

Rural Development around Amarapura Township (1988-2006)

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Abstract

Rural people constitute 70 percent of the population of the Union of Myanmar. With the conviction that the entire country would develop only if the rural areas develop, the government has formulated and has been implementing five programmes for rural development. For the development of agriculture, which is the basis of the economy of the rural people of Amarapura Township, efforts were made to meet the targets for the cultivated areas under rainy-season and summer paddy cultivation under the encouragement and guidance of township authorities and with the close supervision of agricultural supervision committees. To supply the rural people with clean drinking water, tube-wells were drilled and hand pumps were provided in 166 villages in Amarapura township. To enable all the children of school age to acquire education and upgraded the educational standard, special efforts have been made to construct new school buildings and to renovate the old ones. Healthcare facilities for the rural people in Amarapura Township had been upgraded with the support of the government, with the participation of the people and with the contributions made by international organizations. This paper tries to present how the rural areas have been developing fast through the five programmes for rural development.

Keywords: transportation, water supply, education, health, economic development, rural development

Introduction

Mandalay Division consists of twenty-six townships, and Amarapura Township was one of them. Amarapura Township has nine wards, forty-two village tracts and 166 villages. Its population was 147,833. Under the guidance and supervision of the Ministry for the Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs, the Amarapura Township Peace and Development Council and Township Development Committee has been making endeavours for elevating the standards of living of the rural people within Amarapura Township and for the

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development of the township with urban characteristics. Special attention is paid to the development of agriculture, which was not only the backbone of Myanmar's economy, but also the chief occupation of the rural people. Irrigation networks have been constructed to improve the water supply, which is vital for agriculture. To supplement the rural people's income, the Ministry had supplied them with capital for livestock breeding. To prevent the rural people from the diseases caused by contamination of water and unhygienic living conditions, tube-wells with hand pumps were bored in the rural areas throughout the Amarapura Township to supply the people with sufficient clean drinking water. Efforts were also made for the improvement of the healthcare facilities for the rural people in Amarapura Township. To enable all school-age children to acquire education and to elevate the educational standard of Myanmar, which were the main objectives of the Ministry of Education, new school buildings were constructed, old school buildings were renovated and new teachers were appointed. In addition, with a view to disseminating knowledge among the rural people in Amarapura Township, village libraries were established in forty-two village tracts.

Five Programmes for Rural Development in Myanmar

In the Union of Myanmar, about two-third of the population lived in rural areas. Hence, it is extremely important to raise the economic and social conditions of the people in rural areas, and the State has issued five guidelines for the progress of rural areas as follows:

- a) To improve transportation and communications in rural areas,
- b) To make clean drinking water available to the people in rural areas,
- c) To elevate the education of the people in rural areas,
- d) To improve healthcare facilities for the people in rural areas, and
- e) To develop the rural economy.

To facilitate the tasks of the urban and rural development teams of the development committees, the state law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) formed the Ministry for the Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs by issuing Notification No.15/94 on 30 January, 1994. Two hundred and eighty-five Township Development Committees and forty-two Township Development Committees of the

Department of Development Affairs of the Ministry for the Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs are undertaking urban and rural development tasks since the 1997-98 fiscal year (Yakhine State Development Council. (May 2003). A Study of the Water Supply in the Areas of Heavy Rains with Water Shortage During the Summer. ,pp. 14-15)

Transportation

As the five programmes had been laid down for rural development, the Development Committees are directly responsible for the improvement of transportation and communication and water supply. The Government had given guidance that the roads in rural areas had to be repaired to facilitate the transportation of local products to the markets in towns, that it was necessary to effectively repair the former district council roads that connected villages and towns, and to renovate the roads in stages because only if the road in rural areas were good, there would be improvements in economic conditions, educational standards and healthcare facilities. Under the supervision of the Department of Development Affairs, the Development Committees formulated and implemented the First Five-Year Plan of Road and Bridges (1996-97 to 2000-01) (Shan State (Southern) Development Council. (May 2003). An Assessment of the Construction of Inter-village Road on the Hill and the Plains with Special Reference to their Designs.p.41). Of the fourteen work programmes for the fiscal year 2002-2003, set at the annual coordinating meeting of Development Committees held on 30 May 2002, the third was: "The Township Development Committees were to set annual targets for the harmonious development of inter-village roads, and the roads connecting those roads with the roads leading to towns ". Accordingly, the Committees had been striving for the improvement of roads and rural areas (Shan States (Southern) Development Council. (May 2003). *An Assessment of the Construction of Inter-village Roads on the Hill and the Plains with Special Reference to their Designs* p.5).

There were some roads that were paved on self-help bases with the arrangements of Township Peace and Development Council of Amarapura Township. Three tar roads- one each in Hmandan and Odaw Wards and in Myitlaung village, altogether 0.56 miles in length-were paved at a cost of Ks. 1.842 million. Laterite roads were paved in villages, and between 1991 and 2005, the total length of those roads amounted to 24.75 miles, which

cost Ks. 27.908 million. To facilitate the transportation during the rainy season, two bridges were constructed on a self-help basis. One of them, the Mya-inn bridge was a wooden bridge (35 ft. Long and 6 ft. wide) constructed to Taungkaing village at a cost of Ks. 1.545 million. The other was Shankale Kyun Bridge, a masonry bridge (135 ft, long and 6 ft. wide), built at a cost of 2.2 million at Shankale Kyun (Amparapura Township General Administration Department. (March 2005). *The Implementation of Five Programmes for Rural Development* p.7).

The dirt road connecting Yelunkyaw village tract, Amarapura Township, and the road to town – which was 3,200 feet long, 18 ft, wide and 5.ft high – were completed, and it was upgraded to graveled road, by laying five-inch-thick road metal on the dirt road. The construction of gravel road by the Road Construction Committee commenced on 7 December 2004 and was completed on 12 January 2005. This road was paved on a self-help basis under the guidance of the Township Peace and Development Council and under the leadership of the donor and with the participation of the masses (Amarapura Township Peace and Development Council. (March 2005). *Report on the Rural Development Tasks*. p.41).

The Dungle village tract of Amarapura Township is located on the Myitnge-Htonbo road and is adjoining the industrial zone of Mandalay. The gravel road between Daungye and Medawsu, which had been in existence since the AFPFL period, was in a state of disrepair. Hence it was repaired as an all-weather road paved with road metal. As it was necessary to lay a new road at Medawsu village, which was adjoining the industrial zone of Mandalay, a gravel road (1100 ft long, 20 ft. wide with an average height of 3 ft) was paved at a cost of Ks. 2 million. The road was completed on 12 February 2005. Hence the people from Medawzu and six nearby villages could travel conveniently (Amarapura Township Peace and Development Council. (March 2005). *Report on the Rural Development Tasks*. p.41).

With some roads, the government defrayed part of the expenses and the people made contributions. A five-furlong-long road in Yekyipauk village was laid at a cost of Ks. 3.2 million-Ks 0.54 million provided by the government and Ks. 2.66 million donated by the people. At Panchi village, the Government spent Ks. 0.8 million to pave a road 1 mile 4 furlong long. For a 3 furlong-long road in Shwekyetyet village, the state spent Ks. 132.5 thousand and the people donated Ks. 500000 (Mandalay Division Peace and

Development Council. (August 2004). *Economic and Social Development for Historic Records* p.87)

When the construction of the Ayeyarwady Bridge (Yandanabon) in Shwekyetyet village tract, Amarapura Township, was commenced in 2001, the government nationalized 56.38 acres of land which fell within the project area , and relocated seventy-eight households to Shwele village, which had been expanded formerly. Later, the government had to relocate 214 households, as their houses had to be dismantled for paving the approach to the bridge, at Shwele village. Fifty seven plots of land at Shwele village were given to the first batch of 49 households that were relocated, after making them draw lots (Amarapura Township) Peace and Development Council. (March 2005). Report on the Rural Development Tasks. p. 41).

Water Supply

After the promulgation of the Development Committees Law on 1 April 1993, the Development Committees perform the tasks for supplying water not only to towns but also to villages. The four-year period(between 1999-2000 and 2002-2003 fiscal years) was defined as Period for Roads, Bridges and Water Supply, and the government pay special consideration to water supply and allotted funds for water supply projects. The State Peace and Development Council ordered that the tasks for water supply in rural areas were to be conducted by Township Development Committees. A ten-year plan(from 2000-2001 to 2009- 2010) was formulated for supplying drinking water to rural areas (Assessment of the Five Sectors of the Development Committees for the Year 2002-2003 Fiscal Year. p. 3).

As the Township Development Committee had been making an all effort for supplying water throughout the Amarapura Township, Mandalay District, well-wishers, Non – Governmental Organizations(NGOs),United Nations Children's Fund(UNICEF), Japan International Cooperation Agency(JICA) and Bridge Asia Japan(BAJ) made contributions. Between 1991 and 2005, 19 eighty-foot-deep tube-wells and 595 ninety-foot-deep tube- wells with hand pumps were bored in nine wards and 166 villages at a cost of Ks. 9.2 million(Progress of Rural Development Work in Mandalay District from 1988-1990 to 1991-2005, Mandalay. p. 4). Furnishing the rural people with sufficient clean drinking water would prevent the diseases caused by the contamination of water and unhygienic living conditions such as cholera, typhoid, jaundice, etc., and stunted growth and malnutrition . As

the arrangements had improved the living conditions, a new rural environment would be created by elevating the living conditions of the rural people by maintaining the systems for supplying clean drinking water in rural areas.

Education

The government also paid attention to the improvement of the education sector to make the people knowledgeable. As the inputs of intellectuals and technicians were vital in the State's development programmes, the government had been formulating and implementing plans for raising educational standards of all the nationals. With a view to producing competent human resources, the government had been carrying out its programmes for modernizing syllabi, for producing competent teachers, and for providing academic institutions with modern teaching aids. The goals of the Ministry of Education were to enable all school-age children to acquire education and to elevate the educational standard of Myanmar. Hence it established new basic education schools and increased the number of teachers appointed (Department of Higher Education (Lower Myanmar). (June 2001). Development throughout Myanmar. p. 596). Among the rural development tasks in Amarapura Township, Mandalay District, the tasks for the improvement in the education sector were carried out in two phases: the first phase between 1988 and 1990 and the second between 1991 and 2005. Between 1988 and 1990, five new schools were constructed and eight existing schools were repaired; and between 1991 and 2005, three new schools were established and thirty – four old schools were renovated. The schools were constructed on a self-help basis under the supervision of the Township Peace and Development Committee at a total cost of Ks. 11. 269 million (Progress of Rural Development Work in Mandalay District from 1988-1990 to 1991-2005, p. 11). In addition, to make the rural people within Amarapura Township well- informed and to make them enjoy reading, forty-two village tract libraries had been established in forty-two village tracts.

Health

The main objectives of the Ministry of Health were:

1. to ensure that all the citizens would be healthy and would live long, their entire lifespan
2. to ensure that all the citizens would be free from diseases.

With a view to fulfilling these two objectives, the ministry had been educating the people down to village level, striving to prevent diseases and to give effective treatment whenever the people got ill. By conducting postgraduate- and undergraduate- level intradepartmental courses on health education, the ministry had made the people better informed on matters concerning health. In the entire country, 1,402 rural dispensaries were established between 1988-89 and 1999-2000 (Department of Higher Education (Lower Burma). (June 2001). *Development throughout Myanmar*. p. 621). The government had been improving the healthcare facilities in Amarapura Township, Mandalay District. A rural dispensary was established at Sadaw village in 1989 at a cost of Ks. 90,000 - the cost shared by the government and the people. In 2002, the village tract hospital at Yelunkyaw village was renovated with the aid from UNFPA at a cost of Ks. 1.89 million. In 1991, two rural dispensaries- one at Taungkaing village and the other at Mondaw - were opened on self - help basis (Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council.(August 2004). *Economic and Social Development for Historic Records*. p. 102). Moreover, in 2003, a rural dispensary was constructed at Bondawnainggan village with public contributions at a cost of Ks. 5.744 million. Further ,by constructing a dispensary , which cost Ks. 5 million, at Panchi village in 2004 with public donations, the healthcare facilities for the locals were improved (Amarapura Township General Administration Depatment. (March 2005). *The Implementation of Five Programmes for Rural Development*. p. 2). Nurses and midwives are giving treatment to the people; and the people now having become able to receive treatment in time , untimely deaths have been reduced. As the people became more health conscious, it became possible to prevent diseases by vaccination, and to prevent the spread of contagious diseases.

Socio-economic Development

Agriculture: The Union of Myanmar is formed with fourteen states and divisions and three hundred and twenty- four townships. Mandalay Division is comprised of twenty - six townships, and Amarapura Township is one of the townships in Mandalay District of Mandalay Division. The Amarapura Township is bounded on the north by Pyigy Tagun and Chanmyatharzi Township, the south by the Dotthawadi river (Kyaukse District), and Sagaing and Tada-Oo Townships of Kyaukse District , and on the west by the river Ayeyarwady(Sagaing Townships , Sagaing Division). The area of the township is 51,268 acres or 80.11 square miles. There are nine wards,

42 village tracts and 166 villages within the Amarapura Township, Mandalay district. The population of the township is 147,833. To raise the living conditions of rural people, and to invest the township with urban characteristics, the tasks of planting seasonal plants, of constructing roads and bridges, of paving inter-village roads, of upgrading the education sector and healthcare facilities, of improving the supply of drinking water and water for cultivation, and of supplying the villages with electricity are being undertaken under the supervision of Township Peace and Development Council and with the participation of Ward and Village Tract Peace and Development Councils and local populace (Amarapura Township Peace and Development Council. (March 2005). *Report on the Rural Development Tasks p. 1*).

Of 51,268 acres of Amarapura Township, the cultivated area is 34,795 acres-17,127 acres of paddy land, 2,386 acres of farmland, 959 acres of alluvial land, and 569 acres of gardens. The principal crops are paddy (both rainy-season and summer varieties), cotton, pulses, oil-plants (peanuts, sesame, sunflower) and vegetables. The area unavailable for cultivation is 16473 acres- town and villages areas and areas with dams, irrigation channels, tanks and embankments (Amarapura Township Department of Land Records. (December 2004). *Report of the Department of Land Records. p.2*).

The area under rainy season paddy cultivation in 2004-05 was 14,281 acres, i.e. 1,666 acres more than the cultivated acreage in 2003-04 which was 12,615, and 721 acres more than the target of 13,560 acres. As the system of supplying water was improved so that of the areas irrigated by Sedawgyi dam, Amarapura Township, would have good water supplies with a view to increasing cultivated area under paddy cultivation to 14,868 acres for self-sufficiency of rice in the township, water supply was satisfactory during the season in which rainy season paddy was cultivated. It was this improvement of irrigation, the guidance and encouragement given by district and township authorities for meeting the target, and the close supervision of agricultural supervision committees for cultivating only paddy on irrigated fields that had enabled farmers to increase cultivation. Seasonal crops were raised only in the irrigated area within seventeen village tracts in the eastern part of the township. The cultivated acreage did not differ much from the previous years. (Amarapura Township Department of Land Records. (December 2004). *Report of the Department of Land Records.p.7*).

To meet the target of 11,000 acres under summer paddy cultivation in Amarapura Township, Mandalay District, in 2004-05 fiscal year, four field training camps were stationed in Amarapura Township. To attain the target, Agricultural Coordinating Committees had been formed in every village tracts and the members of the Township Agricultural Committees, led by the Chairman of the Township Agricultural Supervision Committee, went around the training camps to organize farmers and made arrangements for the exchange of seeds, water supply, and for the supply of quality seeds. Efforts were made at each of the four training camps--camp 1 at Daungywe, camp 2 at Tamuso, camp 3 at Natyekan, and camp 4 at Yekyipauk- to meet the target of 11, 000 acres (Amarapura Township Peace and Development Council. (March 2005). Report on the Rural Development Tasks.ps.2).

In concerning with the livestock breeding, the implementation of the scheme to raise ten chickens and a pig per household in the village tracts of Amarapura Township began in 2002. The number of domestic variety chickens raised before 31 March 2004 was 244, 715, which increased to 336, 154 by 21 February 2005 (an increase of 91,439). The number of pigs bred until 21 March 2004 was 13, 710, which rose to 12,875 by 31 March 2005 (an increase of 75 pigs). The breeding of RIR roosters began in 2002, and their number increased from 118 in 2002 to 1,950 by 31 March 2004, and to 2,114 by 21 March 2005 (an increase of 164 roosters). The Livestock Breeding Bank provided the villagers with eight piglets in mwe-bet-pe system (a system by which future offspring would be shared by the bank and the pig farm concerned). By 31 March 2004, fifteen offspring (25 male piglets and 26 female piglets) had been narrowed. In 2005, the bank began to distribute thirty of those piglets to other farms. As to raising ducks, a hundred ducks, 26000 kyats subsidized by the bank as each of them worth 260 kyats, were given to each of fifty household in Shwele village tract. Personnel from Township Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department went from village to village making arrangements for the prevention of infectious diseases of farm animals and giving treatment to animals as necessary. As to fish raising, 701,300 fish in 24 tanks and 50,990,000 fish and 31 lakes, at the rate of 10,00 fish per acre, had been raised. By assisting the rural people with their daily works to make them earn extra income, the standards of living of the local people could be elevated (Amarapura Township General Administration Department. (March 2005).The Implementation of Five Programmes for Rural Development. p.2).

Power Supply: Arrangements were made to supply Kinbat village tract and Tawdwin village tract (Sagale - inn viilage) in Amarapura Township, Mandalay District , with electricity by utilizing biogas. The Village Electric Lighting Committee began the construction of the Kinbat Village Tract Biogas Plant on 23 July 2004. The Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council spent Ks. 1 million for purchasing dynamo. engine, mild steel rods and cement to be provided for this plant . Electric power was supplied from 15 December 2004 onwards. Using 504 viss of cow dung, the power plant could supply electricity to 143 households, two monasteries and two dispensaries to use 227 flourescent tubes for four hours (from 6 to 10 pm) a day.

A Village Electric Lighting Committee was formed on 9 July 2005 for the construction of a biogas plant at Sagale-in village, Tawdwin village tract. The villagers have been making efforts for constructing it on a self-help basis, at a cost of 2.1 million with public contributions. The villagers are looking forward to the contribution of Ks. 1 million from the Mandalay Division union solidarity and Development Organization to accelerate their efforts for power supply (Mandalay District Development Council. (April 2005). Progress of Rural Development Work in Mandalay District from 1988-1990 to 1991-2005. p .182). With four privately-owned engines, nine communal engines purchased on a self - help basis and two biogas plants, arrangements have been made to provide the wards and villages in twenty-five village tracts in Amarapura Township , Mandalay District , with uninterrupted power supply.

Establishment of Model Villages: In conformity with the Ministry's guidance to strive for the harmonious development of urban and rural areas , the department for Development Affairs devised a Model Village Pilot Scheme with its letter(no.11/8-1/sa-ya-hka[03] dated 11 November 1997. According to this scheme, each township were to be divided into four zones: east, west , south and north; and at least a model village was to be established in each zone. Thus, there was to be a minimum of four model villages in each township.

The scheme included three phases as follows:

Phase 1 -prosperous villages with a minimum of three hundred houses

Phase 2 - villages with two hundred to three hundred houses

Phase 3 - villages with less than two hundred houses.

In the second, third and fourth Five- Year Plan periods , villages with over three hundred houses, those with between two hundred and three hundred houses, and those with less than two hundred houses , respectively, were to be upgraded as model villages. In the fifth Five- Year Plan period, the remaining villages and villages in border areas were to be formed as model villages. The rural people themselves have been taking part in the discussions, construction and supervision of the construction of model villages. The Taungthaman village in Amarapura Township, Mandalay District, had now been formed as model village (Ministry for the Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs. (June 1999). *Rural Development- Guide to Forming Model Village*. p. 3).

Social Welfare Works: Forming the Artistes' Association in 1991, the efforts for the preservation and uncover Myanmar's culture and fine arts, for organizing the rural people so that they would learn the policies of the State through theatrical entertainments, and for preserving and uncovering ancient performing arts have been made successfully. In 2003, the Thitsashin Welfare Association was formed to provide the poor rural people with free funeral services or healthcare services. A Township Rice Trader's Society was formed in the same year, to procure rice to be sold to the people at affordable prices, so that they would have sufficient food.

Conclusion

The Department of Development Affairs of the Ministry for the Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs formulated five programmes for rural development and has been implementing them . Amarapura Township is in Mandalay Division and is formed with nine wards, forty- two village tracts and a hundred and sixty - six villages. The population of the township is 147, 833. With a view to elevating the living conditions of the rural people in Amarapura Township, the Village Tract Peace and Development Councils and the rural people were coordinating their efforts, under the guidance of the Township Peace and Development Council, for raising seasonal crops, for constructing roads and bridges , for paving the inter- village roads, for developing the education sector , for improving the healthcare facilities, for providing the

villages with drinking water and water for cultivation, and for supplying the villages with electricity for lighting. As an all- out effort was made to improve the conditions in this way, the living conditions of the rural people would improve and a new rural social environment would come into being in the near future.

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