

Community-Institutional Linkage to Reduce the Community Problems in Dhaka City: A Case Study of Two Wards

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Introduction

Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh is one of the fastest growing city in the world with a population of 13.5 million in 2007 (*United Nations* 2008) where the figure was 2.1 in 1974 and 6.9 million in 1991 (*Hossain* 2006) and the projected population of the city is 20 million for 2014 (*Islam* 2005). The level of urbanization was extremely low in 1951 with only 4.33% of the total population living in urban areas (BBS 2001) and the urban population increased to 24.2% in 2002, and a population projection expects it to be about 36% in 2020 and 50.8% in 2040 (NIPORT 2007) which matches with the population projection by ADB, also follows the trend of urban population in BBS publication (2001).

The high number of population and the living standard of Dhaka city force the poor migrants to live in the fringe. The term urban fringe was introduced by *Smith* (1937) to describe *built up area just outside the corporate limit of the city*. In the fringe area, the emphasis is only on accommodating the increasing population not to ensure better living standard (*Masum* 2009). As a result, in the urban fringe area, development activities take place without conforming state rules and regulations (*Masum* 2009). The newly developed fringe areas are seldom provided with adequate facilities (*Masum* 2009) which conforms to the study areas of the researchers. The selected study areas emerged with urban fringe development but those are already developed urban areas in a haphazard way. Both (RND area in Ward no 60 and Rasulbagh in Ward no 62) of the study areas are close to each other which were regarded as an urban fringe in 1970s. During the 1970s, physical transformation of the both study areas ensued rapidly as people started to come to Dhaka in search of fate and pulling effects of Dhaka. They chose this urban fringe as house rent was very low (Tk. 5 per room in 1970s which is now Tk. 1200-1500 per room in 2010). The establishment of the embankment along the Buriganga river enhanced the urban form of the study areas in late 1980s. Number of houses was increasing day by day. Slum like settlement was introduced. This spontaneous and unplanned development as well as inadequate urban facilities in fringe area generate a lot of urban problems like traffic jam, water logging, drug addiction, lack of educational institutes, inadequate supply of water and gas, health hazard and open the door of urban informality which are now acute in the study areas.

The paper tried to understand the contributions of local institutions and the local government to reduce the above problems and the necessity of linkage between the community and the institutions. However, there is consensus among academia and media that the urban local government has failed to achieve the desired standard in its performance for the Dhaka City (*Imam*, 1998; *Haq, Ahsan et al.*, 2002; *Hossain*, 2002; *Chepesiuk*, 2003; *Hossain, Wagatsuma et al.*, 2004; *Islam & Shafi*, 2004; *Alam*, 2005; *Mercer Human Resource Consulting*, 2007; *Luck* , 2008) whereas a large number urban communities of various countries are greatly beneficiaries by enhancing the community-institutional linkage.

Some Successful Programs on Community-Institutional Linkage

National Housing Authority of Thailand set up Urban Community Development Organization (UCDO) to improve the living conditions and increase the organizational capacity of the urban poor community. UCDO has five objectives and one of the them is to promote the community-solutions (*Boonyabantha* 2004). In China, the linkage between emerging urban spatial development and institutional arrangements has greater importance (*Ding* 2009).

Local development programme (PRODEL) was initiated in eight cities in Nicaragua, where it provided small grants for infrastructures and community works projects executed by municipal government and community organizations through participatory model. PRODEL has of tremendous success in improving the quality of life of the poor, targeting and focusing social investment on the poor, making more efficient use of public resources, increasing social and gender equity, improving national reconciliation and finally making a program sustainable ((*Stein* 2004).

Some Key Definitions

Institution

“Institutions are structures and mechanisms of social order and cooperation governing the behavior of a set of individuals within a given human collectivity. Institutions are identified with a social purpose and permanence, transcending individual human lives and intentions, and with the making and enforcing of rules governing cooperative human behavior. Institutions are a central concern for law, the formal mechanism for political rule-making and enforcement” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institution> accessed on 17 April). In this study, institutions are defined as the physical entities or personals which have greater influences over the community. The researchers have classified the institutions in two broad categories-*formal* and *informal*. *Formal* institutions (DWASA, DCC, commissioner office, Proshika, Brack) are regarded as the structures and mechanism operated by government and NGOs having influences over the community whereas *informal* institutions (Local club, *panchayet*, CBO) are operated by the local people for the welfare of the community. Individual entities have been regarded as *informal* institutions like local leaders, ward commissioner, *Imam* of the community mosque, member of the parliament which have influences over the community.

Community-Solution

A community is a group that acts together to meet common needs. The researchers have defined the community-solutions as the taken actions and voluntary works to get rid from any community problem which includes the unpaid leadership and self motivation.

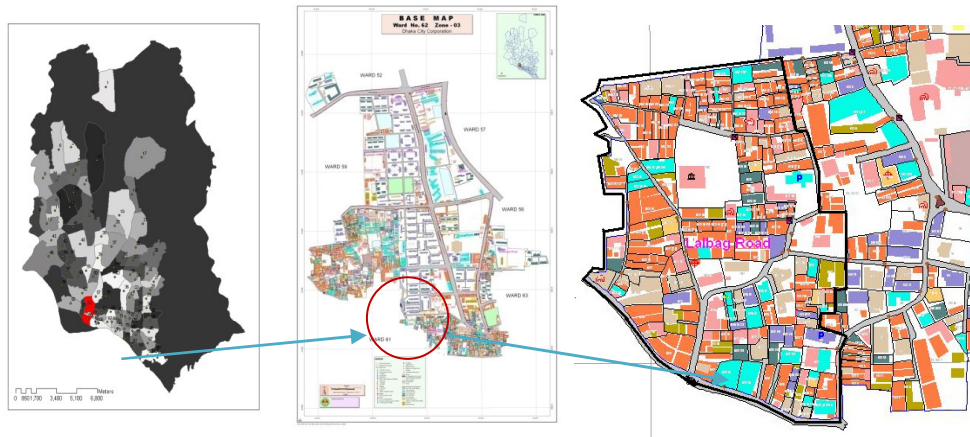
Methodology

To find out the institutional contribution to reduce the community problems in Southern part of the Dhaka City and the necessity of institutional-community linkage, two areas of two wards (RND area of Ward no 60 and Rasulbagh area of Ward no 62) under Dhaka City Corporation area have been selected based on socio-economic and physical condition characterized by lack of urban facilities, poor habitat and unplanned growth assumed from secondary data, and visual observation being cross-checked by conducting transect walk, social map, resource map, focus group discussion, time line analysis. RND area of ward no 60 and Rasulbagh area of ward no 62 reflects all problematic urban characteristics of southern portion of Dhaka City. Community problems have been identified through focus group discussion of different age, gender, profession relying on the local participants and the

problems has been ranked by pair wise ranking method. Top three problems in each study area have been selected for further analysis which can be reduced by community solutions. To know the details of the prior problems, the researchers have conducted focus group discussion and 6 key informants' interviews in both areas. Institutional feedback and community-solutions have been identified through focus group discussion regarding the prior problems. Venn diagramming has been conducted to assess the linkage pattern among the institutions and the community which allows knowing the accessibility (one way or two ways), intensity, and the influences to each other. Institutional feedback, community solutions and Venn diagramming help to understand the necessities of community-institutional linkage to reduce the community problem in the urban area.

Study Area

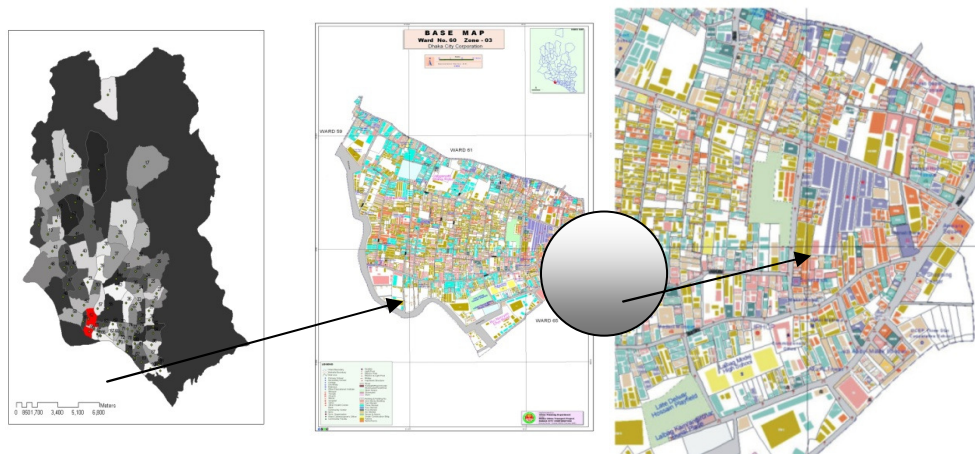
The selected study areas, Rasulbagh mahalla is in 62 number ward and RND area in ward no 60 under Dhaka City Corporation. These two parts is generally known as “Old Town” but actually they are not because these areas emerged after liberation war whereas the Dhaka originated at 1600 AD approximately. In case of the physical characteristics these two areas are also different from old Dhaka. Buriganga River is situated on south-west of the areas. As these area are facing more urban-problems than other area so these areas have been selected as study areas.



Source: DCC

Fig. 1: Location map of Rasulbagh area

'Rambag' was the original name of Rasulbagh area. It was determined from the Rambag temple which was a sign of religious belief of the then Hindu tribe. Then at the time of 1980's a mosque was built and it was necessary to name it as a muslim one. Finally it was named as "Rasulbag Jame Mosjid" from different proposal of name such as Rasulpur, Rasulganj etc. At last this area was introduced as "Rasulbag". After the liberation period, slum was growing rapidly which was vulnerable to fire hazard. From the year of 1980, Population was changing drastically because of migrating to Dhaka and more pressures were created on urban land. After the liberation period, some ponds (water body) were seen in the study area. But then it was filled for building construction.



Source: DCC

Fig. 2: Location map of the RND area

History of development in this RND area is not so old. Before the independence of Bangladesh there was little number of houses and this area was used as a farmland and fishing land for those people. But after liberation war, a lot of people migrated here for higher living standard from rural areas. Basically people came here from Faridpur, Bikrampur (Dhaka), Munshiganj, Chandpur, Madaripur districts. Most of the people were illiterate. They started to pull rickshaws or to work at nearby industry. This spontaneous growth of people and their living tended to build up slum like settlement. As the initial price of land in this area was so much low (Only Tk. 5000 for 16 *katha*) during the period of 1960s and at 1970s many rickshaw puller became the owners of small (half *katha* or 1 *katha*) land at that time. As the owners are illiterate, they built their houses without giving any provision of service facilities. Unplanned housing pattern and narrow roads are the results. Moreover, these small lands are further sub-divided to inheritance. The owners of small piece of land are not ready to sacrifice their land even for an inch. As a result, the road condition is deteriorating with the incremental population.

Problems and Ranking

Both of the areas are facing lots of problems in their daily life which are identified by local participants and prioritized through pairwise ranking method. The output matrix of pair wise ranking method for the Rasulbagh area contains six problems named Traffic jam, Gas supply, Drainage system, Drug addiction, Increase of house rent and Water supply. Three top concerned problems are Gas supply, Drainage system, Drug addiction.

On the other hand the output matrix for the RND area consists of 10 major problems (Drainage, Narrow road, Load Shading, Gas supply, Population Density, Water supply, No of library, Mismanagement of DCC, Drug Addiction) and the top three concerned problems are drug addiction, population problem and mismanagement of DCC. Facilitators have assumed that Population density, Load shading are national problems and Mismanagement of City Corporation cannot be solved through participation if the authority does not want. Facilitator have tried to focus on those problems which could be solved though participation.

On the basis of this assumption the three prior problems are Drug addiction, Drainage problem (water logging) and Narrow road. This assumption is also applicable for gas supply problem in Rasulbagh area but the facilitators focused on this problem thinking the severity can be reduced through community participation.

Existing Community-Institutional Linkage Regarding the Problems

There are various formal and informal institutions active inside or outside the community having the power to control the livelihood pattern of the inhabitants, socio-economic and physical condition of the community whether they do it intentionally or not, directly or indirectly. These institutional relations should be revealed with the perfect analysis of the community. This can be done using the popular PRA tool, Venn diagram.

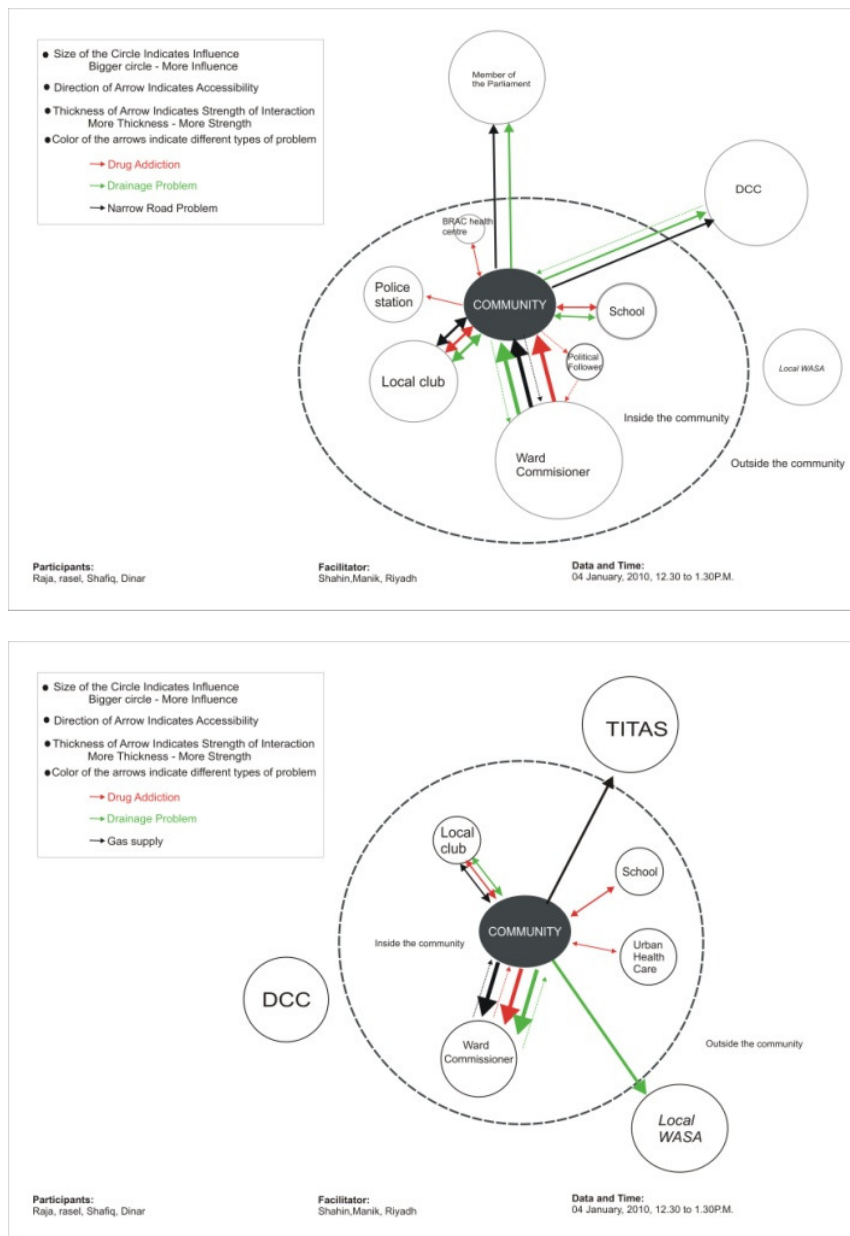


Fig. 3: Existing community-institutional Linkage pattern in RND and Rasulbagh community regarding specified problems.

Both of the study areas are experiencing almost similar type of problems as they faced similar type of development pattern. So the communities interact with the similar type of institutions. Researchers have found ward commissioner, member of the parliament, local club, educational institution, police station, DCC, DWASA from Venn diagrams as the major role players to reduce the concerning problems. In the most cases, the community-institutional linkage is so much vulnerable with no or a little accessibility in one or both direction.

Influence of the Ward Commissioner

Though the ward commissioner is not present in the RND community as political reason, he has a great influence over the locality on almost every aspect of development. But there is an alarming issue about the accessibility of local people to him. The commissioner has access to the local people when he wants but general local people can't go to him except some who are close follower of the commissioner. The commissioner can do anything to alleviate Drug Addiction problem, drainage problem as well as road problem if he wants. Nobody tries to solve these problems from the RND community though they want as the followers of the ward commissioner take it as competitively. To improve road problem the commissioner has led the construction work of road no. 10 in the locality.

Ward commissioner is similar kind of influencing institution in Rasulbagh area regarding each and every problem. He can negotiate with the upper governing bodies to discuss or solve the problem but his attempt is almost zero.

Influence of the Local Club

There is a local club in the RND locality. The members of this club are mainly the local younger people and the rickshaw pullers who are the most vulnerable to drug addiction. So a little attempt of the local club towards reduction of drug addiction problem has a great influence indirectly over the community. The local club has also a moderate influence over community in terms of drainage problem in the RND area as they discuss indiscriminate disposal of waste into the drainage line which is one of the most prime reason of drainage problem. The RND club has been able to gather the younger generation of the locality as well as the elders. They discuss among themselves about the narrow road problem and the probable solution of the problem though they don't go to any initiative regarding this problem.

Rasulbag club deals with only to mitigate the disputes among the local people or the people of another locality. But they are not concerned about the local growing problems which affect more.

Influence of Police Station

There is a police station in the RND area. So there should be a conspicuous influence of police station over the community to alleviate drug addiction problem. But this phenomenon is rarely come into reality for the inter-relationship among the drug dealers and the administration. As a result the local people don't get any benefits after going to police station with objections about drug addiction problem. So the relationship among the police station and the local inhabitants is of one way direction. Police come to the locality for investigation rarely when they are asked for the drug addiction problem.

Influence of Health Centre

There is a primary health care centre in the RND community initiated by a non government organization named BRAC. The workers of the BRAC health centre tried to create awareness among the local inhabitants about the impacts of drug addiction but a number of local people who are interrelated in drug profession didn't take it easily. But still there is "two ways" accessibility among the local people and the BRAC health centre though this is deem.

There is a primary health care centre (Nagar Sastho Complex) in Rasulbagh locality. The workers of the health centre tried to create awareness among the local inhabitants about the impacts of drug addiction and at the same time it also maintains two way relations.

Influence of Educational Institutions

There is obviously a great influence of education and educational institute over the community in terms of drug addiction problem. There is no doubt that education creates values among human being. The school located within the locality is also trying to create awareness about the bad effects of drug addiction among students who are very much vulnerable to drug addiction problem but in terms of this problem the influence of school is not more than the influence of local club and commissioner in the both of the study area.

Influence of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC)

As Dhaka City Corporation is the only authority to clean the drainage system this institution plays a great role in term of drainage problem in both of the study areas. DCC workers come to the locality to clean the drainage system at 6 months interval. Moreover DCC does not set up any dustbin in the locality to dispose the waste. As a result drainage problem becomes more acute. According to a local participant DCC can solve the problem if this institution wants. The interconnection among community and DCC is not in good condition as DCC comes to the locality rarely though the local inhabitants try to attract DCC towards the community by applying to solve the drainage problem.

One of the local participants opined that DCC has power to develop drainage and sewerage system by enlarging the narrow road in RND area. Thus DCC is an influencing body regarding this problem.

Influence of Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (DWASA)

This is an another influencing institute towards the community regarding Drainage Problem in the locality but there is no interrelationship among the local people and the authority as one of the participants said. The sewerage system in the both localities is totally corrupted and wrong where human waste directly disposed into the drainage system instead of sewerage system and makes drainage system ineffective. In this case the DWASA is the only institute to eliminate the problem and facilitates the drainage system in the both of the study areas.

Influence of Member of the Parliament (MP)

Local people have elected the Member of Parliament and thus they wait for the contribution of MP in every infrastructure development in the locality. So MP has a great influence over the locality regarding drainage problem and the narrow road problem in the community. One participant has opined that the MP of the area has not come here for a single moment after winning in the election though the local people has gone to MP several times to solve various local problem. So there exists a one way directed accessibility and not so warm interrelationship among the community and MP though MP incurs a heavy influence over the locality regarding this problem.

Influence of TITAS

TITAS is the central authority of Bangladesh to supply gas to residential households. In Rasulbag area it has gas lines in almost every house. But the problem is that the pressure of gas reduces several times in a day as the diameter of the gas pipes is very narrow. But today the population has been increased at least 10 times so does increasing the need of the gas. But these narrow lines cannot serve satisfactorily and thus the problem happens. According to TITAS this perception is true. Although the local people gave application several times but there is no assurance from the authority.

Community Efforts Regarding the Problems

The community is aware of their problems. They think about the problems and try to do something to reduce the problems, but due to the lack of self motivation and proper patronization they face failure. So there is a very little achievement in community solutions.

In RND, a local community organization named PROVATI is involved with house to house garbage collection system which can be regarded as an effort towards solid waste management for community development. The commissioner has led the construction work of road no. 10 in the RND area. In the Rasulbagh area the inhabitants raised a fund (Tk.2 lakh) for new gas pipes of larger diameter with the collaboration of TITAS.

The communities blame the authority for not taking any measures to reduce the problems but there is no community level efforts regarding the above problems. Both of the communities want to get rid of those urban problems by relying upon the formal institutions, which might be solved or reduced by the local participation or by community-solutions.

As the local problems can be solved or reduced by community solution, the inhabitants should be encouraged and motivated by the formal institutions by increasing the accessibility level and enhancing the community-institutional linkage pattern which is proved in Nicaragua and Thailand. The informal institutions inside the community can be the linkage of community and the formal institutions. A regular awareness program, appreciation and monitoring of community efforts should be ensured by the formal institutions being more accountable. Let the communities to know 'win-win situation' and the 'snow ball effects' patronizing by the formal institutions and this is urgently necessary in the context of present scenario of community development.

Conclusion

The research on the necessity of community-institutional linkage demonstrates the importance of the community solutions as well as the patronization of the formal and informal institutions to the community people for reducing the local level problems. Government intervention is not possible all the time to eliminate local problems in Dhaka city. Government involvement is also a long process. Moreover, the institutions ((DWASA, TITAS, DCC, and RAJUK) providing urban services cannot maintain services efficiently due to lack of resources. Local level initiatives are important in such cases to solve the problems. Thus, ensuring the continuity of the community-solutions is the demanding tasks of the formal institutions.

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