



URBAN POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This article emphasised on poverty in urban areas. The article also highlighted the intervention development programmes entailed in the reviewed studies. Furthermore, this paper covers problems faced by the urban poor people.

KEYWORDS: *Urban poverty, Development programmes, Poverty alleviation programmes.*

INTRODUCTION :

Poverty is when people lack a chance or opportunity and could not afford to have a decent life. In simple words poverty means not having sufficient money to meet basic needs like food, clothing, shelter, education and for health care. Sinha (2003) stated that poverty means denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development. Human development has been defined as the process of enlarging people's choices to lead a long and healthy life. The most critical choices are to be educated and to enjoy a decent standard of living.



URBAN POVERTY

The case of urban poverty in India has been exemplary in terms of mismanaging (or not managing at all) urban growth. Cities have become the best place to foster poverty and destitution at a scale and extent unseen before. Rural poverty is one thing, but urban poverty in India added a whole new breed of revolting aspects to it: diseases, violence (more than at the countryside), disintegration of communities and the social fabric (<http://www.poverties.org/blog/urban-poverty-in-india>).

Urban poverty is invariably associated with poor quality housing, often in overcrowded unsanitary slum settlements, and with ill health which is related to the spread of infectious

diseases like tuberculosis (TB), and the constant threat of exposure to environmental hazards such as mosquito infested drains, and fires and floods, which could destroy their homes altogether. Poverty is also associated with a lack of access to a wider range of services, including health, education and law and order, on the grounds of cost, discriminatory practices, and the failure of urban managers to keep pace with the demands of growing settlements on the peri-urban fringe. In India, these conditions are exacerbated by the division of the poor between those living in officially recognised. Slum settlements where service provision is permitted, and illegal non-recognised squatter settlements, where it is not. In the former, service provision, if it exists at all, is

patchy, poorly maintained, and severely under-resourced. The status recognised officially permits poor people to make demands on the political system, but this does not mean that their voices are heard. People in the non-recognised., category however, are invariably the most vulnerable among the poor. They live on the most precarious sites and in untenable conditions along polluted canal banks, on pavements, and along railway lines, in constant fear of eviction or relocation (Loughhead, Mittal & Wood, 2001).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The prevalence of urban poverty and deprivation, sharply contrasted with relative wealth, have created a potentially volatile situation, which if left unattended could result in insecurity and even lead to political upheaval. People migrate to urban centres hoping to secure a better future for themselves and their families. Governments have an obligation to create policies that permit them to accomplish this goal. Admittedly, the

challenges facing urban areas are daunting. However, recent democratisation and improved communication capabilities have presented most African governments with a fresh opportunity to tackle these challenges in partnership with civil society. In addition, urbanisation presents economic and political opportunities for national development. In the struggle to improve service provision, citizens employ participatory strategies as they establish community structures or elected bodies. This process also fosters citizen engagement in national politics more generally, advancing popular political awareness and the institutionalisation of democratic culture. With a suitable political milieu, the economic potential of urbanisation can provide a foundation for national growth and prosperity towards the creation of vibrant and affluent cities in Africa, and beyond. African countries can assimilate tactics from other regions in their quest to transform the urbanisation they are experiencing from an unbridled phenomenon to the centrepiece in development initiatives today. Accordingly, if pragmatic efforts are made to effectively manage urbanisation, African cities will be both sustainable and able to provide human security to their citizens (Hove, Ngwerume & Muchemwa, 2013).

The urban poor are affected by the highly monetized nature of urban living, which forces them to spend far more on accommodation, food, transport and other services than the rural poor; unlike rural poverty, urban poverty is characterized by the regulatory exclusion of the poor from the benefits of urban development. The three dimension of poverty such as lack of regular income and employment, productive assets, access to social safety nets; lack of access to services such as education, health care, information, credit, water supply and sanitation; and political power, participation, dignity and respect are important in understanding urban poverty. To escape urban poor from the multiple vulnerabilities of urban living and to benefit them from the inclusive growth process, Central Government's intervention is therefore critical. Government's proposal to extend National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme to urban areas, with modifications is certainly welcome policy intervention in addressing the problems of urban poor in providing wage employments and for income generating activities that would prevent the urban poor to find the roots of exit from poverty. Attention needs to be provided to ensure access to affordable healthcare, improving the conditions of housing and social security is the priority for all unorganized workers in the urban settings. Moreover, the nature of urban communities is distinct and urban poverty is not easily addressed by the community-based approaches developed for rural poverty reduction. As the urban population of the region is growing, so is urban poverty (Sharma, 2012).

Coast (2011) pointed out that urban populations are often assumed to have better access to health care than those living in rural areas. However, urban health systems in many poorer countries have a weak to non-existent public health structure and lack implementation and infrastructures. Rapid urban growth in many settings has exceeded the capacity of health systems to serve rapidly growing urban populations. Just because health services are located in an urban area does not mean that they are easily accessible by the urban poor. Health workers find it difficult or are reluctant to serve extremely poor urban areas. A female slum resident who is pregnant might live a short distance from emergency obstetric services, but if she needs help in the middle of the night, it might be too dangerous for her to leave her home to seek help. Additionally, the cost of health care represents a significant barrier for the urban poor. Poor populations spend a significant part of their income on health care: it is estimated that more than 100 million people are pushed into poverty every year due to health care expenses. As the presence of multiple ill-health conditions increase in urban settings, health care costs can push poor people further into poverty. We need to know what works to improve the health of the urban poor. The existing evidence base is tiny compared to the rapidly growing and large urban poor population, with almost no qualitative evidence to complement the limited quantitative data. We need high-quality evidence on effective and sustainable interventions that specifically target the urban poor. The starting point must be disaggregated data which makes visible the significant differences between areas and populations within cities.

In a study carried out by Paul (2006), the principal aim of Poverty Alleviation Programmes is to improve the quality of life of the urban poor by giving them economic support so that the growing sense of hopelessness may be reduced to a considerable extent. The author also stated that while the government is making all-out efforts to improve the socio-economic condition of economically disadvantaged people by providing liberal financial assistance under various Poverty Alleviation Schemes, it is felt that imparting basic minimum level of education to them by introducing various tailored Educational Programmes would make them feel and realize their rights and responsibilities as responsible citizens which in turn will remove social injustice and bring harmony and social cohesion in society for better tomorrow.

Indian urban planners need to know more about their urban population, and especially those aspects affecting the urban poor. They need to understand the contribution that poor people make to urban economic development. And they need to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of current urban poverty alleviation policies and programmes in order to ensure that scarce resources address real needs and have an impact on poverty (Loughhead, Mittal & Wood, 2001).

Suryahadi, Suharso and Sumarto (2001) stated that the Government of Indonesia established a series of new expanded programmes in early 1998 to mitigate the adverse social impacts of the economic crisis which began in mid-1997. These programmes are widely known as the Social Safety Net or JPS programmes, an acronym of its Indonesian name,

Jaring Pengaman Sosial. The programmes are funded by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and bilateral donors. The programmes are intended to help protect both the traditional poor and those who have become the newly poor due to economic crisis. The objectives of the programmes include : ensuring the availability of food at affordable prices, supplementing purchasing power through employment creation and preserving access to critical social services particularly health and education. The findings indicate that in many cases the programmes have not reached the specified target groups due to low coverage and loose targeting. The effectiveness of the programmes varied across different programmes and regions. The general conclusion point to the need for improvements in the implementation of the programmes, particularly in terms of targeting the beneficiaries of the particular programme, and in raising coverage within the target groups.

According to Marcella and Baxter (2000) a national survey was conducted on the citizenship information needs of 898 members of the United Kingdom public through personal interview. It was found that most of the respondents had encountered problems in relation to employment, education, housing or welfare benefits due to lack of access to information. Many were poorly informed about legal rights, welfare benefits and local politics. 91.7% believed that freedom of information was important for exercising their rights as citizens. The respondents preferred public libraries as a source of government information and were seen as appropriate locations for a range of other types of citizenship information.

The advantage of incorporating direct insights from the poor is to gain both in nuance and thus efficiency regarding the most urgent and effective ways to tackle their problems. More research then becomes essential to target the right people, especially when you consider that the government is generally short of basic information on the state of urban poverty in India. The new governmental plan - the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission - from 2005 has been trying to break up with the traditional top-down approach that overlooks long term goals, the value of community-building and social harmony in reducing poverty. As it's endeavoured to restore the provision of basic services, one thing became obvious: there's a need for more research. A need to know which policies work and which don't. That supply is finally picking up, providing vital information on urban poverty in India, but a substantial amount of it will be necessary to create enough results that validate or invalidate strategies in different contexts (e.g. slums in Delhi will likely require somewhat different solutions than slums in Mumbai) (<http://www.poverties.org/blog/urban-poverty-in-india>).

SUMMARY OF THE REVIEWED LITERATURES

In order to have an overall development in urban areas the most important factor to consider is to take care and try to raise the living condition of the urban poor. The authors highlighted that development programmes in urban areas is of utmost importance, housing, spacing, health care, employment and education should also be regarded. A logical and practical framework should be designed by the government as solutions and different strategies should be applied accordingly to different situations in the form of development programmes. Furthermore, information should reach the targeted beneficiaries so that they can access and avail to these development programmes.

CONCLUSION

Urban poverty is a challenge and nuisance that pull back the nation's growth. Therefore the Indian government has taken the initiative in launching many development programmes for the poor people both urban and rural masses. But another major concern is that people are not aware of these development programmes and they do not know how to access them. Therefore, proper implementation of the development programmes is important and also appropriate information communication and services is necessary.

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