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URBANIZATION IN PAKISTAN:
A GOVERNANCE PERSPECTIVE

Abstract

Rapid urbanization is a major issue facing countries across the world today. This phenomenon is on the rise in Pakistan also which is urbanizing at an annual rate of 3% reported as the fastest pace in South Asia (Kotkin and Cox, 2013). Increased urbanization in Pakistan may be attributed to the natural growth in population and external and internal migration to metropolitan areas. Due to the varied definitions of urbanization and the absence of latest census data research on the issue is quite challenging. The paper deliberated upon the issue in the specific context of Pakistan and analyzes it in view of different approaches to development i.e. conventional approach in 1960; complementary approach of 1970s; New Public Management Approach in 1980; and governance approach of 1990s and onwards. Instead of viewing urbanization as a problem for effective governance it supports the complementary and urban governance view and emphasize on addressing the issue with a renewed interest. The paper postulates that urbanization in Pakistan needs to have a tremendous focus on governance structure and policies including; access to education, housing, transportation, employment and public health at an augmented level. It also requires an increased interest in economic wellbeing of people and a sound political system of decentralized local governance. Since urbanization is a context specific phenomenon, the issue needs to be addressed by policy makers and governing institutions in line with indigenous demands and relevant interventions in the form of sustainable policies and their effective implementation and evaluation. Norms of urban governance in the country require a renewed focus on efficiency, transparency, participation, accountability, social justice, and security for all individuals at all levels. Good or good enough governance in the Pakistan is only hoped for if political stability, economic growth and human development are aligned with rapidly increasing urbanization in the country.

Key Words: Urbanization, Governance, Complementary View, New Public Monument, Decentralization, Human Development.

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Introduction:

Urbanization is the process of population growth in urban areas. There are many ways to define an urban population e.g. by population density, population magnitude, governmental/administrative/political boundaries, or economic functions. Some states describe their urban population as per those people living within certain administrative/governmental limits. For example in Iraq, there are administrative centers/municipals/municipality councils, In Bangladesh and Pakistan, a municipality or a municipal corporation, a town committee, or a cantonment board. Population size or population density is the major consideration for classifying urban population in other countries.

The most important difficulty in studying urbanization is that there is no universal standard for the classification of urban milieus. Almost, all countries around the world differentiate among urban and rural population, nonetheless the universal definition of urban region differs among countries and in certain cases it even varies over time in a particular country. There is another problem which causes a constraint in urbanization researches, which is the deficiency of consistent and latest demographic statistics. Census data is the key source of information on distinct metropolises but then again censuses generally takes place merely just the once each decade and then yields more than a few years to be scrutinized and released. In many countries, there is no availability of novel census data since the 1990s or even the 1980s. Due to this reason, latest urban data is actually credited from data that is entirely outdated.

An Overview of Trends in Urbanization:

The world's rural population is increasing at comparatively less proportion to the urban population, (Figure. 1). The world's urban population has increased four times between 1950 and 2003,on the other hand, world's rural population has increased less than doubled from 1.8 billion to 3.2 billion between 1950 and 2000 (Cohen, 2006). With reference to the report on World's Urbanization Prospects 2004, by United Nations, urban population of the world is predicted to rise by nearly two billion in next 30 years, and the world's rural population is anticipated to decline somewhat falling from 3.3 billion in 2003 to 3.2 billion in 2030 (World's Urbanization Prospects, 2004). Therefore, it is expected that, the forthcoming population growth for the foreseeable future, will be riveted in urban areas.

Fig.1. Estimated and Projected Scope of the World's Urban and Rural Population; 1950-2030.
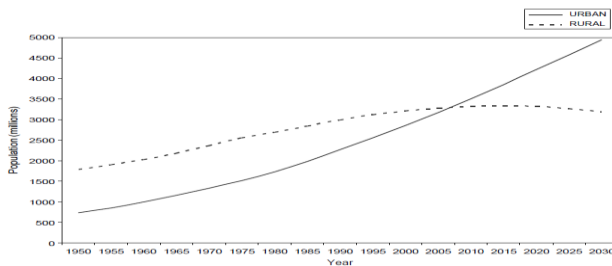
Source: World's Urbanization Prospects, UN (2004, p. 4)

Existing statistics advocate that the percentage of urban poor is comparatively increasing more rapidly in large number of the world's poorest countries, than the general rate of urban population growth (The State of World's cities, 2004). According to one of the estimate, 72 % of the total urban population of Africa nowadays lives in shantytowns. The proportion for Asia and the Pacific is 43%, for Latin America it is 32%, and for Middle East and Northern Africa is 30% (Challenges of Slums, 2013). The cities are continuously attracting new migrants due to which their population is mounting and instigating the problems of unemployment, poverty, transportation, and housing etc. The aptitude of most municipalities to deliver sufficient elementary amenities for their citizens has been utterly outstripped due to the swift urban growth and problems caused by it throughout the developing world (Cohen, 2006). This rapid urbanization is posing challenges of governance for policy makers and decision making bodies of the countries and demands redressal of the issue in view of the global trends, indigenous requirements and effective policy formulation, implementation and evaluation.

Urbanization in Pakistan:

Pakistan has long been a nation defined by its geography. It is the country where majority of the population is based and where the largest industries are ensconced. Pakistan is urbanizing at an annual rate of 3%– the fastest pace in South Asia. Metropolitan cities are facing rapid urbanization as the population of Karachi alone has raised 80 % from 2000-2010, the biggest rise of any municipality in the world (Kotkin & Cox, 2013). The United Nations Population Division estimates that, by 2025, nearly half the country's population will be living in cities as compared to one third of the population at present. Other estimates – which use density-centered rather than administrative/governmental classifications of urbanization, and take into account "peri-urban" regions that lie separate from official urban boundaries – state that the urban population has already reached 50% (Planning Commission of Pakistan, 2011). According to Burki, 2011, 'Pakistan is at the threshold of a major demographic transition', (Burki, 2011). Literature suggests that for municipal management, there should be political and economic decentralization accompanied by marketing and flexibility in municipal actions. Flexibility here can be best interpreted in terms of ability of the governance institutions to adapt to the changing environment (Harris and Fabricus, 1996).

Literature also suggests that municipalities play vital role in provision of basic infrastructure, maintaining law and order and harmony in the society. A sound system of governance demands civic engagement and participation of all players including the corporate and civil society to accompany the state for municipal management and achieving the above said objectives. An earnest effort has to be made in operationalizing the idea of partnership and be on familiar terms with the importance of the local governance.

Intermediate/public/private sector organizations (specially related to microfinance) can play their positive role in this regards. Like in Pakistan, Edhi Foundation, Shaukat Khanum Cancer Memorial Hospital, Akhuwat, one of the local micro-finance NGO, Lahore Transport Company, Clean Lahore and Orangi Pilot Project-

Karachi are some of the examples. In the same way, sub-contracting and outsourcing services to private sector to improve the provision of services through collaboration, coordination and nurturing synergy is becoming the norm.

Urbanization is both promising and problematic for Pakistan. On the one hand, it could boost the country's sagging economy. Pakistani cities are a chief source of employment opportunities for small and medium enterprises which provide the vast majority of Pakistan's nonagricultural jobs and high-growth industries jobs such as information technology (Kugelman, 2014). Cities are also the hub for Pakistan's prestigious educational institutions which impart education, trainings, skills, and research and development opportunities in marketable disciplines.

At the same time, urbanization if not managed properly may place an immense burden on an already-stressed labor market, and severely test the state's ability to provide basic services in cities. Even today, while Pakistan struggles to provide housing, transport, education, jobs, healthcare, clean water, and energy to its urban population, meeting these needs in next 10, 15, and 20 years when the country's urban population will be even greater will be an immense challenge. Failure to address these human development concerns could make Pakistan's urban masses less productive contributors to society and the economy.

Causes of Rapid Urbanization

The phenomenal increase in urbanization in Pakistan may be attributed to two major causes which include natural growth in population and internal migration/relocation (Arif and Hamid, 2009). According to the current statistics Pakistan's total population is rising 3 percent every year and if the trend continues it will increase from 180 million today to 380 million people by 2050 (Kugelman, 2014).

The other factor is rural-to-urban migration. Much of this movement has been driven by war and conflict. At the time of Indo-Pak partition in 1947, millions of Indian Muslims entered Pakistan, and many established roots in urban areas of Sindh and Punjab provinces. Similar influxes occurred during wars with India in 1965 and 1971. In the 1980s, as the anti-Soviet insurgency raged in Afghanistan, masses of Afghans flowed into Western Pakistan, with many ending up in the cities of Quetta and Peshawar.

More recently, military offensives in Pakistan's tribal areas and Afghanistan have triggered an exodus of people to Pakistani cities particularly Peshawar, Quetta, and Karachi. At the same time, many Pakistanis particularly farmers and fishermen afflicted by rural water shortages and natural disasters including flooding and earth quakes are relocating to cities to seek better livelihoods. Others are doing so to have access to better-quality healthcare, employment and education opportunities more often available in urban areas.

Approaches to Urbanization:

A review of the literature suggests that approaches to urbanization have changed over time as a result of change in development thinking. Traditionally, urbanization was viewed as a problem and unnecessary burden on infrastructure and limited available resources which required an immediate solution on the part

of government. However, in recent years, it is considered as a natural phenomenon and a necessary good which needs to be managed through effective urban governance on the part of government, corporate sector and civil society organizations. This emerging concept of urbanization is the outcome of a paradigm shift in development thinking over the years in terms of changing role of the state in society. Government under the new mode of governance has to steer, facilitate, regulate and collaborate for efficient and effective delivery of services to people in contrast to its traditional roles of command, control and sole provider of public services. This shift in urbanization started taking place in the 1980s firstly in the developed countries and then gradually spread over in developing countries including Pakistan.

In order to fully understand the shift in urban development thinking it is important to look at various approaches to urbanization over time. In this regard, the major shifts in urbanization can be traced back to 1960s and classified into four major phases namely: 1). Conventional approach in 1960s; 2). Complementary approach in 1970s; 3). New Public Management (NPM) Approach in1980s; 4). and Governance approach during 1990s & onward.

According to the Conventional approach of 1960s, movement of migrants to the urban areas and filling the available infrastructure without considering the property laws was considered as an evil thing. Drawing from the Keynesian economics more focus was placed on building of infrastructure and technical expertise in the form of projects to enhance the pace of development. The development at that time was viewed only in terms of economic growth. Thus migration which resulted in increased urbanization rate was considered as a problem due to having unnecessary burden on existing infrastructure resulting in low economic growth. According to this viewpoint, poor should not move toward cities and to demolish their settlements in the cities was a right solution to discourage their migration toward cities (Aims, 1995).

In the second phase of development during 1970's, the failure of the Conventional approach and trickle-down theory was recognized as it could not bring the desired outcome in terms of economic growth. This led to the introduction of Complementary approach aimed at poverty reduction by investing in development of human capital through Universal Primary Education, adult education, training and development and capacity building etc. John Turner and William Mangin (a UK Architect and a US Anthropologist) conducted fieldwork in Peru which resulted in a radical change in conventional approach to the urbanization (Turner, 1976). According to Turner's argument, the migrants were settling themselves well and were proceeding toward self-improvement. So, the need of the time was to work with them and provide them education, requisite skills and security instead of working against them. The campaigning was that "the problem was the solution" (Amis, 2002, Cited in Kirkpatrick, et al., 2002, p.205).

Different initiatives were taken in the context of Turner's ideas. World Bank developed an Urban Development program which embraced the objectives of "Site and Service" (SS)-to develop new housing areas, and "squatter upgrading" (SU)-working with existing settlements. The aim in both was the development of migrants and the provision of basic infrastructure facilities to the existing

settlements by the Government. Later on, these initiatives resulted in the acceptance of unauthorized settlements, through commercialization. The access to the shelter followed the market mechanism and the self-help option as advocated by Turner was abolished.

The third phase in the history of international development in 1980's, is marked by the dominance of neo-liberal economics and New Public Management (NPM) practices. In this phase of development thinking the focus was shifted from basic needs to the macroeconomic stabilization. Major focus in this era advocated for privatization, lean government, reduced public expenditure, and openness to private investment. The significant role of corporate and civil society organizations was acknowledged in development process along with government. IMF supported by the World Bank initiated the Structural Adjustment Program promoting the minimal role of government and encouraging privatization. The strategic focus in this era remained on policy level thinking. Empirical research reflected that the urban poor suffered in this adjustment process (Moser, 1998) due to increase in food prices owing to marketization and reduction in public sector expenditures.

The decade of 1990's and subsequent marked by the Governance approach to development has witnessed a renewed interest in urban issues with human development as a key strategy to development (HDC, 1999; Sen, 1999; UNDP, 1997). It was recognized that significant reasons which account for such issues encompass the continuous growth of urban areas and their problems, accelerated rate of urban poverty and most importantly the role of urban areas in economic development. All these concerns emphasis upon municipal management, a focus on urban poverty, good governance and a concern for environment (World Bank, 1991). The major shift that took place in this phase was the realization that all development is related to people, therefore, their involvement and participation in development process along with other partners in governance is integral to development (Jabeen and Jadoon, 2009). To conclude, a gradual shift from conventional to governance approach to urbanization took place over time as exhibited in figure below:

Approaches to Urbanization and Development Thinking
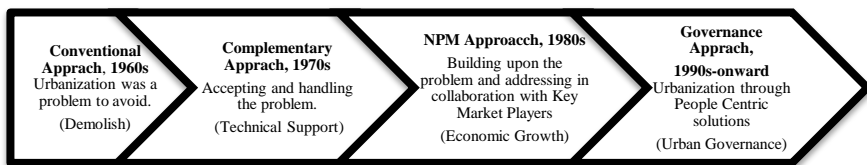
Urbanization: A Governance Perspective

The contemporary upsurge of urbanization is causing several governance challenges. Cities with inhabitants greater than their capacity instigate huge rises in inner-city shantytowns, environmental worsening, divided communities, urban crimes and poor quality of city services. An effective governance demand sustainable and efficient provision of transportation, housing, employment, sanitation and sewerage system along with power, water and supplementary

amenities at an augmented pace. Besides the above, it requires a tremendous focus on access to basic human development indicators including education, healthcare, employment, social justice, security and civic engagement.

In line with the above challenges, urban governance has been given due importance in the Vision 2030 and outline of Economic development in Pakistan. This is because cities are the prime instruments of progress, development and growth and perform key role in economic development. They serve as centers of knowledge, research and development and implementation of innovative ideas (Haque and Nayyab, 2007). However, to materialize the growth and development of urbanization, the challenges which it is putting forward must be tackled through effective governance. A few recommendations in this direction are presented below:

i) A practical and effective local governance system is required to manage the swift upsurge in urbanization in Pakistan. An indigenous scheme of municipal governance was introduced in Pakistan under the Devolution of Power Plan in 2001. The significant features of the system were decentralization of power/control for local decision making, and the development of Citizen Community Boards (CCBs) to ensure participation of public in the decision making. Under the plan, local governments were required to undertake the charge for service delivery and infrastructure planning. The system also ensured 33% representation of women at all three tiers of local governance i.e. District, Tehsil and Union level through an affirmative action and was considered as a mile stone in the history of Pakistan. However, the system was closed down by the later government in 2008 and the system of urban governance returned back to local municipal and development authorities.

These traditional establishments lack the essential technical expertise for current urban planning, have limited capacity and deficit of resources to deliver urban governance in an efficient manner.

Building capacity at that level to comprehend and envisage the local governance plan with technical knowledge, requisite skills, and up-to-date urban planning practices is extremely important for success of the system.

ii) In order to handle the issue of urban unemployment and poverty, cottage industries entrepreneurship at individual level should be promoted. This can be done through offering entrepreneurial and urban management education and skills at college and university level. Further, government should facilitate in providing microcredit, advisory services and skills training. There should be flexible procedures and rules for new entrants so that common person could be encouraged to join it. Government should take steps to lessen the wage differences in public and private sector and increase minimum wage for reducing poverty (Awan and Iqbal, 2011). There should be a provision of capital to early-stage pioneering enterprises serving the urban poor so that they can validate and scale their business models. Economic policies should leverage the bank financing for growth-stage enterprises through risk-sharing guaranty facilities. Initiatives should be taken for setting up urban innovation labs and incubators in collaboration with public, private and civil society organizations focusing on low-income urban populations. In the same way, there should be improvement in employability rate by

concentrating on technical education; occupational training and skill development in people in line with market demand.

iii) For economic development and efficient delivery of public services there is a need for partnership and alliances with corporate and civil society organizations in view of their specific strengths i.e. sewage management, food security projects, small loan schemes for farmers, promotion of organic food and improved farming systems. In this regard, linkages between agriculture and universities need to be strengthened.

iv) Housing deficiencies is another problem confronted in urban areas. Public sector housing schemes are insufficient and require extended time for development. Henceforth, to address the scarcity steps should be taken for encouraging local governments to take administrative initiatives to increase the availability of affordable land, for instance, promoting densification in new housing projects, discouraging the creation of large housing plots, and implementing more vigorously existing housing plans for low-paid government employees. There should be revision of existing bylaws and zoning regulations for sustenance of high-density, high-rise, and mixed land-use patterns. Also there should be a change in the sequence of development site and services schemes to prioritize low-income housing and discourage speculation. For taking all the above stated actions emerging partners in governance i.e. private sector and non- profit organizations should be encouraged to join hands with government to eradicate the housing deficiency. Policymakers should embrace more community-based housing projects, including those that allow homeowners to build their own houses and to pay for amenities and services on an incremental basis through civic engagement.

v) Insufficient funding in another hindering factor in adequate supply of public amenities. The municipal authorities depend on the allocations from the provincial governments and have limited discretion to raise their personal funds through taxation. Since after the 18th amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan provision of health, education and basic community services have become the provincial subject, property tax should be decentralized to the local authorities for improved inducements and resource generation at the local level. This can eradicate the fund deficiency leading to improved amenity supply in the urban zones.

vi) Pakistani cities largely cater to the wealthy. They are rife with highways, overpasses and other infrastructure for cars and other motorized modes of travel which most urban residents cannot afford. It is time to learn from the past failures in urban transit planning, which has been plagued by untested technologies, high costs, poor implementation, and the elimination of affordable transport services and should address the varied transport needs of the middle class. Government budgets should allocate more spending to infrastructure for public transport, the mode of travel preferred by the majority of Pakistan's urban residents. Additionally, fare regulation regimes for public transport should invite participation of all stakeholders including the public transit users, transit experts, policy makers, regulators and others concerned. The upper middle class seeks comfortable public transit and is willing to pay higher prices, while the lower middle class prefers lower-cost, less luxurious transit. Transit planners should not force standardized transit services on commuters whose willingness to pay varies

considerably. There should be reduction in the disproportionate level of transport infrastructure spending allocated to automobiles, and dedicate more funding to public transport, walking paths, motor bikes and bicycle lanes. Car-pooling, bike riding, walking and other environment friendly ways should be encouraged by providing individuals with special incentives and parking places should be properly regularized. More effort should be made in terms of connecting farms to nearby markets through modern infrastructure facilities.

vii) Last but not least a governance perspective of urbanization requires a sincere and sustainable effort by all stakeholders towards developing the human potential of urban as well as the rural poor in view of the indigenous requirements and economic as well as social development indicators. A strong political will and commitment of all functionaries including the federal, provincial and local governments, corporate and civil society organizations and communities is very important to achieve meaningful results in this direction.

Conclusion:

Swift growth of municipalities is an ongoing process in developed a well as developing countries including Pakistan. This results in an upsurge in the degree of urbanization. This fast pace of urbanization, is posing substantial challenges in terms of governance, poverty, unemployment, sewerage, transportation, housing etc. These challenges need to be addressed by policy makers and governing bodies of the countries with indigenous solutions in the form of people centric policies and their effective implementation and evaluation. To successfully address urbanization challenges, we need to understand various approaches and trends towards urbanization as the solutions may not work in isolation. The paper utilizing from the urban governance approach recommends for developing potential of individuals for requisite skills, knowledge, building of infrastructure facilities, research and development, building of linkages among agriculture and academia, a sustainable local governance system and strong collaboration among governance partners including the government, corporate sector and civil society organizations. As if economic growth, human development and augmented urbanization could be managed and governed efficaciously, only then there is a hope for effective governance in Pakistan.

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