

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

**UNIT NAME: PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF URBAN SLUMS AND
SQUATER SETTLEMENTS**

UNIT CODE: EPM 456

**TASK: DISCUSS THE KEY CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE
OF SLUMS (Focusing on the causal factors of slum development)**

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INTRODUCTION

In 2012, according to UN-Habitat, about 863 million people in the developing world lived in slums. As per UN Habitat a slum is characterized by lack of durable housing, insufficient living area, and lack of access to clean water, inadequate sanitation and insecure tenure.

Around the world, there are about 1 billion slum dwellers, and the number is expected to grow to 1.4 billion by the year 2020. Slums form and grow in many different parts of the world for many different reasons. Some causes of slum development include rapid rural-to-urban migration, economic stagnation and depression, high unemployment, poverty, informal economy, poor planning, politics, natural disasters and social conflicts. Rural people migrate to urban areas in search for better jobs, better schools for their children and for diverse income opportunities.

Improving quality of life in the slum is one of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. Strategies tried to reduce and transform slums in different countries, with varying degrees of success, include a combination of slum removal, slum relocation, slum upgrading, urban planning with city wide infrastructure development, and public housing projects.

CAUSAL FACTORS OF SLUM DEVELOPMENT

1. Rural-urban migration

Rural-urban migration is one the major causes for the formation and creation of slum. Some of the factors that trigger rural-urban migration include:

Low economic productivity: The proportion of people working in agriculture has declined by 20-30% over the last 50 years, while global population has increased by 250%. People have largely moved from the countryside to the cities voluntarily in order to exploit the perceived economic opportunities.

Search of basic needs and amenities: Many people are also attracted to urban areas in the search of basic needs and amenities e.g. better education to their children and better health care that are not available in the rural areas.

Unemployment: Most of the rural migrants move to urban areas in search for jobs and diverse income opportunities. Most of them are unable to get immediate jobs, which leads to their financial shortage.

Migrated rural poor people with their lack of skills and high competitive market, are forced them to settle in low cost houses and this is one of the reasons for the expansion of slums.

2. Poor housing planning

Inadequate housing is a major issue in the urban cities due to lack of planning with respect to the current and projected population. The main causes of poor housing planning are insufficient financial resources to create affordable public housing or improve slums and lack of coordination in government bureaucracy i.e. different departments in charge of economic development, urban planning, and land allocation. This is forcing people to opt for makeshifts and substandard housing which in turn leads to slum development.

3. Economic stagnation and depression

Economic stagnation is characterized by high rate of unemployment, insufficient financial resources and inconsistent urban planning policy. In such circumstances, an increase of 1% in urban population will result in an increase of 1.84% in slum prevalence.

4. Urbanization

It is closely linked to the formation of slum. Rapid urbanization creates economic growth, which attracts people to get employment and investment opportunities in the urban area. However as evidenced by poor urban infrastructure and insufficient housing, the local governments are unable to manage large population which gives rise to slum because of insufficient funds and inexperience to handle and organize issues that come along with urbanization.

5. Politics

Many local and national level politicians for their political interest, subvert efforts to remove, reduce or upgrade slum into better housing options for the poor. During the second half of the 19th century, i.e. political parties of the French relied on votes of slum population and they are engaged in maintaining that voting bloc. Replacement and removal of slum created a conflict of interest, and politics prohibited efforts to remove, relocate or upgrade the slums into housing projects that are better than the slums. Similar situations are found in the slum of Brazil, slums of India, and slums of Kenya.

6. Lack of low-cost housing

Many cities do not provide low-cost-housing to the large number of rural migrants who ultimately opt to settle down in affordable slums. Provision of low cost houses with basic necessities e.g. water and sanitation can help curb development of slums.

7. Natural disasters and social conflicts

Peoples migrate to unaffected areas from affected areas due to major natural disasters and social conflicts in poor nations. Initially migrated people settle in temporary tent in cities which creates expansion of existing slum. With time passes these slums convert into permanent as these migrated peoples do not want to leave the current place.

8. Poverty

Urban poverty is also the major factor for the development of slum. With migration of rural poor people, poverty is also migrating to urban areas. The poor people move to urban areas hoping to get easy access to basic amenities which is not really the case. Eventually, they opt to settle in the slums where life is cheaper for them.

9. Informal economy

Informal economy is that part of an economy that is neither registered as a business nor licensed, one that does not pay taxes and is not monitored by local or state or federal government. It grows faster than formal economy when government laws and regulations are opaque and excessive, government bureaucracy is corrupt and abusive of entrepreneurs, labor laws are inflexible, or when law enforcement is poor. Many slums grow because of growing informal economy which creates demand for workers. Slums thus create an informal alternate economic system that demands low paid flexible workers, something that impoverished residents of slums deliver.

Without a sustainable formal economy that raises incomes and creates opportunities, slums are likely to continue in existence.

10. Colonialism and Segregation

Some of the slums in today's world are a product of urbanization brought by colonialism. For instance, the Europeans arrived in Kenya in the 19th century and created urban centers such as Nairobi mainly to serve their financial interests. They regarded the Africans as temporary migrants and needed them only for supply of labor. The housing policy aiming to accommodate these workers was not well enforced and the government built settlements in the form of single-occupancy bedspaces. Due to the cost of time and money in their movement back and forth between rural and urban areas, their families gradually migrated to the urban centre. As they could not afford to buy houses, slums were thus formed.

Others were created because of segregation imposed by the colonialists. For example, Dharavi slum of Mumbai - now one of the largest slums in India, used to be a village referred to as Koliwadas, and Mumbai used to be referred as Bombay. In 1887, the British colonial government expelled all tanneries, other noxious industry and poor natives who worked in the peninsular part of the city and colonial housing area, to what was back then the northern fringe of the city – a settlement now called Dharavi. This settlement attracted no colonial supervision or investment in terms of road infrastructure, sanitation, public services or housing. The poor moved into Dharavi, found work as servants in colonial offices and homes and in the foreign owned tanneries and other polluting industries near Dharavi. To live, the poor built shanty towns within easy commute to work.

MEASURES TO CURB SLUM DEVELOPMENT

1. Policies and Legislation

The Kenyan Government has put in place various national policies and legislation to prevent and reduce slum growth and expansion in Kenya. Such include:

Vision 2030

Its main goal is for urban areas to attain “a well-housed population living in an environmentally-secure urban environment”.

To attain an adequately and decently-housed nation in a sustainable environment as envisaged by Vision 2030, the country needs to:

- Install physical and social infrastructure in 20 urban slums
- Install 200,000 housing units annually
- Establish housing technology centers in each constituency to increase access to decent housing.
- Establish secondary mortgage finance corporation

Constitution of Kenya, 2010

The new constitution that guarantees every citizen the right to “accessible and adequate housing,” and to reasonable standards of sanitation.

2. Project and Program Initiatives

Before the MDGs came into place, forced eviction was the dominant form of slum eradication in Kenya. The MDGs focused on slum upgrading/improvement as a way to respond to slums, a practice that Kenya adopted. In 2003, the government of Kenya and the UN-HABITAT agreed to engage in slum upgrading and they entered into a Memorandum of Understanding under which the UN-HABITAT would oversee the Kenya Slum Upgrading Project (KENSUP) which would cover the three largest Kenyan cities.

The government later partnered with international development institutions, notably the World Bank who would eventually provide loans to another slum upgrading program, the Kenya Informal Settlement Improvement Program (KISIP) which was initiated in 2011 to complement KENSUP. KISIP targeted 15 municipalities.

The two initiatives, KENSUP and KISIP are implemented by the government through the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the relevant local authorities. They are greatly supported by the government to help solve the issue of slum development in the country.

Other initiatives run by the government have also been developed to help in the development of rural areas and prevent rural-urban migration which is a major causal factor of slums. The

initiatives include Rural Electrification Authority (REA), Constituency Development Fund (CDF) etc.

3. Devolution

Since the national government is finding it increasingly difficult to meet the great variety of needs and demands for public goods and services by population groups across the country, it is privatizing the delivery of some goods and services and is decentralizing some government national functions to local governments in rural and urban areas.

After decentralization, local communities can better articulate their needs and demands and local governments are at least in principal in a better position to meet those needs. Local governments and communities can take many more decisions on their own especially to reduce slum development and adapt development policies and programs for urban and rural areas to suit the specific needs of the population.

4. Industrial development in rural areas

Economic development in small towns can have a positive impact on the economy of the surrounding rural areas, if the increase in purchasing power results in the purchase of agricultural and non-agricultural products from the surrounding rural areas.

This will obviously depend on the types of products produced, their quality and their competitiveness compared to products from other parts of the country.

The development of the local urban economy may also lead to a reduction in rural-urban migration to the larger urban centers and city and redirect migration flows to smaller towns in rural areas.

WHY THE MEASURES ARE NOT WORKING

1. Lack of community involvement and participation

Community participation seems flawed in that communities targeted by the project do not seem to have been fully engaged e.g. for the KENSUP project in Kibera, decanting site residents claim that the government didn't involve them in setting up the rent rates and sometimes the civil society organizations that are meant to mobilise people do not do so.

2. Lack of coordination between key stakeholders

Stakeholders in slum developments projects may be running under the same ministry and even target related issues but due to lack of communication and coordination, the projects end up failing e.g. the Ministry of Housing is supposed to implement KENSUP projects in partnership with the UN-HABITAT but apparently the latter is not involved or aware of any happenings.

Similarly, KENSUP and KISIP are poorly linked and they therefore don't complement each other as they are supposed to. For instance, KENSUP assumes that it will provide housing after KISIP has sorted out the land tenure issues and infrastructure in the targeted areas.

3. Lack of sustainable projects due to financial constraints

Most of the projects and programs initiated to curb slum development are not adequately sustainable because they rely on donor-funding with little investment by the government. This is a major challenge if the donors don't give enough funds the projects become retarded and therefore do not meet the target.

4. Government bureaucracy

The slum upgrading initiatives put on paper by the relevant stakeholders are sometimes not effective due to the long and slow implementation process by the government. The government is usually responsible for execution and implementation of the projects and programs through providing local professionals, buildings, training, equipment and materials as well as its part of the financial contribution.

The delay reduces the effectiveness of the proposed initiatives.

5. Corruption and governance

This is one of the major issues in addressing the challenge of slums. The national government makes attempts to build low-cost houses for the slum dwellers so that they can move from the slums and live in houses with habitable conditions. The responsibility of allocating the houses is left to the local authorities and this is where the problem comes in. A good number intended beneficiaries of the housing project who are the slum dwellers do not get the houses. Those who do are the middle income earners who end up giving bribes to the officials so that they can gain an advantage over the slum dwellers.

6. Poor policy planning

The planning projections done by the government agencies for housing are overtaken by population growth due to rapid birth rates and urbanization. This results in lack of adequate housing for the excess of people who were not planned for before. The rapid urbanization backed by the lack of proper plans to accommodate the newcomers to the city only serves to exacerbate the housing situation as people are forced to construct makeshifts and substandard housing.

7. Mistrust of the government and development organizations

There is a great deal of mistrust by the slum dwellers, of the government and development organizations because of the history of their failed aid projects and initiatives. They usually promise to provide better services e.g. clean & reliable water and maintenance of the houses so that they can get them to move from the slums to better houses, but they eventually end up not doing as they promised. For instance, a resident of Kibera who had moved to the upgraded houses complained that she did not have water in her house for a whole month and she therefore opted to move back to the slum.

8. High cost of living

The cost of living in the country is rising day by day and there is need for money. Many of the slum dwellers who are allocated houses prefer to sell them because after all their way of life and jobs are still the same and they are not able to match up to the standards of the houses. For example, many Kibera residents who were given apartments through the slum upgrading program saw a business opportunity and rented their flats to middle class tenants at four to five times the subsidized rate. They then moved back to the slums at least with extra money in their pockets.

The middle class income earners living within the city are also finding life too expensive especially having to pay very high rents for their houses. They have therefore moved to the houses constructed for slum dwellers in search for affordable housing.

9. Social disintegration

The slum upgrading programs carried out in the slums are rigid in allocating the housing. The community members are not given a leeway to choose houses for themselves hence once they are relocated, they are not comfortable with the neighbors they have. This causes a breakdown of the strong community relationship they had before. The social networks are important to people of the community.

RECOMMENDATION

There are basic things a government can do to prevent new slums from developing. One is to recognize that urbanization is going to happen. Sometimes governments believe that adopting alternative policies, such as focusing on rural development, will stop urbanization. This approach is rarely effective.

Once governments accept the reality of urban growth, the next step is to plan for it and determine where the new residents will live. Authorities should identify land and plan for its settlement even if money is not available for urban services. Once people settle on that land and feel that they have a right to live there, they will begin investing in it. Over time, the area will upgrade incrementally.

CONCLUSION

Slums exist in every country and have become a global phenomenon. The government should not just put up measures to help address the problem of slums. Instead, it should go deeper to ensure that the measures are effective and that any implementation issues are sorted out e.g. through ensuring participation of the targeted community, fighting with corruption and promoting good governance, better policy planning, ensuring coordination between stakeholders etc.

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