

Social-Cultural Impact of Katchi Abadi Improvement Programme on Squatters

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to assess the socio-cultural impact of the Katchi Abadi Improvement Programme (KIP) that was implemented from 1985 to 1990 on the dwellers-squatters in the Punjab. Seven hundred households from the *katchi abadis* of three districts (Rawalpindi, Faisalabad and Multan) which are representatives of three geographical zones (Northern, central and Southern) of the Punjab were selected by using the systematic random sampling technique. The analysis of the data revealed that KIP has impact on the household's size, number of households living in the structure, type of family, status and type of occupancy, community conflicts, visits of the relatives and friends, choices of children marriages and movement of the women, children and venders. The average household size at the time of survey was 8.17 as compared to 11 in 1985. The community conflicts were reduced greatly after the implementation of KIP. The movement of the women, children and venders increased after the improvement undertaken through the implementation of KIP. The frequency of the visit of the relatives was increased after the improvement made by the implementation of KIP and a major change in the type of family from Joint to Nuclear was also observed. This all indicate the positive impact of KIP on the socio-cultural aspects of the dwellers of *katchi abadis*- squatters. It can be inferred that KIP was relatively successful; however, it can be further improved.

Key Words: Socio-cultural; Community conflicts; Demography; Squatters

INTRODUCTION

Shelter is one of the basic needs of human beings. Public planning and development agencies in Pakistan like other developing countries have also launched housing programmes to overcome the problem of shortage, particularly for low-income people. However, the process has been extremely slow and inappropriate to meet the demand. Resultantly, the low-income people have continued building *katcha*- rudimentary houses of cheap makeshift materials affordable to them. This phenomenon took the shape of mushroom growth of squatter settlements on public or private land lying vacant adjacent to the existing villages in rural areas and in major urban centers. These squatter settlements are called *katchi abadis* (dissolvable settlements) in Pakistan. There are over 3000 *katchi abadis* in the country with a population approximating 7 million, which has increased from the recognized 2302-*katchi abadis* with a population of 5.5 million declared eligible for regularization and subsequent upgrading in 1985 by the Government of Pakistan (1987) and about 9 million at present. However, the poor quality of these typical shelters persisted, mainly because of the insecurity of land tenure. Housing conditions in the poorest countries in Asia and the Pacific are often characterized by sub-standard housing with poor infrastructure and services. Slums and squatter settlements have proliferated in many of the large cities. The emphasis in most reports, submitted by most of the countries to UNCHS (Habitat)-the secretariat for the conference in 1995 and 1996, was on provision of shelter, access to land

and basic infrastructure and services for low-income groups. The housing upgrading and regularization programmes focused not only on physical aspects of squatter settlements but also on the social aspects, including employment, education, and health facilities. Of late, the government of Pakistan also realized that the programmes of providing public housing have been inadequate to achieve the real target of providing housing, particularly to low-income people. The government decided to take measures for the formalization/regularization and improvement of the *katchi abadis*, so that these may be made suitable for including in the housing stock. Therefore, the government made considerable efforts to regularize and improve the *katchi abadis* during 1985 to 1990 and a formal Katchi Abadi Improvement Programme (KIP) was launched in 1985.

A thorough analysis of all the *katchi abadis*' regularization and improvement programmes started in the past was carried out in order to explore whether the scope and time of work undertaken under the KIPs in different periods had the desired effects on the individuals, households and institutions and whether those effects were significant and attributable to the KIPs' intervention. However, after long discussion with different stakeholders of KIPs and it was agreed that the KIP was implemented with full concentration and on large scale from 1985 to 1990. During this period, major improvements and regularization of *katchi abadis* were carried out throughout Pakistan. The Pakistan has four provinces (Punjab, Sindh, North West Frontier Province and Balochistan). The Punjab province is the largest one

having 55.6% of the total population of Pakistan according to Population and Housing Census of Pakistan (1998). There are more than 900 *katchi abadis* in Punjab according to the surveys conducted in 1985 (Government of Pakistan, 1987). This paper is about the demographic and socio-cultural impact assessment/evaluation of the KIP implemented in Punjab from 1985 to 1990. This is an applied research to look the KIP's effects on the demographic factors like type of family, number of households per structure, and type and status of occupancy and effects on socio-cultural aspects like change in community conflicts, change in women, children and vendors' mobility, change in choice of arranging the marriages of children and change in the frequency of visits by the relatives and friends of the dwellers of the *katchi abadis*. The main objective of the study was to examine the effects and impact of the KIP on the socio-cultural aspects of the residents of squatter settlements.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The cross-sectional design was adopted to collect the primary data through a follow up survey from the field by using well-structured questionnaire. The Punjab province is divided into three (Northern, Central and Southern) geographical zones by the government of Pakistan. This zonal division is based on geographic location, topography, languages spoken, cropping pattern, vegetation, weather conditions, population size, and economic base of the regions. Three districts of the Punjab province i.e. Rawalpindi, Faisalabad and Multan were selected to assess the socio-cultural impact of Katchi Abadi Improvement Programme in Punjab. These three districts are representatives of the three geographical zones (Northern, Central and Southern) of Punjab. The main reason for the selection of three districts was to capture more variation and to increase the scope of the study from the viewpoint of generalization of the research findings, which are based on three geographical zones of the Punjab.

It is pertinent to point out that a large sample size alone does not guarantee a representative sample. A large sample without random sampling or with a poor sampling frame is less representative than a smaller one with random sampling and a complete sampling frame. Keeping in view the population size and characteristics, kind of the data analysis, time and resources available and practical evidences, a sample of 700 respondents was randomly selected.

The principle "as the size of the population increases the sample size decreases" (Fitzgibbon & Lyons, 1987) was the basis of sample selecting procedure for this study. A list of recognized *katchi abadis* for each district was obtained from the office of the Directorate General of Katchi Abadis and Urban Improvement (KA&UI), Local Government and Rural Development Department,

Government of the Punjab, Lahore. These three lists (one for each district) were used as sampling frame for the study. There are 73 recognized *katchi abadis* in Faisalabad, 25 in Multan and 8 in Rawalpindi as per the lists provided by the concerned directorate. A proportionate number of *katchi abadis* from each district, keeping in view the total number of *katchi abadis* in the respective district, was taken. Therefore, six *katchi abadis* from Faisalabad, three from Multan and two from Rawalpindi were selected randomly. Fifty percent *katchi abadis* were selected randomly from the rural area and fifty percent from the urban area for each district. Subsequently, a proportionate number of respondents from the total sample size were taken for each district. This exercise was completed on the basis of number of *katchi abadis* located in each district. The calculated number came out as 483 (69%) respondents for Faisalabad, 161 (23%) for Multan and 56 (8%) for Rawalpindi. The sampling weights technique has been advocated by Kish (1965) and his book on survey sampling is considered one of the standard books in the sampling field. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the required number of *katchi abadis* from each district both from rural and urban area. A systematic random sampling technique was used to identify the individual respondents for interview from each selected *katchi abadi*. A careful strategy was adopted during the selection of the respondents so that views of the actual beneficiaries-users are ascertained. First, by asking a screening question at the start of the interview only those respondents were interviewed who were living in the *katchi abadis* since the implementation of KIP (1985) or before it? Second, interview was conducted only with the head of household. If he/she was not available at the time of visit, a second visit was paid to conduct his/her interview. If, he/she was again not available then the next house was selected for interview.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Impact on demographic characteristics. The household size determines the level of overcrowding in the dwellings of *katchi abadis*. In some of the *katchi abadis* the average household size was large and about 10 to 15 people were living in one house of small size before the implementation of KIP (Alimuddin *et al.*, 2001). The percentage of household size from 7-10 and from 11-13 was 63.7 and 16.4, respectively and average household size was 8.17 at the time of survey as compared to average household size of 11 before the implementation of KIP (Table I). This indicates that the size of household in the *katchi abadis* where the KIP was implemented is medium level, which can be attributed to KIP and is a positive impact.

Effects and impact on number of households per structure. The number of households in the structure is an

important parameter in relation to socio-economic status of the residents and accommodation density. The percentage of 1-household, 2-households and 3-households per structure in 1985 (before KIP) was 27.4, 61.0 and 11.1 respectively (Table I). At present, the percentage of 1-household, 2-households and 3-households per structure is 69.3, 29.0 and 1.7, respectively. This indicates a major effect/change-reduction in number of households per structure after the implementation of KIP, which is a positive impact.

Effects and impact on type of family. The type of family is very important aspect of the social characteristics of any society. It is also important because of its association with household's formation. The percentage of Joint and Nuclear families was 70.0 and 28.4, respectively in 1985 (before the KIP) (Table I). It is also evident from the Table I that the percentage of Joint and Nuclear families at the time of survey was 28.1 and 70.3, respectively. This indicates that there was a great effect on the type of family and substantial change in types of family from Joint to Nuclear after the implementation of KIP. The shifting from Joint to Nuclear families is an indication of penetration of modern family values, which is a positive impact. This is another indirect measure of low density that has happened due to implementation of KIP.

Effects and impact on status and type of occupancy. Information about the status of occupancy i.e. original squatters, primary purchasers and secondary purchasers at present is of much importance to determine the squatters' association with that particular locality and the trend of formation of new *katchi abadis*. Similarly, the type of occupancy i.e. owned, rented and rent-free is also important to know the trend of housing need and commercial market in the informal sector housing. The percentage of original squatters and primary purchasers was 67.4 and 32.6, respectively (Table I).

The data collected from the secondary sources indicates that in 1985, there were 100% original squatters. Similarly, at the time of conducting survey the percentage of the owned and rented houses was 88.0 and 12.0, respectively (Table I). This indicates that the dwellers are satisfied with the status of ownership and the provision of facilities under the KIP. Therefore, they have developed association and belongingness with the localities and it helps to mitigate the formation of new *katchi abadis*. Resultantly, the widening gap between the demand and supply of housing will be decreased and planned development in the rural and urban areas will come up. This was also pointed out by Merrill (1975) in his study of three squatter settlements in Lima that most important component of environmental security was the tenure security and was associated with housing input at 0.001 level significance. The low percentage (12.0) of rented houses indicates that it supplements the low-income of the poor owners and that leads to improve the status and

quality of life of the poor living in the *katchi abadis*. This all indicates the positive impacts of KIP.

The changes in demographic characteristics (household size, type of family, number of households per structure and type and status of occupancy) reflect the improvement made in the settlements or in other words better effects of KIP. This confirms the findings of other studies on squatter settlements of South Asian's countries where the typical changes in the demographic characteristics are reported. Similar demographic changes have also been reported by Shahidullah (1975).

Effects/changes in community conflicts. It has been observed through experience that one of the major causes for quarrels and community conflicts in *katchi abadis* is the poor sanitation situation in these settlements. There is no other option except to throw the foul water in the streets. The streets are normally unpaved so they become slippery as well as the smell of foul water spreads. The neighbors object on this act, which becomes the cause of community conflicts and women start abusing to each other as well as fighting. This situation ultimately involves the men as well. The provision of sewers and drainage facilities were included in the KIP. The social conflicts were reduced after the implementation of KIP (Table II), which is a positive change and impact.

Table I. Changes in demographic indicators

Demographic Variables	Frequency	Per cent
Households Members at Present		
3-6 members	139	19.9
7-10 members	446	63.7
11-13 members	115	16.4
Total	700	100.0
<i>Average Household Size: 8.17, Standard Deviation = 2.35</i>		
Type of Family in 1985		
Joint	490	70.0
Nuclear	199	28.4
Single	11	1.6
Total	700	100.0
Type of Family Now		
Joint	197	28.1
Nuclear	482	70.3
Other	11	1.6
Total	700	100.0
How Many Households were living in the Structure in 1985?		
1-household	192	27.4
2-households	427	61.0
3-households	81	11.6
Total	700	100.0
How Many Households are living in the Structure now?		
1-household	485	69.3
2-households	203	29.0
3-households	12	1.7
Total	700	100.0
What is the Status and Type of Occupiers?		
Original Squatters	472	67.4
Primary Purchasers	228	32.6
Total	700	100.0
Owned	616	88.0
Rented	84	12.0
Total	700	100.0

Effects on women's mobility and its impact. The women in *katchi abadis* are mostly housewives. They cannot afford as well as men do not allow them to go out for recreation. In Pakistan, the society is male dominant and women have to get permission from their husbands to go out of the house. They can only avail the facility of chitchat recreation through the visits of their women friends in the same locality. The dirty streets, poor sanitation and drainage and the stagnant water in the streets hamper the mobility of women within the locality. So, the women mostly remain at house even if they have spare time for recreation. This results into anxiety and feeling of loneliness for the women. The mobility of women was increased after the implementation of KIP (Table II), which is a positive impact. The increase in women's mobility is the effect of environmental improvement, which has improved their status.

Table II. Distributions of respondents according to social indicators

Social Dimensions	Frequency	Per cent
Did any change occur in the community conflicts after the implementation of kip?		
Decreased	331	47.3
No change	155	22.1
Increased	214	30.6
Total	700	100.0
What Changes Occurred in the Mobility of Women after the Implementation of KIP?		
Increased	372	53.1
NO Change	136	19.4
Decreased	192	27.4
Total	700	100.0
Changes Occurred in the Social Activities of Children after the Implementation of KIP		
Increased	419	59.9
NO Change	91	13.0
Decreased	190	27.1
Total	700	100.0
What Changes Occurred in the Mobility of Venders after the Implementation of KIP?		
Increased	421	60.1
NO Change	91	13.0
Decreased	188	26.9
Total	700	100.0
Change in Situation for Arranging the Marriages of Children after the Implementation of KIP		
Become Easy	350	50.0
No change	131	18.7
Become Difficult	219	31.3
Total	700	100.0
Change in Frequency of Visits of Friends/Relatives after the Implementation of KIP		
Increased	353	50.5
NO change	143	20.4
Decreased	204	29.1
Total	700	100.0
Change in Literacy Rate of the Household after the Implementation of KIP		
Increased	465	66.4
No change	91	13.0
Decreased	144	20.6
Total	700	100.0

Effects on children's mobility and its impact. In early ages the children mostly play traditional games in the streets. The unhygienic situation due to poor sanitation hampers the playing of children. Similarly, non-availability of parks and playgrounds also causes impedance. Table II indicates that the percentage of the respondents who reflected that the mobility of the children was increased after the implementation of KIP was 59.9. This is a positive impact of KIP on the children mobility.

Effects on venders' mobility and its impact. There are less grocery shops inside the *katchi abadis*. Moreover, the mobility of women is limited in Pakistan due to cultural constraints. The norm is that venders come in the settlements for selling grocery items and some other items of daily use. The venders normally come either on bicycles or on donkey carts. They hesitate to enter in *katchi abadis* due to poor and dingy situation in the streets. The analysis of data (Table II) represents that 60.1% respondents replied that the venders' mobility was increased after the implementation of KIP. This change made a positive impact and the burden of women has reduced due to the availability of grocery and other items of daily use in the streets of *katchi abadis*.

Effects on the choice of arranging the children's marriages. The parents mostly arrange the marriages of children in Pakistani society. The parents consider that the expected in-laws of their children should live in neat, clean and posh area. Moreover, the arranging of daughters' marriage for the dwellers of *katchi abadis* is very difficult. Similarly, if the marriage is arranged one way or the other then there are no spaces for putting the tents and to make other arrangements to celebrate this function. The size of houses is normally small and the streets are not clean. This results into inconvenience and limited choices of arranging the children's marriages in *katchi abadis*. The analysis of data (Table II) reveals that 50% respondents reported that after the implementation of KIP, dirty and dingy environment was improved. Moreover, the dwellers made improvement in the construction of their houses, therefore, the arranging of their children's marriages became easy and now they had different options to consider before finalizing the marriages of their children. The intervention of KIP resulted into more choices and opportunities of arranging the marriages of children-a positive impact of KIP.

Effects on the frequency of visits by the friends and relatives. It is a custom in Pakistani society to pay social visits to the relatives and friends. This act increases the affection and respect among the relatives and friends. The person who intends to visit the relatives and friends first considers that where he is going is it a neat and clean area? The pleasant environmental situation of the area becomes the attraction and unpleasant situation as repulsion to pay visit to any one. Moreover, it is also an indirect determinant of assessing the environmental improvement attributed to the intervention of KIP. The

frequency of visits of the friends and relatives was increased after the implementation of KIP (Table II).

Briefly, there was an improvement in the socio-cultural aspects of *katchi abadis* after KIP intervention, like greater social interaction between the community, having common meeting places to discuss important issues, greater number of marriage proposals for young girls, feel good factor-the people are happier, increase in number of friends and relatives' visits, reduction in community conflicts, and increase in women and children mobility. These findings are similar to those reported by Alam and Ahmad (2001).

Effects on literacy rate of the households' members.

The education enables the people to use their capabilities to increase their earning potential. The elimination of poverty and progress towards national development will only take place if the level of education is increased. The proximity of schools is an important consideration particularly for the enrolment of girls in schools. It was one of the elements in KIP to construct at least primary schools either inside or in close proximity of the *katchi abadis*. It was found that the literacy rate was increased after the implementation of KIP (Table II). This was proved in a study that by increasing the number of schools and making improvement in the environment increases enrolment rates. An increase in the literacy rate was also reported by Alam and Naveed (2001) by introducing new schools in a locality

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The KIP had visible positive effects on demographic aspects of the dwellers. The demographic changes have reduced (positive impact) the overcrowding and congestion in the *katchi abadis*.
- The physical improvements carried out through KIP had greater effects on the social aspects of the target population. Consequently, the community conflicts were reduced, the mobility of women, children and vendors was increased, the social visits of relatives and friends enhanced, the opportunity for arranging the marriages of children increased, literacy level was improved, and health status of the dwellers was improved.
- There was a positive impact of strengthening the relationship, lessening the women burden and exertion and improvement in love and affection, facilitation in marriage proposals and arrangements and increase in human capabilities in the *katchi abadis*.
- A viable policy towards the low-income housing package needs to be followed. First, a major change has to be introduced in the national housing policy,

which should clearly define the role of government in the provision of housing as facilitator instead of developer i.e. shifting from public to private provision-regularization of informal sector and its up-gradation and improvement. Second, the emphasis should be placed on up-gradation instead of demolition or clearance and resettlement of dislocated households through the provision of developed plots, constructed houses, quarters and flats. Third, all the partners of KIP like the implementing agencies, custodians of the state land, community and provincial level as well as national level departments must be oriented and sensitized about the importance of community organization and community participation.

- A process approach (needs identification, prioritization, design, and implementation in stages) to development of *katchi abadis* should be adopted. The community driven and participatory (involvement of community right from needs identification and planning up to implementation and post maintenance) KIP may be introduced, which will mobilize and ensure the optimal utilization of all resources including the human resources. This is essential for developing the sense of ownership, belongings as well as sustainable development.

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