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URBANIZATION PROBLEMS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

At present, countries all over the world are facing with the same issues and problems concerning environment, social, transportation, economy and many others in their respective cities. These issues which frequently occurred in developing countries are mainly caused by the discrepancy of development in cities and villages (Latif Fauzi, 2007). This imbalanced development between the urban and rural areas is believed to cause such issues and problems. Most countries have tendency to develop the city as the centre of government and business, rather than developing rural areas. As a result, the urban areas are equipped with infrastructure, public facilities as well as offered more job opportunities compared to the rural areas. This situation has attracted more people from rural areas to migrate and live in the city in order to get a job to improve their lives and eventually leads to many urbanization issues.

1. What is urbanization?

Urbanization has been defined by Nsiah-Gyabaah (u.d.) as the shift from a rural to an urban society which involves an increase in the number of people in urban areas during a particular year. Similarly, Gooden (u.d.) discussed urbanization as the migration of people in large numbers from rural to urban areas and occurs mainly because of the concentration of resources and facilities in towns and cities. Meanwhile, Reynolds (1989) defined urbanization as the development of the population and cities, so that higher proportion of population lives in urban areas. Generally, urbanization is closely linked to modernization, industrialization, and the sociological process of rationalization. Urbanization began during the industrial revolution, when workers moved towards manufacturing hubs in cities to obtain jobs in factories as agricultural jobs became less common (Materialism, u.d.). Urbanization is the outcome of social, economic and political developments that lead to urban concentration and growth of

large cities, changes in land use and transformation from rural to metropolitan pattern of organization and governance (Nsiah-Gyabaah, u.d.).

2. Factors of urbanization

There are several aspects which are believed to be the factors that lead to urbanization. According to Gooden (u.d.), the factors can be classified into three categories, namely, economic opportunities, proper infrastructure and utilities and availability of public facilities.

2.1 Economic opportunities

Most people believed that the standard of living in urban areas will be much better in urban areas (Vimala, u.d.). People believe that more job opportunities and a greater variety of jobs offered in the city rather than rural area. Besides, the income also will be higher.

2.2 Proper infrastructure and utilities

As been mentioned before, most countries all over the world are focusing on the development of major cities as the centre of government and business. As such, the cities will be definitely equipped with a better infrastructure and utilities such as roads and transportation, water, electricity and others. Apart from that, the communication and internet coverage also are good in the cities which are believed as one of the pulling factors of immigration.

2.3 Availability of public facilities

In addition to proper infrastructure and utilities, the cities also offered better public facilities which are not found in rural areas. Since a variety of public facilities such as health and education are provided in the cities, people have more options to choose either to use public or private. Furthermore, the provision of recreational area, postal services as well as police station and others are also provided to meet the needs of the urban community. Apart from that, a greater variety of entertainment namely restaurants, movie theaters and theme parks are definitely attracting more people to live in cities.

3. Urbanization Issues and Problems

Developing countries are experiencing a rapid growth in the urbanization. As a result of these, countries are faced with shortage of jobs. Unemployment rates rise as a result of causing people to apply for government-funded programs and benefits. "Businesses and governments cannot produce enough jobs to meet the demand of a fast-growing population" in developing countries.

The problems associated with urbanization are: High population density, inadequate infrastructure, lack of affordable housing, flooding, pollution, slum creation, crime, congestion and poverty.

3.1 HIGH POPULATION DENSITY

This problem of high population density is caused due to the heavy rate of migration from rural areas. The rapid population growth has led to an acute shortage of dwelling units which resulted to; overcrowding, traffic congestion, pollution, housing shortages (slum and squatter housing), high rents, poor urban living conditions, low infrastructure services, poverty, unemployment, and poor sanitation which has become pervasive and indeed high crime rate. All of these have an effect on the high population density in developing countries.

3.2 INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURES

One major serious aspect of the urban problem is the poor state of the infrastructures. Some developing countries are still faced with bad road network, lack of power supply, inadequate water supply and some basic amenities.

3.3 LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Lack of affordable housing has led to confrontations with well – organized squatters, who take over unoccupied buildings to live rent- free or prevent demolitions. Which has brought about, lack of housing vacancy rate, due to the rapid job growth and housing costs that has increased. Problems such as insufficient housing, especially particular for low – income families, are being faced, which resulted in overcrowding of already congested areas, the continuing deterioration of rundown neighborhoods, high social cost and untold personal misery. Measures proposed to offset rising costs in public housing include, less exclusionary zoning regulations, reduced tax burdens, cooperation with the private builders, Encouragement of cooperative housing organization, promotion of industrialized building techniques, Use of low- cost building materials and cheaper mortgage credit.

3.4 FLOODING

Flooding is a very serious problem faced in urban areas, especially in developing countries, during the rainy seasons. The drainage is poorly constructed leading to difficulty in accessing the roads due to the flood leading to the flood disaster in some developing countries.

3.5 CREATION OF SLUM

The growth of slums in cities is one of the serious problems created by the rapid industrialization and urbanization. The following projects are introduced to eliminate slums in urban societies; extensive slum clearance, rehabilitation and rebuilding, slum improvement scheme, construction of a network of expressways to alleviate urban decay and ensure the future propensity of the central areas, relocation of inhabitant to the suburb, slum upgrading scheme which makes provision of some basic amenities such as street lights, drainage, and accessible roads.

3.6 CRIME

The increase in population leads to an increase in crime rate. Due to the high level of urban unemployment, idleness and joblessness, this has brought about a high increase in crime rates suffered by the majority of the people in Urban cities. "Without economic security and amid poor living conditions, crime is inevitable"

3.7 CONGESTION

It could be in traffic and overcrowding. In traffic, there is an overcrowding of a route, leading to slow and inefficient flow which makes movement difficult. Large increases in motor vehicle usage have resulted in congestion on the roads. Congestion within urban areas restricts accessibility. Traffic flow could be controlled by various rules, regulation and signs which are used to keep traffic flow smoothly. The traffic flows help to avoid collisions and other hazard.

Conclusion

As been discussed before, urbanization frequently occurred in developing countries due to the eagerness of the government to achieve a developed city status. As a result, almost all area in the city has been developed and in the worst-case scenario, even the green areas are also turned into industrial or commercial area. It shows that rapid urbanization has many negative implications especially towards social and environmental aspects. The government should not be eagerly to develop a city or nation without considering the impacts towards the social and environmental aspect. Instead, the government should revise the urban development process in order to achieve a developed city and at the same time reduce the possibility of problems that might arise.