

Proliferation of Unauthorized *Kutcha* Bazars in Dhaka City: Causes and Consequences

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Introduction

Kutcha bazar is an important element of both land use and function of the modern city. It is defined as a place for the sale and purchase of different types of commodities which fulfill the daily needs of especially food items like vegetables, fish, meat, fruits etc. and other grocery items. It is quite remarkable that most of the people of Dhaka City cannot find an authorized *kutcha* bazar within 0.75 k.m. distance from their residences, which results in mushroom growth of Unauthorised *kutcha* Bazars (UKBs) at different locations of Dhaka City (Das, 2001). It should be noted that unauthorized means no approval/registration of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) or proper authority.

Distribution of UKBs

There is no specific data on the actual number of UKBs in Dhaka City but from reconnaissance survey it was found that each zone of DCC possesses numerous UKBs. About 66 UKBs had been surveyed and from the Nearest Neighbour Technique analysis, it is found that the locations of UKBs are of random pattern. In most cases both authorized *kutcha* bazars and UKBs are intermingled leading to a chaotic situation (examples: Rampura, Thatari Bazar, Jurain etc.) and authorized *kutcha* bazars are actually creating UKBs in the absence of any step for their expansion by authorities in response to increased demand.

Factors Influencing the Growth of UKBs

There are many factors influencing the growth and location of UKBs. General factors responsible for growth are : (1) authorized bazar is far way, (2) suitable site, (3) proximity to residential area, (4) proximity to roadway, (5) availability of daily necessities, (6) available transport facilities, (7) low price of goods, (8) less rent, (9) high profit, (10) less capital, (11) easy employment of young migrated people– one of the major challenges of MGDs i.e. expansion of urban employment.

Problems Encountered by UKB Users and Traders

User's Perspective : The users face a lot of problems while shopping at UKBs. The problems as prioritized by them are as follows :

1. Unhealthy environment
2. Traffic congestion
3. Lack of cleanliness
4. Absence of garbage disposal facilities
5. Lack of drainage provision
6. Lack of parking facilities
7. Lack of toilet facilities
8. Lack of open space

Traders' Perspective : The major problems as perceived by traders who carry out their trading activities in UKBs are mentioned below :

1. Disturbance by muscleman and law enforcing officers
2. Local touts/*mastans* demanding subscription
3. Lack of open space
4. Absence of permanent shed
5. Lack of water supply
6. Absence of toilet facility
7. Absence of garbage disposal facility
8. Lack of cleanliness

It is evident that some problems such as lack of toilet facility, garbage disposal facility, cleanliness etc. are common from both perspectives.

Overall Problems Created by UKBs

Reduction of Road Width

Vegetable and other daily product stalls have sprung up on both sides of roadways leading to reduction of road width which results in road accidents, traffic congestion at nodal points, degradation of air quality by increase of fumes, noxious gas from vehicles, parking problem etc.

Garbage Accumulation along Road Side

Everyday tons of perishable garbage are disposed on the roadside from UKBs. These garbage make the urban environment most unhealthy by producing odour, degrading the visual environment, breeding disease carrying insects, attracting rodents and street derelict dogs and most importantly, obstructing vehicular movement.

Unhygienic Environment

Due to various problems relating to stall management, drainage and sewerage, water supply, ventilation, space for consumer movement and toilet facility, UKBs are characterised by unhygienic environment inside. Uncleanliness makes the situation worse and dirtier.

General Findings

The general findings of the research are as follows:

The number of authorized *kutch*a bazars in Dhaka city is far below the required number to serve the vast population of this megacity.

Kutcha bazars are not properly distributed in a planned way and as such a large portion of the city dwellers do not find any *kutcha* bazar within half a mile walking distance from their houses.

The physical condition and quality of the unauthorized *kutcha* bazars are very poor.

Most of the areas of Dhaka City are un-served and under-served because of lack of authorized *kutcha* bazar leading to the formation of UKBs.

Recommendations

Some policies are formulated to improve the existing environmental situations prevailing in UKBs:

For balanced distribution of authorized *kutcha* bazars, each ward of the city should contain required number of authorized *kutcha* bazars.

Proper location should be selected to convert UKBs to authorized *kutcha* bazars. It should be remembered that rehabilitation is better than eviction.

The service areas should be within walking distance for the people to purchase meat, fish and vegetable.

DCC should formulate new policy, review and re-design *kutcha* bazars in such a way that environmental degradation can be kept minimum and environmental sustainability (see Fig.1) may be maintained for the greater interest of the people.

RAJUK and DCC should develop proper monitoring mechanisms to check further growth of UKBs in the city. Existing development control rules should be strictly enforced so that unauthorised structures cannot be erected along roadsides.

Training should be imparted to raise awareness of traders of UKBs in appropriate waste management. If the health benefits of sanitation are to be fully realized, good hygiene practices such as keeping wastes in specific dumpsites at critical times are crucial.

Conclusion

It is now clear that shortage of authorized *kutcha* bazars is mainly responsible for the growth of UKBs in Dhaka City. Being illegal, the UKBs are not properly managed and lack required facilities such as water supply, garbage disposal, drainage, toilet etc. Consequently, problems such as environmental degradation, traffic congestion, deterioration of law and order etc. become acute in surrounding areas. Immediate steps, therefore, should be taken for solving the problems created by UKBs. Such steps should include, among other measures, planned expansion of authorized *kutcha* bazars so that the city dwellers can get their daily necessities within walking distance from their residences.

Reference

Das, U. S. (2001), "Factors influencing the location and distribution of Unauthorized Kutcha Bazars in Dhaka City", unpublished MURP thesis, BUET, Dhaka.

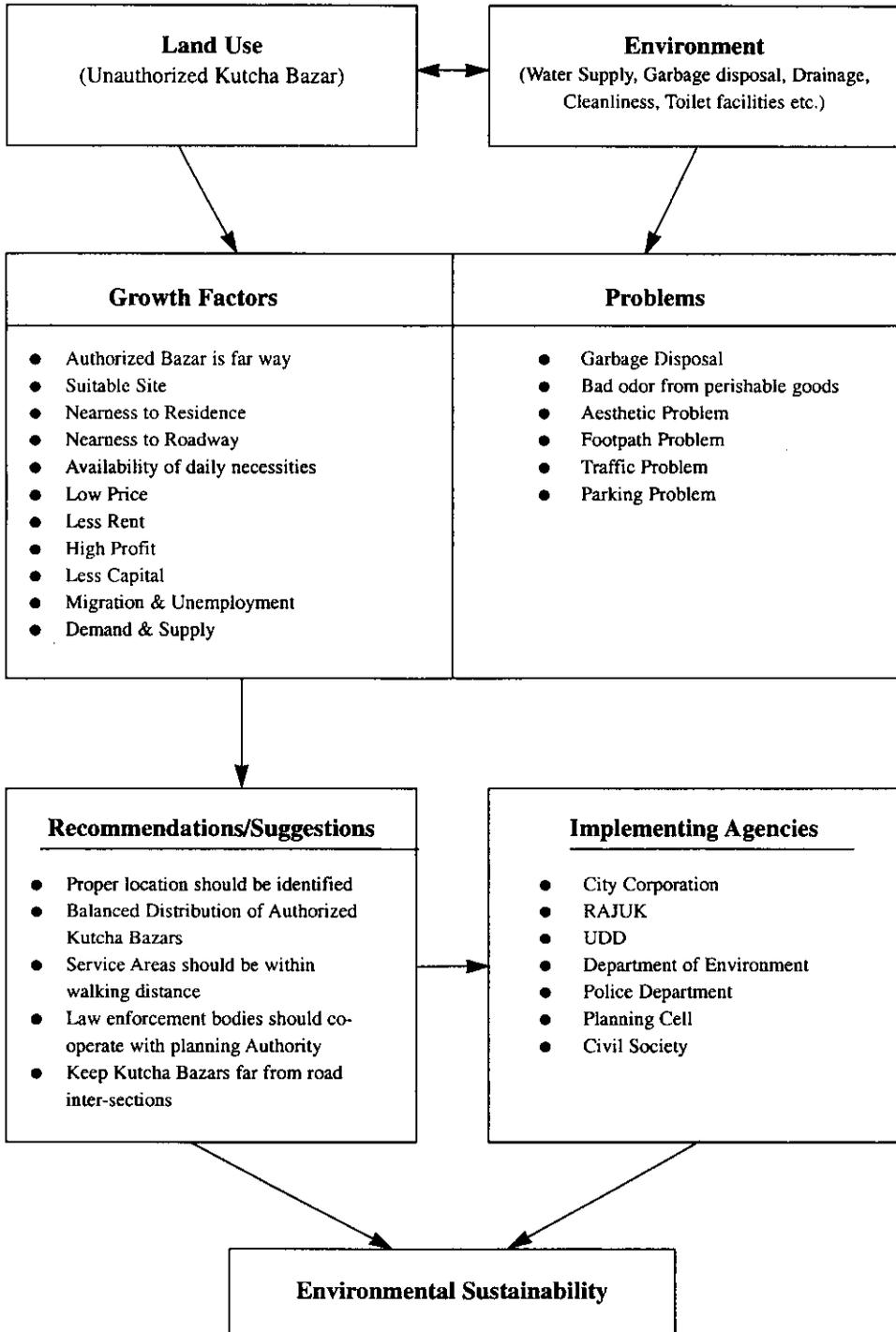


Fig.1. Flow Diagram of Environmental Sustainability.