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INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT FOR BETTER URBAN MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF KHULNA CITY

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Abstract: This paper concerns the issues about institutional improvement through rearrangement for better functioning of urban services by public sector bodies. It studies the conflict and arrangements of urban development and management institutions focusing on Khulna Development Authority (KDA) and Khulna City Corporation (KCC), in particular. It contains discussion on issues and problems that are encountered by KCC and KDA with respect to their functions and responsibilities followed by possible areas of intervention for management improvement to enable better urban management and development with special attention to the spirit of democracy, social mobilization, delegation of power leading to good governance.

Key words: Local government, urban institutional arrangement, KCC, KDA

Introduction

To create an efficient and livable city and also to provide better urban services, the sitting Mayor of the capital city Dhaka of Bangladesh, *Sadek Hossain Khoja*, in early 2004, advocated for the inclusion of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) within the Prime Minister's Office. Last Mayor *Mohammad Hanif*, during his tenure, campaigned for creation of metropolitan government for the capital city for better city management. Recently, an inter-ministerial meeting on establishment of Barisal Development Authority and Sylhet Development Authority failed to reach any consensus due to the institutional conflict between Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Cooperatives (MLGRDC) and Ministry of Housing and Public Works (MHPW). These matters strongly signify the need for urban institutional re-arrangement, particularly, for larger cities of Bangladesh where urban management is taking precarious turn.

There are large number of public sector agencies working in every city and town engaged in wide variety of development sectors, particularly in the larger cities. For example, in Khulna city, there are as many as 32 different agencies (KDA, 2001) including KCC and KDA, controlled by different ministries, working for the urban dwellers. Each of these agencies has its own system of operation and management, functions, objectives, legal status, accountability and relationship with stakeholders. Moreover, each of these has its own planning and implementation process. But the problem is that many of these agencies have severe functional overlapping which is not only a cause for wastage of valuable national resources but also a major reason for interdepartmental conflict that often handicap budget allocation and project implementation. Complex institutional relations among the agencies often create difficulties for efficient urban management in the cities.

The present form of urban pattern as well as urbanization did not exist in the sub-continent prior to the initiation of British occupation in 1757. Before and during early part of the British era, the Indian settlements were 'self-sufficient', 'unchanging and static socio-economic systems'. In 1830, Charles Metcalfe described, 'the village communities are little republics. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds revolution; Hindu, Pathan, Mughal, Maratha, Sikh, English, are masters in turn; but the village communities

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remain same' (Karim, 1996). Gradually, with the influence of the British rule and the changing economic-political pattern, the non-farm activities like, business and administration gave way to turning the settlements into present form. The urban centers emerged as the seat of administration, economic and socio-cultural activities with profound influence on the vast rural hinterland. Specially, setting up of administrative units and agglomeration of business and manufacturing in urban centers paved the way for urbanization and physical development.

Historically, in 1793, the British Parliament enacted the first law of municipal administration for the British India. It concerned, primarily, three presidency towns of British India viz. Calcutta (Kolkata), Madras (Chennai) and Bombay (Mumbai). The first legislature for creation of municipality in Bengal was passed in 1842 (Rahman, 1998). Next the Act of 1850 empowered government to create municipal bodies for urban management (Rahman, 1998). Following the acts, a number of municipalities were set up in the eastern part of Bengal viz. Nasirabad/Mymensingh (1856), Brahmanbaria (1856), Sherpore (1861), Dhaka (1864), Chittagong (1864) etc. From then, a gradual momentum was seen in the process of urbanization in Bangladesh. Looking back over the last hundred years of urban planning and development reveals a dynamic picture, where the ideologies and norms have been found changing leading to the planning focus. Such changes are prompted by the emerging urban problems caused mainly by the unprecedented technological, political and social changes taking place not only in this country but also all around the globe. A brief about the hundred years of planning (specially physical planning), its problems, focus and theoretical basis is presented in Table 1.

For Bangladesh, the rate of urbanization is high but its level/quality is poor. In 1961 only 5 per cent of the population of Bangladesh lived in the urban areas, while the figure increased to 8 per cent in 1974 and to 23.39 per cent in 2001 (BBS, 1997, 2001). The rapid growth of urban population in Bangladesh has taken place during the last three decades contributed by three main factors as follows:

- High natural increase of native urban population;
- The territorial extension of existing urban areas, and a change in definition of urban areas; and,
- Large scale rural-urban migration (Islam, 2001).

Among the above factors, rural-urban migration played the most significant role in urban population agglomeration in Bangladesh. In 1987-91, about 40% of the Dhaka city dwellers were migrants from the rural areas and presently the figure stands at about 70% (Islam, 2001). However, the migration taking place is often termed as 'distress migration' as it is largely contributed by the poor and destitute from rural areas.

Table 1. Evolution of urban problems, planning focus and theoretical basis during 20th century.

Period	Problems	Planning focus	Theoretical basis
1900-1920	Emergence and disorderly growth of town	City orderly	Physical
1920-1940	Deterioration central town, congestion, poor space quality	Ditto and City beautification	Physical
1940-1960	Migration, imbalance growth, stagnation, urban sprawl	Regional planning, growth pole, industrial decentralization	Wealth creation, trickle-down
1960-1980	Income distribution, poverty, unemployment, landlessness, environmental degradation	Rural development, agricultural development (Green Revolution)	Welfare: people centric approach leads towards bottom up planning
1980-present	Aforesaid problems and also Urban crime and hazards, Poor urban culture and negative attitude and psychological aspects, Unplanned urbanization, land-use alteration, land-use conflict, unauthorized structure, lack of zoning and urban hierarchy, lack of resource mobilization, Poor city administration /governance, etc.	Democratic spirit and social mobilization (people's participation), organization institution building, good governance	Philosophical Political: presently each government of Bangladesh considers their party's ideology for prioritisation in planning

Source: Hoque (1994).

The Consequence of Rural to Urban Migration

Migration, of course, has been recognized as the most dominant component of urban population growth. The rural 'push' and urban 'pull' factors are said to be responsible for large-scale migration from rural to urban areas. Rapid urban growth draws heavy demand on shelter and other urban utilities and services like, electricity, gas, water, sanitation, sewerage, garbage disposal, transport; and social services like, health and education apart from other essential urban infrastructure. Growth of urban population through the migration of rural poor has made the task of poverty reduction in urban areas more difficult. Most of these poor people are unable to afford habitable and descent housing and other urban services and facilities. In bigger cities, roads are over burdened causing heavy traffic congestion, water and power supply system fail to keep pace with rising demand, scarcity of land pushes up the urban land price making access to land and housing difficult for the middle and the lower income people who constitute the greater share of the city dwellers.

It is a convention to blame scarcity of resources as the main cause in handicapping the urban development, but in reality the poor quality of urban management and governance is no less important a reason. It is said that inefficiency and mismanagement of some urban institutions are primarily responsible for growing urban management problems (Saroar, 1998). Lack of coordination, poor linkage and network among different institutions and weak urban institutional arrangement have been found to be a major cause for the growing urban problems.

In the following sections, aforesaid aspects of urban institutional management have been discussed with focus on two major urban institutions of Khulna city- Khulna Development Authority (KDA) and Khulna City Corporation (KCC). Prior to embarking upon the discussion on the subject matter it is, however, necessary to look into the historical background and origin of the Khulna city and two of its dominant urban institutions viz. KCC and KDA.

Historical Background of Khulna City and Its Local Bodies

The historians differ as to when and how the city came into being. In 1836, Khulna *Thana* was set up at Nayabad, close to the present city, on the east under the Jessore district (KDA, 2001). In 1842 the *Thana* was upgraded to a sub-division (KDA, 2001). In 1882, taking Khulna and Bagerhat off from Jessore district and cutting of Shatkhira, Kaliganj and Bashantapur from 24 Pargana, a new district called Khulna, was created (KDA, 2001). In 1884, Khulna town was declared as a municipality and in 1994; it was upgraded into City Corporation (Murtaza, 2002). During 1950s and afterwards, a good number of specialized urban institution's local offices of different government departments were set up in different cities of Bangladesh to provide various government services and to tackle the growing problems of the urban areas. KDA was created in 1961 with a territorial jurisdiction of 70 square miles that included KCC and its environs (KDA, 2001). KDA was given certain specific functions in the field of planning, development and development control from then, these two institutions, KCC and KDA have remained significantly dominant in the urban development and management of Khulna City.

KCC and KDA: Role, Responsibilities, Conflicts and Coordination

KCC is an elected urban local government providing basic urban services like sanitation, health, and water supply. It is responsible for construction and maintenance of roads, culverts, bridges and drains; providing streetlight and public safety, maintenance of environment. It also has limited functions on education and social welfare. KCC has the authority to charge tax and fees to finance its management and development activities. Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (MLGRDC) is its supervisory authority. On the other hand, KDA is a specialized body created by the government for providing particular services in planning, development and development control. It enjoys a greater area under its control than KCC. It is responsible for ensuring planned development, improving and expansion of Khulna city and its adjacent areas. It is an agency under the Ministry of Housing and Public Works (MHPW).

In addition, there are over 32 public sector agencies and many other formal and informal institutions operating in Khulna city (KDA, 2001). These agencies directly contribute to the development of urban life. Each of these has its own mode of operandi, functions and charter of duties, objectives, legal status, accountability, and relationship with the users. However, there are clear cut functional entities for each of these agencies. As a result, complex relation between and among these institutions often make it difficult to discharge their responsibilities efficiently.

The overall pattern of relationship between the two main urban local institutions-KDA and KCC- is very complex due to their varied nature of organizational structure and ministerial affiliation. However, the relationship has turned more cumbersome due to overlapping of functions. In practice, relations between each stakeholder and urban institution falls anywhere between co-existence and conflict, depending on the specific configuration of administrative, political, economic, socio-cultural and geographical conditions. There is considerable gap and overlap in terms of responsibility between these agencies. The lack of cooperation, coordination and integration is one of the impediments to efficient operation of the urban development activities.

Urban development, primarily, is the responsibility of Ministry of Housing and Public Works (MHPW). The Ministry carries out its activities through its parastatal agencies, like, Urban Development Directorate, Public

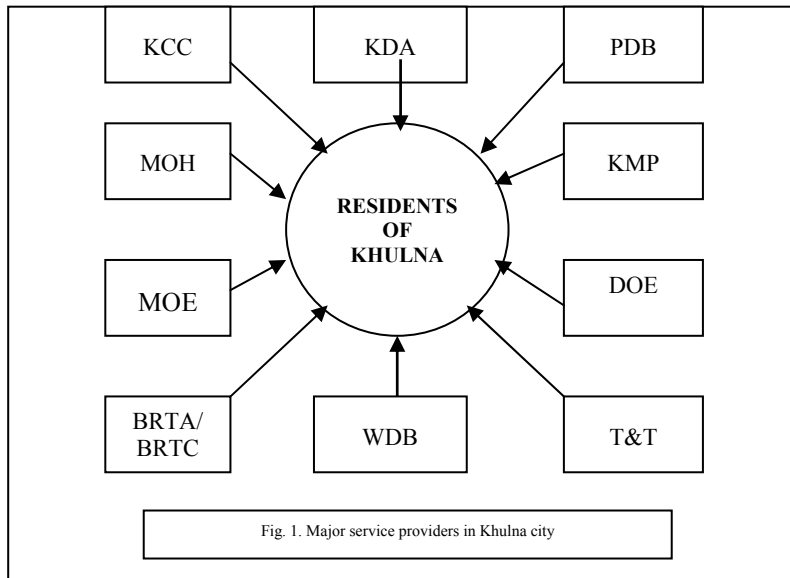
Works Department, Architecture Department, National Housing Authority, and Development Authorities at different divisional headquarter cities viz. Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakha (RAJUK), Chittagong Development Authority (CDA), Khulna Development Authority (KDA) and Rajshahi Development Authority (RDA). But the municipal government is under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (MLGRDC), a different ministry. Table 2 and Figure 1 show the services of the mentioned organizations.

Table 2. Major urban institutions in Khulna and their services.

Organization	Ministry	Services
KCC	MLGRDC	Municipal
KDA	MHPW	Development planning and control
Power Development Board (PDB)	Energy	Electricity
Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP)	Home affairs	Law and order
Directorate of Environment (DOE)	Environment & Forest	Environment
Telegraph and Telephone (T&T)	T & T	Telephone
Water Development Board (WDB)	Water	Flood control
Bangladesh Road Transport Authority/Corporation	Communication	Transport
Educational Institutions	Ministry of Education	Education
Health Services	Ministry of Health	Health

Note: KCC: Khulna City Corporation; PDB: Power Development Board; KMP: Khulna Metropolitan Police; KDA: Khulna Development Authority; DOE: Directorate of Environment; T&T: Telephone and Telegraph; WDB: Water Development Board; BRTA: Bangladesh Road Transport Authority; BRTC: Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation; MOE: Ministry of Education; MOH: Ministry of Health.

Although the functions of the MHPW and MLGRDC appear to be clear, in practice many overlap exist and are poorly coordinated in the Bangladesh urban and shelter review report (GOB, 1993). World Bank also made similar observations in 1981 indicating that the institutional framework for urban planning, administration and finance in Bangladesh provide a difficult environment within which urban development has to take place. In this way, the assigned functions of many urban based agencies have been found to have functional overlapping and same functions are assigned to more than one agency (KDA, 2001). In practice, however, many functions are hardly performed at all. Coordination of such activities as slum upgrading, and water supply, drainage and environmental monitoring hardly exists. This is definitely a matter of great concern for proper urban management and service delivery amid at rapid urbanization. Table 2 and Fig. 1 signify the need for strong and efficient coordination among different urban institutions. But practically, the ‘coordination umbrella’ is too small to encompass all the urban issues due to a number of institutional problems (BRAC, 1998).



Major Problems and Issues Encountered by KCC and KDA

Being an elected urban local body, KCC has linkage with a host of urban based agencies through which it must work to achieve and discharge its objectives and responsibilities respectively. While as a nominated body, KDA also deals with people demanding services and inter-agency coordination problems, however, in a different perspective. Like KCC it is often argued that autonomous body with government control organization KDA that marginalizes the role of elected urban government, in the field of urban governance. There is also counter argument that KCC as a municipal government is unable to handle the large and growing municipal services, and more importantly, the expanding jurisdictional boundaries unbounded with spatial growth of the city. Finally, aforesaid backdrops and present legal and administrative set up coordination of different ministries and agencies, both, at national and local level is difficult to achieve. Therefore, it demands major administrative reforms.

Relevant Areas of Intervention

Information on local government issues indicate excessive Government control over the municipal governments and development authorities that have been found as a major hindrance towards optimum performance in resource mobilization and service delivery. For effective functioning Government's control on local governments should be as minimum as possible. But it calls for reducing their financial dependency on the Government. Because KCC is known for its poor mobilization of resources/taxes. It collects only around 25% of its total tax demand (KDA, 2001). The property is not properly valued for holding tax assessment. It is strongly believed that the taxpayers are unwilling to pay more because they get little for what they pay. The fiscal management of KCC and KDA remains in its old style and there is no attempt to modernize and update the accounting and financial management system. KDA hardly uses its power for resource mobilization, while no attempt is made by KCC to update its holding tax coverage, which is the highest source of its revenue earning (KDA, 2001). The personnel working in these organizations do not have modern outlook and management efficiency and hence the organizations remain incapable to deliver required services to the city dwellers.

Alike modern societies, urban institutions of KCC and KDA should endeavor towards capacity building and undertake steps for creating better and livable city. They should adopt Management Information System (MIS) and Geographical Information System (GIS) for better, efficient and quick discharge of functions and responsibilities. In order to raise institutional efficiency they should provide special attention on transactional and operational activities, management control, financial and accounting system, and land and investment information systems. The city management should be accountable and transparent, ensuring maximum level of people's participation. Attempt should also be made to evolve ways and means to involve NGOs and CBOs in the everyday activities of the urban development agencies.

Table 3. Institutions for planning and its implementation in selected Asian cities.

Country	Authority	Features
India	Calcutta (presently Kolkata) Metropolitan Authority	Combines planning, infrastructure execution and investment coordination functions 1970 to 1980. Withdrew from executions in 1980 and concentrating on planning and investment coordination. Has high degree of visibility.
India	Madras (presently Chennai) Metropolitan Authority	Role is limited planning, greater in investment coordination and development control.
India	Bombay (presently Mumbai) Metropolitan Regional Development Authority	An elected and federal agency with powers to review physical or financial plans; reviews, coordinates and supervises projects of other agencies and also executes projects.
Pakistan	Karachi Development Authority	Combines planning, infrastructure execution, land development and development control functions.
Indonesia	Jabotabek Metropolitan Development Authority	Involved in strategic planning at the level of Jakarta provincial government but faces problems of coordination with other area authority
Thailand	Bangkok Metropolitan Authority	Metropolitan government but its role is diminishing due to presence of dominant central government department.
Bangladesh	RAJUK, CDA, KDA and RDA	Planning, land and infrastructure development including control.

Source: Prokoton (1996).

According to Richardson (KDA, 2001) the basic principles of institutional arrangement of municipal bodies are as follows:

- a. The standard municipal authorities, partly because of their limited territorial control, cannot perform certain metropolitan development, management, and planning functions. These functions need to be carried out by some other organization, which may probably, but not inevitably, be a metropolitan development authority (MDA);
- b. The goal of an MDA should not be to use up functions already performed by the municipalities;

- c. Institution must avoid a tight bureaucratic and hierarchical structure and should go in favour of developing some kind of collegial system that incorporates existing authorities, facilitates inter sectoral coordination, and develops horizontal and vertical networks with other bodies.

It is necessary that institutional reforms are carried out urgently to render urban based public sector agencies more efficient.

Possible Options for Institutional Rearrangement

Review of situations in other countries and past experience (Table 3) suggest that it is always better to avoid radical, sudden and ambitious attempts in designing new institutions or re-arranging the old ones. Various options for institutional arrangement should be devised, evaluated and then the most appropriate one should be chosen in order to achieve the targets in better city management as well as to mitigate urban problems (Table 4).

Table 4. Possible options for institutional rearrangement.

Options	Description	Remark
Option 1	Delegation of power under decentralization and Up gradation of existing status	Most of the urban institutions are not elected bodies and not accountable. Chance of political polarization Poor democratic environment and people’s participation.
Option 2	Existing multiple authorities with coordinating bodies	Present “coordination umbrella” is too small to cover the urban affairs. For better cooperation a strong coordination body may be created.
Option 3	KCC as the only planning and development institution, abolishing KDA	It will reduce conflict and save resources in terms of manpower and finance. May not acceptable for abolishing authorities It is radical.
Option 4	Urban Government	It is more radical and depend on democratic sprit

As there is no single ‘magic bullet’ that can solve the urban institutional as well as urban problems within a magical touch, it needs a step by step continuous approach to achieve effective results through adaptation of any option of Table 4.

Suggestions for Institutional Improvement

Democratic decentralization is said to contribute to the breeding of better society and to establish social harmony, community sprit and political stability (Siddique, 1994). So, decentralization of administrative, economic and social investments at district, *Thana/Upazila* and *Union* level is essential. Rashid (2002) suggested the planned development of 7,000 new ‘compact townships’ for the country each for 20,000 people. These compact township approach may also encourage democratic decentralization in urbanizing Bangladesh.

Enhancing opportunities in non-farm economic activities in the rural areas, provision of power supply, and easy access to credit and acquisition of the technical and entrepreneurial skills are needed for both rural and urban development. Both horizontal and vertical integration of all villages with *Union* or *Upazila* level towns is also essential, whereas recently physical planners are thinking as ‘cities are the engines of rural development’. Above all, a strong network of effective and efficient institutions is needed for efficient organization and management of development activities.

Besides above interventions, to provide a better city management as well as to solve the urban problems the needed improvement should be carried out in the areas of institutions strengthening, resource mobilization, capacity building, MIS and GIS system development, conflict resolution, partnership development for city management, and ensuring maximum participation of local communities.

For the solution of urban problems, a continuous step by step process should be followed. For the short term, the coverage of coordination umbrella should be increased. For example, during the preparation of KDA’s Master Plan in 2001, the coordination and understanding between KDA and KCC was appreciable. In the mid term, on the basis of careful examination, mutually inclusive institutions may be merged in a systematic way. For example, merging of WASA and Titas with DCC is under consideration. It should be done gradually. Finally, in the long run, any new change in the existing local government structural set up should be based on the sprit of democracy, covering social mobilization, including true representation (GOB, 1972) and delegation of power, accountability, and transparency (KDA, 2001). Combining all these elements is nothing but good governance, which is a must for any future development management system in anywhere of Bangladesh.

To ensure achievement of above goals, involvement of three groups (i.e., citizens, leaders and planners and public officials) is essential in decision making. Sustainability of the planned future development for the urban institutions is the function of the interaction, linkage/network and coordination among these three groups.

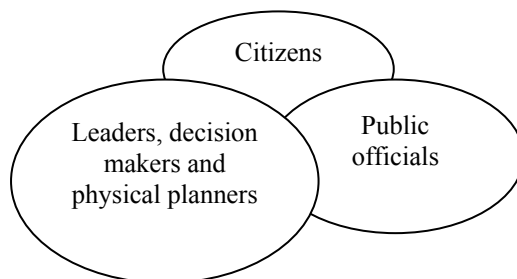


Fig. 2. Three essential stakeholder groups involved with urban development.

From the viewpoint of people’s participation, they are involved in the organizing and structuring the institutionalization of urban development. In this connection the functional assignment of roles of the three groups is presented below:

Table 5. The functional assignment of roles of the three stakeholders.

Urban planning and implementation activities	Participants/Groups		
	Leaders, decision makers and planners	Public officials	Citizens/beneficiaries
Assessing community values	FSR	MR	FSR
Determining goals and objectives	MR	MR	FSR
Data collection	FSR	MR	
Design criteria and standard	MR	MR	
Developing alternative plans	MR	MR	
Choosing an alternative	FSR	MR	FSR
Detail plan preparation	MR	MR	
Plan modification and approval	FSR	MR	
Implementation		MR	FSR
Monitoring		MR	
Reviewing of plan/ programme		MR	FSR

Source: Quim (1998). MR= Major role, FSR= Facilitating /supporting role.

Note: It may not represent or valid for all urban typical case. However, it presents a generalized picture of people’s participation, its nature and extent.

It is clear from Table 5 that the citizens are not in the main stream in the process of urban planning and development. In order to maintain institutional sustainability, maximum level of people’s participation in all the stages of urban planning and development is essential. Their participation should be functional, interactive and self-mobilized rather than present form of passive participation. In order to ensure quality participation, it must be questioned as to: Who participate? What they participate in? How they participate in? For what they participate in? (Hossain, 2003).

Conclusion

Institutional arrangements in the Khulna city as well as in other cities of Bangladesh are problematic and weak. Due to institutional weaknesses of different agencies urban problems have become more critical. Democratic spirit and good governance can improve the level of institutional performances regarding urban affairs. There is no easy and short-term solution to overcome of the current situation. Efforts must be targeted to the right direction with skill and motivation; otherwise, it is likely to break down the existing institutional arrangements for long. Meanwhile, in the short run, efforts should be directed towards devising innovative approaches for participatory local governance to make development initiatives more people oriented.

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