

# State and the Low Cost Housing for the Poor: Fall of Bashentek Rehabilitation Project (BRP) in Dhaka City: Bangladesh

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## Abstract

In the era of neoliberalism now the people especially the lower income group of people is suffering a lot for the scarcity of housing. After migrating from the rural areas for a better life they discovered themselves in the slum like areas of the city as they are not capable to afford housing in the influential areas of the city due to higher rent. Although government take initiatives to remove the housing scarcity of the lower segment of the people but at the end that is after the completion of the housing the flat has been distributed towards the politically powerful and wealthy persons instead to submit those flats to the slum dwellers. This is the case that has been taken place exactly in the case of Bashantek Rehabilitation Project (BRP) a low cost housing program for the poor initiated by the government of Bangladesh. The real situation is that the real slum dwellers were disposed in the name of low cost housing. Now the flat owner is the politically powerful elite and the wealthy personnel. And throughout of this project the slum dwellers has become the victim of dual burden like disposed form the land and lost the money that has been transferred to the project personnel to get the flat at the same time.

**Keywords:** State; Low Cost Housing; Poor; BRP; Slum Dwellers; Right Claim Citizen; Dispossession.

## Introduction:

Bangladesh, a densely populated country in the Asian region and has one of the lowest per capita land ratios in the world (WB, 2015). The situation is further aggravated every year through an irrevocable reduction of per capita share of land for housing. Acknowledging the importance, housing is one of the five basic needs incorporated in the constitution of Bangladesh, compelled Government constitutionally to play a vital role in securing housing rights. Government alone cannot provide house to all and realizing this, they decided to share the task of providing safe decent places to live with NGOs, to make these people a productive resource. Many NGOs are promoting low cost safe housing schemes through skills enhancement, networking, technical assistance, advocacy, credit, and access to government land.

Since the newsletters and networking via electronic media is out of reach for grassroots people and their organizations, NGOs and Government can assist in disseminating knowledge and information in simplified ways in addressing grassroots people's problem identifications as well as locally developed solutions promoting best practices, developing minimum uniform standards for urban low cost housing etc by working together on prioritized issues, by learning from each other, releasing grass root people for their own livelihoods and by utilizing each-others' skills and resources. Networking of grass root people can assure that small is beautiful and practical for scale-up by poor in the Bangladesh. The BRP (Bashentek Rehabilitation Project) at Bashentek is an attempt of Bangladesh government to provide shelter for the low-income group people as well as slum dwellers.

## Review of the housing sector:

The constitution of Bangladesh binds the Government to play an effective role in ensuring Housing rights to all as basic rights as a citizen (Article 26). The national housing policy 1993 commits the government to take initiatives in housing as a provider, for weaker section of the people and as a facilitator in all housing initiatives. As a significant development, the housing question has been the adoption of the National Housing Policy (NHP) in 1993(amended in 1997). The basic principle of the 1993 NHP is that the government would play the role of an enabler or facilitator in the housing sector (Article 4.2), and not the role of a developer or provider. The 1993 NHP also promised special attention to housing needs of women, particularly women in difficult circumstances (Article 5.12) and disadvantaged women, such as widows, single women and women headed households living below the poverty line (Article 14). Government has extended housing support in various projects, such as: 'Cluster village' to rehabilitate cyclone –affected people in coastal areas, Ideal village project in which titles were given on land/housing to low-income men and women jointly, Shelter project, Housing fund to NGO's to provide housing for the rural poor and 'Return to Village Project' to rehabilitate urban slum dwellers evicted by the government.

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According to International Law, adequate housing should include at least the elements of- security of tenure, availability/access to services such as safe drinking water, energy for cooking, lighting, sanitation and waste facilities, adequate space and protection, access to employment and various social services, affordability, and access ability of the disadvantaged, etc. Various UN resolutions and legal resources were adopted recognizing the issue of housing rights for all citizens. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in Dec 1998(Article 25) enshrines specific rights of tenure and equal access to land for all people including women and those in poverty. UNCHS is active in shelter sector in Bangladesh since 1979.

#### **The general housing situation in Bangladesh:**

Khanam(2004) found that , the poor population (47%) in Bangladesh found it beyond their means to make a roof to protect themselves from rainwater and cold in winter .Most of them make their houses at a cost of about US \$ 25 to 30.which do not serves purposes in protecting the inhabitants from monsoon rain and winter breeze. These houses cannot withstand even the moderate onslaught of nature manifested through storm or incessant rain. The poor population cannot generate required savings for repairing their affected houses, thus they are forced to borrow money in 10% interest per month .Natural calamities like River erosion, flooding, storms, cyclones, and fires are the main causes of destruction of housing in Bangladesh.Each year many people lose their houses and ancestral land due to flooding and river erosion of the river Padma, Jamuna, Brahmaputra and other rivers. So, people are compelled to migrate to towns.

#### **Housing for the Poor- The BRP (Bashentek Rehabilitation Project) at Bashentek:**

Housing for the poor is an absolute necessity for survival. But it is not just a commodity to be consumed. It is also a productive asset for the poor. In fact it is a vital investment in health leading to increasing in productive capacity and overall well being of a person and her/his family. Living under leaky roofs (if one has one) in a house made of jute sticks in winter and heavy monsoon does not equip a person to meaningfully engage in any income generating activities. The BRP (Bashentek Rehabilitation Project) at Bashentek is an attempt of Bangladesh government to rehabilitate and to accommodate the inhabitants of the slums at low cost.

#### **The objectives of this research paper are to reveal-**

- i. The current status of low cost housing in the urban areas of Bangladesh
- ii. The problems faced by the low income people in Bhasantek Rehabilitation Project (BRP)
- iii. The survival strategy of the slum dwellers who chiefly belong to lower economic strata
- iv. The prospects of low cost housing in the urban areas of Bangladesh
- v. The role of the government to accommodate or shift people in Bhasantek Rehabilitation Project (BRP)
- vi. The recommendation on Low Cost Housing Projects in Bangladesh

#### **Research questions:**

The research questions that are mainly tried to explored here are-

- i. What is the current status of the low cost housing in the urban area of Bangladesh?
- ii. Whether the low income people in Bhasantek Rehabilitation Project (BRP) get accommodated in this housing or not?
- iii. Does this section of population face any problem to be shifted in this housing project?
- iv. What is worldwide scenario regarding Low Cost Housing Program?
- v. What is the role of the state towards the low income people to provide them rehabilitation in Bhasantek Rehabilitation Project (BRP)

#### **Research design:**

The research is conducted using qualitative research methodology. **Observation** is the prime method used to collect data. Along with observation, **Case Study** has also been taken to find out more concrete & condensed reality in form of data. Here researchers have used **purposive sampling** to conduct this study. Here researchers have purposively chosen **Dhaka City** as it is the “**Primate City**” of Bangladesh. The research team has selected **Bhasantek Rehabilitation Project (BRP)** by considering its significance in the concept on **Low Cost Housing from Bangladesh perspective**. The **Case Studies** have also been gathered simultaneously with the observation.

#### **Review of Housing situation for the poor:**

Bayat (2004) in his study identified different types of marginal people that are visible in the slum dwellers. He argued that the sphere of micro-politics as a further site of subversive practices. That is to say, political challenges and transformations need not taken place in a collective fashion. As he discusses in his concept of quiet encroachment, political change and transformation may indeed occur through unconventional forms of agency and activism. Her further develops this argument by discussing that the favored term ‘social movement’

as a prevailing concept of transformative agency is a highly western notion. One of the major concepts he proposes is the “quiet encroachment of the ordinary”. This term refers to the non collective but prolonged direct action by individuals and families to acquire basic necessities of their lives (land for shelter, urban collective consumption, informal jobs, business opportunities and public space) in a quiet and unassuming illegal fashion. *Castells (1997) argued “State control over space and time is increasingly bypassed by global flows of capital, goods, services, technology, communication and information.” He viewed that “The globalization of crime further subverts the nation state, profoundly transforming processes of governance, and actually paralyzing the state in many instances”*. As a result, the entire structures of the state, often including the highest levels of power is penetrated by criminal networks either through corruption, threats, or illegal political financing, thus creating havoc in the conduct of public affairs. *He also asserts, “Control of information and entertainment and through them opinions and images has historically been the anchoring tool of state power to be perfected in the age of mass media”*.

For Holston's (1998); Caldeira describes the relationship between modernist design aesthetics and the power of defensible design to segregate by social class. Fortified enclaves are privatized, enclosed, and monitored spaces for residence, consumption, leisure, and work. The fear of violence is one of their main justifications. They appeal to those who are abandoning the traditional public sphere of the streets to the poor, the "marginal," and the homeless. In cities fragmented by fortified enclaves, it is difficult to maintain the principles of openness and free circulation that have been among the most significant organizing values of modern cities.

Caldeira (2001) viewed that, a new aesthetics of security shapes all types of constructions and imposes its new logic of surveillance and distances as a means for displaying status, and is changing the character of public live and public interactions. Where excluded residents discover that they have rights to the city, they manage to transform their neighborhoods and to improve the quality of their lives. That fortified enclaves in part counteracted this process should not make us abandon this qualified optimism. The walls were not able to totally obstruct the exercise of citizenship, and poor residents continue to expand their rights.

Holston(1998) in ‘*Urban Citizenship and Globalization*’ focused on urban residential experiences under the powerful forces of globalization. Urban periphery of Sao Paulo experienced cheap contract housing for poor workers and migrants as a process of urban reconstruction. This process is sanctioned by the state and enforced by the neo-liberal mechanisms of globalization. He viewed that, Insurgent Citizenship argues that contradictory realizations of citizenship characterize all democracies--emerging and established. Focusing on processes of city- and citizen-making now prevalent globally, it develops new approaches for understanding the contemporary course of democratic citizenship in societies of vastly different cultures and histories.

In ‘*The Right to the City*’ Harvey (2008) demonstrated urbanization as a class phenomenon where the poor and powerless are segregated from urban resources through the violent forces of dispossession. Harvey proved urban restructuring as an upper class phenomenon, which excluded the poor and marginalized from their fundamental citizenship rights such as housing. Wacquant (2009) on the other hand attempted to prove all of the means of violence directed towards the urban poor as penal apparatus of the state backed by neo-liberal regulation. Drieskon and Heiko (2007) showed urban enclaves as a dwelling place of surplus humanity structurally and biologically excluded from active citizenship.

### **Theorization of the housing sector for the poor:**

Neoliberalism in its practice has not been a “utopian project to realize a theoretical design for the reorganization of international capitalism” (Harvey, 2005) but a practical political project meant to restore the power of economic elites. Harvey goes on to state that any time the theoretical economic principles of neoliberalism came into conflict with elite power, elite power took precedence. This is borne out by the willingness of governments who are certainly committed to theoretical neoliberalism, such as the Bush administration, to throw out free market neoliberal principles when they seriously threatened elite power. The obvious examples are the various bailouts of companies or entire industries, whom according to neoliberal theory, should be allowed to fail as a kind of punishment for market inefficiency. Harvey (2005) in ‘*The Right to the City*’ used the term ‘Dispossession’ to demonstrate surplus absorption through urban transformation.

“It has entailed repeated bouts of urban restructuring through “creative destruction”, which nearly always has a class dimension since it is the poor, the unprivileged, and those marginalized from political power that suffer first and foremost from this process.”

This urban restructuring is occurred through violence backed by the state to create a new urban settlement at the cost of the endless sufferings of the poor. Forcible slum clearance for the use of the capitalist and upper class is a clear example of dispossession that dispossesses land and housing from the low-income population. Dharavi slum in Mumbai is under the pressure of forcible slum clearance for environmental and social reasons(Risbud;2003). Haussmann destructed the old Parisian slums using powers of expropriation in the

name of civic improvement and renovation (Harvey; 2010.). Wacquant (2009) discussed about the penal state which has developed and organized penal apparatus to punish the poor and powerless such as eviction of slum under the neoliberal remaking of the state. Therefore, Drieskons and Heiko (2007) purported that the cities of the Global South have actually developed suburban or urban enclaves excluding ever-larger population as surplus humanity. Thus these cities have excluded enclaves from active citizenship instead of making modern citizens using a mix of economic and security related barriers. In 'Urban Citizenship and Globalization' Holston (2001) especially focuses on the new pattern of citizenship under globalization in the form of urban residential experiences. The right discourses addressed by it give the urban poor an unprecedented sense of power and creativity. Structuring of Sao Paulo's periphery as an urban space of mainly residential neighborhood for poor workers during post World war period actually involves two processes. Such as, Provision of low-cost housing by private developers and Auto construction. These auto-constructors are the modern pioneer of city building the workers and migrant who are pushed to suburban periphery found thus find a plot of accessible land on which to build their own dream houses. According to a national census data in 1940 renters occupied 86% of the total residences in the municipality of Sao Paulo which had dropped to 40% by 1980.

This structuring of Sao Paulo's periphery was encouraged by the state through a number of policies. The Renters Law, 1942-64 froze rents well below inflation for two decades.

The state implemented the Haussmanian Plans of the avenues in 1938-to open the periphery through road reconstruction. It is supposed to enable qualified workers to become home owners but whose funds were mostly usurped by the middle classes. City government also made underdeveloped hinterland attractive to investors by considering under the legal category "Suburban" until the 1960s.

Harvey (2003) cites Marx and argued that Marx generally assumes freely functioning competitive markets with institutional agreements of private property, juridical individualism, freedom of contract and appropriate structures of law and governance guaranteed by a "facilitative" state that secures the integrity of money as a store of value and as a medium of circulation. The roles of capitalist and laborer are already well-established and "primitive" or "original" accumulation has already occurred. Expanded reproduction the exploitation of living labor in production is at the center of the analysis. In Karl Marx's economic theory, capital accumulation refers to the operation whereby profits are reinvested increasing the total quantity of capital. Marx as expanding value, that is, views capital in other terms, as a sum of money that is transformed into a larger sum of money. Here, capital is defined essentially as economic or commercial asset value in search of additional value or surplus value. This requires property relations who enable objects of value to be appropriated and owned, and trading rights to be established. According to Marx capital accumulation has a double origin, namely in trade and in expropriation, both of a legal or illegal kind. The reason is that a stock of capital can be increased through a process of exchange or "trading up" but also through directly taking an asset or resource from someone else, without compensation. David Harvey (2005) calls this accumulation by dispossession. Marx does not discuss gifts and grants as a source of capital accumulation, nor does he analyze taxation in detail. Nowadays the tax take is often so large that some authors refer to state capitalism. This gives rise to a proliferation of tax havens to evade tax liability. The continuation and progress of capital accumulation depends on the removal of obstacles to the expansion of trade, and this has historically often been a violent process. As markets expand, more and more new opportunities develop for accumulating capital, because more and more types of goods and services can be traded in. However, capital accumulation may also confront resistance, when people refuse to sell, or refuse to buy. What spurs accumulation is competition; in business, if you don't go forward, you go backward, and unless the law prevents it, the strong will exploit the weak.

In general, Marx's critique of capital accumulation is that the human chase after wealth and self-enrichment leads to inhuman consequences. The enrichment of some is at the expense of the immoderation of others, and competition becomes brutal. The basis of it all is the exploitation of the labor effort of others. When the "economic cake" expands, this may be obscured because all can gain from trade. But when the "economic cake" shrinks, then capital accumulation can only occur by taking income or assets from other people, other social classes, or other nations. The point is that to exist, capital must always grow, and to ensure that it will grow, people are prepared to do almost anything. Marx's primitive accumulation includes the commodification and privatization of land, the forceful expulsion of peasant populations, conversion of various forms of property rights into private property, the suppression of alternative forms of production and consumption, colonial, neocolonial and imperial processes of appropriation of assets, monetization of exchange and personal taxation, slave trade and usury, debt, and ultimately the credit system.

Castells (2010) argued that, State control over space and time is increasingly bypassed by global flows of capital, goods, services, technology, communication and information. The reconstruction of national identity is challenged by plural identities as denied by autonomous subjects. The state's attempt to reassert its power in the global arena by developing supranational institutions further undermines its sovereignty. The growing challenges to state sovereignty around the world seem to originate in the inability of the modern nation state to navigate the uncharted, stormy waters, between the power of global networks and the challenge of singular

identities. The interdependence of financial markets and currency markets around the world operating as a unit in real time links up national currencies. If the exchange rate is systemically interdependence, so are, or will be, monetary policies. It follows that individual nation-state are losing and will lose control over fundamental elements of their economic policies. Castells (2010) cites Stallings where he shown how economic policies in developing countries were shaped during the 1980s, by international pressures. Our societies are not orderly prison but disorderly jungle.

Bayat(2004) agreed that the economics of globalization comprised of global market discipline,” *flexible accumulation of financial deepening*” have had a profound impact in post colonial societies. Globalization is also responsible for the waning role of nation state, the breakdown of borders and the increased homogeneity of life style, cultures, political system and so on. One major consequence for the new global restructuring in developing countries has been a double process of on the one hand, integration and on the other, social exclusion and formalization. Both processes tend to generate discontent on the part of many urban grassroots in the 3<sup>rd</sup> world. Bayat (2004) explains the term quiet encroachment by using passive poor, “survival strategy” and resistance literature. The notion of quiet encroachment describes the silent protracted but pervasive advancement of ordinary people in relation to the propertied and powerful in order to survive and improve their lives. Survival strategy did not deal directly with the politics of the poor. The survival strategy model implies that although the poor are powerless they do not sit around waiting for fate to determine their lives. Rather they are active in their own way to ensure their survival. World Bank’s structural adjustment program and other politics have led to a considerable erosion of the social contract, collective responsibility, and former welfare state structures. Results of World Bank structural adjustment programs affect people who were dependent on state must now survive on their own. Deregulation of prices for housing, rent and utilities has jeopardized many people’s security of tenure, risk of homelessness of people, middle class people will pushed into the ranks of the urban poor in labor and housing market and so on.

#### **Findings and discussion:**

Bhasantek Rehabilitation Project (BRP) is located at Mirpur-14. Its local name is No. 3 Dhamalcoat. The Bangladesh government has created a fund for slum dwellers so that they can easily obtain 7,560 flats under Bhashantek Rehabilitation Project by 2010. The ministry has taken the Bhasantek project with the estimated cost of Tk. 341.65 core at 47.90 acres of government khas land at Mirpur in 1998. In 2002, the government appointed a construction firm - North South Property Development Limited (NSPDL) as a private partner to implement the project. The Ministry of Land has fixed Tk 1.90 lakh for 215 square feet of a flat for slum dwellers while it was Tk. 3.55 lakh for 395 square feet for low-income people. It is covering an area of 52 acres of land.

#### **Infrastructures:**

At present there are 16 numbers of buildings, each containing six storied. There are 2 units in each floor and in each unit there are 4 flats. Therefore, the total number of flats is 768 which are fully constructed. Among them, in 384 flats are filled with families and the rest of ready flats are yet to distribute. There are two types of buildings –

- a) A-type: One roomed.
- b) B-type: Two roomed.

BRP is designed as comprising buildings, Masjid and Madrasa, graveyard, kindergarten school, college (proposed), hospital (proposed), playground and gymnasium. For Kindergarten, only middle class parents can afford their child to provide education. The monthly tuition fee costs around BDT. 350. Therefore, only inhabitants of this project can afford education for their child.

Its main purpose is to provide low-cost housing to the people who were residing adjacent to the building area. It aims at accommodating them in single room house. It has also an aim to provide low-cost housing for lower-middle and middle class families spacing them with houses of two rooms. Their overall objective is to provide them a better environment for residence. The research team found, at present people living in BRP belongs to lower and middle class in terms of income .The team observes the people who own the flat are not poor at all. These people have bought one-roomed flat costing 3 to 3.5 lacs, govt. ratted price of which is 190000 BDT. Now its price has been increased up to five lacs. The developers sold the two-roomed flat with 4 to 5.5 lacs BDT. which price is now being asked for 8 to 10 lacs. at least. Now the question is why the 1.9 lacs flat is being sold in 9 lacs and how the low income people are deprived of this project. In several conversations with the flat owners and the renters, the research team revealed that instead of distributing these flats among the low income people to provide low cost housing, these were sold to the people of upper strata of the society who were able to pay more money. It is seen that, the developer company North South and its executive Mr.Rahim had increased the rate of price of the flats and sold to the well off people, most of whom are government officials. One very important and noticeable thing is, BRP is a project under the ministry of land of Bangladesh, that is, it is a state leased project .Thus government officials expropriate low-income people’s

power and rights. Owners of flats are now mainly government employees or politically backed. They use their bureaucratic and political power as well to take possession of these flats. Moreover, there are many owners who are foreign emigrants; even many of them own 5-10 flats. Interestingly, another type of people own flats who are just occupying flats due to their affiliation with the project executives or authorities for example, officials of ministry of land, employees who maintain water, electricity, in the project, the police force working in the project of Bhasantek thana, the staffs of the project i. e. Imam of the Masjid. Although these people are not legally allocated for these flats, but they take these in possession by using power by maintaining lobby with the authority and flat owner association of BRP.

The study found that most of the flat owners inhabit outside this project area. In addition, they used to rent these flats. Most of the cases, they rent these flats to their relatives. For other instances, the owners choose people rent who have a fixed income who rent flats primarily belongs to lower middle and middle class in terms of income. People who rent flats are chiefly small-scale businessmen, owner of grocery, battery driven vehicles (Auto rickshaw), low paid employees in govt. offices & non govt. firms, people work in managerial post in readymade garments. For type -A flat the renters have to pay BDT 4000 on average and by including electricity bill, water bill & service charge it reaches to BDT 6000. For type-B flat only the flat rent costs BDT 6000 & by including additional charges, it lifts upto 10000 BDT.

### **Security facilities:**

The security system of BRP complex is very rigid. The research team has exposed to difficulties to conduct the research in BRP. There are two gates to enter into the project area. If anyone wants to enter through gate-1, he or she has to inform the purpose of entry to the private security guard set up by the project authority. If he gets permission to enter, and then he must enroll himself in the register book kept in the security room. If a person use the gate-2 the Then he or she has no alternative to face to the police box adjacent to the gate, as the 'Bhasantek Thana's located inside of the project. The research team has been asked to the police box while entering gate-2 to write their names, professions and purpose of visiting the compound in the register book while entering gate-, in their 4 days observation. While discussing with the local people it has been unveiled that there is prohibition for local people to enter in the project area. Community people express with agitation "Even not all people have access for entrance to Masjid". There is also strict monitoring of security guards inside of the project area. There is rigorous patrol of security guards throughout the complex. The guards are equipped with wireless and sticks inside of the complex. There is a check-post of police and security guard in the end of project area so near to the slum of the evicted dwellers of the BRP area. The guards have assured that, the slum dwellers are strictly prohibited in the project. The research team has been informed by the inhabitants of the project that slum dwellers have agitation on the project. Therefore, several times, they gathered, a mob, attacked the project, broke the main gates of and tried to take possession of flats. But they failed due to interference of police. The local employees or Ministry of Land (MOL) has disagreed to provide information on this project to the research team, although they have got permission from Executive Engineer. Overall, the research team observes that whole BRP compound has become isolated from the rest of the community. It replicates the conception of Teresa Calderia's (2007) "Fortified Enclave"

### **The Role of the state:**

From the purpose of the project, it has been clarified that BRP is a low-costing housing project for low income people of the society. But the harsh reality tells a totally different story that, now all solvent individuals hold these flats. When the leased company, North-south Developers violated the price rate fixed by the govt. & sold out among the non-poor persons, the state remained silent. Because in every phase, individuals who are in the driving seat of the state or the ruling party favor the politically obliged folks or groups to occupy these flats. Here, political identity, power and lobbying have always become the key factors in grabbing the flats in every government period. The researchers reveal from several conversations with community people, authority and owners that happened in 2001-2006 by BNP led government almost to some extent less happened during the Awami League led government while starting again in 2009. For both governments, political identity and illegal exercise of money have become pivotal to handover the flats, rather than rehabilitate the poor for whom the project was intended to. The research team also talks to the local political leaders and the leaders confessed the reality as well.

Moreover, the bureaucrats & government employees who are in charge of the project till now, have abused their power to sell the flats as well as occupying flats by their own. There is no surveillance or supervision by the government or its higher authority. Furthermore, the state is reluctant to rehabilitate the poor in this complex is found by the observers. After conducting the field work, the team contends that due to lack of supervising the developer company state plays the role like a deaf & dumb regarding this project. As such, there are around 400-500 ready flats in this project. But the government is failing to accommodate the poor in these, only because of Developer Company.

### **BRP; A Story of Exploitation: Unveiling the truth**

Bhasantek Rehabilitation Project (BRP) is a project to rehabilitate the low-income people who are mainly residing in slums. However, from our further discussion, the study unmask that slum dwellers are not residing in BRP. The question is, where are these people residing in recent time? From the observation, the research team found that the prime clients of this project are now residing in a slum just behind of the BRP. They built a slum over a pond with bamboo and wooden platform. Around 200 families live in 200 rooms in the meager and wretched condition, more noticeably poor water and sanitations.

### **Story behind the story: A reality check**

In 2002, after setting 52 acres land by the government, the “North South” company reached to the Dhamalcoat 3. Then, there was a slum in this area. The developer company said to the people that they will build a house for the poor like these people. Each of the family will set a flat of their own. The company chalked out the plan of the project and the flats. Finally, the naive slum dwellers were cajoled with the company’s flattery. The company along with the government makes a list of the people for distributing the flats. There are 1300 families estimated. The company told these families to provide 10000 BDT in the Sonali Bank in a fixed account. Rest of the 18,000BDT, they will repay through installment after receiving the flat as per as government decision. The poor people somehow managed BDT 10,000 and gave it to the bank.

Then the company urged them to leave the place so that it can start to build their dream-castle. Eventually slum people leave the place and made a temporary slum to reside in this interim period of construction.

### **Deception:**

The company built two types of apartments, one is for the lower income and the other is for people with lowest income lying at the bottom in the society, the slum dwellers. The government fixed the price rate for the selling of the flats and for rehabilitating the slum dwellers at their assigned type of flat, type –A which is one roomed. But the fact is, instead of selling the flats with government rated price, the company started to sell both type of flats at higher rate. A dishonest group of bureaucrats and political biasness of the government deprived the poor to get their long desired flats. The poor slum dwellers that left their hovels for building complex, at last had become evicted from the compound.

### **Trap of Time:**

Being deprived, the pity slum dwellers have knocked door to door to establish their rights. As they are powerless group of society, the state allows “Punishing the Poor” contended by Loic Wacquant(2009) , the poor have nothing to do. Sometimes they lose their temper, become agitated and attack the compound, but the outcome is zero, as police retards their strikes. Sometimes they move to political leaders to find a path of solution. For conversation with slum dwellers, they confess that several months back, they move to minister of Home Affairs Sahara Khatun with their complains. The minister assured them that all listed families will get flats by fulfilling two more political conditions –

1. They have to be enrolled as voters of that area.
2. Again, they have to submit another 55000 BDT in the banks.
3. Condition of living :

People are living on a wooden platform over the pond. Most of the people are engaged in informal sector economy such as rickshaw pulling, masonry day labour . Many women work garments factories. Children are engaged in rag picking.

### **Survival Strategy:**

People in the slum lead the meanest life for subsistence .For four daylong observations, research found that they live from hand to mouth. Young children are observed to collect arum and from the nearby pond .Many, women try to grow leaves on the tinned-roof such as the production of pumpkin leaf. The average item observed in lunch is potato, brinjal, korolla, and local low price fish- “Baila fish”.There is no line of electricity in the slum. There are only two-three meters lines that the local leaders of the slum have collected from the DESCO. Employees by providing them bribe .The total slums are run through these meters. Every household has to pay BDT 100- light (CFL), 200- fan; 200 –Television; 400-fridge (only 4 households have). For water, they again bring a line and all of them share this .For this, every household has to pay BDT 50-100, except the leaders of the slum. There is no gas supply in the slum. The people particularly women cook meals in earthen stove. It is as risky for the kids as they move around. There is no satellite clinic or public hospital in nearby areas. Therefore, slum dwellers have gone to pharmacy and dependent upon the “quaks”. The slum dwellers, especially the children always suffer from diarrhea, skin diseases, and headache. For this, they accused the environment of the area, especially the polluted water of the pond and mosquito living in the pond. For maternal and child health, there is no initiative

taken at government and NGO level. There is no government primary school at nearby area .The kindergarten of BRP is prohibited and expensive for them. There is private kindergarten which requires BDT 1000 for admission for a student. While conversation people informed the research, team that only 2 percent of the parents have ability to send their children to school. There is no nearby market place in the area. They go to Bhasantek Bazar spending 5 BDT by better driven vehicle. Here are the legal documents of a slum dwellers named Rehena Begum who are exploited and are forced to live in the slums with hope that one day she will get the justice and a flat of her own.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
 ভাষানটেক পুনর্বাসন প্রকল্প  
 ভূমি মন্ত্রণালয়

ভূমি মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক বাস্তবায়নাবীন "ঢাকা মহানগরীর হিন্দুল বস্তিবাসী ও নিম্নবিত্তদের ঢাকার সরকারি জমিতে বহুতল বিশিষ্ট ভবনে পুনর্বাসন" শার্ক প্রকল্পে বস্তিবাসী হিসেবে ("এ" টাইপের ২১৫ বর্গফুট আয়তন বিশিষ্ট) ফ্ল্যাট বরাদ্দের জন্য আবেদন পত্র

ক্রমিক নং- ৬৪

১। আবেদনকারীর নাম : রেহেনা  
 ২। পিতার নাম : মোঃ হুমায়ূন আলী  
 ৩। মাতার নাম : আফিয়া বেগম  
 ৪। স্বামী/স্বীর নাম : মোঃ উদীন মিয়া  
 ৫। বর্তমান ঠিকানা : ভনড হামান কোর্ট ডিফেন্ডেড এন্ড প্রটেক্টেড এলাকা, পূর্ব শাহরাস্তান, ঢাকা - ১১০০৬  
 ৬। স্থায়ী ঠিকানা : মাদ্রাসা মফত্বিপুর, ডাকঘর বায়ান্টা, মাদ্রাসা হুটন - ঢাকা - ১২১০০১  
 ৭। জন্ম তারিখ : ১৯৬৬  
 ৮। জাতীয়তা : বাংলাদেশী  
 ৯। পেশা : গৃহিণী  
 ১০। মাসিক আয় (আনুমানিক) : ৩০০০ (দুই হাজার টাকা)  
 ১১। জাতীয় পরিচয় পত্র নম্বর : ২৬৫৩০১৫০২৩৫৫৭  
 ১২। আবেদনকারীর ব্যাংক হিসাব নম্বর (যদি থাকে) : \_\_\_\_\_  
 শাখা : \_\_\_\_\_

আমি অঙ্গীকার করছি যে, উপরোক্ত তথ্যসমূহ নির্ভুল ও সত্য।

আবেদনের তারিখ : \_\_\_\_\_  
 রেহেনা  
 আবেদনকারীর স্বাক্ষর

Image: Application of Rehana a women of the rehabilitation project of BRP.

Sonali Bank Limited  
 IBRAHIMPUR, DHAKA

Payment Order  
 NOT OVER 100,000/-

POA 1321786  
 DATE 11 AUG 2011

Pay To : রেহেনা বেগম  
 The sum of taka ৫০০০ (পাঁচ হাজার টাকা)

২০০২৬২০৪০

২০০০০০০০০০০০১

১৩২১৭৮৬ ২০০২৬২০৪০ ২০০০০০০০০০০১ ১৭

২০। মাসিক আয় (আনুমানিক) : ৩০০০ (দুই হাজার টাকা)  
 ২১। জাতীয় পরিচয় পত্র নম্বর : ২৬৫৩০১৫০২৩৫৫৭  
 ২২। আবেদনকারীর ব্যাংক হিসাব নম্বর (যদি থাকে) : \_\_\_\_\_  
 শাখা : \_\_\_\_\_

আমি অঙ্গীকার করছি যে, উপরোক্ত তথ্যসমূহ নির্ভুল ও সত্য।

আবেদনের তারিখ : \_\_\_\_\_  
 রেহেনা  
 আবেদনকারীর স্বাক্ষর

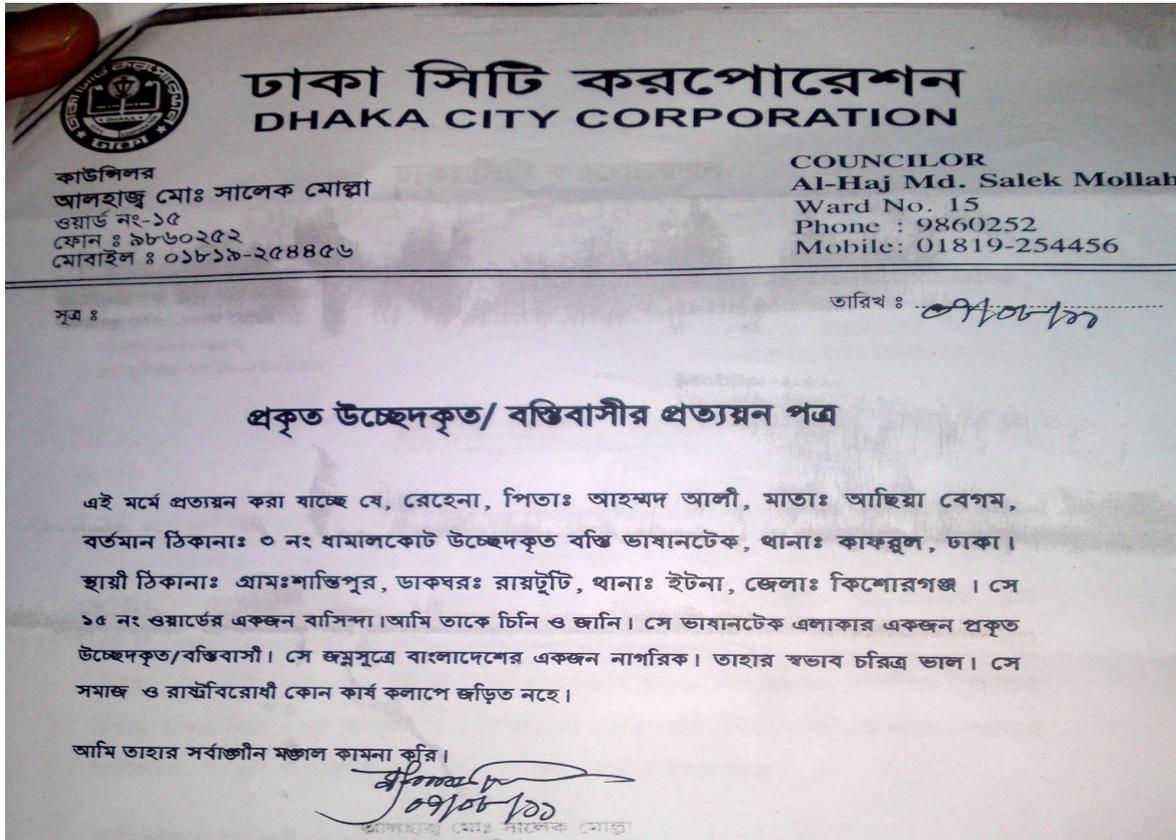
Image: The legal Money submission document of Rehana to get access to the Rehabilitation Project.



POA 1321786  
This portion is to be retained by payee before presentation.  
Sonali Bank Limited  
200000000000  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr./Ms/Mrs/MS: Rehana  
Payment order for Tk: \_\_\_\_\_  
on account of: 10000  
This payment order must be endorsed by the payee before payment. If presented at this branch for cash, proper identification will be required.  
Authorized Officer \_\_\_\_\_

Sonali Bank Limited  
IBRAHIMPUR, DHAKA  
Payment Order  
POA 132  
NOT OVER TK 10,000  
DATE: 11/11/15  
200 262080  
Pay To: ০৯৯ চারটিলা, বেঙ্গালুর গুরুত্বপূর্ণ  
The sum of Taka দশ হাজার টাকা TK ১০০০০  
A/C No. 2000000000001  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Sign Above This Line  
⑈ ১ ৩ ২ ১ ৭ ৪ ৬ ⑈ 200 26 2080 ⑈ 200000000000 ⑈ ১ ৭

Image: Another Money transaction document of Rehana to get access to the Rehabilitation Project.



ঢাকা সিটি করপোরেশন  
DHAKA CITY CORPORATION  
কাউন্সিলর  
আলহাজ্ব মোঃ সালেক মোল্লা  
ওয়ার্ড নং-১৫  
ফোন : ৯৮৬০২৫২  
মোবাইল : ০১৮১৯-২৫৪৪৫৬  
COUNCILOR  
Al-Haj Md. Salek Mollah  
Ward No. 15  
Phone : 9860252  
Mobile: 01819-254456  
তারিখ : ০৭/০৬/১০  
সূত্র : \_\_\_\_\_

**প্রকৃত উচ্ছেদকৃত/ বস্তিবাসীর প্রত্যয়ন পত্র**

এই মর্মে প্রত্যয়ন করা যাচ্ছে যে, রেহেনা, পিতা: আহম্মদ আলী, মাতা: আছিয়া বেগম, বর্তমান ঠিকানা: ০ নং ধামালকোট উচ্ছেদকৃত বস্তি ভাষানটেক, থানা: কাফরুল, ঢাকা। স্থায়ী ঠিকানা: গ্রাম: শান্তিপুর, ডাকঘর: রায়টুটি, থানা: ইটনা, জেলা: কিশোরগঞ্জ। সে ১৫ নং ওয়ার্ডের একজন বাসিন্দা। আমি তাকে চিনি ও জানি। সে ভাষানটেক এলাকার একজন প্রকৃত উচ্ছেদকৃত/বস্তিবাসী। সে জন্মসূত্রে বাংলাদেশের একজন নাগরিক। তাহার স্বভাব চরিত্র ভাল। সে সমাজ ও রাষ্ট্রবিরোধী কোন কার্য কলাপে জড়িত নহে।

আমি তাহার সর্বাঙ্গীন মঞ্জুর কামনা করি।  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
তারিখ: ০৭/০৬/১০  
আলহাজ্ব মোঃ সালেক মোল্লা

Image: Testimonial on behalf of city corporation towards Rehana as a disposed women of slum.

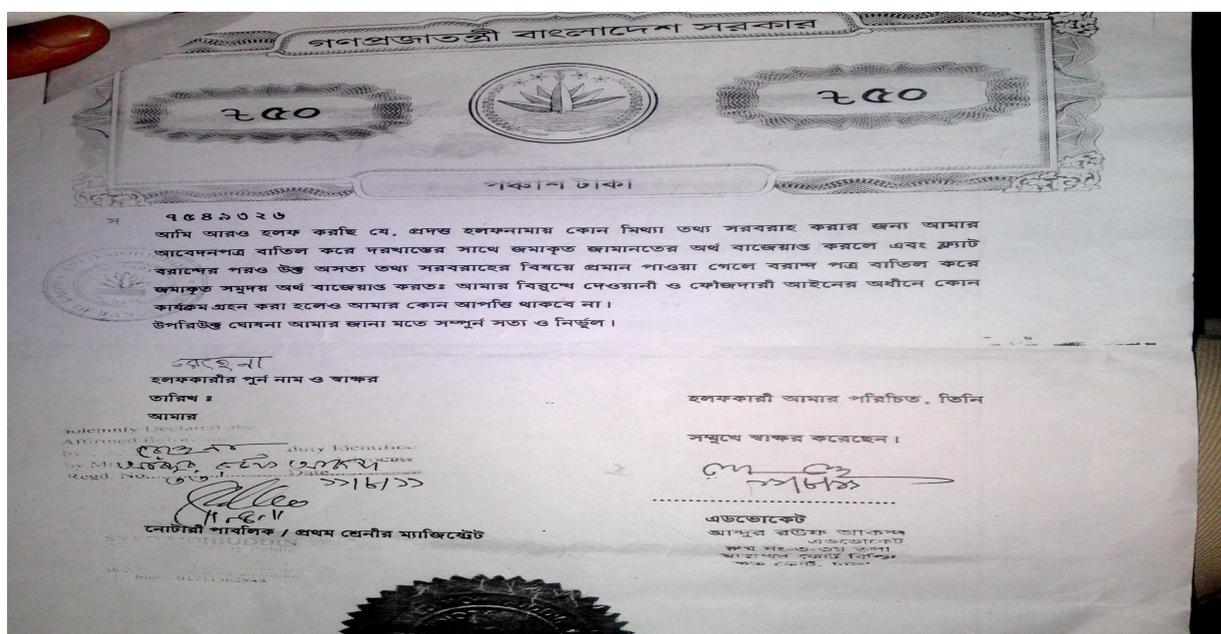
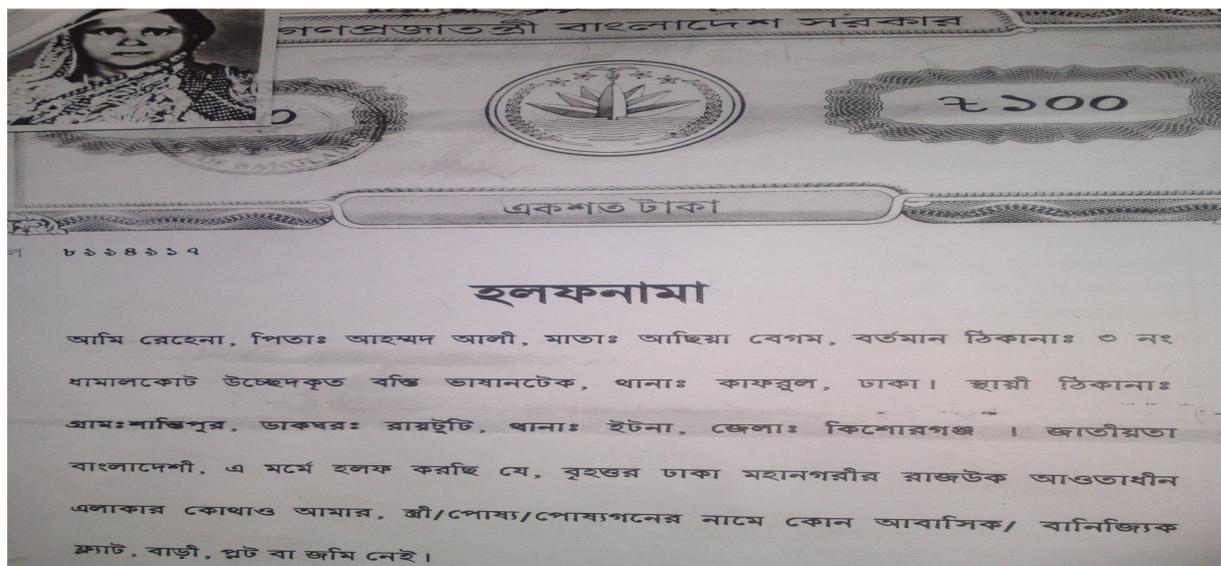


Image: Affidavit of Rehana as a devastated women who used to live in the BRP slum areas before the project started and its recognition from the government where it is clearly mentioned that after the completion of the Project she will get a flat of her own by expending a little amount of money.

All of these legal documents showed that Rehana Begum is a right claim citizen under this project and government are bound to provide the flat to her. although government make an agreement to provide the flat within 3 months but after 16 months she is still not sure whether she will get the flat or not.

### The Fall of BRP project and the dispossession of the right claim citizen:

**State control over space and time** is increasingly bypassed by global flows of capital, goods, services, technology, communication and information. This argument takes the real shape when we focus on the BRP project initiated by the government of Bangladesh to rehabilitate the poor- low cost income people at bashentek. Although this project was initiated by the government primarily but a person named 'Rahim' settled everything and sell the flat to the politicians and rich people instead of rehabilitating the poor. And in this case the role of government was silent.

**Control of information and entertainment** and through them, of opinions and images has historically been the anchoring tool of state power to be perfected in the age of mass media. This is also reflected in this BRP project. It is called that media is the second state. If media highlights the corruption of this project and the way the slum dwellers are exploited and became homeless to the people then it was not possible to do. Here state and its mechanism play the role to keep media silent. The legal owner of the flat- the slum dwellers did not get the flat

but the higher officials who has strong political backup became the owner of the flat. They provide threat of eviction who resides in a part of the project.

**Bayat's** consequences of readjustment policies are reflected in the Bashantek rehabilitation project (BRP). And these can be summarized in these ways, drive for privatization of public sector, people who were dependent on state must now survive, on their own, deregulation of prices for housing, rent and utilities has jeopardized many people's security of tenure and the risk of homelessness of people. The inhabitants of slums are now leads inhuman life. They don't get any governmental support after their eviction. Now they are surviving on their own by engaging themselves in informal economy. The prices of housing are increasing day by day that forced them to live in unhygienic space. They are passing their days by risk of homelessness. Most the slum dwellers are unemployed and those who are employed engaged themselves in informal sector. They are working as casual laborers, street subsistent workers. Most of their children are engaged in rag picking, Street hawking activities. Some of the slum dwellers engaged themselves in underground working for a better life. Survival strategy did not deal directly with the politics of the poor. The survival strategy model implies that although the poor are powerless they do not sit around waiting for fate to determine their lives. Rather they are active in their own way to ensure their survival. The notion of quiet encroachment describes the silent protracted but pervasive advancement of ordinary people in relation to the propertied and powerful in order to survive and improve their lives. For example - To light their shelters the slum dwellers of Bashantek tap electricity not from their neighbors but from municipality power poles and to raise their living standard they do not prevent their children from attending school in order to work, but rather squeeze time from their formal jobs in order to carry out secondary activities in the informal sector.

#### **Prospects of Low Cost Housing in Bangladesh:**

- i. Policy should be formulated for the construction of low cost housing by the government.
- ii. There are more than 75lack slum dwellers in the urban areas of Bangladesh. To rehabilitate them in a proper place outside Dhaka city government should established more and more low cost housing and distribute among the slum dwellers.
- iii. Low cost housing project has to spread out outside the city area.
- iv. The authority of the project must have the attention on the income & economic condition of the poor, so that they can afford to buy flats or low cost houses.
- v. State & authority has to give their deep attention to monitor the low cost housing area.
- vi. Corruption of the associate stuffs & officials must be stopped.
- vii. Government have to be transparent to handover the flats to the poor.
- viii. The protraction of bureaucratic complexities should be reduced.
- ix. The total cost of low cost housing has to reduce & government should given special subsidy on the project.
- x. The dealings or contract has to be within government & the poor without any media, so that the poor can get the supreme advantages from the project.
- xi. Creation of employment for the people who are able among the slum dwellers around the rehabilitation project area.
- xii. Alongside government, NGO and other private housing sector should come forward for the establishment of Low Cost Housing zones.

#### **Conclusion:**

Governments are endeavoring to alleviate poverty by way of making the credit a powerful instrument for socio-economic change so that the poor can find their ways out of the vicious circle of poverty and the human dignity does not get lost in the wilderness. There is much need for sharing knowledge and information for replication of successful best practices for low and middle-income poor. A mechanism for linkages should be established among network of grassroots beneficiaries, local, national and international NGOs, CBOs, government departments, local bodies along with international agencies. There is a need for policy follow-up research for improvement of low-cost housing technologies, and action to scale up low -cost housing programs into action involving grass root people and organizations. Networking can promote that small is beautiful. By working together on prioritized issues, by learning from each-other, releasing grass root people for their own livelihoods and by utilizing each-others' skills and resources. Government can gain flexibility, strength and cost-effectiveness. Now the demand of the slum dwellers who were evicted from the Dhamal court slums by the governments is to get the asking flat- a place of living of their own where they will live in peace without the threat of eviction.

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