

A STUDY ON THE APPLICABILITY OF URBAN REDEVELOPMENT (UR) METHOD FOR DEVELOPING OF THE INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN KABUL: A LITERATURE REVIEW ON DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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Abstract— Speedy urbanization, illegal and arbitrary developments have contributed to large informal settlements in the capital Kabul. Post-war refugees, the return of internally displaced residents to the city, and rural migration are some causal factors. Today informal settlements cover about more than 69% of Kabul and about 82% of the populations are living in such places and suffering from a very bad condition of life; poor infrastructure, environmental degradation, lack of land for open spaces, parks and medical services are the main problems. Urban Redevelopment (UR) has practiced in many countries, in some regions it was failed but it has considered a well method for slum clearance, dealing with the rapid urbanization, enhancing the quality of life and releasing land for the open space and other public facilities. This paper basically focused on a literature review on urban redevelopment practices in different countries and through the international experiences which took place about the slums, we determined a number of recommendations to deal with the problem and to create a sustainable approach for sensitive redevelopment in the informal settlements of Kabul.

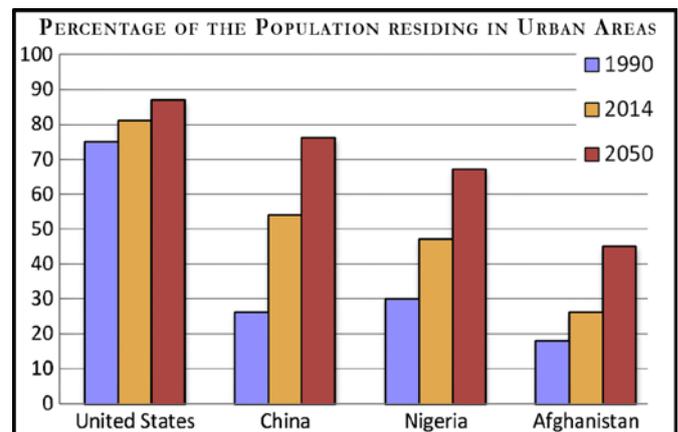
Index Terms— Urban Redevelopment, Informal Settlements, Urbanization, Kabul.

I. INTRODUCTION

Rapid migration and vast urban expansion have contributed to large informal settlements in Kabul. It is characterized by a rapid growth of urban population on an unprecedented scale; it increased from 2 million in 2001 to 4.5 million in 2010 [1]. The households live in over-crowded condition with limited access to urban services such as water, sanitation, waste collection and electricity. The rapid urbanization and population growth have also resulted in a drastic increase in housing need.

The gap between demand and supply for housing is very large. The projected annual housing need for Kabul has estimated 17,163 between 2015-2019 [2]. The urban population of the world has grown rapidly since 1950 and is

expected to reach to 66% by 2050 [3], meanwhile due to the speedy urbanization growth in Kabul; the city has changed into one of the populated and world's fastest growing cities which finally caused a significant increase in the number of informal settlements. The figure below presents the urbanization trends of Afghanistan in a global context.



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2014)

Fig.1. Percentage of the Population Residing in Urban Areas

Urban renewal is another development method which can be said to be the process where an urban neighborhood or area is improved, rehabilitated or redeveloped. It proved a good alternative for slum development as it has the potential to make life safe, more secure and comfortable to the urban dwellers. Urban renewal which may be also known as urban redevelopment is a veritable social gentrification technique. The bursting rate of urbanization has been one of the major issues/challenges which many national and local government authorities in developing nations/economies have to grapple with. The main challenges of urbanization in most urban cities

are acute shortage of shelter/housing, waste/garbage disposal, traffic jams or congestion and the deplorable state of the roads in some instances, flooding, crime and other social vices.

Urban Redevelopment (UR) has practiced in many countries, in some regions it was failed but it has considered a well method for slum clearance, dealing with the rapid urbanization, enhancing the quality of life and releasing land for the open space and other public facilities.

From a very general perspective, the steps involved in urban renewal include planning, sensitization/consultation of the citizens or public hearing, land acquisition (revocation of rights of occupancy), displacement and relocation, site improvement and supporting facilities/infrastructure, disposition of improved land and new construction/development. Sustainability is an important component which should be taken into consideration with urban renewal. The term 'sustainable development' refers to the idea of merging sustainability concepts to secure long-term economic, environmental and social well-being within urban renewal development [4]. Therefore sustainable urban renewal (SUR) aims at improving the physical, social, economic and ecological aspects of abandoned urban areas through various actions, including redevelopment, rehabilitation, and renovation [5].

Urban renewal philosophy and program attempt to accomplish the following:

- To eliminate sub-standard and other inadequate housing through clearance of slum and blighted areas.
- To stimulate sufficient housing production and community development to remedy housing shortage.
- To secure decent home and suitable living environment.
- To eliminate or mitigate crimes and other social ills, etc.

In this research we basically focused on a literature review on urban redevelopment practices in different countries and through the international experiences which took place about the slums, we determined a number of recommendations and point out some factors which can severely hamper the successful development of the high dense informal settlement areas, if not adequately addressed.

II. METHODOLOGY

The methodology which has conducted in this research consists of a comprehensive literature review on Urban Redevelopment practices in developed and developing countries. A comparative analysis has carried out to discuss the pros and cons of each project in developed and developing countries (Unites States, Nigerian and China), and through the international experiences which took place about the slums, we determined a number of recommendations to deal with the problem of informal settlements in Kabul city and to figure out a sustainable solution for development of the high dense slum areas in Kabul.

III. URBAN REDEVELOPMENT (UR)

Urban renewal is a common phrase among urban planners, land use experts and politicians whose dreams and aspiration are usually targeted at seeing that the scarce land resource of an urban area is maximally utilized through ensuring that the available land resource in the area of their interest is put to its highest and best use in strict conformity with the conceived planning design. Urban area or town refers to a built-up and populated area that includes a municipality and generally, has a population of 5,000 or more (Business Dictionary.com). An urban area generally grows in all facets of its features over time. Accompanying the urban growth is the deterioration or degeneration of its basic amenities and infrastructure. Sequel to this growth and decay dynamism, the amenities and infrastructure that were hitherto considered adequate and best uses of the available land resource in the neighborhood are now found to be otherwise. This development triggers off the quest for improvement, rehabilitation, redevelopment or renewal of the amenities and infrastructure to meet the yeanning socio-political and economic demands, tastes and fashion and changing culture of the people.

Urban renewal is most often undertaken to make life safe, more secure and comfortable to the urban dwellers, to attract wealthier individuals to live in that area or to boost economic base or activities in that area. Urban renewal which may be also known as urban redevelopment is a veritable social gentrification technique. As previously mentioned urban renewal has practiced in several countries with different results, in here we have conducted a research on urban redevelopment concept, technic, characteristic and projects which implemented in United States, Nigeria and China.

A. United States (US)

The economic and social circumstances of urban areas have stimulated calls for redevelopment and renewal since the Industrial Revolution transformed the economic base and spatial makeup of America cities during the second half of the nineteenth century. Industrialization not only brought about a fundamental transformation in the nature of work, but also systems of transportation, the structure and operations of city government, the experience of poverty, and the demographic movement of racial and ethnic groups on an unprecedented scale.

In the aftermath of the great depression and World War II, housing and urban issues rose to the top of the U.S. domestic policy agenda, and the elimination of slums and redevelopment of central cities became prominent objectives. In 1949, Congress authorized the Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA) to assist locally planned urban renewal projects with grants of two-thirds (or in some cases three-fourths) of the net project cost to the city [6]. The grant application and project execution processes changed over time, but a typical chronology started with the creation of a Local Public Agency (LPA) that was "enabled" under state legislation to undertake

urban renewal activities and to exercise eminent domain power.

Most of the literatures are overwhelmingly negative in its assessment, disproportionate impact on poor residents, and the use of eminent domain to trump private property rights, huge destruction of neighborhood and loss of the historical buildings [6]. Moreover, Anderson summarized the results of his research on American public housing slum clearance practice in 1949 under UR program and highlighted that more houses were destroyed than were built and the constructed buildings were predominately high-rent ones, furthermore the housing condition were improved only for those whose housing conditions were best [7]. In the current U.S. system, public-private partnerships serve as essential tools for urban renewal. Development strategies typically involve public subsidies and regulatory relief to attract private investment. In a typical Urban Renewal project the municipality follows the following process.

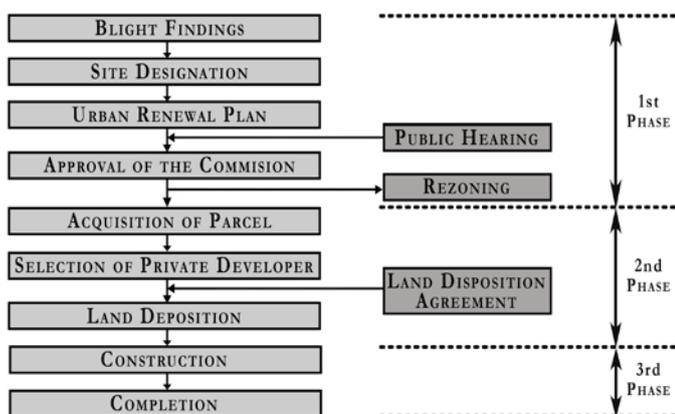


Fig.2. A Typical Urban Renewal Process in US

Private developers especially large ones, generally perceive two major hurdles that make them reluctant to participate in an urban renewal project: financing and the approval process. Thus, to attract developers, local governments often provide not only financing tools such as tax credits, tax exemptions and subsidies but also administrative and legal relief in relation to approval for the project.

B. Nigeria

Nigeria, which currently has one of the highest levels of urbanization in the globe, has continuously experienced environmental degradation, urban & infrastructure decay and poor waste management system. The increased number of aged buildings in most urban centers such as lagos, Ibadan, kano and Port Harcourt has also increased the demand for urban renewal across Nigeria [8]. The first slum renewal was implemented in 1951 with a slum area of about 28.3 ha in central lagos. The project was initiated due to the lack of open space and poor quality of life. It is further noted that lack of sufficient funds limited the success of the first urban renewal project in Nigeria, and some other UR projects have been marked by lack of

resettlement plan for the affected residents. Furthermore, the slum clearance/urban renewal exercise in Ndoi and Aggrey showed that the scheme rather than solving the problem compounded them to a worse condition, the exercise engendered in [9]:

- Breaking up of social network
- Upsetting of existing economic systems and opportunities
- Compounding congestion and pressures on Port-Harcourt infrastructure due to migration of displaced squatters.
- Expanding and emerging of more marginal water front squatter settlements.
- Expansion and or emergence of other squatter settlements elsewhere in the city.

But now same as the US, in Nigeria Public-Private-Partnership has been identified as a veritable cornerstone of government's modernization, development and renewal program (Ejumudo, 2013). This arrangement can be employed in the provision of public infrastructure and other services.

Urban renewal operation should not be a riotous or war like over-run or conquest with military power/might. It is indeed a program of rebuilding rundown neighborhoods of cities through injection of huge amount of public funds and government power (governance) into the normal operations of the private market (Dinunu and Omatson, 2010). Urban renewal program or projects are often beyond what a municipal council or local government council can undertake.

In federated nation as Nigeria, there should be a statutory agency at, the least, state level with other sub-agencies at local levels that should be charged with the co-ordination, supervision and implementation of urban renewal projects for smooth and successful operation. The steps involved are:

Planning

The agency identifies an area or neighborhood requiring renewal and draws up plan for renewal which is scrutinized and approved by relevant authorities for implementation.

Sensitization/Consultation of the Citizens or Public Hearing

The public hearing on the proposed renewal program is held at the very local level to offer opportunity to the citizens/people concerned to air their views and also appreciate the need for the renewal.

Land Acquisition (Revocation of Rights of Occupancy)

Ideally, the land and buildings affected should be acquired by government (or her agency) through negotiation/private treaty with the owners and in extreme situation where this failed, by exercising power of eminent domain. In either of these situations, the professional services of the Estate Surveyors and Valuers are required.

Displacement and Relocation

Affected families and business are either given monetary compensation or resettled in alternative location or both.

Site Clearance

This involves tearing down and removal of debris of buildings and structures considered un-useful by the renewal authority.

Site Improvement and Supporting Facilities/Infrastructure

Provisions of well-constructed roads/streets, water supply distribution network, lighting systems, and other social amenities and services follow site clearance.

Disposition of Improved Land

The improved land/sites can be disposed through sale, lease or donation to private investors or retained by the government agency.

New Construction/Development

New construction or development follows disposition of the improved land. However, the use and development must be strictly in consonance with a general designated use and plan approved by the statutory agency responsible for the renewal project. The new construction could be for residential, commercial or industrial depending on the philosophy and perception of the statutory agency that coordinates the project.

The bellow chart describes regarding the steps for successful Urban Renewal project operation.

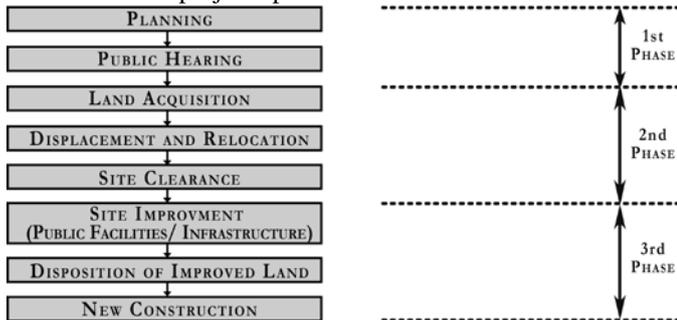


Fig.3. A Typical Urban Renewal Process in Nigeria

C. China

China is experiencing the largest scale of urbanization. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Rural Development has estimated that approximately 20 million people who are now living in rural areas will move into the cities each year [10], which will face the cities with lots of problems such as overpopulation, housing shortages and lack of land for the open spaces. Officials have proposed a new way that is very similar to land readjustment to share the benefits of urban development with land users. By giving the original land users a share of the profits, their resistance was overcome and a compromise was reached in favor of redevelopment. Yumin is a village which has developed based on the urban redevelopment approach. The village had 36 privately owned apartment buildings of five to six stories because past development was done without the municipality’s approval, residents in this area did not have access to electricity, water and sewer. In view of the substandard living conditions, villagers initiated a redevelopment plan in 2004 to demolish 33 old residential buildings, two industrial buildings and one hostel. In 2007, these structures were replaced by 11 high-rise residential

buildings and one 20-story hotel, increasing the development density from 2 to 2.98. Upon the completion of the project, each villager received multiple apartments of 240m² for participating in the project, increasing the value of their holdings by two-fold. More importantly, the village had turned into a small garden district with integrated public facilities such as community centers, green spaces and a pedestrian network.

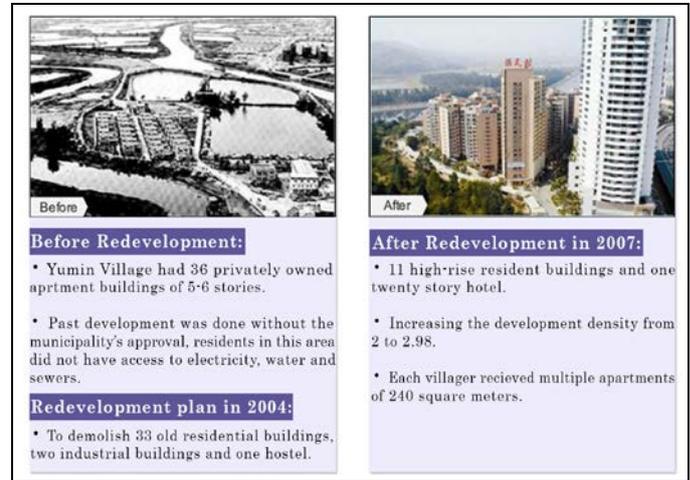


Fig.4. Before and After Urban Redevelopment, Yumin Village, China

IV. DISCUSSION

Rapid urbanization has not only outpaced infrastructure development, but has also brought in the downside of proliferating slums, increasing homelessness, growing urban poverty and crime. Next to other developmental models, Urban Renewal (UR) has also appeared a well method for overcoming slum problems in different countries. In this part of the research, we focused on urban renewal projects which practiced in United States, Nigeria and China. Through the experiences which took place in these countries regarding slum development, we determined a number of recommendations to be considered for developing of slums in Kabul. The reason why we selected these countries as a case study was their similarities with Afghanistan in respect to the urbanization trend. The bellow figure shows the urbanization trends of Afghanistan in a global context.

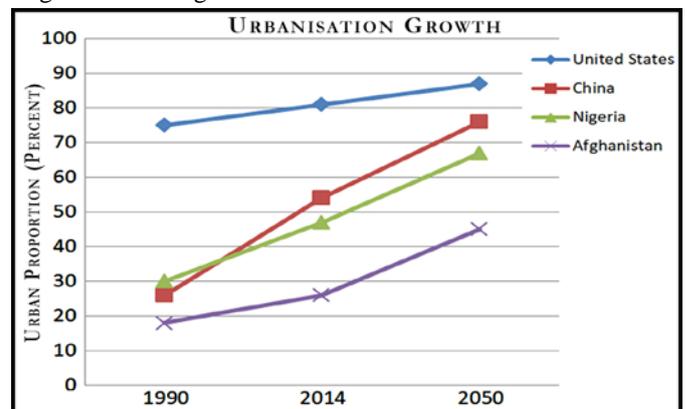


Fig.2. Urbanization Growth in a Global Context

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Urban Renewal Practices in Developed and Developing Countries

Characteristic Description	Countries		
	United States	Nigeria	China
Method Name	<i>Urban Renewal/ Urban Redevelopment</i>	<i>Urban Renewal</i>	<i>Urban Redevelopment</i>
First Slum Renewal Projects	20 Century (1930, 1940)	1951	1970
Case Study Cities	Boston's west end, greenwich village, Pittsburg	Lagos, Ibadan, Kano, Ndoi, Aggrey	Yumin Village, Leed Village
Reason for the origin and proposing of the method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uprising of the slums • Fast Urbanization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speedy urbanization • Environmental degradation, urban and infrastructure decay, poor solid waste management • Increased number of aged buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largest scale of urbanization • Housing shortage and lack of land for the open space
Obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People's resistance against the method of eminent domain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of sufficient funds • Lack of resettlement plan (Lagos, port harcourt and abuja) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong resistance by the landowners. • Endless bargaining for compensation.
New Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public hearing • Involving public subsidies • Regulatory relief to attract private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving public-private-partnership for providing public infrastructure and other services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People participatory approach
Purpose and Aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To eliminate the slums. • Redevelopment of the central cities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To control the urbanization trend • Provision of proper and standard urban services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vertical Development • Provision of open space and proper drainage and sewerage system.
Initiative and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Government • Local Agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government • Cooperatives
Dealing Method	Eminent domain		Giving the original land users a share of the profits.

A comparative analysis of urban renewal projects in US, Nigeria and China has presented in Table.1. It basically illustrates information about the origin of method, purpose, concept, characteristics and obstacles which the projects faced during the implementation.

V. CONCLUSION

Urban Renewal can be said to be the process where an urban neighborhood or area is improved, rehabilitated or redeveloped. The renewal process involves a wide range of activities which may include demolishing or tearing down old buildings, constructing new up-to-date housing and adding new urban amenities. Overall the practice was so similar in US and Nigeria, both countries have included public participation in the process, the only difference was that US have involved

private sector at the beginning of the project and China has completely followed a different module, they developed the urban renewal project only by the Government and community's participation. In conclusion through the international experiences which took place under the urban renewal program, we have proposed some key points in bellow due to deal with the slum problems and to make the method applicable for Kabul city.

- People should be involved and aware from the entire project.
- Religious and historical buildings should be preserved according to their cultural value.
- Majority of the owners who have legal title deed should agree with the redevelopment plan due to let the project proceed.

- The landowners who have affected by the project they should be given new apartments inside the project site based on the value, location, size and legal description of their previous lots.
- For covering the cost of the big UR projects, government can involve the private sector in the process.
- Due to the corruption and long administrative processes, private sector is not willing to invest in Afghanistan; therefore government should provide some financing tools such as tax exemption and subsidies. Furthermore, providing of the administrative relief in respect to the approval of the projects can be more effective in attracting private capital investment.

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