

Theme:

Port City to Merge Center-Periphery Differences

Title:

Port City to Portray the Image of a Country: A Critical Study of Chittagong Port City, Bangladesh.

Abstract:

It is undeniable that a sea port is a prerequisite for the rapid expansion of a country's desired international trade through which the overall socio-economic development of a country takes place. A country, which has no sea port has to face great obstacles in import-export trade. They are totally dependent on other countries for most of their foreign trade. Bangladesh is committed to gain economic development like the Netherlands and Singapore by modernizing the Chittagong sea port. Chittagong sea port can become the communication center of entire south Asia. About 90 percent of Bangladesh's international trade is performed through Chittagong sea port, due to which many industries and commercial establishments have been established in Chittagong. Through this, the socio-economic development of the country has been accelerated. Due to this economic importance, Chittagong has gained the status of commercial capital of the country. The government of Bangladesh has planned to embark as one of the developed countries by the year 2041. Yet, the usage of the port remains only as the source of performing export-import purpose and the city dwellers are still lagging behind of the benefit of the port. The proposed project aims to find out the potentials of the port and problems to overcome them for having full advantage of the port to make Bangladesh as one of the important countries in South Asia.

Ports are broadly categorized in two perspectives, i.e. transshipment and gateways. As transshipment port, we understand the ports are used for generation of revenues by giving access to other countries in loading and unloading of goods, while gateway ports are dedicated for serving international trade of home country, which is broadly dependent on the capacity of its own infrastructure and social structure (*Song and Yeo, 2004*). In the era of globalization, there is immense importance of ports from the viewpoint of connectivity with the rest of the world. In this connection, countries having ports are clearly ahead of the landlocked countries, who do not have direct export-import connection through sea route (*Munim and Haralamb es, 2018id*). Countries, having ports do not always enjoy the benefits from transshipment since of not having deep sea port and geographical and geostrategic importance. Though a Small country, Singapore geographically enjoys the capability as regional hub. Some other countries, like Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Colombo and China enjoy smooth trading facilities for themselves and also gaining revenues through providing transshipment services to other countries.

As globalization though has limitations, been considered as the most popular way to develop. Countries, especially, the developing ones are trying to catch-up their expected goals through best uses of ports. Ports are the basic way to facilitate trade, manage gaps and to some extent, the

customer requirements are completed by its best and efficient uses for different cargo segments (Lee and Cullinane, 2005). The development of port largely depends on shipping lines, market research, management of ports and proper planning and implementation of business (Branch, 2007).

Chittagong is located in the Southeast of Bangladesh and facing the Bay of Bengal, well known as the commercial capital and busiest seaport. Chittagong Port is known as the oxygen of trade for Bangladesh, with the capacity of 92 percent of international trading. As such, it has been contributing as the principal actor for the national economy (https://www.saifpowertecltd.com/port_cct.php). The basic service of the port is being provided by the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA). Based on port, Chittagong City has been considered as the second city after the capital city of Dhaka for better livelihood of inhabitants and job opportunities. Apart from this, Chittagong has been contributing over 40 percent of national industrial output since 2012. In the tax revenue collection, it's contribution is 50 percent, while 11 percent of Gross Domestic is influenced by the city (Muzzini & Aparicio, 2013). Rapid growth is being expedited, influencing the foreign investors to concentrate in this region. Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) has employed more than 1,50,000 employees, added significantly to increase employment rate. In the recent past, Korea and China have shown their interest to come forward with large amount of investment, may create another 1,00,000 employment in next five years.

Though Chittagong has the single largest contributor to the national economy, it has been facing lot of challenges for its own sustainability, may endanger the development of the country. High population growth, uneven industrial location and development, infrastructural shortcomings and lack of basic livelihood supports are the challenges for the city, may cause create obstacle for flourish (Herrmann and Svarin, 2009). At the same time, the port, which is the engine of the growth of the country has been going through a lot of unwelcomed issues, like the lack of efficient and sufficient manpower, lack of managerial capacity due to lack of insufficient scanner and equipment, procedural delays, lack of professionalism of custom and duty officers, lack of interdepartmental coordination, political influence, poor planning. In addition, the unregulated role of trade union and political backings are create hindrance to the development of the port management (Mahmud, T., & Rossette, J. 2007).

Key words: Chittagong Port, National Economy, National Development

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