

A Case Study on New Village Movement in Myanmar (Tha Nat Pin and East Phaunggyi)

Lae Mon Thein¹

Abstract

The objective of this paper is to know about the New Village Movement (Saemaul Undong) in Myanmar and to compare the different between New Village Movement of Korea and Myanmar. The research method is mainly descriptive based on current situations of two villages in Myanmar. Primary data are collected in Myanmar to highlight the current level of two villages through a survey on The findings from the survey reveal that New Village Movement in Myanmar is weak in participation of local people, the effort of village leaders, presence of incentive scheme for the development, spiritual reform and vision and commitment of local people. Some of the good practices, of the SMU model of South Korea should be studied and adopted to develop the all 68,000 villages through these two villages: (Key words: new village movement (Saemaul Undong), rural development, spiritual reform)

I. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In spite of rapid urbanization over the past two decades, rural development remains a major challenge for developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, So, governments of these countries have attempting to promote their rural community by all means, because national development cannot be achieved without rural development. Saemaul Undong, New Village Movement, is an important movement for the development of the rural community. Saemaul Undong is a national campaign that positively branded the government's major program of rural modernization and development and mobilized every village, and nearly every villager. (According to the 2000 data, more than 1.2 billion people are still living in extreme poverty on one dollar a day and 2.7 billion people are living on two dollars per day).

Myanmar and South Korea have so many similar characteristics in the last 50 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 now very different in development stage between these two countries especially in rural areas. At present, although Myanmar had changed to democratic nation in 2011 and democratization is proceeding succeeded, Myanmar is no only a developing but also

¹ Lecturer, Department of Economics, Co-operative University(Thanlyin)

basically an agricultural country. Gross National Product per capita is US\$ 835 while South Korea enjoys US\$ 22589 in 2012 according to the report of International Monetary Fund. That's why Saemaul Undong is absolutely necessary for Myanmar.

1.2 Research Design and Methodology

This research mainly used descriptive research method based on the analysis of current situation of two villages in Myanmar. Literature survey was intensively use in this study and gathered from all available sources including books from SMU Training Center in Korea, journals, special report, finding from previous studies and internet. Primary data was collected from two villages in Myanmar in order to understand and to get knowledge about the implementation of Saemaul Undong in Myanmar. Only secondary data were used to study the case of Sarmaul Undong in South Korea.

Although there are 68,000 villages in Myanmar, Saemeul Undong was only implemented in two villages as the pilot project and the initial stage. Therefore, according to present situation of two villages as much as possible surveyed in the stage based in their implementation.

1.3 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is focused on the new village movement in two villages of Myanmar during the period in 2012. This study has a number of limitations. First, it relies on secondary data form Korea Saemaul Undong and primary data concerning current state of rural villages in Myanmar cannot be covered in this study. Second, survey in two villages is too small and the period covered by the study is limited in 2012. As the output of the study, it can provide useful suggestions for the new village movement implementation that suit the country's situation based on the experience of Korea. The finding from this study will be valuable for the later studied in the field of new village movement in Myanmar.

II. Saemaul Undong Model Village in Myanmar

2.1 Main Characteristics of New Village Movement (Saemaul Undong)

The word "Saemaul Undong" comes from Korea. 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". Thus, Saemaul Undong

represents a continuous effort towards community renewal and modernization for a better future.

Saemaul Undong primarily seeks to facilitate community development and modernization. This ideal is not confined to efforts to improve individual lifestyles and living conditions, but encompasses the whole community. The ultimate goal of the campaign is to develop villages where people can enjoy both physical and spiritual wealth.

Saemaul Undong's primarily objective was to respond to the basic daily needs of the rural people. The ideal and spirit of Saemaul Undong, which steered the campaign, were explicitly stated in the following statements of then president Park Jung-Hee: "Saemaul Undong embodies our efforts to improve and modernize our villages by ourselves in the spirit of self-help and independence".

The Saemaul Undong can be characterized with four features. First, it can be said that the Saemaul Undong was conducted by so-called integrated approach. That is a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches, although it started without a well-defined formal or theoretical framework at first. In fact, government officials themselves did plan and facilitate rural villagers in order to implement the Saemaul Undong without any support from academicians who might have useful and related technical knowledge in its early stage. However, it does not mean that the Saemaul Undong has been projected with no framework.

Second, the implementation strategy of the Saemaul Undong is a pure Korean way of community development. The mottoes, slogans, and terminology used for the program are based on the Korean way of thinking. It means that the implementation of the Saemaul Undong was based on the positive aspects of Korea culture and tradition.

Third, the most important intention to pursue the Saemaul Undong is to escape from poverty. At the time of the inception the Saemaul Undong, there was a strong need to overcome a seasonal problem of hunger. Each year during the months of April through June many farm households suffered an extreme shortage of food. It is called the burley slump! Because poverty was a fact of life, the initiation of the Saemaul Undong means to Challenge to this situation. The Saemaul Undong as a better-living movement emphasized diversification of income sources of farm households that were largely limited to rice production. As a result, the production of main grains (rice and barley) reached sufficiency by 1975. This was considered such an overwhelming achievement of the Saemaul Undong.

Fourth, the Saemaul Undong was a movement for spiritual reform of Korean people, and has achieved a lot in this respect. It changed people's attitude from laziness to diligence, from dependence to self-reliance and from individual selfishness to cooperation with other so as to be dubbed as "Social Revolution of Korean Rural Society".

2.2 Saemaul Undong Model Village Project in Myanmar

SMU Project has been started in Myanmar in 2012. For SMU promotion process in Myanmar, in February 2012 SMU project had started reaching in Myanmar. Korea research group visited Myanmar and they surveyed in 10 villages. And then two villages were selected to implement the SMU project.

In May 2012, 12 representatives in two villages were chosen to visit Korea for SMU training and education. In July 2012, SMU co-operation officers got to Myanmar and worked together with the Myanmar Government and the villagers to succeed in SMU functions. From August to October, implementing the first year of the model village projects was successfully.

Some strategies were used for achieving success in SMU project. Five main SMU model village projects had been implement in two villages. The first one is building the bridge. The second one is repairing village's inroad. The third one is fitting the zinc roofs instead of thatched roofs. The fourth one is digging the artesian wells for drinking water. The last one is providing the necessary inputs to grow the crops. SMU organization invested 45,000 US\$ in 2012 for these projects.

2.3 New Village Movement in Tha Nat Pin Village

Tha Nat Pin village is situated in South East Yangon and 20 km far from Yangon. There are (162) households in this village and the total population is (699). Most of the people have to engage in rice cultivation.

A. Projects in Tha Nat Pin Village

These were three main projects implemented in Tha Nat Pin Village in 2012. Firstly, the bridge made of wood had been built. Its length is (42)m and width is (2.4) m. There is a stream in the East of the village and an old bridge was built across this stream but this bridge was very old and unsure for passers.

There are (505) acres beyond this stream. The villagers carry their paddy to another side across the stream because there is a rice-mill at opposite side. These (505)

acres like an island and difficult to go there. So, it needs to build a bridge for transportation. The name of bridge is 'Kye Pwar Chan Tha'. 'Kye Pwar Chan Tha' means 'prosperous' and 'rich'. This is a sign that the villagers will be richer and more improve their living standard in the future.

The second project was (48) traditional farming houses have been replaced of straw thatch roofs with zinc. Former, they have to cost about (118) USD per house yearly for thatch. These zinc roof lasts for (20) years at least. The third project was digging the tube wells for getting purified drinking water. There have 3 sources installed underground wells. Moreover, breeding pigs, building the village inroad, and building the village community hall (SMU multicenter) projects will continuously be implemented in 2013.

2.4 New Village Movement in East Phaunggyi

East Phaunggyi is situated in North-East Yangon and 80km away from Yangon. There are (1080) households in this village and total population is (4697). So, East Phaunggyi is bigger than Tha Nat Pin. Rice cultivation is their main earning and others are carpenters, masons, laborer in farm etc.

A. Projects in East Phaunggyi

There were also four main projects implemented in East Phaunggyi in 2012. It repaired inroad first. This inroad's length is (3200) m and width is (2.4) m. This type of inroad is gravel roads (construct with Gawin stone). Former. It couldn't use in the raining season. At present. Have being repaired this inroad. The villagers can use it easily in every season and pass with by car or by motorbike or on foot.

The second project in East Phaunggyi was (135) traditional farming house had been replaced of thatched roofs with galvanized iron sheet. The third project was installing underground well. These were two sources before but there is no well enough for all the villagers. So, another new one was dug. The final project is supplying agricultural inputs: pesticides, seeds, fertilizers for (113) households. Moreover, village community hall (SMU multicenter) has built and microfinance project has been implementing in 2013.

2.5 Achievements of the Saemul Undong in two villages in 2012

Achievements of the Saemul Undong in the 2012 had been well documented. Most of the rural people could see the improving of their life environment by their eyes and they could feel the improvement of their living standard by their body.

A. Than at Pin Village

Table 1. Achievements of the Saemaul Undong Projects in 2012

No	Project Name	Unit	Objective	Performance	Growth
1.	Installing Underground Water Pump	Unit	3	3	100%
2.	Building the Bridge	Meter	1	1	100%
3.	Improvement the galvanized iron sheet roof	House	48	48	100%

Source: Tha Nat Pin Village

The Saemaul Undong was successful in Tha Nat Pin Village. As show in the Table 1, doing the several Saemaul Undong projects, it got so many advantages and could set down the foundation for economic development by highly upgrading of the village infrastructure.

Purified drinking water is essential for everybody and the best of health. These wells could provide the health of villagers heavily because only they been getting the purified drinking water but also taking a bath with purified water. Former, they had to drink unpurified drinking water in the coverless lake after setting. So, it could be hazardous for old-aged and children's health. At present, they can safe their life, protect their health and free from the infection of cholera, diarrhea disease.

Building the bridge, the villagers had several advantages. The first advantage is the farm prices beyond the bridge (505 acres) went up four times, from about (824 US\$) per acre to about (3200 US\$) per acre.

The second advantage is the villagers can grow the groundnut and mung bean beside the summer and monsoon paddy. Former, they can grow only summer and monsoon paddy. The third advantage is they have been passing easily to other side and more safety their transportation. Before building this new bridge, if they to pass another side, they use the boat carry but now they can pass with the bullet cart or the tractor or on foot. Moreover, they can economize their transportation cost for (824 US\$) per year.

Having fit the zine roof, the villagers have saved the cost of straw thatch (about 118 US\$) per house yearly. Because these zinc roofs last (20) years at least. It was possible by the introduction of modern agricultural technologies with the internalization of hard-working spirit among rural people.

B. East Phaunggyi Village

Table 2: Achievements of the Samaul Undong projects in 2012

Sr.No	Project Name	Unit	Objective	Performance	Growth
1	Repairing Inroad in Village	meter	3,200	3,200	100%
2	Improvement the Galvanized Iron Sheet	House	135	135	100%
3	Installing Underground well (pump)	Unit	1	1	100%
4	Supplying Agricultural inputs	household	113	113	100%

Source: East Phaunggyi Village

The Saemaul Undong was also successful for targeted projects in East Phaunggyi village. The villagers had been received so many benefits like Tha Nat Pin village. Building the gravel inroad in village (constructed with Gawin Stone), the village could it easily every season and pass with by car or by motorbike or on foot. It could not use in the rainy season before building this inroad.

Former, the village had to cut the bamboo and other necessary parts for their roofs in the forest near the village. There were about (30) wild elephants in this forest. So, the villagers faced the danger of these elephants and about two or three people was passed away in the cutting time. The season which rains cats and dogs, the villagers couldn't sleep well at night because the thatch couldn't cover not to wet Presently, they don't need to worry about that because of replacing of straw thatched roofs with galvanized iron sheet for traditional farming house.

Having dug a tube-well, the villagers can get so many benefits as well as Tha Nat Pin. Being supplied agricultural inputs in free such as pesticides, seeds and fertilizes for (113) households, they can get so many benefits and can provided their farming and they do not need to incur the cost of inputs. So, their production costs fell down and increased their income.

III. The Comparing with Tha Nat Pin and Phaunggyi Village

3.1 Participation of the Villagers

The primary objective of the Saemaul Undong was to respond to the basic daily needs of the rural people and Saemaul program were implemented in a democratic way in which villagers made their own their own decisions. So, the participation of the villagers is important.

In Tha Nat Pin village, the participation of the villagers was weak in all implementation projects especially the young men did not participate with might and main. Most of the people give reasons that they have their own job and they are avoidable to participate. In East Phaunggyi village, the villagers not only old ages, young men but also children actively participated in all projects. But the village leaders in two villages could not still attracts all villagers to participate in those projects.

3.2 The Capability of the Leadership of the Village Leader

The enthusiasm and activity of Saemaul leaders played a primary role in determining the success of the campaign. These leaders consisted of regional representative who were chosen for their decisiveness and leadership ability when the campaign was launched. The Saemaul leaders were expected to complement or even surpass the performance and contribution of existing regional leaders.

In Tha Nat Pin village, although the late village leader was chosen by the villagers in accordance with democracy way, he was weak in education, participation in some implementation projects by himself. Besides, he wanted to maintain the power of village leader and he did some works with his own decision without discussion with other villagers. In East Phaunggyi village, the village leader had the authority to decide how to secure necessary labor, how to acquire the raw materials in the processes. Moreover, he could operate to succeed all programs without thinking of his own benefits. The villagers relied on him and followed after his leading.

3.3 Attitude of the Villagers on This Program

Korea's Saemaul Undongis not a short-term movement. It is a movement of action and practice rather than theory. Implementation Saemaul Undong with self-supportive efforts and mental reformation of villagers based on Saemaul spirits of diligence, self-help and co-operation together with a sense of ownership.

In Tha Nat Pin village, most of the villagers who attended the SMU training program in Korea emphasized to get benefits within a short period of time and they wanted to get more own benefits than the welfare of the villagers as well as they had no clear way for rural development. In East Phaunggyi village, the villagers who attended the SMU training program in Korea were engrossed in implement the pilot project to sometimes as they to contribute and bear some costs for the project, they have burning desire to continue this program.

3.4 Knowledge and Ability of the Villagers

Education, knowledge, intelligent power and ability are most important factors in order to implement a program successfully. In Tha Nat Pin village, most of the villagers are not educated persons. They are lack of knowledge, creative thinking, interpersonal skills in spite of nearness the urban area and most of the people are thinking in traditional way. In East Phaunggyi village, most of the villagers are educated persons. The villagers have enough knowledge, interpersonal skills and they can do every works creatively and consistently. Referring to Korea development model, the spirits of creative thinking and environmental observation belong to SMU members except others at the village.

IV. Suggested Strategy for New Village Movement of Myanmar on Korea's Experiences

In the effort to develop rural community, Myanmar should learn successful experience of Korea in the similar area. The Sameaul Undong, the Korean version of community development movement transformed Korea into one of the leading developing countries during the 1970s'. It has been recognized as a successful model of community development project, especially for underdeveloped and developing countries. In fact, it was not only the rural community development project, but also the modernization project of Korea. So, most of the good practices should be learned from Korea's experience and then be imitated. The following guide lines are suggested for Myanmar Saemaul Undong after studying the experiences of Korea.

A. The Role of Incentives

Everybody lives for hope. No one can do any activity without incentive. In the case of Myanmar, the participants of Saemaul Undong in two villages can do every project

without getting wages or salaries at the initial stage. These projects did not immediately increase income, but they will get benefit the villagers themselves in the long run and require some sacrifice and cooperation from everyone. Although they know that the Saemaul Undong is to escape from poverty and a movement for spiritual reform of Myanmar People, recently, they need money to live every day. So, income incentive or government incentive should be created to improve rural situation. That is, at initial stage, the government gave for all villagers to improve their own living environment. Materials required were provided by the government, partly as grants and partly as loans. In the case of Korea, the government categorized the village into these group-underdeveloped, developing, and developed and used government incentives for advancing rural community to a higher degree of development.

B. The Role of SMU Leaders

The Saemaul Undong could make a big success by nurturing community leadership. Village leadership consisted of Saemaul leaders, both men and women, who had been selected by the villagers. Village leaders were selected by the villagers also played an important role as change agents disseminating technological innovation, and also as managers in planning and implementing project.

Those who are educated, a role model of family and society, well respected creativity and opinion of the others, sincere, hardworking person and healthy at the same time, have decent amount of property, cooperation, judgment and do not get criticism from the others should be selected and trained to be the community leader who will take change and integrate the rural development effort at the village level.

Saemaul leaders should focus on Seamaul Undong only. They can make plan for village development, distribute work to villagers, persuade and resolve problems of villagers. They must be a bridge between Saemaul and administrative organizations and report the result of project. They can also serve to participate with the villagers, to do accordance with democracy way, to provide on the participation of women, to more spread the cooperative spirit, to improve the education standard and knowledge of the villagers and they must be role models in all directions for the rural community development.

C. Stage by Stage Development

In Korea, Saemaul Undong emphasized different development criteria and used the five development stages. They are foundation and groundwork stage, proliferation stage,

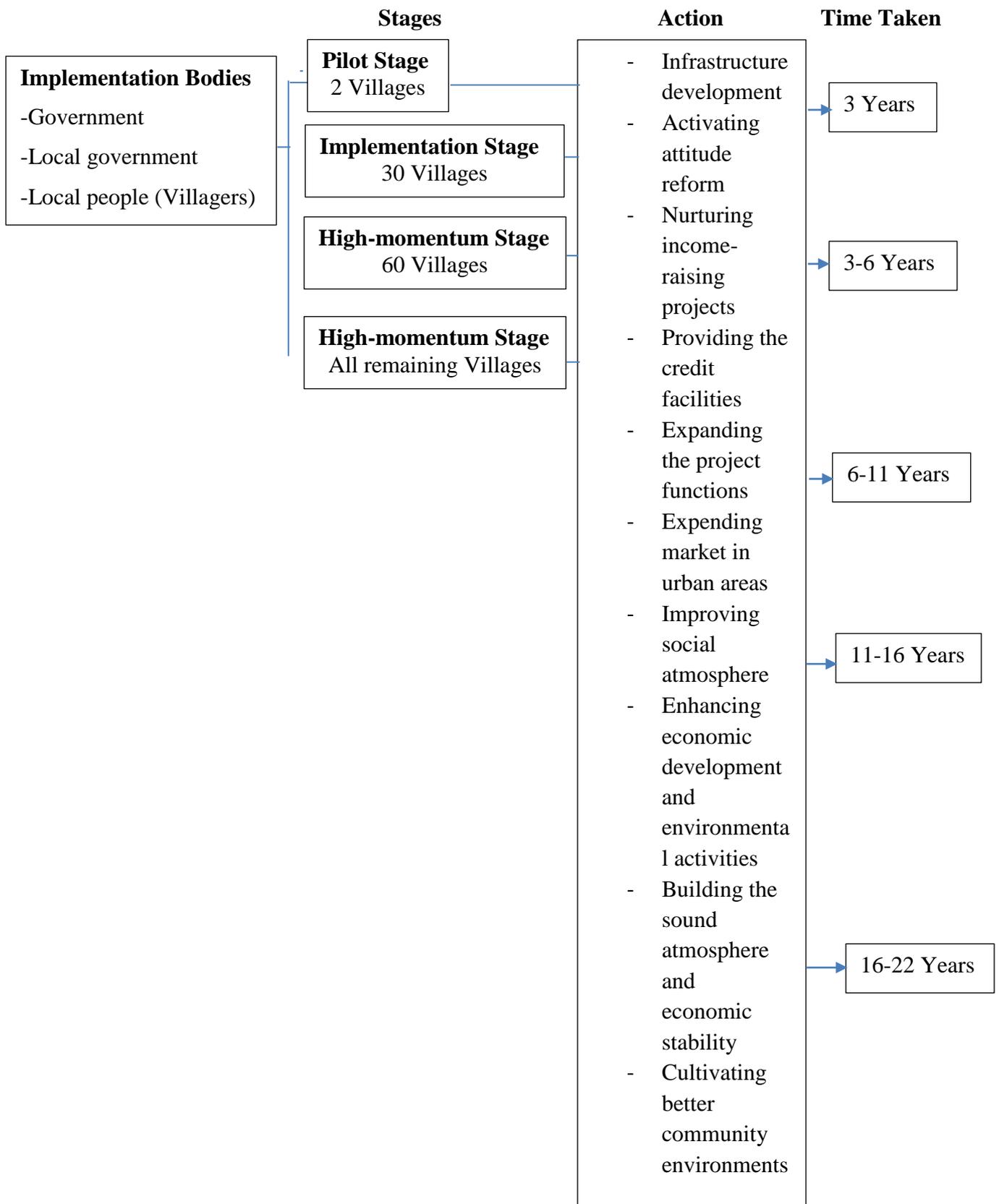
energetic implementation stage, overhaul stage and autonomous growth stage. Stage I took four years, stage II and III took three years, stage IV took ten years and the last stage took nine years. These five stages have characterized by different ideals, guiding spirits, goals, projects, organizations, and activities. So, Saemsul Undong in Korea is systematic and well-considered plan.

In Myanmar, new village movement project has been implementing for two years in two model villages. This project should be implemented through stage by stage like Korea such as infrastructure development, activating attitude reform, nurturing income-raising projects, providing the credit facilities, expanding the project functions, expanding market in urban areas, improving social atmosphere, enhancing economic development and environmental activities, building the sound atmosphere and economic stability and cultivating better community environments. The project should be implemented in all remaining villages through the country after achieving success in these two model villages.

V. Suggested Model of New Village Movement for Myanmar

For implementing a successful project, it should be taken enough time and known about the real situation of the targeted area or village. Based on the previous session, the suggested model of new village movement for Myanmar has been proposed in Figure 1. The whole process will take more than 22 years or may be longer than that time.

Figure 1: Suggested Model of New Village Movement for Myanmar



Source: Own Compilation

As shown in figure, the implementation bodies of new village movement project should be government, local government and local people. Now, the two villages have been being implemented as pilot project and based on their success will be continuous to other remaining villages through the county,

The major activities will be

- (1) Infrastructure development
- (2) Activating attitude-reform
- (3) Nurturing income-raising projects
- (4) Providing the credit facilities
- (5) Expanding the project functions
- (6) Expanding market in urban areas
- (7) Improving social atmosphere
- (8) Enhancing economic development and environmental activities
- (9) Building the sound atmosphere and economic stability
- (10) Cultivating better community environments.

Initially, the villages should take the supporting of government and local government when implementing these activities. Later, the villages will gradually reduce the government supporting and should try hard to stand on themselves. The total time to act should be at least 22 years as showed in figure.

VI. Findings and Suggestions

6.1 Findings

From the comparison of Sawmaul Undong between South Korea and Myanmar, it can be seen that the major differences between remain in attitude of the people, incentive schemes for development leadership at the village level, participation of local people, spiritual reform, supporting of government and systematic and well co-ordinated plan with long term orientation. All of these factors make real difference in the level new village movement between these two countries.

In Myanmar, over (5000) villagers actively participate in these projects for two villages and they don't get wages or salary every projects. So, there is no labor cost. Most of the old and young men actively and voluntarily participated. So, there has more solidarity among villagers and more enlightened the Co-operative spirit of the rural people and these benefits are more valued than money as well as become know that this project

really can provide to improve of their living standard in the future if they effort as possible as they can.

And then, we can set down the foundation for economic development by highly upgrading of the village's infrastructure. By implementing the New Village Movement project in practice, the most of rural people well understand about the basic principles of New Village Movement such as diligence, self-help, and co-operation and 'we can do spirit'. Besides, Movement such as diligence, self-help, and co-operation mind-set has been improving by working together in those projects. Therefore, these two model villages are the successful destination of Myanmar New Village Movement project.

As a weak point, although it could choose right projects, it is wrong calculate project cost such as improvement the galvanized iron sheet roof and underground water pump project because of the villagers and village leaders, weak in preparation for these projects. Besides, the village leader has to work confused and feels fatigue.

6.2 Suggestions

Saemaul Undong is a mental reform movement to raise 'Can do' spirit and to finally practice by themselves. So, the villagers need to change their mind set firstly because people's participation is one of the important factors of the success of SMU program and it based on the three core values of Diligence, Self-help and Co-operation, Saemaul Undong develops and transforms community as well as nation through villagers' own efforts and co-operation. Korea has become a wealthy country thanks to Saemaul Undong. So, Myanmar should effort to develop based on the SMU project like Korea because Myanmar coincides with Korea in many areas, such as; political structure and socio-economic situations in the past. IN Myanmar SMU projects, most of the villagers are not strong enough to participate actively and voluntarily.

One of the significant strategies of the Saemal Undong was a pooling of resources from the delivery organization to provide efficient services in the wide range of activities undertake in the communities. Role of government both national and local level is worthwhile to be focused in order to fully understand the Saemaul Undong because the role of government was important throughout its whole period.

One of the most crucial forms of input into Saemaul Undong is the package of government interventions and support. For the development of Saemaul Undong in Myanmar, firstly, the national government should set up general plan for the Saemaul Undong based on community needs. To guarantee effective rural development, the

government should set the general course for related projects and limited its assistance by providing minimum basic materials needed for the projects.

It will be able to provide incentives for communities showing excellent results after the first comprehensive evaluation projects, and will use the results of evaluation for planning next projects. That is, at the initial stage, the government should give incentives for farmers to improve their own living environments.

Secondly, local governments should also involve in conducting the Saemaul Projects. The role of public delivery system at the community level is also essential for the implementation of Saemaul Undong due to its control of local resources. The coordinating body of the public delivery system must be always searching for any goal conflicts or unnecessary duplication in the process of actual implementation of changing agents at the community level, such as extension of workers, family planning workers, voluntary organizations and community leaders. Extension workers of local governments must be checking the progress of projects and for guiding implementation of projects.

Thirdly, the government should encourage opening the teaching course and the person who attended the Saemaul Undong Training Course in Korea should also share their knowledge to the person who participate in SMU projects.

In conclusion, successful implementation of Saemaul projects in rural areas is based on adequate support from the government, voluntary participation and devoted Saemaul leaders. Saemaul Undong is grounded on the awareness that Saemaul Undong is the driving force behind the rapid economic growth and eradication of extreme poverty. So if the national government, local government and rural people can interact very well in the process of the Saemaul Undong, two villages to the extent of the whole nation, Myanmar New Village Movement will truly become a pan-national campaign to shift the mindset of the people in urban areas, work places, factories and schools like Korea.

ACK NOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Thein Tun, Rector of Co-operative University, Thanlyin for his kind encouragement and support to develop and process of this paper. I am also indebted to my Professor Dr. Htay Htay Lwin, Head of Department of Economics for her monitoring and close guidance to accomplish this paper. I wish to express my deep gratitude to Mr. Song, SMU Advisor in Korea for his invaluable and constant guidance in different ways to finish my paper in time.

References:

1. "A World Together Saemaul Undong". Pamphlet of Saemaul Undong. The Center of Korea Wave.
2. Edward P. Reed, Ph.D (2010). "Is Saemaul Undong a Model for Developing Countries Today" Paper prepared of International Symposium in Commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of Saemaul Undong'.
3. Lee, Jai Chang., (2012). "Saemaul Undong in Korea". Lecture Book for SMU Foreign Leaders Global Forum, Korea SaemaulUndong Center.
4. Park, Sooyoung., (2009). "Analysis of Saemaul Undong: A Korean Rural Development Programme in the 1970s, Asian-Pacific Development Journal, vol 16, No.2.
5. R Yu, Jong Chun., (2012). "Saemaul Projects and the Government's Role". Lecture Book for SMU foreign Leaders' Global Forum, Kora Saemaul Undong Center.
6. 'Saemaul Undong in Korea': The National Council of Saemaul Undong Movement in Korea.
7. Saemaul Undong in Korea (English), Korean Saemaulundong Center, 2011.
8. Soe, T.M., (2011). "The Rural Community Development Strategies of South Korea and Myanmar: Past and Present, "Yangon Institute of Economics Research Journal, Vol 3, No.1.