

Slum development in Ahvaz with emphasis on the All-E-Saffi sector

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Abstract

Slum development is the result of the increasing growth of urbanization. It gives an ugly shape to the cities. Slum development in Iran traces back to 1961, when the land reform was implemented in this country. Following the accomplishment of the plan, migration from rural to urban areas began.

Accordingly, we are faced with increasing rates of urbanization. Big cities receive thousands of migrants from rural areas. Ahvaz, the center of Khouzestan province, is located in southwest of Iran with big numbers of oil fields. Before the outbreak of the Iraqi war against Iran (1980), cities in Khouzestan province such as Ahvaz were considered as the receivers of migrants. It was due to this fact that in such cities there were abundant resources of rich oil and gas fields and heavy industrial establishments. Such factors together with others lead to slum development in this city, the population of which is estimated as more than 1000000. One of the slums in Ahvaz is known as All-E-Saffi sector. Its population is estimated to be well-over 3449, with the family medium per (5.3). Most of the settlers in this sector came from villages. They have kept the social and economic characteristics of rural areas. In other words they are urbanized rather than urbanist. The mentioned district is located on one side of a high class area of the city. It is separated from that place by a highway. In this paper, the existing conditions of this area have been studied geographically, naturally, economically, physically and ecologically. This article is finally brought to an end by suggesting some applicable solutions in order to cope with the problems related to slum development. This paper is the product of a one-year field study made by the author on the All-E-Saffi sector.



1 Introduction

In the process of reconstructing third world countries, population transition from rural to urban areas, as occurred in industrial countries, did not have any regional balance and then rural under development resulted from urban development and this, in turn, led to the imbalance between urban and rural areas.

The rapid growth of urban population in such countries is not resulted from their economic growth, but it comes from rural bad economic situation, and this cause the rural people to migrate toward the cities in order to find a job and improve their level of living.

Due to the lack of dynamic urban economics, such groups of people cannot actively be a part of urban economic system, therefore they resort to false business and start to take residence in degraded part of urban fringes, and it leaves unfavourable effects on cities and city life.

2 Problem design

Ahvaz is one of the biggest cities in Iran. It has heavy industrial establishments, big oil and gas fields and commercial centers. Strong absorbing economical factors have made this city as one of the places for the settlement of migrants.

Economic stagnation in the cities of Khouzestan province has forced the people with low income to move toward Ahvaz, the center of the province. These people have no skill and financial support, therefore they cannot be absorbed by the urban economic system. This problem has caused the development of slums in Ahvaz.

All-E-Saffi is one of the slum dweller sectors in Ahvaz. In this sector, out of rule dwelling units have been made in the occupied lands.

The public and utility land uses in this sector, as compared with other sectors is very inadequate.

All-E-Saffi, in terms of its ancientness and population, is the biggest and closest slum dweller sector in Ahvaz.

Since many problems and complexities in Ahvaz are due to such slums, we deem it necessary to make research on such sectors. Being careless to such problems will bring forth evil economic, social, cultural and physical effects.

3 Research background

Studies made by Jinjikob [1] show that slums and population are the sacrifices of endless problems which have constantly been encouraged by each other.

Slums function as satanic rings such rings have disordered all urban functions.

Jikob holds the view that, if we want to overcome the problems resulting from slum development, we should confront the causes more than effects. He also believes that if the economic policies turn the poor class to the middle class as well as change the illiterate people to educated and skilful ones, then we will enjoy promising future in slum clearance.



In his studies, Marshal Clinard [2] regarding the cultural aspects, classified the slums into two separate groups:

- Slums with hopeful dwellers.
- Slums with hopeless dwellers.

Clinard looks at slum as an urban problem and complications which is regarded as the main source of misdemeanour and crime.

Slum is of different kinds, but it enjoys certain universal pattern. Slum dwellers become detached from the other general parts of the society and they are regarded as the lower class.

Seyed Saaid Zahedani [3] holds that slums in Iran emerged after dependent capitalism entered this country, and slum development has speeded up since 1941.

In 1971, Social Research Institute of Tehran universities [1] prepared an extensive plan to study slums in Iran.

In this way, further studies also made on slums in Shiraz, Tabriz, Shar Ara and shanty towns of northern Salsabil.

In his studies, Piran [4] discussed the heterogeneous and rapid urbanization as well as historical background of emerging non-standard housing in Iran. He also studied the slums in the capital of Iran, Tehran. Then he suggested some solutions to improve the situation in this area.

In 2001 the author made a research on housing of slums in Ahvaz [1].

4 Ahvaz city

Ahvaz is located in the south west of Iran. This city is the center of Khouzestan province. In terms of population rank-size, Ahvaz is the fifth city and in terms of area, it ranks the second city in Iran. Ahvaz is divided into two western and eastern parts. Urbanization growth in this city has been high [5].

Table 1: Population growth in Ahvaz (1956-2000).

Year	1956	1966	1976	1986	2000
Population	120000	200375	334399	619966	1000000

5 Slum development in Ahvaz

Fifty seven years ago, all resident population in the western part of Ahvaz have been slum dwellers. According to urban managers, there were about 2400 households living in slums in Ahvaz in 1960. As the city expanded rapidly, the slum developed in different sectors of this city.

New slum dwellers are largely located in the eastern part of Ahvaz and 60 percent of households living in slums reside in this sector. Strong economic



attractions as well as more services, as compared with other cities in Khouzeestan province have caused the migrants to select this city as their settlement.

6 Slum dwellers of All-E-Saffi

All-E-Saffi sector is situated in the eastern part of Ahvaz as well as on the slope of Karoon hills.

The height of this sector varies between 6 to 22 m from sea level. The origin and early steps of growth in this sector goes back to 1961. Early residents of this sector were shanty town dwellers. They were removed to this sector as the result of overflowing of Karoon River and their demolishing shelters.

These households lived in the tents given to them by the government for six months. They gradually started to wall up their settlements and the tents changed into huts and then they changed into houses which were built with unstable materials. The area of this sector is estimated about 162545 square meters.

6.1 Population characteristics of All-E-Saffi

According to field study made in 2001 [1], The population of All-E-Saffi estimated about 3449, and the average household's per capita has been 5.3. In this sector, Economic active population is estimated 1776.

The figure of age pyramid shows that age structure in this sector is young.

Table 2: Age groups in All-E-Saffi.

Age groups	Population	Percent
0-9	833	24
10-19	1127	33
20-29	671	19
30-39	340	10
40-49	216	6
+50	264	8
Total	3451	%100

About 89.4 percent out of 696 households migrated to All-E-Saffi from the villages and cities in Khouzeestan province and the other migrants came into this sector out of Khouzeestan.

Statistics previously made indicate that 31 percent of the people are illiterate, and the rest of them have been less literate.



6.2 Reasons and duration of settlement in All-E-Saffi

According to field studies [1], the main reasons for settlements are:

- For 84 percent of households, lower price of housing has been mentioned as the reason of the settlement.
- For 11 percent, closeness to other relatives and for the remaining 5 percent, free lands given to them by their relatives have been suggested by the people as their main origin of settlement.

Table 3: Duration of household settlement.

Duration of settlement	Percent of household
1-6 month	5.3
6-12 month	2
1-2 years	3.4
2-5 years	12
+5 years	77.3

6.3 All-E-Saffi dwellers' occupations

According to researches made in this sector [1], 922 people are employed and 854 people are unemployed. Being illiterate and the lack of skill have been regarded as the main origin of unemployment.

Table 4: Occupation composition in All-E- Saffi.

Occupation	Number	Percent
Workers of different companies	332	36
Building worker	249	27
Free	212	22.99
Driver	64	6.94
Member of staff	37	4.01
Military	28	3.03
Total	922	100

Unstable jobs, as research makers say, have been the main source of social crimes.



Statistics on the relationship between the crimes and age groups indicates that the largest number of criminals (40 percent) are among age group between 20-29 and the smallest number (4 percent) of them are among those more than 50. 98.1 percent of criminals are among male and 56 percent are among the marrieds.

Drug and narcotics traffic has been one of the false occupations of people in this sector.

6.4 Physical characteristics of All-E-Saffi

There are 513 residential units as well as 37 blocks in All-E-Saffi. Net residential density is estimated 471 and gross density equals 212.2 per hectare, existing land uses in All-E-Saffi is illustrated in table 5.

Table 5: Urban per capita and land uses in All-E-Saffi.

Land use type	Area (m ²)	Percent per total	Per capita (m ²)
Residential	73350	45.12	21.26
Educational	6845	4.22	1.99
Commercial	1967.5	1.21	0.57
Religious	326	0.2	0.09
Hygienic,therapeutic	1797.5	1.1	0.52
Green space	128	0.07	0.03
Communication Networks and open spaces	78005.5	47.99	22.66
Stall of domesticated animals	105.5	0.07	0/03
Total	162545	100	-

6.4.1 Slummer's housing in All-E-Saffi

There are 513 residential units and 1026 rooms in this sector. Statistics shows that none of the existing residences conform to present standards as shown below:

- Individual per residential room. 6.7
- Household per residential unit. 1.35
- Individual per room. 2.47
- Rooms for each household. 2
- Rooms for each house. 2.71



Construction materials used in All-E-Saffi are largely made from mud brick and wood, Iron and cement block, wood and block or a combination of all ones.

A large number of houses are structurally less qualified, thus 26.9 percent out of 513 residential units need to be renovated, 8.4 percent of other abodes are being exposed to demolition.

According to the studies made [1] 35 percent of residential units lack kitchen, 12 percent of them have no bathroom and 7 percent are of no W.C.

6.4.2 Urban installments in All-E-Saffi

More than half of the population in All-E-Saffi use the water and electricity facilities in a disallowed manner. There is no standard sewage system in this sector. Waste water pour into open canals or they are warded off by absorbing wells.

Repulse of garbage is made non-hygienically, and open spaces around the houses are places for garbage disposal. Some garbage are repelled through burning .

7 Recommendations

To overcome the problems of slum development in Ahvaz, the author suggests the following solutions:

1. Rural planning in order to stop migrating to urban areas. Prevention of slum development or prevention of new slums.
2. Paying attention to small and medium towns in order to make a regional balance which will decrease the rate of migration.
3. Organized participation of administrative systems and those living in slums to organize and renovate sectors based on timing and priorities in order to implement the plan step by step.
4. Implementation of organized plans for the slum dwellers with regard to the area and population of these sectors.

To improve the conditions of slummer in All-E-Saffi the following suggestion are also made:

1. To demolish the amortized buildings and to change the clearance area into educational, cultural land uses and green spaces.
2. To make green spaces on the hills close to the sectors in order to blockade the movement of soft mud and floods.
3. Mechanized collecting of garbage and hygienic discharge of rubbishes.
4. To give bank facilities with no interest rate to the land owners in order to renovate the residential units under the supervision of municipality.
5. To construct hygienic sewage system and canalization in order to repulse superficial water flowing.
6. To grant self- occupational loans to unemployed people in order to activate them and to decrease the crimes.



8 Conclusion

Considering the fact that slums in Ahvaz are increasingly developed causes the urban manager to be cautious and aware of this danger, and urban manager should assume the responsibility to make necessary decision to overcome this problem.

Every thing possible should be done to encourage some public housing and the investment of funds of fiduciaries such as insurance companies.

Slum development jeopardize the health of the cities and will leave undesirable economic, physical and social effects on urban life.

To be careless to the slummer's environment will also leave bad influence on the city and citizens. Since the slums in Ahvaz are resulted from widespread migration from rural to urban areas, the rural area should be given more attention economically. In this way it is possible to decrease slum development closeness of slums to other urban sectors and inequality in using the urban facilities and services indicate that measures should be taken to improve the slummer's conditions.

Urban management should be oriented toward eliminating prejudice between those living in slums and other sectors and all of them should enjoy the same urban facilities. Being careless to this fact will duplicate the urban complications and problems, therefore slum demolition or slum clearance will not be promising, because we will witness the development of new slums in other sectors. Focussing on slums and encouraging those living in slums to participate in improvement of their condition is a matter of necessity.

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