



The Nature and Consequences of Slum Settlement in Jimma City on the Life of Settlers:

The Case of Hirmata-Mentina Kebele

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Abstract

Urbanization in Ethiopia is at a very low standard; and rapid population growth because of high fertility rate, and rural urban migration. Informal settlement in Ethiopia's urbanization process has resulted from social, political, and economy related problems. Informal settlements are characterized by unauthorized invasion and development of land, illegal subdivision, lack of basic social services and infrastructures. The purpose of this study was to investigate the Nature and Possible Consequences of Slum Settlement in Jimma City on the Life of Settlers: in Hirmata-Mentina Kebele, Jimma, Ethiopia. A qualitative research method was employed to conduct the study through the use of in-depth interview, key informant interview and focus group discussion. The study revealed that the nature and the degree of problem at slum settlement are changed from time to time from good to the worst situation. The nature of the problems that currently exist in the slum areas of the Jimma city are situated to four reasons. These are: socio-economic reasons, communal reasons, administrative reasons, and institutional reasons. Dwellers in the area of slum are suffered from problems like absence of basic social services, health cases, and environmental pollution. Besides, Women, youths, elders, and children in this area are suffered from unemployment, lack of security and property right absence of care service, food shortage, and water born disease because of the absence of sanitation. The problem of slum settlement could be solved through all-inclusive approach. The government politicians and urban experts on different positions are expected to: build their administrative, financial and institutional capacities in order to carry out their responsibilities successfully, and resourcefully.

Key Words

Urbanization, Informal settlement, Slum, Social infrastructures

Introduction

Urbanization refers to the process of cities development and people's relationships in cities on the basis of the social, economic, environment and political dimensions. Sociologists in general, and urban sociologists in particular study urbanization from different perspectives: the way in that urbanization, population, and environment are interrelated and functioned together, inequality that resulted from production, how do the inner cities changed to ghetto, and other forms of environmental inequalities, the day to day interaction of groups, the way people understand and experience urban life, and how people interpret things as a social problem (OpenStax College 2013). "Urbanization is a process of population concentration" (Oluwasola 2007 as cited in Tsegaye 2010:2).

UN habitat, and OHCHR (2002) indicated that, urbanization is the result of industrial expansion, economic growth, migration and other development opportunities that achieved in a given country. As urbanization increase from time to time, the need for houses and other basic services also increase together. Unlike that of the past, today, more than half of people are live in the urban centers of the world (54%). Thus, the overall population, who live in the urban center expected to 67% by 2050(United Nations 2011, 2014). Sociologically, city can be understood as relatively large, very dense, and functioned as a constant living space of heterogeneous groups of individuals. Life in city is packed of challenges, and opportunities in terms of social, political, economic and cultural spheres (Wirth 1938).

As one of a developing continent, urbanization in Africa characterized by the expansion of uncontrolled informal settlements (Bassett et al.2003). Expansion of informal settlement is one of a global problem that challenging cities of the world, particularly, cities of developing countries (Mensahet al.2014). There are controversies among stakeholders from different disciplines on the definition of informal settlements. Slum and squatter settlements are common challenges in the cities of developing countries. However, there is no universally accepted definition of slum and squatter settlements. The definition should be varying on the basis of the researcher's perspective. Slum consists of legally, and illegally subdivided. Whatever the issue is, it is about environment, or illegal construction of houses. But, squatting refers to illegal

occupation of land either by the public, or government without getting or to get a title to it (Wendt 1997).

.....Most of the growth in rapidly urbanizing countries is taking place in informal settlements, where most people are employed in the informal economy, where job and enterprise opportunities are limited by both financial resources and spatial patterns, and where access to the formal city and economy is made difficult by distance, physical separation and lack of transport (Hermanson 2005:3).

Informal settlement refers to a situation in which dwellers have no security of house, or land tenure, they lack usually basic services, and other socio economic infrastructures, houses in this settings are not congruent with the currents planning standards, and building criteria. From the most excluded forms of informal settlements, slums are the one (Marx et al. 2013; United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban development 2015,).Increase in population growth, rural urban migration, lack of affordable housing for poor urban people, inadequate government administration in terms of: policy making, planning, urban land management, and failing to give solutions for displacement caused by conflict, natural hazards, and change in climate are from interrelated factors of informal settlements. The current data indicated that about 61.7% Africa's population lives in slums area. And, by 2050, Africa's urban residents are estimated to have risen from 400,000,000 to 1.2 billion (United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban development 2015).

The same situation is true in Ethiopia.As compared to the other African countries, urbanization in Ethiopia is at a very low standard; and rapid population growth because of high fertility rate, and rural urban migration are from the main challenges of the country's urban centers(Tsegaye 2010).Informal settlement in Ethiopia's urbanization process has resulted from social, political, and economy related problems.Informal settlements are characterized by: unauthorized invasion and development of land, illegal subdivision, lack of basic social services and infrastructures.Lack of proper land management, inadequate and unclear housing policy, corruption, expansion of illegal land market, lack of political commitment for the poor homeless people are from the main causes of informal settlements in the country (Daniel 2006).

2. General Overview of Informal Settlement in JimmaCity

From the oldest, largest and commercial centers of the country, Jimma town is the one (Jimma City Administration 2013). Population increase, and settlement expansion are from the events which observed in the town. The current estimated population for the 26 sector towns (2014-2017) revealed that, Jimma town projected to a total population of: 169,446 in 2014, 177,943 in 2015, 186,148 in 2016, and 198,228 in 2017 (Ministry of Urban Development, Housing and Construction and Ethiopian Civil Service University 2015).

The history of Jimma town was characterized by the three events: the urban center was constructed on indigenous beginnings, served as an administrative center in the all of southwestern Ethiopia, and coffee trade and other internal character were facilitated the growth of the town. But, the town obtained its modern phase, since the period of Italian domination. They established the municipal office, and modern hotels, and designed some master plan for their administrative purpose (Yonas 2002).

The head of Jimma town construction office stated that, the town was established before 178 years ago. However, the municipal office was established in 1937 by Italian people, and the town was taking its modern urban position before 70 years ago. The town has about 13 dominant kebeles and 4 newly included kebeles. Private houses are estimated to 40,000-50,000. Informal settlements are increased from time to time because of: lack of access to housing, unlimited interest of people to occupy intensive urban land, demand to earn high profit from house selling, absence of adequate registration of land, migration, illegal buildings, inadequate urban policies...etc. They are considered as one of the strong challenge for government to achieve sustainable development in the town. Squatter refers to illegal invasion of land, either by group or individually. Whereas slum is all about illegal construction of houses. Most of the dwellers in the slum area are economically poor, but dwellers in the squatter settlement are mixed. Most of the time, the land is owned by wealthy people. Absence of adequate basic socioeconomic service is the common characteristics of these settlements.

From all the above provided arguments, it is possible to understand that, all the factors that aggravating the rapid expansion of informal settlement and its adverse consequences in developing countries in general and Ethiopia in particular are from the main contributing factors for the under development of Jimma city today. But, unlike that of the other cities of the country, most of the studies that were conducted in the case of Jimma city are overlooked the issue of

informal settlement, particularly that of the slum one. Specifically, they mainly focused up on health related issues, sanitation and other aspects of socioeconomic life of the dwellers. But, in this study, I attempted to focus on the specific socioeconomic, political, and physical nature of slum settlement of this city.

3. Objective of the Study:

3.1. General Objective: The general objective of this study was to investigate the nature and degree of slum settlement in Hirmata-Mentinakebele, Jimmacity.

3.1. Specific Objectives this study are:

1. To identify the situation in which the slum settlement in Jimmacity has been started
2. To assess the socio economic life situation of slum dwellers
3. To identify changes related to natural environment
4. To identify the core current challenges, which affect the life of dwellers
5. To explain the current efforts to solve the problems of people in the slum settlements.

4. Methods of the Study

The Hirmata-Mentinakebele, which consists of about 13,420 (male=6576, and female=6844) a total population was taken as a focus of this study to investigate the nature and degree of slum settlement in relation to the dwellers' life and urban development. The study design that I employed was that of qualitative method. The non-probability sampling technique, the purposive one was used in this study. The purposive sampling technique was supposed to identify the appropriate and key informants who know the detail information of the study area. Accordingly, I selected about eight respondents for the purpose of this study on the basis of data saturation point. Both the semi structured and unstructured interviews and field observation were used as a method of data collection from eight respondents. In this study, I used both the primary and secondary data sources.

The primary data were gathered from respondents of the study, and personal observation; while the secondary data were obtained from literatures such as books, and other documents which available in the internet sources and Jimmacity municipal offices. Whereas, interview guideline (semi structured questionnaire) was used as instrument of data collection. I used thematic analysis to describe, and narrate the collected data by using of words. Issues related to trustworthiness, data credibility, dependability and comfortability were given a high credit.

5. Result and discussion

5.1.The Nature and degree of informal settlement(Slum)

Based on the data collected from literatures about the town, three days' personal observation of slum settlements, eight interviews with dwellers of slum area, and one key informant expert from Jimmacity construction office, this finding revealed that the nature and the degree of problem at slum settlement is changed from time to time from good to the worst situation.

As per to my field observation and interview result, the nature of the problems that are currently existing in the slum areas of the Jimmacity are situated to four reasons. These are: socio-economic reasons, communal reasons, administrative reasons, and institutional reasons. The socio-economic reasons indicated that dwellers of the slum area are suffered from extreme poverty, housing shortage, unemployment, increasing cost of living, and economic unproductivity. Regarding communal reasons, the dwellers and the city municipal office are responsible to such kinds of environmental pollution, or sanitation problems. Because, I observed that the areas in the slum setting are full of garbage, human wastes and dead animals.

I consider the institutional reasons from the angle of: absence of accountability, low legal enforcement, absence of wise use of lands, lack of coordination, inadequate urban policies, and planning, and lack of focus to control false reports about the town's development. Finally, the administrative reasons are more about politics: giving less emphasis to urban problem in general, and slum dwellers in particular, inadequate political commitment, and biased urban policy, and plans. Most of the slum areas are located in the inner part of the city. And, the degree of the problem is increase from time to time because of population growth, absence of sense of ownership (article 40, land is the common property of people and government), and the need for basic socio economic needs become increase from time to time, but its response is biased, and unequal. Most of the houses in the slum area are owned by the government.

A. Socio-economic situation

The data obtained from eight interviewed respondents revealed that, most of the city's people who are settled in the slum area are too poor in terms their economic situation. Most of them are unemployed people. The majority of the people are engaged in informal economic activities such as day- laborer, small trades, selling local drinks like tela, tej, and areke (alcohols), and

khattrade. The income which obtained from these activities is even not enough to eat three time per day. I also observed many children, and elders who are exposed to live over the street.

During my observation period, I saw one local drink house with full of old men who were drinkingtej. And, I was initiated to join them. I did it. Most of them were too old age. They were in bare foot, and even not dressed properly, and their face is wrinkled. Then, I asked one of the old man as for how many years he is living in Jimmacity. Then he replied that:

Look my son; I am living here for about more than 30 years. I came to here from the southern part of Ethiopia in searching of job. I married one women and started to live with her. Unfortunately, our house was burnt due to unknown reason. No one could support us to recover again, and then we were compelled to lead a street life. The man started to cry and continued his talk. My wife was died and my pain increased too much. Now, I and my same friends are suffered from food shortage, health problems, inadequate shelter, and even people labeled us because of our poorness. So, we are here not to drink and enjoy; rather drinking and forgetting our past grief.

B. Access to basic infrastructures

The data obtained from this study also indicated that, in these area, there is no adequate road that used to vehicle transport. During emergency case, the dwellers in the area used human labor up to the main road. The drainage system is too poor. The dominant energy source is obtained from fuel wood and charcoal. They used electric power only for light purpose. Another common problem of this area is that absence of cost effective health care centers. The respondents stated that, they lack access to cover their health cost, because of the expensiveness of medicinal drugs. They are found in health related risks. With regard to education, most of the poor's children are forced to drop out their school education because of lacking of basic educational materials, and other family related problems.

C. Environmental problems

I observed that, the issue of environmental sanitation is seeming to forgotten by the concerned bodies of the city. The study area is full of dead animals, human wastes, and polluted drainage system. A key informant interview, which was obtained from Jimma city health extension workers revealed that, the issue of environmental sanitation is become a very risk oriented issue

to the dwellers of the area. The dwellers are exposed to various health related issues because of absence of adequate drainage systems for wastes.



Figure 1 photos of slum area in Jimmacity , taken by NigusShimelis

The photo in the left is shows that how people in the slum area of Jimmacity are suffered from environmental pollutions

As two of my key respondents told me,

“the problem is created by: the dwellers themselves, absence of legal enforcement to control the problem, and lack of place for wastes removal.”

D. Security, Social Organization, and political Participation

The interview result revealed that, as compared to the past, there is an improvement in decreasing of crime rate. But, it does not mean that the area is totally free of crime related activities. People in the slum are participated in different forms of traditional social institutions like Idir, and Ikub. But, as compared to the past, there is a change of culture from informal to the formal one. Before some decades ago, conflicts were solved by local elders, but currently, even a minor dispute is reported to the court. The past mutual support is on the way of lessening, and poverty made them to less political participation.

E. The negative impacts of slum on the development of the city

The result obtained from key informant interview indicated that, slum settlement resulted in decrease in government revenue, affect the expansion of basic social services as it is needed, area of crime, suppressed the beauty of the town, and requires high amount of budget to solve the problem.

6. Conclusion

In a nut shell, from this study, I would like to conclude that, our world is urbanized too fast. And, urbanization in developing countries is characterized by informal settlements like slum. Dwellers in the area of slum are suffered from problems like absence of basic social services, health cases, and environmental pollution. And the same thing is true for those residents in the

Jimmacity's slums areas. They lack access of social security, lack of property right, unsanitary environment, lack of employment opportunity, lack of urban services, and overcrowdings. The situation is jammed the town's development by lessening of government revenue, and by making complex the balanced distribution of basic services. Inadequate urban policies, lack of access to housing, inadequate political commitment, absence of responsibility by different stake holders from different disciplines and disintegration among stakeholders are from the causes of problems in the slum areas.

7. Recommendation

The rapid expansion of urban centers in developing countries should making the cities' development stagnant. This is because of the wide spread of informal settlements such as slum settlement, which made the life of urban poor too bad. So, to solve this problem, I would like to recommend that:

- The problem of slum settlement could be solved through all-inclusive approach. Because, the problem is created by people, affect people, and it could be solved by people. It requires the responsibility of different stake holders from different disciplines.
- Giving equal attention, and recognition to the dwellers of slum is also a very key issue. It is to mean that, policy makers, urban experts, and the government itself are expected to give their attention to improve the living environment of these people by fulfilling of basic socioeconomic infrastructures and incorporate the participation of the dwellers in decision making process.
- Exclusive, and/or inappropriate construction of houses can necessarily affect the housing demand of the urban poor. So, the government expected to give an attention for low income groups by taking of in to consideration the design and standard that compatible with the dwellers' socioeconomic assets.
- To solve the problem of informal settlement, the government politicians and urban experts on different positions are expected to: build their administrative, financial and institutional capacities in order to carry out their responsibilities successfully, and resourcefully.
- Women, youths, elders, and children in this area are suffered from unemployment, absence of care service, food shortage, and disease born because of the absence of sanitation. So, offices like Social Affairs and Labor issues, municipal, health and urban housing

development are expected to give their urgent priority to solve the problems in the slum area.

- The Jimma University in particular, and researchers from different disciplines in general are also expected to conduct an applied inquiry that can be used to design different development projects that will benefit the urban poor people.
- Identifying the political will of the dwellers, allocating adequate funding, and developing adequate policy frame work are from the issues that used to solve problems in the slums; because, sustainable development is all about humanity. My intention here is that multiplying a jungle of concrete simply on a given space is not a solution to solve the problem of the urban poor; rather it is better to have an equivalent development strategies that encompasses both the spiritual and physical dimensions of people.
- Last, but not least, the main problem of urban centers in Ethiopia is that lack of skillful and well educated leaders for municipal offices. I can confidently talk that the presence of qualified city administrator is the one who can play a very crucial role to the development of a given urban center. It is better to ask why some of the cities in the country are better than the rest of the cities. Example, Hawassa Vs Jimma.

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