

Slums Development in Ghana, Debates on Eradication and Upgrading: A Necessary Highlight on Abinkyi

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Abstract: Slum policies in Africa have mostly focused on the demolition and destruction of inhabitants' property. In Ghana, for example, various governments over the years have embarked on slum destruction without relocation. During Alfred Osei Kuffuor's tenure as Accra Mayor, he also implemented the policy of widespread destruction without relocation. The government of Ghana in 2020 undertook a huge demolition effort in Old Fadama as a strategy to combat the spread of COVID-19, with reports indicating that over 1000 slum dwellers were made homeless as a result of this activity. The primary reason of such wholesale destruction can be attributed to poor urban planning. Proponents of demolition contended that it is required for a variety of reasons, including elimination of criminals and beautifying the city, health concerns among others. This paper argued that the government's attitude toward slum clearance in Africa, and particularly in Ghana, has resulted in two schools of thought within the geography of academics and policy making, one believes in full eradication, while the other believes in incremental upgrading as a solution to slum clearance. Scholars have paid less attention to the importance of this debate especially in Ghana. As a result, the goal of this paper is to identify the optimal strategy to put into effect by analyzing both primary and secondary data.

Keywords: Slum, Policy, Upgrading, Demolition, Abenkyi, Ghana

1. Introduction

In many cities, slums are the most common kind of human dwellings. Taher and Ibrahim (2014) defined squatter settlement (slum) as "urban residential communities populated by the extremely poor who do not have access to tenured property of their own and so "squat" on unoccupied land, either private or public [30]. According to Taher and Ibrahim, urban policies are inactive in terms of developing these neighborhoods [30]. The Encyclopedia Britannica used the word "Slum" to describe "densely inhabited regions of substandard housing, generally with poor conditions and social disarray." Given that various nations have different perspectives and degrees of development in terms of sanitation, infrastructure, and residential settlements, what may be considered a slum in Europe or South America may not be applicable to Africa? However, it is important to argue that slums are mostly located outside the city or in areas where socioeconomic life, residential patterns, and sanitation differ from the rest of the city [4]. Over 1.6 billion people are

projected to be homeless, with one out of every seven people living in a slum [4]. Obeng-Odiom, has also lamented that almost 5.35 million Ghanaians, or 37.9 percent of Ghana's entire urban population, live in slums [25]. According to the UN estimates from the Human Settlements Programme, the number of urban slum inhabitants in Ghana has increased from 3.57 million in 1990 to 4.47 million in 2000 and slightly more than 4.48 million in 2010, indicating that there has been a progressive increase in slum settlement over the last 3 decades in Ghana. Furthermore, the UN-HABITAT (2014) estimates, slums in African cities absorb almost three-quarters of urban population increase [10]. Many illnesses have been linked to slums. In Ghana, the most prevalent diseases in slums include HIV/AIDS, Cholera & Diarrhea, Malaria, and others [19].

This introduction is concluded by pointing out where the literature falls short and where the data comes in. Then, indicate the paper's structure here.

2. (MIS) Understanding Slums

The notion of slums has existed since the nineteenth century. The name "slum" is supposed to be derived from the Irish phrase "Slome," which signifies a desolate or desolate location. However, in the nineteenth century, the English Dictionary defined the phrase as "chamber [2]." Since then, the phrase has been used to describe low-quality dwellings, unsanitary circumstances, and a haven for marginal activities such as crime and social vices [2]. The historical growth of slums in Africa, particularly in Ghana, has its roots in colonial and imperial agendas, which may be divided into two categories: economic and purposeful causes. Rapid industrialization and urbanization in Europe and North America resulted in the growth of enormous slums. Because of overcrowding in these cities, there was a major challenge in housing coupled with land conflicts, which led to vulnerable impoverished laborers settling in informal neighborhoods with substandard housing and sanitation. In Africa the abolishment of Slave trade and the establishment of legitimate trade led to the proliferation of slums on the region. Obeng-Odiom argued similarly that a number of mining and industrial businesses were established on the continent, particularly in the metropolitan regions, as a result of the advent of legal commerce following the abolishment [25]. Despite the vast numbers of people engaged in different colonial businesses, Florence Ejoga (1998) argues that these industries made little to no attempt to provide their workforce with suitable housing." In the late 1920s, for instance the Nigerian Tin Mines camp accommodation consisted mostly of grass thatched houses packed close together, with a radius of around 4 feet," she asserted again; they were horribly overcrowded, with four or even eight people sleeping in each cabin [9]. The issue was not limited to housing. There was less emphasis on sewage and trash disposal systems, as well as main water supply and surface drainage. The camps' hygienic difficulties were exacerbated by the expansion of free squatter communities, over which these industries had no authority [9]. The rise of these industries entailed a direct increase in workers residence, with little regard for their wellbeing. This resulted in the proliferation of slums across the length and breadth of the continent.

Additionally, purposeful actions to advance colonial objectives led to the development of slums. This can be well- explained by drawing inferences from the apartheid regime in South Africa. Politically, South Africa's unification in 1910 united four states—the Orange Free States, the Transvaal, the Cape Colony, and the Natal province—under a single union government but excluded the country's majority-black population [29]. The union resulted in comprehensive authority over the Bantustan people, as well as distinct development for the white minority and the black majority. Swanson (1968) noted that "the Union of 1910's notion of autonomous development gave little attention to Africans in these cities [29]." As a result, infrastructure, adequate housing, and sanitation were neglected, leading to the formation of slums in most black-populated districts,

including Transkei, Ndebani, and New Brighton, among others. Swanson (1977) places further emphasis on the matter and based his arguments on medical (health) grounds. Between 1900 and 1904, he claimed, the bubonic plague outbreak endangered important cities [29]. As a result, Africans were forcibly removed in large numbers to hurriedly constructed places at the behest of the medical authorities [29]. The Black labor force in the cities was subsequently placed in exclusive, separate camps. For instance, in Cape Town, specific designated camps called Ndebani and Transkei were established for the black labor. New Brighton was also established as a designated camp for black migrant laborers in Port Elizabeth [29]. Because white authorities paid less attention to these places, slums grew on a vast scale. The above analysis indicates that the development of slums in Africa occurred as a result of economic and deliberate (purposeful) actions during the colonial period. This confirms to the above notion that, the development of slums in Africa had its root in colonial antecedent.

2.1. *Slum Policies in Africa*

Following criticisms of governments' inadequate handling of slums and housing, some critics have painted the development of slums as a result of institutional failures in "housing policy, housing finance, public utilities, local governance, and assured tenure of office [22]." The above notwithstanding, numerous African governments have devised various strategies to address slum development. Among these include benign neglect, forced eviction, slum improvement, and slum resettlement [22]. These policies have been in place for decades as a means of dealing with the slum problem.

2.1.1. *Benign Neglect*

Benign neglect was a popular slum policy in the early post-independence era. This was founded on the idea that slums were unlawful but ephemeral, and that they would vanish with economic prosperity [10]. Some argue that slums were permitted because they were viewed as remnants of traditional villages that were being absorbed by modern urban design [25]. According to Taher and Ibrahim, this policy was based on the idea that slums were neglected by denying residence basic necessities and that these areas were portrayed as blank spots, particularly on maps, implying underdeveloped regions that were not considered to be part of the city and that such areas would eventually disappear. To address the issue, some African governments developed a low-cost housing program as a technique for satisfying the demands of low-income households [30]. This was founded on the belief that such policies will aid in the elimination of slums. However, such programs failed to meet its objective, owing to the fact that houses constructed were prohibitively expensive for the poor to afford. They ended up in the hands of middle-income workers.

2.1.2. *Forced Eviction*

Olds et al (2002) defined 'forced eviction' as the

displacement of individuals from their lands or houses against their will [23]. Similarly, the United Nations Habitat (2014) defined forced eviction as "the permanent or temporary removal against the will of individuals, families, and/or communities from homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection [10]." The policy of forced eviction was implemented in the 1970s and 1980s, and it is still in place in many African countries in the twenty-first century, despite the fact that such policies do not totally remove slums. Failure of the "Benign Neglect policy" led to the implementation of this policy especially in Africa. However, critics of this policy have contended that forcibly evicting individuals against their will violates the individual's or the affected community's fundamental human rights.

Similarly, the UN Habitat (2014), opined that forcible eviction of individuals breaches the rights to sufficient housing and security of tenure, the right to food, international humanitarian law violations that constitute international crimes, and the rights of women and children, among other things [10]. Many institutional bodies and organizations have advocated for the abolition of this policy (forced eviction), claiming that forced eviction does not provide a solution to the problem but instead focuses on the symptoms rather than the root cause of slum settlement, which results in displacement of evictees rather than eradicating slums. In Ghana, for example, Amnesty International has advocated for the abolition of the 'forced eviction' policy following the enormous devastation of dispersed regions (slum) in the country's capital, Accra. Amnesty International noted in its April 2018 findings that "evictors frequently do not apply ethical mechanisms while implementing the eviction orders; they use force, demolish evictees' household possessions, and it is typically planned, premeditated, and unannounced. In short the nature of this policy has been subjected to a lot of criticisms especially on humanitarian grounds. This therefore leads to the development of a new strategy to help curtail slum proliferation.

2.1.3. Resettlement Programmes

Most African governments embraced this program in the mid-1980s. The plan simply regards slums as a residence for the poor [21]. Resettlement is the process of relocating evicted households to a new site, generally outside of the city [21]. According to Cheema (1987), resettlement might take the form of land allotment, where victims are required to build their structures, or are offered low-cost housing [6]. Notably, the method is thought to be underutilized in Africa. This is due to a lack of financial and technical resources to implement such programs. According to Cheema, plots and homes offered at the new site become insufficient, and they were also located in distant locations without suitable infrastructure and amenities, worsening the situation and resulting in slum growth [6].

2.1.4. Slum Upgrading

Slum upgrading is one of the most current ways to slum removal. In the 1980s, several African countries followed

this policy, which was heavily supported by the World Bank. Turner's efforts [26] have had a significant impact on bank backing for slum improvement programs. Turner's studies in Peru instilled new notions in policymakers that the solution to slums was not destruction but rather improving people's environmental circumstances. It is stated that slum upgrading programs are community-based solutions aimed at improving slum conditions via the provision of essential services or infrastructure [1]. This method results in a little loss of physical assets and disturbance of life. Arimah then claims that it is the most cost-effective way to slum elimination since it incorporates long-term and medium-term strategies to progressively improve the region [3]. As a result, unlike the other options, which demand quick measures in response to the flow of cash, this does not place considerable pressure on the government. Given its strategy, Wiredu and Midenne (2017) suggest that the upgrading policy's shortcoming is that it is done with centralized planning and top-down execution, making it difficult to reproduce successful initiatives [32].

2.2. The Dual Approach to Addressing Slum Challenges: Eradication or Demolition VS Gradual Upgrading

Following the policies presented above, academic arguments on dealing with slums may be divided into two major categories: demolitionist/eradication and upgrading views. The demolitionist thesis contends that slum clearance is the most effective way to abolish slums. According to this viewpoint, slums frequently begin unlawfully on private or state land holdings, and in most cases, such sites are key locations for public initiatives [5, 9]. Furthermore, the horrible living conditions in ancient and extremely old neighborhoods in rising cities, along with a growing desire for smart cities and sustainable urban development plans, project the notion of slum removal even farther. Mukhya has also stressed the importance of urban redevelopment as a crucial factor for slum clearance. This is because slums were viewed as an eyesore in a city that needed to be beautified. Otiso has also emphasized security as a fundamental motivation for slum eradication [24]. He made a significant allusion to the demolition of Muoroto and Mwariro in Nairobi and Kenya in the early 1990s. According to him, the main reason for such wholesale destruction was primarily for security reasons. Arimah argued further that slums were perceived as a sanctuary for criminals and hence needed to be eliminated [3]. Some people believe that slums are the cause and host of many contagious illnesses. Among diseases that have been recorded in slums are cholera, malaria, measles, and typhoid among others [20]. In light of this, Odek et al have asserted that "infectious illnesses constitute a substantial factor to high death rates in slum regions in many parts of the world [22]." In Liberia, for example, Sclar et al, among other notable scholars made strong emphasizes on the Ebola epidemic, linking its spread to the country's expansion of slums [28]. This signals to them that the solution to the problem was to demolish slums, which are the root of several health issues.

Upgrading Perspectives

This school of thought believes that progressive improvement of slums is the best way to remove slums. Their key point for their dispute is essentially the necessity to promote, preserve, and equalize the fundamental human rights of city slum inhabitants. In light of this, Abelson et al (1996) argued that upgrading programs will help replace slum obsolescence and decay with the provision of basic services and physical infrastructure such as good drinking water and street lighting, among other things, in which all citizens have equal access to these facilities [1]. El Hadj et al (2018) placed much emphasis on the "Right to the City," which is a component of the United Nations' "Right to Housing" [8, 31]. The right to the city, as defined by the United Nations, is "the right of all inhabitants—past and present, permanent and transient—to inhabit, use, occupy, produce, govern, and enjoy just, inclusive, safe, and sustainable cities, villages, and human settlements, defined as common essentials to a full and decent life." The term aims to encourage equitable access to benefits that might be of advantage to all urban residence, including good living conditions [8, 30]. The 2001 mass expulsion of Nehuru was used as an example to buttress their point. According to El Hadj et al, the purpose of the mass expulsion was to make room for a spiritual park. 5000 Basti households were displaced as a result of this effort. They further asserted that in April 2006, a Basti family of 1500 people in Northwest Delhi was demolished because it was considered hazardous to be next to a planned five-star hotel. As a result, they believe that redevelopment programs are the top contender for slum eradication. This is because they enhance the social and economic well-being as well as essential infrastructure to safeguard, uphold, and promote the fundamental human right of slum inhabitants.

2.3. Slums and Epidemics

Slum residents are exposed to high risk of communicable and non-communicable diseases [11]. Prevalent illnesses include communicable and non-communicable diseases. This is due to high population densities, a high percentage of illiteracy, and restricted access to health facilities and services. According to Riley and colleagues (2007), "chronic non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, intentional and unintentional injuries, and HIV infections are recognized to exist in slums due to the late complication of these diseases that the informal sector sees and deals with [27]." Non-communicable illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory conditions, neurological disorders, and mental illness have been classified as contributing to the disease burden of slums [27]. According to Sclar et al, research on children's health in slums has shown that diarrhea and cholera are the most prevalent illnesses among young people [28]. According to estimates, HIV/AIDS and TB account for roughly half of the death load in slum locations like Nairobi [7]. Most slum areas lacked basic health infrastructures like clinics and pharmacy among others. The end result is the existence of chronic and endemic diseases. The root cause of such problems was emphasized in

the work of Riley et al [27]. They argued that poor access to genuine health statistics of slum dwellers is responsible for poor health services in slum areas [27]. This is because many slum dwellers do not seek for proper medical attention in health care facilities and this results in insufficient data. According to Riley et al, this might prevent efficient allocation of medical resources in slum areas since many countries base their health care plans on data from various health institutions and national mortality registry [27]. According to a recent research, the majority of slum residents opted to seek out private healthcare providers or use self-medication. Most of these practitioners are frequently individuals who lack a license, have inadequate training, and operate pharmacies and clinics not to serve the needs of the public but rather to profit from them [27].

3. Methods

The work was basically a qualitative study with interviews being the most important strategy for data collection. 40 respondents were interviewed throughout the research including some policy makers, residence living outside the area and the slums dwellers themselves for their opinions in relation to the subject matter. Using a random sampling techniques, the age of the respondents basically ranges from (24-71) years. Most of the residents have little or no level of education. Many of these respondents have attained their highest level of education at the J. H. S level, while some were school dropout due to financial constraints. Books, Journals and Articles were used to support or corroborate the research.

3.1. The Geographical Scope of Abinkyi

Abinkyi is located near Asafo in the Asante region of Ghana. The area serves as a bus station for major transport firms. Within Abinkyi, there is a development of a large slum along the railway. The slum is estimated to host thousands of residents in which over 95 percent are from the northern part of the country. Residents informed us that their primary reason for settling in the area was basically to search for greener pastures. The area was formed for over two decades ago in which in recent times there have been some attempts to demolish the area by a private investor. Mohammed a Father of two and a driver shared his view on how the place developed.

He said:

"The area started to develop over two decades ago where permission to settle was granted to us by the railway cooperation in which an agreeable amount was to be paid annually. The area was given to us on temporal basis. It was as a result of the permission granted to us that led to the development of this place [15]."

This demonstrates that African governments—and Ghana in particular—are largely to blame for the growth of slums as a result of their deplorable treatment of slum residents. In support of this Njor's claims that slums were permitted since they were considered as remnants of old villages that were

being assimilated into the new urban design.

Residents live in wooden structures close to each other with an improper arrangement of such buildings. The most common occupation of the dwellers is basically centered on petty jobs such as street hawking, driving, and cleaning among others. However, within the place, the common occupation engage by residence is bar business, prostitution and drug trafficking.

3.2. Health Conditions at Abinkyi

As put forward by Liford et al (2017) slum dwellers are prone to high rate of diseases. This can be as result of overcrowding, inadequate health infrastructures among others [11]. This is similar to the situation at Abinkyi where poor environmental conditions due to improper sewage and refuse disposal makes residence vulnerable to contract all sort of environmental borne diseases. Refuse was dumped in gutters and on the streets. At the back of the area, there is a huge gutter. This gutter is claimed to spawn mosquitos, causing residents to suffer malaria on a regular basis. Martha, a twenty-four-year-old woman with a kid, provided a detailed summary of the place. She said,

“There is no proper refuse dump site here. All our gutters are choked. The government has just left as ajar. In facts during raining seasons, I and my daughter always go to the hospital every two or three weeks because of malaria. There is no toilet facilities here, most of us defecate in black rubber bags and just throw it inside the big gutter. In fact here is not a place for human settlement, but because of poverty, nothing can be done about it [16].

This indicates that, the health of residents were at stake. In similar view Lilford among other notables have postulated that, almost all slums residence shared similar social, economic and health conditions especially in Africa [11]. The environment at Abenkyi was quite devastating.

Another interviewee Amina a 27 year old girl, who sell oranges, also gave an account of the health status of the place. She said,

“It is very bad here. There is no health post, clinic or even a pharmacy. Most people here rely on self-medication whenever they are sick, and this is not the best. Just recently one of our neighbors died just because of self-medication. Most of us go to the hospitals whenever the condition becomes serious [12].

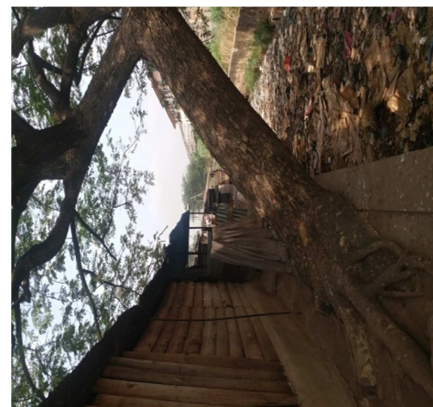
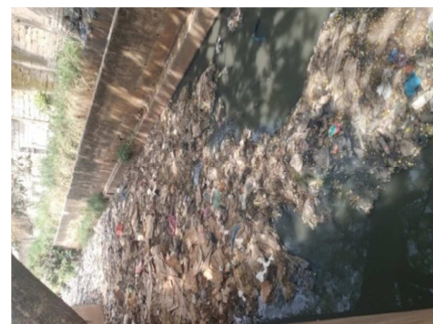
From the above, it is clear that residents in slum communities, such as Abinkyi, suffer from terrible environmental circumstances in addition to being unable to receive basic health care when they are sick. Furthermore, the place has a very bad smell because of poor sanitation. To have balance view of the study residence close to Abinkyi were consulted. Boateng Albert a 35 year old man who works in a mechanic shop just close to the place shared his thought. He said:

“the place has an unpleasant smell which is not good for our health (residence living around or close to the area), they have choked gutters which breeds mosquitoes, because of that we can't sleep at night. What annoys me

most is that, prostitution is rampant here and most of our youth are influence by such practice. What do u thinks the end result will be is it not HIV and other venereal diseases? In fact this people are really causing public nuisance.”

Throughout the survey, it was discovered that Abinkyi residents who lived outside the slum or near the slum area detested these slum residences. However, the majority of these respondents argues that their presence is vital to the economy of Asafo because they supply cheap source of labor, particularly in the informal sector.

Looking at the environmental state in the region, it is clear that residents living in such locations face health risks. This is due to the possibility of an epidemic spreading on a huge scale anytime a contagious disease breaks out.



Source: Field Survey 2021

Figure 1. Images depicting residence environment at Abinkyi.

4. Discussions: Debating Demolition vs. Upgrading

Respondents were selected from within and around Abenkyi relating to the subject matter. Also among the

respondents were policy makers including planning officers and District Chief Executive from Abuakwa North Municipal Assembly and East Akim District respectively. It was observed that the upgrading policy found pride of place in the hearts of many of the respondents within the area under study. On the contrary, most residents living outside the area strongly believed in the demolition policy as the best solution to the problem. What was observed was that respondent expressed their views based on their interest. To ensure a balance view of the study, policy analysts were consulted.

Slum dwellers at Abenkyi shared their views on the subject matter. Many favored the upgrading policy basically because they saw the demolitionist policy as against their rights and a wicked policy. Martha a 24 year old woman shared her thought on the subject matter, being in favor of the Upgrading policy. She said:

"It is the government duty to provide for a good job and a secured future for its citizens, of whom I am included, but the government has failed to do so and this has brought us in this situation. Now, attempts have been made to demolish the place just for a Car park. But the question is where should we go and how can we even cater for our families? It is because of financial constraints that we are here. If we all have money I don't think here will be a residential place for us. From my perspective, I think the upgrading policy is quite better because it will help make our surrounding clean and healthy to stay in [16]."

According to Martha's statements, slum dwellers would prefer not to live in such regions, but circumstances have compelled them to do so. Fink, among other famous upgrading scholars, has argued on a similar line that poor governance and leadership have led to the rise of slums in Africa, particularly in Ghana. As a result, demolishing residence buildings as a remedy is a danger to national security since these inhabitants would be unemployed. Furthermore, Charles Asabula also provided an emotional view on the issue. He said:

"I think the upgrading policy is the best. Before demolition, my wife used to do a bar business which was booming. We had money to pay for school fees, rent and even send some home. Now that the place have been demolish, my children have stop schooling. A place to sleep has even become a problem for most of us. We are still here because we do not have any place to go. In fact this is against our right but you know we don't have money to challenge the government in court. I think the upgrading policy is good. This is because it will make our surroundings a bit attractive to stay in, and helps provide solution to the problem."

From the foregoing, it can be claimed that Asabula's reasoning is on par with those who support upgrading policies as a means of preventing the growth of slums. According to these academics, forcing slum inhabitants out of their homes does not advance the goal of slum clearance. The livelihood of slum residents, who have in some manner created businesses and other vocations within the slums districts, are destroyed. Similarly, Mr. Royal Antwi, a senior

planning officer at the Abuakwa North Municipal Assembly also lamented that mass demolition without resettlement can't be a better a solution to the problem. He said,

"I personally think that, the demolition policy is the best provided if there will the commencement of a resettlement programme for the evicted ones. This can be feasible only if the government can finance such programme. However, if the government is not ready to bare such financial risk then the only option for him is to employ upgrading policies that requires less spent of money since it is a long-term initiative [18]."

It can be argued from the above that the best course of action is to progressively improve these locations. Importantly, it was observed that, demolition policies were not favorable to the goal of slum eradication. A major effect of mass demolition exercise was highlighted by a residence within the area. Amina a 27 year old woman with three kids also gave her own version on the subject matter. She said:

"I personally don't believe that mass demolition will help eradicate slums. My reason is simple. Most slum dwellers do not have enough money to rent a house in the city. My monthly income is around 200cedis. The cost of a single room per month in the city is around 100 to 150 cedi's. I and my children have to eat, buy cloths as well as to pay for utilities. Now ask yourself, can I afford it? The answer is a big "NO", because the remaining 50 or 100 cedis cannot cater for us for a month. Therefore we will move to places of similar conditions especially on government abandoned lands. So I think the "upgrading policy" will be beneficial to us [12]."

In addition to this Philip Boadu who is a mechanic and lived close to the slum also gave an important account, his conviction was that there must be better solution for slum dwellers which must manifest in the form of job provision and provision of basic infrastructures within the slum. He lamented that,

"I personally hold this strong conviction that, demolition without any jobs provided for the victims is just a "recipe for disaster". This is because it is as a result of financial constraints that is why they are in these conditions. Therefore demolition the place without giving them a secured job will deny them access to good housing and environment, good health conditions among other benefits. They will therefore look for a different alternative by moving into different areas of similar conditions. However, demolition policy can be a possible solution to slums only through resettling the evicted ones with more secured jobs [17]."

There is no doubt that forcible eviction or mass demolition cannot be a long-term solution to slum clearance. However, it only offers quick-fix solutions. The likelihood that slum inhabitants will relocate to new abandoned areas and turn them into slums when forced to do leave their current residence is very high. Importantly, it can be argued when this residence are evicted it is most likely that most residence might find it difficult to locate their home town. Mr. Emmanuel Esihene a former DCE gave a brilliant account by lamenting that,

“Slums in Ghana upon my experience in planning are quite different and a little bit confusing. The reason is simple. In Ghana most slums has a strong historical development even before Ghana’s independence and this tradition has continue to date. Most residence living in such places are the descendants of the first settlers. Most currently don’t even know their place of origin or in other words their parents’ home towns. What is unique about these slums is that, some has even developed to become recognized towns and communities nationwide. Looking at the circumstances now, there is no way any government or individual can demolish such places today. Therefore, the only option here is by upgrading [14].

From the above, it is conceivable that most slum dwellers, including Abinkyi, have extensive historical roots, rendering the majority of its residents unable to trace their ancestors. As a result, slums have become their home and hometown. Due to this, forceful eviction (mass demolition) cannot constitute a barrier to slum clearance. On humanitarian grounds Ex Sargent Mosses Ajaley who owns a shop close to the slum argued that slum upgrading should be the possible solution to slum eradication based on humanitarian reason.

“if government concentrates effectively on the well-being of rural folks, this problem would have been minimal. This is because most rural folks migrate to the cities as a result of inadequacy of jobs in the rural communities. However, the government has failed to do so, causing many people from such places to find their way to survive by settling in slums. Now the government comes back to demolish the place because some peculiar reasons without taking into consideration the concerns of the dwellers. To me I think the upgrading policy will be a bit favorable on humanitarian grounds [13].

This obviously implies that slum upgrading might be a viable answer to the slum elimination challenge. However, the question is how the government can finance such an approach? Significantly, it was worth noting that, most residence outside the slum argued along similar lines of mass demolition. Most of these residences are of the views that, the slum possess a lot of threat to the health as well as the security of the people of Asafo. Gifty Twum a vendor shared an important account arguing that, slums in Ghana including that of Abenkyi have always been the heaven place for criminal and prostitutes. In areas closer to slums these areas are prone to high rate of criminal activities and other social vices. On this account most residents who argued for mass demolition argued along similar lines. It important to argue that, demolition policy could be best achieved when slum develops at the early stages. According Emmanuel Asihene:

“Demolition policy can be necessary only when slums are at their infancy stage of development. In here, the residents living in those areas should be given a prior notice of the action to be taken. Demolition slums at the infancy stage do not cost many damages. And this will even prevent people from settling on government lands close to the area of incidence. So to me the two are good. Upgrading policy will be best suited in areas (slums) of large development

whiles demolition policy on the other hand can be good for slums at their infancy stage [14].

From the above it is important to state that, demolition policies are very effective when slum developments are at the initially stages or phases. In here such approach will be very effective as the damaging effect will be less minimal on residence.

5. Summary and Conclusion

Slum policies in Africa over the years are simplistically radical, bringing much pain into the minds of the evicted ones. Due to this, many organizations, scholars and other statutory bodies have made it their priority to suppress such radical policies on humanitarian grounds. From the above discussion, it can be deduce that, the fundamental human right of dwellers is consequential and should be taken into consideration before embarking on any policy of slum eradication.

Slum upgrading becomes very important here, since it provides permanent solution to slum development in a long run. The demolition policy is although good but tackles the issue on the surface but not from the bottom. Embarking on mass demolition without resettlement will eventually lead to the development of slums in other areas since dwellers cannot afford to stay in buildings within the city. However, it is very necessary to argued that, both demolitionist and upgrading debates have paid a little attention on the development of policies or designed programs that will train the social and psychological thinking of slum dwellers.

During the field research at Abenkyi it was observed that, although residence were more interested in the upgrading policy however, their thinking and way of life will have a great impact in any new area they finds themselves (whether being forced or resettled) which has the tendency to develop such places into slums. Therefore the social and physiological definition to slums needs to be the first action to be taken into consideration before any action of redevelopment or mass demolition is embarked on by the government. It is consequential to state that, effective education and training to slum dwellers to orient residence thinking and their way of living can be promising as an important solution to slum eradication.

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