

The Role of Local Municipal Branches in Planning, Developing and Managing Growth in the Urban Environment in Saudi Arabian Cities: A Case Study of the City of Jeddah 2014

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Abstract

The impacts of urbanisation are becoming increasingly recognised and severe both on a national and international level. The demands of growing populations in cities cause major economic, social and environmental problems. These problems can relate to a lack of structure and control within urban areas such as the creation of slum dwellings, inadequate infrastructure and lack of access to essential services. The rising awareness and challenges of rapid urbanisation has led to urban governance and growth management becoming major research themes in the academic literature as good development principles are sought for effective planning management in urban and surrounding areas.

This study focuses on cities in Saudi Arabia, in particular the Jeddah Municipality, which shows some classic problems and issues relating to urbanisation, through gradual stages of development. The main research aim was to determine to what extent the current organisational structure of Jeddah is appropriate to address problems of urban areas and aid smooth organisation of urban development. Furthermore, this study has looked at establishing an analytical framework that can contribute to improving management and organisation of urban development in the city of Jeddah, by investigating the role of the Jeddah Municipality and Municipal branches to improve the management of urban areas and address their impact on city planning both economically and socially.

Primary data was collected through questionnaires and interviews with officials and citizens in the city of Jeddah. It was found that the city of Jeddah grew rapidly and significant activity in terms of physical changes and economic population growth created a number of problems including inadequate provision of municipal services and public facilities to the citizens; reliance on central administration to conduct affairs and do decision-making without taking into account requests and needs of citizens and their desires to participate in the urban development of the city.

A number of recommendations are made to promote change in the organisational structure of Jeddah Municipality and the municipal branches, as the study showed that the current structure lacks integrity with regard to urban planning, development and management growth. These include improving the existing organisational structure and making it more efficient and improving the ability to manage changes informed by citizen needs. It is hoped that these recommendations will be effective not only in Saudi cities but also in other cities worldwide.