



## UP-GRADING OF BASTI SAIDAN SHAH

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**INTRODUCTION:** Since independence (1947) of the country slums of various kinds and sizes have emerged in big cities like Karachi and Lahore. Mostly these slums are known as "Katchi Abadis or Bastis". Such Abadis are scattered in various parts of City of Lahore. Due to high demand of housing this type of squatting is quite prevalent on open land in the city. The inhabitants of these abadis are living in squalid environment devoid of even minimal civic facilities. The abadis even do not have regular streets, water supply, sewerage, drainage, open spaces and other community facilities like health, education etc.

There are about 100 recognised Katchi Abadis in Lahore. They are situated on state as well as private lands. Most of the Abadis are being improved at the existing sites and others will be shifted to the built up quarters. It was decided by the Government in 1978 that all the Katchi Abadis located in big Urban Centres will be improved and upgraded. Few Abadis which are located at strategic/awkward points will be provided with alternative sites or built houses. But in 1979 the decision was amended and it was declared that the Katchi Abadis which are situated on the state lands will be regularized and improved and decision regarding the others which are located on private lands will be taken later. The first abadi which was selected for upgradation in Lahore was Basti Saidan Shah.

**LOCATION:** The Basti Saidan Shah is located in Lahore City. It is an old settlement named after Saint Saidan Shah. It was since partition (1947) when the population of Basti has increased manifold. It is situated on the state land between the Tomb of the saint and the Railway Line - an ideal site for the squatters.

**PEOPLE AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS:** There are 1144 dwelling units in the Abadi. The total population is 6810. About 55% population comprised of male members and remaining 45% female. 37% population is in the age group of 6-25 years. 62% members of the household were unmarried.

The data revealed that about 29% of the household heads were born in Lahore but none within the Basti. 27% took birth in those parts of the sub-continent which are now in India. Out of the remaining heads of the households 11% were born in Sialkot 7% in Kasur 8% in Kashmir and 4% each in Jhelum and N.W.F.P.

When inquired about the last place of residence where from the households moved to Basti a high proportion, 79% mentioned some other parts of Lahore 6% hailed from Sialkot, 4% from Kasur. 49% of heads of households have reported the living period in Basti from 16-20 years, 24% have reported 6-10 years while 13% have reported 11-15 years and 9% have reported less than 5 years. Only 5% have reported more than 20 years stay. The most frequent reason for residing in the area expressed by the majority (44%) was the availability of land without any cost. A good location being near to the work place was mentioned by 25% followed by 21% for whom existence of relatives in the area was the main reason to stay. Availability of cheap land was another reason forwarded by 10%. The basic reason to stay in area was free or cheap land. 84% of the residents were members of the welfare committee operating in the area.

**ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS:** The occupational profile of the heads of the households of the Basti indicates variety of occupations. 52% of heads of households are working as Government servants on various jobs like chowkidars, clerks, drivers, etc. 11% are in private jobs, 16% are shopkeepers, 12% are unskilled labourers and 5% are retired or unemployed.

The income distribution of the household heads show that the income of 55% range between Rs.301-500, 17% have income in the range of Rs.501-600 while 13% have income ranging between Rs.601 to 1000, 7% have income range of Rs.1001 to 2000, 8% reported their income upto Rs.300.

The data indicates that 18% members of the households move within the area for jobs and education. The movement pattern shows that about 60% travel 1-4 miles and 15% travel from 5-8 miles on working days. A negligible percentage (2%) travels more than 8 miles. A sizeable majority (86%) cover the distance mostly on foot or bicycles while 11% travel by us.

**HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS:** 40% of houses are Kutcha (mud), 30% are semi pucca (mud and bricks, concrete etc) and 21% are pucca (bricks, concrete etc). In the abadi majority, 98% heads of the households are owner of the dwellings and 2% are reported to be renters. 75% dwellings have minimum size of plot from 1-3 marlas (i.e. 25-75 sq.yards), 24% are between 4-6 marlas (100-150 sq.yds), 1% plots are 7-10 marlas (175-250 sq.yds). The average number of households is 1.25 per dwelling while the average size of plot comes to be 2.5 marlas (62 sq. yards). The survey data indicates that 54% of houses have single room, 40% have two rooms, 6% have more than 2 rooms. Nearly 40% households having size of 4-10 persons live in a single roomed house, 45% of houses have courtyards where as 55% do not have any courtyard.

The data analysis indicates that 15% houses have separate arrangements for cooking and 50% use their living rooms and 35% use their verandahs for cooking purposes. 22% households have separate arrangements for bathing and 78% use living rooms or verandahs for this purpose.

**ENVIRONMENT CHARACTERISTICS:** 75% houses have latrine arrangements. All the latrines have dry system. 25% houses have no such facilities. There existed no sewerage and drainage system in the Basti. The water was allowed to stagnate in the streets and open areas.

The water supply was also non-existent. Majority of the households had no water supply system. They got water from outside the Basti. Very few households had water from the hand pumps which were installed within their premises.

### A POLICY OF KATCHI ABADIS (SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS)UPGRADATION:

In search of a solution to the housing problems and also because of the deplorable conditions of the Katchi Abadis, Government had no choice but to upgrade them. In 1978 it was decided by the Federal Government that the Katchi Abadis in the major urban centres will be improved and upgraded. The households which are living prior to 1st January, 1978 in any such abadis will have the access to the proposed improvements and anybody who tries to build a house or occupies land after this date will be ejected from the Abadi. For this purpose physical and topographical surveys were conducted much earlier without indicating their objective. The policy decision had the following major points :-

- 1) All the Katchi Abadis of the major urban centres will be upgraded.
- 2) All the residents of such Abadis who have settled in them before 1st January, 1978 will be given proprietary rights of the land which is under their occupation.
- 3) Special police force was deputed to make it sure that no one settles or builds any structure after this date.
- 4) The private lands on which the Katchi Abadis have been built will be acquired by the Government.

To further upgrade the abadis the following steps will be taken :-

- i) Existing layout will be re-adjusted and alignment of streets will be done.
- ii) Streets will be widened where ever possible.
- iii) The streets will be paved.
- iv) Open drains on both sides of the streets will be provided.
- v) For water supply community taps will be provided.
- vi) Drainage scheme will be prepared and implemented.
- vii) Community centre, shops, etc. will be provided.

- viii) School, Dispensary and open space, if possible, will be provided.

#### UP-GRADATION OF BASTI SAIDAN SHAH

**LAYOUT PLAN:** To facilitate the provision of adequate streets widths, water supply drainage and other major infra-structure in the area it became necessary to make adjustment in the existing layout. Since this involved re-allocation of houses it was not possible without the help of the local people. Three representatives of the residents were picked up to help the team of experts. The community leaders played a very vital role in making the adjustments in the layout of the area and removing the bottle necks. Many house holds were shifted to new sites and some to the built houses. About 150 households had to surrender some area of their houses for the adjustment of the new functional layout of the Basti. No compensation was paid to them. 35 houses were shifted to the new sites in the process of the revision of the layout. The residents were not paid any money for their structures.

**Widening of streets:** The minimum street width was adopted 10 feet. Two feet on each side of the street was earmarked for the open drains and central 6 feet strip to be used for the movement of people. The streets were paved with bricks. At one or two points where heavy demolition was involved the street width could not be achieved according to the minimum standards. Where ever necessary the residents voluntarily removed their structures to widen the streets.

**Water supply:** It was not possible to supply piped water at individual house level. The stand pipes were provided at the street junctions. Each group of 10-15 houses is served by one connection.

**Drainage and sewerage:** The drainage and sewerage disposal is done through the open drains which are provided on both sides of the streets. However, the human excreta is directly disposed of from the houses, it is not thrown in the drains.

**Other social services:** When the layout plan was revised some of the houses were removed and in their place sites for school, dispensary and park was provided. The school and dispensary are under construction and will start functioning in near future. The Government departments of health and education are looking after them.

**UNICEF & the Project:** From the middle of 1981 the UNICEF has also started some projects in the Katchi Abadis where upgradation has taken place. In Basti Saidan Shah the organization of UNICEF has started a project of community house where the women are given vocational training of knitting, embroidery and secretarial services. Through such projects the people are motivated to further develop the Basti and improve its environment. The courses are also conducted regarding family planning, adult education and environmental hygiene.

**Title of Land:** After completing the upgradation programme the Government, according to its commitment handed over the lease (for 99 years) documents to the 25% of the house holds to see the reaction of the residents. It was reported that some of the households attempted to sell their rights of ownership to the property dealers in order to leave for some other Katchi Abadi. Since then the lease documents are with-held by the Government and will not be given to the other households until the community leaders will guarantee that this kind of thing will not happen again.

**Resource Generation:** In order to make the upgradation programme possible it was decided that the development charges will be paid by the residents of the Basti. The community leaders were taken into confidence to this effect who had already discussed this matter with the residents of their sectors and persuaded them to pay the cost of the services. The total expenditures of development were divided over the total area of the Basti and was found out that the development charges will be collected at the rate of Rs.450 per Marla (225 sq. feet or 25 sq. yards). The households will pay the development charges according to the size of their plot at the above mentioned rate. When the head of the house hold will receive the documents of the title of land he will make the payment of the development charges prior to that. The title of land was given free of charges provided the plot size is not bigger than five marlas (125 sq. yards). If the plot is bigger than five marlas then the occupant will have to pay the price of the extra land at the rate of Rs.10,000 per marla (25 sq. yards). The experience has shown that the residents have paid the development charges and cost for the extra area of plot without any hesitation or delay. Through these

sources of income entire cost incurred on the up-gradation of the project of Basti Saidan Shah was recovered.

Monitoring of the Project: In one of the recent evaluation surveys of the abadi it has been discovered that 12% of the house-holds have done some renovation, 8% have added new rooms, where-as 1% have built new houses and 75% do have some improvement plans for their houses and the remaining have no plans for the time being. This shows that some positive contribution is being made by the residents on self help basis towards the upgradation of the Abadi.

Conclusion: This project has to a certain degree given the residents (i) a share in decision making (ii) the opportunity to improve their housing (iii) title to land and (iv) above all an experience of close co-operation with the local authority and among themselves. Taking into account all problems and sensitivity, results are encouraging. There is a reason to believe that squatter upgrading really does hold the key question of how best man can provide suitable shelter for this generation. It is very hard to judge at this juncture whether or not the project is a complete success. Yet when one knows what has already been achieved one has hope that this squatter upgrading exercise may really benefit the people for whom it was intended and it may also serve a useful model for other countries to provide reasonable shelter that enhances the dignity of man.