



Present scenario of renewable energy sources in Mymensingh and Pabna districts

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Abstract

The study was carried out to investigate the present scenario of renewable energy sources in Pabna and Mymensingh districts. Data were collected by interviewing 120 randomly selected respondents in each study areas during the period of September 2016 to July 2017. It was observed that available sources of renewable energy were mainly solar, biogas and biomass in both districts. Data were collected based on various independent and dependent variables. The findings revealed that 53.3% respondents in Pabna and 63.3% respondents in Mymensingh showed positive response to renewable energy sources. It was also observed that 38.3% respondents of Pabna had medium and 41.7% respondents of Mymensingh had high familiarity with renewable energy sources. The majority of the respondents commented that biomass energy in Pabna and biogas energy in Mymensingh was the most cost effective sources and the major contribution to energy comes from mainly biogas in Pabna and solar energy in Mymensingh. Besides, a questionnaire survey was done in different GOs and NGOs which involving for creating public awareness and community level sources maintenance in both districts. The most effective strategy of the organization is education and capacity building program in Pabna and in Mymensingh it was renewable energy markets, financing mechanism. The most effective awareness program was found campaigning in Pabna and in Mymensingh it was direct consultation. Survey result showed that 50% organization provided medium amount of loan (5000-8000) in Pabna and in Mymensingh it was 65%. The most effective training program was found customer training in Pabna district and in case of Mymensingh district it was customer motivating training. The majority of the respondents' percept that government should provide more subsidies to make renewable sources more affordable in case of both study area. The most of the respondents' percept that saving money was most important for using renewable energy sources in Pabna and in Mymensingh it was availability of renewable energy sources. Therefore, the GO and the NGO should work hand in hand to emphasize more on renewable energy source to produce electricity to solve their power crisis problem.

Key words: Renewable energy, solar, biogas, biomass, Pabna, Mymensingh

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Introduction

Bangladesh is a developing and a probabilities country. In Bangladesh, there are many natural resources such as coal and gas. The main source of energy in

Bangladesh is Natural gas (24%) which is likely to be depleted by the year 2020. People have a large unsatisfied demand of energy, which is growing by

10% per year (Rahman *et al.*, 2013). Bangladesh has a vast potential for renewable energy and the natural availability of alternative energy creates an opportunities to the power sector. Not only the technologies should be developed to produce energy in an environment friendly manner but also enough importance should be given to conserve the energy in most efficient form (Islam and Islam, 2005). The government has issued its vision and policy statement in February 2000, to bring the entire country under electricity service by the year 2020. Recently it has the lowest per capita consumption of commercial energy in south Asia. Presently total generation capacity is 6727 MW. In this capacity 3534 MW is from the public sector which is 53% and 47% respectively of the total generation capacity. To meet the cumulative demand of electricity coal, gas, diesels, are being used to produce electricity. But it is also insufficient. In order to lessen the pressure of power demand on our conventional power plant, renewable energy can be used (Biswas *et al.*, 2001). In Bangladesh, around 70% of people having lack accesses to electricity and most of them are living in the village. Among them about 40% of them are living in below poverty line (Islam *et al.*, 2017). On the other hand climate change puts addition threats to development (Islam *et al.*, 2017; Islam *et al.*, 2015). To combat these situations, renewable energy sources stands out to be one of the prospective sources to meet its unprecedented energy demand and can contribute to achieve sustainable development as a country has a plentiful supply of renewable sources of energy (Rahman *et al.*, 2013).

Unlimited access to energy sources is essential for any economic development; this is especially factual for a developing country like Bangladesh. Most developing countries have ample renewable energy resources. By developing such energy sources developing countries can reduce their dependence on oil and natural gas, creating energy portfolios that are easily available and less vulnerable to price rises. To alleviate shortage of energy recourses and to ensure uninterrupted production this is the right time for companies to adapt

renewable energy sources like solar energy, wind power, biomass and biogas and hydro energy (Alam *et al.*, 2012). The conversion of fossil fuel into consumable energy, like electricity continues to cause irreparable damages to the nature and environment due to Green House Gas emission. This has necessitated increased demand on Renewable Energy sources for all countries of the world. These include solar, biomass, wind, micro-hydro and other technologies as available in each country. In Bangladesh the most abundantly available renewable resource are solar and biomass. There is some possibility of wind and micro hydro based energy development although they are very little in quantity and specific to some locations only (Monju and Ullah, 2014). To this end, effective utilization of renewable energy resources has been adopted as a policy of the Government of Bangladesh. Different government and nongovernment organizations working separately or jointly to disseminate renewable energy sources, such as: Grameen Shakti, AVA development society, TMSS etc. However, prospective planning and comprehensive understanding of this dynamic field requires as well as regressions, in this sector should be continually scrutinized. Approximately 60% of total energy demand of the country is supplied by indigenous biomass based fuels. Activities on the development and promotion of biomass technologies have been going on for one decade. Some national and international funds have been available for biogas technology, improved biomass cookers and production of biomass briquettes. Biomass fuels are estimated to account for about 73% of the country's primary energy supply (Martinot, 2001). The country's per capita annual energy consumption in 1997 was about 77 Kxoe, and it was much below the world average of 1474 Kxoe (Lee, 1999). Only around 30% of the population has access to electricity (Winkler *et al.*, 2011). Over 80% of people depend on traditional energy sources such as firewood, cow dung and agricultural residues for their energy needs. Excessive use of fire woods threatens the remaining forest cover, which is only 10% of the total land area (UNDP,

2000). Harnessing these resources appears to be a promising solution for improving the quality of life of rural villagers, who are unlikely to have access to conventional electricity supply in the foreseeable future.

The whole world is now in a planetary emergency. In addition, as a third world country, Bangladesh has become the worst affected one. Therefore, we have to response this critical problem quickly. So to represent the present scenario of renewable energy sources of Bangladesh author selected two representative districts like Pabna and Mymensingh for this study. Undoubtedly, renewable energy is the only sustainable solution of these acute problems. It can help us to get our energy security as a strong auxiliary force. Moreover, when we will be able to ensure the adequate investment to promote this sector then infrastructure development, job creation, women empowerment and poverty alleviation will happen automatically. Therefore, it is the high time to address energy insecurity immediately, take visionary planning, attract investment and create mass awareness. It is the policy makers' call to mobilize the whole nation through the right track.

A present scenario of renewable energy sources focus in Pabna and Mymensingh districts were described in this paper to find out the different types of available renewable energy sources, public awareness, scope and future activities as well as involve users/local community along with capacity building in establishing, operating and managing different renewable energy resources.

Materials and Methods

Study area: The study was conducted in Five Upazila of Pabna district including Atgharia (186.15 km²), Bera (248.6 km²), Bhangura (120.2 km²), Ishwardi (246.9 km²), Pabna sadar (443.9 km²) and seven Upazila of Mymensingh district including Mymensingh sadar (345.88 km²), Gauripur (374.07 km²), Ishwarganj (286.19 km²), Muktagachha (314.71 km²), Trishal

(338.98 km²), Fulbaria (402.41 km²) (El-Saharty et al., 2014). The map of Pabna district and Mymensingh district showing the study upazila areas and that have been presented in Figure 1.

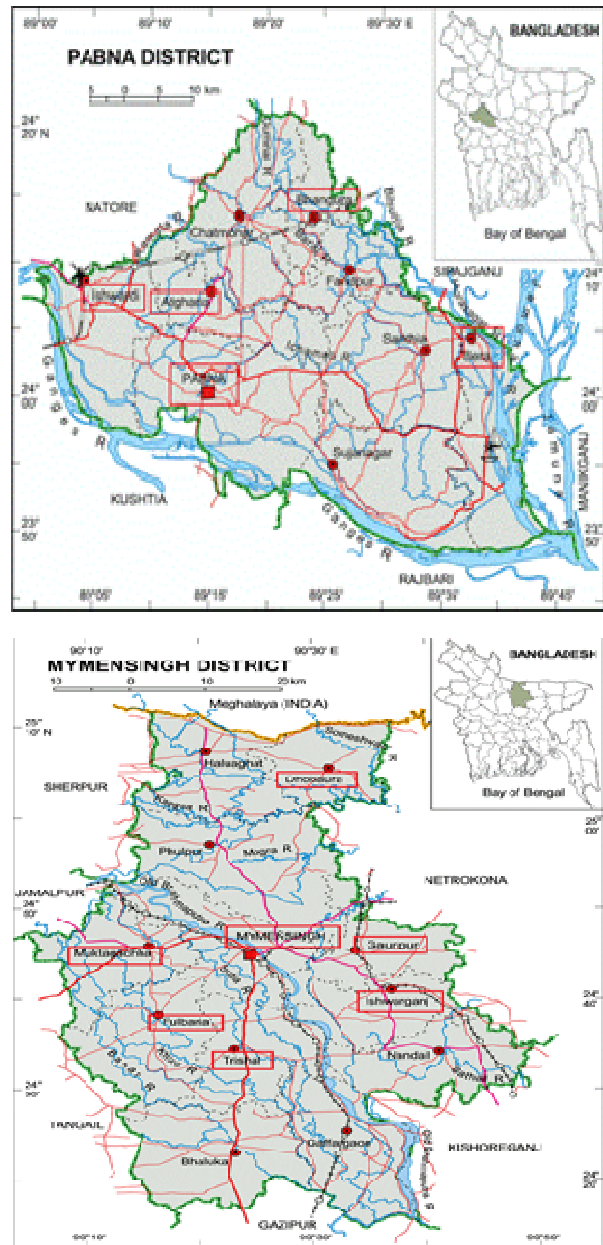


Figure 1. Map of the sampling site in Pabna and Mymensingh district.

Population and sampling: A questionnaire survey and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted to the

twelve upazillas of selected two districts following simple random sampling method. All information were collected from 120 respondents of each district considering dependent and independent variables. Data for the study were collected through personal interview from September 2016 to July 2017. During collection of data, both primary and secondary sources were considered. Primary data were collected from respondents. The respondents were considered from urban and rural both locality, various professionals, variety of ages, both illiterate and literate and also male or female. Simple and direct questions, different scales, closed and open form of statements were included in the interview and frequently asked them about their response, familiarity, cost effectiveness, contribution, activities and importance of using renewable energy sources. They were also interviewed about organizational strategies, public awareness program, organizational loan, loan amount, training etc. The secondary data were collected from various GOs and NGOs, literature review of various national and international books, journals, research paper and newspaper and search from internet.

Data processing and analyses: To facilitate tabulation, the collected data were properly coded and transferred from interview schedule to a master sheet. Qualitative data were converted into quantitative forms by means of suitable scoring whenever necessary. Tabulation and cross tabulation was done on the basis of categorize developed by the researcher. The analysis was performed using statistical treatment with SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) computer package and Microsoft Office Excel. Such statistical measures as number, percentage, range, and rank order were used in describing the variables where ever applicable.

Results and Discussion

Socioeconomic Perspective: Survey results showed the age range of respondents varies from 32 to 72 years both Mymensingh and Pabna. Majority of the respondents in

Pabna were old aged (61.7%) and in Mymensingh were middle aged (43.3%) category. About 58.3% respondents of both districts were lived in rural area and other 41.7% lived in urban area. The occupation of people of the study area was various but almost of them were farmer (31.7%) in Pabna. Whereas Most of them were businessman (38.3%) in Mymensingh. The highest educational level of both districts was primary school pass or not. Besides the rest of the respondents were equal in gender.

Human response to renewable energy: The survey was conducted on 120 respondents of Pabna district and 120 respondents of Mymensingh district to find knowledge about renewable energy resources. Here author found that 53.3% respondents showed positive response and 46.7% showed negative response on renewable energy in Pabna district. In case of Mymensingh district 63.3% showed positive response and 36.7% showed negative response which shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their response

Respondents' perception	Pabna		Mymensingh	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
No	56	46.7	44	36.7
Yes	64	53.3	76	63.3
Total	120	100	120	100

Chandrasekar and Kandpal (2007) found that 56% of respondents had heard of the term “Renewable Energy” or “Clean Energy”, only 39% of rural respondents had heard of these terms compared to almost 60% of residential and commercial. Overall there is a lack of education and understanding when it comes to people knowing what renewable/clean energy is.

Familiarity with renewable energy resources of the respondents: The familiarity with renewable energy resources scores of the respondents ranged from 5 to 19 against the possible range of 0 to 21 for both Pabna and

Mymensingh district. On the basis of familiarity with renewable energy resources score, respondents were classified into three categories, Low (<10), medium (10-15) and high (>15). This data were presented in Table 2.

The data showed that 38.3% of the respondents had medium, 31.7% had high and 30% had low extent of familiarity on renewable energy resources in Pabna district. In case of Mymensingh district 41.7% of the respondents had high, 35% had medium and 23.3% had low extent of familiarity on renewable energy resources. After calculating the “extent of familiarity with renewable energy resources index” scores for each of 120 respondents in each district. An extent of familiarity Index (FI) was developed to fulfill these objectives. Percent of distribution of the respondents according to familiarity with renewable energy sources in each of six items had shown in along with extent of familiarity index (FI) and rank order of each familiarity, of the six items ranged from 0 to 190 in case of Pabna district and 0 to 184 in case of Mymensingh district. Here 0 means less familiarity and 190 means high familiarity in Pabna district and in case of Mymensingh it was 184.

Table 2. Overall categories of Familiarity on renewable energy resources of the respondents

Extent of familiarity	Pabna		Mymensingh	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
High >15	38	31.7	50	41.7
Medium 10-15	46	38.3	42	35
Low <10	36	30	28	23.3
Total	120	100	120	100

Data showed that the respondents were most familiar with mainly three energy resources which were biomass, biogas and solar energy but there were difference between their percentages of familiarity in both districts (Figure 2). Other sources like wind, hydro and tidal energy were less familiar in both

districts because of their unavailability. Jacobson (2009) found that solar energy is now considered as one of most promising renewable energy source. It has the highest potential to gain energy compared to other renewable. Islam et al. (2006) found that biomass is the most significant energy source in Bangladesh which accounts for 70% of the total final energy consumption in Bangladesh.

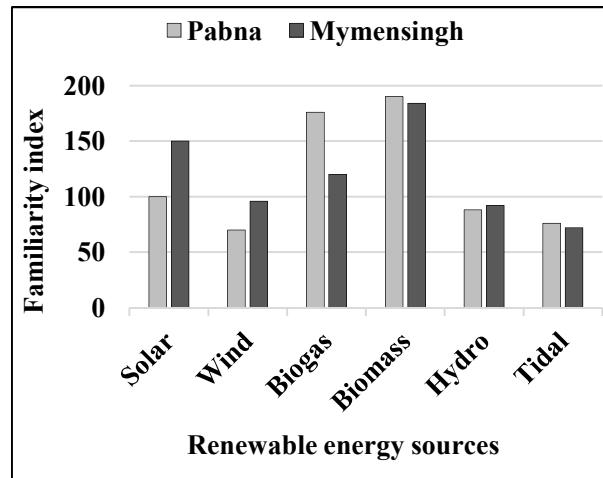


Figure 2. Comparison between Familiarity indexes of renewable energy resources in study area.

Cost effectiveness of renewable energy resources: The majority of the respondents’ percept that biomass was most cost effective and then biogas and solar energy had comparatively low cost effectiveness in Pabna district. In case of Mymensingh the respondents percept that biogas was most cost effective while solar energy had medium cost effectiveness and low cost effectiveness was found in biomass which shown in Table 3.

The data showed that (60%) of the respondents commented that biomass was most cost effective in Pabna district and in case of Mymensingh district the majority respondents (70%) percept it was biogas.

After calculating the “extent of cost effectiveness index” scores for each of 120 respondents. An extent of cost effectiveness Index (EI) was developed to fulfill

these objectives. Percent of distribution of the respondents according to cost effectiveness of renewable sources in each of 3 items had shown in Figure 3 along with extent of cost effectiveness index (EI) and rank order of each cost effectiveness of the 3 items ranged from 0 to 216 in Pabna and 0 to 226 in Mymensingh district. Here 0 means less cost effectiveness and 216 means high cost effectiveness in case of Pabna and in case of Mymensingh it was 226.

Table 3. Cost effectiveness of renewable energy resources.

Renewable sources	Pabna		Mymensingh	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Solar energy	24	20	24	20
Biogas	24	20	84	70
Biomass	72	60	12	10
Total	120	100	120	100

Monju and Ullah (2014) studied on renewable energy and its effect on reducing power shortage of Bangladesh: The size and economic potential of the renewable energy resources (e.g., solar photovoltaic, solar thermal power, wind power, biogas, etc.) in Bangladesh are yet to be determined and the capacity of renewable energy development is presently low.

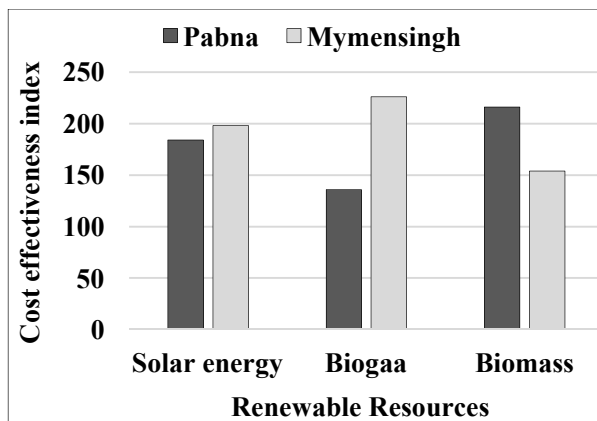


Figure 3. Comparison between cost effectiveness indexes of renewable energy sources.

Although investment costs of renewable are generally higher compared to fossil fuel alternatives, this option becomes economically viable when all externalities (e.g. environmental cost, health hazards etc.) and lower operating cost are taken into consideration. Mondal (2010) considered the geographical status Bangladesh is located in a position where the potential sources of renewable energy including solar, wind, biomass, hydro, tidal, and geothermal energy were quite reliable as well as affordable.

Contribution to different renewable energy sources as compare to other sources:

In our country the most energy contribution comes from electricity, natural gas and other conventional sources. Still then some amount of energy comes from renewable energy sources. The contribution of those sources in two study districts were converted into hundred percent which is shown in Figure 4. The data presented that major contribution of energy comes from mainly biogas (45%), solar (29%) and biomass (26%) respectively in Pabna district. In case of Mymensingh the most energy comes from solar (42%), biomass (40%) and biogas (18%) respectively.

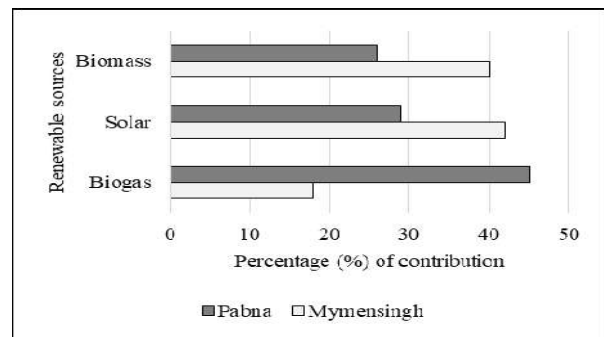


Figure 4. Differences between contribution percentages of renewable energy sources.

Rahman *et al.* (2012) studied on Renewable energy in Bangladesh and related socio-economic aspects: having the huge prospects of solar, wind, biogas and biomass, micro and mini hydro and tidal energy to harness and transform Bangladesh government has already targeted

to generate 5% of total electricity from renewable energy by 2015 and 10% by 2020. From only biogas and biomass, there is a potential to generate 800 MW and 400 MW of electricity respectively. Büsgen and Dürschmidt (2009) found that the contribution of renewable energy sources to electricity in Germany was about 37 TWh (6.3 % of gross electricity consumption) in 2000 and had increased to 87 TWh (14.2 % of gross electricity consumption) by 2007.

Capacity building activities related to renewable sources

Activities need to emphasis the renewable sources more affordable: The author found three kinds of activities need to emphasis the renewable sources more affordable. Among those the majority of the respondents’ percept that government should provide more subsidies to make renewable sources more affordable in case of both districts. The activities need to emphasis the renewable sources more affordable in two study districts were converted into hundred percent which is shown in Figure 5. The data presented that most respondents commented about government should provide more subsidy, some respondents percept about invest more in research and development to improve technology, which results in decrease in price, some on surcharge on other sources of supply.

Having the huge prospects of solar, wind, biogas and biomass, micro and mini hydro and tidal energy to harness and transform Bangladesh government has already targeted to generate 5% of total electricity from renewable energy by 2015 and 10% by 2020. From only biogas and biomass, there is a potential to generate 800 MW and 400 MW of electricity respectively (Sharif, 2009).

Shahid and Jamal (2008) found Government of Bangladesh has taken a systematic approach towards renewable energy development. In line with the Government approach Bangladesh Power Development Board formed the Directorate of Renewable Energy and Research & Development in 2010. Since the very

beginning of establishment the directorate is dedicated to keep a sign for the enhancement of Renewable Energy use in power sector. There is a good scope for solar, wind, biomass, and micro/mini hydro power generation in Bangladesh. BPDB has taken systematic steps for developing Renewable Energy projects as well as implement and promote Energy Efficiency Measures for the last few years to achieve the target of the Renewable Energy Policy 2008. Chandrasekar and Kandpal (2007) found an overwhelming majority of about 90% of all surveyed respondents said government should support renewable energy which is a very positive sign for the industry.

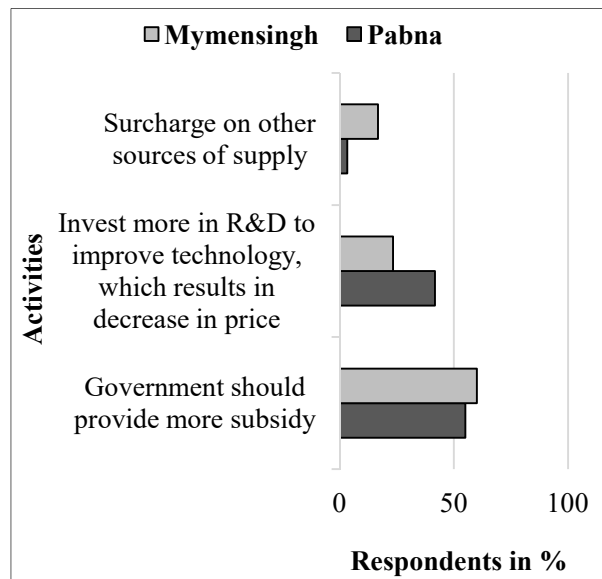


Figure 5. Comparison between activities percentage to emphasis renewable sources more affordable in both districts.

Importance of using renewable energy resources: The majority of the respondents’ percept that saving money was most importance for using renewable energy sources in case of Pabna district. In case of Mymensingh district the most respondents’ percept about availability. The Importance for using renewable energy resources in two study districts were converted into hundred percent which is shown in Figure 6. The

data presented that the author mainly found four types of importance of using renewable energy resources. In Pabna district the most respondents' percept about saving money, reducing environmental impact, fewer maintenance cost and availability respectively. In case of Mymensingh district the most respondents' percept about availability, saving money, fewer maintenance cost and reducing environmental impact respectively.

Bogolea *et al.* (2009) mentioned that the main advantage of using solar panels in comparison to other renewable energy sources is that they are one of the least polluting as they have minimal impact on the environment. Hasan *et al.* (2010) stated that Solar Energy can be a great source for solving power crisis in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is situated between 20.30 and 26.38 degrees north latitude and 88.04 and 92.44 degrees east which is an ideal location for solar energy utilization.

A National Survey (2015) found the promise of saving money and reducing costs that's the primary motivator for their decisions to buy clean-energy products and services.

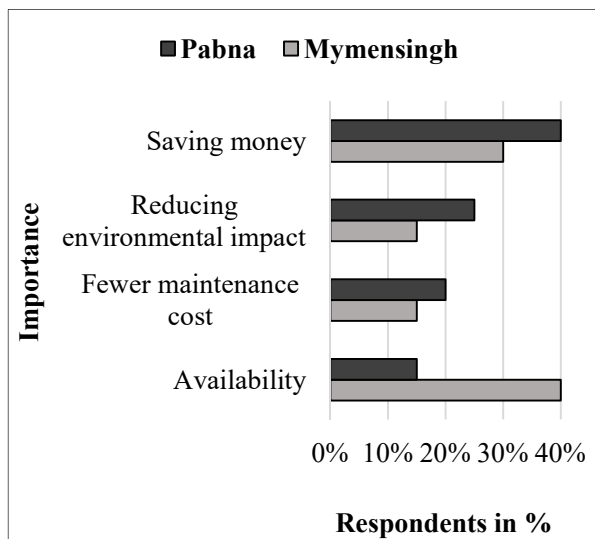


Figure 6. Contrast between Importance percentages of using renewable energy resources in two districts.

GO/NGO activities and their perception

NGO deals with renewable energy sources of the two districts: There were some organization deals with renewable energy sources. Several NGOs like IDCOL (Infrastructure Development Company Limited), GS (Grameen Shakti), Rahim Afrooz, AVA development society, BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), CCDR (Center for Community Development & Research) foundations are working to develop electricity sector. Grameen Shakti was one of the most important for dealing with biogas plant installation and also solar panel installation.

Main strategies for making renewable sources reliable to the local people: The author found four types of strategies for making renewable sources reliable to the local people .The most effective strategy was found education and capacity building program in Pabna district and in case of Mymensingh district it was renewable energy markets, financing mechanism. Main strategies for making renewable sources reliable to the local people in two study districts were converted into hundred percent which is shown in Figure 7.

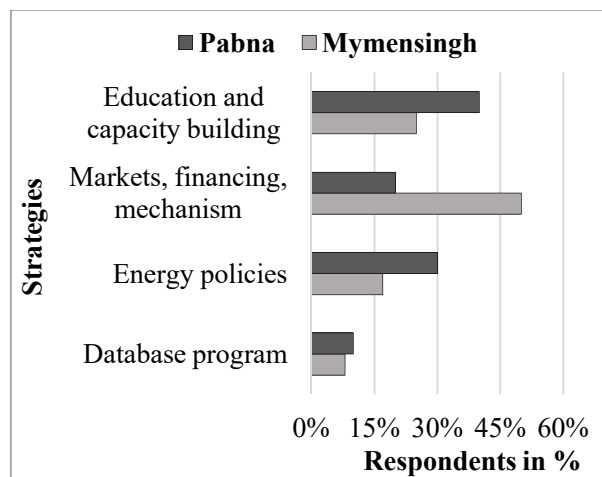


Figure 7. Contrast between strategies percentage for making renewable sources reliable to the local people in two study districts.

Steps taken by organization creating public awareness: The author found four types of awareness program (leaflet, card, campaigning, direct consultation) taken by organization creating public awareness for using renewable energy resources. The most effective awareness program was found campaigning in Pabna district and in case of Mymensingh district it was direct consultation. Awareness program taken by organization for using renewable energy sources in two study districts were converted into hundred percent which is shown in Figure 8.

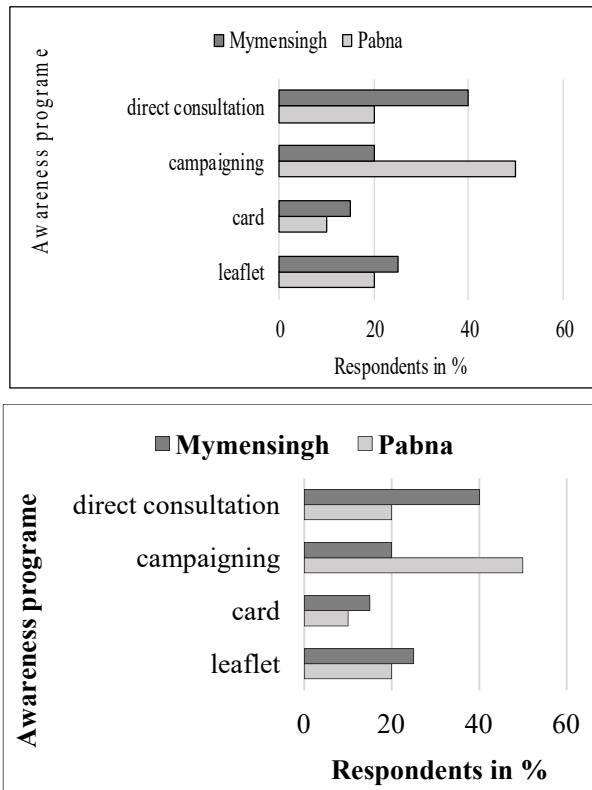


Figure 8. Comparison between different awareness programs taken by organization in two study districts.

Organization providing loan: The author found there was 66.7% organization which provided loan for renewable energy sources in Pabna district and in case of Mymensingh district it was 71.4%.

Loan amount providing by organization: The author found organization provided some loan for using and maintaining renewable energy sources. The loan amount was categorized into three categories named low amount (<5000), medium amount (5000-8000) and high amount (>8000). The loan amount provided by organization in two study districts were converted into hundred percent which is represent in Figure 9. The data presented that 50% organization provided medium amount loan (5000-8000) in case of Pabna district and in case of Mymensingh it was 65%.

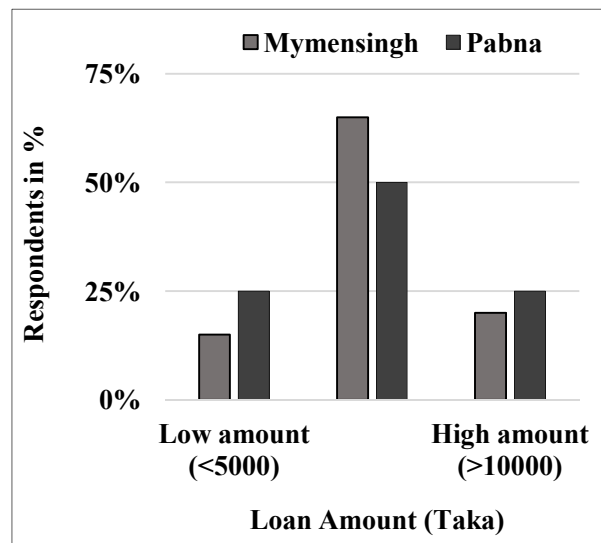


Figure 9. Comparison between loan amounts providing by organization in two districts.

Training provided by organization: It was found that four types of training program provided by organization for proper maintaining renewable energy resources. The most effective training program was found customer training in Pabna district and in case of Mymensingh district it was customer motivating training. Training program provided by organization for proper maintaining renewable energy sources in two study districts were converted into hundred percent which is shown in Figure 10.

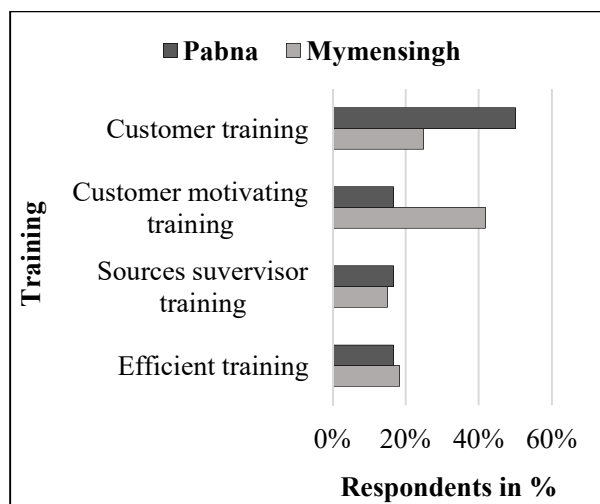


Figure 10. Comparison between training provided by organization in two study districts.

Conclusion

The people of the study areas are needed a suitable and sustainable energy resource that can help them better livelihood. From the total discussion it's crystal clear that the people demand more than the traditional energy sources. Nowadays they are concerned about the renewable sources because of organizational activities like strategies, awareness and training programs. There were mainly three available sources in studied area named -solar, biogas and biomass. People of there were eager for using renewable energy sources. If government provides more subsidies, the respondents would be more involved in using renewable sources especially solar and biogas which can be solved power crisis problem in Bangladesh and it is a good sign of green energy technology for the future generation.

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