

Determinants and Pattern of Urbanization and Counter-Urbanization: The Case of South Asia

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Abstract

Developing countries are experiencing rapid and unguided urbanization which may contribute to increase poverty. Managing rapid urbanization is crucial for sustainable development. The main purpose of this article is to explore the determinants, trend and status of urbanization and counter-urbanization in South Asia. The effects of urbanization and counter urbanization has influence on land use pattern and real estate planning in South Asia. Urbanization in South Asia provides opportunities for education, employment, better housing, updated technology transfer, markets for agricultural products and better physical treatment facilities by gathering well educated and skilled people. While the urbanization is increasing gradually in most of the megacities in South Asia but the trend of counter urbanization is less than the urbanization. The paper concluded with some policy recommendations including public-private partnership for sustainable urban development in South Asia.

Keywords: Urbanization; Counter-urbanization; South Asia; land; Real estate.



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1. Introduction

Developing countries are experiencing rapid and unguided urbanization which may contribute to increase poverty. Urbanization is a process of population movement from rural areas to urban areas and the way by which society adapts to the change. Urbanization is usually occurred due to specific development in a place which also encourage human development and modern life leading facility. It is also closely related to industrialization and increasing trend of modernization of economy and society. Increasing trend of urban population is a major driver of contemporary urbanization. Earning facility, economic development and spatial distribution of development works are also major characteristics of urbanization (Seto *et al.*, 2010; World B., 2009). The urbanization of developing country is usually influenced by the urbanization of developed country. Though the trend, characters, and other drivers of urbanization of developing country are not similar to developed country but spatial distribution is almost similar to developed country (Jain and Knieling, 2017; Seto *et al.*, 2010; Slemroda *et al.*, 2017; Tiana *et al.*, 2017). Market liberalization and economic transformations are the key elements which influence land and housing into real estate in the urban areas (Neve and Donner, 2015).

The counter-urbanization is the movement of the people from urban areas to the rural areas. Consequently, all the activities related to this movement also move from urban to rural areas (Berry, 1976). Some push factors which directly responsible for counter-urbanization lack of basic public services are, unavailability of proper accommodation, the high value of land, expensive life leading cost, restrictions, local tax, pollution and unavailability of the job. It is actually a demographic and social process. Some pull factors invite counter-urbanization in unurbanized areas like low life leading expense, job availability, easy transportation, cheap land, and

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real estate, easily available basic services and comfortable environment for living. It was first observed in the USA in the 1960s but became available in 1970s. Due to misinterpretation it was not properly documented (Gilg, 1985). The concept of counter-urbanization is still under debate though it has passed already 41 years. According to (Mitchell, 2004), it is a chaotic concept whereas urbanization can be described simply (Halliday and Combes, 1995). The concerned area of counter-urbanization is really so large and dispersed. It is very difficult to identify the area of counter-urbanization that is why most of the researcher depends on the concept of Berry (1976) where he explains it as a decentralization process of the people. In this process, people move from more concentrated area to less concentrated areas. The concept of counter-urbanization is based on some predefined assumptions like people generally migrate from large settlement to small settlement, more uncomfortable places to comfortable places, an insecure place to secure places etc. But predefined assumption cannot touch the full areas of counter-urbanization. Berry (1976) defined counter-urbanization in the context of American Geography which consists a socio-geographical interrelation between national and regional formation. According to Berry (1976), due to counter-urbanization some common phenomena may be seen like rural population may be stabilized, slow urban growth, slow capital growth, slow growth around big cities etc. According to Fielding (1989), counter-urbanization means permanent migration and relocation of people from city to the rural areas or countryside. Counter-urbanization has two dimensions viz. expansion of suburban zone and conscious choice of people to migrate rural areas from the city.

The land is an important part of urbanization and counter-urbanization. It is considered as a local asset of livelihoods and essential factors for solving the problems related to global food, climate, and energy crisis, and urbanization. There is a debate raised on global urbanization and issues on urban growth. The urban growth in South Asia is taking place in an unplanned way. According to world urbanization prospects, the urban population rate is increasing which will be 66% of the world population by 2050 UN (2014). Inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities are necessary to meet the challenge. New urban agenda should be implemented by mobilizing sufficient financial investment for housing, infrastructure and economic development (Sheppard *et al.*, 2015); (UN-Habitat, 2016). The land is one of the key elements for sustainable urban development by promoting the security of tenure, sustainable land use, and responsible land governance (Wehrmann, 2016). Real estate is the property bearing land and building with natural resources. The business which deals with buying, selling, renting of land and buildings is called real estate business. Sometimes real estate increases the speed of urbanization by providing better accommodation facilities. In South Asia real estate industry means purchasing land, construction of building, selling and providing rent or lease to people. Brokerage house or real estate company has emerged to facilitate deals, securing land deeds, obtaining official procedures and negotiating various parties in the real estate industry. The agricultural land is enhanced by the real estate company for building construction which creates an effect on agricultural food production. The massive expansion of South Asian cities decreases the agricultural land but increases real estate industry and urbanization from last two decades (Jain and Knieling, 2017). This research is basically a descriptive one with some characteristics of normative research focusing on urbanization and counter-urbanization in South Asia. At the same time, current problems of land and real estate in the process of urbanization and counter-urbanization in South Asia has been discussed on the basis of evidence. Therefore, the research is aimed at discussing the factors that contributed to the development of the real estate business in the process of urbanization and counter-urbanization in South Asia and how the market is performing now. It also focuses on various problems related to urbanization and counter-urbanization in South Asia along with an economic explanation of land and real estate sector. Major values of the research come from its contribution in the knowledge spillovers system especially in the area of urbanization and counter-urbanization in South Asia.

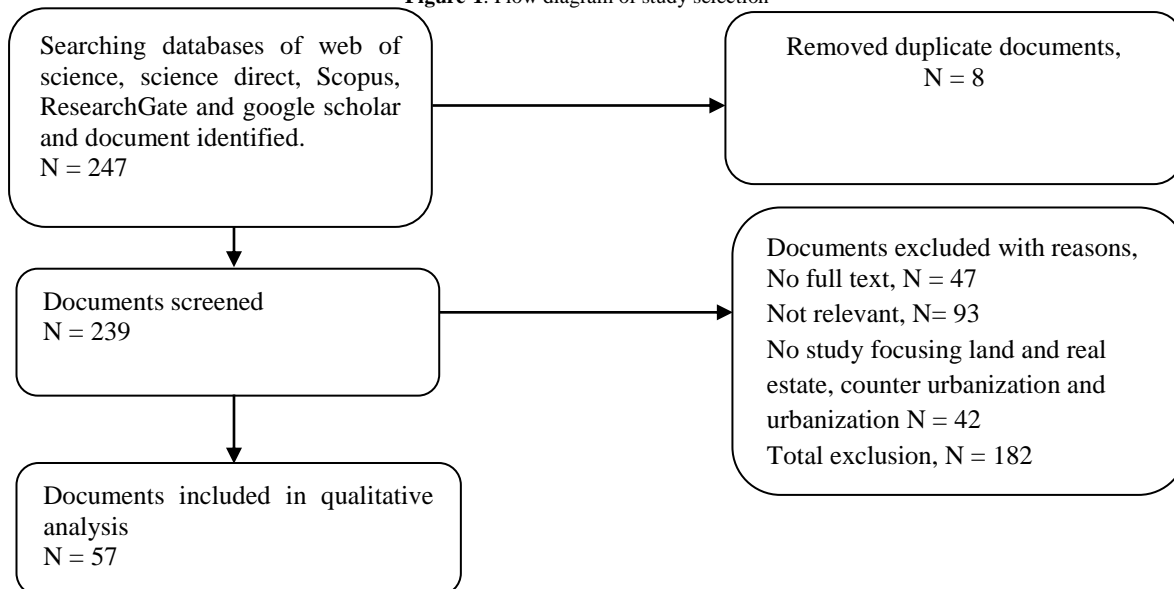
Income inequality has risen with gradually increasing the rural-urban income gap and disparity between highly educated urban professionals and rural poor people. The uneven economic growth and income distribution in the last three decades emerged due to rural-urban migration across the country which leads to the emergence of many empty villages in resource-poor areas in South Asia. It creates series of policy challenges on urbanization and future rural sustainable development. This article aims to contribute to the new urban agenda and current discussions about “making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (SDG 11) by presenting a comparative review of last two debates. This article addresses the questions: (a) what are the key characteristics of South Asian urbanization? (b) what is the status of urbanization and counter-urbanization in South Asia? and (c) what are the problems of land and real estate in the process of urbanization and counter-urbanization in South Asia

The article is organized into seventh sections. The first section describes the concept of urbanization, counterurbanization, land acquisition and real estate industry with theoretical perspectives. The second section explains the key characteristics of South Asian urbanization. The third section describes the Urbanization status of South Asia. The fourth section explains the counterurbanization in South Asia. The fifth section explains the problems of land acquisition, real estate in the process of urbanization and counterurbanization in South Asia. The sixth and seventh section explains policy implications and conclusion.

2. Methodology

This study is qualitative in nature which uses a systematic literature review. The study mainly focuses on the status of urbanization and counter-urbanization in South Asia. Besides, A case study method has been done to explore the in-depth information regarding the trend of urbanization and counter-urbanization of the main cities of the South Asian countries.

Figure-1. Flow diagram of study selection



A systematic literature review has been done by following the objectives of the study strictly (Figure 1). According to (Rother, 2007), a systematic literature review is considered as an original research work because of following a rigorous, and systematic process. The analysis has been confined to the urbanization and counter-urbanization of South Asia. An extensive review is done by using web of Science, Science Direct, Scopus, researchgate and google scholar website and some keywords like “urbanization, counter-urbanization, land, real estate, South Asia, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives, and Afghanistan” have been used to get the latest research related to the topic (Fredriksson et al., 2017). Fifty-seven journal articles, working papers, and books have been reviewed to explore the status of urbanization and counter-urbanization in South Asia. The data collection and analysis for this study have been done from February to March 2018. Secondary statistical data have been collected from world economic outlook-2017, HDR (2017), and (World C. D., 2017). Data is analyzed from different perspectives of urbanization and counter urbanization and challenges related to land and real estate industry.

3. Profile of South Asia

South Asia’s urban population has increased sharply since the turn of the century, and the region has made impressive progress toward greater prosperity (Raman, 2015). Logic market mechanism is a key driver of structural changes in cities. It is usually happened at global level due to liberalization policies. So, globalization is an important instrument for urbanization and counter urbanization in the whole world (Neve and Donner, 2015). A great opportunity to access global market brings an opportunity to develop the mainstream economy of a nation. It also influences to Southern Asia to lead same type of life like western developed countries (Figure 2). For example, eyes attracting architecture, luxury apartment, nice shopping mall, too high office tower, ornamental restaurants, and high-tech park are already constructed in the different South Asian cities which attracts people to migrate from countryside to big cities.

Figure-2. Map showing study area



The total land area of South Asia is 6,399,056 Km² (WEO, 2017); (HDR, 2017). About 35.1 % of the population are living urban areas (Table 1).

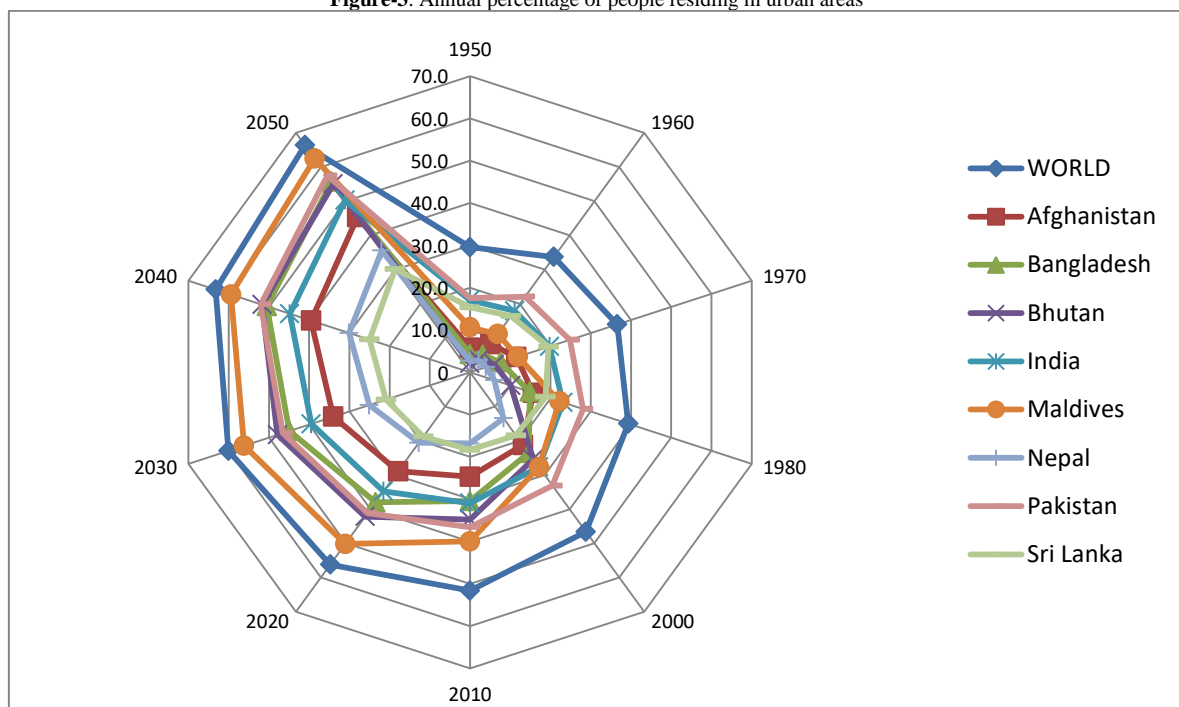
Table-1. Urbanization profile of South Asia

Year	Population (million)	Yearly % Change	Migrants (net)	Density (P/Km ²)	Urban Pop %	Urban Population (million)	Compare to World Population	World Population (million)
2017	1870.46	1.28 %	-1.05	292	35.1	655.61	24.89 %	7515.28
2016	1846.76	1.31 %	-1.05	289	34.7	639.91	24.85 %	7432.66
2015	1822.97	1.37 %	-1.31	285	34.3	624.43	26.31 %	7349.47
2010	1702.99	1.5 %	-2.09	266	32.3	550.60	26.12 %	6929.72
2000	1451.93	1.93 %	-0.57	227	29	420.68	25.32 %	6126.62
1990	1189.26	2.33 %	-0.10	186	26.6	316.08	24.51 %	5309.66
1980	939.04	2.44 %	-0.04	147	23.6	221.31	23.12 %	4439.63

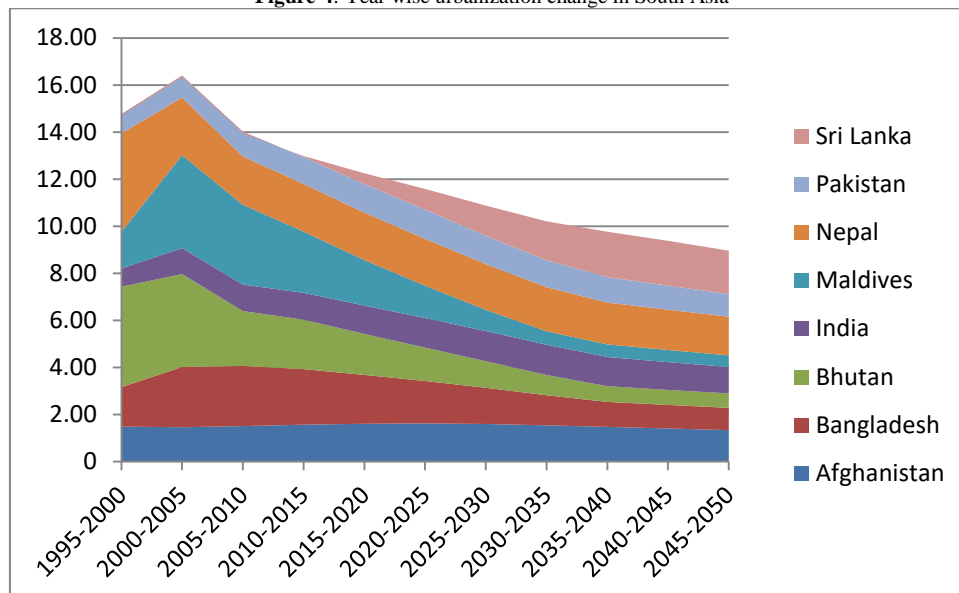
Source: (World C. D., 2017)

The south Asian countries are characterized by variations in terms of socio-economic, physical, demographic, and cultural characteristics (Figure 3). India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh have more populations amongst the countries in the region.

Figure-3. Annual percentage of people residing in urban areas



Bangladesh is one of the most populated countries in the world. The Maldives is the second most densely populated in the region with a density but it has a small area. Afghanistan and Bhutan are a relatively thinly populated country which has less than 50 persons/ km².

Figure-4. Year wise urbanization change in South Asia

The urbanization pattern of South Asia is different from other regions. South Asian urbanization just started after 1981 but the speed of urbanization is slower than other regions (Figure 4). Congestion pressures is a fundamental problem for South Asian cities.

4. Urbanization in South Asia

4.1. Urbanization in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the world's most densely populated country and is going to face rapid urbanization in upcoming decades. According to [World B. \(2008\)](#), the urban area will face about every other man, women and child urban resident by 2020. It is not managed properly, it will increase chaotic conditions in futures. Dhaka is the capital of Bangladesh and one of the megacities of the world where one group of people is living in a slum and another group is living in the elite residential area. This disparity creates an instantly of the political condition. During 2000 to 2010, Bangladesh experience more urban population growth than rural areas ([Ansari, 2009](#)). The urban population growth rate was 6 percent whereas national growth rate was 2.2 percent since 1971 ([World B., 2007](#)). Approximately 25 percent populations live in urban areas. Among them, more than half are living in four major cities viz. Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, and Rajshahi.

The fastest urbanization of Bangladesh is putting pressure on land, real estate, and basic services. The growth of real estate industry is slow due to political instability. Now the real estate business spreads to the major cities of Bangladesh. But most of the cities are experiencing indiscipline and random construction. That is why experts and public pretty much worry about the situation. Agricultural land decreases due to rapid urbanization. Now about 320 companies are operating real estate business in divisional cities and neighboring cities of Dhaka. The land is decreasing due to rapid urbanization which fuels real estate business to expand their money-making business without caring discipline and planned construction. Public sector fails to provide housing for people as well as monitor the real estate company.

4.2. Urbanization in Bhutan

Bhutanese have a few experiences of urbanization. About 85 percent people are living in the rural areas and agriculture is their livelihood means. So, they are little concern about the urbanization. The government of Bhutan has been concentrated to make Bhutan as a modern state through vibrant economy and modern service delivery system. Thimpu, the capital of Bhutan and Phuntsoling are experiencing urbanization. Various regions of Bhutan are connected by virtue of the flows of peoples ([Mehran, 2000](#)). There is a large income gap between the people of urban and rural areas due to less opportunity for a large number of rural people.

4.3. Urbanization in India

The average urban population growth rate is three percent per annum and about 32 percent of the population is living in cities ([Nijman, 2015](#)). Though urbanization is an integral part of an economy, India will be third largest economy bearing 6.7 percent GDP growth by 2030. In 2015, 420 million people were urban people but it increases to 583 million by 2030 ([Nefedova et al., 2016](#)). The urban growth stimulates industrialization and commercialization which effects on the environment and infrastructural capabilities ([Rao, 2013](#)). Local government is continually facing challenges regarding public service delivery. The people who migrated from rural areas are mostly bound to live in the slums. Urbanization rate in India is low due to the low level of industrialization. Urban slums are expanded because of migration from rural area despite government slum eradication orb rehabilitation policies ([Chatterji, 2013](#)).

4.4. Urbanization in Nepal

Nepal is one of the ten least urbanized countries in the world. The population urbanization was 5,130,000 with 3 percent growth rate and urbanization level was 18.2 percent (in Table 2) (UN, 2014). Now Nepal is the fastest urbanizing country dominated by a few large and medium cities excessive population. The major urbanized areas are Kathmandu valley, the Pokhara valley, the Inner trial valley and border towns located close to India (MoUD, 2015); (Muzzini and Aparicio, 2013). Three mutual transitions are the factors of fast urbanization in Nepal viz. demographic transition, spatial transition and economic transition (MoUD, 2015). The extension of the boundary of municipal and adjacent areas of cities are the key factor of the urban growth (Choe and Pradhan, 2010).

Table-2. Urban growth patterns in Nepal

Parameters	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2014
Urban population (000)	336	462	957	1,696	3,228	4,523*	5,130**
Number of urban areas	16	16	23	33	58	58*	191**
Urban population (%)	3.6	4.0	6.4	9.2	13.9	17*	18.2*
Urban growth rate (%)	4.40	3.23	7.55	5.89	6.65	3.4***	N/A
National population growth rate (%)	1.65	2.07	2.66	2.10	2.27	1.35*	N/A

Source: (Choe and Pradhan, 2010); (CBS, 2012); (UN, 2014); (MoUD, 2015).

4.5. Urbanization in Pakistan

The one-third population of Pakistan is urban and it may be rise to 50 percent by 2050. Urban population is increased from about 1.12 million in 1951 to 11 million in 2017 (Pakistan, 2017); (Rana and Bhatti, 2017). The major reason of urbanization is a migration of people from the countryside to escape war, insecurity and natural disasters as well as seeking better livelihood and basic services. The rate of population growth of metropolitan cities is much higher than small and intermediate cities. Though urbanization has a positive effect on economic development uncontrolled and rapid urbanization causes housing shortage, insufficient education and health facilities, transportation shortage, degrading environments and deteriorating law and order situation in Pakistan. Most of the cities of Pakistan are not administratively cohesive. Most of the houses of city centers are the housing of civil servants, judges, and any officials. It creates a land shortage for development works. Sometimes inner-city land is taken by the federal and provincial government without consultation of the city government. The expert official gets the gift of land as officials' reward. So, urbanization is not a new story in Pakistan (Rana and Bhatti, 2017). It is started from birth in 1947 when some refugees settled in urban areas of Sindh and Punjab. Pakistan should take the challenge of urbanization especially for maintaining a balance between rural and urban areas (Kugelman, 2013).

4.6. Urbanization in Sri Lanka

The city government is relatively newly formed in Sri Lanka. That is why it is the first phase of urbanization. The government of Sri Lanka initiated an urbanization program in 2009 for facilitating the middle-class people of the country. This initiative will create a business-friendly environment. The program has been implemented since 2020 by which some modernization initiatives have already done. The world bank took an initiative to help Sri Lanka for this journey in 2012 and took a look at how this drive could be sustained to get urban development goal. The urban vision of the Sri Lankan government will be achieved by 2020 by fulfilling the institutional and policy gap. The government of Sri Lanka has a plan to construct 500000 housing units by constructing one million new houses by 2020. The sustainable township program has already initiated to construct low-income houses in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The plan of sustainable township program is to build 100000 new houses per annum over the country until 2020.

4.7. Urbanization in the Maldives

The Maldives has about 1192 islands. In mid-2008, the population of Maldives was 309575 and spreading in 115300 Km² of about 202 islands of which more than 95 percent is water (MPND and UNDP, 2004). The size of the islands is relatively small but only two of them are more than 500 hectares. The urbanization rate of Maldives is very high which faces difficulties to housing congestion. The people are suffering from housing since island geography limits for the available land of the housing. 1.97 Km² land has already managed for construction in the capital city of Maldives under an urbanization project which initiated in 1970 (MPND and UNDP, 2004). The capital city, Male' is one of the densely populated cities in the world which faces continuous migration of people from other islands. According to 2006 survey, the population density of Male' was 52636 people per Km². The use of housing is affected by a number of social and administrative factors. The land scarcity creates high prices and overcrowded housing, that is why government stops to allocate the land for individuals.

4.8. Urbanization in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is one of the rapidly urbanizing countries of the world. The rate of urbanization is 4 percent per year and about 26.7 percent people are living in the city (UN, 2014). But the urban center of Afghanistan faces some challenges like informal settlement, poor infrastructure, environmental pollution and poor sanitation (Jain and Knieling, 2017). The urban people are facing a considerable housing challenge due to the migration of people from

the countryside. Afghanistan was done its last census in 1979 which was actually a partial count. So, it is very difficult to explain the urbanization and economic trend due to lack of recent data.

5. Counter-Urbanization in South Asia

The process of counter-urbanization involves the movement of people from urban areas to the countryside or rural areas, a new town, a new estate, a new commuter town or village. Generally, government encourages to move from urbanized area to a new town or a new estate area. People choose a commuter town or village for their convenience. Most of the research work on counter-urbanization showed it as a domestic phenomenon (Halfacree, 2008). The urbanites who moving from near city area are called urbanization. But exurbanites are closely tied with cities for their jobs and now want to deprived of comforts of urban areas. Sometimes people are squeezed out due to lack of job, expensive living cost and discomforts of urban areas and move to the countryside are called displaced urbanization (Mitchell, 2004). Finally, the people who reject urban life due to out of principle are called antiurbanization. All the forms of counter-urbanization are available in South Asia but at the initial stage.

5.1. Dimensions of Counter-Urbanization

There are two dimensions of counter-urbanization available in the society viz. firstly, people prefer rural life due to expensive life leading cost, congestion, lack of basic services; secondly, natural reduction of urban population. The objectives of decentralization are not yet achieved all over the world and that is why, people are concentrated to migrate urban areas (Nefedova *et al.*, 2016). There is an exception for example in Sweden, people migrate large cities to the urban periphery. It is because of the older age people who are unable to work and unable to bear the cost of city life (Lindgren, 2002). Recent studies have shown that employment opportunities one of the major reasons for urbanization and counter-urbanization. When the employment facility is better, people migrate to urban areas but if the people do not get employment opportunity, they are bound to migrate to the rural areas. Employment sector drives mainly labor forces and economic factors. Labor forces generally shift from urban to rural areas. Employment sector also influences by economic factors like expensive livelihood, tax, air pollution, transportation cost, lack of backward and forward linkages. But both the causes are mutually dependent on each other. Natural reduction of population is done urban as well as rural areas.

5.2. Challenges of Counter-Urbanization in South Asia

Counter-urbanization is one kind of economic transformation. Usually, it is seen in old urban areas. A new form of rural area develops which is dominated by urban characteristics due to urban to rural migration. The major task of city government is controlling air pollution, solid waste management and resources management in South Asia. The solid waste management and resource management are much easier in urban areas than rural areas. The environmental sustainability of the area may lose due to much counter-urbanization. Tokyo city is a vital example of it. The Tokyo city provides so many utility services for its citizen but due to urbanization, most of the services lost its demand. Counter-urbanization increases the distance between the living place and workplace but information communication technology (ICT) takes place to reduce the distance. The ICT also reduces cost and time. As a result, people can easily do their jobs by sitting home. Some means to tackle the challenges regarding counter-urbanization like firstly, a holistic approach is necessary to maintain urban and regional land and transport; secondly, innovative technology should be developed to support the holistic approach for easily control the balance between urbanization and counter-urbanization; thirdly, the quality of life should be improved in the urban as well as rural areas to control balance between two areas; finally sustainable city requires well-structured objectives, vision, mission, strategy and policy instruments.

5.3. Land and Real Estate in Urbanization and Counter-Urbanization

The land is an important natural resource which on people depend for livelihoods but the ways of using land and resources are not good which creates a serious problem in future (Cieslewicz, 2002). The exploitation of land increases dramatically due to modern agricultural practices, modern technology, and capitalist mode. This phenomenon is directly related to counter-urbanization due to its products and resources orientation. The economic structure, demography, prices of land and real estate are based on the process of counter-urbanization (Löffler and Steinicke, 2006). Counter-urbanization is a process which changes the long-term settlement system (Dean *et al.*, 1984). The relation between migration and the size of urban areas settlement or regions were mentioned by the earlier researcher (Fielding, 1982). According to Liu and Roberts (2013), the main reasons of counter-urbanization are expensive land, more task, traffic congestion, expensive living, and pollution. But the causes may vary from cities to cities. There are some major effects caused by counter-urbanization like closing local services and changing rural settlements. People generally want to avoid negative effects of urban lives and search easier lives. According to Illeris (1990), the major causes of counter-urbanization are expensive living cost, environmental problems like water pollution, air pollution and sound pollution, overcrowding and traffic problem, higher crime rate, modern technology, and easy transport system. Counter-urbanization has an impact on both rural and urban life. It develops rural peoples faster. Farmers get benefits by selling their products and land to developers. It has some negative effects on a rural area like adaptation problem between old and new residents' environmental degradation. It has some positive effects for urban areas like slower development, lack of labor force etc. Though urbanization provides employment opportunities, better housing, education, modern technology, available markets it has new challenges for adoption (Thu, 2013).

5.4. Introduction to Land Use Change

Land use change means the change of land cover and land using system. The land surface is covered by natural activities (cropland, vegetarian, soil type, water resource, mountains, water sources) and man-made structures (Meyer, 1995). Land covers changes usually happen by modification and conversion Lambin *et al.* (2006). Land use system mainly focuses the using pattern of a human for urbanization and counter urbanization (Lambin *et al.*, 2006) with other purposes farming, mining housing, logging on creditor. The exploitation of land is done for fulfilling people needs (Ansari, 2009). Many research and scholar focused on land use change to explain the land use decision-making process which has direct effect on individual farms, households on communities (Lambin *et al.*, 2006). There are same fundamental forces responsible for urbanization and counter urbanization like technological, economic, demographic, political culture and institutional (Lambin *et al.*, 2006), for example and use change in the fundamental force of urbanization in US.

5.5. Connection between Land Use Change and Urbanization

Generally, the process of movement and redistribution of population is the result of urbanization. It means the relocation population, resources and industries from one place to another. There were two major resource of US urbanization viz. economic growth and city growth (Geruson and McGrath, 1977). An urban is farmed due to the process of urbanization which limited city and suburbs economically and socially. According to Rostow (1977), capitalism is the cause of urbanization which stimulates distribution of habitat, economic and administrative activities. This distribution is based on consumption of land by new housing unit, industrial activities, administrative division and infrastructure. The fundamental aspect of urbanization is to build houses for people which is based on land is expanding than urban people in the same place of the world. However, the urban population will be increased double about 5.0 billion in 2030 from 2.6 billion in 2000 (UN, 2014), and the urban area will be triple in 2030 from 2000 (Seto *et al.*, 2012).

5.6. Priority Areas of Land and Real Estate

There are four priority areas of land and real estate viz. inter-city dynamics, semi-urban dynamics, emerging cities and large-scale investment. According to Nguyen (2015), a socially inclusive agenda should be developed to meet the challenges of developing inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities without hampering land grabs. A mobilization of large investment should be necessary for getting urban spaces and good infrastructure (Otsuki *et al.*, 2016). Large-scale investment is necessary for developing inner and out cities and should be extended to the rural areas. The nature of cities largely depends on the inflow of land-related investments. It triggers not only real estate but also infrastructure development equally in urban and rural areas. Livelihood pattern and compensation land loss of farmers more or less common in the semi-urban areas.

6. Policy Recommendations

The large-scale conversion is depending on semi-urban dynamic that means livelihood change. Semi-urban area is considered as a frontier in new urban agenda which surrounded the city gradually. It attracts developers and investors to invest in urbanization sector. Sometimes large-scale investment covert rural area to semi-urban areas by establishing administrative offices, real estate, job opportunities and modern facilities of life. It can be happened by private sector lead strategies like making smart city (Brenner and Schmid, 2104). Industries driven urbanization may be occurred due to urbanization of rural areas linking with agriculture, mining and tourism development. The traditional cattle farming area is converted into nice place for tourism and real estate due to urbanization is same part of South Asia. The development of tourism and establishment of international hotel is the effect of urbanization.

6.1. Improving City Governance

Generally, most of the city government of south Asia cities are characterized by corruption, lack of accountability, budget and financial autonomy, poor coordination and poor management. The city government should be active and manage their work by themselves. The central government should monitor the city government property for managing the balance between urbanization and counter-urbanization. Zeuthen (2017) a research on urbanization in Chengdu, China and argued that the higher degree of government control can preserve the rights of old rural property rights institutions.

6.2. Decentralization of Administrative Functions

The concept of decentralization is based on the relocation of administrative offices to the different cities at various levels to run the administrative activities properly. Generally local level administrative providers various public services like water distribution, sanitation services, waste management, maintenance of local roads, traffic management and transport services. These activities generally done by the urban city government of the south Asian countries. Decentralization can provide proper control the balance between urbanization and counter-urbanization. Liua *et al.* (2017) conducted a study on Local state and administrative urbanization in Hebi city, Henan, China and mentioned that urbanization in China was done through direct intervention of local administrative means under national urban policies of central government.

6.3. Coordination among Fiscal, Regulatory and Administrative Division

The efficiency of the city is largely depending on the ability of city government official to coordinate financial, regulatory and administrative system which directly influence the services for urban cities. If the efficiency is good then urban people get benefits from it. Most of the cities in South Asia, city managers, do not have the control for managing the city as they are not a sole authority. City government should be empowered to coordinate fiscal, regulatory and administrative matter to control between urbanization and counter urbanization (Li, 2011; Lindgren, 2002).

6.4. Raise Own Finances for Autonomy

Tax is the main earning source of the city government. Government should take measure to make the city government as self-reliant (Gao *et al.*, 2017). The access to property taxes and business on income taxes became an investment for ensuring accountability. The central government should be taken long-term strategy to enable city government in various aspects like skill development training, modern technology, leadership, increasing earning sources and autonomy (Li, 2011).

6.5. Urban Planning and Initiative

A good planning is necessary for sound urban development. Incentives are also necessary for private sectors so that they can build new housing for urban peoples (Lai and Wu, 2013). Job opportunities should be created so that people can move into formal and informal housing. Now a day, slum is created at the periphery of the urban area in the south Asian cities. It is one kind of counter-urbanization. People can easily do their job in urban areas by transportation from periphery areas. Li (2011) argued that both fiscal and political incentives are necessary for the local government in promoting economic growth. He conducted research on the role of incentive for creating cities in China.

6.6. Developing a Sound Real Estate Market

The rising urban population is mainly depending on the real estate on housing markets in the south Asian cities. Though, most of the real estate and housing company are privately financed, so it as a major constraint to them. But the housing and real estate company serves middle class and rich people. So, government institution should become forward to make housing and real estate facilities to the low level of people and it should be spread to the neighboring places of urban areas to balance between urbanization and counter-urbanization. Gao *et al.* (2017) argued that an equalization is necessary for rural and urban people for free transformation of land and property. They assessed the real estate and housing situation in rapid urbanization of China.

6.6. NGO Involvement for Land and Housing

It is a very big deal for government to control the urbanization without the help of other stakeholders. NGO should be come forward to do work alongside the government for controlling urbanization. Some NGOs already made facilities for accommodation of women workers in the Dhaka city (World B., 2007). It is really cost-effective and secure accommodation services for women. This kind of strategy should be taken in other cities of South Asia. Zoomers *et al.* (2017) mentioned that NGOs can become actively participate in preventing land grabbing through promoting and implementing good land governance.

6.7. Prioritizing Urban Land Management

The urban areas require so much land for various organizations like commercial organization, industrial organization, administrative organization, educational institution, recreational park and industrial use. So, land management is a big problem for urbanization as well as pressure for central and local government to deal properly. Governments land management policy should be such that people can get comfortable life in city as well as the rural areas around the city for maintaining balance between urbanization and counter-urbanization (Lian and Lejano, 2014).

7. Conclusions

This study focuses on new urbanization and counter urbanization trend in South Asia. It also explores the problems of land and real estate in this process of urbanization and counter urbanization. The study reveals that South Asia has entered in the process of sub-urbanization in 1981. However, the urbanization rate is little higher than other areas of the world because of the industrialization and increase of per capita income. The peoples of South Asia choose urban areas for enjoying modern life with comfortable facilities where rural areas lack of many basic facilities and government services. However, many people living in cities are also facing problems like lack of public service facilities, education, water and sanitation facilities, lower income and less job availability that enforces them to come back to rural areas. As a result, counter urbanization is taking place in the South Asian cities from last few years. The main drivers for urbanization and counter urbanization are state policy, right to access to information and land, environmental issues, beautification drivers, aesthetic governmentality, lack of mechanism for property right and right of customary usage. The study suggests that privatization, citizen friendly of land and real estate policy and public-partnership may be good drivers for sustainable urban growth in South Asia. The study faces some limitation of data for investigating and understanding the pattern of urbanization and its related challenges. It

suggests further research on urbanization and counter urbanization by focusing social, economic and political challenges in South Asia.

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