

# Integrated Approach to Slum Upgrading

Case of Benarosi Palli in Dhaka

Integrated Approach = Shelter upgrading + Poverty Alleviation

*Syed Monirul Islam*

Architect, Bashirul Haq & Associates Ltd.



*I am Syed Monirul Islam. I am an Architect. I completed my graduation from Khulna University, Khulna, Bangladesh in 1997. Since then I am engaged in professional practice; was working with eminent architect Bashirul Huq till 2003. After I had finished working with him, I am now working as a consultant architect in various private housing companies in Bangladesh*

Bangladesh has one of the highly dense populated urban areas. During 1947 India-Pakistan partition, giving a separate territorial recognition as East Pakistan, massive demographic shift occurred. Since then there is a persistent trend of migration from rural to urban seeking job opportunity. Currently having population of nearly 144 million, where 46.4 million live in urban areas, Dhaka (capital of Bangladesh), is mostly affected by the migration process. At present, the density has reached 18,055/square kilometer. But the crux of the whole urbanization process is the lack of proper development plan and controlled detailed area plan, which created almost 48.5% of the urban settlement as slum characterized by poor quality of construction and built environment. Amongst these slum developments, 45% people live below poverty level. This 'urban poor' have limited access to essential services, like, land and housing, health, education, water, sanitation, transportation and so forth. The most vulnerable situation is that they have little access to formal employment due to urban competition and lack of their ability to match with their capacity. Therefore, any poverty alleviation requires holistic approach, and this study aims to explore ways and opportunities to generate an Integrated Approach to Slum upgrading where shelter-based economic approach may likely to lower down poverty level, and allow them to access basic services. This is the major focus of this study and will bring in several action plans in order for urban managers to create pragmatic ways to shelter development.

## Description of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the dense urbanized countries, reaching 144 million in population. The total urban areas have 46.4 million populations, where 48.5% lives in slum and squatters. By the year 2010, total urban population will be 56.8 million. Among them 35% of people will live under poverty level. Almost all the people living in slums are poor. “The urban poor are the people who cannot afford to meet the basic needs, which include basic food and nutrition, clothing, primary health care, education and shelter.”

The question is why these urban slum dwellers have little access to the essential services like land and housing, health, education, water and sanitation, transport and so forth? The answer might be the rate of unemployment and the income.

In an integrated approach it should be the poverty alleviation policy that requires more attention. Therefore, in any upgrading programme of urban slum, poverty alleviation is one of the major areas of changes in order to solve other critical problems. However, the issue of poverty alleviation is very vast and persistent problem that needs pragmatic yet place-responsive solutions. The Urban Development Directorate (UDD), Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP), Centre for Urban Studies (CUS) and Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) identify some issues and recommended some programmes.

Due to persistent poverty, infant mortality rate is high reaching 60.83 deaths per 1000 live births each year. This affects the potential work forces to support the economic activities of the country in the long run. Moreover, this factor, coupled with other vital issues, such as, alternative production and stable political situation, makes lower GNP at \$220 per capita. As shelter situation is the best indicator of economic performance, given this GNP level, access to shelter is restricted for those who cannot afford. Also the poor economic situation and income inequality in the country is reflected in the quality of the housing stock. It was estimated that close to half of the all housing units in the country (3.3 million in 1993) were made of temporary materials and needed replacement within 1 to 5 year period.

Approximately 1/3rd of all the houses in the urban areas were constructed without formal regulatory system, especially in possessing the formal title. According to a survey conducted in 1993, Greater Dhaka showed that there were 2100 slums which comprised 3 million people. This situation also becomes worst due to the inability of

the government's service providers (Water, electricity etc.) to supply adequate and steady supply of essential services to these slum areas.

According to the National Housing Authority (NHA) of Housing and Public Works Department, objectives of 'Housing Policy 2005' is to provide permanent and adequate housing that is positively responsive to the norms and values of the society at large; considering the safety and socio-economic condition, and environmentally sound; and which will also highlight our heritage, culture and religion; and further help in poverty alleviation.

## Benarosi Palli

In particular study area, Benarasi Palli is a testimony to these scarcities of services and degraded shelter situation, which will be discussed in the following sections.

This study aims to touch upon several critical urban issues, such as, follows:

- Assessing the growth figure of the urban poor is prerequisite to any integrated approach to urban shelter development.
- The policies and programmes of the government in alleviating urban poverty need focused approach to reach the beneficiaries.
- Integrated programmes should cover infrastructure, housing, employment, education, health and family planning services and social recreation facilities.
- Formulating a national human settlement policy is vital to lowering poverty level.

### Aim and Objectives of the study:

Aim of the study is to understand:

- How "in house" income generation activities influence in poverty alleviation.
- How living space can be used as a working space, and how women, elderly and disabled people can involve in such income generating activities.
- How the living condition of the residents influence their income generating activities.
- The willingness and the capability of the residents to do any income generating activity.
- How can they overcome the existing problem and successfully face the poverty.

## Theoretical Basis: Residential areas should be places of work

In slum area most of the people related to informal employment. For them residential are may be a place of income generating activities. Especially for the women, who can do enormous amount of paid and unpaid works in house without going outside. Today men and women both are equally involved in the income generating activities. So that the residential area should be design in such way that can be used as a good living space as well as the working space also.

## Current Situation in Benarosi Palli

Back Ground “Banarosi palli” is a typical slum at Mirpur Dhaka. The people who live in this slum came Bangladesh after the separation of India and Pakistan in 1947 and started to live their. Their main profession is weaving ‘shari ‘.Now 80% people of this slum is poor. The existing problems of the area are poor shelter, poor sanitation and water supply, little access to utilities including education, health & recreation.

I think if the people can increase their income & alleviate the poverty level then the problem mentioned above can be solved. In case of “Banarosi Palli” the situation of the area should not be like this, because they are already involved in income generating activities.

In my study I tried to find out the reason of their poverty and tried to find out some guide line to alleviate the poverty level. “Banarosi Palli” is a very large slum. So for my study I select an area within the slum where live 200-225 families and each family has avg. six family members and each family has a house of two rooms (avg. 90sft-100sft).



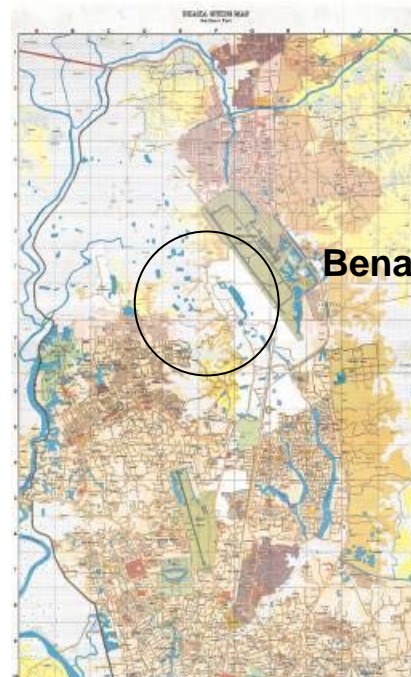
Figure 1: Space for Weaving Sari



Figure 2: Worker Decorating a Sari



Figure 3: Small Shop in the Slum



**Benarasi Palli**

Figure 4: Location of Benarasi Palli

The people of the slum are involved in different type's income generation activities such as:

- Most of the people are involved in weaving sari. (Almost 90%)
- There are some small shops.
- There are some small restaurants.
- There are some handicraft shops

#### Physical Condition of the Site:

Total area is developed without any plan and the road network and other infrastructure condition is very



Figure 5: Approach Road to Slum



Figure 6: Internal Road



Figure 7: Drainage and Sanitation



Figure 8: Individual House with Working Space

Access road of the area is unfinished and always covered with wastage materials. The width of the internal road is very narrow (hardly 6ft-7ft), which does not allow any vehicular access. (not even Fire Service). Due to complicated road network it is very critical to provide efficient utility service such as drainage, sewerage and sanitation. To accommodate a large number of people, Govt. allocate small plot to the people where they hardly have to manage their livelihood. But the people of the area habituate to work in the house. Because women is also involved in the paid work with the other house hold work. If the working space is far away from the living space the percentage of the working women will decrease. Now the people of the slum are avoiding their “in house income generation activities” concept because of

- There is no planned working space in the house. The environment of the house can not support them in production. Because it is not designed in that concept
- There exists an unhealthy and unhygienic environment due to lack of pure water & proper sanitation system, which is decreasing their working efficiency
- The infrastructure of the area is not good; especially the access road and the internal road cannot allow any visitor to the shops.



Figure:9 and 10: Congested Working and Living Spaces

And because of these situations the quantity and also the quality of the production going down. And as a result this income of the people is decreasing rapidly. The positive thing is that people of the area manage individual and communal scope to do income generation activities with in the community. They think a house as a possible ground of income generating activities. And this survival strategies and the way they use their house helps to generate and increase their income level.

## Scope and Limitations

**Location:** The location of the slum is not far away from the CBD So the site has potentiality to explore more.(from selling point of view). The multipurpose use of the space helps them to use the space more flexibly. And all member of the family can be engaged in the income generating activities. The residents have willingness & capacity and they understand the importance of such activities.

**Limitations:** The area is over dense, which is a factor in decreasing healthy environment as well as the production. As the area is near to the CBD Govt. and other private organization always trying to capture the land.The residents are dependent on the money of “Agent” (the third party between the producer and the buyer) for their machineries and other materials. Most of he residents do not have their own machine to weave sari. And other residents take advance money from the agents for their production. As a result they are bond to give their labor at low rate.

## Problem Identification

The case of Benarasi Palli indicates that there is a core problem of unregulated economic activities due to shelter problem that persisted at the outset of the settlement, which has been one of the key factors for growing poverty level. Benarasi Palli depends on the production and sale of sari (traditional clothes for women), which has established a tradition of its own but recently been unpopular due to several factors, such as,

- Unplanned & unhealthy settlement and its effects on their production work;
- Low production and failure to maintain quality leads to the lowering down market demand; (Low production due to lack of environment & spaces for income generating activities.)

- Lack of capital to buy machineries and raw materials.
- Govet’s apathy in integrated approach to reinstate their settlement in a pragmatic ways;
- Sense of transient livelihood that affects the new generation to maintain the tradition of Benarasi production.

All these factors lead to poverty in the study area.

## Proposal for Changes

Following is the change areas required to initiate an Integrated Approach to Slum Upgrade that will have catalytic effects on poverty alleviation in the long run.

Problem Identified	Areas required change
1) Unplanned settlement and its effects on their productive work	Policy regarding upgrading the settlement (government level)
2) Low production and failure to maintain quality leads to the lowering down market demand	New integrated settlement master plan addressing economic activities as key land use
3) Government’s apathy in integrated approach to reinstate their settlement in a pragmatic ways	Government’s policy by ways of establishing dialogue
4) Sense of transient livelihood that affects the new generation to maintain the tradition of Benarasi production	Community design addressing socio-economic integration among generations

### Methodology to improve the living condition of the residents

By generating master plan considering infrastructure, road network, and water supply, drainage and sanitation system.

Master plan should provide : Additional working space in single unit. So that it can be used in income generating activities.

Some cluster outlet within the community, so that they can sell their production directly to the buyer.



Providing some loan to the resident to start their individual production. So that they will not depend on the agent for the machineries and raw materials.

Some of their production is now old fashioned & decreased popularity. So it is need to upgrade their production to cope with the latest trend.

By discussing with relevant government officials at proposal level to device a mechanism for easy implementation of policy of integrating Benarasi settlement in urban area

By using detailed economic framework for revitalizing production and distribution mechanism

By using planning tools to integrate all above methods for a comprehensive approach to poverty alleviation.

## Action Plan

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- Providing some loan to the resident to start their individual production. So that they will not depend on the agent for the machineries and raw materials.
- Some of their production is now old fashioned & decreased popularity. So it is need to upgrade their production to cope with the latest trend.
- By discussing with relevant government officials at proposal level to device a mechanism for easy implementation of policy of integrating Benarasi settlement in urban area
- By using detailed economic framework for revitalizing production and distribution mechanism
- By using planning tools to integrate all above methods for a comprehensive approach to poverty alleviation.

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