



**Paper 1**

**URBANISATION, MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
IN BANGLADESH: RECENT TRENDS AND  
EMERGING ISSUES**

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It is now widely recognised that there is a need to take the scope of the population policy in Bangladesh beyond the confines of achieving population stabilisation through reduction of fertility. Although in recent years the approach to reduction of fertility has changed from narrow family planning to a broad based reproductive health approach, it is being increasingly felt that Bangladesh's population policy should encompass other equally important issues which have wide implications for the development process and the quality of life of people of Bangladesh. To address some of the related pertinent issues the Centre for Policy Dialogue has initiated a programme which aims at undertaking a series of studies covering the broad area of **Population and Sustainable Development**. The major objective of these studies is to enhance national capacity to formulate and implement population and development policies and programmes in Bangladesh, and through close interaction with the various stakeholder groups, to promote advocacy on critical related issues. The programme which is scheduled to be implemented by the CPD between 1999 and 2002 shall address, *inter alia*, such issues as population dynamics and population momentum and their implications for education and health services, the nexus between population correlates, poverty and environment, impacts of urbanisation and slummisation and migration, as well as human rights. The study has benefited from generous support provided by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The programme also envisages organisation of workshops and dialogues at divisional and national levels and also holding of international thematic conferences.

As part of the above mentioned CPD-UNFPA collaborative programme the CPD has planned to bring out a series of publications in order to facilitate wider dissemination of the findings of the various studies to be prepared under the aforementioned CPD-UNFPA programme. The present paper on the theme of ***Urbanization, Migration and Development in Bangladesh: Recent Trends and Emerging Issues*** has been prepared by Professor Nazrul Islam of the Department of Geography and Environment, University of Dhaka. The paper was presented at the launching National Workshop on *Population, Development and Urbanisation: The Emerging Issues* which was organised by the Centre on July 4, 1999.

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## **Urbanization, Migration and Development in Bangladesh: Recent Trends and Emerging Issues**

### **1. Introduction**

The relationships between migration and urbanization, between urbanization and development and between migration and development are well known. The relationships are also a two-way phenomenon. With each pair, one variable may be the cause as well as the effect of the other. Limiting ourselves only to the national scale, we may refer to international migration (mainly out migration) and its impact on economic and socio-cultural development in Bangladesh. However, this is not within our scope in this paper. There have been many studies on this issue. We will limit our attention to internal migration, urbanization and development. The main purpose of the present paper, is to highlight the recent trends in migration and urbanization and the emerging critical issues which have impact on national development. However, since development at macro or national level is linked with development at individual or household level, and since the ultimate goal of development is probably also aimed at improvement of quality of life of an individual human being, or his /her family, our attention should logically also be directed to such a scale.

### **2. Urbanization and Development**

The relationship between urbanization and development on a global scale has been well documented and analyzed (for example, Friedmann, 1973, United Nations, 1970). The relationship has been expressed in simple terms as between (a) The degree (or level) of urbanization, and (b) GNP per capita for countries of the world. The relationship has been found to be positive, with economically developed countries generally showing higher level of urbanization. This may lead the uninitiated person to conclude that one effective path to development is urbanization.

The urbanization and development relationship is also obvious in third world countries, although, urbanization in such regions may not have occurred through industrialization which was the case in the West and in Japan, rather it has probably taken place mainly through the growth of the tertiary sector and the informal manufacturing sector. The other distinguishing feature of urbanization in the western and non-western (developing) societies, is the rapidity at which urban growth and urbanization have taken place in the developing countries. This phenomenon is best illustrated by recent urbanization in Bangladesh. The rate of urban growth has been consistently very high since 1961 (Table 1). It will remain high for a couple of more decades (Table 2).

Table 1: Growth of national and urban population in Bangladesh, 1901-91

Census year	Total national population (millions)	Annual growth rate of national population (percent)	Total urban population (millions)	Urban population as percentage of total population (i.e. level of urbanization)	Decadal increase of urban population (percent)	Annual (exponential) growth rate of urban population (percent)
1961	55.22	2.26	2.64	5.19	45.11	3.72
1974	76.37	2.48	6.00	8.87	137.57	6.62
1981	89.91	2.32	13.56	15.54	110.68	10.03
1991	111.45	2.17	22.45	20.15	69.75	5.43

Source: Government of Bangladesh: Bangladesh Population Census, 1981; Report on Urban Areas, 1987; and Preliminary Report, Population Census, 1991.

a. This abnormally high rate of growth was due partly to identification of urban areas in 1981 census.

Table 2: Urban population projection in Bangladesh, 2000-2015

Census year	Total national population (millions)	Total urban population (millions)	Urban population as percentage of total population (i.e. level of urbanization)	Annual urban growth (percent)
2000	141.1	37.3	26.4	4.8
2005	155.8	46.4	29.8	4.4
2010	170.5	56.8	33.3	4.0
2015	184.6	67.9	36.8	3.6

Source: World Bank, Bangladesh Economic and Social development Prospects, Vol. III (Report No. 5407) April 1985. P. 126, Table 9.8

The positive correlation between development and urbanization is apparent also within the country context of Bangladesh. This can be explained both in terms of economic growth over time for the country as a whole, and in spatial or regional terms. In the support of the former, it may be noted that the contribution (at constant prices of 1984-85) of the urban sector to GDP of Bangladesh, grew from 25.36 per cent in 1972-73, to 36.39 per cent in 1991-92, (Table 2, and Huq, 1997) and most probably to over 40 per cent by now. Correspondingly, the level of urbanization in Bangladesh rose from 7.86 per cent in 1974 to 20.15 per cent in 1991 and probably to over 25 per cent by now (Table 1).

Table 3: Trend of Urban Sector's Contribution to GDP during 1972-73 to 1991-92.

Year	Contribution at current prices of 1984-85		Contribution at constant prices of 1984-85 (Percent)	
	Urban sector	Rural sector	Urban sector	Rural sector
1972-73	24.86	75.14	25.36	74.64
1975-76	25.61	74.39	25.47	74.53
1979-80	30.64	69.36	29.25	70.75
1982-83	36.64	68.36	29.81	70.19
1985-86	32.46	67.54	32.26	67.74
1988-89	35.82	64.18	35.41	64.59
1991-92	37.97	62.03	36.39	63.61

Source: Huq, 1997 based on Calculated from Tables 7 and 8 of BBS's Twenty Years of National Accounting of Bangladesh, 1993c.

In one recent study by two young researchers (Economist Emranul Haque and Geographer Delwar Akbar of BOU), have concluded that :

“Growth of urban GDP is proportionately related to urbanization growth in Bangladesh. Growth of urban GDP is mainly generated positively by the growth of urban population, urban employment, and urban industrial output” (Haque and Akbar, 1992).

Economist Atiya Yasmeen has worked for her doctoral thesis on “Economic Significance of Urbanization in Bangladesh” at Calcutta University (Yasmeen, 1990). The thesis maintains that

“With the progress of the level of development some kind of capital saturation starts, with that , the optimum level of income or production for a city begins to level off and optimum city population which is related to this output starts to fall. While the progress of the development is beyond the optimum level, urbanization steps into the decentralization stage from the stage of concentration” (Yasmeen, 1990, p. 66).

The study thus indicates that economic development and urbanization is not necessarily a liner relationship, all along.

The relationship between urbanization and development can also be visualized from spatial or regional perspective, as shown in (Table 4). District (regional) percapita GDP and composite socio-economic index are positively related to level (or degree) of urbanization (the Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient is 0.46 for urbanization and per capita GDP and 0.15 for urbanization and composite socio-economic index [Islam, 1997]). Thus, in general, such more urbanized districts as Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna (Fig. 1) are also high on the development scale . Obviously, there are exceptions.

Fig 1

Table 4: Level of urbanization and development by greater districts

Greater District	Level of urbanization 1981		Per capita real GDP 1985 (rank order)	Composite socio- economic index, 1985 (rank order)
	percentage of total district population	rank order		
Chittagong	32.2	2	2	2
Chittagong Hil Tracts	30.9	3	1	15
Noakhali	11.5	8	15	11
Comilla	8.9	15	14	5
Sylhet	8.7	16	12	18
Dhaka	38.9	1	4	3
Jamalpur	9.1	13	10	19
Tangail	7.6	18	16	8
Faridpur	8.6	17	7	19
Mymensingh	10.2	12	17	16
Jessore	11.0	10	8	8
Kushtia	14.1	5	9	7
Barisal	12.1	6	6	12
Khulna	22.5	4	3	4
Patuakhali	9.0	14	5	16
Bogra	7.3	20	11	1
Pabna	11.8	7	20	10
Rangpur	1.3	9	18	14
Dinajpur	8.9	15	13	5
Rajshahi	10.8	11	19	12

Source: BBS Bangladesh Population Census of 1981: Report on Urban Areas: and 1987 Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh, 1988 and UDD- UNCHS-UNDP, 1985 (for Column 5)

Having argued in favour of the argument that urbanization and development are positively related processes, we must also emphasize that more needs to be explored in this area. For example, spatially the relationship should be explored for smaller geographical regions such as the 64 districts, or 460 Thanas.

The 1985-86 Composite Index Score was made on the basis of over 30 variables. A similar scoring exercise may be made for the current period ( Dr. Pk Matiur Rahman of ISRT, Dhaka University, has recently done something in this area).

While development score is an aggregate for a region/district/thana, it is necessary to recognize the fact that the benefits of development are not enjoyed by all people even within such smaller territories, or even within a particular city. Some studies have shown severe intra-city inequality in access to land, housing and services and other opportunities (Islam, 1985-86, Jahan, 1995) . On the national scale again, official statistics have shown increasing inequality in urban income over the years, as evident from such Gini ratio of 0.37 in 1985-86 to 0.44 in 1995-96 (BBS, 1997, p. 388).

We have underlined this inequality feature of urbanization and development for many years (Islam, 1978, Islam, 1985-86, Islam et al. 1991, Islam 1996). Other researchers also have recently become concerned about this growing inequality (Afsar, 1999a, 1999b, Hossain, Afsar and Bose, 1999). The phenomenon is perhaps inevitable in a situation of globalized market economy without a national system having minimum control over the development process. Anti-poor public policy is of course another strong factor causing or enhancing inter-regional, intra-regional, inter-city or intra-city inequality.

The conflict of development and inequality is not to be easily resolved in our existing political social- economic system.

*Urban Concentration, Metropolitanization and Primacy* are yet other features of contemporary urbanization in the developing world, and also in Bangladesh. Nearly 50 percent of the national urban population happens to be concentrated in the four metropolitan cities (Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi). This 4-city primacy situation has sharpened in every census.

Dhaka (or the Dhaka Statistical Metropolitan Area or Dhaka Megacity) is the largest urban agglomeration of Bangladesh and enjoys a clear primate status in its urban structure. This status became obvious since 1961, when Dhaka's share of the urban population of Bangladesh was 20 percent. The share rose to 24 percent in 1974, 26 percent in 1981, and 30 percent in 1991. Dhaka with a present (1999) population of over 9 million people contains 33 percent of the country's urban population (of about 30 million). At this trend of population, primacy of Dhaka is most likely to be continued also in the near future, and may not be reversed before 2015, unless very radical programmes can be implemented for decentralized urbanization and reduction of Dhaka-bound migration flow.

*The primacy of Dhaka* is stronger functionally than in terms of population. Administrative headquarters and civil employments, financial and banking services, international commerce and business except port functions, are all largely concentrated in Dhaka. Educational, cultural and consultancy and research activities are also concentrated in the capital area. A disproportionately large concentration of industrial and various public sector investments have been made in the area. In spite of the declared governmental policy of decentralized administrative and economic development introduced in the early '80s, the actual development in the huge export oriented ready-made garments industries sector during the eighties and nineties shows an overwhelming concentration in Dhaka city. More than 80 percent of the garment industries of Bangladesh are located here. With these industries came over 800,000 young female workers in the city. In several other large industrial sectors too, Dhaka has more than 80 percent of the national enterprises. The dominance of Dhaka is even more overwhelming in several of the smaller manufacturing activities, such as rubber produces in which Dhaka contributes nearly 100 percent of total jobs, furniture (97 percent), publishing (96 percent), footwear (84 percent), leather goods (82 percent), and electrical machinery (72 percent) (United Nations 1987, p. 12).

The unique position of being at once the oldest, historically largest, most centrally located city and also the capital city, Dhaka has the finest linkages with its immediate rural hinterland and the rest of the country, it attracts migrants from all of the 20 former districts, almost all of the 64 new districts and most of the 460 upazilas (sub-districts) of the country. In addition to being a permanent destination of migrants, Dhaka also attracts hundreds and thousands of daily commuters and circular migrants from the neighbouring rural districts.

Such a primate situation has resulted in Dhaka's rapid population growth (from 1.6 million in 1974 to over 9 million in 1999) with all accompanying urban problems (Islam, 1994, 1996).

### **3. Migration and Urbanization**

The role of migration in urbanization is obvious in all societies and at almost all times, since urbanization and urban growth take place through a combination of three components, such as (a) natural increase of the native urban population, (b) area redefinition or reclassification or annexation and (c) rural-urban (or other forms of internal) migration. In a condition of developing urbanization, role of migration is even more pronounced while in the state of advanced urbanization, where urban growth is almost stagnant or even declining, internal migration plays a minor or almost no role.

In Bangladesh, as in some other developing countries, the rate of urbanization is extremely high, (more than two to three times that of the national population growth rate), being consistently over 5 per cent since 1974, and even upto 7 per cent in some years (Table 1). In this situation, the role of all the above mentioned three components is important, but at times, and in the city specific cases, the role of migration is very dominant.

Migration contributed about 40 per cent to the urban growth in Bangladesh during 1974-81. The share was probably similar during 81-91. For some large cities, this share could even be higher, upto 70 per cent, as in the case of Dhaka (UDD-UNCHS-UNDP, 1985). An ESCAP (1993) document has estimated role of migration and reclassification to the tune of 58 per cent until 2005 (ESCAP 1993). The variable contribution of migration to urban growth by cities is evident from Table 5.

Table 5: Components of population growth in 6 major cities in Bangladesh, 1961-1974

City	Population 1961	Population 1974	Nat. increase in %	In-migrants in %	Annexation in %
Dhaka	521.034	1,679,572	18	74	8
Chittagong	364.205	889,760	28	43	29
Khulna	175.023	437,304	27	73	-
Narayanganj	162.054	270,680	41	17	42
Mymensingh	53.256	182,153	17	25	58
Rajshahi	56.885	132,909	30	36	34

Source: Khan, 1982, pp. 384

On the aggregate level, both in and out-migrations have increased in Bangladesh during the period of 1982-92 (Table 6 and BBS, 1994, Huq-Hussain, 1995). But quite obviously the increase is significantly higher in case of in-migration than of out-migration, indicating robust net migration trends. The urban in-migration in 1984 was 14.5 per thousand population and in 1992 it rose to 35.2 per thousand. The out-migration rate was 13.3 per thousand in 1984 and 19.5 per thousand in 1992 (Table 6).

Table 6: In Migration and Out Migration Rates 1984-1992

Year	In-Migration (per '000' population)			Out-Migration (per'000' population)		
	Bangladesh	Rural	Urban	Bangladesh	Rural	Urban
1984	6.8	5.8	14.5	8.0	7.3	13.3
1985	9.5	6.5	17.2	8.5	7.1	12.4
1986	14.2	9.6	30.5	10.5	8.2	10.4
1987	14.0	8.7	30.5	11.1	7.9	19.6
1990	16.2	12.9	31.2	10.1	9.2	18.0
1991	16.7	13.9	33.2	10.2	8.2	17.2
1992	17.5	14.7	35.2	12.1	10.2	19.5

Source: Huq-Hussain, 1995 based on BBS, 1994

It is mainly rural to urban migration which leads to urban growth and the difference in rate of rural population growth and urban population growth leads to urbanization (i.e. percent of national population living in urban areas).

Rural to urban migration may again take many forms, such as (a) permanent migration, (b) temporary migration, (c) seasonal migration, (d) circular migration and (c) commuting (Mahbub, 1997). The process ranges from short distance mobility (commuting) to long distance and long term movement or permanent migration.

The 1996 Habitat Global Report on Human Settlements highlighted the importance of the study of internal migration in developing countries and also noted the paucity of such studies (UNCHS, 1996, p.22). In the case of Bangladesh, status of academic as well as planning studies on internal migration is not too bad, although, all dimensions of internal migration might not have received enough attention (Islam and Begum, 1983, Mahbub and Khatun, 1994). Only a few studies took a macro-approach looking at internal

migration on a national scale and its many dimensions, while most of the other studies focused on rural to urban migration and more specifically on migrants at the urban end. Even in such cases, saving a few, majority of the studies were related to Dhaka. Only a few major survey works were conducted on other cities, such as Khulna (CUS, 1978) and Mymensingh.

One of the very early studies on internal migration in Bangladesh was by M. Obaidullah in 1967, being an analysis of patterns of internal migration in the country based on census data (Obaidullah, 1967). Ziaush Shams Haq (1974) provided a rigorous analysis of the determinants and dynamics of population movement within the country in his doctoral thesis at UBC (Canada) in 1974 (Haq, 1974). His work was based on district level data from census and hence did not have scope for rural to urban (centre) migration analysis. Rafiqul Huda Chowdhury made an excellent study in 1978 on rural out migration, with only limited scope for rural to urban migration (Chowdhury 1978). A recent study which looked at the national level data on role of migration in urbanization is the one by Atiya Yasmeen for her doctoral thesis in Economics at Calcutta University (Yasmeen 1990). She tested the Harris-Todaro model and concluded that the model did not significantly explain rural urban migratory movement in Bangladesh in 1981 although it did so in 1974. Yasmeen's work was based on 1974 and 1981 census data by district.

There have been a number of studies on rural-urban migration particularly focusing on Dhaka. Majority of these studies looked at migration behaviour and survival strategies of the poor, a few even focusing specifically on poor women. Syed Ali Mortuza's doctoral thesis at Berlin University in 1992 was entitled "Rural-Urban Migration in Bangladesh: Causes and Consequences" (Mortuza, 1992). After a general discussion on the national pattern, it provides a detail analysis of socio-demographic features of the migrants, reason for their migration and the consequence of migration in terms of survival strategies. The research was based on 341 migrant households selected from 9 slums in Dhaka city. The research has shown that

"In spite of adverse situation, migrants are able to secure their survival themselves. In this respect the friends and relatives of migrants in the city play a meaningful role. In spite of all migrants believe that migration to the city is a tangible solution to their poverty situation" (Mortuza, 1992, p.127).

AQM Mahub's doctoral thesis at Canterbury University in New Zealand in 1986, "Population Mobility in Rural Bangladesh: The Circulation of Working People" took a pioneering look at the subject of circular migration and commuting. It is important from urbanization point of view in the sense that it explores the growing connections and linkages between rural areas and urban centres, including, of course, Dhaka. The primary data was obtained from 1941 households in six villages in three districts (Sariatpur, Comilla and Munshiganj). Among several important findings, the research suggests that

"the space-time pattern and rate of movement in future will be dominated even more by the mobility strategies of the lower classes" (Mahub, 1997, p.209);

Nurul Islam Nazem's doctoral thesis at Durham University on "Rural Urban Interactions in Bangladesh: A Study of Linkages between Villages and Small Urban Centres" reveals that

“the economy of rural Bangladesh is undergoing a rapid change from a predominantly agrarian character to a mixed one. Small urban centres are playing an important role in this transition (Nazem, 1994)”.

There is more commuting now and probably less long-distance out-migration. The study was conducted in Faridpur District.

Shanaz Huq-Hussain's Ph.D. thesis at SOAS, University of London in 1992, is entitled “Female Migrant's Adaptation in Dhaka: A Case of the Processes of Urban Socio-economic Change”. It is based on survey of 399 migrant households and a number of life histories, all taken from slums in Dhaka city. The research concludes

“the rural migrants in the city are not as much as the victims of culture of poverty of Oscar Lewis. They are rather hard working and contribute significantly in the daily maintenance of the city life as well as themselves. Their involvement with services, informal and limited formal activities in the city have been found to improve their economic conditions and life chances. It may also be said that the longer their duration of stay in the city better the chance of economic and life condition” (Huq-Hussain 1996, p. 207).

Huq-Hussain also maintains that

“Their adaptive capacity leads them to modify as well as retain their traditional values, norms of the society and behavior to endure city life” (Huq-Hussain, 1996, p. 207),

and that

“the social networks established by their relatives, friends and district acquaintances are supportive to their city life making the transition easier and give them courage to face the challenge and uncertainties of urban life and even sponsor them for jobs” (Huq-Hussain, 1996, p. 207).

Rita Afsar of BIDS in her doctoral dissertation at the Department of Geography at Adelaide University in Australia in 1995 and as evident from her recent paper presented at a CPD dialogue, also maintains a view quite similar to those expressed by Mortuza and Huq-Hussain that “Migration benefits migrants and their family members” (Afsar, 1999a, p. 16). Afsar notes that

“migration to Dhaka city provides greater scope for occupational diversification and upward mobility than rural areas. It also improves their economic condition, housing structure and access to electricity and provides greater scope for diffusion of education among adolescents, compared to rural areas” (p. 16).

She also identifies “high rate of morbidity as a matter of great concern” (Afsar, 1999a, p. 16).

That migration to cities do not necessarily bring improvement of life condition to all, or even many is made evident by such deeply probing research as the one on 30 informal sector poor women in Dhaka by Farzana Islam of Jahangirnagar University. Indeed in her 1998 doctoral thesis in Anthropology at Sussex University, she has concluded that

“These (*meaning employed poor*) women perpetually struggle with the interrelated problems that arise through general disadvantage, poverty and gender” (Islam, F. 1998, p. 302.).

Some other researchers also have claimed that urban poor working women are probably subject to greater harassment and exploitation than rural poor women.

The several migration studies (mostly survey type) conducted since 1973 by the Centre for Urban Studies in Dhaka, Khulna and other cities have also come to conclusions not very different from those in the other studies mentioned earlier. CUS studies have also found upward economic mobility of a section of the migrant population but at the same time these studies have found poor migrants (as well as poor native urban dwellers) to be

living in extremely hazardous habitats, in slums and squatter settlements, with negative impact on their health condition (see CUS, 1976, 1979, 1990, 1996).

Almost all urban planning studies have expressed concern at the deplorable environmental conditions in slums in particular (see for example doctoral theses by Huque, 1982, Shakur, 1987) and in cities as a whole. The situation in metropolitan cities, particularly in Dhaka, is simply alarming. The situation is often portrayed as a consequence of rapid urbanization which in turn is caused by migration of the rural poor. We may come to this aspect later.

#### **4. Causes of Rural-Urban Migration**

Considerable literature exist on the subject of determinants or causes of rural to urban migration (see for details Islam, 1985 and Mahbob and Khatun 1994). A Bangladeshi scholar working at an American University has, in a recent paper, classified the models of causes of migration into two groups (i) one which isolates migration as a domestic phenomenon and (ii) the other which places causes of migration within an international politico-economic framework ( Alamgir, 1993).

Of the domestic models the most popular is the Push-Pull model pioneered by Everett S. Lee (1996). Migration is the combined effect of both push and pull factors and it is often difficult to separate the role of the two.

Within the Push-Pull model, *push factors* (at rural end) may be identified for Bangladesh as:

- 1) Population pressure, adverse person-land ratio, landlessness and poverty.
- 2) Frequent and severe natural disasters (particularly river bank erosion).
- 3) Law and order situation.
- 4) Lack of social and cultural opportunities (applicable for rural rich).

The *pull factors* are operative at the urban destination end. Real or perceived job opportunities and higher wages in the city are the main pulls. Rural-urban disparities in other opportunities and services are also responsible. A large proportion of rural-urban migrations are due to marriage and other familial reasons.

Table 7 summarizes the findings of several studies on reasons for migration to Dhaka city. The push factors at rural end are both economic and environmental, while Dhaka's agglomeration economy provides diverse opportunities and hence attract the rural out migrants, both rich and poor.

Table 7: Reasons for Migration in Dhaka City

Reasons	Floating Population in Dhaka <sup>1</sup>		Demra Bstuhara Camp <sup>2</sup>		Squatter Settlement in Dhaka <sup>3</sup>		Process of slums and squatter location <sup>4</sup>		Slums of Dhaka Metropolitan Area <sup>5</sup>		Demra and Dattapara Bastuhara Camp <sup>6</sup>		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
ECONOMIC REASONS													5769	55.4
Landless and poverty	-	-	215	47.8	-	-	55	18.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unemployment/Poverty	-	-	-	-	-	-	115	38.3	5	2.5	2207	42.5	-	-
Economic crisis	-	-	-	-	110	38.2	-	-	126	63.0	-	-	-	-
Job/earning opportunities	-	-	38	8.4	55	19.1	15	5.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Seeking job (unemployed)	2640	66.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Business reasons	54	1.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Getting charity	120	3.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Selling(Loss) property	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSES														
Natural Hazards														
Mostly river bank erosion	195	4.9	173	38.4	77	26.7	50	16.7	9	4.5	2271	43.8	2775	26.6
PERSONAL/FAMILY REASONS													951	9.1
Loses of husband														
Family feud	246	6.2	-	-	-	-	7	2.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dissolution of family	48	1.2	-	-	-	-	10	3.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dependents	608	15.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	32	16.0	-	-	-	-
SOCIO POLITICAL REASONS													81	0.8
Social Factors														
Brought by relative	-	-	20	4.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Village politics	-	-	-	-	18	6.2	-	-	19	9.5	-	-	-	-
Communal riot	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	6.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
OTHER REASONS	-	-	-	-	4	1.4	1	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
NOT STATED	60	1.5	-	-	24	8.3	15	5.0	9	4.5	213	13.7	821	7.9
TOTAL	3980	100.0	450	100.0	288	100.0	300	100.0	200	100.0	5191	100.0	104	100.0

1. BBS (1986); 2. CUS (1977); 3. Shakur (1987); 4. Rawshan (1989); 5. Hossain (1984); 6. Mahbub and Islam (1988)

Source: CUS, 1990. CUS, 1996.

## 5. Source of Origin of Migrants

Rural to urban migration takes place from all districts of Bangladesh, but some districts or areas are more out-migration prone. These districts are generally the ones with poor economic condition, high vulnerability to natural disasters and having easy transportation linkage with the destination city particularly metropolitan cities like Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna. The intervening distance, thus, is an obvious factor.

The prominent (Greater) districts of migrants' origin are Faridpur, Barisal, Comilla, Dhaka, Noakhali and Mymensingh (Table 8, Fig. 2)). In recent years even such districts as Rangpur and Jessore are sending migrants to Dhaka, with increasing poverty or lawlessness in such places.

Table 8: District of origin of the heads of migrant household in Dhaka city

Districts	CUS Survey 1980-89		MoL Survey 1989		BIDS Survey 1989		Average Percentage
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Faridpur	2172	20.8	10119	20.2	54	11.2	17.4
Dhaka	2062	19.7	9124	18.3	99	20.5	19.5
Mymensingh	739	7.1	1125	2.3	26	5.4	5.0
Comilla	1601	15.3	6574	13.1	88	18.2	15.5
Noakhali	346	3.3	5025	10.1	45	9.3	7.6
Rangpur	221	2.1	-	-	4	0.8	1.5
Pabna	110	1.0	510	1.02	10	2.1	1.4
Barisal	1934	18.5	10909	21.8	100	20.07	20.3
Others	1254	12.0	6609	13.2	58	11.9	12.1
All districts	10439	100.00	4995	100.00	484	100.00	100.00

Source: Barkat, 1997.

**Fig 2**

**6. The Migrants**

Migration generally tends to be a highly selective process which results in differentials in some characteristics of the migrant population from the non-migrant population both at the place of origin and at destination. Each of the characteristics, such as sex, education, marital/status, occupation, skill and socio-economic status, have impact on urbanization process. Several studies have identified this characteristic of migrants in Bangladesh. Although majority of migrants are the rural poor, some also belong to the rural middle class or rich (Choudhury 1978). Migrants are generally young adults but increasingly more and more old people and children are coming to the city as accompanying family members. Migrants used to be overwhelmingly the males, but for recent years, females, including unmarried girls, are also coming to the city in very large number to work (Box 1).

This is particularly true for Dhaka. Migrants are both illiterate, literate and educated. They bring in rural types of skills with them some which are usable in urban areas.

**Box 1**

**Female migrants:** One significant feature of recent urbanization in Bangladesh has been the large scale migration of rural poor women to major cities, particularly Dhaka. This has happened mainly as a result of the growth of the export oriented garment industries, which in turn is the effect of economic globalization. Women in the past would only migrate to city as spouses or female members of the family. Now they also come as unmarried singles. In the last 15 years nearly a million women have joined the government industries in Dhaka and also a large number in Chittagong. This has helped in balancing the distorted sex-ratio in these major cities. The process also has some long-term socio-demographic impacts such as on age at marriage and fertility rate.

**7. Consequences of Migration and Urbanization**

The impact rural to urban migration is both diverse and deep, both at the urban destination end and at the rural origin. At both ends there are economic and socio-cultural impacts. There are very few studies on the consequences of rural-urban migration at the rural end. Some exceptions are there. For example, the paper by Mahmuda Islam and Parveen Ahmed for UNESCO in 1984. Most of the researches have been at the urban end. Urbanization and urban growth occurring due to migration (and other factors) have both positive and negative consequences or impacts.

*Some of the positive consequences of urbanization are the following:*

- Economic benefits: higher productivity, better income etc.
- Demographic benefits: lowering of age at marriage, reduction of fertility rate etc.
- Socio-cultural benefits: modernization
- Political benefits: empowerment, democracy etc.
- Improved access to information technology.

Some of these have already been discussed in the preceding sections. We will now have a little more discussion on the negative consequences of migration and urbanization.

***Negative Consequences of Migration and Urbanization***

Urbanization is not an unmixed blessing. Its negative consequences are of great concern. These assume critical role under situation of rapid and uncontrolled or unplanned urban expansion.

The negative consequences, can be grouped as the following:

- Environmental consequences.
- Encroachment on productive agricultural land and forests.

- Extreme pressure on housing, growth of slums and the pressure on and urban services.
- Economic consequences, leading to income inequality and poverty, ill effects of globalization.
- Social consequences, resulting in increased violence and crime, social degradation.
- Cultural consequences: entry of alien culture, loss of national cultural identity.
- Political consequences: Criminalization of politics.

*Environmental consequences, water and air pollution*

Rapid urbanization without planning and development control has resulted in massive degradation in the urban environment; This is obvious in pollution of air and water. There is also high level of noise pollution and degradation of land. Uncollected garbage add also to increase in noxious odour. In large cities like Dhaka and Chittagong, particularly Dhaka, air pollution (in all indicators) is one of the highest in the world. The country is fast becoming a nation of sick and crippled people, because of such pollutions. Massive traffic congestions have become regular features. In addition to contributing to pollution of air, congestion also causes economic loss.

The situation has been caused by rapid urbanization, and total lack of development control. There is very little planning activity and urban management is weak and un-coordinated. The situation has been created over a long period of time. Lack of adequate financial resources is also an important factor, but equally critical has been the lack of awareness on the part of the authority as well as of the people.

That rapid growth of population of a massive scale causes negative impact on environment is obvious in Bangladesh, both in its rural and urban areas. Deforestation, cutting down of hills, encroachment and filling of water bodies, or such other situations are caused mainly by over population and poor governance.

*Encroachments on agricultural land*

Population increase, growth of income of certain sections of the population, lack of planning and development control are resulting in rapid conversion of agricultural productive land to urban use. There is significant degree of under utilization of land even within urban areas and land left idle by speculators in the fringe locations. There is also urban encroachment into forest areas, as seen in the Modhupur Tract.

*Extreme pressure on housing, growth of slums, and pressure on such urban services as health, education and recreation*

Urbanization, particularly rapid urbanization within a situation of weak economic condition, creates extreme pressure on housing and urban services like education, health, transportation, water, sanitation, electricity, fuel, garbage clearance, recreation etc. Pressure on housing accompanied by poverty causes growth of slums and squatter settlements. In Dhaka, for example, more than 30 percent of the population live in very

poor quality habitats called *bastees* (slums). The environment of physical squalor in the settlements of the urban poor, known as slums and squatter areas, and the fact that criminal and anti-social activities are found to be located within slums have given a scope to national governmental leaders and law enforcing agencies to crackdown on such places and on innocent people living there. All the basic services are also in short supply and of generally poor quality. Most serious shortages are in sanitation and safe water supply. Energy is also in short supply. Although poor management, dishonesty, lack of skill are responsible for problems in the service delivery sector, increased demand due to **population growth** has its obvious impact.

*Economic consequences, growth, inequality and poverty*

While it is true that urbanization generates growth in the economy, it also creates great inequality of income within urban population. Income inequality in urban areas in Bangladesh is higher than in rural areas and even within urban areas it has increased during the last few years as measured in the Gini index from 0.37 in 1985-86 to 0.44 in 1995-96 (BBS, 1998, p. 384).

Rural-urban migration in Bangladesh is sometimes held responsible for transferring poverty from rural areas to urban areas. The official BBS statistics at least would support such a proposition for some recent years as evident from Table 9.

Table 9: Number and proportion of population below recommended calorie intake and “hard core” poverty lines by residence

Year	Poverty Line I		Poverty Line II	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
	Absolute number of poor (million)			
1981-82	6.4	60.9	3.0	43.1
1983-84	7.1	47.0	3.8	31.3
1985-86	7.0	44.2	2.4	19.1
1988-89	6.3	43.4	3.5	26.0
1991-92	6.8	44.8	3.8	26.5
1995-96	9.6	45.7	5.2	23.9
	Percentage of poor			
1981-82	66.0	73.8	30.7	52.2
1983-84	66.0	57.0	35.0	38.0
1985-86	56.0	51.0	19.0	22.0
1988-89	47.6	48.0	26.4	28.6
1991-92	46.7	47.8	26.2	28.3
1995-96	49.7	47.1	27.3	28.6

Source: BBS, 1998, p. 383.

Poverty incidence in urban areas in 1991-92 was 46.7 percent as opposed to 47.8 percent in rural areas. The situation was reversed in 1995-96, with 49.7 percent in urban areas and 47.1 percent in rural areas. A similar pattern over the two periods is evident for hardcore poverty.

This is in contradiction to claims of poverty improvement by some researchers. The discrepancy is probably due to difference in poverty measurement methods. There may be difference of opinion on poverty incidence, but it is probably true that the absolute

number of urban population poor in the country as a whole has been increasing steadily. The same table above shows this quite clearly. What is more of a concern is the fact that the number of hard core poor has also gone up in urban areas, while it has marked significant reduction in rural areas. The massive GO and NGO support and credit activities with the rural poor and the paucity of it with the urban poor might have played some role. This issue remains to be examined thoroughly. In addition, the shift of the hardcore poor from the rural areas to urban centre may also be partly responsible for increase in urban poverty.

Although the informal sector provides employment, that these are of low productivity, is also a matter of concern (Kabra, 1997). There is also prevalence of unemployment, underemployment and misemployment such as in prostitution, underworld business and maastanism in urban areas. These are all in the increase.

#### *Social consequences*

Among the many negative social consequences of urbanization are the increase in the incidence of crime and violence, drug trafficking and addiction, corruption and prostitution. Some of these are associated with affluence while the others with deprivation, frustration and bad governance.

#### *Cultural consequences*

Alien cultures make easy entry through urbanization. Satellite TV has been a strong agent but there are also other modes of entry. The situation could be even worse if the country had adopted a more open tourism policy like some of the South-east Asian countries. The negative impact of globalization is not insignificant.

### **8. Urbanization Policy Initiatives**

Mass poverty in Bangladesh as a whole and also in urban areas is a stark reality. With only \$280 per capita GNP for the country, urban poverty is also extreme in nature. Notwithstanding discrepancies in data on urban poverty between official government sources (BBS, 1998) and independent studies like the one conducted on behalf of ADB and GOB (Islam, et al 1997), the fact remains that urban poverty has become a critical and major issue to reckon with. The incidence of poverty varies from 47 percent to 61 percent in these sources. The incidence of urban poverty resulting from rapid urban growth is visibly indicated by the proliferation of squatter and slum settlements, especially in metropolitan areas. In many of the slums, overall conditions in housing service and health are worse than those in the rural areas. The other obvious manifestation of urban poverty is the presence of a huge low income earning informal sector.

Although the Government of Bangladesh has long been aware of both the rapid pace of urbanization in the country and the associated physical, economic and social problems, it has not yet adopted an explicit urban policy. However, a number of

government documents and other initiatives have from time to time indicated the policy thinking of the government with regard to urbanization and urban development.

The National Report on Human Settlements submitted to the *UN Habitat I* conference held at Vancouver in Canada in 1976 came close to a policy statement on human settlements and urbanization in Bangladesh (GOB, 1976) back in the seventies. Besides this, the various five year plan documents prepared between 1973 and 1998 also indicated some policy directions. There have been some other related reports and documents prepared in between these years.

The 1976 National Habitat Report had recommended that various planning regions were to be identified and in each region one medium-sized town would be chosen as focal point of regional growth. The report also suggested the development of a metropolitan city in the northern region of the country. These measures would have helped create more balanced spatial urban development.

The second five year plan (1980-85) envisaged that infrastructural and service facilities would be extended from 100 urban centres to about 1200 growth centres all over the country. The objectives of such a programme were to connect all growth centres with a transport network, provide these centres with all other necessary infrastructural and utility services and to set up agro-based industries to increase employment opportunities. The policy was to prevent city-based polarized growth and to promote more balanced growth throughout the country. In 1982, the government upgraded all 460 thana headquarters into upazilas (sub-districts) to promote a policy of decentralized administration and development for the country. The objective was to develop the upazila headquarters as urban focal centres of administrative, industrial, commercial, social and cultural activities so that the rural people could have comparatively easier access to necessary development support. The policy was already included in the third five year plan (1985-90) and 460 upazila headquarters were all declared urban centres. This also resulted in an increase in the urban population over the 1981 census.

Between the third and the fourth five year plans, the government carried out preparation of land use/master plans for all the district towns and the upazila centres. The fourth plan (1990-95) recommended updating and completing these master plans. However, almost none of these plans was officially adopted or used for implementation. The fourth plan also sketched out a range of macro-economic policies which might have fostered urban development. Such policies included encouragement to the private sector investment, promoting decentralization and reliance on local authorities for implementation of development programmes. But before the fourth plan could be officially approved, the government of the time fell (in December 1990). A new government was elected to power in March 1991 for five years. One of the major decisions taken by this government (BNP) was to abolish the upazila system. This resulted in lowering of the importance of the upazila headquarters as an urban growth centre. The Planning Commission even abandoned the sequence of successive five year plans and instead spent a lot of time issuing a 15 year Participatory Perspective Plan (PPP) to be supplemented with detailed Annual Development Programmes (as before and as at

present). The PPP was not officially approved by the (BNP) Government. The PPP makes little mention of either the urban sector or of housing. The planning style has again changed in 1996 with the coming of yet another party (Awami League) into power and the practice of planning for five years has been reestablished. The Government has recently approved the fifth 5 year plan which provides no comprehensive urban planning guideline.

While the formal planning documents have side-tracked urban development, a number of parallel developments, interestingly, have emphasized urbanization and the urban sector. The Report of the Task Force on Social Implications of Urbanization prepared in 1991 at the behest of the interim government of the time, made an elaborate statement on urban policy and poverty alleviation (Islam et al, 1991). This report, however, was not approved by the BNP Government, (1991-96) and, therefore, not considered for implementation. The Task Force recommended, among other actions, a policy of deconcentrating population of Dhaka City.

Subsequently, the National Housing Policy 1993, the Bangladesh Urban and Shelter Sector Review (1993), the Bangladesh Urban Sector National Programme Document (1994) and the most recent Bangladesh National Habitat II Report (GOB, 1996) have all underscored the important role urbanization can play in national development. All these documents have spelt out policy directions and even action plans for achieving a balanced development process. The National Housing Policy is an officially approved document and so is the 1996 Habitat II Report. The other two documents have been discussed widely at national level but not approved officially.

All these documents and policy statements make specific reference to spatial aspects of urbanization and to urban poverty alleviation strategies and programmes. The 1996 Habitat II National Report was prepared during the Caretaker Government of 1996. However, the present Awami League Government in power since immediately after the Habitat II Global Conference in June, recognizes the Report and agrees to implement its recommendations. However, the progress so far in implementation has been rather limited.

## **9. Major Trends Summarized**

### *Population, Migration and Urbanization*

- Large base population in both rural and urban areas.
- Massive rural to urban migration, particularly towards Dhaka and other metropolitan cities.
- The main cause of rural-urban migration is rural push, mostly economic in nature.
- Migration to Dhaka is partly due to pull, such as formal sector industrial employment for women, and informal sector opportunities for men.
- Migrants originate mainly from a number of economically depressed or (crowded) districts, vulnerable to natural disaster and located close to major cities.
- Rural-urban migrants include both rural rich and rural poor, but more of the latter.

*Migrant's Economic and Social Mobility*

- Migration benefits migrants and their families but all migrants do not necessarily experience upward economic mobility.
- Even if there is income or occupational mobility, life condition may not change for many migrants, specially for informal sector poor women who continue to suffer from insecurity and harassment.

*Economy, Inequality and Poverty*

- Urbanization fosters economic growth, the urban sector's contribution to country's GDP is increasing,
- Spatial/regional imbalance in urbanization and development exists.
- Urban Concentration, Metropolitanization and Primacy increasing.
- Informal sector contributes significantly to employment but not so significantly to Gross City Product.
- Inequality in urban income is increasing, nationally.
- There are various types of inequalities even within a city. Inequality is sharper in large cities, specially Dhaka.
- Massive poverty persists in urban areas, particularly in large cities. Both absolute poverty and number of population poor have increased nationally. In some cities like Dhaka, poverty incidence might have declined.

*Emerging Issues at City Level (for example, Dhaka)*

- Environmental crisis, pollution, inadequate solid waste management
- Poor transportation system and traffic congestion
- Pressure on land, housing, growth of slums and squatter settlements
- Pressure on all services (health, education, recreation, water, sanitation, electricity, fuel etc)
- Low productivity, unemployment, underemployment, system loss
- Inequality and poverty
- Insecurity for women and children
- Lawlessness, violence and crime
- Municipal resource constraints
- Lack of citizens awareness and activism.
- Absence of or weak urban planning, absence of poor focus in planning and development
- Poor urban management, lack of coordination amongst agencies, governance crisis

*Emerging Issue at National Level*

- Lack of vision, absence of policy on migration, urbanization, urban growth, urban system and urban development.

## 10. The Way Forward

Bangladesh is characterised by rapid urbanization, backed by a huge base population. It is also characterized by heavy concentration in a few large cities. The country is also poor and vulnerable to many natural hazards. The economy is slow growing and vulnerable to political restlessness, irresponsibility and intolerance. Under these circumstances the future of urbanization is not at all bright. But we need to think of a future and a way forward. Some ideas in this context are as follows:

There is need for guiding the progress of the country through a national human settlements policy which will include policy on urbanization and urban development. Such a policy would consider the following:

- Stress on decentralized urbanization (or decentralized development), by:
  - Deconcentrating growth in Dhaka city (e.g., establish satellite towns within commuting distances).
  - Encouraging growth of secondary cities and small towns.
  - Encouraging planned growth of rural towns or compact townships as a form of new settlements.
  - Extending urban services to existing villages and enhancing income-earning opportunities, to reduce rural out migration.
- Increase urban productivity by technological and entrepreneurial development.
- Alleviate urban poverty by income-enhancing methods, improve productivity of the informal sector. The role of NGOs be encouraged in this area.
- Reduce inequality within cities, by adopting a people oriented resource allocation, urban land-use and service delivery planning. Particular attention need to be given to allocation of land for housing of all income categories, particularly the low-income groups, and to space for economic activities of the poor.
- Adopt a transportation system that would be efficient, affordable and environment friendly, (these may imply reducing dependence on private cars, cycle rickshaws and auto rickshaws in Dhaka and look for other alternatives, particularly mass public transport).
- Protect cities from floods and other natural hazards, but in a manner that ensures protection against new kind of environmental problems, like water logging.
- Control environmental pollution, such as pollution of air, water and land.
- Provide low-cost shelter and urban services (use participatory and contributory approaches for this). Implementation of the National Housing Policy 1993 in good earnest could pave the way.
- Ensure urban development in a planned way. For this, establish planning departments/cells in each city and municipality, and ensure participatory urban planning. For cities which have approved urban development plans (such as Dhaka, Chittagong etc) ensure their speedy implementation. For this good coordination of city-based development agencies is important.

- Ensure higher efficiency of urban centres by introducing better management and participatory governance.
- Strengthen urban local governments, politically, economically and efficiency wise.
- Empower the civil society to ensure better participation, transparency and accountability of public sector institutions and local governments. Provide scope for participation of defence forces along side civilians in critical urban development activities, such as in construction of roads, embankments, land and housing development, urban forestry and urban agriculture.
- Encourage private sector in not only profit-seeking but also pro-poor investments, including housing.

Above all adoption and implementation of a comprehensive urbanization policy and improvement of urban management within a local government system are essential for a sustainable future of the country.

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