

Community Mobilisation and Residential Land Security – Case of Karachi.

By,

Haris Gazdar

Collective for Social Science Research , Pakistan

Workshop on Shelter Security and Social Protection for the Urban Poor and the Migrants in Asia

At Ahmedabad, India
(February 11-13, 2009)

Organized by,



A Research Advocacy Program

Managed by



Supported by IDRC and Ford Foundation

Social significance of Residential Land Security

- A community's struggle towards residential land security could be a vector of social transformation:
 - ❑ Homelessness is tied to vulnerability and marginalization
 - ❑ Exclusion and marginalisation are conditions of unequal citizenship (Kabeer 2002; Kabeer 2005)
 - ❑ Vulnerable groups deprived of social citizenship rights are 'effectively unequal citizens'
 - ❑ Social citizenship rights encompass economic and welfare rights, and they are essential for realisation of civil and political rights (Marshall, 1950)
-

Social significance of Residential Land Security in Pakistan

- adequate housing is a basic human right
 - a fixed abode is linked with citizenship based entitlements
 - security of tenancy results in alleviating poverty and inefficiency
 - ability to own land is socially embedded- land ownership could hence result in social transformation
-

-
- Linking theory to practice, we aim to investigate how far government policies of extending residential land security through land ownership schemes has (and could) result in reducing marginalization of landless/homeless
 - Restricting the focus to urban housing, we will keep this presentation centered on Katchi Abadis in Karachi
 - Keeping the workshop theme in mind, we will highlight the role of community mobilization in the struggle for residential land security
-

Karachi Overview

- Spread over 3,530 square kilometers, Karachi is home to more than 13 million people
 - It is the single largest contributor to domestic economic output and federal government revenue
 - Karachi is a city of migrants from India, other areas of Pakistan, as well as neighboring countries who arrived in search of livelihoods and refuge
 - Since the arrival of the first wave of migrants, the city has found it difficult to meet housing demand with supply
 - Since 1947, the city's population has been growing on an average of nearly 6 percent every year
-

Growth of Katchi Abadis

- Following the creation of Pakistan, between 1947 and 1951, the population of Karachi grew by 10.8 percent
 - While migrant officers were housed in vacated houses, migrants escaping communal riots and violence in India were settled in tent camps
 - These tent camps continued to grow and slowly took the shape of Katchi Abadis
 - In the following years, these low cost alternative-housing attracted laborers migrating from other areas of Pakistan as well as impoverished refugees seeking settlement.
 - In 2006, 61 percent of the total population in Karachi (1,200,000 households) was reported to live in Katchi Abadis (Hasan, 2007)
-

-
- Between 1947 and 1972, Government's attempts to demolish Katchi Abadis and resettle residents (which encroached prime land in the heart of the city) repeatedly failed. As the Abadis mushroomed. The government realized that regularization instead of resettlement would be a more cost effective option
 - In 1972, the government initiated the Katchi Abadis (Squatter Settlements) Improvement Regularization Programme (KAIRP) to regularize Katchi Abadis and provide public amenities to those residing therein
-

Sindh Katchi Abadi Act 1987

- KAIRP aimed to regularize 2,320 Katchi Abadis with a total population of 5.5 million in Pakistan and to provide residents with water, sanitation, electricity, road paving and other social facilities in lieu of payment of development charges (referred to as “lease charges”) (Hasan, 1997)
- In 1987 the Katchi Abadi Act (KAA) was passed and Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority (SKAA) came into effect to manage land regularization (and upgrading) policy
- To date, 120,815 individual (home ownership) leases were granted to residents of Katchi Abadi's

Residential Land Insecurity

- Katchi Abadi's that have not been regularized through the KAA are known as 'irregular settlements'. These remain under constant threat of demolition
 - Between 1980 and 2008 residents of more than 105,000 houses were evicted
 - Between 1994 and 2004, approximately 2,700 huts were gutted: 380 people were injured, 34 women and children were reported to have burnt alive.
 - Land mafia, political groups, land owning agencies and law enforcement agencies were reported to be suspect in these various incidents. Occupants of irregular settlements continuously remained under eviction threats from various 'land owners'
-

Case Study- Kausar Niazi Colony

- Located in the north-central part of the city- area was originally developed for formal housing schemes in the mid-1970s
 - Ethnically dominated by Pashtun migrants, minorities are Baloch and Bengali migrants
 - By 1970, 200 families were living in the area.
 - The government started supplying electricity in 1988 and gas in 1990.
 - Water was tapped from illegal connections from the main line and a basic sewerage system existed
-

Case Study- Kausar Niazi Colony

- the ownership of the land on which abadi was settled was contested between inhabitants, the Karachi Development Authority, and two private land development companies
 - The local settlers had the patronage of a local elected government official
 - Despite this, their houses were demolished by the KDA as well as the land developers
 - people of that area resisted withdrawing from their investments, and kept rebuilding their makeshift houses after each demolition
 - Following clashes with police in which several people were injured, residents sought legal action and won
-

-
- To end the dispute of land ownership, a KDA officer who had political sympathies with the residents invited the leaders of the community for discussions with the governing body of KDA.
 - the KDA conceded to grant residents ownership rights on payment of a lease, the value of which was higher than the actual value of the land.
 - While some residents bribed KDA officials into accepting their applications, others heavily protested.
 - The dispute was resolved with the enactment of the Sindh Katchi Abadi Act (1984). Residents completed due process for regularization, and got their settlement formally registered and regularized.
-

Issues in Residential Land Security

- Competing claims of land ownership
 - Regularization of Settlements and Communities More Salient Than Individual Title
 - Ethnic diversity and inter community conflict
 - Provision of public goods
 - Patronage
 - The informal sector
 - Many Shades of Security and Insecurity
 - Importance of Political Mobilization and Networks
-

Evidences of Community Mobilization

- The Katchi Abadi regularization process is centered around community mobilization at each stage of regularization:
 - At the starting point, it is initiated by applications from residents- thereby encouraging agency and action
 - Residents have to provide proof of abode through documents such as National Identity Card, name on voters list, public utility bills etc thereby resulting in civic engagement
 - The process also encourages community cohesion through collective action in making the application, applying for public utilities, agreeing to the SKAA's demarcations etc
-

Regularization: creating opportunities that encourage equal citizenship

- Examples of successful struggles against demolition demonstrate a communities ability to exercise their capacity at legal and political engagement
 - With residential security, residents of Katchi Abadi's enjoy an improved standard of living as well as increased access public goods and services
-

The End
