

*Razia Sultana*

## **UNPLANNED RAPID URBANIZATION IN BANGLADESH: A THREAT TO HUMAN SECURITY**

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### **Abstract**

Like many other developing countries, unplanned rapid urbanization is a major security threat for Bangladesh. Due to exponential growth of population, the country is facing a host of challenges especially in Dhaka city. In this regard, the city of Dhaka has been taken as a case as the city in recent years has experienced rapid urbanization and might turn out to be one of the densely populated cities in the future. To perceive the overall impacts of unplanned urbanization, existing social, economic, environmental and political concerns such as urban poverty and scarcity along with inequity in water, sanitation and other basic services have been touched upon in the paper. These issues have been addressed mainly from the human security perspective. The paper also tries to show how human security aspects are conceptually interlinked with the issues of urbanization. Apart from highlighting the effects of mal-urbanization on human security aspects in the city, the paper tries to address the existing gaps between urban policy and planning and ways and means to overcome the problems in a more concerted way.

### **1. Introduction**

While urbanization is seen as a crucial aspect of development in the twenty first century, it has now become an important process of urban people to ensure security and safety. Since the last couple of decades, urbanization process has deeply challenged the human security aspects owing to exponential growth of population in many cities. More precisely, in the cities of developing countries, the massive demographic transformation from rural to urban areas has intensified the mushrooming of slums which have become the abode of a huge number of rootless people. This large scale migration in the cities, however, has brought negative impacts over environment, planned development, economy, health, politics and a host of others.

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Like many other developing countries, Bangladesh is undergoing unplanned rapid urbanization which has been identified as a formidable security threat in several studies. In particular, Dhaka is under considerable strain as a significant portion of inhabitants resides (either permanently or temporarily) in this urban location. As the population growth outpaces the development in this city, poverty, hunger, food shortage along with absence of various amenities like safe drinking water, proper sewerage systems, drainage system and solid waste disposal are the glaring phenomena among the common mass of the capital. These poor qualities of urban settings, nevertheless, increase health challenges, making social costs higher, degrade environment, and add the problems of pollution as well as traffic congestion. Besides, the burgeoning number of migrants from rural to urban areas increases a wide variety of concerns like crime, violence, social unrest and sexual harassment of women that tend to decline the level of security, safety and comfort.<sup>1</sup>

In this context, the principle aim of this paper is to explore the growing nexus between urbanization and human security aspects, both conceptually and empirically. To cover these issues, the paper mainly deals with the following enquiries: What are the key human security issues that relate to urbanization? How does mal-urbanization affect human security aspects in Dhaka city? What are the existing steps and policies of urbanization from government and non-government sides and how do they address the security and safety issues of Dhaka city? What are the gaps between policies and implementation and how can the gaps be reduced for ensuring urban security?

The paper is divided into five sections. After analyzing the background in section 1, the paper tries to develop a conceptual framework of human security aspects with urbanization in section 2. Section 3 attempts to identify some of the major human security and unplanned urbanization related concerns particularly in Dhaka city. Viewing in this light, section 4 underlines the existing urban policies initiated by the government, non-government as well as international agencies. Finally, in section 5, some policy suggestions are outlined to deal with the gaps for ensuring human security of the urban dwellers.

## **2. Conceptual Framework: Human Security and Urbanization**

### ***2.1 Understanding Human Security: A Multi-disciplinary Perspective***

The concept of human security is multi-dimensional and context specific in nature; therefore, the existing definition of human security almost covers

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<sup>1</sup> Akhtar Hussain, S. M Keramat Ali and Gunnar Kvåle, "Determinants of Mortality among Children in the Urban Slums of Dhaka City, Bangladesh", *Tropical Medicine and International Health*, Vol. 4, No. 11, 1999, pp. 758–764. Also see, Khandakar Golam Tawhid,, "Causes and Effects of Water Logging in Dhaka City, Bangladesh", *TRITA-LWR Master Thesis*, Department of Land and Water Resource Engineering, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden, 2004.

“everything from physical security to psychological wellbeing” of the people.<sup>2</sup> Human security notions have been considered as an institutional form by the United Nations (UN) in 1948 through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights where it asserts that “everyone has the right to life, liberty and security...”<sup>3</sup> In the 1960’s, it was acknowledged that military security would not be sufficient unless the security of individual was not taken into consideration. In the 1990’s, after the end of Cold War, human security concerns had been broadly shifted to individual and community levels rather than the state, considering the vulnerable situations of world’s population. Since then, various scholars, academicians, nations as well as international organizations exemplified the concept considering the individuals as the core of analysis addressing their numerous social, economic, political and cultural concerns.

While explaining the meaning of human security, Ramesh Thakur, the leading Peace Researcher, addressed the security of people as “anything which degrade their quality of life – demographic pressures, diminished access to or stock or resources, and so on - is a security threat”.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, Khattak *et al* acknowledged human security with two important techniques: “protection and empowerment”.<sup>5</sup> ‘Protection’ encompasses ensuring different social, political and economic aspects such as food, water, sanitation, health and so on. On the other hand, ‘empowerment’ includes increasing the capabilities of people, especially women in their decision-making process. From the thematic point of view, he also explained human security based on three sub-categories which are mutually interlinked in the following ways: i. livelihood security (e.g. absence of poverty, job loss and economic exploitation); ii. political security (e.g. civil and political freedom including food security as well as assurance of livelihood security); iii. environmental security (e.g. reducing societal costs of environmental hazards such as soil erosion, deforestation, water pollution, lack of pure water and sanitation).

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<sup>2</sup> Shaheen Afroze and Abul Kalam Azad, “Human Security in Bangladesh: Discourse, Practice and Policy Proposition”, Paper presented at the Work-in-Progress Workshop of BIISS–Ford Foundation Collaborative Project on *Human Security in South Asia: Discourse, Practice and Policy Proposition*, organized by BIISS, Dhaka, 26-28 September, 2004, p.1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Ramesh Thakur, “From National to Human Security”, in Stuart Harries and Andrew Mack (eds.), *Asia-Pacific Security: The Economics-Politics Nexus*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1997, pp. 53-54.

<sup>5</sup> Khattak Gul Saba, Habib Kiran and Khan Sadiq Foqia, *Women and Human Security in South Asia: The Cases of Bangladesh and Pakistan*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2008, p. 6.

Notwithstanding the individual, political, social and environmental aspects of human security mentioned by various scholars and practitioners, different international organizations and nation states explain human security from individual wellbeing to global security. Credibly, the concept of human security was well explained in Human Development Report (HDR) of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1994 highlighting the agendas of “freedom from fear” and “freedom from want”. Supporting the notions of this UNDP Report, the UN Commission on Human Security (2003) chaired by Sadako Ogata and Amartya Sen admitted that human insecurity was one of the crucial challenges for individuals. It provided a formal definition in which the concept of human security was considered as a series of “political, social, environmental, economic, military, and cultural systems” that jointly ensure people’s “survival, livelihood and dignity”.<sup>6</sup>

Countries like Canada defined human security as “freedom from pervasive threats to people’s rights, safety or lives.”<sup>7</sup> The foreign policy of Canada highlighted 5 principles including good governance and accountability of private and public sectors to avoid trafficking in small arms, income inequality between the rich and the poor, environmental degradation, rapid population growth, migration, child abuse, drug trade, crime, and so on. The Government of Japan also recognized most of the components of human security mentioned by the Human Security Commission and delineated the concept as “the preservation and protection of life and dignity of individual human beings.” Like the UNDP Report, the country also believes that, human security would actively work when people have “the right to live in peace” and secure lives with “free of fear and want.”<sup>8</sup>

Considering all the definitions and discussions outlined above, it can be perceived that the concept of human security is no longer constrained with the traditional issues of state security; rather, it is widened to persuade the essential security requirements of individuals. Therefore, more emphasis is now given to human rights and safety issues which have historically been ignored. From the essence of the above definitions, it can be argued that human security is the combination of eight categories (social, economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political) to promote the concepts of “freedom from

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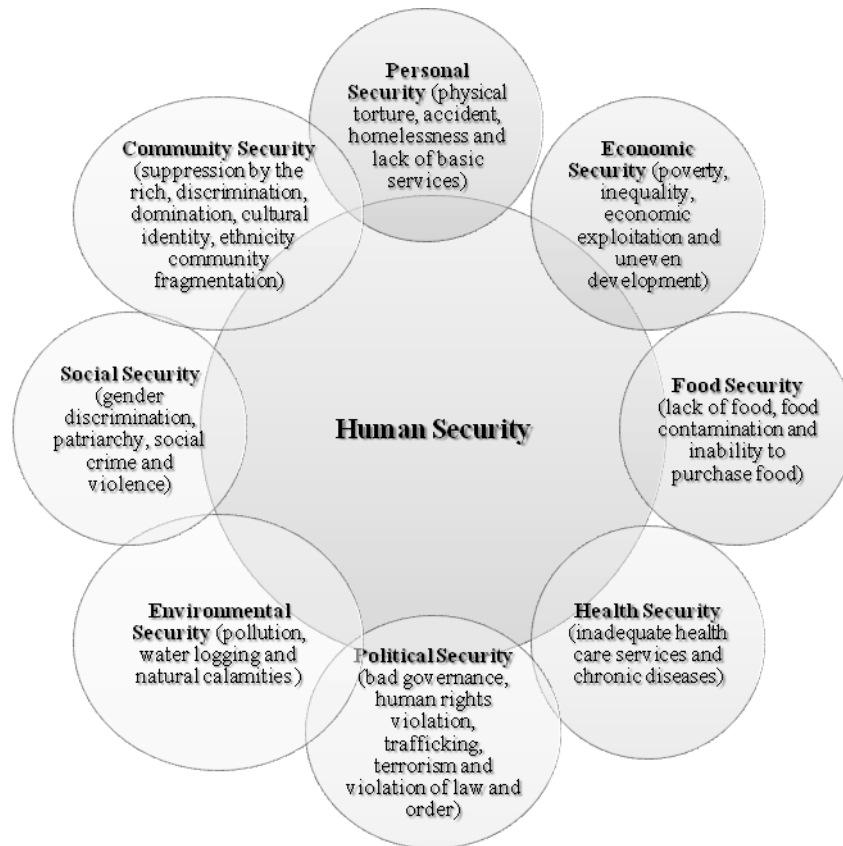
<sup>6</sup> Cited from UN Habitat, “Enhancing Urban Safety and Security”, Global Report on Human Settlements, United Nations Human Settlement Programme, London, UK, 2007, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Canada Foreign Affairs (CFA), “Freedom from Fear in Urban Spaces”, Discussion Paper, Human Security Research and Outreach Program, Canada, Foreign Ministry of Canada, 2006, available at: <<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/foreignp/humansecurity/menu-e.asp>>, accessed on 19 July 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Shiro Okubo, “Freedom from Fear and Want” and “Right to Live in Peace” and “Human Security”, *Ritsumeikan International Affairs*, Vol. 5, 2007, pp. 1-15.

fear” and “freedom from want” and this could be figured out in the following way:

**Figure 2. 1: Categories of Human Security and Patterns of Threats**



Source: Compiled by the author from various sources

## ***2.2. Urbanization and Human Security Paradigm: A Normative Linkage***

How the process of urbanization is inherently related to human security? In fact, human security and urbanization are, in conjecture, commonly supportive. Nowadays, ensuring safety of the cities is the core aspect of urbanization. Therefore, urbanization does not only mean the advancement of infrastructure coupled with the social, economic and demographic transformation of a city. It is also related to a city’s capacities of planning, management and providing safe and secured environment. While analyzing the nexus between urbanization and human security, a broad range of distinctive characteristics of human security (such as reduction of poverty and violent confrontation in the city, protection of people from forced movement, ensuring economic security, providing necessary

healthcare facilities, increasing literacy rate, etc.) articulated by the UN Commission on Human Security (2003) could be mentioned. Besides, many authors delineate that urbanization and development (in all aspects) have a positive relationship that leads to peace, safety and security of citizens.<sup>9</sup>

Defining an urban city, Max Weber put emphasize on city's safety issues like law enforcement, equity regardless of class and ethnicity as well as strong base of economy which denote the important aspects of human security.<sup>10</sup> Taner and Steven opined that a city would be safe when it could offer a series of physical interventions (such as lighting, parking, educational institutions, hospitals, banks, etc) followed by waste management practices, facilities for women employees and other services at various stages.<sup>11</sup> Thus, it can be said that a planned city not only ensures physical safety but also offers sufficient places to live, provision of food, safe transport, education, employment opportunities and a host of others. Evidences show that many cities are now considered as "engine of growth" or "agents of change" for creating a conducive environment for all types of development.<sup>12</sup> For instance, cities like Singapore and Hong Kong are more secured as people could exercise all kind of public facilities and their freedom from fear, freedom from want and dignity are not threatened by unplanned urbanization. Also, these cities are providing public services irrespective of the rich and the poor based on equity and justice. This sort of distinctive growth of cities is gradually becoming a strong entity which shows a new prospect for human security goals shown in the following Figure.

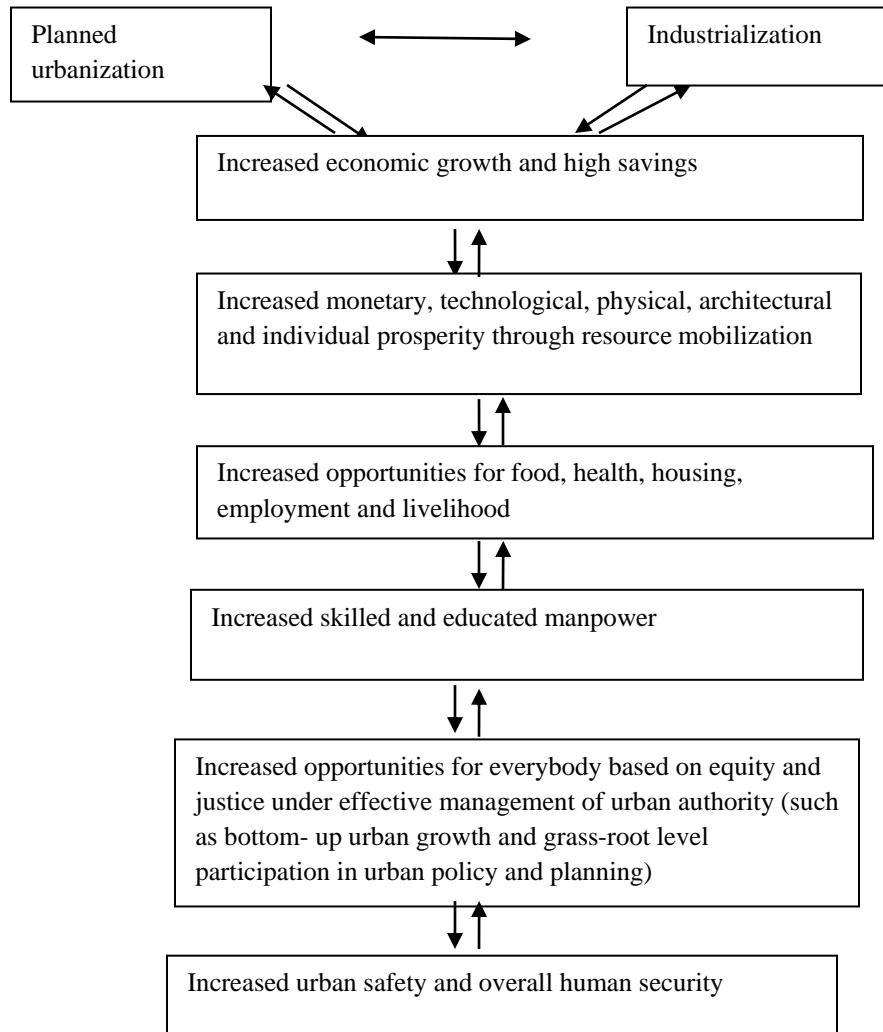
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<sup>9</sup> Nazrul Islam, "Urbanization, Migration and Development in Bangladesh: Recent Trends and Emerging Issues", Paper presented at the launching National Workshop on *Population, Development and Urbanisation: The Emerging Issues*, organized by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka, 4 July, 1999. Also see, J. Robert Lawson, Maciek Hawrylak and Sarah Houghton, "Environmental Change and Human Security: Recognizing and Acting on Hazard Impacts", in P. H. Liotta, D. A. Mouat, W. G. Kepner, and J. M. Lancaster (eds.), *Nato Science for Peace and Security Series - Environmental Security*, Springer, The Netherlands, 2008, pp. 169-202.

<sup>10</sup> Cited from A. I. Mahub Uddin Ahmed, "Weber's Perspective on the City and Culture, Contemporary Urbanization and Bangladesh", *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 1. No. 1., 2004, pp. 1-13.

<sup>11</sup> Taner Oc and Steven Tiesdell, *Safer City Centres: Reviving the Public Realm*, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd, London, UK, 1997.

<sup>12</sup> Rakesh Mohan, "Asia's Urban Century: Emerging Trends", Conference on *Land Policies and Urban Development*, organized by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 5 June, 2006, p.2.

**Figure 2. 2: Urbanization and Human Security Linkage**

Source: Concepts taken from Rita Schneider-Sliwa, "Theoretical Framework: Global and Local Forces in Cities Undergoing Political Change", in Rita Schneider-Sliwa (ed.), *Cities in Transition: Globalization, Political Change and Urban Development*, Springer, The Netherlands, 2006.

The above Figure shows the close interaction between urbanization and human security through a number of steps and addresses a safer city by means of ecological balance, gradual economic development, sufficient employment opportunities, satisfactory supply of housing and a host of others.

### 2.3. *Mal-urbanization and Human Insecurity*

From the above discussion, it is well noted that human security and urbanization are interlinked with each other as the concepts are related to overall safety and wellbeing of the individuals. However, safety is an abstract idea which can be conceptualized comparing with its opposite remark 'insecurity'. Nevertheless, insecurity is a subjective notion; to some, it is traced from mal-nutrition while to others, it is from violence. However, it is perceived that the failure of planned urbanization tends to increase the propensity of overall human insecurity. As remarked by Rioux, "human security rather comes from a definition of the insecurity as the whole of the political, economic, social, environmental, and cultural threats that confront individuals in their daily lives."<sup>13</sup> On the contrary, mal-urbanization coupled with malfunction of the services poses threats to all kinds of freedom of individuals as it deprives various political, economic and social rights. Hence, considering all forms of concerns, a stipulation of relationship between human insecurity and mal-urbanization can be shown in the following way: Human insecurity = f(livelihood insecurity, personal insecurity, community insecurity, economic insecurity and environmental insecurity) = f(mal-urbanization)

Though urbanization does not produce hunger, poverty, crime and other illegal acts directly per se, the presence of large volume of people within a small space aggravates uneven and unplanned urban growth through slum settlements. This pertinent scenario of mal-urbanization is very common in most of the cities of Asia, Africa and Latin America that poses tremendous human security threats. In these regions, around one billion people are residing in slum areas and the number is estimated to increase to roughly around two billion by 2030.<sup>14</sup> Some emerging issues in the cities of different countries such as conflict between police and slum dwellers during slum eviction in Jakarta, rapid influx of refugee, terrorism and drug trafficking in Kabul, widespread community violence at Karachi in Pakistan, small arms proliferation in Bujumbura, presence of gangs and militia groups at Mogadishu in Somalia, increased child death caused by organized armed violence in the slums of Rio de Janeiro, crime and violence in Guatemala city, involvement of children in urban gangs in Nigerian cities and massive explosion of slums in Sub-Saharan Africa are some of the glaring examples of threats towards urban safety and security.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Cited from United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), UN Habitat and Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL), "Human Security: Urban Security and Safety Initiatives", A Guidebook for Local Authorities, 2008, p.3, available at: [http://lasur.epfl.ch/recherche/projets/vups/publications/Human\\_Security/Projet\\_anglais.pdf](http://lasur.epfl.ch/recherche/projets/vups/publications/Human_Security/Projet_anglais.pdf), accessed on 15 August, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> CFA, 2006, *op.cit.*

<sup>15</sup> For details, see, Jean du Plessis, "Forced Eviction: A Threat to Urban Human Security", in Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT) and Canadian

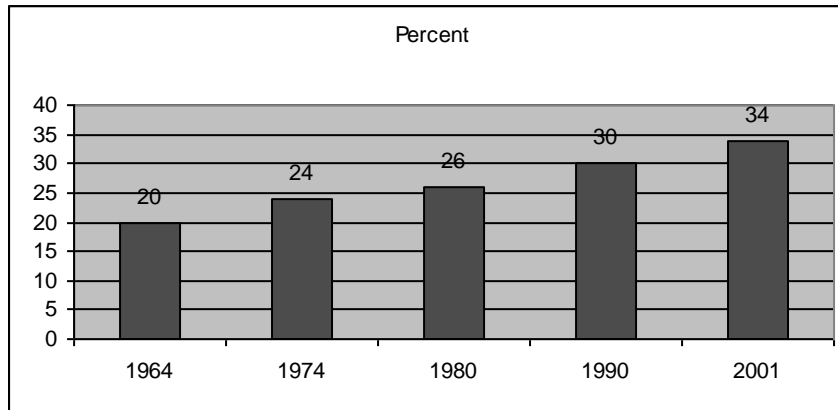


### 3. Urbanization and Human Security: The Scenario of Dhaka City

#### 3.1 The Trends of Urbanization: A Brief Overview

Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, is one of the most densely inhabited and rapidly growing cities in the world. In 1951, the city's population was 411,279 which rose to 718,766 in 1961. During 1960's, the city was comprised of only 20 percent of urban population. From 1980 onward, there is a gradual increase of urban population proportion from 26 percent to more than 30 percent which is shown in the following Figure.

**Figure 3. 1: Increase of Urban Population Proportion in Dhaka City**



Source: Data Compiled from Nazrul Islam, 1999, *op.cit.*, Xinhua News Agency, "Bangladesh's Urban Population to Reach 99 Million By 2030: WB", 2005, available at: [http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/342866/bangladesh\\_urban\\_population\\_to\\_reach\\_99 mln\\_by\\_2030\\_wb/](http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/342866/bangladesh_urban_population_to_reach_99 mln_by_2030_wb/), accessed on 16 August, 2010.

After the Liberation War in 1971, urbanization process was accomplished at a rapid scale to meet the requirements of Dhaka city. In 1974, the population unexpectedly augmented to 2,068,353. In 1981, the population reached 3 million within 510 sq.km. area and wetlands were encroached by building new commercial, administrative and residential areas. During 1981-1991, within a decade, the city gained its highest growth rate and urban area was again enlarged from 510 sq.km to 1353 sq km.<sup>16</sup>

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Consortium on Human Security (CCHS), (eds.) *Human Security for an Urban Challenge: Local Challenges, Global Perspectives*, Canadian Consortium on Human Security, Centre of International Relations, University of British Columbia, Canada, 2006-2007.

<sup>16</sup> Shahadat Hossain, "Rapid Urban Growth and Poverty in Dhaka City", *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 5, No.1, 2008, pp.1-24.

**Table 3. 2: Urban Agglomeration in Dhaka City (annual rate of change shown in parenthesis)**

Estimated and Projected Population (Per thousand)						Share in Urban Population	
1990	1995	2000	2005	2015(Projected)	2020(Projected)	1990	2015(Projected)
6,526	8,217 (4.61)	10,159 (4.24)	12,430 (4.03)	14,625 (3.25)	16,842 (2.82)	9.84	11.36

Source: UN Habitat 2007, *op.cit.*

During 2000-2001, the city's population reached around 11 million with more than 56.5 percent growth in the last decade. In 2006, the population was 12.4 million which ranked the city in the 11<sup>th</sup> position among the mega cities of the world.<sup>17</sup> In 2010, of the 160 million people in the country, more than 13 million of them are living in Dhaka city.<sup>18</sup> It is projected that during 2000-2015, the city's growth rate would be 3.6 percent and the total population would be 21.1 million by 2015. The city then would be ranked as the 4<sup>th</sup> on the list of world's mega cities. Therefore, the UN termed the rapid population trend of this city as "exceptional case."<sup>19</sup>

### **3.2. Mal-urbanization and Effects on Human Security in Dhaka City**

Needless to say, unplanned rapid urbanization in Dhaka city has become a formidable challenge for the urban government as it is concentrating people and wealth within the particular fringing area. This unplanned urbanization of the city has down-sized the growth potential by creating pressure on the basic urban services and generated a number of negative impacts on numerous security issues of urban dwellers.

#### **3.2.1 Livelihood Insecurity**

##### **Heavy Stress on Housing and Growth of Slums**

In Dhaka, unplanned urbanization has created pressure on housing that leads to mushrooming of slums termed as *bastee*. Of the 13.5 million people in the city, around one third lives in lower standard houses. Within three decades from 1974 to 2005, slum inhabitants became eleven times greater and the number of

<sup>17</sup> Manoj Roy, "Planning for Sustainable Urbanization in Fast Growing Cities: Mitigation and Adaptation Issues Addressed in Dhaka, Bangladesh", *Habitat International*, Vol. 33, No.3, 2008, pp. 276-286.

<sup>18</sup> Mohammad Abdul Qayyum, "Causes, Consequences and Challenges of Demographic Explosion in Bangladesh", Paper presented in the Panel Discussion on *Causes, Consequences, and Challenges of Demographic Explosion in Bangladesh: Policy Prescriptions and Future Outlook*, organized by BIISS on 5 August, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> *World Urbanization Prospects: The 1999 Revision*, United Nations, New York, USA, 1999.

slums augmented from 500 to 4,300, which makes the city as the biggest slum location in the country.<sup>20</sup> The gradual increase of slums, however, is a concern for urban safety and security as population density of slums is 200 times greater (531,000 people per sq. mile) than that of other inhabitant areas.<sup>21</sup> Absence of cooking gas, pure drinking water, garbage collection, drainage system and other basic facilities increases the vulnerabilities of slum people. Meanwhile, slum eviction from the government and non-government owned land is a very common feature. During 1995-2005, 242,442 people were forcedly evicted and around 7 percent of them had experience of slum eviction for once or more.<sup>22</sup> Thus, fear of forced deportation and tenure insecurity are the reality of urban slum people.

### Unemployment Problem

Unemployment problem has figured prominently in Dhaka city. By now, a significant segment of migrants in this city is below the age of 37 who are capable of doing labour intensive works.<sup>23</sup> As a large cohort is unskilled youth, they used to get involved in various illegal activities such as prostitution, begging, mugging, stealing and so on. On the contrary, around 500,000 children live on the streets and 75 percent of them reside on the road sides of the city.<sup>24</sup> They also have to hunt for temporary jobs for their survival. As the street children have no available and suitable jobs, they often have to involve in works with unsafe environment (e.g. waste picking and drug selling) increasing the frequency of crime, deaths and numerous health hazards.

### 3.2.2 Social Insecurity

#### Violence against Women

Women in urban areas often face the difficulties to access equal share of resources and to involve in decision making process. The gender inequality in urban areas often increases the events of violence against women. Generally, the most common forms of violence against women are discrimination, physical

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<sup>20</sup> Centre for Urban Studies (CUS), MEASURE Evaluation and National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT), "Slums of Urban Bangladesh: Mapping and Census 2005", Dhaka, Bangladesh and Chapel Hill, USA, 2006. Also see, Khan Haider, "Challenges for Sustainable Development: Rapid Urbanization, Poverty and Capabilities in Bangladesh", Munich Personal RePEc Archive (MPRA), Paper No. 9290, Denver, USA, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Jean du Plessis, 2006-2007, *op.cit.*

<sup>23</sup> Shahadat Hossain, 2008, *op.cit.*

<sup>24</sup> Alessandro Conticini, "Urban Livelihoods from Children's Perspectives: Protecting and Promoting Assets on the Streets of Dhaka", *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2005, pp.69-81.

abuse, rape, trafficking, acid throwing, prostitution and torture. According to a survey on 2,702 women conducted by International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) and *Naripokkho*, in 2000-2001, 40 percent and 19 percent of urban women respectively had the experience of torture and physical abuse by their husband and extended families.<sup>25</sup> Another dreadful part of urban society is the sexual abuse of adolescent and young girls who used to work outside home especially in the garment industries. Though, many victims do not flash out the events fearing of further attacks by the musclemen (locally known as *mastans*).<sup>26</sup> Besides, women are susceptible to rape and trafficking which are hidden social crimes in urban society. In terms of trafficking, women and young girls are selected for trade by means of prostitution, enforced labour and slavery. Only from Dhaka city and nearby areas, the number of prostitutes is around 50,000 who used to work in brothels and hotels.<sup>27</sup> As a result, women are gradually become susceptible to HIV/AIDS and various sexual transmitted diseases.

#### Crime, *Mastans* and Safety in Streets

Dhaka city is gradually turning into a city of crime, violence and insecurity. In a Focus Group Discussion conducted by the World Bank in 4 slum areas of Dhaka in 2004/2005, it was reported that 93 percent of the respondents has more or less experiences about 33 types of crime related vulnerabilities such as drug trade, gambling, murder, violence and so on.<sup>28</sup> The presence of musclemen intimidates the city dwellers by means of collecting money forcibly from trade centres, market places, bus terminals and construction areas. Often, they conduct illegal operations like torture, murder, looting and stabbing to gain control over the limited urban recourses including water, gas, electricity, etc.<sup>29</sup> The city streets, as expected, are organized for comfort and safety. In Dhaka city, the scenario is quite opposite and diverse. Mostly, road sides and open footpaths are occupied by the homeless people who reside there and sleep at night temporarily. According to a survey in 1996 by ADB-LGED-GOB, around 11,500 people sleep

<sup>25</sup> Tania Wahed and Abbas Bhuiya, "Battered Bodies and Shattered Minds: Violence against Women in Bangladesh", *Indian Journal of Medical Research*, Vol. 126, No.4, 2007, pp. 341-54.

<sup>26</sup> Christoph Schultz and Jeremy Bryan, "Human Security of Female Migrant Workers in Dhaka", in DFAIT and CCHS (eds.), *Human Security for an Urban Challenge: Local Challenges, Global Perspectives*, Canadian Consortium on Human Security, Centre of International Relations, University of British Columbia, Canada, 2006-2007.

<sup>27</sup> Tania Wahed and Abbas Bhuiya, 2007, *op.cit.*

<sup>28</sup> World Bank, "Dhaka: Improving Living Conditions for the Urban Poor", *Bangladesh Development Series*, Paper No.17, World Bank Office, Dhaka, 2007.

<sup>29</sup> K. I. Ahmed, "Urban Poor Housing in Bangladesh and Potential Role of ACHR", Policy Paper, *Asian Coalition of Housing Rights*, Bangkok, Thailand, 2007.

in different locations of streets such as open footpath, transport station, park, play yard, garages, and different construction sites.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, women who live in the streets with inadequate illumination and lighting are subject to harassment, physical abuse, rape as well as kidnap.

### **3.2.3 Economic Insecurity**

#### Urban Poverty and Inequity

It is anticipated that extreme migration from rural areas has shifted rural poverty in the metropolis. In 1999-2000, about 43 percent of urban people resided under the poverty line and Dhaka city predominantly received the highest rate of poverty.<sup>31</sup> During 1995-96 to 2000, the proportion of urban poor in the city living below the upper poverty line and lower poverty line rose from 40.2 percent to 44.8 percent and 27.8 percent to 32 percent respectively.<sup>32</sup> Although urbanization encourages economic development, on the way around, it increases income inequality in the city. According to Gini coefficient measurement, income disparity of Dhaka city increased from 0.37 in 1985-86 to 0.44 in 1995-96. Gender inequality is highly prevalent in wage structure of low paid jobs such as construction, crafts, manufacturing and small trade. Besides, due to the hostile and unfriendly attitudes towards female employees, they get limited access to labour industries. This poor income sources ultimately lead to poverty and poor health of women owing to their failure of maintaining the basic needs.

### **3.2.4 Environmental Insecurity**

#### Water Logging and Drainage System

Rapid growth of population immensely affects different aspects of environmental settings. For the last couple of years, water logging of Dhaka city has been a widespread problem especially during the monsoon (May to October). This is mainly due to the encroachment of drainage paths, insufficient drainage system, absence of proper management, lack of inlets and outlets and other unplanned development initiatives. During the rainy season, water logging turns into a crisis as it generates social, economic and environmental hazards in the

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<sup>30</sup> Asian Development Bank (ADB)-Government of Bangladesh (GOB)-Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), "A Report on the Survey of Street Dwellers of Dhaka City", in *Urban Poverty Reduction Project*, Final Report, Dhaka, GOB and ADB, 1996.

<sup>31</sup> Nazrul Islam and Salma A. Shafi, "Solid Waste Management and the Urban Poor in Dhaka", Forum on *Urban Infrastructure and Public Service Delivery for the Urban Poor Regional Focus: Asia*, jointly sponsored by the Comparative Urban Studies Project, Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars (WWICS), Washington DC, USA and The National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), New Delhi, India, 24-25 June, 2004.

<sup>32</sup> Shahadat Hossain, 2008, *op.cit.*

city. The stagnant flood and rain water create various types of disease vectors which aggravate diarrhoea, malaria, typhoid, dengue and other water borne diseases. Another adverse impact of water logging is the massive environmental pollution along with foul smelling when logged water mixes with open sewerage and latrines. It also increases the propensity of ground water contamination which threatens access to pure drinking water.

#### Solid Waste Disposal

In Dhaka city, different types of wastes (solid, clinical, and industrial) increase the hazards of urban life. Each day, around 4,000 metric tons of wastes are generated and it may reach around 6,000 metric tons if the pace of population growth increases further.<sup>33</sup> The biggest amount of solid wastes (e.g. piece of cloths and liquid chemical waste) are derived from the industrial sectors especially from garments, and near about 300 tanneries situated in different urban locations. The wastes from these sectors are polluting the water of adjacent rivers. Furthermore, the most unsafe wastes are sourced from the 500 clinics and hospitals where a significant portion of wastes is infectious.<sup>34</sup>

**Table 3. 3: Nature and Composition of Solid Waste in Dhaka City**

Sources of Solid Waste	Amount (%)	Materials	Amount (%)	
			Inhabited Areas	Industrial Areas
Domestic	40-60	Waste from food	84.37	79.49
Industrial	5-2	Paper	5.68	7.22
Street sweeping	20-30	Textile	1.83	1.59
Combustion	20-30	Plastic	1.74	1.48
Non-combustion	30-40	Glass	6.38	10.22
Humidity	45-50	-	-	-

Source: Khandakar Golam Tawhid, 2004, *op. cit.*

The situation is gradually deteriorating as Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) fails to collect 50 percent of the wastes which usually pile in the drains. Subsequently, water logging takes place on the streets that ultimately disrupts normal life, increases mosquitoes, pollutes the environment and brings severe health impacts.

#### Pollution (water, air, sound and soil)

Air pollution has adverse impacts at different locations in Dhaka city. According to Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission, every year, 50 tons of

<sup>33</sup> Nazrul Islam and Salma A. Shafi, 2004, *op.cit.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

leads are discharged in the air and the extent of lead is the highest in the world.<sup>35</sup> Transport sector is identified as the major source of Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) gas emission as 20 to 30 percent of gas is discharged from the vehicles. Consequently, the outbreak of various air borne diseases poses greater health risks and children become the worst sufferer.<sup>36</sup> In a study, it was found that the lead level among the street children was 90-200 micrograms per deciliter which exceeded the World Health Organization (WHO) suggested secured blood lead content of 25 micrograms per deciliter.<sup>37</sup>

On the contrary, water scarcity is acute in Dhaka city due to a number of reasons like increase of population, over use of ground water and pollution of water through different sources. At present, 58 percent of urban dwellers has to rely on contaminated sources of water and the slum dwellers are considered as the most vulnerable groups as only 37 percent of them has access to safe drinking water. It is projected that only 40 percent of urban people has sanitary waste removal access and water is contaminated through wastes released from toilet in open places.<sup>38</sup> This poor sewerage system and unsafe water are the major sources of water borne diseases like cholera, diarrhea, typhoid as well as other acute respiratory infections which cause one fourth of country's child deaths.<sup>39</sup>

The major sources of noise pollution emanating from vehicular horn, loud speakers in the meetings and industrial sound are severe threats as the noise has already crossed the acceptance level in Dhaka city. In 2002, WHO carried out a study on 45 different industrial, commercial and residential locations of Dhaka city and identified that almost all the areas crossed the tolerance level of noise.<sup>40</sup> Comparing to the noise levels between the residential and commercial areas from 1999 to 2002, it was found that commercial areas were severely affected than the residential locations and there were some places in the former where noise level

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<sup>35</sup> David Hodgkinson and Walton-Ellery Sandie, "Strengthening Bangladesh: Transport, Sustainability and Better Lives", Hodgkinson Group, 2007, available at: [http://www.hodgkinsongroup.com/documents/transportation\\_sustainability.pdf](http://www.hodgkinsongroup.com/documents/transportation_sustainability.pdf), accessed on 18 August 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Manoj Roy, 2008, *op.cit.*

<sup>37</sup> David Hodgkinson and Walton-Ellery Sandie, 2007, *op.cit.*

<sup>38</sup> Hamidur Rahman Khan and Qamrul Islam Siddique, "Urban Water Management Problems in Developing Countries with Particular Reference to Bangladesh", *Water Resources Development*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2000, pp. 21-33.

<sup>39</sup> Water Aid, "Fatal Neglect: How Health Systems are Failing to Comprehensively Address Child Mortality?", cited in <http://gurumia.com/2010/04/03/bangladesh-to-improve-water-quality-to-save-children/>, accessed on 2 December 2010.

<sup>40</sup> United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), "Dhaka City State of Environment: 2005", 2005, available at: <http://www.rrcap.unep.org/reports/soe/dhaka-soe-05/3-4dhaka-noise.pdf>, accessed on 21 August, 2010.

increased more than 10db within 3 years.<sup>41</sup> This scenario of noise pollution is a hazard for both physical and mental health of urban dwellers especially for the elderly and children.

Because of unplanned settlement, some commercial and industrial areas of Dhaka city are facing severe soil contamination. In 2000, a study conducted by the Australian Research Centre found that soil contamination exceeded the environmental quality level and turned into an acidic form with pH 5.7 particularly in Tejgaon commercial areas.<sup>42</sup> Besides, Hazaribagh area is extremely contaminated by chromium because of the presence of significant numbers of tanneries.

### Construction, Road Mismanagement and Traffic Accident

The construction and reconstruction activity of roads, high rise commercial buildings, shopping malls, sewerage, underground telephone, electricity and other utility services in unplanned ways is a quite common feature in Dhaka city. While doing housing construction, the plot owners prepare building structure without keeping space for roads and dump sands, brick, stones and other construction materials on the public roads violating the rules of DCC. Consequently, the construction materials mix in the drainage paths and create obstruction to pass the water. On the other hand, inefficient and insufficient transportation system in Dhaka city has become very risky and unsafe for people especially for women. Quite often, women have to face the unusual events like physical harassment, rubbing and bag snatching in the overcrowded public buses.<sup>43</sup> Alternatively, increase of vehicles, presence of around 500,000 rickshaws, bumpy road surface, absence of parking facilities, occupying foot paths by the vendors, digging of roads, mal-function of public transport, violation of traffic rules and poor traffic arrangement are singled out as major causes of increasing traffic congestion, accident, health problem, economic loss and air pollution in Dhaka city. According to a report, 90 percent of the road accidents occur due to road crossing by the pedestrians and traffic rules violation by bus and truck drivers.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* also see, The World Health Report, “Reducing Risks, Promoting Healthy Life”, WHO, Geneva, 2002.

<sup>42</sup> UNEP, 2005, *op. cit.*

<sup>43</sup> Safeen, “Transport Constraints”, 2008, available at: <http://safeen.wordpress.com/2008/11/04/transport-constraints/>, accessed on 23 August, 2010.

<sup>44</sup> Cited from AVISO, “Urbanization and Environmental Change: Issues and Options for Human Security”, Issue No.11, 2003, available at:<http://www.gechs.org/aviso/11/>, accessed on 5 September 2010; Also see, David Hodgkinson and Walton-Ellery Sandie, 2007, *op.cit.*



## Earthquake

One of the major environmental threats for the country is earthquake and Dhaka is identified as one of the most vulnerable cities. From the last 150 years, a significant number of earthquakes with  $M > 7.0$  took place from 100-500km epicenter distance from Dhaka city.<sup>45</sup> From 1762 to 1997, around 6 major earthquakes occurred in the city.<sup>46</sup> Besides, a series of earthquakes with  $M > 4$  had been perceived in different times. Recently, on 10 September 2010, the two earthquakes with  $M > 4$  have called for urgent preparation. It is projected that, if the earthquake is felt with  $M \sim 7$ , 80 percent buildings of Dhaka city might be collapsed.<sup>47</sup> Because of construction of high rise buildings violating the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakha (RAJUK) rules and regulations by the developers and the land owners, the post earthquake vulnerabilities might be severe in the future. It is also estimated that a massive earthquake with  $M \sim 7$  / or  $M \sim 8$  might take place at anytime in the country caused from excessive water extraction from the groundwater and faults at various levels of soils.

### 3.2.5 Street Vending, Food and Health Insecurity

Street vending with a temporary built-up arrangement is a common view in Dhaka city. The number of street vendors is gradually increasing and their services are highly demanding for a particular segment of urban people (e.g. rickshaw puller, beggar, migrants and homeless people) with a view to meeting their daily food requirements at a low cost. It was estimated by DCC in 2003-2004 that nearly, 90,000 street hawkers had been doing their temporary business and a significant number of poor women were involved in food vending predominantly in city's commercial areas.<sup>48</sup> Though street vending creates employment opportunities for lower educated women and migrated people, the concern is, street hawkers are facing livelihood insecurity as they have no legal and permanent status to run their temporary business. Often, they are continuously humiliated by the legal authorities and brokers whom they need to provide a significant amount of money as bribes to run their business.<sup>49</sup> In most cases, the street vendors offer food with less nutrition and poor hygiene which

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<sup>45</sup> Jamilur R. Choudhury, "Urbanisation and Mega City Risks: The Dhaka City Scenario", 8<sup>th</sup> National Forum, *DKKV/CEDIM: Disaster Reduction in Climate Change*, 15-16 October, 2007, Karlsruhe University, Germany.

<sup>46</sup> *The Shomokal* (a Bengali Daily), 15 September 2010.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Sharit K Bhowmick, "Street Vendors in Asia: A Review" *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28 May – 4 June, 2005, pp. 2256-2264.

<sup>49</sup> Willem van der Geest, Mobasser Monem and Golam Hossain, "The Mega Urban Food System of Dhaka, Bangladesh", Paper presented at the *20 European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies (ECMSAS)*, The University of Manchester, England, 8-11 July 2009.

result in health insecurity as people often become victims of various water borne diseases. Currently, Bangladesh Hawker's Federation and other unions are working for food vendors. Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive policy for them to date.<sup>50</sup>

### 3.2.6 Political Insecurity

In Dhaka city, political aggression commonly takes place either between the police and hostile political parties or between the supporters of government and opposite political parties. Other means of political crimes are hidden assassination, raiding and the demolition of possessions.<sup>51</sup> This poor and corrupted political system directly or indirectly increases urban insecurity. Misfortune and deaths as a result of political conflicts and *Hartals* (strike) against government are very common in Dhaka city. In 2005, 21 *Hartals* took place and the fatalities caused from strikes augmented to 74 percent which was 60 percent in 2004. In most cases, innocent civilians are the victims of deaths and injuries.<sup>52</sup> In addition, economic costs due to political instability and strikes are massive. Besides, incidences of bomb blast, attack on journalists and hiring of musclemen by the political parties to conduct demonstration raise the question of security and safety of general public.

## 4. Significant Measures and Gaps between Policies and Implementation

Since the independence in 1971, the successive governments of Bangladesh have taken different policy initiatives to overcome the rapid pace of urban growth. Regrettably, no significant progress was made about formulating a comprehensive urban policy. Though, from time to time, various governments have adopted urban policy documentations, 5 Year Plans and various strategies shown in Table 4.1.

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<sup>50</sup> Sabina Faiz Rashid, "Urban Poverty and Social Exclusion: The Health Challenges for the Poor Living in Slum Settlements", Paper presented at *Global Forum on Health Research II*, Beijing, People's Republic of China, 29 October - 2 November 2007.

<sup>51</sup> Shahadat Hossain, "Social Characteristics of a Mega City: A Case of Dhaka City, Bangladesh", Paper presented at *TASA Conference*, University of Western Australia and Murdoch University, 4-7 December, 2006.

<sup>52</sup> Mushtaq H. Khan, "Bangladesh Human Security Assessment (2005)", Department of International Development (DFID), Bangladesh, 2005.

**Table 4.1: Urban Policy Initiatives by the Government**

Initiatives	Year	Objectives
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Five Year Plan</b>	1973-1978	Alleviate poverty, creation of employment opportunity, equal distribution of incomes, programmes for reducing population etc.
<b>Report/Documentation on Human Settlement Policy</b>	1976	Identification of region for a balanced growth Development of metropolitan city in the North
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Five Year Plan</b>	1980-85	Extension of infrastructure, service and transport facilities from 100 growth centres to 1200 mega cities Establish agro-based industries to create employment opportunities
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Five Year Plan</b>	1985-90	Inclusion of decentralization process by upgrading 460 <i>Thana</i> into <i>Upazila</i> (sub-district) headquarters for urban central point.
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan</b>	1990-95	Initiating macroeconomic policies Introduction of poverty alleviation programme through improving health, education, water and sanitation
<b>Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP)</b>	1995-2015	An elaborative plan for 20 years to ensure services for local people
<b>Participatory Perspective Plan (PPP)</b>	1996	PPP for 15 years for overall urban development

Source: Nazrul Islam, 1999, *op.cit*; Golam Rahman, Deanna Alam and Sirajul Islam, "City Growth with Urban Sprawl and Problems of Management", 44th ISOCARP Congress 2008, *City Growth with Urban Sprawl and Problems of Management for Sustainable Urbanization*, Dalian, China, 19-23 September, 2008.

According to the 5 Year Plan for 1973-1978, a number of initiatives was carried out to make a sustainable urban development. Despite that, none of these were successfully implemented due to improper urban planning, lack of labour division, placement of inappropriate executive agencies and disagreement about plans after changing the governments in different periods of time.<sup>53</sup> Besides, absence of participation of poor people in urban development, lack of coordination and transparency among different government ministries and involvement of too many departments (around 42) in urban development process delay the implementation of the policies.<sup>54</sup> Often, it is very difficult for the Dhaka Municipal Corporation to coordinate with other agencies, finish the project within particular deadline and go forward with a new venture. More ominous, urban local authorities have been facing tremendous funding crisis because of limited resources, rampant corruption, nepotism and inability to raise the revenues from levy and other sources. Hence, it has become very complicated for the urban authorities to meet the ever rising demand of the urban people.

<sup>53</sup> Md. Saidur Rahman, "Future Mass Rapid Transit in Dhaka City: Options, Issues and Realities" *Jahangirnagar Planning Review*, Vol. 6, No.2, 2008, pp. 69-81.

<sup>54</sup> Pranab Kumar Panday, "Policy Implementation in Urban Bangladesh: Role of Intra-organizational Coordination" *Public Organization Review*, Vol.7, No.3, 2007, pp.237-259. Also see, Shahadat Hossain, 2006, *op.cit*.

While considering the sector wise urban development, it is found that the urban authorities have been facing a series of challenges to ensure security and safety of urban community. For instance, in case of alleviating poverty, government took the initiative of “*Dal Bhaat*” (rice-lentil) programme in First 5 Year Plan to ensure the minimum nutrition and basic needs of urban dwellers. In addition, the government signed National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS, 2005) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000) addressing the issues of adequate management of water and sanitation by 2005. Because of absence of resource mobilization, failure to halt rapid rural-urban migration and lack of job opportunities, the programmes, nevertheless, did not bring much fruitful outcomes.

On the other hand, to renovate slums and ensure other basic utilities (e.g. water, sanitation, health care, etc.), government adopted various policies like the National Housing Policy (1993), Bangladesh Urban and Shelter Sector Review (1993), Bangladesh Urban Sector National Programme Document (1994), Bangladesh National Habitat II Report (1996), Sector Development Programme (SDP)-Water and Sanitation Sector in Bangladesh (WSSB) (2005), Guidelines for Water Supply (2006) and so on. However, due to absence of specific land policy and government awareness, 70 percent of urban poor does not have any land and 8 percent of wealthy people occupies near about 40 percent of urban land.<sup>55</sup> Despite taking several measures to provide access to water and sanitation in the slum areas, urban authorities are facing paramount challenges to ensure these basic services owing to shortage of funding, lack of efficient management and employees, excessive system losses of Dhaka Water Supply Authority (DWASA), presence of musclemen to control the basic services and a host of others.<sup>56</sup>

Regarding waste management, DWASA and DCC are fully accountable to clean Dhaka city. Due to longstanding mismanagement, lack of proper policy guidelines, and inability to collect taxes (40-60 percent of tolls remain uncollected) of DCC, tons of garbage are regularly dumped on the road sides. It is estimated that if the waste is properly segregated and deposited, it can be a good source of organic fertilizer for the country.<sup>57</sup> There are some laws of waste management like the Municipal Ordinance 1983 and Bangladesh Environmental Conservation Act 1995, but till now, neither DCC nor the local government has adopted any substantive waste management policy in relation to collect,

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<sup>55</sup> Nazrul Islam, “Urban Land Management in Bangladesh: The Status and Issues”, UMP – Asia Occasional Paper No. 12, Urban Management Programme Regional Office for Asia – Pacific (UMP – Asia), UNDP, 2004.

<sup>56</sup> Hamidur Rahman Khan and Qamrul Islam Siddique, 2000, *op.cit.*

<sup>57</sup> Pranab Kumar Panday, 2007, *op.cit.* Also see, Salma A. Shafi, “Poverty Alleviation and Urbanization in Bangladesh”, UMP-Asia Occasional Paper No. 4, UMP-Asia, 2004.

transport, separate and discharge of harmful wastes. Most of the time, waste pickers and temporary cleaners collect wastes without taking any protective measures and continue their jobs with lump-sum remuneration.

In terms of water logging, the city is continuously expanding without any Master Plan and the existing laws and regulations are outdated to meet the emerging concerns. Additionally, blockage of wetlands and building the embankment without any space for drainage facilities result in various problems that badly affect the urban dwellers residing in low lying areas. As mentioned in Wetland Conservation Act (2000), nobody has the constitutional rights to construct anything in marshland and flood prone zones. Nevertheless, the landowners and real estate businessmen are incessantly enlarging their actions in the catchment areas which repulsively contravene the DMDP and the Wetland Conservation Act.

On the contrary, to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> gas emission and environmental degradation, a number of policies were formulated including National Environment Policy (1992), National Environment Management Action Plan (1995), Environmental Conservation Act (1995), Environmental Conservation Rules (1997), and Environmental Court Act (2000). Moreover, the Department of Environment (DoE) signed Kyoto Protocol and Ozone Depleting Substances Rules (2004) to avoid environmental hazards. Notwithstanding these policies and some of other noteworthy initiatives of urban authorities like combating air pollution, prohibiting polythene shopping bag, banning of two stroke three-wheelers, introducing Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) oriented vehicle and setting of Air Quality Monitoring Station, there is no significant improvement of overall environmental quality.<sup>58</sup> For example, polythene bag is still used in different shopping malls by the deceptive traders in the city.

With regard to transportation sector, inefficient management system is a decisive predicament to ensure security of urban people. Also, it has negative effects on urban wealth and environment. Lack of systematic procedures in public buses such as overcrowdedness, careless driving, indifference towards traffic rules, long queue for ticket, lack of proper arrangement for female passengers as well as refusal by drivers to take them during peak hours have made the lives of urban dwellers challenging. Recently, Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) has introduced new buses with reserved seats for female passengers. Even then, women are facing sexual and verbal nuisances while commuting in public transport due to shortage of bus services.

By now, ensuring social security of women is a formidable challenge for the urban government. Events such as violence against women, rape, sexual abuse

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<sup>58</sup> Mousumi Biswas, *et al.*, "How Far is Bangladesh in Ensuring Environmental Sustainability?", Supro Position Paper, Shamoli, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2007.

and other sorts of crimes are clear violation of human rights. The law and order system is still followed by the British Penal Code which is insufficient to address these concerns. To prevent human rights violation at a large scale, government has signed international conventions like Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and adopted a number of Acts namely Dowry Prohibition Act (1980), Cruelty to Women Ordinance (1983), Family Court Ordinance (1985), Women and Children Repression Act (1995), Acid Crimes Control Act (2002), Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children Act (2003) and so on. In most cases, these Acts are, however, difficult to implement properly because of women's helpless position, their lack of awareness, high cost to continue court cases and dominance of powerful groups in legal system.

In addition to government initiatives, various Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and other international organizations (such as ADB, DANIDA,<sup>59</sup> Human Habitat) have brought a crucial breakthrough to address the vulnerabilities and insecurities of Dhaka's urban poor. UNDP is assisting and funding in carrying out DMDP for 20 years (1995-2015) for planned urban development. Around 15 NGOs are working at technical levels with a view to increasing participation of poor people in urban planning and management.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, a number of international and local NGOs have community development programmes to improve the living standard of slum people. The glaring example is Local Partnerships for Urban Poverty Alleviation Project (LPUPAP) implemented by Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, LGED in association with UNDP and UN Habitat which have been working since 2000 targeting 360,000 poor people in 338 slums.<sup>61</sup>

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Despite the efforts of the government and NGOs to ensure human security of urban poor people through various urban policies and planning, the development,

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<sup>59</sup> Danish International Development Agency.

<sup>60</sup> Social Development Direct (SDD), "Involving the Urban Poor in Municipal Governance in Bangladesh", ADB and NPRS-PRF, 2007, available at: <http://www.adb.org/Documents/PRF/knowledge-products/BAN-Municipal-Governance.pdf>, accessed on 8 September 2010.

<sup>61</sup> Salma A. Shafi and Geoffrey Payne, "Land Tenure Security and Land Administration in Bangladesh", Final Report, *Local Partnerships for Urban Poverty Alleviation (LPUPAP)*, LGED, UNDP and UN-Habitat Project, 2007, available at: [http://www.glt.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=9&Itemid=69](http://www.glt.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=9&Itemid=69), accessed on 9 September 2010.

nonetheless, is not well integrated and organized. The unintended development actions are infringing the existing laws and regulations. Moreover, security and safety issues are not coherently considered as part of urbanization policy, planning, design, management and implementation. Thus, addressing security and safety issues are the unmet needs for the wellbeing of urban people. To overcome the existing situations, urban authorities need to take appropriate initiatives. Following steps can facilitate the concerned authorities to reduce the distresses of city dwellers.

### ***5.1. Adopting Urban Policy and Implementation of the Existing Plans***

Urban planning in a sustainable manner is perhaps the best possible path to address the urban insecurity issues against the back drop of high population growth. To make the city sustainable and secured, a comprehensive urban policy is required addressing social, economic, environmental and health hazards of urban dwellers. Also, successful implementation of DMDP, 5 Year Plan and other related development plans is crucial for a balanced growth of the city. To implement the existing plans in effective ways, involvement of various stakeholders is essential to consider some of the important aspects of urban planning like the procedures, clarity, probable size of the city, proper rules of development and efficient institutional dealings.

### ***5.2. Incorporating Security and Safety Issues in Urban Planning***

Security and safety are the unmet requirements of urban people. Urban government needs to formulate the policies addressing the safety concerns of urban dwellers. Issues that are posing threats especially to the vulnerable groups (e.g. women and children) of society should be incorporated in urban policy. For instance, regarding street children, urban government can create different employment opportunities to reduce crime and violence committed by them. Likewise, the government can adopt separate regulations to ensure safety in every sector. The idea of adopting distinct regulations and implementing those seem to be difficult for a radical change of society at present. But, it will be accepted gradually by the society in course of time.

### ***5.3. Coordination and Continuous Monitoring among Different Ministries***

As urban management is handled by so many ministries, coordination among them is crucial to address the common interests of urban dwellers and implement the urban policies accordingly. However, certain initiatives can be taken to make the urban authorities more effective and workable. For instance, an autonomous institution can be established for continuous monitoring of nepotism, political influence, corruption and ill management of different ministries. Under this institution, grants and resources can be properly allocated adopting certain rules

and regulations to overcome fund constrains. Skilled and efficient urban planners should be recruited in proper places based on sound educational background and expertise avoiding the political recruitment procedures. Moreover, regulations should be implemented by clear division of tasks among the employees of DCC. This authority should take the prime responsibility of increasing funds so that they can work autonomously by reducing the dependency on governments.

#### ***5. 4. Cooperation among the Government, NGOs and Donor Agencies***

Undeniably, maintaining social, economic and environmental security concerns is a gigantic task and it is not possible for the urban authorities solely to handle it. Therefore, active participation of different NGOs and international organizations are pertinent to provide available urban services in case of housing, waste management, pollution and health. CBOs can play a very important role to upgrade the skills and services by equipping the urban poor people with proper education and vocational training. The role of donor agencies is also crucial and they should extend their cooperation especially in various urban poverty alleviation programmes. Moreover, they need to be flexible in case of grants rather than imposing terms and conditions on the government.

#### ***5. 5. Ensuring Basic Services in Slum Areas***

Though the informal settlement has become an integral part of urban poor people, slum eviction is a common threat for them. To overcome this hindrance and support tenure safety, some policies and legal frameworks (such as the property rights for all citizens addressed in Article 42 of the Bangladesh Constitution and the Town Improvement Act, 1953) need to be properly activated. There must be a housing and land policy to address the tenure rights regarding those who have been living in temporary settlements. Besides, urban authorities should give more attention to upgrade some of the basic needs such as water, sanitation, gas, and solid waste management for overall wellbeing of slum dwellers. In this case, CBOs can play an active role to make the slum dwellers empowered so that they can maintain these services by themselves. To ensure equal rights of slum dwellers, LGED can play a strong role to take action against those musclemen who illegally control the ownership of these services and forcefully demand extra service charge from the deprived residents.

#### ***5. 6. Poverty and Unemployment Problems***

Poor income, inequality, lack of resources, education as well as professional skills of urban poor are identified as the primary causes of urban poverty and insecurity. In this regard, government can play a crucial role in mobilizing the resources and developing the rural areas to reduce the city ward migration. Some urban poverty alleviation programmes, construction and waste management projects can be undertaken with the active involvement of poor urban dwellers



especially with the unemployed youth so that they can have regular income opportunities. Additionally, government can provide different vocational trainings and educational skills to them with a view to increasing their productive capacities. Once they have the livelihood security, poverty will reduce gradually and it will ultimately reduce the ill social activities committed by the young generation. To halt the rapid rural-urban migration, employment opportunities should be created in the rural areas and this venture, obviously, will have a positive impact on both poverty and unemployment in urban areas.

### ***5.7. Legal Action against Repression of Women and Children***

Protecting urban women from violence is one of the biggest challenges for urban government. To eliminate violence and sexual abuse of women, existing laws and regulations should be effectively implemented against the criminals and *mastans*. Besides, significant level of public awareness and behavioural change programmes for men are necessary to eradicate discrimination, dowry, and other ill social practices. In this regard, community based educational programmes can be arranged to raise the awareness on women's social and legal rights. Moreover, women need to be empowered by giving them more opportunities in job sectors so that they can ensure their livelihood security. In case of street children, some educational programmes can be organized on a regular basis so that they become aware of their rights, personal safety and security.

### ***5.8. Proper Traffic Management***

Appropriate traffic management is essential to avoid traffic congestion and high rate of accidents. To make the transportation system safe and sound, the public sector needs to adopt some policy measures like widening the roads, ensuring adequate sidewalks for pedestrians, parking provisions for high rise shopping malls and lanes for bicycle as well as making the foot path free from illegal settlement of temporary shops and markets. To avoid accident, strong rules and regulations for the bus and truck drivers are necessary. To make the traffic management system more environment friendly, actions should be taken regarding construction of the road activities and banning of old motor vehicles which emit CO<sub>2</sub> gas.

### ***5.9. Proper Waste Management***

Solid waste is a great social, physical and environmental threat for urban dwellers. To improve the situation radically, complete set of laws and legislations should be adopted for the city dwellers as well as the waste management authorities. In this regard, DCC needs to play a prompt role about resource mobilization, accessible dustbins, and other administrative steps so that waste cannot deposit on the streets and create blocks in the drains. Besides, collaboration between private and government sectors is required for efficient

drainage management, estimation of exact quantity of wastes, waste separation for recycling and surveillance against the violators who do not compile the waste in assigned places. In this regard, CBOs can run some programmes to increase awareness of urban dwellers and remove all types of wastes from door to door. To ensure job and health security of cleaners, DCC should provide them regular payment, adequate medical facilities and some protective measures such as hand gloves, masks and medicines.

#### ***5.10. Appropriate Measures for Water Logging and Earthquake Management***

To manage a sustainable drainage system, DCC should have an inclusive Master Plan about the actual width and length of natural drainage system which will restrain water logging, water pollution and the spread of disease vectors. Apart from DCC, RAJUK, Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) and other concerned agencies should take responsibilities to halt unauthorized encroachments of water sources including lakes, wetlands and rivers by the developers and urban dwellers. Legal action should be taken against those who are running illegal construction and dumping the building materials on the road sides. In case of earthquake, government should take some preventive measures to reduce the vulnerabilities emanating from this natural disaster. This might incorporate a series of actions like arrangement of necessary equipments, listing of risky buildings, identifying those high rise buildings which are built violating the National Building Code, as well as involvement of Disaster Management Bureau in association with DCC and private organizations to initiate earthquake preparedness programmes and campaign for raising awareness of common mass.

#### ***5.11. Reduction of all Kinds of Pollutions***

Water, air and noise pollution are increasing at an alarming rate in Dhaka city. To prevent all forms of pollution, urban authorities can consolidate a set of policies to improve overall environment. For instance, to avoid water contamination, proper management needs to be taken about the insufficient sewerage system as well as industrial pollutants. To check CO<sub>2</sub> emission, government should adopt proper policies against vehicles, industries and brick fields that generate pollution. With a view to decreasing the noise pollution, government should properly implement the existing rules and regulations including Noise Control Rules, 2004 and prohibition of hydraulic horns especially in the industrial areas.

#### ***5.12. Ensure Urban Food and Health Security***

Effective urban government is very crucial to control the quality of food and provide services to maintain healthy environment for the urban poor. As a significant portion of poor urban workers depends on the street food vending, there should be some rules and procedures for urban food vendors so that they

are obliged to provide quality food. In this regard, coordination between DCC and the police are necessary to scrutinize the quality of food and services.

In fact, planned urbanization can help to make a city more secured. On the contrary, unplanned rapid urbanization might be the direct outcome of insecurity which is perceived in case of Dhaka city. Thus, there is no alternative of planned urbanization to make the city free from all sorts of social, economic, political and environmental vulnerabilities. In addition, developing pro-poor policies and participation from all sectors are important to improve the quality of urban life and make the city more safe and sound. Otherwise, the city might face formidable challenges which will increase the insecurity of urban dwellers in their regular life pattern.