

THE ROLE OF SPECIALISTS TOWARD SENSITIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SLUMS AND THE NEED FOR LAND READJUSTMENT (LR) EXPERTS IN AFGHANISTAN

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Abstract— Technical specialists provide expert consultancy within their area of specialism and promote sustainable and technical solution in support of the business requirements within their area of expertise. Next to the rapid urbanization, lack of technical experts in the field of urban planning also have contributed in upsetting of existing economic system and expansion or emergence of other slums elsewhere in the city.

This paper describes the result of a questionnaire which was conducted in different organization relevant to urban planning and slum development due to figure out the level of their understanding on developmental methods particularly about LR and basically how to decrease the contribution ratio in LR process.

Index Terms— Land Readjustment, Technical staffs, capacity building, Afghanistan.

I. INTRODUCTION

Slums at its simplest, is a heavily populated urban area characterized by substandard housing and squalors [1]. The definition encapsulates the essential characteristics of slums: high densities and low standards of housing (Structure and services) and squalor. The first two criteria are physical and spatial, while the third is social and behavioral.

In Afghanistan, cities and towns are expanding to accommodate rising numbers of rural-urban migrants, internally displaces persons (IDPs) and refugee returnees. There has been considerable rural to urban migration over the last ten years with the relative security in cities, livelihood opportunities, access to services and education being strong “pull factors”. These pull factors have similarly attracted large numbers of IDPs to move to cities. The rapid migration and vast urban expansion have significantly contributed in the number of informal settlements in the capital. Kabul, which is the largest city in Afghanistan, faced particular problems with respect to slums and illegal developments, about more than 69% of the city has covered by informal settlements [2].

The term “Informal Settlements” often use interchangeably with slum, squatter settlement, favela, shanty towns and etc. all these terms basically refers to illegal or semi-legal urbanization process or unsanctioned subdivisions of land at the urban periphery where land

invasion took place often by squatter who erected housing units usually without formal permission of the land owner and often with materials and building standards not in lie with the criteria of the local building code [3]. The residents are suffering from many problems such as poor infrastructure, shortage of public facilities, depriving of the sense of ownership and facing much environmental degradation. Even though majority of the residents are living in such condition, the government response has been quite weak due to the political, social and financial issues and as well as lack of experts in the field of urban planning.

The issue of the role of specialist in different sectors is a crucial need to avoid from the misuse of land, time and financial resources. Based on the international experiences and slum development practices which took place in different countries, it obviously reflect that next to the financial and social issues, lack of technical experts in the field also can affect the development process. The slum clearance exercise in some cities of Nigeria showed that the scheme rather than solving the problem, compounded them to a worst condition. The exercise engendered in breaking up the social networks, upsetting of existing economic systems and expansion or emergence of other slums elsewhere in the city [4].

According to a technical report entitling “Quick guides for policy makers” bad governance, corruption, inappropriate regulation, unresponsive financial system and a fundamental lack of experts on the field. Afghanistan is no exception, next to the financial issues and bad governance, lack of experts in the field of urban planning is another major challenge that most of the projects could not succeed to achieve the certain objectives. Even some projects engendered in breaking up the community network, upsetting of the economic system and as well as caused social unrest.

Moreover, the concept plan which was proposed for developing of the Bagh-Ali-Mardan area by Ministry of urban development and housing (MUDH) on 2011, it clearly reflect the weak planning and land wastage of the area. The concept was basically developed based on the physical upgrading model [5]. in general the project looks cheap as the main objective was to preserve the existing dwellings and provide very basic services. From the urban planning point of view,

their proposal considers not too sustainable as next to the economy factor, there are some other indicators too such as quality of life and environmental issues which should be highly considered while planning. Sustainability is not only about economy but often seen as a three-dimensional concept that covers social, ecological and economic perspective [6].

In their plan a part of the area has proposed for the park but the size and location is not based on any principle and has the problem of functionality. Moreover, 12184 m² including a bazaar which was one of the fine commercial establishment and historical place have proposed to be preserved but there is no any developmental plan shown in their map in this regard. Preservation alone is not a sustainable solution for such a high value and important cultural heritage. These historical area and establishments own cultural and economic importance for the country therefore they are necessary to be revitalized in order to rejuvenate and restore the status and prestige of the old city.

Land readjustment has proved a well and sustainable method for developing of the informal settlements as it is a self-financed method and has the potential to enhance quality of life, generate job opportunities and develop the area.

In this research we have focused on awareness of the officials and engineers about LR and the role of this method toward sustainable development of the informal settlements in Kabul city.

II. METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was prepared and face to face interview was conducted on June, 2018 with the technical officials of the Capital Region Independent Development Authority (CRIDA). Although Land Readjustment (LR) is totally a new concept for developing of the informal settlements in Afghanistan but some officials of CRIDA organization were already trained by JICA through many workshops and sessions held in Japan, Turkey and India. The questionnaire was aimed to figure out their level of understanding and knowledge on developmental methods particularly on LR method and to collect their ideas on how to decrease the contribution ratio in LR process. Moreover, the result of this questionnaire will also explain the level of the need for LR experts in Afghanistan.

III. THE RESULT OF QUESTIONNAIRE

A total 48 forms, consisting of 12 questions have been filled by engineers, architects and experts from 5 different divisions and departments of Capital Region Independent Development Authority (CRIDA) such as Division of Technical Planning, Upgrading and renovation program division, Structure & Design Division, Good and Electronic Governance Division and Infrastructure division.

Table 1. Participated Divisions with number of respondents

Questionnaire	
Number of Questions	12
Participated Divisions	5
Number of Respondents	48
Questionnaire type	Paper based

Regarding the education level of the respondents, about 38 out of 48 participants who filled the form were holding bachelor degree, 19% had master's degree while there was only one participant who was graduated from vocational institute (14th class) and there was no PhD degree holder among the participants.

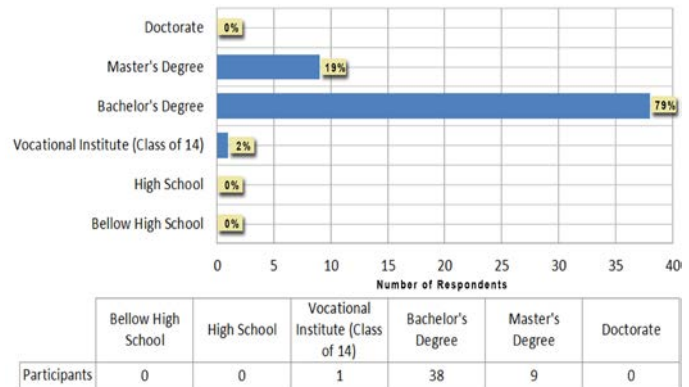


Figure 1. Respondents Education Level

Q2: Which development methods of informal settlement do you fully familiar with?

There were lots of responses to this question, most of the participants received training on informal settlement development specially upgrading method, therefore almost 58% of the participants were familiar with the "on-site upgrading" method, while 29% had general knowledge about urban regeneration and land readjustment method.

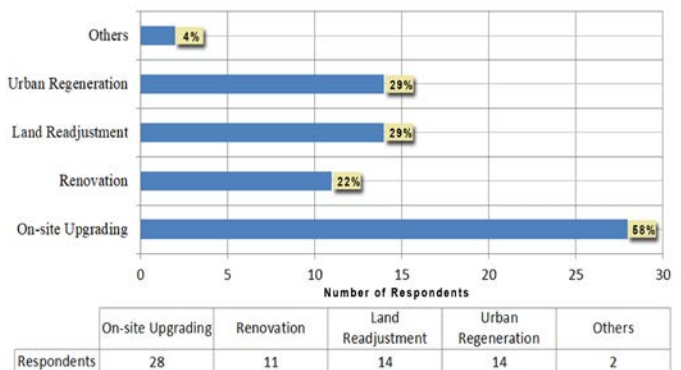


Figure 2. . Familiarity level of the participants with different types of developmental models

Q3: Have you got any training on Land Readjustment?

From total 48 respondents, only 10 participants have received training on Land Readjustment through some workshops and sessions which was held in Japan, Turkey, India and Afghanistan. The majority portion of respondents almost 79% did not receive any training yet.

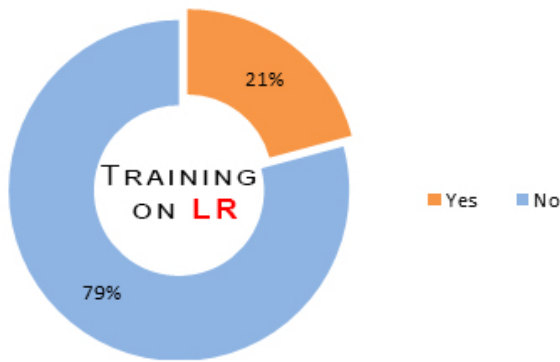


Figure 3. Responds to question regarding received training on LR

Q4: Do you understand the challenges of Land Readjustment projects during the implementation?

Almost less than the half of participants (26 people) didn't know about the challenges of LR projects during the implementation while 22 participants had a very basic & general understanding which indicates the crucial need for more trainings, workshops and local experts in the field of LR.

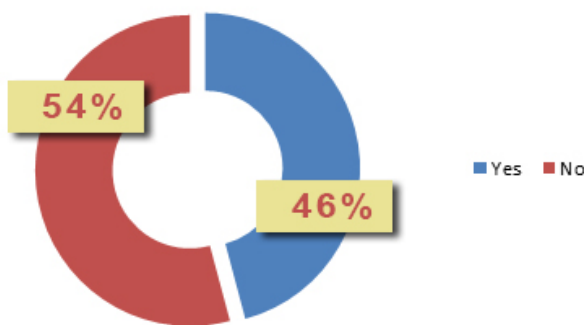


Figure 4. Responds to question about understanding the challenges of LR during the project

Q5: Do you have any idea about financial land?

Majority of the participants had no idea about the financial land while 17% of the interviewed officials had basic knowledge about financial land/Reserve land.

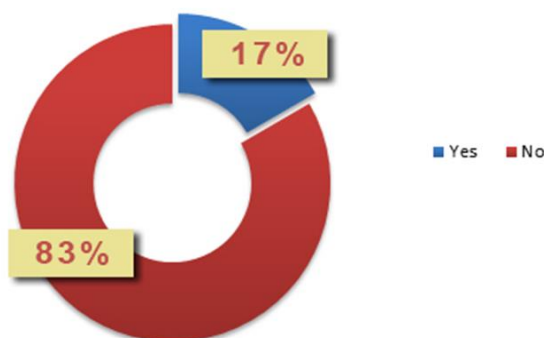


Figure 5. Respondents knowledge about Financial Land

Q6: Do you have idea about alternative financing sources to decrease reserve land:

As most of the participants didn't receive any training or workshop on land readjustment therefore majority of the responses were negative for this question. However, 39 participants had no idea and only 9 people shared their ideas on alternative financing sources for decreasing the reserve land.

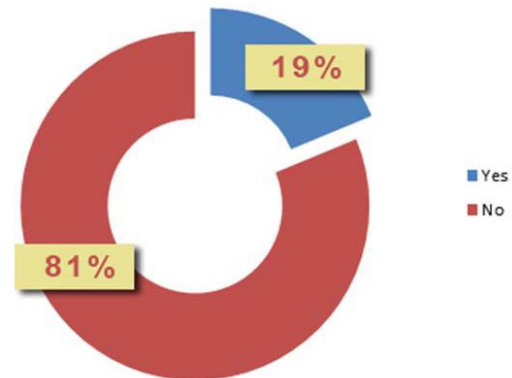


Figure 6. Ideas on alternative financing sources for decreasing reserve land

Q7: How to increase satisfaction level and trust of people?

Trust plays a significant role in implementation and success of urban planning and design projects, Land Readjustment is a method where the developers or implementers are directly encountered with the people especially affected residents, therefore it is too important for the government to have the people's trust, and it will help to accelerate the implementation process and make the project successful. In this regard, we questioned the participants (Engineers and experts) that how we can build up people's trust on government; a very few numbers of participants shared their ideas on the issue, the summary of the ideas have mentioned in below:

- Government should do what they have promised to the people.
- Government should provide several alternatives for the resident whom affected by the new plan.
- Government should implement at least a small project of renovation or upgrading in order to encourage people and get their trust.
- Involving the people in the project
- Provision of public facilities and enhancing quality of life for the people.

Q8: Land Readjustment can establish a multilateral partnership between people, developer and government:

Regarding the above statement, 33% of respondents were strongly agree that LR can establish a multilateral partnership between the government, people and private sector while 11% were not sure and 8% of the participants were disagree with the statement. More details about the above question have mentioned in following bar chart:

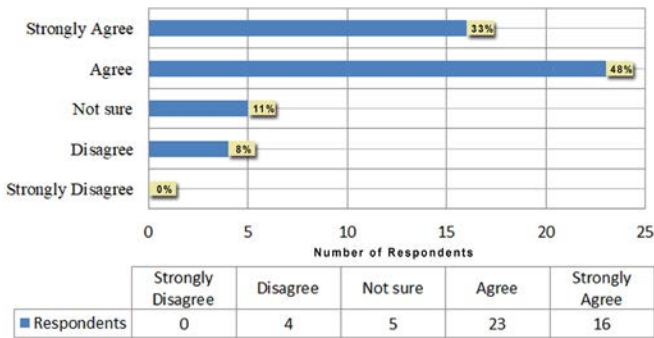


Figure 7. The possibility of creating multilateral partnership through LR

Q9: Land Readjustment method increases the value of land for landowners:

18 out of 48 forms which filled by the participants showed strongly agreement that LR can increase the land value for the landowners while 6 respondents were not sure and 3 people were disagree with the statement.

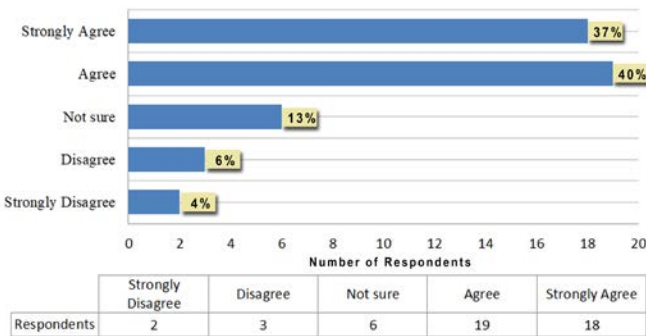


Figure 8. Responds to question regarding land value increase through LR

Q10: Land Readjustment method can pave the ground for the private sector to invest and partake in development of the project:

Regarding the statement which LR can make available the platform for the private sector to invest in Afghanistan; almost 63% of the respondents were agree while 27% were not sure and 2% of the participants were strongly disagree with the statement.

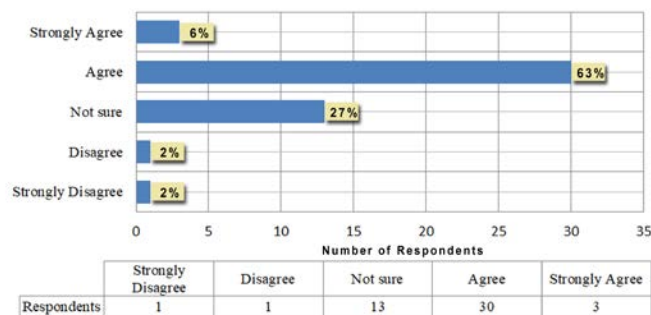


Figure 9. Responds to question regarding LR role in paving the ground for the investment

Q11: Land Readjustment can financially support the government in developing the informal settlements:

About 54% of the respondents were agree that LR can financially help the government in developing the informal settlements while 15% were not sure and 6% out of 48 respondents showed their disagreement to the statement.

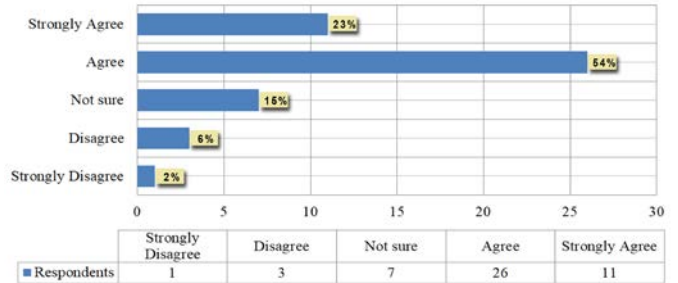


Figure 10. LR role in financially supporting the government

Q12: Land Readjustment can provide parks, open space, infrastructure and other required public facilities to the area:

Regarding the provision of parks and infrastructure; about 20 out of 48 respondents were strongly agree while 14% were not sure and 2% of the respondents were strongly disagree with the statement.

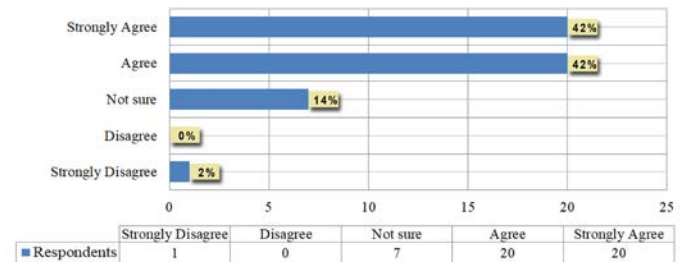


Figure 11. Responds to question regarding providing public facilities through LR

IV. CONCLUSION

However Land Readjustment (LR) is totally a new concept for developing of the informal settlements in Afghanistan but some officials of CRIDA organization were already trained by JICA through many workshops and sessions held in Japan, Turkey and India. Therefore, a questionnaire was prepared and conducted with the CRIDA officials on June 2018 in order to understand their level of understanding about Land Readjustment (LR) as well as have their ideas on how to decrease the contribution ratio and build people's trust on government.

Lack of experts in the field of urban planning in particular Land Readjustment (LR) is a big challenge toward sensitive and sustainable development of the informal settlements. Next to other financial, social and political matters, lack of the experts and lack of the knowledge has been recognized the biggest problems as to why many developmental projects could not succeed to achieve the certain objectives in the past.

Currently in Afghanistan, according to the legislation in the Ministry of Justice, municipalities have the power of eminent domain. For instance, Kabul Municipality (KM) can expropriate private lands for the purpose of road widening and public services. According to a report entitling Kabul urbanization and development challenges which

prepared by AKTC, the Kabul Municipality is the only governmental organization that is mandated in such cases to compensate people whose property is expropriated or relocate them to alternative sites. Based on this statement, Land Readjustment process also has to be managed and conducted through this organization. Kabul Municipality has a department by the name of "Urban Planning and Implementation". It was established on 1960 for the purpose of making Master Plan for the city of Kabul. The main responsibility of this organization is to design the roads, bridges and prepare development plans and drawings for the city of Kabul to avoid from the arbitrary expansion and development of the informal settlements. It has many divisions including LR which recently added to the organizational structure of this department, but unfortunately lack of experts in this field is a big and crucial challenge for this department. In order to enhance the sustainability and quality of the projects, government has to invest more on the capacity building of the engineers and urban planners in order to have highly technical stuffs and solve the problems from the root in a sustainable way.

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