

Role of Growth Center: A Rural Development Perspective

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Abstract

This paper incorporated the upshot of growth centre for economic & social development of rural Bangladesh. An attempt has been made to expose the changes in social life as well as in physical development of the area after built up the Growth centre. In recent years the purchasing intensity of various sector's (agriculture, fisheries etc.) input increased very fast. Thus, the more increase in the numbers of buyers in these markets, more will be the trade volume and turn over which perpetuate local development. But these rural markets are beset with many problems which are mostly associated with infrastructure. Growth centers with better infrastructure facilities are likely to play a wider role in the rural economy & development. It has been seen that provision of infrastructure in rural markets actually paves the way for employment generation and contributes to increasing number of traders and market turnover.

Introduction

Growth Center in the village can be compared with Central Business District (CBD) of the arena. The growth centre performs as centre of economic, social and cultural activities in the rural areas. These are the venues where people exchange their ideas with their neighbours regarding improved methods of production and marketing and also serve as centre of recreation. In Bangladesh, agriculture accounts for about fifty percent of the Gross Domestic Product and employs around sixty percent of labour force (LGED Manual). Nearly seventy percent of the total population of the country lives in rural areas that are directly or indirectly related to agriculture for their livelihood, it is essential that the agricultural products reach the buyers through an efficient marketing system. It is necessary that the surplus agricultural produces are brought to the markets for buyers and at the same time, inputs of agriculture, like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and other necessities are made available on time for delivery.

The goals of rural development requires adequate attention to various economic, social and political factors that influence the rural society through an intricate web of interrelationship where growth centre can be an eligible potential feature. There is feeling that lack of marketing facilities have been acting as a serious bottleneck in promoting economic growth. Rural markets providing efficient market outlets for the producers of small farmers with a view to stimulate production and increasing the cash income of rural people either by enabling them to sell their produces or obtaining their needed commodities as buyers through the creation of efficient marketing system.

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Growth centre is the focal points with a specific level of facilities (ESCAP, 1979). It's a 'growing point' included with its vicinity and its effects as spread of development. In Bangladesh, rural markets are considered as growth centres (LGED, 1995). There are about 8000 rural markets (hats & bazaars) in Bangladesh (World bank, 1996) i.e. assembly market, primary market, secondary market & terminal market. But it is difficult to assess contribution of growth centre in the areas of trade volume and turn over, employment opportunities and economic upliftment, social services improvement, infrastructure development, place to exchange knowledge on production and marketing and place of social gathering.

Improvement of the rural markets, therefore, assumes great importance in the overall development of the rural economy. *Goraikhali* growth centre is one of the biggest markets of *Paikgacha* Upazila in Khulna district of Bangladesh and it is situated on the bank of river *Shibsha*. Most of the population were dependent on agriculture and fishery in the area, and in this respect, the market can play a vital role for the development of economy of the locality. Recently shrimp culture has been the most focused economic issue in this area.

Goraikhali growth centre is located on the bank of the river *Shibsha* under Goraikhali union of *Paikgacha* Upazila. This is the main marketing place of Goraikhali union and people of the surrounding rural villages depend on this market for performing their economic, social and cultural activities. This market falls in the category of Assembly Market. Most of the products used to be sold in the local rural markets resulting that products might not fetch a good price as there was limited demand for the products in the local market, because of the absence of better network with other markets or Upazila and Zila towns.

Literature Review

The rural development model as conceived by the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) and known as the "Comilla Model" emphasized the formation of co-operatives and the integration of support services provided by government departments originated in the early 1960s. The Government of Bangladesh (1984) formulated and adopted Strategy for Rural Development Projects (a Sectoral Policy Paper of the Planning Commission) in January 1984. The rural development strategy contained three components: i) development of physical infrastructure including roads, storage and markets; ii) irrigated agriculture, minor drainage and flood control works; and iii) production and employment program (PEP) for the rural poor. In Bangladesh, the increase of growth centers from 1400 to 2100 were due to increase of population and regional growth and thus regional priorities will have to be defined in view of the natural potential of the regions (LGED, 2004).

DHV Consulting Engineers (1979), in their book "Guidelines of Rural Centre Planning" prepared for the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP),

made a detailed discussion of rural centre planning. Rural centers are defined as the focal points with a specific level of facilities. The engineers of Local Government Engineering Department (1995), in their book "Manual of Growth Centre Planning" focuses on the planning of growth centers in Bangladesh. Momen (1997) in his research paper, "State of Rural Centre's and their Planning for Rural Development" discussed the overall condition of rural markets and highlighted the role of markets as a different service provider.

Objectives and Methodology

The objectives of the research are to identify the role of growth centers in the field of economic, social and cultural development of rural areas and to identify the services and facilities essential for the development of growth centers. To achieve the objectives the study was conducted in Khulna district. There are seven Upazilas in Khulna District. This study has focused on Goraikhali Growth center and its catchment area located in Paikgacha Upazila of Khulna district. Goraikhali Growth Center is the second biggest growth center in the Upazila. The study area is situated in the southeast part of the Paikgacha Upazila. The river Shibsha is running on the east and north of the growth center and Koyra Upazila boundary is 6 km far from southern side of it.

The catchment area radius of the growth center is identified to be 6 km. The catchment boundary of the growth center involves the western side of Dacope Upazila of Khulna district. The present population of the study area is 56,487 (BBS, 1991). Within the catchment area, total households were 9383 and household size was 6.02. The total area of the catchments area is 113.097 sq km. The major land-use pattern of the study area is composed of agriculture, shrimp farming and mixed used of shrimp and agriculture.

This study explores the existing situation and problems of growth center development and effect of growth center in rural development. For analysis, the study considered the variables of economic, social and cultural development of the rural area. The study is an explanatory research. The field work for this study was conducted through field observation and questionnaire survey with visitors, traders and other personnel. This study followed personal interview, Focus Group discussion and Key Informant Interview for the collection of information. This study used secondary data from Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), local NGOs, LGED and Union Parishad, and also books, journals and various other documents.

Analysis and Results

The results of data analysis are presented in this section. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework adopted to analyze the data and information on growth centers.

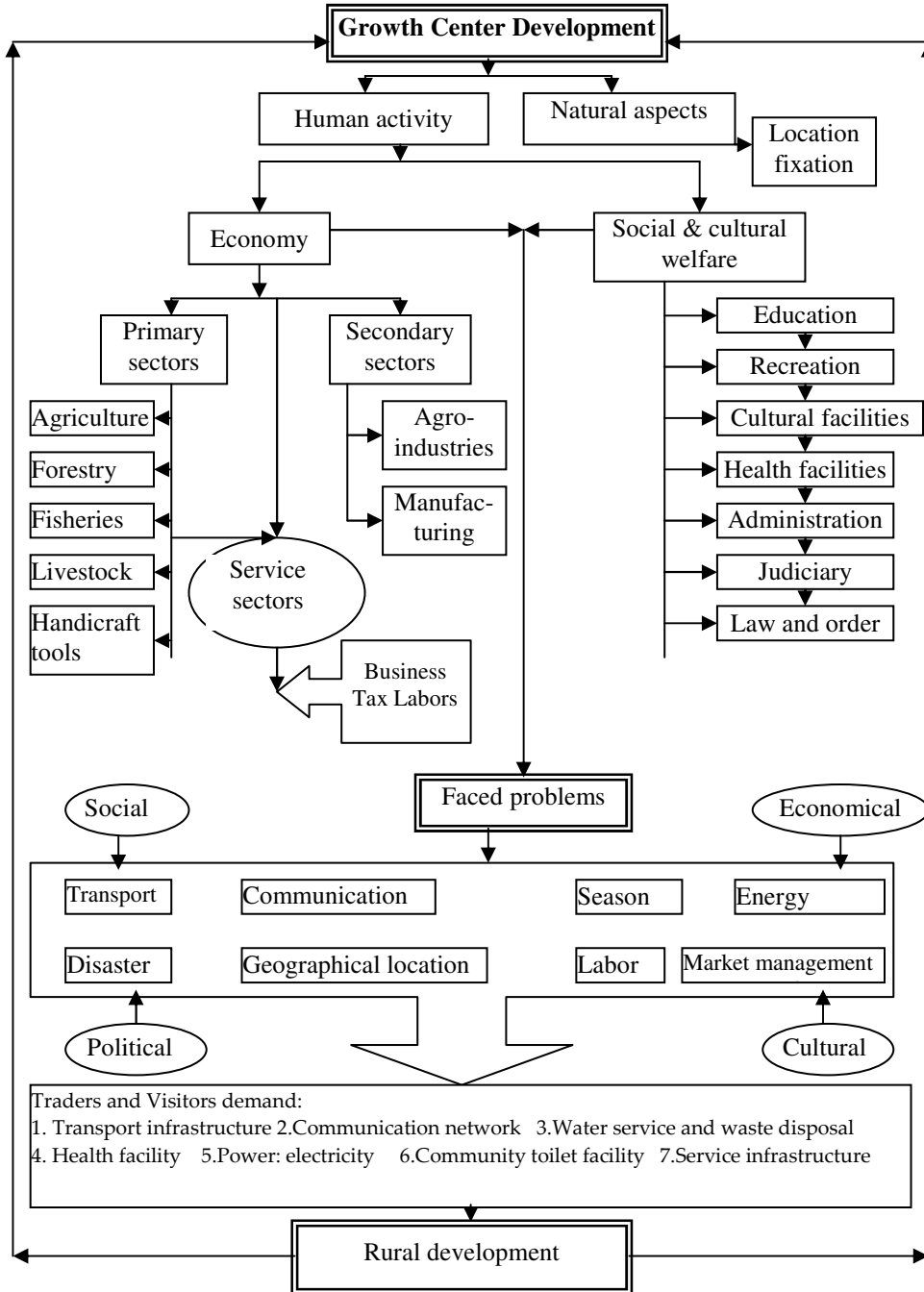


Fig. 1: Conceptual framework of Growth Center development

Model of Economic and Social Development

The growth center included process on economic, social and cultural development, national economic interdependence, health and human resources, agricultural research and extension, technology choice and transfer, immigration and domestic labor supply, agriculture and rural development, savings and capital flows, and taxation of the catchment area. The concepts of economic, social and cultural development are shown in Figure 2.

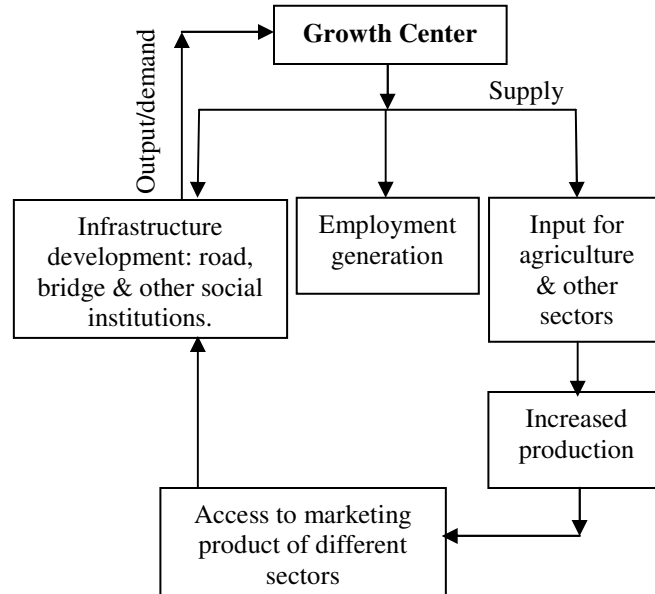


Fig. 2: Model of economic and social development

Origin of Employment and Earnings

Growth Center is not only a market place but also generates employment that improves the condition of rural poor. The contribution of growth center in employment creation created an example of economic development of the rural poor. Like a financial institution, every year some people started their jobs depending on this growth centre. Table 1 indicates the picture of employment creation and increase of different types of shops.

Table 1 shows the increase of shops from year 2000 to 2005. In 2000, the number of shops was 412 and in 2005 the increase of shops continued and reached at 569. After five years, there was an increase of 157 shops that means the growth centre created employment for more 346 people in 157 shops resulting in the success of the scheme of poverty alleviation.

Table 1: Increase of shops from 2000 to 2005

Shop Types \ Year	2000	2005	Increase
Dispensary	2	6	4
Grocery	36	57	11
Stationary	12	19	7
Battle Leaf	16	24	8
Book	8	13	5
Cloth	34	43	10
Hotel	3	5	2
Net	10	19	9
Plant	5	7	2
Pottery	9	13	5
Shoes	12	16	4
Studio	0	2	2
Sweet	14	18	6
Vegetable/fruits	183	231	48
Fish and meat	14	23	9
Metal	18	21	3
Wood/bamboo	16	22	6
Electronics	6	9	3
Saloon	11	16	5
Rice mill	3	5	2
Total	412	569	157

Source: Field Survey, August 2005.

Increased Turn Over and Economic Upliftment of Traders

The growth not only increases the employment or volume of shops but also increases turn over rate over the time. Table 2 shows the scenario of the increment of turn over from 2000 to 2005.

Table 2 shows the increase of turnover in 2005 from 2000. The highest 9 shops' turnover increased at 2-3 thousand BDT. The exceptional feature was that most of these shops' turnover increased in 2005. This indicates the increasing demand for products and extra income of the traders, which perpetuated the economic advancement with the development growth center.

Table 2: Shop wise monthly turnover increased in 2005 from 2000

Shop Type	Monthly turn over increase (BDT in thousands)							Total
	<1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	>6	
Dispensary							1	1
Grocery				2	1			3
Stationary			1	1				2
Battle Leaf		1						1
Book				1				1
Cloth						1	1	2
Hotel					1			1
Net			1	1				2
Plant		1						1
Pottery	1	1						2
Shoes				1	1			2
Studio				1				1
Sweet			1	1				2
Vegetable/fruits	1	2						3
Fish and meat		1	1					2
Metal			1					1
Wood/bamboo		1	1					2
Electronics			2					2
Saloon	1							1
Rice mill			1					1
Total	3	7	9	8	3	1	2	33

Source: Field Survey, August 2005.

Goraikhali Growth Center provided the opportunity of buying necessary goods, housing materials, agricultural & fisheries inputs to the customers and visitors. The service area people mostly depended on the market for their daily needs and other necessary productive inputs.

Table 3 shows the purchase intention of the visitors for their necessary goods, housing materials, agricultural & fisheries inputs in 2000 and 2005. In most cases in 2000, on an average, less than fifty percent of the visitors used to buy their necessary goods, housing materials, agricultural and fisheries inputs from the growth center. But in 2005, the average purchase intention of the visitors increased tremendously and it reached at 70%,

Table 3: Purchase intention of necessary goods, housing materials, agricultural and fisheries inputs by the visitors

Inputs	2000 Year		2005 Year	
	Frequency out of 50	%	Frequency out of 50	%
Vegetables	47	96	50	100
Serials	43	86	47	94
Cloth	33	66	41	82
Wood/bamboo/ Golpata	50	100	50	100
Brick	11	22	23	46
Sand	7	14	19	38
Cement	7	14	19	38
Fertilizer	37	74	46	92
Pesticides	23	46	37	74
Seeds	25	50	34	68
Fish feed	11	22	28	56
Fertilizer	14	28	31	62
Medicine	9	18	24	48
Plants	41	82	46	92
Chicken	13	26	27	54
Feed	29	58	38	76
Medicine	21	41	35	70
Average		49.6		70

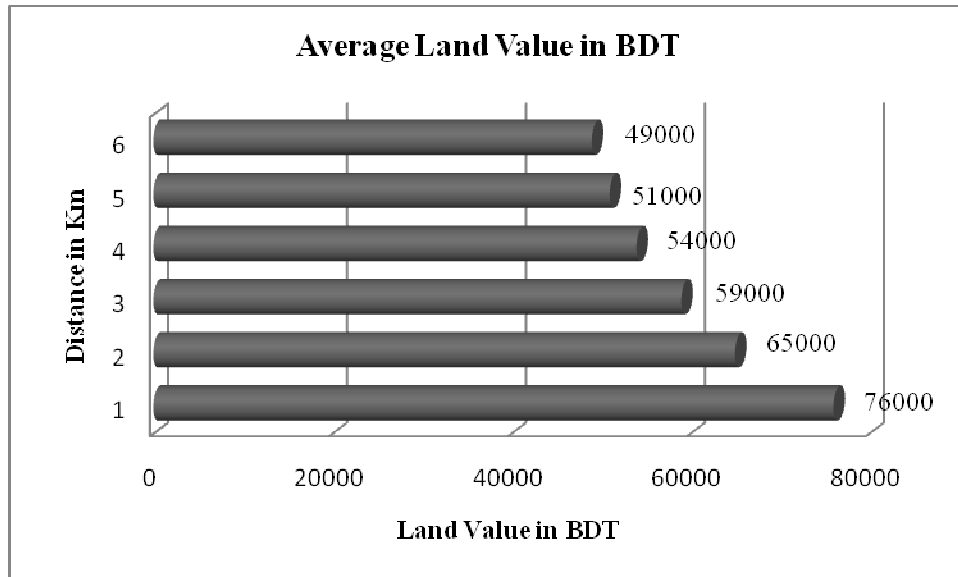
Source: Field Survey, August 2005.

which indicated that with the development of growth center, the dependency of the people increased. Over the 5 years, intention of more than 20% visitors changed to buy their products in the growth center. Earlier, they depended on Zila and Upazila towns.

Distance Nexus Land Value of Growth Center

Land values of the catchment area vary depending on the inherent quality of the land for agricultural, fisheries, livestock etc. Land value also depends on the proximity to growth center. Significant indirect influence is observed on cropland values through capitalization of income from commodity supply by growth center. Land values are closely tied to the income-generating capacity of the land. Production of rice, vegetables, serials, shrimp, livestock, miscellaneous trees etc. influences on significant increase of land value that is closely linked with growth center. The land value of Goraikhali growth center service area was closely linked with production, service facility, transportation network etc.

The average land value of the service area is shown in Figure 3 in respect to proximity to growth center.



Source: Field survey, August 2005.

Fig. 3: Distance from Growth Center nexus land value

Figure 1 showed that the land value of the catchment area in relation to distance. The land value decreased with the increase of distance from the growth center. The average land value was the highest within one kilometer as Tk. 76000/bigha, because most of the services and facilities exist in the area and people were in good access to growth center. Otherwise, due to lack of access to product market and other influencing services, increasing distance decreased the land value. So it indicated that the high demand of the land of the adjacent areas of growth center resulted in social and economic development.

Services and Facilities

Goraikhali growth center provides higher level of services/facilities for the service area population. This center also influences the alignments of roads, rural small hat/bazaar, social institutions, educational and recreational facilities within the catchment area. The water supply system, internal road network, sanitation and drainage condition, facility for solid waste management provided the network of services for the visitors and traders welfare. Table 4 and Figure 1 show the social services within or outside of the growth center.

Table 4: Distance of the nearest facilities from growth center

Types of facilities	Distance
Social and administrative services	
Primary School	250m
High School	250m
Madrasha	In the growth centre
College	2.5 Km
Park	Absent
Playground	250.
Community center	In the growth centre
Club	In the growth centre
Mosque	In the growth centre
Youth centers & libraries	In the growth centre
Police camp	In the growth centre
Clinic/Health care center	In the growth centre
Economic and commercial services	
Bank/NGO	In the growth centre
Bus/ other vehicle stand	200m
Nearest hat/bazaar	2 Km
General store	In the growth centre

Source: Field Survey, August 2005.

Table 4 states that social, administrative, economic and commercial services network were inter-related with the *Goraikhali* growth center. The important features were that the most needed facilities developed within this growth center. Some services were within 250m from the growth center. One bank (*Rupali bank*) and three NGOs (*BRAC, Prodiapon and PROSHIKA*) provide credits and social services for the rural poor. In 2003, the police station was set up for the security of rural people and this growth center. Finally, it is clear that the social service institution developed in relation to the growth center helped boost up the morale of the local people. On the other hand, the volume of services of the social institution decreased outside of catchment area. Figure 4 shows that most of the service institutions were found within 3 km from the growth center.

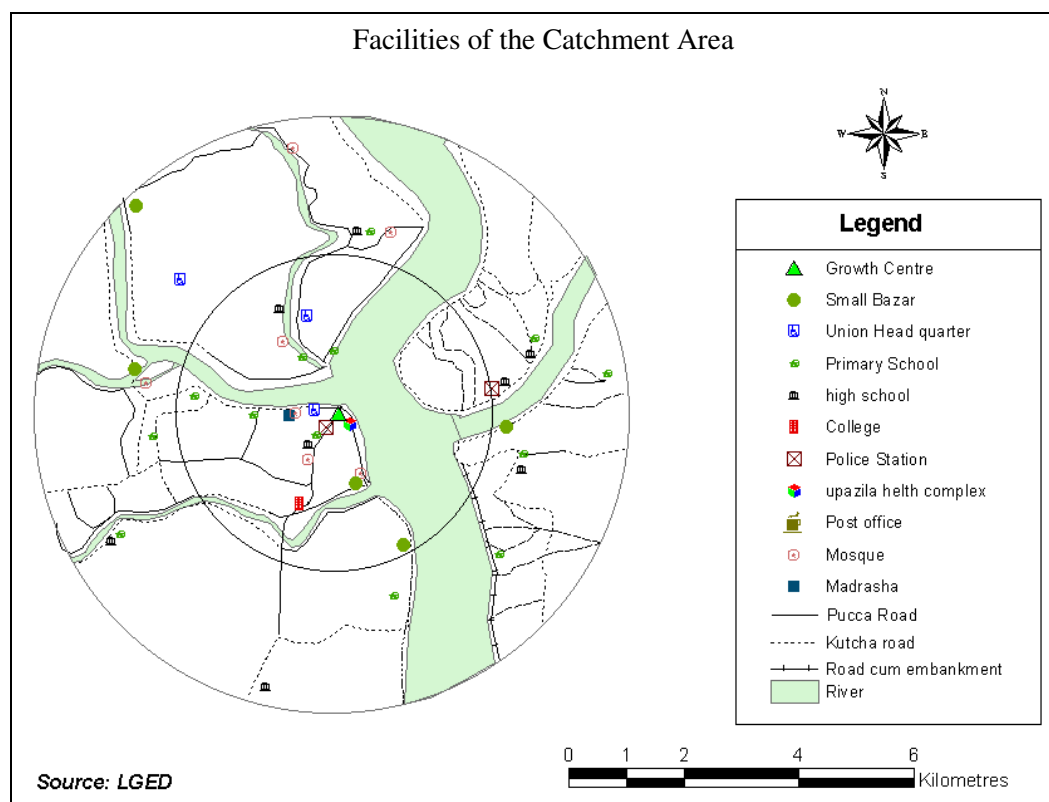


Fig. 4: Facilities of the catchment area

Growth Center: A Growing Point for Comprehensive Rural Development

Goraikhali growth center served visitors as a place not only for shopping/buying but also as a center for social, political, recreational activities. The visitors spend their time for sharing their different ideas or views that helped for their social development and the political leaders/supporters used this place for their political purpose. The people of the community spend their time in the growth center for recreational purposes (Table 5).

Table 5: Purpose wise time spending in the growth centre by visitors

Purpose of visit	Time spending each visit (Hour)					Total	%
	1-2	2.1-3	3.1-4	4.1-5	>5		
Shopping	1	5	15	7	1	29	58
Social	1	1	2	2	1	7	14
Political			2	1	1	4	8
Recreational	4	3	1			8	16
Others			1	1		2	4
Total	6	9	21	11	3	50	100
%	12	18	42	22	6	100	

Table 5 illustrates the visitor's choice for coming and spending time in the growth center. The highest 58% people visit in the growth center for shopping purpose and the second highest (16%) visitors visit for recreational purpose and respectively 14% for social and 8% for political purposes. On the other hand, most of the visitors stayed more than 3 to 4 hours in the growth center for different purposes and 22% people spend 4.1 to 5 hours. Only 6% visitors spend more than five hours, who were staying for shopping, social and political purposes. Finally, it could be said that growth center is not only playing a role for selling and buying, but also it had effects in social, political and recreational arena for the rural people.

Recreational Facilities: The growth center and recreation facility hosts a multitude of services for rural people and plays both an active and passive role in the quality of life for the service area inhabitants. The market management committee operates and maintains numerous recreational facilities. The facilities include recreation centers, playgrounds, VCD hall, campgrounds, meeting rooms, historic sites, amphitheatres, boat, trawlers, river side, and pond. These facilities bring persons with diverse backgrounds together to enjoy special events, relax, and strengthen community relations. The growth centre was also a roaming, gossiping place in the evening of the day of the catchments area people likely who were live in inner service area. The peoples were gathering on the side of the river for fishing and roaming. All ponds were consolidate under one aquatics unit to form a more efficient and effective aquatics organization and also act as a swimming pool of rural people.

Problems of Growth Center

Though Goraikhali Growth Center had significant role for social and economic development of the catchment area, but this centre had been faced numerous problems since its inception. The prob are as follows

Service related problem

- Electricity (absent)
- Poor sanitation condition
- Lack of proper solid waste management
- Lack of recreation facility
- Inadequate safe drinking water sources

Structural problem

- Storage facility
- Absent of slaughter house
- Absence of internal drainage system
- Absence water distribution system
- Lack of shaded area of the market
- Inadequate internal access roads & pathways

- Shortage of paved open ground
- Absent parking space
- ineffective road width
- Absent loading & unloading space
- Absent *pucca ghat* for traders trawler
- Inadequate public toilet
- Inadequate dustbin

Governance and Management Problem

- Arrangements of temporary shops on the hat day.
- No control over informal placement of temporary shops.
- Management committee is not functional proper

Conclusion

Growth center facilitates agriculture, fishery, livestock and other sectors by providing efficient points for buying and selling for the improvement of rural development and it's a point that promoting social interaction among the rural people for exchange of ideas regarding use of irrigation, fertilizer or improved variety of seeds and local and international business and overall culture are included in the analysis of growth center. Growth center dominated the service delivery and infrastructure development to ensure social sustainability and created productive employment opportunities and economic enlargement through initiating different income generating schemes and businesses. Growth center is found as a growing spot of service delivery in the rural area and to bridge the gap between rural economy and regional economy, attention should be paid on infrastructure development of the catchment area. Though, the government of Bangladesh selected 2100 growth center among 8000, these growth centers faced numerous problems. So, special attention should be given regionally for growth center development for changing the rural people's livelihood style and the sustainable development of the catchment area of the growth center.

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