

Corruption by Example: Legalizing the Illegal as a Means of Survival in Modern Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines the behavioural consequences of the public outcry on corruption by the Nigerian citizens especially the top ranking officers and leaders of government. A sample of 873 respondents cutting across twelve professions was interviewed through a carefully designed questionnaire. The research was complimented with secondary data sourced from other anti-corruption agencies. Findings reveal a total disgust for corruption for its apparent smearing of the country's image in the international community, but that the war against it would be hard to win since the acts are perpetrated by policy makers themselves. It, however, suggested a number of factors which if religiously executed could reduce the cases of corruption to the barest minimum.

Introduction: The problem in perspective

It is an indisputable fact that Nigeria is blessed with abundant human and natural resources. Even though very many of these natural resources have yet to be tapped, the few which are available for our use are enough, given our present population and human resources, to make life comfortable for the average Nigerian. Alarm has been raised in several quarters especially the academic community and by other economic analysts of the inherent danger which our over dependence on the oil sector poses to the nations economy.

This influenced the federal government's determination to source for revenue from other areas such as the Iron and steel, liquefied natural gas, tin oil, all of whose contributions to the Gross national product has remained very insignificant. Efforts are also at top gear to harness other resources such as the gold and bitumen believed to be the second largest in the world. Cocoa, kolanut and groundnut, which were the major sources of foreign exchange before the discovery of oil, appeared to have been revisited due to the encouragement of the government through several inducements to farmers.

It is, however, rather unfortunate that in spite of these human and natural endowments, the nation ranked high among the world's poorest. Hunger exhibits its ugly face in most homes where the average citizen contends with a life of abject poverty. The common man is alienated from himself as he lacks the wherewithal to afford the basic necessities of life such as education, medical

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facilities etc. As expected, the life expectancy is low compared with those of the developed nations of the world.

Nigeria's debt just before the recent debt relief pronouncement stood at over \$30 billion with an interest rate which has become unserviceable. The nation became encapsulated in a kind of galloping inflation, which witnessed the collapse of major institutions in the society. The educational sector is bedridden, the manufacturing industries are collapsing, and the health sector is seeking urgent attention while the polity is bedeviled by all sorts of amoral behaviour.

Many have blamed this on several factors including; weak leadership, mismanagement of funds, misplacement of priority and corruption among others. Corruption is one scourge which hinders a nation's growth and development as well as posing serious threats to democratic growth through its promotion of arbitrary rules (Crossette 2004 and Ogus, 2003).

Corruption has no dated history. It is perhaps as old as man and it is endemic in all known societies of the world, be it developed or developing economies. Scolt-Joynt (2001) reported the alarming rate of corruption among top-government functionaries in France, where several of them had criminal charges hanging on them and in Mexico where the people ended a seventy year corrupt regime through a change of baton from the ruling revolutionary party to president Vincente. In the United States, McCain presidential campaign was not without the opposition accusation of graft by the political elite while Germany had a finger sore of kickbacks and favour-broking involving members of the ruling Christian Democratic Party. Even in Vietnam, where leaders of government accused workers of corruption, it was discovered that his own lieutenants were the real culprits.

Moises-Naim (2005) study of some Latin American countries reveals a high level of corruption among others which has either brought about the outright impediment or forced resignation of not less than about a dozen heads of government. The public outcry against the governments of Russia brought about the choice of Vladimir Putin as leader of government. The same could be said of Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and Silvio Berlusconi of Italy (Moises-Naim 2005).

It is disheartening that in spite of the public concern about the issue of corruption in very many of these countries, the scourge persist even to the extent that many believe that society cannot do without it. John Ashcroft, the United Nations Attorney General and a signatory to the pact on corruption eradication expresses the mind of many by describing people's perception of

bribery as “simply part of human nature”, and “a necessary oil to lubricate the wheels of business or even promoted as a normal expense to be deducted from taxes at home”⁷

In Africa, the situation is pathetic, positions of public trust has been turned into a ‘heaven’ for looting public property. Very many past leaders have sold their countries into slavery having looted even loaned money meant for developmental projects. Funny enough, the embezzled money are sent back into banking centers in Switzerland, Cayman Island, Liechtenstein and Luxemburg for further investments in these countries, at the very expense of their impoverished people, (Stevenson 2003).

Nigeria and Zaire were quoted as two nations in Africa which were hard-hit by the act of corruption, losing close to 5 billion dollars each in a couple of years before the signing of the anti-corruption treaty world-wide (Authonio-Costa 2003). This is the situation in very many African countries especially the oil-rich states, where strong Mafia operates, crippling governmental policies and laws aimed at combating it. The founder and the Chief executive of aid agency GOAL, Dishes, provided statistical findings on aids in cash, which were embezzled by the so called leaders of these poor nations. In Indonesia, Mohammed Suharto’s three decades of administration cost his people a whopping 35 billion dollars. Of the 2 billion dollars granted to Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) during the over three decades of mal-administration of Mobutu Sese-Seko, about fifty percent of the money ended up in his private account.

In Kenya, an embarrassed Edward Clay, the British High Commissioner, had to recommend the suspension of aid to the country as he considered it of no benefit to the wretched of the earth for whom the aid was meant. He put his reasons aptly thus:

The officials were behaving so gluttonously at the aid, through that they are now vomiting on the shoes of donors’.(Edward Clay: 2004)

It was reported that between 1995 and 2002, countries in sub-Sahara Africa enjoyed over one hundred billion dollars (\$114b) as aid yet they have very little or nothing to show for it.⁸ Based on the aforementioned, Ashea, (2004) advised that corrupt regimes should be excluded from the list of recipient countries saying:

Our government should of course continue to assist the poor, but we must, for our own sake as much as theirs ensure we get the best value for our contribution (O’shea:2004).

This according to him, is to avoid what he called; a waste of tax payers money as well as save donors from such accusation of collusion in ‘criminal activities’.

⁷ http://www.globalpolicy.org/nations/lauder/general/2003/1210_reveal.htm

⁸ http://www.globalpolicy.org/nations/auder/general/2004/1209_aidcorrupt.hitm

Given the above, the problem arises as to how to achieve the millennium development goal of reducing at least by half the number of people living in total penury by the year 2015. This is because, in spite of the public outcry against corruption very many countries of the world especially sub-Saharan Africa are perpetrating the act with reckless abandon.

To achieve this objective, the United Nations Convention against Corruption was signed in December 2003. Very many countries of the world have signed the treaty even though many have not fully complied with the rules. Other independent organizations have even formed coalition to fight corruption across the globe. One of such organizations is the Transparency International which has been publishing the corruption perception index in recent years.

Nigeria, which is our focus in this paper, was rated the second most corrupt country in the world during the 2004 corruption perception index. This negative conferment of status has diverted undue attention on the country. The populace especially the media houses have raised alarm on this revealing the known secrets of corrupt officials. The government of President Olusegun Obasanjo has set up commissions to try any identified culprit. The Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC) was similarly set up with the aim of achieving the objective of minimizing, if not eradicating, corruption in the country.

Several notable Nigerians including past leaders have been accused of corruption but it appears as if the more the allegations, the greater the increase in the corrupt practices of the average Nigerians especially of top government functionaries. One then begins to wonder whether corruption is not just a part of human nature. The questions that arise given the above are:

- (a) Whether corruption is actually seen as an offence or a game in Nigeria.
- (b) Based on (a) above, whether it can be dispensed with in the country.
- (c) Whether the various tribunals and anti-corruption commissions can successfully combat the scourge of corruption in Nigeria.
- (d) Whether the various anti-corruption campaigns can bring about a positive behavioural change especially among Nigeria's leaders

Basic Aim of the Study

The study therefore examines the behavioural consequences of the public outcry on corruption against public office holders in Nigeria.

From the major aim above, the study also seeks the following objectives:

- (a) To highlight incidences of corruption of public office holders in Nigeria.
- (b) To assess the effectiveness of some of the anti-corruption agencies at combating crime.
- (c) To discover the reasons for the seemingly intractable problems of corruption in Nigeria.
- (d) To identify certain reasons why government appears powerless in handling some sacred cows in the war against corruption in Nigeria.
- (e) Knowing the perception and attitude of people towards public office holders in Nigeria.

Method

Two major techniques were employed in this study for the collection of data. A total of 1025 questionnaires were randomly administered to respondents in twelve major professions; viz; Teaching, Legal, Medical/para-medical, Farming, Civil Service, Engineering, Business/Trading, Religion, Banking, Entertainment, Artisan (i.e. Bricklayers, Computer operators/typists, Drivers etc) and Students. Questions were asked on a number of variables measuring the influence of status symbols on corruption, the perception of people towards public office holders etc In all, 873 questionnaires were returned.

This technique was, however, complimented with secondary data sourced from several anti-corruption Agencies. The data were analyzed using the simple percentage distribution technique.

Discussion on Findings

Findings on the social-economic characteristics of the respondents reveal a proportional representation of both sexes in the research. The male gender with 535 (51.3%) represented three-fifth of the population. The opposite sex was about two-fifth of the population. This is not unconnected with the fact that the men are mostly available since they are more in paid employment than the opposite sex who are mostly inaccessible due to certain factors including the sanctity of tradition (see appendix A).

It was also discovered that an overwhelming majority of the respondents were in the economically active population, with about two-third of the total respondents while about one-third (35.6%) were actually below the age of 5 years many of whom were of school age at the time of the

research. This is an indication that, the community in which the research was conducted is literate (Appendix A). This is also attested by the findings on literacy level where only a negligible proportion of the sampled population (3.9%) reported not having basic education. Less than one-tenth (7.8%) had below secondary education while over four-fifth (88.2%) had secondary education and above. Not less than half (58.6%) had acquired tertiary education as at the time of research (Appendix A).

Findings equally reveal the involvement of the adherents to the three known religions. Twenty percent respondents represented the Islamic faith while about 10% reveals their interest in traditional religion. Thirty (30.2%) percent were Christians while two-fifth (2/5) identified with other faith ranging from 'free-thinking' to 'Eckanker', the Roscicrucian order (Armoc), and the Grail Message (Appendix A).

On occupational distribution of the respondents, a little above one-third (37.6%) were civil servants while those in the business, farming and artisan had representations of 12%, 4.7% and 10% respectively. This leaves the student population with an almost one-third (30%) of the total sampled population. This reveals why a large number of the respondents are still single. Two hundred and eighty six (32.8%) representing one-third of the total respondents were yet to be married as at the period of the research while 62% were married. Five percent were either separated from their spouses, divorce or widowed. This is somehow significant given the perception of the society on widowhood and inheritance which by implication increases the number of the dependant population on the relations of the widowed. A clear exhibition of this was revealed by the findings on respondents' number of dependants where, save for the student population, who themselves are dependants, nobody could stick only to himself. The societal attitude toward child bearing and child rearing also impacted on the large number of dependants. About three-quarter (73.7%) respondents reported having over five dependants while less than one-tenth (7.4%) had between three and four dependants, less than one percent had below two, indicating that they entered matrimony only recently.

Of the five hundred and ninety-eight (598) responses on income, about 46% earn below N20,000 per month which is hardly enough to feed an individual for about two weeks in an inflation stricken country like Nigeria, only about seven (7%) percent respondents earn above N50,000. The present researcher considers this just near enough the minimum wage in present day Nigeria. This no doubt corroborates some expressions linking corruption to poor living conditions of the people, especially the low-income earners. This may not be very correct as most acts of corruption are perpetrated by highly placed people and leaders of government businesses.

In an interview with the Tell, Magazine of December 3, 2001, Chief Audu Ogbeh, a political stalwart and the then chairman of the ruling people Democratic Party, confirmed this in his submission that the very complex nature of the Nigerian society makes corruption war difficult to fight! This may not be unconnected with the zoning system in the polity aiming at equitable allocation of power. A critical example of this was revealed in the Tell report of August 14, 2000:

Very many top ranking officers of the Nigeria politics have stolen themselves out of their irresistible urge to wear the cap of corruption.

Examples are found in the upper house (senate) which kept on changing leadership; three times within a four year tenure and five times within 6 years, all on charges of corruption.

Questions were also asked seeking information on peoples perception of corruption in Nigeria. Such questions include their awareness of the scourge in the country and whether it can be dispensed with, the major perpetrators and the factors responsible for its prevalence. It also sought opinions on the efficacy of the various governmental anti-corruption agencies set up to combat the crime of corruption in Nigeria. The study reveals that majority of the respondents, (8.8%) believe that the scourge is endemic and has become part of human nature. This has been aptly summarized by Wada Nas (2003) when he described a life without corruption as a disease in Nigeria. In his submission:

In Nigeria, life without corruption is a disease because corruption is the right thing to do in which only fools do not indulge. It is a country where honesty is a serious crime punishable by ridicule and exclusion from public limelight (Tell, Nov. 2003).

Findings also show that major corrupt practices are perpetrated by public figures in government *parastatals*. An over-whelming majority affirmed this with 93.5% respondents. In fact, none was against this opinion while only less than one-tenth (6.5%) gave no response. This is what has been termed institutional or official corruption in Nigeria, and has been corroborated with facts from a leading Nigeria magazine's report on the oil industry. According to this report, not less than N40 billion was lost to official corruption in the year 2003 only. Over 67,798,490 barrels of crude oil were lost to official corruption in year 2000. By the year 2000, it increased to 294,549,432 barrels and skyrocketed to 115,469,490 barrels just in the first three-quarters of the year 2002 (Tell, Nov. 2003).

On whether corrupt practices are rampant among the male gender, about one-quarter (24.1%) respondents were in agreement while 73.3% vehemently disagreed with this statement due mainly to the fact that most corrupt practices by women are usually covered up even by men.

Dele Omotunde (2003) writing in the Tell Magazine described the concept of first Lady as “a national motif of recklessness and waywardness”.

...”The position of first lady, though was not instituted by the constitution has ever been created under the presidency where the highest cry on corruption crusade has been going on. The office of the first lady was reported to have spent just \$.99 million on traveling expenses abroad within a period of six years” (see Okigbo’s report on Appendix C).

This highly exalted position of the first lady is another way of cleaning up the national treasury under the guise of all sorts of gluttonous foundations whose impacts were hardly felt by the general populace. This, in part must have accounted for international rating of, at least, 50% of corruption in Nigeria being “perpetrated under the Presidency whose officials are leading crusaders of anti-corruption”. (Tell. Nov. 17, 2003).

On the question of corruption being perpetrated by the low-income earners, a vociferous rejection was recorded by 60.7% of the respondents who are of the opinion that corruption at this level are mere crumbs from the richman’s table for Lazarous. Real corruption which the common man hardly observes is perpetrated by the rich and the top echelon of the Nigerian Society. This was supported by available evidences linking top notches in government to mass corruption in Nigeria. Several governors in Nigeria have been accused of corruptly enriching themselves at the expense of the people whose money they are suppose to hold in public trust. Very many could not be dealt with because of the immunity of this caliber of Nigerians.

The recent scandal which rocked the upper house and the Federal Ministry of Education is another case in point. The Senate president and the Professor and Minister of Education are by all parameters of judgement not in the low-income class, neither could it be said, using any sociological binocular that all those involved in the N55 million bribery scandal, which includes a Vice-Chancellor and other Senators, are poor. The trend in the act of corruption increases as the position increases. This was revealed from the findings of this research that very many public figures see their exalted position as an opportunity to loot the nation. Six hundred and eighty four (684) respondents (76.7% were of this opinion while about one-fifth said the contrary. On the reason(s) why this was so, it was gathered that, public office is about the only place where one could easily amass wealth without much sweat and since this position is only for a while, it is expected that such a status holder takes care of himself for the rest of his life. Another reason given was the fact that, the act was encouraged by the society whose goal is ‘money’. The society believes that anybody given the opportunity to serve should utilize the opportunity to get rid of poverty for his entire family and associates. This is epitomized in the way chieftaincy titles and laurels are showered on him/her during his stay in the corridor of power.

The above explains in part why many of the respondents believe that war on corruption cannot be won in Nigeria. To this, another three-quarter (76.7%) were in the affirmative while twenty percent (20.6%) believed that the scourge can be wiped out from our system through a general overhaul. Secondary data collected were used to compliment the above (see appendix C and D) The Okigbo's (2005) panel which was set-up to probe into the activities of former military-president (General I. B. Babangida) revealed the drain pipes of the oil windfall which was realized during gulf-war within a year (1990-1991) and also narrated how \$12.4 billion unbudgeted money was spent between 1988 and 1994. In this report, the panel blamed the presidency for its inability to account for this extra budgetary expenditure.

...that this disbursement were clandestinely undertaken while the country was openly reeling external dept overhang. (Tell, April, 2005)

Several state governors, also colluded with their close associates to loot their states' money, and in cases where there was not much to loot, they quickly went for loan from the international agencies for projects they never executed. Several of such deals were recorded in Abia State, Anambra and Enugu States in Eastern Nigeria, Bauchi, Kaduna and Niger States in the North and Lagos and Osun States in the West (see appendix D).

Some of the reasons given by the respondents for their submission that corruption war cannot be fought and won include, government's seemingly lack of the necessary apparatus to fight it, to which an overwhelming majority (95.1%) agreed. Another reason was that, the crime was also mainly perpetrated by those who are the crusaders of anti-corruption war in the country.

On the involvement of foreign agencies in the massive looting of the treasury, as part of the reasons why the corruption war could be a fruitless exercise, was supported by 63.8% of our 608 respondents while less than one-fifth (16.1%) couldn't agree. This empirical evidence was further supported by the secondary data. In Yobe State, a loan of \$3.62million meant for a biscuit factory contracted to a foreign firm, M/S Integrated Technical services Ltd, United Kingdom was never executed after the payment of the mobilization fee of N270,000 million. The London office address existing before the contract was awarded could not be traced (appendix D). Same was reported in Delta State where a farm project awarded to a foreign contractor, Rockline Ltd. at the cost of 9.6 million was also embezzled while Anambra State was equally robbed by yet another foreign agent, Cross Ocean Ltd, United Kingdom, of 11.9m loan meant for a carpet factory (see appendix D). All this money vanished into thin air and nothing has been done till date to bring culprit to book.

The reasons that there are so many sacred cows that are above the law seem to find solace in the above as another overwhelming majority (98.1%) supported this view. Only less than two percent (1.9%) were of the contrary view. The Tell of September 27, 2004 reported the case of some top Naval officers accused of colluding with foreign powers to steal two ships being used for bunkering in the Country. They were apprehended, and made to face court martial but the result has since gone into the thin air.

In response to public outcry on the presidency to try former military head of state, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida over several allegations of corruption while in office, President Obasanjo announced to the public to bring evidences against the man for him to be tried;

If you find 'IBB' anywhere, come and tell me and I give you my word, that within 24 hours, we would have all the accounts frozen, otherwise no be Obasanjo born me.

Anti-corruption agency in collaboration with Tell Magazine quickly brought out the Okigbo's panel report in one of the Nigeria's widely read Magazines indicting the man but the President has kept a sealed lip since then. In support of the argument for sacred cows, three past leaders who were invited before the Oputa panel which was set up at the wake of the Obasanjo administration in 1999 over certain allegations of Human right violations, never honoured the invitation and nothing happened (*Tell*, August, 2001).

It was revealed by the findings of the research that the various anti-corruption agencies set up would not yield the desired result. Seventy-two (72%) respondents hold tenaciously to this report, this is anchored on the belief that only those without godfathers would be cornered by the wretched hand of the law while the sacred cows would escape the wrath of the law.

Recommendations

In view of the above and the recent public outcry against corruption, the study offers the following suggestions as a way out of the doldrums.

- (a) While the presidency deserve commendations for relieving some of his men including those in the legislature of their duty, spirited effort should still be made to extend the war beyond the house. Other bottle-necks preventing speedy execution of justice should be removed so as to send signals to corrupt governors who always act under immunity.

- (b) The issue of sacred-cows who are not touchable is a blemish on the sovereignty of the nation. Of recent, the Inspector-General of Police; was apprehended and arranged before the court of law. Something should be done to other top ranking officers of the army, the legislators who never left office even after being proved guilty of acts of corruption.
- (c) Where the Federal Government appears deficient at providing evidences against corrupt officials, the private sector should be encouraged to do so by making use of their evidences after scrutinizing. When this is done, they feel encouraged to do more. Such was the newspaper report on former speaker, Hon Busari over his forged certificate which earned him his job.
- (d) It is becoming glaring that, corrupt practices in Nigeria are being revealed by foreign agents while it is concealed in the country. This is a clear indication that the powers that be are behind it and secondly that people are afraid of publishing the truth for fear of victimization. The laws on the abuse of human rights and its violations should be enforced to ensure life security in the country. The assassination of the founder of Newswatch Magazine for which the government has yet to find the killers since 1986 is a case in point. A foreign journalist who exposed the \$128 billion oil money and its misappropriation during Babangida's regime was deported immediately and the news went under carpet since then.
- (e) The names of all corrupt leaders in the country whose scandalous activities have brought untold hardship on the country, dead or alive should be published officially so as to send warning signals to would be criminals, rather than worshipping them like heroes. Such people should be banned from receiving any award or titles in the country.
- (f) The attitude of the society towards government appointee needs be changed. Since the society sees positions solely as opportunity to amass wealth, people rather than being innovative and investing are struggling for political appointment so as to make enough money for life. The National Orientation Agencies should divert attention on the inculcation of values on the people to erase the negative conception that nothing good could come out of Nigeria.
- (g) There should be a quick revisit to all probe-panel reports and justice should be done.
- (h) The various anti-corruption agencies should be made independent of government to operate though with some forms of checks and balances.
- (i) There is the need to empower the Central Bank of Nigeria to perform the function of regulation of the accounting system by removing some decrees (as it often operates under the military) which place supervision of the accounting system in the presidency. Such decrees include the Central Bank of Nigeria decree (CBN) 1969,

the banking decree no 24, 1969 and the Banks and other financial institution decree no 25 of 1991. These decrees should as a matter of urgency be repealed to ensure proper accounting system.

- (j) There is also the need for the restructuring of the Central Bank of Nigeria to ensure its efficiency. The number of departments having several deputy-governors amounts to bureaucratic bottlenecks. In most cases, some of these positions were created to take care of special interest and quite often results into wasteful spending. This should be stopped henceforth. Rather the information system should be updated with competent professionals regardless of their ethnic background.
- (k) It is also suggested in line with other economic observers that dedication and other special accounts should be made to perform its role by wriggling it from the hand of only one-man, Mr. President, who has the prerogative to spend it as he pleases.
- (l) The immunity clause should be removed henceforth.

Any Country committed to its development no doubt should get rid of corruption. The war on corruption in Nigeria should be seen as an endless one until the scourge is totally removed from our body politics. It is only then that Nigeria can occupy an enviable position in the committee of nations.

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Appendix A

Table 1: The Socio-Economic Statistics of Respondents

	Male	N – 873 535	% 61.3
Sex	Female	338	38.7
Sex	Below 15	311	35.9
Age	16-35	288	31.8
	36-50	190	9.6
	50+	084	
Religion	Christianity	264	30.2
	Islamic	178	20.4
	Traditional	096	11.0
	Others (specify)	345	40.0
Profession/Occupation	Civil servant		
	Business men	328	37.6
	Petty Traders/Farmers	104	12.0
	Artisan	102	4.7
	Students	087	10.0
		262	30.1
			N = 598
Income (per month)	Below N10,000	136	22.7
	N10,000 – N20,000	142	23.7
	N21,000-N30,000	112	18.7
	N31,000-N40,000	088	14.7
	N40,000-N50,000	076	12.7
	N50,000+	043	7.2
			N = 352
Job Status:	Junior	280	79.5
	Middle	060	17.0
	Senior	012	3.4
	None	34	7.9
			N = 873
Literacy level	Below Secondary School	68	7.8
	Secondary School Certificate	250	29.6
	Tertiary	512	58.6
	None	159	(18.2)
Dependants	Below 2	06	(0.9)
	3 – 4	65(7.4)	
	5 – 6	124(14.2)	
	6 and above	519(59.5)	
		N = 873	
Marital Status	Single	286	32.8
	Married	543	62.2
	Separated/Divorced/Widow	044	5.0

Appendix B

Table 2: Variables and Responses

Variables	Responses	%	
	N = 878		
Corruption is Endemic & has come to stay	Yes No N/R	714 112 047	81.8 12.8 5.4
Common among public office holders (government parastatals)	Yes No N/R	816 - 057	93.5 - 6.5
Perpetrated majorly by the male gender	Yes No N/R	210 640 023	24.1 73.3 2.6
Common among the low income earners	Yes No N/R	310 530 033	35.5 60.7 3.8
Influence of status symbols	Yes No N/R	684 103 066	78.4 11.8 7.6
The war against cannot be won in Nigeria	Yes No N/R	670 180 023	76.7 20.6 2.6
(i) Government lack the apparatus to fight corruption	(N =60) Yes No	580 030	95.1 4.9
(ii) Perpetrated by these fighting it	(N=540) Yes No	524 016	97.0 3.0
(iii) There are sacred cows (untouchables)	(N=623) Yes No	611 012	98.1 1.9
(iv) Aided by foreign powers in Nigeria	(N=608) Yes No	510 098	63.8 16.1
(v) Weak Leadership	(N = 563) Yes No	514 049	91.3 8.9
Whether Efforts of the various governmental agencies are yielding result	(N873) Yes No N/R	205 632 056	23.5 72.4 6.4

Appendix C

Table 3: Okigbo's Report on the Misappropriated \$12.8 billion Excels oil money**

1.	Documentary Film on Nig.	\$2.92
2.	Purchase of T.V/Video for the presidency	18.32
3.	Ceremonial Uniform for the Army	3.85
4.	Staff Welfare at Didan Buract/Aso Rock	2.98
5.	Travel of the First Lady Abroad	.99
6.	President Travels abroad	8.95
7.	Medical (Clinic at Aso Rock)	27.25

** From 1988 Sept – June 1994, *The Drainpipes Revealed*.

8.	Gift (Liberia)	1.00
9.	Gift (Ghana)	.50
10.	Nig. Embassy: London	18.12
	Nig. Embassy: Riyadh	14.99
	Nig. Embassy: Teheran	2.76
	Nig. Embassy: Niainey	3.80
	Nig. Embassy: Pakistan	3.80
	Nig. Embassy: Israel	3.07
	T.V Equipment for ABU, Min. of Defence	17.90 323.35
	Security	59.72
	Defence Attaches	25.49
	GHQ	1.04

Source: Tell Magazine, April 4, 2005

Appendix D

Table 4: Loan Money Never Used for the Purpose it was Meant

Loan	Project	States	Remark
CHF. 49,100.00	Umuahia water supply scheme	Abia	Not expected
GNP 2,360,000	Awchukwu ohajia water scheme	"	"
DM 24,457,920	Abia Gidem Cjoclem Farm Ltd. Ogwe	"	"
USD 23,577,745	Rural Electr. Project	"	"
CHF 43,300,000	Umuahia Ceramic factory	"	"
GPB, 11,811,023 & USD, 3,00,000	Carpet manufacturing project, ihiala	Anambra	"
USD 53.45 million FRF 16.75 million	Combine water supply scheme Maiduguri Sheraton Hotel Project	Bornu	"
GPB 9,578,151	Wauri farm project	Delta	"
DM 150 million USD 10,511,252	Enugu/Abakalili water project Purchase of immigration pump	Enugu Enugu	" "
FF 60,605, 315.50	Purchase of 100 no Buses	Kaduna	"
US & 37,570,000	The mini steel project	Lagos	"
Us & 12,887,000	Minna-Hydiogbo Invigation pumps	Niger	"
US &, 58.99M	New Ilesa/Ejigbo water scheme	Osun	"
GPB 3.62M	Biscuit factory	Yoba	"

Source: Tell Magazine; July 8, 2005. pg 42 + 44

Rapid Urban Growth and Poverty in Dhaka City

Shahadat Hossain*

Abstract

The paper aims to explore the nature of urban growth and poverty in Dhaka City, Bangladesh. It has highlighted the city of Dhaka as the urbanisation of the whole country is interlinked with the intense development of the city. The paper is based on data collected through surveys of population censuses and relevant studies. It reveals that the historical process of urban development of Dhaka City presents various trends based on its political development. The rapid urbanisation of the city since its emergence as the capital of an independent state is due mainly to massive migration of rural population. The paper also reveals that significant portions of the city dwellers are settled mostly in slums and squatter settlements and are living below the poverty lines as the rapid urban growth of the city is not commensurate with its overall development. The paper, however, argues that the experience of poverty in the city of Dhaka follows the pattern of urbanisation without development, the opposite of the expectations and aspirations of the poor there.

1. Introduction

The paper deals with the urban challenges in Bangladesh focusing on rapid urban growth and poverty in the megacity of Dhaka.⁹ It starts with a general profile of the city highlighting its geography and population characteristics. It is important to note that the urbanisation of Bangladesh is interlinked with the intense development of Dhaka City which has developed as a politico-administrative centre, having gained and then lost its position through the political development of the country. Due to the concentration of both domestic and foreign investment Dhaka City has experienced massive migration from the rural population of Bangladesh in recent decades but a critical downside to this has been the dramatic rise in poverty. In light of this, the paper deals with the trend of poverty in Dhaka City. In addition, the state of Dhaka's infrastructure is inadequate and unable to keep up with growing urban pressures. Significant portions of the city's population are living in slums and squatter settlements and are experiencing extremely low living standards, low productivity and unemployment. The slum population mostly live below the poverty line in terms of both calorie intake and the cost of basic needs. Moreover, despite having lived in the city for a long period of time the urban poor have limited access to the economic and social systems of the city.

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⁹ The term 'megacity' is frequently used as a synonym for words such as super-city, giant city, conurbation, and megalopolis. There has been little agreement about the size of the megacity. Megacities are defined as cities that were expected to have at least ten million inhabitants by the year 2000. Please see World Bank's *Urban Policy and Economic Development: An Agenda for the 1990s* (Washington: World Bank, 1993).

2. A brief profile of Dhaka City

Dhaka City is centrally located in Bangladesh, in the southern part of the district of Dhaka. It is situated between latitudes 24°40' N to 24°54' N and longitudes 90°20' E to 90°30' E and defined by the Buriganga river in the south; the Balu and the Shitalakhya rivers in the east; Tongi Khal in the north and the Turag river in the west. The city has developed on the higher elevated Pleistocene terrace land or Order Alluvium of the central part of Bangladesh, otherwise referred to as the Madhupur-Bhawal Garh Region. In addition, a substantial portion of the adjoining low-lying areas have recently been brought under the structured zones of the city due to the accelerated rate of the urban growth in Dhaka.¹⁰

According to the adjusted population of the 2001 Census the size of Dhaka's population is 10,712,206 of which 5978482 are male and 4733724 are female.¹¹ This makes Dhaka a megacity. The population growth of Dhaka stands at 56.5% in the last decade, which is very high. This means that during the last decade the city's population has grown by 3,868,077. The sex ratio of the population is calculated as 123.4 based on the current population census.¹² Moreover, the sex ratio of Dhaka City has decreased over the years due mainly to the reunion of females to their male partners living in the city and the increase in the number of single females in the urban work force.¹³ The number of the Dhaka City's young population is relatively high due to age selective rural-urban migration.¹⁴ About 40% of the total city's population is in the unproductive age groups of 0-14 and 60 and over, which indicates a high dependency burden on the working age population.¹⁵ The high dependency ratio among the city's population causes poverty, especially among the low income groups in the city.

3. National urban growth and Dhaka City's predominance

3.1. *The trend of urbanisation and urban growth*

The growth of the urban population in Bangladesh prior to the 20th century cannot be termed urbanisation in the truest sense because the change in rural life concomitant with urbanisation was not evident.¹⁶ The growth of the urban population in Bangladesh since 1901 is depicted through the following periods. In 1901 only 2.43% of the country's population lived in urban

¹⁰ Asaduzzaman and Rob, *Environmental Control over Urbanisation of Dhaka City* (Dhaka: The Mappa, 1997).

¹¹ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Population Census 2001, National Report (Provisional)* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 2003).

¹² Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Population Census 2001 Preliminary Report* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 2001).

¹³ K. Siddiqui, S.R. Qadir, S. Alamgir and S. Haq, *Social Formation in Dhaka City* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1993).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Bangladesh Population Census 1991 Urban Area Report* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1997).

¹⁶ Centre for Urban Studies, *Squatters in Bangladesh Cities: A Survey of Urban Squatters in Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna- 1974* (Dhaka: CUS, 1976).

centres.¹⁷ During the next two decades the urban population remained almost static. Between 1911 and 1921 there was only an 8.8% increase in the urban population.¹⁸ Plagues caused large scale depopulation in many urban centres during this period. Since 1921 there has been slow but steady growth - except when thousands left the cities out of fear during World War II. But a famine which ensued soon pushed millions from rural areas back into urban areas.¹⁹

In Bangladesh the first significant phase of urbanisation started in 1947.²⁰ During the 1951-61 decade there was a 45.11% increase in the urban population, more than twice the previous decade's 18.4%. The factors causing this were many, some political, others socio-economic.²¹ Large scale migration of Muslims from India in 1947 and afterwards was a major factor. The emigration of a large Hindu population from Bangladesh to India was mostly from rural areas, while the immigrants from India, mostly concentrated in the urban areas of Bangladesh, thus outnumbering the emigrants from the urban areas. Moreover, there was substantial development of new centres of trade, commerce, industry and administration in Bangladesh after it attained a new political status in 1947.²²

Despite the growth in the urban population, the nature and characteristics of urbanisation has remained similar to the pattern during the British period.²³ During the Pakistan period, the West Pakistani rulers treated East Pakistan (Bangladesh) as their colony. There was no significant industrialisation in this part during the first half of Pakistani rule. During the 1960's there was some industrial development which was not significant.²⁴ The most phenomenal urban population growth in Bangladesh occurred during the 1961-74 inter-census period. Over 6 million people were living in urban areas constituting roughly 8.0% of the total population.²⁵ Thus the percentage increase of the urban population during the 13 years was striking. That accelerated growth is to a great extent the result of the very recent influx from rural villages. The growth rate of the urban

¹⁷ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Bangladesh National Population Census Report - 1974* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1977).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Centre for Urban Studies, *Squatters in Bangladesh Cities: A Survey of Urban Squatters in Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna- 1974* (Dhaka: CUS, 1976).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Bangladesh National Population Census Report 1974* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1977).

²² N. Ahmed, *An Economic Geography of East Pakistan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

²³ Centre for Urban Studies, *Squatters in Bangladesh Cities: A Survey of Urban Squatters in Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna- 1974* (Dhaka: CUS, 1976).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Bangladesh Population Census 1981, Report on Urban Area: National Series* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1987).

population was 5.4% during the 1981-1991.²⁶ The total urban population increased to 28.6 million by 2001.²⁷

There was a general decline of urban population in Bangladesh after the British took over in the mid 18th century²⁸ and there were no urban centres left with populations of over 100,000 until 1891. In 1901 there were only 2 and that did not change up to 1951. There were no other urban centres in the range of 25,000 - 49,999 (population) up to 1911, but by 1921 there were. Then there were 5 in 1921. Most urban centres fell in the range of 10,000-24,999 population. They were 14 in 1872 and this increased to 23 in 1911, then decreased to 20 and remained so up to 1951.²⁹ Urban centres within the range of 5,000-9,999 population size increased from 5 in 1872 to 19 in 1941. The total number of urban centres increased from 22 in 1872 to 59 in 1941, an increase of 168% during a span of nearly 70 years. Thus urban growth was rather slow throughout the period of 1872-1947.³⁰

After the partition of India in 1947 Dhaka City became the provincial capital of East Pakistan and the growth of the urban population began to increase substantially.³¹ In 1951, Dhaka City had a population of 411,279 which increased to 718,766 in 1961. Then there was a rapid growth of urban centres followed by an explosive growth of big cities after the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971.³²

Table-1: Urban population growth in Bangladesh (1901-2001)

Census	National population		Urban population			
	Number (million)	Growth rate (% annual)	Number (million)	Share (% of total Population)	Decadal increase of urban population (%)	Growth rate (% of annual)
1901	28.2	0.70	2.43	-	-	-
1911	31.65	0.94	0.80	2.54	14.96	1.39
1921	33.25	0.60	0.87	2.61	8.85	0.84
1931	35.60	0.74	1.07	3.01	22.20	2.00
1941	41.99	1.66	1.54	3.67	43.20	3.71

²⁶ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Bangladesh Population Census 1991 Urban Area Report* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1997).

²⁷ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Population Census 2001, National Report (Provisional)* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 2003).

²⁸ See below.

²⁹ A. Z. Eusuf, 'Urban centres in Bangladesh: their growth and change in rank-order' in N. Islam and R. M. Ahsan (eds.), *Urban Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Urban Studies Program, 1996) pp.7-20.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Centre for Urban Studies, *Squatters in Bangladesh Cities: A Survey of Urban Squatters in Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna- 1974* (Dhaka: CUS, 1976).

³² A. Z. Eusuf, 'Urban centres in Bangladesh: their growth and change in rank-order' in N. Islam and R. M. Ahsan (eds.), *Urban Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Urban Studies Program, 1996) pp.7-20.

1951	44.17	0.51	1.83	4.14	18.38	1.74
1961	55.22	2.26	2.64	4.78	45.11	3.74
1974	76.37	2.53	6.00	7.86	137.57	6.52
1981	89.91	2.56	13.56	15.08	110.68	10.97
1991	111.45	2.17	22.45	20.15	69.75	5.43
2001	129.25	1.54	28.60	23.1	37.05	3.15

Source: Centre for Urban Studies, *Squatters in Bangladesh Cities: A Survey of Urban Squatters in Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna- 1974* (Dhaka: CUS, 1976) & Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Bangladesh National Population Census Report - 1974* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1977); *Bangladesh Population Census 1991 Urban Area Report* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1997); *Population Census 2001, National Report (Provisional)* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 2003).

The number of urban centres with populations of 100,000 doubled from 2 in 1951 to 4 in 1961. Urban centres with populations of 50,000-99,999 increased from 2 to 5 during the same period, while urban centres of all categories increased from 63 in 1951 to 78 in 1961.³³ However, the overall increase in the urban population and newly emerging urban centres has to some extent been counter-balanced by the declining number of small sized towns. In fact, towns of 5,000-9,999 decreased from 19 in 1941 to 12 in 1974, while towns with population less than 5,000 remained more or less steady from 3 in 1941 to 4 in 1971.³⁴ This declining trend in the lower order towns is partly due to the proportion of smaller cities developing into large cities by virtue of population growth. The persistent decline in the importance of small towns is perhaps an indication of the limited economic functions there and the consequent movement of the population towards bigger cities in search of better economic opportunities.³⁵

After the liberation of Bangladesh, there was an explosive growth of big cities.³⁶ Cities with a population of 100,000 increased from 4 in 1961 to 6 in 1974, 13 in 1981 to 23 in 1991.³⁷ This shows an increase of about 383% during 1961-91. And the total number of urban centres increased from 78 in 1961 to 492 in 1991, an increase of over 647% during a span of 30 years.³⁸ The growth of urban centres by size/class indicates that there is a strong association between city size and city growth rates, that is the large and medium sized cities are increasing more rapidly simply because of the graduation of cities occurring in that class.³⁹ Cities with a population between 25,000 and 49,999 increased from 15 in 1961 to 45 in 1981, an increase of 300%. During the same period cities with a population of 5,000 to 9,999 increased from 21 in 1961 to 129 in 1981 and those with a population less than 5,000 increased from 10 to 168.⁴⁰ In summary,

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ N. Islam, 'Urban Research in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka: towards an agenda for the 1990s' in R. Stren (ed.) *Urban Research in Developing World* (Toronto: Centre for Urban & Community Studies, University of Toronto, 1994) pp.101-169.

³⁷ A. Z. Eusuf, 'Urban centres in Bangladesh: their growth and change in rank-order' in N. Islam and R. M. Ahsan (eds.), *Urban Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Urban Studies Program, 1996) pp.7-20.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

the urban population of Bangladesh grew at a much faster rate from 1961-1974 (8.8%) and reached its peak during the period 1974-1981 (10.97%). And about 30% of the total increase during 1974-1981 can be explained by the extended definition of urban areas in 1981.⁴¹

The 1991 Census shows data in relation to only 110 municipalities.⁴² It does not give a complete picture of the total number of urban centres of different size categories.⁴³ The population census report gives the figure of the urban municipal population as 1,22,55,307 and the population of 4 Statistical Metropolitan Areas (SMAs) as 10,40,60,79, which constitutes 84.91% of the total municipal population. Out of the existing 110 municipalities, 28 are in the Rajshahi division where there is an urban population of 16.09%; 33 in Khulna where there is an urban population of 14.98%, 27 in Dhaka Division with an urban population of 45.83% and 22 in Chittagong Division, having 22.95% of the urban population.⁴⁴ Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi municipalities constitute 50.26% of the total municipal population. There are 20 municipalities with a population of 50,000-99,999, which constitute 10.70% of the population. The number of municipalities with a population of 25,000 to 49,999 is 41, with an urban population of 12.29%. There are 17 municipalities with population of 10,000-24,999 constituting 3.77% of the municipal population. And the number of municipalities with populations less than 5,000 is one, which constitutes 0.07% of the municipal population.⁴⁵

Some urban centres have recorded a very rapid population growth (above 50%). In the 1951-61 period 12 urban centres recorded a growth of more than 50% in their population with Khulna, Chuadanga and Dhaka showing a very high (above 200%) increase.⁴⁶ Khulna recorded high growth due to industrialisation, Dhaka due to its importance as the provincial capital, and Chuadanga due to the influx of refugees from India. In the 1961-74 period, 36 urban centres recorded a growth of more than 50% in population size with Dhaka showing a 936% increase; due to its importance as the new capital city and due to the expansion of commercial activities. During this period 8 urban centres recorded the highest growth of 180.2%.⁴⁷ The 1991 census recorded 11 urban centres with a 50-112% increase from 1981 to 91.⁴⁸ During that period 4 urban centres recorded growth of more than 100%. Sherpur, Dhaka, Moulvi Bazar, Cox's Bazar,

⁴¹ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Bangladesh Population Census 1981: Analytical Findings and National Tables* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1984).

⁴² Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Preliminary Report on Population Census 1991* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1991).

⁴³ A. Z. Eusuf, 'Urban centres in Bangladesh: their growth and change in rank-order' in N. Islam and R. M. Ahsan (eds.), *Urban Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Urban Studies Program, 1996) pp.7-20.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Bangladesh Population Census 1991 Urban Area Report* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1997).

Rangamati and Jessore have shown more than a 50% increase in three consecutive intercensal periods while Feni and Naogaon experienced over 50% increase throughout the period.⁴⁹

Table-2: Ranking of major urban centres in Bangladesh (1901-2001)

Urban centres	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1974	1981	1991	2001
Dhaka	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Chittagong	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Sirajgonj	3	3	5	4	6	-	10	-	-	-	-
Rajshahi	4	4	8	7	7	8	7	6	4	4	4
Bramanbaria	5	8	9	9	9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Comilla	6	6	4	5	5	5	8	9	6	9	-
Barisal	7	7	3	3	3	3	5	7	7	7	7
Pabna	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jamalpur	9	9	10	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Madaripur	11	-	6	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nawabganj	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mymensing	-	10	7	6	4	6	9	5	5	6	8
Chandpur	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rangpur	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	9	5	6
Saidpur	-	-	-	-	-	4	6	8	-	-	-
Khulna	-	-	-	-	-	7	4	3	3	3	3
Dinajpur	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	10	10
Narayanganj	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4	-	-	-
Jessore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	10	8	9
Sylhet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	5

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Bangladesh National Population Census Report - 1974* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1977); *Bangladesh Population Census 1991 Urban Area Report* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1997); *Population Census 2001, National Report (Provisional)* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 2003).

In Bangladesh, historically, the major urban centres developed around industrial concentrations of cotton and silk production and indigo processing.⁵⁰ During the British rule most of the urban centres served as tax collection and export-import centres for the British Empire. Other urban centres were used as administrative or religious centres, and many of these centres subsequently

⁴⁹ A. Z. Eusuf, 'Urban centres in Bangladesh: their growth and change in rank-order' in N. Islam and R. M. Ahsan (eds.), *Urban Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Urban Studies Program, 1996) pp.7-20.

⁵⁰ N. Ahmed, *An Economic Geography of East Pakistan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

flourished as commercial and industrial centres. Administrative centres gained momentum due to increasing educational and cultural centres, infrastructure and better communication.⁵¹

There has been considerable movement, up and down, of the relative and political importance of the major urban centres over the years. Dhaka and Chittagong have remained in first and second position respectively since attaining city status at the beginning of the century.⁵² Khulna, the third largest city has gained its ranking since just before independence in 1971 through industrialisation.⁵³ The fourth largest city, Rajshahi held the same ranking in the early decades of the last century but lost it position for socio-political reasons and then again regained its position.⁵⁴ Other cities like Serajganj and Barisal have had a history of ups and downs during the last century. The city of Sylhet has emerged as one of the important cities and occupied 5th position in recent times. It started to grow very rapidly immediately after its establishment as a divisional headquarter.⁵⁵

The historical process of urban development in Bangladesh presents different trends based on the political development of the country.⁵⁶ Although the history of Bangladesh in the early periods is obscure due to a lack of sufficient information, it is evident that Bangladesh acted as a passive periphery of West Bengal and India. Though the rulers of Bengal often revolted against the central authority, these were sporadic efforts and did not have any marked impression on the spatial development of the region.⁵⁷ During the British rule, Bengal attracted many colonial interests. As Calcutta was the primary city of Bengal, Bangladesh (then East Bengal) became a passive periphery of the region. During Pakistani rule, hostile relations developed when Bangladesh attempted to become an active periphery of the country.⁵⁸ Thus historically, the political-spatial development process of Bangladesh has passed through passive and active stages followed by cooperation and accommodations as well as hostile situations.

The legacy of spatial development in Bangladesh has led to the development of a few cities - particularly the capital city of Dhaka. The failure of planning initiatives is directly linked with the

⁵¹ A. Z. Eusuf, 'Urban centres in Bangladesh: their growth and change in rank-order' in N. Islam and R. M. Ahsan (eds.), *Urban Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Urban Studies Program, 1996) pp.7-20.

⁵² Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Bangladesh Population Census 1981, Report on Urban Area: National Series* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1987).

⁵³ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Bangladesh Population Census 1991 Urban Area Report* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1997).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Barisal and Sylhet were set up as divisional headquarters in the 1990s. The cities were upgraded to city corporations in recent times. In the latest population census of 2001 Barisal and Sylhet were categorised as Statistical Metropolitan Areas (SMA) along with Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi. Please see Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Population Census 2001, National Report (Provisional)* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 2003).

⁵⁶ M. H. Khan, *Urban Social Structure and Urban Planning in Dhaka: A Test of MaueI Castells' and David Harvey's Model* (Research Monograph), (Dhaka: Department of Sociology, University of Dhaka, 1996).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

urban mismanagement and increasing inequality and poverty in the city of Dhaka during the period of independent Bangladesh.⁵⁹ Like the colonial development of a landed aristocracy, an 'urban housing class' developed in Dhaka City through the process of 'sub-urbanisation' which is one of the main causes of today's urban land crisis and the proliferation of slums and squatters in Dhaka City.⁶⁰

In fact, the urban government needs to play a very significant role in adopting and implementing policies to reduce urban inequality and poverty. While macroeconomic trends have pushed towards a diminished role for the state over recent decades, more recent efforts at rehabilitating the state are increasingly focused on the local level. But the urban government has failed to play its effective role in urban development of Bangladesh due to the multiplicity of institutions and the overlapping nature of their jurisdiction.⁶¹ The result has been rivalry, bickering and blaming each other for inadequate and insufficient services. Due to inadequate funds the local government of Dhaka City is absolutely dependent on grants from donor agencies and hence has to work within limits set by the conditions of such grants. This kind of control adversely affects the quality of urban services provided to the urban poor by the authorities. In addition, a lack of accountability and transparency of Dhaka City's urban government also makes it corrupt and inefficient.⁶²

3.2. *The growth of Dhaka City*

The majesty and peculiarity of Dhaka City has developed over a long span of time. The city was under the suzerainty of different kings and rulers and its growth was hindered and distributed from time to time. Sometimes the growth gained momentum during the reign of some rulers at other times it did not.⁶³

The history of Pre-Mughal Dhaka is very vague. This period ranges from the 13th century to the beginning of early 17th century.⁶⁴ Its importance as a market centre started in that period.⁶⁵ The city began to flourish as a commercial and political centre, expanding in the west up to Chandi Ghat during 1602-1604.⁶⁶ After the Sultans the Mughals took over the city and started to attribute more importance to it. During the early Mughal rule, the city covered an area of about 2.20 sq. km and was confined within the small continuous zone of the present old city.⁶⁷ Dhaka City got its pomp and splendour during the Mughal rule and attained the prestigious position of the premier

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ N. Islam and M. M. Khan, 'Urban governance in Bangladesh and Pakistan' in N. Islam (ed.), *Urban Governance in Asia: Sub-regional and City Perspectives* (Dhaka: Centre for Urban Studies and Pathak Shamabesh, 2000)

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ M. Asaduzzaman and A. M. Rob, *Environmental Controls over Urbanisation of Dhaka City* (Dhaka: The Mappa, 1997).

⁶⁴ A. M. Chowdhury and M. S. Faruqui, 'Physical growth of Dhaka City' in S.U Ahmed (ed.) *Dhaka: Past Present Future* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1991).

⁶⁵ A. Haider, *A City and Its Civic Body* (Dhaka: East Pakistan Gov. Press, 1966).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

city of the empire. The city gained its reputation as a capital during the early period of the 17th century.⁶⁸ To check the attacks of the Magh and Arakanese pirates, Emperor Akbar stationed several hundred soldiers in Dhaka City. It was made capital of the province of Bengal in 1608 by Subadar Islam Khan Chisti for its political and military importance, and being a capital, it required more space for administrative, military purposes and accommodation. Centring on the old market, the provincial capital Dhaka began to develop rapidly as a major city of the province.⁶⁹

During the rule of the Mughals Dhaka City grew in a north-western direction. D'oloy shows that the greatest urban growth took place under Subadar Saista Khan (1662-1667 and 1679-1689).⁷⁰ At that time, the city extended from the Buriganga river in the south to Tongi Bridge in the north, a distance of about 25 km (in a north-south direction) and from Jafrabad (Sarai Jafrabad) in the west to Postagola in the east, a distance of about 15 km in a east-west direction.⁷¹ Of course, this huge Mughal city incorporated many villages and suburbs within its urban area and at that time the city had a population of over a million.⁷² The city then started to lose its glory with the shifting of the provincial capital to Murshidabad in 1717 (due to a personal clash between the Emperor Azim-Us-Shan and Subadar Murshid Kuli Khan).⁷³ From that time a number of influences from European traders started to increase in Bengal.⁷⁴ At that time the size of Dhaka City was about 4.5 sq. km and the population was about 1 million.⁷⁵ The main city was confined in a small area on the northern bank of the river Buriganga around the Lalbagh and Chawk-Mughaltoli area where the older part of the city is today.⁷⁶

Under the control of the East India Company after the decisive battle of Plassey in 1757 Dhaka City became a declining urban centre and between 1757-1864 it had a tremendous decrease in population and area.⁷⁷ The population of Dhaka City which was estimated to be nearly 200,000 in 1800 dropped to 51,000 in 1873.⁷⁸ The energetic controller of Dhaka, Mr. Walters founded the Dhaka Committee in 1830 and under his chairmanship began the development of Dhaka town. The inclusion of Rammna Green Pasture, an area from Old Paltan to Nimtoli, Dakesshware Temple to Azimpur under the town's jurisdiction took place in this period. The total urban area during that time rose to a total of 14.5 sq. km and the total population was 51,635 in 1867.⁷⁹ The

⁶⁸ M. Asaduzzaman and A. M. Rob, *Environmental Controls over Urbanisation of Dhaka City* (Dhaka: The Mappa, 1997).

⁶⁹ A. H. Dani, *Dacca: A Record of Its Changing Fortune* (Dhaka: Asiatic Press, 1962).

⁷⁰ C. D'oyly, *Antiquities of Dacca* (London, J. J. Landseer and Company, 1824).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² J. Tavernier, *Travels in India* (Translated from French Edition of 1976 by William Crooke) (London: Oxford University Press, 1925).

⁷³ A. Karim, *Dacca-The Mughal Capital* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of East Pakistan, 1964).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ J. Taylor, *Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca* (Calcutta: Military Orphan Press, 1840).

⁷⁶ M. Asaduzzaman and A. M. Rob, *Environmental Controls over Urbanisation of Dhaka City* (Dhaka: The Mappa, 1997).

⁷⁷ W. W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal: Dhaka* (London: Trubner Co, 1976).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

urbanised space started to expand towards the north on the Pleistocene terrace high lands during this time, mainly for residential and recreational purposes.⁸⁰

Table-3: Population and area size of Dhaka City (1700-2001)

Year	Periods	Population	Area (sq.km)
1608	Pre-mughal	30,000	2
1700	Mughal period	900,000	40
1800	British period	200,000	4.5
1867	British period	51,636	10
1872	British period	69,212	20
1881	British period	80,358	20
1891	British period	83,358	20
1901	British period	104,385	20
1931	British period	161,922	20
1941	British period	239,728	25
1951	Pakistan period	411279	85
1961	Pakistan period	718766	125
1974	Bangladesh period	2068353	336
1981	Bangladesh Period	3440147	510
1991	Bangladesh period	6887459	1353
2001	Bangladesh period	10712206	1530

Source: J. Taylor, *Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca* (Calcutta: Military Orphan Press, 1840) & Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Bangladesh National Population Census Report - 1974* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1977); *Bangladesh Population Census 1991 Urban Area Report* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1997); *Population Census 2001 Preliminary Report* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 2001).

Dhaka City began to rise from a declining and stagnant condition after the transfer of power to the Crown in 1858 by the British East India Company. The first local administration, the Dhaka Municipality was found in 1864 by Mr. Skinner.⁸¹ After 1864, the lowland areas in the north of Islampur, Tantibazar, Kamrangir Char, Goalnagar were gradually filed for urbanisation and at the same time Wari, Gandaria, Old Cantonment (Purana Paltan) Narinda, Hazaribagh, Nawabganj, Sarai Jafarbad, Race Course Green Pastures and Rayar Bazaar (to name a few) were also brought under the town's jurisdiction.⁸² Moreover, during that period in order to protect the river bank of Buriganga from flooding and erosion and to add a face lift to the river side, the Buckland Embankment was completed. Thus the area of Dhaka City was expanded into 17.0 sq. km. and Dhaka City started to flourish again, its population increasing to a total of some 90 thousand in 1901 and reaching over a hundred thousand in the subsequent ten years.⁸³ In 1941 the population of Dhaka was more than 200,000 and in 1947, it passed 250,000. But within a decade,

⁸⁰ M. Asaduzzaman and A. M. Rob, *Environmental Controls over Urbanisation of Dhaka City* (Dhaka: The Mappa, 1997).

⁸¹ S. M. Taifoor, *Glimpses of Old Dacca* (Dhaka: Saogal Press, 1956).

⁸² P. Geddes, *Town Planning Report on Dhaka, Bengal*, (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Pub, 1917).

⁸³ M. Asaduzzaman and A. M. Rob, *Environmental Controls over Urbanisation of Dhaka City* (Dhaka: The Mappa, 1997).

after the annulment of the division of Bengal, again this urban growth of Dhaka declined and it remained as a mere district till the independence of Pakistan in 1947.⁸⁴

The growth of Dhaka City gained momentum again after 1947. The influx of people from India on the one hand and the onrush of people to the newly established administrative, commercial and educational centre on the other contributed to an unprecedented growth of the city.⁸⁵ The need for office space for administrative and commercial purposes as well as residential needs resulting from the increase in population led to the growth of the city on several levels. During this period, the Dhaka Improvement Trust (DIT) was created in 1956 (which was later transformed into RAJUK in 1987) for supervision of the overall planning and development of the city. Beside different urban development projects, DIT developed a number of residential areas to meet the housing needs of the emerging elite class.⁸⁶ A central Business District (CBD) was also developed to meet the demand for space required for increasing commercial and government administrative activities.⁸⁷ Initially, the needs for official, educational, residential and administrative spaces were fulfilled by the expansion of the city in Purana Paltan to Naya Paltan, Eskation to MoghBazar, Siddiheswari, Kakkrail to Kamlapur through Razar Bagh and Shantinagar, the Segun Bagicha, Azimpur, Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Shre-e-Bangla Nagar, Tejgaon, Gulshan Model Town and other areas were encroached on between 1950 and 1960. The Banani and Gulshan areas were acquired by the government in the early sixties under the 1959-Master Plan of Dhaka City and by 1961, the city population grew to 718,766 and the area at that time was about 125 sq. km.⁸⁸

The urbanisation process achieved tremendous growth to meet the needs of the newly independent country's capital. The city's population suddenly increased to 2,068,353 in 1974, it began to expand in all directions including the low-lying areas of the east, such as Jurain, Goran, Badda, Khilgaon, Rampura, and to the west including the areas of Kamrangirchar, Shyamoli, Western Mohgammadpur, Kallyanpur.⁸⁹ As very rapid urban growth (along with a fast increase in population and structural development) started to take place a new structural plan was needed. The population leapt to 3 million within a decade of the independence of the country and the city

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ K. Siddiqui, J. Ahmed, A. Awal and M. Ahmed, *Overcoming the Governance Crisis in Dhaka City* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 2000).

⁸⁶ M. H. Khan and S. Hossain, 'Changing urban environment in Dhaka City' in *Bangladesh Political Science Review*, Vol.1, no.1, pp.93-104 (2001)

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Bangladesh Population Census 1991 Urban Area Report* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1997).

⁸⁹ *Bangladesh National Population Census Report - 1974* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1977) & A. M. Chowdhury and M. S. Faruqi, 'Physical growth of Dhaka City' in S.U Ahmed (ed.) *Dhaka: Past Present Future* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1991).

covered an area of about 510 sq. km. by 1981⁹⁰. During this period the swamps and wetlands within the city started to disappear quickly and new areas of residential, administrative, business and commercial importance began to develop. In addition, slum and squatter settlements also sprang up in different areas of the city.⁹¹ Keeping pace with the magnitude of the urban growth, the new urbanised areas began encroaching on the low-lying areas within the city limits and even on some adjacent outlying areas.⁹²

Dhaka City has faced its highest rate of physical and population growth during 1981-1991, with the population doubling during that decade and the city expanding from 510 sq. km to 1353 sq. km. The city now includes the surrounding areas of Gazirpur, Savar, Narayangong, Bandar thanas and the entire thana of Keraniganj.⁹³ In 1995, a new master plan was prepared for the further development of Dhaka City and the recent construction of a bridge over the Buriganga river has encouraged the expansion of Dhaka City in a southerly direction to the other side of the river. A second bridge which is likely to be completed within the next five years will further increase this process.⁹⁴

However, the expansion of Dhaka City is constrained by physical barriers such as the low-lying flood prone areas around the city. Also, valuable agricultural and forested land will have to be sacrificed if the built-up area is to increase. But as mentioned, the population of the city is increasing very rapidly due mainly to rural-urban migration. The population of the city reached to 10.7 million in 2001 and the population growth of Dhaka has been 56.5% in the last decade, which is very high.⁹⁵ Understandably, these additional people have created tremendous pressure on the urban utility services and other amenities of urban life. This has resulted in an adverse effect on the urban environment where a large number of people have settled in slums and squatter settlements where they live below the poverty line.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ K. Siddiqui, J. Ahmed, A. Awal and M. Ahmed, *Overcoming the Governance Crisis in Dhaka City* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 2000).

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Bangladesh Population Census 1991 Urban Area Report* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1997).

⁹⁴ K. Siddiqui, J. Ahmed, A. Awal and M. Ahmed, *Overcoming the Governance Crisis in Dhaka City* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 2000).

⁹⁵ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Population Census 2001, National Report (Provisional)* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 2003).

⁹⁶ S. Hossain, 'Urban poverty and social marginality: the case of Bangladesh' in F. Lovejoy and L. Adorjany (eds) *Celebration, Causes, and Consequences* (Sydney: UNSW Printing Section, 2003) pp.69-76 & 'Poverty, household strategies and coping with urban life: examining 'livelihood framework' in Dhaka City, Bangladesh, in *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*, Vol.2, no.1 (January 2002).

4. Urban poverty and Dhaka City's predominance

4.1. The trend of urban poverty

Bangladesh Household Expenditure Surveys (HES) constitute the main source of information for most of the available studies on urban poverty. These surveys have limitations due to diversity in the method of imputation, lack of data at the household level, uniform methods of recording the data flow and of time sampling, faulty memory recall method and the problems of missing cases.⁹⁷ Despite the limitations of data of HES these are nonetheless mainly relied on for measuring the extent of urban poverty. In fact, these surveys are the only existing source of macro level data on poverty in Bangladesh. Beside these, the Centre for Urban Studies (CUS) has conducted a number of micro level studies on the urban poor. These studies explain the partial scenario of urban poverty in Bangladesh.⁹⁸ Two methods – the Direct Calorie Intake (DCI) and the Cost of Basic Need (CBN) methods are currently used for measuring urban poverty by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.⁹⁹

The Direct Calorie Intake (DCI) method is traditionally used by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics for determining the poverty line. According to this method the urban poor are categorised as 'absolute poor' and 'hardcore poor' based on their daily calorie intake. The poor who take 2122k.cal per day per person fall below Poverty Line-1 (and are known as the absolute poor) whereas the poor who take 1805k.cal per day per person fall below Poverty Line-2 (these are termed the hardcore poor). At the national level the percentage of population in Poverty Line-1 decreased from the 47.8% to 44.3% in the survey year of 1988-89 to 2000. But in urban areas the percentage of population below Poverty Line-1 increased from 47.6% to 52.5% from the survey period of 1988-89 to 2000 due to the migration of the rural poor to the urban areas. In the case of Poverty Line-2 the situation is to some extent different. The percentage of hardcore poor has decreased over the years at both the national and urban contexts. But the rate of decrease is comparatively lower in urban areas.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ N. Khundker, W. Mahmud, B. Sen and M. U. Ahmed, 'Urban poverty in Bangladesh: trend, determinants and policy issues' in *Asian Development Review*, Vol. 12, no. 1, pp.1-31(1994)

⁹⁸ Centre for Urban Studies, *The Urban Poor in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: CUS, 1979); *Slums in Dhaka City* (Dhaka: CUS, 1983); *The Urban Poor in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: CUS, 1990).

⁹⁹ The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) uses the DCI and FEI poverty lines for its Household Expenditure Survey (HES) which has been conducted since 1973/74, but in the first 1995/96 survey the DCI and CBN poverty lines were used with the assistance of the World Bank. Please see Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Yearbook of Bangladesh 2000* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 2002).

¹⁰⁰ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Analysis of Basic Needs Dimensions of Poverty (Vol. 3)* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1998) & *Statistical Yearbook of Bangladesh 2000* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 2002).

Table-4: Urban population in Bangladesh below the poverty line (DCI method)

Survey year	Poverty line-1 Absolute poverty (2122 k. cal per day per person)				Poverty line-2 Hardcore poverty (1805 k. cal per day per person)			
	National		Urban		National		Urban	
	Number (million)	% of Pop.	Number (million)	% of Pop.	Number (million)	% of Pop.	Number (million)	% of Pop.
1988-89	49.7	47.8	6.3	47.6	29.5	28.4	3.5	26.4
1991-92	51.6	47.5	6.8	46.7	30.4	28.0	3.8	26.3
1995-96	55.3	47.5	9.6	49.7	29.1	25.1	5.2	27.3
2000	55.8	44.3	13.2	52.5	24.9	20.0	6.0	25.0

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Analysis of Basic Needs Dimensions of Poverty (Vol. 3)* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1998) & *Statistical Yearbook of Bangladesh 2000* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 2002).

Table-5: Recent trends in urban poverty in Bangladesh (CBN method)

	Upper poverty line (%)		Change (upper line) 1995-96 to 2000	Lower poverty line (%)		Change (lower line) 1995-96 to 2000
	1995-1996	2000		1995-96	2000	
National	51.0	49.8	-1.2	34.4	33.7	-.7
Urban	29.4	36.6	+7.2	13.7	19.1	+5.4

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Preliminary Report of Household Income & Expenditure Survey- 2000* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 2001).

Table-6: Incidence of poverty in selected urban areas in Bangladesh (CBN method)

Urban areas	Upper poverty line (%)		Lower poverty line (%)	
	1995-96	2000	1995-96	2000
	National	51.0	49.8	34.4
Dhaka	40.2	44.8	27.8	32.0
Chittagong	52.4	47.7	28.6	25.0
Khulna	55.0	51.4	36.4	35.4
Rajshahi	61.8	61.0	46.9	46.7

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Preliminary Report of Household Income & Expenditure Survey- 2000* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 2001).

Due to the problems of the calorie intake method, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics has used the Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) method. Unlike the traditionally used DCI method, the CBN method considers other basic needs (along with food) for measuring poverty. The poor are categorised by an 'upper poverty line' and a 'lower poverty line'. This estimation reveals the alarming situation of urban poverty in Bangladesh despite the overall improvement of the poverty situation at the national level. According to this method, from 1995-96 to 2000 the percentages of the urban population below both the upper poverty line and lower poverty line have increased by 7.2% and 5.4% respectively.¹⁰¹ Poverty is mainly concentrated in urban Dhaka due to the predominance of Dhaka City. In urban Dhaka the percentages of the population below both the upper poverty line and the lower poverty line have increased by 4.6% and 4.2% respectively during 1995-96 to 2000.¹⁰²

4.2. Poverty and slums in Dhaka City

The phenomenon of slums and squatters in Dhaka is as old as the city itself.¹⁰³ But the city has experienced a prolific growth of slums and squatters since the independence of the country in 1971.¹⁰⁴ By the end of 1976 only 10 slums existed with a population of 10,000. The number increased to 2,156 settlements with a population of 718,143 in 1993, and 3007 settlements with a population of 1.1 million in 1996.¹⁰⁵ About 90% of the total number of slums and squatter settlements have developed in the last three decades. The highest concentration of growth (45%) took place between 1981 and 1990 followed by the previous decade's 26%. Only 18% of these clusters were established since 1991.¹⁰⁶

Slums and squatter settlements are not distributed uniformly throughout the Dhaka Metropolitan area but rather they are concentrated mostly on the fringes of the city. Due to an acute demand for land and high land prices, especially in the central zones and in upper class residential areas, the slums and squatter communities have moved or are moving towards the city's peripheries in the search for cheap shelter.¹⁰⁷ According to CUS among the 3007 slums and squatter settlements an overwhelming majority of these poor communities are located on land owned by private individuals (1270 clusters, or 42.2%), or under multiple private ownership (1047 clusters or 34.8%). Only 644 clusters (21.4%) are located on government and semi-government land,

¹⁰¹ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Preliminary Report of Household Income & Expenditure Survey- 2000 (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 2001)*.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ J. Taylor, *Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca* (Calcutta: Military Orphan Press, 1840); P. Geddes, *Town Planning Report on Dhaka, Bengal*, (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Pub, 1917) & C. Arams, *Housing in the Modern World: Man's Struggle for Shelter in Urbanising World* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964).

¹⁰⁴ S.R. Qadir, *Bastees of Dhaka City: A Study of Squatter Settlement* (Dhaka: National Institute of Local Government, 1975).

¹⁰⁵ Centre for Urban Studies, *Survey of Slums and Squatter Settlements in Dhaka City* (Dhaka: CUS, 1996).

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ A.Q.M. Mahbub and N. Islam, 'The growth of slums in Dhaka City: a spatio temporal analysis' in S. U. Ahmed (ed.) *Dhaka Past Present Future* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1991) pp.508-521.

while a few settlements (only 35 in number, 1.2%) are found on land belonging to non-government organisations.¹⁰⁸ Slum and squatter settlements did not develop in the central part of the city like Mothijheel, Kotoali, Sutrapur or Lalbagh Thanas in the last decade. They mostly developed in the peripheral thanas of Mirpur, Mohammadpur and Demra.¹⁰⁹ In recent times a number of slum clusters were evicted by the urban development authorities in Dhaka City and the poor were forced to settle in a resettlement slum in the peripheral thana of Mirpur.¹¹⁰

The demographic features of the slum population are to some extent different from the other urban population. There is a high propensity of young people to migrate to the city of Dhaka. More than 50% of 'migrant populations' in the city were less than 35 years of age.¹¹¹ Young populations predominate in urban centres because they are usually not yet integrated into rural traditional systems and they are more likely to leave the village than the older population. The proportion of the elderly population who have lost their ability to perform labour-intensive jobs is negligible in the slum areas.¹¹² Despite the relative increase in the female population, there is still a substantially greater proportion of males in the city owing to the initial high rate of male migration. However, with more single poor women joining the urban labour force, especially in the garment industry it is possibly decreasing.¹¹³

The distinctive aspect of urban poverty in Dhaka City's slums is its close connection with recent migration. The slum dwellers have mostly migrated to the city from rural areas. As Dhaka is well linked to the entire country by land, water and air, and can be reached within a day from any part of the country, there are opportunities for migrants to arrive in the city using transport within their reach.¹¹⁴ The majority of urban poor migrate to Dhaka City from a few districts like Faridpur, Barisal and Comilla.¹¹⁵ The rural poor migrate to Dhaka City due to some push and pull factors. The push factors include over-population, floods and natural disasters, river erosion, growing landlessness and exploitation by the rural elites and moneylenders.¹¹⁶ In this agriculture based countries land is the main means to generate subsistence and surplus and is the most valuable asset to the rural poor. Increased loss and fragmentation of land among the poor and increased

¹⁰⁸ Centre for Urban Studies, *Survey of Slums and Squatter Settlements in Dhaka City* (Dhaka, CUS, 1996).

¹⁰⁹ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Slum Areas and Floating Population 1997 (Vol.3)* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1999).

¹¹⁰ S. Hossain, 'Urban poverty, vulnerability and policies in Bangladesh' Paper Presented in The 2005 Social Policy Association Annual Conference, 27-29 June, 2005, University of Bath, UK.

¹¹¹ R. Afsar, *Rural-Urban Migration in Bangladesh: Causes, Consequences and Challenges* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 2000)

¹¹² Opel, A. E.A, 'Livelihood of the Vulnerable: An Ethnographic Illustration of Life in Dhaka Slums', *Urban Livelihood Monograph-2* (Dhaka: Proshika, 1998)

¹¹³ K. Siddiqui, S.R. Qadir, S. Alamgir and S. Haq, *Social Formation in Dhaka City* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1993).

¹¹⁴ N. Islam, Dhaka: *From City to Mega City* (Dhaka: Urban Studies Program, 1996)

¹¹⁵ K. Siddiqui, S.R. Qadir, S. Alamgir and S. Haq, *Social Formation in Dhaka City* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1993).

¹¹⁶ T. M. Shakur, *An Analysis of Squatter Settlements in Dhaka*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Liverpool, UK, 1987

concentration of land among the rich, coupled with a high natural growth rate of population raise the number of landless and the hungry. In the absence of other sustenance opportunities in villages, many of the landless in rural Bangladesh are forced to migrate to cities to seek better opportunities although their chances of improving their conditions are limited.¹¹⁷ Along with push factors the pull factors also contribute to the increasing rural-urban migration in Bangladesh. These pull factors are mainly employment opportunities in the informal sectors of the economy, better opportunities in the city and relative freedom for female workers.¹¹⁸

The slum population in Dhaka City faces extreme poverty due to its low level of earnings and the majority are living below the poverty line in terms of both calorie intake and cost of basic needs. What is more, the slum dwellers are mostly involved in low paid jobs in informal sectors of the urban economy. To be precise there is a predominance of day labouring and rickshaw pulling among this poor group of city dwellers.¹¹⁹ Moreover, there are occupational variations between males and females in slum and squatter settlements in Dhaka City. Among these there are eighty different types of occupations held by males in slum and squatter settlements. Females are found to belong only to occupations such as maidservants and housewives.¹²⁰ The urban poor involved in the formal urban sectors of the economy have better economic conditions than the poor in the informal sectors. There is a significant difference in the wage rate between the formal sector poor and informal sector poor in Dhaka City.¹²¹ The formal sector poor receive various benefits, which means that they are better off compared with their informal sector counterparts. There is also a variation in poverty among the poor employed in informal occupations based on their level of skills.¹²² Skill differentials were found to be an important factor in determining differences within the informal manufacturing activities in Dhaka City¹²³

Slum populations in Dhaka City are 'vulnerable' in terms of their access to urban land.¹²⁴ Slum dwellers have mostly settled temporarily on public or private land and they are often evicted from their settlements. In the overwhelming majority of house construction the roof is of tin and the wall beams are of bamboo. Only a small proportion of poor settlements (9%) were made of brick,

¹¹⁷ J. Alamgir, 'Rural-urban migration in Bangladesh: theoretical approaches to understanding the internal and external dynamics' *Journal of Social Studies*, Vol. 59, pp. 26-48 (1993)

¹¹⁸ T. M. Shakur, *An Analysis of Squatter Settlements in Dhaka*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Liverpool, UK, 1987

¹¹⁹ A.T.M.N. Amin, "Dhaka's informal Sectors and its role in the transmission of Bangladesh economy' in S. U. Ahmed (ed.) *Dhaka Past Present Future* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1991) pp.446-470.

¹²⁰ Centre for Urban Studies, *Slums in Dhaka City* (Dhaka: CUS, 1983).

¹²¹ K. Siddiqui, S.R. Qadir, S. Alamgir and S. Haq, *Social Formation in Dhaka City* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1993).

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ N. Khundker, W. Mahmud, B. Sen and M. U. Ahmed, 'Urban poverty in Bangladesh: trend, determinants and policy issues' in *Asian Development Review*, Vol.12, no. 1, pp.1-31 (1994)

¹²⁴ S. Hossain, 'Poverty and vulnerability in megacities: the case of slum communities in Dhaka City, Bangladesh' Paper Presented in the 2005 Annual Conference of the Australian Sociological Association (TASA), 5-8 December, 2005, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia.

cement and tin.¹²⁵ About 68% of slum families in Dhaka City have a single room unit, 20% have two small rooms and at least 5% have to share a room with other families.¹²⁶ The average floor spaces of poor urban households are only 125sq. ft, with only 100 sq. ft in Dhaka City.¹²⁷ Very often slum and squatter settlements in these areas are prone to annual flooding, and they are environmentally unsuitable for housing as they are located in low-lying areas and along risky canals and railway tracts.¹²⁸

Slum dwellers in the city are disadvantaged in terms of their access to urban services like safe water, electricity, gas supply, toilet facilities and garbage disposal. The quality of these services has been found to be poor and the supply remains highly irregular and inadequate.¹²⁹ Most slum dwellers have access to safe water for drinking purpose only. And most use unsafe water for washing, bathing and other purposes. A small proportion of the urban poor (20%) use sanitary latrines and the majority still use a variety of non-hygienic latrines.¹³⁰ The study shows that 67% use electricity and another 33% still have no access to electricity. The study also found that 72% of the urban poor use traditional fuel for cooking and only 22% have access to gas facilities. More than 60% of the poor just dump their garbage on the road or on the ground.¹³¹ And a very small proportion (12.4%) of these poor households has access to the underground drainage system.¹³² Slum populations also have limited access to health and education. Though theoretically the urban poor have equal access to the public health facilities in the city, in reality very little are available to them.¹³³ They are the most deprived groups in the city as they have very limited access to the existing educational opportunities. This is true for both primary education and general and technical education for adults. It has been evident from official statistics that although enrolment in primary school in urban areas is higher than that for rural areas, the enrolment of the slum population is very low.¹³⁴

¹²⁵ A.Q.M. Mahub, 'Rent affordability and rent policies for slum dwellers in Dhaka City' in N. Islam and R.M. Ahsan (eds) *Urban Bangladesh* (Dhaka, Urban Studies Program, 1996).

¹²⁶ Centre for Urban Studies, *The Urban Poor in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: CUS, 1979).

¹²⁷ N. Islam, N. Huda, F.B. Narayan and P.B. Rana, *Addressing the Urban Poverty Agenda in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1997).

¹²⁸ N. Islam, 'The state of the urban environment in Bangladesh' in N. Islam and R.M. Ahsan (eds) *Urban Bangladesh* (Dhaka, Urban Studies Program, 1996) pp.21-31.

¹²⁹ Centre for Urban Studies, *Survey of Slums in Dhaka Metropolitan Area-1991* (Dhaka, CUS, 1993); Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Slum Areas and Floating Population 1997 (Vol.3)* (Dhaka: Ministry of Planning, 1999) & S. Hossain, 'Research on slums and squatters in Bangladesh: a critical review' in *Social Science Review*, Vol.18, no.2, pp.67-76.

¹³⁰ Centre for Urban Studies, *Survey of Slums and Squatters in Dhaka City* (Dhaka, CUS, 1996).

¹³¹ R.M. Ahsan and N. Ahmed, 'The urban poor's access to water and sanitation' in N. Islam (ed.) *The Urban Poor in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Centre for Urban Studies, 1996).

¹³² K. Siddiqui, S.R. Qadir, S. Alamgir and S. Haq, *Social Formation in Dhaka City* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1993).

¹³³ K.M. Fariduddin and A.U. Khan, 'Health profile of the urban poor' in N. Islam (ed.) *The Urban Poor in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Centre for Urban Studies, 1996).

¹³⁴ Government of Bangladesh, *Zila Primary Education Statistics* (Dhaka: Ministry of Education, 1991).

In the adverse urban environment social networking based on kinship and community play a significant role in urban adaptations of slum communities. Such networking works as a source of social capital in the context of migration to the city - by providing information related to migration and adaptation to city life, and by providing initial accommodation and employment information.¹³⁵ Most of the slum dwellers migrated to the city with direct or indirect help from their relatives or fellow villagers who live in the city. These networks are most important in the village before departure although they continue to play a significant role after arrival in the city.¹³⁶ The urban poor have strong kin connections with rural areas, though in their neighbourhoods kinship ties are not so distinctively visible because of the financial crisis of the residents.¹³⁷ The slum dwellers often come to the city from lineage based organisations and extended family, and kinship plays a significant role to encourage the poor from rural areas to come to the city and settle down in their neighbourhoods.¹³⁸ The host community in the city (relatives, friends or fellow villagers) play a significant role in offering the poor their first shelter and food when they arrive in Dhaka City. Temporary residential/sublet arrangements are made until the newcomer finds a job and a suitable rental unit. Kin groups and fellow villagers offer hospitality in the form of food, accommodation as well as finding a job and knowledge about the city, which is as necessary as practical help at the initial stage.¹³⁹

However, poverty of slum population is an extension of rural poverty of Bangladesh. The process seems to be influenced by the existing superstructure which is dominated by the rural rich and which plays a strong role in maintaining and legitimising poverty.¹⁴⁰ Poverty is caused by the stagnation of productive forces and production over time and government policies and development measures which only help the rural rich to get richer and increase inequality.¹⁴¹ Ahmed has outlined a number of factors as causes of poverty including socio-economic and political factors - particularly inequality in the distribution of economic and political power, insincerity and the indifferent attitude of the ruling power elite who control resources, external factors such as the role of metropolitan capital, foreign aid and loans (in which again the role of the national power elite is critical) and lack of poor people's participation in decision making and the development process.¹⁴² CUS has also identified some specific causes of urban poverty and

¹³⁵ S. Hossain, *Urban Poverty and Adaptations of the Poor to Urban Life in Dhaka City, Bangladesh*, PhD Thesis, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2006.

¹³⁶ P. Dannecker, *Between Conformity and Resistance: Women Garments Workers in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 2002).

¹³⁷ M. Mizanuddin, *Social Organisation of the Urban Poor in Bangladesh: A Case Study of Squatter Settlements in Dhaka*, PhD Thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India, 1991.

¹³⁸ T. K. Das, *Social Structure and Cultural Practices in Slums* (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 2000).

¹³⁹ P. Dannecker, *Between Conformity and Resistance: Women Garments Workers in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 2002); R. Khun, 'Identities in motion: social exchange networks and rural-urban migration in Bangladesh', *Contribution to Indian Sociology*, vol. 37, no. 1&2, pp. 311-338.

¹⁴⁰ K. Siddiqui, *The Political Economy of Rural Poverty in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: National Institute of Local Government, 1982).

¹⁴¹ Centre for Urban Studies, *The Urban Poor in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: CUS, 1990).

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

slums in Dhaka City. These include the socio-political and economic structure, that have developed in a long colonial and feudal history and exploitation and social injustice; oppression by the vested interest groups and ruling power elite; corruption of the ruling elite and the neo-rich, foreign aid and debt; natural hazards and consequent landlessness; lack of government assistance for the poor; and population explosion (and lack of its control).¹⁴³

5. Conclusion

The urbanisation of Bangladesh is interlinked with the intense development of Dhaka City. The historical process of urban development in Dhaka City presents different trends based on its political development. Dhaka developed as a politico-administrative city and subsequently economic and commercial activities have also concentrated in the city making it the prominent city of the country. The urbanisation activities in Dhaka City have been achieving tremendous growth for the needs of the newly independent country's capital. Overall, Dhaka City has experienced its highest rate of physical and population growth in recent decades that transformed it into a megacity.

As urban growth of Dhaka City is not commensurate with the economic and social development of the city, significant portions of the urban population are living below the poverty line. The percentage of the urban population in Bangladesh below the poverty line has been increasing over the years. The percentage of the urban population living below the poverty line is comparatively higher in Dhaka City than other urban centres of the country. Consequently, the city has had a massive growth in slums and squatter settlements in recent decades. The fact is, the socio-political and economic structures of the country are generally responsible for urban poverty and the emergence of slums in Dhaka City.

The formation of slums is closely associated with rural-urban migration. Poor people living in the city slums have mostly migrated there from rural areas rather than other cities or towns. Both the pull and push factors - including low incomes in rural areas, river erosion of agricultural land and job opportunities in the city are the main factors behind this rural-urban migration. And urban poverty of Dhaka's slums is closely linked with the participation in the informal sectors of the economy. The poor are mostly involved in informal activities as they are excluded from the formal sectors of the economy through lack of education and employment training. Employment in the informal sectors is generally characterised by a low level of income and high level of vulnerability in terms of risk and harassment.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

In the context of poverty and vulnerability social networks play significant support roles in migration and the adaptations of the poor to the city. Poor people maintain both kin and non-kin based social networks in Dhaka City's slums. After their move to the city poor migrants gradually develop non-kinship social networks, which also play a significant role in their social life. The urban poor often provide and/or receive assistances from their relatives, friends and neighbours to help them cope with their poverty and vulnerability. In fact, social networking generally works as 'social capital' in urban adaptations of poor migrants, who have limited access to the formal sources of support.

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