

Preface

This volume originated from the International Conference on Public Policy & Governance which Public Affairs Centre co-hosted with the Department of Management Studies, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. Given the overarching importance of urbanization in Asia, and the large number of papers received for that track, we decided to bring out this volume on the theme.

It should be remembered that the 21st century Asia has become urban, the process itself has not been smooth, since many problems have occurred as a result. The most important of them relate to migration from rural areas, urban infrastructure including highways, basic services such as solid waste management and their impacts on the urban environment. In this volume, we have made an attempt to capture all these aspects of urban problems and the papers included reflect on various aspects of the above.

Nonetheless, we recognize that the most important of all problems is governance, as Paul and Sridhar (2013) point out, skilled labour and technology can be imported. Substitutes can be found to make up for infrastructure gaps. Power shortage can be relieved through the use of generators or of a national grid. Railways may make up when roads fail, but governance cannot be imported. Hence that's the common underlying theme for all aspects of urban problems we discuss here.

We also understand that different countries define urbanization in different ways, but most of the chapters make only intra-country comparisons. We have a note of caution which is also a caveat. Most papers in this volume focus on urban problems in India. However, given the Conference was held in Bangalore, India, this focus was unavoidable. The next caveat is that there are no papers focusing on the major Asian giant, China. However, we were able to include a few relevant papers one each in the context of Indonesia, Fiji and a cross country comparison chapter.

We hope that this volume will stimulate provocative debates on the ways in which these pressing urban problems can be solved across Asia. We sincerely hope that relevant policymakers, including those that have contributed to this volume, will take cognizance of the findings and recommendations here.

Urbanization in Asia

Governance, Infrastructure and the Environment

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2014, XII, 287 p. 90 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-81-322-1637-7