

# Urbanization and Transforming Urban Form of Asian Cities – Cases of Bangkok, Tokyo & Mumbai

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**Abstract:** Cities under the influence of urbanization around the globe have experienced new shifts in urban policies and development. The paper discusses the transformation of Asian megacities through urbanization and the response of cities towards this paradigm of urbanization in terms of infrastructure policies and urban planning. The study is broadly divided into two sections. The first section is about urbanism and its connection with smooth working of cities. The second section is structured on impacts of urbanization with particular focus on how the urbanization is transforming the urban form Asian cities. This pattern of urban development being rapidly implied at more than one place at a time around the globe, demands for comparison of regional policies to effectively deal with impacts of urbanization for the sustainable growth of cities.

**Key Words:-** Urbanization, Cities, Urban Form, Urbanism, Transformation

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Urbanization usually is taken into account on behalf of: natural Population growth, rural to urban migration, reclassifying rural areas into urban areas [1]. This comes along with employment opportunities, housing demand and the commercial development. Presently, the phenomenon of globalization and urbanization is an active paradigm in urban areas in most countries of the world. The familiarity of Developed countries like America, England with these terms of modernization is historical one, which has been boosting their economic development for long time. On the contrary, Asia has become active recently in this competition of economic and social development under the urbanization influence. The developing countries in the continent of Asia are currently adopting the globalization trends in fast manner. In this regard, Asia has become the foremost region of rapid urbanization on the global forum and this phenomenon is familiar throughout the continent. Every single country is now in reach of globalization and urbanization, either it's East Asia or South Asia, urbanization is coloring every city in its aspect to some extent. Strong mobility linkages are one of most important features of urban areas which connect them with rural areas. Such connecting routes between urban and rural areas are responsible for high degree of human movement for different purposes like trading, employment, marketing etc. This paradigm has distorted the clear differences of urban

and rural areas, encouraging people to work in urban areas, at the same time keeping their family in home towns (rural areas). This transforming image of cities has much developed with passage of time if we look at Asia's urban population which has increased to 1.2 billion in 2000 from 250 million in 1950 revealing that Asia has been urbanizing with quick pace and this pace becomes even more evident when it comes to southern part of the region [2]. The cities are growing with rapid inclination towards better employment opportunities, better standards of living, social and industrial sector. Thailand, Singapore, Mumbai, Shanghai, Hong kong, Karachi, Lahore, Kuala Lumpur have been acting as engines of economic growth in their respective national economies as explained by Jones that Bangkok produced 37 percent of Thailand's GDP and Manila, 24 percent of the Philippines' GDP. In 1990 the ratio of city GDP per capita was 3.5 for Bangkok, 1.9 for Manila and 3.7 for Shanghai [3].

## II. IMPLICATIONS OF URBANISM FOR SMOOTH WORKING OF CITY SPACES

Presumptions of urbanism include an idea of good-looking, well-organized setting helpful in creating a framework of economic growth and individuality. This is why after taking successful impression of urbanization from developed countries of UK and USA; developing countries are adapting this paradigm in desire of attaining such fruitful environments of social and economic development. Urbanism is a fundamentally intricate and multifaceted

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movement in its nature which makes it difficult to abridge precisely. Urban planning has recognized the concept of urban villages as an important constituent in the recent years. Neal has discussed that the origins of term ‘urban villages’ may be traced back in part to the work of urban sociologist Herbert Gans who undertook an in-depth appraisal of the social structure and neighborhood of a predominately Italian American immigrant community in Boston [4]. His detailed examination prompted him to give the community as name of urban villagers, which exposed a lively neighborhood defined by mixture of different social groups and concentrated forms of commercial, residential and industrial lofts. Since the people are physically living in metropolitan area of Boston but the life by its soul is much of a small township for the dwellers, facilitating them in their everyday activities. The strategies of urban village have been implemented in different parts of world like UK, USA and Australia with neighborhood regeneration as focal point. For instance in United States, a motivated detailed planning has been suggested by the Mayor of Seattle, for a complex of urban villages located near shopping and transportation points to be characterized as crowded mixed-use settlements to direct expected urban development of the city effectively. Likewise, the major cities of Australia have also espoused planned framework of urban villages at neighborhood level as methodology to redefine urban expansion successfully. Big cities inherit diversity in their pattern of development. Jacobs relies on diverse usefulness of city neighborhoods saying that a successful city neighborhood is a place that keeps sufficiently abreast of its problems so it is not destroyed by them [5]. An unsuccessful neighborhood is a place that overwhelmed by its defects and problems and is progressively more helpless before them. According to her theory, primary uses and secondary uses are fundamental components of city working; primary use is about bringing people out to offices, factories, dwellings, educational and entertainment facilities to perform daily duties whereas secondary use is an endeavor (development projects like malls, multipurpose buildings) originating in reaction to occurrence of primary uses to facilitate people in achieving the primary use. If the secondary category serves single primary function like offices with no shopping or recreational facility, then the typology of one single use is not enough to make it efficient. For effective working of growing cities in rapid manner in Asia, there is need to balance with the primary use and secondary use for smooth

working in order to cater the additional number of inhabitants coming to the cities.

The considerations of the mentioned implications of urbanism are obligatory for growing megacities of Asia. The Neal concept of urban villages can be suitably employed into the setting of Lahore city as villagers from nearby rural areas formulate their bounded neighborhood, giving them proper space to continue with individual character of living will bring diversity in urban face positively. In addition to this, the city of Lahore is going through massive commercial development without focusing the primary and secondary uses according to Jacob’s theory. Such ignorant approaches of urban planning and policy makers altogether enhance the complications of formal housing sector, limiting it for urban poor specially. The implications of urbanism are required to make a positive framework for practical implementation of success stories from outside in developing countries, leading to discourage the production of informal housing settlements by urban poor. The discovery of way outs for the major problems faced by cities presently includes management of the urban sprawl, incorporated transportation systems and sustainable urban development calling for an imperative need of effective urbanism at the ending phase of twentieth century.

**III. METHODS**

The present study is review article based on literature review of secondary data. The Secondary data includes research work done by international Organizations such as UN-HABITAT, UNDP, World Bank and (ACHR). In addition to this, journals, books, research and conference papers on urbanization, globalization, and housing issues in Asia are also taken into account. The selected points of study helped in collecting the actual information and picture of the problem.

**IV. DISCUSSIONS**

It is important to look into the ways how cities in different developing regions of Asia has coped with transformations as result of urbanization in terms of physical and planning framework of metropolises. In this regard, how the cities of Bangkok, Tokyo and Mumbai have incorporated the globalization factors into their urban structure have been discussed below:

### **A. Bangkok – Infrastructural Growth**

Bangkok is the most populous city of Thailand and prime example of a city in the South East Region of Asia. According to Statistical Profile of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration by Department of Administration - Ministry of Interior, the city houses approximately 10 million inhabitants. The globalization has purely modified the city face into modern one with food chains of McDonalds and making the public to face the reality of its after effects on the streets of city. Currently, around 70 percent of urban populace is now situated in Bangkok. The city has a history of coping with congested urban spaces, as result of high influx of public coming to live in this city, with poor traffic management and road network. To accommodate this traffic congestion issue as result of urbanization, in 1999 The Skytrain as the rapid transport system started its function in the city although favoring to specific groups of public with money as daily expense for low income groups demands for 10 percent of their monthly income [6] (Figure1). The mass transit system provides direct links to international hotels and markets to facilitate the tourists. Below the Skytrain line, lives the true of face of Bangkok presenting noisy and polluted environment with Erawan Shrine and stalls of local product with untidy walkways. The product of urbanization in form of foreign-built transit system operating in modern ways has not touched the lives of local people living beneath the line. Local business district with hawkers displaying cheap manufactured goods open to everyone without any restriction of economic status. The efforts for urban prospect to improve the quality of living should serve the whole society irrespective of their economic profile. The coexistence of different worlds displaying varied forms of everyday lives as a common aspect in urbanized spaces. However every city experiences the globalization differently and reacts in its own way under the movement of urbanization along with their inhabitants in streets trying to sustain a high measure of local character.



*Figure 1– The two worlds below and above the Sky train in Bangkok*

### **B. Tokyo – Governance of Public Authorities in Urban Spaces**

Tokyo being the capital city of Japan is the most populated metropolis in the world, with calculated figure of 35 million citizens in 2007, experienced the rapid urbanization and its impacts on urban structure and environment in twentieth century. Modernization framework of planning policies incorporated railway construction as one of such policies to provide direct connections of central Tokyo with other cities for facilitating the urban society for commuting. In the Beginning of 1920s, private railway companies purchased huge areas of land in the suburbs of Tokyo and developed housing estates or garden suburbs as mentioned in study on Tokyo's Urban Growth, Urban Form and Sustainability [7]. The governmental bodies of the city have been striving to make use of space economically in urge to compete for global cities like Shanghai and Hong Kong. Urban planners had to face challenging situations due to urban issues created by massive urbanization for not being addressed properly during quick economic progress in seventh decade (1960-1970) of twentieth century [8]. Multi-oriented development within the bigger Tokyo district was encouraged at the Metropolitan Government level under the conventional management of Governor Suzuki for central Tokyo. One such world project primarily promoted as Tokyo Teleport Town practiced by Government of Suzuki to serve as a gateway to international communications with

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perception of providing a foremost new supply of exclusive and fashionable offices in techno-centric clustered city centers [9]. This profitable oriented approach inflated the property prices causing economic disparity in society benefitting the land owners to gain financially and the ones without piece of land pushed even far away from owning a small home. The conversion of inner-city neighborhoods into commercially operated spaces led to closing n lessening of amenities like Public Baths, which caused conflict over space in central portion Tokyo making hard for inhabitants to sustain their existence against the encroachment of economic space. This space conflict as a result of urbanization and globalization caused sharp rise of housing problems more critically for poor groups of city.

### **C. Mumbai – Case of Urban Environment**

Mumbai is the capital of Maharashtra State of India and being the most populous city of the country. The city has experienced urbanization at great pace as the increase in the population of metropolitan has been more than twelve times in preceding century. It was projected in 2010 that the more than 25 million inhabitants would be residing on the basis of better employment and business opportunities. In this regard, a study on population change of Mumbai city by Bhagat & Sita has discussed that having evolved as a colonial port city it had by 1931 become established as an industrial center with the textile industry dominating its economy [10].

Risbud further emphasized that Mumbai's contribution to the growth of the Indian economy has been significant as nearly 40 per cent of state domestic production originates in Mumbai [11]. High rates of population and migration under peak influence of urbanization have pressurized the resources, economic activities and income levels further causing stress and unavailability of ordinary goods per capita. This phenomenon created a wider scope for increased environmental concerns, which are multifaceted and also cross sectoral, is being categorized by Yedla as following [12]:

- Poverty issues including insufficient access to drinking water, informal housing settlements – as a result of inadequate infrastructure, high population growth and economic inequity – causing high infant mortality rates, spread disease like diarrhea and cholera.

- Industrialization issues including Air and water pollution, poor urban sanitation and waste management – as a result of speedy industrialization and inefficient management team- causing disorder to ecosystem, frequent incidents of tuberculosis.
- Energy issues including overloading of limited resources of energy and dioxins – as a result of high style and rich living standards – causing dioxin-based abnormalities and excessive taking out of available resources.
- Environmental issues including hazardous emissions, noise pollution and abundance of urban solid waste – as a result of enhanced mobility and vigorous commercial activities with less priority on natural environment – causing global warming, tons of rubbish and poor working of sewers.

### 4. CONCLUSION

Urbanization has influenced the cities in terms of urban form, urban environment and institutional framework through modification of planning policies as discussed in the cases of Bangkok, Mumbai and Tokyo (table 1). The discussions reveal that in case of Bangkok both worlds (new urbanized areas and old economic markets) have survived with the growing rates of urbanization. Tokyo has managed to transform into techno city center while converting the inner city neighborhoods into commercial spaces. Whereas Mumbai has emerged into mega economic state with undesirable urban and environmental issues.

	BANGKOK	TOKYO	MUMBAI
Coping strategy for urbanization	Installing Foreign-built transit systems  Opening international food chains and market	Opening gateway for inviting telecom companies Introducing techno-cluster office	Establishing industrial zone with focusing on level for economy High employment rates
Changes in urban form	Manageable act towards keeping pace with urbanization  Continuation of Local markets within the urbanized area	Conversion of inner-city livelihoods into commercial spaces  Increasing housing shortage  Removal of amenities like Public Baths	Pressurizing the available resources  Problems of poor urban sanitation & Noise pollution  Overloading of energy resources

Table 1: National Urban Strategies Cases of Bangkok, Tokyo & Mumbai

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