



## CONCEPT OF CO-PRODUCTION AND THE URBAN POOR'S HOUSING CHALLENGE IN BANGLADESH

Rabaya Nusrath Niva<sup>1\*</sup>, Samia Zabeen<sup>2</sup>, Tamanna Sultana Swarna<sup>3</sup>, Fahria Momtaz Lima<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Engineering, Department of Architecture, Premier University, Chittagong, Bangladesh

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer, Department of Architecture, Khulna University of Engineering & Technology, Khulna, Bangladesh

<sup>3</sup>Lecturer, Department of Architecture, Rajshahi University of Engineering & Technology, Rajshahi, Bangladesh

<sup>4</sup>M. Arch Student, Department of Architecture, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh

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### Abstract

Co-production is more than an idea; it is a gathering of thoughts collaborating to find common results. Co-production within the community becomes successful when the community people lead their processes themselves. Through this theme, the communities can enhance their capacity to respond constructively to future problems. Besides, community people, the government, and other organizations play important roles in regulating, financing, and managing the whole process, being potential actors. Slowly, a transformation is taking place in the relationships between the stakeholders—that is, being equal partners in development. This type of relationship strengthens the sustainability of community development initiatives. In some cases, the application of co-production at the grassroots for a better life has encountered numerous challenges limiting participation at various levels. Our study aims at exploring the concept of co-production in housing scenarios, identifying the outcomes of this concept by indicating active roles encountering diverse ways that actors and participants may face challenges to make it successful in the housing process. This paper also focuses on finding out the benefits and drawbacks of co-production in housing and the effectiveness of management policies in the context of Bangladesh. For achieving these objectives, an effective literature review of the existing knowledge on this theme of “Co-Production” has been followed as the study methodology. The results from this study depict that co-production within a community can be an alternative approach to addressing the housing issues of the underprivileged community of society. Although having the challenges of socio-economic and political dynamics, a flexible participatory approach to co-production can be successful in Bangladesh, with an appropriate management policy undertaken by the stakeholders.

**Keywords:** co-production; urban poor; housing; community participation; global south

### Introduction

Co-production involves a mixing of the creative efforts of steady and user creators through industrial,

\*Corresponding author: <snniva@gmail.com>

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financial, and institutional inspirations (Parks et al., 1981, pp. 1001-1011). The outcomes of this applied concept include public participation; gaining efficiency; better service outcomes; and so on. However, a few possibilities for drawbacks can be identified as well. This concept gained popularity in social movements aiming at protecting citizens' rights. The Global South has diversified examples of how extensive and substantial variations can be carried about in the lives of lower-income groups by supporting a community-driven procedure in partnership with the government and other partners on community development issues. Diverse government and non-government organizations play indispensable roles as actors in that process. They face several challenges and difficulties, but they surely find a way out with creative solutions. Ackerman (Ackerman, 2004) discussed how citizen participation in state activities could contribute to the South as a means of improving State accountability (Mitlin, 2008). If discussed locally, in a country that is on the limit of becoming a "Middle Income Country" from a "Developing Country", the fair share of the economic development here is being guided by community-driven developments, where the roles of the contributors guide and define the degree of development.

#### ***The following are the study's objectives***

- To explore and comprehend the concept of co-production and its process in community housing.
- Identify active roles in indicating and defining co-production outcomes.
- To assess the benefits and drawbacks of co-production in housing using case studies from the Global South and Bangladesh.

This education does not seek to measure the accurateness of any findings or directed studies, nor does it seek to make any recommendations; rather, it seeks to review analytically the existing narratives and to determine the scope of applicability of this concept in the prospects of Bangladesh with the findings of management policy of limitations.

#### **Methods**

The researcher analyzed the information purposefully through identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. After defining the possibility and goal of the study, terms like "co-production," "co-creation," urban poor, housing, community participation, global south, and collaborative housing in Bangladesh were searched and identified for selecting data sources. In August 2021, searches were performed on information sources like Google Scholar, Habitat International, and World Development, to identify relevant scientific literature. The terms 'co-production', 'co-production in housing', 'management policy of co-production' or 'Collaborative housing', and numerous diverse groupings of the preceding terms were used to trace academic articles and educations that enclosed or referenced the search terms. This limited the search to studies published in English since the year 2000, which were available as full-text options online. In study selection and data collection, titles and abstracts were screened and papers not dealing with housing in the Global South or the theme of co-production and collaborative housing for the urban poor were excluded. Full texts were screened for mentioning and defining 'co-production', 'collaborative housing', or 'community participation', 'factors of co-production, and "actors and drivers in co-production." Focusing on the origin and defining the concept, thus 18 sources were included in the study. The rest of the 6 sources were selected based on the particular cases revolving around the theme of the housing sector in the Global South and Bangladesh.

#### **The Theoretical Background on Co-Production**

##### ***Origin of the concept***

The concept gained attention and interest through public services as a means of growing the efficiency and effectiveness of the resident government, originally developed in US cities during the 1980s. The foremost theories of urban governance fundamental strategy reference huge control shaped argument. Hence, a specific set of citizen-state interactions were exposed. Scholars argued that citizen participation in public services (e.g.,

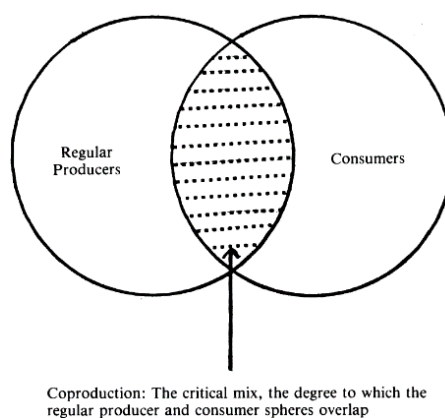


Figure 1. Coproduction Model of Service Delivery (source: Brudney & England, 1983).

anti-crime efforts, solid waste collection, improving education, and wellness) could improve quality. This outcome showed the realization that the construction of service was problematic without the active involvement of the receivers. The term "co-production" was coined to describe the latent affiliation that could exist between the "regular" creator (Street-level police officers, schoolteachers, or health workers) and "consumers" (Figure 1) who want to be renovated by the service into safer, better-educated, or healthier people (Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006).

### ***Defining co-production***

Political economist Elinor Ostrom's definition of co-production states the method of providing goods or services by the contribution of a group of individuals from different organizations. For example, through condominium sewerage systems addressing sanitation needs in northeast Brazil, low-income groups were related to city sewerage structures through reduced predictable manufacturing standards and residents' involvement in resident planning results, funding, and unpaid labor. For availing cost-effective vital urban infrastructure to the poorest communities in Brazil, these types of systems have become a success (Ostrom, 1996, pp. 1073–1087). According to Emeritus Professor of Public Management and Governance Tony Bovaird, the opportunity is created for system transformation because of the involvement of customers and community activists in the co-planning and co-delivery of facilities along with the professional staff. A complex adaptive system can be generated which is different from "Provider-centric services" (Bovaird, 2007, pp. 846–860). Co-production can be redefined as "a relationship between a paid employee of an organization and (groups of) individual citizens that require a direct and active contribution from these citizens" to the organizational work (Brandsen & Honingh, 2015).

### **Typologies of co-production**

The classical typology proposed by Brudney and England (1983) includes individual, group, and cooperative co-production. Brandsen and Honingh (2015) later categorized co-production into four, based on two variables: the extent to which citizens design and deliver services and the proximity of co-production to the main procedure. Thus, the four potential types of co-production as proposed are shown in Table 1. "Co-production in the design and implementation of core services" indicates direct citizen involvement in the core service generation of an organization. They are directly tangled in both the strategy and application of the discrete facility provided to them. For example, cooperative housing projects where (future) tenants are engaged in the plan, construction, and maintenance of their homes alongside architects and builders (Brandsen & Honingh, 2015).

Table 1 Proposed types of Co-production. (Source: Brandsen & Honingh, 2015)

The extent of citizen involvement	Implementation	Design and Implementation
Complementary	Complementary co-production in implementation	Complementary co-production in service design and implementation
Non-complementary	Co-production in the implementation of core services	Co-production in the design and implementation of core services

***Drivers of co-production in the Global South***

Analyzing reasons for co-production in the South, two drivers are prominent (Joshi & Moore, 2004)

- Governance drivers ➡ failure of government to provide services
- Logistical driver's ➡ difficulties within the context

***Conditions and factors for co-production***

Conditions found from the study by Parrado et al. (2013) encouraging or discouraging co-production using a large-scale survey across five European countries; to investigate the behavior and attitudes of citizens towards co-production are as below.

- Women and elderly citizens –are more likely to engage in co-production.
- The belief in self-efficacy -the most reliable and firmest interpreter of co-production.
- Stimulated by an awareness of poor public performance on outcomes
- Enhanced by governments providing information or engaging citizens in co-production.
- Local conditions discouraging co-production included- an absence of faith in the management due to a history of repression and the view that civic duties end at paying taxes.

Excluded, disadvantaged, or low-income communities who substituted public services with their community organizing, influencing the use of co-production (Parrado et al., 2013). Alford's (2002) research suggests that the factors motivating the willingness of clients to co-produce were categorized into sanctions; material rewards; and non-material rewards, including intrinsic motivation, solidarity incentives, and expressive values. Co-production of private value is motivated by individual intrinsic motivations like self-esteem and self-determination. Rather than sociality or solidarity, incentives elicited co-production of group value. Expressive values were successfully employed to appeal to collective value creation. Joshi and Moore (2004) identified two "drivers" analyzing the reasons for co-production in the South: governance drivers (failure of government to provide services), and logistical drivers (difficulties within the context). For instance, great figures of consumers, the essential domestic differences in service delivery, and the absence of evidence, personnel, and/or specialist.

***Collaborative housing and co-production***

Collaborative housing, community-led, resident-led, participative-housing, or co-housing, are interrelated terms to refer to collective self-organized housing. As Fromm (2012) explains, classic co-housing in Denmark is where plan cheers social interaction; populaces have a strong participating character in the expansion method and overall community organization, and archetypally share dining weekly (Fromm, 1991; McCamant

and Durrett, 1988). The term "community-led housing" is applied to the housing projects conducted by a small group of people with similar identities from the same locality (Jarvis, 2015). In equivalent to bottom-up actions, top-down attempts in European states inspire comprehensive societies and vigorous residency. For example, new Housing Act of 2015 in the Netherlands familiarizes innovative prospects for occupant organizations to form residents' housing co-operatives. Combined housing can be well-defined as "the arrangement where a group of people co-produce their housing in full or in part in collaboration with established providers." whereby the extent and role of user group involvement vary at diverse steps of the housing manufacturing method. Enhanced participation can occur in both the designing and delivering of the provider-led project as well as the user group's leadership role (Boonyabantha & Kerr, 2018b). Poocharoen and Ting (2013) compared the ideas of partnership and co-production. Whereas the past emphasizes the organizational level, the latter focuses on the specific level, i.e., inhabitants and specialists. Collaboration implies a wider thought than co-production, including possible types of interrelationships between objects. These entities include the community, remote, and non-profit sectors altogether (Poocharoen & Ting, 2013). Between community-led projects (co-production) and organization-led projects (co-operation), the difference lies in the freedom given to the considered community.

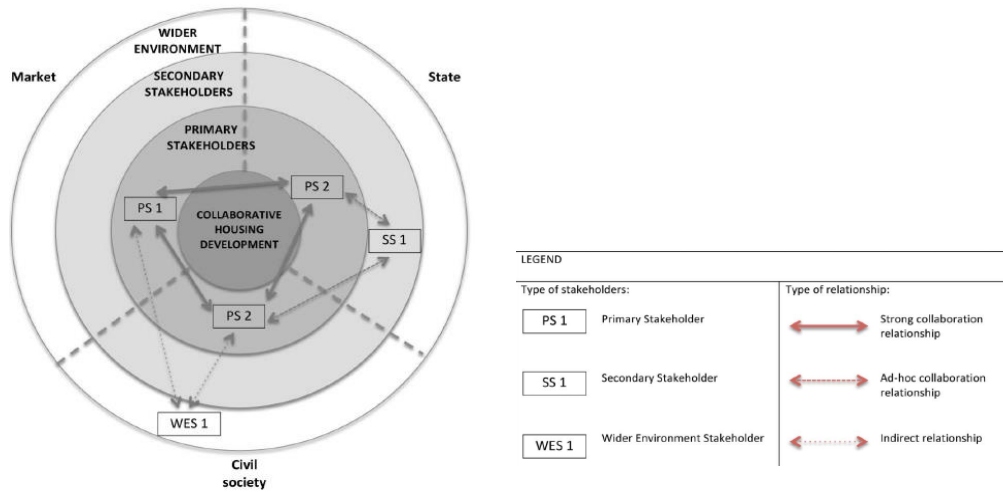


Figure 2. Figure of multiple stakeholder associations in cooperative Dwellings scheme (Source: Czischke, 2017).

In the stakeholder onion model applied in Sudiyono's (2013) study of co-housing projects in Berlin, stakeholders were categorized into three distinct roles. Each of these individuals was allocated to a tier based on things like their level of respectability, who controlled vital assets, and the extent to which they possessed considerable influence. The marketplace, the legislature, and civilized society are the three separate spheres where stakeholders can be found in. A new diagram proposed by Czischke demonstrates co-production in cooperative housing, where collaborative housing involves the plans, development phases, building, renovation or reconstruction, and organization of housing for the core inhabited use of the active households (Figure 2). In most cases, level 1 consists of the tenant community as consumers and manufacturers in addition to qualified "established" accommodation suppliers (i.e., housing organizations and architecture firms) who are active in activities of residential development. Co-production hence takes place between the players placed at this stage of analysis, even though it is part of a sequence of collaboration contacts with other stakeholders situated in the outer coats (Czischke, 2017).

## Case Studies using Co-production to address the Shifting Challenges in the Global South

### Global South

The term "Global South" refers to Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania as a whole. It is one of a group of phrases that comprise "Third World" and "Periphery" to describe regions outside of Europe and North America that are mainly (but not always) low-income and frequently politically marginalized or culturally marginalized. The term "Global South" denotes a shift away from a centralized focus on growth or cultural issues and toward a reliance on geopolitical power structures (Dados & Connell, 2012).

### Different cases of Global South

Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI) is a low-income housing loan provider in metropolitan areas in Thailand, as well as a convener of general agreements with other interested parties on real estate, community capacity building, and house design and construction. In Thailand, CODI has prioritized people over anything. Their main principle has always been that the communities should determine their own needs, and lead the development processes. Here, CODI's work is to support them in this process following their direction and relating them to the Government. The Government's role has changed dramatically – from a provider of housing to a facilitator of community-driven local housing co-production (Boonyabancha & Kerr, 2018b).

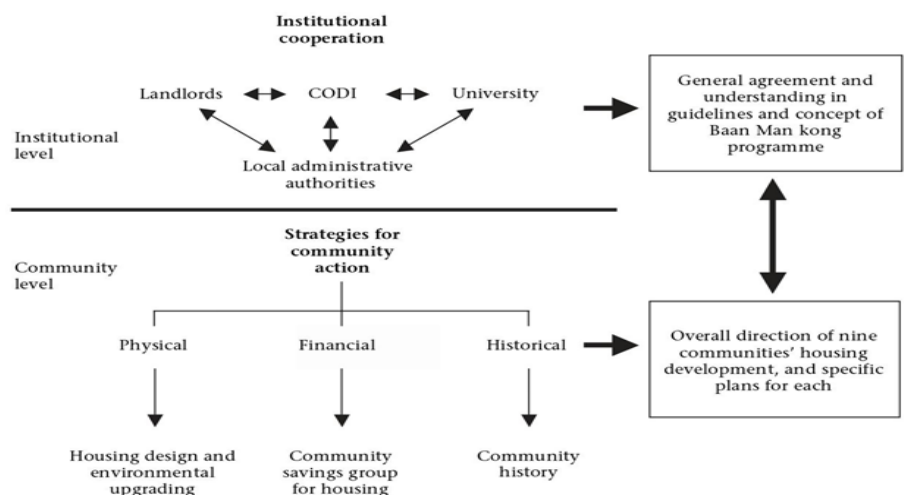


Figure 3. Policy in Bangbua groups promotion scheme (Source: Usavagovitwong & Posriprasert, 2006).

CODI has been successful in emerging collaboration between unlawful colonizers and those administration authorities. The agreement was reached between CODI and the Treasury Department, which owns the land. The Thai government's current urban poor housing policy suggests an alternative approach, namely upgrading. nine Bangbua communities will now be able to upgrade their living conditions. Three working groups were set up to develop a work plan for housing upgrading in Bangbua. The first task was to develop a work plan, specifying each group's specific roles and activities. From the Treasury Department, it sought to negotiate long-term community land tenure (20–30 years). The aim was to ensure land tenure and encourage people to invest in improving livelihood. According to the community network and framework for action, a working group (the community network) was formed, with representation from all nine communities. Data collection, such as housing pattern, condition, and site, among other things; some houses were relocated due to an emergency. The team worked with each community and gathered information from

each site, analyzing the info. In this case, CODI helped to form a community savings group that was important for negotiations with a property owner who was planning to build a new office complex on the banks of the Grand Union canal and arranging external funding and ensuring savings groups from all communities with the approval of All members (Usavagovitwong & Posriprasert, 2006).

### ***Literacy accomplishment through case studies***

In the same approach, community networking is crucial at the institutional level. Cooperation provides a larger view, solves problems by assigning roles and responsibilities, and produces innovative ideas and models through partnerships. Networking communities to engage in home development and networking ensures other stakeholders that progress in attaining secure land tenure and network social learning interaction will be made. Ensure engagement with various groups, dispute resolution, the least number of negative consequences, and the greatest outcome for everybody through increasing potential and capacity. Overcome landowners' skepticism and demonstrate your readiness and capability. Ensure that the authorities, thus assuring their self-sustaining development (Usavagovitwong & Posriprasert, 2006), accept the strategy.

Subsequently, the Homeless People's Federation of the Philippines (HPFP) is a community-based self-help group that promotes low-income individuals and families to save and invest in their growth. Low-income communities must demand that the government fulfill its responsibility to provide adequate housing for the city's poor. Government involvement is required not only in regulating, financing, and providing housing but also in controlling land usage and involving citizens in governance. Slowly, a shift in community relationships is taking place, with communities increasingly seeing themselves as equal participants in the development (Yu & Karaos, 2004).

### ***Case studies analyzing Bangladesh's evolving condition***

The history of community-based development efforts is popular in the Asian context as well as in Bangladesh. While theoretical discussions highlight the potentiality of co-production, the empirical evidence and research on co-production with community cases indicate a variation in operational success and the inclusion of desired focuses. Recent exposure to the 'Bottom-Up approach' has found it more effective than the 'Top-Down approach, where the concerned community is driven by their realization that the hindrance to their social status is their social position. When this is the driving factor, the process of development comes easily. The operators in action reflect different key factors and often indicate the outcome of co-production. The case studies below focus more on the roles of these participants and their influence on the output.

A case from Jhenaidah that evolved through the participation of the slum community to bring positive changes in the neighborhood by managing their funds to build better houses for themselves with support from the local government. This successful example of co-production, started by a small set of architects and a resident NGO, led to prove a work balance between local power and institutional administration, eliminating the domination of unequal power dynamics (ALAM & BAIDYA, 2019).

This medium-sized municipality, consisting of 9 wards and 33 mohallas, started its social development with small savings. Savings is the most influential model for co-production. Saving in a set and articulating a judgment is linked to shared power dynamics. "When a group of people begins to save together, each individual becomes more aware of his/her right to make decisions, because they believe their monetary contribution is valuable for the entire group." (Kabir, 2018). Therefore, with the help of planning from the architects, they started saving and were eventually eligible for seed funds from ACHR (Asian Coalition for Housing Rights). As one community expenses these provided funds along with their savings to develop their housing and repay it, the next community in the pipeline receives it and explores the same. The basic principle of funding behind the chain of development is this. The architects guided the community in their needs and steps to meet those needs with the assistance of non-governmental organizations. The children of the community were asked to demonstrate how they imagined their surroundings and their expectations from the community, thus contributing to the design. The elderly community was asked to express their view of the

neighborhood. Together with this participatory process of all age groups and their view of their lives in society, the architects and the NGO group helped to build houses and improve the community. From there, they helped each other to lead as they expanded to nine communities living in different geographical areas of the city. The pioneer communities act as support groups by teaching others about plotting and saving actions, thus continuing a consistent development.

The next case highpoints how the intention of a cluster of slum inhabitants resulted in bringing about a change in the housing conditions and how that strength was to develop housing for them with support from a nongovernment organization (Begum et al., 2018). The case study of Agargaon, Mirpur is an example of slum dwellers performing an active role in improving their living conditions. About thirty thousand individuals are ordered into small community-based sets of 24–30 followers from diverse informal situations, each consisting of mostly female members. NGOs were running investments and credit support programs for the inhabitants. The main driving factor was the understanding of the community associates that living in an uncertain and corrupt environment in slum areas was the core hindrance to their societal self-respect and monetary progress and that this could be reflected only through suitable settlements. So, the housing scheme was introduced by ARBAN for the associates of the program and is open to those who are willing to grow their housing circumstances. To begin building residences for individuals, the participants must first contribute a set sum of money (BDT.500 per month) for a period of ten years. Whereas the second project has been executed, the first housing complex, known as Housing Assistance Project-1, was already finished and has been distributed among the recipients. The entire building consists of a six-story structure in a projected middle-class neighborhood, as well as all already-existing public amenities in the vicinity. In the year 2000, members of Project-1 purchased a plot of land in Mirpur from a private real estate firm, which marked the beginning of the project's project execution. A total of 40 single to two-bedroom units with a 4,620 sq. ft. footprint were scheduled to be built. Consequently, 182 total individuals were the targeted customers to gain.

As the level of effectiveness is measured by the degree of the approach that directly addresses the problems and members' satisfaction with it, this approach was able to reach the targeted low-income group for housing. The slum dwellers took part to create value for the project development, through which they developed their socioeconomic conditions. The participants gained confidence, a sense of belonging, security because they own the houses and have legal rights to the property, and a sense of dignity and self-worth because they can leave the slum and live in decent conditions. As the project reached its objective of housing the urban poor with their resources, it proved its efficiency. Members' affordable contributions and moderate long-term help from organizations managed construction.

## **Discussion**

- The theoretical background section of the research has explored the perception of “co-production” from its origin to its inclusion of this concept in the housing process. The terms and factors associated with co-production have been indicated and understood here.
- The findings from the selected case studies explore the concept of housing in the context of Thailand and Bangladesh. The outcomes and indicators of this idea have been identified here as follows.

The discussed case studies both in Thailand and Bangladesh highlight certain instruments, such as a community organization, an external group, and a knowledge-based social network aided in the development processes. Extending community networks and institutional partnerships, as well as raising public awareness of community issues, are three forms of outreach. For work, the planner collaborated with community members and ensured that all groups were represented (Usavagovitwong & Posriprasert, 2006).

## ***Cause of success***

The use of local wisdom and intelligence to solve local problems identified by accessing the real needs of local people is the most effective one. The participation of people to build their dreams is the driving factor for the



patience to reach the outcome, guard the right use of resources, and monitor the outcome of success. For the Jhenidah project, the self-determination of taking decisions in the monetary instrument made easier loan payment for the group divergent from any other loan scheme intended by stranger administrations.

### ***Change in socio-politic dynamics***

Community-based projects such as these examples discussed offer more chance of success if only participation is determined as the main running factor. However, if the concept of participatory strategy is formulaic and people's participation is just a box to be checked, it may also fail even when participatory methodologies are applied. By relating individuals at every stage of the decision-making method, the institutional structure or funding source of the project can be changed as necessary to fit the needs of the beneficiary community.

### ***Power and gender dynamics***

Womenfolk are professed as less skilled than males, in the patriarchal context of Bangladesh. Furthermore, it is clear from the discussed local case studies that the women's group plays a crucial part in community development and saving efforts. Slowly and on a modest scale, the co-production method has been effective in overcoming the impervious barrier of gender inequity. Now, a noticeable shift in women's conduct can be seen; instead of being embarrassed to speak in front of men, they now proudly identify as "community leaders."

### ***Drawbacks found through research***

The rules of community-saving organizations can be stringent and unfair to some groups. Due to a lack of trust, forming a savings community is challenging. Design and resource constraints are prevalent. Temporary housing is required throughout the construction period, as well as pilot construction for the temporary residence of residents. The network leader (Usavagovitwong & Posriprasert, 2006) must resolve all conflicts. In addition, the seed fund or the money flow is a temporary solution to convoluted complications. These processes have been reassuring since money flows from organizations to work for their dreams. The less patience to wait for accumulating the money may lead to creating victims of self-sabotaging outlines, Failure to perceive the superior depiction or cautiousness out of self-interests results in losing reliance on coherence. These models often lose altercations when it is expanded to a larger canvas which was the case for 'Comilla Approach to Rural Development, lost effectiveness when expanded outside of the planned area as less concentration was active for expressing local contextual needs. Another faulty string often detected is that the smallest portion of the community remains outside of benefits; they become a victim of social domination led by beneficiaries. In addition, lack of possibility and impatience for change cannot often let to ensure desired extended development. A major drawback articulates when the involvement of politics surfaces or funds from foreign sources are involved. Such a case was found in 'Deedar Comprehensive Village.' The project after getting the internationally prestigious Magsaysay award, a skirmish broke out among the members. The incident led to the disintegration of this successful cooperative society (Rahman, 2019).

### ***To improve the management policy of co-production in housing***

From both the case studies discussed in the above section, the following policies can be indicated for the improvement of the management of coproduction in housing.

- Identity potential land for communities that are unable to restructure, and then schedule an accommodation procedure that will benefit all neighborhoods in the city.
- A decentralized system to be provided to encourage the community people to create their ideas to obtain flexible funding, because it is a crucial instrument for co-production.
- Flexible and participatory institutional arrangements to function with more autonomy are to be maintained to support the demand-driven development process.

- Collaboration and negotiation at all levels of stakeholders (community people, community institutions, housing providers/government, politicians, etc.) need to be ensured to facilitate a community-driven, demand-driven coproduction in housing.
- Isolated micro co-productions can be integrated on a larger scale to ensure maximum transformation and impact in housing scenarios for better outcomes of co-production.
- Proper and prompt assistance to be provided by the organizations to administer community funds for the needy neighbors.
- Managing City-based Community Development Funds (CDFs) that connect all of a state's investment groupings and are governed by local groups. It may be a means to combine available resources, improve linkages to and cooperation with municipal councils, and include further underprivileged communities in the development of the entire city.
- A shift in perspective and appropriate awareness could alter the result. The roles of Political and Administrative elites should be moderated carefully and concentrate on supporting the cause.
- Overall, a national policy umbrella is needed to promote the scheme and to permit new initiatives, and partnerships, to mitigate the housing challenges for the underprivileged community.

## Conclusion

This research states how community organizations and their networks can help to create urban poor housing with the help of other parties following knowledge-based social networks. Planners must collaborate closely with residents and groups in each community to establish common strategies and tools for tackling social, economic, and environmental concerns. To achieve a collaborative set of strategies, awareness of the participants' social backgrounds are vital (Usavagovitwong & Posriprasert, 2006, pp. 523-536). Poor communities should discuss human rights, strengthen institutional connections, and establish community networks. Captivating the public's attention and ensuring that communities are not dominated or excluded by others. Whatsoever approach is adopted to develop a community, the crucial step is to determine the degree of development, and more importantly, success depends absolutely on the roles of participants—both beneficiary group and supporting group. At the same time, the involvement of user groups is necessary for co-production in a method that expresses the concerned administration's confidence in grassroots abilities. If people realize the potentiality and benefits of the process of co-production, people will tend to capitalize on supplementary in the development, commercially and actively. If monitored and ensured, these may enhance the degree of quality of community development and the economy as a whole.

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