

Urban Renewal in Favour of Poor People At Historic Centre of Shiraz City

[Neda Rafiee and Mohammad Reza Emtehani]

Abstract: The total area of Shiraz city is 18622.79 ha of which the central area of Shiraz city is 375.82 ha is being deteriorated. The Deteriorated central areas in Shiraz city is located in historical and cultural texture, so these places are full of historical monuments and it has its own urban heritage and cultural identity but now its historical, economic and cultural identity is in threat of blighting. Renewal our city is the penalty for neglect and irresponsible civic management with negligent urban housekeeping allows obsolescence to spread. It causes sickness, crime delinquency, traffic, death and injury. We not only need to defend our standard of living, we need to achieve it. The necessity for government to give its assistance has been clear and it is evident that private enterprise, unaided, is not able to provide an adequate supply of satisfactory housing to meet the wise variations in the income levels of all the people.

Historically, urban renewal of old or inner-city areas of Shiraz city was addressed through urban revitalization initiatives, which focused mainly on housing repair, reconstruction and rehabilitation of infrastructures. In this paper we are discussing, analyzing and criticized on two different urban renewal approaches (“Eradication and Relocating” and “ Clearance and Redevelopment”) which have done currently in the central area by the Municipality and the Urban Development & Revitalization Organization of Shiraz city. Finally the best appropriate approach and proposition to renewal and revitalize of central area of Shiraz city will propose which it is based on consideration, analysis and assessment of two current urban renewal initiatives. The general approach and recommendation to tackle urban poverty in the historical centre of Shiraz city is three-pronged that all these three prongs are in favour of poor people.

Keywords: Urban renewal, blighted area, Eradication, relocating, clearance, redevelopment, upgrading, Shiraz city.

I. Introduction

Shiraz has developed haphazardly over the years especially from 1966 up to now, the health of central area of Shiraz city can be tested on the basis of quality of civic life and status of urban property.

The quality of civic life declined due to high density of population, pressure on urban land and resources, increasing of land uses prices, and at the same time, inadequacy of community services, their poor maintenance and expansion of Shiraz city toward the north west of city(gardens with better climate) and appearance of new competitive commercial centres in new developed area of city, led to the migration of affluent people to the suburbs and migration of the rural people to the inner city, and loss of urban gravity in the central area arising out of the shift of socio-economic, political and administrative functions to the other parts of the Shiraz city. Based on High Council for Urban Planning and Architectural (HCUPA) of Iran definition, blighted areas are urban blocks that at least 50% of their areas have these three following characteristics all together: a) Lack of stability b) Problems with accessibility c) Tiny plots. The central area of Shiraz city has the all three mentioned factors plus factors like the old age of buildings, dysfunctions of the area, lack of financial soundness of the civic body, heavy traffic, and low urban infrastructure per capita which determine the health of central area of Shiraz city. The neglect of these factors would contribute to urban decay,(Shahro Khaneh Consulting Engineers, 2007). This paper begins with a brief review on the two approaches adopted towards historical buildings, sites and central area of Shiraz city. It then discusses the challenges faced in revitalising historic districts by these two approaches. This is followed by the appropriate approach and some ideas on what should be the focus for renewal efforts if they want to be sustainable in the long term for the urban poor. The paper summarises the advantages of the proposed approaches which might contribute the success of such interventions and concludes by pointing towards the works that still remains to be done.

Map 1. Land Use in Central Area of Shiraz City, 2003



Source: Pardaraz Consulting Engineers, 2004.

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II. Review of literature

Henrik Gutzon Larsen and Anders Lund Hansen (2008) has stated about urban renewal policies and socio economic transformations in Copenhagen. The municipality's aim was to prevent the dislocation of poor people from the neighbourhood but because of ambiguous policies, the workings of the property market and the lack of sufficient deflecting mechanisms, middle class inhabitants are now replacing. Edith Elmer Wood (2006) has stated about the economic effects of slums and blight. The economic situation becomes unsound, the cost of the new areas is added taxes increase, but the total number of tax payers' has not increased. On the other hand the partly abandoned blighted district cannot pay its share of the economic burden! Solution can only gain through making the blighted areas attractive and a place to live in for the low income groups of workers who already reside there and perhaps for some others of slightly higher earning power who may be drawn back nearer their work when living conditions improve. Reinout Kleinhans (2004) has indicated the social implications of housing diversification in urban renewal. He provides the actual consequences of diversification in Great Britain and the Netherlands fine issue has been identified such as housing quality and area reputation, neighbourhoods based social interactions, residential attitudes towards social mix, the role model effect and problem dilution the review shows ambivalent results that necessitate modest expectation and it is because of unclear policy goals and policy terms and also vagueness about the relevant spatial level.

Hugh O. Nourse (1966) has studied about the economics of urban renewal. He points out the purpose of the urban renewal program which is removing slums and improving housing and the economic justification for the program is that social benefit from the programs would improve values and increase local taxes but if urban renewal program want to apply for poor people, it doesn't cause the increasing land or property values. Sustain peter – UN – Habitat – Succi – Cupa – Tudidco (2006) has pointed out Jawaharalal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) should provide these following elements to be integrated in the process of the mission 1. Achieving efficiency at the program level, local level and scheme level. 2. Equity in the form of adequate attention to the need of less privileged citizens. 3. Empathy in the form of public participation 4. Sustainable environmental management improving the income level of the low income sections is the key to improve the environment and overall quality of life in the cities. Lee Sang Leem (2007) has stated about the important of balance between historic preservation and urban revitalization. In order for the revitalization effort to last, the residents must take the initiative and the government should provide the necessary administrative support, so that the residents will be able to take care of their own neighbourhoods.

II. Methodology

This paper analyses the merits of two different urban renewal approaches that go by the names, 'eradication and relocation' and 'clearance and redevelopment' that have done

well by the Municipality and Urban Development and Renovation Organization of Shiraz city in the historical centre of Shiraz city. Consideration, descriptive analysis and assessment of the current urban renewal initiatives in respect of different aspects; socio-cultural, economic and physical aspects and also by comparison of land use pattern between proposed comparative plan and the current situation in the central area towards achieving the sustainable urban renewal approach and proposed general charter to tackle urban poverty in the historical Centre of Shiraz city. Triangulation is the application and combination of several research methodologies in this study of the same phenomena. It was employed with quantitative and qualitative studies. By combining multiple theories, empirical materials and research methods, it can be overcome the weaknesses or biases that come from a single method. Combination of two methodologies may also increase reliability and present a more accurate picture of the problem. Research design serves as a logical manual to guide a researcher in the course of data collection, analysis and interpretation. Stating clearly each step in the manual can help a researcher collect the right kind of data and analyze them in the right way to address the primary and major research questions. Major research questions of this study, are:

1. Is the existing, and were the previous, approaches of the Municipality or Organization of Urban Development and Housing, the correct and appropriate ones to resolve the problems of blighting in the Central area?
2. What are the best approaches to resolve the blight in the central area in favour of poor people?

III. Current Renewal Initiatives to Blight Alleviation in The Central Area of Shiraz City

It is evident from the preceding sections of the study that all the blights in a particular city are vulnerable. Only the degree of vulnerability varies. The basic approach to deal with blights to be two pronged either the blights will have to be relocated or upgraded through in situ improvement measures.

A. Eradication and Relocating

Going by the history, the first responses to dealing with blights was to stop the growing numbers of poor by eradicating and relocating blight residents to resettlement sites that were usually outside the city. One example of this method is "Eradication and Relocating" of people in the area which called "Beynolharameyn" and located in the central area of Shiraz city. In 1993 the municipality of Shiraz city demolished 458 constructions between two important religious symbols (Shahcheragh and Astaane). The demolished region had almost the length of 700 meter and approximately the wide was 100 meter, the area of created region was almost 7 hectares. Before demolition the Beynolharameyn was a passing road which divided to three different neighbourhoods, also there were few of valuable monuments and historic buildings around this road that all destroyed by "Eradication and Relocating" approach, for example two residential buildings and one traditional bathroom which had been marked by

Heritage Organization as heritage places, all of them related to Ghajar dynasty). 2818 persons were left this area by this

action. In the year of 2004 municipality of Shiraz city and Tavasol consulting engineering company signed a contract to rebuild this area. In this proposed scheme is supposed to construct 15,000 sq.m commercial units , 15,000 sq.m cultural units such as theatre saloon, library, mosque, museum and sports saloon and 10,000 sq.m official and residential, 7,000 sq.m hotel and restaurant and 70,000 sq.m including parking lots and stores. the total floor area of this scheme is 109,000 sq.m which including three floors(basement, ground and first floor) and also including three zones, the zone number one with total floor area 31,200 sq.m including one shopping centers and mosque. The zone number two with total floor area 28,300 sq.m including all cultural constructions and zone 3 with floor area 49,400 sq.m including hotel, restaurant, official. The anticipated expenditure for accomplishment of scheme is 75,000 \$. This scheme started from 2006 and 40.8 percent of total scheme completed up to now, Rafiee, N. (2003).

Criticizing on This Scheme:

a) Socio-Cultural Aspects:

- The people who are dishoused are to be supposed to be provided with alternative housing facilities, but it did not happen finally people scattered throughout the city and they just carry the blight with themselves to another place in the city!
- Reluctance or unwillingness of the blight dwellers to move from Beynol Haremeyn district for clearance.

b) Economic Aspects:

- This scheme has 15000 sq.m commercial units which they might have not economical efficiency in the future times, because at the moment based on the table the commercial per capita (5.40 sq.m per person) is more than the proposed per capita (2.37 sq.m per person), it means that the existent area of commercial units are 117200 sq.m more than the real needs, however the population decreased, the area of the commercial land uses increased. On the other hands there has been seen some commercial activities near this project which they have faced economic recession or stagnancy such as Shahcheragh Bazaar and all stores long side the Ahmadi roads(next to the project). For instance after a long time there are some stores in the new built commercial centres which their key monies have not been sold yet!
- This scheme has been for higher income families and the buildings of commercial, tourism, cultural, official and recreations centres and it is against the congress which says urban renewal projects should be applied for the poor. 34.5 percent of resident population around the Beynolharemeyn scheme are very low income, Afghan, war-victims (stricken) and rural people. The predicted activities in the Beynolharemeyn scheme such as theatre saloon, library, museum and sports saloon, high quality star hotel and restaurant are suitable for high income people. There will be happen socio-cultural contradiction between the futures customers and the residents of this area. The entrance of new cultural activities should be on current resident's demands and their needs. Also new and modern land uses should be entered

slowly and gradually and they always have historic characters roots.

- Bazaar Vakil is the heart economic centre of the central area and it has not still competed with the other commercial centres

out of the central area of Shiraz city, Zand subway already (the other recently wrong project) destroyed the economic status of Bazar Vakil due to Zand subway has prevented the direct access of customers to the Bazaar, so it is better to improve the existent economic potential of the current commercial centres such as Bazar Vakil instead of expand the number and area of commercial land uses in some project such as Beynolharemeyn scheme.

- This method proves to be too costly, lengthy and time-consuming whether the procedure of the acquisition of 458 constructions or the Tavasol proposed scheme.

c) Physical Aspects:

- Destroyed the conjunction of the organic bypasses roads. Most of the bypasses roads have been cut by this scheme.
- lack of road hierarchy, the Beynolharemeyn bypass was at first as a local/access street between two collector streets(Ahmadi and Hoseyni roads), by new scheme the new created road acts as a Collector streets which carry traffic external to the Ahmadi and Hoseyni roads and providing direct access for two religious centers.
- Destroyed two important religious mark lands (Shahcheragh and Astaane) by this scheme, the tomb of these two religious centres will not be showed from the other parts of historic centre and also the religious atmosphere will be affected by the new tourist-architectural space!
- Destroyed the sky line of central area by this scheme.

According to the information gaining from studies based on comparison between current situation and proposed comparative plan, the central area has inadequate public and semi public land uses(in details it considered and concluded that they are just such as: educational, official and security offices. Also it has been seen in the other activities such as National and recreational Parks, sports, urban infrastructures and historical centres and tourism places, however one third of this scheme has been specialized to the commercial places!

B. Clearance and Redevelopment

Based on the information collected from Shiraz Urban Redevelopment and Housing, Ghadir renovation scheme was initiated in 2002, it is in the final stages of execution. The total renovated area under this project is 7,130 m². The total numbers of new residential units are 3.4 times the total number of demolished units. It shows that instead of one new residential unit for every demolished unit, there have been 3.4 new residential units. This scheme has indeed been very successful in increasing urban land utilization, but, in reality, it is not a suitable approach, for most of the units remain unoccupied and are not sold because the final price of the individual units is so high that most previous residents cannot afford to buy them. Thus, the population of the area, after redevelopment, has not increased as expected and also the population density has not grown as anticipated either. On the

other hand, when compared to the new residential units, there has been a dearth of infrastructural and urban facilities such as roads and public utilities, despite greater intentions to provide so. In this case study, the total redevelopment area is 7,130 m², of which 17.11 percent belongs to transportation land uses such as wider roads, the current roads or additional new roads, so 1,220 m² out of 7,130 m² has been allocated to the transportation land uses and no area has been specified for renovated land under public and semi-public uses. So, only the transportation per capita can be calculated as follows:

$135 - 40 = 95$ (number of added/new residential units during renovation scheme)

$3.8 =$ household size in central area of Shiraz city in 2006

$95 * 4.6 = 361$ (new population who is supposed to have been added)

$1,220 \text{ m}^2 / 361 = 3.38 \text{ m}^2/\text{person}$ (transportation per capita)

However, the transportation per capita basis of proposed plan for the Central area of Shiraz city is 8.5 m², the calculated per capita (being 3.38 m²/person) reveals that the provision of transportation land uses for the anticipated new additional population is by any standard inadequate or, in other words, the redevelopment areas could not meet the public needs of transportation of the old as well as new residents. It should however be pointed out that the Central area of Shiraz city has had severe insufficiency of land uses such as transportation, public and semi-public spaces, parks, sports and open spaces before redevelopment scheme and, after the scheme, the issue became even more worse. With regard to demographic situation, Shiraz could not attain 76,000 in population, based on the proposed Plan in 2010 for it had lacked as much as 21,000 people at that time. But, the residential per capita has increased due to migration from the Central area to other parts of the city and by the migration of the affluent of the blighted areas in the central area. So, increasingly the residential density of a high rise development is much greater than that in the blighted community and that is why, currently, there are excesses in residential units in newly developed high rise apartments, which are vacant and not sold as well. In addition to the high social space constraints, economic costs of the approaches are not quite affordable: it is at least 10-15 times the cost of improving infrastructures in the slums. And so, this scheme has not been successful in the Central area of Shiraz city by any measure.

The Appropriate Approach

An integrated approach between “Clearance and Redevelopment “ and “Upgrading the blighted area” holds good both for housing for old residents as well as provision of infrastructure for urban poor, it could be a very suitable and a viable general approach for historical centre of Shiraz city.

The general approach and recommendations to tackle urban poverty in the historical centre of Shiraz city is three-pronged:

- Proper diagnosing to assess the situation and provide appropriate approaches for intervention in the historical centre of Shiraz city.
- Low income groups and all current residents have the priority right to stay and reside in the area, and so solutions should be in favour of poor people.

- Provide urban poor with housing and infrastructure by government help.

The multidimensional and general approach could be a sustainable strategy, although the scope and degree of specific interventions would vary from ward to ward in the Central area of Shiraz city. Urban authorities should be able to select the suggested, appropriate approach between the two approaches based on the local conditions, stage of deterioration and building quality.

A. The Advantages of This Multidimensional Approach

1) Improving the Use of Urban Land (Increasing the Urban Land Utilization)

Land is a scarce and valuable good. It cannot be imported from outside, so urban lands should be used efficiency with maximum utility. In the other words it can be gained by increasing the population density or preventing the horizontal expansion of city, Aeeni, M. (2007). Growth of population density in central are of Shiraz city has decreased from 175 to 150 persons per hectare from 1996 to 2006. So there is no need to expand the city by the project like “Eradication and Relocation” while there are a lot of capacities inside the cities.

2) Decreasing the Wastelands and Useless Lands Inside the City

The studies about Iran land uses shows that around 10 to 12 percent of urban land inside the developed area are waste or useless, they are actually considered as an urban opportunities which with urban renewal they could be used efficiently. In 1992 the wastelands and useless lands in the historical centre of Shiraz city was 5.27 percent of total built area and unfortunately in 2003 this land use increased to 11.85 percent of total developed area of central area! So upgrading the blighted area could be an effective way to decrease the wastelands and useless lands inside the historical centre.

3) Decreasing the Government and Municipality Costs.

Expanding the urban periphery to residing poor people are very costly for government and then also for people. Governments not only had to spend a huge of money for cleaning slums and resettling inhabitants, but also later had to finance public transportation to facilitate access to employment in the central city. Experiments show government expenditures in upgrading projects are about 50 percent less than relocation or redeveloping. Their initiatives such as widening the roads, creation of green spaces and other necessary infrastructures are really less expensive than develop new area generally in suburbs for poor people. Statics in Iran show that 20 to 30 percent the maintenance municipality expenses decrease compared to city growth horizontally.



4) Decreasing the Urban Securities

With preventing of urban expansion there is not any necessary to create new security offices or police station on new developed areas. On the other hand with increasing population

density inside the city and with existing of persons, the possibility of insecurity will decreased.

5) Improving Urban Environment and Decreasing The Use Of Energy Resources

With upgrading the blighted area and not relocating, transportation costs decreased and accordingly the energy resource consumption will be decreased. Also it can effect on air pollution, since 70 percent of air pollution related to the transportation and fossil fuels. In addition to that, preventing of land use changes such as natural green spaces, jungles and fertile lands to the other urban land uses such as residential, infrastructures and etc.

6) Keeping the Current Blighted Areas in the Active Economic Cycles

With renewal of the blighted areas inside the city and upgrading them it can cause increasing the land price, it can prevent the price decreasing and raise the investors' motive for investment. Native people are not reluctant to quit their old districts and have more tendencies to stay and reclaim their habitats.

IV. Conclusion

The renewal interventions and approaches which currently have done in the central area of Shiraz city are “eradicating and relocating” and “clearance and redevelopment”. After consideration and analyze the two mentioned schemes it was approved that these approaches were not successful in regard to socio-economic and cultural aspects and neither sustainable approach for urban poor. The integrated and multidimensional approach between “clearance and redevelopment “ and “upgrading the blighted area” holds good both for housing for old residents as well as provision of infrastructure for urban poor, it could be very suitable and viable strategy. Although the scope of degree of specific interventions would be vary from ward to ward in the central area of Shiraz city. Clearly, to achieve the ideal situation of a ‘blight free’ city, it is not possible to have only one solution or plan. It is well understood that not all of it can be achieved within a short span of time. Some of neighbourhoods need immediate attention while for some the process can begin right away. Some declined neighbourhoods in the central area needs only “upgrading the blighted area”, the stage of urban decline in this kinds of areas are in the first and two degree of deterioration but It is not the worst form of residential blighted area, in this approach government provide and improve urban infrastructure, basic amenities and governance reform. This approach excludes home construction, since the residents can do these themselves. some other blighted neighbourhoods in the central area of Shiraz city, are suitable for “clearance and redevelopment” with higher population density (maximum four floor buildings), the stage of urban decline in this kinds of

areas are in higher degree of deterioration, the building qualities in this neighbourhoods are bad or fit for demolish, They are not suitable for home construction by the residents themselves or choosing “upgrading the blighted area” approach, but also temporarily moving the slum residents, cleaning the land and building new housing for the same site is

the best appropriate approach. Essential part of this approach is transferring tenure and owner rights to have a residential unit in the same area after redevelopment and it has been shown to motive occupants to invest two to four times the amount of funds that the government invests in housing and infrastructure improvements in a blighted area. The considered experiences have shown the residential density of a high-rise development should not be very much more than that of a central area community; it could be maximum 4 floors, the economic costs of this approach should be affordable for the poor people as well. The general approach and recommendations to tackle urban poverty in the historical centre of Shiraz city is three-pronged:

- Proper diagnosing to assess the situation and provide appropriate approaches for intervention in the historical centre of Shiraz city.
- Low income groups and all current residents have the priority right to stay and reside in the area, and so solutions should be in favour of poor people.
- Provide urban poor with housing and infrastructure by government help.

Thus the arduous task of preparing city specific strategy is an absolute necessity. It is important that Municipality and urban authorities should be able to recognise and select the appropriate approach between the “upgrading the blighted area” and “clearance and redevelopment” based on the local conditions. It has to be customized to the local conditions based on a set of parameters the location, socio-economic, physical and cultural fabric of each neighbourhood, and it should be re-emphasise that avoid the “eradication and relocating “ the poor in the central area of Shiraz city.

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