

Interrelation Between Social Safety Net Programs and Rural Development in Bangladesh: An Analysis

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Abstract

Bangladesh is a small country where poverty breaks the social protection system. The government of Bangladesh is trying to alleviate poverty and maintain social protection. The government has a lot of safety net programs and a fully planned rural development for alleviating poverty, ensuring social protection and economic growth, ensuring proper child education and health, managing disaster effects quickly, etc. The study emphasizes identifying the relational perspectives between social safety net programs and rural development in Bangladesh. The study employs both primary and secondary data collection methods, including interviews and data review for analysis. The study mainly focuses on the thematic analysis to touch on the final findings according to the objectives. The findings of the study present social safety net programs help the rural community with the form of allowances, work security, food security, etc. Rural development includes the economic security, a capital

enhancement system, policies, and aims to include people in different social safety plans and programs. Economic growth, social protection, and poverty alleviation are the main concern areas of these programs, development policies. Community participation helps fulfil the program's agenda and to implement the policies for rural development. Strengthening the institutional framework and ensuring transparency in all programs and policies can make the social safety net and rural development more effective at the rural level of Bangladesh.

Keywords: Interrelation, Social Safety Net, Rural Development, Bangladesh.

Introduction

Bangladesh, a middle-lower developing country, faces a lot of problems about poverty, unemployment, women's vulnerability, deprivation of basic needs, etc. Poverty is a big curse for rural communities in Bangladesh. It is called a bad inhalation process in the economic system. Other living standards are in a vulnerable position in the rural community of Bangladesh. The government of Bangladesh has tried to reduce poverty and increase the living standards at the rural level. From 2010 to 2023, the GDP of Bangladesh about 6.4% growth (World Bank, 2023). The government aims to enhance the overall well-being of rural residents, foster economic growth, and mitigate regional disparities by investing in rural areas. The Government has taken various programs, plans, and policies for regenerating income and removing the curse system, like poverty, unemployment, vulnerability, etc., from the country (Ministry of Finance, n.d.).

Social safety net programs are a set of measures to provide safety and solvency for rural people to protect them from various economic and social hardships and from

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various types of contingencies like loss of cultivating land, crop failure, land loss due to river erosion, unemployment, sickness, maternity, old age, invalidity, and death of earning household members (Barkat-E-Khuda, 2011). Safety Net not only protect the rural community from transient periods of poverty but also protects them from lifetime poverty. Safety Net programs create a path toward a mechanism that concerns alleviation poverty in Bangladesh (Hossain, 2015). Rural development has focused on village development, economic prosperity, social inclusion, income generation, improvement of socio-economic conditions, rural people's participation in the development process, etc., at the rural level. Rural Development aims to improve the livelihoods of rural people in a sustainable manner (Hossain, 2015).

The rural development and social safety net basically present significant accession for poverty reduction, inequality remission, and inclusive growth (Global Journals Inc., 2015). The coordination and integration at rural development are presented by the policies and programs. Rural development and SSN programs have a crucial role and relational perspectives when the questions arise in the points of improving the well-being of individuals and communities which are residing in rural areas with complications about poverty reduction and socio-economic factors (Hossain, 2015).

Social safety net programs are very best initiatives for standardizing the living process of vulnerable people at the rural level in Bangladesh. In parallel, social safety net programs and rural development in Bangladesh work to help and protect the most vulnerable groups in society. These initiatives cover a wide variety of activities, such as food assistance, healthcare, education, and skill-building initiatives to alleviate poverty, social protection, fulfil fundamental needs of rural people.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are twofold. The objectives seek to identify interrelation and grassroots participation in social safety net programs and rural development. The objectives of the study are -

- i) To identify the interrelation between social safety net programs and rural development in Bangladesh.
- ii) To assess the extent to which rural community participation impacts the implementation of social safety net programs and rural development.

Based on these objectives, the study has been guided by the following research questions:

- a) What are the relational perspectives of social safety net programs and rural development in Bangladesh?
- b) How do rural communities in Bangladesh participate in the implementation and monitoring of rural development and social safety net programs?

The objective seeks to examine how social safety net programs contribute to different aspects of rural development, including poverty reduction, livelihood security, and social inclusion. It aims to uncover the extent to which these programs influence the overall socio-economic development of rural communities. The question of this objective examines the conceptual and practical connections between safety net programs and broader rural development policies, seeking to understand whether they work in harmony or in isolation. Another objective focuses on understanding the role of community involvement in ensuring the effective functioning of social safety nets. It explores how grassroots participation in planning, monitoring, and implementation contributes to the success and sustainability of rural development outcomes. This objective covers the question to investigate the level, forms,

and effectiveness of community participation, as well as the challenges that hinder meaningful involvement in the delivery and oversight of these programs.

Review of Social Safety Net Programs and Rural Development

The World Bank report (2021) states that, in Bangladesh, about 70% of the population, or over 160 million people, live in rural areas. Bangladesh has reduced the poverty rate from 31.5% in 2010 to 20.5% in 2019 (World Bank, 2021). Poverty and social security are a great threat to economic growth in Bangladesh. The moderate GDP growth is about 6% in Bangladesh. For this indication, this is clear that a large proportion of the population is still poor economically and socially. The extent of the poverty rate is severe in rural areas in comparison to urban areas. Bangladesh's density of population density is a big burden to cope with the limited resources. The agricultural sector has limited opportunities, which pushes rural people to migrate to urban areas for employment. Natural disasters force rural people into vulnerable situations like food insecurity, sanitation and hygiene problems, shelter problems, etc. Bangladesh's government has implemented various social safety net (SSN) programs and rural development policies to reduce poverty in rural areas. Social Safety Net programs consider education, health, nutrition, employment, and disaster issues in the form of food, cash transfers, or a combination of the two for vulnerable groups like the elderly, women, children, and disabled persons (SNSP, 2024).

Social Safety Nets in Bangladesh

Social safety net programs include food assistance programs (Vulnerable Group Development-VGD, Vulnerable Group Feeding-VGF), Cash Transfer Programs, and Public Works Programs (Employment Generation Program for the Poorest- EGPP). The VGD program provides monthly food

rations, including rice, lentils, oil, and salt, to eligible households of poor women who have limited access to resources and face social and economic exclusion. The VGF program provides food rations, including rice, lentils, and oil, to eligible households to the poorest households in rural areas (Islam, 2018 & Hasan, 2019).

SSNP provides monthly cash transfers to eligible households, which can be used to purchase food, pay for healthcare, and invest in productive assets to poor households to support their basic needs. The most significant public works program is the Employment Generation Program for the Poorest (EGPP), which provides employment opportunities through projects such as road construction and irrigation and training to poor households to help them acquire new skills (Hasan, 2019)

Rahman & Choudhury (2012) discussed the government has implemented several policies for allocating resources for rural development. The Annual Development Program (ADP) is essential for rural development policies. In Bangladesh, agriculture, health, education, and employment policies target rural development. After independence of Bangladesh, poverty and inequalities were addressed and social protection programs were traced. The government and stakeholders had developed and worked for xpanding social safety net programs.

The history of the social safety net programs of Bangladesh has several phases (Rahman & Choudhury, 2012) such as

- Early Years (1970s-1980s): Bangladesh faced significant challenges, including widespread poverty and limited resources. At this time, the relief and rehabilitation programs were initiated to support affected people by disasters and economically vulnerable population.
- Fourth Five-Year Plan (1990-1995): By addressing poverty, the interventions of social safety net

programs were marked through the Fourth Five-Year Plan at 1990-1995. This was the milestone of the social protection policies and programs in Bangladesh.

- Introduction of Food Aid (1992): In 1992, the vulnerable group feeding (VGF) was introduced to provide the assistance of food to ultra-poor in rural level.
- National Social Protection Strategy- NSPS (2002): In 2002, for social protection, NSPS was introduced which integrated to safety nets programs on alleviation poverty, economic development, and social inclusion.
- National Social Security Strategy- NSSS (2015): It was for expand SSN coverage, improving mechanisms of targets and framework, and enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of SSN programs in Bangladesh. NSSS was established in 2015.
- Expansion and Diversification (2000s-2010s): Social safety net programs expand as cash transfer programs such as old age allowances, widow allowances, maternity allowances, allowances for disabled as direct financial supports to vulnerable people.

Barkat-E-Khuda (2011) identified that social safety net programs are the supportive components of the government's anti-poverty strategy. The government has set social protection as a pillar of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The major Social Safety Net Programs may be divided into four broad categories (Barkat-E-Khuda, 2011) -

- Employment Generation program
- Programs to cope with disasters
- Incentives for child education
- Incentives for health

These four categories can be set as two types

- Cash transfers
- Food Transfers

Table 1: The major Social Safety Net Programs with broad categories

Name of the programs	Objectives of the programs	Targeting area	Administration/ Finance rs
Primary Education Stipend Project (PESP)	Increase the number of children in primary school, Reduce dropout, Increase the study completion rate in primary education, Control child labour	Destitute women headed a family, Day labour household, Family of low-income, Landless households or those that own 0.50 acres of land (marginal or sharecropper).	Department of Primary Education, Ministry of Education; Financed by GoB
Old Age Allowances	Providing old - age cash allowances to the poor elderly people	At least 65 years of age, female, 62 years, Income not more than TK.3000 per year, Must not have worked in the formal sector, Based on the category of the union	Department of Social Services; Financed by GoB
Rural Maintenance Program (RMP)	Empowerment of Women, Maintaining rural infrastructure	Less than 30 decimals of land, Destitute family circumstances, Female heads of households of 18-35 years of	Department of Local Government and Engineering, CARE Bangladesh, E C, CIDA, Union Parishads;

Name of the programs	Objectives of the programs	Targeting area	Administration/ Finance rs
		age, Widowed or separated for at least one year	Financed by GoB
Female Secondary School Assistance Program (FSSAP)	Increasing students in the secondary school, Increase prospects as employees and of self-employment, Controlling underage marriage	All unmarried female students studying in recognized institutions at the secondary level	Ministry of Education; Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education; Financed by GoB, USAID, Asia Foundation, NORAD, World Bank, AD
Food Security Programs			
Food for work (FFW)	Employment Generation for the poor through infrastructure creation and maintenance. Developing and maintaining rural infrastructure.	Functionally landless, Lack of productive assets, Women-headed households - widowed, deserted and destitute, Day labour or temporary worker, Income less than TK. 300 per month.	Department of Local Government Eng., Department of social Services, Other Departments. Financed by GoB, ADB, WFP
Vulnerable Group	Increasing the efficiency of	Households with not more than 15	Ministry of Women and

Name of the programs	Objectives of the programs	Targeting area	Administration/ Finance rs
Development (VGD)	women through training, motivating, and savings for initial capital accumulation and providing scope for availing credit, Building social awareness on disaster management and nutrition through training in groups	acres of land, Training totalling about 150 hours, Monthly household income less than Tk 300, Women of reproductive age (18-49), Day labour or temporary worker, Lack of productive assets	Children's Affairs; Directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation; Financed by GoB, WFP, EC, Canada, and Australia.
Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF)	Provide calamity-related emergency needs, Short-term relief to disaster victims in terms of food and necessities.	Generally, a location is targeted based on the occurrence of a natural disaster.	Ministry of Food and Disaster Management; Financed by GoB and some Development Partners
Test Relief (TR)	Employment for the poor in the rainy season, Developing and maintaining rural infrastructure,	Generally, a location is targeted	Ministry of Food and Disaster Management; Financed by GoB and some Development partners

Name of the programs	Objectives of the programs	Targeting area	Administration/ Finance rs
	Compared to FFW, lighter labour equipment		
Gratuitous Relief (GR)	Provides for calamity -related emergency needs, Short-term relief to disaster victims in terms of food and necessities.	Generally, a location is targeted based on the occurrence of natural disaster.	Ministry of Food and Disaster Management; Financed by GoB, Development Partners

Source: (World Bank, 2008 and Uddin, 2013).

Interaction of Union Parishad with SSN Programs at the rural level

In Bangladesh, union parishads are the lower-tier and grassroots level authority to connect with rural level. Union parishads as governmental authoritative organization correlate the public service, social security, social inclusion, community connections, need assessments with the local and rural communities. They assist to identify the vulnerable, needy citizens for assisting the application of SSN programs by providing necessary information and support. In social safety nets registration, they help targeted citizens to complete the documents and forms. Union Parishad officials conduct necessary checks and verification of authenticity and eligibility of the application of citizens. They organize different activities like seminars, meetings, workshops, campaigns, and rallies for targeted citizens to raise awareness about available SSN programs, eligibility criteria, potential benefits, and active participation (World Bank, 2020).

Union parishads act as a platform for citizens to raise concerns, grievances, and complaints regarding SSN programs. They receive and address complaints related to program implementation, eligibility, payments, and other issues. They play a role in monitoring the implementation of SSN programs at the community level. They keep track of program activities, beneficiaries, and outcomes. Union Parishad officials provide feedback, collect data, and report to higher authorities on program performance, challenges, and areas for improvement (Kaiser et al., 2023).

Rural Development in Bangladesh

The British, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi eras can be used to categorize the history of contemporary rural development policies in Bangladesh. For over two hundred years (1757–1947), Bangladesh was a part of British India. Law and order, administration, and revenue collection in the rural areas were the colonial authorities' main concerns. The following laws indicate the actions performed as a result of the passage of specific laws: The *Chowkidery Panchayet Act* of 1870, the Land Improvement Act of 1883, the Agricultural Disaster Loan Act of 1884, the Local Self-government Act of 1885, and the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act of 1935, are just a few examples (IDB, 2001). Bangladesh was an integral component of Pakistan from August 1947, when India was divided, until 1971, when independence was proclaimed. Several projects geared to rural development were launched during this time. 1954 saw the planning and introduction of the first comprehensive rural development program (BARD, 1996).

The program was a part of the Village Agricultural and Industrial Development (V-AID) initiative for community development. Before it could be implemented

in the vast majority of rural development areas, the V-AID program was abruptly cancelled in 1961. The Comilla Model, created using a rigorous approach of pilot experimentation and presented by the BARD, was the most important development success in rural areas throughout the 1960s (Quddus, 1996). Five-year plans of Bangladesh focused on poverty reduction through rural development, emphasized women's participation, skill-building, employment and literacy. The plans included the strategies about agricultural support, infrastructure development, participatory planning, etc. (Uddin, 1996; Hye, 1996).

The rural development aims to alleviate poverty and create employment opportunities at the rural level (Edward et al., 2024). (World Bank, 2003) Rural Development emphasizes

- a self-development environment at the rural level to improve the standard of living, increase income, and generate employment for rural people
- to ensure the development process with agricultural productivity, income generation, human resources with skills, education, and training, etc. at the rural level
- to make efforts to meet the needs of rural residents by properly identifying the issues preventing the socioeconomic uplift.

The Interaction of Union Parishad with Rural Development

The interaction between rural development and people at the Union Parishad (UP) is a crucial aspect of local administration and rural development in Bangladesh. Rural development aims to include people in the creation

and implementation of development programs. Union Parishads provide an opportunity to participate in planning for local development, advocate for needs, and offer feedback on implementing policies (World Bank, n.d.). Union Parishads are connected to rural development and are responsible for doing the following:

- informing the people about the policies, programs, and services.
- disseminating information through meetings, newsletters, public announcements, and other channels of communication.
- ascertaining who qualifies for various rural development projects, like as social safety net schemes, efforts to combat poverty, and agricultural support programs.
- consulting with the local population.
- ensuring public participation, which helps to ensure that assistance.

Union Parishads offer rural people to express grievances regarding rural development services through the formal channels of the Union Parishad (Ahmed & Islam, 2013). Union parishads are accountable to the rural community to provide the opportunity for rural development programs. They are engaged to increase the knowledge and understanding about participation, auditing, civic capacity, and community monitoring at rural development campaigns (Jahan, 2023).

At the Union Parishad level, the interaction between rural development and rural communities may differ based on a number of factors, including the capacity, the degree of public involvement, knowledge, and the local

environment. Union Parishads need to promote openness, public engagement, and needs and aspirations (Khalid, 2024). An important organization working on rural development in Bangladesh is the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD). BARD's rural development strategies connect with rural communities through participatory research, policy dissemination, advocacy and collaboration, extension of agricultural services, etc. (BARD, 2025). After its establishment in 1959, BARD has been working for rural development and promoting different development models for rural development policies and rural people.

These are the most important aims and objectives of rural development, which indicate development at the rural level in Bangladesh with the collaboration of social safety net programs. The study gap is addressed to examine the relational importance of social safety net programs and rural development in Bangladesh.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework relates the objectives and illustrates the expected relationship between variables. In the framework, the independent and dependent variables focus on the relational components of social safety net programs and rural development in Bangladesh. The study objectives and research questions are set in a collaborative nature and relational functions.

Table 2: The Framework with highlighting points of rural development and social safety net programs in Bangladesh

Highlighting Points	Rural Development	Social Safety Net Programs
Objectives	• Promoting economic development • The eradication of poverty • Sustainable development • Advance human capital, agriculture, livelihood possibilities, and infrastructure in rural regions.	• Offer the most at-risk groups in society urgent help and protection, • ensuring that their basic needs are addressed
Poverty Assessment and Targeting	• Comprehensive analyses of poverty with locations and demographics	• People are eligible for assistance • the neediest households, • most vulnerable groups, • most disadvantaged communities.
Integrated Development Interventions	• Development interventions, including • the infrastructure, • the agricultural production, • rural financing, • encouragement of entrepreneurship • skill training.	• Cash transfers, • Food assistance, • Healthcare -services, • Educational support, • Public works initiatives • Immediate relief and support. Etc.
Coordination and Collaboration Partners	• Government agencies, • Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and • Stakeholders.	• Government agencies, • Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), • Responsible Agencies • Beneficiaries

Source: Author's Illustration

By following the conceptual framework, rural development and social safety net programs in Bangladesh have a collaborative nature to address poverty, promote inclusive growth, and improve the well-being of rural communities. The framework highlights the key components and their interactions to address poverty, promote inclusive growth, and improve the well-being of rural communities.

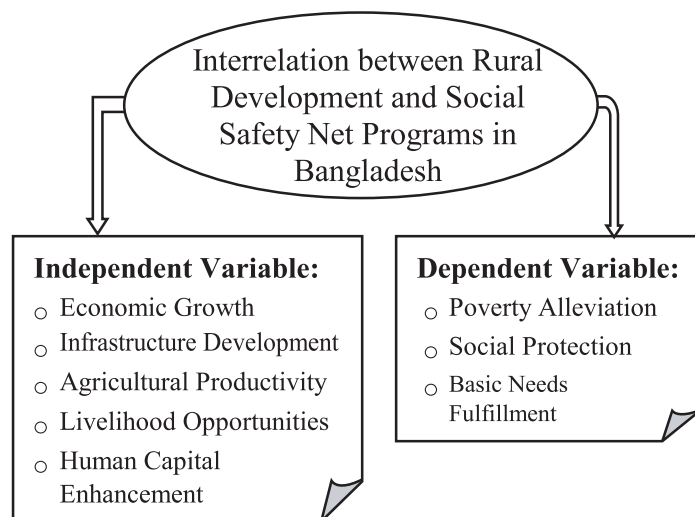


Figure 1: Identification of variables

Source: Author's Illustration

The interrelation and mutual influence by arrows between the dependent and independent variables emphasize poverty alleviation and social protection. Optionally, include additional arrows or lines to represent feedback loops, data flow, and coordination between the variables of the framework.

Research Methods and Relevance

The study has explored the interrelation between rural development and social safety net programs in Bangladesh.

Information and data for the study were framed by the thematic research with the main phase of secondary analysis and the addition of primary data. The study connected the relational perspectives with secondary data sources like official reports and publications from government ministries, departments, and agencies, such as scholarly articles, research papers, and dissertations related to the study through academic databases, the internet, and libraries. The social safety net beneficiaries were interviewed as primary data to know about their basic connection to rural development.

For the social safety net programs, secondary documents from different websites, like socialprotection.org, worldbank.org, etc., governmental portals of Bangladesh, journal articles, governmental and non-governmental reports, periodical articles, books and chapters were revised for basic understanding and the main relational perspective. Although by using purposive sampling, additionally 30 beneficiaries were interviewed to obtain insights into social safety net programs in some regions like Barangail from Manikganj, Paharpur from Muradnagar and Salmanpur from Cumilla South of Cumilla. In primary interviews, data saturation occurred. The data and information on Rural Development in Bangladesh were collected from secondary sources. The relatable ministerial websites, BARD website, Rural Development websites and reports were visited to collect information about rural development.

The qualitative findings from secondary sources and partially from SSN beneficiaries were combined to offer a comprehensive understanding of the study's objectives. A descriptive discussion was placed for identifying key answers and patterns of the study objectives related to the social safety net programs and rural development. Triangulation of data from various sources helped to

validate and reinforce the analysis, allowing for a more nuanced interpretation of the research questions. The results were interpreted through variables and a framework to emphasize the interrelations, understandings, and potential recommendations for enhancing the connection and relation between rural development and social safety net programs in Bangladesh.

Findings and Discussion

Social Safety Nets in Bangladesh

Poverty reduction can be achieved through improving rural conditions, prosperity, and well-being. The government of Bangladesh focuses on protecting vulnerable people and reducing poverty. For this, several social protection programs are in line to spread out at rural level with a big aim of alleviating poverty, economic growth, sustainable households. The income generation, poverty alleviation, feeding and working opportunities, relief and rehabilitation, secure child and old-age survival, women development, etc. are the targets of SSN programs in Bangladesh which indicates to the rural developments and social protection.

The collaboration of Bangladesh with international organizations, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and United Nations agencies, helps to support the design and implementation of social safety net programs. These programs continue to undergo refinement and expansion to address the changing needs of vulnerable populations and promote socio-economic well-being in the country. The interaction of Union Parishad with SSN programs at the citizen level helps to ensure the effective delivery, transparency, and accountability of social safety net initiatives.

Rural Development in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, rural people are most vulnerable to economic prosperity, social inclusion, disaster management systems, as well as social protection. The income gap, inequality between men and women, poverty, social protection, etc., are the important determinants for rural development. To alleviate the suffering of the rural population, a few state initiatives were made during the second half of their administration. Five-year plans, social safety net programs, and sustainable development goals are contributing on poverty reduction and rural development in Bangladesh. Rural development aims to improve the livelihoods of rural people sustainably, like connecting village development, economic prosperity, social inclusion, income generation, with the alignment of the plans, which include the strategies about agricultural support, infrastructure development, participatory planning, etc. and social safety net programs.

Union Parishad and Bangladesh academy for Rural Development interact with the citizens about the rural development initiatives through informing the people about the policies, programs, and services, disseminating information through meetings, newsletters, public announcements, and other channels of communication, ascertaining who qualifies for various rural development projects, like as social safety net schemes, efforts to combat poverty, and agricultural support programs, consulting with the local population for ensuring public participation what helps to ensure that assistance.

Statements about SSN programs and RD in Bangladesh

Views of SSN Beneficiaries

Most of the beneficiaries of social safety net programs at the union level only know about the old-age, widow, and disability allowances, but don't know about the

other programs under the social safety net. Afia Begum, 65 years old, from Salmanpur, Cumilla, says, “*Without allowance programs, the Union Parishad does not give them the opportunities or knowledge about other programs*” (Afia, Interviewee, 2023)”.

Beneficiaries say the government gives them 1500/- allowances after 3 months through the mobile banking system. So, there is no problem getting money. But they also notice that at a rising market value, this amount is very small. One of beneficiaries also mentioned that for the old-age problem, the Union Parishad does not take them to food security programs.

Rasheda Begum, a respondent from Mohadebpur Union, Manikganj, says, the government gives them money every 3 months. As an old-age beneficiary, she fulfils her treatment and basic needs. She also says, allowance facilities are available at the union level, but other programs are unknown to them, especially food security programs.

There is a summary that social safety net programs are promoting the alleviation of poverty strategy in Bangladesh. These programs concern the basic needs and protective security, like employment, education, health, etc., at the social point, which are interrelated with rural development.

Statement about Rural Development at the Rural Level

With a wider development focus, the National Rural Development Policy of 2001 was introduced to ensure rural-level development. It included a wide variety of topics, including reducing poverty, enhancing women's quality of life, promoting better health, nutrition, and

family planning, and providing opportunities for the development of disabled, tribal groups, and ethnic minorities. The policy designates 39 categories, and the respective ministries take on initiatives each year and try to improve them. Safety net, the stipend for schooling, etc., gets a major financial allocation in addition to this unique rural development program, like Ashrayan (Mehta, 2020).

In addition to these, non-government influences include the over 5,000 NGOs working in rural regions to improve sanitation, health, and other areas of deprivation. Bangladesh's "development paradox" demonstrates excellent accomplishment in a number of metrics of rural development efforts at a low level of national GDP. Additionally, the results were as planned thanks to a comprehensive strategy that included effective ministry collaboration (Mehta, 2020). A broad overview of the important elements and metrics frequently employed in Bangladesh to evaluate the efficacy of rural development policies. These elements could include:

Poverty reduction: The efficacy of rural development policies can be evaluated based on how well they contribute to lowering poverty rates and enhancing the socioeconomic standing of rural areas. One House One Farm project, Asrayan Project, etc., are important issues at rural development.

Agricultural productivity: The effectiveness of rural development policies can be assessed by looking at how well they contribute to raising agricultural production, supporting sustainable farming methods, and boosting rural farmers' incomes. The Comilla model guided the issue, then Irrigation programs were initiated by BARD.

Infrastructure development: Rural development strategies frequently place an emphasis on enhancing rural infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, irrigation systems, and the availability of power. The development of infrastructure can serve as a barometer for the effectiveness of policies. Food for Work (FFW) is one of the most prominent programs at Social Safety Net in Bangladesh. Under this project, rural infrastructural development has occurred with the supervision of the Rural Development.

Access to essential services: Access to essential services, such as healthcare, education, clean water, and sanitation, is essential for rural development. In order to minimize unemployment in rural areas and provide employment prospects, rural development policies are implemented. A measure of a policy's performance is how well it creates jobs, particularly for marginalized people.

Identifying relational perspectives between the Social Safety Net and Rural Development

Social safety net programs are concerned with basic needs fulfilment, social protection, human capital enhancement, access to services, etc. Rural development emphasizes economic growth, infrastructure development, agricultural productivity, livelihood opportunities, human capital enhancement, etc. Social safety net programs have a relation with the rural development in the concept of poverty alleviation, social protection, livelihood opportunities, etc.

Social safety net programs help the rural community with the form of allowances, work security, food security, etc. Rural development includes the economic security of the rural people, a capital enhancement system, policies for

rural development, and aims to include people in the creation and implementation of development programs. SSN, as social protection and rural development, aims to protect the rural level in Bangladesh from poverty, unemployment, and dependency. Union Parishads are a common platform for locals to participate in planning for rural development, to advocate for needs, and to implement social safety net programs. Both are working for rural development, rural community participation in development, the reduction of the poverty rate, and social inclusion of underprivileged communities.

In order to advance rural development initiatives and meet citizen needs and promote SSN programs, BARD participates in policy advocacy, modifications or adjustments to better meet the needs and aspirations of rural communities using research-based data. Rural development and social safety net programs have an interrelation with each other through the provision of community participation, social protection, and community development at the rural level in Bangladesh.

Table 3: The Interrelation Between Rural Development and Social Safety Programs

Perspectives	Social Safety Net Programs	Rural Development	Interrelation
<i>Focus</i>	Basic needs, food security, and social protection	Livelihood change, economic and social growth	Aim to reduce poverty, improve well-being at the rural level
<i>Enhancement</i>	Education and health	Skill development and accessibility	Capacity building of rural people
<i>Inclusion</i>	Vulnerable groups	All rural communities	An inclusive society and the participation of the underprivileged
<i>Community Engagement (Lower tier)</i>	Distributions	Planning and implementation	Establishment of local-level participation and accountability
<i>Tools</i>	Allowances, support of food and work	Services, centers, infrastructures, trainings	Sustainable development and alleviation of poverty at the rural level
<i>Policy and Programs</i>	National Social Protection Strategy, Social Safety Net Programs	National Rural Development Policy, Five-Year Plans, Local Government Act	Need coordination
<i>Final Goal</i>	Reduce poverty, vulnerability	Achieve inclusive and sustainable development	Mutual contribution to rural resilience and development

Source: Author's Illustration

Identification of Community Participation at Social Safety Net and Rural Development

Social safety net programs are effective in the nature of community participation; every single program engages the rural people as a process of cash transfer and food security. Rural development ensures rural-level participation in building a self-development environment and a proper rural economic growth system, which is ready to reduce poverty at the rural level.

The union parishad, as a lower-tier of government and a rural-level administrative body, works for social protection and rural development. For better community engagement at SSN programs and rural development, union parishad informs the people about the policies, and programs, through meetings, newsletters, public announcements, and other channels of communication, ascertains who qualifies for various rural development projects, like as social safety net schemes, efforts to combat poverty, and agricultural support programs, consults with the local population for ensuring public participation.

The interaction of SSN programs with lower-tier authorities and rural development bodies helps to ensure the effective delivery, citizen engagement, local-level participation, transparency, and accountability of the programs and developmental initiatives. There is an impact on the community participation to rural development and social protection. The capacity building among rural people, creation of new dynamics at local administration, openness, knowledge development, response on needs assessment at rural level, smooth and participatory livelihoods are the effective results of SSN programs through community level engagement as authoritative bodies to rural development. The interaction between rural development and social safety nets is promoted through engagement of community-based institutions with a major impact on rural people participation in Bangladesh.

Conclusion

The interrelation between social safety net programs and rural development in Bangladesh creates path to connect with advancement of rural development sustainability and to alleviate poverty. There are different possibilities, dynamics for developing rural community in sense of proper implementation of social safety net programs. The study has explored interrelation between SSN programs and rural development on the basis of poverty alleviation, economic growth, social inclusion and protection, security at livelihoods. The study used mainly secondary data from academic studies, official reports, online articles and chapters, and government and non-government papers and reports as well as primary data from interviews of the SSN beneficiaries. The study has found that social safety nets targets vulnerable people to assist food security, financial supports, social protection; contrary rural development emphasizes on structural issues, economic security, secure productivity and livelihoods, access of basic needs and services, and social protection. So, social safety net programs and rural development in Bangladesh show a complementary display.

The study identifies the relational effects of social safety net programs and rural development on rural people's lives and spending at the rural level. The identification and inclusion of vulnerable people at rural level through social safety nets has significance in rural development. The alleviation of poverty, improvement of income, secure basic needs have been facilitated by SSN programs to encourage non-farming activity in rural areas, generate income possibilities, and to boost productivity in terms of rural development. The study also demonstrates social protection to vulnerable groups as more comprehensive and long-lasting solutions from integrating interrelation between social safety net programs and rural development.

The achievement of targeted social safety net programs is hindered by poor coordination among implementing agencies, overlapping efforts, and fragmented programs. Increasing program efficiency through simplified procedures, reduced administrative costs, and greater transparency can maximize resource use and improve outcomes. In light of the results, the paper makes several proposals for improving the interrelation between social safety net programs and rural development policies in Bangladesh:

- To promote coherence, information sharing, and synergy across actions, strengthen coordination mechanisms by putting in place procedures for improved coordination among key ministries, departments, and agencies.
- To successfully identify and reach the most vulnerable individuals, improve targeting strategies' accuracy and efficacy via thorough data collection, validation, and updates.
- To better integrate SSN initiatives for rural development, need effective resource allocation, stronger institutional coordination, policy coherence, and information-sharing systems.
- To ensure social safety net programs effectively reach rural development, need to improve targeting methods, enhance data accuracy, and strengthen observatory mechanisms.
- To track the progress, results, and effects of both rural development and social safety net programs, build thorough monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- Strengthen implementing organizations' capabilities, especially at the local level, to enhance program delivery, coordination, and implementation efficiency.
- Encourage collaborations between the public and

commercial sectors to maximize resources, knowledge, and creativity for rural development and social safety net programs.

These may help to do further research on this topic. The interrelation between social safety net programs and rural development in Bangladesh is not a small ground for research; this can be the best platform for research and analysis. Social safety net programs have a relation with rural development in the context of social protection and poverty alleviation. But there are gaps and challenges in these two initiatives of the government, which need more research and analysis to build a collaborative structure for developing rural circumstances.

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