

DISPLACEMENTS IN THE NAME OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT; PERSPECTIVES FROM KARACHI

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ABSTRACT: *The cities of emerging economies and developing neighborhoods employ large sums of investment for infrastructure upgrades and development schemes. The improvement of the built environment and land use raises the socio-economic status of cities. However, these developments add to the stresses on economically marginalized settlements survival, livelihoods, and security of shelters. The fact exacerbates the uprooting and replacement of informal settlements, which are technically termed internally displaced populations" (IDPs, through so-called 'compensation proposals' in the name of urban development. These displacements, as 'by-products' of development projects, are often justified as being in the public interest; however, they are generally devoid of prospects for durable solutions and inclusive approaches to resettlement for the affected. Taking into account the massive urban development of Karachi and managing the basic needs of a vulnerable population, the impacts of neo-liberal doctrine on the development process would be worthwhile to examine. The policies of neoliberalism are associated with austerity, privatization, the free market, and a reduction in government spending on social programs; they also emphasize minimal state intervention in economic and social affairs. Neoliberalism, as a useful concept, connects large-scale urban development projects and the production of residential spaces using entrepreneurial opportunities with the reformation of the welfare state. Karachi, as one of the fastest-growing cities in the Global South, has several evidences of displacements and evictions, from large-scale infrastructure upgradation projects to money-intensive housing schemes for certain social classes. The resettlement proposals are offered to displacing communities with no choice and have several severe compromises. The internal displaced population (IDP) with diverse needs and vulnerabilities encounters limited and difficult access to livelihoods, loss of education for children, long distances from recreation, health facilities, and other services, inadequate housing and tenure security, broken social and cultural life resulting in psychological repercussions of disruptive lives, and broken homes, to name a few of the mentions. The inappropriate policies, weak urban governance, and cumbersome regulatory systems are not efficiently capable of counterbalancing the relocation and resettlement of displaced populations, perpetuating physical and mental stresses that eventually lead to urban poverty. It is then significant to underpin the cumulative impacts of internal displacements by analyzing case studies as evidence and people's lived experiences through field investigations conducted by several scholars as research methodology. Based on facts and humanitarian grounds, it is essential to formulate norms and ethics for relocation and displacement as novel practices in urban development. **Research Objective:** The development projects in Karachi usually target the upper strata of society. The objective of a development or planning exercise is primarily based on certain socio-political interests, profit, and real estate investment. Subsequently, in Karachi, the most recent case studies supplementing evidence, impacts, and repercussions of internal displacements for mega development projects are the Lyari Expressway (LEW), Karachi Circular Railway (KCR), and Gujjar Nullah extension. The displacement of people from their settlements has short- and long-term impacts on their lives. This research aims at identifying why development projects induce displacement and eviction, as well as the different impacts of urban displacements on livelihoods, physical and mental health, education, the environment, housing and infrastructure, security, and social and cultural life of IDPs residing under the jurisdiction of these urban development projects. The corresponding methodology can be worthwhile if it thoroughly investigates the population affected by major or minor displacement, even if the population never experienced displacement. The research methodology is based on examining the two aforementioned case studies, Lyari Expressway (a mega project of elevated transit expressway) and Gujjar Nullah (a small water stream) extension projects, along with field investigations conducted by scholars to analyze the need and repercussions of displacement on people's entire lives.*

Key Words: Displacements, IDPs, Urban Infrastructure Development, Informal Settlements, Neo-liberalism

1. INTRODUCTION

Urban Development

Urban development through infrastructure upgrades (roads, bridges, flyovers, mass transit solutions, and water supply and sewerage systems) ensures improved access, growth, and development of cities. Urban development projects, indeed, foster economic prospects and enhance urban character. These development projects are conceived by 'planning, which has an established role in preparedness. The evolution and emerging approaches of planning expertise encompass responses to open lands as well as revitalization of land in use. The development projects under the domain of urban planning, in response to the needs and demands of the city, require evaluation through criteria as mentioned by [5].

1. The ecology of the area of the city in which projects are proposed should not be damaged.
2. The land use of the project should be determined on the basis of social and environmental considerations rather than on the basis of land value alone.
3. The needs of the majority of the population should be catered to.
4. The tangible and intangible cultures of the communities living in a city must not be damaged by the proposed projects

Since urban development principles and practices should cater to the majority of the population, which in the case of Karachi comprises 62% of low-income settlements, new extensions or relocations, although financially basic or sufficient, must be planned and structured with feasibility and the willing acceptance of the people. It is the state's

responsibility to facilitate people's acquisition of adequate houses for their survival. In case of the state's failure to fulfill this basic need, people who cast their dwellings are to be helped for survival with alternatives that minimize displacement and reduce negative impacts on people's lives or propose better sustainable solutions in case of necessary resettlement or relocation for development tasks of futuristic prospects or due to a natural hazard.

Neo-Liberalism in Urban Development

The ideology of Neoliberalism gained wider acceptance in the late twentieth century and was subsequently followed by many states and institutions that practiced it. Peck & Tickell [20] summed up neoliberal doctrine as a market solution to virtually all economic and social problems. Neoliberalism is a framework encapsulating the theory of political economy that promotes the concepts of freedom, justice, and well-being by promoting private property, an open market, and free trade through a state-powered political economic system. Sager [15] opined on Neo-liberalism as a restructuring of the relationship between private capita owners and the state, which rationalizes and promotes a growth-first approach to urban development. Within this political role of the neoliberal city, urban elites and private agents play a key role in the decision-making process [11].

Neoliberalism, as an effective role in urban governance, has accounted for entrepreneurial ventures in the urban development of cities by the local government. This shift in urban government has been spotted in Karachi as well. As mentioned by Hasan [6], government policies in Karachi have responded to neoliberalism by promoting the real estate sector for the elite and middle-income classes. An example can be found in the densification of the inner city by permitting high-rises to extract maximum value out of land. The same doctrine can be applied to mega-infrastructure projects. In entrepreneurial cities, in addition to the widespread production of residential space, another way of producing space and transforming the city is to use other mechanisms that "open up" the city and attract financial capital, such as the construction of what are known as large-scale urban development projects (LSUDP) and mega-projects [11]. Taking into account the massive urban development of Karachi and fulfilling the needs of the residents, this methodology ensures that cities lead to development and prosperity. Sager [15] further emphasized the doctrine of neoliberalism as a mobilizer of urban spaces as an avenue of market-oriented economic growth and elite consumption practices; thus, the political-economic setting is transformed for implemented public plans and projects.

Displacements

Forced displacements and evictions are a harsh reality practiced to materialize infrastructure and housing schemes for urban development in cities. The World Bank report of 2018 mentioned forced displacements as an increasingly urban crisis that requires an integrated approach to humanitarian and development objectives in towns and cities. Displacement has been defined as the "forced movement of people from their locality or environment and occupational activities" (unesco.org.2019) caused by numerous factors such as armed conflict, natural disasters, economic fluctuations, and development.

In Karachi, the major cause of displacements is the development of housing and infrastructure typologies that depend on land status and administrative instances for actions of displacement to be negotiated or forced and compensated or uncompensated. Nunez et al. [13] stated that contexts with poorly functioning administrative systems often practice displacements. Historical injustices and structural inequalities shape a person's capacity for resilience in the face of displacement [2]. With a long history of evictions and displacements, the city of Karachi has experienced ever-increasing growth, both formal and informal. In a research study by Ashfaq et al. [2], it was mentioned that the first major uprooting of an informal settlement of migrants from India took place in 1958 from the area designated for Jinnah's tomb. Shahana Rajani in an interview by Ashfaq et al. [2] informed about the aforementioned research that these evicted people were simply unceremoniously moved without any compensation or support of infrastructural provision.

There is no global estimate of the scale of displacements associated with development projects; however, Anwer et al. [1] estimated that approximately 600,000 people have been displaced from their homes due to infrastructure and development projects in Karachi. These displacements, at times, are a consequence of inappropriate choice of projects, narrow directional design, and rigid implementation procedures [3]. As a matter of fact, the population most vulnerable to displacements is the lower-income strata of society. The extreme situation arises with forced evictions without any compensation or resettlement plan; however, the government offers compensation or relocation promises for regularized settlements that are not fully materialized. The forms of uprooting people from their settlements by city administration for development tasks are through two actions: 1) displacement through forced evictions with or without prior notification to informal settlements (unauthorized katchi abadis) 2) displacements with resettlement plans or compensation for affected communities in regularized areas. A third category is for those who remain in uncertainty and are under threat of eviction. Anwer et al. [1] evaluated the past two decades and found that barely 33% of low-income residents forcibly evicted in Karachi have received any form of resettlement site and/or cash compensation as support for rebuilding their livelihoods.

The displaced people are relocated or they opt to settle in precarious conditions on the city fringes, which results in rapid unplanned urban growth as homes are extended and new ones are built without access to urban services. Ghaus and URC [4] stated that these evictions and relocations affect the population in such a way that they make them poorer in social, political, and economic terms, as well as having a long-term negative impact on their future generations. Younus [18] stated that forced evictions with multiple implications on the lives of poor communities are not only about losing a home and livelihood; this action is responsible for the entire wellbeing of the community, which may indulge in antisocial and anti-state activities with negative psychological impacts in the minds and hearts of poor communities.

Besides development projects, in cases of displacement requirements, it is essential to propose planned city

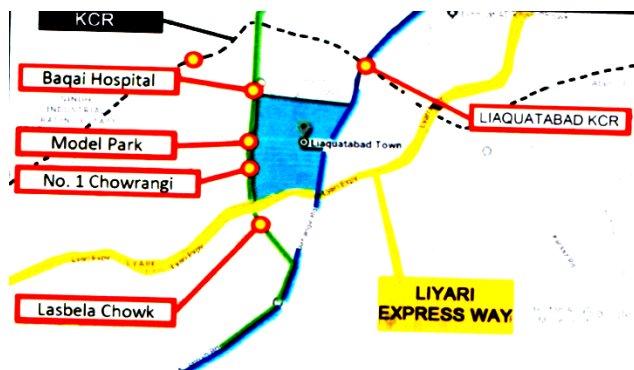
extensions with sustainable urban planning principles, well-functioning street networks, adequate densities, and spaces for public amenities. Investments made in planned extensions are beneficial not only to the IDP community but also to the city itself; the development of infrastructure, shelter, schools, and health facilities, even if initially temporary, can be incrementally improved over time [13]. It is thus essential to examine the implications of urban displacements for formulating better policies and novel practices.

In Karachi, the massive displacements for mega projects became crises as the local government lacked pre-planning and adequate resources to address the situation clearly. Three cases of mega projects, namely Gujjar Nullah, Karachi Circular Railway (KCR), and Lyari Expressway (LEW), and several housing schemes by developers on lands containing informal settlements have experienced forced displacements and evictions. To examine the act of displacement and evictions, two cases have been examined below to address the root cause of displacement and its repercussions, along with possible alternatives that could reduce the loss of people.

The Case of Lyari Expressway

Lyari Expressway is a 38-kilometer-long high-speed road project. The area under the Lyari Expressway was home to

Map of Lyari Expressway. PC: CED Report, Batch 2013-14, Architecture Department, NED University



Encroachments Drive for Lyari Express way (Source: Pakistan Today, June 16, 2017)

Vulnerabilities after Displacement

During the resettlement phase, due to a lack of funding, houses were not complete; many people rented a house in

Goths of Sindhi and Baloch communities settled in the 19th century and Bangali, Pathan, and Punjabi migrants of post-Independence time. Anwer et al. [1] speculated that the number of people displaced by the construction of LEW was around 200,000. A resettlement plan aimed at housing 30,000 people with improved settlement and tenure security This plan consisted of relocating families to 3 locations with 27,302 allotments: Hawksbay scheme 42 (5,557 housing units), Taiser Town scheme 45 (19,306 housing units), and Baldia Town scheme 29 (2,439 housing units) [4]. The Hawks Bay Relocation Site, with under-construction development works in a barren area, was offered as a resettlement location for the majority of displaced people. Meanwhile, infrastructure services such as water, sewerage, roads, and schools were in the process of being executed within a time span of 6-7 years. A research study by Hasan and Younus (2004) summed up the repercussions of demolishing the settlements along Lyari Bed as follows:

Residents of unauthorized settlements would not be entitled to land ownership as per the resettlement plan.

All residents will receive no more than 80 square yards of plots, even if they have previously had larger plots.

The substantial market value of the people's properties was nullified.

The majority of residents were closer to their work places and relatives.

Some residents were earning money from their premises through rent or operating shops from their homes.

Children could commute to their primary and secondary schools by walking.

Health facilities were nearby.

Infrastructure services like water, electric, gas, telephone, and sewerage connections were readily available.

The people opted to move, as on refusal they could lose the compensation (an 80-square-foot plot and 50,000 rupees) offered by the government for them. This compensation was for 30,000 people out of an official record of 80,000 displaced people, so 33% of people received compensation that was not adequate to build a house; the rest were homeless.

another locality, a few lived with relatives, and a few spent nights under the stars. After completion of construction, a few affected people acquired two-room houses; the rest had

to accommodate in one-room houses. The social life was discontinued because it was distant from relatives and a known community neighborhood. Transport was not available after 10 p.m., and transport charges also increased with travel time and long distances. Due to the absence of a piped water connection, water had to be purchased from tankers. A solid waste management system was lacking. Due to the absence of a gas connection, cylinders had to be purchased for cooking. School and healthcare facilities were distant. Many children were disconnected from education. The existing school and health center were lacking adequate and professional staff because they were far from the city. Markets and commercial centers were also quite distant and difficult to approach. Employment was majorly affected, with many having to quit their jobs. Employment and livelihood opportunities were scarce nearby. The dislocated commercial and industrial units did not receive any compensation. They intended to shift to nearby settlements, thus further congesting the settlements.

Less Harmful Alternative Proposals

A number of academics and planners opined that the Lyari Expressway was not a necessity. Alternatives could have been proposed with the design of the expressway to be curtailed with the width of the river so that the road could pass within the flood plain by reducing demolitions by less than a quarter. Also, Hasan and Younus [5] proposed that embankments could be proposed at appropriate places to protect settlements from flooding and could be regularized later. A few changes in laws could prevent massive displacement and suffering.

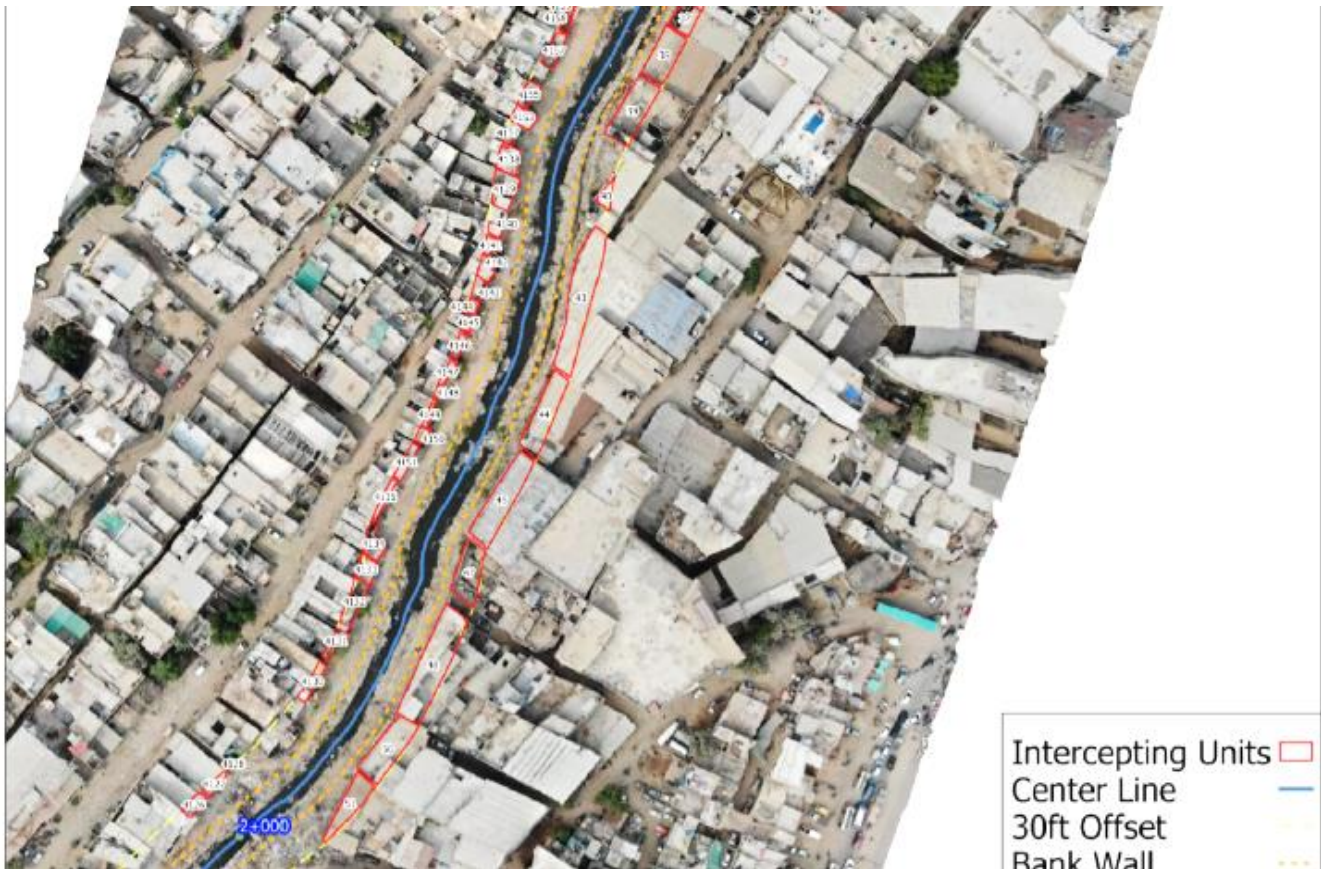
The Case of Gujjar Nullah

Gujjar Nullah is a small stream that flows through Karachi from the northeast to the center and merges with the River Lyari, which ultimately connects to the Arabian Sea. The overall length of this nullah is 8294 ft., with a varied width of up to 40 ft. Three settlements residing along the banks of Nullah are Kausar Niazi Colony, Sadiq Nagar, and Qayyumabad, which have been subjected to an anti-encroachment drive since 2016 by the Sindh Government to clear up the natural drainage and improve the overall urban infrastructure. The entire city was suffering from poor rainwater drainage, and the city dwellers saw choked-up nullahs overflow and swamp the city. The initial proposal was to widen the Nullah and construct a 30-foot-wide road along both of its banks. In response to that sewage problem and urban flooding, houses all along the Gujjar nullah bank had to be knocked down by the authorities, which were subsequently supported by the Pakistan Supreme Court as well. The judgment ultimately legalized the whole process of forced eviction.

Instead of a door-to-door survey, a Global Navigation Satellite System survey was conducted to obtain aerial images of houses required to be demolished for the purpose

of extension. Based on the survey conducted for the compensation proposal, Karachi Bachao Tehreek (KBT) identified several loopholes in the survey and a gap in clarifying the actual need basis to evict people and construct a roadway on both sides of Nullah. Houses along the banks of Nullah were declared encroachments; however, the survey revealed 36 out of 80 households to be leased properties [14]. The lease issuing institutions were found to be the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), Karachi Development Authority (KDA), and Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority (SKAA). There are no municipal plans, and the site location was designated for resettlement and rehabilitation of Gujjar Nullah residents; however, KMC (Karachi Metropolitan Cooperation) promised to give 360,000 rupees in rent compensation for 2 years until IDPs are able to acquire an adequate housing solution for them. The survey and interviews also revealed that the same ID was allotted to multiple entities, and multiple IDs were allotted to the same entity as per faulty data entry in the record system. The land price and house building costs were not included in the compensation package. Moreover, the majority of residents who had not acquired a lease were not subject to any compensation; therefore, they will have to counter the vulnerability of homelessness. Based on our survey, an estimated 12,789 women and 20,980 children will be affected, along with 2058 elderly people above the age of 65 [14]. Out of the total number of people affected, an estimated 30,609 (64.4%) will be completely homeless [14].

The aerial image of the technical survey revealed a bank wall of orange dotted lines depicting the width of the nullah that requires restoration and a 30-foot offset wall of yellow dotted lines for road construction along the Gujjar Nullah. The map indicated that no house was in Nullah's right-of-way. This revealed that the anti-encroachment drive was not to restore Nullah but to pave a 30-foot-wide road along both sides of Nullah. The motivation for constructing this road has not been clarified by the government. It was speculated that it would ultimately transform the land use of the area with increased land value for real estate prospects. It was also mentioned in the KBT report that KMC issues letters to respective authorities to cancel leases of residents along Gujjar Nullah for a national cause project, which can be interpreted as serving the public. In other cases, if residents along this nullah are prone to flooding hazards due to heavy rainfalls, the Human Rights Act states to relocate people with an adequate housing solution and guarantee that no one will be homeless. However, for genuine reasons, under the Land Acquisition Act (LAA), the land is reclaimed with a comprehensive, adequate resettlement plan for the affected. In such cases, it is also required to release an environmental impact assessment report. Both of these were lacking in this case.



Gujjar Nullah Right of Way and settlements. Picture Credits: Karachi Bachao Tehrik Report, (2020)

Vulnerabilities of eviction

In 2021, 344 houses near the Gujjar Nullah were erased in an anti-encroachment drive to clean the Nullah on Supreme Court orders. UN expert Mr. Balakrishnan Rajagopa (Special Rapporteur on adequate housing) stated for halting evictions of Gujjar Nullah: "We are also extremely worried that intimidation and unlawful detention have allegedly been used on numerous occasions against residents protesting the demolitions and even against their allies, human rights defenders," the experts said. "This raises additional concerns about access to justice and remedies for those concerned. However, after demolitions, it is evident that the Nullah still stinks with trash, and a cleaning process still needs to be initiated.

People spend their entire life's earned savings on acquiring a shelter. In an interview with Arab News, it was informed by Adil, a father of five children, that "I purchased a plot with Rs 125,000 (\$784), which was my life savings. I constructed this house over many years, getting all the utilities legally, but now I'm told it's illegal." A check of 90,000 rupees was given for a period of 6 months, which didn't give sufficient time to search for a home. The check also took a few weeks to cash while they had to survive on their own.

Another resident, Matina Iqbal, responded to an interview by Arab News, saying, "I had a one-room house; they razed it.

"Where will we go? We don't know. "This is a city of utter chaos and lawlessness," says Maria. "They had also come to bulldoze our homes in 2016. Our Tayyababad home used to have six rooms, and they demolished two rooms in the front, saying that there was going to be nullah cleaning and that we had exceeded our limits. Maria and her family accepted this and started living in the now four-room residence. But years went by, and no nullah cleaning took place [6].

The poor families live under a constant threat of eviction without any resettlement or relocation options. This uncertainty and fear of homelessness affect the physical as well as psychological wellbeing of people. The constant state of housing insecurity bearing legal sanctions negatively impacts our sense of safety, home, and community. Families who suffer an eviction-catalyzed relocation are more likely to suffer material hardship, report depressive symptoms, be in poor health, move frequently, and move to neighborhoods with higher poverty and crime [8, 9, 10]. Both the displaced and the host communities suffer from the worst conditions in housing, health, security, livelihoods, and education. This halts their ability to contribute to local economies through earning and spending, thus investing in the socioeconomic development of the country.



Heavy machinery clears illegal settlements along the Gujjar Nullah drain in Karachi, Pakistan, on February 18, 2021. (Picture Credits Arab News)

Physical, Social and Economic Impacts of Eviction

1. It worsened the overall living condition of these families and further deprived them economically.
2. A drastic transformation in the demographic composition of neighborhood areas.
3. Increased social ills and socio-political issues for the whole city, especially areas within walking distance.
4. Further escalating the sentiments of anti-government.
5. The residents with their long association with the land heavily rely on their location for economic means.
6. The residents who don't have CNIC are not eligible to any sort of monetary compensation provided by the government.
7. The amount provided by the government is not sufficient for the family as many of them lost their livelihood due to eviction.

Less Harmful Alternative Proposal

As it was mentioned in report by KBT that houses were not crossing the limits of Nullah's right of way therefore there was already sufficient space for Nullah extension and cleaning operation. Since objective of road construction along Nullah banks was not clear therefore even if it was essential, the land could be reclaimed under LAA Land Acquisition Act and the settlers of area could be safely relocated as per laws to be less harmful with minimum loss to livelihoods and shelters for the poor.

The Norms and Ethics of Relocation and Displacement

The resettlement plan is significant not in terms of compensation but as an extension or growth of urban development which has been targeted for another urban development. Solutions for displaced people and vulnerable groups in urban areas often require significant strengthening or reform of the land administration system (Nunez et.al, 2020). A framework and methodology on data collection and analysis of accurate and disaggregated data as evidence are a pre-requisite for effectively managing urban displacement policies and its implementation.

Basic Conditions

1. A strong partnership between development authorities and those concerned with displacement can be established before initiating an urban development project that requires displacements/ relocation of settlements. It should be mandatory for local authorities/ development actors (equipped with political, administrative and operational capabilities) to organize consultation with experts, academicians, practitioners, local NGOs, host community leaders and representatives from targeted communities to discuss opportunities, threats and possible outcomes of the development project intended and resettlement plans if required. Involvement of affected population at each and every stage should be mandatory.
2. The affected communities should have right to discuss and elaborate an alternative project proposed after collaboration with some NGO or academic institution.
3. A due consideration, with profound respect for human rights, to right of freedom of expressing views and opinions must be given.

Avoiding Displacements

4. The proposals/ devised strategies must be prioritized with reduced or minimal requirement of uprooting or displacement of local settlements as per international human rights standards.
5. A department addressing the grievances of settlement to be displaced must be active with capacity to listen and respond with durable solutions for displaced population.

Preventive Measures

6. A mapping exercise must be conducted to document direct or indirect affecters. Identify most vulnerable as segregated from community on priority basis. Secondly, indirect affecters subjected to those having access to resources in their vicinity for attainment of livelihood, residing near construction site or living near resettlement sites should be considered.

7. For requisite of any development project, before initiating planning, there must be an exercise of evaluating the needs, benefits, impacts on lives and livelihoods and alternatives through 'Displacement Impact Assessment' with comprehensive analysis of repercussions of displacement or resettlement in addition to lived experiences of internally displaced people in past. It must encapsulate economic impacts through livelihoods, social and cultural aspects through examining pre-existing relationships, community interactions and living conditions and psychological and health impacts due to trauma and loss of services of health, education and recreation.

During Displacement

8. People should be assisted leaving their homes and moving to the resettlement site by providing transportation and cost of travel.
9. People assets and possessions should be safeguarded during relocation process.
10. A reasonable time should be informed before demolishing operation for preparedness.

After Displacement

11. Resettlement proposal should be for all affecters with better or equal quality of housing.
12. IDPs as right holding citizens and human rights acts must be provided with housing, land and property rights and resources irrespective of gender discrepancy, cast, race, religion or any discrimination.
13. Basic services, such as water, sewerage, electric, gas, telephone connections with health, commercial and education facilities must be a basic requisite for any resettlement proposal.
14. There must be jobs and livelihood opportunities for the relocated people.
15. Protection and access to justice for access to basic services, right to work, housing and access to banking is also a basic right for IDPs.
16. Communities should be empowered through medical and psychological assistance along with technical and social rehabilitation policies for participatory planning and promoting community development.

2. CONCLUSION

Internally Displaced people are those unfortunate people who are on the run in their own country. These peoples are struggling on so many fronts, with no permanent location. The overall economic, physical, social, political, psychological and emotional impact of displaced population is far beyond the studies, many of the IDPs still experience significant hurdles in their efforts to keep the displacement acceptable to a certain extent or towards a sustainable end. The impact of displacement ultimately challenged their welfare and security. As IDPs are evacuated from their homes/ land and hence separated from their properties, livelihoods and social networks, their ability to earn a living has been compromised greatly.

In case of Karachi, the competition for scarce and limited

resources leads to anger among the local population towards newcomers, thereby fueling social tensions. Thus, the struggle for housing for all is escalating, and the poorest population groups are being pushed to the periphery or fringes of the cities. This is the high time to further develop laws related to land ownership and tenure, moreover provide similar institution /state support for all social classes.

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