

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This research has addressed “How did AIIB help India improve its rural-urban connectivity through infrastructure development in 2016-2018?”. With theory of neo-liberal institutionalism, which believe that India as a state is willing to cooperate with other actors in international organization, in this case AIIB. By involving in AIIB, Government of India also has governance cost due to autonomous activities or decision making, which reflected in assistance in funding of infrastructure project to increase national rural-urban connectivity.

Interdependence also applies for this research, where Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane in *Power and Complex Interdependence* believe in the complexity of interdependency that can be poured into three characteristics of multiple channels, multiple issues, and negotiation as a political instrument especially within bilateral and multilateral cooperation agenda. Existence of Multilateral Development Bank were clearly as the result of in complexity in interdependency within the school of thought of Neoliberal Institutionalism. Having a development bank as a platform proves the characteristic of multiple channels. Multiple issues also allow states to discuss and cooperate on low politics issues, including infrastructure development especially in this case, rural infrastructure. Lastly,

foreign aid as an activity conducted within development bank can be described as political instrument that are closer to negotiation instead of military.

AIIB has assisted India to improve rural-urban connectivity in India consists of Andhra Pradesh Rural Roads Connectivity Project, Gujarat Rural Roads (MMGSY), and Madhya Pradesh Connectivity Project. The form of assistance is foreign debt, which includes interest and maturity period. These rural areas had gone through extensive eligibility review and assessment before procurement of the projects. Rural roads were the main product of these projects, complemented with non-road infrastructure (such as bridge or water tunnel) or institutional development. Having roads as the result is the realization of foreign debt utilized to build public goods.

Andhra Pradesh Rural Roads Connectivity Project has objective to provide connectivity for unserved communities by providing all weather rural roads to provide in all 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh state. The project start date was in November 2018 and should be finished by October 2023. AIIB provided around one third of the cost, and the rest from Government of Andhra Pradesh. The project included construction of new road and also upgradation of water-bound macadam into blacktop roads. In terms of progress, the project were lagging behind, around 1 percent of completion.

Gujarat Rural Roads (MMGSY) started in August 2017, with the purpose of improving road connectivity by providing all-weather rural roads to approximately 400 villages in 33 districts in Gujarat. AIIB funded about half of the

project cost, with project contents are construction of non-planned roads, update of planned roads, and also appliance of technology. As this project implementation period ended in June 2019, this project has the most progress of all. This including construction and upgradation roads that were 90 percent complete at the end of 2019, and also for update of planned roads which generally has completed 90 percent, for upgradation of water-based macadam (WBM) has surpassed 100 percent.

Madhya Pradesh Rural Connectivity Project was aimed to improve durability and accessibility of rural roads in Madhya Pradesh, by providing road upgrading, construction, and maintenance. These projects were also co-financed with the World Bank. Institutional development was also one of the key differences in this project, as AIIB at first were focusing on infrastructure only project but slowly started to also involved in social development project. Road safety management capacity development as project component was also unique if compared to the two projects beforehand. Road upgradation of this project were about 75 percent completed, but for new road construction, and system architecture for rural road asset management, development have not taken place.

The projects contribute to the improvement of rural-urban connectivity in India through providing funding, knowledge-sharing, and rural infrastructure development. First, AIIB projects provide funding for India's so called "caterpillar" project. Initially, India was facing difficulty in attracting infrastructure investment especially roads in rural areas since it has little to almost none direct economic impact. Difficulty in netting new investment for low ROI projects has put India on

a challenge because it means India has to provide the “caterpillar” projects to attract “butterfly” project through foreign funding. But AIIB were willing to provide financing in India’s “caterpillar” projects, mostly co-financed. National-state policy coordination and land acquisition issues were also problems faced by Government of India, with awareness and efforts for solving the issues coming from the government itself.

Second, cooperation with AIIB has also provided the arena for AIIB provides knowledge on infrastructure development for India to achieve sustainable growth. Cooperation can take place not only in negotiation but also through learning opportunities. Globally, India is next to China in terms of economic growth. By learning through China’s expertise in infrastructure development and planning, India does not have to go through try and fail stage and could straight away modify China’s journey into India’s own development plan. This type of cooperation was the peak of neoliberalism institutionalism, where the actors build each other gain benefits.

Lastly, the rural-urban connectivity project has been evident in the number of rural roads constructed and upgraded, which implies the number of rural citizens benefited. Andhra Pradesh Rural Roads Connectivity Project have facilitated 35 habitations and 17,500 number of people impacted with direct access to all weather rural roads. For Gujarat Rural Roads (MMGSY), 21 million are benefited by providing connectivity to thousands of villages. Lastly, Madhya Pradesh Rural Connectivity Project are estimated to benefit 1,5 million rural citizens, police, MPRRDA staff, and other social infrastructure.

Expansion of infrastructure to the marginal areas are supposed to bring profit by bringing goods, services, and access to rural communities as Rosemary Morales Fernholz argued in *Physical Infrastructure Development: Balancing the Growth, Equity, and Environmental Imperatives*. The project has impacted the beneficiaries in a way rural citizen could shift from agricultural labor to industrial jobs, and also market their product with better place and price. Rural citizens of India are more connected to one another and to the city, providing more opportunities of further social development.

The roads build within these project carries social effect, which include economic integration and better governance. In accordance to Samuelson's theory of Public Goods, where the goods must be non-excludable and non-rivalry, therefore "impure" public goods such as roads should further facilitate the development of "pure" public goods such as governance and programs.

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