

Noapara Dissemination Brief

‘Liveable Regional Cities in Bangladesh’ Project

June 2020



Policy suggestions

- ❑ Continue with the Mayor’s strategic plan which includes:
 - Providing proper drainage systems
 - Providing solid waste management
 - Providing regular access to electricity
- ❑ Lower-income brackets in informal settlements should be managed under rehabilitation
- ❑ Put safety measures in place for railway crossings
- ❑ Increase awareness of marrying young and possible accompanying high divorce rate
- ❑ Continue advocating for a by-pass road to divert long haul traffic out of the city centre in order to ease congestion and air pollution
- ❑ Create additional recreation areas for youth and residents
- ❑ Support the establishment of community groups and activities
- ❑ Consider a people centered, youth focus in governmental decision making
- ❑ Consider health and wellbeing of residents in all decision making

The Liveable Regional Cities in Bangladesh project explores what makes regional cities more liveable from the perspective of residents and local stakeholders

The project addresses three intersecting global challenge areas: sustainable cities and communities; long-term environmental change and resilience; and sustainable livelihoods. Mongla and Noapara in south-western Bangladesh were used as case studies.

Using an interdisciplinary approach, the project conducted household surveys (50 middle class and 53 informal settlement dwellers in Noapara), storytelling workshops as well as 20 semi-structured interviews with residents and local stakeholders. The fieldwork for the project was conducted during September and October 2019. The project will disseminate the findings through a short film, photography exhibition and town hall meetings in both target towns.

This dissemination brief shares findings from the field work in Noapara.

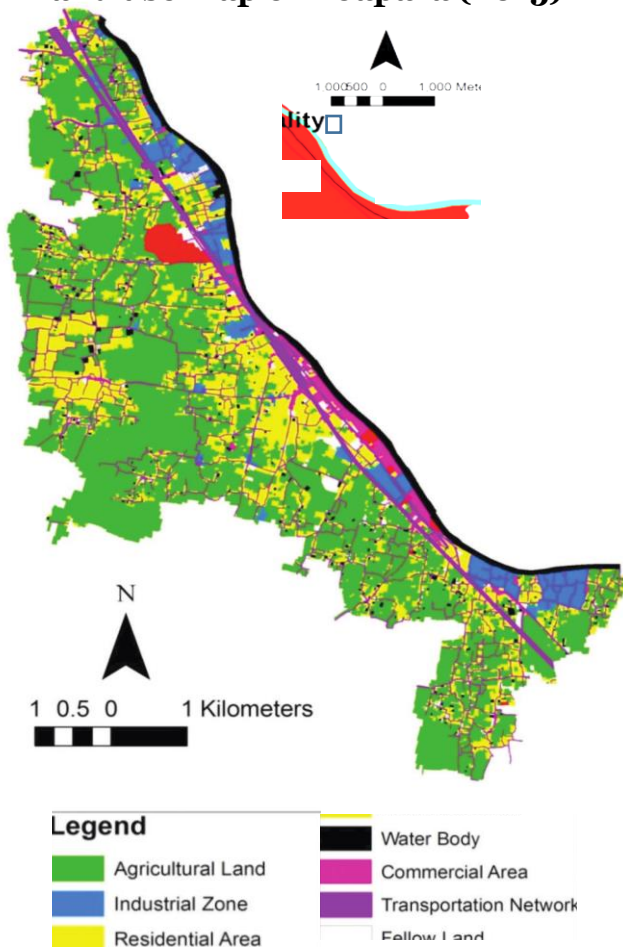


Why Study Regional Cities

Until recently, research and policy attention has focused on mega or capital cities such as Dhaka. There is little research on regional cities with less than 500,000 inhabitants which is where most residents of the global South live including in Bangladesh. Increasingly, migrants are settling in these regional cities. It is unclear who lives in these cities, how residents earn their livelihoods, what are sources of urban resilience and how authorities can manage cities for sustainable futures. This project is essential to understanding components of long term resilience and sustainability of Bangladeshi regional cities.

The Mongla and Noapara municipalities were selected as the case study cities because they present different scenarios for climate change vulnerability and yet both cities are attracting individuals seeking livelihood opportunities. This research is also of relevance to ICCCAD's visions to create climate resilient, migrant friendly secondary cities in Bangladesh.

Land use map of Noapara (2015)



Quotes from Residents

"There are jobs in Noapara"

"The hospital should have enough doctors and medicine so that we do not need to go to Road 250"

"Bangali boys should not be allowed to divorce their wives so easily"

"Noapara will be even better in ten years"

Description of Noapara

Noapara has a population of 170,000 and is located at the southwestern part of Bangladesh, in the district of Jessore and the Division of Khulna. Noapara is a fully functioning city that has robust river, rail and road connections to many parts of the country. It is an important junction for goods and materials being transported to Dhaka. A national transportation road travels through the city. The railway is linked to India. The Bhairav River at Noapara connects Noapara to Chittagong. Noapara is an important port for natural resources. Coal is imported from Indonesia and sand is imported from India and then transported by truck internally within Bangladesh. Noapara also supplies fertilizer to the rest of the country.

There is a strong linkage between the urban, peri urban and rural areas in the Noapara area. There are over 100,000 labourers who come into Noapara for paid labour each day. The jute factory is a large employer as well. Noapara's residents have various employment opportunities and they earn liveable wages. There is a tension due to loss of the agricultural land and industry that employs large numbers of people and provides export income for the nation. Agricultural land is being converted into industrial areas and housing for labourers (rental income) which may be an issue in the future. Though people of Noapara have access to water for drinking and daily usage, only 30% of that water is piped water from the municipality and the rest is tubewell water.

Noapara is perceived by its residents and government officials as being a 'real city' where people want to live and move to.

Positive findings from interviews and surveys

- Residents, stakeholders and the government consider Noapara liveable
- Residents like Noapara
- Noapara is business friendly
- Road infrastructure in the recent years has improved significantly and was mentioned positively by most residents
- Noapara offers a lot of employment through its industries and the port
- Piped, potable water infrastructure is good and reliable
- Natural water sources are fresh with no encroaching salinity

Key issues for Noapara based on interviews, surveys and storytelling workshop

- According to Noapara Municipality, the city is overlooked by the central government
- Local government has limited control over land use change (e.g. conversion of agriculture land to commercial operations)
- The municipality does not have the funds to purchase land for solid waste management and at the present time mostly open dumping is taking place
- Uncertainty of continued land tenure for residents living near railway lines
- Pollution levels are high, close to port site
- Waterlogging resulting from unplanned construction of dams and the huge siltation in adjacent open surface water bodies (e.g. river)
- Inadequate utilities (water supply, drainage and sanitation, electricity) and medical care system
- Drug addiction in some neighbourhoods

Liveability Project Team

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All outputs (Dissemination briefs about Mongla and Noapara, films, survey results and photographs) of the Liveability Project are on the ICCCAD website and the Durham University, IHRR website.

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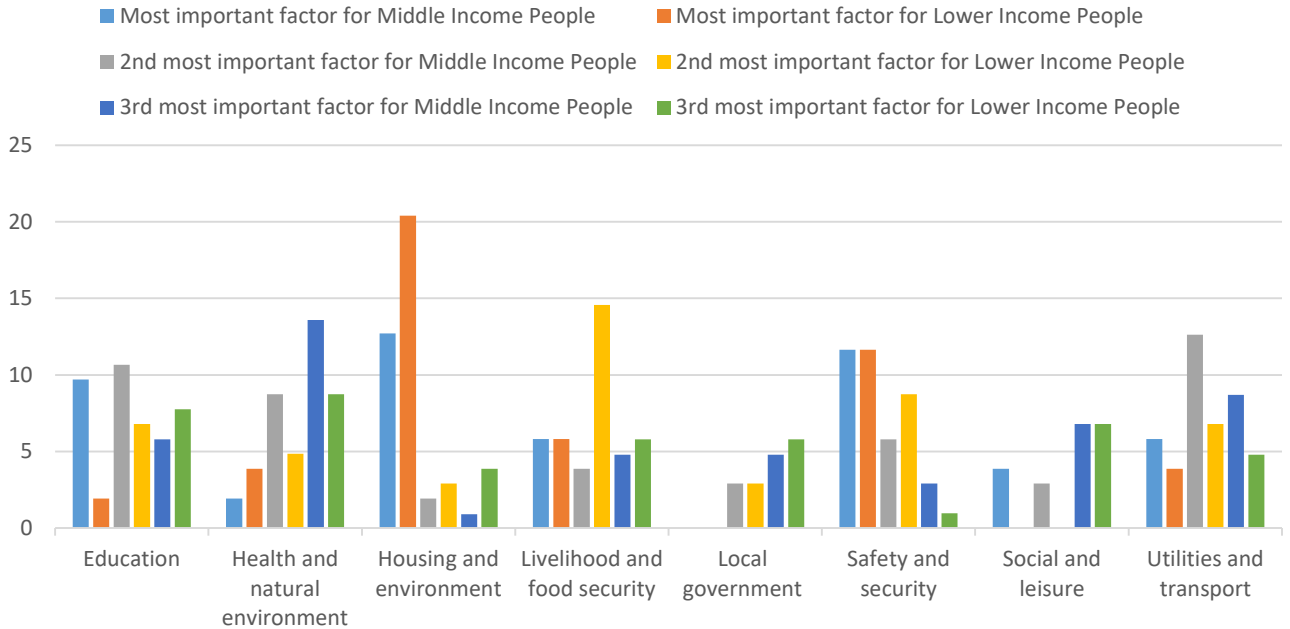
Annex

Survey highlights from Noapara

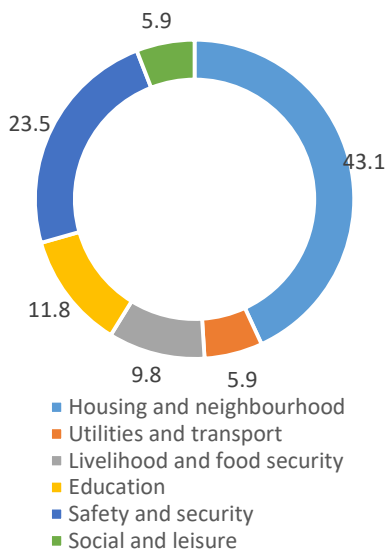
To see the full survey results please visit ICCCAD.net

All data displayed is in percentages, unless stated otherwise.

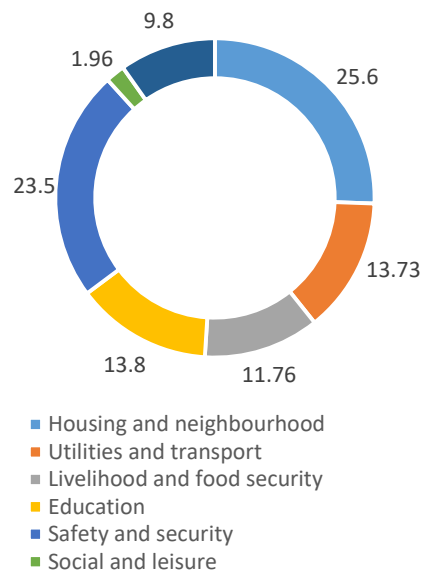
Key factors in making Noapara liveable, according to respondents



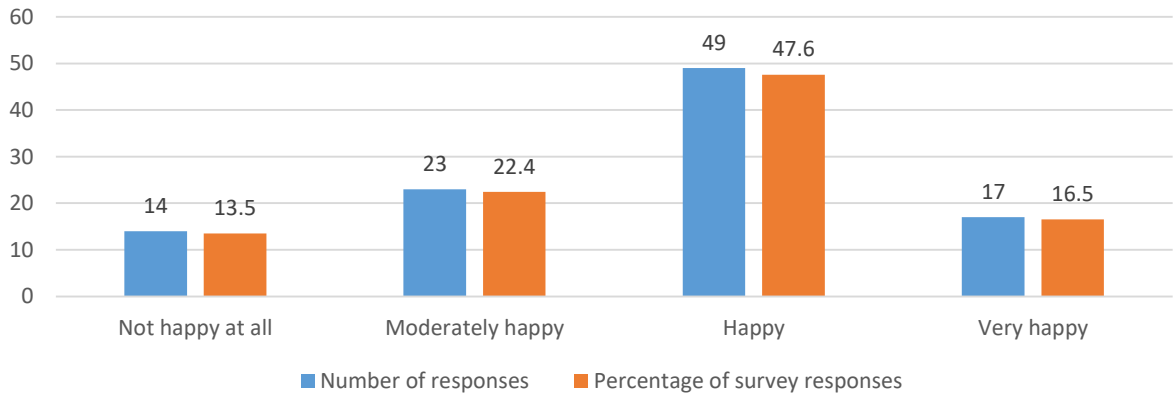
Key factor in making Noapara liveable, according to male respondents



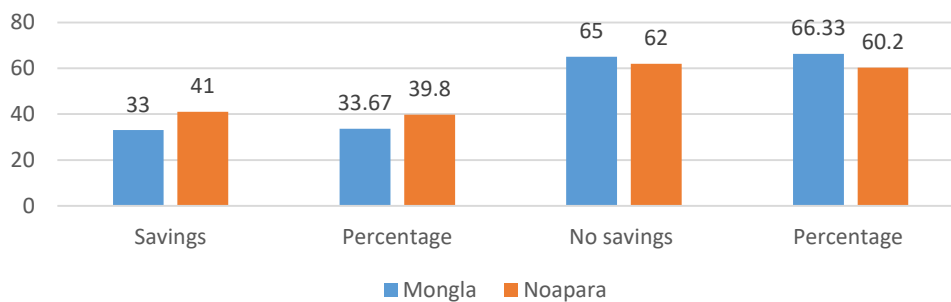
Key factor in making Mongla liveable, according to female respondents



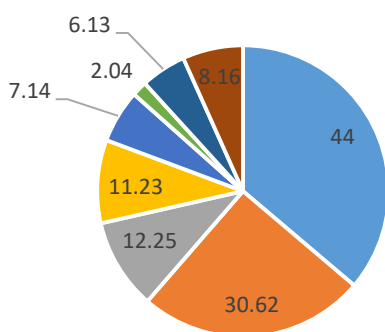
How happy do respondents feel in their neighbourhood



Comparing the number of respondents with and without savings in Mongla and Noapara

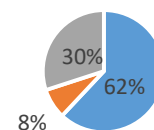


Occupation distribution in Noapara



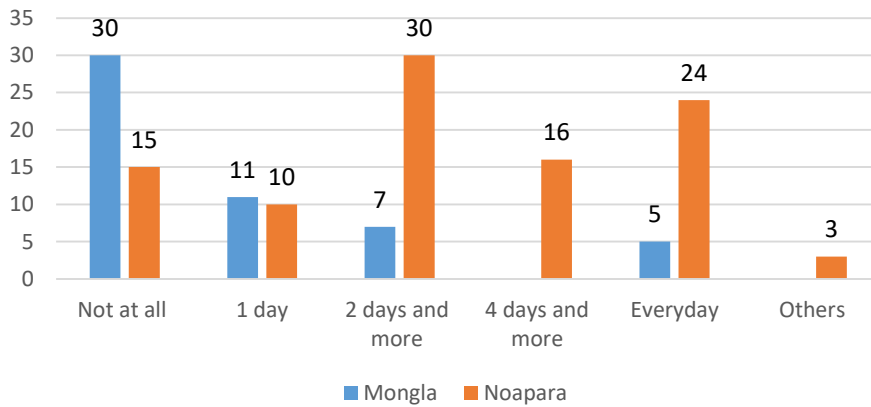
- Small business
- Day labour
- Housewife
- Government employee
- Non-Government job
- Retired from work
- Unemployed
- Other (Student, Shrimp farming, Fishing)

How worried are respondents about eviction in Noapara?

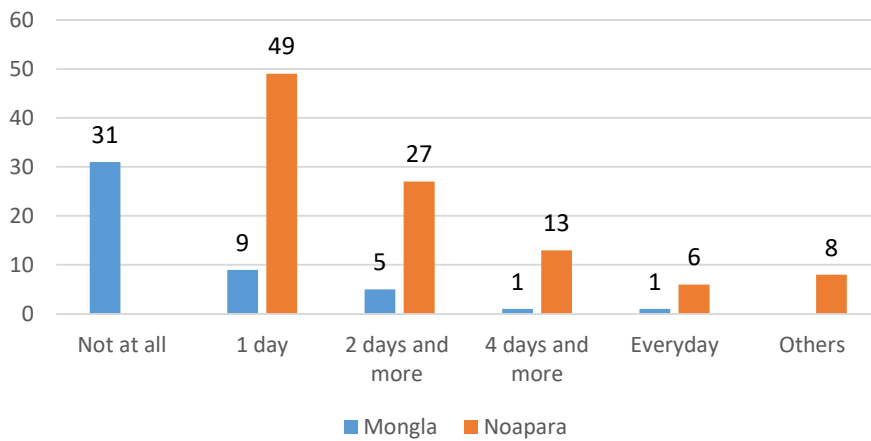


- Not worried
- Somewhat worried
- Very worried

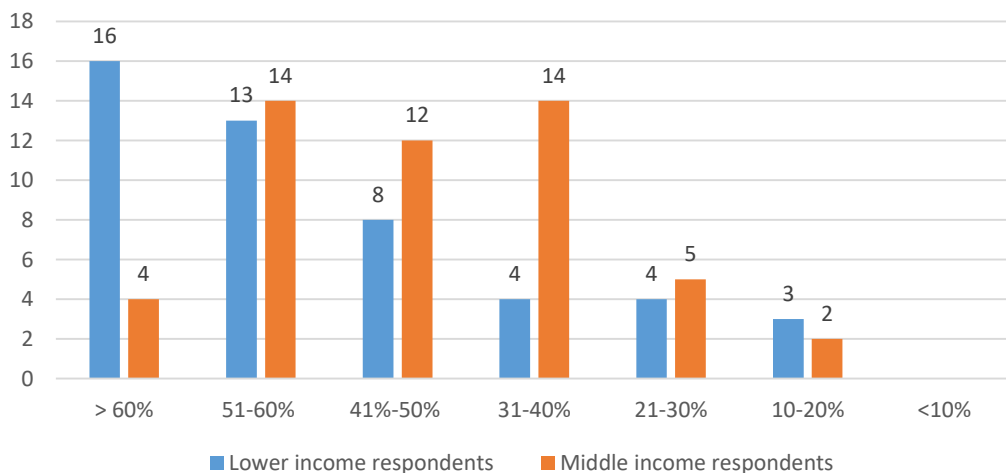
How frequently respondents eat fresh fruits and vegetables in Mongla and Noapara



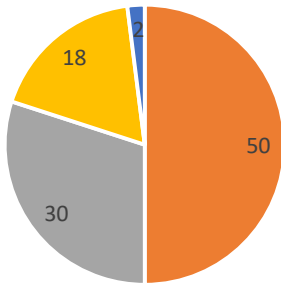
How frequently respondents eat meat in Mongla and Noapara



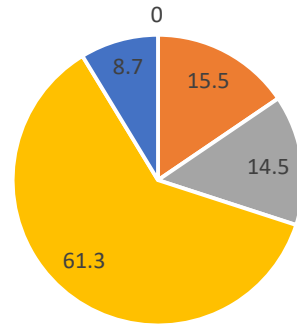
Percentage of monthly income spent on food in Noapara



Do respondents agree that schools in Noapara have the facilities required for the development of children



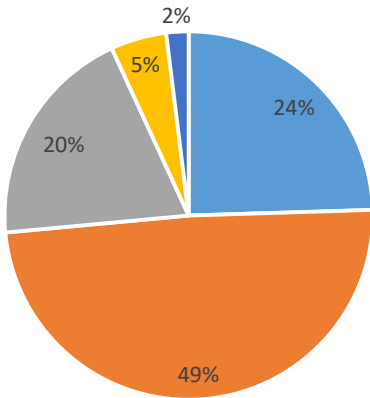
How safe do respondents feel in Noapara at Night?



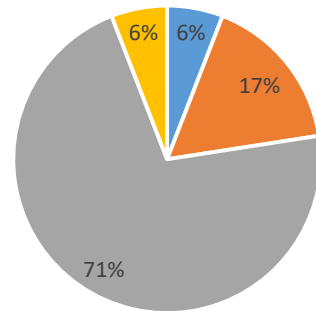
■ Totally Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Totally Disagree

■ Not Safe at All ■ Unsafe ■ Neutral ■ Safe ■ Very Safe

How do respondents rate the quality of service and medication in local hospitals



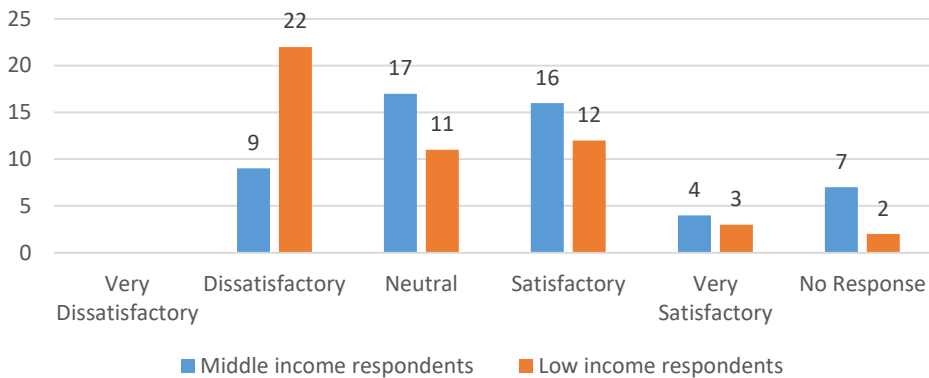
How do respondents rate the quality of water



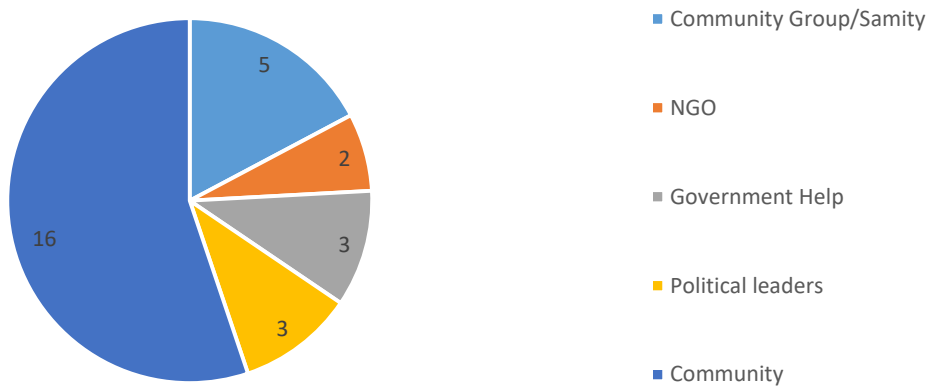
■ Average ■ Good ■ Poor ■ Very good ■ Very poor

■ Dissatisfactory ■ Neutral ■ Satisfactory ■ Very satisfactory

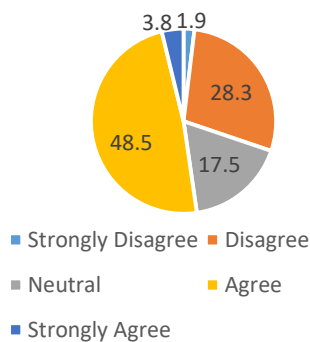
How satisfied are low and middle income respondents with the local government's engagement in their needs



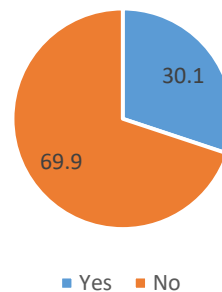
How frequently different forms of social support were mentioned by respondents



Do respondents agree that there is a good future for their children in Noapara



Are respondents thinking of leaving Noapara to live elsewhere in the future



Background on Survey

In September 2019, we surveyed 103 residents (53 residents of informal settlements and 50 middle class residents*) to understand their views of eight qualitative components of a 'liveable' city. These components include: livelihoods and food security, utilities and transport, health and natural environment, education, housing and neighbourhood, central and local government, safety and security and lastly, social and leisure. The survey had 90 Questions and this annex shows a range of topics that were considered. For more information, please go to ICCCAD.net for the full survey results.

*The middle class residents were located by the surveyors asking random local people from different spheres of life "where do the middle income people live?". We found that there were some specific areas where the middle class people live according to the local people. Among these middle class locals there were lower income earners as well as middle income earners. Education was reoccurringly emphasised as an important identifier of middle class. In many cases, the elders or the heads of the families might not have been educated but the second generation is currently being educated or has already completed steps to higher education.