

Linkage between the My Village My Town Program and National Institutional Framework of Bangladesh

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Abstract: A significant portion of the total population of Bangladesh live in rural areas with lack of various facilities, services and amenities which in turn persuade the rural urban migration, unemployment, poor socio economic condition. To reduce the disparity among the urban and rural areas as mentioned in section 16 of our nation constitution Government of Bangladesh is going to implement My Village My Town Program in rural areas. This study tried to link the different sectors of the project with the national institutional frameworks like National Agriculture Policy 2010, National Rural Development Policy 2001, 7th Five Year Plan 2016-2020, ICT Policy-2018, National Education Policy-2010, Disaster management Act 2012, BCCSA 2009 & National plan for disaster management 2021-2025. The aim of this study is to find out whether the existing national legal framework support the different issues mentioned in My Village My Town projects or any further national legal framework or policy support is needed. The result found that the current national legal framework supports the every sector of the My Village My Town program. Some important considerations need to be considered while implementing this project to get optimum result for this project.

Introduction

Rural and urban areas are intertwined economically, socially, and environmentally (Gebre & Gebremedhin, 2019). Thus, ultimate national development requires both urban and rural area development. Thousands of villages in Bangladesh that yield agrarian agriculture which supply the country's basic needs for living (Nasrullah, 2005). Therefore, development of rural area demanded crucial importance and long-term national growth necessitates attention to agricultural development (Hossain et al., 2012) with proper utilization of rural resources and bio diversity (Nasrullah, 2005). Rural development, on the other hand, remains a major problem for emerging countries. Rural poverty creates technical, financial, and other development barriers, yet 70% of the world's poor live in rural areas (World Bank, 2009). As a result, the world's urban population is growing at a rapid pace than it has ever been, necessitating more attention to urban development, particularly in developing countries. Nearly seven out of ten people in the world will live in cities by 2050 (World Bank, 2019). The main reasons of this upsurge of urban population are employment attraction, community facilities and expectation of higher quality of life. On the contrary, rural areas are suffering from lack of basic facilities for quality life. In the meantime, rapid urbanization causing lack of urban facilities and services. Thus, the quality of urban life is decreasing. This problem can be trade off by proving urban facilities in the rural area with conserving basic characteristics of rural area.

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With an average annual growth rate of 3.29 percent, Bangladesh's urban population has increased from 7.9% in 1971 to 38.2 percent in 2020 (Knoema, 2020). This increased pace of rural-urban migration causing urban deprivation and destroying traditional rural life in Bangladesh. Approximately 50.96 percent of slum dwellers has migrated from rural areas in quest of work/jobs, with poverty accounting for 28.76 percent, river erosion accounting for 7.04 percent, insecurity/disappearance accounting for 2.15 percent, and natural disasters accounting for 0.84 percent (SID, 2014). Additionally, BBS report 2017 reveals that education rate in the rural area is 65% (SID, 2017) and these people are conscious about civic facilities and the betterment of life. This factor also induced rural people to migrate in urban area. Another study reveals that in recent years, the growth rate of the population in urban and rural is 3.27% and -0.0799% respectively (Trading Economics, 2020). The disparity between rural and urban areas in terms of poverty levels, disaster vulnerability, and facilities for a better quality of life are the key drivers of this rural urban migration in Bangladesh. However, it is a hope that more than still agriculture share 40% of total labor force which contributing 13.65% of Bangladesh's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019 (Khatun, 2020). This labor force should remain in village and development in agricultural sector should crucial issue.

Article 16 of the Constitution that the state that adopting effective measures to bring about a radical transformation in the rural areas through the provision of rural electrification, the promotion of an agricultural revolution, the development of cottage and other industries, the improvement in education, communications and public health, in those areas, so as progressively to remove the disparity in the living standards between urban and rural areas is essential part. The mentioned vision is reflected in the government undertaken initiative named “My Village, My Town” program. Additionally, Global Agenda SDG promises that no one will remain (Ahmed, 2020). Thus, rural people should be included in the urban facilities. However, implementation of such project requires legal framework, empowerment of local governance body, political support and legal support. This paper will explore the legal institutional framework which support the segments on which the my village my town project will work to diminish the disparities between urban and rural area.

Research Objective and Methodology

This study focuses on current national policies, act, plans have with a desire to explore linkage with the sectors on which my village my town program will be dealt with to eliminate the disparities between urban and rural areas.

Methodology employed in the study adopts qualitative approach for answering research question. The study is based on secondary sources. First, the details of the My Village, My Town initiative have been studied from exiting literature. Apart from that the national policies and acts -National Agricultural Policy-2010, National Rural Development Policy -2001, 8th Five Year Plan 2021-2025, ICT Policy-2018, National Education Policy-2010, Disaster management Act 2012, Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009, National Plan for Disaster Management 2021-2025 were reviewed and tried to find out the link between the national legal frameworks and the sectors with which my village my town project will be dealt with. Some literatures from different journals were studied on strategy of rural development. Moreover this study provides some recommendations for the effective implementation of this program.

Concept of My Village My Town

This concept was firstly traced by the father of nation Banggabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman which has been stated in the section 16 of our national constitution. However, this concept was formally leveled by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasinas 11th election manifesto. It reveals that urban amenities will be provided to each village to reduce the gap between the cities and the rural areas. The main aim of this concept is to fulfill the Bangabandhu's dream of Golden Bengal by providing the essential facilities to all the villages including improved roads and communications, supply of safe and pure drinking water, modern healthcare services and proper treatment, standard education, proper sanitation and waste management, social security, supply of power and minerals, setting-up of bio-gas plants and solar power panels, computers with high-speed internets, electrical equipment and standard consumer goods, growth centres and markets of commodity goods, flourish cottage and other industries, bank loan for marginal and small entrepreneurs; establish amusement parks, sports and recreation centres, libraries and community spaces, agricultural equipment servicing centers and workshops, training of rural youths and entrepreneurs, rural climate change and disaster management (Hasina, 2018). Installation of this service will play a key role in reducing the rural problems and disparity. This concept could be associated with John Friedmann model which was proposed as a way to generate economic benefits in rural areas by providing basic utilities, such as quality health care and education (Paul, 2017). However, implementation of this concept depends of socio-economic pattern of the local area (Ahmed, 2020).

A successful history of South Korea rural development reveals a lot of emphasis on its industrial sector (Hafiz Iqbal et al., 2017). The key factors of the success of Saemaul Undong are homogeneous communities with a strong tradition of cooperation, solid and consistent economic growth, national leadership and strong political commitment, incentive system and cooperation at the village level efforts and government-led policies and strategies, such as the holistic approach, vertical integration, and horizontal coordination (Rondinelli, 1991). Therefore, this concept of My Village My Town is shaded by local demand and strong local governance with legal institutional framework for laying best output. This can be best illustrated by the figure-1.

My Village My Town Program For Bangladesh: Factors and Forces

This is a huge, comprehensive, complex, and long-term national development endeavor. The government has taken several steps to implement this program, including creating a time-bound work plan, an Upazila master plan, holding national workshops to develop innovative creative working strategies to address the program's challenges, and coordinating initiatives among related organizations. The administration has been developing new plans and bolstering existing ones in order to improve local government entities and ensure openness, accountability, and increased public participation in all stages of development (Islam, 2020).

Literature reveals that diversification of weather and production are interlinked and the strength of our agrarian production-based economy (Akram et al., 2020) as well as challenging the implementation of the concept of My village my town. Implementation of rural development requires ensuring good governance at micro level, rural bias policy for

multi-dimensional facets of rural life (Nasrullah, 2005). Only the NRD 2001 enabled Union Parishad in terms of law and order within its authority among the existing laws and policies, security of the growth center and law enforcement agencies, as well as the implementation of a Community Policing System (CPS).

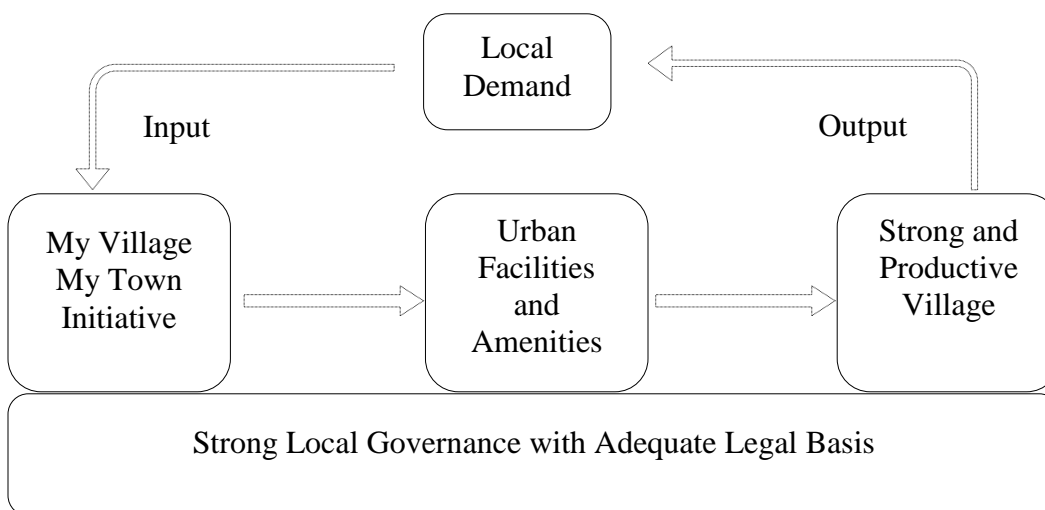


Fig-1 Concept of My Village My Town

Source: Developed by Authors, 2021

Beside, special undertaking for my village my town are:

- Zero corruption
- Empowerment of local government body (Hasina, 2018).

On the other hand, cluster-based committees, in addition to other ongoing programs by several ministries to increase civic services in villages and rural areas has been taken (Financial Express, 2021) and 25 guidelines and 13 consultants in charge of overseeing the development of standards or policies, as well as survey work has been proposed by government (Prothom Alo, 2021). Additionally, the pilot project will begin in 15 villages (Islam, 2020) and at the Local Government Division, eight villages in eight upazilas of eight divisions and seven in selected areas (of Haor, Char, Hill, Coast, Barind, Midland beels and two adjoining economic zones) has been chosen for this program (Rahman, 2021).

Therefore, factors and forces that will ensure success of this project are adequate funding, accountability, transparency, local people's participation in every development stages and support from government authorities with proper legal basis. To look at all these factors and forces while implementing the concept of my village my town, there need to examine implementing authority and policy support in Bangladesh. Table-1 illustrates the state of sectors of this concept, implementing agency and existing policy support to implement the program in Bangladesh.

My Village My Town Project Linkage with the National Frameworks

This section presents the short description of the different sectors of My village My Town project with the legal support.

Table 1: Sectors of My village My Town with legal support and respective ministries and authority

| Sector of My village My Town Concept | Description | Legal Support in Bangladesh | Implementing Authority |
|--|--|--|--|
| 1. Improved roads and communications | It includes road widening, fund for road maintenance, quality construction materials etc. | Provision of rural road widening of 7 th Five Year Plan (2016-2020), Section 5.3.6 of National Rural Development Policy 2001 stated about measure for rural infrastructural development. | Union Parishad, LGRD&Co |
| 2. Supply of safe and pure drinking water | Establishment of deep tubewell, drainage system and prevention of river water pollution in dry season | Less policy support only section 5.19 of NRD-2001 has stated about rural environment promotion grossly and section 5.3 for infrastructural development. | Local Government and LGRD&Co |
| 3. Modern healthcare services and proper treatment | Establishment of modern health care facilities at village level | Section 5.6 of NRD 2001 supports rural health and nutrition improvement for both men and women including children. | Ministry of Health, LGRD&Co and Union Parishad |
| 4. Supply of power and minerals | Construction of three phase electric line, continuous supply of electricity specially in night time and irrigation time, providing gas supply or subsidized cylinder gas supply, Subsidized solar panel, setting-up of bio-gas plants and solar power panels | Section 5.24.1 of NRD 2001 stated to rapid expansion of rural electrification. However does not stated about quality of supply. | Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources, Union Parishad, NGO Use of PPP in electrification |
| 5. Rural information and communication | Establishment of digital center at union level, places of poster, banner at public place for announcing services, affordable mobile internet services to the youth, community radio etc. | ICT policy 2018 section 1.3, 4.2, 8.3 may support for establishing internet service center at village level, ICT training for youth and inclusive access to internet services. Section 5.26 of NRD 2001 for information dissemination and data Base using ICT. | Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications, and Information Technology |

| Sector of My village My Town Concept | Description | Legal Support in Bangladesh | Implementing Authority |
|--|---|---|---|
| 6. Standard education | Improvement of Educational quality in rural school, reduction of school dropout and expansion of vocational and technical education | National Education policy 2010 section 2, 5, 12, 22, 24 stresses on technical education, quality education and education for all measures. | Ministry of Education |
| 7. Health, Nutrition and Family planning | Health care center at village, ambulance facilities at emergency, special attention of women health, treatment at low cost, awareness on population growth | NRD 2001 in section 5.6 and 5.7 stated about rural health improvement and rural population control. | Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, NGOs |
| 8. Bank loan for marginal and small entrepreneurs | Introduction of agricultural loan, easy access to loan facilities etc. | No clear policy support. Only section 5.7.5 of National Agricultural Policy stated about micro credit finance for farmers. | NGOs, Government Commercial Banks |
| 9. Rural security | Employment of police security at village level and enabling Shalish board | NRDP 2001 empowered Union Parishad in terms of law and ordered within its jurisdiction. Specifically security of growth center and law enforcing agency, Introduction of Community Policing System(CPS) | Home Ministry, Union Parishad, Ministry of Finance |
| 10. Growth centres and markets of commodity goods | Ensuring management of growth center and supply of quality goods at profitable price, agricultural equipment servicing centers and workshops | National Agricultural Policy 2010 fully supported for innovative process for marketing of good, equipment for agriculture specially section 10 of the policy. | Union Parishad |
| 11. Social security | Allowance for older people, employment opportunities for widowed women | NAP 2010 stated to engage women in agriculture but not specifically in other employment for widow or older, Section 5.14 of NRD 2001 take measure to help disadvantageous people. | Ministry of Social Welfare, NGOs |
| 12. Proper sanitation and waste management and housing | Introduction of improved technology to the rural housing, sanitation and waste management, low interest and protracted loan facilities for housing development and public awareness for | Section-16 of our National constitution, Section 9 of 7 th five year plan, Strong policy support has been stated in section 5.8 of NRD 2001. | LGRD, Housing and Public Works Department, Union Parishad |

| Sector of My village My Town Concept | Description | Legal Support in Bangladesh | Implementing Authority |
|--|---|--|--|
| | sanitation and waste management | | |
| 13. Flourish cottage and other industries | Establishing agro based industries at the peripheral area of the village to generate employment. | National Industrial policy 2016 stated special emphasis on small and cottage industries, section 5.10 of NRD 2001 stated measures for rural industries. | Bangladesh Small and cottage Industries corporation (BSCIC) |
| 14. Community facilities | Establish amusement parks, sports and recreation centres, libraries and community spaces | Section 5.23 of NRD 2001 stated to take initiatives for recreation. | Union Parishad |
| 15. Rural climate change and disaster management | Curing after disaster destruction in terms of housing, crops, health etc. Taking preventive measure for disaster | Disaster Management Act 2012 National Plan for disaster Management 2021-2025 Bangladesh Climate Change strategy and action plan 2009 | Ministry of Disaster Management, Disaster management bureau and at the rural local level the union disaster management committee and self-help groups. |
| 16. Improvement of rural women and child | Creating employment opportunities for women, special health facilities in community clinic for children and women. | Section 5.6 of NRD 2001, section 9 of NAP 2010 stated about health of rural people and employment of rural women | Ministry of LGRD&Co |
| 17. Rural human resource development and rural youth development | Training of rural youths and entrepreneurs, creation of self-employment including women | Section-12 of National Agriculture Policy 2010 and NRD 2001 support this section strongly through taking measure for youth training, creating self-employment, empowering women. | Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Education |

Source: (NAP-2010, NRD-2001, 7th Five Year Plan 2016-2020, ICT Policy-2018, National Education Policy-2010 & Rural Public Demand and Planning-2019, Disaster management Act 2012, BCCSA 2009, National plan for disaster management 2021-2025, Bangladesh Climate change Strategy and Action Plan 2009, compiled by authors)

From the table we can find out some Issues that the factors:

- For different sectors of the My Village My Town project several ministries and authorities are involved. It may be crucial to coordinate and interlink their functions and may create disorder.
- Implementation strategies will be very on spatial context. Based on local socio environmental context, local resources and economy the approaches should be varied and aligned with the local context.

Recommendation

For successful implementation of the My Village My Town project, participation of local people from plan preparation to execution, considering the local context, manpower and resources should be ensured. Participation of local people ensures a sense of ownership among the local people and which will be helpful for uplifting their faith upon government. The different local government authority will be engaged for different sector of My village My Town project like- rural communication, water supply, sanitation, community space and recreation centre development, capacity enhancement of union parishad to ensure the improvement of rural areas but proper coordination among the ministries and authorities must be ensured and if possible they should work under an umbrella. The 25 recommendations provided in Action plan of this project should be of the followed properly. The feedback/output from the first 25 villages in which the project will be implemented as pilot project should be seriously observed and every single shortcoming must be addressed properly.

Conclusion

The project is a highly demanded, varied and ambitious. There are challenges in developing pragmatic, appropriate and sustainable and an integrated plan for providing the urban facilities in all rural areas. It's difficult to come up with one size fits all. Among those many challenges it need to have proper legal framework and coordination among various ministries and authorities. From this study it has been revealed that every sectors of the My village My Town project are stated in different national policies and acts and several authorities are assigned to deal with different sectors. However further research should be done on how these authorities could be coordinated and work under one national plan for fulfilling the aim of the My village My Town project and remove the disparities between rural and urban areas.

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