

URBAN-RURAL POVERTY LINKAGES IN MYANAMAR

Summary Note¹

Myanmar, with the transition period and new government which has been opened foreign investment since 2011, is on the road to modernization and development. Although still a predominantly rural based country, urbanization and urban development are a key factor in determining the country ability to address development challenges like providing jobs, the provision of socio-economic services and managing the environment. The rapid economic development will accelerate urbanization and increase the size of the cities and urban centers putting additional pressure on existing urban infrastructure and services.

At the present, estimated total population of Myanmar is around 60 million and urban population ratio is 32.6% is geo-strategically located between China, India and neighboring ASEAN community in the Region. As the present population growth rate, the urban population will be around 36.47 by 2030.² Urbanization of Myanmar is directly related with its economic growth. Rapidly increasing urban population will lead to the environment problems and many challenges particularly in the area of infrastructure development, adequate housing, providing essential social services and amenities for citizens, if it is not properly manage. As a result of urbanization and pressure of economic development the prime city Yangon, former capital of Myanmar, current population is about 7.8 million is likely to become a mega city of 10 million population in 2030.³

Urban and Rural Population Ratio in Myanmar

Urban Rural	1973 Census	1983 Census	1993	2000	2010	2020 Estimate	2030 Estimate
Urban pop (million)	6.85	8.66	11.87	13.91	17.97	23.01	29.74
(%)	(23.53)	(24.71)	(25.91)	(27.93)	(29.73)	(32.48)	(36.47)
Rural pop (million)	22.25	26.63	31.24	35.88	42.46	47.84	51.80
Total pop (million)	29.10	35.29	43.11	49.79	60.43	70.85	81.54

Reference: 1973, 1983 Population Census, Population Department and Estimation of DHSHD.

¹ This is a note on rural-urban poverty linkages in Myanmar produced by the Myanmar delegation (Ms. Hla Thein and Ms. Nang Lawn Nong Nong) to the "Rural-Urban Poverty Linkages" conference, held on 2-4 Sept 2014 in Zhejiang, People's Republic of China. The views expressed in this note are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the organizers (Asian Development Bank [ADB] and International Poverty Reduction Center in China [IPRCC]), or ADB's Board of Governors, or the governments they represent. ADB and IPRCC do not guarantee the accuracy of the data and information in this paper.

² Urban Planning and Housing Development Activities of Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development, 2014

³ 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census

On the other hand, most of the people from rural area migrate to the major cities or urban area because of lack of farmland which lead less job opportunities and lower income and lack of life expectancy. And then infrastructure services and amenities are not available in rural area. So that, this kind of rural area become depopulation and halt in development. However, some rural area near urban center have been developed and improved because of good connectivity with the major cities and urban center.

At that situation, the Government need to prepare for managing uncontrolled urban expansion, clash in land use and unclear land management and land speculation. Moreover, Myanmar has been facing the challenges of environmental deterioration, lack of land or unavailable land to implement infrastructure because of uncontrolled urban growth. Furthermore, there is no good coordination between concerned stakeholder and unclear responsibilities within government sectors so that land uses in Myanmar is not clear to implement the development plan.

To address the problems and challenges of urban rural disparity, Myanmar Government published the framework for “Economic and Social Reforms” in December 2012. This landmark document laid out an ambitious and broad set of policy reforms to rapidly liberalize the economy, improve regulation and invest infrastructure in rural area and urban areas. In august 2013, the Myanmar Government formed the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development. At that time government commissioned a Strategic Framework for Rural Development in October 2013.⁴

As per regional development plan of Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, all the concerned departments have been doing priority for infrastructure development for linkages between urban rural areas.⁴ Moreover, Ministry of Construction has been implemented and managed the transportation network system for not only regional network but also the international transportation network. However, it has been facing challenges because of land availability for all the road network.⁵

Adequate and Affordable Housing in Myanmar

In Myanmar, 90% of the people are living in timber and bamboo structure housing. Majority of people in rural as well as urban areas are needed to improve their living standard. Many challenges have to be addressed in housing, infrastructure provisions and providing social amenities. Thus, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Government has set the policy of

- To develop urban system contributing towards balanced and sustainable development of settlements of the Nation and
- To upgrade living standards and provide adequate housing for all the citizens.

Eventually housing provision strategy is focused on the development of low-income and low- medium income housing. The Union Government has convinced for the establishment of housing financing mechanism, regulatory framework, institutional arrangement and encouraging private sector participation in housing sector development. Thus, the Construction and Housing Development Bank (CHDB) is now established under the Ministry of Construction in cooperation with private sector to introduce housing mortgage and construction loan system.

⁴ Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, Republic of the Union of Myanmar

⁵ Public Works, Ministry of Construction, Republic of the Union of Myanmar

In accordance with the housing policy, one million housing will be targeting for 20 years Long-term Plan (2011-2030) and pilot schemes of affordable housing are planning to develop with comprehensive and integrated approach. Moreover, improve access to basic social services in urban and rural area such as education, health, potable water, shelter, etc., for the people. Currently, Dagon Seikkan Housing project in Yangon is undertaking to develop as a pilot project for affordable housing approximately 20,000 units. All together 35,000 units housing for middle and low income target groups will be produced in 2015.

At the present, Myanmar Government have been trying to implement the National Spatial Development Plan, establish and modify necessary Laws & Regulations such as national spatial development laws and trying to develop National Housing Policy for implement the sectoral network systems and for Sustainable development and balance development throughout the country.

In conclusion, the urban-rural linkages have not well developed much and very first step for implementing this development in Myanmar till now. For that reason, all the government agencies and international organization need to co-operate to set the policies, guidelines and strategies for developing regional development master plan and the central and regional government should provide and enforce to implement this plan.