

Localism for Leave No One Behind (LNOB) Groups Rights

A Proposed Social Protection Governance Model

Presentation by

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Background of the Study

- Social Protection has significant influence to reduce the rate poverty.
- Contributing of SSNPs to a reduction in the poverty rate from 31.5% in 2010 to 18.7% in 2022 (Hasib, 2024).
- Incentives of SSNP in Bangladesh: Feeding, cash, service, work incentives.
- Bangladesh incorporate LNOB in their SSNPs for LG functions (Malik, 2017; GED, 2020). Such as-
 - collaboration with NGOs,
 - enhancing planning capacity,
 - awareness raising for local intervention.
- Despite positive output the women and other vulnerable groups (Hijras, Dalits) are still neglected in LNOB principle (Dissanayake, 2024; WB, 2019a).
- However, the rise of youth class and recent political shift raised serious questions in terms of role of local government in ensuring the participation of LNOB groups.
- There are need for rethinking the approach of inclusion of LNOB Groups at Local Government.

Localism

- Localization or Localism may understand differently.
- But in this study I give more emphasis on the three kinds of localism are set out in Baguios et al. (2021):
 1. localization of resources (which follows the money),
 2. localization of agency (which follows the decision-making) and
 3. localization of 'ways of being' (that is, where practices, approaches and knowledge of local actors are adopted, even where unfamiliar to the donor).
- This study, in the case of Social Protection my focus more on localization of agency (See the example of Rikta Akhter) to ensure inclusive participation.

Bangladeshi educator Rikta Akter among BBC's 100 inspiring women of 2024

Banu, who worked as a senior staff nurse in Kurigram's Chilmari upazila, struggled to find a school that would accept her daughter, who is autistic and has cerebral palsy



Rikta Akter Banu, founder of the Rikta Akhter Banu Learning Disability School. Collage: BBC

Conceptualizing LNOB

- The principle of "Leaving No One Behind" (LNOB) has been recognized as a foundational step towards creating more equitable societies globally (UNDP, 2018).
- It emphasize that development efforts should reach and benefit all people, especially the most marginalized and vulnerable groups such as women, disable, third-gender, transgender, minorities, etc.
- It mainly focus on:
 - ensuring all people, especially marginalized and vulnerable populations, have access to opportunities, resources, and benefits of development.
 - dismantling the systemic barriers that perpetuate inequality.
 - marginalized groups should not only be recipients of services but also active participants in decision-making processes.
 - equitable distribution of resources.



Source: Global Education Derby

Scope of the Study

The study aims to identify challenges, evaluate existing frameworks, and provide actionable policy-oriented solutions to create inclusive and participatory governance at the local level on following areas:

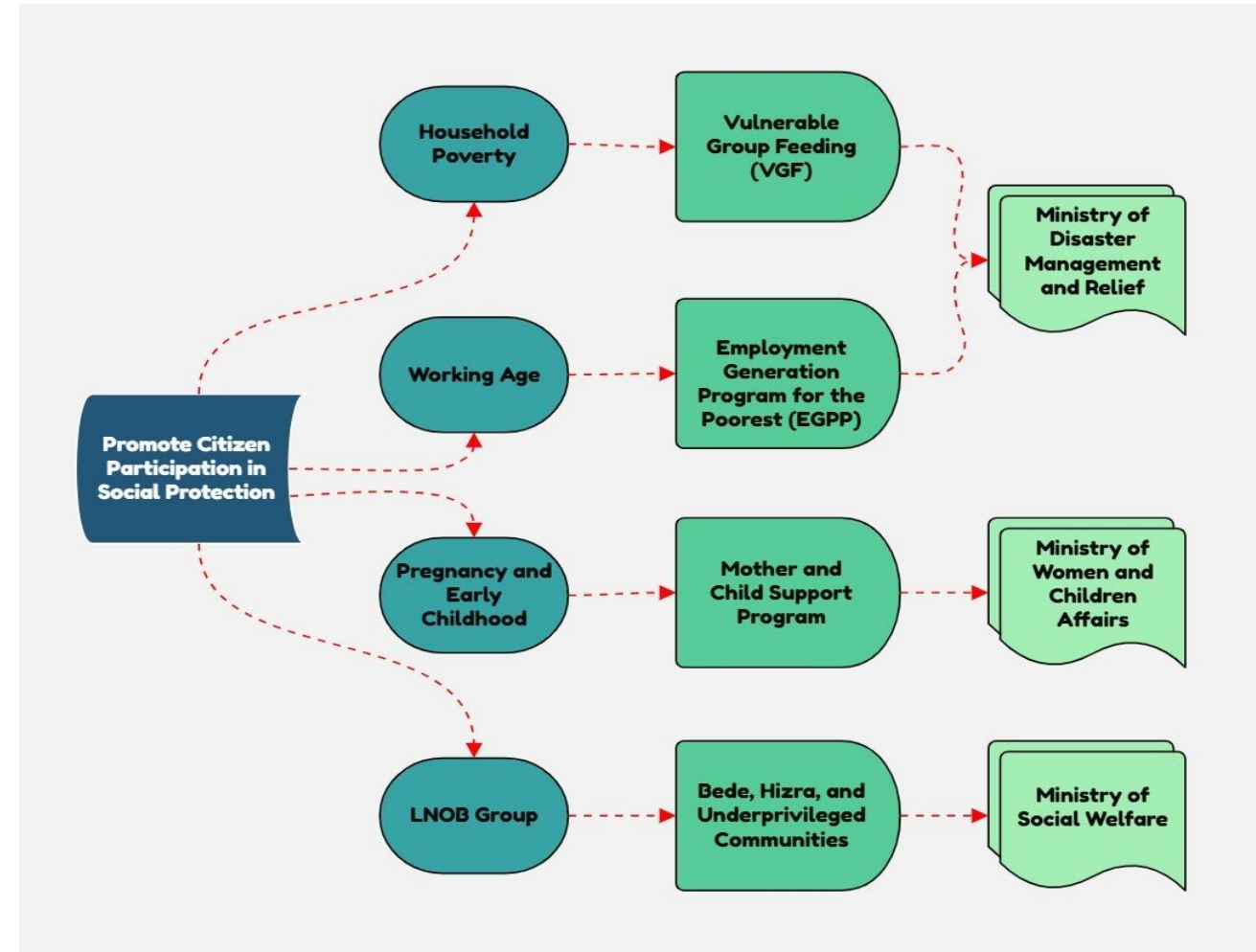
SSNP	Eligibility Criteria	Targeted Beneficiaries	Budget (2024-25)	Amount of Benefit	Payment Cycle
Vulnerable Women Benefit (VWB)	Poor women	10.04 lac.	Tk. 2195.45 Cr.	30 kg Rice/month	Monthly
Employment Generation Program for the Poorest (EGPP)	Landless, low income, poor resource.	5.18 lac.	Tk. 1504.50 Cr.	Tk. 200/day	Hal yearly
Mother and Child Benefit Program (MCBP)	Pregnant women, mother and young children.	16.55 lac.	Tk. 1622.75 Cr.	Tk. 800	Monthly
Improvement of the livelihood of the Bede, Hijra and Disadvantaged Community.	Bede, Hijra and members from other unprivileged group.	3.26 lac.	Tk. 90.22 Cr.	Tk. 500-1200	Quarterly

Table: Detail of Four SSNPs in Bangladesh

Source: Adapted from Ministry of Finance (MoF), Government of Bangladesh (2024)

Rational Behind the Selected Scope of Study

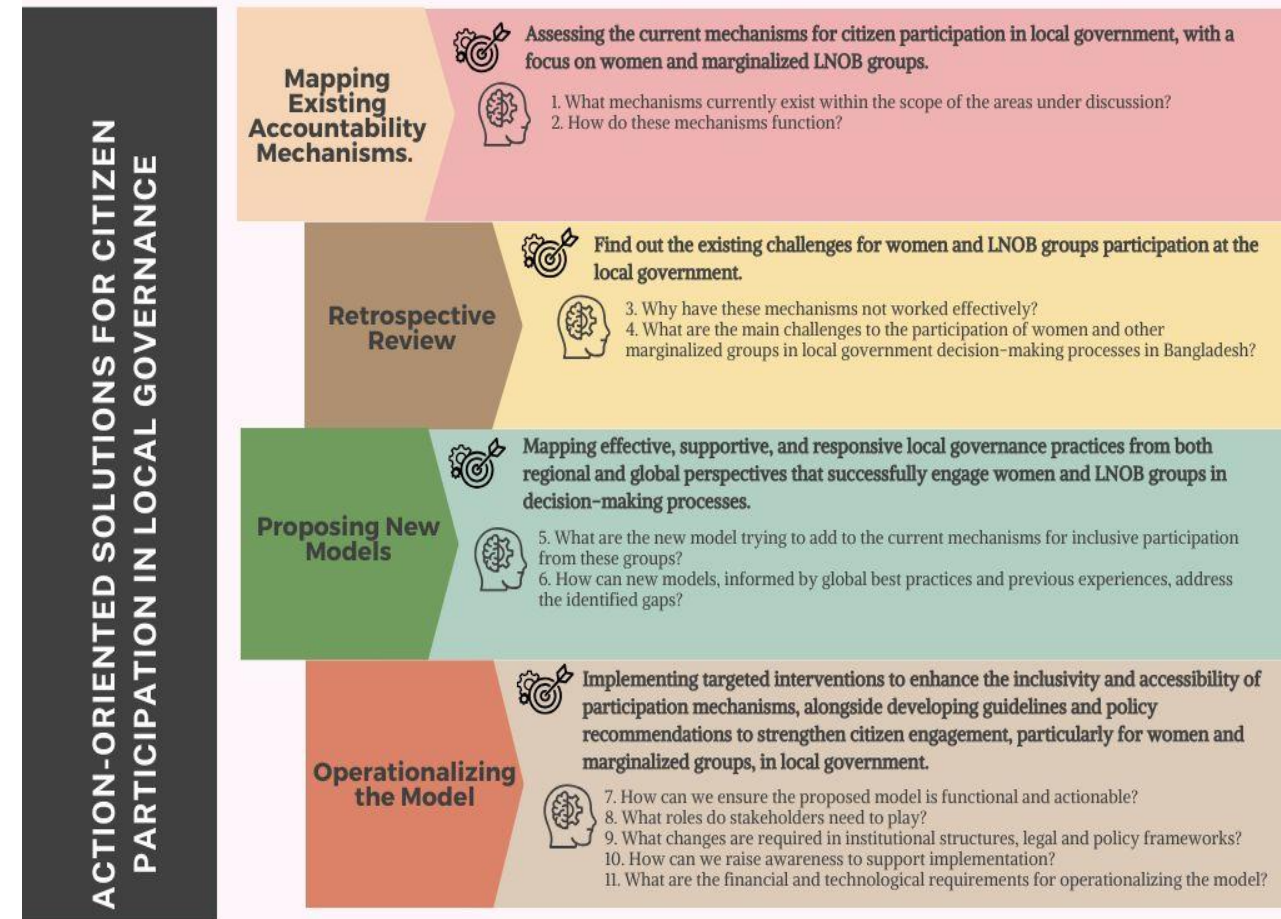
- Vulnerability can vary based on life-cycle stage and implementing ministries.
- Some of them are underexplored
- The focus specifically on women and LNOB group
- Different in terms of Social benefits
- These chosen programs are crucial for improving social and economic inclusion, especially for groups at risk of exclusion.
- Linkage in terms of developing governance model



Outline, Objectives and Relevant Questions

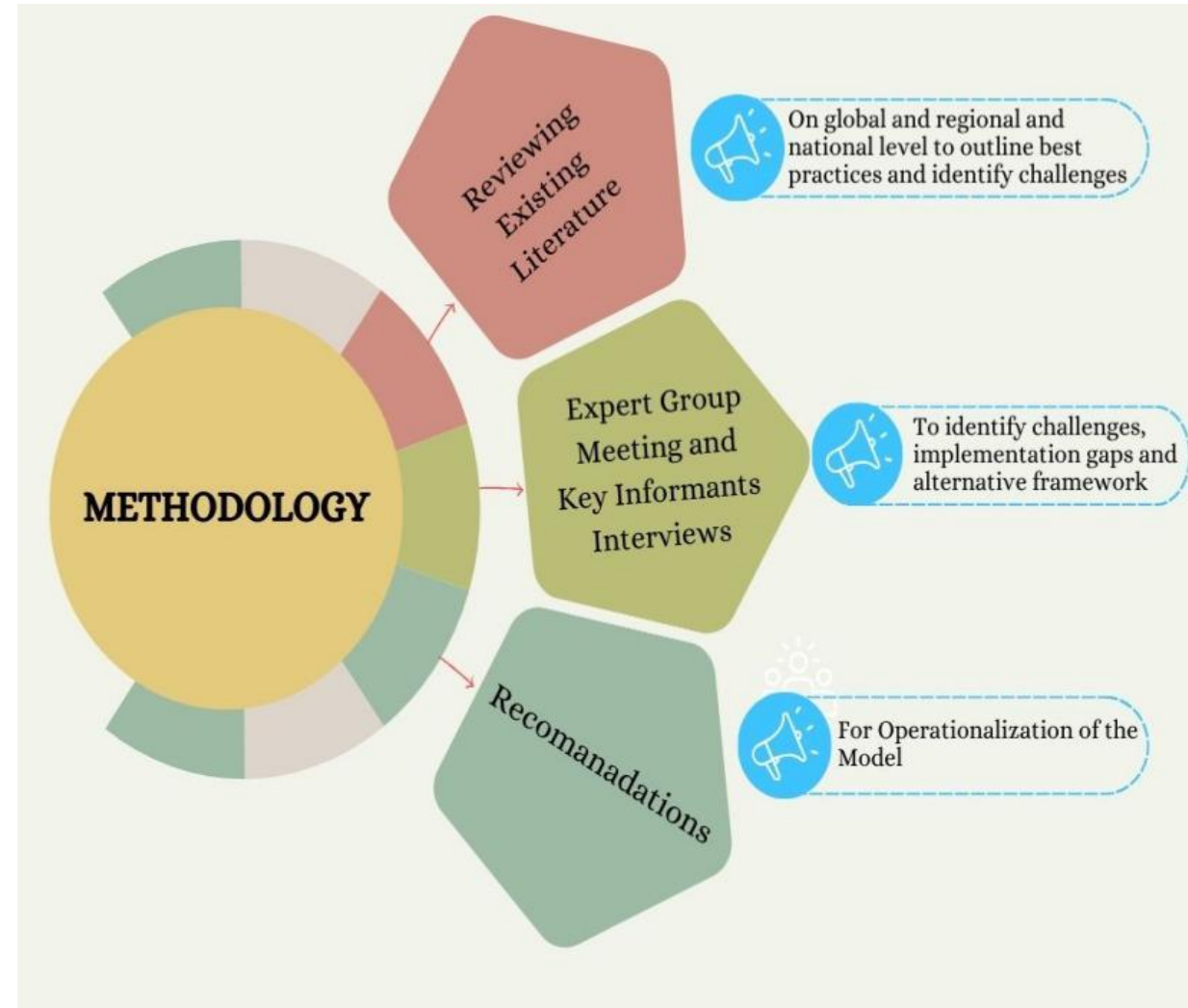
Key objectives are:

- Assessing the current mechanisms for citizen participation in local government, with a focus on women and marginalized LNOB groups.
- Find out the existing challenges for women and LNOB groups participation at the local government.
- Mapping effective, supportive, and responsive local governance practices from both regional and global perspectives that successfully engage women and LNOB groups in decision-making processes.
- Implementing targeted interventions to enhance inclusivity and accessibility of participation mechanism for operationalizing the model.



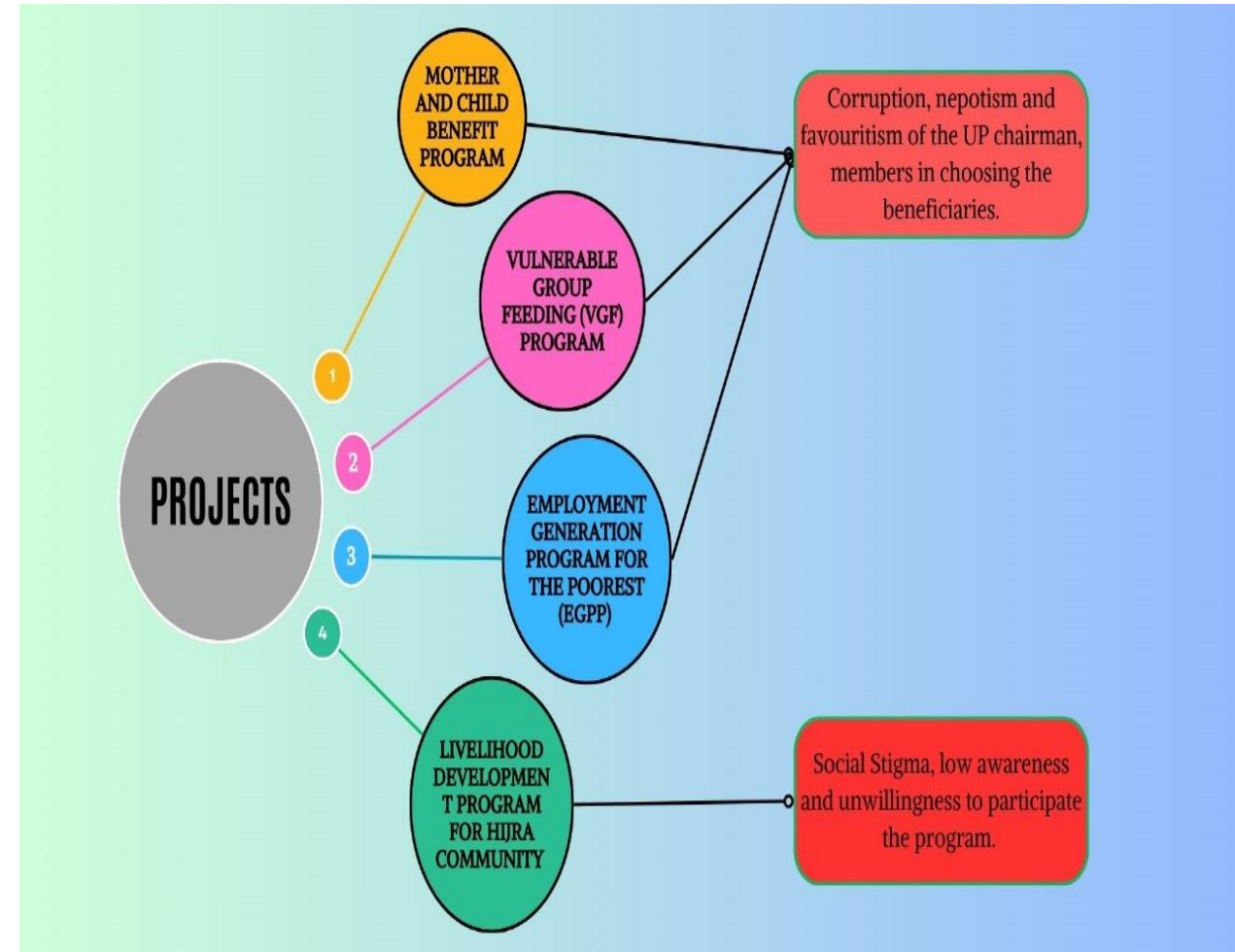
Methodology

- The study conducted using based on both secondary and primary data collection method.
- Secondary data were collected mainly through desk research reviewing significant literature such as articles, reports, laws, website from global, regional and local perspective to identify exiting mechanism, challenges and best practices.
- Primary data were mainly collected through Expert Group Meeting (EGM), and Key Informants Interviews (KII) with LNOB groups, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders.
- Both methods of data collection helped to identify exiting challenges, prepare a proposed citizen centric model and provide recommendations to operationalised model.



Existing Challenges for the Inclusion of LNOB

- Capture and Corruption by Powerful Elites
- Limited scope for citizens participation (Chowdhury, 2017),
- Inadequate accountability and monitoring mechanism (LNOB Network, 2020)
- Top-down approach (Khan et al., 2023),
- Digital Divide
- Hacking on G2P
- Excessive Workload for the Relevant Officials
- Poor Redress System
- 'I Earn Better Rather Inclusion' [Low coverage (Mumtaz & Whiteford, 2017)]
- Adherence to Established Occupation
- Challenges in Adjusting Entitlements
- Identifying the Hijras: Medical test



Best Practices of Similar Types of Programs

Social SafetyNet Programs are very popular among the LNOB groups around the world. It is estimated that approximately 1.5 billion of people are benefited from SSNPs including countries like India, China, USA, Indonesia.

Program	Beneficiaries	Incentives	Remarks
The Masawaat Program of Punjab, Pakistan.	Transgender	Unconditional cash transfer with special focus on aged and disable person (additional amount). Interest-free Microcredit (Up to Rs. 100000). Job opportunities. Free medical service.	Mainstream the group by providing a standard amount of monthly allowance, Promote entrepreneurship, Ensuring a minimum standard of living, Collaboration with Industries, corporation, Health ministry.
Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), Ethiopia,	Vulnerable households who face food insecurity and natural calamities.	Food and Cash transfer.	A realist coping strategy that forecast the need (in terms of calamities) and maintain a good “predictable transfer” during crisis. It provides a flexible framework (value of transfer and number of beneficiaries depend on circumstances of the specific areas). Help to overcome shocks derived from calamities and crisis. Help people to avoid “Harmful Coping Strategies (selling assets)”. Adopt long-term strategy.
Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP), Kenya.	Vulnerable populations in arid and semi-arid regions	Unconditional cash transfers	Region based initiatives (poorest, vulnerable to natural calamities). Designed by considering the resource, food havid and lifestyle of a specific region. Take preemptive measure with the help of technology (satellite). Use of digital payment systems (mobile banking).
The Unified Labour and Employment Subsystem (EMAS), Azerbaijan.	Potential Labourer.	Employment opportunity	Introduced electronic platform that appears as a central hub for employment opportunity and disseminate information transparently. Make the best use of human labour. Well collaboration with different ministries and captained by Local Government division.
The Cash Assistance Program for Pregnant Women and Preschoolers, Laos.	Pregnant women, mother (up to 1000 days of a baby's birth)	Cash transfer	Long term initiative to ensure a sound health of mother and babies. Well collaboration between GOs and NGOs.
The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), Philippines.	Vulnerable households.	Conditional Cash transfer	Beneficiary households are objectively selected based on a Listahanan database, leaving little room for personal or political favoritism. Brings a sustainable development- a family gen enjoy it up to 7 years, and if the objective is not attained the National advisory Committee can extend the period. Conditional on households’ investment in human capital (health, nutrition, and education) and training in environmental resilience. A monthly family development session brings a behavioral change towards poverty and strengthen oversight role.

Proposed Social Protection Governance Model

- Need to Rethink the Governance Model.

A. Restructuring Local Committee for SSNP:

This study proposed a unified union SSNP committee named '**Union Social Safety Net Committee (USSNC)**'.

B. Digital Based Process Mapping Delivery Chain

Union Social Safety Net Committee (USSNC)

The committee should consist of 10–15 members to ensure balanced representation and effective decision-making.

- **Chairperson** of the committee will be Union Parishad (UP) Chairperson (Ex-officio).
- **Secretary:** the Union Parishad Secretary.
- **Two elected members of the Union Parishad (UP)** with mandatory representation of women.
- One **opposition party** (based on parliamentary election at the constituency) member chosen party leader (president) at the Union/Upazila level to ensure transparent selection process.
- **At least two Community Representatives** (e.g., schoolteachers, religious leaders, or senior citizens).
- **One Marginalized Group Representatives** from a vulnerable population (e.g., women, persons with disabilities, or minority groups).
- **One NGO/CSO Representative** from a local NGO or civil society organization active in social development.
- **Two Youth Representatives**, preferably below 25 years, selected from local youth groups. One of them should have at least diploma in IT.
- **One Health or Social Worker** professional involved in community health or social work.
- **One Government Official** representative nominated by the Department of Social Welfare or local government office.
- **One Business Community Representative** from the local business community to promote private sector involvement and local resource mobilization.
- **One Program specific officials** from Upazila provide technical insights.

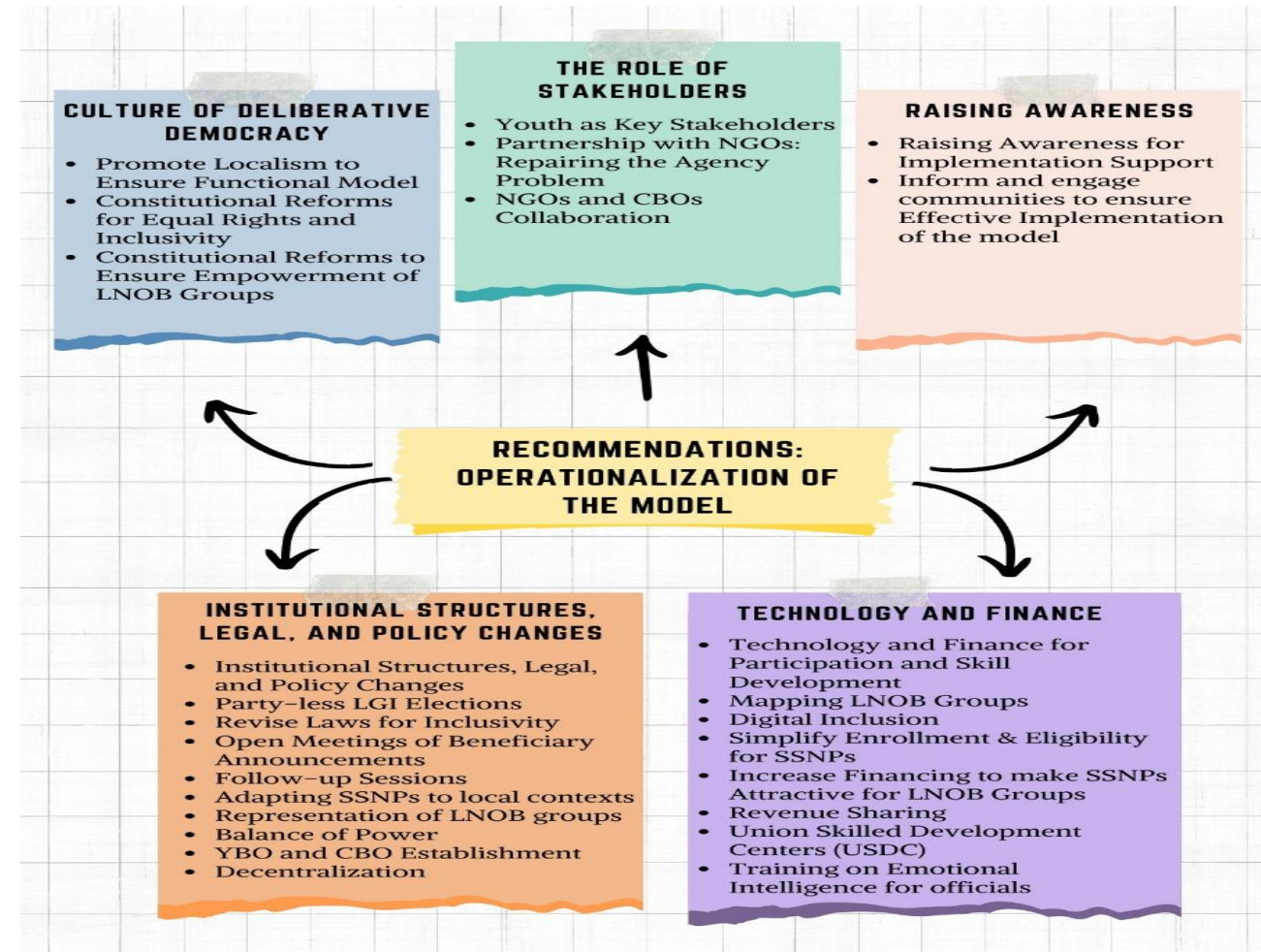
Digital Based Process Mapping Delivery Chain

Stage	Key Process
Outreach & Registration	Inform potential beneficiaries about the program through targeted campaigns (TV, radio, digital platforms, and community outreach). Use localized approaches to ensure marginalized groups (e.g., women, disabled, indigenous communities) are included.
	Enable multiple channels for registration: in-person, online portals, or mobile apps. Also, simplify the process by reducing paperwork and allowing applicants to self-declare basic information initially.
	Validate beneficiary identity using national IDs, biometric systems, or other secure identification tools.
Eligibility Assessment	Define clear, program-specific eligibility rules based on poverty levels, demographic characteristics, or other criteria. Use proxy means tests, community-based targeting, or categorical targeting (e.g., age, disability).
	Cross-check applicants' data with integrated databases (e.g., civil registries, tax records) to verify eligibility. Use automated systems for preliminary validation while involving local committees for community-level oversight.
	Enrol eligible beneficiaries into the program and issue program-specific identification or benefit cards.
Benefit Calculation and Payment	Set clear benefit structures based on family size, vulnerability, or other criteria. Ensure equity and adequacy of benefits to meet program objectives (e.g., nutritional support, income stabilization).
	Use digital platforms (e.g., mobile money, bank transfers) for secure and efficient payments. Also, provide alternatives (cash-in-hand distribution centers) for areas with limited digital access.
	Ensure regular and predictable payment schedules. Use grievance redress mechanisms to address payment delays or errors.
Case Management	Allow beneficiaries to update their data (e.g., change of address, household composition) via user-friendly mechanisms.
	Connect beneficiaries to complementary programs (e.g., health, education, or skilled based training services).
	Monitor conditionalities (e.g., training attendance for conditional cash transfers) using robust data systems.
Grievance and Appeals	Establish accessible mechanisms for beneficiaries to report issues (hotlines, helpdesks, online portals). Based on the report track and resolve grievances in a timely and transparent manner.
	Allow beneficiaries to appeal decisions regarding eligibility or benefit amounts.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Use Management Information Systems (MIS) to track beneficiary data, payment flows, and program performance and monitor key indicators such as coverage rates, payment accuracy, timeliness, and beneficiary satisfaction.
	Conduct rigorous evaluations (e.g., randomized controlled trials) to assess program outcomes and refine policies.
Institutional Support	Develop interoperable digital systems to link multiple social protection programs and avoid duplication.
	Foster partnerships between government agencies, local governments, private sector (e.g., financial service providers), and development partners.
	Train staff and local officials on program operations, technology use, and grievance resolution.

Recommendations: Operationalization of the Model

To operationalization of the proposed model, a massive effort needs to be taken at all levels. Here are some recommendations;

1. **Develop the Culture of Deliberative Democracy to Promote Localism and Ensuring Functional Model.**
2. **The Role of Stakeholders: Participation and Partnership**
3. **Institutional Structures, Legal and Policy Changes.**
4. **Raising Awareness to Support Implementation**
5. **Technology and Finance to Ensure Participation and Develop Skills**



1. Develop the Culture of Deliberative Democracy

- The spirits of 'July Revolution' is fight for equal rights and reduce discrimination.
- Create watchdog that bites.
- Create a pack among youth and relevant stakeholders that ensure localism and citizens rights.
- Constitutional Reforms for equal rights and inclusivity
- Constitutional Reforms to Ensure the Empowerment of LNOB Groups.

2. The Role of Stakeholders: Participation and Partnership

- **Youth as Key Stakeholders: Participation and Awareness Leads to Qualitative Change**
- **Partnership with NGOs: Repairing the Agency Problem**
- **NGOs and CBOs Collaboration**
- **Women and LNOB Groups**
- **Government Officials**

3. Institutional Structures, Legal and Policy Changes

- **Party-less LGI Election for Localization and Revise Laws in terms of educational qualification, running election more than two times, criminal records, etc.**
- **Open Meeting of Beneficiary Announcement: Fostering Social Accountability** at the union level during the final selection process.
- **Follow Up Sessions with the Beneficiaries**
- **Adapting SSNPs to Local Circumstances and avoid one-size-fits-all approach.**
- **Inclusion Through Representation: Clear representation of LNOB Groups based on population size.**
- **From Patriarchy to Polyarchy: A Balance of Power in the LGIs by abolishing** direct elections for mayor or chairman.
- **Youth Based Organization and CBO Establishment** in each ward/village with the help of Ministry of Social Welfare and Ministry of Local Govt and Rural Development & Cooperatives.
- **Decentralization to be Decentralized by Establishing Commission, Coordination and Enhancing Manpower**

4. Raising Awareness to Support Implementation

- Awareness for Implementation Support
- Using all forms of media and local channels
- Inform and Engage Communities to Ensure Effective Implementation of the Model.
- From the government level, attached ministry can send mobile messages and TV advertisement about program and relevant information.

5. Technology and Finance to Ensure Participation and Develop Skills

- To ensure fair and effective distribution of SSNPs, it is essential to properly **document and map the LNOB groups** at the local level.
- **Digital Inclusion and Technology Integration** through a unified “National Database” to centralize beneficiary data, reducing redundancy and improving tracking and resource allocation. Also, need to incorporate “Digital NID” and “Digital Fingerprint” to claim benefits.
- “One-stop Service Centres” should be established in easily accessible locations to provide information and assistance with enrolment to **simplifying the enrolment and eligibility processes.**
- **Increase Finance to Make SSNPs Attractive for the LNOB Groups**
- The local governments should be able to retain a portion of the revenue they generate while sharing a percentage with the central government. This would provide LGIs with more financial autonomy.
- Targeting the working class and LNOB groups such as youth, Hijra, etc, it is important to initiate a Union Skilled Development Centre (USDC) at each union under social welfare or local government. For Example: Hijra or Transgender could suit better as caregiver at foreign countries due to their physical strength.
- To improve the interaction between government officials and marginalized communities like the Hijra and Bede, training on emotional intelligence (EI) should be given to the officials.

Final Remarks

- You won't get any better time for reform.
- Do the necessary reform
- Implement the reform
- Local Solutions for Local problem.

Thank You



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