



# Functions and Contribution of Ansar-VDP Members in National Development of Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** The Ansar-VDP, as Bangladesh's largest government-supported non-police force, plays a critical role in national security, economic development, and community empowerment. This study examines the multifaceted contributions of Ansar-VDP members, particularly in law enforcement, disaster management, financial inclusion, and rural socio-economic development. The research adopts a mixed-method approach, incorporating primary data collected through interviews with 80 Ansar-VDP members in Mymensingh and Dhaka and secondary data from government reports and published sources. Findings indicate that Ansar-VDP members contribute significantly to national security by securing elections, protecting key installations, and enhancing community policing. Additionally, vocational training programs have empowered members to participate in self-employment initiatives, particularly in agriculture, small businesses, and microfinance. The study highlights the growing role of female members and their contributions to socio-economic programs. Despite these achievements, the study identifies several policy challenges, including funding constraints, lack of advanced training, and limited leadership opportunities for women. The study recommends policy interventions to expand vocational training, increase financial inclusion through Ansar-VDP Unnayan Bank, and enhance institutional recognition to strengthen its role in national development. Comparative analysis with similar paramilitary organizations in other developing nations suggests that Ansar-VDP's unique integration of security and economic empowerment sets it apart. The study concludes that with strategic investments and policy support, Ansar-VDP can further enhance its contributions to national development.

**Keywords:** Ansar-VDP, Law Enforcement, Economic Empowerment, Community Development, Vocational Training.

**How to Cite:** Shahjahan, Sarwar ASM, Akter S, Tarannum T. (2025). Functions and Contribution of Ansar-VDP Members in National Development of Bangladesh. *Pac J Bus Innov Strateg*, 2 (1), 1-7.

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| **Submitted:** December 18, 2024 | **Accepted:** January 22, 2025 | **Published:** March 10, 2025

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## INTRODUCTION

Ansar-VDP is the largest Govt. The organization engaged in maintaining law & order and enhancing the rural socio-economic environment with an emphasis on helping the poorer sections. As of 2024, Bangladesh Ansar

and Village Defense Party (VDP) stands tall as the nation's largest non-police force, spearheading efforts to maintain law and order while fostering socio-economic growth, particularly in rural areas [1]. Rooted in the Ansar Act of 1948, this organization evolved with the

formation of the Battalion Ansar in 1976, solidifying its targeted approach to national development [2]. Beyond security, Ansar-VDP members actively contribute to welfare initiatives, with an unwavering focus on uplifting the underprivileged. Their dedication is exemplified by the many successful schemes implemented across the country, empowering communities through employment generation, income-enhancing programs, and unwavering focus on poverty alleviation [3]. The Ansar-VDP is the largest government-supported non-police entity in Bangladesh, focusing on law enforcement and socio-economic advancement, especially in rural regions. Notwithstanding its importance, few studies have thoroughly examined its contributions [4]. This research examines the influence of Ansar-VDP through training, security functions, and economic activities. A comparison analysis with analogous forces in nations such as India and Pakistan demonstrate that Bangladesh's approach is more cohesive in community development, offering both security and economic prospects.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study evaluates the performance of Ansar-VDP members in maintaining law and order, financial progress, and operational costs, assessing their impact on national development and offering policy recommendations for improvement.

## METHODOLOGY

The study focused on Mymensingh and Dhaka headquarters, selected due to their operational significance and diversity in rural and urban settings. Mymensingh was chosen as it represents a rural landscape with active Ansar-VDP engagement, whereas Dhaka serves as the administrative and strategic hub. Primary data were collected through face-to-face interviews with 80 Ansar-VDP members, equally distributed across two villages. Secondary data were obtained from journals, newspapers, and official reports.

## ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

### *Ansar-VDP Unnayan Bank*

Long recognized as a crucial need for Ansar-VDP members' development, the government established the Ansar-VDP Unnayan Bank (AVUB) in 1995 through the Ansar-VDP Unnayan Bank Act. This specialized bank aims to empower members through income-generating activities (IGAs) and poverty alleviation. The bank boasts over 82 branches, providing critical financial support across the country. Over the years, AVUB's impact has been significant. By 2020, it has disbursed a total of micro-loans to around 262 crores of Ansar and VDP members, fueling their entrepreneurial endeavours [5]. Based on the loan amount and average loan size, an estimate of 300,000-350,000 beneficiaries as of 2023 could be appropriate. The bank's commitment to sustainable development is further exemplified by its members actively participating in its shareholding system, contributing over an estimated Tk 12-15 crore to its capital. This active engagement, coupled with an impressive consistently high recovery rate. 98.87% on loans, showcases the bank's success in fostering financial inclusion and empowerment within the Ansar-VDP community) [6]. Intending to promote poverty-alleviating activities, Ansar-VDP has so far undertaken the following Projects and Activities:

### 1. Security and Law Enforcement

- Ansar-VDP members play a key role in securing elections, public events, and critical infrastructures, complementing police operations.
- In the latest City Corporation Election, 13,704 male and 6,852 female members were deployed to ensure voter safety [7].
- 20,991 members are currently securing various Key Point Installations (KPIs), industries, and other vital infrastructures.
- Their involvement in community policing has significantly reduced local crime rates.

**Table 1: Security Deployment of Ansar-VDP Members**

Security Deployment	Male	Female	Total
City Corporation Election	13,704	6,852	20,556
Security of KPIs & Industries	15,000	5,991	20,991

## 2. Economic Empowerment

- Vocational training in agriculture, small businesses, and financial literacy has increased members' self-sufficiency [8].
- Over 200,000 members have benefited from vocational training in the past five years.
- Small business initiatives such as poultry, dairy farming, and fishery projects have helped generate employment and income [9].

**Table 2: Economic Empowerment through Vocational Training**

Economic Training Type	Male	Female	Total
Poultry Farming	50,000	30,000	80,000
Dairy Farming	40,000	25,000	65,000
Fishery Projects	30,000	20,000	50,000

## 3. Community Development

- Initiatives in family planning, sanitation, and disaster management highlight the force's role beyond security.
- Family planning efforts have successfully motivated over 58,000 couples for permanent methods and 160,000 for temporary methods [10].
- Disaster management programs have been pivotal in response to cyclones and floods, ensuring community resilience.

**Table 3: Community Development Initiatives by Ansar-VDP**

Community Development Program	Participants
Family Planning (Permanent Methods)	58,000
Family Planning (Temporary Methods)	160,000
Disaster Management Training	75,000

## 4. Comparative Analysis

- **Gender-based Analysis:** Female Ansar-VDP members are increasingly participating in security and economic activities, though challenges remain in leadership representation [11].
- **Rural vs. Urban Contributions:** Rural members focus on agriculture and community service, while urban counterparts emphasize security and administrative functions.

**Table 4: Comparative Analysis of Rural and Urban Contributions**

Category	Rural Members	Urban Members
Agriculture & Farming	80%	10%
Security & Admin	20%	90%

## 5. Statistical Analysis

- Incorporating trend analysis of financial growth over the past five years [12].
- Comparative evaluation of employment impact across different service durations.
- Recommendations for further correlation analysis between training and long-term career sustainability.

**Table 5: Trend Analysis of Vocational Training and Employment Impact**

Year	Vocational Training Participants	Employment Rate Increase (%)
2018	30,000	5.5%
2019	35,000	6.2%
2020	40,000	7.0%
2021	45,000	8.3%
2022	50,000	9.5%

## 6. Operational Framework and Impact

- **Military & Law Enforcement Operations:**  
The Ansar-VDP played a critical role in maintaining security in East Pakistan (pre-1971), in border protection during the 1965 war, and actively fought in the 1971 Liberation War.
- **Special Operations & National Elections:**  
Deployment of Ansar-VDP members to

ensure free and fair elections and participate in disaster management operations.

- **Socio-Economic Development Programs:**  
Contribution to public health campaigns, tree plantation drives, sanitation programs, and microfinance support through Ansar-VDP Unnayan Bank [13].

**Table 6: Operational Framework and Impact of Ansar-VDP**

Operational Activities	Impact
National Security & Law Enforcement	Strengthened election security, reduced crime rates, improved border safety
Economic & Vocational Training	Increased employment rates, financial independence, income generation
Community Development	Enhanced healthcare, sanitation, and rural economic opportunities
Disaster Management	Effective response to floods, cyclones, and emergencies

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the multidimensional role of Ansar-VDP in national security, economic empowerment, and community development. The discussion section critically analyzes these contributions in the broader context of governance, development, and international comparisons.

### Security and Law Enforcement

The results demonstrate that Ansar-VDP plays a crucial role in maintaining internal security by assisting the police, guarding key installations, and ensuring fair elections. Their presence in rural areas strengthens community policing and enhances the overall sense of safety. Studies on community policing in developing countries Azman *et al.*, support the argument that localized security forces improve crime prevention and social cohesion [14]. However, the lack of advanced tactical training and modern equipment remains a challenge, indicating the need for further investment in capacity building.

### Economic Empowerment

The vocational training programs initiated by Ansar-VDP have contributed to self-employment opportunities, particularly in agriculture, small businesses, and financial literacy. This aligns with the concept of economic resilience as emphasized in microfinance-based poverty alleviation strategies [15]. However, despite the high participation in training programs, the long-term sustainability of income generation remains uncertain due to limited access to capital and market linkages. Integrating Ansar-VDP training programs with national economic development projects can enhance their impact [16].

### Community Development

The involvement of Ansar-VDP members in disaster management, sanitation, family planning, and rural healthcare has significantly contributed to the well-being of local communities [17]. Their participation in national immunization programs and environmental initiatives (such as tree planting) supports the United

Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to health and environmental sustainability [18]. However, a lack of consistent funding and policy alignment with governmental agencies limits the full potential of these initiatives.

### Comparing Ansar-VDP with International Paramilitary and Community Security Forces

Globally, many developing countries have implemented similar paramilitary and community-based security models. Countries like India (Home Guards), Pakistan (Civil Armed Forces), and Nigeria (Civilian Joint Task Force) have adopted community-integrated security systems that complement their police and military [19]. A comparative analysis reveals that Bangladesh's Ansar-VDP is unique in its dual role in both security and economic empowerment, whereas similar forces in other countries primarily focus on security functions. However, Bangladesh can learn from these models in terms of structuring leadership training, operational efficiency, and policy integration with national defense strategies.

### Challenges and Policy Gaps

Despite its extensive contributions, several challenges hinder the full potential of Ansar-VDP:

**Financial Constraints:** Limited government funding for expanding vocational programs and providing sustainable financial aid to members.

**Skill Development Gaps:** The need for modernized training programs in cybersecurity, disaster resilience, and business management.

**Lack of Formal Recognition:** Ansar-VDP members often receive lower social and institutional recognition compared to regular law enforcement agencies.

**Limited Gender Inclusion:** While female participation has increased, leadership opportunities for women within Ansar-VDP remain limited.

**Data Monitoring & Impact Evaluation:** There is an absence of systematic tracking of trained members' career progress and economic improvements.

### Future Policy Directions

To enhance the role of Ansar-VDP in Bangladesh's national development, policymakers should consider the following steps:

**Integrating technology-driven training:** Advanced courses in cybersecurity, emergency response, and small business management should be introduced.

**Expanding access to microfinance:** Strengthening partnerships between Ansar-VDP Unnayan Bank and government-backed financial institutions [20].

**Promoting gender inclusivity:** Implementing quotas and leadership mentorship programs for female members [21].

**Institutionalizing data collection:** Establishing an impact assessment framework to measure the long-term effects of training and employment.

**Enhancing legal and social recognition:** Increasing awareness and appreciation of Ansar-VDP's role in national security and community development [22-26].

### Recommendations for policy and strategic development

To augment the efficacy of the Ansar-VDP, the subsequent strategic steps are proposed:

**Enhance Training Programs:** Integrate technology-focused courses, including cybersecurity, advanced disaster management, and digital entrepreneurship, to meet contemporary security and economic demands.

**Augment Financial Inclusion:** Fortify the function of Ansar-VDP Unnayan Bank by expanding access to microcredit and financial literacy initiatives for its members.

**Enhance Gender participation:** Implement leadership training, mentorship initiatives, and quotas to secure greater participation of women in decision-making roles.

**Enhance Institutional Recognition:** Augment public knowledge and policy recognition of Ansar-VDP's contributions to national security and development by further integrating it with government-led efforts.

**Execute Data-Driven Policy Decisions:** Establish an impact assessment system to monitor the development of members following training, evaluating economic and social results.

**Optimise Resource Allocation:** Augment financial support for contemporary training facilities, equipment, and welfare programs to enhance overall performance and sustainability.

**Promote International Collaboration:** Initiate exchange programs with analogous forces in other developing nations to disseminate best practices and enhance operational efficiency.



## CONCLUSION

The Ansar-VDP has made substantial contributions to national security, economic empowerment, and community development in Bangladesh. Utilising its extensive membership and organisational structure, it fulfils a twin function of upholding law and order while simultaneously tackling socio-economic issues. The Ansar-VDP has been pivotal in Bangladesh's national security, economic empowerment, and community development. Its contributions to election security, safeguarding critical infrastructure, and diminishing crime have fortified law enforcement in both urban and rural regions. The vocational training programs have facilitated the self-sufficiency of thousands of individuals via participation in income-generating activities. The organization's participation in social welfare initiatives, including disaster management, family planning, and sanitation, corresponds with Bangladesh's national development agenda and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Notwithstanding these notable accomplishments, certain problems persist, such as budgetary limitations, absence of formal acknowledgement, and insufficient women representation in leadership roles. Resolving these challenges through enhanced policy integration, financial assistance, and technology innovations will be essential for the future development and efficacy of Ansar-VDP in fostering national advancement.

**Funding:** No funding sources

**Conflict of interest:** None declared

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