

THE FORCES OF URBANIZATION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract

Rural to urban migration is widely held to be the principal component of rapid urban population growth in the developing world. Bangladesh is no exception to this picture and one characteristic of urbanization in Bangladesh is the large numbers of migrants from rural areas to urban centers. Both rural push and urban pull factors cause large-scale migration from rural to urban areas. Actually, urbanization is intrinsically connected to and interconnected with the development process in Bangladesh so this study seeks a general understanding of urbanization using different variables to discuss the reality of urbanization. Then the aim of this study is to identify the forces which work behind the rapid urbanization in Bangladesh and to provide an answer which variables are important to force urbanization of Bangladesh. Therefore, this study addresses how urbanization and urban growth are important for Bangladeshi development at the present. This study uses data from all 64 Bangladeshi cities covering the years 1991, 2001, and 2011 to look at the forces that have driven urbanization in these major cities. This study uses Pearson correlations to evaluate the relationship between different variables. The findings reflect a comprehensive understanding of some core details of urbanization. The study concludes by providing some strategies that might be helpful to the policy maker in formulating development policies for urban development.

Keywords: Urbanization, Urban Development, Population Changes, Bangladesh.

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization generally denotes the redistribution of population from rural to urban settlements over time and it is the process whereby large numbers of people congregate and settle in an area (Orum, 2011). Bangladesh has been experiencing rapid urbanization in recent decades. The urban population is growing much faster than the population as a whole to an extent greater than ever before. This study seeks to help remedy this situation. Further, the correlation between urbanization and growth on a development scale is also apparent within the context of Bangladesh, which suffers from being one of the poorest and most crowded and most environmentally vulnerable nations in the world.

The aim of this study is to discuss the forces behind urbanization in Bangladesh. Therefore, this study addresses the question of how urbanization is important for Bangladesh's development at the present conjuncture to provide an answer which elements are important in

driving the urbanization of Bangladesh. This study explores the trends and nature of urbanization in Bangladesh from the colonial era to the contemporary period of globalization in order to ascertain the implications of rapid urbanization to democratic transitions. This study also outlines the major elements with the ultimate aim of identifying the forces at work behind the rapid urbanization in Bangladesh.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study addresses the issue of urbanization and its causes and driving factors in Bangladesh. First, some research trends covering the phenomenon and importance of urbanization are listed. Urbanization has the ability to transform the economic fabric of nations. However, it has been demonstrated that urbanization is an irreversible, dynamic process interlinked with socio-economic change (UNDP Report, 2010). The model of this study is based on the push-pull model and the framework of this study perceives migration as a consequence of the interaction of push factors that motivate people to move and leave their places of origin, and pull factors that attract people to particular places (Portes and Borocoz, 1989).

The factors propelling urbanization in Bangladesh have been quite different from other international experience. The causes of migration to a city are generally described as push and pull factors that drive people from the countryside (push) or attract people to the city (pull). As an approach to explaining urbanization, this means that all of the major factors are considered in turn and related to the dynamic process of urbanization. This is one of the most commonly known theoretical concepts in migration research, and is therefore applicable to urbanization. Lists of push factors include such elements as economic, social, and political hardships, while the pull factors include the comparative advantages (UNFPA, 2007).

Major industrial activities and auxiliary business services are concentrated in the largest cities and urbanization is arguably the most fundamental factor for economic development in Bangladesh (Lee, and Mehedi, 2014). Islam (1996) stated that the global demand for textile products is a factor influencing urbanization in Bangladesh, accounting for the bulk of employment, particularly as a thriving, export-oriented, urban-based industry big cities (Uddin and Jahed, 2007; Ahmed and Islam, 2014). Urban areas have created disparity between rural and urban with respect to consumption, wage and productivity levels (Bradshaw, 1987), and such disparities draw migrants from poorer (rural) areas. The easy employment opportunity in the informal sector has much contribution towards this rapid urbanizing trend.

Furthermore, cities have been the overwhelming recipient of international development aid on top of the disproportionate resources the central government has lavished on them. There is limited capacity of the Bangladeshi state, meaning that the central government has limited power, resources, and authority to enforce a bias powerful enough to tilt the playing field on its own. On top of that, there is the oft-cited call for increased NGO governance to compensate for weak state capacity and international donors are heavily drawn to Bangladeshi NGOs (Habib, 2009; Hasan, 2011: 6).

This wage gap is an example of an economic factor that could be the result of a rural push or an urban pull. Rural poverty due to land pressure or natural disasters causes rural migrants to flock to cities (Barrios *et al.*, 2006; Poelhekke, 2010; Henderson *et al.*, 2013).

Urbanization and economic growth occur in tandem and economic growth has sustained and fueled urbanization in Bangladesh (Muzzini and Aparicio, 2013). Economic forces are the dynamic driving forces of urbanization in Bangladesh (Ahsan *et al.*, 2012). There is a close

relationship between economic development and urbanization in Bangladesh (Kawsar, 2012). From rural to urban migrants generally benefit from access to better opportunities in urban areas (Choguill, 1996).

Transportation offers the greatest options for rural to urban movement, providing a draw to cities or an escape from the countryside (Brookfield and Byron, 1993; Garrett and Chowdhury, 2004). Rapid progress in transportation facilitates the dispersion of economic activities as a country urbanizes (Muzzini and Aparicio, 2013). On the other hand, there is also evidence for a demographic transition from rural to urban because of employment opportunities in the public sector of Bangladesh (UN-Habitat, 2014).

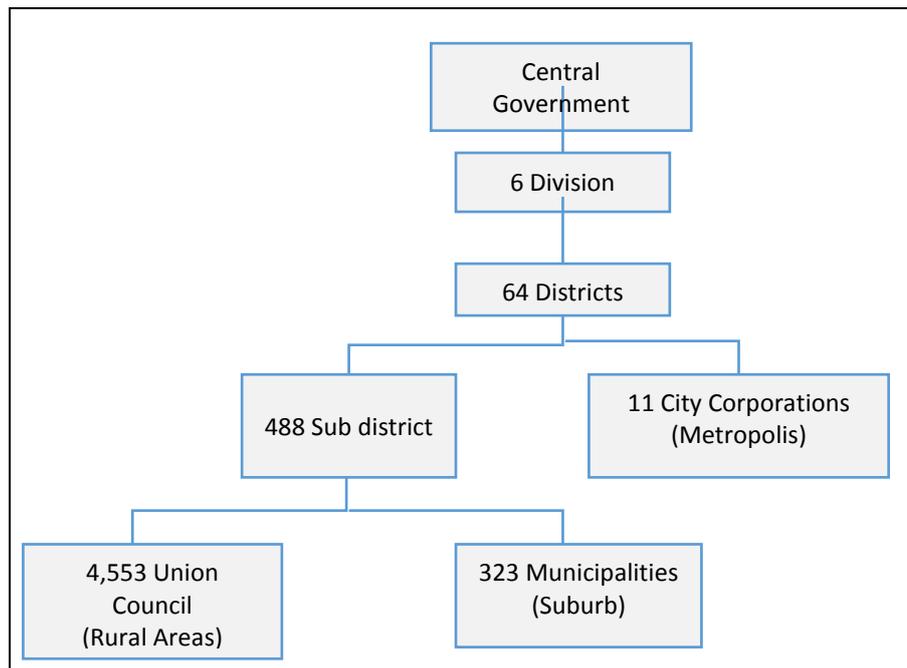
Urbanization and education are interwoven in Bangladesh with the capital city and urban areas requiring a literate workforce for domestic service, industry, transportation, and even small business (Karim, 2004). There is a stark variation in literacy rates between rural and urban areas in Bangladesh (Cooke, 2013) so education is a major pull factor as cities provide more educational opportunities in an economy that has developed through literacy, by providing better employment prospects and giving higher economic status.

URBANIZATION CONTEXT IN BANGLADESH

Urban Administrative System

For administrative purpose, Bangladesh is divided into six administrative divisions: Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet.

Figure 1: Administrative Tiers of Bangladesh



Source: Statistics and Information Division (SID), 2015

Divisions are subdivided into administrative units known as districts. The districts have been the focal point in the administrative system of Bangladesh. The Figure 1 outlines the tiers of government in Bangladesh. The divisional level is the highest tier of local administration below the central government.

Urbanization Trends

Bangladesh is experiencing the greatest rural to urban migration in the world in recent

history, and its urban population has grown very fast in the last few decades (Islam, 2012). The level of urbanization and share of national urban population along with total urban population for each of the six divisions reveals that Dhaka overwhelmingly holds the highest rank in all the censuses both for level of urbanization and share of national urban population (Rouf and Jahan, 2009).

Table 1. Urbanization in Bangladesh

	1991		2001		2011	
	Pop (Million)	Pop (%)	Pop (Million)	Pop (%)	Pop (Million)	Pop (%)
Urban	22.46	21.12	29.26	23.53	33.56	23.29
Rural	83.85	78.88	95.07	76.47	110.48	76.71
Total	106.31	100	124.33	100	144.04	100

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), 2001 & 2011

Table 1 shows the amount of population in urban and rural areas at three different times. The populations in both the areas are increasing with time. Between 1991 and 2001 the proportion of urban population increased from 21.23% to 23.53% of the total population. Hence, urban growth took place with positive urbanization. This was because the rate of expansion of the rural population was lower than that of the urban population. In 2011, the proportion of the urban population was 23.30% with an urban growth rate of 1.37%, which was half of the preceding census.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Discussion of Variables

This part will focus on explaining the variables used in this study that were not explained in the literature review as these variables are special ones related to the character of the Bangladeshi situation. This study uses population density as a dependent variable due to the concentrated nature of Bangladeshi cities. Therefore, population density essentially represents the Bangladeshi government definition of urbanization. Other variables, including the literacy rate, as well as NGOs, transportation, public employees, manufacturing, textile, and agriculture as measured per capita are used to capture the reality of urbanization in Bangladesh.

Population density is a good measure of urbanization in the case of Bangladesh because it shows how people move over time. The literacy rate shows better opportunities for education over time. The NGOs shows a lack of government strength in service provisions. Transportation employment per capita shows the provision of infrastructure. Public employees per capita show the strength of government in a given city. Manufacturing employment per capita shows the relative importance of manufacturing. Textile employment per capita shows the relative importance of textile industry. Agricultural employment per capita shows the relative importance of the agricultural sector.

2. Correlation Analysis

This study uses panel data and it is a dataset in which the behavior of entities is observed across time. Although Pearson correlations are used for data analysis, the independent variables were selected according to the model in the following formula:

$$Y_{\text{Urban Development}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{\text{literacy}} + \beta_2 X_{\text{NGO}} + \beta_3 X_{\text{transportation}} + \beta_4 X_{\text{public sector}} + \beta_5 X_{\text{manufacturing industry}} + \beta_6 X_{\text{textile industry}} + \beta_7 X_{\text{agricultural industry}} + \epsilon.$$

The correlation analysis has been done where population density is the dependent variable and literacy rate, per capita NGO, per capita transportation sector, per capita public employee, per capita manufacturing industry, per capita textile industry, per capita agricultural sector all are the independent variables.

Table 2. Description of Variables

Name of Variables	Description
Population Density	Population density is measured through the number of inhabitants per square kilometer. Bangladesh has one of the highest population densities in the world.
Literacy Rate	Literacy rates represent the quality of life. It is the proportion of people who can read and write. There is a stark variation in literacy rates between urban and rural areas in Bangladesh.
NGO	NGOs attempts to raise the economic status of Bangladesh. The number of NGO divided by the population in units of 10,000. NGOs are related to the effect of development and these are organized in the local or national level in Bangladesh. NGOs deliver a large scale of development program in urban areas through the Bangladeshi government.
Transportation Sector	Transportation sector represent the development of infrastructure in Bangladesh. The number of people who work in the transportation sector divided by the population in units of 10,000. This is an effective instruments and one of the major force for driving urban development and the economic progress in Bangladesh. As a country urbanizes, rapid progress in transportation sector facilitating the dispersion of economic activities.
Public Employee	Public employee represents the government capacity of Bangladesh. The total number of people who provide services with public institutions divided by the population in units of 10,000. The employment rate is higher in urban areas than rural areas in Bangladesh. Migration from rural areas has been a key driver of the rapid urban growth in Bangladesh.
Manufacturing Industry	Manufacturing industry represents the industrial development of Bangladesh. The number of people who involve with the manufacturing industry divided by the population in units of 10,000. Urban development has often been overlooked in discussion on industry dimension and manufacturing industry has frequently been seen economic growth in Bangladesh.
Textile Industry	Textile industry represents also the industrial development of Bangladesh. The number of people who work in the textile industry divided by the population in units of 10,000. Bangladesh’s manufacturing sector specializes in export-oriented garment production. This industry accounts for about three-quarter of Bangladesh’s export earnings.
Agricultural Sector	The number of people within agro processing for production divided by the population in units of 10,000. Mostly cultivate or raise food products and operates land, crops, livestock etc. Agriculture can make an important contribution in helping the urban people to become food secure. The agriculture sector reinforces not only food security but also economic benefits at various levels in Bangladesh. It also interacts with the urban functions to provide resources and services in Bangladesh.

Table 3. Correlations Matrix, 1991

	Pop_ Den.	Lit_ Rate	NGO_ Per	Trans_ Sector_ Per	Pub_ Em p_ Per	Manu_ Ind _ Per	Tex_ Ind_ _ Per	Agri_ Sector_ _ Per
Pop_ Den.	1							
Lit_ Rate	.465**	1						
NGO_ Per	-.341**	-.104	1					
Trans_ Sector_ Per	.735**	.536**	-.125	1				
Pub_ Emp_ Per	.512**	.518**	-.144	.587**	1			
Manu_ Ind_ Per	.178	-.017	.221	.285*	.288*	1		
Tex_ Ind_ Per	.428**	.014	-.186	.206	.419**	.372**	1	
Agri_ Sector_ Per	-.520**	-.507**	.141	-.592**	-.445**	-.253*	-.145	1

$n = 63$

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level*

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level*

Table 3 shows there is a positive and significant relationship between population density and literacy rate. The relationship between population density and NGO is statistically significant but it shows a negative relationship. There is positive relationship between transportation sector and population density and statistically it is significant. The relationship between the number of public employee and population density is positive and statistically significant. Manufacturing industry shows a positive relationship with population density but it is not statistically significant. Textile industry is statistically significant and has a positive relationship with population density. Agricultural sector shows a negative relationship with population density though it is statistically significant.

Table 4 shows there is a positive and significant relationship between population density and literacy rate. The relationship between population density and NGO is statistically significant but it shows a negative relationship. There is positive relationship between transportation sector and population density and it is statistically significant. The relationship between the number of public employees and population density is positive and statistically significant. Manufacturing industry shows a positive relationship with population density but it is not statistically significant. Textile industry is statistically significant and has a positive

relationship with population density. Agricultural sector shows a negative relationship with population density but it is statistically significant.

Table 4. Correlations Matrix, 2001

	Pop_ Den.	Lit_ Rate	NGO_ Per	Trans_ Sector_ Per	Pub_ Emp_ Per	Manu_ Ind_ Per	Tex_ Ind_ Per	Agri_ Sector_ Per
Pop_ Den.	1							
Lit_ Rate	.407**	1						
NGO_ Per	-.255*	-.065	1					
Trans_ Sector_ Per	.645**	.342**	-.072	1				
Pub_ Emp_ Per	.569**	.563**	-.085	.542**	1			
Manu_ Ind_ Per	.237	.050	.136	.334**	.298*	1		
Tex_ Ind_ Per	.339**	-.035	-.073	.280*	.280*	.444**	1	
Agri_ Sector_ Per	-.450**	-.319*	.148	-.254*	-.314*	-.293*	-.016	1

n = 63

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 5 shows there is a positive and significant relationship between population density and literacy rate. The relationship between population density and NGO is less statistically significant but it shows a negative relationship. There is positive relationship between transportation sector and population density and it is statistically significant. The relationship between the number of public employee and population density is positive and statistically significant. Manufacturing industry shows a positive relationship with population density but it is not statistically significant. Textile industry is statistically significant and a positive relationship with population density. Agricultural sector shows a negative relationship with population density but it is statistically significant.

Table 5. Correlations Matrix, 2011

	Pop_ Den.	Lit_ Rate	NGO_ Per	Trans_Sect or_Per	Pub_Emp_ Per	Manu_Ind Per	Tex_Ind_ Per	Agri_Sect or_ Per
Pop_ Den	1							
Lit_Rate	.535**	1						
NGO_ Per	.000		1					
Trans_ Sector_ Per	-.255*	-.071	.044	.582				
Pub_ Emp_ Per	.432**	.304*	-.030	1				
Manu_ Ind_ Per	.000	.016	.814					
Tex_ Ind_ Per	.557**	.627**	.007	.383**	1			
Agri_ Sector_ Per	.000	.000	.958	.002				
	.100	.162	.277*	.628**	.300*	1		
	.438	.204	.028	.000	.017			
	.337**	.173	.024	.416**	.261*	.515**	1	
	.007	.174	.850	.001	.039	.000		
	-.299*	-.453**	.111	-.267*	-.218	-.287*	-.045	1
	.017	.000	.385	.034	.086	.022	.724	

n = 63

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Manufacturing industry is clearly not related to urbanization in Bangladesh. There is no significant correlation and the levels of correlations are very low any case. It demonstrates that the case of Bangladesh is not a typical urbanization case. However, the textile industry is an influential factor in Bangladesh's urbanization. The textile industry has the bulk of the share of employment, particularly in the big cities of Bangladesh. The textile industry has contributed significantly to the growing dominance of the urban economy in Bangladesh. The textile industry is Bangladesh's biggest economic success story and this sector is the main driver of economic growth in urban areas. It has been highly successful in increasing economic density and cities are the most productive location for the textile industry in Bangladesh. Bangladeshi urban areas still maintain considerable amounts of agriculture, as Bangladesh is still divided starkly between massive concentrations of pseudo-urban development next to centers of agrarian and traditional economic activities and the continuing existence of agriculture within urban districts plays an important role. However, the analysis shows that agriculture is negatively related to urbanization and its influence is declining over time.

CONCLUSION

The present explosive and rapid growth in Bangladesh is a new and unique feature of urbanization. A combination of push and pull factors can be a reason for Bangladeshis moving to cities. The normal push factors for rural people are the circumstances that make their earning of living impossible: land deterioration, lack of adequate land, unequal land distribution, droughts, storms, floods, and clean water shortages. A lack of modern resources,

firewood shortages, religious conflicts, and local economic declines are also major reasons for moving to urban areas. People continue to migrate to cities as long as they expect urban wages to exceed their current rural wages.

Urbanization has a crucial role to play in the economic development of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has an exceptionally high population density in urban areas so cities in Bangladesh are faced with the challenges of rapid population increase characterized by crises such as lack of economic dynamism, governance failure, severe infrastructure and service deficiencies, inadequate land administration, massive slums and social breakdown as mentioned above. However, national and local management capacities are often weak and planning processes and resources are often poorly coordinated in developing countries like Bangladesh. Therefore, it is very urgent for Bangladesh to harmonize all urban policy efforts with the spatial characteristics of sustainable economic growth.

Economic reasons are the main motivators for moving from rural to urban areas in Bangladesh. To accelerate economic growth, Bangladesh needs cities that are more capable of innovation, better connected internally and with global economy. A major conclusion have emerged from the discussion that urbanization generally contributes to the economic development, it is very clear from the historical evidence that cities are innovation diffusion and economic transformation. The main challenge is how to cope with rapid urban growth. Urban policy can be the main tool for coping with the rapid urban growth. Although outside of scope of this study, this massive urban growth could exacerbate existing problems of congestion, pollution, and traffic safety without the right design and planning. This study conveys the message, in line with many Bangladeshi thinkers, that the pattern of urbanization in Bangladesh needs to change in order to better respond to the challenges of our time, to address issues such as inequality, climate change, informality, insecurity, and the unsustainable forms of urban expansion. Therefore, urbanization can be a powerful and positive force for development if urbanization is planned for in advance and well managed and governed.

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