THE ETHEREAL PARTITION
DEMOCRATIC STREETSCAPE POTENTIALS OF JASHORE ROAD TOWARDS EQUITABLE BENAPOLE

J.F. SONIA[1], S.M.M. ABEDIN[2] & S.N. ANJUM[3]

[1] Nippon KOEI BD Limited, Dhaka, Bangladesh
[2] Khulna University, Dhaka, Bangladesh
[3] Khulna University, Faridpur, Bangladesh
[1]jannatulferdous110106@gmail.com, [2]mailtominhaz@gmail.com, [3]anjumnabil.1@gmail.com

Abstract
Benapole, the most vibrant land-port city of Bangladesh is divided by a bold line at its geographical level, the historical 'Jashore Road' running almost in-between the city bifurcating the community of Benapole. The northern part of Benapole is pulsating with mixed use development, vendors and people's engagement but the southern part is comparatively less vibrant because of traffic congestion and the adjacent lands being 'Port' and other ancillary government facilities with over heighted solid boundary wall. Meanwhile, the railway running parallel with the 'Jashore road', itself is creating a barrier within the city causing social segregation between the communities. This segregation and street adjacent activity pattern lead to social inequities in terms of community engagement and area development. But developing the Jashore road as a democratic street space instead of just a highway can reduce these social inequalities by providing street that has meaning for people and space for vehicular circulation. This paper aims to identify the social form of inequities burgeoned in Benapole due to Jashore road and explore this street's potentiality as a democratic street in integrating the communities of both parts. The data used in this investigation are collected from questioner survey, observation, FGD and KPI. Photograph and spatial mapping analysis indicate the lack of social equity among communities and the impact of Jashore road in various scale on adjacent space and the user group. The outcome of this paper will describe the role of a street in cultivating social equity and advocate community engagement of cities.

Keywords: Democratic Streetscape, Jashore road, inequity

1. Introduction

A Street is a public thoroughfare in a built environment adjoining buildings in an urban context which belongs to everyone in the city. People rely on the street for most of the daily activities and eventually the street accommodates the city life. According to Mark Francis (2016), much social life and learning occurs along streets. Streets are the main public spaces of a city which serves all the city dwellers in traveling, shopping, social interactions, gatherings and trading etc.

But in the context of Beanpole which is the largest port city of Bangladesh, the main street (Jashore Road) of the city itself is raising some social-spatial issues. Jashore road almost divides the city into two parts and doing so emerges issues of inequity in both social and spatial terms. This paper identified the reasons behind this inequity in Benapole. Insensitive infrastructural development with predominant economic focus along Jashore road has bifurcated the communities, while unequal distributions of infrastructural facilities and urban amenities have historically promoted inequity between communities. Also, the concept of 'zoning' of urban facilities has also contributed to inequity through a sense of spatial injustice within Benapole city.

This paper aims to identify the socio-spatial incompatibilities prevailing in Beanpole interpreted in terms of specific spatial problems related to Jashore road and also explores the idea of a 'Democratic street' as solution to those problems. This paper contributes to knowledge as mentioning streets role in cultivating community engagement and abolishing inequity amongst the dwellers in such a small city like Beanpole in Bangladesh as well as to other similar transitioning cities of the world.

2. Methodology

This study is based on the contextual problem documentation of Beanpole city using fundamentally a qualitative approach. As secondary data the Development Plan for Jashore Benapole Highway Corridor Final Report, and Final Report on Transport for the aforesaid Corridor Project by Urban Development Directorate (UDD) of Benapole were reviewed. These sources helped understanding the larger planning

context for Benapole city and from primary data collected via physical survey, KPI including the mayor of Benapole Pourasava, the administrative head of Benapole port, FGDs with local people and observation. Photograph analysis, activity mapping analysis and manual content analysis from questioner survey helped to construct a summary of problems. And this summary indicates the spatial and physical environment of Beanpole agonises from the problem of socio-spatial equity because of Jashore road and any development intervention to recompense this, would require the former review of theoretical materials.

The study involved the review of global theories, planning and design approaches related to the concept of equitable and democratic street space, and followed by a review of case studies relevant for Bangladesh. Through the synthesis of problems and theoretical materials, a theoretical stand point has been constructed for Jessore road, while specific ingredients of street democracy are discussed in respect of equitable beanpole.

The following sections of this paper will describe the social and spatial issues of Beanpole occurring due to Jashore road. Hence will discuss the democratic street concept and review the theoretical perspective. The next section will provide a schematic idea of socially and spatially equitable Beanpole in respect of having Jashore road as a democratic street space. And to conclude, the paper will discuss the inevitability of recognising streets potentialities and their impacts on dwellers in small city development like Beanpole.

3. Socio-spatial Inequity in Benapole

Benapole, the largest land port of Bangladesh is a type 'A' municipality which includes 09 administrative wards with total area of 8.6 sq.km. The historical Jashore Road (Jashore-Benapole Highway) cuts through Benapole in almost a symmetrical manner, with a railway running parallel to this arterial highway. This vibrant land port has a significant impact on the country's economy.

Presently, Jashore Road (Jashore-Benapole highway), the railway (Khulna-Jashore-Benapole-Kolkata) and the highway-adjacent land-use like port and government services and facilities have become the strategic contributors to its major social problems of segregation and inequality as they cut across them spatially and segregate the city.

With the growth of economic development, the pressure of migrant population in cities increasing day by day and Benapole is not different. In Khulna division overall 18% of people migrated from rural to urban areas between 1991-2010 (Marshall, Rahman 2013). Moreover, being a port city Beanpole is always crowded by various mobile people throughout the year. With this increased flow of people also increase economic activities, transports, traffic congestion, land development. With this hasty growth, city's social cohesion, social balance and control are also critically affected, as a group of people migrates from rural to urban area and they become outsiders for the host community. New infrastructural development for growing population is creating spatial segregation, hence raising the question of social inequity responsible for social injustice. As Benapole is now the most important land port of Bangladesh that handles more than 90% of total cross-border trade between India and Bangladesh, it draws both national and international interests. Therefore, balancing the cohesion and integration between communities in terms of social and spatial equity are essential.

3.1. THE "JASHORE ROAD"
The Jashore Road earned its name for being a crucial communication link between the eastern and western parts of Bengal. But it reappeared with a new significance in September 1971 when millions used it as a highway to life, defying natural calamities, to evade Pakistani atrocities.

Primarily the positioning and locations of Jashore Road, the railway track and the port service area stand as the key barriers between communities of either side of the road (Figure 1), thus these developments spatially segregate the community.
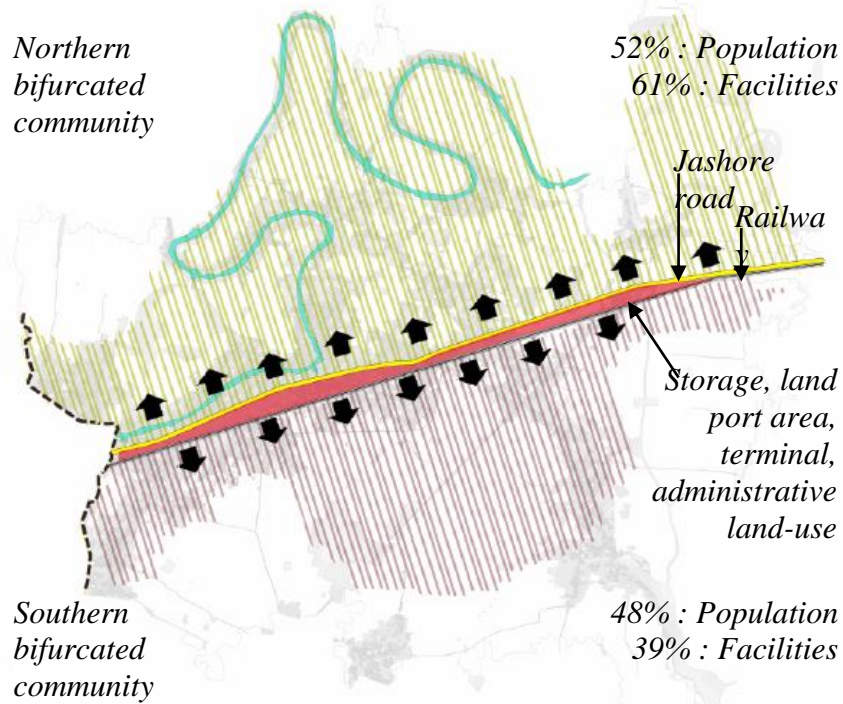
Northern bifurcated community

52% : Population
61% : Facilities

Jashore road

Railwa y

Storage, land port area, terminal, administrative land-use

Southern bifurcated community

48% : Population
39% : Facilities

Figure 1, Jashore road, port's service block and railway segregate Benapole into two parts (*Source: Author*)

On the other hand, [Figurer 2(b)] shows that the southern part with the city bus terminal which is bounded by a full height (almost 9 feet) boundary wall that stands like a barrier between the southern community and northern community affecting the visibility, accessibility and permeability of the neighbouring areas.

Jashore Road, the railway and port service blocks also hamper the equitable distribution of facilities and disrupt the equilibrium of overall development process of Benapole. In interviews, shopkeepers, students express their fear of crossing this high-way on daily basis. Some believes in southern part the accommodation is affordable but facilities are not so available. Eventually this barrier of infrastructure can be held guilty of creating spatial as well as social segregation.
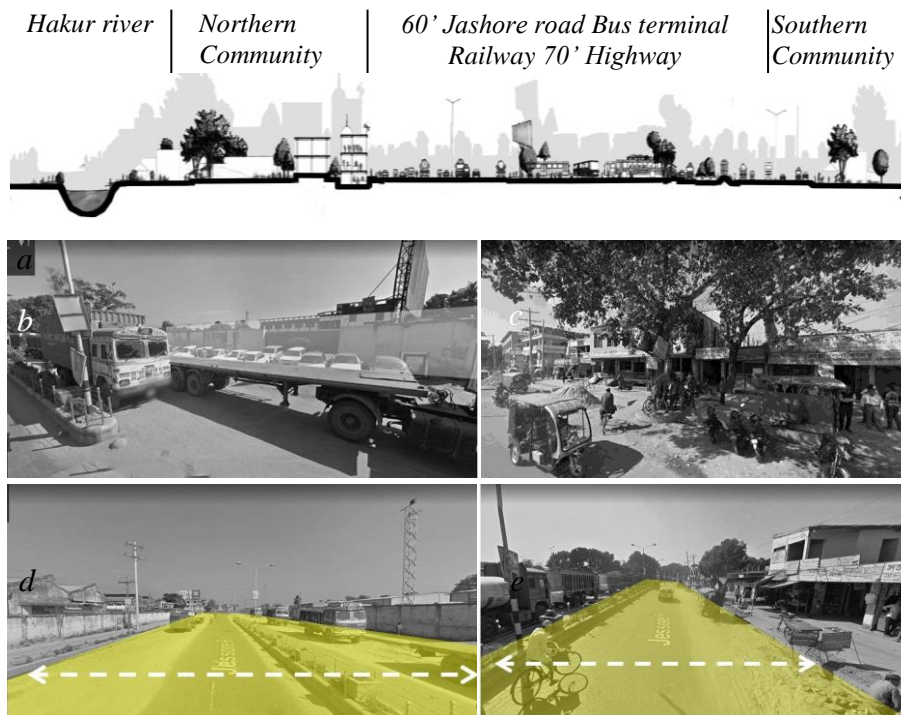

Figure 2, (a) Jashore road, port's service block and railway segregate Benapole into two parts and bifurcate

community, (b Bus terminal with over heighted boundary at southern part, (c) Market, mosque, vendors & vibrant pedestrian at northern part, (d) Port storage service area segregates the city and bifurcates community, (e) Traffic congestion and city segregation in-front of land port bus terminal area (*Source: Author*)

3.2. LAND USES ALONGSIDE JASHORE ROAD

Most of the land use along Jashore road is commercial. Almost 40% road adjacent land is under Government ownership-used as a service area for port activities like warehouse, customs and lorry/truck terminals, while the rest 40% area is used for commercial and mixed-use purposes, 10% for residential use and the rest 10% for playgrounds, educational institutes and religious purposes.

This land use and zoning pattern of government land (and used by Customs, port office) are also accountable for inflicting social inequity. A longitudinal section along the Jashore road is used which shows blocked (surrounded by high boundary walls) by the government office and port authority, segregates the northern and southern community.

- Jashore Road, itself contributes to the production of irregular pedestrian accessibility for the roads (not all roads have pedestrian footpaths).

- Uneven distribution of public, private and commercial functions as shown in (Figures 3) in the northern part with facilities like mosque, Bazar (market) and vendors make up the vibrant image on that side, while the southern part with bus terminal that bounded by heighted (almost 9') boundary wall that stands like a barrier between the southern community and northern community leading up to the making of a less-public front.

- Too many community road intersections with the arterial Jashore Road – 63 in total at different points interjecting the Jashore–Benapole Highway traffic.

- Insufficient space for heavy vehicle parking (Cargo Lorries and Buses are commonly parked on the side of Jashore Road).

3.3. 'ZONING' PATTERN ALONGSIDE JASHORE ROAD

In Benapole, lack of social interaction, social segregation and lessened accessibility to public facilities for people are somehow promoted by the zoning of the city at a certain level. In terms of specific zoning, around 40% of total land alongside Jashore Road is used for government service area, while the first layer or sometimes the second layer adjacent Jashore road are used for commercial and mixed-use purposes, as they are almost non-existent on the roadside creating a non-public front of the road. The railway track with rail station also creates a different layer of land use, further distancing the two communities of northern and southern parts. If summarized, three main zones can be located in Benapole.

- Railway and the adjacent development zone
- Northern part of the city which holds larger share of public amenities and facilities
- Southern part of the city where amenities and facilities are comparatively lower than the northern part. (Figure 3)
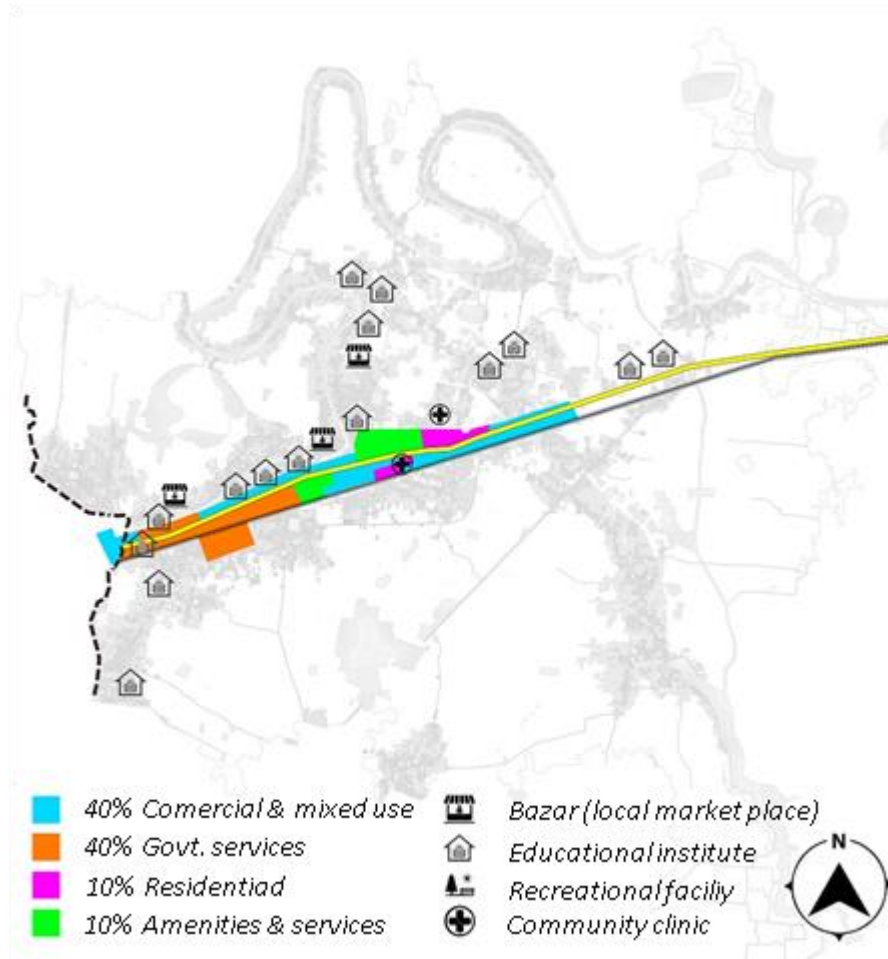
Figure 3, Jashore road adjacent land uses and locational distribution of local market place, educational institute, recreational facilities, community clinic (*Source: Author*)

This zoning pattern has been further aggravated by an inequitable distribution of whatever facilities are available in Beanpole city. As the total area is separated into two distinct parts, the facility distribution also becomes separated and not equitable here. Apparently, the percentage of total population of northern part is 52% but it mainly consists of 62% of facilities (Figure 1) like educational, Bazar (market), health and recreational facilities.

As for educational facility the northern part of beanpole contains 12 educational institutes within 400 m radius, on the other hand southern part only consists 4. In terms of recreation, northern part of Beanpole consists an open filed and a community centre, where southern part has no such facility. In both cases the facility distribution creates inequity amongst the community. Moreover, more than 33% of inhabitants of Benapole think they don't have adequate recreational facility. In the health sector only 2 community clinics exit and both are located in northern part (Figure 3). For diurnal livelihoods, Bazar (market) is the most essential facility and location and accessibility of Bazaar (market) is important for the urban inhabitants. In Benapole Bazaars (market) are located in the northern part (Figure 3), leaving the southern community neglected as usual.

Clearly both social and spatial issues are correlated with each other. Social spectacles do not work in vacuum; a spatial form also coincides. In the context of Beanpole, as the Jashore road divides the land in two parts, so does form a communal segregation. But isn't community means that a group of people living together having certain attitudes and interest in common? These distinct communities not only got separated but also got deprived of facilities in terms of distribution and allocation. Here spatial injustice turns out to be the reason behind social segregation and a segregated community. In communal

development practice, an important question arises that how can a street space integrate the communities instead of segregation and balance the socio-spatial equity through spatial development?

4. Jashore Road as a Democratic Street Space

This section aims to assume a theoretical standpoint with reference to global practices. Following this, the socio-spatial issues that prevail in Benapole are synthesized using the indicators of the theoretical premise of 'Democratic Street'. Finally, the concept of Equity through a democratic Jashore Road is outlined as the key ingredient of a socially and spatially Equitable Benapole.

According to A. & P. Smithson, 1970, "It is the idea of the street, not the reality that is important". Streets are playing larger social, economic and ecological role in towns and cities. The past decades have seen increased interest in the role of public space and streets can play in shaping culture (Francis 2016). Streets are the main public-privet intersection where most of the public activities occur. Both historically and culturally urban streets were seeking attention and growing concerns as potential public domain. Therefor urban thinker and researcher discussed theories and applications including "pedestrianization", "liveable Streets", "private indoor streets" and "democratic Street".

4.1. WHAT IS A DEMOCRATIC STREET?

'Democratic' street is the alternative holistic concept of Good Street. "A democratic street is one that reflects the history as well as the social and economic diversity of the larger neighbourhood and city" (Francis 2016). This street offers friendly pedestrian and liveable street space. A democratic street reflects social justice, ecological vitality and economic health which doesn't exclude the automobiles but create a more equitable balance with street users. "Yet the democratic street also emphasizes the access and needs of many different kinds of people, provides opportunities for discovery and challenge, and actively encourages user manipulation, appropriation, and transformation" (Francis 2016).

4.2. SPECIFIC INGREDIENTS TO BUILD A DEMOCRATIC STREET

Based on the work of Jacobs, Lynch, Appleyard, and others, we can further define democratic streets as ones that are well used and that invite direct participation, provide opportunities for discovery and adventure, and that are locally controlled and broadly accessible (Francis 2016). So basically, street democracy grows out of the idea of 'Publicness'- that recognizes habitant's right to free and boundless access to the public places. According to Jane Jacobs "eye on the street" is important to create secured neighbourhoods. All along a democratic street is secured public place with equitable, unlimited accessibility of its habitants. Mark Francis (2016) discussed the ingredients or the indicators of democratic street for evaluating existing street or for designing new ones. The ingredients are,
 i. Use and user diversity; ii. Accessibility; iii. Participation iv. Real and symbolic control; v. Traffic management; vi. Safety/Security; vii. Ground floor street relationship; viii. Comfort; ix. Ecological equity; x. Economic health.

A balanced mix of different uses and user group is needed for a lively and successful street. When diverse people can come together to perform diversified activities in a place, the place become democratic and to welcome diverse group of population, unconditional accessibility to its habitants is a must. According to Appleyard, "safe and easy access to nearby street spaces continues to be a major factor in residential satisfaction" (Appleyard 1981). Streets also need to be modified by their users to fit the changing activities and needs of the community (Francis 2016). Varity in use and belongingness to the street space encourage its habitants in direct participation. Recent research has documented that users who develop vacant lots into community gardens and plant flowers and vegetables on sidewalks often encourage other people to participate in the improvement and care of the rest of the street (Francis, Cashdan, Paxson 1984). Streets work democratically when people feel a sense of control over them. Conversely, streets fail when people perceive them as belonging to the "city" or when they seem to be controlled by no one (Francis 1987). Democratic Street space allows its users to own the street and maintaine the space

having a symbolic control. Hence traffic management and safety security are two important ingredients for street democracy. Appleyard and Lintel (1977) described that resident satisfaction with neighborhood streets in San Francisco depended in large part on traffic volume and speed. 'They also found greater social contact among residents on streets with less traffic' (Appleyard, Lintel 1977). That makes sense as a street under ongoing traffic management is more democratic as it allows people participation, accessibility and user diversity. In terms of ground floor-street relationship, "in democratic streets social connection links ground floor building uses to be adjacent street space" (Francis 2016). Other indicators like Comfort, Ecological quality, Economic health are as important as others. A democratic street needs to be comfortable where businesses and land values prosper and where abandonment, vacant lots, and disinvestment are discouraged. Besides an ecologically healthy street contribute to clear air, buffer noise and add visual relief.

"Democratic streets are places where we learn to deal more competently with our everyday environment (Ward 1978); they communicate much about the economy and social structure of urban life" (Francis 2016).

4.3. POTENTIALITY OF JASHORE ROAD AS A DEMOCRATIC STREET

Section 3 outlines the social and spatial problems of Benapole. Segregated community, socio-spatial inequity within community due to uneven distribution of facilities, unequal access to facilities have been identified as main obstacle to achieve an equitable Beanpole. By nature, Jashore road itself with the adjacent land and insensitive land development is one of the main contributors to this inequitable situation. Nevertheless, the presence of a street like 'Jashore road' can integrate the whole community to fightback this 'inequity' of Benapole. A democratic Jashore road with its historical value and century old rain tree can create a street scape where the street users and vehicle get equitable balance, where habitants get unlimited access to public facilities, where street are always safe and vibrant with diversified users. And finally, street democracy will achieve when habitants will own the street as a social space, not as social barrier.

4.4. DEMOCRATIC JASHORE ROAD FOR SOCIO-SPATIALLY EQUITABLE BENAPOLE

Finestine believes equity, diversity and democracy these are the main three components for a socially spatial just city (Fainstein 2014). Although these components stand as individual but are co-related. An equitable city will ensure by democracy and diversity. To warrant a socio-spatially equitable Beanpole a democratic Jashore road with diversified use and users from all over the city, remains prerequisite. To develop Jashore Road as a democratic street scape,

Firstly, there should be an equitable balance for traffic and street users, to ensure user safety and reduce traffic congestion.

Secondly, the adjacent land development of Jashore road needs more sensitivity considering accessibility of all stages of users, diversified functions, and street ground-floor relation.

Thirdly, equitable distribution of basic facilities should be provided ensuring adequate facilities and infrastructure to access those facilities. For example, If Jashore road become safe enough to cross often both road side facilities will be equally accessible for all.

Fourthly over heighted boundary wall, port ancillary facilities should be relocated from Jashore road adjacent land or for future development the existing railway can be overhead rail way to minimize this spatial buffer between communities.

Lastly street safety, traffic management, diversified function to enhance street ground floor relation, balance in facility distribution all these indicators promote access and need of different kind of habitants for which a democratic street stand for.

5. Conclusion

"Streets are not the dividing lines within the city. They are to be communal rooms and passages" (Duany 1994). But in the context of Benapole Jashore road is certainly dividing the community along the city. According to Talen, "Streets are designed to encourage street life, since any increase in pedestrian activity bonds and promote sense of place" (Talen 1999). Jashore road hold that ability to produce a public place for the inclusion of bifurcated communities in Beanpole. Preservation of the century old rain trees can maintain ecological equity. 'Buildings and landscape shape urban streets into "outdoor living rooms" (Speck 2013). The historical Jashore road as a democratic street scape can have a great impact on rising social issues amongst the community of Benapole as the spatial and social aspects always complement each-other. Moreover, sensitive planning and design intervention in regional, municipal or community scale can bring immense positive changes in socio-spatial level. So, some relocation and sensitive new development alongside Jashore road can promote user diversity, accessibility, street-ground floor relationship, safety, public control and all these together can indorse the democracy of Jashore Road which will lead to an equitable Beanpole.

6. References

Appleyard, D. and Lintell, M., 1972. The environmental quality of city streets: the residents' viewpoint. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, *38*(2), pp.84-101.

Duany, A. and Plater-Zyberk, E., 1994. The neighborhood, the district and the corridor. *The new urbanism: Toward an architecture of community*, pp.17-20.

Fainstein, S.S., 2014. The just city. *International Journal of Urban Sciences*, *18*(1), pp.1-18.

Francis, M., 2016. The making of democratic streets. *Contesti. Città, territori, progetti*, (1-2), pp.192-213.

Francis, M., Cashdan, L. and Paxson, L., 1984. *Community open spaces: Greening neighborhoods through community action and land conservation*. Island Press.

Marshall, R. and Rahman, S., 2013. Internal migration in Bangladesh: character, drivers and policy issues. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New York.

Speck, J., 2013. *Walkable city: How downtown can save America, one step at a time*. macmillan.

Talen, E. and Koschinsky, J., 2013. The walkable neighborhood: A literature review. *International Journal of Sustainable Land Use and Urban Planning*, *1*(1).

Ura, K., Alkire, S. and Zangmo, T., 2012. Bhutan: Gross national happiness and the GNH index.

Ward C. 1978, The Child in the City, *Pantheon,* New York.