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THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN INDIA

Bachelor Thesis

Supervisor: Dr Erhard Berner

Olomouc, 2009

I declare in lieu of oath that I wrote this thesis myself. All information derived from the work of others has been acknowledged in the text and in a list of references is given.

Olomouc, 14th May, 2009   ....
                                                                              signature

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ASSIGNMENT OF BACHELOR THESIS

student

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International Development Studies

<u>Title:</u>

Role of government in urban poverty alleviation in India

<u>Principles of the thesis:</u>

The aim of the bachelor thesis is the description, study and analysis of the role of official policies and government in urban poverty alleviation by the way of India. The thesis will be focused on the strategies and policies of the Indian government in seeking solutions for the urban poor in the region. Therefore it will concentrate on the overall aspects of the government role in tackling urban poverty and more concretely will focus on regional and local policies and approaches. Concrete policies and strategies implemented by local authorities and municipalities in urban areas in India will show better some specific weaknesses and lacks struggling with urban poverty. The thesis will pay attention especially in the field of secure land tenure and role of insecure housing in illegal settlements. In the second part there will be space to deepen the role and position of local authorities and the impact of their policies or interventions on slum dwellers. The theory will be applied on the concrete case in a selected Indian city. The case study will demonstrate the specific situation in the city and describe the results of recent local, regional or national policies for slum dwellers in the area. In conclusion all aspects gained by the Indian case will be considered lining up the priorities and possible steps to set framework for sustainable solution of urban poverty and to foster partnership between government and other stakeholders in urban poverty alleviation.

<u>The thesis will be elaborated in following phases:</u>
- July – September: clearing up the plan and objectives, completing resources or relevant literature;
- October – January: processing theoretical part and methodology;
- February – April : analysing and comparing concrete strategies and policies, studying examples from an Indian city that were successful and failed;
- April: elaborating conclusion and annexes.

Structure of the thesis:
1. Introduction
2. Function of government in urban poverty alleviation
3. Point of secure land tenure
4. Description of various interventions and policies towards informal settlements
5. Role of decentralisation
6. Urban poor and urbanism in the last fifty years in India
7. Case study from a selected Indian city
8. Analysis of the specific situation in the city (urban government, slum profiles)
9. Analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the framework
10. Conclusion

Extent of graphics: maps, schemes

Extent of the original paper: 12 – 15 000 words of the basic content

Estimated resources and literature:

Expert articles from foreign journals and expert publications, for example:

Berner, E. (2001) 'Learning from informal markets: Innovative approaches to land and housing provision'. Development in Practice 11, 292-307

Hardoy, J.E. & D. Satterthwaite (1989) 'The legal and the illegal city'. In: Squatter citizen: Life in the urban Third World. London: Earthscan, 12-36

Milbert, I., (2006), Slums, Slum Dwellers and Multilevel Governance, European Journal of Development Research, Volume 18, Number 2, June 2006, 299-318

Payne, G. (2005) 'Getting ahead of the game: A twin-track approach to improving existing slums and reducing the need for future slums'. Environment & Urbanization, 17(1), 135-145

Payne, Goeffrey (2001). Urban land tenure policy options: titles or rights?, Habitat International 25, 415 – 429

Werlin, H. (1999) 'The slum upgrading myth'. Urban Studies, 36, 1523-1534

Official information published by the Indian government and authorities.

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Abstract

Informal housing has become a serious problem in most developing countries all around the world. India, one of the most rapidly urbanized countries, presents an example of how the government copes with urban poverty and related problems. The role of government is a crucial element to tackle urban poverty. The paper addresses partly national or regional and especially local government policies to alleviate urban poverty and analyzes various government interventions towards illegal settlements, mainly focused on their impact on slum dwellers' livelihood and secure housing. It address slum policies in Chennai, the fourth biggest city in India, to demonstrate different government approaches and interventions in practice. The paper brings further description of the causes and consequences of the Chennai slum policies for better understanding the complexity of the urban poverty alleviation in general.

Keywords: urban poverty, government, informal housing, slum clearance, slum policies, insecure land tenure

Abstrakt

V současnosti problematika slumů a městské chudoby představuje vážný problém v mnoha rozvojových zemích na celém světě. Případ Indie, jedné z nejrychleji a nejvíce urbanizovaných zemí, přináší příklad vládních snah o zmírnění následků rostoucí populace slumů. Role vlády v otázce řešení slumů je nezastupitelná. Práce se zabývá vhodnými vládními politikami na národní, regionální a především místní úrovni, které se snaží s tímto fenoménem ve městech bojovat. Věnuje se jednotlivým přístupům a politikám a jejich dopadům na samotné obyvatele slumů s ohledem na jejich každodenní život. Práce analyzuje relevantní vládní politiky na příkladu Čenaj, čtvrtého největšího indického města, s cílem demonstrovat jejich průběh a dopady v praxi. Přináší bližší popis příčin a následků vládního jednání vymítit slumy v Čenaj se záměrem ukázat složitost a komplexnost zmírňování městské chudody v obecné rovině.

Klíčová slova: městská chudoba, vláda, slumy, vlastnictví půdy, politiky směrované k vymícení slumů

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List of abbreviations

AK	slum Anju Kudisai
CMA	Chennai Metropolitan Area
CMDA	Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority
CMSWB	Chennai Metropolitan Solid Waste Board
CMWSSB	Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewage Board
COC	Corporation of Chennai
HUDCO	Housing and Urban Development Corporation
JNNURM	Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission
KP	slum Kalyana Puram
MC	Municipal Councillor
MTC	Metropolitan Transport Corporation
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PWD	Public Works Department
SHG	Self-Help Group
TNHB	Tamil Nadu Housing Board
TNSCB	Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
WB	World Bank
WC	Ward Committee
74th CAA	74th Constitutional Amendment

Thatched house	Construction term indicating transitoriness, built of brushwood
Pucca house	Construction term indicating durability and solidity, built of bricks

1. Introduction

Our planet is becoming more and more urbanized. At the beginning of the 21st century we have to face the escalation of urban population all around the world. In developing countries the urbanization and migration of peasants from rural to urban areas has been the most significant. It is necessary to rise to the global challenge of recent growth of cities and to search for a sustainable way to manage for future.

The majority of developing cities is shaped by informal settlements in any spatially free urban areas. As Hardoy and Satterthwaite write 'the last four decade have seen illegal house construction, either on illegally occupied or illegally subdivided land, become the major source of cheap new housing in most Third world cities' (1989: 25). According to the authors, slum dwellers present the most important organizers and planners of cities. The underestimated role of the informal settlements in forming city's nature is obvious.

1.1 Context of the thesis question

Cities of the developing world present a complex of various livelihoods, interests, expectations, hopes and deprivations. There is a variety of different incomes groups. The most numerous are often groups of the poorest and the most vulnerable inhabitants. Regarding the urban poor in the developing cities 'there is widespread recognition among government and international agencies that these people lack of infrastructure and services' (Mitlin, Satterthwaite, 2004: 14). These are the visible and measurable evidence of urban poverty. The lowest-income groups are living wherever in a city to be as close as possible to their job places or to public transport. They frequently do not have access to the public services and other necessary amenities for their lives.

The insufficient security of their rights causes the poverty as well as the more explicit and well-known elements mentioned above. Vulnerability of the urban poorest is often highly connected with their inaccessibility to legal status. As Hardoy and Satterthwaite showed in their book 'most urban citizens in the Third world cities have no choice but build, buy or rent an illegal house or an apartment' (1989: 12). Slum dwellers choose the way out of law, because they are not able to pay proper market prices for a plot or a flat. Under these preconditions they live daily in illegality. No accessibility to secure fundamental citizen rights makes slum dwellers the most risky group in a city. Security of the land tenure presents the core assumption for the urban poor to find their way out of poverty.

Municipalities and government institutions do not care too much about slum dwellers who are not formally registered and who do not pay proper taxes. Moreover government and official authorities restrict them because of their basic needs – shelter and livelihood. In fact slum dwellers are not often recognized as real citizens. 'Government rules and regulations in regard to building, planning, environmental protection and employment regulation ensure that the most basic aspects of the lives of squatting citizens are illegal' (Hardoy, Satterthwaite, 1989: 16). From the point of view we perceive government and its bodies as the important actors in urban poverty alleviation. On the one side there are the existing laws and regulation to change, on the other side there are recent human settlements who have been coping with their uneasy housing situation everyday. The authors argue that 'the fault lies with unrealistic and inappropriate government views' (ibid). If the government does not recognize slum dwellers as significant city builders, no housing policy will be effective and sustainable.

Furthermore the allocation of an urban land is for many reasons a 'hardly political issue' (Baken, 2003: 9). There is often a struggle between interests of slum dwellers and government or politicians' interests. Government and other powerful groups within the city want highways, metro systems and improved parking capacities. If the poor people are questioned, they mostly tend to less expensive investments as garbage collection, health centres or schools, protection against floods etc. (Hardoy, Satterthwaite, 1989). In simple terms the public policies sometimes target the space instead the people's needs and urban poverty alleviation programmes may simply mean taking slums down and ordering their residents out.

1.2 Objective of the study

This thesis aims to study various interventions of government towards informal settlements in the developing cities to prove the need for government involvement in urban poverty alleviation. Concrete purposes are 1) to demonstrate the role of government institutions including their actions to decrease the number of slum dwellers living in their everyday vulnerability and 2) to explain the importance of multi-stakeholder governance to find a solution to illegal housing. Specifically the case study from the fourth largest Indian city Chennai[1] in Tamil Nadu directs to demonstrate it.

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[1] The name Chennai has been adopted since 1996 according to government reform. The former name of the city was Madras. In the thesis the recent name is used in spite of the fact that in most available resources their authors use mostly its former name.

1.3 Conceptual framework

Generally speaking unstable and insecure housing is clearly one of the most essential aspects of urban poverty. Based on the context, slums are largely affected by housing policies, laws and systems at the global, national and local level, if not a result of these policies. It is simply a public task to provide the poorest an inadequate supply of secure tenure decreasing their vulnerability.

The concept of the thesis is established on description and understanding of causes and consequences of informal housing. The illegality of slums has a definitely negative influence and impact on their inhabitants. The framework provides space for indication of diverse public interventions towards informal settlements and their following implications on the slum dwellers.

The land tenure security issue reflects the interconnected urban reality. It is important to concern all its substantial elements. The framework presents an interpretation of relationships among local government institutions, their actions, slum dwellers and other relevant stakeholders in chosen slums in Chennai. Therefore it is necessary to draw up a net of the stakeholders and their role in the field as well as related brief history of public actions in the appropriate areas. The concept of the thesis is basically to outline the complexity of the selected topic.

1.4 Relevance and justification

Government interest in urban poverty alleviation is crucial. Most recent literature based on various case studies, fieldworks and research or projects confirms the reality. Their authors show the role of government at national, regional and local levels from different perspectives, but they conclude very often the same: slum dwellers have to feel secure in their 'homes' as a starting point for sustainable development. They need more official support based on capacity building and empowerment rather then ingoing financial resources. This support should be targeted with attention to local circumstances and changeable reality. The thesis aims to show the role of government in urban poverty alleviation in India, it addresses its policies at the local level in Chennai.

1.5 Methodology and organization of the thesis

The paper is divided into two main parts. The first introduces the theoretical background based on secondary resources to cover basic input information about the topic. It describes the role of insecurity in daily slum dwellers' lives and points the function of government in fighting urban poverty and role of decentralization within the topic. This section also provides an overview of the most widespread public interventions towards informal settlements.

The second part brings the case study from Chennai based on the field research realized in February and March 2009. During the research I was trying to avoid mechanical collecting of information in the field as questionnaires or mini-survey. The data came especially from semi-structured interviews with slum dwellers in two selected slums, next with local government officials and University of Madras employees working within the area. I spoke also with several field workers from various non-governmental organizations.

The Chennai case study summarizes my observations during the fieldwork supported by officially available information about local government structure and secondary resources relevant to the topic. The conclusion brings out a summary of complicated reality related secure land tenure. It concludes to stress necessary government intervention to assist urban poorest going away from their vulnerable situation and tackling their permanent housing insecurity.

2. Function of government to tackle urban poverty

2.1 Endangered right to live

Human history shows how land is essential for our life. The title to a place to live presents a fundamental human right. Nowadays the principle is becoming less recognized than in the 19th century when one American theorist argued for access to land as the basic human right: 'The equal right for all men to the use of land is as clear as their equal right to breathe the air' (Neuwirth, 2005: 290). Recently we have to question this statement in the sense of its generalizability in the 21st century. The question which remains is how to fulfil this right within the more and more economically determined urbanized world.

There is no doubt about the principle. On the other hand it presents a value uneasy to reach in spatially bounded areas. As Neuwirth describes the 'problem starts when access to land becomes limited' (2005: 287). People especially in urban areas have to face increasing spatial demands. Limitation of space makes land a reason for a negotiation or even conflicts. There must be a system to manage access to land as equally as possible, ideally speaking equal distribution of land for everyone to secure his right. Unfortunately the equality is no more possible when land tenure happened to be a barely economical issue and when 'property turns land into a commodity' (ibid: 289).

The market price of the land dictates who will raise a dignified place to live and who will not. The formal land market does not allow many low and middle-income groups in the developing cities to ensure their livelihood in dignity. The urban poor are not able to pay proper market prices; they usually lack stable income to save such an amount to rent or to buy an appropriate plot in a city. Moreover they clearly cannot choose more accessible land in peripheries or out of the city because 'even for the most modest demands, a parcel of land has to fulfil two minimal conditions to suitable: accessibility and source of water. To be attractive, it has to be located not too far from the places of employment, industrial or commercial centres' (Berner, 2007: 6). The informal market provides them a solution.

Slum dwellers are forced to find always the most cost-effective answer for their housing and living needs. Their role in forming the city's nature is often underestimated. Informal settlements lie along roads, railways, municipal canals, rivers or close to city industries. Their inhabitants occupy these localities, keeping in mind that they break the law everyday. Lack of choice makes them search for any way to survive. It best describes a statement of a Mumbai single woman slum dweller who replied to the question about her situation: 'Poverty is never having any choice' (Mitlin, Satterthwaite, 2004: 235).

Daily living in illegality becomes part of the reality in slums. This reality causes more then feeling insecure. Insecurity of housing does not allow slum dwellers to change their living conditions and exposes them to considerable vulnerability. As Payne argues 'access to secure land and shelter is widely accepted as a prerequisite for access to other services and livelihood opportunities' (2004: 168). Slum improvement simply does not make too much sense for its inhabitants if the owner of the land can resettle them anytime. Moreover lacking legal address and access to formal institutions, they are often unable to access social services, health care or education.

A house or a shelter built in an informal settlement should be perceived as an asset. As Berner shows 'lack of assets is identified as a major aspects of the poor's vulnerability' (2007: 8). The poor shelter means for its household a lot: place to live, generation of an income, human efforts to create a home and a part of life history. 'First, in case of an eviction the whole property may be lost in an instant, second, even in emergencies people will think twice about selling their house as this may jeopardize their access to their sources of income' (ibid). To lose a shelter could be a loss of income in the sense of being unable to reach a former working place or to lose a place of self-employment to promise certain salary.

In addition Varley argues that a shelter is even more than an economic asset: 'It has become part of life story. People who have struggled to build their homes in adverse circumstances are proud of their achievement' (2002: 457). Hardoy and Satterthwaite bring out a concrete example of irrational perception of the illegal housing from one of Recife's slums in Brazil. According to one of its inhabitants questioned, their plot means for his family 26 years of struggle with local authorities (1989: 34). The illegal shelter makes up a substantial part of his life which raises its value more than just as an 'economic' benefit.

According to the former, the slum dwellers' vulnerability is caused by various consequences of informal housing. A secure place to live guarantees a more secure income, development of local infrastructure, secure human or citizen rights to access basic public services or to decrease health vulnerability from lacking sanitation. Payne points that 'one of two indicators for measuring progress in the implementation of the urban target included within the Millennium Development Goals to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 is secure tenure' (2004: 168). Secure land tenure is also a necessary precondition to start upgrading without worries of losing human or financial investment.

In World Bank's *Dialogue on City Poverty and Liveability* published in Washington in 1998 land tenure is emphasized as 'essential for the poor to become active citizens, good clients, municipal taxpayers and central to the productive work force' (Werlin, 1999: 1531). Furthermore the security of tenure should be perceived as prevention of deprivation from poverty. Once the slum is recognized or legalized, there is more mobilized human energy for building on that success and for trying to improve slum dwellers' homes and organize themselves to gain more assets.

2.2 Justified role of government

Slum dwellers occupy valuable public and private urban land without permission. Both public and private owners want to use the land for their intentions and they use various interventions to protect their property. The government has the uneasy role to manage their own developing plans, developers' and investors' interests and different city inhabitants groups' needs. Mostly those are very incoherent interests. The urban poorest take a back seat for obvious reasons. At the same time they form a considerable part of a city, represent a substantial percentage of voters and, by running their small-scale illegal businesses, form an important portion of the city economy.

The starting point to tackle urban poverty is based on the government intervention to find a humane and sustainable answer for slum dwellers and preferably to prevent formation of the informal settlements in general. The role of government is basically to provide its citizens public services and ensure them a livelihood in security. As Hardoy and Satterthwaite write: 'There must be something wrong with a law or code if it is broken daily by so many people as they go about their daily lives' (1989: 31). The problem lies often in the government perception of slum dwellers.

As Milbert points out before analysing public interventions we should remember two separate dimensions of slums: 'its inhabitants and a space with highly divergent status, commercial value and environmental characteristics. Measures implemented by the public authorities sometimes target the space, sometimes the population, with frequent ambiguity' (2006: 301). To be honest, the government hardly acknowledges the slum population as a relevant part of the city nature which should be protected and supported to guarantee future urban development. If slum dwellers are recognized as an important city group, slums could be part of the solution instead of an urban problem.

For better understanding the variety of public interventions towards informal settlements described further, we have to outline the general division of land tenure to point out more of its options in developing cities. Payne reports that UN-HABITAT in 2004 identified the following tenure categories (2004: 169):

1. Formal tenure

    1.1 Registered (including ownership, leasehold and use/occupancy rights)

    1.2 Unregistered but documented (e.g. rental, rent to buy, unregistered leases)

    1.3 Group/family/household rights (e.g. customary/tribal family rights, community land trusts)

    1.4 Unregistered and undocumented (e.g. adverse possession, use or occupancy rights without certificate, customary rights)

2. Irregular tenure

    2.1 Documented (e.g. written agreements between irregular owners and tenants, de facto recognition, illegal subdivisions, customary rights, tenancy at will)

    2.2 Undocumented (e.g. as above but without documents)

This scale of rights shows more possibilities to secure housing. Registration seems to be logically the right way to secure a slum dweller's livelihood. On the other hand UN-HABITAT Shelter branch paper argues that the freehold and registered leasehold are the most expensive tenure types because of obvious reasons: 'They (these types) use professionals to create rights, transfer it and maintain the registration record over time' (2004: 3). Slum dwellers have to pay the subsidized cost of a plot which is not easily affordable for them.

Payne states that the majority of all housing and land development in most countries falls somewhere between two extremes of formal registration and undocumented irregular tenure (2001). Nothing is black and white. The slum population constitutes a vast universe influenced and formed by varied circumstances. From a short-term point of view, even documented irregular tenure can ensure relatively stable housing provision.

It is also desirable to distinguish different levels of government action from the national overall policies to small-scale local interventions. 'Provincial and national agencies or ministries or international agencies often misunderstand the nature of local developments, resources and constraints' (UNHCS, 1996: 426). Centralized all-purpose intervention is not possible. The central government provides a legal framework of urban policies, but it can hardly estimate steps to be implemented in a particular city. On the contrary, the perspectives of the national government are rarely benefiting (Gilbert, Stevenson, Stren, Herbet, 1996). Adjustments of the approaches for urban poverty alleviation in the single cities are necessary to sustain in future.

In many countries local government is responsible for service delivery and urban regulations (UNHCS, 1996). Mitlin and Satterthwaite describe in detail eight case studies from different regions which show 'how the scale and scope of poverty reduction interventions need to be related to local circumstances and local capacities' (2004: 290). Decentralization of urban policies to fight with local housing problems is essential.

Decentralized policies themselves do not guarantee the success of their implementation in practice. Local government is the most logical mediator for urban poor to fulfil their demands. Speaking about urban poverty alleviation, decentralization means also an effort to enable slum dwellers to solve their situation. As De Wit recommends 'decentralization efforts may be combined with empowerment strategies in order to increase the chance that such groups (urban poor) will in fact benefit from decentralization and that they will (be able to) participate in decentralized policy formulation and implementation' (De Wit, 1997: 1). Mitlin and Satterthwaite provide the same detection in their case studies (2004). In the context, decentralization should be perceived as a tool for more participative solutions, targeting the slum population and encouraging mutual accountability to tackle urban poverty.

2.3 Common public interventions

'Fighting slums may simply mean tearing them down and evicting the inhabitants' (Milbert, 2006: 301). To consider difficulties facing diverse interests within a city, it is obvious that the winners are mostly wealthy and powerful groups of citizens or investors bringing financial capital to the city. 'Demolitions and evictions are justified on the grounds of improvement and beautification of the city, removal of centres of crime and health hazards, and more intensive and lucrative use of land in strategic locations' (UNCHS, 1996: 245f.). Taking informal settlements down is the least expensive solution to clean an area for future commercial development. Slum dwellers do not receive any compensation or alternative site. In the case of eviction government simply ejects the community out of the city.

Demolition and eviction provide no solution. A number of households lose their homes from one day to another. These people have no other place to go and often they fight to take 'their' land back. Government has to force these resolute people again and again to pull their overnight-built shelters down. Berner warns that 'if demolitions are unavoidable, it is crucial to have an adequate relocation site' (2001: 303). Shifting a slum to an alternative site where government has constructed new houses is becoming the usual practice of slum clearance. Relocation areas are located basically out of cities on suitable vacant public land where slum dwellers will not matter.

Mostly the purpose to shift people somewhere else is the same as to simply evict them. Other interests are more important than slum residents' needs. 'The announced construction of subsidised housing or of sites and services functions is a mean of counterbalancing the negative social impact of slum destruction' (Milbert, 2006: 305). Rather then an intervention to tackle urban poverty it brings a more justified solution to clear a slum.

Milbert follows that 'it is very rare that evicted slum dwellers actually move into these new provided houses' (ibid). The reasons are evident. Nobody asked the slum community before the resettlement. Slum residents were forced to move to cheaper land far away from urban infrastructure and distant from possible employment. The locality does not often comply with the basic people's need of accessibility and water resources. The new site presents for them secure place to live, however, it does not automatically mean the end of slum dwellers' vulnerability. If the government provides basic sanitary facilities and water supply, even schools for children, they are not able to ensure employment opportunities, especially for women who have limited access to work. For example men can find a job in

construction sites in peripheries; women are basically dependent on small-scale businesses within city markets or on higher-income households next to their former settlement where they used to work as servants.

New houses are not able to substitute the value of human and financial investment in their illegal homes. Besides losing their economical assets, the relocation also disrupts social networks (Mitlin, Satterthwaite, 2004). The 'beneficiaries' vulnerability does not disappear. 'Apart from the large-scale destruction of assets, this policy is almost always unsustainable' (Berner, 2001: 295). Urban poor lacking sufficient livelihood opportunities simply return to informal settlements in the cities. Mostly selling new houses they go to occupy land elsewhere to meet their demands more easily.

Previous interventions target especially the space. There are other ways to make a city slum free, targeting slum population rather than land. 'In many countries various intermediate tenure systems offer adequate security of tenure for the urban poor and do not overstretch local administrative capabilities' (Payne, 2004: 174). Back to the UN-HABITAT classification of tenure categories, besides registered and documented formal tenure, we distinguish additional possibilities to provide slum dwellers more security. The entry point is that the government accepts slum dwellers' right to stay and officially recognizes informal settlement as a part of the solution.

'In practice, most residents base assessment of their security of tenure on processes indicating official tolerance of their settlement. … These processes may not, in theory, be possible without legalization; but in practice they do take place prior to regularization' (Varley, 2002: 455). Government recognition (in Indian terminology also 'notification') may ensure slum dwellers a livelihood as well as legalization of an informal settlement. It describes Neuwirth's words: 'They (the urban poor) simply need a sense of control over their homes and a guarantee that they will not be arbitrarily evicted' (2005: 301). Slum residents must be convinced about no possible demolition or relocation. From the occupant's perception, the formality of his house does not play as important a role in comparison to his settlement's stability. A certain stability of the settlement could be protected or confirmed under local or national law. The legislation or jurisdiction may recognize slum dweller's occupancy as their rights, and possible eviction as an illegal act attacking their rights.

Many informal settlements have existed for a long time, they expanded, people are well-settled, and they have invested savings or loans to improve their houses. There is a certain degree of security that the slum is not going to shift in the near future. 'When they (slum dwellers) know that they are secure, they build. They establish a market. They buy and sell. They create. They develop. Give a squatter security and they will develop the cities of tomorrow' (Neuwirth, 2005: 302). Slum residents need to feel secure to start changing their conditions; ideally to change the slum into a more dignified and proper place to live. They are able to do a lot on their own. Uneasy living conditions made them skilful and creative to gain as much as possible from almost nothing.

Besides undocumented formal land tenure as occupancy rights without certificate or an adverse possession which means official recognition, it is necessary to briefly mention another intervention, sometimes hardly distinguish from unregistered legal tenure. De facto recognition of occupation presents less tangible action towards informality. In this case, slum dwellers stay in their illegality under political patronage against possible negative interventions (UN-HABITAT, 2004). From slum residents' point of view, they enjoy provisional stability of tenure. Unfortunately the still illegal character of their houses creates dependency on local political circumstances and government tolerance. Informal settlements are dependent on temporary unwritten promises and current government will.

Some authors agree that a slum population becomes a politically important group in urban areas perceived as a *vote bank* (Werlin, 2006, De Wit, 1996 and 1997, Baken, 2003). Slum dwellers very often are allowed to vote even if they are not registered and slums in a city form a considerable source of votes in elections. As De Wit shows 'they (candidates) may influence officials to implement a programme in a particular slum just before an election, so making it clear that the slum people should be grateful to him, and that he expects them to vote for him' (1997: 19). In many cases slum dwellers are easily seen as a tool instead of a target for policies. In the sense of sustainability, if the tenure status is tied by fleeting politicians' willingness, politics and political interests are crucial for slum dwellers' future as the study from Chennai shows later.

2.4 Legalization

Regularization of an informal settlement seems to be logically the most sustainable and effective solution. Once the settlement becomes registered and documented, it will be difficult to question slum dwellers' titles in future. There is no doubt that the intervention ensures stable housing. Payne even concludes that titling became a mainstream development approach when the World Bank started to run its upgrading program in 1990s: '*World Bank Housing Policy Paper* (1993) recommends developing market-oriented systems of property rights and allocates priority to upgrading systems of land titling and regularizing tenure in squatter settlements' (2001: 420). These recommendations are based on clearly visible profits of the slum regularization which can activate economic investments and public participation of the urban poorest.

Slum residents from legalized settlements can reach all public services as other regular citizens in a city paying proper taxes. In addition to social and health profits, Neuwirth quotes De Soto that 'title deeds will liberate people's economic power' (2005: 299). An illegal shelter presents 'dead capital' because its informality limits access to a loan or a mortgage to start to improve (ibid). Regularization of illegal housing allows economic integration as well as integration to the society. In general legal shelter protects the majority of its resident's assets. Turning away from insecurity, slum dwellers can get across their deprivation and demotivation to influence their livelihood conditions.

The intervention does not remain without problems. 'However, the titling approach has already achieved considerable momentum, which recent studies suggest needs to be challenged' (Payne, 2001: 421). Apart from difficulties with legalization of private land, which has to be intensely negotiated with a land owner, there are other situations showing lacks of intervention. First of all, it is increasing the value of a plot which could lead to informality again as illegal land subdivision (ibid). The outcomes of regularization could bring exploitation of the poorest in hand with development of illegal housing market within and even outside of a slum's boundaries. The full-title could also stimulate unauthorised constructions or improvements in the settlement.

If the slum residents realize the value of the land, the higher price of a plot may attract them to sell it out and move to squat somewhere else as we learnt already from the resettlement case. Varley paraphrases other authors that legalization may lead to displacement of original slum dwellers because the usually well-located area attracts higher-income groups able to pay regular increased costs of the land (2002). Those are interested in the land, but they are willing to purchase it only lawfully. Payne follows that 'such actions

may therefore actually result in an increase in informal settlements rather than a decrease' (2005: 136). This statement argues against the consideration of regularization as the most sustainable tool to tackle urban poverty. To understand what is happening in some cases of legalized shelters, it is important to keep in mind the settlements history.

The majority of dwellers in these former informal settlements has experienced daily livelihood in illegality to survive. They are used to seeking the most convenient way to live within their limitation. Receiving title deeds they became suddenly 'legalized'. They have to pay proper taxes and face rules which they did not follow before. In fact most of these rules raise their living expenses for taxes, electricity, rent and other services. All these new regulations, administrative processes and bureaucracy make their livelihood more complicated than before. 'High standards impose higher costs, and complex bureaucratic procedures impose delays that require informal payments to facilitate progress' (Payne, 2005:137). Slum dwellers have to change from 'living from one day to another' to thinking about their future and monthly payments and duties. Most of them could find it difficult, more expensive and less convenient than before.

Regarding stability and sustainability of the intervention Neuwirth shows in the example from Mumbai that the communal ownership of the title deed assures more stability than the individual titles (2005: 299). It simply keeps slum dwellers together interconnected through collective property and forces neighbours to be more careful in the case of illegal subdivision. The system itself provides a mechanism of 'checks and balances' to ensure and to improve their livelihood. Payne adds: 'Where possible, the precise form of such tenure and rights should be based on tenure systems already known to local communities. Communal tenure options, such as communal leases, may be acceptable to residents and can reduce the administrative burden on land management agencies' (2004: 176). If the government combines legalization with consideration of urban poor practices and perceptions, it may avoid most of negative aspects of the intervention.

3. Case study of Chennai

3.1 An Indian city

India is well-known as one of the most overpopulated countries in the world. The Indian population explosion presents a serious problem leading to an acceleration of urbanization all around the country. In 2002 distribution of Indian urbanization within the world urban population covers 10 % (Mitlin, Satterthwaite, 2004: 6). To imagine the size of Indian urban population, Chakrabarti compares the independence time in 1947 with 60 million people living in cities to 300 million Indians lived in its almost 3 700 towns and cities in 2001 (2001: 260). Overcrowded metropolis became equivalent to India today.

Indian cities attract many peasants searching for a job to overcome their poverty. The trend of migration from rural to urban areas presents a hard predictable issue. The prognosis shows that the number of people in urban centres will overtake the number of their counterparts in rural areas soon. According *India: Urban Poverty Report 2009* released by Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation Ministry 50 % of India's population is estimated to live in urban areas today (The Hindu, 5th February 2009). The considerable number of these new comers from villages to the urban centres forms the slum population in Indian cities.

Informal settlements have not just emerged in the last 20 years. Slum dwellers have been part of the urban population in India for almost a century. Illegal housing has a long 'tradition' in India. The difference is in the perception from national or local government, international agencies and local or foreign organizations recognizing them and taking appropriate steps to fight urban poverty. Edelman and Mitra show that the total number of slums in India has decreased from 56 311 in 1993 to 51 688 in 2002 (2006: 28). This is a result of various policies focused on slum clearance and resettlement.

Moreover, notification of informal settlements has been carried out often in India in the last decade. 'Overall, 51 % of India's slums were officially recognized by the respective municipalities, corporations, local bodies or development authorities in 2002, up from 36 % in 1993' (ibid: 34). Sometimes recognitions stay unclear due to incoherent policies and unorganized interventions of local government bodies.

Since independence, India has followed a long tradition of Five-Year plans which have constituted Indian development policies from 1947. Indian government understood the necessity to focus more on urban development in 1990s. The challenges related to urbanization were firstly emphasized indeed in 1992 when Indian national Parliament

passed the 74th Constitutional Amendment (further 74th CAA) (Gnaneshwar, 1995). The Amendment established a new level of urban bodies to get across implementation of national policies to the local government hands. According Chakrabarti 'the 74th Amendment incorporated some revolutionary changes in the organisation, powers, functions, and jurisdictions of the urban local bodies' (2001: 264). It brought different insight on urban development and at the same time it challenged local government authorities to be more interested in citizen's needs. Generally speaking, for the first time it stressed the importance of decentralized policies and the need for a framework for urban governance to tackle urban poverty in India.

It was important to introduce the 74th CAA known also as Nagarapalika Act for better understanding the structure of urban government bodies in Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu in South India. The following study focused on Chennai slums and the role of local government describes concrete functions of government agencies, their relations among each other and difficulties to act together to implement slum policies in the city. These policies often exist clearly defined on the paper, but in reality there is a lack of proper and cooperative solutions. Besides the overall analysis of government interventions toward slum dwellers in Chennai, the two examples of selected slums support to outline government involvement in practice later in this chapter.

Map 1: Chennai, India

Source: Central Intelligence Agency of United States of America, 2009

3.2 Chennai slums and policies

Chennai as an example of an Indian city is one of the most rapidly growing urban centres in India (Chakrabarti, 2001: 262). Chennai is the fourth biggest city and port in the country. The urban area forms a major transportation hub for roads, railways, air lane and naval transportation inside and outside of India. Besides the well-known megacities as Calcutta, Mumbai, or Delhi, Chennai has attracted more and more migrants from rural areas in the last years. Apparently Chennai, in terms of investment, was the top destination for domestic migrants in 2007 as well as Bangalore in comparison to the leading Indian business urban centre Mumbai (The Hindu, 13th March 2009). Recently the city has become a target destination for middle income workers from other surrounding Indian states. The reasons are its intensive commercial and industrial growth in the past 20 years and the accelerated expansion of outsourced IT and IT enabled services in the region (TNSCB, 2009).

When speaking about Chennai we have to distinguish between Chennai Metropolitan Area (CMA) and Corporation of Chennai (COC). The huge and diverse area of CMA constitutes the 'region' more simply called Chennai. CMA is divided into Chennai city itself or better, the Corporation of Chennai, plus 16 municipalities, 20 town panchayats, 1 cantonment and 214 villages (viz. Map 2). CMA compounds various administrative units in the sense of regional development and planning, but administration and service provision are in the hands of appropriate municipal governments within the region.

CMA covers a total surface of 1 189 sq. km contrary to COC surface of 176 sq. km (CMDA, 2008). According to information accessible from an internal report of the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB), the population of CMA numbered 7.04 million inhabitants in 2001 and the projection for 2011 is 8.42 million inhabitants (TNSCB, 2009). The majority of the population of CMA lives logically in Chennai city which numbered 4.3 million inhabitants in 2001 (CMDA, 2008). Current estimation is that the city comprises around 5.4 million people today (COC, 2008). Chennai city plays a dominant and central role in the region.

Map 2: Division of Chennai Metropolitan Area
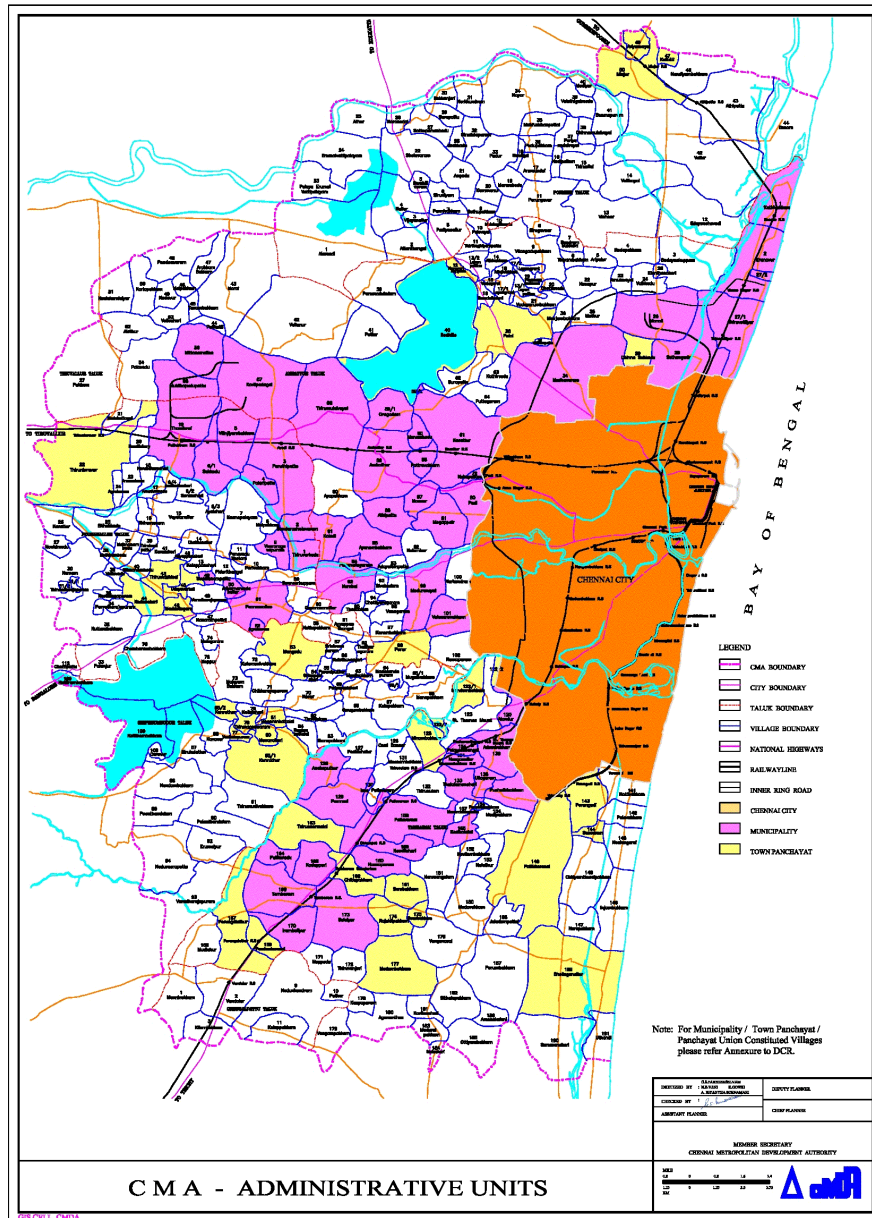
Source: Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority, 2009

It is evident that Chennai city is highly overpopulated. In 2001, slum residents formed 26 % of the city population (Chandramouli, 2003: 83). The urban space became very limited. In comparison to 1932 when there were 181 slums in the Chennai city, in 1986 the number of them increased to 1 413 settlements counting more than 170 000 families (TNSCB, 2009). Increased land price, higher demands on infrastructure and housing have negatively affected many poor households to live in informal settlement. According to Chandramouli's profile of Chennai slums, 67 % of the slum households lived in one-room houses in 2003 (ibid). The need for appropriate shelters presents one of the most crucial of slum dwellers' demands.

Apart from the lack of space they suffer from inadequate water supply, toilet facilities and absence of drinking water. Living conditions of slum dwellers in Chennai affect their vulnerability and cause various health problems and diseases as malaria, cholera, pneumonia or diarrhoea. Secondly, slums contribute to continuing pollution of rivers and other waterways in the city. Open defecation areas, lack of drainage, often no garbage collection and widespread ignorance of environmental problems are common features for many informal settlements in Chennai. The illegal electricity access for many households risks possible fire accidents, sometimes fatal for the majority of shelters in a slum. Primary education and public health care are free. Unfortunately many public schools are in very poor conditions and the quality of teaching is questionable. Government hospitals do not guarantee professional medical treatment as well. Moreover they are crowded and the poorest have to wait sometimes for long hours to get medical care.

All these problems and difficulties which many urban poor in Chennai have to face are interconnected to each other. The secure place to live is a necessity to change most of them as we learnt from the previous chapters. The most vulnerable group of 'citizens from slums' constitutes the substantial part of the COC population. The Tamil Nadu government and local government bodies seem to recognize that fact. Before 1971 there was no proper slum policy (De Wit, 1996: 112). In 1971 the state government enacted *Tamil Nadu Slum Areas (Improvement & Clearance) Act* (further Act 1971). Apart from the newly established government agency Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB) responsible exclusively for slum clearance and development, Act 1971 confirmed a vast definition of slums:

'Any area is or may be a source of danger to the health, safety or convenience of public of that area or of its neighbourhood, by reason of the area being low-lying, in-sanitary, squalid, or overcrowded or otherwise, or the buildings in any area, used or intended to be used for human habitation are in any respect, unfit for human habitation by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement and design of such buildings, narrowness or faulty arrangement of streets, lack of ventilation, light or sanitation facilities, or any combination of these factors, detrimental to safety, health or morals, they may by notification, declare such area to be a slum area.'

Source: Declaration of Slum Area Act 1971, Chapter II. TNSCB, 2009

The universality of the definition provides a large understanding of slums. For example it says nothing about illegal land tenure and classifies slums only according the bad living conditions in general. As De Wit argues, Act 1971 still leaves space for odd interpretation for a possible intervention (1996: 113). Act 1971 gave government the possibility to protect slum dwellers living in notified settlements against eviction or

relocation in theory. The eviction could be justified in specific cases when government will ensure an alternative site for them and 'if the eviction is in the interest of improvement and clearance of the slum area' (ibid). In 1971 the number of 'declared' slums in the city was 1202 settlements. According to Act 1971, these slums were supposed to be relocated for their improvement somewhere else or to be recognized (same as notified) for upgrading programmes. Unfortunately the declaration remains unclear leaving decision about slum status and following intervention on negotiations among involved government agencies with uncertain powers in that case.

The establishment of TNSCB was obviously the necessary step to form a body in charge of integration of varied government policies which affect illegal settlement in all cities in Tamil Nadu. So far the largest slum population has been in COC (Chandramouli, 2003: 83). Implementation of various interventions, programmes and projects caused that the city numbered 444 slums in 2004 (TNSCB, 2009). The present total number of slums contrary to 1970s and 1980s reflects the TNSCB effort to implement improvement and clearance policies. The results in Chennai city are noticeable. In spite of the decreasing number of slums, the absolute number of slum dwellers increased. In 2004 almost 105 000 households lived in slums (ibid). Explanation is complex and partly connected to difficulties with Act 1971 mentioned above.

In summary, during the period of almost 30 years TNSCB has been balancing among resettlement policies and upgrading programmes in declared slums. Demolitions and simple evictions of many informal settlements occupying government or private land were executed. Slum dwellers mostly came back either to occupy the land again or better to join already recognized settlement. Many slums were resettled to sometimes incomplete alternative tenements far from the city lacking basic amenities again. Its residents often returned. It is evident that government interventions and programmes often targeted illegally occupied space instead of the urban poor themselves.

Some slums have been upgraded. The large-scale upgrading strategy of WB affected Chennai slums as well as many developing cities indifferent to the country in 1990s (Werlin, 1999). However, the recognized slums with certain security of tenure started to attract more poor migrants or evicted/relocated former slum residents. De Wit mentioned that 'new slums appear to develop only in the urban finger, while existing (illegal) slums appear to grow ever more crowded' (1996: 108). Recognized and upgraded informal settlements became commonly the target for new coming urban poor who build their shelters wherever the slum area allows it. The results were that the number of slums did not grow, but the slum population extended rapidly anyway.

The brief description of Chennai slums based on various documents and interviews brings an insight to their evolution. The history of selected slums for the study shows some facts more concretely. Today slum policies follow the effort initiated by Act 1971. The latest Tamil Nadu government adopted Second Master Plan for Chennai Metropolitan Area under national Indian policy Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). The Mission covers many issues of regional development of CMA including slum clearance.

TNSCB have already undertaken steps to implement the plan under its Resettlement and Rehabilitation programme. The projection is to make the city slum free by 2013 (The Hindu, 5th May 2007). Many undesirable settlements have been relocated and the majority of current slums is going to be resettled soon. Regarding relocation sites, which are located out of the city itself, the Resettlement and Relocation programme constitutes an integral part of Second Master Plan For Chennai Metropolitan Area, 2026 (CMDA, 2008). There are selected areas in north and south Chennai where TNSCB has constructed tenements for resettled slum dwellers.

3.3 Local government structure

The decentralization effort brings the division of roles into the local context. The power should be balanced and separate local government and municipal institutions are supposed to communicate reaching the objectives of national or state policies. To understand government interventions towards slums we have to know the most important and relevant stakeholders forming the COC and regional structure. Moreover, the basic knowledge about them and their interactions are essential preconditions for understanding the demonstrative case studies from the slums later.

3.3.1 *Corporation of Chennai*

The Corporation of Chennai is the oldest municipal institution in India established in 1688. COC is administratively divided into 10 Zones (viz. Map 3). Each Zone is headed by a Zonal Officer in the local corporation office. Local officers are responsible for services in their Zones, but they are fully financially dependent on the Head Quarter. Head Quarter or central office represents the Council Department headed by the Mayor, the Council Secretary and standing committees. Other departments are responsible for administration, legislation, planning and engineering in general. The relevant departments for slum dwellers are Revenue Department which is responsible for tax collection and distribution of ration

cards[2], Electrical Department in charge of electricity supply, Solid Waste Management Department looking after garbage collection (in some Zones is replaced by privatized companies), Health Department and Education Department.

The Corporation is one of the public land owners in the city. Other public land is property of the Tamil Nadu government and its agencies. As the owner of occupied land, COC categorizes informal settlement on *objectionable* and *unobjectionable* slums. Objectionable slum are basically located on waterways, road or railway margins and seashore, simply places inappropriate for housing purposes. The categorization is used by other public bodies, but there is no legislatively fixed definition of the categorization.

Generally speaking, objectionable slums are allowed to be evicted or relocated to alternative sites. Unobjectionable slums on public land are tolerated, better officially recognized. Their Zonal offices have permission to enable their residents to the Corporation services and TNSCB runs a range of activities based on the upgrading and development programmes or projects in these settlements, moreover provides their residents property documents in some cases.

Map 3:Zones in the Chennai city

Source: Corporation of Chennai, 2009

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[2] Mitlin and Satterthwaite describe ration cards as a 'kind of permission which provides access to subsidized food and fuel for registred citizens in India' (2004: 219). The ration cards are distributed per household.

3.3.2 Ward committees

The 74th CAA initiated restructuring of municipal government and formed 'Ward Committees' (WCs) which represent approximately 40 – 50 000 people per ward (De Wit, 1997: 9). The members of WCs called Municipal Councillors (MCs) are elected every five years by the ward population. Each Corporation Zone is divided in 10 WCs in average. The total number of WCs in Chennai city is 155 (COC, 2009). MCs present the closest connection for population of its district to assist them to reach public services and help them in the case of an emergency. As a connector the MC should encourage citizen participation and facilitate dialog between citizens and COC offices or other government bodies. Slum dwellers often address the MC to get access to service provision, to complain about possible relocation or lack of maintenance about already provided public facilities. Their MC is mostly the tie to the COC Zonal Officer or sometimes to the higher government level.

3.3.3 Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board

As we learnt above, TNSCB is responsible for all matters connected to the clearance, improvements and relocation of informal settlement in Chennai and other major cities or towns in Tamil Nadu. The agency has no acquisition policy (De Wit, 1996: 108). This makes its position difficult and dependent on negotiation with other government institutions owning the land. TNSCB is basically a body facilitating slum policies in communication with other stakeholders involved in an intervention.

The tasks of TNSCB are housing provision for relocated settlements, following support and maintenance of the sites. In unobjectionable and notified slums the agency run various environmental, rehabilitation, upgrading and housing development programmes and projects. Community Development Wing targets communities in both categorized slums as well as in resettlement areas to build slum dwellers' capacities and to assist them on the way out of their poverty. TNSCB activities are funded primarily by Tamil Nadu government, central Government of India, Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) and by international donors, especially WB.

3.3.4 Tamil Nadu Housing Board

Tamil Nadu Housing Board (TNHB) is another government agency owning public land. TNHB contrary to TNSCB has an acquisition policy. Its land it appropriate for housing purposes, but TNHB provides houses to middle- and higher-income groups in Tamil Nadu. Regarding interventions towards slum dwellers, TNHB is one of the bodies to negotiate about land for relocation sites in the region.

3.3.5 Metrowater and Chennai Metropolitan Solid Waste Board

Apart from the Corporation departments there are other boards responsible for public service provision in all of CMA. Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewage Board (CMWSSB), simply called Metrowater, provides water supply and sewage disposal. Chennai Metropolitan Solid Waste Board (CMSWB) is responsible for solid waste management. They cooperate with the COC office and other municipalities indifferent to an area in CMA to provide services to their residents. Metrowater assists also COC with liabilities connected with water supply and sewerage services in the city.

3.3.6 Public Works Department

Public Works Department (PWD) is parastatal Tamil Nadu government agency operating in the state. PWD is responsible for maintenance, development and protection of bodies of water and reservoirs across Tamil Nadu. In CMA there are three rivers: Kosasthalaiyar, Cooum and Adyar. Many Chennai slums are located on Cooum and Adyar banks which are PWD property. Another relevant waterway presents Buckingham Canal, a man made canal which runs north south through Chennai city. In CMA there are many lakes looked after by PWD. Many of them are today affected by illegal settlements.

PWD land is not suitable for housing purposes. From this point of view all informal settlements on rivers, canal and around lakes or other bodies of water are objectionable. PWD can provide a 'no-objectionable certificate' to some slums in a limited number of cases if they do not obstruct PWD interests. In fact many slums are located on PWD land and TNSCB has the uneasy position to negotiate with PWD officials about possible interventions towards them.

3.3.7 Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority

The authority (CMDA) is first of all the planning body in charge of CMA regional development. In 2008, CMDA released Second Master Plan for Chennai Metropolitan Area for 2026 (further Master Plan 2026) based on the Mumbai development model. The Master Plan 2026 covers complex plans for the whole region in terms of housing, infrastructure, commercial and industrial development. It supposes further cooperation and involvement of relevant government or parastatal institutions as municipalities within the region: TNSCB, TNHB, Metrowater, PWD, Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) or Tamil Nadu Highways Department (CMDA, 2008). Regarding slum policies, it is important that Master Plan 2026 takes the underestimated internal migration to the Chennai city and increasing housing needs of the poor into account.

Figure 1: Official structure of intervention in Chennai slums
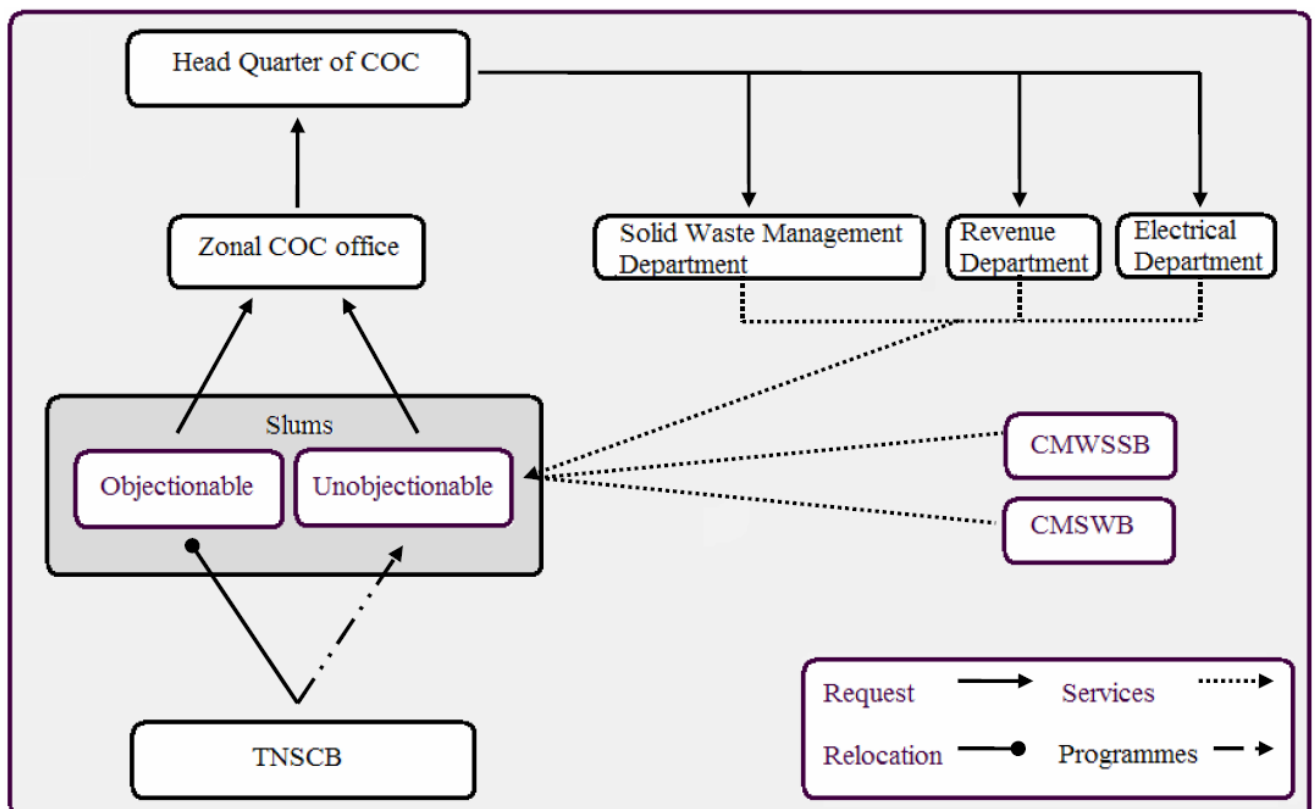
Source: Sobotová, 2009

The brief picture of the Chennai urban structure brings overall insight on public institutions and government agencies involved in interventions towards slums. Figure 1 shows in a simplified way the slum's status within the official structure. Slum dwellers mostly address for service provision their MCs or even Zonal Officers without regards to the categorization of the settlement. All of them have similar needs and requests for basic services.

In theory it seems that responsibilities and authorizations of government bodies are defined. Unfortunately the optimal situation remains on the paper. Lack of communication, mutual cooperation among them and lack of common vision make the slum policy implementation more difficult and less sustainable. In practice, the different character of the institutions leads to less evident division of roles and unclear responsibilities of an intervention. All these aspects create space to misuse power.

Unfixed policies affect the most the 'beneficiaries' in slums who are sometimes defrauded by unorganized intervention or never fulfilled political promises. Following profiles of two selected settlements in the Chennai city should demonstrate how the outlined theory for common intervention works in practice. It is important to keep in mind that both slums present illustrative cases for the purpose of the analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the slum policies in general.

4. The reality of Chennai slums

4.1 Kalyana Puram profile

Kalyana Puram (KP) is located on the Buckingham Canal in the North Chennai, Zone III. The settlement is an unobjectionable and notified slum with all basic public facilities. The place presents very good location close to the Central railway station, bus terminus and government hospital. In the vicinity of the slum there are various employment opportunities to work for middle income merchants and households from higher castes. KP is an example of a recognized slum in general, but regarding its position close to the objectionable area of the canal banks, situated on lucrative land, its rapid expansion and long-term negative impacts on the canal pollution and flow, the status provides only limited security of tenure for its slum dwellers. The case study of KP demonstrates the impact of recognition on slum residents and unpredictable consequences of its growth due the certain security and attractive location.

4.1.1   Slum history

The first illegal shelters appeared here more than 40 years ago. There were a limited number of thatched houses, but the settlement grew fast. Slum dwellers got illegal electricity. Hot weather and unsafe jumper connection often exposed the settlement to fire. A serious fire accident affected almost every house 40 years ago (around 200 thatched houses at that time). Government then promised to provide alternative tenements for the victims who left almost with nothing. In reality the construction of the houses took more than two years. The tenements were finally built close to the affected area. Meanwhile the slum dwellers had to live in very poor provisional conditions.

News about the housing provision spread quickly and more people started to join the settlement. In fact the population doubled within the waiting period. When the construction was finished, TNSCB could offer tenements only to a limited number of households. The decision regarding who would get a tenement was made by a lot. About half of the slum population moved to tenements, others remained in their illegal shelters. TNSCB helped them to adapt land for further housing construction. Those started to build their pucca houses believing in certain security of tenure promised by TNSCB. First of all it affected a slum expansion closer and closer to the canal banks. In addition some slum dwellers who got tenements just sold them and moved back to the slum.

The growing KP with a majority of pucca houses had since the fire poor sanitary conditions without water supply, drinking water and toilet. Among their self-help built houses was no closed drainage and pavement. Dirty water from washing or bathing ran out of houses directly to the space in-between and to the canal. In monsoon season all the mud and 'black' water contaminated the area. People had illegal electricity access and no street lights. The quickly growing settlement was deteriorating the canal pollution and was limiting its flow. The area started slowly to affect PWD property.

4.1.2   Present time

The sanitary conditions started to improve around 10 years ago. So far the slum has basic sanitary facilities including three washrooms with toilets, drinking water supply from tank, close drainage and regular garbage collection. On the other hand the slum has extended and today counts almost 1 000 households. The washrooms and toilets are crowded and people have to queue especially in the morning before going to work. The main washroom close to the slum entrance has all facilities, the other two have only water hand pumps. Toilet and water supply are paid, but the price is symbolic. Some women complained about these conditions. In the majority of cases households do bath and washing at home anyway. In fact many people do not want to use corporation toilets because of waiting, paying or other less obvious reasons.

TNSCB arranged legal electricity access based on household need. Few households even have documents to their houses from the beginning of the construction 38 years ago. The majority of households owns ration and vote cards. Regarding the security of tenure TNSCB affirms formal unregistered status of the settlement. The slum still grows because of its very attractive location with well-settled community. Today there are especially pucca houses, thatched shelters are located only on the canal banks. People are building, upgrading and investing in their 'assets'. The problem presents the illegally occupied PWD land close to the canal. Part of the KP fills PWD property. The threat of possible relocation for them still remains. According to slum dwellers, the government went many times with relocation promises in the past, but nothing happened. Therefore they do not consider the menace very dangerous yet.

4.1.3 Illegal housing subdivision

The declared certain security of tenure and long-term slum history encouraged slum dwellers to build and to improve. It has induced illegal housing subdivision and development of informal housing market within the settlement. In the slum there is a number of illegally built up tenements. Some families constructed another floor in their pucca houses to provide ground floor room for rent. Those moved to higher floor of their elevated pucca house or moved out of the slum to let their house to a new tenant. Those who moved away usually went easily to another informal settlement earning their money through illegal renting in KP.

People realized the increased value of the land in present time. In fact there are many ways to profit from it. The owners left their house for regular rent or for an 'agreement' based on a kind of temporary new comer's 'ownership'. In that case the tenant has to pay a deposit for the house. The informal agreement is usually for three years and it can be prolonged afterward or changed to the regular rent based agreement. Another way to make an easy income is to build a new thatched house close to the canal and to rent it again. Illegal electricity subdivision is very common. The owner pays electricity bill every month and later on shares the power with neighbours or tenants on the same street who contribute to the payment.

In addition to slum expansion, the illegal subdivision brings increasing inequality among slum dwellers. New comers are often poor peasants or relatives of present residents. Some of them got a house through a broker who charged for the intermediation to become a member of the slum community. Many times people try to avoid broker's assistance and use already established connections with the slum dwellers through relatives, marriage or friends. Secondly tenants are not able to get ration cards, because their presence in the slum is not officially recognized. Owners watch carefully if the tenants approach their MC to get a ration card. The reason is clear: they might lose their property in a case of possible relocation. Therefore tenants cannot get subsidized food from ration shops and they are forced to spend more money on alimentation from outside.

4.1.4   Community

There are many various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the area. Some of them run women self-help groups (SHGs). The SHG concept is a widespread tool of community participation in urban as well as in rural areas in India. The nature of SHGs is mostly money savings. The members deposit together an amount in a formal bank to get later loans for individual small-scale businesses. The number of women in the group differs depending on the NGO. In theory the function of SHGs is women economic empowerment. On the other hand a SHG presents also a tool for encouraging its members to be more self-confident and empowered in general.

Local SHGs seem to reach the objectives. In KP most women joint SHGs and some of them are members of more then one which is not officially allowed. Besides loans women learnt how to approach officials and policemen, how to help each other, how to speak with people trying to reduce manifestation of social pathology in the community as prostitution or alcoholism. They managed to organize themselves to clean the drainage before getting services from the Corporation. SHGs in KP presented an important voice to address their MC to reach public facilities in the past.

Today their role is also giving notice about lack of maintenance or improper services as insufficient garbage collection or broken street lights. Marialaya, the one NGO who runs 40 groups here, even organizes 'slum visits' to show other SHGs from informal settlements successes of local women. The slum community seems to have a good reputation among Chennai slum populations. Some new comers shifted here from another slum. Neighbouring slum communities are allowed to use their facilities or buy food in its shops. Moreover the community is strong in its relative unity. They are ready to fight for their assets. Many slum dwellers mentioned that in a case they will battle very much to protect their property and to not lose the lucrative location.

4.2 Anju Kudisai profile

Anju Kudisai (AK) is located on the Cooum River in the North Chennai, Zone VI. AK is well-located close to the railway, public school and hospital. Regarding employment slum dwellers have several opportunities to find a job close to the area. The slum differs in many ways from the previous case. AK is an objectionable settlement missing security of tenure from the beginning.

Since 2004 the slum has been involved in the collaborative Madras-York universities five-year project *Water and Environmental health*. The project was predominantly designed for research purposes of Canadian young scholars. Secondly it targeted community participation to examine the concept of Community Action Planning (CAP) in the settlement. The project staff effort helped slum dwellers to access some public facilities. In that case an outside interference played the considerable role. AK is the perfect example of a political patronage. The case study shows the role of political contacts in reality and it demonstrates the impact of the informal intervention on the slum community.

4.2.1 Slum history

The first thatched houses in the area appeared in 1980s. In 1982 there were around 15 households. Some people rented thatched shelters, other owned them. New families from close tenements started to join the settlement because of lack of space or their insolvency to pay rent. The first households did not have anything, they lived in very bad sanitary conditions without any facilities. The settlement full of thatched houses had illegal electricity connection which caused fire accidents often. The Corporation cut them off sometimes. Slum dwellers used to address their MC several times to complain about the conditions.

Approximately 10 years ago TNSCB constructed pucca houses for more then 100 households at that time. The shelters were built a certain distance from the river banks to not reach flooding area. In theory the land was PWD property and TNSCB was not allowed to intervene. Apart from the construction, TNSCB counted the households and enabled them to get ration and vote cards including the rest of the thatched houses closer to the river. In that period the slum dwellers got corporation toilet and drinking water from tank. In-between constructed houses there was mud, no pavement and no drainage. People used to do bath and washing at home and let the dirty water out in the Cooum River.

In 2004 the settlement was involved in the collaborative research project Madras-York universities. Project team tried to form community and run some SHGs. Through field workers' assistance the slum dwellers manage to approach their MC to ask for more facilities. In the period from 2004 till 2008 they got financial support from the Zonal COC Office to build two water hand pumps, closed drainage and the old corporation toilets were enlarged including kids toilet. Moreover the street light was provided, but the informal settlement does not have legal electricity access for households.

4.2.2 *Political patronage*

AK with objectionable status reached substantial government support and aid. For two elected periods the settlement has profited from protective political interference. First of all the TNSCB construction 10 year ago was not officially allowed, because PWD provided no permission to build houses on its land. The TNSCB intervention stays unclear. Next AK involvement in the project helped slum dwellers to raise their voice requesting more facilities. In fact a higher interest seems to play a role in the past. The slum dwellers either recognized their electoral importance and power to address local politicians willing to be re-elected again, or the community itself was powerful to act and to guarantee some advantages through a leader or a middleman.

As we learnt from the previous chapter, slum residents present a considerable number of voters for local politicians, in Chennai case especially for MCs. The AK case affirmed the perception of a slum as a *vote bank*. The value of the urban poor's votes may attract a MC and could impose his or her patronage walking around official slum policies in reality. The same could happen even on higher level of government structure especially if the MC is a member of the ruling party. Regarding the experience of AK dwellers it is important to understand the role of local government bodies in Tamil Nadu not only as services providers, but also as much politically structured institutions. It is a well-known fact that upcoming elections may influence more political interests in urban poor needs and induce misusing of power to obtain more voters on the 'right' side.

4.2.3   Present time

Today the community counts more than 250 households. The settlement does not extent too much because of its instability. The latest in February 2009 the community received an official announcement of relocation as well as other surrounding slums on Cooum banks. The relocation case shows interesting mixture of circumstances. AK as an objectionable settlement should be involved in the TNSCB Resettlement and Rehabilitation programme. In that case it would be very probable that only thatched houses closer to the river in flooding area would be relocated. The pucca shelters formerly constructed by TNSCB would suppose to stay and be improved under a new pilot WB initiative. It was negotiating with PWD before. On the other hand PWD asks to evict the informal settlement completely. Another reason matters. Tamil Nadu government has already approved plan of four-lane road along the Cooum River. The road construction covers the whole AK area. Finally all households are going to be resettled on the South of Chennai probably in June 2009.

4.2.4   Community

Going through the project documentation and slum meeting reports there are visibly some difficulties to empower the community to be involved in changing their environment. Slum dwellers understood their relative temporary power to address local politicians as well as they expected relocation in future. The community was unwilling to contribute their effort, time and work to an uncertain project without promise of material or financial assistance. Contrary to the certain political protection they did not want to invest in their settlement much. Within the project the community once collected money and organized women to clean the drainage before the Corporation provided the close drainage.

Project team and some NGOs started to run SHGs, but most of them finished soon or women are willing to participate only because of possible loans. Most women are not interested in any other activities of the groups. Among slum dwellers exist common understanding of participation in SHGs just in a case of financial difficulties.

Nowadays the community has coordinated people to build more thatched houses together. Neighbours are helping each other to construct a shelter from one day to another. During the period from second half of February 2009 and till the beginning of March 2009 they managed to build more than 100 houses. The reason of such a king of effort lies on their strong belief to get more tenements at the relocation sites.

Most slum dwellers in AK assume that the alternative housing provision is based on tokens. Tokens are generally distributed per household and used to affirm that the household owns a house in a slum. Simply a token means that the family has lived in the settlement and should have an alternative after the eviction. Unfortunately TNSCB has already recognized that urban poor try to misuse tokens in this way and provides new tenements based only on ration cards.

4.3 Final analysis: strengths and weaknesses of the government action

From the previous cases we have learnt how regional or urban government action influences slum dwellers' livelihoods. Various interventions towards these settlements have marked following development of the communities and an effort or a motivation of their residents to change their way of living. Characterization of KP and AK reflects the current situation in the Chennai city. It is necessary to be careful in the case of generalisation, but most of the informal settlements in the city share a similar history, experience with local government and officials, with political patronage, clientelism or difficulties with recognition. Most of them face early relocation.

Regardless of the range of specific circumstances and evolution in a Chennai slum, the profiles mediate an overall view on the role of government and mean of its intervention to cope with illegal housing in Chennai and other cities in developing countries. Speaking about the sense and role of government in urban poverty alleviation we have to outline the positive and negative aspects of the interventions. The illustration from Chennai provides concrete evidence for the following analysis.

4.3.1 Weaknesses

Both the history and present time of both slums prove the slum dwellers' inventiveness and ability to profit from almost nothing. Some authors agree that survival strategies of the urban poorest present the most appropriate and cost-effective solutions to accommodate their needs and interests (Neuwirth, 2005, Berner and Phillips, 2005). The community in AK quickly constructed new thatched houses to get more tenements after relocation. The plan of TNSCB to build new tenements for fire victims in KP caused the population to double quickly. In fact the government action led to the enlargement of the slums, which has negatively affected their surrounding. Any growth of an inner-urban slum influences its environment affecting other public or private land, highways, railways, contaminating rivers or municipal canals and limiting their flow. It seems to be a vicious circle of urban poverty.

Moreover, the increased security of tenure in the KP example changed the settlement not only spatially. The opening for an illegal housing subdivision and informal housing market inside and even outside of the settlement brought about several consequences. Some slum dwellers profited again, some became more disadvantaged. An urban community presents the heterogeneous unit of various groups (Botes and van Rensburg, 2000: 48). The different tenure statuses within a community determine a social structure of new comers, old timers, new tenants, old tenants, owners and brokers or middlemen. Vertical stratification of a community may lead to an inequality or even a tension in the slum.

In many informal settlements slum leaders or middlemen have a significant position in the community hierarchy. 'Slum leaders are not only brokers, they are also the local and lowest level representatives of the various political parties' (De Wit, 1996: 271). In AK slum dwellers many times remembered the community leader who was responsible for their political contacts. It is questionable if the leader addressed his counterparts on the higher level to guarantee a certain security for 'his' settlement. It seems to be very probable that his role was especially organizing local election activities and ensuring enough votes for local MC. De Wit calls the system 'the pyramid of patronage' which starts with a slum leader or a broker on the lowest level and follows up within the municipal structure (ibid: 270). The leader in AK is possibly the element that convinced the community about their significance as a vote bank.

Political interference and patronage (indifferent to its initial input) influence the community behaviour. First its transitoriness imposes a lack of motivation to change a slum as it was written above. It was very difficult to encourage slum dwellers in AK to be active overcoming their instability and vulnerability. They counted on their electoral power.

Secondly, if the community development and change are successful, it will not sustain for a long time. The reason could be that an outsider (an NGO) undertook an initiative in the progress (Berner and Phillips, 2005: 24). For example some successes reached during the project run in AK over the last years have balanced the total passivity of its inhabitants.

The passivity of the communities may spring from the lack of believes in government institutions in general. From the point of view of the urban poorest never fulfilled promises prove the inability and corruptness of the government. 'Their participation is often used by governments as a means of legitimizing the political system and as a form of social control' (Botes and van Rensburg, 2000: 46). Insufficient or even no information from TNSCB and other government bodies means that slum communities are often confused about their rights, responsibilities and electoral power. The slum dwellers stay informed only about their voting authority and possibility to address their MC to ensure their position in the democratic society.

4.3.2   Strengths

Ironically, the weaknesses described above could be transformed in positive way. The growth of a slum is difficult to predict. Experience shows that the involvement of communities in the process of planning an intervention and searching for appropriate solutions to their illegality may help to avoid many unwanted consequences (Mitlin and Satterthwaite, 2004, Botes and van Rensburg, 2000, Cleaver, 1999). The government unfortunately underestimates the role of the urban poorest in the development process itself.

The UNHCS report from 1996 argues that 'the capacity of citizen groups to identify local problems and their causes, to organize and manage community-based initiatives and to monitor the effectiveness of external agencies working in their locality represents one of the most valuable resources available to city and municipal authorities' (1996: 427). This does not mean to design slum policies entirely according slum dwellers' demands. 'Innovative policies will have to learn from the informal market, explore the grey area between formal and informal housing, assess strengths and weaknesses of both, and attempt to combine the former while minimizing the latter' (Berner 2007: 2). The government authorities executing partial steps to reach a plan and its objectives suppose to be more careful in planning following action and reflect slum dwellers' livelihood strategies and practices.

The function of SHGs in Chennai follows a similar approach. The community Development Wing of TNSCB perceives members of SHGs as the entry point to implement various programmes and projects in informal settlements including the Resettlement and Rehabilitation programme. Besides civil society support, women in KP enjoy also assistance from the Corporation and TNSCB. The groups allow development of social solidarity across the community contrary to an existence of the vertical structure of leadership and patronage. In KP some women from SHGs are very powerful to influence others to fight against negative social events or manifestation within the slum.

The issue of the role of a slum as a vote bank is questionable. Kumaran states that urban poor are one of the most powerful citizen groups in India (2008). These people usually do not have anything to lose. They manifest their disagreement very easily, sometimes even with the use of force. Residents in KP have already run officials and investors out from the slum defending their property in a case of possible relocation. Mitlin and Satterthwaite described the significance of political power in their eight case studies (2004). From this point of view the importance of slum dwellers during election period make them visible at least for a short time to achieve public services improving their livelihood afterward. Their votes mostly are the only instruments to influence decisions made about their future.

5. Conclusion

This thesis starts with the justification of the importance of secure land tenure as the basic precondition for human development. To ensure this right for the most vulnerable groups of citizens it is necessary to have protective support from a legitimate authority. The government has instruments to act towards informal settlements and to decrease the number of people living in everyday insecurity. These instruments should be developed and implemented on the lowest administrative level to appropriately answer the concrete needs of the urban poorest. Decentralization provides a partial solution, but the decentralized slum policies themselves do not guarantee the sustainability and success of a strategy as we saw in Chennai.

The case study from Chennai provides insight into the city and its relevant actors in the field. The Chennai example shows that the instruments and set up structure for common intervention towards slums on the paper do not correspond to the reality. It is obvious that calculation of the impact and consequences of slum policies and government interventions present a hard to predict issue. On the other hand the participation of the urban poorest in the formulation of slum policies is just a theoretical approach, which has not been fulfilled in many cases.

Slum policies and government plans for urban poverty alleviation are not often absolutely wrong. Inadequate or counterproductive results of an official intervention should be perceived broadly. From the text we learnt the significance of proper targeting. The objectives of slum policies have to first of all solve the risky situation of slum dwellers in a city instead of targeting a space inside and immediately outside an informal settlement. The government task is find a way to assure urban development and commercialization of a city next to managing the rapidly growing role of slum dwellers as citizens in urban centres.

The recent trend of rapid urbanization and overextending slum population calls for urban governance reflecting its previous lacks and limits. A top-down solution should be combined with the best practices of civil society and especially in cooperation with the urban poorest themselves. Werlin concludes: 'I recognize the need for strong administration to combine `development from above' with `development from below' (1999: 1533). Governance means effective relationship and cooperation between all involved stakeholders as government and its agencies, subject of civil society and slum

communities. The participation of the urban poorest in the process of seeking a solution may not be seen as a tool, but as one of the integral pillars of the solution.

Governance does not serve a universal elixir for urban poverty in general. It is a complex issue. The municipal governance primarily should provide a framework to integrate urban poverty alleviation in all aspects of the local, regional and national development plans. Ideally the long-term partnership of all involved stakeholders should teach them effective cooperation and mutual accountability to cope with both positive and negative results in future.

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