

## Strategies to Control the Growth of Marginalization in Urban Areas (Case Study: Bonab Town)

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The urban life is rapidly developing in the world. The rate of urbanization is highly progressing in developing countries compared to that of developed countries. Iran is also struggling with rapid urbanization. This rapid pace has brought about many consequences for big cities. Hence, informal settlement plays a fundamental role in the study of these cities. Marginalization and informal settlements coupled with planning and management deficiencies have severely affected the livability and environmental quality of cities. Marginalization and its related informal settlement problems accumulated overtime pose a daunting challenge to urban renewal. The complex environmental, social, economic and spatial challenges have made the development of these areas relatively impossible. The current environmental quality, especially in the marginal areas, is degraded as it is difficult even to provide basic water supply and sanitary services to these areas. Thus, these problems together have given rise to construction of insecure buildings in the name of urbanization. The unsatisfactory employment conditions in marginalized areas, inhabitation in illegal settlements, crime increase and cultural, social, economic and environmental pollutions are the unwanted consequences of informal settlement.

### 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Poor environmental conditions in marginalized areas have been associated with poor health, aggravating the poverty and often resulting in low educational levels and reduced income caused by

disease and exorbitant expenses of health care, which may deplete the households' savings. Poverty prevents people from moving to safer areas or investing in the improvement of their neighborhood. On the other hand, environmental problems exacerbate urban poverty with poor neighborhoods suffering disproportionately from inadequate water and sanitation facilities and indoor air pollution. Poor people living in marginalized areas are often forced to live in unsafe environments, steep hillsides, flood plains or polluted sites near solid waste dumps, open drains, sewers and polluting industries. Therefore, in the second decades of 1980s, empowerment strategies along with improvement in informal habitat settings are recommended to alleviate the poor economic conditions of families as well as their inability to use the collective power. Therefore, the modern approach is based on the improvement of local communities and macro policies to resolve the problems of marginalized areas.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive – analytical research. The data were gathered using documentary analysis and field studies through interviews with specialists and professionals of local administration. The main research instrument was a questionnaire with open-ended items. Fifty participants including university professors, specialists, researchers and experts of Range and Forests Organization of BONAB Township were interviewed. The results were analyzed by SWOT model and frequencies and

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percentages were calculated. SWOT analyzes the future possibilities through a systematic introspection of both positive and negative points. This helps planners determine the strengths that need to be promoted to alleviate the internal weaknesses and the external opportunities, as well as the external threats that should be taken into account. Thus, it offers a means to be used in the preliminary stage of decision-making and as a precursor to strategic planning in various applications. SWOT analysis consists of two internal/external dimensions: strengths and weaknesses are internal factors and opportunities and threats are external factors. Strengths are basic assets that provide a competitive advantage for the growth and development. There are positive aspects that are considered in the analysis of internal factors. Weakness (W) is the deficiency or limitation that can create disadvantages for the growth and development at certain times and places. Weaknesses militate against strengths and there are negative aspects that should be considered as internal factor. In fact, this factor refers to a scope which needs to be revised. Opportunity (O) is the ability to grow and achieve the specific objectives in a given situation. Strengths are one of the factors that produce opportunity and appropriate situations and are treated as positive/external aspects. Threat (T) is a situation that hinders the abilities to grow and develop to meet the ultimate goal. Threats are negative aspects that should be considered as external factors. Thus, weaknesses and threats are negative/external aspects.

In this research, there were 11 Strengths (S), 21 Weaknesses, 10 Opportunities (O) and 9 Threats (T). After identifying the central strategies, QSPM model was used for ranking the strategies.

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## 4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The analysis of SWOT results show that despite the serious threats and fundamental weaknesses such as high percentage of workers in primary jobs, hidden and seasonal unemployment, high dependency ratio, limited role of women in the economy of the family, intensive poverty, lack of financial facilities to improve neighborhoods, disorganized streets spaces, imbalanced constructions, narrow passages, compressed texture, inefficiency of network access, weak and inappropriate building materials, unattractive facade and formal features, low education, migration of majority of residents, undesirable sanitary condition, high rate of youth crimes, there are some opportunities for empowerment of the residents and the improvement of neighborhood. These improve neighborhood, focus the local government's attention on organizing the informal settlements, attracting international aids for empowerment activities, and creating a sense of public participation of the residents in supporting the government in creation of local loan boxes. These are only a few solutions for neighborhoods problems. The results show that a conservative strategy would be the central strategy of action. These strategies emphasize overcoming weakness by taking advantage of opportunities through eight approaches.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that main reasons encouraging marginalization in Bonab city is unemployment, low income, inhabitation in rented accommodations and widespread immigration from small cities and villages, which are rooted in economic factors (such as economic attraction and economic obstacles of villages) as well as socio- cultural obstacles.

**Keywords:** Urban planning, Marginalization, Strategic Planning, Bonab city.

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