

The Rural Community Development Strategies of South Korea and Myanmar: Past and Present

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Abstract

The development of a country will not be feasible unless development in the rural community has been taken place. Consequently a variety of rural development programmes have been launched by the governments. Among these, some have achieved remarkable success. One of such programmes is "Saemaul Undong", which improved the scenes of rural community of South Korea in the 1970s. As the result of the Saemaul Undong, the rural sector of South Korea improved. The rural sense of Myanmar barely changed during the same period. The main rationale of this paper is to compare and contrast the rural community development of South Korea and Myanmar. The research method is mainly descriptive based on historical and current situations of both countries. Primary data are collected in Myanmar to highlight the current level of rural community development through a survey on twenty villages. The findings from the survey reveal that the economic and social wellbeing of rural villages are moderately improving at the expense of environmental sustainability. Although the economic wellbeing of the villages in the sample has been improved, the main reason for the improvement is largely external – i.e. wages of family members working abroad and at the expense of environmental deterioration. The findings from the experiences of South Korea show successful rural development remain on agricultural marketing system, presence of incentive scheme for the development, vision and commitment of national leaders, development of community leaders, cross institutional involvement, spiritual reform and finally stage by stage development with long term orientation. Some of the good practices of the rural community development model of South Korea should be studied and adopted since the two countries experienced similar political structure and socio-economic situations in the past. (Key words: rural community development, Saemaul Undong, spiritual reform)

I. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Development of rural community is very important for the development of a poor country since majority of its population is living in the rural areas. Accordingly, governments of these countries attempt to promote their rural community by all means. Some succeed while others fail. Myanmar and South Korea are two extreme examples. There is no straightforward answer for that since many intertwining factors are playing in the different stories of these countries. Myanmar and South Korea share a number of similar characteristics in the last 50 years. Both are Asian countries and had experienced strong military dictatorship for many years. By 1960s the populations of these two countries were within about 10 percent range difference and per capita GNPs were ranging from US\$50 to US\$70. However, there is a big gap between them today in terms of the level of economic development. It may be a surprising result for a prescient observer of the Asian scene who might predict that Myanmar will be the economic leader among three countries in the future (Korea, Thailand and Myanmar) under comparison (Steinberg, 1997). Today, GNP per capita figures show South Korea enjoys about US\$ 20,000 while Myanmar has barely more than US\$ 300 in 2010.

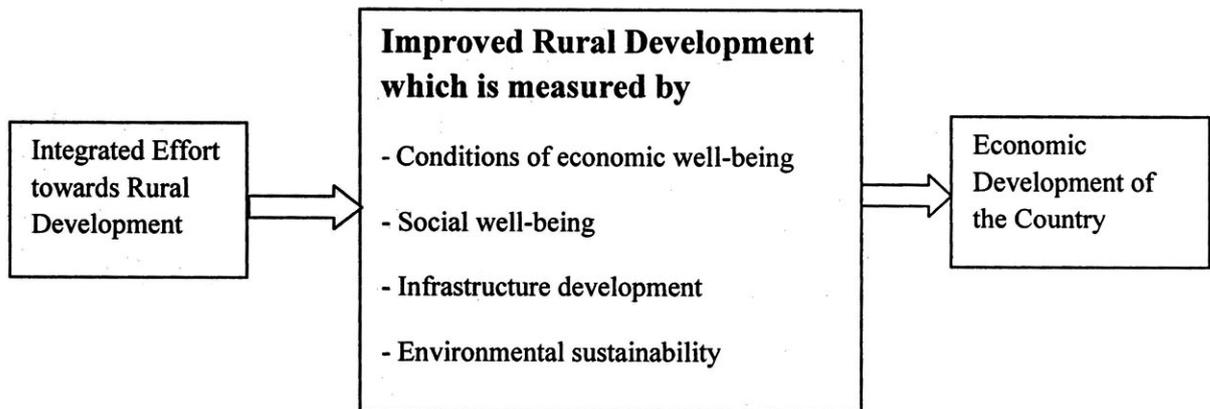
Inevitably, the consequences of poor economic performance affect more on the population who are living in the rural areas. Since rural development and economic development of a country are largely interdependent each other, economic development cannot be obtained without rural development.

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1.2 Conceptual and Analytical Framework of the Study

Conceptual framework of the study is shown in the following diagram. The indicators used to measure rural development are based on “Indicators for Rural Development and Household Income” by Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) – United Nations, 2009¹.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study



Source: Author (2011)

The conceptual framework is based on the belief that the integrated and cross institutional involvement in the effort for rural development will lead to improve rural condition which is measured by (1) economic well being (2) social well being (3) infrastructure development and (4) environmental sustainability. These conditions ultimately lead to the economic development of the country. Based on this conceptual framework, an analytical framework for measuring the level of rural community development has been constructed as below.

Four elements of rural development shown in the conceptual framework can be measured by the indicators as follow.

1. Economic well-being

- a. ← Real per capita income of the villager (individual and household)
- b. ← Percentage of farmland households
- c. ← The number of houses in the village with good conditions
- d. ← The ownership of consumer durables like Motorcycle, Television, Seattleite, Mobile phone etc.

2. Social well-being

- a. Literacy rate of the village and number of graduates per year
- b. Percentage of the people access to safe water (suitable for drinking)
- c. Infant mortality rate

¹ Expert Group Meeting on Adopting the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach for Promoting Rural Development in the ESCWA Region, Beirut, 21-22 December 2009

3. Infrastructure

- a. Access to electricity and road condition
- b. Time taken to read newspaper and journal
- c. Time taken to read nearest town
- d. Forest area within 10 miles of the village

4. Environmental sustainability

- a. Pollution is measured by noise and air pollution due to the traffics and industries (because of motorcycle and machineries for transport purpose)
- b. Level of water and soil pollution
- c. Bio-diversity is measured by the number of animals (wildlife) in a square mile
- d. Access to water near the village

1. 3 Research Design and Methodology

This research mainly used descriptive research method based on the analysis of historical and current situation. Historical and current data of both South Korea and Myanmar gathered from all available sources including special reports, findings from previous studies, government statistics, books, periodicals, journals and Internet. Literature survey was intensively used in this study. Only secondary data were used to study the case of South Korea. Primary data was collected from villages in Myanmar in order to understanding the socio economic status of living of people in the village, present level of rural development and the level and integration of effort towards rural community development. There are more than 330 townships and 60000 villages in Myanmar. Because of cost and time factors, this study only focuses on 20 villages to get detailed information on the above factors. Because of geographical difference as well as ethnical variety in Myanmar, there may be somewhat differences in terms of rural community development among villages in the whole country. Therefore, in order to represent the situation of villages in the whole country as much as possible multistage stratified random sampling was used to obtain sample villages.

The country was stratified into four regions based on their geographic characteristics namely - Central Region, Hilly Region, Delta Region and Costal Region. Some townships located in remote areas are discarded due to difficulty in transportation and communication.

First step – Five sample townships from each strata region are drawn with simple random sampling basis. Since there were four strata region, it got totally 20 townships after finishing this step. This step was done in order not to be two villages are located in a single township.

Second step – A sample village from each township is chosen at the second step with the simple random sampling basis. After completing this step, it got five villages in each region and totally 20 villages all over the country to collect primary data. In each sample village, the village head or senior villager is targeted approached and requested to fill predetermined questionnaires to investigate about present state of rural community development of that village.

1. 4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study has a number of limitations. First, it relies on secondary data for Korea's rural community development. Second, only literature survey can be used to gather required data from Korea and primary data concerning current state of rural villages in Korea cannot be covered in this study. Third, sample size 20 villages are too small to reflect the situation of overall villages in Myanmar. Fourth, the period covered by the study is limited from 1970 to 2010. Therefore, the development efforts toward rural sector prior to 1970 are beyond the scope of this study. Despite these limitations, this study should provide insightful information and lessons for successful rural development and unsuccessful one. As the output of the study, it can provide useful suggestions for the development of rural development model that suit the country's situation based on the experience of Korea. The finding from this study will be valuable for the later studies in the field of rural development in the developing countries like Myanmar.

II. Rural Community Development Effort of South Korea

2.1 Brief Political and Economic History of South-Korea

South Korea was established as The Republic of Korea in 1948 the same year Myanmar got her independence from the British. Before that, Japan conquered and ruled Korea peninsula for 35 years. After Japanese left, the country was divided into two parts; the southern the U.S. administered part and the northern the Soviet controlled part. South Korea appeared as one of the poorest nations in the world. North Korea attacked the country in 1950, resulting in a terrible civil war which lasted for three years and many civilians were injured and killed. In 1952, Syngman Rhee was elected as the President. It was the period of economic and social hardship in the history of South Korea.

Park Chung-Hee seized power by means of military coup in 1961. General Park Chung-Hee attempted to develop the nation by adopting an export-led strategy. Park Chung-Hee was assassinated in 1979. Although he was a military dictator, he made a lot of contribution to the economic development of his country. Saemaul Undong, which emerged largely due to his vision and guidance. The years between 1961 and 1987 were characterized by increasing domestic political repression and power struggles. By the 1980s student demonstrations gained a widespread following all over the country and the government held elections in 1987. In the following election, in 1992 Kim Young-sam was become President. Since then, South Korea has experienced peaceful democratic transition. In 1997 Kim Dae-jung was elected president, followed by Roh Moo-hyun in 2002. Although South Korea had faced economic downturn in 1997, it economy was almost recovered in 2004.

2.2 Rural Community Development of Korea through the Saemaul Undong

Rural areas of South Korea have been going under changes for a long period of time. The rural development programs were initiated during Japanese colonial period through the introduction of scientific techniques in agricultural production. So called the Rural Revival Movement was launched during the Japanese occupation. However, it was proved to be unsuccessful. In 1958, Rhee government introduced a community development scheme. But it also was faded away during a few years. After the military coup took power in 1961, a rural oriented community development plan, known as the National Movement for Reconciliation,

was introduced. But it did not success. The National Movement for Reconciliation was replaced by Saemaul Undong movement in early 1970s. The Undong, which was officially launched in April 1970, intended to improve the physical environment of villages and to increase rural income. The term "Saemaul" was coined by combining *Sae*, which means 'progressive renewal based on past experiences,' and *Maul*, which refers to 'regional and social communities.' The main features for the success of Korea's Saemaul Undong are discussed as follows.

A. Land Reform in Korea

The program of land reform in Korea was carried out in the period from 1949 to 1952. Under the amend Land Reform Act in 1950, landlords turned over lands to the family at the low prices to the families that were actually cultivating the land which caused the number of landowners in the rural communities increased from 30% to more than 90% (Lee, 2007).

B. Agricultural Marketing

The government agencies and private expertise exerted their best efforts to create new species of rice to maximize the quantity of harvested grains. Rice prices were largely subsidized. Government adjusted the terms of trade to favor the agricultural sector by increasing the government purchase price of rice and protecting the agricultural sector from cheaper import (Reed, 2010). The prices at which government purchase rice and barley were steadily increased starting from 1968 and within a few years stood well above both international and domestic prices (Moore, 1984). As a result, the main products of Korea, rice and barley, reached sufficiency by 1975 (Choe, 2005).

C. Incentive Scheme

Incentive scheme plays an important role in Saemaul Undong. The scheme played at both levels – individual and village. Villages were classified according to the status of development as prescribed by central authority and undeveloped villages received no support until they had instituted a self-help program. As the undeveloped villages advanced to developing status, the central authorities channeled resources to them mostly in the form of cement and steel rods to be able to use in further progress. When these villages reached to a higher level of growth, government subsidies were reduced and eventually cut off when the villages became self-sustaining. At the individual level, outstanding Saemaul leaders were given an Order of Merit which was bestowed upon them by the president or by another leading official (Turner, 1993).

D. Leadership

The role of government and visionary leadership played an active role in the success of the model. President Park, who was passionate to develop rural areas of the country presided by himself over a monthly cabinet meeting held only for the report, discussion and relevant to the Movement. President, prime Minister and most ministers used to visit the rural communities or project sites without notice in advance. Several success makers to the movement were awarded with the medals and prizes by the president himself.

E. Cross Institutional Involvement

One of the factors that contribute the success of Saemaul Undong was integration of efforts and genuine cooperation among all level of government institutions. Through integration plans made at the president level, they were well communicated stage by stage down to the group level in the village. National government, local government and rural people are well cooperated and structure of interaction among them is very strong in the process of rural

community development. The Saemaul Undong was conducted so called integrated approach with the combination of top-down and bottom-up approach (Choe, 2005).

F. Community Leadership

President Park recognized the role of community heroes to be able to successful implementation of the Saemaul Undong (Turner, 1993). Korea has a strong custom of selecting village leaders through informal process who are skill in resolving disputes and negotiating with higher authorities. Saemaul Undong did not challenge this traditional practice rather it developed new cohort of younger and develop oriented leaders who served as change agents in their villages (Reed, 2010). The authorities specified the new leaders based on the personal, social, educational and performance criteria. They must be respected and trusted by the people since they are chosen by the villagers through election or at their request. The Saemaul Undong leaders were enrolled in a special program of ideological, practical and leadership training at the national Saemaul Undong Leadership Training Centre and then they became focal points of authorized for introducing government initiatives at the village level. One of the most important tasks of the Saemaul leader and village development committee was to agree on rural development projects with the villagers that were really needed for their village. The role of women in the village had also been enlarged to participate and support in village development activities.

G. Spiritual Development

Korean people have the tradition of community spirit in which people living in the community are ready and willing to help each other's affairs and for the common good. One of the aspects of Saemaul Undong was energizing villagers with "we can do" philosophy with self-help approach. Each community was responsible to develop their own village by the accumulation of own fund and need to show own initiatives only after that funding from high authorities was followed for further development. In this way, villagers acknowledge themselves successful outcomes of the development in which they take part (Lee, 2007). The movement was success in that it changed the spirit of rural people from dependence to self-reliance, from laziness to diligence and from individual to cooperation as a group (Choe, 2005).

H. Infrastructure Development

The Saemaul Undong created environment that is conducive to rural development through the improvement of rural infrastructure such as replacement of straw thatch roof of the houses with tile ones, enlargement of village roads and repairing of village wells, improvement of walls and fences, expansion of irrigation cannels, building new bridges and repairing old ones, improvement of sewages and construction of community centers. The integrated approach was taken to implement these projects through cements and steel rods were supplied by the government, lands were donated by wealthy household in the villages and labors are contributed by the villagers (Lee, 2007).

I. Stage by Stage Approach with Long-term Orientation

The Saemaul Undong project was not one-off, short time sparse and a political dressing activity. Rather it was a well-design and long-term development project with the real commitment and support for rural development from the top in every stage. The initial stage of development was largely self help approach that was designed to improve the living conditions of individual households through improvement of housing condition, sanitation and wells. In that stage, government supplied necessary materials, guidance and encouragement. The second stage focused on the development of economic infrastructure

which included the building of feeder roads, bridges, irrigation and drainage systems, community places, strengthening of embankment and the development of rural electrification. The third stage was concentrated to increased incomes of rural family through increased food production, group farming, breeding and marketing and establishing small scales industries in the villages. The villages were classified according to their level of development based on established criteria to be able to support according to their status.

Without exception, Korea experienced arbitrary, coercive and exploitative political control by authoritarian regime. However, at the same time, government's real concern to develop rural community development had been coexisted. The Saemaul Undong movement undeniably transformed the appearance of Korean villages. It was evident that at the start of Saemaul Undong in 1970, GNP per capita of Korea was 257 US \$ and it became US \$ 10,548 in 1996.

III. Rural Community Development Effort of Myanmar

3.1 Brief Political and Economic Background of Myanmar

Myanmar is a country located in the Southeast Asia. Like Korea, Myanmar gained her independence in 1948. Myanmar, during the colonial period, was the largest exporter of rice and teakwood in the world. In terms of average annual per capita export from 1936 to 1939, Myanmar was two times higher than Indonesia and Thailand, three times higher than Vietnam, six times higher than India and 25 times higher than China (Economists, 2000). Coupled with the independence Myanmar faced nation-wide insurgencies. The period between 1950s were so called parliament democracy or may be regarded as golden period of Myanmar in her history. In terms of economic development during that period from 1948 to 1962, the average annual growth of GDP of 5.3 per cent was said to be quite satisfactory compared with the South Korea's average annual growth rate of GDP of 4 per cent between 1953 and 1961 (Thein, 2004). A turning point of the country's fortune actually happened in 1958 when the ruling party at that time, namely Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League (AFPFL) split into two parts. The political instability invited Myanmar army led by General Ne Win temporarily took care of the country (1958-1960). Having experience in administration with enjoying the taste of power led the Myanmar army to seize the national power again in 1962. Revolutionary Council was formed and later it transformed as Burma Socialist Program Party in 1972. Inward looking and close door economic system was adopted while disconnecting its citizens with outside world. The economic performance was rapidly deteriorated during the period between 1962 and 1988. External indebtedness rose from negligible levels to over US\$ 4 billion at the end (Economists, 2000). These results led to the all-round political unrests in 1988, which were put to an end by a new military coup namely The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and later changed its name as State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) in 1997. It officially declared to adopt a market-oriented economic system. After a long period of holding power, SPDC conducted a state referendum for national constitution in May 2008 and based on the result of it a democratic election was held in 2010 September. The new government hands over power at

the end March 2011. At the opening page, it has brought the issue of rural development and poverty alleviation into the top of its reform agendas².

3.2 Rural Community Development of Myanmar after 1960s

It can be said that economic development of Myanmar cannot be separated from rural sector development of the country since 70 percent people is living in the rural areas and most of the poor are also fallen in that sector. And again, rural development of the country cannot be divorced from agricultural sector development because this sector is major livelihood of the people in the rural areas. The followings are reform measures to develop rural areas after 1960s.

A. Land Reform

In Myanmar, all lands are owned by the state. Historically, farmers have no ownership right on the land they are cultivating but cultivators have land holding right as long as they pay taxes and are cultivating (Soe, 2005). Under the socialist regime, the agriculture sector was highly controlled and directed by the government. The land policy had created small scale, subsistence and family farming with small amount of land holding³. The government passed a Farmers Rights Protection Law (1963) that protects the land of farmers from the lenders but it also deterred the access of credit from the banks by using lands as collateral.

B. Agricultural Marketing

The State Agricultural Marketing Board (SAMB) was formed to monopolize rice trading since parliament democracy period. The government practiced a system of official procurement of paddy with the compulsory delivery system under which farmers were required to sell a part of their paddy output (set by the quota) to the state with the fixed price which was far below than the prevailing market price throughout the socialist period up to 2002. This system effectively discriminated domestic price of rice from international price, and any difference between the two prices was enjoyed by the government⁴. Internal transportation of rice had been strictly prohibited to avoid illegal export to neighboring countries. The first liberalization in agricultural sector was happened in 1987 by liberalizing domestic agricultural marketing and abandoning crop planning by the government (Okamoto, 2004). The SPDC government abolished public procurement system and liberalizing agriculture trading in April 2003 including major agricultural products of rice, beans and pulse. However, rice exporting was banned for the sake of domestic self-sufficiency and food security in 2004. Rice export rights were resumed in large scale in 2009 by granting export permits to some large companies that specialized in paddy.

² The speeches delivered by President U Thein Sein at the opening of National Level Workshop for Rural Development and The first meeting of Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Central Committee on May 20, and June 20 2011 respectively.

³ Over 85 percent of total farm land holdings in 1971 and 1987/88 were household-based farming of less than 10 acres (Myat Thein, 2004:89)

⁴ This was referred to as a policy of agricultural exploitation (Fujita and Okamoto, 2006:3)

C. Incentive Scheme

There were no incentive schemes for rural development since everything was dictated by the government throughout the period. Instead the disincentive had taken in place for agricultural products due to the marketing system as described above. Therefore Myanmar which was the former champion of rice export in the world can export less than 1 % of world's total rice export at present (Myint, 2011).

D. Leadership

During socialist regime (1962-1988), the government had organized totally eight rounds of nationwide farmers' conferences to be able to present and discuss the difficulties and desires of farmers (Mya Han, 1993). These activities, however, were end up just the political dressings. During SLORC/SPDC regime in 2001, the Integrated Rural Development Plan was initiated to undertake the following five major tasks: 1. Construction of roads between villages in rural areas to establish a link with urban areas 2. Make water available for people as well as for cultivation 3. Improve and upgrade school buildings and furniture to improve the standard of education, to improve the quality of teachers, and to encourage school-age children to attend school 4. Uplift rural health care system and 5. Bring about economic growth for the rural populace. But in practice, the effectiveness was weakening due to lack of integrated efforts among institutions from the top to the bottom and end up the activities like its predecessor.

E. Cross Institutional Involvement

Throughout the socialist period up to the SLORC/SPDC regime, majority of effort on the rural development activities have been done by the rural people themselves, by government institution, by the NGOs and INGOs especially after Nargis and international donor agencies like Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). However, each has done these activities with separate objectives, resources and scopes and no national wide initiative to cooperate them has been seen yet although some integration may be happened at the implementation level.

F. Community Leadership

Although Myanmar rural people have a tradition of selecting informal leaders in their community throughout the socialist period up to present, leaders at the village level are directly appointed the higher authorities and their criteria of selection may be different with expectation from the people in the villages.

G. Spiritual Development

Like Korean people, Myanmar has a culture of community spirit in which people in the same community are willing to help each other and cooperation for common good. But "we can do" philosophy and self help approach could not be generated due to the influence of authorities who want to behave people according to their dictates dominated up to the behavior and spirit of the people for a long period of time. Community leadership appointed with the democratic approach cannot be expected under this regime.

H. Infrastructure Development

In quantitative terms, the rural economic and social infrastructure of Myanmar like road, dams, bridges, communication, schools, hospitals have been increased particularly during SLORC/SPDC regime (Ministry of Information, Myanmar, 2007). Their relative term and cost effectiveness in term of real contribution to rural economy, however, were largely questionable. Moreover, these projects have been done as parts of the country's overall

development program and they were not integrated with rural community development projects of the particular regions.

I. Stage by Stage Approach with Long-term Orientation

Unlike Korea, the rural development efforts were done with ad-hoc needed basis without long-term orientation by the authorities. The improvement had been done some extents but could not sustain for the long time and back to the origin a few years later. Therefore, even hundreds of attempts had been made, that the real situation was not much different from the past.

Concerning health, education and environmental situation of the rural areas credit should be given to the U Ne Win's government for their effort in country-wide campaign for eliminating illiterate population in 1970s, maintenance of social relation in the villages' life and environmental condition due to long been adopting of close economy. The natural beauty of rural areas was almost untouched up to 1988. This situation, however, was reversed in the regime of SLORC/SPDC government. The villages' life is not noiseless. The environmental condition of villages has been rapidly deteriorating due to heavy exploitation of natural resources including mine and forest. The percent of forest area of the country is rapidly declining from 60% in 1988 to 47 % in 2008. The water in the rivers now is largely contaminated due to increased mining and waste disposals. Soils are not fertile like before due to over use of chemical fertilizers and multiple cropping without upgrading land quality. In the regime of present government which handed over power in 2011, the rural areas are again received attention by the national leaders. After addressing ten rural development strategies by The President U Thein Sein at the national level workshop for rural development and poverty alleviation which was held in Naypyidaw on 20 May 2011, several working papers came out to discuss the idea on how to define, reduce poverty in the country and how to develop the rural economy and reduce poverty⁵. These initiatives produced eight action programs to be implemented by respective ministries concerned in the near future⁶. At present, the potential of these efforts is too early to give comment.

IV. Present State of Rural Community Development in Myanmar

4.1 Report on Survey Findings

As an attempt to present current state of rural community development in Myanmar, a small survey was conducted that covers 20 villages of Myanmar during 2011 April and May. In order to represent overall situation of whole country as much as possible, the country is divided into two strata namely Upper and Lower Myanmar and they are in turn divided into four strata namely hilly and central area in upper Myanmar and delta and costal area in the Lower Myanmar. They will be named as Hill group (HG), Central group (CG), Delta group (DG) and Costal Group (SG) for analysis purpose. Five villages in each of four strata were randomly selected and collect data through questionnaires that are directed to the head of village. In line with conceptual framework of this paper, the four aspects of rural

⁵ Discussing Papers of Dr, U Myint (Chief Economic Advisor to the President), U Set Aung (Member of Economic Advisor to the President) and of several other officials of the Ministry concerned

⁶ Addressed by the President U Thein Sein on 20 June 2011 at the first meeting of Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Central Committee in Naypyitaw (The New Light of Myanmar, Vol. 50, No. 259, 21 June 2011)

development mainly investigated in the survey are economic well-being, social well-being, infrastructure development, and environmental sustainability.

A. Economic Well-being

In the aspect of economic wellbeing, average income of village household that earns more than 5 US\$ a day is found as 67 % in SG, 54 % in HG, 45 % in CG and 40% in DG, respectively. Persons in the village who earn more than 2 US\$ a day is highest in SG with 57 %, CG 49%, HG 40% and DG 40%, respectively. In all areas under study, farm land population is greater than non-farm population and average land holding of these people are less than five acres. In DG and CG, most households of the village in these regions earn their earning mainly from farming but those in SG and HG are relying on the remittance of money sent from their family members who are working abroad. The percentage of households that own some types of transportation vehicles (from bicycle, boat to motorcar) is also highest in SG 88 %, followed by CG 68%, HG 55% and DG 47%. The percentage of household who own TV in the home are also highest in SG with 60%, CG 52%, HG 40% and DG 22%. The percentage of people who own phone (mobile and line) are also found that 12% in SG, 9 % in CG, 6% in HG and 5% in DG, respectively. Based on these findings, the conclusion can be draw that the coastal areas of Myanmar covered in the survey are more economically better off than other regions while delta areas are the least in this aspect.

B. Social Wellbeing

The literacy rate is highest in the village in CG group with 95%, SG 92%, DG 76% and HG 72%. Percentages of people who pass matriculation are also highest in CG 49%, SG 38%, HG 27% and DG 18 %. Percentage of people can access to the safe water is highest in HG, followed by SG and then CG and DG is the worst case. The average life expectancy of people is not much different among the regions but the highest in CG with 55 and the lowest in DG with 48. It has been found that CG is the most favourable in social wellbeing and SG is the second followed by HG and then DG. Even though the DG is closer to Yangon (the former capital), the social well being is the worst among all other groups in the survey.

C. Infrastructure Development

Percentage of households that access to electricity is also highest in CG 48%, SG 45 %, HG 42% and DG 22%. Condition of village roads is the best in CG and the worst in DG. Time taken to get hospital is the smallest in CG followed by SG, HG and DG, respectively. Communication as measured by time delay to reach newspaper is in CG (within a day), in SG (after a day), in DG (after a day), and in HG (after a day). Therefore, it can be concluded that the infrastructure condition is better in CG and SG than other two remaining areas.

D. Environmental Sustainability

Two aspects examined regarding this area are forest area and wildlife within 10 square miles of the village and level of pollution within and near the village. In the first area, villages including in HG and DG are more favorable than villages in SG and CG. Although most of rubber plantation is found in SG, they are excluded in the calculation of natural forest area. Most of the forest areas are found in HG and DG. CG is the worst case in both aspects. In environmental pollution, HG is relatively better than the rest regions in machinery usage, plastic bags, and level of water pollution and availability of water sources near the village. Environment is rapidly deteriorating within the last five years in other regions.

E. Effort toward Rural Development

It was seen in the survey that effort for rural development in all villages is mainly depending on the villagers themselves and they are cooperative and willing to help each other in the house-roof repairing, harvesting, social activities like donation, wedding and dead of a villager etc. The institutions that participate and provide help in the effort of rural development are not the same in all regions and in all the areas. In DG and SG, non-government organizations (NGOs) are the major participants to develop rural areas. Private companies and individuals are also actively playing in the rural development efforts of DG after Nargis. In the CG, government and a political party play active role in rural development while NGOs again are playing actively in HG. The efforts of NGOs are mainly concentrated in the social areas in DG and SG and infrastructure development like construction of tube-wells in CG.

V. The Differences between Rural Community Development of Korea and Myanmar

5.1 Lessons from the Past

A. The Role of the Leader

It should be recognized that all leaders of the country would like to see their country's prosperous. The difference is the way to achieve this. Again, it depends on their vision as well as their priority. The leaders of Korea and Myanmar put effort toward rural community development since both of them recognized the development of their country would be feasible only when the people in the rural community prosper. Both of them used top-down approach i.e. the goal and strategy were determined at the top and rolled out to the lower level for implementation. But in the case of Korea, top leader of the nation knew and accepted real situation of the village since he had intimate knowledge on the situation at the rural level. In the case of Myanmar, top leader did not have intimate knowledge on what is happening at the village level.

The second thing is the choice of the leader whether he wants to maintain the power or wants to raise the welfare of the villagers. Both of the leaders were authoritarian tended to maintain their power as long as possible. But in the case of Korea, the leaders was so committed to the improving living standard of the rural people by means of subsidizing through government budget, encouraged to increase agriculture products and farm output through price incentives and ensuring government's officials were supporters for improving village situation. In the case of Myanmar, the situation was reversed. Government treated village people have to obey the instructions to implement government planned economic system. Give priority to political stability in the urban areas at the expense of the villagers by transferring wealth through compulsory paddy delivering system through quota system with the lower price and rice were in turn distributed at the subsidized prices for the urban people and freely provided to the government staff. The government officials down to the village level were not supporters but enforcers of the government policy whether they are meaningful or not in reality. Therefore, most of the rural development efforts were end up as for show activities to the top leaders.

B. Macro Economic Policy and Strategy

Korea adopted outward looking economic policy and export-driven strategy while Myanmar emphasized in implementing inward looking and import-substitution strategy at the same period. The success of these policies and strategies had impacted on the life of people rural areas by creating industrials' demand for labor located in the urban areas. It is difficult to

answer whether economic development contributes to rural community development or the reverse is true. Actually, they are mutually reinforcing each other.

C. Systematic and Well Coordinated Plan with Long-term Orientation

Korea's Saemaul Undong is not a spark for showing short-term result. It was well systematic planned, step by step development, integrated with incentive, community spirit and leadership development. It is combined both top-down and bottom-up approach with cross institutional participation, cooperation and integration of effort while Myanmar's effort for rural community development is ad-hoc and too much emphasize to show good results within a short-period of time, lack of integration and coordination among the stakeholders participated in the process.

D. Involvement of Local People

Although Korea's model was started at the top, it was end up at the through the effort of the local people. In Myanmar case, the authority could not attract to the local people involvement in the rural community development process since there were lack of communication of the true purpose, lack of ways for involvement, lack of incentive and no clear ways for development.

E. Leadership at the Village Level

In the case of Korea, community spirit and can do philosophies were nurtured through initiation and cooperation in the village's development work. Saemaul Undong leaders were carefully selected and exposed training for rural community development. In Myanmar, The village leaders could not lead the villagers to initiate and cooperate in rural community development activities like road and bridge repairing, digging drinking waters, improving social and economic activities of the village since they are preoccupied to enforce and implement government's directions and plans. The development effort and agenda stated at the top were disappeared before reaching to the village since there were too many layers at the implementation level.

VI. Suggested Strategy for Rural Development of Myanmar based on Korea's Experiences

In the effort to develop rural community, Myanmar should learn successful experience of Korea in the similar area. The experience of Saemaul Undong inevitably may guide to develop its own model for Myanmar that will be tailored to its unique culture and social system. Some of the good practices may be learned from Korea's experience and then be imitated. Comparison with Korean and Myanmar past experiences in rural community development effort may help to explore the points that should be followed in practice. The following guild lines are suggested after comparing and contrasting the experiences of Korea and Myanmar.

6.1 Lessons Should Be Learnt from South Korea

A. Vision, Commitment and Knowledge by the Top Leader

Both Korea and Myanmar case highlight the role of top leader on the rural community development. It should be noted that without the support of top leader throughout the process, any development efforts will be destined to failure. Not only top leader passionate on rural community development but also he has to know and accept what is happening in reality at

the rural level. In the case of Korea, President Park Chung-hee personally visited to the village level, understand the real situation of the village and what should be done to improve, constantly monitor the progress through monthly formal meeting and consultation with regional level officials and really passionate to the rural community development in which he was growing. In the case of Myanmar, top people rarely have intimate knowledge on the village level since they usually relied only on formal reports which had been filtered by a number of stages. Lack of knowledge on the real situation of the village level leads to make costly mistakes.

The historical event pointed out that the top leader should not merely satisfy upon information given to him, he should have personal and intimate on what is happening in the reality on the situation of the rural. The President should visit to the villages frequently given without notice or only a short notice. He should visit the village as far as possible up to the poorest village in the remote areas and make snap decisions based on the real situation on the requirements of the village.

B. The Role of Incentives

People tend to put effort to achieve a goal based on the incentives given to them. Without incentive scheme it will be very difficult to motivate these people to be participating in the development effort even if they are done for their community. Market incentives or government incentives should be created. In the case of Myanmar, the rapid growth of export in beans is largely due to market incentives given by SPDC government and the fall of rice output can be reasoned due to lack of incentive to produce more under the compulsory delivery with quota system during Socialist period. In the case of Korea, the government categorized the village into three groups – developed, developing and undeveloped and used government incentives to improve rural situation.

C. The Role of Community Leader

Those who are educated, well respected and have ability to organize people in the village should be selected and trained to be the community leader who will take charge and integrate the rural development effort at the village level. Community leaders should be change agent and facilitator as well as organizer for change in rural community. They are those believed by the villagers and have ability to lead and coordinate the resources of all contributors for the rural community development. Saemual Undong case highlights the potent role of community leader in the success of the project.

D. Be Sure to Implement What Have Been Said a the Top Level

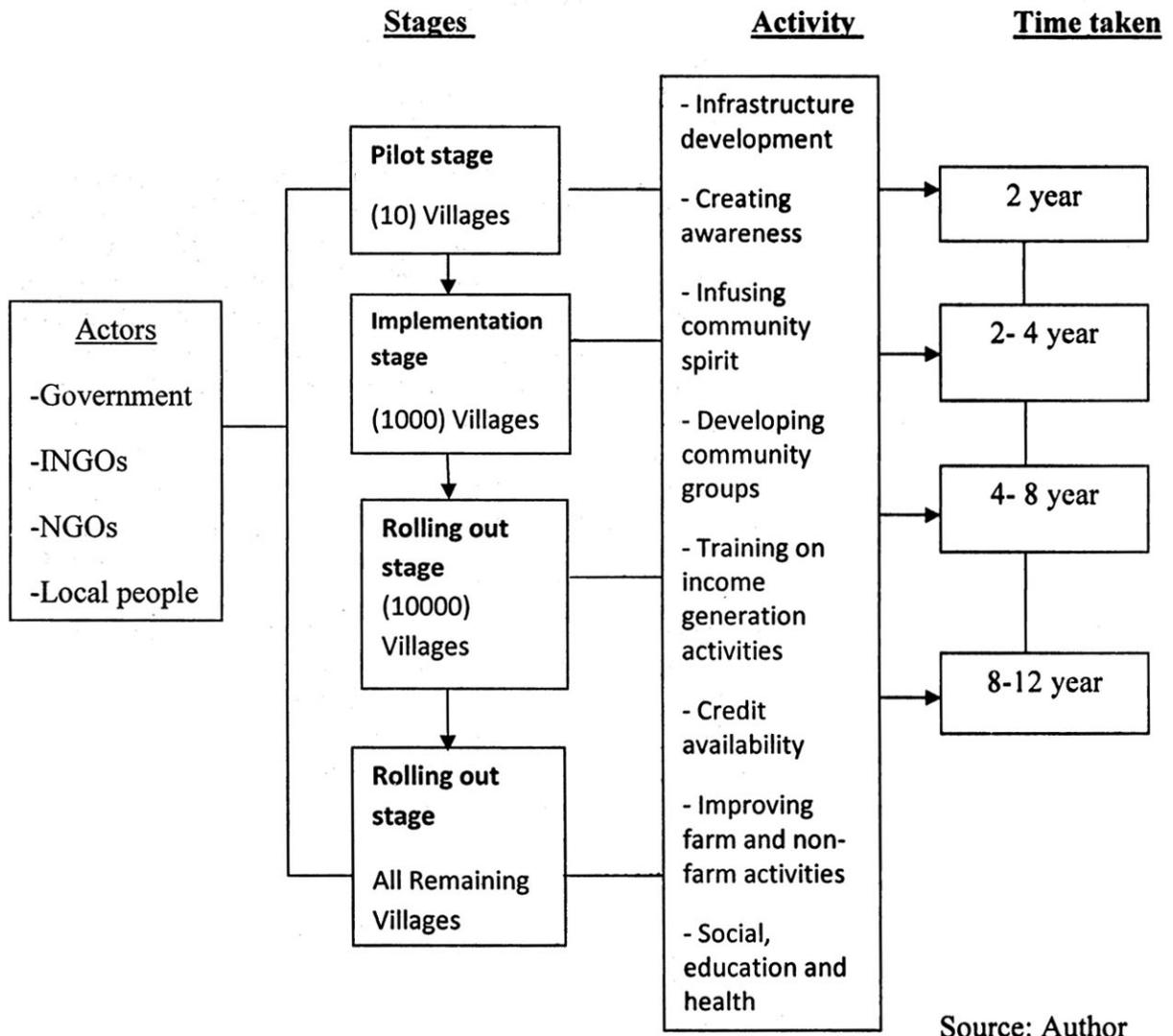
Most of the development efforts are out of fuel before their effect reach to the village level. Seminar and workshops are organized, discuss the problems and explore the options, call several meeting for detail implementation, invite many parties to participate, impose the guidelines and call again the meeting at the lower level to clarify these guidelines and tired before actual implementation. This phenomena is so called paralyze by analyses. As a result nothing is happening in practice and end up as political shows. The people do activities not because they are really belief them but because of powerful people like them and ignore these after top leader's attention gradually fad out. Rural community development is long-term process and has done through integrated effort of many people. These people can be motivated to fully and actively participate in the process only when actual works are done and fruits from these can be seen at the lowest level.

E. Stage by Stage Development

Saemaul Undong experience shows that rural community development cannot be done during short term and ad hoc basis. Instead, it is a result of deliberated and well-considered plan. Saemaul Undong was undertaken through four stages that were devised after thinking very well. There are five stages in the process namely foundation and ground work stage, proliferation stage, energetic implementation stage, overhaul stage and autonomous growth. Each stage takes at least three years to nine years and to successfully finish the whole process required 28 years. In the case of Myanmar, the period to complete rural development and poverty alleviation is about four and half years from July 30, 2011 to December 30, 2015. During that period, predetermined eight tasks have to be completed which will be handled by eight ministries with the collaboration of NGOs, INGOs, local people and private companies. The targets are intended to accomplish through the group of like-minded people. It will be very challenging task to accomplish all targets in time since many tasks need to be done and a number of stakeholders need to be participated in the whole process. This could result a lot of coordination and conflicting objectives and interest among them. Like Saemaul Undong, rural development process should be done through stage by stage – Infrastructure development through joint effort of government and rural people, awareness creation on community, developing community spirit and organizing community groups, training for income generation and cash management, availability of credit, improving farm and non-farm activities and finally encouraging social, health and education level of the villages. Some villages that have a good potential to develop should be chosen as the model villages and the process should be started on these villages. After getting some experience and when other villages envy on the success of model villages, the process should be rowed out gradually to other villages which are already classed in terms of development stage. The process should be done through the lead of government and the participation of people.

VII. Suggested Model of Rural Development for Myanmar

It takes much time to develop rural community and there will be a lot of pains and patients throughout the process of rural community development. It should not be one-time sparkling effort or the process that ends with dreams due to promises but nothings change at the bottom in reality or the process that diverts a lot of country's scare resources to ever support to rural people. Based on the lessons taken in the previous session, the suggested model of rural community development has been proposed as shown in Figure 2. To be effective, the whole process will take more than 12 years or may be longer than that.

Figure 2: Suggested Model of Rural Community Development in Myanmar

As shown in figure, the development effort of rural community should be done through efforts of the Government, INGOs, NGOs and local people. The pilot phase should be started in 10 villages and based on success the process will be rolling out to other village communities.

The major activities will be

- (1) Infrastructure development
- (2) Creating awareness on community development
- (3) Training on income generation and cash management
- (4) Developing community spirit
- (5) Improving farm and non-farm activities and
- (6) Encouraging social, education and health development of the people.

In implementing these activities, incentives for the progress should be offered to the whole village community by the government as in the case of Saemaul Undong and these will be gradually reduced after the villages have confident enough to stand by themselves. The total time taken to the whole process should be 12 year minimum as indicated in the figure.

VIII. Findings and Conclusion

From the comparison of rural community development between South Korea and Myanmar, it can be seen that the major differences between them remain in agriculture marketing, incentive schemes for development, leadership at the top, cross institutional involvement, spiritual reform and long-term concerted effort toward rural development. The collective strength of these factors makes real difference in the level rural community development between these two countries.

In the case of Myanmar, farmers in the rural areas were transferring their wealth to urban settlers and civil workers through compulsory delivery system from early 1960s until 2002 since rice is the staple and political product for Myanmar. Every successive government preferred domestic sufficiency of rice rather than boosting export. They attempted to deliberately keep rice price far below the level of international price for political reason that created disincentive effect to produce more output and led to destroy rural economy. There was no integrated and cohesive effort towards rural development and many attempts to boost rural economy and life of people in the rural areas were ended up at the cosmetic level since there was no clear vision, commitment and support from the top. Due to lack of opportunities and disappointed for their poor living life, a significant number of people in the rural areas has been start migrating into neighbouring countries after 1990s in search of better likelihood. This situation created farm labour shortage in the rural areas and that cannot be effectively substituted with increased use of farm machineries. This problem is more severe in recent years since bad weather conditions destroy farm outputs in the harvest and there are no insurance and other buffer systems in place for those farmers who are suffering from the crop failures⁷. This problem gradually leads to become a nationwide problem unless no remedial action has been taken. It may largely impact on the farm output and possible to be a threat to food security of the country in the future. Currently, the new government has shown its enthusiasm to reverse rural life of the country very recently⁸. It should be noted, however, that without cohesive effort and guideline at the top and participation from the mass and all stakeholder at the implementation level, the effort will be in vein like its processors without achieving any material results⁹. A cohesive and national wide integrated model of rural community development has been required for Myanmar. In this regard, Korea's Saemaul Undong model could help as a benchmark for Myanmar for some extent.

A small but wide areas survey on Myanmar's villages finds that the life of people in the rural area of Myanmar is not very encouraging. But they are not regionally the same. The best case is found in rural area of SG where family earning mainly come from working abroad and the worst case is found in DG that was once the rice bowl of Myanmar and engine for economy during colonial period. It has been also found that economic wellbeing in most regions was better off at the expenses of environment.

The lessons from the study of rural development model of these two countries reveal that Korea model can be illustrated as proactive strategy while Myanmar's is reactive strategy. The first model place rural sector development as the country's priority while it was

⁷ There are two crops failure in the harvest was happening due to off season rains in 2010 that severely affected farmers in rural area. A lot of farmers sell their droughts to repay borrowing money.

⁸ Speech of president U Thein Sein at the workshop which is aimed at improving the living conditions for rural people and alleviating poverty at Naypyitaw on 20 May 2011

⁹ Within 6 years (from December 1962 to March 1968), revolutionary council had organized totally eight round of the whole country farmers conventions aimed at improving life of farmers in the rural area.

subordinate to the maintenance of political stability of urban area in the second. Rural community development of Korea was partly contributed by growth of economy in the urban areas through rapid industrialization that lead to increase demand and prices of farm products from rural area. Urban industrialization and rural community development are mutually reinforcing each other in Korea model while this link is not found in Myanmar's. Finally, the vision and real commitment of national leaders to develop their own country make a real difference in the past.

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