A Survey on Strengthening in Organizing Informal Settlements (Case Study: Imam Ali Town and Hojjat Town of Mashhad)

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Abstract:Increasing presence of informal settlements in past decades in Iran shows the inefficiency of devices and exerted policies to encounter them in those decades. Undoubtedly the demolition of such settlements considered as a part of social-economical asset of the cities destroys economical asset of low income groups and meanwhile it is an inhuman action. Formalization of informal settlement in itself doesn't prepare better servicing conditions, increasing private investment, or resolving economical, social and cultural problems. It seems to cooperate with low income groups and take policies and perform programs toward their benefits and Strengthening them is one of directives to encounter this problem. This research is after surveying the relation between people's literacy level and the quality of their participation for Strengthening the neighborhood. Method of this research is descriptive-analytical and it uses documentary and field study and also uses "SPSS" statistical analysis method for statistical calculations and information analysis. The results show that there is a meaningful relation between people's literacy level and the quality of their participation for Strengthening the neighborhood.

Keywords: Strengthening, public participation, organizing, informal settlement, Imam Ali town, Hojjat town

I.Introduction

Urbanization is a way of life which considerably has been increased in past decades and this is while the inability of some of inhabitants to be attracted into formal dwelling market and urban occupation, and also the migration of villagers into cities and their reliance on unstable opportunities have led to build settlements in which their inhabitants are a considerable population of the many cities of the world while they are incapable of getting the minimum of urban services and equipments and the quality of their lives is unpleasant. The only fixed thing about cities is that they are continually changing. In recent decades the heterogeneous spread of the cities in Iran, and on the other hand the inefficiency of programming system and the weakness of national development and spatial planning programs have caused urbanization to have many problems in our country. One of the most important results of contemporary urbanization is the birth and spread of informal settlement phenomenon within the cities or their margins, especially the capitals of provinces. International statistics show that about 1/6 of the world population live in marginal or slum areas having no enough urban facilities. To improve the physical conditions of these areas such as sanitary and environmental improvement

can't destroy this null circle by itself. Therefore considering the economical and social issues of these areas in massive level seems very necessary (Ahmadian, 1386:2). Such settlements lead to different kinds of social, economical, physical, cultural, … problems that nowadays in third world countries as Iran it is extremely more intensive than industrialized countries and needs its own special management. The history of this phenomenon in Iran goes back to 1320s and even earlier, but since 1340s affected by special conditions of that period it has increased and its worrying growth rate has become a threat to the cities.

II. Theoretical Basics

- Informal Settlement Strengthening Viewpoint

Such a solution is based on assembling internal asset of these settlements, the most important of which is young and motivated labor force and it is thought by helping and facilitating of public part that wants a level of centralism and submitting affairs to local level (Sarrafi, 1381:9). Great economists such as Lester Taro (MIT university economist), North and Fogel believe that the community development depends on factors that are available in Strengthening strategy, this capacitating should rely on making social asset based on its Fokomaeeian concept, i.e. people's ability to work with each other to realize collective goals and based on common values, respect and reciprocal reliance in which human asset-healthy skilled and alumnus labor force- breaks abortive circle of reproduction poverty. Therefore in Strengthening informal communities economical growth is a necessity but a growth from within is comprehensive and fairly group advantageous. In such an approach the goal is not delivering the development supplies but also it is the evolution of the process leading to development (Sarrafi, 1381:10). Theoretical framework based on informal settlement Strengthening viewpoint believes that Strengthening along with special considering of economy and creating stable occupation should present and perform practical strategies about settlement security, being formalized, land accessibility, service accessibility, settling citizen culture, low income groups participation and so on, and to complete use of internal power of these communities (Shahrdariha magazine, no.45:4).

- General Features and Basic Principles of Strengthening Strategy

This strategy is a kind of view toward informal settlement in which the governments instead of violent and inhuman encounter against squatters and clearance, try to create a strengthened

environment in which the informal settlement dwellers can find solutions for their shelter and dwelling problems using their own belongings sources and productions. In addition to traditional role of supplying needs, the governments' new role in Strengthening is to support and facilitate enacting the power of these communities as if it will be possible to have a complete use of their internal power with the minimum external sources (Shahrdariha magazine, no.45:4). Strengthening depends on Poverty reduction viewpoint and human sustainable development relying on citizen and city participation (urban management). A participation formed based on bilateral conversation and the citizen by getting personality out of this conversation, Identify his settlement (Khazraee, 1381:56). The pursuit of Strengthening strategy is caused by the demolition threat of informal settlement and not being formalized way of house supply in them considered the main asset of low income groups and a part of economical asset of the total community, is one of effective factors in instability of informal settlements and of the main obstacles against situating them in the heart of urban planning, intensifying social isolation and finally unwillingness to participation in improvement and promotion of the settlement programs. Unstable settlements of the low income groups can be a symbol of being marginalized and socially secluded (caused by lack of sources advantages and not being included as goal groups in planning) and a Physical break from the city body and internal explosion (considering lack of urban service) (Javaheripour and Davarpanah, 1381:86). Clearance and renewal policies will lead to "transmission of poverty colony and urban deprivation" to another place, so erosion caused by poverty and urban deprivation should be destroyed another way. As it is mentioned in universal strategy of "supplying shelter for everybody" Strengthening Approach is effective in city management improvement based on public and private sectors participation, Housing financial supplement and capacitating in urban poverty decrease and in result continuity and Expand of informal settlement. New viewpoint of Habitat in GSS document (Global Strategy of Shelter up to 2000), was relied on taking definite performing policy based on social participation against lack of policy-making, and using social and physical and financial assets (abilities of informal neighborhood inhabitants) toward formal connections with the city is emphasized (UNCH, 1990, Agenda 21). It seems the problem in getting to this policy in underdeveloped countries is not lack of sources but also it is lack of political commitment (Sarrafi, 1381:9).

III.The Studied Area

3-1 Imam Ali Town

- The Way of Birth and History of Imam Ali Town

This town is located in the central part of Toos district. Natural condition of this town (village) is plain and it has mild climate. Over 250 years ago two population cores called Noda Olia and Noda Sofla with about 300 meters distance of each other have been built for peasant Residence. Noda Olia and Noda Sofla have organic texture and they are considered as early building block cores of nowadays Noda. Later because of extension and

migrant reception these two cores were connected to each other and formed around the axis connecting old Ghuchan road to the population core of Kushk Mahdi until it gets to nowadays condition. The history of this town considering old and new cemeteries both having the extent of about 12000 kilometers goes back to over 250 years ago.

- The Main Reason of Imam Ali Town spread

The main reason of this population core spread can be as follows in turn: The low value of land, proximity to main axes and old Ghuchan road, service and production centers, high potential of migrant reception, offspring, proximity to holy city of Mashhad and accessibility of city services. The average population growth rate from 1355 to 1379 had been 0/0 10/8.

- A Survey on Physical- framework features of Imam Ali Town

Noda town has an axis shape and the path connecting old Ghuchan road to Kushk Mahdi villages and upside villages has been the main connective axis and almost all the town shops and major elements such as mosques and so on have been formed around this axis. Now this axis is the main Structure of the city.

- A Survey on General Quality of Buildings in Imam Ali Town

Except Developed texture of this town formed in southern part and near to old Ghuchan road all the texture has been organic and formed by natural growth. General quality of buildings in old texture has thatched and brick facade and some buildings of old texture have domes. But all the buildings of new texture are built with brick and iron. A house with a complete facade rarely can be found. About Floors in this town it can be said that in old texture most houses have Single-storey. Although exceptionally some houses with two- story can be found on the edge of main streets. New texture has totally Single-storey houses and there is no Two-storey .

3-2 Hojjat Town

In 1354 Moheban Al-Hojja Charity, In order to accommodate Supported people.by using benefactor owners of the area and getting needed lands started to build 50 building units and assign them to applicants and it gradually would be completed by others migration. Therefore the early core of Hojjat town has been found in 1354.
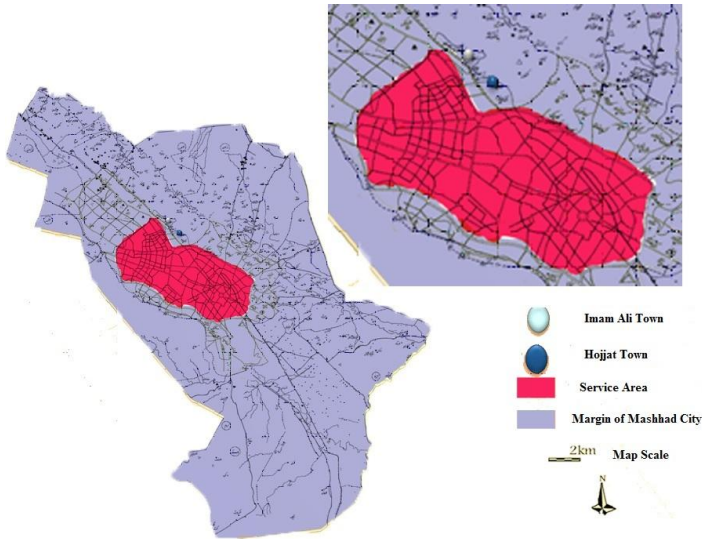
- Hojjat Town Situation

Hojjat town is located in central part of Mashhad and in Toos district. Considering political divisions it is situated in urban limited area of district 2 municipality and out of urban legal and service area, and based on master plan of Mashhad, Hojjat town is located on city region of Mashhad (1th and 2th volumes of master plan). Its geographical situation than Mashhad is on the northeast of the city. The distance to service area is 2.5

kilometers, time distance to service area is 2.5 minutes and distance to connective axis is 0 kilometers.

The most main connective axis with the town is old Ghuchan road-Shahid Fahmide square. This population core is located in the distance of 1500 meters of north of the square.

Figure 1- Hojjat Town and Imam Ali Town Situation

- The Main Reasons of Hojjat Town spread

Inexpensive lands, proximity to the main axis (old Ghuchan road), not paying taxes and city charges, and being a propitious area for attracting migrants are the main reasons of this town spread. The extent of the town up to 1380 has been 27 hectares.

- A Survey on Population Features of Hojjat Town

Hojjat town population had been 1500 in 1375 that has reached to 2170 in 1380. Population growth rate from 1375 to 1380 is 7/66. Offspring and migrant reception are from the effective factors in population density. Based on population statistics of 1375 the number of households in the town had been 306 families with the dimension of 4/9 which considering its 1500 population 735 of them were men and 765 were women. According to data the ratio of men to women (gender ratio) is equal to 96/1. Expected population of Mashhad margin organizing plan by the end of 1390 is 3368 (Mashhad margin organizing plan, 1381).

- A Survey on Social-Cultural Features of Hojjat Town

Most inhabitants of the town have migrated from Mashhad's villages or other cities of the province to this place. These people include Kord tribes of Ghuchan and Dargaz. The number of foreign citizen households had been one household in 1375. The language and accents in the town include Persian, Kordish and about one percent Arabic. It should be mentioned that there is no special area with potential of crime or crisis. As if the necessity of police forces for performing discipline and security

is low. Considering literacy level according to the statics of 1375 the number of literate people of the town has been 990 and the literacy and illiteracy coefficients have been 5/86 and -4/86 in turn.

- A Survey on framework Texture of Hojjat Town

Hojjat Town has an irregular checker texture in which the main street passes the center of the town and forms the main connective axis. Public services are generally formed around the main streets and important axes and almost a neighborhood central system rules over them. General quality of buildings in the town is lower than Mashhad. All the buildings are made from brick and iron and there is no adobe house in the town. There are a few houses with complete facade because of financial poverty. The number of floors are kind of Single-storey and rarely tow-storey houses can be found.

- Public Participation and Management in Imam Ali and Hojjat Towns

Most inhabitants of informal settlements have low incomes and are from among low levels of the community. They are daily wage labors mostly working at informal sectors. They are paid the minimum wage and sometimes some families earn more money by working at part time jobs. Most inhabitants are migrants (from villagers and small towns) and some of them are also second or third race of illegal inhabitants. The key index which distinguishes Imam Ali and Hojjat towns is that it's inhabitants buy subdivided agricultural lands (with nonstandard low extent) from jobbers and make physical, social, economical, cultural, management problems for their own and the town. Some features of these two towns are as follows: informal jobs prevalence, low technical and training skills, low literacy level, kinship and relation ties, village source and urban low income population overflow, low accessibility to city services, inappropriate and limited deep infrastructures, high population density, low and nonresistance dwelling units, inappropriate sanitary conditions, high population density and household in dwelling unit, less building area average than city average, the type of land possession and dwelling units, average poverty in the area, seclusion of the area people from urban life. Researchers experiences show that the most appropriate strategy for organizing these areas is using inhabitant Strengthening of these communities. These models mostly are presented by participation of nongovernmental organizations as development facilitators.

IV. Research Methodology

The main method of this research is hypothetical-deductive and during some stages based on which the hypotheses were codified along with logical reasoning, and related indexes were formed and then they were contrasted against data resulted from direct and indirect observations and finally were verified or rejected. This method is used for phenomenon recognition and its features and testing the hypotheses. This method's high scientific reliability and the ability of generalizing the results makes it justified and it is attempted to answer the research questions

using this method and its techniques. On completion of the first method descriptive-analytical methods and documentary and field studies are used. . (Mohammadzade Titkanlou, 1386).

- Research Techniques and Devices

Using computational software such as those used for statistical calculations and information analysis like SPSS, Excel, and preparing needed plans using ArcGis and Autocad software and using observation and taking and documentary and field studies (Mohammadzade Titkanlou, 1380).

- Method of Gathering Information

This research is descriptive and uses field and surveying method in which needed data have been obtained as follows: a) Field studies: involving the filling in the questionnaire, observation and getting photos from the physical and social and economical situation of Imam Ali and Hojjat towns and having interviews with the area inhabitants. b) Documentary studies: involving library studies, studying the existed sources about informal settlement and Strengthening strategy and also studying reports and plans about Imam Ali and Hojjat towns.

- Sample and Statistical Community

The statistical community of this research is from among informal settlements of Mashhad city which considering the research subject and consulting with municipality officials and Mashhad margin organizing manager, Imam Ali and Hojjat town were chosen as samples which in turn having a population of 20000 and 3000, some of their inhabitants from different areas were chosen for answering questions as the samples.

- Sampling Method

Considering that squatter areas in the holy city of Mashhad with the population of 700.000 include a vast area of the suburb, so performing any kind of research about this issue seems to be faced with difficulty in order to surveying and analysis of squatter Strengthening, first of all needed information were gathered and also a questionnaire was prepared and 50 household inhabitants of Imam Ali town and 50 household inhabitants of Hojjat town filled it in. In this research it has been used two sampling methods of clustering and systematic in which using the plans of Imam Ali and Hojjat towns firstly different clusters were chosen and then out of these clusters using systematic random sampling some of them were chosen for answering questions and interview.

V. Research Findings

The survey and evaluation of forming and spread process of informal settlement in the metropolitan of Mashhad and also the survey on Mashhad master plan show that Mashhad city with a heavy gravitational force notwithstanding positive effects, is attractive to migrants and community low clusters in which the literacy level of these settlements affects improving

environmental conditions. The literacy level of these two area were studied as follows:

Table 1. neighborhood inhabitant literacy level

illiterate	low literacy level	average literacy level	high literacy level
9%	66%	14%	11%

Low literacy level: includes under diploma degrees, average literacy level: diploma degree, high literacy level post diploma degrees (college studies). In examining the questionnaire 70% were willing to participate, 24% unwilling and 6% had no answers. The quality of the studied inhabitants participation (willing) is as follows:

Table 2. The area inhabitant participation rate

illiterate	low literacy level	average literacy level	high literacy level
61%	76%	81%	83%

Considering that the most of inhabitant jobs of the studied areas are laboring and they have low income level (86% of inhabitant income is under 300.000 tomans while the poverty line is 450.000 tomans.) considering financial cooperation they have problems and considering physical help in performing development plans they don't cooperate. Most inhabitants of studied areas are ready to cooperate with public sector and they are not optimistic about private sector. According to above findings most inhabitants of the population core have low literacy level, and lower participation than the other people. As it is shown 75% of household supervisors are illiterate or have low literacy level that generally their cultural and literacy level is lower than Mashhad and on the other hand they don't consider themselves belonged to the population core and therefore considering social psychology they don't feel commitment to the social relations and this lead to extreme decrease in cultural level and also it decreases their participation quality for the neighborhood rehabilitation. Therefore it can be concluded that there is a meaningful relation between people's literacy level and their participation quality for the neighborhood Strengthening.

VI. Conclusion

Active public participation in informal settlement Strengthening process leads to have enough variety in spatial structure and mixing different activities in the city and its image and therefore the needs of different groups can be satisfied. Social presence of citizens in the community calls for creating public belief in citizens based on involving their requests in city decision makings. This issue will lead to the more voluntary participation of citizens by reinforcing their commitment to the neighborhood and city. Just such an action by passing from elitism to participation planning can prevent citizen removal of low income groups in planing and use their maximum power for sustainable development of urban community and make it possible.

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