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Multisectoral Project Design Approaches for Developing Countries: Linking Theories, Policies, and Practices

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Abstract

In this research study, the multisectoral project design strategies have been observed in the developing nations in respect of connecting the theoretical frameworks, theoretical policy mechanisms, and the practice of augmenting the development outcomes. In a thorough assessment of existing literature, cases, and empirical evidence, the paper finds important elements associated with the effective multisectoral coordination that include network governance theory, integrated project delivery frameworks, the whole-of-government approaches and cross-sector collaboration mechanisms. The research concludes that institutionally prepared multisectoral projects requires political commitment with proper institutional arrangements, proper coordination mechanism, a systematic capacity building endeavor. The major conclusions made are that as much as multisectoral strategies have enormous potentiality in resolving complex development issues, their application is still limited by a high level of fragmentation in institutional structures that have conflicting mandates, scarcity of resources and inadequate coordination factors. The proposed study is bold enough to address the research gap in the literature since the complete framework suggests correlating theoretical background with practical implementation aspects thereby offering evidence-based policy implications to governments and development practitioners and international organizations operating in the setting of a developing country. The study concludes that the planning of effective multisectoral projects requires strategies that are flexible and situational and that it aims at systematically tackling the distinct factors and opportunities that are encountered in the third world, and uniting various sectors ready to march together towards achieving development objectives.

Keywords: Multisectoral Project Design, Developing Countries, Communication Across Sectors, Integrated Project Delivery, Development Cooperation, Governance Frameworks

1. Introduction

The modern-day development problems in the developing nations are thorny, and problem solvers need creative solutions, which cut across departmental lines and assemble together the varied talents the various organizations have to share a common

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good (World Health Organization, 2019). The concept of Multisectoral project design became highly significant to solve interdependent challenges, including poverty reduction, empowering the health system, climate change, and meeting sustainable development goals (European Commission, 2018). It was developed based on the realization that the inter-relationship of development issues requires the coordinated combination of interventions, which involves tapping into knowledge, resources and expertise in the sectors of government agencies, civil society organizations, the world of private actors, and the international development agencies (The Compass for Social and Behavior Change Communication, 2022).

Several disciplines using theories underpin the approach to multisectoral project design such as network governance theory, systems thinking, approaches to collaborative governance and integrated approaches to project management (Brady & Davies, 2004). These theories provide explanations regarding the incorporation of groups of organizations and other players more or less in details, regarding the means through which effective collaboration can be achieved in the contexts of complex development issues (Bryson et al., 2006). But the practice related to these abstract ideals remains an elusive one even at the present stage of the developing countries, being burdened with the institutional capacity, resource, and governance limitations to layer these complexities even further (Martinsuo, 2022).

In the context of developing countries, the policy frameworks and systems of governance might facilitate or hinder multisectoral collaborative arrangements (World Health Organization, 2019). The facilitating legal and regulatory system, explicit institutional setups, a sufficient resource mobilization mechanism, and an accountability system would be the critical factors of successful multisectoral coordination (United Nations Development Programme, 2021). In contexts of a developing country, however, the creation and preservation of such enabling conditions is frequently complicated by the insufficient institutional capacity, financial constraints and political instability with larger sectoral interests (Amoah, 2022).

At the practical level, the application of the multisectoral approaches implies highly complicated processes of the coordination that reconcile the competing ideas and organizational cultures, working procedure, and accountability systems (International Labour Organization, 2021). In terms of implementation, effective programs require a concentration on relationship building and management, capacity-building plans, monitoring, and assessment and adaptive administration that can be adjusted to circumstantial alterations and trial (World Vision International, 2024). However, there is some evidence suggesting a significant amount of multisectoral strategies in third-world countries that cannot be implemented seriously due to the lack of effectiveness and sustainability (Amoah, 2022).

The relationship between this study and the literature is in its ability to cover a major gap in the development of a broader framework of integrating theoretical views, policy processes, and practical implementation cycles of multisectoral project design in third world countries. This paper advances the idea of an integrated approach that would incorporate the theoretical knowledge and principles of practical implementation with placing in the context of the challenges of the particular environment that occur in the developing world. The following research questions will help in leading this study: (1)

What are the most effective theoretical construction bases of multisectoral project designing in the developing nations? (2) How can the structures of framework and governance be best organized to promote multisectoral coordination? (3) Which implementation strategies and mechanisms would be most suited to regulate multisectoral complex arrangements? (4) How can theory and policy framework and working methods be interconnectively introduced to facilitate improved development interventions?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Multisectoral Approaches

Multisectoral project design builds upon theoretical premises based on numerous disciplinary views that provide complementary opinions regarding how various groups of organizational actors can work effectively to solve complex issues (Bryson et al., 2006). The notion of network governance has essential theoretical assumptions to make because it revolves around the value of horizontal relationships and the cooperation agreements within an interdependent relationship between actors in an organization (Provan & Kenis, 2008). The assumption that governance in the complex multi-actor environment is networked and not hierarchical means that such a scheme requires much attention to the establishment of relationships among the actors, the development of mutual trust, the development of a mechanism of shared accountability, and dispute solving (Kenis and Provan, 2007).

Such addition as cross-sector collaboration theory focuses on collaboration between organizations which represent different sectors but also have structural, cultural, and operational obstacles in between effectively collaborating (Bryson et al., 2015). It is in this framework that the key building blocks to cross-sector collaboration are identified as shared responsibility, mutual interests, mechanisms to hold each other to account, and joint governance structures that facilitate effective cross-sector collaboration (Selsky and Parker, 2005). The theory emphasizes that collaboration across sectors should be grounded on the examination of power-relatives, resource sharing mechanism, and jointly rule structures in which such consider diversity in organizational culture and operational processes among the companies (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012).

The systems theory further offers some root theories by the conceptualization of development issues as complex interconnected systems where the systemic interventions are done instead of singular and sectoral approaches (Meadows, 2008). It values as well as appreciates system dynamics, feedback, and leverage points and emergent properties that directly and indirectly affect the nature of the interventions to interact with the current systems to bring about the results (Senge, 2006). System thinking acknowledges that unlike in the sectoral approach, effective development interventions put into consideration a wider contextual environment, institutional structure and structural preconditions that will influence how the specific initiative will relate to the existing structures (Williams and Hummelbrunner, 2011).

Models of integrated project delivery (IPD) provide the substantive realistic theories into managing multi-stakeholder and complex projects that require to be synchronized across organizational lines (American Institute of Architects, 2007). The IPD theory encourages the engagement of stakeholders at an early stage, risk, and reward sharing among the stakeholders, joint decision-making, and having integrated project teams, which work together throughout all project implementation phases-Ashcraft (2014). It has been observed in the literature that when applied in the complex project setting, integrated project delivery techniques have a significant positive effect on the projects in terms of improving the coordination by the stakeholders of projects, minimizing time wastage and expenditure (Kent and Becerik-Gerber, 2010).

Nonetheless, the introduction of IPD frameworks are associated with some challenges that are unique to developing countries, such as resistance to change, the lack of experience and skills, ignorance of project owners, and the lack of agreed contractual arrangements (Khanna et al., 2021). The operationalization, which is required to implement IPD successfully, necessitates then significant changes to regulations to allow the workforce training and developing new procurement practices, primarily in the public sphere where traditional procurement practice sets are unable to support collaborative project delivery models (Khanna et al., 2021).

2.2 Policy Frameworks and Governance Structures

A sound multisectoral project designing must have sound policy frameworks that define clear coordinating mechanisms and articulate roles and responsibilities and develop accountability structures, which are capable of accommodating various organizational actors with different mandates, cultures, and operations procedures (World Health Organization, 2019). The multisectoral coordination framework by the World Health Organization defines five components that constitute effective coordination mechanisms: highest political leadership with supraministerial mandate, clear scope and mandate of all sectors involved, robust secretariat and departmental focal point, costed joint action plans with allocated funds and robust accountability indicators with frequent reporting conditions (World Health Organization, 2019).

On the top level of politics, there is the necessity of leadership to spearhead the coordinated actions via ministries and agencies whose mandates, priorities, and organizational cultures may be competing (World Health Organization, 2019). HIV/AIDS coordination experiments have manifested that the governments incorporate resource allocation initiatives as well as stakeholder management and target population priority in their leadership, is far superior in comparison to the initiative by the ministry level leader (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2011). Political commitment over time is however very hard to sustain particularly in situations where political changeovers, conflicting priorities and resource constraints dampens such commitments (Tantivess & Walt, 2008).

Laws and regulations constitute a fundamental part in authorizing multisectoral coordination processes and creating the framework of institutional organization as well as promoting the articulation of clear mandates in cross-sector coordination (Allen and Carey, 2001). These frameworks should take into account such complex factors as the jurisdictional power, the provision of resources sharing, the accountability framework, as well as conflict resolution mechanism, which should take fair consideration of the interests of the various organizations and the numerous operation processes at the organizational level (Peters, 1998). Examples that have been successful include the national legislative initiatives that have been put in place to combat tobacco use, specifically the National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol in Sri Lanka and the former Prime Ministerial Task Force on Tobacco Control in India, both initiated by legislature and executive respectively (World Health Organization, 2019).

However, although the legislative approach is more sustainable and legitimate than the administrative one, the latter is beneficial in cases when urgency is more crucial than the necessity to deliberate (World Health Organization, 2019). However, both alternatives must be designed carefully to ensure that they have the required power, sufficient resources and system accountability through which they may effectively integrate with diverse stakeholder interests and both operation needs, respectively (Guldbrandsson & Fossum, 2009).

Resource mobilization, and financing means is, actually, a part and parcel of policy preparations that have to face intricate issues of cash pooling togetherness of resources of a multiplicity of origins and harmonizing irregular funding streams of funds, to provide dependent goals (World Health Organization, 2019). The necessity to develop programmatic structures on the eventual inter-sector sharing costs and the development of cross-sectoral accountability mechanisms in ensuring sourcing of the funds to the coordination activities is crucial as it is situated in the development of joint action plans that have capacity to ascertain the requirements of resources (World Health Organization, 2019). However, the developing nations are struggling under the intense resource mobilization constraints needed to attain multisectoral programs because the domestic resources are limited, and competing priorities of other sectors are many as well as the donors being very difficult to co-ordinate (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2011).

2.3 Implementation Challenges and Practical Considerations

The structural, institutional and operational challenges in developing countries regarding implementation of the multisectoral approach must be countered in order to coordinate the implementation in the endeavor to achieve sustainable outcomes (World Bank, 2005). Structural obstacles are; rippling of institutional structures; agencies overlap in mandates working together; poor coordination processes; a limited institution's capacity in dealing with multi-active initiatives of this nature (World Bank, 2005). The factors mentioned above in combination with the poor rule of law, low levels of transparency, threats of corruption, and poor accountability structures further escalate inability to coordinate thus impairing implementations (Transparency International, 2020).

Organizational culture differences, organizational conflict among the participating agencies, competing performance interests, and poor knowledge-sharing and joint learning system are some of the institutional barriers (World Bank, 2005). The studies indicate that the multisectoral programs will be more sustainable in case there is successful coordination with the sectoral programs in the respective ministries. Nevertheless, ministries find it hard to organize implementation because additional agencies are involved (World Bank, 2005). The stakeholder organizations may have low motivation to focus to the collaborative tasks rather than their own sectoral operations since the burdens are compounded by the ineffective incentives and intersectoral coordination systems (Peters, 1998).

The issue of capacity building and technical assistance as one of the major challenges used in the implementation must be addressed at the level of various organizations to ensure successful multisectoral coordination (World Health Organization, 2019). This involves increment of technical capacity in involved non-health sectors, facilitating the creation of specific focal points with explicit signs of accountability, as well as cooperating in both coordination procedures and communication throughout a lengthy duration (World Health Organization, 2019). One example of the most appropriate methods to pursue capacity building is the UNDP-NACO model in India, where the focus on the location of technical experts across different ministries enables building-up critical mass of a force of officers in the long run that will be able to promote the multisectoral goals (World Health Organization, 2019).

The issues that the capacity-building initiatives should deal with, though, are those related to the technical abilities, common potential in working together, inter-sectoral expertise, and adaptable administration that facilitate successful coordination within intricate and dynamic setups (Horton et al., 2003). In other words, there should be methods that contain formal training, peer learning, mentoring, and work experience in handling a collaborative project (Eade, 1997). The effective accomplishment of capacity-building initiatives, consequently, will depend partially on the dedication of organizations, the presence of resources, and a framework of institutions that promote the coordinated acts and promote cross-sectoral interaction (Morgan, 2006).

Measured and assessed solutions on multisectoral projects should give sufficient platform on which to measure processes across sectors, ascertain the efficacy of coordination mechanism and measure the synthesised results that materialise during the conflict between various interventions (Kusek and Rist, 2004). This absence of a proper system of observations and evaluations was revealed as one of the significant issues related to the implementation of multisectoral nutrition programs on various levels of coordination in the developing countries since the traditional approach of sector-specific monitoring is unable to identify the extraneous return and systemic change caused by the coordinated interventions (Ruel et al., 2018).

3. Theoretical Framework

The study develops a comprehensive theoretical framework by synthesizing ideas from multiple established theories to facilitate a holistic understanding of multisectoral project design in developing countries. This paradigm recognizes that the concept of efficient multisectoral cooperation not only needs to be considered in terms of practical implementation strategies in different contextual frameworks but also on a theoretical level. These include network governance theories, systems theory, collaborative governance philosophies and integrated project management frameworks.

3.1 Network Governance Theories

Network governance theories focus on the concept that multi-sectoral collaboration occurs in network-based governance arrangements, rather than command and control, hierarchical organizations. This view suggests that, in addition to the vertical authority links, there are horizontal, interdependent links between actors who combine resources, skills and authority to achieve shared objectives that are important for the process of coordination. The framework identifies three basic types of network governance:

- ***Participant networks:*** These networks are ones where the member organizations co-ordinate their activities.
- ***Lead organization networks:*** One organization is in charge of coordinating all the activities in these networks.
- ***Network administrative organizations:*** These are independent entities that were set up just to undertake coordinating tasks (Provan & Kenis, 2007).

Due to institutional constraints, limited resources, power differentials, and a myriad of political factors, network governance has to be tailored to the needs of poor countries. In such cases, a key element of network governance may be the coordinated leadership, adequate resources to coordinate, common problem identification, and network-level institutionalization of decision-making.

3.2 Systems Theory

In addition, the theoretical development of systems theory as a complex adaptive system with emergent properties and non-linear feedback loops (1941-2001 & Diana, 2008) strengthens the theory. This view is considered to be important because it helps to understand that interventions need to play with prevailing conditions to achieve outcomes, and understand the structures of the systems, the feedback loops, the leverage points, and how the emergent behaviors are governed (Senge, 2006).

A systems perspective in developing countries recognizes the complexity due to interacting factors, scarcity of resources, and problems with institutions, which result in emergent behaviors that are unpredictable and dynamic. It enables adaptive management, feedback and comprehensive learning systems in projects that engage multiple sectors to allow for changes to be implemented when new evidence and new circumstances arise.

3.3 Collaborative Governance Doctrines

The broader "Theoretical Foundations" (Section 2.1) of the article extensively examines Cross-Sector Collaboration Theory, an essential element of collaborative governance philosophies, although it is not explicitly identified as a distinct section under the "Theoretical Framework." This framework focuses on collaboration across organizations from different sectors and works to break down structural, cultural, and operational barriers (Bryson et al., 2015). Essential elements for effective cross-sector collaboration include:

- Responsibility as a group
- Common interests
- Ways for both sides to hold each other accountable
- Frameworks for cooperative governance (Selsky & Parker, 2005)

This theoretical aspect emphasizes the importance of analyzing power dynamics, resource allocation frameworks, and collectively developed laws that embody diverse corporate cultures and operational procedures.

3.4 Integrated Project Management Frameworks

Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) models provide practical theoretical frameworks for overseeing extensive projects involving several stakeholders that require cooperation across organizational boundaries. The IPD theory supports:

- Initial engagement of stakeholders
- Spread the risk and profit among all parties
- Making decisions as a group
- Project teams that work together throughout the entire project

IPD frameworks make it easier to work together, save time, and cut costs on complicated projects, but they are hard to use in developing countries because people don't want to change, they don't have enough experience or skills, project owners don't know enough, and contracts aren't good enough. To use Integrated Project Delivery effectively, we need to change the rules, train the workers, and come up with new ways to buy things that make it easier for people to work together.

3.5 Synthesis and Application

Designing multisectoral projects in developing countries is based on a mix of perspectives. To coordinate well, it is important to concentrate on:

- ***Network Relationships:*** Understanding that collaboration is horizontal and interdependent
- ***System dynamics:*** Appreciation of complex and flexible developmental problems and solutions.
- ***Institutional mechanisms:*** Establishing institutional frameworks that help build sectoral relationships around responsibility, interest and governance.
- ***Issues related to project management:*** therein the use of integrated project management techniques for planning, risk management and decision making.

This single theoretical framework helps to illuminate the intricacies of coordination behaviors and their application for multi-organizational interactions particularly in developing countries where institutional constraints, limited resources and governance issues add another layer of complexity. The framework will emphasize that three major elements are crucial to the operation of the coordination: a "strategic base", "organizational structures" and "coordination methods" that are effective, "implementations processes" that are streamlined, and "systems for continuing learning".

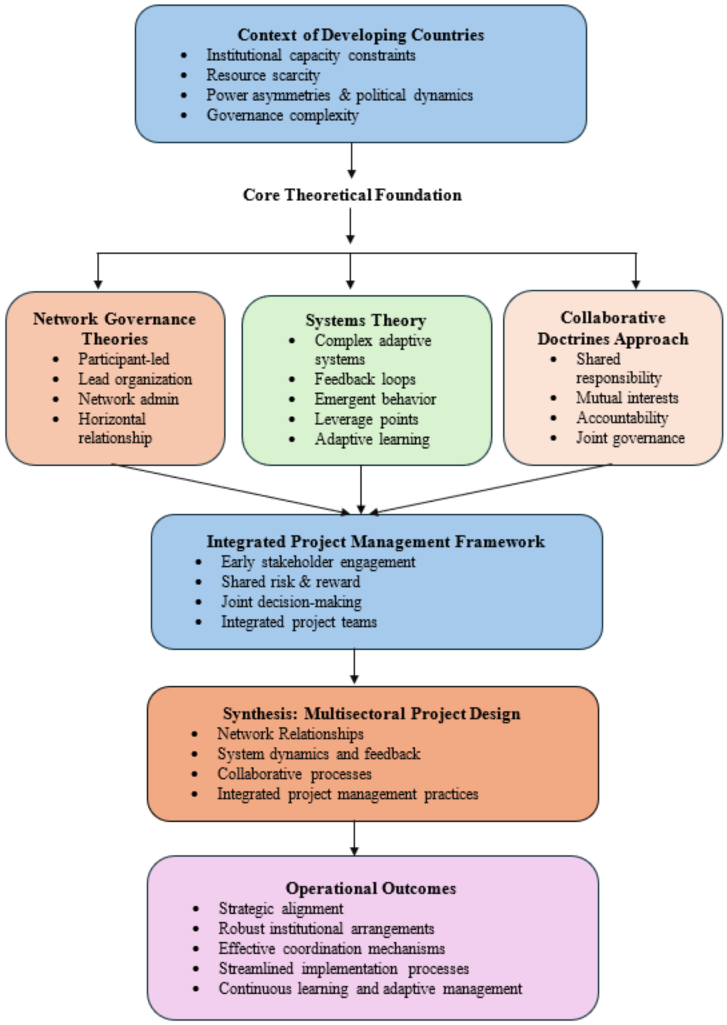

Fig 1: Theoretical framework for multisectoral projects design

4 Methodology

This study provides a comprehensive technique in which qualitative analysis based on a broad literature survey is joined by empirical investigation using case study analysis to create a framework for the multisectoral project design that can be applied in the developing countries. The study's goal is to move from theory into practice and offer evidence-based policy recommendations (Brady & Davies, 2004).

4.1 Research Design and Flow

The study adopted qualitative approach with literature review and case study analysis (Brady & Davies, 2004). This allows for comprehensive examination of the interdependencies that exist in multisectoral project design, to explore the theoretical aspects in relation to the practical issues and successes of project implementation in a developing country setting (Brady & Davies, 2004). The primary aim is to connect theory, policy making, and practice to provide policy recommendations on the basis of evidence (Brady & Davies, 2004).

Table 1: The methodological flow is conceptualized as follows:

Stage	Description	Primary Contribution
I. Comprehensive Literature Review	A comprehensive evaluation of current theoretical frameworks (e.g., network governance, systems thinking, cross-sector collaboration, integrated project delivery) and policy instruments pertinent to multisectoral coordination in poor countries.	Development of fundamental theoretical understanding and recognition of essential components for efficient multisectoral project design (Brady & Davies, 2004; Bryson et al., 2006).
II. Case Study Analysis	Empirical examination via comprehensive analysis of actual multisectoral project designs. Cases were chosen to exemplify various methodologies, obstacles, and results in the coordination of development interventions in poor nations.	Verification of theoretical frameworks, supply of empirical evidence, and recognition of practical application techniques and obstacles (Brady & Davies, 2004).
III. Integrated Framework Development	Integration of ideas obtained from theoretical research (literature study) with actual evidence (case studies) to develop a complete Multisectoral Project Design Framework.	Creation of a structured framework with five fundamental components: strategic alignment, institutional arrangements, coordination mechanisms, implementation procedures, and learning systems (Brady & Davies, 2004).
IV. Policy Implications and Recommendations	Development of evidence-based policy insights and actionable suggestions derived from the established framework, intended to improve the efficacy of multisectoral project design in developing nations.	Providing pragmatic recommendations for policymakers and development practitioners to tackle difficulties and capitalize on possibilities in multisectoral cooperation (Brady & Davies, 2004).

4.2 Data Collection

Literature Review: To identify current theoretical models, policy instruments and practical challenges to support multi-sectoral collaboration, a comprehensive and systematic review of the literature was carried out (Brady & Davies, 2004). This included a range of disciplines which offer complementary perspectives on the effective inter-actor dynamics which could emerge when dealing with complex issues (Bryson et al., 2006) such as:

- ***Network Governance Theory:*** Provides useful theoretical background concerning the significance of horizontal interactions and cooperative arrangements in the interdependent relationships between actors in an organisation (Provan & Kenis, 2007).

- ***Cross-Sector Collaboration Theory:*** Emphasizes the need for collaboration among companies of various industry sectors and highlights the essential elements of successful collaborations, including shared responsibility, common goals, accountability mechanisms, and joint governance (Bryson et al., 2015; Selsky & Parker, 2005).
- ***Systems Theory:*** views developmental challenges as systemic and systemic interventions rather than sector-specific interventions as needed, emphasizing system dynamics, feedback processes and leverage points (1941-2001; Diana, 2008; Senge, 2006).
- ***Integrated Project Delivery Models:*** Deliver detailed and practical theories on how to manage complex projects that involve multiple parties, parties outside of the organization and involve involving stakeholders in projects with their risks and rewards as well as in collective decision making (Kent & Becerik-Gerber, 2010).

Case Study Analysis: Empirical data were obtained through case study analysis with the use of real-world case studies, where the projects' designs are examined in detail. These studies revealed various techniques, issues and outcomes that enabled development projects to collaborate (Brady & Davies, 2004). These scenarios were selected both because they illuminate regional differences and connections between sectors, as well as possibilities for coordination (Brady & Davies, 2004). The cases that were looked at are:

- The Bangladesh Rohingya Refugee Response is a case study of how various sectors can respond swiftly and collaboratively without compromising on the humanitarian needs while maintaining a focus on host-community relationships and long-term development.
- The India Integrated Project Delivery in Infrastructure provides learning on how to implement collaborative project delivery methods, drawing on experiences of institutional, regulatory and cultural barriers in the developing world.
- The Kenya Locally-Led Climate Action Project is an example of an initiative where various governance levels can collaborate and activities are locally owned.

4. 3 Data Analysis and Framework Development

The theoretical study (literature review) and empirical data (case studies) led to the formulation of a detailed Multisectoral Project Design Framework for developing countries (Brady & Davies, 2004). This paradigm systematically integrates scholarly insights, policy implications, and pragmatic execution strategies, structured around five core components:

1. Strategic Alignment: The foundation of good multisectoral project design, involving a shared vision, common goals and strategies to inform various organizational actors (Bryson et al., 2015). This includes mapping and analyzing stakeholders, working together to define problems, setting common goals, and making sure that strategies are in line with each other (Brady & Davies, 2004).
2. Institutional Arrangements: Defined by strong policy frameworks that set clear coordinating mechanisms, roles and responsibilities, and accountability structures that can bring together different organizational actors with different missions, cultures, and ways of doing things (Brady & Davies, 2004).

3. Coordination Mechanisms: Showing how hard it is to make contradictory ideas, organizational cultures, operational procedures, and accountability frameworks function together (Brady & Davies, 2004). These systems need to be flexible enough to adapt to changing environments (Brady & Davies, 2004).
4. Implementation Processes: Dealing with structural, institutional, and operational problems in developing countries. This includes dealing with problems including broken institutional frameworks, too many agencies doing the same thing, not enough ways to coordinate, limited institutional ability, and worries about capacity building and technical support (Brady & Davies, 2004).
5. Learning Systems: Putting together solutions that have been tested for multisectoral projects to find out how well coordinating mechanisms work and what happens when different interventions work together (Brady & Davies, 2004; Kusek & Rist, 2004). This involves an adaptive administration which may be modified in response to changes in circumstances (Brady & Davies, 2004).

This all-encompassing method offers evidence-based policy implications and practical suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of multisectoral project design in developing countries (Brady & Davies, 2004).

5. Multisectoral Project Design Framework

According to the theoretical underpinnings and evidence that has been growing due to this study, the subsequent section will offer a detailed framework of multisectoral project designing in developing nations that considerately connects the theoretical knowledge, policy provisions, and the practical application provisions. The above structure will include the five fundamental elements that reflect the significant aspects of multisector coordination, i.e., strategic alignment, institutional arrangements, coordination mechanisms, the implementation processes, and the learning systems.

5.1 Strategic Alignment Component

Strategic alignment is the basis of the existence of an effective multisectoral project design where a common vision, shared goals, and different strategies orienting towards different organizational actors are developed with various official mandates, priorities, and approaches to operations (Bryson et al., 2015). It is also this element that encompasses such aspects as stakeholder mapping and analysis, shared definition of the problem, mutual objective setting, and a synchronization of strategies that would allow to develop a sufficient framework of coordinated action (Gray, 1996).

Stakeholder mapping and analysis is the systematic identification of the actors, their analysis based on their capabilities and interests, and the analysis of their trends and effects of administration relationships and evaluation of these, depending on the collaborative process (Freeman, 2010). The stakeholder mapping results in developing country setting should consider the complicated political processes, informal power systems, the culture, and resource limitation so that the actors involved can run their behaviors (Brinkerhoff, 2002). To carry out effective stakeholder analysis, formal organizational mandates, and informal relations, power perspective and incentive structures are given attention to which impacts on collaborative behavior (Eden and Ackermann, 1998).

Shared problem definition encompasses joint routines that facilitate different actors to acquire a mutual picture on development issues, their root causes and systemic interrelations (Bryson et al., 2015). Particularly, it is applicable within the context of the developing countries, where the issues of complex development are more likely to have numerous and interconnected causes, which need to be addressed in different sectors through coordinated intervention (Ramalingam, 2013). Problem defining processes should provide sufficient ground to motivate all parties involved and they should also balance the voice (Roberts, 2000).

The joint objective forms will involve collaborative methods that focus on the translation of mutual problem insights into specific, measurable, realistic, and attainable objectives that coordinate activities based on various organizational interests and capabilities (Bryson et al., 2015). It has to achieve a balancing act between the shared goals and sectoral donation as well as making joint goals tangible to be executed and assessed (Gray, 1996). It has been found out that the process of objective setting is an iterative process which necessitates the process to be repeated and refined as the level of understanding and circumstances keeps varying (Ansell and Gash, 2008).

1. Case Study Analysis

This part does the detailed analyses of multisectoral project design styles by country case studies illustrating dissimilar approaches, difficulties and scenario of results to coordinate development interventions. They have been chosen because the cases provide an insight into regional variances, sector relations, and coordination strategies. They hence offer an extremely important input concerning the actual implementation of the theoretical model that this study produces.

6.1 Case Study 1: Bangladesh Rohingya Refugee Response

An example of such complex multisectoral coordination problem is the Bangladesh Rohingya refugee response, where a quick mobilization of various organization members is conducted in an effort to meet the humanitarian demand and balance the issues of host-community relationships and longer-term developmental factors (Inter-Sector Coordination Group, 2020). There was a need to coordinate government agencies, UN organizations, INGOs, local organizations, and donor agencies in addressing the immediate humanitarian issues and in being resilient towards the long term and developing capacity in response.

The former Site Management Site Development (SMSD) coordination mechanism of the sector, therefore, offers a prime example of how the multisectoral coordination mechanisms might function with the purpose of connecting the objectives of protection, transition, and recovery with the community involvement in an anarchically governed framework (Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster, 2021). The mechanism of coordination established firm roles and responsibilities among each of the participating organizations and yet, left the flexibility to change as and when the environment changed and new demands were created.

The Bangladesh response had attained strategic alignment by means of shared need assessment, joint strategic planning processes, and frequent coordination meetings, in which various actors could form a shared understanding of key areas in which they needed to intervene and to coordinate their interventions (Inter-Sector Coordination Group, 2020). Nonetheless, the realization of strategic alignment was an ongoing exercise of striking balance between humanitarian values against government values, different organizational mandates, and protection of donor needs and made attempts in ensuring success in implementation.

This was changing the institutional forms of coordination as the response went on and changes began with the emergency forms of coordination but now increasingly shifted to the more organized forms of governance when the response became steady (Inter-Sector Coordination Group, 2020). The coordination structure was overloaded with formal structures, coordination group structures, technical working groups, and information management systems as opposed to informal relationships, which made fast communication possible in addressing coordinated problem-solving.

Among the interesting models was Women`s Participation Project, that model was a prototype of expanding the participation of women and adolescent girls, based on the systematic integration of women committee activities in the mainstream activities of SMSD, such as coordination, operations, community work, and communications (Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster, 2021). This practice demonstrates that multisectoral coordination is able to give attention to inclusive goals without affecting the efficiency of operations.

Fig 2: Rohingya refugee response, Bangladesh. Arial view of Rohingya camps in Kutupalong-Balukhali expansion site, Source: Source: https://rohingyaresponse.org

6.2 Case Study 2: India Integrated Project Delivery in Infrastructure

Infrastructure projects experience in India provides good insights on how to implement collaborative method of delivering projects using their own experiences of institutional constraints, regulatory framework and organizational cultures unique to the developing world (Khanna et al., 2021). The case offers some promising aspects of collaborative project delivery models and some of the practical pitfalls of applying such a model to settings where there are minimal prior experiences in the institute of multi-organizational project management.

According to research, the use of IPD in Indian infrastructure projects facilitates at least a greater level of stakeholder coordination, transparency, and cost saving at every phase and process of development and management of risks within project management (Khanna et al., 2021). These were to be implemented through early stakeholder engagement processes where there is planning togetherness and sharing of risks and rewards structures where organizational interests are aligned and integrated project teams, which eases communication and coordination during implementation.

Nonetheless, there were significant impediments of the IPD implementation in India, especially the resistance to change by traditional project management players; scarcity of experience and competence in delivering projects through collaboration; inadequate awareness among project owners and government bodies; and, consequently, the lack of standard set of contractual relations that could be implemented with the help of collaborative project delivery model (Khanna et al., 2021). These obstacles mirror the larger struggles one would have in attempting to introduce new venture projects of project management in an environment of well-established institutional settings and organizational culture.

The strategic alignment recorded in the IPD projects included a series of stakeholder engagement activities using which diverse actors grew to have a common understanding of project goals, provision of shared solutions, and benefits sharing agreements (Khanna et al., 2021). This has been hard especially because of the large involvement of actors such as the government agencies, contractors in the private sector, consulting firms and financial institutions that had contrasting organizational cultures and operating processes.

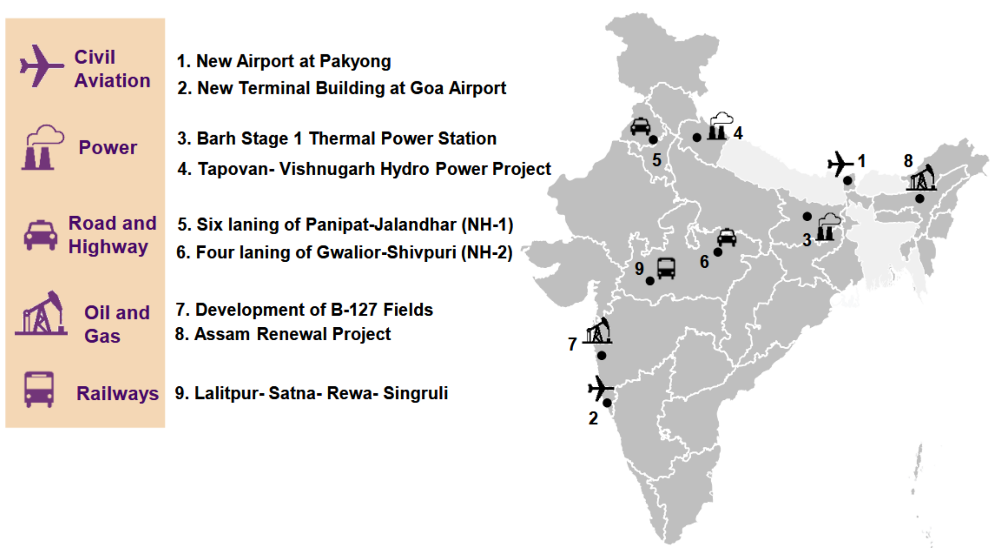

Figure 3: India Integrated Project Delivery in Infrastructure Source: Project Management Institute [PMI] & KPMG, 2019

6.3 Case Study 3: Kenya Locally-Led Climate Action Project

Kenya Locally-Led Climate Action Project is one image of a whole-of-society response to complex development issues, which entails coordinating top-to-bottom at multiple levels of government, between civil organizations, and community groups (World Bank, 2021). The project marks an operational example of multisectoral coordination at varying levels of governance with the process upheld by interventions owned by the local community.

The Plan welcome whole-of-society in that it creates a system of joint decision making between the government and communities and focuses on the vulnerable and disadvantaged communities and applies examples locally to inform national policy (World Bank, 2021). The approach presupposes that adaptation to climate should be a concerted effort on the sectoral and governance levels with a simultaneous stimulation of local ownership and community engagement in the process of decision-making.

The Kenya project had been strategically aligned by involving the participation of the communities, local governments, and national agencies in the process of planning the projects thus creating a common vision of the risks associated with the climatic condition and giving priorities to adaptations without negating local knowledge and community preferences (World Bank, 2021). The alignment process demanded sound balancing of technical skills, on top of the local knowledge, national policy frameworks, against communal priorities, and the top-down coordination and bottom-up participation.

Figure 4: The World Bank's three LLCA Design Features are derived from the eight LLA Principles (Source: World bank, 2024)

6.4 Summary of Case Studies for the Multisectoral Project Design Framework

The three case studies together validate the multisectoral project design framework by demonstrating the operation of strategy alignment, institutional arrangements, coordination mechanisms, implementation processes, and learning systems in diverse developing-country contexts. The response to the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh is an example of flexible and inclusive coordination in times of humanitarian need. Quick aid and long-term rehabilitation efforts were supported by collaborative needs assessments, flexible institutional frameworks and community participation. As demonstrated in the Indian infrastructure case, the IPD approach offers several advantages for strategic alignment, transparency and efficiency through the early engagement of stakeholders and through the application of a shared risk/reward structure. Meanwhile, it demonstrates the challenges of collaboration due to institutional rigidity and capacity constraints. The Kenya Locally-Led Climate Action Project is a representative example of a holistic society-based strategy that combines technical competency with local goals, and demonstrates how sustainable learning, effective governance on multiple levels and community ownership can help to achieve success (Table 2). These experiences show that for a multisectoral project to be successful, stakeholders and goals must be aligned in a way that works for each situation, institutional structures must be flexible, coordination mechanisms must be strong, and everyone must be willing to learn all the time to deal with complexity and uncertainty.

Table 2: Checklist for multisectoral project design framework based on case studies

Framework Component	Checklist Item	Bangladesh (Rohingya Response)	India (IPD Infrastructure)	Kenya (Locally-Led Climate Action)	Remarks / Evidence
Strategic Alignment	Common vision and shared goals	✓	✓	✓	Joint assessments and planning across sectors
	Stakeholder mapping and analysis	✓	✓	✓	Government, NGOs, donors, private sector, communities
	Joint problem definition	✓	✓	✓	Humanitarian needs, infrastructure risks, climate vulnerabilities
Institutional Arrangements	Clearly defined roles and responsibilities	✓	✓	✓	SMSD coordination, IPD governance, multilevel institutions
	Flexible and adaptive governance structures	✓		✓	Strong flexibility in Bangladesh and Kenya; regulatory rigidity in India
Coordination Mechanisms	Formal coordination platforms and committees	✓	✓	✓	Coordination clusters, IPD teams, joint forums
	Information sharing and communication systems	✓	✓	✓	Meetings, reporting tools, shared data systems
Implementation Processes	Early stakeholder involvement	✓	✓	✓	Early engagement in planning and implementation
	Integrated planning and execution		✓	✓	Emergency context constrained integration in Bangladesh
Learning Systems	Monitoring, evaluation, and feedback	✓		✓	Learning-by-doing; limited formal learning in India
	Adaptive management and iterative improvement	✓		✓	Policy adjustment, community learning, project refinement

7. Policy Implications and Recommendations

Based on the findings of theoretical analysis, empirical evidence, and case study of this research, some of the main implications in the policies are presented, with the subsequent key recommendations being made on how to enhance the effectiveness of multisectoral project design in developing nations. These recommendations have been summarized as the five parts of the framework which encompass both a system level policy reforms and the specific implementation plans on ensuring that effective coordination is established within the framework of challenges facing the developing nations.

7.1 Strategic Alignment Policy Recommendations

Policymakers must aim at creating systematic procedures of formulation of common strategic frameworks as a measure of offering the direction of multisectoral coordination considering the multiple interests of organizations, as well as accept the imperfection of sectoral requirements (Bryson et al., 2015). This would entail the setting up of capacities in facilitation and communication with stakeholders and the development of collaborative planning instruments, which have the ability to bring disparate actors together to build a shared conception of development issues and the collective way to overcome them.

The models of national development planning processes require redesigning in order to clearly consider the requirements of multi-sectoral coordination, cross-cutting issues identification, coordination mechanisms specification and designation of resources available to perform coordination activities (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2011). This suggests that the development planning framework must go beyond traditional thought processes of thinking on a sectoral basis with recognition of the interrelationship of development issues and need to resolve them in unison.

Government agencies must come up with incentive structures that encourage the cooperation between organizations and between sectors but leave efficiency and accountability in the sector intact in organizations (Peters, 1998). This can entail changes to performance measurement systems, promotion systems and resource allocation systems that, as matters stand, favor achievement in individual sectors as compared to that of collaboration.

The international development agencies are required to change their programming and vehicles of funding to multitask coordination requirements such as joint programming strategies, pooled-funding designs and joint accountability designations which could incentivize collaboration of the recipient organizations (Craig and Porter, 2006). This will entail an abandonment of project-linked financing scheme in favour of longer-term and therefore more adaptable scheme of raising funds which will be able to contribute to the continuity of coordination work.

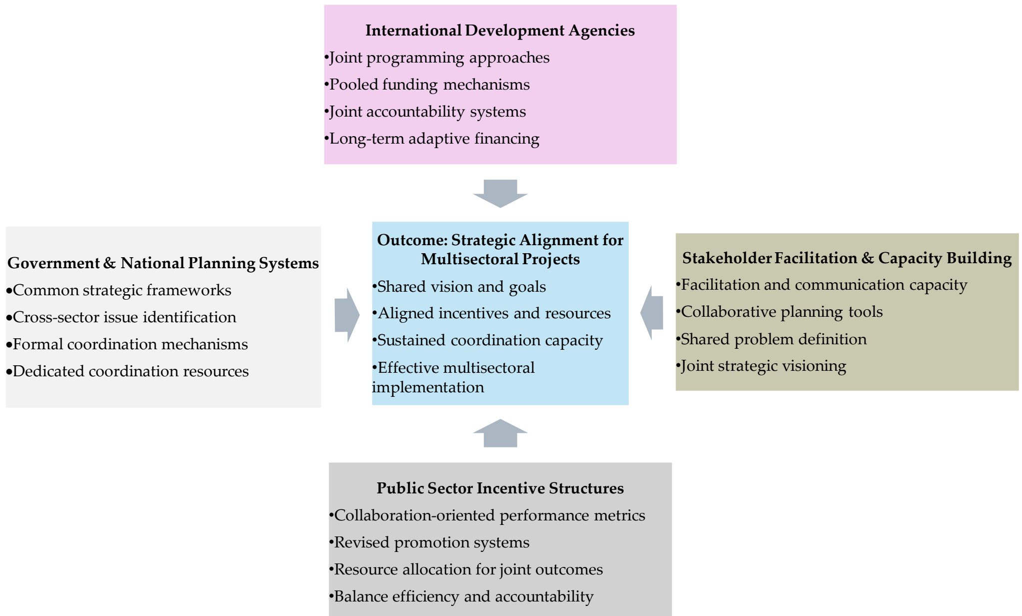

Figure 5: Policy Recommendations for Multisectoral Project

8. Discussion

The contribution of this research study is the evidence that different complexities are to be observed in multisectoral project design and implementation in developing nations where enormous potentials are evident as well as the find that enormous challenges accompany the coordinated development intervention (Kumar, 1996). This evidence, therefore, indicates that as much as the concept of multisectoral approaches have enormous advantages when it comes to the management of complex development issues, their effective application necessitates systematic consideration in which concepts, policy frameworks and real-world implementation strategies are systematically applied according to the realities of a particular situation.

The theoretical scope of this paper shows that the multisectoral project may not be designed effectively relying on individual theoretical frameworks but must combine various perceptions (Bryson et al., 2015). Although the network governance theory offers critical perspectives on how horizontal coordination can be achieved, this is to be combined with systems thinking orientations that tackle complexity and emergence, collaborative governance orientations that deal with multi-organizational governance issues and integrated project management orientations that lead to the practical implementation (Provan and Kenis, 2008; Meadows, 2008; Ansell and Gash, 2008).

The theoretical synthesis has implications on the conceptual and design procedure of multisectoral projects. Its implication is that successful coordination in multisectoral projects means that focus would be given to networks relationship, system dynamics, and collaborative processes and project management concerns at the same time and not in sequence as these various aspects are commonly addressed (Williams & Hummelbrunner, 2011). The challenge of the integration must be of much concern in a developing country, whereby the limited capacity, scarcity of resources and failure of institutions bring in extra layers of complexity that must be considered during project design and implementation.

The policy analysis has shown that to achieve multisectoral coordination, a supportive policy environment is needed that operates at different levels of institutional settings and not at isolated policy interventions only (World Health Organization, 2019). Based on everything that is known, to be successful in multisectoral coordination the constitutional and legal contexts must be able to reflect and legitimize the collaborative arrangements, as the administrative systems need to offer operational guidance and support, resource allocation mechanisms must support the financing of coordination, having accountability mechanisms that weigh coordination requirements against organizational autonomy needs.

Conversely, such analyses also lead to the discovery of the issues that accompany the establishment of these supportive policy environments in the context of developing countries, where low institutional capacity, adverse resource endowment, political unpredictability, and conflicting priorities complicate the implementation process of the comprehensive policy reform (Grindle, 2004). This introduces the idea that the future policy formulation on multisectoral coordination must be both incremental and adaptive, a process which will accumulate momentum and ability to coordinate in the longer term as in the case of immediate improvements.

9. Conclusion

Multi sectoral project design and implementation in the third world countries has been researched in detail where special consideration has been laid on the theoretical approach, policy frameworks, practical implementation methods and empirical evidence available in different countries. According to the research, though multisectoral approaches can be employed to provide enormous opportunities when it comes to addressing the complexity of development issues, their application must consider both the technicalities of coordination as well as design and management of projects, in many ways.

Theoretically, the discussion has demonstrated that multi sector projects could be better planned in case they entailed inputs of network governance theory, systems thinking, collaborative governance structures, and concerted strategies in project management compared to the option of relying on a single region of interest. This combined theoretical foundation provides some important hints as to the complexity of coordination behaviors and implementation space of practice in multi-organizational interactions especially in developing nations where both institutional capacities, resource limitation, and governance issues contribute to inter-organizational issues.

The policy analysis consequently shows that supportive policy environments should concentrate on the full package of legal, regulatory, institutional structures, resource distribution and accountability mechanisms which enable and legitimize multisectoral coordination whilst still upholding the autonomy and mandates of organizations. But much more important is the reality of the creation of these encouraging conditions in developing countries whose poor institutional capacities, constraints where resources are scarce and competing priorities retard their even being able to consider a wholesome policy reform agenda.

The implementation analysis does go on to show how a high degree of coordination success needs high degree of management capability in terms of collaborative leadership, adaptive management, stakeholder engagement and organizational learning capabilities that are beyond the conventional ways of project management. In addition, evidence has also specifically indicated the fact that these capabilities cannot be generated by imposition of temporary technical support programs but instead requires long-term commitments and investments in capacity building, institutional fortification and coming up with optimal practices of learning systems.

As can be seen in the case study analysis, the context factors have a very strong impact on the effectiveness of coordination and define the necessity of the adaptive and situational approaches that would be capable of adapting to the local conditions and, at the same time, diffusing the corresponding theoretical and practical knowledge. The examples demonstrate not only the opportunities of multisectoral coordination, but what hinders it and based on the examples, what is a success and what remains a barrier to getting the efficiency of coordination.

The integrated framework generated in the field of this study will be the systematic means of correlation of the theoretical base, policy processes, and potential implementation approaches in a manner that will underscore the strategic footing, organizational arrangements, coordination systems, implementation patterns, and learning systems. Successfully, this is an approach to fill the critical gap between the theoretical understanding and offering practical recommendations of implementation of the same to the policymakers and development practitioners, including among the international organizations.

The article adds to the body of literature by offering a comprehensive development of the method of designing multisectoral projects, in a systematic and organized way of connecting theoretical understanding with the practical implication of implementing them together addressing certain challenges that prevail within the setting of the developing country. The above question has resulted in the enlightenment of the dynamics of coordination and has also provided evidence-based recommendations that will enhance the sustainability and efficacy of multipolar projects.

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