

Water Crisis and Urban Poor: The Case of Poor Communities in Dhaka City, Bangladesh

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Abstract

Slums are one of the most common features of the poor countries like those in South Asia and deprivation of basic rights among the slum dwellers is well known. Water scarcity and lack of access to safe drinking water has long been a part of the lives of slum people. This paper has attempted to recognize issues such as the intensity of the water crisis problem, its causes and its impact on the lives of the urban poor in Dhaka city, based on the interaction with people of two slums. The paper has concentrated on presenting the whole scenario of the water crisis problem of the slum dwellers, especially on the basis of their own interpretation and experiences- that is from an insider's view. It has also paid close attention to the fact that how these basic problems of poor are used by the people of other classes for their own economic benefits and how they play an important role to let the water scarcity problem to persist.

Keywords: Water crisis, Slums, Urban Poor, Urbanization, Poverty, Government, NGOs, Policies

Statement of the Problem

Acute water crisis, in accordance with, lack of access to safe water, has become one of the predominant problems for developing countries like Bangladesh, due to the increase in population, random contamination of surface and ground water, absence of comprehensive water sharing with neighbouring countries, mismanagement in preserving rain water and the failure of the state to take initiatives to provide safe water and sanitation to its citizens. The WHO estimates that with a staggering 60% of the population that has to endure unsafe drinking water, the nation is in danger. The number of urban dwellers is increasing day by day, because of the increasing migration rate from rural to urban areas and the inability of the state, to provide them good housing, has led to the growth of more and more slums. Water sources for this expanding population are not available, let alone safe water sources. These slum people always suffer due to lack of water and this water crisis affects their lives, their health and their socio- economic conditions. In the overcrowded slums of the city of Dhaka, the lack of safe drinking water is a deadly threat to young children. Not only the people of lower classes, but also people of middle classes, living in flats or apartments, are also not free of this problem. These people may have more access to water than the slum dwellers, but the water they get is not uncontaminated. This is the consequence of water pollution by chemical wastes of factories, sewage generated by houses, natural disasters and excessive use of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides in agricultural fields, negligence of government, unawareness of people etc. Water purification system in Bangladesh is not good enough to provide uncontaminated water and therefore, water that comes from the polluted rivers, paves the way to the lack of safe drinking water. Water contamination is a major cause of respiratory and stomach ailments and premature death in the city. It also affects the socio- economic conditions of the urban poor and has a profound impact on urban economy. The central argument of the paper is that water scarcity in slums is the result of the institutional and policy failure by the government in association with the greed of the NGOs.

Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to assess the problem of water crisis in urban Bangladesh, from a sociological perspective, in order to give it a new impetus and to bring in light, those various aspects of water scarcity and shortage of safe water in Bangladesh, which so far have been overlooked or ignored. The paper focused on the access of the urban poor to safe drinking water. It further explored its causes and consequences.

Rationale of the Study

Water scarcity is one of the most alarming issues in the developing countries. It has now become a major concern of the developed world too, as it hampers normal livelihoods, leads to serious ecological imbalance and intra state conflicts. The leading causes of water shortage and scarcity of safe water mainly includes the social ones like increase in population, lack of awareness of people, urbanization, industrialization etc. It is therefore essential that, we analyze the social dimensions of the problem, using a sociological perspective. The poor, especially the urban ones, are in particular vulnerable to the effects of scarcity of safe drinking water, as it can lead to the social, economic and health problems among the poor. As a result, when analyzing the problem of water crisis, it is important to pay attention to the poor in order to understand why and how the problem is severe, particularly for the poor. In order to reduce the detrimental effects of the problem of water shortage, we

first need to know how deeply the problem prevails and what the actual condition of water resources in Bangladesh is. We must find out the real causes of water crisis and identify the group of people who are mostly affected by this crisis. Later on, we have to examine the impact of this water crisis on overall socio-economic condition of Bangladesh. These analyses would help us to comprehend the real picture of water crisis in Bangladesh. There is a lack of sociological research works on this issue and only a research from a sociological perspective can clearly sort out the magnitude and intensity of the problem. The research can contribute to understanding the social aspects of water crisis in the context of urban Bangladesh. This study is expected to be able to provide the reasons for which it is very important to pay much more attention to the issue of water crisis both nationally and internationally.

Research Questions

- What is the condition of water crisis in urban areas of Bangladesh?
- What are the factors that lead to the shortage of urban water?
- How does water crisis affect the lives of poor urban communities?
- What are the measures to be taken for better access of poor people to safe water?

Review of the Literature

Amoah in his study focused in the international politics and conflicts associated with water scarcity, because of increasing population in various countries (Amoah, 2004). In his seminal work on water issues, Ramaswamy elucidates how the problem with water issues is not that water issues complicate political issues but that complicated political issues make the smallest water issues between countries, intractable (Ramaswamy, 2003). Douglas et al. revealed in their research report- a multi-scaled approach to assessing water scarcity and the impact that inadequate access to water has on human well-being in Africa (Douglas et al., 2006). Describing the water crisis in Asia, Shustov claimed that, the deficit of water resources that may in the future be in greater demand than petroleum and natural gas has already become a reality for many districts of the inner Eurasia. (Shustov, 2012)

According to Rashid, The *mastaans* take control of the taps by paying low-level state employees for access to the illegal connections and diverting the water to a connection inside a household or compound, where they sell it to the residents at exorbitant prices (Tk 5 per bucket, or Tk 1–2 for a bath). Only inhabitants who can afford the price are able to access the water. Profit is shared between the government officials and the *mastaans*. (Rashid, 2009) A World Bank Report illustrated that, in Dhaka, slum settlements rely mainly on municipal taps for drinking-water, and outside Dhaka, residents rely on tubewells. Marriot wrote in his article about the rising water scarcity in Bangladesh due to frequent load shedding, drastic fall in ground water level, insufficient water treatment plants and deep tube wells. (Marriot, 2007) Faruqui presented a detailed picture of the effect of lack of safe drinking water, on the health of urban poor in Dhaka city (Faruqui, 2002). Rahman talked in his article about the scarcity of water in Bangladesh due to low water availability, unsustainable upstream water withdrawal and low quality of groundwater, and tried to find out possible solutions to this problem (Rahman, 2005). Suryanarayanan showed in the article various internal and external dimensions of water scarcity in Bangladesh (Suryanarayanan, 2009). Malhotra demonstrated in his study, the problematic water issues between Nepal, India and Bangladesh which can lead to conflicts in the future regarding the rights of river water for increasing population in these countries. (Malhotra, 2010)

Birongo and Le (2004) revealed in their project paper that populations in urban slums are increasing in number because of the relatively affordable shelter provision, which are called 'Slums'. Most slums are unplanned as well as illegal and therefore lack basic facilities. In spite of the fact that the majority of dwellers in these slums are low-wage earners, they are compelled to pay more for basic needs such as water than their neighbours in affluent and rich neighbourhoods. This paper focused on the water governance problems in Africa's arguably biggest slum Kibera (Kenya), and zeroes in on the Public- Private Partnership between the two biggest water suppliers in the slum, who, because of their troublesome partnership, have considerably contributed to the on-going water governance chaos. It also provided recommendations for reducing the problems. Their main points are that the water governance problems in Kibera are versatile in which corruption has been a factor disrupting the governance system and deteriorating the water governance situation; and thus there should be some alternatives to bring in some changes which include setting up an Association of Water Consumers, who will correspond to and protect all the households using water in Kibera. (Birongo and Le, 2005)

Water Supply to Poor and Slum Dwellers:

DWASA provides water for poor and floating people by 1000 street taps in Dhaka and 600 hand pumps in Narayanganj. Though cost of water supply through street taps at community rate is reimbursed by GOB to

DWASA, the cost of hand pumps in Narayanganj is not reduced. DWASA's rate schedule sell water to destitute and extremely poor families at a lump sum cost of Tk 25.00 (equivalent to Yen 50.00) per month. However, such families must possess water connection in own house built on their own land. Therefore, it does not lessen water supply requirements of huge segment of Dhaka city population living in slums and shanties built on illegally on government land.

According to DWASA Connection and Levy Rules, water/sewer service connection can be provided only on request by holding (land) owner. These slums are located on the lands owned mostly by govt. departments and agencies who think of these inhabitants as unauthorized occupants. Therefore no application is made for water supply of any other utility service for these unfortunate communities However, that does not mean that these slum dwellers survived without water as they used almost all the utilities including water through musclemen, who have been the providers of these services illegally sometimes. Such supplies of utility services included huge cost for the poor slum dwellers like, one pitcher or bucket of 15 to 20 liters of water cost Tk. 1.00 to the user whereas the rate for such domestic counterpart user for 1000 liters used to be less than Tk. 4.00 only.

The management of the Employees Co-operative along with DWASA to give water connection to slum dwellers through some non government organizations (NGO) at metered domestic water rate charges so that the poor slum dwellers no more have to pay excessive rates charged by unauthorized muscle/middlemen. Though Objection came from the strong musclemen having support of some political parties, yet the program has covered most of the slums so far.

Contribution of an N.G.O. (Dusta Shastha Kendra or DSK) for water supply to the poor slum dwellers was invoked for two reasons: To violate DWASA Connection and Levy Rules by taking a security deposit of Tk 10,000.00 provided by the NGO on behalf of each water connection in slums and to to inspire them not to misuse or waste water. (Hoque, 2003)

Methodology

The conducted research is a case study research. Case study refers to the collection and presentation of detailed information about a particular participant or small group, frequently including the accounts of subjects themselves. A form of qualitative descriptive research, the case study looks intensely at an individual or small participant pool, drawing conclusions only about that participant or group and only in that specific context. Researchers do not focus on the discovery of a universal, generalizable truth, nor do they typically look for cause-effect relationships; instead, emphasis is placed on exploration and description. One advantage of the case study is that they provide a great amount of description and detail. Researchers can learn a lot from one case. This volume of details suggests many future research questions to follow up in other studies. Another advantage of the case study is that they present opportunities that researchers could not otherwise have. It would be unethical to take a volunteer and damage his or her hippocampus just for the purpose of studying memory effects. However, if a person undergoes surgery or some other event for another purpose, psychologists can study the outcomes. Much of what we know about the human brain comes from case studies of people who have had surgeries or accidents. The study was conducted in two slums – Khilgaon Slum and Shahajahanpur Slum- of the capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka. The population of this study consists of the people o these two slums. Study unit was drawn from the study population keeping in mind the aims and time constraints of the study. Each resident was a probable study unit.

Sampling

Non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to draw the sample from the target population. Purposeful sampling is generally used in case study research (Creswell, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Because attrition may deeply affect case studies based on just one or two participants, sampling carefully is crucial. Two slums of Dhaka city were chosen which were easily accessible and secured.

Techniques of Data Collection

Yin (1994) identified six primary sources of evidence for case study research. The use of each of these might require different skills from the researcher. Not all sources are essential in every case study, but the importance of multiple sources of data to the reliability of the study is well established (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). The six sources identified by Yin (1994) are:

- documentation,
- archival records,
- interviews,
- direct observation,

- participant or direct observation, and
- physical artifacts.

In the study, interviews and direct observation were used as data collection procedures.

Findings

Case Study-1

'Khilgaon' Slum

I, along with some other friends, visited the slum in Khilgaon in Dhaka. It is situated on both sides of the railways. I saw the tiny houses made of paper and polythene, which have been set up in a row. I first chose a middle-aged man, Md. Mona, his wife, brother and mother, in order to have a chat. I let them know why I came, asked them about their life histories, daily routines, problems in slums and their perceptions about governments, NGOs, etc. They described how loss of land property compelled their parents to leave Comilla (a district of Bangladesh) and to migrate to Dhaka in search of work. They have been living in slums for about thirty years.

Figure 1. The Slum



While talking about the problems in the slums, they first started with the water crisis. There is one tube-well for the whole slum where more than 500 families live. When I asked to describe the problem in more details, his wife said, "Suppose, I would go now to collect the water. It would take more than one hour to get it." Her husband interrupted, "No single step has been taken to provide water and sanitation facilities...." He informed that the political leader promised to provide tube-wells, when they came to the slum for votes. However, after being elected, they did nothing. Clothes and cutleries can not be washed often, and for collecting only the drinking water, the women have to wait in a long queue from the early morning till the end of the day. As so many people use the tap, it often gets damaged and the slum-dwellers have to pay every month for its repair. They drink this water without boiling.

Figure 2. The single Tube-well for 500 families in the Slum



When they were asked about the activities of NGO workers, one said, 'NGO workers also come and write down everything like you and go away; the problems are never solved...' The tubewell was provided by a political leader once and still remains the one and only source of water of the whole slum. What is needed most right now? " At least two more water taps"- they replied. They cannot make arrangements of another tap as they are illegal inhabitants and do not have holding numbers; WASA would not provide them water line. Another source of water is those brought in by the females in the slums from the flats or apartments where they work as housemaids.

I continued my chats with many more men and women. Poverty compelled all of them to come to Dhaka city and their main problem in the slum is scarcity of water. Everyone blamed the government for their crisis of water. They are compelled to bathe in the dirty lake beside the slum which is responsible for their skin diseases. The lake is full of waste and the colour of the water is black. The rubbish of all types could be found there, left by people. There is no doubt that using this water even for bathing or washing cutleries can lead to serious health damage.

Figure 3. The Dirty Lake where the slum people bathe



"Everyday we quarrel and fight in the queue for collecting water..." one woman said. For these women, this

water collection wastes a lot of time of their whole day, which they could utilize more properly to earn more. They keep worrying whether they would get the water or not, what would they do if they do not get it etc. There are some petty-leaders in the slums who always have the right to fetch the water first. Many think that though the government sometimes wants to provide some facilities, the government employees distribute the money among themselves and the slum dwellers get nothing in the end. Corruption of the govt. employees is one of the main reasons of not getting basic rights- they think.

“They earn a lot of money through these slums...” one man said. Many come, take their photographs and interviews, but nothing changes. These people answered the questions indifferently and they are familiar with the fact that people (researchers, NGO/social workers, govt. employees) would continue to come and ask questions which they would write down in the paper and would leave.

Nevertheless, I found a man who had a bit different viewpoint. He thinks that, as they are not legal habitants, so they do not have the right to demand anything. Access to water cannot be their right, as they do not own lands, lives illegally on government lands and they have to arrange their own water by themselves.

Figure 4. Tube-well of another ward



Case Study-2 Shahajahanpur Slum

A bigger one in comparison to the ‘Khilgaon Slum’. Houses are not situated in a single row, but are scattered and divided in parts. In the middle, some old buildings are situated where middle class people live. I chose one part and started chatting with the people living in that part. They informed me that most of the females there work as housemaids in the flats nearby. The only source of water in that part is these houses. After finishing household chores in the flats, the female slum dwellers bring in water from the flats. They take bath there after work; sometimes they collect the water from the water tanks in the flats when it flows down due to excessive water flow.

Figure 5. The buildings from which the slum people collect water when the water tanks are overflowed



In another part, we found a dirty well from where people were collecting water. Though they do not drink the water, they use it for bathing and washing clothes and cookware. They collect the drinking water from a nearby mosque.

Figure 6. The Dirty well form which the slum-dwellers collect water



Most of the males are day labourers and females work as housemaids. We met some dwellers who have been living in that part of the slum since their childhood. One woman commented when they saw us, “We are fed up with these interviews...our names, birthplaces...writing down these things... so disgusting!..they say they will do this and that, but never do anything truly..” They said, in the past the water crisis was not this severe as there were less people. However, at present, a large number of people migrate from rural areas and reside in these slums which has deteriorated the situation. They described that some NGO workers came, enlisted their names,

took money from them and promised to provide a tubewell. “One year has passed...they never came back..no tubewell yet.” One middle-aged man stated.

Another part that we visited was a bit different from these parts. People that are more solvent live in this part. There is a tubewell surrounded by clean, tin shaded houses. The females living in this part are garments workers and therefore, they can afford to have a permanent source of clean water.

I found a queue of women in one part of the slum in front of a small pipe with narrow flow of water. The place is surrounded by containers. One woman said, “everyday we fight and quarrel for the water..” “Everyone wants to fetch the water fast as everyone has a hurry to go to work. Therefore, fights are obvious...” another said.

Figure 7. A pipe with a narrow flow of water from which the women collect water



The women said they keep their water pots around the pipe in the morning and after the water starts flowing, they collect water one by another. I saw a lot of water pots, buckets, utensils, bottles there and a lot of women waiting to collect water from a pipe with narrow flow of water which takes a lot of time to fill up one bucket or pot.

Figure 8. Water pots gathered around the pipe



In another part, we found some people very annoyed with the interviewers. They said that often people come

,ask them about their problems and take their photographs. They told us about some foreigners who came and visited their bathrooms. They promised to provide them some facilities but ultimately did nothing. They collect water from the buildings.

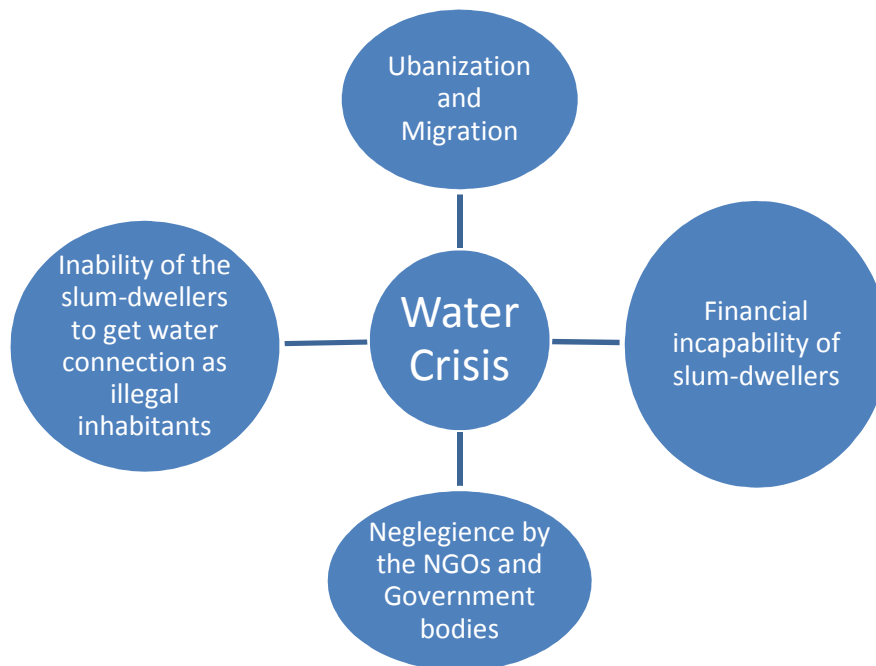
Discussion

Now let us focus on the research questions. The first research question was regarding the condition of water crisis in Dhaka city. Based on experiences in three slums, and also from the secondary data, it can be said that, water crisis is a common feature of every slum dweller living in Dhaka city. There are more than 1000 people in every slum in Dhaka city, and for all people there is one water tap or none. The slums I visited were no exception. In Khilgaon slum, there is one water tap for 2000 people of the whole slum. The Shahajahanpur slum is divided in various parts, and in some parts there is no arrangement of water for the houses of that part at all, and in one part there was found one deep well which contains dirty and unhygienic water. These people collect water from the buildings around which the slum-houses are situated, and where the female slum dwellers work as housemaids. Some also collect water from nearby mosques, some bribe the door attendants of the buildings to get water, and some collect the extra water that flow down from the water tanks of the buildings when the tank is full and the water overflows. In fact, there is no specific source of water for many of them. If they get enough water, they wash their clothes and take bath; otherwise, they do not do these essential works often. They just use the water for cooking and drinking. In some slums, they have to pay money for the repair of the tap or they have to buy water. Where there is a tap, the women in the slums everyday have to wait in a long serial in order to collect water from dawn to dusk. WASA never provides any water source here, as these are illegal habitations. The NGOs come and interview them, promise them to provide tube-wells, but never come back to keep those promises.

The dwellings in slums are tiny, paper and plastic made houses, where one cannot get rid of heat, rain or cold weather. The slum dwellers are deprived of all their basic rights- food, clothes, education, shelter and health care. Moreover, they do not have access even to water. Water is something we used to think as available forever to anyone in Bangladesh as it is known as a land of rivers. Nevertheless, the picture is now different, as water resources are no more available to all people in this country. These slum dwellers have to struggle day after day just to collect the drinking water, which is a must for survival. Water for other chores such as washing clothes and cutleries are not easy to get to, let alone water for bathing. The responsibility for collecting water is mainly on the females, who also work for the whole day in houses as housemaids, and then after coming back to home, she has to go to fetch water from water sources far from her house. This makes her life more difficult and if she fails to collect the water, her husband scolds or even tortures her. Payment for the repair of the water tap or for buying water falls as an extra burden on the slum people. Unhygienic water is responsible for skin diseases and abdominal diseases among these poor people living in slums. The treatment of these diseases also put unexpected economic pressure on them.

What are the factors leading to this water shortage? The general factors may be illustrated as the spread of urbanization, illegitimacy of the slums to get legal water sources, the financial incapability of the poor people to make an alternative arrangement of water, commercialization of water by the capitalist system and the negligence of the government and other organizations in the water shortage issue. Approximately 0.1 million people in Dhaka city reside in slums and these huge number of people has no access to water, let alone safe drinking water.

Figure 9. Causes of Water Crisis in Slums



Urbanization is one of the major social changes sweeping all over the world, especially in developing countries, where urban growth rates are rapidly increasing. Urbanization brings changes in the way of people's life- in the number of people they see in the places they were, and often in the quality of water they drink, the air they breathe, and the home in which they live. Such changes have profound impacts- both positive and negative for the health of city residents (Stephen, 1996: 87). Urban poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon. The urban poor live with many deprivations and their daily challenges include limited access to employment opportunities and income, inadequate and insecure housing, lack of access to safe drinking water, violent and unhealthy environments, little or no social protection mechanisms and limited access to adequate health and educational opportunities.

Water and Sewage Authority, WASA, is in charge of supplying sufficient and safe water for the urban population. People living in Dhaka city need city approval before they can collect water or connect to city water pipes. However, only those get the approval of using the city water who can provide proof of land ownership. As slum dwellers are illegal inhabitants, they have no legal access to city water. A problem for the urban poor is being deprived of secure land possession, especially in slums. Authorities of WASA are prohibited to provide services to slum people because of the fear that the services would be equal to supporting illegal settlement and would promote its growth.

In all countries, it is now obvious that water users should pay largely for the water they use and that the amount of payment is proportionate to water consumption. Due to this rule, water which was once a natural resource available for all has become the possession of only those who can afford to pay for it. Obtaining water through regular payment is absolutely impossible for slum people most of whom are day labourers. Therefore, they can never arrange for a water source for their financial incapability to pay for it.

Water scarcity has become an indispensable part of the people living in slums. From the very early morning, the women stand in queues for collecting water under the hot sun, and after collecting water, they go to flats or apartments for work. After coming back from work, again they have to go to fetch water. This stressful daily routine due to the water crisis has made the lives of slum people more miserable. In the queues, they sometimes fight and quarrel with one another, which have a negative impact on their social relations. Sometimes they have to walk a long distance for fetching water and the failure to bring in water leads to the tortures by husband or in-laws. The slum people sometimes have to buy the water or have to pay for the repair of the water, which falls as an extra economic burden on their lives. The power structure of the slums provide privileges to the petty-leaders selected by the political leaders or 'Mastaans'(terrorists) to get more water than others and to get the water first before everyone else gets it.

This is true that they are illegal residents but it is also true that they came to Dhaka city, as it was impossible for

them to survive in the villages. The government failed to implement policies for rural development that led to the underdevelopment of villages and unemployment of rural people. They were compelled to migrate to urban areas in search of work. Both the pull and push factors-including low incomes in rural areas, river erosion of agricultural areas and job opportunities in the city are main factors behind this rural-urban migration (Hossain, 2008: 21). Here their main work includes brick breaking, pulling rickshaws or vans and other types of day laboring. Majority of the females work as housemaids as well as brick breakers. Therefore, they cannot afford to live in buildings in urban areas. Slums are their last shelter where most of them build up the houses with paper and plastic by themselves. The government is totally responsible for their miserable lives, but it is also the government which make their urban life more miserable and hard, by attempting to evacuate the slums, claiming them as illegal; and therefore, by refusing them to provide the essential facilities like water, sanitation and security of life. The NGOs often visit these slums and they bring foreign visitors here in order to get a big donation from them. There are billion dollar projects on providing water and sanitation facilities to urban poor, but the beneficiaries of these projects are NGOs and social scientists; not the urban poor. It is the elite class and political leaders of the poor countries, the capitalists of the developed countries, the NGO workers and the intellectuals who would not let the problems regarding the urban poor be solved, because the 'business' which is going on by using slum-dwellers as the 'capital' would be ended if the problems get solved.

Recommendations

What is seen from the primary data is that these people living in slums left villages as the policies of government and NGOs regarding rural development failed to lessen acute poverty and they had to migrate to urban areas in search of work; and are now facing problems like scarcity of water in slum areas. Many NGOs as well as the human rights organizations are working or pretending to work for these slum dwellers. However, their main problem is that 'they live in slums'. Why do they live in slums? Because they cannot afford to live in better houses. They are poor and illegal habitants. However, it is the failure of the government that it could not provide better lives when they were in villages. Now the government is again neglecting the issue of providing them basic rights like housing, water and sanitation.

One solution to this problem is to make sure that the rural people stay in villages and lead a prosperous life there with the help of the government. The policies about rural development should not be kept only in papers, but those must be implemented. Another solution to the problem is the endeavor by the government to provide the slum dwellers alternative housing facilities as well as other basic rights, though it would be very expensive for a government of a poor country. However, some policies to allot a fixed sum of money for their rehabilitation after evacuation and for their basic rights, may solve the problem to some extent. Nevertheless, in order to get rid of the problem enduringly, the government must take steps that would have a long-term impact like creating employment opportunities in villages and taking initiatives to reduce rural poverty, which would make the rural people stay in their own villages and not to have a miserable life in slums, and also should plan in a way that would encourage urban poor to go back to their own villages to lead a better life. Then it would be easy for the government to rehabilitate fewer people in slums who from their birth are living in slums and to provide them all kind of facilities like water and sanitation.

It is now recognized that water must be affordable to all in order to ensure the right to drinking water. The Government of Bangladesh must make policies in line with this. It is a matter of astonishment that, the water policies of the GOB do not include any initiative about supplying water to urban poor. New policies must be prepared as well as implemented in order to improve the water situation in poor urban communities.

Conclusion

The slum people whom we interviewed expressed their hatred and anger towards the researches that are conducted on them and they are annoyed with the interviews and photo sessions. It does not matter that thousands of research projects or poverty eradication projects have already been undertaken for 'serving' the slum people. This trend would continue and more and more papers would be written by examining the slum people as 'guinea pigs' and more projects would be carried out for eradication of urban poverty. The donations would come in the name of help and the government officials and political leaders would distribute most of the donated money among themselves. Nevertheless, the central question is 'who gets what' by these initiatives and who are really 'benefitted'?

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