

Determinants of Slum Settlements in Dagon Myothit (East) Township, Yangon

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Abstract

Dagon Myothit (East) Township is located in Yangon City. It is a new township in Yangon City and has many slum dwellers. In Dagon Myothit (East) Township, the numbers of slum population is 20918 and total population is 155432. Nearly 15% are slum dwellers. It has an area of 82.13625 sq. km.

This paper studies determinants of slum formation in Dagon Myothit (East) Township before 1990 to the present 2018. The study of slum settlements in Dagon Myothit East Township is mainly based on the socio-economic factors such as incidence of literacy, income and economic status. Other important factor is housing prices in Yangon City, commercial capital. Semi-structured questionnaire is used to collect primary data. Qualitative technique is used to analyze the data. Determinants of slum settlements are poor urban governance, lack of the stability concerning economics and policy, high living cost and high transport cost in the city.

Keywords: Dagon Myothit (East) Township, slum formation, determinant, living

1. Introduction

Dagon Myothit four townships are included in new urban area of Yangon City. They are Dagon Myothit (North), Dagon Myothit (South), Dagon Myothit (East) and Dagon Myothit (Seikkan). All these new townships have industrial zones, but industrial zones of Dagon South and Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) are developed. Industrial areas of Dagon East, the study area, and Dagon North Townships are not developed. Especially, Dagon East has many open spaces and uninhabited lands such as extensive land of Dagon University, land for proposed Yangon Railway Station and industrial zones. Moreover, people have settled in 29 wards and 3 village tracts although the township has 63 wards and 3 village tracts. Therefore, it has many uninhabited lands for the migration of slums.

Dagon East is situated at the end of north eastern part of Yangon City. It is located between North Latitudes 16° 52' and 17° 1', and between East Longitudes 96° 11' and 96° 18'. It has an area of 82.13625 sq. km. It is bounded by Hlegu Township in the north, Dagon North Township in the west, Dagon South Township in the southeast. It is one of the new satellite towns founded in 1989 by the military government. It is still largely undeveloped and lack of basic municipal services. The Ngamoyeik creek cuts through the west of Dagon East

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Township. Yangon Circular Railway runs to Dagon East through The Toegyaukalay Railway Station and Myanmar Railway's Yangon-Bago line. Several bus lines connect Dagon East to downtown and other parts of the City. These facts support to increase informal settlement area (Figure 1).

This paper includes seven sections. The first section is **introduction**, the second one is **data and methodology**, and the third section is **determinants** in slum settlement which includes poor urban governance, lack of the stability concerning economics and policy, high living cost and high transport cost. The fourth presents **the concepts of slums** and the fifth is **conclusion**.

Research Problems

Research problems are why Dagon Myothit East has informal settlement areas and how to control these slum areas?

Aim

Aim of the paper is to point out the determinants of slums in Dagon Myothit (East) Township

Objectives

Objectives of the paper are to study socio-economic conditions and the importance of policy making in the informal settlement area, and to observe the incidence of literacy in slum area.

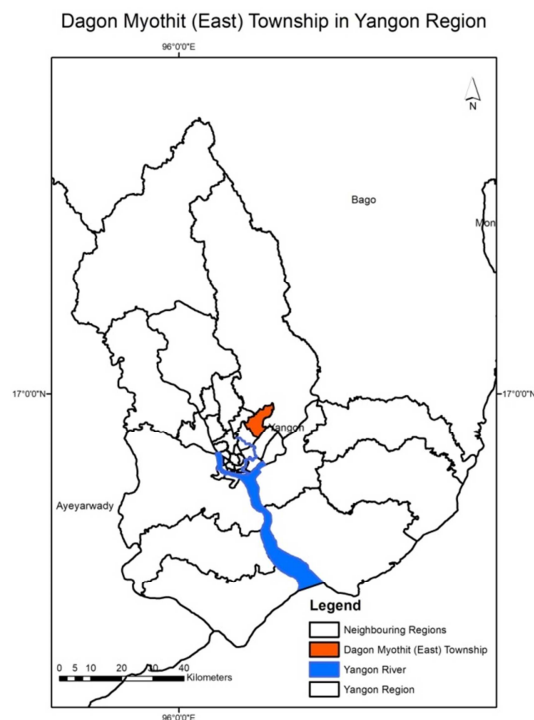


Figure 1: Location Map of Dagon Myothit (East) Township
Source: Yangon City Development Committee, Myanmar

2. Data and Methodology

Data

Secondary data such as the numbers of population, the number of slums and locality of the study area are recorded from General Administrative Office in Dagon Myothit (East) Township.

Base map for Dagon Myothit (East) Township is drawn on the basis of Google image 2017 and field survey in 2018.

Primary data is collected by the structured questionnaire and interview.

Methodology

The focus of getting the primary data is on the aim and objectives of the research to examine determinants of slum formation in the study area.

There are 6918 slum households and 20918 slum dwellers (total number of slums) in which 954 slum households were interviewed. The sample size is 14 % for every slum wards and villages.

Then, database of the data sets is constructed in Access Database. The numbers of migrant people are counted on the basis of time periods. To examine determinants of this area, slum dwellers are interviewed. The results are poor urban governance, lack of the stability concerning economics and policy, high incidence of low literacy, high living cost and lack basic service and high transport cost (Figure 2).

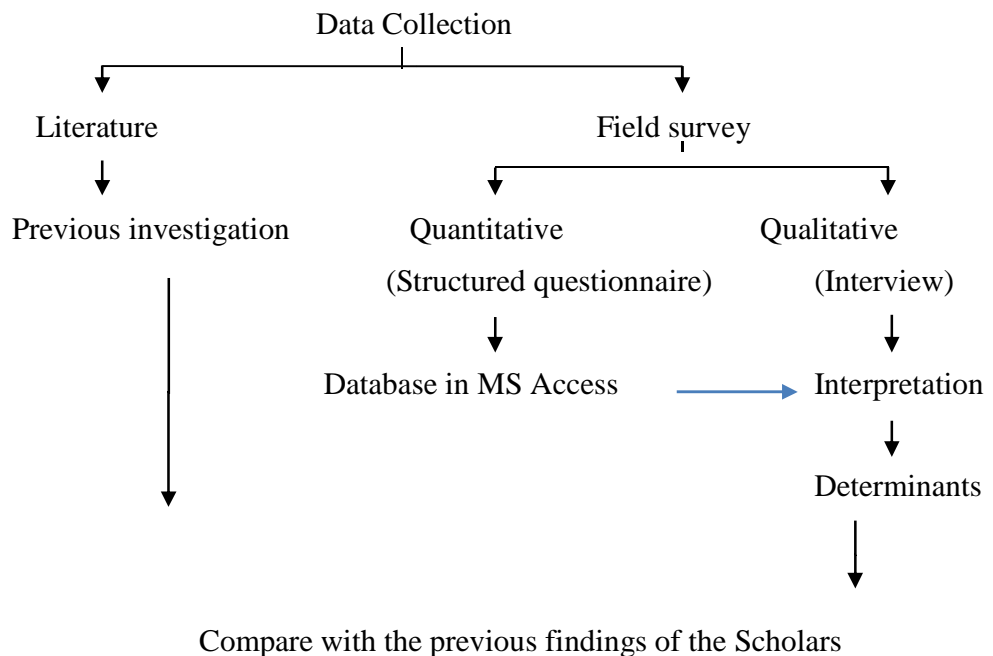


Figure 2: Data Collection Design and Methods

3. Determinants

Poor urban governance

Myanmar's 2014 Population and Housing Census indicate that approximately 15 million people reside in cities. The Ministry of Construction's Department of Urban and Housing Development foresees increasing urbanization in the coming decades. It is projecting that by 2040 half of Myanmar's 35.5 million people will be living in urban areas. Yangon's populations will more than double to over 10 million. It is estimated that over 150,000 housing units will be required each year to accommodate this growing urban population. However, speculators and some developers have bought the flats and estate in Yangon Region. Therefore, the house rent is very high in townships in Yangon City. Moreover, they are not end users. Their lands become uninhabited land and give a chance to become informal settlement areas. Another important thing is that to extend the city, government established new wards, which were farm lands. As a consequence, farm owners become landless people and then they resettle in these new wards. These wards were their farm lands and are uninhabited land yet.

Due to the expanding gap between housing prices and wages of urban dwellers in urban centers, it is likely to meet the major part of the informal housing sector. These areas are often subserviced, with limited road access, poor drainage, shared and illegal electricity connections, poor sanitation and water supply, and often lacking even rudimentary medical facilities. These areas need to increase road width to facilitate the access of emergency vehicles (e.g., fire trucks) and the provision of health care.

Lack of the stability concerning economics and policy

According to the new project of urban expansion, new wards and roads are established urgently. Consequently, roads are not enough strong because of the farm land and the roads are usually destroyed in raining season.

Some wards, a little far from the township, become uninhabited areas. This supports and enhances the urban informal settlement. In the country, law for informal settlement has not been issued clearly and the officials have not tackled these squatters yet. Slums have to stay in these improper housing units and have no official documents for living and no National Registration Card. These determinants make them difficult to find the proper jobs.

Another important fact concerning policy is that Dagon East has a large project, namely, Proposed Yangon Railway Station located in the western part of the township. It has not been implemented yet and has many open spaces to grow slum dwelling.

High incidence of low literacy

All of the family members including the head of the family studied basic education of primary, middle and high school. Nobody graduated from university. People with only primary level of education are 52 %, middle level is 29 % and high school is 19 %. They have no opportunity to get good job because of their education and the lack of capital to invest. People who studied basic high school work in factories and industries. Their income is between about 100 thousands MMK Lakh or up to 30 thousands MMK per month. People who know basic primary education work in construction sites such as bricklayers and brick

carriers, some are motorcycle carriers and some trishaw drivers. Their income is about 80 thousands MMK or up to 250 thousands MMK per month. The vast majority of labors have to engage in informal sectors.

High living cost and lack basic service

Slum area has no basic needs for settlement such as water and electricity. For the use water, they have to buy 400 MMK for 1 barrel of water and 500 MMK for 1 plastic bottle of drinking water. There is no lighting in the house and on the street. They have to spend 350 MMK for one bulb lighting and to watch TV between 6:30 pm to 10 pm.

High transport cost

For their housing squatters are located at the end of the wards or outer most part of the wards, they have to spend time or expenses to arrive bus stand. This is the daily problem to arrive to the work and other desired places such as market, school and health care centre.

4. The Concepts of Slums

Slum dwelling shows the degradation of urban landscape. Slum areas are crowded housing spaces at a price that people can afford to rent or buy. Otherwise the cost is free.

Substandard housing with unhealthy environments is common life style in slum area. The amenities of the houses are that the roof of the house is usually corrugated iron, the wall is bamboo or wood and the floor is bamboo or/and wood.

Slums usually live in or near dumping ground and wet land area. Otherwise they create the dirty surroundings by disposing of household waste under or beside the house or into the creek and river. They have no systematic disposal for garbage. Dirty environment makes them unhealthy vice visor they create unhealthy places.

The socio-economic conditions denote that no water supply and electricity. Slums have to spend for water and lighting in the house and on the street. The vast majority of workers are willing and able to engage the job at a low wage.

Incidence of low literacy in slum areas is higher than that of formal areas. Over half of slum dwellers studied basic education of primary school.

5. Conclusion

Dagon Myothit East Township has many slums, 6918 households, as it is a new town and has many uninhabited land and unused lands. The main reasons for slum dwellings are: (1) When the Nargis Cyclone struck in Ayeyarwady Delta Region on 2nd May 2008, many households from Ayeyarwady Region come and find the jobs in Yangon City, but they cannot afford the high rent in the city. Therefore, they construct the huts in the unused lands of the new township.

(2) This new town has many job opportunities for low wage labours in the construction of factories and implementation of the departmental projects such as industrial zones and construction sites for affordable housing. Low wage workers in these construction sites such

as bricklayers and carpenters do not resettle to their former places and continue to stay in these temporary huts although the projects have been done.

(3) To expand the city, farmlands are defined as the residential areas. However, local farmers and their relatives and friends stay as slums in the fallow lands, lands proposed for playground and parks.

(4) People live in other townships of Yangon City sold their houses and then come and settle as slum dwellers in unused lands because of the bad economy.

(5) Slums have to stay in unfit housing units, unhealthy environments, and improper sanitation. They have to work in hard job and low wage job. One of the most important things is that they have no National Registration Card. They therefore have difficulties to travel and to join permanent jobs.

The above-mentioned facts are common reasons why people migrate to new urban areas and how they encounter the constraints to improve their lives.

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