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THE SLUM ERADICATION URBAN RENEWAL: A CRITICAL STUDY

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Abstract:

The concept of renewal and reconstruction has gained importance because of expanding slums and blighted areas in most cities which help in haphazard growth of built-up areas. Urban renewal is intended to describe the process of dealing with a large area on a whole and it includes preservation, rehabilitation of property or environment and redevelopment. The process gradually changes the character of the area to fit in with the needs of contemporary society. It is distinguished from the radical changes of redevelopment and from the status quo of preservation and rehabilitation. It is in fact, an amalgam of all the processes which act on a town, or a portion of it and which are continual moulding and changing its character and appearance.

KEYWORDS:

Slum Eradication , Critical Study , Urban Renewal , Continual Moulding .

INTRODUCTION

Urban renewal, in the form of a federal programme, began in 1949 when it was essentially a planning requirement, and first started with New York City. In 1955, the Housing Act of U.S.A. converted slum clearance and redevelopment to urban renewal and made possible the creation of an urban Renewal Administration. The concept was extended further by the Housing Act of 1959. This new approach initiated the "Community Renewal Programs", under which federal funds were made available to the communities to undertake an appraisal of the community's total need for all types of renewal measures and its resources for putting these measures into effect.

The United States Government adopted a policy since 1945 to remove dilapidated residential areas with a view to provide decent housing facilities, particularly for the poor who lived in slums. The renewal programme involves several types of techniques and projects but the chief emphasis is given on residential redevelopment. In recent years, techniques other than massive land clearance for residential slums have received attention under which a combination of rehabilitation and spot clearance have been applied and areas other than those that are predominantly residential have been brought under the renewal programme.

SLUMAREAS:

There seems to be a cause and effect relationship between the process of urbanisation and the multitude of problems of immigration from the poverty stricken areas which manifest in overcrowding, sub-standard housing, degenerating cultural-social organisation and in sanitary conditions. This has been a concrete social organisation and in sanitary conditions. This has been a concrete social phenomenon since

the time of industrial revolution in Western Europe, particularly in Great Britain where the bulk of rural population in search of employment, seemed to have moved into the new industrial centres. Continued exploitation of these people, their poverty and overcrowded living conditions resulted into substandard housing, in sanitary conditions and poor amenities. The entire social environment of the region where they inhabited became polluted. Desperation and frustration became so inherent that the dwellers developed a sub-standard social organisation full of chaos and confusion. Such an area with poor amenities, inhabited became polluted. Desperation and frustration became so inherent that the dwellers developed a sub-standard social organization full of chaos and confusion. Such an area with poor amenities, inhabited by low income population and insecure family life is called a slum. Various people have defined slum in different ways. A slum, according to Gouder, is an environment that lacks the basic amenities of a good living condition and is regarded as the worst form of human habitation. Most of the slums face the problems of water supply, electricity, ineffective drainage facilities and inefficient circulation system. Dwellings are so crowded that space becomes a problem. Slums hardly provide opportunity for self expression, decency and morality. To Gist, the word 'slum' refers to an area close to the central business district which is in transition as a product of continuous invasion and succession of impoverished migrants, with houses which were considered adequate at the initial stage of colonization, but are now in the process of physical degeneration owing to low rents and poor maintenance.

SLUM DEVELOPMENT IN URBAN AREAS

Urbanisation provides job opportunities, thereby allowing immigration from the neighbouring areas. The poor immigrants gravitate towards poor housing areas leading to a complex spatial distribution of the slum areas. Slums provide the bulk of the labour force required for the urban economic organisations. The slum dwellers constitute a distinct social organization of their own in the urban areas, which according to the social scientists must be studied in the background of their living conditions. The development of slum areas largely affect the functional characteristics and the morphology of different urban areas, particularly those which are unplanned. Since the slums are occupied by the low income people, who usually lack moral and social decency because of poor upbringing and frustration, they usually lead to social degeneration and criminal activities.

SLUM FORMATION:

Like a disease, slums seem to grow and multiply. Several factors seem to aid the growth of slums in urban areas. The first and foremost is the rapid pace of rural urban migration in recent decades. Most of this migration is the result of inadequate employment opportunities in rural areas. Naturally, the emigration to industrial centres where a large unskilled labour force is required, is higher. Thus, slums coexist with industrial urban centres.

The second important factor is the lack of building space and a shortage of housing facilities resulting there from. Thus, most immigrants, particularly in the larger Indian cities, squat on roads and footpaths, encroach upon public land and usurp government property. They settle wherever they can find open space. These areas rapidly degenerate into slums. Even where they occupy houses in areas already built up, over crowding soon causes such areas to degenerate into slums.

SLUM DEGENERATION:

Degeneration of slums is a concrete social phenomenon that results from status consciousness which develop among the slum dwellers. The slums which usually become compact and concentrate on a particular area, tend to spread and split into a number of smaller units as the urban areas under go a real expansion. A section of slum dwellers by virtue of their abilities, achieve "economic superiority", over their fellow dwellers and try to get rid of the congestion and overcrowding. They move in search of new areas in the peripheral parts of the town. This leads to splitting up of the inhabitants into new colonies which in the absence of planned development degenerate into new slums.

SLUM CLEARANCE:

Urban renewal is a process by which a large area of a town is slowly rebuilt and thereby it gradually changes its character to fit in with the needs of contemporary society. It is in fact, an amalgam of all the processes which act on a town, or a portion of it, and which are continually moulding and changing its character and appearance. The whole process of renewal thus includes preservation, rehabilitation of

property or environment and redevelopment.

It has been the practice of the U.S. Government since World War II to wipe out the slums through destruction of ugly neighbourhoods. It is an intricate programme to get decent houses built, particularly in the city core. The effort is based on the notion that the destruction of the slums would result in an upgrading of housing for the poor.

SAMPLE SURVEY:

In order to study the nature, problems and characteristics of slums as a pre-condition to analyse the problems of renewal and reconstruction in the city, secondary sources of data could be used. But the paucity of secondary data made field study imperative. For the field work and collection of primary data, questionnaires have been prepared. These are of two types, one dealing with general and physical condition of the slum and the other with the households and the socio-economic structure of the population. The author has surveyed the general and physical condition of all slum areas in the city which include 21 well defined pockets classified in three categories. One hundred questionnaires have been filled during the field observation on random sample basis.

For household and socio-economic condition of the slums, the author surveyed and filled questionnaires in both areas of slums of Category I. In the case of Category II, four out of eight pockets and in the case of Category III, six out of eleven pockets have been surveyed.

247 households have been surveyed altogether, out of which 42 households belong to Category I, 84 to Category II and 121 to Category III slums. The number of households thus increases as the number of pockets of different categories of slums increases. An intensive door to door household survey has been done. For the household survey, simple random sampling technique has been adopted.

The simplest type of probability sampling, where the probabilities associated with different possible samples are equal, is called random sampling. No attempt has been made to stratify the cases other than choosing adequate samples from each slum category. Similarly, no question of replacement has been considered. The raw data collected during the field investigation have been processed under the heads – demographic, social, economic and civic amenities.

PLANNING STANDARDS:

Apart from the identification and delimitation of slum areas, and determination of their nature and characteristic, an important aspect of the present study is the proposal for urban renewal and reconstruction in Patna. For town planning, various planning standards have been adopted. These standards differ from country to country, and even in India, different planning authorities, such as the Delhi Development Authority and the Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation, have formulated their own separate standards. In the present study, the Planning Standards approved by the Government of Bihar for cities with a population of more than 100,000 have been accepted.

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