Urbanization in the Bangladeshi Economy

Effects of urbanization on different aspects of Bangladeshi economy such as growth, employment, human development

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Introduction

Urbanization is an increase in the physical growth of urban areas. According to the United Nations, this population movement from rural to urban areas is equal to urban migration ¹. Eldridge defines urbanization as population concentration. It occurs through multiplications of points of concentration and increase in size of individual concentrations. ² Definition of "urban" varies based on the country, it can be defined by certain criterion such as having the significant majority of population not being engaged in agricultural work, no surplus unemployment, presence urban characteristics (electric lighting, sewerage) and administrative/political boundaries etc. UNICEF points out that urban growth occurs due to the natural increases in urban population and the population growth resulting from net rural-urban migration and reallocation of rural settlements into urban areas.³ World Bank classifies Bangladesh as a low-income country⁴ consisting of poverty, deprivation and inequality. ⁵ The initiation of urbanization, relationship of urbanization with variables such as unemployment, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the effects of urbanization in Bangladesh will be discussed in this essay.

¹ "Urbanization." *Urbanization*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2013.

² H.T. Eldridge, 'The process of urbanization', in *Social forces* (1942), repro in J.J. Spengler and O.D. Duncan (eds.) *Demographic analysis* (Glencoe Ill. 1956) 338-343.

³ UNICEF Definitions. N.p.: n.p., n.d. PDF

⁴ "Bangladesh." World Bank Data. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2013.

⁵ "Home - Rural Poverty Portal." Rural Poverty Portal. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Nov. 2013.

Initiation of Urbanization

Urban population is defined as the percentage of total population living in urban areas⁶. According to Figure 1, this value increases roughly linearly from 4.43 in 1951 to 29 in 2012. Before Bangladesh gained independence from Pakistan the primary focus of production was import substitution methods. In 1982, Shortly after Bangladesh gained independencee from Pakistan, New Industrial policy (NIP) was implemented to focus on export oriented growth in order to launch the private sector⁷, other policies such as the 2010 industrial policy followed⁸. Establishment of export processing zones in different cities and direct export incentive schemes⁹ have strengthened the manufacturing base of the economy. ¹⁰ Thus there is a rapid increase in the manufacturing industries of the country (Figure 2) with a boom in the late 1980s. This growth in manufacturing industries shows an increase in capital accumulation in the urban areas 11. Corden and Findlay suggested that capital mobility (movement places where capital is more productive) is an important determinant of rural-urban migration as. 12 Lewis suggests this expansion of the manufacturing industries causes the total product of manufactured goods to shift outwards thus causing demand of labour to shift outwards. Thus rural-urban

⁶ "Urban Population (% of Total)." World Bank Data. N.p., n.d. Web. 9 Nov. 2013.

⁷ Rags, Riches and Women Workers: Export-oriented Garment Manufacturing in Bangladesh. N.p.: n.p., 29 July 2004. Web..

⁸Momen, Nurul. *Implementation of Privatization Policy: Lessons from Bangladesh*. N.p.: n.p., 2007. PDF ⁹ Rags, Riches and Women Workers: Export-oriented Garment Manufacturing in Bangladesh. N.p.: n.p., 29 July 2004. Web.

¹⁰ Yunus, Muhammad, and Tatsufumi Yamagata. *The Garment Industry of Bangladesh*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. PDF.

¹¹ "Economic Issues 8 -- Why Is China Growing So Fast?" *Economic Issues 8 -- Why Is China Growing So Fast?* N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Nov. 2013.

¹² Corden, W.M. and R. Findlay, 1975, "Urban Unemployment Inter-sectorial Capital Mobility and Development Policy," Economica, pp. 59-78.

migration occurs so that the excess demand of labour is met. ¹³ According to a study of UNIDO, the educational level of 96.2 ¹⁴ percent of the labourers among the sample of manufacturing firms is primary education thus the barrier of entry to these manufacturing sectors is low. As Figure 3 suggests that the real income index is significantly lower in rural areas than in urban areas. This is why poor households diversify their sources of income through sending a family member to urban areas initially (an example of rural to urban migration). ¹⁵ According to Harris and Todaro, rural-urban is positive when the expected urban wage (expected wage is calculated by the probability of the migrant getting a job and the actual manufacturing wage) is greater than the actual rural wage. ¹⁶ These factors justify the positive correlation between the variables "increase in manufacturing industries and urbanization" and "increase in urban wages and urbanization"

Gross Domestic Product and Urbanisation

It is very important to explore the relationship between annual percentage growth of GDP and urbanisation to highlight the effects of urbanisation on economic growth.

This is because economic growth rate equals the growth rate of real GDP. ¹⁷The annual percentage of growth rate of GDP was -14% following the war in 1972, after that period

¹³ Todaro, Michael P and Stephen C. Smith. *Economic Development, 11th ed.* New York: Addison-Wesley (2012). Print. P.356

¹⁴ "Industrialization and Poverty Alleviation." *UNIDO*. N.p., n.d. Web. 9 Nov. 2013. http://www.unido.org/fileadmin/import/59563_04COMPID_0591422_Ebook.pdf>.

¹⁵ Yamagata, Tatsufumi, Mayumi Murayama, and Takahiro Fukunishi. *Industrialization and Poverty Alleviation: Pro-poor Industrialization Strategies Revisited*. N.p., n.d. Web.

¹⁶ Espindola, Aquino L. *A Harris-Todaro Agent-Based Model to Rural-Urban Migration*. Digital image. *Brazilian Journal of Physics*. N.p., n.d. Web.

¹⁷ MEASURING GDP AND ECONOMIC GROWTH*. N.p., n.d. Web. 9 Nov. 2013.

it has consistently almost linearly increased till last recorded in 2012 when it was 6%. This is show in Figure 4. The Agriculture value added (% of GDP) decreases rapidly and linearly while the industry value added (% of GDP)increases less rapidly (absolute value of slope is lower compared to the data of the agricultural value added, implying a lower rate of change) and linearly from 1980 -2012. The higher urban sectorial composition of GDP growth confirms that there is a strong link between rapid economic growth (increase in GDP) and a structural shift of employees from agricultural to urban (industrial) activities (urbanisation). ¹⁸ High levels of GDP growth is accompanied by high levels of urbanization (Fig 5). Economist Haque and Geographer Akbar highlighted that there is a positive relationship between urban GDP urbanization in Bangladesh¹⁹, this can be seen in Figure 4. However the growth rate of urbanization and GDP of Bangladesh as a whole is not proportional as seen in (Fig 5) however they are positively correlated. The rapid increase in the higher urban real wages (Fig 3) causes overall income to increase which leads to an increase in consumption expenditures, which causes the GDP to rise. ²⁰ A positive economic growth is observed because higher economic growth correlates with increase in GDP²¹.

¹⁸ "Urbanization and Growth: Setting the Context." *Lawrence*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Nov. 2013. <Urbanization and Growth: Setting the Context>.

¹⁹ Haque and Akbar. 1992, "Economics of Urbanisation", Vol. 20, Nos. 1 & 2, *Journal of Bangladesh National Geographical Association*

²⁰ "Shift Factors of Aggregate Demand." *EconPort.* N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Nov. 2013. http://www.econport.org/content/handbook/ADandS/AD/Shift.html.

²¹ MEASURING GDP AND ECONOMIC GROWTH*. N.p., n.d. Web. 9 Nov. 2013.

Unemployment and Urbanization

Unemployment is a very important consequence of urbanisation that leads to the formation of informal markets²². Unemployment rate is defined as the percentage of the total labour force that is unemployed (without jobs). ²³. As shown in Fig 6, the unemployment rates between 1989-2010 in Bangladesh as a whole, rural areas and urban areas are increasing almost linearly. The level of urban unemployment is higher than levels of rural unemployment almost at all periods. Land is becoming a scarce commodity in Bangladesh .45% of the rural population remain landless/functionally landless²⁴ which is a probable cause of rural unemployment that makes rural-urban migration more appealing to the rural workers. According Harris and Todaro, rural-urban migration continues as long as the expected urban wage is higher than rural wage, this causes the workers to believe that probability of obtaining a urban job is high even though unemployment exists in urban areas²⁵. Thus urbanization can co-exist with high levels of unemployment and a growth of informal sectors. ²⁶. Trainings afforded by the informal sector in Bangladesh are of low quality which results in a limited amount of low quality skills, thus resulting in low earnings of the workers, thus increasing their

²² "Theorizing Migration: Classic Perspectives, Shifting Paradigms." *Red Polemique*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Nov. 2013. http://redpolemique.wordpress.com/2012/02/08/theorizing-migration-classic-perspectives-shifting-paradigms/.

²³ "Central Intelligence Agency." *The World Factbook*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Nov. 2013. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2129.

²⁴ "Bangladesh: Priorities for Agriculture and Rural Development." *World Bank.* N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Nov. 2013.

²⁵"International Economic Development." 9 Nov. 2013. Lecture.

²⁶ "Theorizing Migration: Classic Perspectives, Shifting Paradigms." *Red Polemique*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Nov. 2013. http://redpolemique.wordpress.com/2012/02/08/theorizing-migration-classic-perspectives-shifting-paradigms/.

vulnerability to poverty²⁷. ²⁸In the 2010 study by ADB it was shown that 88.5% of the total number of jobs in labour market consisted of informal employment, 75% of the total number employed were in employed in an informal urban job, 91.5% in a rural informal job. 43% of the total GDP was shared by the informal sector. ²⁹ Thus the informal sector is a major sector in Bangladesh. According to Wang, urban-informal sector could be a "pull factor" for rural-urban migration³⁰. Based on the high levels of unemployment, high rural-urban wage rate difference and an expanding informal sector, this theory could hold true.

The increase in overall consumer consumption (proportional to increase in GDP growth as shown in figure 5) led to almost 10% percentage point reduction in poverty headcount.³¹ However even though sustained economic growth, and reduction in overall poverty has been observed, there has been a rapid increase in urban income inequality. ³² As poverty is measured in terms of consumption thus changes in expenditure Gini coefficients as depicted in figure 8 affect poverty the most. A higher urban Gini at all levels compared to the national Gini imply higher levels of expenditure inequality in the urban area and higher levels of poverty. Poor people who are engaged in the informal

²⁷ Survey and Assessment of Formal and Informal Apprenticeships in Bangladesh. N.p.: ILO, 10 Nov. 2013. PDF.

²⁸ The Informal Sector and Informal Employment in Bangladesh. N.p.: ADB, n.d. PDF.

²⁹ The Informal Sector and Informal Employment in Bangladesh. N.p.: ADB, n.d. PDF.

³⁰ Wang, T., A. Maruayama and M Kikuchi, 2000, "Rural-urban Migration and labour market in China: A case study in a Northeastern province," The Developing Economies, XXXVII(1), pp.80-104.

³¹ Narayan, Ambar, Hassan Zaman, and Nobuo Yoshida. "Trends and Patterns of Poverty in Bangladesh in Recent Years." *Cleancookstoves*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Nov. 2013. <Trends and Patterns of Poverty in Bangladesh in Recent Years>.

³² "Eradicating Poverty in Bangadesh." *University of Ottawa*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Nov. 2013. http://www.socialsciences.uottawa.ca/sites/default/files/public/eng/documents/b.feor_-_poverty_and_microfinance_in_bangladesh_20129.pdf.

sector inhibit slums in urban areas. ³³According to UNICEF slums are performing significantly worse compared to most rural areas (at both the district and sub-district levels). Reports also suggest that urban slums in Bangladesh grew much faster than the rate of urbanization. These lack the "basic characteristics of urban areas such as running water, sewage systems, electricity etc and also lacked access to social services such as health care and school. There national attendance in secondary education is 48 % in rural areas, 53% in urban areas, but only 18% in urban slums. ³⁴ Even though overall an increase in GDP might lead to poverty reduction, however cases of poverty have worsened in the urban areas.

Gender and Urbanisation

The increase in urbanisation led to a rapid increase in the number of women who migrate to urban areas find jobs. There has been a shift from traditional role of a woman from governing household work to the role of the economically independent woman with economic independence. The increase in employment of females can be shown in Fig 8. With 80% of Bangladesh's export income being generated from ready to wear garment factory, 1.5 million are employed in this sector. In addition to adjusting to a new city, they also have to face gender discrimination and sexual harassment. According to a 2003 UN population fund report also sexual harassment of Bangladesh women and their

³³ Daily Ittefaq, 1999, "Programme for taking back the rootless people to their village," 24 July.

³⁴ "Understanding Urban Inequalities in Bangladesh." *UNICEF*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Nov. 2013. http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/Urban_paper_lowres.pdf>.

improved economic conditions. Females who earn in these urban factors early only 60% of the salary earned by male co-workers³⁵.

Crime and Urbanisation

Furthermore a positive relation between urbanization and an increase in urban crimes has been noticed. 25.27% of the total crimes happening in Bangladesh occurred in metropolitan cities from 2008-2012. These crimes include trafficking in women and children, mastan (hooligan), kidnapping, murder etc³⁶.

Children and Urbanisation

Rapid urbanisation causes more children to move into urban slums and being forced to work in the urban factories. In the slums one in five children aged 5-14 are child labourers. Only 25% attend school³⁷. Many of these Bangladeshi children engage in forms of child labour, which can hamper both physical and mental development, such as auto workshops, battery recharging, tobacco factories etc³⁸.

Conclusion

Urbanization in Bangladesh was driven by different factors such as expansion of the manufacturing sector (increase in capital accumulation), which led to a higher

³⁵ "Urbanisation in Bangladesh Proves a Double-edged Sword for Women." *The Guardian.* N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Nov. 2013. http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/nov/05/urbanisation-bangladesh-women>.

³⁶ Rahman, Motiar, MD. "Urbanisation and Urban Crime in Bangladesh." *Government of Bangladesh (Police)*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Nov. 2013. http://www.police.gov.bd/userfiles/file/UrbanizationAndUrbaCrimeInBangladesh.pdf>.

³⁷ BBS/ UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006, October 2007

³⁸ "Child Labour in Bangladesh." *UNICEF*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Nov. 2013. http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/Child labour.pdf>.

demand for labour and the urban-rural wage differential attracted many Bangladeshi workers. Urbanization has a positive effect on GDP growth which leads to economic growth. The increase in GDP could be associated with a reduction in poverty due to an increase in consumption. However it also has a negative effect on unemployment, leading to an increased number of workers in the informal sector who survive in low standards of living and increased poverty. These points are highlighted in detail earlier in this essay.

Three different types of policies are employed by different developing countries to cope with the negative effects of high rural-urban migration such as poverty and high levels of unemployment. The shadow pricing policy (implemented in Kenya and Tanzania) to equate marginal rates of substitution between labour inputs in both sectors, this causes manufacturing markets to be subsidized thus lowering the urban wage to the rural wage. However such a policy involves heavy administrative costs. Restricting labour migration has also been applied to many LEDCs which yielded short run positive results³⁹. More labour intensive projects could be implemented in the cities in order to decrease urban unemployment and poverty such as the labour intensive projects⁴⁰ implemented in the LEDC Lesotho with the help of ILO⁴¹. The National Urban Sector Policy is in drafting stages and could be implemented by the Bangladeshi government in the future in order to strengthen the urban sector and combat urban poverty. ⁴² This shows

³⁹ Sabot, R.H., 1979, Economic Development and Urban Migration, Tanzania

⁴⁰ Todaro, M.P., 1969, "A model of labour migration and urban unemployment in less

developed countires," The American Economic Review, 59, pp. 138-148

⁴¹ "UN Special Programme Project Document." *ILO*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2013. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_policy/---invest/documents/projectdocumentation/wcms_asist_10478.pdf>.

⁴² "Bangladesh's Urban Future." *UNDP*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2013.

that the government is taking some positive steps in order to combat the problems causes by rapid rural-urban migration.

Large scale operations such as Operation Murambatsvina⁴³ in Zimbabwe could be undertaker to eliminate slums. However steps should be taken to ensure that these poor people who have been removed from their houses is provided with proper housing with sanitary conditions, educational facilities such as in Mbare (Zimbabwe) could be used by the government. ⁴⁴

Thus different types of policies can be imposed by the government to limit ruralurban migration, high unemployment rates and huge inequality which exists between the urban rich and urban poor, this can increase the living standards and welfare of the people in Bangladesh.

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⁴³ ""Operation Murambatsvina": An Overview and Summary." *Sokwanele*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2013. http://www.sokwanele.com/articles/sokwanele/opmuramb_overview_18june2005.html>.

⁴⁴ "Harare Slums Upgrading Profile." *SDINET*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2013.

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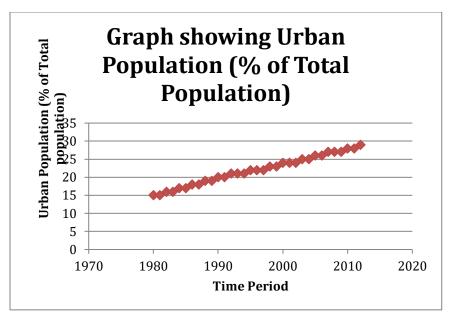
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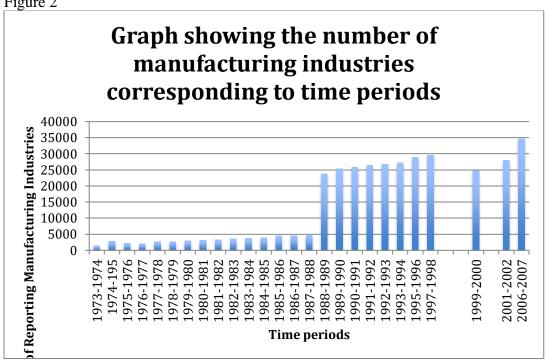
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Figure 1

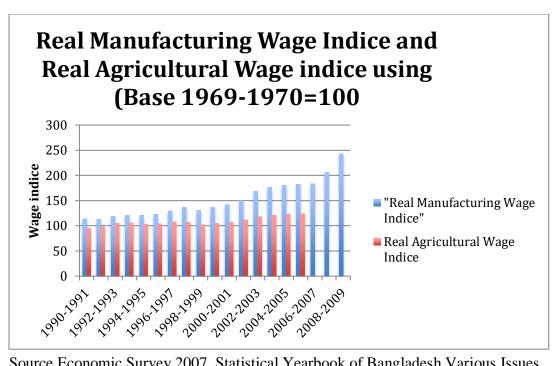


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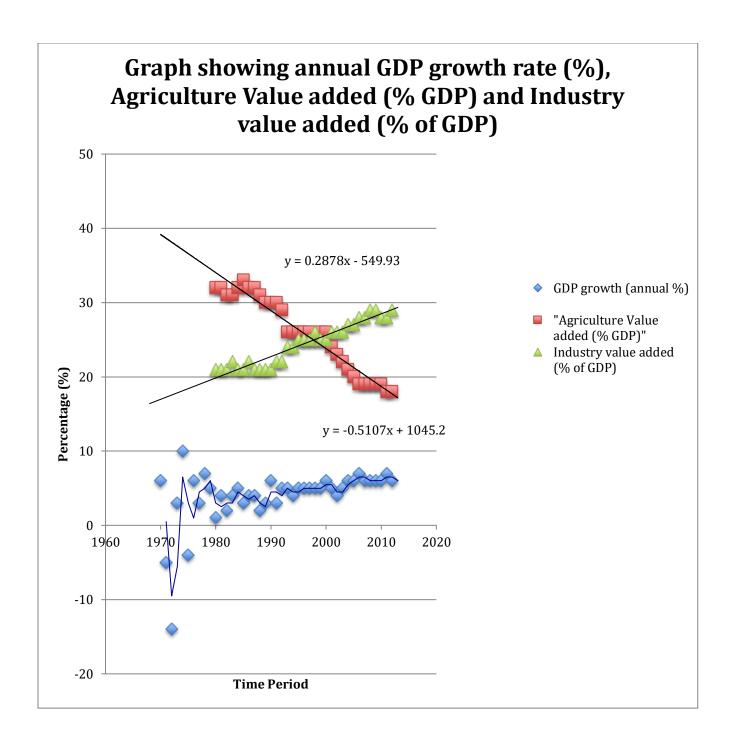


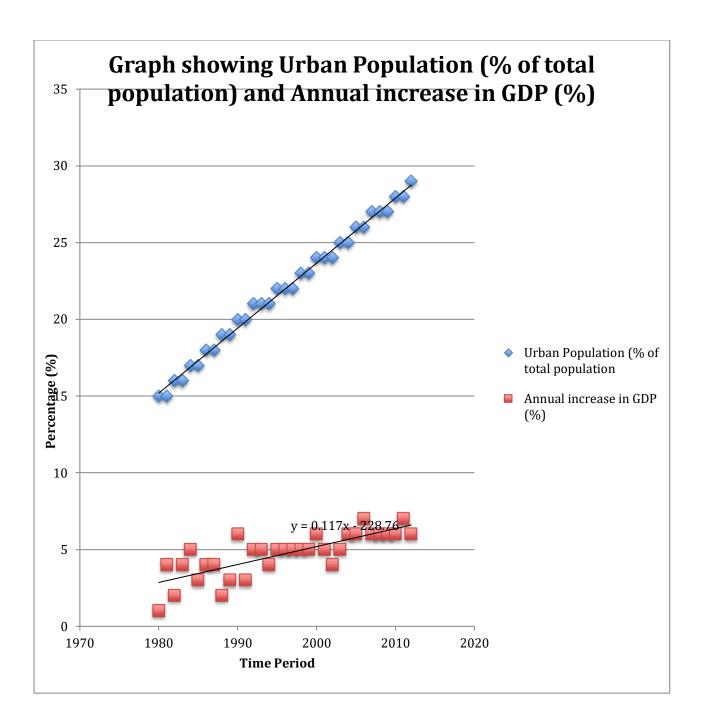
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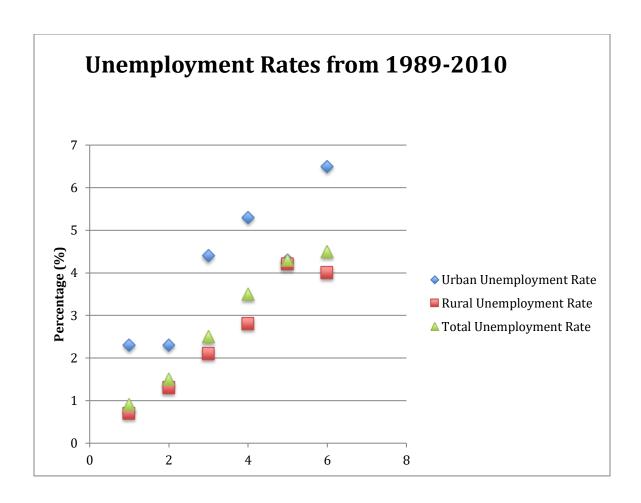


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Figure 4







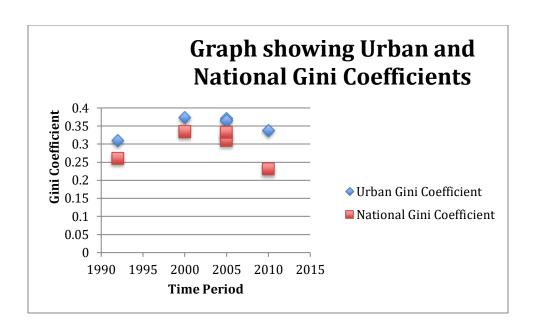


Figure 8

