

# ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT AND MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS ROLE IN AGRICULTURAL FARM LAND USAGE OF SUBURBS (A CASE STUDY: BEHSHAHR CITY)

Seyed Ebrahim Hosseini Lamerdi<sup>1,2</sup>, Hossein Nazmfar<sup>2\*</sup> and Mohammad Taqi Masoumi<sup>2</sup>

1Department of Geography and Urban Planning, Ardabil science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ardabil, Iran

2Department of Geography and Urban Planning, Ardabil Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ardabil, Iran

\* Corresponding author, Tel: +98-914-301-9909

Corresponding Author: Hossein Nazmfar, **E-mail address: [nazmfar@uma.ac.ir](mailto:nazmfar@uma.ac.ir)**

**ABSTRACT:** *The development of urbanization and issues such as urban environment, transportation, sustainable development, urban planning, etc came to urban experts' attention when cities had grown rapidly and uncontrollably and agricultural lands in suburbs had already been damaged due to various constructions. Today there are different issues in cities that are considered to be a part of urban management duties and they include the process of urban development and farm lands usage in future. Behshahr a city in Iran is surrounded by agricultural products and lands which are the main reason of city's foundation and development. Hence in this city almost all economical activities depended on agriculture, either directly or indirectly. In this paper we have tried to study the Behshahr city case's urban management and its role in suburb farm lands usage through the years. The importance of the mentioned matter is clear because of Behshahr city's special condition given being surrounded by various farm lands in its suburbs and the urban management decisions can be taken and studied quite seriously in this case since it has huge impact on the agriculture of the area. The main factors playing in this issue are government agencies, city hall and the city council, and of course some others too that can have indirect or direct effect on the decisions made by these three.*

**Keywords:** Administrative institutions, urban management, Behshahr city

## INTRODUCTION

Manipulation of real activities is the deviation from normal operating procedures and managers' motivation for doing this is to confuse some of beneficiaries, so that they believe the financial reporting objectives have been achieved through normal activities. Actual management profits are Population increase and immigration have led to unprecedented urban development and this growth have increased the demand for land in cities Land speculation has other implications too such as occupation of agricultural lands and Illegal constructions. Continuing this process puts suburb lands in great danger. Urban management and its functionality have been of great importance in recent years. Urban management has the responsibility to take care of these lands as the highest power. The issue of saving agricultural lands and suburbs and their application and usage is a part of city management duties. Considering the growth of population and destruction of lands in cities and urban management decisions seem to be worth studying because the great importance they have gained over time.

In this project we have tried to study the Behshahr city case's urban management and its role in suburb farm lands usage through the years. The importance of the mentioned matter is clear because of Behshahr city's special condition given being surrounded by various farm lands in its suburbs and the urban management decisions can be taken and studied quite seriously in this case since it has huge impact on the agriculture of the area. In order to prevent the usage of these lands it is necessary that we study the factors deciding for the matter. The main factors playing in this issue are government agencies, city hall and the city council, and of course some others too that can have indirect or direct effect on the decisions made by these three.

Urban management as the first power has to make the right decisions and planning, monitor and regulate the use of urban activities. In the planning section the issue of development and land use change must be studied and the damage of lands at times of construction or urban plots must be prevented. Behshahr city has witnessed a lot of damages to its suburb lands due to population increase and urban development and the process still goes on. The forceful factors in city management decisions in the form of a decentralized and multi-sectional system of urban management have whether had an impact against the destruction of agriculture and the plans involved or not.

Due to many reasons Behshahr have developed greatly in the past few years and a lot of its farm lands have altered usage. The study of urban management effects with new structure on farm lands usage and their decisions matters mostly because it helps to identify and remove the barriers to help improve the city and its agriculture [1-4].

The first is the conversion of agricultural land into land used for settlements and traffic. For example, in the People's Republic of China, the per capita area of arable land decreased from 1.59 mu in 1996 to 1.39 mu in 2006 (15 mu = 1 hectare) [5, 6]. The government has fixed a minimum of 120.0 million hectares (1.80 billion mu) in order to guarantee food security (Jiang et al., 2008). In Germany, the average growth of areas used for settlements and traffic was between 113 ha per day (2003–2006) and 129 ha per day (1997–2000) [7]. The largest portion of converted land was farmland. The German Government declared a target to reduce daily conversion to 30 ha per day by 2020 [7]. Issues such as ecological degradation, rising infrastructure costs due to urban sprawl, and the provision of minimum service infrastructures in remote areas for elderly people and children, are the most important aspects under discussion [8].

The second type of land conversion discussed in this article is the result of agro-industrial investments. Plantation or industrial farming – involving high specialization, high input of capital, mass production and application of modern techniques – is completely different from small-scale farming. Agro-industrial investments may be carried out by domestic companies, by foreign direct investors, or as joint ventures between domestic companies and foreign investors. In Cambodia, so-called ‘Economic Land Concessions’ (ELCs) were created by the Land Law (2001) and Sub-Decree No.146 (2005) for this kind of investment. ELCs are long-term leases that grant land for agro-industrial or other economic exploitation [9]. The Cambodian Government claimed that agricultural development was a priority, citing the aims of ensuring food security, providing raw materials for industry, increasing exports and creating employment. However, issues of concern arising from the law include dislocation, land concentration and – despite the government’s aims – food security [10].

The literature related to the subject of the study can be considered as the researches done in Iran and overseas about the usage of farm lands. The record of land usage in the world is not very long and it started in the 19th century. There was a gentleman named Von Tannin at the time who published his work in 1826 under the title of Agriculture and National Economy. He insisted on land use patterns considering the price of agricultural products and then started his own research in 20th. The matter of urban management has gotten the attention of two groups of people worldwide; First, researchers and practitioners in civil field and administrative managers and city halls who study all complex urban issues including constraints related to urban development, studies and similar documents, and in the planning section management and administration of the city, overseeing the development of the city, the municipal executive management purposes and the problems of urban life. Some of the examples are as the following: The Urban Land Management book says: Lack of stable management and attention to the environment of lands around the cities have resulted in major problems for Babol in this new era and has separated the effective factors in land usage into three groups of legal, economic and demographic and demographic factors are the most important. In another research with studying the government role in the physical growth and development of the city there has been emphasis on the usage alternation of the surrounding lands, the demand for these alternations indicate technological or structural change of a society. Some of these alternations are temporary but some refer to big permanent changes. There have been studies taken place in India considering the same matter which shows the great importance it has in the world.

The purpose of this research is studying administrative management role in the farm lands usage surrounding Behshahr. We will try to answer the question if the City Council plays an important part in city development or not, and do urban development plans have important roles in

harmonious urban development of the city and avoid the loss of agricultural land areas around the city, or not.

## **THE RESEARCH APPROACH IN THIS PAPER CONSISTS OF DOCUMENTARY AND SURVEY DOCUMENTARY APPROACH:**

In order to achieve the goals of this idea by doing library studies and researches in institutes, first we describe definitions and criteria of urban management and the governing system of the country based on new modes and then evaluate urban management types. Since Behshahr was selected as the capital so that the process of city’s physical development based on its features and functional changes are expressed. Plugs were gathered and subject classification was done on them to help set subject sectors and help identify each one by its level of necessity.

Using the map and aerial photographs of Behshahr was taken before the position and size of the city had been determined and then these maps were compared to result in a single, which showed updated size and functionality information.

### **DOCUMENTARY APPROACH:**

Doing interviews with managers and visiting the researched area and preparing urban maps; studying population and migration statistics and urban land use change.

### **TOOLS FOR DATA ANALYSIS**

According to the topic of the thesis the approach is model-analysis, comparison and application. In a way that to study the current situation we will use defining-analyzing method and in the study section, the distribution of the researched area and comparing it to the criteria and standards of comparative- analysis models are used.

## **ASSESSING BEHSHAHR’S DETAILED PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

The previously approved detailed plan for Behshahr was made in the winter of 1995. The end of this period was estimated to be 2000 with the population of 95.568.

In the beginning of the work we started to evaluate the options to achieve the plan. We compared tables of land usage in 1990, 1995 and 2002 as the following:

### **Land Usage with Green Space Approach**

The area of this application was estimated 9.5 in 1990, 7.5 in 1995 and 9.5 in 2002 and the decrease seen in 1990 does not seem to be right. The area of this application was invariant from 1990 to 2002.

### **Land Usage with official-disciplinary Approach**

The area of this application was estimated 14.15 in 1990, 15.59 in 1995 and 24.36 hectares in 2002, which increased 1.44 in the first period and 8.77 in the second.

### **Land Usage with Residential Approach**

The area of this application was estimated 365.53, 336.55 and 375 hectares respectively. The area decrease in 1995 is definitely not right which makes one of the calculations of 1990 or 1995 wrong. Either way the area increment in 2002 is almost 10 hectares.

### **Land Usage with Religious Approach**

The area of this application was estimated 4.27 in 1990, 3.8206 in 1995 and 5.18 hectares in 2002; this application is less in 1995 than 1990 which doesn’t also seem right.

### **Land Usage with Cultural Approach**

The area of this application was estimated 0.402 in 1990, 0.35 in 1995 and 1.67 hectares in 2002; there was an increase of 1.268 hectares.

### **Tourism Hospitality Land Usage**

The area of this application was estimated 0.679 in 1990, 0.57 in 1995 and 0.67 hectares in 2002.

### **Land Usage with Industrial Approach**

The area of this application was estimated 36.5 in 1990 35 in 1995 and 29.7 hectares in 2002 (Mazandaran County).

Thus it is clear that education, health, business, sports, administrative, residential, religious, cultural and industrial land usage was increased 3.64, 1.56, 4.25, 4.05, 10.21, 10, 0.91, 1.27 and 6.8 respectively from 1990 to 2002 making the sum of 42.69 hectares. If we subtract private sections such as residential, administrative, business and industrial sections we get 11.43 hectares. Meaning the power to expropriate lands for public assignments between 1990 and 2002 is only 11.43 or %6 of the total applications. The rest is assigned to these applications that is about 170 hectares and has been nothing but disaster for people. If we assume that the average property area for private use is 500 m<sup>2</sup>, we have in fact troubled almost 3200 from 15700 families which are more than %20. Statistics of discussed cases in Article 5 committees which are more than 120 and 4130 offensive cases that have been referred to Article 100 committee, meaning %55 of city's structures are witnesses of this fact. The further studies on a recommended passages resulted in removing some of the street accesses to housings or replacing them with another option. These changes took place in the two cases at the request of the municipality. The rest of the cases were to prevent the destruction of farms and orchards. These changes were about the 10 and 12 meters passages which are shown on the map next page. It should be noted that the passages of the approved projects, have all been retained.

### **ZONING OF FUNCTIONS**

Shahid Hasheminezhad street (After Road Construction) and the proposed inner ring and Imam Khomeini street constitute the city's main thoroughfares, which their equivalent functions, meaning urban functions such as administration, higher education, cinema, industrial lands, city park, municipal and commercial applications etc can be formed in their vicinity. Modares, Motahari, Mofatteh and Aboamar streets are secondary urban/area roads which the functions in their vicinity such as schools, junior high, high school, park area, commercial land area, sports etc can be deployed next to them. Other passages such as Farabi, Madani, Jomhour Eslami, Ashrafi Esfahani, Shahid Fallahi and Rajai are biosynthesis pathways collection locations and accesses to housings which their equal functions including, kindergarten, schools, parks, commercial areas, children parks, Institute for Intellectual Development etc can be formed in their vicinity.

### **LACK OF REGIONAL PLANNING**

In terms of comprehensive plans (from 1969 to 1985) regional planning plays a small role. But in the new services description which is about "The economic

situation in the region and city's role in it" there is almost "no studies to be relied on for advice" primarily because of the planning system of the country is not designed in such a framework and what is made is either rescinded later or disapproved. One of the examples of positive effects of regional planning is the city of Arak: In Arak's estimated population (Which is purely based on demographic principles) the advisor generally, based on the population growth in 1954-1964 which has been %2.1 first estimates the maximum population of the city as 150 thousand in 1992. But when The Supreme Council for Planning mentions the fact to the advisor that Arak will be activated as an industrial hub in the future he is forced to consider water resources in his calculations. Therefore the result changes to 300 thousand. It is worth noting that Arak's population was estimated 257 thousand people in 1987 which turned out to be 265 thousand with a little difference.

\* Service costs that have regional dimensions and are offered by local organs and their sources go to people living in the area as an income should be financed through local taxes and duties.

\* It has been seen in most countries that the revenues related to urban lands are about 50 to 75 percent of urban income [11-13].

\* Delegation of powers to local governments or mayors in the field of planning, funding and implementation of projects must take place with full independence.

\* It is necessary to develop and regulate a tax system based on land value for financing and construction of infrastructure in cities.

### **THE ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTIONS ROLE IN LAND USAGE**

Uncontrolled urban growth, distress in the land usage, lack of welfare and development in city's programs, the appearance of worn urban structure, and similarity of cities' appearances with no standard resolutions and in a residential form, lack of attention to the everyday needs of people living spaces and needs have no result but premature aging and migration of population and residents. Development of unsettled neighborhoods, land speculation, building violation growth are detailed rules and regulations and changes in unrelated land use are another problems for developing cities; and administrative managers must face them with a general approach and considering the long-term interests of the city instead of temporary incomes. If considered and studied seriously such actions as temporary incomes not only solve any problems but they even have worse consequences as further costs for managers and dissatisfaction and new expectations for people, because the managers' operations are studied and observed by residents on a daily basis based on the given services. It is normal that is evaluation is positive if the urban system reliability increases following people's participation. And if the evaluation result is negative the operation of urban system faces challenges with political-social reflects. Lack of consistent income of municipalities and the imbalance of costs and incomes have been positive and know common agreements in the municipality and Article 100 crime commission income and the separation of lands are due to

them. This means that in the recent years most of the city halls have faced imbalanced income due to the government stopping its support. Such semantic attribute has nothing but lack of long-term planning for urban managers.

**BEHSHAHR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM GOALS**

Behshahr Management System’s aim is to administer the city; right now only the city hall of Behshahr is in charge for this and other sections try to achieve the goals of their respective departments or agencies and the ministry. Behshahr Management System performs in three ways:

1. City development related goals
2. Municipalities goals (Supply of utilities, constructions, etc)
3. Behshahr’s current management condition

Elements of urban management in Behshahr have three levels like other cities in our country:

- \* Metropolitan management level
- \* Regional management level
- \* Local management level

According to plan’s goals the sighted level is the local management level but because of the association of some of the local levels elements with ultra-local levels of Behshahr Management System, we will discuss them too.

The decisions made by the metropolitan management level usually include all other cities as well. Their way of making decisions and observation in form of specifics usually follow the decisions taken in the local level.

**URBAN MANAGEMENT IN RELATION WITH URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

Although any kind of construction on land usage change in the area of city and its suburbs are done under the city hall’s observation, according to current laws and regulations for the issuance of building permit and approval they ought to take orders from higher levels in some cases or declare their approval or refusal under the supervision of some organs of the construction or change of land usage.

**EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENTAL ELEMENTS ON LOCAL LEVEL MANAGEMENT**

1. Behshahr Government: Behshahr governor is the highest observer of all matters in the city and his duties include managing city councils and committees and budget supply and supervising the decision of the City Council’s national interests.

2. Behshahr Administrative Council: The Council is chaired by the governor of Behshahr administrators’ participation. The task of the city council is coordinating the activities of various departments.

**LAND USE REGULATIONS IN BEHSHAHR’S SHIELDING**

Since the city continues to grow as the population grows and changes its suburb lands use to what it needs, a part of the city’s suburbs that is marked as Shielding on the map with probably useful potential might join the city in the future.

The purpose is to avoid stagnation of agriculture and horticulture activities and controlling avid lands due to sporadic constructions cause any problem in city’s future development, rules are set as following:

- \* Construction of housing units in rural residential area of the villages
- \* Horticulture, agriculture, livestock, forestry, etc usage
- \* Construction of industrial facilities related to the above expenses
- \* Construction of residential townships under the terms of Iran’s Supreme Council for Planning
- \* Construction of public facilities and equipment to fulfill the needs of rural services
- \* Establishing educational, health, business and sports institutions and professional workshops within the village with the requirements of the villages

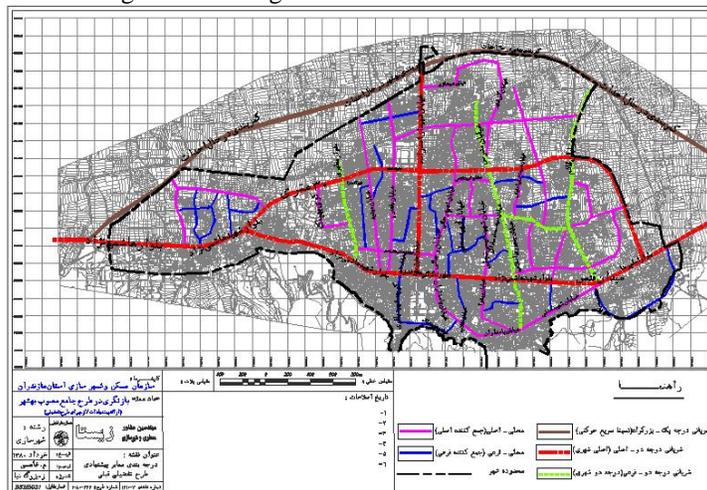


Figure 1: Behshahr’s comprehensive plan map -2002- (ministry of Housing and Urban Development)

**THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CITY AND ITS SURROUNDING IN BEHSHAHR**

Lands in the city are important because they are the starting point of any type of future development and every piece of land because of its uniqueness compared to other parts of the supply constraints are generally very worthy because making decisions about a lands usage due to its long term effects which may not be changeable is difficult.

**CURRENT CONDITION OF URBAN MANAGEMENT IN BEHSHAHR**

\* Urban Management can be defined as a subset of the local government and it works as a system that combines different parts or components of which are interdependent and the interrelationships among them are formed and organized in a special way; and this organizing is to achieve a specific goal. Urban management must supervise, plan and take care of the city. The concept of urban management can vary in different cities and areas; because so are their way of handling situations in cities. Generally there are two types of urban management that are common. One a centralized management system (non-federal) and the other decentralized management system (federal) and the independence of the civil administration from the central government depending on which of these systems they belong to. Administrative management in our country is mostly the first type; although there have been efforts but none have been successful. Of course there have been actions such as the formation of the Islamic City Council in order to improve people’s participation with the management. Some of the characteristics of the centralized administrative decisions is including national and local political center for country or province’s capital; also lack

of public participation in decision-making and planning. In addition to the government ruling over it, civil administration might have different levels and is divided into 3 distinct levels overall; Metropolitan management level, Regional management level and Local management level. Each of these levels of city management has a relationship with a higher level and centralized management systems depend on the level of greater objectivity. Urban management, regardless of the diversity of social and political systems has diverse functions and has changed through the time, some of its most important duties are:

- Urban planning including regulations of development mapping
- Service and civil duties
- Providing urban health
- Cultural duties such as library construction
- Regulatory duties, supervising constructions
- And finally, preservation and enhancement of the environment and working towards sustainable urban development

Thus one of the urban management’s most important duties are urban planning including regulations of development mapping and controlling and regulating constructions. All of the mentioned duties should be developed and implemented within the framework of municipal regulations; in other words urban management is urban law enforcement while monitoring compliance with the rules, based on the urban functions.

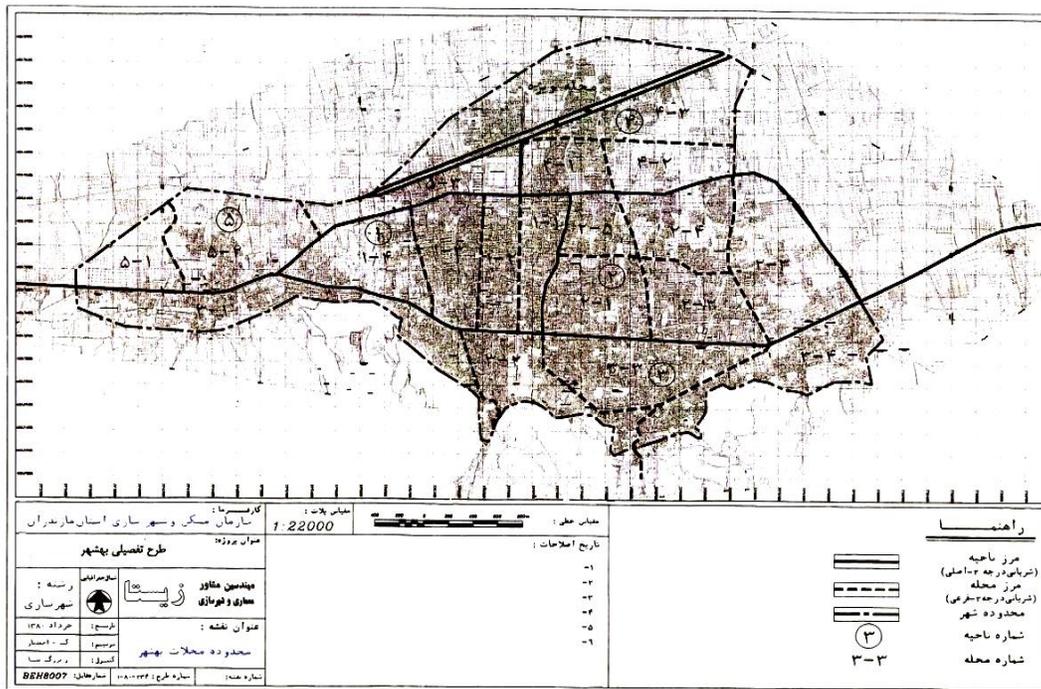


Figure 2: Detailed map of Behshahr -2002- (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development)



Finally the process of proper and wise planning with analysis of economic, social, physical, political, legal, environmental, etc, aspects of lands and compatible with a participatory process, involving a comprehensive approach to the management of land use changes, introduces a new approach. The process of planning with formation of a reciprocating cycle from start to the running part, have had feedback comments and influential interest groups and their participation and will manage the continuous review of the project. The final phase, Management Development Project; the connection between design and implementation are the regulations on traditional management tools and project development. Pathology; Supervision and inspection in organizations, criteria for measuring and monitoring organizations, especially public services, are establish a clear relationship between the results of inspections and encouraging the punishment or compensation to individuals and organizations. One of the main weaknesses of the financial system of municipalities is the procedure of cash accounting records. In cash accounting system, cash deposit funds into banks and is reflected in the accounting system. Change from cash accounting to accrual-based system, leads to all movable and immovable property of the municipality's to have accounting records and can be tracked annually; the supervision and inspection of authorities is always clear. In case of managers' interpellation in time of addressing their responsibility and plain legal punishments, getting a commitment to performance accountability may be effective. Removing the formation of cooperatives completely, to buy lands such as in Marvdasht case, have taken place under name of housing cooperative agencies and the military – police agencies; in a way that these cooperatives act as major land transactions agencies and each has had several large land separated for sale to members and others. Undoubtedly the main motivation for this is financial.

Behshahr's continuous growth due to the increasing development of Sari will be the main industrial center and service center around the main roads Continuing this trend, the future prospects of the city will only get worse, in a way that in order to coordinate the use of a variety of industrial applications, the role and function of the city are of services and the loss of agricultural lands, and indiscriminate construction and lack of supervision from a unified management have caused congestion and tension within the suburban transport; and the life quality will be decreased in this area of the city and with population crisis, lack of control over land speculation, land and garden usage change from day will result in land speculation.

## REFERENCES

1. Ahangaran, ME., "Council of Cities and Urban Management", *Master Thesis*. (2001)
2. Maxwell, A., "Dynamics of Land Use Planning and Its Effects on Socio-Economic Development. Case Study Of Sunyani Municipality And Odumasi In The Brong Ahafo Region", A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Degree MASTER OF SCIENCE, College of Architecture and Planning, Department of Planning, (2011).
3. Chalifour, N.J., Kameri-Mbote, P., Lin Heng, L., Nolon, J.R., "Land Use Law for Sustainable Development", Cambridge University Press, [www.cambridge.org/9780521862165](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521862165), (2007).
4. NTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Auditing (WGEA), "Land Use and Land Management Practices in Environmental perspectives", (2013).
5. Zou, X. & Oskam, A. J., "New compensation standard for land expropriation in China". *China & World Economy*, Vol. 15, No. 5: 107–120, (2007).
6. Alexandratos, N. (ed.), "World Agriculture: Towards 2010. An FAO study", FAO, Rome, and John Wiley, Chichester, UK, (1995).
7. German Federal Parliament (Deutscher Bundestag). Printed matter 16 / 7360. Berlin, (2007).
8. Köck, W. et al. "Handelbare flächenausweisungsrechte. Baden–Baden, Germany. Nomos–Verlag. (2005).
9. Lühr, D., "The driving forces of land conversion. Towards a financial framework for better land use policy", *Land Tenure Journal*, No 1, pp 61-90, (2010)
10. Sokheng, V., "Boosting food security. In Phnom Penh Post". (2009).
11. Ziari, K., "Urban land use planning". Yazd, Yazd University Press (2003).
12. Brown, E., et al., "Regularization of Informal Urban Settlements in Peru, Mexico and Brazil" prepared for IDB, (2006).
13. Afrane, S., "Urban Planning and Public Health in Ghana" *Daily Graphic*, February 13 and 15, pp 7-17, (2006).