

*“Formal and Informal Nexus for a
Functioning City: Redistributive
Justice Through Planning”*

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Quest for a Functioning City

- Dhaka is reconciling the paradoxical scene of abject poverty, lying cheek-by-jowl with prosperity in a laissez-faire manner.
- Chronic shortage of basic amenities; somehow, it resembles an urban functional entity.
- Land-use is a juxtaposition of market-led manufacturing, retailing, commercial, other petty and service activities and shelter (high and low quality).
- Recent literature accepts its urban incoherence as an organizing urban logic. However, this paper contends that acknowledgement of both the formal and informal for organizing the environment is now imperative in order to sustain urban logic.

Quest for a Functioning City..contd.

- Informality which leads to economic and environmental degradation, is inimical to the cities functioning.
- Informality and lack of coordination in urban management does not lead to a (economic or environment) conducive urban logic. Therefore, functional cities in the developing countries must devise, innovate and manage to make economic and environment sense.
- Acknowledgement of both the formal and informal for organizing the environment within the urban logic is needed. Not only would it ensure poor people's health and livelihoods but also assist sustainable urbanization. Informality if left unaddressed, would lead to unbridled competition for urban space and increasing marginalization of the poor.

Hypothesis and Objective of the Paper

- *Hypothesis:*
- “Well functioning cities are logical and can adhere to economic and environment needs”.
- *Objective:*
- Delineate the quest for a well functioning logical city: decipher the nexus between formal and informal aspects in city functions and articulate a redistributive plan for the poor.
- *Research Questions:*
- What is the relationship between functionality of cities and the issues of unabated migration, housing and services on the environment, in the context of Dhaka?
- How can this city devise, innovate and manage to make economic and environment sense?
- Which informal and formal synergies can be harnessed for functioning systems of governance and planning for future city administration.

Rationale for Formal-Informal Nexus

- This paper negates the hypothesis that urban informality is an organizing urban logic because:
- It superficially serves to confirm the continuation of economic activities, on a shallow basis, not cognizant of planning measures and apathetic to urban governance;
- It fails to take into cognizance the important issue of additional burden of ill health on the poor;
- It does not envisage sustainability of economic activities and spatial dev. which could ensure inclusion of the poor through a conducive urban environment, making the city logical and functional;
- City functioning is hampered by unabated migration, housing and lack of planning for services. It requires a multi-dimensional approach which can consider the formal and informal nexus as a means of planning for the poor.

Rationale for Formal-Informal Nexus...

- The planning system is non-functional in terms of negating the unequal negotiations of poor .
- It is also incapable of ensuring a balance between the various stakeholders, viz. the government, non-government interests and the peoples' interest.
- Urban planning governance and livelihoods of poor is being threatened.
- Poor are resorting to inordinate adjustments, albeit condoned, it is diminishing their productivity. While in the process, this innocuously but surely, is eroding the functionality of the city itself.

Formal Informal Nexus Contd..

- Lack of need based, pragmatic and enduring plans and programs that are dynamic and effective at the city level. The non-implementation of formal plans renders those ineffective, when ad hoc measures creep in,.. voiceless stakeholders.
- Participation of the slum dwellers in the process of decision-making, program design, implementation and monitoring is non-existent.
- Pressure groups and corruption. Services are beyond the access of the poor especially women and children.
- There is a high dependence of foreign support and existence of misuse syndrome. Lack of adequate initiative among GO-NGO professionals and the poor are exploited by the ill-motivated groups among the professionals and the politicians.

Making the City Function Through F-Informal Nexus

- Invest in resilient infrastructure – improve the drainage system, put into place measures for adequate disaster-safe housing, increasing access to basic services (water-sanitation) increased security of tenure for the informal settlements etc.
- Commitment for the improvement of urban basic service delivery system in the budget is needed and also increase/improve mobilization of local potentials and resource.
- The instruments available for managing urban environment include legal mechanisms, indirect economic and fiscal measures, planning systems, regulatory powers, standards and community organizations, public education and training, public protests and promotional activities.
- Policy makers should be actively involved in research, project development, implementation and monitoring, avoid delays in decision making and its dissemination. Eschew absence of honesty and accountability above all.

Growth of Dhaka City

- 3 most significant drivers of urban growth in Dhaka:
- Economic and Industrial Policies that led to increased economic activities promoting export oriented ready-made garments, food processing and pharmaceutical industries. Besides, two economic zones, and Gazipur Industrial Belt in Greater Dhaka, were established.
- Secondly government promoted development projects in surrounding wetlands for urban services. Developers' indiscriminate land-filling regardless of official support or (DAP) Detailed Area Plan formulation.
- Thirdly, the extension of the RAJUK area led to incursions into the flood free zones on the outskirts of the city and changed the lives of lacs, who became urban dwellers without concomitant access to city services, but burdened with water-logging, loss of agricultural livelihoods, lack of sanitation and high cost of living

Issues For Policy Formulation

- There is inherent lack of urban plans and lacunae within institutions responsible for urban management;
- Although land is unavailable due to competing uses we could look for synergies that exists betn. Public and private sector.
- Redistributive planning may combat multiple deprivation of the poor: spatial, insecurity, limited citizenship, social discrimination, poor work opportunities
- Security of tenure for poor is crucial for ensuring access to services and infrastructure development: eg. services related to potable and safe drinking water, health care, education, sanitation systems, clean and paved roads, garbage disposal etc.
- NGOs and donors developed infrastructure and services for the poor. Lessons for scaling-up and motivation is needed. Develop social capital for replicating best practices and renovate/rehabilitate. Sustain the benefits.

Main Points for City Function Improvement

- Land management and urban planning tools that are most appropriate for the most specific areas for eg. urbanized core, the high-density areas, the low-income residential areas must be utilized
- Housing finance institutions that will be able to assist in the management of future developments to ascertain the supply capability of affordable housing and residential lands.
- The vulnerability of the urban poor is related to a low asset base comprising mostly of their own physical labour and human resources, and the segmented and gendered labour markets and unequal access to capital among the self-employed.
- Migrants live in temporary shelters or streets and they comprise a significant number vying for jobs within the urban labour force. Low cost transportation, pedestrian friendly footpaths and over-bridges to assist in the easing of mobility is essential.

City Function Improvement (contd.)

- Housing project land-fills have pushed people to informal work like day-labour , and is causing suffering due to water logging (Faisal et., al. 1999). Increasing risk of earthquake, social and env. problems (Kamal & Midorikawa 2004). No appr. Housing P.
- Policy required to safeguard interest of low and middle-income , eg. housing finance, rent control, land cost control, cooperative with resale restrictions, infrastructure standards, drainage, conservancy services, green belts, institutions concerned with urban management- through govt. and local resource mobilization, delegation of authority and community dev.

City Function Improvement (contd.)

- Replacement, repair and maintenance, disaster house reconstruction-housing schemes and special housing loans (with low interest or as grants) for the poverty stricken, deprived and vulnerable groups, female headed households without male member ,disabled and homeless etc., should be planned and implemented.
- The Bombay Municipal Corp. grant *de jure* tenancy & basic amenities: form cooperatives and undertake routine maintenance of the infrastructure. The Bangladesh strategy for collateral free loans to the poor; grps could be recognized as viable units for land ownership and acquisition powers.

Housing may be viewed as a social policy issue, where reinforced, coordinated planning and admin. could ensure distributive benefits even to the poor (Begum, 2007).

City Function Improvement (contd..)

- Crucially significant is the management of rapid transit through the city, with an efficient system for addressing repairs and maintenance and functioning drainage.
- A coordination of the agencies providing service to the city is needed to ensure that spatial development caters efficiently to city and also specific neighbourhood needs must be in place and could be monitored through community mobilization.
- Enabling poor communities where threats and violence are a common feature of urban life The extremely vulnerable groups are the urban poor i.e. the elderly, disabled, young children and women, vagrants etc who are abandoned (Begum, 1997).

Key Areas of Formal Informal Nexus

- Emphasize community initiatives to adapt cost effective locally based infrastructure development in the absence of formal provisions due to increasing demands and deterioration.
- Exploring innovative measures affordable for the urban poor, will be a key strategy for adapting to the emerging realities. Deriving a 'standard' can be an outcome of an interactive and spontaneous participatory and self mobilizing planning process.
- Questions remain re. capacity within the government to respond to this high demand for infrastructure. As long as the state remains impervious, this status quo will remain. Paradoxically, the poor will continue to pay more for basic needs...

Thank You

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