



The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture
at Harvard University and the
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

BANGLADESH

Background Information Paper

**Prepared for the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture
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BANGLADESH

Primary Information

Country:	People's Republic of Bangladesh
Capital:	Dacca
Population:	84.7 million
Growth rate	2.7%
Density	588 persons/square kilometer
Urban	11%
Urban growth rate	6.6%
Area:	144,000 square kilometers
Geography:	Low-lying deltaic plain formed by three great river systems: the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna. Marginal hills rise to the east and southeast.
Climate:	Humid tropical, characterized by high summer temperatures, high humidity, a monsoon season, and a brief temperate winter.
Languages:	Predominantly Bengali, several local dialects, English widely used in government and trade.
Religion:	Muslim 85% Hindu 13.5% Other 1.5%
Currency:	Taka. 1 taka = US \$.07
Per Capita Income:	GNP/capita US \$ 90
Major Cities:	Dacca, Rajshahi, Chittagong, Khulna
Production:	Industry 13%, growth rate 5.9% Agriculture 57% Services 30%



BANGLADESH

Background Information Paper

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Geography

Bangladesh is bounded to the west and north by India, to the east by and Burma, and to the south by the Bay of Bengal. Its predominant topographic feature is a low-lying deltaic plain, formed by three great river systems: the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna. Marginal hills rise in the east and southeast. As Bangladesh is situated within the humid tropical zone, its climate is characterized by high temperatures (up to 105°F) during summer, high humidity, heavy rainfall (ranging from 60" to 200") during the monsoon, and a short but pleasant winter.

Historical Background

From the accounts of Greek, Chinese, and Arab historians, it is apparent that Bengal had a rich cultural heritage and early commercial relations with countries of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Dacca's muslin was famous throughout western Europe in medieval times.

From the middle of the eighteenth century to 1947, it was part of the British Colonies in India. At the partition of India in 1947, two-thirds of Bengal became East Pakistan. The partition led to massive population movements: Muslims from India to Pakistan, and Hindus from Pakistan to India. Bengal absorbed a large share of the immigrants from adjacent states in India. The major concentrations of these immigrants were in the border districts. Government efforts also located a substantial number of

them in major urban centers like Dacca, in government-sponsored housing and business facilities.

After years of political agitation, the demand for autonomy in East Pakistan escalated into an open guerilla warfare. In December of 1971 Bangladesh became independent. This again led to large population movements between the two nations, as both West Pakistanis and former migrants from India resettled in Pakistan.

Administration

Bangladesh is a republic. The President, elected by direct franchise, is head of state and chief executive. He holds office for a term of five years. The Ministers assist the President in exercising his executive functions.

The legislative power of the Republic is vested in the Parliament, consisting of 300 members who are directly elected from single territorial constituencies, for a five-year term.

The judiciary is a hierarchical system with the Supreme Court, consisting of the Appellate Division and the High Court Division, at the top, and lower courts at district and subdivision levels.

The country is divided into four divisions and 17 districts. Each division is headed by a Commissioner, and each district by a District Commissioner appointed from the Civil Service. Next in the hierarchy come the subdivisions, municipalities, and villages.

Economy

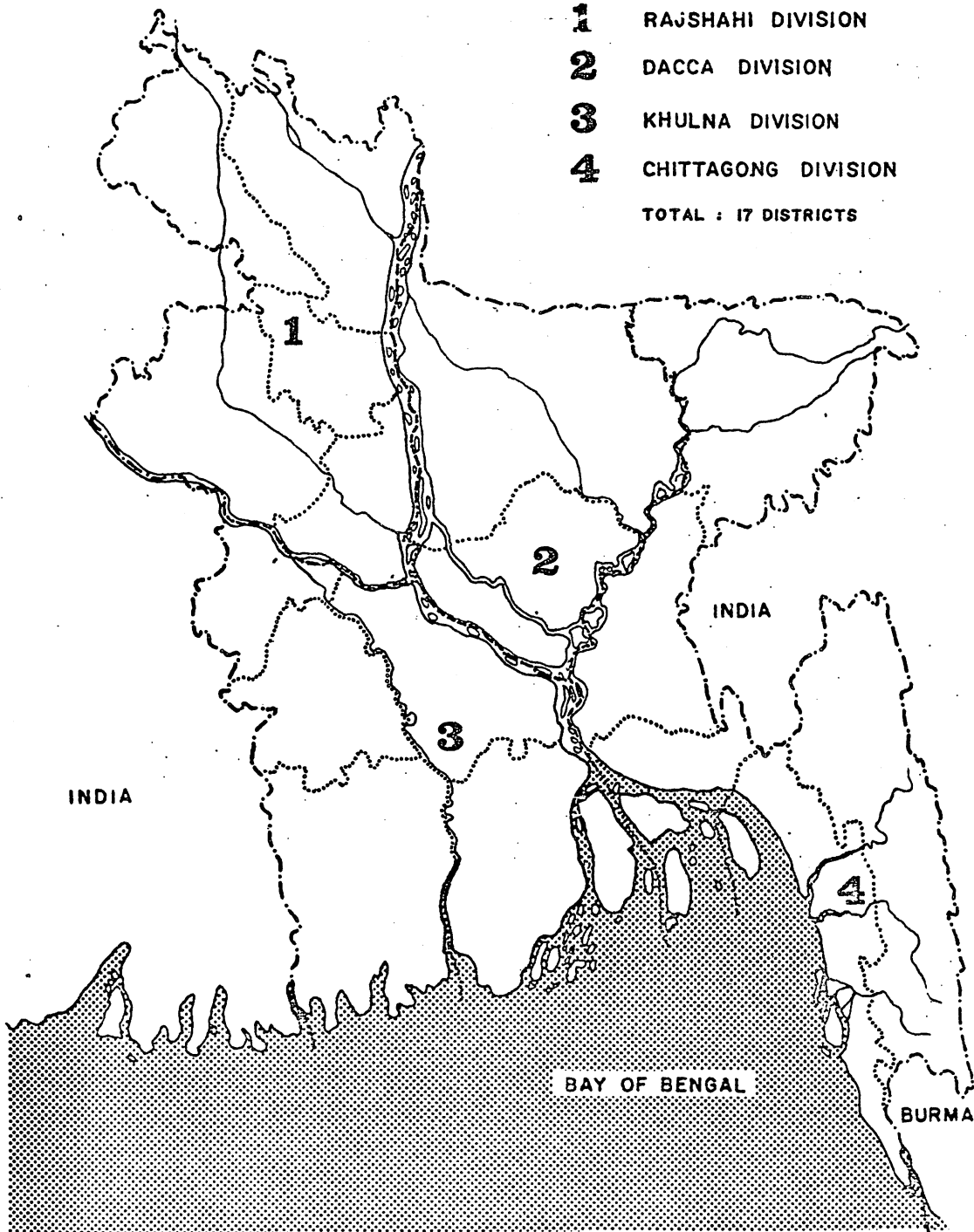
The economy of Bangladesh is dominated by the agricultural sector, which accounts for 57% of the gross national product and 86% of total employment, followed in importance by the service and manufacturing sectors. The per capita income is US \$ 90 per year.

While agriculture is predominantly in private hands, government has a significant share in the service and manufacturing sectors. Over the past few years the economy has been growing at an average rate of 5%

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

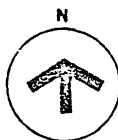
- 1** RAJSHAHI DIVISION
- 2** DACCA DIVISION
- 3** KHULNA DIVISION
- 4** CHITTAGONG DIVISION

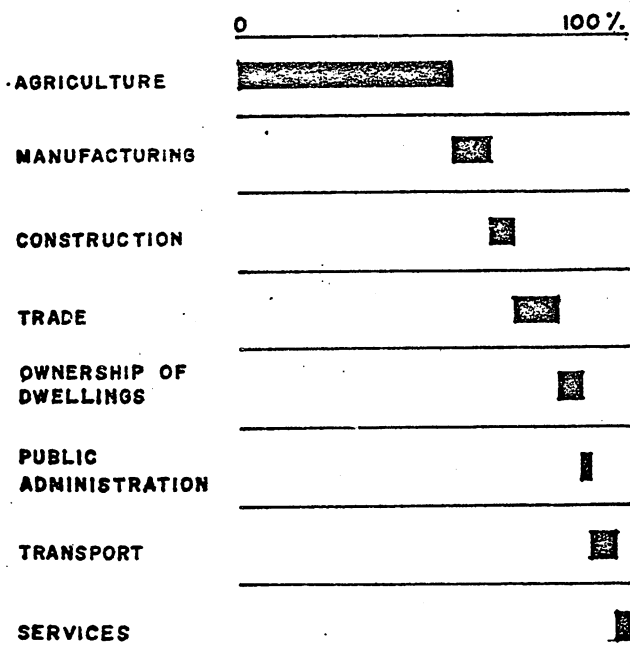
TOTAL : 17 DISTRICTS



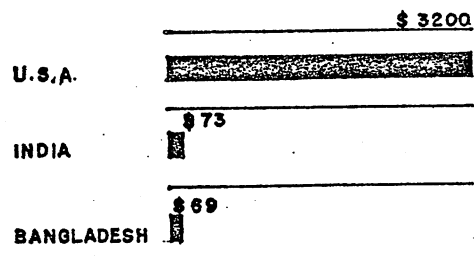
BANGLADESH

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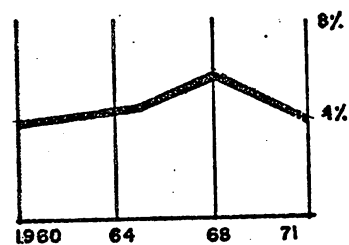




GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT



PER CAPITA INCOME



RATE OF GROWTH OF GNP

SOURCE- PLANNING DEPARTMENT , GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH

annually. Per capita income has been growing at a much lesser rate (2.5%) because of the high rate of population growth (2.5%).

Major export items are jute, tea, rice, bananas, and sugarcane. However, the economy suffers from a chronic balance of payment problem, with imports significantly outweighing exports. Between 5% and 10% of the total food requirements of the country is imported. Available natural resources have not been fully assessed, but do include natural gas and hydroelectric power.

Demography

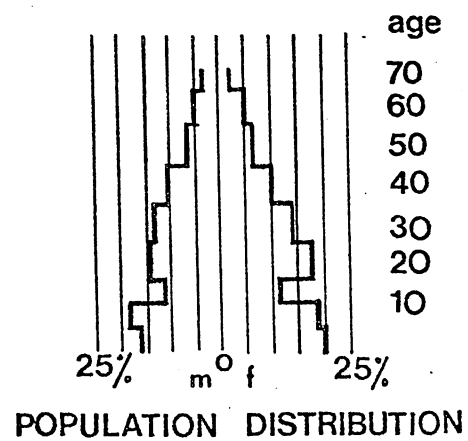
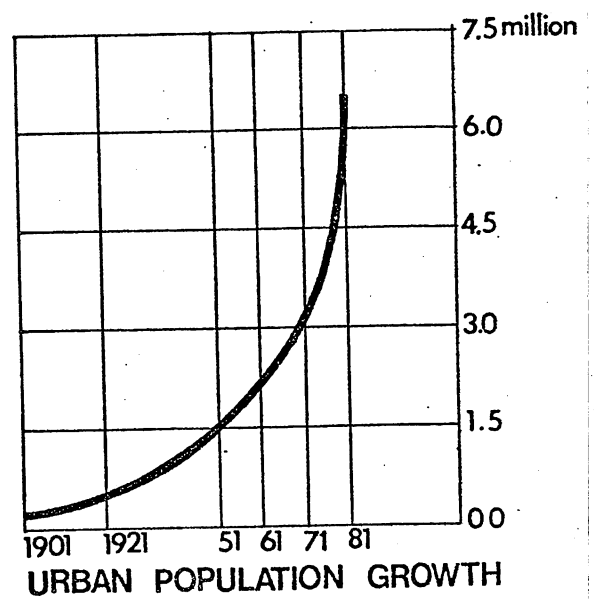
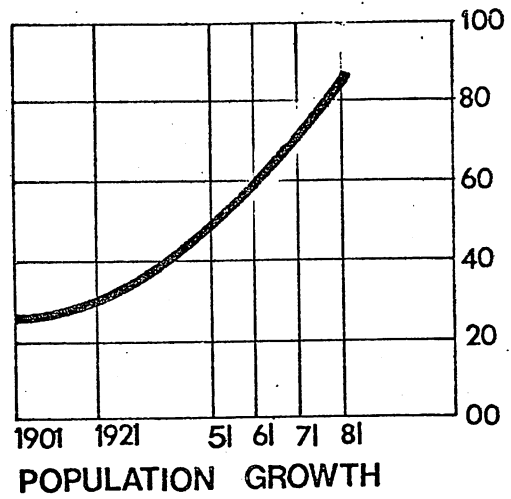
A majority of the people of Bangladesh are of a fairly homogeneous descent and speak Bengali. English is widely used in modern international trade and government. The Bengali language, however, rich in literary heritage, is still a vital part of the culture and was important in promoting a strong national identity, strengthening the spirit and process of national development toward independence.

91% of the people live in 65,000 village settlements. A majority of the population is Muslim. As with most agricultural societies, religion plays an important role in the lives of the people and there is a strong tradition of very tightly woven community structures.

Consumption patterns vary widely between income groups, and between rural and urban populations. In the lower income groups, the major share of the income is spent on food, followed by clothing, then shelter. The average income of a poor squatter family is 200 to 300 taka per month, most of which must be spent on procuring food. There is subsidized food rationing in urban areas. Clothing needs also vary between rural and urban areas (the average per capita consumption is 13 yards). The lower income population usually depends on old clothes sold second-hand in the markets.

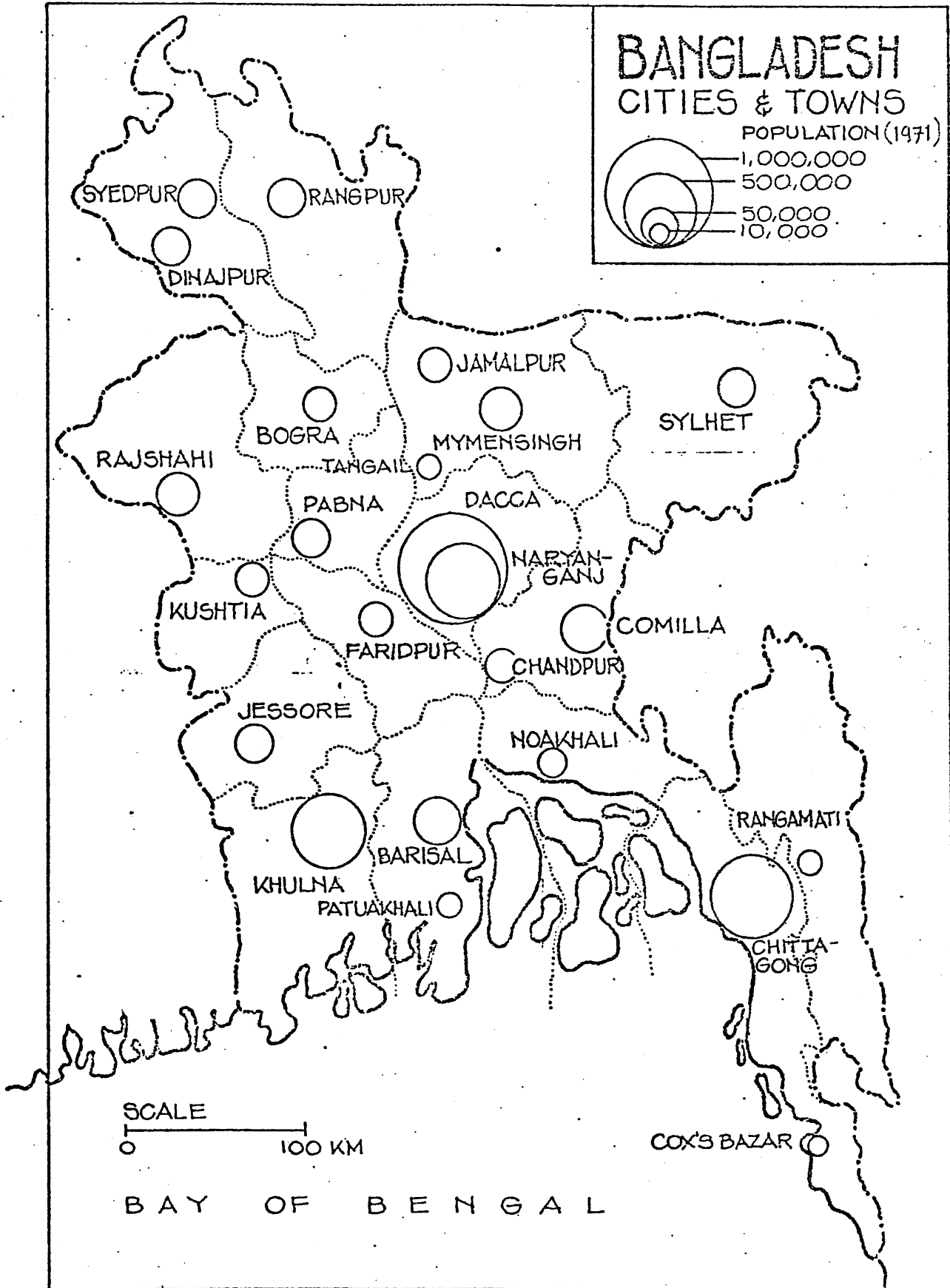
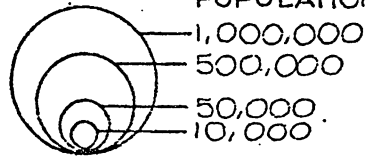
Infrastructure services such as piped water, sewerage, and electricity are generally limited to urban areas. Traditional means of obtaining services (wells, water containers, pit latrines and cesspools, and kerosene) continue to be used in rural areas and in a large part of urban areas. Many programs are being undertaken to provide electricity to the rural areas.

Demographic Characteristics



BANGLADESH CITIES & TOWNS

POPULATION (1971)



Health and sanitary conditions vary between urban and rural areas, and also between localities. A national health program exists whose chief objective is the control and eradication of epidemics and communicable diseases.

Urbanization Trends

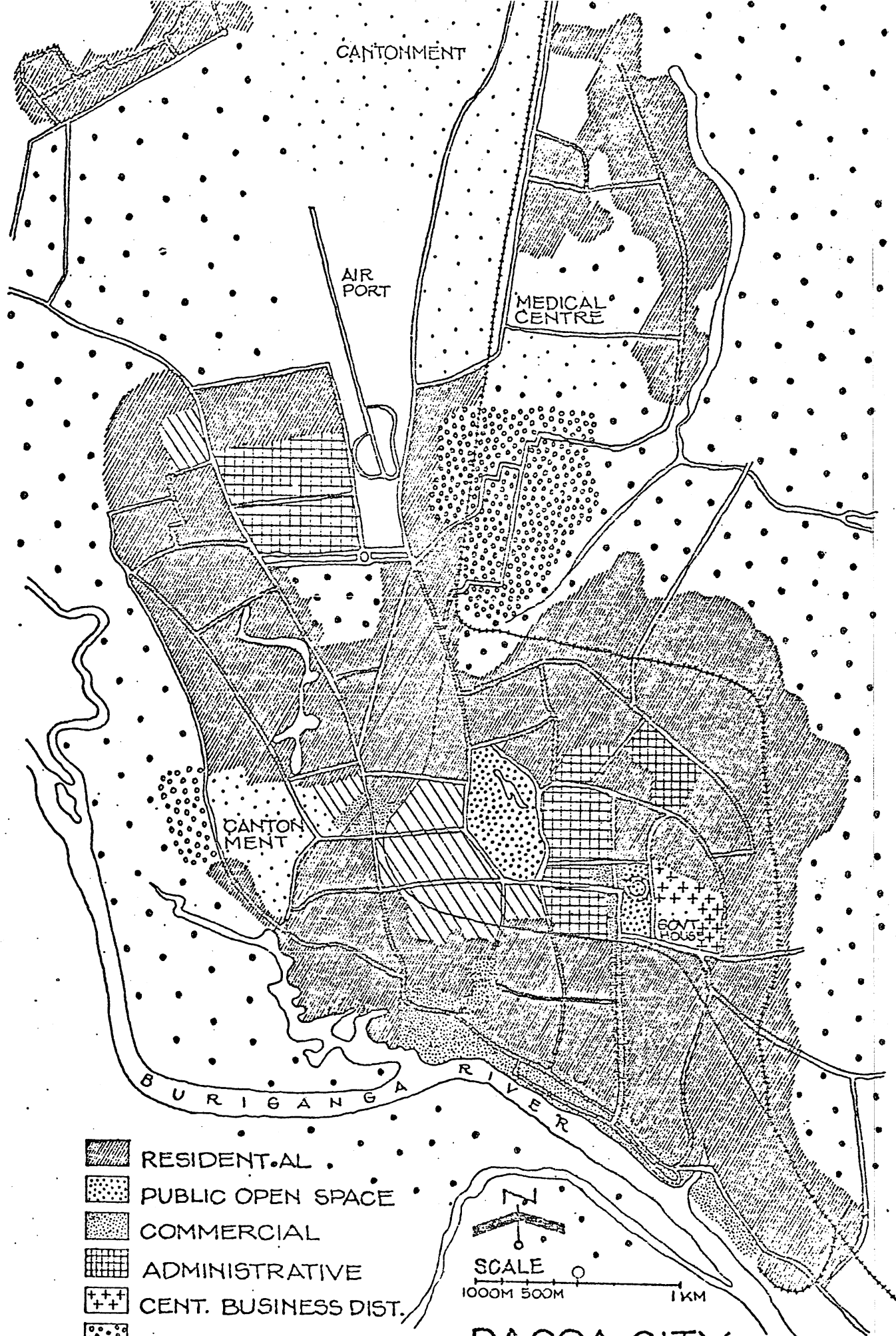
Bangladesh is one of the least urbanized countries in the world. In 1901, only 2.4% of the population was living in urban areas. The rate of urbanization subsequently started to increase, but even in 1921 Dacca was the only settlement that could be regarded as a city. Urban growth rates, particularly in Dacca, received an impetus in 1947 following the partition of India, due mainly to large scale in-migration of Muslims from India. However, the most significant phase of urbanization occurred after the War of Independence in 1971.

Urban growth has been very rapid recently. Major cities are growing much faster than others, with the pressure on the capital being heaviest. Among 119 urban centers, the four major cities have 50% of the urban population. The city of Dacca has experienced a 600% increase of population over the last 30 years.

This rapid urbanization in Bangladesh has received its impetus chiefly from the deterioration of living conditions in rural areas and migrations due to political developments, rather than from normal processes of industrial and economic development. As a consequence, cities face serious problems of overpopulation and inadequate infrastructure and services.

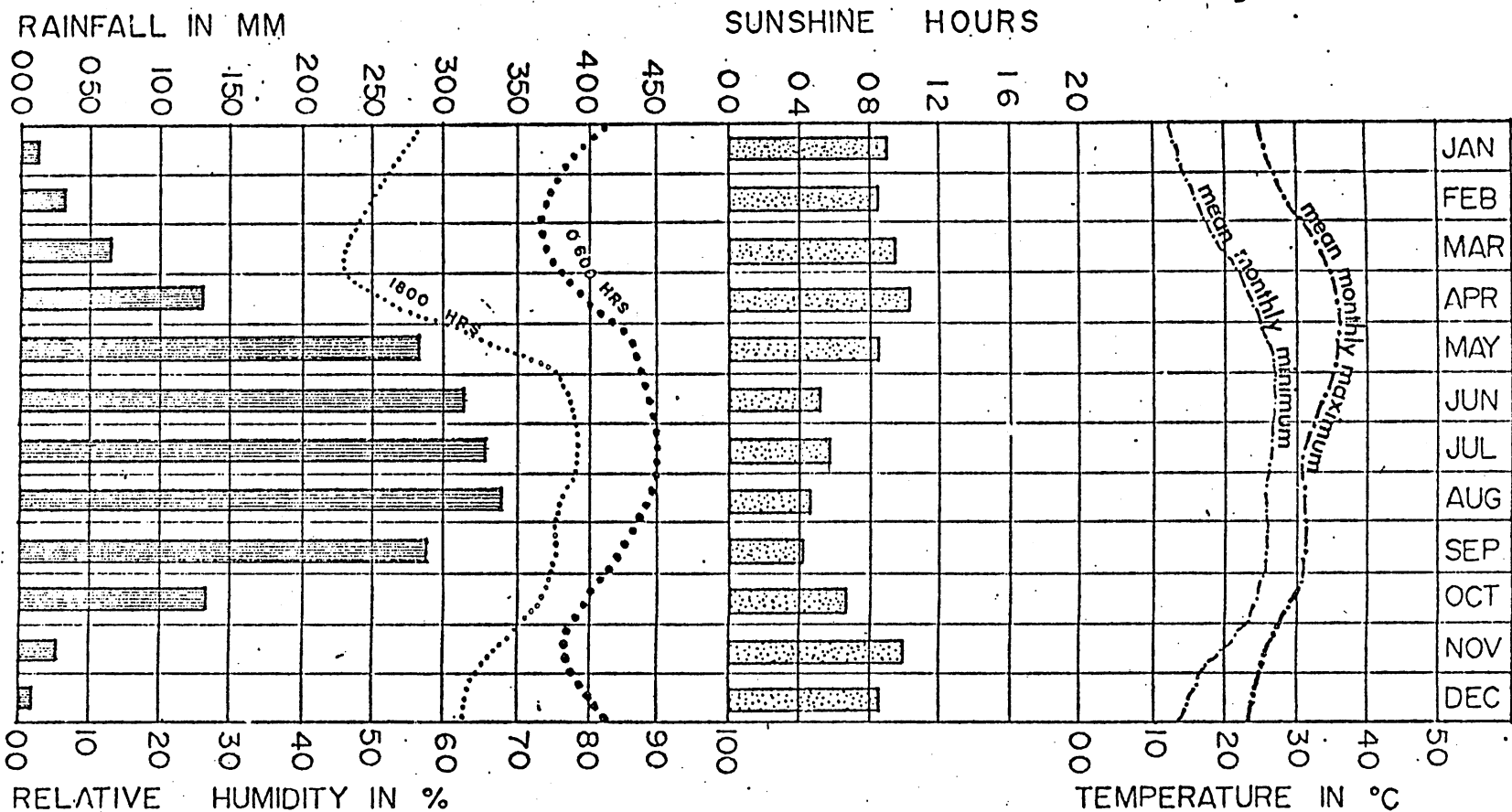
URBAN CONTEXT: DACCA

Dacca is located at 24° north latitude, 90° east longitude. It has an area of 324 square kilometers, and a population of 2.5 million. Its main seasons are: winter, from November to February; summer, from March to June; and the monsoon, from July to October. Winter temperatures are generally temperate, ranging from 52°F to 84°F. The summer is warm, with



DACCA CITY
LANDUSE MAP

COUNTRY	BANGLADESH
LOCATION	DA C C A
ALTITUDE	9M ABOVE SEA
LATITUDE	23°45' N
LONGITUDE	90°15' E



WIND VELOCITY

IN KM PER HR

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
2.9	5.1	6.0	9.3	9.6	6.7	8.0	7.7	7.7	12.9	11.0	3.2

WIND SPEED IS MODERATE WITH THE EXCEPTION OF CYCLONIC WINDS IN SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER AND NOR-WESTER IN APRIL WHICH MAY EXCEED 150 KM/HR

temperatures between 70°F and 94°F. Rainfall during the monsoon varies from 47" to 136". Humidity ranges from 99% to 36%.

History

Dacca existed as a trading town as far back as the third century. It first came into prominence when it became the seat of government of the province of Bengal under the Mughal Dynasty. The city at that time covered a very large area, with a population of one million, and the basic structure that was laid out then still exists today.

Under British colonial rule, Dacca first experienced a period of growth, but declined again when the capital of Bengal was removed to Chittagong. After the partition of India in 1947, Dacca became the seat of the provincial government and experienced rapid expansion. Muslim migrants from India were resettled in Dacca by the government.

When Bangladesh achieved independence in 1971, Dacca became the capital of the country. Since then, the city has experienced its greatest expansion. The population nearly doubled with the past decade. Many new areas were developed and previously developed areas became more dense, seriously overtaxing the capacity of the city's infrastructure.

Administration

Urban growth in Dacca is shaped by the activities of a number of independent organizations having jurisdiction over land development, the supply of infrastructure, and the operation of municipal services.

The Municipal Corporation, headed by an elected mayor, executes the functions related to property taxation, urban transportation systems, limited public works, refuse collection, and limited health care and public education. The Dacca Improvement Trust is responsible for developing, administering, and maintaining new housing and commercial areas. Other municipal bodies include the Department of Roads and Highways, Public Works Department, Water and Sewerage Authority, Directorate of Public Health Engineering, Urban Development Directorate, Dacca Metropolitan Police, and Postal Department. In addition, there is the Housing and Settlement

Directorate, which was originally established to house the massive influx of refugees from India.

Economy

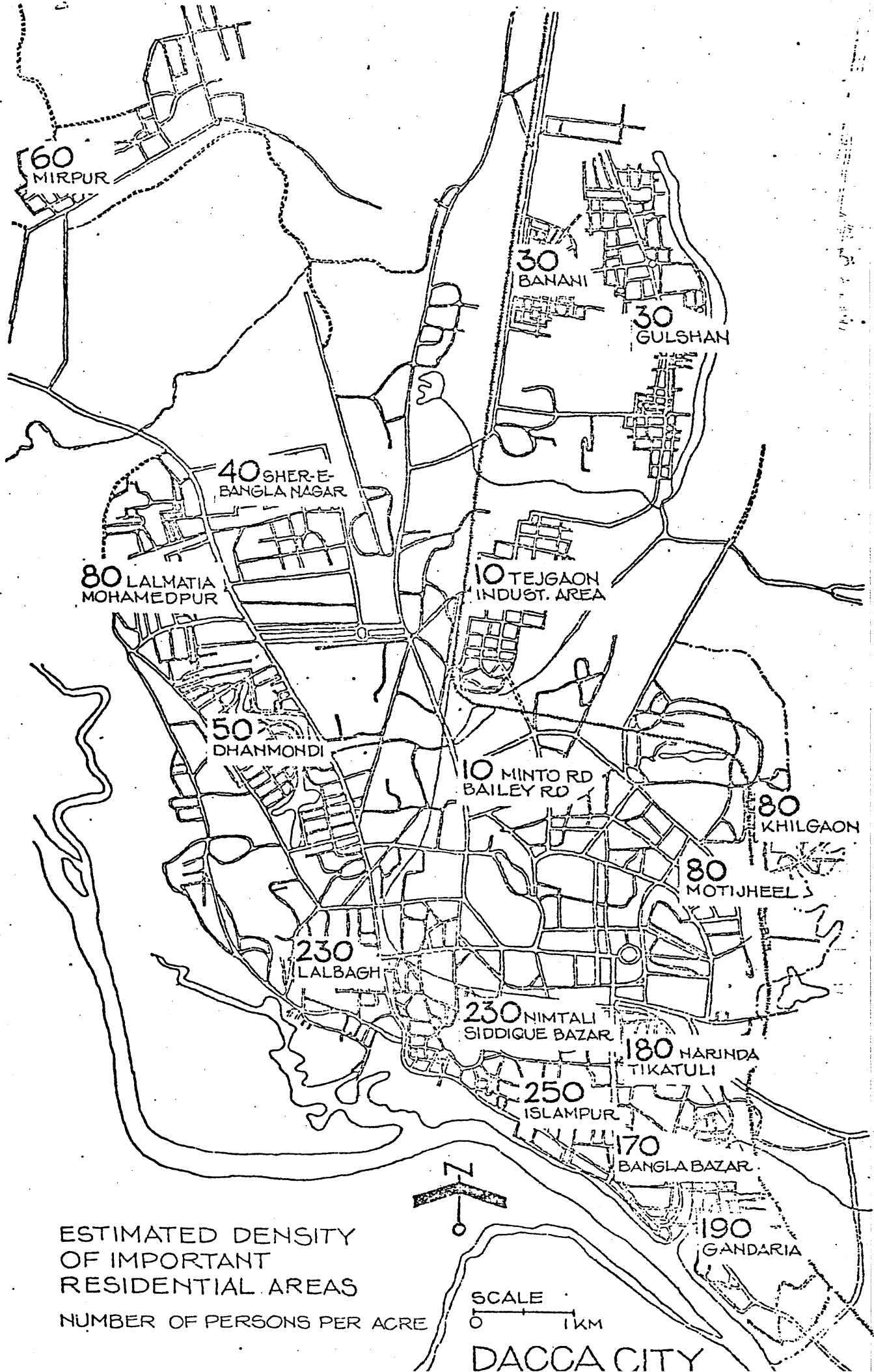
The capital city accommodates most of the country's administrative machinery, including the headquarters of all government organizations, housing for government employees, and the military bases, which occupy a large area of the city. It is also the major industrial and commercial center of the country and a major inland port, handling much of the internal wholesale trade. The headquarters of most private sector industries and trading organizations are also located in Dacca, as are almost all the private professional services available in the country.

The main industries in Dacca are tanneries, metal products, glass, pharmaceuticals, textiles, tobacco processing, chemicals, steel re-rolling, ceramics, machine tools, and specialized industries.

Demography

The population of Dacca in 1951 was 418,000; in 1961 it rose to 560,000; in 1971 it was 1,201,000; and now it is estimated to be 2.5 million. Of this population, 57.7% are male and 42.3% female. Between 1961 and 1974, the rural population of the country experienced an increase of 44%, while the urban population increased by 165%. This increase was concentrated mainly in the four big cities: Dacca grew by 320%, Chittagong by 695%, Khulna by 341%, and Rajshahi by 233%.

The population of Dacca is largely homogeneous ethnically, composed of people who come from all parts of the country and speak various local dialects. A large number of original residents, called "kuttis," live in the old section of the city. In a different section lives a substantial population of migrants from India who came after the partition. The old city and the migrant area have their own distinct expressions of the living pattern, clearly discernible in their use of space - verandahs, front and back yards - and decorative motifs. Another distinct section includes the very high income areas of Gulshan and Banani, where all diplomatic missions are located.



ESTIMATED DENSITY
OF IMPORTANT
RESIDENTIAL AREAS

NUMBER OF PERSONS PER ACRE

SCALE
0 1KM

DACCACITY

Most of the high income population groups in the country are located in urban areas. Nevertheless, low income groups form the vast majority of urban populations.

In 1972, it was estimated that 25% of the total population of Dacca city was living as squatters, with an average monthly income of \$15 to \$20 per family. According to 1976-77 data, 13% of urban households had an income of less than \$200 per year, and were classified as very low income; 31.1% were low income households, with earnings of \$200 to \$320 per year; 35.5% were moderate income households with earnings of \$600 per year; 15% ranked as high income households with incomes of \$600 to \$1,600; and 5.5% as very high income households with incomes above \$1,600 per year.

Housing

Until the late 1960's, the government addressed housing needs in terms of population categories (industrial workers, government employees, displaced persons), undertaking isolated projects to solve the specific housing problems of these different population groups without a comprehensive policy framework.

Improvement trusts were created whose purpose was largely the development of land for resale to upper-middle level government employees and other higher income beneficiaries. To help make available mortgage money for home building in the private sector, the government established in 1952 the House Building Finance Corporation, with the power to make direct loans to home owners up to 80% of the house value. Here again, the beneficiaries of the program were the middle and upper income groups.

With the influx of refugees from India, government responsibility in housing expanded. In 1958, a special housing and settlement office was created, which in 1970 was raised to the Directorate level. This organization constructed about 26,000 core houses and provided 10,000 buildable plots for refugees. Following independence in 1971, the government has constructed 4,500 dwellings for the urban poor. This number is insignificant in relation to a shortage of over .75 million housing units.

Until recently, therefore, the role of the public sector was limited mostly to the provision of housing for government employees and developing residential estates for the richer segments of the urban population. Plots are, characteristically, large, building materials are of high quality, and densities are very low in comparison to the older districts in the city.

As far as the private sector is concerned, apart from a few palatial houses built by wealthy businessmen and professionals, houses in the city are generally quite modest. They are mostly single or two-storeyed, with the exception of a few multi-storey flats put up by private developers.

Unlike the public sector housing, these dwellings use a wide variety of construction materials, depending on the economic resources and personal preferences of the individual consumer. A recent survey of urban housing in the private sector has classified dwellings into six categories:

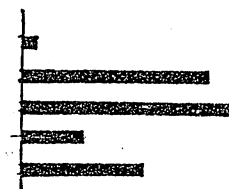
Types of Dwellings, According to Construction Materials

<u>Category</u>	<u>Roof</u>	<u>Wall</u>	<u>Floor</u>	<u>% of Dwellings in Category</u>
1	Concrete	Brick	Cement	20
2	Corrugated Metal	Brick	Cement	13
3	Corrugated Metal	Corrugated Metal	Cement	4
4	Corrugated Metal	Corrugated Metal	Mud	7
5	Corrugated Metal	Bamboo	Mud	30
6	Bamboo/ Thatch	Bamboo	Mud	25

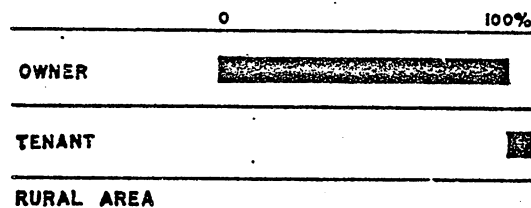
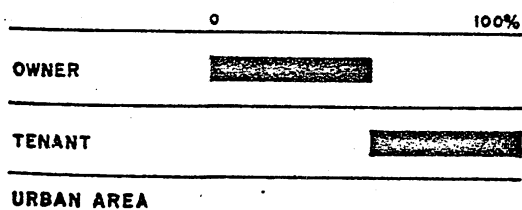
A majority of the dwellings of lower income households have one room, which is used for almost all the household activities. But the survey revealed that economic considerations alone did not dictate this multiple use of space. Cultural tradition and family living patterns are other determinant factors. In rural areas, the concept of dividing a structure into rooms for different uses is not followed. If needed, separate rooms are built as separate structures. Even among upper income households, in larger dwellings multi-use of spaces is common.

1960 HOUSING CENSUS OF BANGLADESH

<u>Construction Types</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Masonry-Concrete	218,000	2.3%
C.I. Sheet (tin), bricks, wood	2,900,000	30.8
Shacks (wood, bamboo and mud)	3,460,000	36.7
Adobe (with bamboo)	940,000	9.9
Mobile (boats) and others	1,920,000	20.3
TOTAL	9,438,000	100.0%



1960 TENURE PATTERN OF BANGLADESH



(SOURCE - HOUSING CENSUS REPORT, EAST PAKISTAN 1960)

20.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Yearly Income in US\$</u>	<u>Percentage of Urban Households</u>
Lowest	\$ 0 - 960	80%
Medium Low	961 - 1920	12
Medium	1921 - 2880	4
Medium High	2881 - 3840	2
Upper High	3840 - 4800	2

Note: Of the lowest income group 27.5% has yearly income of less than \$200, and 52.5% has yearly income \$200-300.