

Institutional Arrangement for MSDP Project

1.0 Introduction

Cities all over the world are facing an increase in the frequency and severity of climatic and other natural disasters. These factors will, in turn, put people and assets at greater risk of impacts of these events (Trohanis, Shah et al. 2009). For example, 90% of the total estimated asset exposure in large port cities (with populations exceeding one million) is concentrated in only eight nations (China, US, India, Japan, Netherlands, Thailand, Vietnam and Bangladesh) (R.J.Nicholls, S.Hanson et al. 2007).

Disasters in the context of development are often considered to be any severe disruption to human survival and security that overwhelms people's capacity to cope. The importance of addressing disaster and development perspective together is considered as two sides of same issue. (Collins 2009). The relationship between development and disaster can be explained in four thematic areas (Figure 1):

- Disaster setbacks development
- Disaster creates opportunity for development
- Development increases the susceptibility of disaster and
- Development can be designed to decrease vulnerability from disaster (Stephenson 1997)

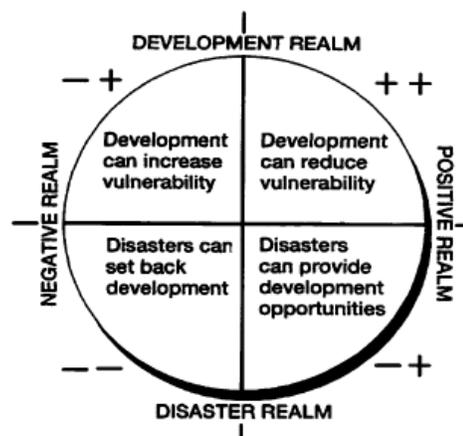


Figure 1: The Linkage between development and disaster

Source: (Stephenson 1997)

Comprehensive land use planning has been widely recognized as one of the means for sustainable development. So attempts have been made all over the world to incorporate disaster risk reduction measures in physical planning. Collins claimed (2009) the extent of disaster

management and sustainable development is a matter of right and good governance. Thus there is no denying that for sustainable development institutional built up is must.

Though disaster risk reduction is incorporated in the physical planning framework in some of the plans of Bangladesh (For example, Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan 1995-2015) in Mymensingh it got importance as one of the objective of the plan. Mymensingh Strategic Development Plan (MSDP) Project aimed at mainstreaming disaster risk reduction measures into comprehensive land use development planning and management for Mymensingh (Municipality) strategic development planning area. The planning area is 69,024.74 acres (27933.43 hectre) of which only 7.68% is under the municipality (Table 1). Though more than 38% of the population live in the municipal area still a management plan for strategic development planning area only for municipality area would not do justice to the plan. The application of existing legislation on management of comprehensive land use development planning would create complexity. Moreover the new plan incorporated disaster risk reduction in the planning process which increases the complexity in institutional arrangement.

Table 1: MSDP planning Area

Paurashava/ Union	Upazilla	Area			Population in 2001	
		acres	Hectares	%	Number	%
MymensinghPaurashava	Mymensingh Sadar Upazila	5,302.03	2,145.67	7.68	227,204	38.37%
Akua		3,286.90	1,330.16	4.76	41,905	7.08%
Baera (Kewatkhali)		1,430.56	578.93	2.07	22,620	3.82%
Bhabkhali		7,632.49	3,088.77	11.06	43,467	7.34%
Char Ishwardia		7,150.91	2,893.88	10.36	39,095	6.60%
Char Nilakshmia		8,022.88	3,246.76	11.62	37,917	6.40%
Dapunia		7,014.10	2,838.52	10.16	41,690	7.04%
Ghagra		8,379.64	3,391.13	12.14	46,842	7.91%
Khagdahar		6,642.92	2,688.31	9.62	36,645	6.19%
Sirta		7,337.31	2,969.32	10.63	31,485	5.32%
Bhangnamari	Gauripur Upazila	6,825.00	2,761.98	9.89	23,215	3.92%
Total area		69,024.74	27,933.43	100.00	592,085	100.00

Source:(Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) 2001)

2.0 The Problem

The existing legislation entrusted the local level government in urban area for preparing and managing development plan (Government of Bangladesh 2009b). On the other hand, local level rural government at union level is entrusted with preparing and implementing economic and social plan at local level (Government of Bangladesh 2009a). However, Upazilla could prepare and implement development plan as long as the upazilla could support the plan financially (Government of Bangladesh 1998). MSDP area consists of one paurashava and 10 union parishads under two upazillas. Thus there are one municipality, ten unions and two upazillas to manage the aforementioned development plan. Though **উপজেলা পরিষদ আইন ১৯৯৮ সংশোধিত ২০০৯** states that upazilla may seek suggestion/ consult union parishad regarding development the laws does not explicitly or implicitly say who would supersede whom.

On the other hand disaster risk reduction is the responsibility of disaster management directorate (Government of Bangladesh 2012). This law stipulates that there would be a disaster management committee (in some case health management committee) at local level (district, upazilla, paurashava and union level). The law also states that there should be a disaster response co-ordination group at local level (district, upazilla and paurashava level). However the duties and responsibilities of these committees and groups were supposed to be defined by rules which have not yet been prepared. However, Standing Order on Disaster 2010 (SoD) defined the members of these committees and their duties and responsibilities (Government of Bangladesh 2010). But it should be bear in mind that the law does recognize the standing order till the rules are established for the committee. However there is still one problem as there is an option of union disaster response co-ordination group in SoD.

The other problem of the present set up is that with the exception of Mymensingh no physical planner is working at union and upazilla level. Even the paurashava has only one planner for an area over 5,000 acre. So it would be a near impossible task to manage and implement the plan as there is not enough competent manpower to do so. Thus the prepared plan may become another document without bringing benefit to the society as a whole.

It is clear from the above paragraphs the problems of managing MSDP plan in the present institutional framework. Thus it would be futile to manage this plan unless there is sole

owner/custodian of the plan. As MSDP is unique in the sense that it covers both comprehensive land use plan and disaster risk reduction a unique institutional set up is needed. One of the ways to overcome the problems is by creating a parastatal authority like RAJUK. However in most of the countries of the world the planning and development authority is under the jurisdiction of elected local body. So a hybrid model of parastatal body with the supervision of elected officials is proposed.

3.0 The Proposed Institutional Set Up

For managing the MSDP government should create a body in the form of RAJUK. But this body (may be named Mymensingh Development Management Authority, MDMA) unlike RAJUK would only act as a regulatory authority for development management. The task of this authority would be to act as a custodian of the plan. As custodian of the plan MDMA should review the plan regularly and act accordingly, issue development permit for building construction, infrastructure development and any other functions that deemed necessary for management and implementation of MSDP.

MDMA should be led by chief planning officer who would be supported by planning officers and assistant planning officers. There should also at least one officer responsible for disaster management. He and his team not only would assist the planning team in integrating disaster risk reduction in development planning and management but also assist the various committees that are formed by **দুর্যোগ ব্যবস্থাপনা আইন ২০১২** in the jurisdiction of MSDP area

The authority would be governed by a council. The council should be consists of representatives of all the unions and paurashva under MSDP. The chairman of MymensinghSadarUpazilla (the largest stakeholder of MSDP) would act as ex-officio chairman of the authority. While the Mayor of MymensinghPaurashava and chairman of GauripurUpazilla would be ex-officio vice chairman of the authority. There would be also representative of UNOs of MymensinghSadarUpazilla and GauripurUpazilla, MymensinghZillaParishad, Disaster Management Directorate, Civil Society and professional organizations in the council. Chief town planner of MDMA should act as member-secretary of the council. For the smooth functioning of MDMA it is necessary to make all the clauses and sub-clauses of relevant acts related to development planning in MDMA area (i.e. **স্থানীয়সরকার (পৌরসভা) আইন ২০০৯**,

ধারা৫০উপধারা১গউপধারা২ক-ঙ; স্হানীয়সরকার (ইউনিয়নপরিষদ) আইন২০০৯, ধারা৪৭উপধারা১ঘ;
উপজেলাপরিষদআইন১৯৯৮সংশোধিত২০০৯, ধারা৪২) null and void.

4.0 Conclusion

Disaster poses significant threats to achieving and sustaining development plans and goals. Ignoring the relationship between disaster and development in the planning process would do a disservice to the society. At the same time considering the disaster in the comprehensive development planning without the structural and institutional transformation would make it an academic exercise.

Reference

- Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) (2001). Population Census 2001, Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh.
- Collins, A. E. (2009). Disaster and Development. London and New York, Routedledge.
- Government of Bangladesh (1998). উপজেলাপরিষদআইন১৯৯৮ (সংশোধিত২০০৯), Government of Bangladesh. **24**.
- Government of Bangladesh (2009). স্হানীয়সরকার (ইউনিয়নপরিষদ) আইন২০০৯, Government of Bangladesh. **61**.
- Government of Bangladesh (2009). স্হানীয়সরকার (পৌরসভা) আইন২০০৯, Government of Bangladesh. **58**.
- Government of Bangladesh (2010). Standing Order on Disaster, Government of Bangladesh.
- Government of Bangladesh (2012). দুর্যোগব্যবস্হাপনাআইন২০১২ Government of Bangladesh. **24**.
- R.J.Nicholls, S.Hanson, et al. (2007). Ranking Port Cities with High Exposure and Vulnerability to Climate Extermes - Exposure Estimates. OECD papers.
- Stephenson, R. S. (1997). Disaster and Development: Study Text and Course Guide for C280 - DD02. Madison, University of Wisconsin - Disaster Management Center.
- Trohanis, Z., F. Shah, et al. (2009). Building Climate and Disaster Resilience into City Planning and Management Processes. Fifth Urban Research Symposium: Building Climate and Disaster Resilience into City Planning and Management Processes

