

Dhaka is the capital of Bangladesh and one of the major cities of South Asia. Located at the banks of the Buriganga River, Dhaka metropolitan area has a population of over 16 million (2011). The modern city was developed during British regime in the 19th century. After the partition of India in 1947, Dhaka became the administrative capital of East Pakistan, and later in 1971, the capital of an independent Bangladesh.

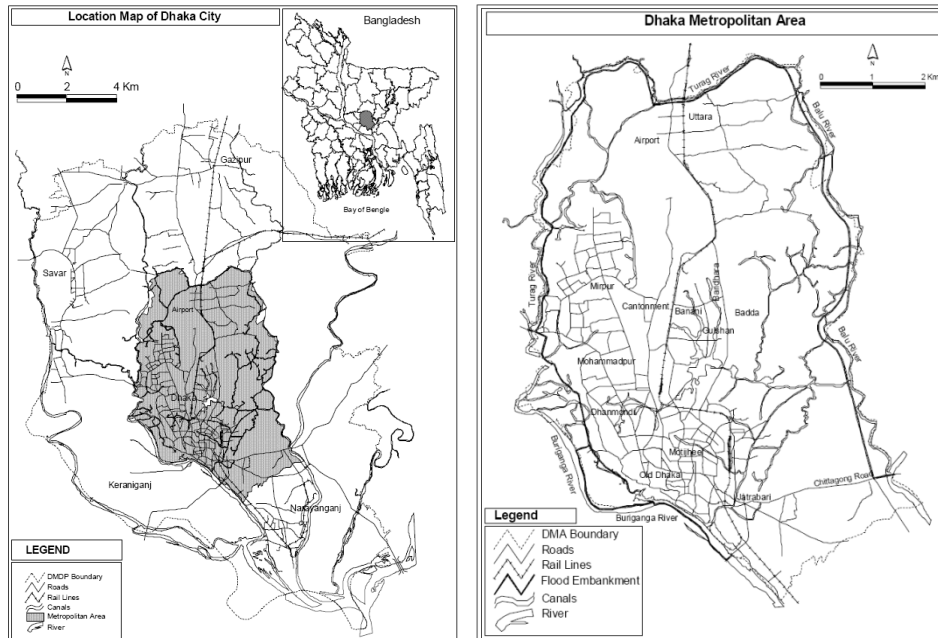


Figure 1: Bangladesh map and location of Dhaka

Figure 2: Map of Dhaka metropolitan area

► **Administrative arrangement and planning fabric**

Bangladesh is a unitary state and parliamentary democracy. Bangladesh is divided into seven administrative divisions. These divisions are subdivided into districts (zila, further subdivided into upazila (subdistricts)). In the metropolitan areas, upazila are divided into wards, which are further divided into mahallas. Dhaka has mayoral elections, while other municipalities elect a chairperson. Mayors and chairpersons are elected for a span of five years. In the mid-fifties, the Pakistani autocratic government introduced the conventional British master plan system to promote organized development in cities. Town improvement act (TIA) 1953 was enacted which subsequently led to the establishment of Dhaka improvement trust (DIT) in 1956 for urban planning and development control. Under TIA, DIT undertook the first master plan project for Dhaka city in 1959. In the nineties DIT was replaced by Rajdhani unnayan kartripakkha (RAJUK). RAJUK undertook the task of creating Dhaka metropolitan development plan (DMDP). DMDP is a three-tier plan package, comprising of the structure plan, the urban area plan and detailed area plans (DAP). All the civic responsibilities in Dhaka are managed by the Dhaka municipal corporation.

► **Urban identity and some critical issues**

Dhaka has grown from a small settlement to the present mega city. The population is growing by an estimated 4.2% per year. According to 'Far eastern economic review', Dhaka will become a home of 25 million people by the year 2025. Dhaka's commercial and residential areas are situated side by side, mostly concentrated beside the narrow roads. Old Dhaka still resembles this phenomenon of a mixed landuse; namely commercial, residential and small industries. The present type of landuse of the greater Dhaka include residential 32%,

commercial 4%, agricultural 57%, water bodies 5%, and open fields 2%. Dhaka's Gross municipal product (GMP) is registered at \$85 billion (2009). With an annual growth rate of 6.2%, the GMP is projected to rise to \$215 billion by 2025. The annual per capita income of Dhaka is estimated at \$1,350(USD), with 34% of households living below the poverty line. Half of the workforce is employed in household and unorganised sector, while about 800,000 people work in the textile industry. Even so, unemployment in Dhaka remains high at 19%. Growth has been especially strong in the finance, banking, manufacturing, telecommunications and services sectors, while tourism, hotels and restaurants continue as important elements in the economy of Dhaka.

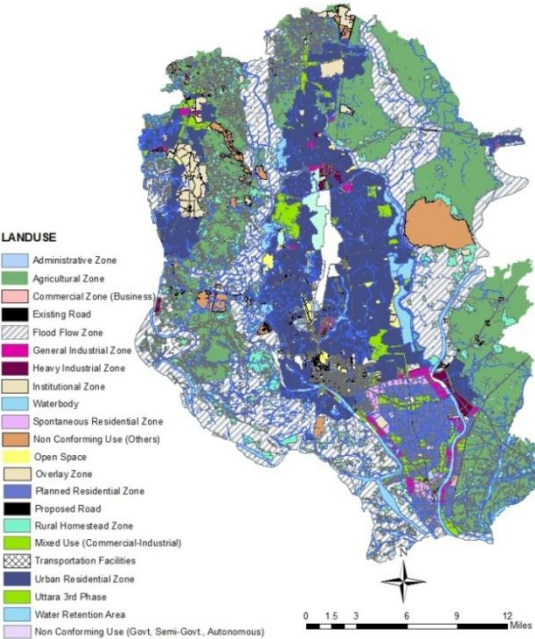


Figure 3: Proposed Landuse Plan of Dhaka

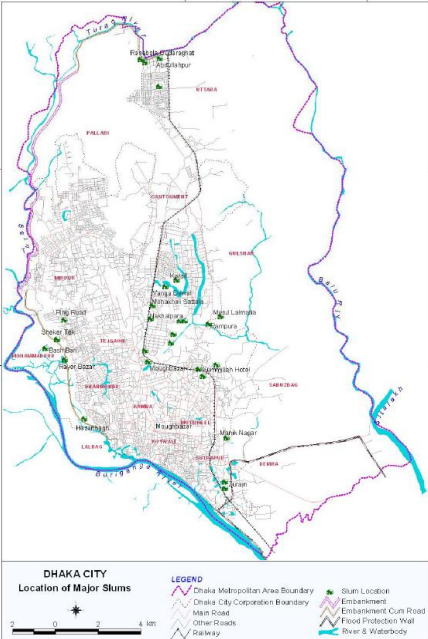


Figure 4: Location of Major Slums in Dhaka

The city has experienced a prolific growth of slums and squatters since the independence of the country in 1971. From a mere 10 settlements in 1976, the number increased to 3007 settlements with a population of 1.1 million in 1996. Slums and squatter are not distributed uniformly throughout the city but are concentrated mostly on the fringes. There is a high propensity of migration of young population in Dhaka. Cycle and auto rickshaws are the main mode of transport. Scooters, taxis and private automobiles are increasingly becoming popular with the city's growing middle class. Dhaka is connected to the other parts of the country through highway and railway links. Dhaka metro route is being initiated with the help of JICA.

► **Urban evolution and growth story**

The development plan recognizes the positive and sustainable role of green belts, preservation of high quality wetlands, agricultural lands and existing rivers in and around the city limits and thus recommends a circular waterways round the city. The plan also earmarks a number of retention ponds around the city limits for retaining rain water as well as for maintains an ecological balance. The plan strategy is to establish a long-term road network for the metropolitan area which will effectively serve the needs of the growing urban concentrations. DMDP (1997-2015) also stated policies to optimize existing urban land resources in the short to medium term period.

