problems negatively reflected on our achievements in the anti-corruption strategy"* (informant 1, NGO). Similarly, informant 9 who is NGOs' expert argued that, *"skilled subordinates considered as an important pillar in volunteer works, without such a staff organization's assignments will be difficult and achieving the objectives will be hard as well. Such a skilled staff was absent in these NGOs who influenced and participated in the government national anti-corruption strategy. Hence, I declare that, the lack of skilled staff was one of the factors which negatively contributed to the NGOs' achievements since they could not achieve their desired objectives properly"* (informant 9, NGO's expert). Informant 6 also acknowledged, *"those NGOs who influenced and participated in the national anti-corruption strategy considered as active and organized NGOs in the Kurdistan region since they have several offices. However, they are still lack in terms of professional subordinate, their staffs are not trained properly. Therefore, they did not achieve their objectives successfully"* (informant 6, NGO's expert and parliament member).

In conclude, the lack of skilled subordinate negatively affected the NGOs' achievements as mentioned by the informants. The study found that those NGOs who influenced and participated in the government national anti-corruption strategy were lack in terms of skilled staffs. The study also revealed that the financial problems negatively affected on the NGOs achievements since they could not pay high salaries to the skilled staffs.



Thus, lack of human resources considered as one of the internal factors which negatively contributed to the NGOs' achievements in the anti-corruption strategy formulation process.

NGOs' Financial Problems

The NGOs' lack of funds also considered as negative factor which negatively contributed in the NGOs' achievements in the national anti-corruption strategy formulation process. However, the project was fully funded by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), nevertheless, the fund has stopped when the NGOs attempted to implement the strategy. informant 1 stated that, *"the NGOs initiative was covered by the WFD financially, the fund was for drafting the anti-corruption strategy and implement it. However, after the strategy has been drafted and considered by the government as a tool to fight against corruption, the fund has stopped due to the project's deadline. The WFD decided to terminate the project and the fund has been stopped as well. Thus, we enabled to complete the project and implement the strategy. Therefore, the lack of funding or financial problem was one of the negative factors which restricted our demands to be achieved"* informant 1, NGO).

Additionally, informants 2, 3, 7 and 9 also generated financial problems as a negative factor which banned the anti-corruption NGOs to achieve their desired objectives and demands. They further mentioned, since the government restrictions delayed the project, the WFD decided to stop the funds and the project has stopped due to lack of funds (informants 2 & 3, NGOs; informants 7 & 9, NGOs' experts). Informant 2 who is an NGO member mentioned *"WFD has stopped the project due to lack of the formulation and implementation process. The government restrictions were a reason which caused the project delayed. Accordingly, we have been informed by the WFD that the funding has stopped, however, the strategy was in the implementation process"* (informant 2, NGO). Informant 3 also stated, *"we can't say that the anti-corruption NGOs have failed in achieving their demands, since the strategy has been adapted by the government and it is considered as a government tool to tackle corruption in the government institutions. Thus, it can be concluded that the anti-corruption NGOs partially succeeded. However, I confidently acknowledge that, if the WFD did not stop the funds, the strategy would successfully implement, and the NGOs significantly could achieve their objectives"*. (informant 3, NGO).

Consequently, the financial problems or the lack of funding considered as one of the NGOs' negative factors which harmfully effected their desired demands and objectives. The study found that the government restrictions negatively affected the anti-corruption strategy which caused delay the project. Since the project delayed and it did not implement in time, the WFD has stopped the funds. Accordingly, the anti-corruption NGOs faced financial problems and such a problem negatively contributed the NGOs' achievements.

Lack of Using Media

Since the anti-corruption NGOs unachieved their demands and objectives properly, the lack of using media considered as one of the factors which negatively contributed in NGOs lack achievements. The findings revealed that the anti-corruption NGOs did not use media while the government restricted their initiatives and denied strategy implementation. Informant 1 declared; *"however, the government restricted our initiatives and denied strategy implementation. Nevertheless, we did not use media to influence the government to accept our demands. Further, the media did not used in our influences and participations in the strategy formulation. Although, a live program has been organized in one of the Kurdistan TVs about the strategy. Nonetheless, the program's agenda suddenly has changed, and presenter did not discuss about the strategy only few minutes"* (informant 1, NGO). Similarly, informant 2 also mentioned; *"in the strategy formulation process, several outsider tactics have been used except media coverage. We did not used media because we realized that the government does not concern about such outsider influences. Usually, the government considers media campaign as outsider interruptions. Thus, we more focused on insider influences instead of outsiders"* (informant 2, NGO).

On the other hand, a part of the interview respondents particularly experts, also confirmed that the media did not used in the national anti-corruption strategy formulation process. The experts argued that the strategy lack implemented because of several negative factors, and the lack of using media was one of the negative factors which hardly affected the NGOs' achievements. Informant 7 who is an NGOs' expert stated that *"the anti-corruption NGOs did not use media in their influences and participations in the strategy formulation"*. He further mentioned, *"media is crucial strategy for the interest groups to influence the policymakers. However, such an important tactic did not used by the NGOs to influence the"*



government policymakers to accept their demands and achieve their objectives. Accordingly, I can say that, if the NGOs were used media as a tactic to influence the government, they may achieve their objectives properly" (informant 7, NGOs` expert). Similarly, informant 6 also established that, the media did not use in the NGOs` influences and participations in the strategy formulation process. She argued that, "the anti-corruption have successfully used media campaign as a strategy to influence the Kurdistan parliament in the commission of integrity`s law deliberations. Nonetheless, such a media campaign did not use by the anti-corruption NGOs in the national anti-corruption strategy formulation process. Thus, such a lack of using media directly contributed in the NGOs` lack achievements" (informant 6 parliament member and NGOs` expert).

Consequently, lack of using media considered as one of the negative factors which directly contributed in the NGOs lack achievements. The study concluded that the anti-corruption NGOs did not organize media campaign as a crucial strategy to influence the government policymakers. Accordingly, they did not achieve their objectives properly. However, the national anti-corruption strategy has been adapted by the government and considered as government tool to fight against corruption in the government institutions. Yet, the strategy unimplemented properly in the government institutions due to the mentioned factors.

DISCUSSION

The anti-corruption NGOs in the Kurdistan region influenced and participated in the government national anti-corruption strategy. They have used several tactics to influence the anti-corruption policymakers in order to accept their demands and achieve their objectives. Accordingly, they listed their demands and objectives, nevertheless, the NGOs` objectives partially achieved, or they did not achieve their objectives properly. The study revealed that several negative factors contributed negatively in NGOs` lack achievements. The paper found that several factors negatively contributed to the NGOs` lack achievements including; Lack of government political will, bureaucracy, NGOs` lack relationship with the government, lack of NGOs` human resources, lack of using media, and NGOs` financial problems. The study found that the Kurdistan government did not concern about the NGOs` initiatives. However, including three NGOs` demands, two of them successfully achieved. Nevertheless, one of the significant NGOs` demands which was implementing the

strategy did not achieve properly. Accordingly, government`s lack of political will was one of the factors which restricted the NGOs in implementing the strategy. The study revealed that the government mostly open to the NGOs and accept their proposals but very rarely implement the NGOs` initiatives particularly anti-corruption initiatives.

Furthermore, the study also found that the government archived several significant anti-corruption strategies which have been designed by the NGOs. Yet, the strategies are not implemented, or lack implemented. This study also discovered that huge financial amount has been spent to designing the strategies, and the strategies designed based on the international standards and adapted with internal environment. Nevertheless, none of the anti-corruption strategies have implemented due to the government`s lack of political will. As mentioned by the respondents, the government does not want tackle corruption in its institutions due to several political factors. The government institutions controlled by the two main political parties Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). The political parties` members have involving in the corruption cases. Therefore, they are unwilling fight against corruption in the government institutions.

Government`s political will significantly discussed in the literature. Moreover, previous studies importantly considered political will as a crucial factor in fighting local problems particularly corruption problems. Abdulai (2009) states that fighting corruption in the developing countries required a consistency from the top of political leaders towards the eradication of the phenomenon. Whereas top political elites unwilling to fight against corruption, or when the eradicating corruption is weak, governments are only probable to involve in "zero tolerance for corruption" talk but continue to play a "tolerant corruption" game. Thus, in this regard tackling corruption become priority without any results. Besides, Ankamah and Khoda (2017), mention that political will has a significant positive influence on the governments to fight against corruption. They further argue that such a political will needed to tackle corruption particularly in developing countries. For instance, Singapore and Bangladesh are two countries which spent their efforts to fight against corruption. However, Singapore significantly practiced political will and the country importantly improved in tackling countries and the level of corruption sharply reduced. Nevertheless, Bangladesh still suffer from



corruption consequences, and the level of corruption still extremely high due to lack of government's political will (Ankamah & Khoda, 2017). Consequently, the current literature concluded that the governments' political will necessary in tackling corruption in the developing countries. Previous studies also acknowledged that in countries when the governments' political will lack, the attempts to tackle corruption become lack too. For instance, in the Kurdistan, since the anti-corruption NGOs attempted to implement the government national anti-corruption strategy, their initiatives failed or unachieved properly due to lack of government's political will. Thus, the lack of political will in the Kurdistan regional government considered as a major obstacle to the NGOs to achieve their demands and objectives.

Bureaucracy was another factor which negatively contributed in the NGOs' influences and participations in the national anti-corruption strategy formulation process. The study revealed that the government bureaucracy considered as one of the negative factors which directly affected the NGOs' role in the strategy. The study revealed that the government routines harmfully restricted NGOs' initiatives in the strategy formulation process. As mentioned by the NGOs, the national anti-corruption strategy has been accepted by the government in May 2015, after seven months the government formed a committee to adapt the draft. The paper discovered that the government created the committee after almost seven months. Accordingly, such a delay affected on the NGOs' strategy implementing deadline. Furthermore, the study also found that meeting government's high position officers considers a difficult task. The study revealed that the NGOs' facing difficulties if they want to meet policymakers due to government's regulations which decelerated the NGOs' initiative process. Accordingly, the NGOs should have a good relationship with the policymakers in order to reach them easily. Similarly, access to information in the government institutions also considered as difficult process. The study also exposed that the NGOs have to follow several laws and regulations in order to gain information regarding corruption cases in the government institutions. Accordingly, the NGOs' demands and achievements mostly unachieved since they influenced the government policymaking. Consequently, the anti-corruption NGOs faced restrictions when they influenced the policymakers during the national anti-corruption strategy formulation process. Thus, they did not achieve their demands properly.

The NGOs lack relationship with the Kurdistan government also mentioned as a negative factor which restricted the NGOs' influences and participations in the national anti-corruption strategy. The study revealed that there was a lack of relationship among the anti-corruption NGOs and the government during the strategy formulation process. Moreover, the study also found that the government rarely consult the NGOs during the policy formulations particularly in the anti-corruption policies. However, sometimes the NGOs provide proposals and advices to the government. Nevertheless, their initiatives have not been concerned, and the government rarely concerned about the NGOs' initiatives. Further, the study also revealed that there was a lack of trust among the NGOs and the government. The government untrusted the NGOs especially anti-corruption NGOs. According to the interviewees, whatever the NGOs initiate, the government did not concern about. Thus, such a lack of trust negatively contributed in the NGOs' influences and participations in the strategy formulation process. More importantly, the NGOs conducted a survey regarding the relationship among the NGOs and the government, the survey result concluded that the government infrequently consult the NGOs in designing anti-corruption policies due to lack of relationship among them. However, as mentioned by the respondents, there are several anti-corruption policies which have been designed by the NGOs. Yet, the anti-corruption NGOs' initiatives did not implement due to the lack trust and lack of relationship among the NGOs and the government.

The relationship among NGOs and policymakers significantly discussed in the interest groups literature. The previous studies concluded that the good relationship among the interest groups and the policymakers importantly reflects on the interest groups achievements. In this regard, several strategies have been declared by Najam (2010) to increase the interest groups' relationship with policymakers. He categorizes the strategies into cooptation (winning over through inducements), cooperation (working together), confrontation (working as an opposition) and complementary (same goal but working separately). Additionally, representative and better coordination are two significant strategies to increase NGOs' relationship with policymakers (Holmen & Jirstrom, 2009). Moreover, Silva-Leander (2015) mentions that, the NGOs' good relationship with policymakers significantly reflects on the NGOs' achievements. She further states, if the NGOs have good relationship with



policymakers, their desired objectives will be achieved. Elliott-Teague (2007) concludes that the Tanzania's NGOs did not achieve their demands in the environmental law due to lack of relationship with the parliament. They did not coordinate with the lawmakers which supported by the ruling parties. Thus, their demands and objectives did not achieve accurately due to lack relationship with lawmakers.

Accordingly, this study revealed that the Kurdistan anti-corruption NGOs did not concern about the Najam's strategies in order to have a good relationship with the government. However, they have worked as partners with the government anti-corruption policymakers. Nevertheless, the lack of relationship negatively affected the NGOs' roles in the strategy. Besides, the study also found that there was a lack of trust among the NGOs and the government policymakers. According to the interviewees, the government rarely invited the NGOs to participate in policy formulation, particularly anti-corruption policies. Therefore, lack of trust among the NGOs and the government, declined the NGOs' relationship with the government policymakers. Further, the study revealed that the anti-corruption NGOs did not concern about the Holmen and Jirstroms' recommendations to increase their relationship with the government policymakers during their influences and participations in the government anti-corruption strategy. Besides, the Najam's strategies also neglected in the NGOs relationship with the government. Consequently, the NGOs' lack of relationship with government created a situation that the NGOs could not achieve their demands and objectives in the government national anti-corruption strategy.

Similarly, the paper revealed that the lack of NGOs' human resources, lack of using media, and NGOs' financial problems were another three factors which negatively contributed to the NGOs' achievements. The NGOs' lack of using media mentioned as a factor which negatively contributed in the NGOs' influences and participations in the national anti-corruption strategy. The study revealed that the media did not use by the NGOs' during their participations in the strategy formulation process. However, in the commission of integrity law the anti-corruption NGOs successfully used media campaign to influence the lawmakers. Nevertheless, such a strategy did not use by the NGOs in the national anti-corruption strategy.

Previous studies significantly discussed the importance of using media in interest groups

influences. Mohd and Lee (1999) mention that a good relationship among interest groups and media significantly contribute to the NGOs' achievements. They further declare, in Malaysia the environmental NGOs importantly used media to influence the environmental policymakers to participate in environmental policies. Besides, Silva-Leander (2015) states that in Indonesia the anti-corruption NGOs organized a protest to influence the anti-corruption policymakers to pass the anti-corruption law. She further states that the media significantly contributed to the anti-corruption NGOs' successes, since the media played important role in mobilizing public to participate in the NGOs demonstration. Additionally, Baumgartner et al (2009), categorize the interest groups' effective factors to influence the policymakers. Good relationship among media and interest groups highly recommended in their categorization. They argue that the interest groups advocacies cannot be achieved properly without media coverage. Berry (1977), significantly considers media in his insider and outsider tactics categorization. He states that media coverage is one of the effective factors which importantly helps the interest groups to achieve their objectives. Therefore, the interest groups' objectives and demands can be achieved through good relationship with media or participate media in their events. More importantly, the media coverage and the relationship between media and interest groups considered as a significant factor in the interest group theory literature. The theory importantly categorized the tactics, and the good relationship among interest groups and media considered as one of the effective outsider tactics which interest groups use to influence the policymakers to accept their demands and achieve their objectives (Gais & Walker, 1991; Elliott-Teague, 2007; Miroff et al, 2014). Consequently, the importance of using media did not consider by the anti-corruption NGOs during their influences and participations in the national anti-corruption strategy formulation process. However, they have faced several restrictions by the government, yet, they did not organize media campaign to influence the government policymakers to implement the strategy. Thus, lack of using media considered as one of the factors which negatively contributed in the NGOs' lack achievements.

The NGOs' financial problems similarly considered as factor which hardly effected on the NGOs' achievements in the anti-corruption strategy. The study revealed that the anti-corruption NGOs faced financial problems during their influences and participations in the anti-



corruption strategy formulation process. The NGOs initiative was funded by WFD, however, the WFD has stopped the financial supports suddenly because of delaying implementing the strategy. Thus, the anti-corruption NGOs faced financial problems and the strategy lack implemented due to lack of funds. The study exposed that the project's timeframe was three years including designing and implementing the strategy. Nonetheless, the anti-corruption NGOs could not complete their initiatives in time. Thus, the WFD has stopped the financial supports due to lack of the process and unimplemented the strategy in time.

Financial problems considered as one of the negative factors in the interest groups influences. The interest groups literature acknowledged that the financial problems or lack of funds negatively affect the NGOs to achieve their demands and objectives particularly in the developing nations. Harir (2015) mentions that in most of the developing countries the NGOs facing financial problems. He further declares that the lack of funds restricts NGOs to achieve their objectives in the developing nations. Similarly, Bromideh (2011) determines that in the developing countries NGOs' financial crises considered as the most NGOs' challenges in their participation in policymaking process. He further states, however, in the last decades the role of NGOs has increased in the policymaking in the developing countries. Nevertheless, they have faced several difficulties, and financial crises considered as one of the obstacles which negatively contributed to the NGOs' achievements. Machalek, (2012) states that sometimes the governments in the developing countries control the NGOs to get funds from international donors. He further mentions that the governments in developing countries avoid the NGOs get funds from international donors, because they want to weaken the local NGOs and make them enable to influence policymaking process.

The NGOs' lack of human resources also mentioned as one of the factors which negatively affected the NGOs' achievements in the national anti-corruption strategy formulation process. The study revealed that those NGOs who influenced and participated in the strategy were lack in terms of human resources. The anti-corruption NGOs participated in the strategy formulation with unskilled NGO members. However, some of them considered as huge NGOs with massive subordinate. Nevertheless, most of them were unskilled and considered as lack in human resources. The study also revealed that in the Kurdistan region most of the skilled activists work for international NGOs instead of local NGOs.

This is because the international NGOs pay high salary compare to local NGOs. Accordingly, the local NGOs suffer from lack of human resources. Thus, their influences and participations some time fail to achieve.

The importance of the NGOs' human resources highly recommended in the interest groups' literature. The previous studies acknowledged that the organizations human resource management is fundamental factor for the organizations to achieve their demands and objectives. Stanley and Albin (2013) mention that the purpose of having a skilled subordinate is to help the interest groups particularly NGOs to achieve their fundamental objectives. Furthermore, Adera (2014) states that the organization's staffing strategy is one of the most powerful factors that effects on the NGO's performance. For instance, In Kenya, one of the factors that affected the NGO's performance is lack of human resources (Adera, 2014). Accordingly, staff strategy should be taken into consideration by NGO's to have an effective performance and to achieve their objectives. Drucker (1992), in his book "Managing the Non-Profit Organization" mentions that, "*The yield from the human resource really determines the organization's performance. And that's decided by the basic people decisions: whom we hire and whom we fire; where we place people, and whom we promote. The quality of these human decisions largely determines whether the organization is being run seriously, whether its mission, its values, and its objectives are real and meaningful to people rather than just public relations and rhetoric*" (p. 111). Besides, Legge (2004) argues that the NGOs with skilled staff may have better influence and more possibly achieve to their demands and objectives. She furthermore declares that the human resource management relates to "those decisions and actions which concern the management of employees at all levels in the business and which are related to the implementation of strategies directed towards creating and sustaining competitive advantage" (p. 352). Consequently, since the previous studies highly recommended NGOs to manage their human resources to achieve their desired objectives. Nevertheless, those anti-corruption NGOs who influenced and participated in the national anti-corruption strategy faced lack of human resources. Thus, such a lack of resources affected them to unachieved their demands and objectives in the anti-corruption strategy formulation process.

CONCLUSION

The anti-corruption NGOs influenced the Kurdistan regional government in order to fight against



corruption in the region. They have proposed a national anti-corruption strategy to the government in order to be adapted. During their influences, they have listed three demands including; designing a national anti-corruption strategy, increasing coordination among the anti-corruption organizations and the government institutions, and the third demand was strategy implementation. Yet, they have successfully achieved their first and second demands, however, the most important demand is not achieved which is the strategy implementation. Accordingly, several negative factors contributed the NGOs lack of achievements. The paper concludes that the governments political will, lack of relationship among the NGOs and the

government, bureaucracy, lack of using media, financial problems and lack of NGOs` human resources were the factors which negatively contributed in the NGOs lack of achievements. Consequently, the anti-corruption NGOs did not achieve their objectives properly due to the government unwilling fight against corruption, and there was a lack of relationship among the NGOs and the government. Besides, lack of using media was another factor which negatively affected the NGOs` achievements since they did not use media campaign as a strategy to influence the government. Further, lack of financial resources was another factor which restricted the NGOs` achievements.

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