

# **Spatial and Temporal Patterns of Urbanization in Bangladesh**

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## **Introduction**

The study of urbanization in Bangladesh has not yet been spread out with proper importance. At present research on urbanization associated with spatial and temporal variations are very much lacking. Chaudhury (1980) attempted to understand the complex process of urbanization and its variations. In that study Bangladesh was divided into four regions on the basis of former divisions. The author analyzed not only the divisional variations but also the factors affecting the variations with special emphasis on the economic characteristics of the divisions. Urbanization is viewed both as cause and effect in socio-economic development accompanied by demographic and cultural change (Laskar, 1983). The author explored regional variations like Chaudhury, on the basis of former four divisions. The divisions of Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi were termed as Central, Eastern, Southern and Northern regions respectively. In his study Laskar used the terms 'urbanization' and 'urban growth' interchangeably though there exists noteworthy differences between them. The present paper distinguishes between these two terms with real data. Demographic and economic indicators are considered to be the most important aspects of urbanization. Indeed urbanization and economic development have been closely linked ever since the industrial revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (European Demographic Inflation Bulletin; vol. VI, No. 4, 1975). Eusuf (1993) studied the urban growth of urban centres and their changing pattern in rank-order by population size. The author used only population as a determining factor of changing pattern of urban centres.

The analysis of the trend and pattern of any dynamic process is usually carried out against specific period of time and place. In this study we devoted ourselves to analyze the trends and patterns of urbanization of Bangladesh from 1891 to 2001 with special emphasis on the period of 1974-2001. The urban agglomerations have been classified on the basis of the administrative tiers of Bangladesh. The administrative set-up can be divided into several hierarchical categories like division, region (former districts) and district etc. There are six divisions, twenty regions and sixty-four districts in the administrative tiers of Bangladesh.

### Urbanization: Conceptual Aspects

Urbanization is generally regarded as a four-dimensional process—demographic, economic, environmental and socio-technical. According to R.P. Misra, “urbanization is a process which reveals itself through temporal, spatial and sectoral changes in the demographic, social, economic, technological and environmental aspect of life in a given society. These changes manifest themselves in the increasing concentration of population in human settlements larger than villages, in the increasing involvement of people in secondary and tertiary production function, and in the progressive adoption of social traits which are atypical of traditional rural societies (Misra, 1978, pp. 16).”

### Level of Urbanization and Urban Growth

Often ‘level of urbanization’ and ‘urban growth’ are used synonymously though they do not bear the same nuance. There exist significant conceptual distinction between level of urbanization and urban growth. So, they should be distinguished from one another.

### Level of Urbanization

Level of urbanization or simply ‘urbanization’ refers to the proportion of a nation’s population living in the urban areas. The degree or level of urbanization may be denoted as,

$$U^n = \frac{U_p}{T_p} \times 100$$

Where,  $U^n$  = level of urbanization  
 $U_p$  = total urban population  
 $T_p$  = total population

Urbanization is indicated by an increase in  $U^n$  over a period of time. For instance, in 1981, the total population and urban population of Bangladesh were 87.12 and 13.54 million respectively. Hence level of urbanization in 1981,

$$U_{81}^n = \frac{13.54}{87.12} \times 100 = 15.54 \text{ percent}$$

In 1991, the total population was 111.45 million and the urban population was 22.45 million. Therefore,

$$U_{91}^n = \frac{22.45}{111.45} \times 100 = 20.15 \text{ percent}$$

Thus, over the 10-year period (1981-1991) the proportion of population in the country's urban areas increased from 15.54 percent to 20.15 percent. This is the highest ever intercensal increase in the level of urbanization in the history of Bangladesh.

### **Urban Growth**

'Urbanization' and 'urban growth' are two different and also independent concepts such that there may be urban growth with or without urbanization; likewise urbanization may occur without urban growth. But the latter is an exceptional phenomenon. However, urban growth refers to an increase in total urban population, whereas urbanization refers to an increase in the percentage of urban population to total population. That is why urban growth may sometimes take place without urbanization. As for example, between 1901 and 1911, the urban population of Dhaka division increased from 269 thousand to 293 thousand, indicating an annual urban growth rate of 0.86 percent; but the proportion of urban population declined from 3.16 percent to 3.05 percent of the total population. Thus, during the decade 1901-1911, Dhaka division had experienced an urban growth with negative urbanization.

Between 1981 and 1991 the urban population of Bangladesh increased from 13.54 million to 22.45 million, indicating an annual average urban growth of 5.19 percent while the proportion of urban population increased from 15.54 percent to 20.15 percent of the total population. Hence Bangladesh experienced urban growth with positive urbanization. This was because the rate of growth of rural population was lower than that of urban population. In 2001 proportion of urban population was 23.10 percent with urban growth rate of 2.45 which was half of the previous census. This implies that urbanization is increasing but at a decreasing rate.

### **National Trend of Urbanization in Bangladesh During the 20th Century**

Urbanization in Bangladesh has several peculiar facets and dimensions. Table 1 provides the proportion of total population residing in the urban areas of Bangladesh in the various census years of the 20th century, their intercensal variation and annual average growth rates. This time series data show a gradual increase in both number and percentage of urban population over the time period with fluctuating growth rates (Fig. 2). As such the time span from 1901 to 1991 has been divided in to four distinctive periods – period of sluggish growth (1901 – 1921), period of moderate growth (1921-1941), period of rapid growth (1951- 1974) and 1974 onward that of declining period. Accordingly, in 2001 a moderate growth rate has been recorded. It is worth mentioning that the urban population of Bangladesh at various census years up to 1941 was estimated from the undivided Indian

census counts by adjusting for territorial changes at the time of partition. In independent Bangladesh the first census was held in 1974.

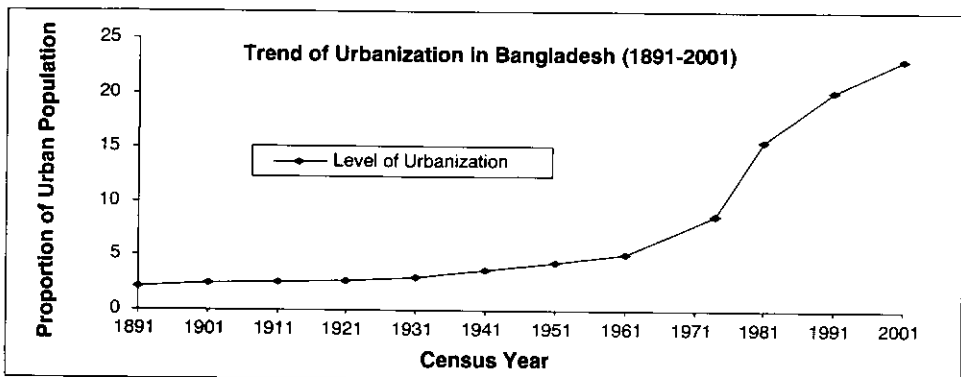
In 1901 the urban population of Bangladesh was only 25 thousand which increased to 22,455 thousand in 1991 (BBS 1997). In the earlier part of the century a very low share of the total population lived in urban areas which remained stagnant till 1921. The level of urbanization, as measured by the proportion of total population living in urban areas, was 2.43 percent in 1901, which increased to 2.64 percent in 1921. The relatively low level of urbanization during the period may be attributed to the profit motive strategy of the British Colonial Government to destroy indigenous industries and to build up industrial-commercial agglomeration around Calcutta that virtually turned the area which is today Bangladesh into its rural hinterland. Besides, there was gross under enumeration in the census of 1921 because of the boycotting of the enumeration for political reasons (UN/ESCAP, 1981, pp. 13).

A slight increase both in the level of urbanization and growth rate was, however, recorded in the period 1921-1941. Between 1941 and 1951 the annual average growth rate (AAGR) decreased from 3.66 to 1.70 though proportion of urban population increased in absolute sense. Lower growth rate of urban population during the period 1941-1951 might be the effect of the devastating Bengal Famine, the Second World War and the partition of India in 1947. A significant increasing trend was found in all respects from 1961 and it has been continuing since then. During the period of 1961 to 1974 the highest ever intercensal variation (137.57 percent) was observed in urban population; the annual average growth rate of 9.04 was also the highest ever. This sharp acceleration of urban population growth during the period of 13 years (1961-1974) may be attributed to some industrial development in the 1960s and the emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign nation. In 1981 the country had over 13.5 million urban people with 15.05 percent level of urbanization accompanied by 115.76 percent intercensal increase and an average annual growth rate of 7.99. It is worth mentioning that the latter two rates of urban population growth are less than that of the previous census of 1974. In case of 1991 census the above rates were respectively 65.89 percent and 5.19 which are also less than that of 1981. Similar results were also observed for the census year of 2001. This indicates that urbanization in Bangladesh after 1974 is increasing but at a decreasing rate.

**Table 1.** Trend of the Level of Urbanization and Urban Growth in Bangladesh during the Twentieth Century (1901-2001).

Particulars → Years ↓	Total Population	Annual average growth rate	Total urban pop <sup>n</sup>	Level of urbz <sup>n</sup>	Inter-censal variation	% of variation	Annual average growth rate
1891	24665000	—	537000	2.18	—	—	—
1901	28927786	1.61	702035	2.43	165035	30.73	2.72
1911	31555056	0.87	807024	2.56	104989	14.95	1.40
1921	33254096	0.53	878480	2.64	71456	8.85	0.85
1931	35604170	0.69	1073489	3.02	195009	22.20	2.02
1941	41997297	1.67	1537244	3.66	463755	43.20	3.66
1951	42062610	0.02	1819773	4.33	282529	18.38	1.70
1961	50840235	1.91	2640726	5.19	820953	45.11	3.79
1974	71479071	3.47	6273602	8.78	3632876	137.57	9.04
1981	87120119	2.00	13535963	15.54	7262361	115.76	7.99
1991	111455185	2.49	22455174	20.15	8919211	65.89	5.19
2001	123851120	1.06	28605200	23.10	6150026	27.39	2.45

Source : BBS (1984), BBS (1994a) and BBS (2004).



**Fig. 1.** Trend of Urbanization in Bangladesh (1891-2001)

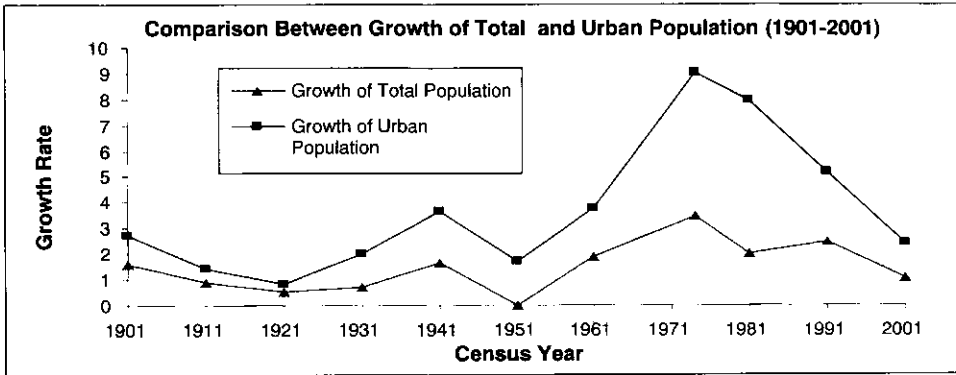


Fig. 2. Comparison between Growth of Total and Urban Population (1901-2001)

After 1974 the proportion of urban population increased predominantly due to 'rural-urban migration' and the flexibility of the definition of the concept 'urban'. About 30 percent of the total increase in urban population during 1974-1981 could be explained by the extended definition of urban area in 1981. The inclusion of Thana Headquarters<sup>1</sup> and small hats and bazars with electricity accounts for about 4-million urban population (BBS, 1987). Under these Thana Headquarters there are many areas which are virtually rural but officially are being treated as urban. Therefore, the trend can be summarized as-

- A consistent rising trend in the growth of urban population was found over the period of 1901 to 2001 except in 1911-1921 and 1941-1951 decades.
- Level of urbanization was very low during the British colonial rule i.e., up to 1947 because of their exploiting attitude.
- From 1960s the pace of urbanization had got momentum and continued till 1991.
- Industrial development paved the way for urbanization in Bangladesh.
- After 1974 level of urbanization is increasing but at a decreasing rate.
- Flexibility of the definition of urban area is highly responsible for accelerating the growth rate of urban population.

### Regional Trend of Urbanization (1891-2001)

Throughout the twentieth century different administrative tiers of Bangladesh experienced uneven trend of urbanization with remarkable variations for varied reasons. Table 2 shows the breakdown of the level of urbanization of Table 1 for the period of last 110 years (1891-2001). It is observed that the regional trend of the level of urbanization more or less followed the national trend. Between 1901 and 1921 level of urbanization for all the regions as well as the divisions was stagnant (Fig. 1). The same statement is also true to the former four divisions. This stagnation continued longer for some regions. In case of Noakhali, Sylhet and Faridpur regions this stagnation continued till 1974. Unlike these regions a consistent rising trend in the proportion of urban population was found in all the divisions over the period 1911-2001 except Khulna division. The rising trend in Khulna division was also absent in the 1941-1951 decade (Fig. 3).

Table 2. Regional Trend of Urbanization in Bangladesh during the Twentieth Century.

Census Years	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1974	1981	1991	2001
Regions	% of urb Popn	% of urb Popn	% of urb Popn	% of urb Popn	% of urb Popn	% of urb Popn	% of urb Popn	% of urb Popn	% of urb Popn	% of urb Popn	% of urb Popn	% of urb Popn
Dhaka	4.08	4.34	4.66	5.3	8.68	6.58	10.09	14.79	29.56	38.94	54.42	61.48
Mymensingh	3.44	2.68	2.69	2.62	2.72	3.32	3.51	3.91	5.6	10.16	11.76	12.48
Jamalpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.10	10.86	17.12
Tangail	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.79	1.61	5.25	7.56	9.52	12.99
Faridpur	1.39	2.5	1.55	2.26	2.11	2.11	2.14	2.48	2.88	8.58	8.75	11.26
<b>Dhaka Division</b>	<b>3.13</b>	<b>3.16</b>	<b>3.05</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>4.52</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>5.18</b>	<b>7.02</b>	<b>13.60</b>	<b>20.51</b>	<b>28.34</b>	<b>34.83</b>
Chittagong	2.17	1.85	2.19	2.54	3.22	4.55	11.78	12.5	20.97	32.08	40.30	42.45
Hill Tracts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.97	10.24	28.80	34.45	31.74
Comilla	1.85	2.31	2.35	2.33	2.41	4.37	3.09	3.17	4.24	8.51	10.46	11.94
Noakhali	0.49	0.61	0.53	0.54	1.4	1.08	1.06	1.42	2.13	11.27	11.64	12.79
Sylhet	1.06	-	-	-	1.65	2.2	2.52	2.03	2.75	8.72	10.56	12.36
<b>Ctg. Division</b>	<b>1.43</b>	<b>1.71</b>	<b>1.80</b>	<b>1.88</b>	<b>2.11</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>4.70</b>	<b>7.53</b>	<b>15.43</b>	<b>19.00</b>	<b>20.83</b>
Khulna	3.09	1.91	2.12	2.21	2.15	3.39	2.84	7.06	14.62	22.51	27.25	28.49
Jessore	3.16	1.16	1.19	1.22	1.25	2.08	2.17	3.42	5.44	10.96	12.35	14.24
Kushtia	2.85	5.69	-	-	6.86	-	4.52	5.4	8.33	14.06	15.52	15.01
Barisal	1.44	1.96	2.01	2.28	2.27	4.08	4.63	3.49	3.92	12.10	14.00	16.11
Patuakhali	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.99	1	2.47	8.97	10.01	9.47
<b>Khulna Division</b>	<b>2.42</b>	<b>2.63</b>	<b>1.78</b>	<b>1.95</b>	<b>2.94</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>3.23</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>7.39</b>	<b>14.39</b>	<b>17.17</b>	<b>17.83</b>
Rajshahi	2.53	-	2.09	2.12	2.66	3.88	3.85	4.27	5.79	10.85	17.36	19.79
Pabna	2.86	2.88	3.07	3.23	3.73	4.34	4.36	5.1	7.64	11.82	14.48	15.67
Bogra	1.35	1.29	1.32	1.52	1.74	2.14	2.82	2.98	3.72	7.44	11.14	12.16
Rangpur	0.67	1.35	1.5	1.99	2.54	3.23	4.39	4.19	4.81	11.30	12.93	12.84
Dinajpur	1.37	0.83	0.88	1.05	1.08	2.18	5.68	4.21	4.4	8.87	11.34	11.46
<b>Rajshahi Division</b>	<b>1.68</b>	<b>1.57</b>	<b>1.75</b>	<b>1.99</b>	<b>2.36</b>	<b>3.18</b>	<b>4.23</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>5.31</b>	<b>10.40</b>	<b>13.82</b>	<b>14.75</b>

Source : Calculated from Appendix Table A.

\* Initially Tangail and Jamalpur were parts of greater Mymensingh district, and in 1941 and 1981 respectively they became separate districts

\*\* Patuakhali was part of Barisal district initially and after 1941 it became a separate district.

\*\*\* Sylhet district was attached to the undivided province of Assam in India and data for census years of that period were not readily available against Sylhet district.

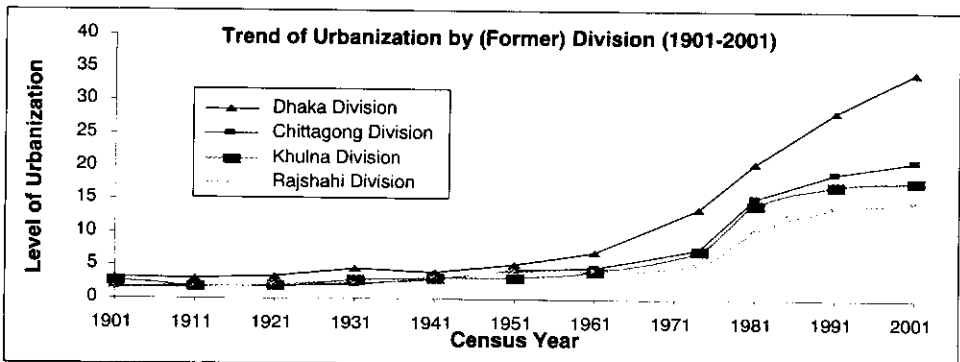


Fig. 3. Trend of Urbanization by (Former) Division (1901-2001)

**Regional Variation in the Trend of Urbanization (1961-2001).**

Table 3 reveals the level of urbanization of each the twenty regions and their ranks in the census years from 1961 to 2001. Dhaka region emerged as the highest urbanized region since 1911 census. In 1901 Kushtia occupied the top rank with 5.69 percent of urban population exceeding Dhaka region. Chittagong region has been following Dhaka region since 1941. Before 1941 Mymensingh, Kushtia and Pabna regions sometimes followed Dhaka region. During 1961-91 the 3rd and 4th positions were interchanged between Khulna and Hill Tracts regions. The rank of Hill-Tracts was 4th in 1974 which improved to 3rd position in 1981 and still holds the position. The principal reason behind this improvement of the Hill Tracts region in the level of urbanization was due to the development of hilly areas into urban localities and settlements of internal migrants into those urban localities by giving them incentives. Rajshahi, like Dhaka, has been remaining at the same rank since 1961 except in 1981 and its rank is 5th. The least urbanized regions in 1961 and 1974 were Patuakhali and Noakhali. Later Noakhali improved its position and placed itself around mid position but Patuakhali remained among the least urbanized regions.

**Table 3.** Regional Variation in the Level of Urbanization and its Ranking (1961-2001).

Year → Region ↓	Level of Urbanization					Region-wise Ranking				
	1961	1974	1981	1991	2001	' 61	' 74	' 81	' 91	' 01
Dhaka	14.79	29.56	38.94	54.42	61.48	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st
Chittagong	12.5	20.97	32.08	40.30	42.45	2nd	2nd	2nd	2nd	2nd
Hill Tracts	5.97	10.24	28.80	34.45	31.74	4th	4th	3rd	3rd	3rd
Khulna	7.06	14.62	22.51	27.25	28.49	3rd	3rd	4th	4th	4th
Rajshahi	5.4	8.33	10.85	17.36	19.79	5th	5th	11th	5th	5th
Jamalpur	—	—	9.10	10.86	17.12	20th	20th	13th	15th	6th
Barisal	3.49	3.92	12.10	14.00	16.11	11th	14th	6th	8th	7th
Pabna	5.1	7.64	11.82	14.48	15.67	6th	6th	7th	7th	8th
Kushtia	4.27	5.79	14.06	15.52	15.01	7th	7th	5th	6th	9th
Jessore	3.42	5.44	10.96	12.35	14.24	12th	9th	10th	10th	10th
Tangail	1.61	5.25	7.56	9.52	12.99	17th	10th	19th	19th	11th
Rangpur	4.19	4.81	11.30	12.93	12.84	9th	11th	8th	9th	12th
Noakhali	1.42	2.13	11.27	11.64	12.79	18th	19th	9th	12th	13th
Mymensingh	3.91	5.6	10.16	11.76	12.48	10th	8th	12th	11th	14th
Sylhet	2.03	2.75	8.72	10.56	12.36	16th	17th	16th	16th	15th
Bogra	2.98	3.72	7.44	11.14	12.16	14th	15th	20th	14th	16th
Comilla	3.17	4.24	8.51	10.46	11.94	13th	13th	18th	17th	17th
Dinajpur	4.21	4.4	8.87	11.34	11.46	8th	12th	15th	13th	18th
Faridpur	2.48	2.88	8.58	8.75	11.26	15th	16th	17th	20th	19th
Patuakhali	1.00	2.47	8.97	10.01	9.47	19th	18th	14th	18th	20th

Source : Calculated from Table 2



In 2001 Patuakhali again appeared as the least urbanized region of the country. In the mean time Faridpur gradually demoted placing itself at the bottom in 1991 from 15th position in 1961. The position of other regions more or less fluctuated over time though remained around their position in 1961. It is seen from the Table 3 that the highest degree of variation in the level of urbanization for the regions of Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Tangail took place between 1961 and 1974 while that of the remaining regions occurred between 1974 and 1981. It is generally assumed that earlier variations in the level of urbanization were determined predominantly by administrative importance and industrial legacy of the regions.

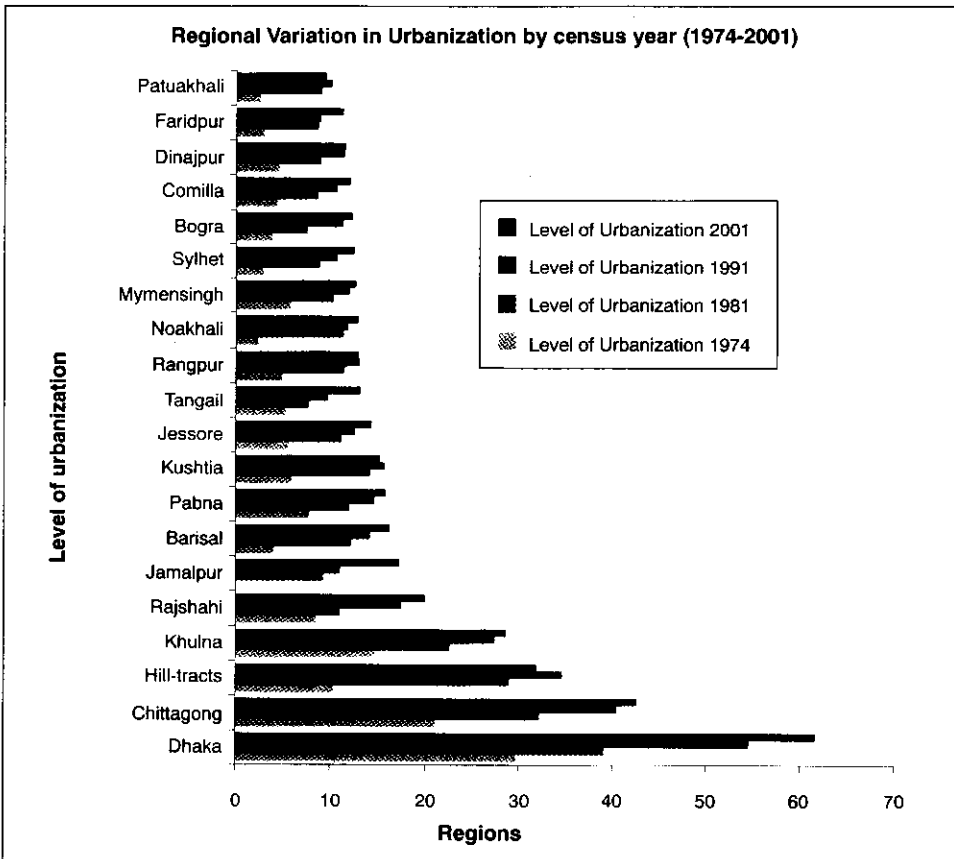


Fig. 4. Regional variation in Urbanization by Census Year (1974-2001)

Significant upward growth trend of urban population was found in the regions of Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna. The primary reasons behind the fast growing trend of urbanization of Dhaka are largely attributed to the establishment of Capital City, locations of various government and non-government offices, industrial and commercial organizations, educational institutions etc. Besides, the easy employment opportunity in the informal sector has much contribution towards this rapid urbanizing trend. Chittagong and Khulna, the other two highly urbanized regions, have seaports, divisional

headquarters, industrial and commercial belts and educational institutions that attract people from different parts of the country for better employment, commerce and educational purposes. In sum, it can be said that there exist remarkable spatial, temporal and spatio-temporal variations in the level of urbanization among the regions.

### Distribution of Urban Population among the Regions (1961-2001)

Urban population is very skewedly distributed in Bangladesh—a few of its regions hold over half of the total urban population. Table 4 presents the distribution of urban population in terms of percentage share from 1961 to 2001 by region and its ranks as per their respective share. Unlike the level of urbanization, distribution of urban population

**Table 4.** Share of National Urban Population in Percentage and its Ranking by Region (1961-2001)

Year →	Distribution of Urban Population					District-wise Ranking				
	1961	1974	1981	1991	2001	1961	1974	1981	1991	2001
Region ↓	Share in percent	Share in percent	Share in percent	Share in percent	Share in percent					
Dhaka	28.55	35.87	28.81	33.77	37.20	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st
Chittagong	14.12	14.43	13.02	13.11	12.32	2nd	2nd	2nd	2nd	2nd
Khulna	6.55	8.29	7.20	6.46	5.70	4th	3rd	3rd	3rd	3rd
Rajshahi	4.54	3.94	4.22	5.39	5.26	7th	7th	7th	4th	4th
Mymensingh	8.18	6.76	4.93	4.37	4.47	3rd	4th	5th	6th	5th
Rangpur	6.02	4.18	5.43	4.88	4.08	5th	5th	4th	5th	6th
Comilla	5.26	3.94	4.33	4.08	3.84	6th	6th	6th	7th	7th
Sylhet	2.69	2.09	3.64	3.39	3.41	13th	12th	9th	9th	8th
Barisal	4.05	2.45	4.17	3.54	3.29	8th	11th	8th	8th	9th
Jessore	2.84	2.89	3.26	2.80	2.76	11th	9th	10th	11th	10th
Pabna	3.79	3.43	2.99	2.86	2.65	9th	8th	13th	10th	11th
Faridpur	2.99	1.87	3.02	2.20	2.39	10th	13th	12th	13th	12th
Noakhali	1.29	1.10	3.18	2.56	2.35	16th	17th	11th	12th	13th
Dinajpur	2.73	1.80	2.10	2.13	1.88	12th	14th	15th	14th	14th
Kushtia	1.78	1.32	1.50	2.03	1.75	15th	16th	18th	15th	15th
Bogra	0.87	0.83	1.60	1.80	1.65	18th	18th	17th	16th	16th
Hill Tracts	—	—	1.65	1.61	1.49	20th	20th	16th	17th	17th
Tangail	2.39	2.50	2.38	1.33	1.48	14th	10th	14th	19th	18th
Jamalpur	0.91	1.74	1.37	1.52	1.26	17th	15th	19th	18th	19th
Patuakhali	0.45	0.59	1.22	0.96	0.76	19th	19th	20th	20th	20th

Source : Calculated from Appendix Table A.

did not show continuous rising trend even for a single region. The percentage share of urban population in each of the regions was found changing from census to census though the extent of variation was not so wide that has been reflected in their ranks (Table 4). Census after census the rank of the regions corresponding to different census years remained same in some cases and in most cases they clustered around a certain rank. As for example, Dhaka, Chittagong, and Khulna occupied respectively the 1st, 2nd and 3rd ranks during the whole period (1974-2001). Rajshahi joined them from 1991 promoting its status from 7th to 4th position. These regions together claim 62.53 percent, 53.25 percent, 58.78 percent and 60.47 percent of the urban population in the census years of 1974, 1981, 1991 and 2001 respectively. That is, over fifty percent of the urban population live in the above four regions. These outcomes also imply that the distribution of urban population in our country is highly skewed.

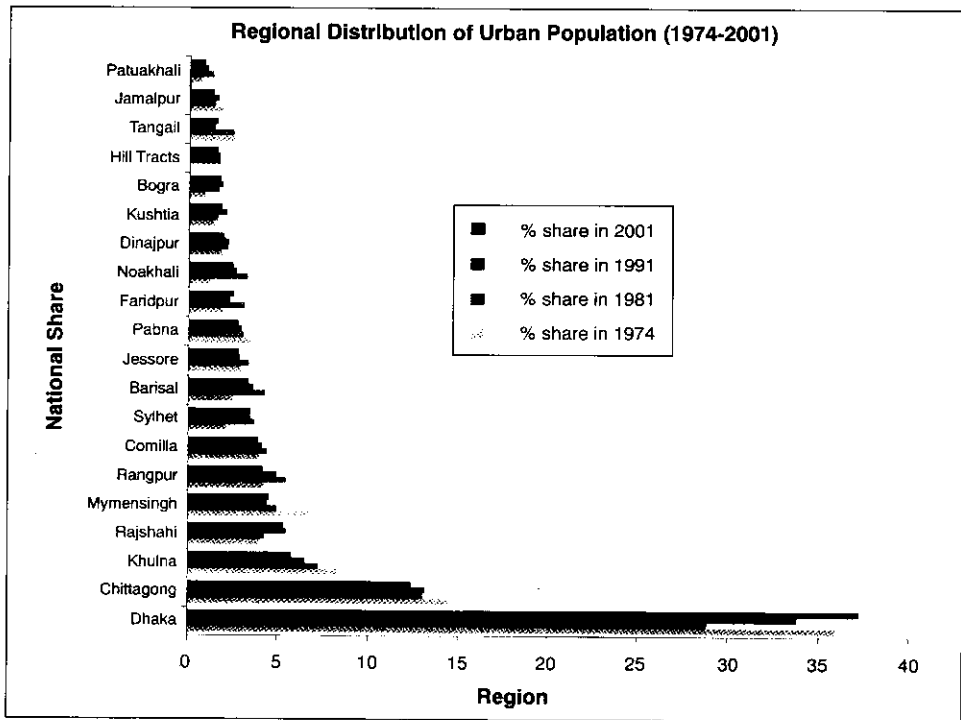


Fig. 5. Regional Distribution of Urban Population (1974-2001)

### Consistency of the Regions

We can have an understanding about the consistency<sup>2</sup> of the regions regarding their level of urbanization (LOU) with respect to their respective share of urban population (SOUP) by comparing their ranks as well as partial possession in LOU and SOUP. Table 5 shows the comparison for the last three census years of 2001, 1991 and 1981. Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Jessore appeared as highly consistent regions while Hill Tracts and Comilla emerged as highly inconsistent regions. The other regions were found moderately inconsistent.

**Table 5.** Comparison between LOU and SOUP for the Last Three Decades by Region.

Year →	Rank						Partial possession in %					
	2001		1991		1981		2001		1991		1981	
Region ↓	LOU	SOUP	LOU	SOUP	LOU	SOUP	LOU	SOUP	LOU	SOUP	LOU	SOUP
Dhaka	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	61.48	37.20	54.42	33.77	38.94	28.81
Chittagong	2nd	2nd	2nd	2nd	2nd	2nd	42.45	12.32	40.30	13.11	32.08	13.02
Hill Tracts	3rd	17th	3rd	17th	3rd	16th	31.74	1.49	34.45	1.61	28.80	1.65
Khulna	4th	3rd	4th	3rd	4th	3rd	28.49	5.70	27.25	6.46	22.51	7.20
Rajshahi	5th	4th	5th	4th	11th	7th	19.79	5.26	17.36	5.39	10.85	4.22
Jamalpur	6th	19th	15th	18th	13th	19th	17.12	1.26	10.86	1.52	9.10	1.37
Barisal	7th	9th	8th	8th	6th	8th	16.11	3.29	14.00	3.54	12.10	4.17
Pabna	8th	11th	7th	10th	7th	13th	15.67	2.65	14.48	2.86	11.82	2.99
Kushtia	9th	15th	6th	15th	5th	18th	15.01	1.75	15.52	2.03	14.06	1.50
Jessore	10th	10th	10th	11th	10th	10th	14.24	2.76	12.35	2.80	10.96	3.26
Tangail	11th	18th	19th	19th	19th	14th	12.99	1.48	9.52	1.33	7.56	2.38
Rangpur	12th	6th	9th	5th	8th	4th	12.84	4.08	12.93	4.88	11.30	5.43
Noakhali	13th	13th	12th	12th	9th	11th	12.79	2.35	11.64	2.56	11.27	3.18
Mymensingh	14th	5th	11th	6th	12th	5th	12.48	4.47	11.76	4.37	10.16	4.93
Sylhet	15th	8th	16th	9th	16th	9th	12.36	3.41	10.56	3.39	8.72	3.64
Bogra	16th	16th	14th	16th	20th	17th	12.16	1.65	11.14	1.80	7.44	1.60
Comilla	17th	7th	17th	7th	18th	6th	11.94	3.84	10.46	4.08	8.51	4.33
Dinajpur	18th	14th	13th	14th	15th	15th	11.46	1.88	11.34	2.13	8.87	2.10
Faridpur	19th	12th	20th	13th	17th	12th	11.26	2.39	8.75	2.20	8.58	3.02
Patuakhali	20th	20th	18th	20th	14th	20th	9.47	0.76	10.01	0.96	8.97	1.22

Source : Extracted from Table 3 and Table 4.

### Division-wise Trend of the LOU and Share of National Urban Population (1961-2001)

Table 6 provides both level of urbanization and share of national urban population along with total urban population for each of the six divisions. Hence it is observed that Dhaka division overwhelmingly holds the highest rank in all the census years both for level of urbanization and share of national urban population. On the other hand, the rank of Sylhet division was the lowest for both of the above-mentioned cases. From 1961 to 1981 the level of urbanization of the divisions of Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna remained above the national level. But in 1991 Khulna dropped from the status with a narrow margin. The rank of level of urbanization for all the divisions remained same for the census years of 1961 and 1991 with descending order as Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal and Sylhet division. In 1974 Khulna division occupied the 2nd position and Chittagong the 3rd position but in 1981 they interchanged their positions. The same happened between Rajshahi division (4th in 1974) and Barisal division with the 4th and 5th positions. Thus, like the regions, the spatial, temporal and spatio-temporal variations are also present in case of divisions.

**Table 6.** National and Divisional Variations in the Level of Urbanization and Share of National Urban Population (1961-2001).

Years →	1961				1974				1981			
	Total Pop <sup>n</sup>	Urban Pop <sup>n</sup>	Level of Urbaniz <sup>n</sup>	Share of Urbaniz <sup>n</sup>	Total Pop <sup>n</sup>	Urban Pop <sup>n</sup>	Level of Urbaniz <sup>n</sup>	Share of Urbaniz <sup>n</sup>	Total Pop <sup>n</sup>	Urban Pop <sup>n</sup>	Level of Urbaniz <sup>n</sup>	Share of Urbaniz <sup>n</sup>
Dhaka Div.	15293	1073	7.02	40.63	21316	2900	13.60	46.23	26242	5383	20.51	39.77
Ctg Div.	10140	569	5.61	21.54	13876	1273	9.17	20.29	16940	2994	17.67	22.12
Sylhet Div.	3490	71	2.03	2.69	4759	131	2.75	2.09	5656	493	8.72	3.64
Khulna Div.	5805	311	5.36	11.78	8768	858	9.79	13.68	10641	1737	16.33	12.84
Barisal Div.	4261	119	2.79	4.51	5427	191	3.52	3.04	6510	730	11.22	5.39
Rajshahi Div.	11850	498	4.20	18.86	17332	920	5.31	14.67	21132	2198	10.40	16.24
<b>Bangladesh</b>	<b>50839</b>	<b>2641</b>	<b>5.19</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>71478</b>	<b>6273</b>	<b>8.78</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>87120</b>	<b>13536</b>	<b>15.54</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 6.** Contd.

Years →	1991				2001			
	Total Pop <sup>n</sup>	Urban Pop <sup>n</sup>	Level of Urbaniz <sup>n</sup>	Share of Urbaniz <sup>n</sup>	Total Pop <sup>n</sup>	Urban Pop <sup>n</sup>	Level of Urbaniz <sup>n</sup>	Share of Urbaniz <sup>n</sup>
Dhaka Div.	33940	9620	28.34	43.20	38987	13386	34.33	46.80
Ctg Div.	21865	4757	21.76	21.36	24120	5724	23.73	20.01
Sylhet Div.	7149	755	10.56	3.39	7897	976	12.36	3.41
Khulna Div.	13244	2515	18.99	11.29	14605	2921	20.00	10.21
Barisal Div.	7758	1001	12.90	4.50	8154	1160	14.23	4.06
Rajshahi Div.	27493	3799	13.82	17.06	30089	4438	14.75	15.51
<b>Bangladesh</b>	<b>111449</b>	<b>22447</b>	<b>20.14</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>123851</b>	<b>28605</b>	<b>23.10</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source : Calculated from Table 1 and Appendix Table A.

The five top ranking regions of 1991 retained their positions in 2001 while Kushtia moved down from the 6th position and Jamlpur moved up and occupied the position. The 7th and 8th ranks were interchanged between Barisal and Pabna. With gradual demotion Dinajpur ended up at 18th position and Patuakhali listed itself as the lowest urbanized region of the country in 2001.

Turning to the share of urban population from 1961 to 2001 there has been no change in terms of the rank of the divisions though their percentage share varied during this