

Slum Redevelopment in Addis Ababa: How Can It Become Sustainable?

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Abstract: *The municipality has been making effort to redevelop the inner city slums predominantly by relocating dwellers to the outskirts in the last one and half decade. The available literatures have rarely indicated the multi-dimensional impacts of relocation on relocatees. This document identified that the approach has led to loss of economic activities, social ties and accessible urban services. On the other side, it pinpointed that relocation has some sort of benefit for relocated people-better housing condition-accessible water tap, adequate toilet, kitchen, sanitary, sewerage, healthy living environment and alleviate burden of water collection borne by females. Nonetheless, the effort has resulted in unsustainable redevelopment. Failing to consider the multidimensional nature of slum, neglecting local people participation, overlooking dwellers' means of income and lack of cooperation between various public sectors were major factors that contribute to unsustainable redevelopment. Therefore, there is a need to extenuate such gaps to attain sustainable slum redevelopment.*

Keyword: Inner city, slum, relocation, sustainable redevelopment, relocatees

1. Introduction

Like many other developing countries, Ethiopian cities suffer from shortage of infrastructure and urban service, urban environmental degradation, homelessness, urban decay and high unemployment (UN-Habitat, 2011). One of the grim problems facing cities is the proliferation of slum. Available data indicate that 80 percent of urban population resides in slum housing that needs either complete replacement or significant upgrading (UN-Habitat, 2007 and 2008). The degree and conditions of slum, however, vary across cities of the country. It is dire in Addis Ababa, capita city, where slums constitute the greater portion of the residential areas. More than 80 percent of Addis Ababa is a slum (UN-Habitat, 2004; Yonoineshet, 2007; Elias, 2008; Gebre, 2008) with 70 percent of this comprising government owned rental housing (UN-Habitat, 2011).

Addis Ababa's slum areas are characterized by overcrowded neighborhoods with no or little basic infrastructure and municipal services, poor hygienic conditions, lacking safe drinking water and sewage. This has been making health conditions of dwellers poor. Available literatures indicated that absence of adequate water and sanitation in slum areas have resulted in the presence of various diseases (Fry et al, 2002; Water aid, 2008). UN-Habitat (2003) revealed that in some of the slums, child mortality rates are more than twice than the rural figure.

Social exclusion is also attributable to slum areas. According to Habtamu (2011) slum dwellers have poor social ties with non-slum dwellers. Study of slums by YUVA (1996) also revealed that the most significant impact of the riots was the spacial segregation and ghettoisation of community. The lion shares of Addis Ababa's slum dwellers are residing in government owned houses, and thus is making them feel unsecured and unstable. This implies that living condition of slum area is very poor and unsound.

On the other side, location advantages including strong social ties among the dwellers could be seen as desirable

experience in the inner part of Addis Ababa's slums. A multitude of formal and informal income generation activities is available for the inner city slum (UNCHS, 1991). In addition to this, slum area is serving as a temporary destination of migration to cities (Marx et al, 2013).

Therefore, it is erroneous to understand slums in terms of its objectionable part focusing only on the physical dimension leaving the aforementioned realities aside. In fact, the poor physical attributes are often required for an area to be considered a slum, and thus it is seen as the urban cancer (Dickenson, 1983). The most common reaction to such settlements has been, therefore, to undertake large slum clearance project (Tsegaye, 1998). Similarly, relocation had been the selected, and is an ongoing, slum redevelopment project in Addis Ababa.

Different scholars have different insight on urban slum relocation. While some argue about the indispensability of slum relocation seeing that the areas need to be utilized for economically more productive purposes and thus indicated that individuals are expected to sacrifice for the state (see, Perera & Viratkapan, 2004; Meikle & Walker, 1998) others state that relocation creates tremendous negative impact on the socio-economic assets of communities (Turner, 1967; Wood, 1994; Cernea, 1996; Robinson, 2003). In any way, this path of development is very rarely sufficient to bring sustainable development. The efforts made by government and other international and indigenous NGOs to reduce slums were ineffective to achieve sustainable ending. Nonetheless, I am not suggesting that slum areas in Addis Ababa shall be entirely neglected in the future, but to renew them by employing inclusive and economic development

If slum relocation is the only option, sustainability in all dimensions should be, therefore, prioritized. There has been a clear recognition of the importance of sustainability in all dimension of urban development in helping to alleviate poverty (UN-Habitat, 2002). Indeed, the question is that how sustainable slum redevelopment can be achieved?

Sustainable development now a day is a buzz word. Development related actors, such as, planners, policy makers, researchers, practitioners, government officials and others are either consciously or unconsciously saying it in their day to day activities. They are all too aware when it is lacking. The problem is mainly lack of a clearly indicated and well organized directions as well as responsible actors to achieve it. Therefore, I do share the questions raised by Williams (2010) in his article on Sustainable Cities: research and practices, “do we know how to bring about sustainable urban development? “

Urban relocation in Addis Ababa has been a subject studied for the last few years. However, the available studies have focused more on limitations of relocation projects. They have not proposed for a new approach taking in to account the socio-economic context of the country to achieve sustainable urban redevelopment. In general, the currently available data are inadequate for clarifying some of the most critical issues that are indispensable toward achieving sustainable slum redevelopment.

The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to put apt ways that must be addressed to achieve a sustainable slum redevelopment thereby documenting the hitherto success and shortfall of relocation approach. Given the fact that more than two-third of Ethiopia’s urban population lives in slums, this document shows what could be done in the future both in and in places outside of Addis Ababa to achieve sustainable urban development.

2. Methodology

The methodology implemented to achieve the objectives was analysis of literature apposite to slum reduction strategies executed in the last few decades. This document reviews available Ethiopian generated literature that throws light on relocatees’ issues in slum relocation. Local literature on slum redevelopment is limited. This review draws on research and analyses of slum redevelopment in other African, Asia and Latin American countries. Hence, the experience of other countries within the framework of Ethiopia’s experience was also appraised. Attempt was also made to bear out its consistency with conditions in Ethiopia. In general, information was gathered from Journal articles and conference/ workshop papers on slum redevelopment related issues and government urban development policy and relocation guidelines. Information was also gathered from the related article that I published on Asian journal of humanities and social studies.

3. Concepts and Theoretical Framework

3.1 What is Slum?

According to UN-Habitat, slum is an area that combines inadequate access to safe water, sanitation and other infrastructure, poor structural quality of housing, overcrowding and insecure residential status (UN Habitat, 2003). According to Sufaira (2013) slum simply refers to a heavily populated urban area characterized by sub-standard housing and squalor. In Addis Ababa, slum has local name “*yedekemu betoch/seferoch*” meaning that deteriorated

houses or settlements (Elias, 2008). The above described definitions focused merely on the physical attributes of slum leaving the socio-economic issues aside. This means that they failed to consider the multi-faceted nature of slums. The definitions are, therefore, misleading. It allows to develop erroneous intervention approach.

3.2 Sustainable Development

Development doubts, such as, what, for whom, how and why have been asked over and over by many since 1950s. What constitutes and how development change over time, shaped by critique, debate, experiences and evolution (Hamed, 2005). Indeed, recent years have witnessed the perception of development in a holistic way. Pike et al (2007) argues that development as a holistic approach necessarily broader than just the economy and encourages wider and more rounded conception of wellbeing and quality of life. Development is, therefore, expected to move beyond the narrow economism of “desiccated” indicators (Morgan, 2004). This connects to the recognition of social, economic, cultural and environmental realm in development objective as well as path. Meaning that development should be sustainable thereby endeavoring an equal balance of social, ecological and economic dimensions. On the other side, United nations often argue that development is sustainable if it meets the needs of present without compromising part of future generations to meet their own needs.

3.3. Environmental and Socio-economic Conditions of Slum

The intensity, type and cause of slum vary across countries and even between cities of the same country. But, they share the same uncomfortable living conditions (Sufaira, 2013), poor and overcrowded housing, lack of toilet, inadequate water and sanitation, etc. Poor infrastructure and vulnerability to risks like natural disaster and environmental degradation, and health risk are commonly attributable to slums (World Development Report, 1991). The study undertaken by Sufaira (2013) on slum areas of Gonder city revealed that people are living in a very unfavorable conditions, old and congested houses, and easily vulnerable to diseases and floods.

Various literatures show dramatic differences in health condition between slum and non-slum dwellers. The public health consequences are sever in slum areas (Fry et al, 2002). In slum area, the combined impact of poor sanitation as a driver of diseases such as malnutrition, diarrhea, endemic cholera and respiratory infections may make it the biggest killer of children under five (Water Aid, 2008). UN-Habitat (2003) also states that in some of the slums, child mortality rates are more than twice than the rural figure. Kausar et al (1999) argue that the health of urban poor is further compromised by unsatisfactory man made conditions of the living environment, poor housing, overcrowding, pollution and increased exposure to infectious diseases which are reinforced by social and psychological problems including instability and insecurity. Social exclusion is attributable to slum areas. Slum dwellers had poor social ties with non-slum dweller (Habtamu, 2011). Study of slums by YUVA (1996) also revealed that the most significant impact

of the riots was the spacial segregation and ghettoisation of community.

On the other side, slums, particularly the inner city one, have enormous locational advantages. Income generating opportunities and accessible social services are often concentrated in slum areas (Gebre, 2008). A multitude of formal and informal income generating activities is available for the inner city slum (UNCHS, 1991). On the other hand, slum area is serving as a temporary destination of migration to cities (Marx et al, 2013). Poor, mostly emigrants from rural areas, are concentrated in slum areas (Sufaira, 2013).

Conventionally, slum has been, however, perceived by most of people as a settlement that smash the quality of urban area. It is seen as the urban cancer (Dickenson, 1983). The most common reaction to such settlements has been, therefore, to carry out large slum clearance project (Tsegaye, 1998). Gebre (2008) also states that urban development and renewal programmes often target such areas.

3.4 Views on Urban Relocation

Urban compulsory relocation thinking is fundamentally uneven. Different Scholars have different insight on development-induced relocation. According to Meikle & Walker (1998) the proponents of relocation argue that individuals are expected to sacrifice for the state. They argue that the prime land occupied by slum dwellers need to be utilized for economically more productive purposes (See, Perera & Viratkapan, 2004), rather than being occupied by low income people.

The critics of resettlement projects usually argue that relocation creates tremendous negative impacts on communities as well as the micro- economy of the area (Perera & Viratkapan, 2004), and thus reject development-induced relocation. Others also argue about the asymmetrical benefits of development-induced relocation. Concomitant to this, Mathur (1995) and Harrison (1993) asserted that development project that cause disruption on the lives of the people relocated reflect the interests of the rich because the way development has worked over the years make the rich richer and the poor poorer.

Other scholars, however, are less compromising, and to them sustainable development could be attained through well-developed course of action. According to World Bank (2004), the adverse impacts of development induced relocation can be mitigated by careful planning that specifically targets the relocatees. Thus, Pettersson (2002) argue that if the relocatees are not properly resettled and rehabilitated, it is irrelevant whether the project forcing them off their land is of an *overriding public interest* or not.

4. Slum Relocation in Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa has been showing transformations since the 1990s (Gebre, 2008). The city municipality has also been greatly investing on urban renewal to improve and increase the productivity of inner-city. The renewal approach has multifaceted impacts on the relocated communities as of discussed hereunder.

4.1 Pros of Slum Relocation

The inner-city of Addis Ababa contained a high concentration of poor housing quality. Lack of adequate water supply, sanitation, toilet and kitchen has also contributed to the poor housing condition (see CSA, 1994 and UN-Habitat, 2008). Thus, better housing quality is one of the positive results that have been achieved by relocating slum dwellers. Studies by Nebiyu (2000) and Habtamu (2014) found out that relocating people from Addis Ababa's inner cities to another location enable them secure quality housing with adequate toilet, kitchen, water supply and sanitation. Specifically, the study by Gebre (2008) revealed that for the majority of relocatees the latrines in the new sites were much better than their old latrines.

Similarly, Lloyd-Evans and Potter (1998) stated that in the resettlement scheme when the state acted as provider in many parts of third world countries, there were individual housing units more spacious, having their own toilets, water taps and kitchens. Specifically, experiences from Shanghai, where the relocation project had relocated over 15,000 residents from several neighborhoods shows that, the new apartments were built at standards higher than the houses subject to demolition (Cernea, 1993). If this is the case, hast generalization, the negative consequences of relocation, is not always true. It has not brought losses in all dimensions, instead, it ultimately generates certain benefits for those people who are relocated from slums.

Health conditions in slum areas are poor (UN-Habitat, 2003). Similarly, slums in Addis Ababa expose dwellers to health risk. Moreover, in inner city slum areas of Addis Ababa, sharing facilities (UN-Habitat, 2004) are risk factors for communicable diseases (Habtamu, 2014). Intervention to slum, therefore, helps reduce the occurrences of diseases caused by slum related risk factors. The study by Habtamu (2014) revealed that relocating people from Addis Ababa's inner-city slum to outskirt has resulted in better health status among dwellers thereby improving risk factors such as, unsafe water, poor sanitary condition and overcrowding. Similarly, Nabiyu's (2000) study found out that the relocatees have had a far better access to facilities that have resulted in creating a healthy environment than the old location. Therefore, the negative consequences of relocation on the health of the relocatees resulted from unsafe water and sanitation (Robinson, 2003 and Cernea, 1993) may not be the case for communities relocated from slum areas.

Moreover, in slum areas women particularly girls are the primary water collectors. The study conducted by UN-Habitat (2004) in Addis Ababa on urban inequities indicates that women are responsible for water collection in over 90 per cent of the households, and of these 45 per cent are girls. Habtamu's (2014) and Nabiyu's (2000) studies found out that relocation resulted in the availability of water tap inside relocatees' houses. This appears to reduce burden of water borne by women and/ or girls, which is a phenomenon in turn has implication on girls' ability to pursue education that enables them even competent in their future life scenario.

4.2 What are the cons of Slum Relocation?

4.2.1 Livelihood Activity

In addition to the proximity of clients and due to high population density and a concentration of various public and private firms, a multitude of formal and informal income generating activities are available for the inner city slum (NUCHS, 1991). Similarly, accessible economic activities are far better in Addis Ababa's inner cities slums. Most of slum dwellers are engaged in informal livelihood activities, such as, fruit or vegetable vendors, street hawkers, charcoal selling, local drink making and selling, *injera* baking and selling, etc. Thus, the studies by Nebiyu (2000), Berhanu (2006), Gebre (2008) and Habtamu (2014) on the impact of development-induced relocation on relocatees in Addis Ababa revealed that loss of formal and informal economic activities is among the challenges that relocatees faced. This means that relocation of dwellers from inner cities to the outskirts has disrupted livelihood activities of relocatees.

Experiences of urban relocation in different countries have evidenced this phenomenon. The study by Mejia (1999) on World Bank funded project in Latin America shows that alarming loss of economic activities among relocatees. Other empirical evidences (Cernea, 1993 form Jakarta) (Indonesia) and Khartoum (Sudan) and Evans, 2007 form Senegal) indicate the adverse impacts of relocation on relocatees' income earning activities. As a result, unemployment or underemployment is among the challenges relocatees often endure long after physical relocation has been completed (Robinson 2003). For the 26 Latin American-urban resettlement projects, the proportion of unemployed averaged around 15%, about 25% of the relocated populations were underemployed (Mejia, 1999).

Moreover, since informal activities often depend on the surrounding environment (Perlman, 1982), relocation is disastrous for people deriving their incomes from these enterprises (World Bank, 2004). This is particularly true of women who frequently earn their livelihoods from a number of sources in the informal sector (Hoadley, 2008). Therefore, economic activities loss that occurs among relocatees in various cities of different countries has implications that urban relocation projects have given little attention to relocation affected income earning activities.

4.2.2 Social Network

Social network is usually used as a means to cope up with social, economic and environmental shocks. According to Mitchell (1995), network relation enhances the transfer of information among individuals and transfer of material goods and services among people. In Ethiopia, people have evolved self-help institution and neighborhood ties which play an important role in the struggle of their daily life and a source of strength (Pankhurst and Andrias, 1958). Nonetheless, various studies on urban development-induced relocation indicate that this social network benefit has been under pressure.

Gebre's (2008) research on urban redevelopment in Addis Ababa focusing on households who were relocated from the inner city to 14 relocation sites in the outskirts found out the adverse impacts of relocation on social network of relocation

affected communities. The study undertaken by Berhanu (2006) also revealed that about 96 per cent of relocated people loss previous neighborhood ties. Nebiyu's (2000) study on communities moved from the inner-city to another destination shows that about 67 per cent of relocatees claimed that the relocation scheme brought about break up of former neighborhood ties. Other qualitative study by Habtamu (2014) on those communities relocated from inner city to outskirts indicates loss of access to mutual help, child care arrangements, exchange and borrowing opportunities, and other informal support systems.

Similarly, a range of literatures (for instance, Cernea, 1993; Pandey, 1996 and World Bank, 2004) also argue that the social disruptions in neighborhood ties and community organization disintegration are the other consequences of relocation. The findings of these all studies undertaken by different researchers in different areas enable to understand that the importance of social network is neglected by urban relocation project.

4.2.3 Urban Services

In Addis Ababa, since urban services tend to concentrate in the inner cities, dwellers living in these areas enjoy better access to urban services compared to those live in the suburbs. Various studies conducted in Addis Ababa found out that relocation of people from inner cities to outskirts has resulted in hindering access to urban services such as education, health and transport. The studies by Nebiyu (2000), Berhanu (2006), Gebre (2008) and Habtamu (2014) revealed that in the new place of residence schools are not accessible in terms of distance and cost to relocated people. The availability of accessible education service is, therefore, better in the inner cities compared to the outskirts areas. These studies further state that school dropout, walking to the previous school in old location and using transport instead of walking were difficulties experienced by relocated people.

Regarding to health services, Gebre's (2008) research shows that for 83 per cent of the respondents, the distance from current homes to the nearest affordable health care facility is far or very far. The studies undertaken by Nebiyu (2000) Berhanu (2006) and Habtamu (2014) found out that the relocation project has led to loss of accessible health service. This is mainly because of that the public and NGO-operated healthcare facilities are concentrated in the city center, largely inhabited by low-income households (Gebre, 2008). Inaccessible transport, the location of bus-termini far away from place of residence and unaffordable transport cost are difficulties that relocatees have experienced in the new settlements (Berhanu, 2006; Gebre, 2008 and Habtamu, 2014). Cernea (1993) argues that one of the consequences of the relocation of people to the periphery is unaffordable transportation cost or absence of transportation. The findings of the studies imply that relocation projects have given little attention to accessible urban services.

4.3 How to attain Sustainable Slum Redevelopment?

4.3.1 Meaning of slum

The term slum which is derived from an old English or German word meaning a poorly drained place, was

originally applied to describe the cheap rental housing of the working class (d' Cruz & Satterhwaite, 2005 citing Hoskins, 1970). Since then the connotation given to slum areas predominantly associated to the physical and legal characteristics. Literatures which prevailed in 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s described slum as illegal settlement and an eyesore to the larger community. This connotation is continued up until now. For instance, the operational definition given by one of the most concerned international organization to slum area, UN-Habitat, is that slum is characterized by inadequate access to safe water, sanitation and other infrastructure, poor structural quality of housing, overcrowding and insecure residential status (UN-Habitat, 2003).

Since its origin, slum has simply been defined from the point of view of material aspect leaving economic, social and other values aside. This often justifies and rationalizes relocation approach that often focuses on physical dimension. The conventional meaning of slum, which leads to problem to be improperly stated, is therefore grossly misleading. Having various evidences including form my case study, I am more in agreement with the writing of Georges Bernanos, "there is no greater evil than a problem mis-stated." Therefore, we need to advance our understanding of slum. Understanding the multi-faceted nature of slum helps attain sustainable redevelopment.

4.3.2 Cooperation between the Main Public Sectors

The socio-economic challenges relocatees face, in areas such as unemployment, lack of accessible health, transport, education, energy and poverty require an integrated approach. There can be no sustainable urban relocation without strong cooperation between various public bureaus, such as Addis Ababa urban redevelopment, water, transport, Ethiopian electric power cooperation, telecommunication, education, sewerage, micro and small enterprises, saving and credit bureau and others. In fact, in Addis Ababa, there is absence of coordination between such sectors, and thus, has resulted in unsustainable slum redevelopment. Therefore, it is rare to bring about sustainable development without different sectors well cooperated effort.

4.3.3 Participation

The relocation project often neglects the participation of local community in decision making process. The study by Habtamu (2011) revealed that local people involvement in decision making process of slum redevelopment was inadequate. In fact, community participation oriented development became important since 1980s, when there was a significant shift from a top-down, technocratic planning to bottom-up or participatory development approach. The shift occurred due to that top-down development approach was unable to recognize local context or social, economic, cultural and environmental traits in development process. The approach did not give the local community the chance to participate and contribute in shaping their own development. Thus, it failed to achieve sustainable development. There is, therefore, a need to enhance participation of local communities in development process-project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Rahmena (1999) indentified participation is no longer a threat to development; rather it has been accepted as an instrument for effective implementation of projects. In general, it is impossible to achieve sustainable development without the participation of local people in development process. Therefore, it is essential to involve local community throughout decision making process of slum redevelopment projects. As many empirical evidences in China, India and Mali show, community participation in process of relocation projects enables to identify people that can be mostly vulnerable and of course their interests. In addition, the community gains a sense of ownership of the project and they less likely perceive themselves as victims.

4.3.4 Households' Economic Activity

One of the issues that contribute towards unsustainable redevelopment is that mostly relocation projects overlook households' economic activity, particularly informal sectors up on which majority of livelihoods rely. Urban redevelopment-induced relocation often disrupts much economic activity of affected people. This is mainly because of that urban resettlement pays little attention to the economic impact of relocation. Lloyd-Evans and Potter (1998) argues that the scheme, which stands as one of the largest public housing programmes in the Third World, is basically designed to settle slums and not as a means for assisting low-income families *per se*.

The same concept in different words, Dwyer (1975), Drakakis-Smith (1979) and Yen (1990) argue that a strong motive on the part of government was to free sites-occupied by slum dwellers for more lucrative permanent development. Clearly, Mejia (1999) indicates that most current urban resettlement programs were based primarily on housing. Moreover, even though, in developing countries, the role of informal sector in employment and survival especially in the poor sections of society is crucial (UN-Habitat, 2003), Mejia argue that the reliance of poor on the informal economy has not been sufficiently studied or taken into consideration. Giving much attention to slum households' economic activities, mainly informal sector, is required to achieve sustainable slum redevelopment.

5. Conclusion

More than two-third of Addis Ababa's people reside in slum areas. Various efforts have been made by different actors to redevelop slum areas. In Addis Ababa, one of the predominantly implemented redevelopment approaches is relocation. Relocation erodes communities' access to all elements needed for their well-being-economic activity, social ties and urban services. There are also evidences that reveal the desirable impacts of relocation on relocated people. It also creates a better living scenario for relocatees-quality housing with adequate water supply, sanitation, toilet, kitchen, low risk factors for disease and manage burden of water collection borne by women, specifically girls. However, it has fallen to attain sustainable redevelopment. This is mainly because of that the multi-faceted nature of slum is seldom reflected in this approach. Failing to involve local people in overall redevelopment process, neglecting dwellers' economic activity and lack of

cooperation between various public sectors were also the other factors that contribute to unsustainable redevelopment.

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