

Urban Governance and Management in the Developing World



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Handbook of Research on Urban Governance and Management in the Developing World

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Preface

This book is a multi-disciplinary compilation of relevant knowledge and new opinions necessary for emergent and revival of cities. This book was motivated by the fact that urban studies are increasingly taking root in the developing world where the countries are steadily urbanising. It examines contemporary urban governance and urban management practices and issues. Urban Governance is the set of rules by which a city operates, while urban management is the carrying out of activities of the city to meet specific targets or objectives. Urbanization has come with challenges very evident especially in the developing world. Most of the cities in the developing world are slums or slowly degenerating into slums. Continuous innovation and progress to transform emerging cities into livable cities is a lingering challenge. Ideas that can enhance the progress of cities are inter disciplinary and therefore need special concern. The book therefore includes the following interdisciplinary themes; land, marketing, housing, transport, management, poverty and institutions. This book, *Handbook of Research on Urban Governance and Management in the Developing World*, addresses sustainability of cities. Urban governance and management is a multi-disciplinary approach that will enable cities realise economic, social and political development and consequently alleviate urban poverty.

Urban Governance and urban management are critical for cities to meet the planned city operations, specific targets and objectives. Integrated policies and enforcement are necessary to improve the livelihood of the urban dwellers and these may be benchmarked in several documented studies. The purpose of this book is to promote sustainable cities for all. The objectives of the book are to; a) Promote the integral economic, social and environmental protection and development in cities. b) Promote cities as drivers of development and poverty reduction. c) Present studies that can guide efficient urbanisation.

The target audiences for this book are academicians, professionals, and researchers working in/on urban areas. They include; university students and lecturers, researchers, non governmental organisations and development workers. This book is a reference for research scholars and a course supplement to students pursuing urban studies. The book was developed in a period of twelve months. The process involved a rigorous peer review. To this end, we are grateful to the chapter contributors and reviewers. We are sincerely grateful to Professor Waswa Balunywa the Principal, Makerere University Business School, and the Dean, Faculty of Management and Public Policy, Annet K. Nabatanzi-Muyimba, PhD for their encouragement and guidance while compiling this book.

The book is thematically integrated with twenty three chapters which are linked within Fourteen substantive sections. Each section addresses a specific urban theme and chapters address specific topics. The book consists of the following chapters:

Chapter 1: This chapter explores the opportunities and challenges faced by ward committees at eThekweni metropolitan municipality in Durban, South Africa. The author argues that the effectiveness of ward committee structures depends on the interface of five elements such as participation, representation, accountability, deliberation and finally collective action. The chapter highlights that politicisation, electoral embedded challenges, poor and lack of administrative, budgetary and infrastructural support appear to be the contributory factors in undermining the potential of the ward committees to executing their democratic, developmental and decentralised service delivery mandate.

Chapter 2: This chapter deliberates on the role and importance of parliamentary democracy in consolidating democratic governance at community level through the establishment of constituency offices.

Chapter 3: This chapter examines the implications on local authority operational efficiency through the twinning concept, using Harare and City of Munich as units of analysis.

Chapter 4: Examines the different tiers of governance (local government, private enterprises, state government and union government) . It analyses their involvement in realizing smart city building in India and to achieve faster, efficient, and superior quality in city building and management. The chapter highlights the connection between ‘governance and institutional framework’ and smart city building in India.

Chapter 5: The chapter analyses the relationship between institutional arrangements and efficiency of water and sewer services. It applies statistical and cluster analysis to empirical data on water utilities in the 13 largest cities in Russia.

Chapter 6: Examines the available designs and management styles of Public Private Partnership in water and sanitation and how they can be used to realize its desired outcomes in the developing countries.

Chapter 7: This chapter explores the notion of housing citizenship through the Federation of Urban Poor (FEDuP) among the poor and homeless in South African Townships. The chapter makes use of human-capability development framework to draw lessons for active participation and empowerment in the delivery of services such as houses.

Chapter 8: Explores the three salient issues related to informal housing areas: tenure security, affordability and good governance based on tangible data from one of the rapidly growing cities (Hawasa) in Ethiopia.

Chapter 9: Discusses why the existing model of urbanization in Nepal by dividing it into “development regions” has not delivered results that are commonly expected through urban transformation.

Chapter 10: The chapter examines the persistence of the phenomenon of street begging, as well as challenges in a developing country context.

Chapter 11: This chapter assesses the effectiveness of CCTV application in urban planning, environment management, good urban governance, safety strategies and achieving sustainable urban development.

Chapter 12: This chapter explores the motivation for youth violence and crime in both rural and urban areas.

Chapter 13: This chapter examines the socio-spatial differences and the relationship between the negative rate of population growth and the level of social development in the shrinking cities of Khuzestan province as an oil-rich region in Iran.

Chapter 14: This chapter examines the realities of agglomeration economies of scale due to clustering of small-scale manufacturing firms of the informal type in Zimbabwe. Essentially, it brings to fore spatial ground rules such as intensity and interaction of manufacturers in space and how individuals or organizations following their own interests result in benefits to others.

Preface

Chapter 15: This chapter highlights the analyses stakeholders responsibilities in a 360-degree framework which in a way would contribute by overcoming the issues raised in multi-stakeholder studies. Understanding of responsibilities of stakeholders is helpful in predicting stakeholders support for sustainable tourism.

Chapter 16: Used settlement theories and regional growth and development theories in regional economics to provide answers to the following key questions in urban development; What is the economic logic explaining companies' and households' preferences for settlement in the location? What are the factors determining the functioning of big regional systems (city/urban systems, etc.)? and Why are certain regions, cities, and locations more developed compared to others?

Chapter 17: This chapter compares the effectiveness of Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) in regulating and enforcing laws related to traffic management and solid waste management in Kampala.

Chapter 18: This chapter assesses the benefits of urban agriculture in a developing country context.

Chapter 19: This chapter examines population dynamics and other variables that are linked to the rapid expansion of Epworth, arguing that economic and social infrastructure became conditioned by such dynamics. Notable also is the fact that civic organizations, the private and public sectors have converged to rethink ways of regularising and upgrading the mostly informal settlement of Epworth to modern urban and rural planning standards.

Chapter 20: This chapter explores the relationship that exists between the informal sector and the urban environments in Africa.

Chapter 21: The chapter examines the extent to which latrines deliver the intended health benefits in the urban-developing country context.

Chapter 22: Examine the role of The New Social Movements in determining the Taksim Park events. It is noted that The New Social Movements are mostly related with politics, human rights, violence against women or religion.

Chapter 23: This chapter emphasizes the need to exploit urban marketing and branding for transformation, revival and competitiveness of urban centres.

This book in general provides relevant knowledge in the field of urban studies. It contributes information relevant to improving, invigorating, and sustaining urban spaces in the developing world context. It emphasizes and provides answers to the key contemporary concerns in the developing world.

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Chapter 9

Challenges of Inclusive Urbanization in the Face of Political Transition in Nepal

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ABSTRACT

Nepal is one of the rapidly urbanizing countries in south Asia. This trend of rapid urbanization and on-going political change has created several challenges to the planned urban development in Nepal. This chapter presents a picture of urban development and growth in Nepal and identifies key challenges why the existing model of urbanization has not delivered results that are commonly expected through urban transformation. Unclear and inconsistent policy regime, poor municipal services, urban disaster risk and environmental vulnerability, managing the politics of slum, and transforming informal economy are the five key urban challenges for the inclusive urbanization that are discussed in this chapter. The chapter concludes with brief recommendations for each challenge.

INTRODUCTION

Nepal—a relatively small country between China and India and with its largely rugged mountainous topography with a small plain area in its southern part—is one of the fastest urbanizing countries in South Asia. Throughout the past six decades of planned development in the country, the development of cities and towns has been seen as an engine for ushering growth and employment. The policy makers, in the 1960s and 1970s in particular, conceived of balanced development of the country by dividing it into “development regions” wherein cities and towns were expected to serve as hubs to provide markets for goods and services and for improved living conditions and employment for the city dwellers as well as those in the surrounding rural localities. Accordingly the government of Nepal, from the first (1956-59) to the sixth plan (1980-85) period, undertook planned resettlement and urban development programs especially in the southern Terai region (Adhikari and Dhungana, 2010). These programs largely benefited those who were close to the governing elites, and with passage of time, gradually gave way

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to an autonomous urban sprawl. Individuals and families with dispensable income bought lands and constructed buildings in cities and towns or along the highways in an unplanned and haphazard manner. An economically weaker section of population also began to converge in the public spaces in and around the cities, along riverbanks and highways—making informal settlements and adding stress to already scarce urban services. With law enforcement weakened and service support systems paralyzed following the insurgency in mid-1990s, urban development in Nepal is yet to take a firm footing in terms of planning, governance and delivery of essential services to the diverse urban populace. Added to this are the environmental stress and vulnerabilities that particularly hit hard on the poorer and marginalized sections of the urban population. Understanding these challenges offers the unique perspectives on how the government and other actors in a least developed country can capitalize on opportunities of urban-led economic growth and other objectives.

This chapter presents a picture of urban development and growth in Nepal, and identifies key challenges why the existing model of urbanization has not delivered results that are commonly expected through urban transformation. After presenting the current status of urban growth in the next section, author identified and explained five main challenges associated with urban development in Nepal. In the final section, the chapter offers what reform opportunities exist around those challenges.

URBAN GROWTH IN NEPAL

Nepal has a predominantly agrarian economy and rural socio-cultural outlook, and has historically a little experience in rational organization of human settlement and economic activities. The very idea that the government is to support people on a regular basis through social security or health, education or environmental services or in times of need, such as through medical aid and disaster response is relatively new. The various political experiments—authoritarian rules until 1950, and both regimented polity and liberal democracies after that, has so far created a state that is yet to command popular legitimacy by responding to the needs of rural and urban population. The country remained in self-imposed seclusion from outside world until 1951, and the formal “development planning” that came with the promulgation of periodic development plans from 1956 conceived of relocating and rearranging settlements especially in the country’s Tarai region¹. This region, once being a flat, fertile area with dense forest, was long seen as a prospective site for agriculture expansion and human settlement. At the same time, it provided incentive for the rulers to benefit from timber trade and secure their own political ascendancy by favoring a certain group of people by providing free land. The significant growth of towns in Tarai can thus be traced to the high migration rate from hill to Tarai after the malaria was eradicated and the east-west high way was constructed in southern Nepal. In the past, Rajbiraj was planned in classical *Prastara* form after Hanuman Nagar was swept by the flood in Koshi river in eastern Nepal. In the far-western Nepal, the town of Tikapur was planned following a Grid Iron Pattern. After these twin efforts, however, the city planning exercise came to a virtual standstill in Nepal. These initial advances in settlements in the otherwise densely forested Tarai paved the way for town development in the region, while in the Hills, the valleys of Kathmandu and Pokhara saw an increasing influx of new inhabitants, especially as monetary income and savings increased with the opening up of Nepal and its development in the post-1950 period.

There has been some documentation about the development of ancient towns in Nepal. It is suggested that some localities, such as Nuwakot, Dolakha, Banepa and Panauti had urban features back in early years of Nepal’s written history stretching to the Lichchhavi dynasty (Basyal and Khanal, 2001). In the

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medieval period, Kathmandu valley was developed and flourished as the important trade route between India and Tibet. With unification of the country in 1769 by Prithvi Narayan Shah, and the government's expansionist policies, the government functionaries (civil and military) were stationed to several outlying places in the hills and Tarai with the objective to assert sovereignty, appropriate taxes and make further military advances in the Gorkhali imperial mission. These places—such as Tansen, Pokhara and Bandipur – gradually attracted clustering of near by population to lead to small towns. The trade treaty of 1923 between Nepal and British-India also contributed to the gradual emergence of urban centers in Tarai. This helped achieve some level of industrial development in localized spaces in the Tarai from 1930s which have now become full-blown cities of Biratnagar and Birgunj.

Still, as of 2017, rural population that comprises over 41.6 percent of the total population dominates Nepal. The remaining 58.4 percent of the population live in so called urban areas, most of which are practically rural—meaning the absence of basic services, amenities and opportunities that are commonly anticipated in urban areas (see Table 1). Nepal's urban population has increased to 17% in 2011 from 13.9% of 2001, urban population growth rate was at 3.38%. Urban population became 38.2 in 2016 and 58.4% in 2017. But these are urban by law, which is rendered so through the declaration of a certain territory as a “municipality”. Among these urban areas, Kathmandu valley that comprises two metropolitan cities and part of surrounding municipalities presently has more than 2.5 million people and is growing at 4 percent per year (World Bank, 2013). The valley comprises one of the fastest growing metropolitan area in South Asia, but it faces unprecedented challenges of rapid urbanization as it faces severe problems of drinking water, sanitation, air pollution, squatter settlements and so forth. Another city in the hills valleys, Pokhara, is also expanding rapidly with an annual growth rate at 5 percent (ibid). Several other clusters of non-farm economic activities, comprising core urban center surrounded by a hinterland of small towns and rural areas, have emerged in the Tarai region close to the border with India. In this way, several new towns are emerging along the main East-West highway and the Tarai district headquarters most of which lie south of this highway. However, unlike in other South Asian countries, rapid urbanization in Nepal that has been quite prominent over the past two decades has unfortunately not been accompanied by comparable economic growth. This runs counter to conventional economics

Table 1. Urban growth in Nepal: number of towns, population, and growth

Census Year	Number of Towns	Urban Population in Millions	Percentage of Urban Population	Average Annual Urban Growth Rate in Percentage
1952/54	10	0.238	2.9	-
1961	16	0.336	3.6	1.65
1971	16	0.462	4.1	3.23
1981	23	0.957	6.3	7.55
1991	33	1.696	9.2	5.89
2001	58	3.28	13.9	6.65
2011	58	4.53	17.0	4.9
2017	263*	26.49	58.4	

**(Between 2011 and 2017, Government of Nepal successively added 205 new municipalities by four announcements. This has significantly increased the urban population.)*

Source: (CBS, 2011) and (LGCDP, 2017)

wisdom which sees urban growth as paving way for off-farm employment, industrialization and growth in service sectors.

Indeed, urbanization is considered an indicator of modernization and an essential process of development. In the next four decades, all of the world's population growth is expected to take place in urban areas, which will also draw in some of the rural population through rural to urban migration (World Bank, 2011). Most of this urban growth is expected in developing countries, where the urban population is expected to double from 2.6 billion in 2010 to 5.2 billion in 2050 (United Nations, 2011). The rise in urban population in recent decades – as shown in Table 1—has been phenomenal. At present, Kathmandu metropolitan city consists the largest urban population (975453) and Thuli Bheri municipality consists the smallest (8370). Pokhara, Lalitpur and Bharatpur metropolitan cities are in second, third and fourth position comprising the urban population. There are other 19 municipalities having more than 0.1 million population. This can be contrasted to the census of 1952/54, when nearly 83 percent of Nepal's urban population was concentrated in the Kathmandu valley. This has now considerably declined with the growth of other smaller towns throughout the country. Using international poverty line of \$1.25 per day, the incidence of poverty has declined steadily from 68.0% in 1996 to 53.1% in 2004 and 24.8% in 2011. Despite the remarkable decline in overall poverty level, poverty in rural Nepal is still higher than urban Nepal, even though rural poverty is declining at a faster pace than urban poverty. While urban poverty fell from 21.6% in 1996 to 10.0% in 2004, it again rose to 15.5% in 2011. On the other hand, rural poverty has declined continuously from 43.3% to 35.0% and to 27.4% between 1996, 2004 and 2011. While poverty is far less in urban areas, urban poverty is becoming increasingly serious. Poverty experience is exacerbated in the urban context: unlike in the rural community settings, it provides far less of the safety nets for the poor and as most services are privatized the poor's access is limited. This provides severe limitations on how urban growth would support especially the poor and marginalized sections.

These observations suggest that Nepal's experience of rapid urbanization falls behind the implicit hope to serve as an important driver of economic development. The author examined below main challenges related to urban development in Nepal, and how these serve as barriers in tapping opportunities that are associated with urbanization.

MAIN CHALLENGES OF URBAN GROWTH IN NEPAL

Unclear and Inconsistent Policy Regime

Major challenge to urban development in Nepal concerns with unclear and inconsistent policy regime. First, the confusion lies in defining areas which are urban or "municipality" and accordingly planning and funding for the development of the area. The areas designated "municipality" have been defined and redefined over the years in Nepal, and there is no consistent definition for this term. As per the local self governance act (MLD, 1999) the municipality is defined for a local government jurisdiction that has a population of at least ten thousand in hill and mountain regions and at least twenty thousands in the Tarai, along with the capacity to raise a yearly revenue of NPR five million and with availability of connection to electricity, transportation, drinking water and communication facilities. However, as per the basis and criteria given to the local government restructuring technical committee in 2016, there should be at least 20000 population to be municipality in mountainous region. This number varies and increases upto 75000 in Tarai region. While restructuring the local government in 2017, these criteria

were largely ignored. For instance— more than 15 newly added municipalities does not have the minimum population as per the criteria. In the decade 1991-2001 reclassification² alone accounted for 50% of total urban growth while the decadal urban population in the same period grew by 6.65% (Sharma, 2003). During 2014 to 2017, Government of Nepal added 205 municipalities by merging and converting urbanizing rural villages into municipality. This has significantly increased the urban (municipal) population in Nepal. Declaration of a municipality projects a sense of progress and hence is attractive to local as well as national political elites. But such designations of rural areas as municipalities fall short of delivering basic urban-like facilities and create additional troubles for local population (such as formal procedures for building construction etc). More importantly, such designations confuse and conflate the rural and the urban, and render town and rural planning a messy enterprise.

Secondly, urban development and planning in Nepal face conflicting institutional mandates and competition for resources within government departments. For a long time, Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC) under the ministry of Physical Planning and Works has been responsible to implement urban development plans and programs, whereas the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) was responsible to administer the programs. The MoFALD was involved in the administrative and personnel management functions of the local government but did not have the capacity to assist in the preparation of physical development plans. This division of technical and governance tasks continue to become a hurdle, as it leads into institutional conflicts of securing resources and managing them. In May 2012, the government has created a new Ministry of Urban Development without resolving the conflicting mandates with MoFALD. DUDBC is under this ministry now. Further, along with the political transformation and implementation of federal structure, the expert committee has recommended 18 ministries where ministry of urban development is proposed to merge into another ministry. Hence, urbanization has become one of the most important aspect of state restructuring. On the contrary, the essence and importance of urban development has not been recognized at the policy level.

The Local Self Governance Act (LSGA) mandates a wide range of functions and responsibilities to municipalities, but the limited financial and qualified human resources and institutional capacities as well as the lack of elected leadership in local governments from 2002 to 2017 especially in municipalities has significantly hindered the identification, prioritization and funding of programs for urban planning and development. During the period of political vacuum municipalities have been governed by either centrally appointed bureaucrats or local political functionaries without clear accountability mechanism. These conditions of the Nepal's political transition further exacerbated the weak planning and coordination through out the municipalities. Weak capacity and confused institutional mandates lead to difficulties in project approvals and execution, and raise their costs and time span required for urban development.

Provisioning of Municipal Services

Another challenge to urban development in Nepal concerns with delivering of critical urban services, either by the central government, municipal government or through the private sector. In the post-1990 period, the government adopted a public-private partnership (PPP) model, which has made nominal progress in the management of some monuments and other public spaces. However, there remains an acute lack of understanding about the provision of services as entitlement of the city dwellers as a matter of social contract. Most of revenue generated by both the central and municipal government are indirect taxes, which is largely supported with remittance earnings from Nepal's overseas workers. This

provides a weak basis for citizens to demand the accountability of the government in the delivery of critical municipal services.

In this backdrop, however, the government has introduced an urban policy with good-sounding objectives. The National Urban Policy of 2007 seeks to promote a balanced national urban structure, a clean, safe, and well developed urban environment, poverty reduction; and effective urban management by capable local institutions. The policy has also prioritized ensuring access by the urban poor to low-cost housing, housing finance, and income-generating activities and development in excluded regions. But the protracted political transition in the country through the post-2006 period has pre-empted any opportunity of locally-owned envisioning of a sound urban management. There is further confusion about how these objectives will be funded and executed.

Accordingly most of municipal services—including drinking water, sanitation, school and health facilities—are either privately provided at exorbitant prices or are poorly delivered through publicly-funded institutions. About 35% of urban households, mostly in newly inducted small municipalities, have no access to tap water; 23% are without toilets; and 35% still use solid fuels (wood, agro by-products, and cow dung) for cooking and heating (Choe and Pradhan, 2010). In the absence of a coherent and coordinated approach to service provision, urban areas experience deficiencies in basic urban services, environmental degradation, encroachment on public lands, forests, and river banks. Most of the urban municipalities lack properly engineered and operated sanitary landfills and they have limited and intermittent water supply services, poorly maintained road infrastructure, and inadequate drainage systems that cause recurrent water logging problems, mainly in the Kathmandu and Tarai. This is so, even while the government has in recent decades focused on physical development. These problems will add on with ongoing high rural urban migration trend, real state growth in new emerging cities, increasing slums, indecisive political structure, unstable municipal governments. Given this, meeting the needs for services especially for the urban poor would become increasingly problematic in the coming years.

Disaster Risks and Environmental Vulnerabilities

Nepal is one of the 20 most disaster-prone countries in the world (UNDP, 2011) and ranks 11th globally most vulnerable countries to earthquake (NSDRM, 2009; Paudel and Panthi, 2010). Ever since the first recorded earthquake of 1255 AD that killed one-third of the population in Kathmandu valley and its King Abhaya Malla, Nepal has experienced a major earthquake every few generations (NPC, 2015). Based on the data available from the Department of Mines and Geology, (CBS, 1998) concludes that earthquakes of more than or equal to 5.0 on the Richter scale have occurred at least once every year in Nepal since 1987, with the exception of 1989 and 1992 when no such events were recorded (NSET, 2012). Large earthquakes seriously affected the country on April 25th 2015 (7.8 on Richter scale) and May 12 2015 (7.3 on Richter scale). Over 500,000 homes were destroyed, 250,000 damaged, nearly 9000 people killed, 21000 injured, and 3 million affected.

A database maintained by the Ministry of Home Affairs, covering a period of 45 years (1971 to 2015) revealed that a total of 22,372 disaster events have been recorded during this period. Hence, annually, Nepal is exposed on average to about 500 disaster events. The dataset shows that fire is one of the most recurrent hazards in Nepal. Number of fire incidences were recorded 7,187 times, followed by flood (3,720), epidemic (3,448) and landslide (3,012). Epidemics - caused by diseases including cholera, gastroenteritis, diarrhoea, encephalitis, meningitis, typhoid, jaundice, and malaria – are critically important in the sense that they represent one of the most lethal hazards claiming the lives of more than 16,500

people (41.1% of the total disaster-induced deaths) during the period. This is followed by earthquake, landslide and flood (MoHA, 2017).

Hence, the critical challenge for urban development in Nepal concerns with how to handle disaster risks and stresses induced by environmental change. Haphazard and uncontrolled growth of built-up areas in urban centers particularly in Kathmandu and other larger cities has thus become a critical challenge. Enforcement of building codes, especially in the newly built apartment buildings, remains elusive primarily because the role is spread into many hands, including the private builders, consulting engineers, as well as municipal officials who often overlook standards given the widespread culture of bureaucratic corruption.

Another associated challenge remains with environmental resources—within which water emerges as a critical limiting factor. An urban water crisis is looming globally due to climate change and rapid population growth (McDonald et al. 2011). It is particularly severe in South Asia due to the melting of Himalayan glaciers (Shrestha et al. 2012) and changes in rainfall patterns (Xu et al. 2009, Shrestha and Aryal, 2011, Guhathakurta et al. 2011). The impacts are distributed unevenly among the urban population—women and poor bear disproportionately higher costs (Kher et al. 2015). Rapid urbanization has led to water crisis—including conflicts between urban and rural demands (Celio et al. 2010), ensuring equity while financing the mega water infrastructure (Asthana, 2012), and maintaining the water ecosystem health (Upadhyay et al. 2011). Cities, however, are often too slow to respond to the water crisis (Shrestha et al. 2014).

There is already a severe limitation in piped drinking water in Kathmandu, which has been now supplemented with ‘private water’—supplied in tankers or in bottles by the private actors, rather than supplied by the government as a basic entitlement. The urbanization has not only increased the water demand but it has also disrupted hydrological regimes resulting into reduced groundwater discharge and increasing risk of disasters in urban and peri-urban zones. (Poudel, 2008). The uncertainties of precipitation and ground water recharge within the ongoing climate change would create further shortage in water supply in Kathmandu (Jha and Shrestha, 2013).

Another related problem is with maintaining a clean environment. Kathmandu’s air is amongst the most polluted in the South Asia region, which is caused not only by the rise in automobiles, continuation of wood-fired brick factories, and the dust particles from bad road and automobile exhaustion, but also maintained by the topography of the valley itself that prevents polluted air sweep out of the valley. Many squatters living along the river banks in Kathmandu and other cities also face risks of flooding and water pollution, causing health and social stress on the children, elderly and sick. These pose important questions on the basic securities of urban inhabitants in a least developed country, whose government is yet to command legitimacy in the eyes of its own citizens.

In this context, the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA, 2010) has identified Urban Settlements and Infrastructure as one of the six key themes and included Promoting Climate Smart Urban Settlements and Infrastructure as one of nine priority projects. Provisions for making buildings earthquake-resistant are difficult to implement especially in the political transition, and also because buildings in rural, semi-urban and urban areas are mostly constructed without the input from qualified engineers. It is becoming increasingly important to incorporate disaster risk assessments into the urban planning and management of disaster-prone human settlements and particularly by addressing the problems of informal settlements in high-risk areas (ISDR, 2005).

Informal Settlements and Slum Politicization

Informal settlements—or commonly the squatter or slums—emerge as one significant challenge to urban development in Nepal, as in several countries in South Asia and beyond. In South Asia itself, the highest proportion of slum dwellers was found in Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan respectively. However, in absolute numbers, India and Pakistan accounted for nearly three-fourths of the slum population in the region, with 194 million people living in poor informal settlements (158 and 36 million, respectively) (United Nations, 2011). Nepal's slums emerged out of poor sections of mostly rural population residing in the environmentally hazardous locations in the city margins, along river banks and at the fringe of nearby forests. These are often treated as a law enforcement problem—frequently experiencing firing and demolition of buildings by the police. But, improvement in urban conditions, as demonstrated by many successful programs around the world, shows that slums can become vibrant and well integrated parts of a city.

In given current governance structures and systems, municipalities face a crucial challenge in implementing measures for poverty reduction and managing myriad informal employment activities amid increasing slums and squatter settlements in urban areas (Choe and Pradhan, 2010). Slums and squatters were not considered a major urban development issue in Nepal, because the percentage of urban population living in such settlements was low. However, due to their unprecedented growth in recent years and especially since early 1990s when they began to be seen as important voting blocks by the political elites, urban informal settlements started to become an important urban development issue. The Government of Nepal adopted the Habitat Agenda, and is fully committed to the goal of “Shelter for All”. According to government data, nearly 430,000 families live in sub-standard housing in Nepal. The gap between the supply and demand of decent and affordable housing in Nepal is wide. In a rough estimation, about 70,000 new homes per year would need to be built to close the housing gap in Nepal. Currently fifty thousand people live in slum in Kathmandu where as total number of slum households is 2,763. The number of squatter settlements has grown from 17 in 1985 to 63 at present (Devkota, 2012). Of 40 squatter settlements in the Kathmandu valley, 24 are on the floodplain of rivers. Most of the remaining settlements are in areas prone to landslides. Another equally vulnerable place for occupancy is *ghats* (riverbank protected for cultural and religious purposes), where traditional public buildings are often on the verge of collapse. Though, government has initiated some plans of resettlement of the slum dwellers in Kathmandu, this has largely been a forced eviction, with no clear promise of alternative settlement and livelihoods. Thousands of slum dwellers are thus facing the prospect of forced eviction after decades of living by the banks of the Bagmati river in Kathmandu.

The Constitution of Nepal stipulates that various arrangements shall be made with regard to education, health, housing, land and social security for the landless, squatters and marginalized communities. The Town Development Act 1988, Local Self-Governance Act 1999, National Housing Policy 1996, National Urban Policy 2007 and National Urban Development Strategy 2015 include provisions on housing and urbanization to address the problem of slum dwellers. In the National Shelter Policy 1996, the issue of slums and squatters was recognized in terms of the welfare of low-income groups, with a plan to undertake activities to support, mobilize, develop and expand the land and housing market. However, none of the above policies and acts has addressed the issue of land tenure, which is at the crux of the problem, particularly in the case of squatters. Initiatives from I/NGOs advocating for the rights of slums households and squatters has been done on a project basis, that will be contingent upon external funding for NGOs. Squatters themselves are relatively organized in demanding their rights. Govern-

ment attempted several times to resettle these people from river bank to another secured region but the attempt was failed as the local people reject them to live in surrounding communities. Series of protests by All Nepal Landless Squatters Association and their negotiation with government through talks has been held though the situation is still in the same status. Thus efforts to resettle the squatter settlements require a clear road map for relocation and strategies for livelihood support.

Informal Economy in Urban Areas

Despite the important contribution of urban areas to GDP and poverty alleviation, rapid urbanization has been accompanied by lower economic growth in Nepal than in other South Asian countries. The lack of economic stimuli combined with the insecure political situation has resulted in a massive exodus of the Nepalese productive workforce from the country, and Nepal's growth is becoming increasingly reliant on highly volatile external remittance flows, rather than internal competitiveness (World Bank, 2013).

Nepal's informal part of the economy is very large and is growing rapidly due to changing economy. As per the record by ILO more than 70 per cent of the economically active population is involved in the informal economy. It is—largely operating informally, that is, outside the purview of formal statutory oversight and support structure. This sector represents an important part of the economy and the labor market by employment creation, production, and income generation. It is estimated that around 2142 thousand people aged 15 and over to be currently employed in the non-agricultural informal sector (70 percent of total non-agricultural employment) as compared to 1657 thousand in 1998/99 (73 percent of total non-agricultural employment). In total 77.5 percent of females and 66.0 percent of males have main jobs in the non-agricultural informal sector (Adhikari, 2012). In the urban areas, it is mainly the women, so called lower caste and indigenous groups and economically poor groups that engage themselves in informal economy and self-employment. They are especially vulnerable and face insecure living and working conditions including security risks at the workplaces. The combination of low pay, high vulnerability, and little or no scope for upward mobility, coupled with disproportionate burden of local urban government make lives of people in the informal economy a daily struggle (Bajracharya, 2013). Hence, another challenge for urban development in Nepal that this chapter highlights concerns with supporting the transformation of informal economy in urban areas.

In urban areas -- specifically in the cities like Kathmandu, street vending has become an important source of earning for the livelihood for poor. It has also become an opportunity of marketing space to most of the urban poor in such cities. However, issues relating to urban management and controlling over the deteriorating city environment due to increase vending activities are, of course, challenging for urban governance. Therefore, there are confrontations between authorities and vendors over licensing, taxation, encroachment of public places and pavements and on increasing social problems (Timalisina, 2011). It has been difficult for controlling and managing the city environment, including managing footpath, controlling of increasing vending activities and providing easy movement to the pedestrians. Hawkers and street vendors spread their wares on the pavement and sometimes on the street, causing great inconvenience to the pedestrians and vehicles.

One confronts frequent scenes of the municipal police chasing away vegetable vendors or other city vendors who risk their valuable items apprehended by the police and risk their livelihood. This overly legalistic approach to handling the informal economy is both inhuman and counterproductive. These people also provide goods and services at economical rates to the lower income groups in the city, and

at the same time maintain themselves in the absence of a caring, socially-committed government. The challenge lies in incentivizing and supporting those in the informal economy to come under the purview of formal law and formal support apparatuses such as insurance, job security and so on.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONCLUSION

The above discussions in this chapter offered a short political economy account of the challenges for urban development in Nepal, which has come under a policy and programmatic stalemate in the face of ongoing political transition in the country. The author highlighted the contradiction that Nepal's urban development has ironically not been as equally conducive to the creation of non-farm goods and service market, as commonly believed in the urban transformations thinking. This chapter identified five main challenges confronting Nepal's urbanization—and these also provide pointers to how the government and others capitalize on the opportunities it offers.

First, the policy inconsistencies and contradictions are a product of initial experiment of the government of Nepal's attempt at planned urbanization and service delivery. While, Nepal's insurgency and subsequent political transition took away the agenda and energy to invest in substantive policy areas, the current political commitment to major restructuring of the country provides important avenues to rethink urbanization policy in new light. This would include consolidating the positive gains in such areas as inclusive process of policy making and city planning through local governments, resolving the inter-departmental competition over mandates and resources, and engaging non-governmental actors within a sound public oversight and standards observance. In due course, the recent efforts to bring several local government units under a single urban government through local government restructuring would further enhance the governance, efficiency and effectiveness of urban planning and management.

Second, the poor state of service delivery in both urban and rural areas in Nepal would require a fundamental rethinking about the government-citizen relations—especially by improving the government image as a tool for appropriation and control in favor of its image building as a provider of services and protections. There has in recent years been some effort at improving the accountability of the public sector in providing the services to the people and in particular to the poor, but this needs to be further consolidated through complete set of government instruments to realize adequate public funding and accountability and strengthening social actors to make demands on the municipal and national governments. The effective utilization of resources under the newly elected municipal government would contribute to the improvement in urban service delivery in the municipalities.

Third, the existing readiness of the government to foresee and manage disaster risks and address the environmental stresses, such as water shortage and air pollution, are starkly weak. While the existing efforts for addressing earthquake risk after the Gorkha earthquake in April 2015 is laudable, addressing disasters would require country-wide rethinking about how cities can become resilient to disaster. Rather than concentrating on a single issue, the government should make efforts to expand disaster resilient cities through policy formation, effective implementation of such policy through the elected municipal government. Similarly, enforcement of building codes requires more sound basis for technical and administrative integrity of municipal officials as well as private actors for quality construction and would require a long-range basis for monitoring their actions, rather than a one-off approval process. The government could also draw on wider experiences on climate smart city development in developing further urban policies and codes.

Fourth, the government and urban population should view informal settlement not simply as a law enforcement problem, but instead to embrace them as a key part of urban ecosystem. The dominant approach to forced eviction of squatters should be replaced with a more humane way of handling the problem—along with due consideration of their own aspirations for a better life and improved livelihoods. Relocation to other areas in the past has faced resistance in the new place, while alternative housing has gained some momentum in Nepal. The latter approach has been spearheaded by NGOs, but its successes, including its funding basis, should be mainstreamed into the urban planning itself.

Finally, for an inclusive urban development in Nepal, the central and municipal government should properly account for the vulnerabilities as well as important services provided by the informal sector workers in the urban areas. In addition to providing livelihood opportunities to the poor people, small and informal enterprises are also providing goods in cheaper price to another section of urban poor. Hence, municipalities can engage private sector actors to design ways for the security of informal economy participants, bring them into formal courses of micro business and expand social security for them. Urban planning should not necessarily be an elite-dominated technical process, but instead involve the squatters and informal sector workers into how an inclusive urban settings could be fostered in the country.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Tarai is a lowland region in southern Nepal and northwestern India that lies south of the outer foothills of the Himalaya, the Siwalik Hills and north of Indo-Gangatic plains.

² Reclassification implies bringing together a number of village areas (called VDCs—Village Development Committees) that together conform to the definition of municipality (mainly in terms of population), so that the government can declare such an area as a municipality.