

RETHINKING THE SUSTAINABLE MODEL OF A 'RURAL GROWTH CENTER' FROM THE SOCIO-SPATIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE OF THE REGION: KOPILMUNI AS A CASE

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Abstract

In recent times, the development plan of the government of Bangladesh incorporates that to develop the commercial hubs in between urban, sub-urban and rural areas, which are more likely the growth centers. While developing a certain core area of a growing neighborhood, we often don't consider present socio-cultural parameters. So, as a study here, Kopilmuni growth center is studied and a notion of sustainable development is made from the socio-spatial perspective of the market development procedure. As this market possesses a lot of historical values in it while incorporating development for economic purposes, how we can recapitulate history and can bring it forward with the change is to be addressed in this particular case. For seeking adequacy in the sustainable development sector of a developing country like ours, rural and sub-urban development is an integral part of the whole procedure. Seeing centers as a drop of hope in the corridor of developing sub-urban/rural junction, this research accentuates and initiates the process of developing a sustainable model of a growth center on the periphery of the country.

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Lack of marketing facilities has been acting as a serious issue in promoting economic growth. In recent years, the purchasing intensity of various sectors has increased very fast. More increase in the numbers of buyers in the market more will be the trade volume and turnover which perpetuate local development.

Keywords: Rural growth center, socio-spatial perspective, economic development, Kopilmuni.

1.1 Introduction

From urban to rural settlements there prevails a journey of development. A journey that tells the story of thousands of people prevailing, dwelling and nevertheless doing everything for their livelihood. For growing a livelihood or settlement, as say there need a center for growth or cumulative works that can be a market place. It is mostly a market place in our context. After that, it grows with other functionality of society, of the people of the neighborhood. Then it is called a Growth center. Growth centers perform as centers of economic, social and cultural activities in the rural areas. These are the venues where people exchange their ideas with neighbors regarding improved methods of production and marketing and also serve as centers for recreation. (Das & Mondol, 2010) states that the Growth Center in the village can be compared with the Central Business District (CBD) of the arena. Nearly seventy percent of the total population of the country lives in rural areas that are directly or indirectly related to agriculture for their livelihood. It is essential that the agricultural products reach the buyers through an efficient marketing system. It is necessary that the surplus agricultural products are brought to the markets for buyers and at the same time, inputs from agriculture, like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and other necessities are made available on time for delivery. The goals of rural development require adequate attention to various economic, social

and political factors that influence the rural society through an intricate web of interrelationship where growth center can be an eligible potential feature.

Improvement of the rural markets, therefore, assumes great importance in the overall development of the rural economy. Kopilmuni growth center is one of the biggest markets of Paikgacha Upazila in Khulna district of Bangladesh and it is situated on the bank of the river Kopotakkho. Most of the population were dependent on agriculture and fishery in the area, and in this respect, the market can play a vital role for the development of economy of the locality. Recently shrimp culture has been the most focused economic issue in this area.

This is the main marketing place of people of the surrounding rural villages depend on this market for performing their economic, social and cultural activities. This market falls in the category of Assembly Market. Most of the products used to be sold in the local rural markets, resulting in products not fetching a good price as there was limited demand for the products in the local market, because of the absence of a better network with other markets or Upazila and Zila towns.

1.2 Problem Statement

Growth centers should be a place which beholds the whole cultural paradigm of the adjacent neighborhood of that particular settlement. This culture extends from economic exchange to the heritage of celebration. This place should behold the identity of the community's economic condition, their cultural exchange and their history. Nowadays, growth centers lack hierarchy in providing facilities for their catchment areas and they are also behind in the aspect that they should be the most vibrant rural centers in Bangladesh, which will serve as the nerve centers of economic and social activities. Most of

the markets have poor infrastructure for running a proper marketing chain. There prevails a poor waste collection and drainage system, whereas waste collection and disposal is a vital issue in a hygienic market chain. Where the edge of the market is concerned, vendors and hawkers encroach the road surface, on the other hand, on the riverbank being on the backdrop and a waste dumping station. There is no waterfront planning there. For all these causalities, there prevails a scarcity of socio-spatial integration and dedicated public space. So there is a lack of an adequate environment for travelling a long time. From a socio-spatial perspective, the morphology and the historical essence of the surroundings are not taken into consideration, while development is a concern.

1.3 Research Question

What can be a sustainable model for growth centers to ensure a proper marketing chain with ensuring socio-spatial interactions?

1.4 Research Objectives

- I. To understand the morphological pattern of traditional rural market.
- II. To explore total marketing chain in rural and sub-urban Bangla.
- III. To explore an efficient marketing condition for the system.
- IV. Making inclusive environment for marketing and recreation in purpose.
- V. To develop social sustainability through social-spatial connection.
- VI. Encouraging river-land amphibian connection in marketing system.
- VII. To construct a sustainable procedure to develop a growth center.

2.1 Literature Review

In Bangladesh the rural markets are popularly known as hat / bazaar.

Hat means assemble of rural people in a fixed place for exchanging of rural product with a certain interval of days. It remains 1-3 days in a week. The places where rural people exchange their product daily are called bazaar.

2.2 Classification of Rural Market

According to LGED: According to influence and number of buyers and sellers rural market is of three types (table no. 01)

	Influence	No. of Buyers And Sellers
Primary Market	1.5 - 3 Sq. m.	500-2000
Local Assembly Market	3 – 8 Sq. m.	2000-10000
Secondary/ Terminal Market	8 – 30 Sq. m.	10000-30000

Table no 1: Classification of Rural Market according to number of buyers and sellers

According to occupied land and investment rural market is of three types (table no. 02)

	Occupied Land	Investment
Small Market	Up To 2.5 Acre	20-30 Lakh
Medium Market	2.5 To 5 Acre	30-40 Lakh
Large Market	More Than 5 Acre	40-60 Lakh

Table no 2: Classification of Rural Market according to occupied land and investment in the market

2.3 Growth Center

The “Growth Center” performs as center of economic, Social and cultural activities in the rural areas. These are the venues where people exchange their idea with their neighbors regarding improved

method of production and marketing and also serve as center of recreation. An attempt is made to expose the changes in social life as well as in physical development of the area after built up the growth center. Growth Center: A Growing Point for Comprehensive Rural Development.

But it is difficult to assess the contribution of growth center in the areas of trade volume and turn over, employment opportunities and economic upliftment, social services improvement, infrastructure development, place to exchange knowledge on production and marketing and place of social gathering.



Figure No 1: Focuses of a Growth Center

2.4 History Of Kopilmuni

One of the earliest priests to come to the Sundarbans and build an ‘Asram’ and ‘Kali mandir’ was Kopilmuni. After him, there were 200 years of non-existence of people living in this area. Around the year 1900 a man named ‘শ্রী বিনোদবিহারী সাধু খাঁ’ (*Sri Binod Bihari Sadhu Kha*) came into renovating the area economic, religious and cultural paradigm. He built a Kali mandir again and continued the ‘Beruni snan’ festival and traditional mass bathing with fair or ‘মেলা’ (*mela*).

2.5 Beruni Snan Festival Trail

Beruni snan festival is a gathering of thousands of people to perform mass bathing and puja in the Kali Mandir situated in Kopilmuni bazar surrounding. It was a month long festival with linear fair spaces in the waterfront, school field and places near the mandir and ghat.



Image No 1: Beruni Snan Ghat

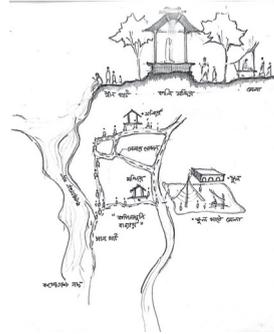


Figure No 2: Beruni Snan festival trail

3. Methodology

This research is objectified to find out the present physical, social, cultural, spatial and economic condition of the Kopilmuni Growth Center and identify the services and parameter it can be developed into. To achieve the objectives, the study was conducted in Khulna District. This study was focused on Kopilmuni Growth Center and its catchment area located in Paikgacha Upazila of Khulna District. The study explores the existing condition of the growth center and its surroundings. Problems regarding the spatial pattern of the Bazaar area and its surrounding development, which refers to the built-environment condition analysis and also finding out the morphology of the development of the bazaar. The field work for this study was conducted through field observation and questionnaire survey with visitors, traders and other personnel. This study was conducted through personal interview, Focus Group discussion for the collection of information. This study used secondary data from Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), local NGOs, LGED and Union Parishad, and also books, journals and various other documents. After the study and all the analysis here, it is intended to provide guidelines for a sustainable growth center model.

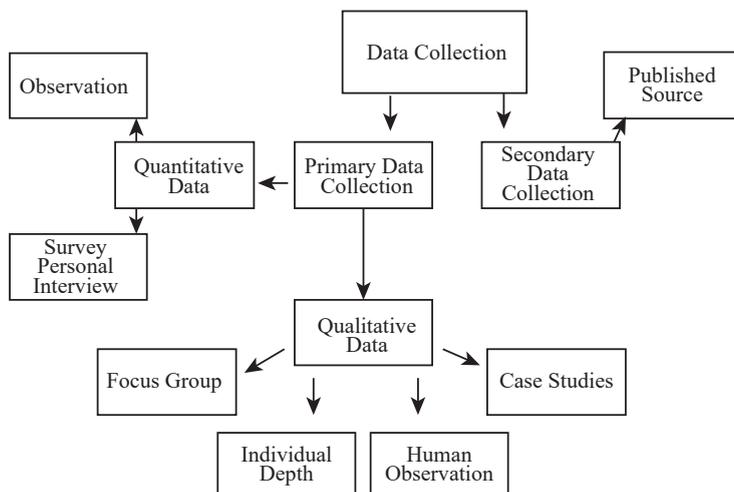
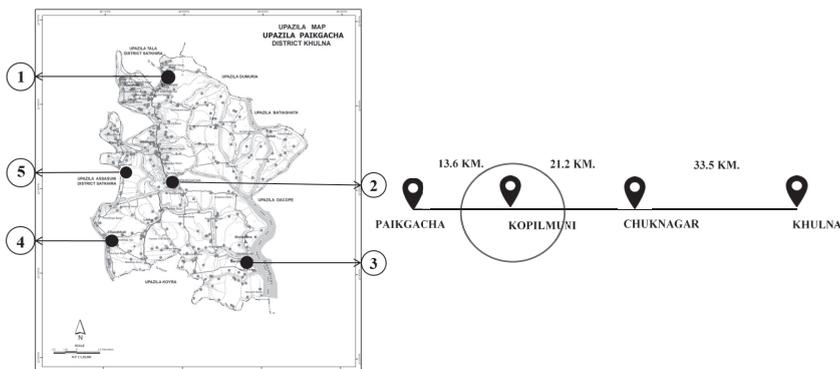


Figure No 3: Data collection method

4.1 Findings

Growth Centers in Paikgacha Upazila: According to LGED there are 38 rural markets in Paikgacha upazila. Among them 5 markets are denoted as Growth centers of that region. According to the size of the market, connectivity of the market with urban and sub-urban hubs, availability of the products and different selection criteria these markets are sorted out from other markets.



Map No 1: Paikgacha Upazila Map with 5 Growth Centers

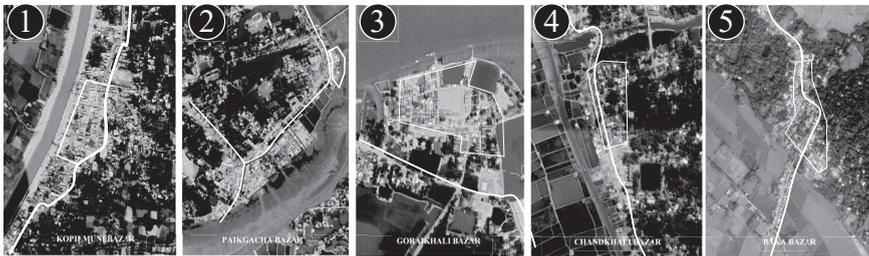
Five Growth Centers of Paikgacha Upazila

1. Kopilmuni bazar, 2. Paikgacha bazar, 3. Goraikhali bazar, 4. Chandkhali bazar, 5. Baka bazar

Site Location: Site: Kopilmuni Bazar, Paikgacha upazilla, Khulna division, Bangladesh.

- One of the five growth centers in Paiakgacha upazilla, Comprises wholesale, retail and all type of social institution in catchment area. Above 800 shops in the market

4.2 Justification of Sites within the Set of Criteria



LOCATION	Entrance of the upazila beside the khulna-paikgacha regional highway.	Situated in the heart of the upazila.	It is the far most growth center from urban linkage.	In the edge of the upazila	In the edge of the upazila
ACCESSIBILITY	Main linkage road and river side.	Main urban center but river is dried up.	Far most point from urban center but water ways is very well utilised.	Satisfactory but no water ways	Satisfactory but no water ways
PARKING	No	No	No	No	No
ARRANGEMENT	Large span spatial arrangement of the market .	Not arranged in a particular space, scattered.	Large span spatial arrangement of the market .	Not well organised	Not well organised
INFRASTRUCTURE	Not well planned and also not in good structural condition	Not well planned and also not in good structural condition	Comparatively better planned and also not in good structural condition	Not well planned and also not in good structural condition	Not well planned and also not in good structural condition

Table No 3: Justification of growth center sites within the set of criteria

4.3 Morphology of the River

Kopilmuni is situated in in the bank of the river ‘Kopotakkho’ (image no 2). River is regained from demolishing by dredging after 2015. Market is extending towards South. The total Market is about

1.5km through the North-South Axis. The other development is created through the south eastern side of the Market area.



Image No 2: Morphology of Kopotakkho River



Image No 3: present waterfront condition of Kopotakkho River in bazar area

4.4 Surrounding Bazar Catchment Analysis

‘Tala’ & ‘Kopilmuni’ are two major wholesale market of the area. Sunday and Thursday wholesale date for ‘Kopilmuni’. Other five days except Sunday and Thursday wholesale market is placed in ‘Tala’. The retail market is open seven days a week. Generally, the main rush time in the market is up to when the daylight ends.

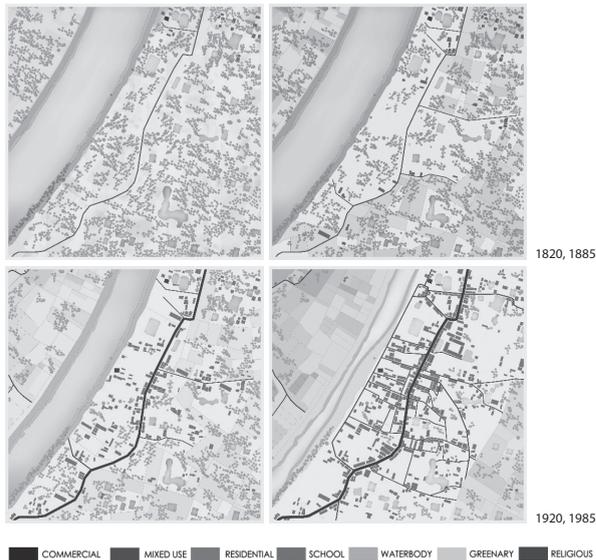


Image No 4: Bazar in the catchment area

4.5 Morphology of the Site

1820: Saint Kopilmuni first established the temple and his ashram. Most of the portion was still full of greenery the main commuting source is the Kopotakkho River.

1885: The Rai Bahadur family shifted here. This is the time when the actual condition of Kopilmuni started to change they established the age old famous kali mandir here still the main commuting source was the river.

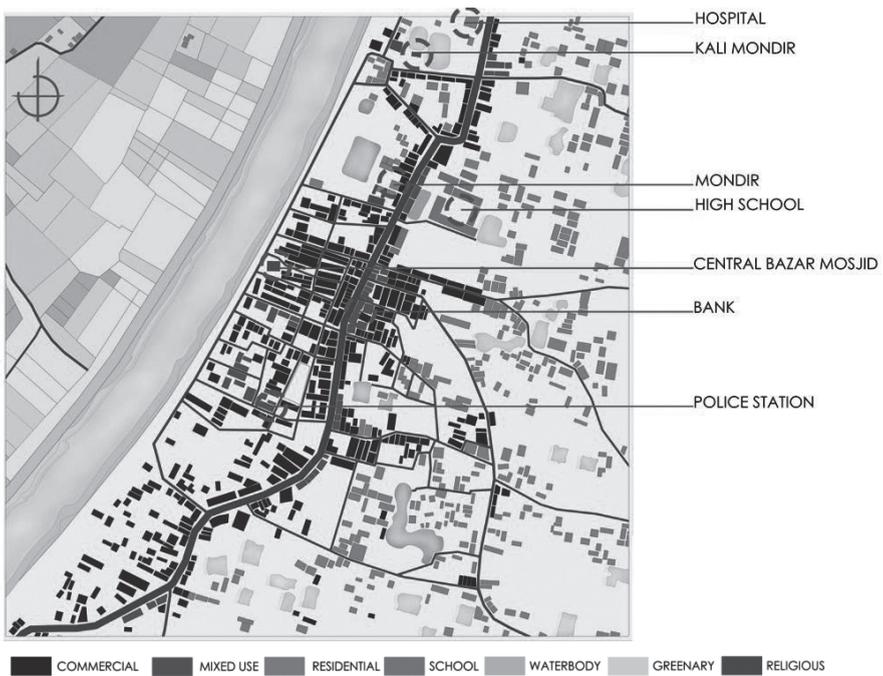


Map No 2: Morphology of the Site

1920: This is the time when the Bazaar started to grow beside the River and so the settlements started to grow also the commuting system was both the river and road.

1985: The settlements beside the Bazaar started to grow and other institutes were also established The River died over the period main commuting source became road.

2022: The total exposure of the Bazaar and Kopilmuni changed throughout this time the government took necessary steps to revive the river still the min commuting source is the river.



Map No 3: Existing Land use patter

5.1 Observation & Model Analysis

To develop a certain growth center, we need to evaluate the present scenario with all the stories it contained throughout the timeline. After diagnosing the present market zoning, we need to re-evaluate the zoning that it should maintain. Here is the ratio of the broader zoning

of market types, like: retail zone, wholesale zone and mixed use zone. (Figure no: 4)

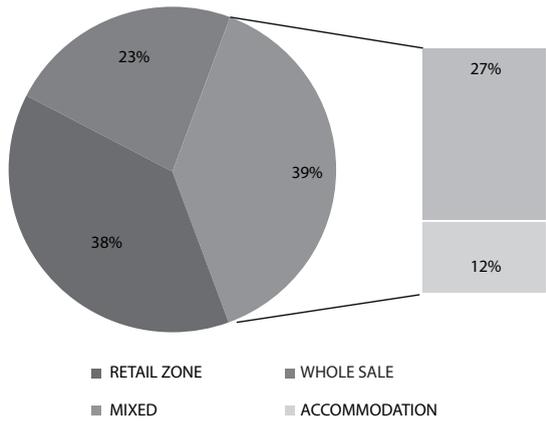


Figure No 4: Existing market zone analysis



Wet Zone:

1. Butcher
2. Fish
3. Vegetable

Grocery & Grain:

1. Grocery
2. Rice & Grain
3. Food Hotels

Dry Zone:

1. Cloth
2. Cosmetics
3. Shoe

Source: Field survey, 2023 Figure no 5: Existing market, shop type analysis (retail)

Commercial and mixed use activities are located mainly beside the roads. The total development is towards the north-south axis with a length of 1.5km, two temples is situated in the neighbourhood community which bear the history Green spaces are at the riverside.



Map No 4: Existing Market Zoning Analysis

There are different typologies of the built environment. We observe differences in the spatial pattern in the retail zone and the wholesale zone. Also, while redesigning the built environment, we must reflect the-old tradition and the patterns it inherits.

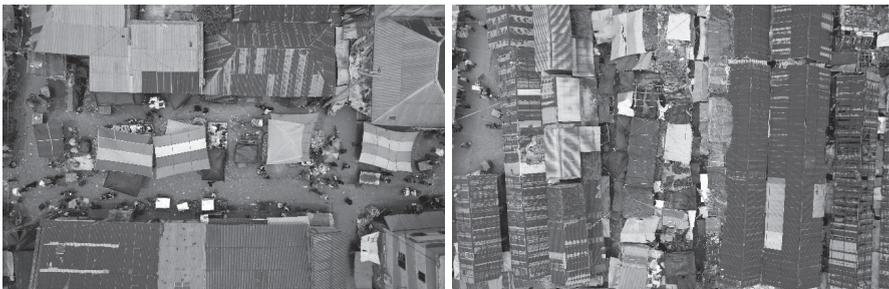


Image No 5: Wholesale zone (left), Retail zone (right)

Here is the analysis of the socio-spatial patterns of the built environment (table no: 4)

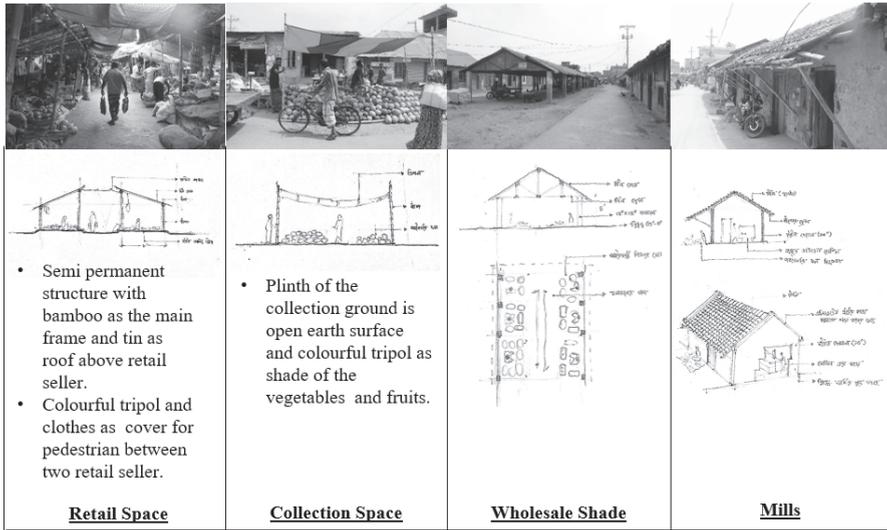


Table No 4: Existing market spatial pattern analysis

5.2: Recommendation

- I. To regenerate a communal space for the Beruni snan festival which can also be used as a space for the seasonal whole sale market.
- II. To segregate the market zoning according to the Dry-wet zoning. Increasing shop number and vertical zoning is encouraged.
- III. To accommodate a parking area and separate loading-unloading decks for the wholesale market.
- IV. To provide women-centric entrepreneurship centers and shopping modules.
- V. Reevaluate the waterfront and provide a proper ghat for loading unloading and ensure an amphibian marketing system.
- VI. To provide adequate waste dumping stations.
- VII. To provide a grade up gradation in the product sector, as such, fish cold storage can be added and also a fish processing zone.
- VIII. To provide permeable walkable features from road to river.

6. Conclusion

A growth center remains as a heart of a growing neighborhood. While a rural setting tends to be a combination of suburban and urban neighborhood it requires some additional spatial organization that needs to be developed from the essence of the previous growth and spatial pattern. A growth center must be a container of memory, and the combination of memories should be carried forward. Kopilmuni growth center is one of the complete connecting bazaar ensuring economic and other social support to its surrounding bazaars. An inclusive interpretation in the development procedure of the growth center will ensure overall community development of Kopilmuni.

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