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Neglecting the urban poor in Bangladesh: research, policy and action in the context of climate change

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Abstract

In Bangladesh, urban poverty is neglected in research, policy and action on poverty reduction. This paper explores the underlying foundations for this relative neglect, including national identity and image, the political economy of urban poverty, and the structuring of knowledge creation. It argues for more comprehensive policy and programmes for the urban poor given Bangladesh's increasingly urban future and the growing magnitude of urban poverty. The impact of climate change will accelerate Bangladesh's ongoing urbanisation, as well as deepen the scale and severity of urban poverty. That urban poverty reduction will subsequently be increasingly important to the ability to meet national goals for poverty reduction means that policy and action must pay more attention to the urban poor. This is contingent upon two factors: a better understanding of the scale and nature of urban poverty reduction and vulnerability, and the confrontation of powerful interests necessary to secure national commitment to urban poverty reduction.

Keywords: Urban poverty, climate change, Bangladesh

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List of abbreviations

BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BCAS	Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BOSC	*Bustee Bashir Odikhar Surikha Committee*
BCCSAP	Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
CGS	Centre for Governance Studies
CPD	Centre for Policy Dialogue
CUS	Centre for Urban Studies
CUP	Coalition for the Urban Poor
DCC	Dhaka City Corporation
DCI	Direct Calorie Intake
DFID	Department for International Development
DMDP	Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan
DMSA	Dhaka Metropolitan Statistical Area
DSK	*Dushtha Shastyha Kendra*
DSS	Department of Social Services
GoB	Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
HDS	Health and Demographic Survey
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LDC	Less-developed Country
LDMS	Local Development Monitoring Survey
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PMS	Poverty Monitoring Survey
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SIP	Slum Improvement Project
ULS	Urban Livelihoods Study

1. Introduction

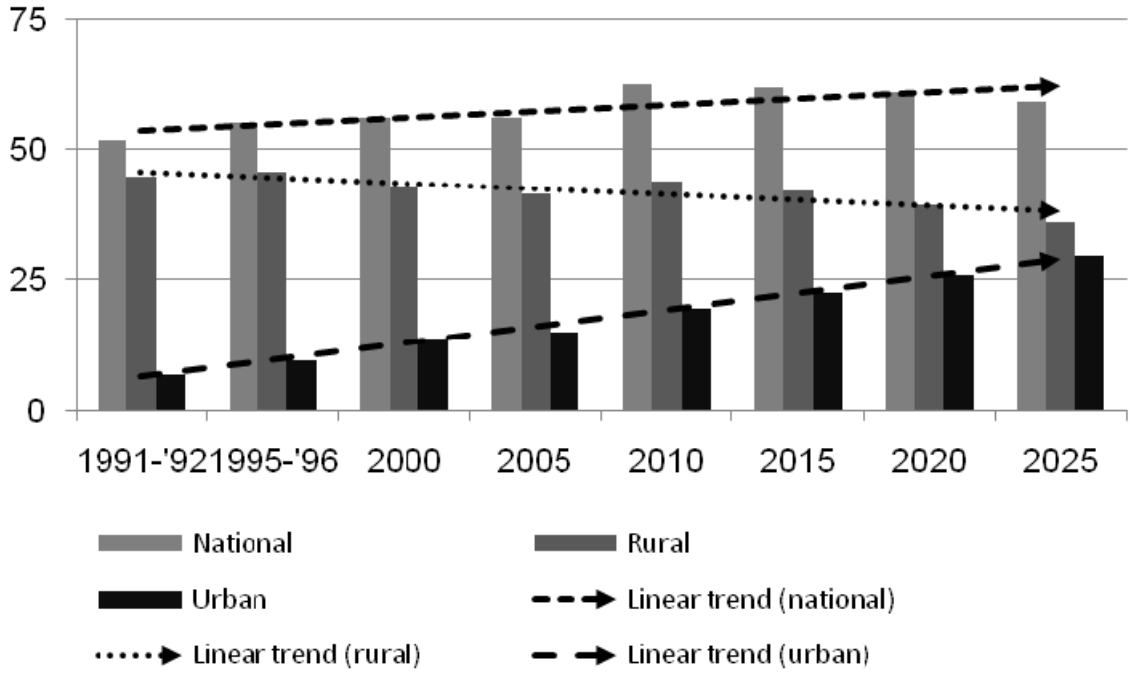
This working paper argues that, in the context of Bangladesh, research, policy and action on poverty in urban areas experiences neglect relative to rural areas. A number of overlapping factors underpin this relative neglect, which can be broadly grouped under three headings: national identity and image; the political economy of urban poverty; and the structuring of knowledge creation. This neglect of poverty in urban areas will be compounded in the future because of the neglect of research and policy on the impacts of climate change on low-income urban residents. After a brief overview of urban poverty in Bangladesh, the paper discusses the causes of this relative neglect, and the implications that this has for urban poverty in Bangladesh, in the context of increasing vulnerability due to climate change.

2. Urbanisation and urban poverty in Bangladesh

Rapid urbanisation is a key feature of Bangladesh's recent development, and has led to an increasing proportion of Bangladesh's population living in urban areas. From the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s, the urban population growth rate of Bangladesh was over six percent per annum, much higher than the national population growth rate of 2.5 percent per annum over this period (Islam et al 1997). Its urban population continues to grow at over 3.5 percent annually (CUS et al 2006).

Consequently, Bangladesh experienced a 23 percent increase in the urban share of the population during 2000 to 2005 (Narayan, Yoshida et al 2007). By 2005, Bangladesh had an urban population of around 35 million, just over 25 percent of its total population (CUS et al 2006). While rural population growth is expected to stagnate by 2010, population growth will continue in urban areas (Garrett and Chowdhury 2004). As Figure 1 shows, population projections indicate that a declining share in Bangladesh's rural population will be accompanied by a rapidly increasing urban share in the population. The tipping point at which Bangladesh's poor population becomes predominantly urban, therefore, is likely to occur within this generation.

Figure 1. Bangladesh: rural and urban populations below the poverty line 1991-2025 (by DCI method, absolute number in millions).



Note: Data from 1991 to 2005 are actual reported in the BBS (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics) Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), and from 2010 to 2025 are projected. Population data have been obtained from United Nations Population Division.
Source: Eusuf 2010.

While urban areas are evenly distributed spatially across Bangladesh, there is regional imbalance in the concentration and level of urbanisation. Dhaka district has by far the highest level of urbanisation, given the size of Dhaka, the capital city, which is expected to be the world's second largest urban agglomeration by 2020 (World Bank 2007).

Bangladesh distinguishes between large and smaller urban areas. The country's six largest cities have been denominated with the status of city corporations, and are governed by their own municipal authorities. There are an additional 271 smaller municipalities, or *pourashavas*, that are also classified as urban areas. With the exception of Chittagong, Bangladesh's second biggest city, however, the other four city corporations are not large urban agglomerations. This means that the other districts of Bangladesh display much lower levels of urbanisation. The least urbanised districts displayed levels of urbanisation below 10 percent in 1995, for example (Islam et al 1997). Many of the smaller municipalities are little more than rural towns: in the late 1990s, for example, nearly 70 percent of municipalities did not meet the criteria necessary for being considered a municipality (CGS et al 2006).[1]

In recent years, discrepancies in district levels of urbanisation have widened, with patterns of urbanisation moving gradually from a system of four-city primacy to a system of two-city primacy. In 1991 the four largest metropolitan cities (Dhaka,

[1] *Pourashavas* must have a total population over 15,000, a population density over 2,000 per square mile, and have over three-quarters of the population employed in industry other than agriculture.

Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi), held 46 percent of Bangladesh's urban population. This polarisation has increased dramatically: in 2001, Dhaka held just over 58 percent of Bangladesh's total urban population, and the country has witnessed the emergence of a two-city primacy, with Dhaka and Chittagong holding just over 85 percent of the country's urban population (calculations from CUS et al 2006).

While urban and rural areas are distinct geographical categorisations in Bangladesh, the distinction between the rural and urban poor is less so. The larger metropolitan centres, especially Dhaka, have been the major destination for rural-to-urban migration, and many migrants retain close linkages with their rural villages. As capital city and Bangladesh's economic, political and administrative heart, Dhaka alone attracts between 300,000 and 400,000 new migrants each year (World Bank 2007b). Both 'push' and 'pull' factors have contributed to migration in Bangladesh, but it is widely acknowledged that 'push' factors – such as a lack of job opportunities or land erosion – have been the main contributing factors to migration (Opel 2000; Siddiqui, Ahmed et al 2000; Islam 2005). New 'urban' migrants must not be viewed as disconnected from rural economies: the relationship between urban and rural areas should be seen as a continuum rather than a dichotomy (GoB 2005).[2] It is also, however, important to recognise that high natural increases in the urban population mean that there are new generations of low-income urban residents that may have looser links with rural areas.

Urban poverty is a distinctive feature of cities in Bangladesh. The World Bank (2007) reports that the human development situation in urban areas is either stagnating or actively deteriorating. In 2005, nearly 35 percent of Bangladesh's urban population lived in low-income settlements, or *bustees,* across its six city corporations (CUS et al 2006). While urban poverty rates have experienced a steady decline – as illustrated in Table 1 – the absolute number of the urban poor has risen dramatically.[3] That urban poverty rates have decreased, therefore, has not reduced the absolute number of urban poor in Bangladesh (Islam, Shafi et al 2007).

Table 1: Urban poverty in Bangladesh (1983-2005)

	1983-84	*1988-89*	*1991-92*	*2000*	*2005*
HIES urban poverty headcount (%)	40.9	35.9	33.6	26.4 35.2*	28.4*

Note: Estimate for 1995-1996 excluded, due to gross overestimation of average urban per capita expenditure.
Source: Sen, Mujeri et al 2007; *Narayan, Yoshida et al 2007.

[2] As experienced in many countries across the developing world, strong social networks along village and district identities act as a defining factor in who migrates and where, with prior contacts helping migrants to find housing and employment, and providing other assistance on arrival (Afsar 2000; Siddiqui 2008). Even once established in the city, many families maintain close linkages with their village families and networks, returning regularly for festivals or seasonal work, or through sending regular remittances.

[3] Kanbur (2008) emphasises the disjuncture in representing changes in poverty through percentages or absolute numbers; declines in poverty percentages can easily be offset by increases in absolute numbers of the poor.

It is widely recognised that urban poverty is underestimated in developing countries, and research suggests that this is also the case in Bangladesh. One reason for this is that national poverty lines are unlikely to meet the costs of basic necessities in urban areas (Satterthwaite 1997; Bapat 2009). In the Indian city of Pune, for example, Bapat (2009) highlights the discrepancy between the two percent of households designated as 'poor' by the official poverty line, and the 40 percent of the city's population who 'live in poor conditions'. Monthly expenditures are significantly higher for city residents, given the monetisation of the urban economy, where low-income households must meet all of their food costs, high monthly rent and transport costs, and also have to pay for services, including the high costs of illegal water and electricity, and health and education costs. By neglecting to recognise that large segments of the urban poor must meet monthly rental payments for housing, poverty lines greatly underestimate the costs of urban living (Banks 2010; Chandrasekhar and Montgomery 2010). In her study of four *bustees* in Dhaka city, for example, Banks (2010) finds high levels of tenancy rates in three out of four settlements. Monthly rental payments (including water and electricity costs) constituted between 17 and 22 percent of mean monthly incomes across the four communities.

Given their reliance on food purchases – as well as facing higher costs – urban households are also more vulnerable to food price increases. In light of the recent food price crisis, Cohen and Garrett (2010) highlight that policy makers need to take a stronger urban focus. They argue that while poverty is often deeper or more widespread in rural areas, disproportionate attention to rural dwellers is probably misplaced: while rural dwellers are net food producers (and where they sell additional crops or livestock, may actually benefit from price increases), the urban poor are net *purchasers* of food, and food purchases account for the majority of their expenditures (Cohen and Garrett 2010). Not taking into account these higher costs of living means that national poverty lines underestimate the extent of urban poverty. One cross-country study revealed that urban poverty lines are on average 30 percent higher than rural poverty lines (Ravallion et al 2007). In South Asia, the $1/day poverty line is the equivalent of a $1.40/day line in urban areas. Likewise, the $2/day line is represented as $2.79 (Ibid).

Bangladesh's measurement of urban poverty suffers similar problems. The Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) applies the same questionnaire and sampling strategy for rural and urban households, regardless of the costs and consumption patterns across these two geographic areas. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) uses a Cost of Basic Needs approach to define poverty lines, most recently using appropriate price indices for 2005. This utilises a fixed food bundle consisting of 11 key items based on minimum nutritional intake. Food poverty lines are computed by pricing this bundle using the average price of each item for each of Bangladesh's 15 geographic areas. There is, however, no breakdown of urban and rural prices (Dubois 1997; Narayan et al 2007). Given large variations in food prices across rural and urban areas – indeed, even across large and small cities – this undermines claims that the national poverty line is representative of both urban and rural areas. Other measurement errors have led to the 1995-96 HIES being excluded from poverty analyses, as average urban per capita expenditures were believed to be grossly overestimated (Sen, Mujeri et al 2007). Islam et al (1997) also argue that HIESs lack the comprehensiveness required to provide a demographic and social profile of the urban poor.

For these reasons, it is recognised that the HIES is not representative of the urban poor in Bangladesh. To address this limitation, BBS has conducted several separate surveys in urban areas, such as the Poverty Monitoring Survey (PMS), the Labour

Force Survey (LFS), the Local Development Monitoring Survey (LDMS) and the Health and Demographic Survey (HDS). Of these, the most relevant to urban poverty is the PMS, which provides information on the incidence of poverty twice a year. However, as Dubois (1997) notes, most of the samples are either small – as for the PMS – or only focus on specific categories, like the LFS. This leads to insufficient representation of urban socioeconomic groups such as the self-employed. None of the surveys attempts to re-interview the same households in subsequent years, so the datasets are unsuitable for longitudinal studies of poverty dynamics. The 2002 Slum Observatory Survey carried out by the NGO Aparajeyo-Bangladesh may be considered unique in this regard, as it attempted to re-interview the same households in subsequent years, but the survey is limited to four *bustees* in Dhaka.

This section has highlighted both the underestimation of urban poverty, as well as its growing magnitude within Bangladesh's total poor population. Indeed, it is likely that Bangladesh's 'tipping point', at which the urban poor will outnumber the rural poor, will occur within this generation. The need for more accurate measurement of urban poverty, therefore, is urgent, both to provide a more accurate representation of the number of low-income urban households, as well as to provide a more comprehensive economic, demographic and social profile of the urban poor. The hidden extent of urban poverty contributes to continued emphasis on policy, action and research on rural manifestations of poverty.

Given the high probability that Bangladesh will experience severe negative impacts from climate change,[4] a lack of understanding and recognition of low-income households in urban areas reinforces these problems. It is recognised that climate change will accelerate the process of urbanisation by displacing a greater number of poor rural households at a faster rate. Renner (2008), for example, estimates that climate change will displace between 12 and 15 million people in Bangladesh by the turn of this century. The majority of those displaced for climate change-related reasons will be the rural poor, who head for *bustees* in cities and towns (GoB 2009).[5] New migrants are most likely to be absorbed into the informal sector, which provides almost 70 percent of the labour force in Bangladesh's cities (IOM 2010).[6]

Although climate change is adding pace and complexity to Bangladesh's urban future, urban poverty continues to be sidelined in national policy efforts concerning action for climate change, notably in NAPA (GoB 2005b) and the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (GoB 2009). Most governments tend to envisage climate change as largely a problem of rural poverty and food security, and therefore fail to consider the life- or health-threatening risks to which low-income urban populations are exposed to (Bicknell et al 2009). The following sections review

[4] Bangladesh was the country most affected by extreme weather events from 1990 to 2009 according to the Global Climate Risk Index (Harmeling 2011).

[5] This displacement will be a result of three impacts: i) 'sudden-onset' events, such as floods, cyclones and river erosion; ii) 'slow-onset' processes, such as coastal erosion, sea-level rise, salt water intrusion, rising temperature, changing rainfall patterns and drought; and iii) 'cascade' effects, such as environmental degradation, human security and international migration. Sudden on-set events may cause affected populations to leave their homes at least temporarily, often leading to sudden, large-scale movements, but return is often feasible in the long run. However, a larger number of people are expected to migrate due to slow-onset processes and the cascade effect, and migration of this sort is likely to be more permanent owing to the long-lasting – and in some cases irreversible – effects of these processes (IOM 2010).

[6] That low-income urban residents act as such a strong support to Bangladesh's urban economy provides further evidence for the need to recognise these residents as a key engine of the economy and support them through policy and action.

the extent and nature of the neglect in urban poverty in Bangladesh across policy statements, government action and poverty research. We highlight that in an era of climate change, the vulnerability of low-income urban households will increase for three main reasons. First, both through environmental hazards caused by increased scale and concentration of poor households; second, through increased health, physical and environmental risks and disruption as a result of more frequent, more severe, or more prolonged severe weather events, such as flooding; and third, through the increased pressure on urban resources caused by higher levels of rural-urban migration associated with climate change.

3. Bangladesh: image and identity

Bangladesh, and Bengal before it, originated as a predominantly rural and agricultural economy, and this remained the case until the late 20th century. Since 1970 the country has experienced a shift from a predominantly rural country to one that is highly urbanised, without any concurrent shift in recognition – or an understanding – of what this means for research, policy and action for poverty in Bangladesh. Indeed, Islam et al (2007) state that all ruling governments since Independence have been anti-urban poor.[7] Recent efforts to update poverty maps for Bangladesh, for example, do not disaggregate rural and urban areas, and this masks the extent of poverty found in districts with large cities. While Dhaka demonstrates low poverty headcount rates in the poverty mapping exercise, this overlooks the high absolute poor population. A number of areas displaying higher poverty *rates* have a relatively small poor population in comparison (World Bank 2009b).

As with other countries with agrarian histories, Bangladesh remains loyal to a rural-oriented model of development, placing the emphasis of poverty reduction on the development of the rural economy (World Bank 2007). In addition, the generation that presently governs Bangladesh continues to envision the country as 'rural', and such perceptions play an important role in maintaining a rural bias in poverty reduction. Van Schendel (2009: 202) traces the political contests of the 1950s to the 1970s which meant that "[t]he favourite visual representation of the nation was a landscape of beautiful green fields dotted with rustic, peaceful riverside villages". As a result, the image of Bangladesh as rural is a deep part of the ideology of political parties.

As Hossain (2005) writes, "As the repository of all that is good about Bangladeshi society, 'the village' appears as the heart and core of social harmony, usually as the opposite of the dangerous, amoral city" (Hossain 2005: 44). This contributes to an ongoing emphasis on rural investments, given that "The over-crowding of the cities made some see the virtues of a stronger rural focus in economic policy" (ibid: 64). These traditional perceptions of the urban vis-à-vis the rural poor have an impact on national policies for poverty reduction, as, consequently, the national elite view the rural poor as more deserving of support and investment. As highlighted by Hossain (2005b), "…classifications of the poor serve something like a pre-policymaking function, enabling policymakers to sort or prioritise among an otherwise undifferentiated set of claimants, and providing them with the justification for doing so". Perceptions of the urban poor, however, have more commonly and historically been associated with issues of crime and squalor, and emphasis placed on removal rather than assistance.

[7] This was brought home to one of us (DH) when the Minister for Finance stated that "social protection cannot be provided to the urban poor as it will increase the rate of migration to cities" (personal interview with Mr Abul Maal Abdul Muhith 28th January 2009).

In part, images of a rural country are based on objective information: 74 percent of Bangladesh's total population in 2008 still lived in rural areas (World Bank 2009a). However, this stance continues to overlook the need for urban-specific policies and programmes with which to meet the complex vulnerabilities facing the growing number of the urban poor. Not only does a lack of policy impact directly on the urban poor, it also has repercussions on development and poverty reduction in Bangladesh at the national level. In assessing whether Bangladesh would meet the MDGs, for example, the World Bank (2007) named urbanisation and urban poverty as one of the major challenges: urban areas, they highlighted, would drive the improvement, stagnation or deterioration of national outcomes (World Bank 2007).

Another problem which exacerbates the view of rural areas as the location of poverty is the ongoing perception that rural areas are the "legitimate" place for the poor. Bangladesh's cities are increasingly recognised as centres for growth, and city planning, priorities and spending reflect this.[8] At the same time, however, there is no scope within a vision of Bangladesh's "urban future" that allows rightful space to low-income households. Indeed, a number of "myths" remain to the detriment of the urban poor, as explored in Appendix 1. In Bangladesh's first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), for example, the Government of Bangladesh reveals that their neglect of the urban poor has been due to negative perceptions of the widespread nature of *bustees.* Government policy so far, it states, has displayed "a tendency…to equate the problem with that of a big city slum life" (GoB 2005: 53), generating visions of illegality, unsanitary environments and criminality.

In addition, early beliefs that investments in the urban poor would encourage further migration remain, and underlie a continued lack of investment in poverty reduction in urban areas. While investments in infrastructure, services and human capital have equipped the rural poor with an institutional framework that ensures some access to benefits from increased sources of growth, few comparable investments have reached the poor in urban areas. Where the urban poor have benefited indirectly from infrastructure development projects in urban areas, these projects generally did not have the urban poor as their primary focus (Islam et al 1997). This rural bias in poverty reduction efforts has meant that the 1990s was largely the decade of escape from poverty of the moderate poor in rural areas: initial disadvantages in the capabilities of the poor in urban areas persist, however, limiting their prospects for upwards mobility (Sen, Mujeri et al 2007).

4. The political economy of urban poverty and climate change

Policies and actions to tackle poverty have been part of policy debate within Bangladesh since its Liberation in 1971. As Appendix 2 details, poverty has been a significant component of National Development Plans since the first Five Year Plan in 1973. In 2003, Five Year Plans were replaced with National Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). Within these key policy documents, however, urban poverty has been overlooked. Alongside ideologies of a "rural" Bangladesh, a number of political economic factors make the pursuit of narratives about urban poverty less attractive for those with economic and political power than for rural poverty: in turn this has impacted on the policies and programmes of donors and NGOs, and, to a lesser extent, as the final section will discuss, research.

[8] To clarify, we are not arguing here that urban areas are neglected in public expenditure, but that policy and expenditure on poverty reduction neglect low-income households in urban areas.

While over 40 government agencies and departments play various roles in urban governance, none has been mandated with responsibility – or crucially, funding – for urban poverty reduction.[9] Banks (2008b) identifies a rural bias in governmental policy and programmes for poverty reduction. Through interviews with government officials from a number of agencies and departments, she identifies three main obstacles to more effective urban policy making: a rural bias in Bangladesh's PRSP; a lack of coordination among relevant departments and ministries; and a common resignation that urban poverty reduction is "the impossible" – although financial and administrative constraints contributed to this attitude, a lack of knowledge of the scale, causes and consequences of urban poverty also contributed.

The neglect of urban poverty is most visible in an analysis of Bangladesh's national poverty reduction strategy. The initial draft of the PRSP omitted any specific focus on urban poverty and, subsequently, no policy emphasis or provisions were outlined for urban poverty reduction. Indeed, urban poverty was only incorporated into the final document after last-minute advocacy work from concerned stakeholders. Research has shown, however, that nationwide programmes designed for rural areas do not serve the needs of the urban poor (Rashid and Hossain 2005).

The structure of municipal governance leaves little scope for participation by the urban poor. The urban poor were only granted voting rights in 1994, so historically there was little need for municipal governments to represent them. In Dhaka prior to this, for example, the electorate constituted only nine percent of the city's population, with voting rights dependent on property, income and qualifications (Kamal 2000). Consequently, the urban poor now view municipal elections with great importance: elections are seen as a reversal of power and the only time when the urban poor hold any social and political power (Banks 2008). Even after voting rights were established, however, political participation remains limited. In 1997, Khan stated that, "The poor's exclusion from local urban bodies is complete. They simply have no means through which to directly or indirectly participate in the deliberations of such bodies and influence decisions" (Khan 1997: 22).

In recent years there has been some progress made for the urban poor in terms of participation and representation at the municipal level. Banks (2008) details the efforts of *Bustee Bashir Odikhar Surikha Committee*[10] (BOSC), a network of local committees throughout low-income settlements across the major cities of Bangladesh, which aim to mobilise the poor and press their demands on local government. She finds, however, that its success is limited, both by its low coverage of the urban poor population, and by a lack of national commitment. As a result there are no mechanisms through which the urban poor can influence national policy. While BOSC committees have experienced some successes in access to local services, these successes are constrained by a lack of national commitment. The impact of existing community mobilisation activities through BOSC – and progress in urban poverty reduction in general – therefore, requires the recognition of urban poverty in Bangladesh's policy agenda. This highlights the need for simultaneous "bottom-up" and "top-down" efforts in fighting for the rights of the urban poor: community mobilisation at the local level must be complemented with advocacy work within central government to actively promote national policy change (Banks 2008).

[9] See Islam (2005) for a full list of the 41 different agencies and departments involved in urban governance and service delivery.
[10] The translation of this is "Slumdwellers Rights Protection Committee".

A high degree of centralised power undermines political representation in city corporations. Khan (1997) describes government control over local urban elected bodies as "extensive and rigid": given a shortage of funds on their own, he explains, they are "absolutely dependent on government grants and hence have to work within limits set by procedures of such grants" (Khan 1997: 17). Although city corporations, therefore, are autonomous institutions, they have vastly restricted powers, due to their control by central government.[11] This position has been described by the World Bank as a "conflicting dual metropolitan power structure" (World Bank 2007b: 5), thus limiting initiative and drive amongst city corporation officials, and hindering the efficiency of city corporations (Siddiqui et al 2004: 400).

That voting rights have not translated into wider political participation for the urban poor is also in part driven by a lack of representation in large cities: relationships between democratically-elected government officials and their constituencies are hugely different in rural and urban areas. While winning the rural vote depends upon, amongst other things, relationships of accountability and legitimacy, this is not the case in urban areas. Election to urban local government positions is strongly dependent on the power and influence of candidates, with a mixture of "money and muscle" having characterised past elections (CGS et al 2006).

Bangladesh's six city corporations are headed by a democratically elected Mayor. Ward commissioners, however, are the most local level of political representation to city residents. Each of the 90 wards in Dhaka, for example, is headed by a democratically elected ward commissioner. As the closest representatives to urban dwellers, ward commissioners play a crucial role in city governance. They lack, however, a fully-defined framework of duties and responsibilities, and with little funding and resources at the ward level, are left to perform their responsibilities according to their individual initiative and commitment (Banks 2008). While the democratic election of ward commissioners should, in theory, reflect the interests of the poor at the local level,[12] this is not echoed in policies or priorities at a higher level of government. This is due both to the weakness of ward commissioners in relation to the city corporation, and of the city corporation in relation to central government (Banks 2008).

Differences in the size of electorates across rural and urban local governments cause problems with representation of the poor in urban areas. The size of municipal electorates is vastly greater than that of rural local governments. Ward sizes in Dhaka, for example, range between 65,000 to 75,000 (Rahman 1998) to 100,000 voters (Siddiqui 2004), making urban electorates somewhat large and anonymous

[11] There are recent and historic foundations to centralised power relations between central government and city corporations. Such a hierarchy dates back to the colonial legacy, when the imperial power devolved authority to local governments in a piecemeal manner in an attempt to keep ultimate power concentrated at the top (Siddiqui et al 2004). After Liberation in 1971, local governments have been used as a system of control and patronage distribution, rather than being allocated the functional and fiscal authority that would allow them to operate autonomously. More recently, the loss of Dhaka City Corporation to the opposition Mayoral candidate in 1994 has been identified as one of the contributing factors to the decline of the BNP government, who lost power at the next election. Ruling powers therefore fear to delegate total power to a body that may be captured by the opposition.

[12] Given limited resources and budgets, the efficiency of ward commissioners is largely down to initiative, as is their treatment of their poor electorate. Banks (2008) reveals that ward commissioners can only act as "gatekeepers" to greater political participation of the poor where individual ward commissioners are willing to take a pro-poor stance. She compares the experiences of slumdwellers and political participation in two of Dhaka's wards: one with a pro-poor ward commissioner, and one without.

voting blocks. In rural areas, in contrast, *union parashads* – the core unit of rural local government – have an average population of 27,000 people.[13] A number of factors contribute to the better responsiveness and accountability of local officials to the poor in rural areas.[14] In rural areas, local leaders have a better understanding of the poor, as well as playing a more active role in their daily lives. "As community leaders", Hossain (2005) explains, "local elites are customarily expected to resolve local conflicts and to meet wide-ranging obligations towards members of the community, including the poor" (Hossain 2005: 31). In rural areas, opportunities for re-election are, in part, dependent on being seen to deliver rights and entitlements, and there is some possibility for confronting local elites about poverty reduction: their position becomes vulnerable if they do not "perform" in this respect. These differences underscore some of the differences in accountability and representation in these different settings.

It is also more important to their re-election that rural officials take an active pro-poor stance. Rural political elites rely on the state for their wealth and position:[15] this is less the case for the professional and urban-based political elites emerging from a business background and who increasingly dominate national and urban politics. The wealth and status of urban ward commissioners is independent of the state, and they are relatively insulated from the poor.[16] It may be the case that these individuals feel less concern about their representation of and accountability to the poor. Unlike rural areas, where local officials take responsibility for distributing social assistance, locally-elected representatives in urban areas do not play a role in the distribution of resources to low-income communities.

Two factors limit the interaction between local municipal officials and low-income urban residents. Firstly, almost all national social assistance programmes are not extended to the urban poor. Even pensions (old age allowances) were only introduced to the urban poor in 2007.[17] Secondly, where goods or entitlements are distributed in urban areas – such as food rations during emergency flooding, or blankets during cold winters – local government officials do not engage directly with communities. Instead, they work via intermediaries known as *mastaans*. These are unofficial local leaders in each *bustee*, who draw upon their political affiliation to legitimate their power. The literal translation of *mastaan* is '"muscleman", and these

[13] There are 4,500 *union parishads,* where democratic elections have been carried out since 1991. CGS et al (2006) provide a detailed comparison between rural and urban local governance in Bangladesh.

[14] This is not to argue that political relations in rural areas approximate to normative democratic theory. Rather, rural elites and officials are connected to poor rural people in forms that sometimes align to the benefit of some of the better-off and some of the poor.

[15] Not only do they live in closer proximity to and have more regular interaction with the poor, they also derive financial and/or in-kind benefits from their role in the distribution of national social assistance programmes. In addition to benefiting from '"leakages" in the system in this way, however, they also view their role in the distribution of resources as integral to safeguarding their legitimacy and authority (Hossain 2005b).

[16] While the urban elite may be more greatly exposed to a different *manifestation* of poverty – given the dense, overcrowded city, the poverty they meet on a daily basis and the impact this has on their daily lives – this does not pose a significant threat to the health or lifestyle of the urban elite, given their ability to meet their housing, education and other affairs privately (Hossain 2005).

[17] While planning for extension of this scheme to the urban poor started prior to 2007, it was not implemented until this date. Banks (forthcoming) interviews government officials involved in introducing pensions to the urban poor. Although as of 2007 they had not yet started distribution of this social assistance programme, lists had been drawn up for beneficiaries at this stage.

figures play a role somewhere between a local strongman and a local leader. They act as intermediaries, making connections between under-served informal settlements and political leaders (Banks 2008). Relying on their links with local *mastaans* for support and re-election, elected municipal officials exchange improved services or other benefits for a votebank mobilised by the *mastaan* (Sen and Hulme 2006; Banks 2008; Siddiqui et al 2010).[18]

While, therefore, rural officials are subject to some level of accountability – communities are aware of the identity of the recipients of social assistance programmes, or those eligible as recipients, and will be vocal if they think that resources go astray[19] – this is not the case in urban areas. Even where low-income urban residents are aware that resources are not distributed equally across the community when they are distributed, the threat of violence or retribution from *mastaans* is enough to prevent communities from vocalising their disapproval or mobilising against this.

Given this political economy in urban areas, it is hard to challenge the structure of interests necessary to '"deliver" poverty reduction to the urban poor. There is limited space for confrontation, and no incentive for democratically-elected officials to deliver services or entitlements to the poor in order to safeguard their legitimacy and authority. The interests that must be influenced to advance urban poverty reduction in Bangladesh are powerful elites with enormous wealth and power over issues such as access to land and control over local *mastaans.* These urban elites have such power and influence (and, through their connections to *mastaans*, can threaten violence), that only those with high levels of commitment – and power themselves – could consider such a risky venture (Siddiqui et al 2010). Hossain (2005) explains that even the most rich and powerful can be denied justice if their complaint is against someone with better political connections. This exacerbates an unwillingness to confront these interests on urban poverty reduction.

A lack of policy on urban poverty and these ongoing obstacles to getting urban poverty higher on the policy agenda, means that the urban poor have benefited comparatively little from government action in the form of programmes for poverty reduction. This lack of government action is highlighted by a review of previous and current government efforts for urban poverty reduction. The only major government assistance programme for the urban poor was the UNICEF-supported Slum Improvement Project (SIP) launched in 1995, but this was discontinued shortly afterwards in 1996 (Islam et al 1997). Habib (2009) discusses concepts behind the SIP, but also notes that there has been no independent evaluation of the project, and little information exists on it. Local governments and governmental agencies and departments are limited in their ability to run programmes for the urban poor, because no agency, department or Ministry has been allocated responsibility or funding for urban poverty. Banks (forthcoming) reveals that although not officially mandated with responsibility for urban poverty reduction, one or two government agencies worked within their funding constraints to provide assistance to the urban

[18] Banks (2008) provides a deeper discussion on the role of the *mastaan*. She finds that low-income urban residents have mixed views regarding these figures. While recognising their necessity for mediating with officials and connecting informal settlements to service providers and political contacts, these leaders are also a source of fear among the urban poor, often using extortion or the threat of violence to control a community. They are able to do so because their political affiliation with the leading political party means that they are free from recrimination from the police or other authorities.

[19] See Hossain (2005b) for a discussion on the role of local government officials in the distribution of government safety nets.

poor. They felt that it was important that the urban poor received some form of assistance, even though they had not been allocated any funds for this purpose.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), for example, established the Urban Basic Services Delivery Project; and the Department of Social Services (DSS) offer a similar Urban Community Development Project. Both offer microcredit, and promote education, health services and family planning to slum dwellers. The funding available for these projects does not reflect the scale of urban poverty, however. Of nearly 3.5 million slum dwellers in Dhaka city, for example, only 27,000 beneficiaries receive small loans under the Urban Community Development Project. This highlights that without commitment and funding at the national level, the impact of locally-driven efforts will be greatly limited, due to budget constraints. More recently, UNDP Bangladesh has been implementing the Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction project in 30 towns and cities across Bangladesh. This is a partnership arrangement between UNDP, DFID, Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) and UN-HABITAT that aims to improve the livelihoods and living conditions of three million poor urban residents.[20]

A lack of recognition of the urban poor in national policy and programmes has impacted on the willingness and ability of NGOs to operate programmes in urban areas (see, for example CGS et al 2006; Banks 2008).[21] This means that NGOs in Bangladesh have less presence in urban areas, and that the urban poor are less served by their programmes (in service delivery, education, health, microfinance and other forms of poverty reduction programme) in comparison with rural areas. As Siddiqui et al (2010) highlight, NGOs have yet to make a large mark as either advocates or service providers for the urban poor. There are, however, exceptions to the rule: DSK, for example, is an NGO working in *bustees* across all of Bangladesh's major cities. It helps low-income urban communities to access legal water supplies and to build hygienic sanitation facilities and community infrastructure. There are also several NGO providers offering primary education in *bustees* across the country.

Issues of land in urban areas act as a major obstacle to NGOs. The ever-present threat of eviction prevents NGOs and other service providers from investing in *bustees*. This would result both in financial loss from the destruction of infrastructure, and lost investments in microfinance through unpaid and untraceable loans as households are forced to find new places to live. That "ownership" of land and facilities in *bustees* lies with *mastaans* also provides an obstacle to NGOs, who must seek their permission before operating in their areas (Rashid and Hossain 2005). These issues surrounding land also mean that those NGOs that have extended

[20] See www.upprbd.org for more details on this programme.

[21] This is visible both in the *number* of NGOs operating in urban areas vis-a-vis rural areas, and the length of time in which they have been operating there. Coalition for the Urban Poor, for example, is a network organisation representing the 52 NGOs in Bangladesh that have some programme or intervention in urban areas. In contrast, the Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh have 900 registered members (http://www.ong-ngo.org/spip.php?page=fiche_pn&lang=en&id_rubrique=236 , accessed 15 December 2010). The number of NGOs is higher, however. Registering with the government's NGO Affairs Bureau (NAB) is a precondition for receiving foreign funding: Gauri and Galef (2005) found just over 6,500 NGOs using this distinction. The Department of Social Service's list of 'social welfare organisations' (including mosques, trade clubs, unions, etc.) gives a much higher figure of 23, 000 registered organisations. In addition, those NGOs which do operate in urban areas, have done so for much less time than in rural areas. BRAC, for example, has provided microfinance and service delivery to rural populations in Bangladesh since 1972. Development programmes were extended to urban areas in 1997. BRAC implements projects in 70,000 villages, in comparison with 2,000 *bustees* across Bangladesh.

programmes to urban areas are unable to implement programmes and provide services that meet the primary needs of the urban poor. Banks (2008) found that, for this reason, the urban poor are highly critical of – even hostile towards – NGOs, and feel that they are "getting rich in the name of the poor".[22] While housing and land security is a primary concern for *bustee* residents, NGOs are unwilling to intervene, given tight government control over land in cities (Habib 2009).

As poverty has been a key part of policy debate in Bangladesh since Independence in 1971, the country has also responded quickly to a new challenge which threatens to increase the vulnerability of millions of its citizens: climate change. As with the neglect of urban poverty in national policy on poverty reduction, however, urban poverty is also neglected from considerations in policy and action for climate change.

Climate change is a recent addition to policy debate and action in Bangladesh, but the country has taken a lead amongst developing countries in the development of two national strategies on adaptation to climate change: the 2005 National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) and the 2008 Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP; see Appendix 2 and 3 for details and timelines). The Government of Bangladesh has attempted to take a lead at the international level in the arena of climate change, both through policy making and through active participation in global meetings and international treaties. Indeed, issues of climate change received early attention in Bangladesh. The first policy document on climate change in Bangladesh came from UNDP a decade earlier than the formation of the IPCC, and the current Prime Minister is one of the first national leaders to put a figure on an adaptation budget at Copenhagen.

It is notable, however, that while Bangladesh has taken an LDC lead on issues of climate change adaptation, it has so far neglected follow-up action on policies and plans. Although showing rapid action to international calls to create a National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA), the priority actions identified have not been implemented. In contrast to the failure to implement NAPA, the post-NAPA preparation period was a period of rapid development and build-up for the Copenhagen Summit. Bangladesh responded by developing the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP), the second such plan in a period of five years.[23] Such a quick revision of the national policy suggests that earlier documents may have been prepared hastily to tap into the growing possibility of international funds. The lure of international finance for adaptation may have also led to the identification of costly projects, rather than steadily building and expanding on current initiatives and existing community adaptations.

Both BCCSAP and its predecessor, NAPA, have prioritised agriculture and adaptation in drought-prone or coastal areas.[24] Of those 15 actions prioritised under

[22] These sentiments are exacerbated by a lack of regulation of NGOs. Poor urban residents across Dhaka have experienced false "briefcase" NGOs, which have caused many *bustee* residents to lose considerable savings.

[23] The rejection of NAPA priority action in the current BCCSAP does not mean that the new policy has overcome all of the limitations of NAPA. The new plan is also heavily reliant on adaptation funds, but shows a more visible commitment from the national budget. A comparison of these two plans can be found in Appendix 3.

[24] NAPA was prepared through assistance from six sectoral working groups, none of which had an explicit interest in advocating for the needs of the urban poor. These working groups prepared background papers on: 1) Agriculture, fisheries and livestock; 2) Forestry, biodiversity and land-use; 3) Water, coastal zone, natural disaster and health; 4) Livelihood, gender, local governance and food security; 5) Industry and infrastructure; and 6) Policies and institutes.

NAPA, only one – the need for increased urban infrastructure to increase resilience – is related to adapting urban areas to the vulnerabilities of climate change. This, however, does not have any explicit reference to the urban poor. This neglect continued in the 2009 BCCSAP, which built upon and extended the earlier NAPA. As shown in Appendix 2, BCCSAP is built upon six pillars, and the plan outlines a number of programmes within each theme. While a number of these programmes *may* have some relevance to urban areas, there is no explicit outline that programmes will recognise the different environmental, socio-economic and political contexts of rural and urban areas.

Like its predecessor, NAPA, the only urban-focused programmes in BCCSAP are infrastructural: the improvement of urban drainage is outlined as one of eight programmes under the "infrastructure" thematic programme, and the management of urban waste is one of 10 programmes under the "mitigation and low carbon development" thematic programme. As with other investment in infrastructure development discussed earlier, this makes no provisions for the urban poor, instead leaving them only open to possible indirect benefits. Consequently, there is little likelihood that these investments will benefit this vulnerable group. Moreover, it is likely that infrastructural and drainage improvements may displace low-income urban communities situated in flood-prone areas or along water bodies. Thus, the urban poor face a "double-whammy" of neglect. Not only are they neglected by national policy on poverty, they are also neglected in national policy on climate change. The relationship between poverty and climate change is now widely recognised, confirming that low-income urban households have little adaptive capacity with which to cope with shocks resulting from climate change. This means that climate change is impacting – and will impact further – on urban poverty in Bangladesh.

Cities in Bangladesh will be heavily impacted by climate change, with their existing problems being magnified. This is particularly the case for the urban poor, who, living in environmentally-vulnerable areas, dense populations and with poor access to services and limited coping mechanisms, are amongst the most vulnerable of city populations. As discussed earlier, in-migration due to climate change will expand city populations, compounding these problems.

Dhaka is predicted to be particularly affected, given its sheer size and its nature as an unplanned city in an environmentally-vulnerable country prone to heavy flooding and cyclones. "Add the unexpected nature of climate change to this cauldron", writes UN-HABITAT (2008: 1), "and it's a recipe for disaster". Indeed, of 11 Asian cities, Dhaka was highlighted as the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, due both to its location in a flood-prone environment and its limited adaptive capacity (WWF 2009). Flooding and drainage congestion and increased heat stress are the major climate-induced vulnerabilities that will affect Dhaka (Alam and Rabbani 2007; UN-HABITAT 2008). These problems will most heavily impact upon the urban poor, who tend to live in flood-prone and water-logged areas with little or no access to drainage. Consequently, low-income urban populations will face large health implications, possibly even loss of life. Rashid (2002) highlights that the urban poor were most affected by heavy flooding in 1998, due to losses in income-generating activities and poor services and infrastructure.

A lack of explicit recognition of the vulnerability of low-income urban communities in BCCSAP means that these populations will not be incorporated into programmes and policies arising from the strategic action plan for climate change adaptation. Not only does this mean that no measures to help the urban poor manage the increased vulnerabilities are likely to be taken, this also means that good opportunities for adaptation will be missed. It is widely recognised that optimising the adaptive

capacity of less-developed cities must recognise the community- and household-level adaptive techniques that low-income urban people undertake. Rather than assessing future vulnerability and long-term policy on climate change at the state level, UNFCC (2010) highlights that developing countries must "take into account existing coping strategies at the grassroots level, and build upon that to identify priority activities". This places grassroots communities at the centre of a country's adaptive capacity. The exclusion of urban poverty in these policy documents on climate change, however, suggests that there has been little or no consultation of the urban poor in their development. Despite this, the urban poor are making adaptations to the environmental problems they face, such as designing huts to reduce heat stress, and shading roofs with "green infrastructure". Such adaptations will become more important as climate change impacts intensify.

From the viewpoint of the urban poor, recent changes in national policy do not bring promise. Past obstacles to getting urban poverty on Bangladesh's policy agenda – including the unique political economy of urban areas – have also fed into the exclusion of urban poverty into national policy on climate change. Consequently, there is no specific action within existing climate change policy that recognises the challenges facing low-income urban communities, nor any recognition of the adaptive measures they currently undertake in the face of increased vulnerability through climate change. The more recent BCCSAP at least acknowledges some of the challenges it faces: while it failed to prioritise any action within the first phase of implementation, it highlights the need for more research. It indirectly recognises, therefore, that a lack of research-based knowledge undermines the creation of clear and appropriate policies or programmes targeted at specific groups or populations – in this case, the urban poor. The following section now turns to research on urban poverty in Bangladesh. Research on poverty also experiences a rural bias, although to a lesser extent than policy and action.

5. Knowledge generation surrounding issues of urban poverty and climate change

A lack of understanding and information on urban poverty in Bangladesh – both in terms of scale and measurement, and in understanding the distinct nature of vulnerabilities of urban poverty – causes serious problems in developing adequate policy responses (Islam et al 1997). As rural issues in Bangladesh have remained the dominant paradigm in Bangladesh's development, so too has this impacted upon knowledge generation on poverty. Rural poverty remains the major focus of research and policy in Bangladesh, among government, donors, NGOs and researchers alike. As Banks (forthcoming; 2008b) reveals through interviews with government officials, the need for improved knowledge on urban poverty is evident. While current policies and programmes have transferred knowledge from rural to urban areas, this has not accounted for the complex differences in rural and urban areas.

Research on poverty in Bangladesh had an early and strong start through the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), an autonomous public multidisciplinary institute mandated to undertake policy-oriented research on development issues.[25] BIDS is now one of the largest and most active research organisations in the country, drawing upon knowledge and expertise from relevant academic and policy experts from within and beyond Bangladesh. As Table 2 illustrates, however, its research has a strong rural bias. While 182 research reports have been published since the 1980s, only 14 of these have focused specifically on urban issues, of which six centred on urban poverty.[26] With the exception of Kabeer and Mahmud (2005), reports on urban issues and urban poverty are also dated.

Table 2. A breakdown of BIDS reports

Research report topic	*1970s*	*1980s*	*1990s*	*2000s*	Total papers
Rural issues	18	50	28	12	108
(% of total papers)	(9.9)	(27.5)	(15.4)	(6.6)	(59.3)
(of which *poverty*-related)	5	24	16	6	(51)
(% of total papers	(2.7)	(13.2)	(8.8)	(3.3)	(28.0)
Urban issues	2	5	5	2	14
(% of total papers)	(1.1)	(2.7)	(2.7)	(1.1)	(7.7)
(of which *poverty*-related)	**1**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**(6)**
(% of total papers)	**(0.5)**	**(1.1)**	**(1.1)**	**(0.5)**	**(3.3)**
National/international issues	7	32	18	3	60
	(3.8)	(17.6)	(9.9)	(1.6)	(33.0)
(% of total papers)					
Total papers	27	87	51	17	182
% of total papers	(14.8)	(47.8)	(28.0)	(9.3)	(100)

Source: Authors' compilation.

Several research centres and institutes have emerged since BIDS was established,[27] many of which focus specifically on poverty. A review of the most active research organisations after BIDS, however – the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) – shows that they too have neglected the urban poverty agenda (see Table 3).

[25] BIDS was first established in 1957 as the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics and later renamed as the Bangladesh Institute of Development Economics in 1971. It was renamed the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies in 1974.

[26] A similar breakdown is found with the research monographs listed in their publications: of 20 listed monographs, 10 are based on rural issues (of which five are based on issues of poverty), nine are based on national issues, and only one, a 1996 study of garments workers, focuses on urban poverty.

[27] A directory of social science organisations can be found at http://www.bssrcbd.org/html/directory.htm (accessed 15 December 2010).

Table 3. Breakdown of CPD and BCAS research reports

Research report topic	Organisation	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Rural issues (*of which poverty related)*	CPD	-	-	11 (*4*)	41 (*25*)
	BCAS	None	6 (3)	7 (*2*)	23 (*13*)
Urban issues (*of which poverty related*)	CPD	-	-	3 (*1*)	5 (*3*)
	BCAS	none	None	1 (*0*)	1 (*0*)
National/international issues	CPD	-	-	37	209
	BCAS	none	1	24	29

Only one research institute, the Centre for Urban Studies (CUS, founded in 1972), has a specific mandate to research urban issues, including poverty. The research agenda of CUS has focused on urban planning, management and poverty. The institute also continues to play an advocacy role in trying to promote issues of urban poverty at the national level. When urban poverty was omitted from the 2005 PRSP, for example, it played a central role trying to get urban issues accorded greater importance in national policy.

There have been several surveys that have built poverty profiles of urban areas. Amongst the notable contributions of CUS to research, for example, are a series of surveys on urban poverty: in Dhaka in 1974, 1991 and 1996 (Islam et al 1997; Islam et al 2009) and in Bangladesh's six city corporations in 2005 (CUS et al 2006). These surveys are an important step forward in reporting the incidence of urban poverty in Bangladesh, but are limited to providing demographic, socio-economic and environmental profiles of *bustee* populations. Most existing research, however, has not analysed the socio-political and cultural factors that lead to the specific vulnerabilities for the urban poor: even studies of urban livelihoods may overestimate the "room for manoeuvre" low-income urban households have in a hostile political economy (Wood and Salway 2000). Banks (2010), for example, found that a simple household-based analysis of livelihoods overlooks the key structural constraints facing poor urban households in accessing the labour market. Urban poverty reduction, she finds, therefore not only requires an expansion of the asset bases of the poor, but also policy and programmes to assist their integration into the labour market on better terms.

Another limitation of existing urban research in Bangladesh is that it displays a "big city bias". It tends not, therefore, to be nationally representative of the country's urban areas, as rural datasets tend to be. Not only are poverty surveys of the urban poor few in number, but most have been conducted primarily in Dhaka, such as the Urban Livelihoods Study, or conducted across the six city corporations (Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Barisal), such as the *2005 Slums of Bangladesh: Mapping and Census* survey conducted by the Centre for Urban Studies (CUS et al 2006). In Dhaka, many of the research publications on urban poverty have emerged from one large research study, a large DFID-funded Urban Livelihoods Study (ULS) undertaken in a single ward of Mohammadpur (See Pryer 2003; Wood and Salway 2000). Such studies, therefore, have not captured the characteristics of urban poverty across a greater area. The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) area (145 km^2) is significantly smaller than the Dhaka Statistical Metropolitan Area (DMSA, 1350 km^2) or the Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP, 1530 km^2), and there are many *bustees* located in the urban fringe outside DCC boundaries. There is considerable variation between *bustees* in central and peripheral areas, however, and greater research is necessary to reveal the differences across these locations. Likewise, there is limited research on urban poverty in Bangladesh's five other city

corporations and its smaller municipalities. A review of all urban poverty papers written on Bangladesh – which can be found in Appendix 3 – revealed that only seven of 49 papers that focused on urban poverty in Bangladesh were conducted outside Dhaka.

The predominance of rural-focused research is not unique to Bangladesh. Local research communities in developing countries, reflecting a broader international tendency, have been slow to produce research outputs on urban poverty. As the previous section explored, one reason for this is that their scholarship has been historically driven by the persistence of poverty in rural areas, where the majority of Bangladesh's low-income population continues to reside. A relatively distant "urban future" has been slow to attract established academics, many of whom have gained expertise on areas of rural development and macroeconomics. With the exception of the Urban Livelihoods Study discussed earlier (which has not been updated since 1999), no research projects have collected panel data on urban poverty in Bangladesh. This means that those datasets that do exist are not directly comparable (World Bank 2007).

While agricultural economics and rural poverty dynamics are internationally established in microeconomic analysis, urban economics has not really evolved. A new generation of economists now faces the dilemma of whether to follow these theoretically and methodologically well-established areas or to take a professional risk by specialising in urban poverty. Furthermore, for economists and quantitative analysts, the problem of sample attrition on panel datasets makes the analysis of urban poverty more difficult. The mobility, and sometimes anonymity, of urban residents means that complex analyses of urban datasets are likely to be flawed because of attrition, a potential blighting factor for economists trying to advance their careers.

In parallel to research conducted by CUS, a limited number of – mostly internationally-funded – studies have kept the urban agenda afloat in Bangladesh. Research projects and subsequent papers or reports, however, are much less numerous and comprehensive than those on rural poverty. A bibliographic search of the Swetswise database for post-2000 papers, for example, identified 358 papers on Bangladesh. Only 35, or 10 percent, of these papers addressed urban issues, and this included only 25, or seven percent, of papers addressing issues of urban poverty. A further 14 additional papers on urban poverty in Bangladesh were identified through the Web of Science database, giving a total of 49 post-2000 papers on urban poverty in Bangladesh.[28] It is notable that of these, seven papers were the outcome of one large-scale project, the Urban Livelihoods Study (ULS) discussed earlier.

Research funding has meant that it has been hard for local research bodies to meet needs for commitment and continuity: the number of home-grown researchers and the availability of research money from domestic sources are limited in developing countries. That most of the research on urban poverty in Bangladesh is based upon externally-funded projects and have lead authors representing external institutions

[28] A concise review of post-2000 papers on urban poverty in Bangladesh was carried out across international journals. First, a search for "Bangladesh" was carried out in Swetswise bibliographic database, and these papers were grouped into "urban" and "rural" categories. Urban-related papers were further reviewed to identify the number focusing on urban poverty. In addition, the Web of Science 2000 citation index was used to identify all journals categorised as "urban studies" or "planning and international development". Similar keywords were used here to identify articles with relevance to urban poverty in Bangladesh.

(See Appendix 4),[29] therefore, may mean that it fails to produce policy-relevant knowledge on the grounds of commitment and continuity. Internationally-funded and led research projects are sometimes seen as an alternative source of knowledge creation in developing countries. However, international research funding is subject to policies and priorities of funding bodies, which often run in different directions from national interests and priorities. International research also mostly comes in the form of short-term projects, is unpredictable, and if not conducted with local participation, often ends up producing "useless" findings (Bradley 2008).

The neglect of research in urban areas is compounded by a lack of research and policy on the impacts that climate change will have on the livelihoods of the urban poor.[30] Climate change is now a consensually established social phenomenon (M. Hulme 2009) and its links to urban poverty have been firmly established (IIED 2009, Bicknell et al 2009). Specifically, research – both in Bangladesh and internationally – recognises that the effects of climate change will have a disproportionate impact on the urban poor in comparison to other urban residents (Pelling 2003; Alam and Rabbani 2007; Bicknell et al 2009; Jabeen et al 2010)

While the potential repercussions of climate change and their impact on the urban poor – as have been discussed in the previous section – have been forecast for Bangladesh's cities (particularly for Dhaka), there has been less research at the community level on impact or adaptive capacities. The question is, therefore, whether governments, decision makers, the research community and other actors have the expertise, imagination and willingness required for meeting the new challenges that climate change brings to a context of urban poverty.

Unfortunately, the process of creating and utilising climate change knowledge in developing countries such as Bangladesh does not look promising in this respect. Knowledge and expertise for development and climate change rests primarily in the hands of a limited number of global expert institutes, such as the World Bank and the United Nations. Klugman (2002), Prasad et al (2008), and Mehta and Dastur (2008) are examples of how the World Bank portrays its expertise on poverty alleviation, climate change and slums, respectively. In Bangladesh, examples of the UN mechanism of expert support include the formation of an expert group to advise on areas of adaptation and capacity-building in developing NAPA (Huq et al 2003).

Issues of funding have also meant that where funding can be accessed for climate change adaptation or mitigation, it has not been utilised for research or investment in climate change in the context of urban poverty. The promise of larger sums of finance for international climate change adaptation is acting as a catalyst for governments of developing countries to buy in foreign expertise (Porter et al 2008; Ayers 2009). In addition, to exploit access to external funding, bureaucrats and researchers end up prioritising actions that maximise external funding. This means that policies to support low-cost, low technology and people-centred practices for the urban poor are likely to receive less priority, given the perverse incentives created by the financing of climate change adaptation becoming the "new" foreign aid.

[29] Thirty out of 49 papers identified on issues of urban poverty in Bangladesh were based upon externally-funded projects.

[30] A few ongoing research projects on urban poverty and climate change in Bangladesh have been recently launched – including the Poverty and Climate Change in Urban Bangladesh (ClimUrb) research programme (Brooks World Poverty Institute, University of Manchester). While it is expected that analyses and publications emerging from these programmes will contribute to some of the gaps in knowledge, this is a relatively small volume of research compared to the growing scale of urban poverty in the face of climate change.

Conditionalities for accessing these funds require that developing countries rapidly formulate actions at the national and sub-national levels. Consequently, the speed with which they must act leaves little time for participation or consultation with all levels of stakeholders. This results in there being a gap between national plans and grassroots levels activities, and means that these grassroots level activities remain unsupported by global funds. Banks (2008) illustrates this gap in the context of the urban poor in Bangladesh.

There is more that can be said about how each of these foci – a foreign expert-led knowledge and policy-making process that undervalues grassroots-level practices, and a lack of research activities providing useful local knowledge on urban poverty – will affect low-income urban residents in an era of climate change. Increasingly, however, it is recognised that these problems are adding to the urgency on the ground for civil society organisations and low-income urban communities to take the initiative. This is evident in the incorporation of climate change adaptation in the activities of NGOs such as CARE (2009). In the case of Bangladesh, the initiatives and practices of low-income households to climate change at the local level have, in some cases, been identified (see, for example, Hutton and Haque 2003; Hutton and Haque 2004; Jabeen et al 2010).

Micro-level actions and projects, however, have limited impact without wider knowledge creation on a level that leads to application through policy. Given a weak state of understanding of the phenomenon of urban poverty (especially in the context of climate change), and a short-term focus because of elections, policy makers are yet to prioritise actions to address urban poverty. Claims that these issues have "yet to arrive", have meant that tackling them has been pushed aside for future rounds of policy. While recognising urban poverty as an emerging phenomenon, therefore, this has yet to translate into inclusion in Bangladesh's policy framework. In the meantime, national policy maintains existing narratives that view *bustees* as an issue for political neglect or, alternatively, violent evictions.

6. Conclusions

This working paper has emphasised that, with the inevitability of an increasing urban future in Bangladesh, there is an urgent need for increased recognition of urban poverty in policy, research and action. Two factors reveal the urgency of gaining a better understanding of urban poverty in Bangladesh and developing adequate policy to address it: the underestimation of urban poverty; and its growing magnitude. The "tipping point", when Bangladesh's poor population will live predominantly in urban areas, is forecast within this generation. Intensified pressure from climate change will accelerate this transition, as well as exacerbate the vulnerabilities that the urban poor already face. Masking the extent of urban poverty reinforces the ongoing emphasis on rural poverty in national policy, action and research.

National policy, however, continues to overlook urban manifestations of poverty in policy and action, and this has had repercussions, both on research activities and state and NGO programmes and interventions. As the paper has discussed, a number of interacting factors lie behind this. Elite perceptions remain focused on rural areas as the rightful home of the poor, and this is exacerbated by negative images of crime and squalor closely associated with urban poverty, and perceptions that investment in urban poverty will cause further migration to the city – which have since been disproven. In part, these perceptions are prolonged by a lack of understanding of urban poverty. While the Centre for Urban Studies has increased knowledge and awareness of urban issues, including urban poverty, other national

institutes and external research conducted in Bangladesh remain predominantly focused on rural or national issues.

An analysis of the political economy of urban poverty reveals structural factors that ensure urban poverty is not accorded higher priority at the national level. While there has been some progress in political participation at the local municipal level, its impact is limited for two major reasons. Firstly, given a highly centralised government, there is no mechanism through which electoral successes at the local level can reach the national level. There are also problems with representation: interacting primarily with their poor constituents through *mastaans,* local elected officials in urban areas have little incentive to be responsive, accountable or inclusive to their poor electorate.

This rural bias in policy for poverty reduction reaches the activities of both the state and NGOs. Initiatives from government and NGOs in urban poverty reduction, while welcomed, have barely scratched the surface of urban poverty in terms of the number of low-income urban households reached. While the rural poor, therefore, have benefited both directly and indirectly from investments in infrastructure, services, human capital, and social protection, this has not been the case for the urban poor. Although government spending priorities invest heavily in urban areas, low-income urban households are only indirect beneficiaries of government spending through infrastructure development, and often direct victims if violent evictions are a prerequisite for development. While Bangladesh is recognised for its great proliferation of NGOs, this position is exacerbated by limited coverage of NGO programmes in urban areas. Together, this means that the urban poor have not been equipped with an institutional framework that supports their efforts to increase resilience and to access opportunities for upward mobility.

The evidence presented in this paper means it must now be recognised that urban poverty reduction will be increasingly important to meeting future national poverty reduction goals. Urban poverty, therefore, must be addressed directly in policy and action. The urgency of this task is magnified in the context of climate change. Although policy makers continue to treat climate change primarily as a problem of rural poverty and food security, it will have a heavy impact on urban areas, increasing the *scale* and *severity* of current urban poverty, as well as increasing the frequency of environmental hazards that city dwellers will face. Living in environmentally hazardous areas and with low resilience, the urban poor will face the most severe repercussions of climate change.

There are two challenges facing efforts to meet improved policy and action for the urban poor. The first is gaining a better understanding of the scale and nature of urban poverty, and the urban-specific vulnerabilities that the urban poor face. Both the national and international research communities can play a role in this. More challenging, however, is confronting the powerful interests necessary to secure commitment at the national level. Until there is a normative shift that recognises the urban poor as a legitimate group for government support, urban poverty will continue to face a double-whammy in exclusion both from national development plans and climate change adaptation strategies.

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Appendix 1:

Myths versus realities of urbanisation

Myths	Realities
Urban strategies are at the cost of rural development.	On the contrary, a good rural strategy requires an equally good urban strategy. Urban centres absorb the rural inflow and through higher factor productivities, contribute more sharply to the growth of GDP per capita. Remittances of the urban poor also contribute to rural development.
Urban services i) draw rural migrants, and ii) add to unemployment.	i) Migrants are attracted by economic opportunities in cities, so it is economically rational for them to migrate. It is not the marginal provision of services that influences the decision of the poor to migrate. ii) Evidence does not support assumptions of a vicious cycle of unemployment. On the contrary, urban job search occurs in rural areas through networking through relatives and friends, and it is too costly for the poor to come to cities for random job search.
The nexus between rural and urban poverty is close, so focus only on rural poverty efforts.	i) A holistic approach, emphasising broad-based growth, and targeted programmes both in rural and urban areas is required. ii) The contribution of rural poverty programmes has been marginal. At the same time, the incidence of urban poverty has been increasing in both relative and absolute terms.
The philosophy of the Grameen Bank (i.e. the trustworthy nature and entrepreneurship of the poor) does not apply to the urban poor. Urban poor contribute to crime and law and order problems.	Not so; the urban poor sometimes appear to be more "hardened" because of the harsher urban environment in which they have to survive.
The urban poor can be discouraged by denying them access to services.	Not so: the urban poor who have made the choice to stay will stay. Services will be obtained illegally, rather than legally. Deficient services cause health, social and environmental problems.
Migrants should all go home or be sent to their villages. They should be contained in their village of origin.	The urban poor comprise an integral part of city life and economy, and are mostly here to stay.
The urban poor are a drain upon the city's resources.	The urban poor contribute significantly to urban essential services, particularly in the informal sector, and increasingly in export industries such as garment making.
The urban poor are highly mobile, not bankable, and cannot be depended upon to repay loans.	Existing programmes have good rates of recovery for loans from the urban poor. Some squatter settlements have existed for over 40 years. The poor have reliable network links, which provide them with some social security even though they might be mobile.
The urban poor are actually quite wealthy and disguise their wealth.	The urban poor are generally productive and hardworking, but lack job security. They are disadvantaged in the labour market by low skills, few connections, and poor health, and are often exploited by landlords and *mastaans.*

Provision of urban services to the poor is not economically feasible; the past approaches of public provision at subsidised prices have by-passed the poor.	The urban poor are prepared to pay for reliable services. In fact, in absence of legal services, they pay a higher price than other city dwellers.
The urban poor should be re-settled far away from the city.	Without nearby employment most might not stay: they or others will return to the city to sites vacated or other vacant lots.
Urbanisation leads to conversion of precious agricultural lands.	Evidence suggests that this argument is exaggerated.
Urbanisation leads to environmental degradation (e.g. sanitation and pollution).	Planned urbanisation is better than urban sprawls, which grow in a haphazard manner.

Source: Islam et al 1997.

Appendix 2:

A review of urban poverty (and climate change) in key policy documents for development and poverty reduction in Bangladesh.

Policy document	Issues prioritised	Policy on urban poverty
National Development Plans		
First Five Year Plan 1973-1978	Reconstruction and development of the economy; more employment opportunity. Population control; alleviation of extreme poverty as well as establishing socialistic economic structure. Achieving self-sufficiency in food production and sealing food importation.	Nothing explicit on policy to tackle urban poverty.
Second Five Year Plan 1980-1985	Poverty alleviation by adopting strategies in the development of the rural sector. Population control; achieving self-dependence in food production in the lowest possible time. People's participation in the development programme to improve the lives of rural people.	Emphasis on proactive plan formulation to improve the living standards of common people both in urban and rural areas.
Third Five Year Plan 1985-1990	Rational sharing of developmental responsibilities between the public sector and private sector. Poverty reduction, equal distribution of resources, self-sufficiency in food production, population control, creating employment opportunity, extracting internal resources, and increasing literacy rate.	Nothing explicit on policy to tackle urban poverty.
Fourth Five Year Plan 1990-1995	Goals and objectives for a 20-year period. Rural economic development. Human resource development. Poverty alleviation (with emphasis on alleviating extreme poverty), increasing the opportunity of employment. Population growth control.	Recognising "urban disorganised group" as one of 10 socio-economic classes, and initiating projects to change their fate.
Fifth Five Year Plan 1997-2002	Structural adjustment, liberalisation and science and technological development. Self-sufficiency in food grain production along with export of agricultural products. Human resource development. Education and primary health care for all. Women's empowerment and children's development.	Improving the functional, managerial and organisational capabilities of the poorest group through formation of groups and participation in rural/urban development programmes in respective areas.
Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers		
Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2003	Five sets of long-term priorities: • Accelerate and expand the scope of economic growth for increasing income and employment of the poor. • Human development of the poor through education, health, nutrition and social interventions. • Women's advancement and closing of gender gaps in development. • Social protection for poor against income/consumption shocks and vulnerability to disasters. • Participatory governance for enhancing voice of the poor and improving non-material dimensions of well-being. Major thrust areas: • Effective macroeconomic management and creation of growth-enhancing investment climate. • Small and medium industries, especially agricultural diversification, agro-processing, IT and exports. • Quality or primary education, enrolment in secondary education, and expansion of vocational education. • Coverage of new area under primary health care service. • Management of vulnerability approach to disasters. • Economic, social and political empowerment of women. • Strengthening the pro-poor growth and equity impact of central government expenditure.	Policies to address urban poverty remained implicit, although the emergence of the following issues during grass-root level consultation: • Serious concerns over the quality of basic public services and rising hidden costs in getting access to basic public services. • Weakening of governance, criminalisation of politics, corruption, and violation of citizen rights. • Growing violence against women, both in public and at home. • Widening educational divide between rich and poor, both in urban and rural areas. • Importance of local government as one of the most desired institutes.
Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2005	Medium-term priorities are to ensure: • Stable macroeconomic balances. • Strong institutions and improved governance. • Outward-oriented growth with strong private sector role. • Government-private sector (including NGOs)	Policies to address urban poverty remained implicit, although the following policy entry points have been identified: • Mitigating public health risks.

	partnership. • Gender-sensitive macro and policy framework and the national budget. Key priority areas for accelerating growth and bringing pro-poor orientation in the growth process are: • Rural areas and development of agriculture and non-farm economic activities. • Small and medium manufacturing enterprises. • Rural electrification, roads, water supply and sanitation, and supportive infrastructure including measures to reduce natural and human-induced shocks. • Information and communication technologies.	• Addressing the service needs of both transient settlements and more stable poor neighbourhoods. • Strong and effective policy support to the informal sector. • Better utilisation of urban khas land for community purposes and for the needs of the poor.
National Strategies on Adaptation to Climate Change		
National Adaptation Programme of Action	Priority projects by broad thematic area: • Coastal zone (afforestation, drinking water, agriculture and fisheries) – projects # 1, 2, 11 & 14. • Infrastructure planning and management – project #3. • Disaster preparedness and management in major floodplains – projects # 4 & 5. • Knowledge and capacity building – projects # 6, 9 & 10. • Climate change policy making –project # 7. • Urban infrastructure and industries – project # 8. • Agriculture and fisheries in areas prone to flash and enhanced flooding – projects # 12 & 13. • Insurance and finance – project #15.	There is no reference to urban poverty in the document.
Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009	Priority projects by broad thematic programme area: T1 Food security, social protection and health – nine projects, with two projects (T1P6 & T1P7) having relevance to urban areas in general. T2 Comprehensive disaster management – four projects, all having some relevance to urban areas in general. T3 Infrastructure – seven projects, with one (T3P3) directly on an urban issue, titled “improvement of urban drainage”; projects T3P1, T3P5 & T3P6 also bear some generic relevance to urban areas. T4 Research and knowledge management – five projects, with three projects (T4P1, T4P2 & T4P3) having some relevance to urban areas in general. T5 Mitigation and low carbon development – seven projects, with one (T5P6) directly on an urban issue titled “management of urban waste”. T6 Capacity building and institutional strengthening – five projects, none with urban focus.	A number of projects relate to urban areas in general. Two projects (T3P3 & T5P6) also bear direct links to specific urban issues. But no project shows an explicit link to urban poverty.

Appendix 3:

List of key activities Bangladesh has undertaken in the area of climate change

- Signed the UNFCCC on 9 June1992 and ratified it on 15 April 1994.
- Accessed the Kyoto Protocol on 21 August 2001.
- Participated in the US Climate Change Country Study Program and prepared its emission inventory and vulnerability assessment in 1994.
- Participated in the Asia Least Cost Green House Gas Abatement Strategy (ALGAS) Study in 1995-98. The ALGAS study included the formation of the national GHG abatement strategies consistent with national development priorities, and preparation of portfolio of GHG abatement projects.
- Submitted its first National Communication to the UNFCCC in 2002. Bangladesh has taken up a project, “Bangladesh: Climate Change Enabling Activity Self Assessment Exercise”, as a first step to prepare its Second National Communication in the near future.
- Under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) Bangladesh has established a two-tier Designated National Authority (DNA), namely National CDM Board and National CDM Committee on 13 October 2003.
- Completed a National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) and has already submitted the NAPA to the UNFCCC in November 2005.
- Prepared the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) in 2008, which has been revised in 2009.
- Submitted its first national progress report on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action in 2009.
- In FY2008-09, the government established a National Climate Change Fund, worth $45 million, while in the national budget of FY2009-10 an additional $105 million was added to this fund.

Sources: Huq and Ayers 2008; GoB 2009b; Islam and Khatun 2010.

Appendix 4:

Evaluation of post-2000 articles in international journals relevant to urban poverty in Bangladesh

Domain	Component	Article	Geographical focus	Thematic focus	Data source	Funding source
Basic services	Water & sanitation	Sansom, 2006	6 countries, including Bangladesh	Govt. engagement with non-state service providers.	Case studies (*n* unspecified) supported by existing literature.	External (DFID)
		Cavill and Sohail, 2004	Dhaka (Mdantsane)	Accountability of urban service providers.	Case study service provisions and interviews of beneficiaries (*n*=100).	External (unspecified)
		Hanchett et al., 2003	2 cities: Dhaka and Chittagong	Evaluation of NGO-led water and sanitation programme.	Survey of both beneficiary and non-beneficiary households (*n*=1,130).	External (WaterAid)
		Akbar et al, 2007	Dhaka	Community-managed water supply for the urban poor.	Household survey (*n*= 540), focus groups and stakeholder interviews.	Unspecified
	Shelter	Begum, 2007	Dhaka (overall)	Role of urban planning in housing provision for the urban poor.	Secondary and author's opinion.	Unspecified
		Speak and Tipple, 2006; Tipple and Speak, 2005; Speak, 2004	9 countries incl. Bangladesh	Perceptions of and interventions for homelessness.	Interview of homeless people, and NGO and govt. representatives (*n* unspecified).	External (DFID)
		Rahman, 2002	Dhaka (overall)	NGO involvement in urban housing for the poor.	Case study of 5 selected NGOs.	External (World Bank)
		Mahmud and Duyar-Kienast, 2001	Dhaka and Ankara (Turkey)	Location, morphology, and development of slums.	Not mentioned.	External (unspecified)
		Rahman, 2001	Dhaka	A review of housing rights for the urban poor in Dhaka, including violations of these through evictions.	Secondary review.	Unspecified
		Rahman, 2002	Bangladesh (urban general)	Role of NGOs in housing the urban poor.	Secondary review.	External (World Bank)
	Education	Kabeer and Mahmud, 2009	Dhaka (Pallabi and Agargaon slums)	Why parents send their children to school or not.	Household survey (*n* = 616) and interview of parents, children and teachers.	External (unspecified)
	Health	Caidwell et al., 2002	Dhaka (old and new parts)	Infant mortality and poverty among poor urban people.	1999 Access to Health Services survey involving 1,825 slum households and 8,429 persons.	External (Rockefeller Foundation)
		Pryer et al., 2002	Dhaka (Slums in Mohammadpur thana)	Livelihood patterns, nutrition and health status.	Urban Livelihoods Study (ULS): quantitative panel survey (*n* = 850) and qualitative interviews.	External (DFID)
		Kabir et al., 2000	Dhaka (Slums in Mohammadpur thana)	Impacts of sickness on livelihood vulnerability and security.	ULS (see above).	External (DFID)

Domain	Component	Article	Geographical focus	Thematic focus	Data source	Funding source
Livelihoods	Rickshaw pulling	Begum and Sen, 2005	Dhaka (overall)	Prospects and limitations of rickshaw pulling as a livelihood.	Questionnaire survey of existing and former rickshaw pullers (*n*=500).	Domestic (BIDS)
	Home-based work	Mahmud, 2003	Dhaka (3 slums: Babupara; Badal Mia; and Ershad Nagar)	Women's transformation of domestic spaces for income generation.	Questionnaire survey of women involved in home-based work (*n*=151).	External (unspecified)
		Ghafur, 2002	Faridpur, Comilla and Mymensingh (total 18 slums, 6 in each city)	Women's utilisation of space in home-based work.	Informal interviews with slum dwellers, field workers and official and elected members of the municipal authority.	Domestic (unspecified)
	Livelihood determinants	Opel, 2000	Dhaka (Slums in Mohammadpur thana)	Role of social resources in urban livelihood patterns.	ULS (see above).	External (DFID)
	Livelihood security	Wood and Salway, 2000	Dhaka (Slums in Mohammadpur thana)	Security and vulnerability of livelihood patterns.	ULS (see above).	External (DFID)
Development & safety nets	Micro credit	Malhotra, 2003	5 countries, including Bangladesh	Microfinance for home improvements.	Synthesised from secondary sources.	External (unspecified)
	Access to external support	Gafur, 2000	Faridpur, Comilla and Mymensingh (total 18 slums, 6 in each city)	Factors affecting slum dwellers' claims on slum improvement projects.	Informal interviews with slum dwellers, field workers and official and elected members of the municipal authority.	Domestic (unspecified)
Socio-political	Eviction	Paul, 2006	Dhaka (15 selected slums)	Eviction fear and awareness of rehabilitation options.	Questionnaire survey (of 300 slum dwellers).	External (unspecified)
		Rahman, 2001	Dhaka (overall)	Housing rights; social mobilisation; governance.	Secondary (review of events, charters and declarations).	External (unspecified)
	Political participation	Banks, 2008	Dhaka (two wards)	Power structure and political participation of the poor.	Focus group (with community members) and interview of ward commissioners (*n* unspecified).	Domestic (BRAC)
	Gender	Salway et al., 2005; 2003	Dhaka (slums in Mohammadpur thana)	Women's employment.	ULS (see above).	External (DFID)
		Jesmin and Salway, 2000	Dhaka (slums in Mohammadpur thana)	Uncertainty and instability of women's marriage.	ULS(see above).	External (DFID)
		Ahmed and Mitra, 2010				
	Violence	Garrett and Ahmed, 2004	City of Dinajpur	Research design and its application to study crimes.	Questionnaire survey of households from 14 communities (*n*=585).	External (IFPRI)
	Child labour	Delap, 2010	Dhaka (slums in Mohammadpur thana)	Economic and socio-cultural factors of child labour.	ULS (see above).	External (DFID)
		Delap, 2000	Dhaka (Korail slum)	Urban poor children's work during flooding.	Survey and interview of flood-affected households with children (*n*=50).	External (DFID)
		Delap, 2000a	Dhaka (Gazi Rahman slum)	Children and intra-household labour deployment.	Qualitative survey of selected households (*n* unspecified).	Domestic (Grameen Trust)

Domain	Component	Article	Geographical focus	Thematic focus	Data source	Funding source
Environmental	Flooding	Rashid, 2000	Dhaka (5 *bustees:* Shahidertek, Bailtola, Katashurberi, Shibir, Masjid, Mothertek)	Struggles and coping strategies during 1998 flooding.	Interview of flood-affected poor urban households (n=32).	Domestic (BRAC)
	River erosion	Hutton and Haque, 2003 and 2004	Sirajganj city (4 *bustees*)	Economic and social adaptation among displaces of river-bank erosion.	Interviews with displaced households (n=238).	External (unspecified)
	Community adaptations to climate change	Jabeen et al, 2010	Dhaka (Korail *bustee*)	Household and community-level strategies to reduce risks of flooding and high temperatures.	Household interviews (n=35).	External (UCL)
Technological change	Use of mobile phones	Wong, 2008	5 cities in Bangladesh (Dhaka, Cox's Bazar, Khulna, Chittagong, Mymensingh)	Adoption and diffusion of mobile phones among the urban poor.	Interviews (n=20).	External (unspecified)

Note: For a list of references for these publications, please contact the corresponding author.

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