



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Survey of Impact of Marginalization of city of Lahijan upon Economical and Environmental Quality of city dwellers

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ABSTRACT

Marginalization is one of the most important factors in unsustainable urban development. In general, this phenomenon originates from social and economical changes as well as uneven urbanization trend in Iran especially in the last half century. Urban development trend is an inevitable process and provides new opportunities for improving the quality of life. But this opportunity can be lost quickly and becomes an inefficient process and contrary to the goals of sustainable development. The accomplishment of this task requires review of planning and implementation of local, regional and national programs. If enough attention is not paid to the process of urban development then heavy social, political and environmental costs are expected in near future. This paper reviews marginalization and its formation causes in the city of Lahijan and studies the environmental and economical impacts of this phenomenon upon quality of life of city dwellers. First, current condition of Lahijan suburb including Yusefabad district and Khaloobagh by means of field survey (direct observations and personal interviews) from a sample of sixty marginal households is studied. This study then examines the required variables through 144 questionnaires (sample size) that have been filled by city officials and local urban dwellers. Using SPSS software, logistic regression and chi-square test data analysis has been carried out. Research findings show that marginalization in the form of slum dwelling or shanty towns are totally irrelevant and meaningless in Lahijan. Marginal dwellers of Lahijan have access to minimum low quality social facilities and utilities but they are considered as very effective factors on local urban life in the eyes of city officials and dwellers when it comes to the quality of surveyed economical, social and environmental indicators.

Key Words: Marginalization, Urban sustainability, Urban quality, Social indicators, Lahijan

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INTRODUCTION

Urbanization or sustainable urbanization is the kind of urbanization providing the opportunity of a life in existing and future cities for back to back generations according to the worth of human beings in one hand, and is concurrent with environmental considerations and dilettante of the environment itself on the other hand. So it can be claimed that urbanization and sustainable urbanization prompts the social and economic development of cities in a way that leads to the preservation of the environment and the earth's resources and prevents the destruction of natural surroundings. In other words, urbanization or sustainable urbanization develops congruent with and based on the capacity of the Ecosystem or natural systems [1]. In recent decades the phenomenon of the increasing growth of urbanization has been noticed in Iran too; meanwhile, the current status of the existing cities in Iran does not satisfy the needs of people. The principle to be taken into account is that these needs should be analyzed in terms of social, economic, and life aspects; otherwise, the forthcoming hazardous consequences will not be predictable or controllable. Having in mind the adverse effects of the physical growth of the cities on the environment, we should accept that the phenomenon of urban growth is an inevitable issue. A glance at the prediction of Iran's 1400 information and statistics with a population estimation of 130 million and measuring the current urbanization rate clarifies that we need at least two times of the current living area for cities. Although the inner-city growth can satisfy part of this need, development occurs mostly at suburbs where

unreasonable undertaking of the earth causes the destruction of desirable natural resources and sensitive ecosystems. Since the aim of such developments is the increase of the scales, centralization, specialization and mechanization follows endangering the above mentioned natural and artificial environments [2]. The informal proximity with cities especially the mega ones is among the barriersthat prevent cities to fulfill their key roles in national development and being pioneer in using the opportunities raised from the globalization of economy. Without any doubt in globalization many of urban dwellers have to dwell in suburbs and due to this lack most of the social protective affairs [3]. Suburbanites are people who live in abnormal abodes compared to the main dwellers of the urban areas. These people are in such conditions- leaving their origins and coming to urban areas- mostly because of therepulsive forces of the origin including poverty, unemployment and less because of the attractive elements of the urban areas. Since most of these people are illiterate and do not have the required skills to have jobs in urban areas the cities force them to suburbs too [4].

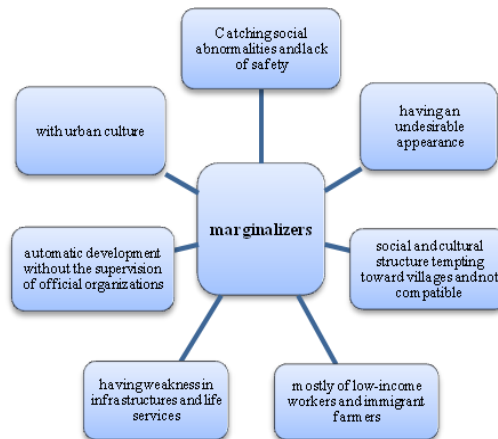


Figure 1-the characteristics of informal dwells

The global commission warned regarding the future of cities in the 21st century and mentioned that as mega cities grow, poverty will increase in developing and underdeveloped countries and due to this a high amount of urbanization growth will occur based on informal economy and we will observe an increase in the amount of informal dwells; such temptation is called informalized urbanization [5].

The point that should not be forgotten is that poverty in every situation is a threat to all places and surroundings.

Therefore, informalized urbanization is not considered as a temporary issue with limited size, and to the best of our knowledge it seems to exist an agreement concerning its existence, re-occurrence in the future, and its development which is due to the weakness of solutions and municipal policies and requires modern undertakings to get rid of. According to the habitat center of the United Nations (Habitat) in year 1996 one fifth of the world's generation lacked an abode worthy of human beings; this including a vast domain of the homeless, street dwellers, and hut dwellers [6]. A more worrying issue is that this rate is increasing for developing and underdeveloped countries. In the report of ESCAP it is seen that between one-third to one-fourth of the world population live in absolute poverty, and today the number of cities' poor people in Asia is more than the first half the century [4].

In our country the growth of informalized urbanization hasface a sharp increase and it is estimated that one-fifth of urban population live in such dwells. Indeed, informalized urbanization is one of the clear features of the urban areas, occurring at suburbs in an uncontrolled way, without legal permissions for having buildings there, and without obeying the municipal policies for making the city including a group of low-income people and a low quality of life. This is called marginalization, informalized dwelling, automatic disorganized dwells, and hut societies [7]. The living environment of these dwells is the host of abnormalities and the cause of social harms considered the cause of the occurrence of such dwells in reverse-formed arguments. Although the physical conditions of the informalized dwelling in Iran in terms of the materials used in abodes, per capita residential, and having access to social services and infrastructure is not as worse as the other developing and underdeveloped countries, exclusion and discrimination compared to other urban areas and also poverty and corruption makes them critical centers and against sustainable urban and human development. Therefore, considering informalized dwellingis a prerequisite derived from belief and humanity values as well as being compatible with social benefits, sustainable dwells, and sustainable national development. Regardless of the importance of the surveying slum dwelling and its effects on sustainable urban development, there has never been a scientific study regarding this in Lahijan. An increase in the population and poverty, a decrease in quality of life indexes, increase of unemployment, growth of informalized dwells, and environmental pollution

like other urban areas have caused many problems to Lahijan. Considering the urban environment of Lahijan as a desirable living area for urban dwelling, the sustainability of the city has impacted on the betterment of life of the city dwellers, but there are many factors effecting sustainability, one of the most important ones is marginalization. The accommodation of these low-income immigrants in vulnerable areas of the city has caused many abnormalities and unsustainability of the city. The aim of the researcher is to clarify the relationship between marginalization and the quality of life in two dimensions of economy and life, to recognize the challenges, and at the end propose the desirable strategies for solving this crisis as well as surveying the issue that with the existence of the such a problem whether Lahijan goes forward toward sustainability in next two decades or not.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Recognition of the study case range:

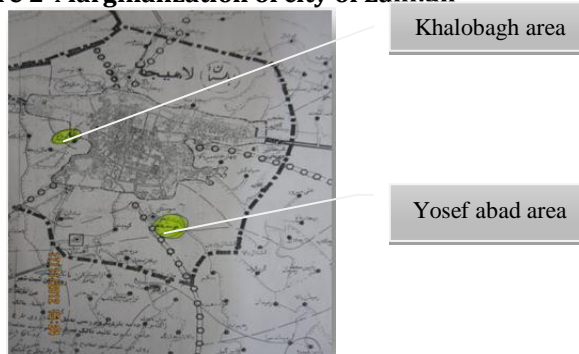
Lahijan, one of the cities of the Guilan province, from the south part is about 20 meters above sea levels and is located in Alborz rugged mountains. The city is located at 37 degrees and 11 minutes of north latitude having the living area of 1433 Hectare. The city is in a parallel line with Langeroud and Roudsar, other cities of the Guilan province. Lahijan like the other cities in the south part of Caspian Sea has a mild and humid weather. Among Eastern cities of Guilan province this city has the highest population, nearly 72950. Approximately there are 3 and a half in each family in Lahijan; the average rate of population growth in this city was 4/3 percent according to the statistics of the year 1375. Gender rate in this city is 1/99 (according to the document of the development of Lahijan, 1390). The city has two parts, Roubaneh and the central part, and two towns, Roubaneh and Lahijan; moreover, the city has seven rural districts (according to the year 1385 census of the statistical center of Iran).



Picture 1-lahijan city

The suburbs of Lahijan are the two districts of Yusefabad and Khalubagh. The lands in Yusefabad were part of tea gardens or in the bank of rivers. Peasants took control of these lands after the owners left them. They received the documents for owning these lands according to the articles 147-148 of the constitution in early 1360's. This area has developed regardless of the development of the city and is not based on the separation principles of the city. Most of the immigrations happened at that time with peasants because they did not have access to facilities and with city dwellers because the lands there were cheap compared to the city itself. These people because of long time of habitation there are considered the native dwellers of such areas. The Khalubagh area was a village from the beginning and has been the suburb of Lahijan because of the disorganized urban development there. Most of the people here were farmers but because of the failing down of the agriculture and an increase of the price of lands sold their lands and chose new jobs.

Picture 2-Marginalization of city of Lahijan



Methodology

In order to reach the aims of the study here in a descriptive-analytic method (a method for describing an issue in a real, objective, and systematic way. In this method, recognition and studying of the issues and current affairs are performed) in the defined period of time, we studied the consequences of marginalization in Lahijan. The population of this study includes two samples. The first one is 60 families of the marginalized areas of Lahijan for studying the reasons underlying the occurrence of marginalization and surveying the current status of those areas, and the second sample includes 144 people from the city and its organizations for studying the effect of marginalization on the quality of life of urban dwellers regarding the factors under consideration. The procedure for gathering data is of library one- gathering data regarding the history of the city, gathering information from well-known internet websites, articles in the web, existing books, the center for statistics of Iran, university dissertations, observations (non-cooperative)- and field studies- going to districts, the city, and related organizations such as the municipality, governmental center, health centers, etc. The tools for gathering data include a questionnaire having 20 questions on a 5-point Likert scale (for city dwellers and officials) and open interviews with the dwellers of Yusefabad and Khalubagh. Open interviews are for mentioning the current status regarding the three main variables of the research including the economic, social and environmental ones. In order to analyze the internal consistency (reliability) of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was used. The result was 83/3% for the questionnaire of urban dwellers and officials indicating a good amount of consistency. The SPSS software was used in this study to analyze data and evaluating the hypotheses of the study. Moreover, the Excel software was used to draw figures and descriptive diagrams [8]. The regression and chi-square test (χ^2 test) was used in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following table indicates the mean, deviation from the mean, standard deviation, and the variance of each of the studied indexes of Lahijan. The highest amount of mean relates to economy and environmental indexes. So it is seen that marginalization has the most impact on economic and environmental status and the least impact on social indexes.

Table 1- the descriptive statistics of indexes

Index	number	mean	Deviation from the mean	Standard deviation	variance
economic	144	3/57	0/071	0/850	0/722
social	144	3/50	0/052	0/626	0/392
Environmental	144	3/57	0/082	0/987	0/974
total	-	-	-	-	-

After gathering the data regarding the questionnaire, the questions were categorized regarding the economic, social and environmental indexes and the following results and figures have been obtained.

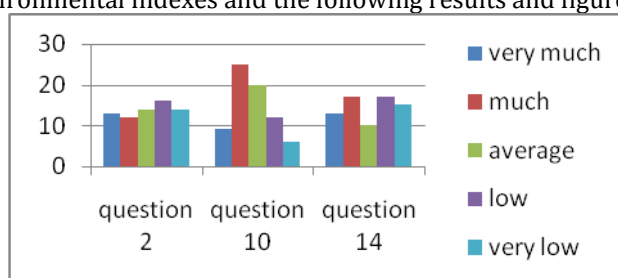


Figure 1-economic index

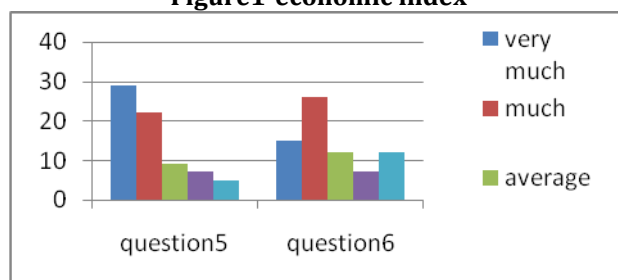


Figure 2- the frequency of the environmental index

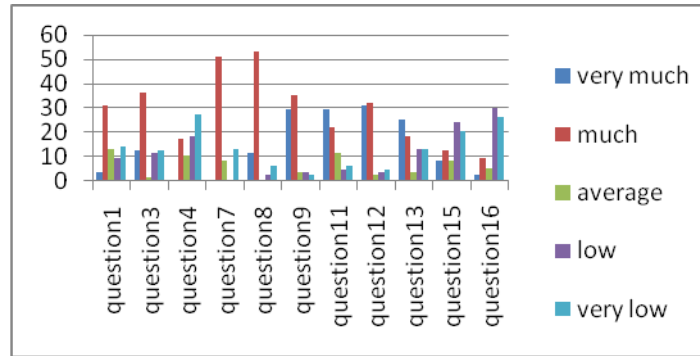


Figure 3-the frequency of social index

Hypotheses of the study

H0: marginalization does not have any impact on the quality of life of urban people regarding economic and biology concerns.

H1: marginalization affects the quality of life of urban dwellers regarding economic and biology concerns. In this study three secondary hypotheses were proposed regarding the indexes under study to survey their effects on marginalization in Lahijan. Correlation tests were used to accept or reject these hypotheses. The results of the test are as follows.

Analyzing the hypotheses of the study and their correlations

To study the question that whether marginalization has any effect on the quality of life regarding economic and biology concerns we used the linear regression test. This test shows the cause and effect relations showing the effects.

Hypothesis 1:

H0: marginalization does not have any impact on the quality of life of urban people regarding economic concerns.

H1: marginalization affects the quality of life of urban dwellers regarding economic concerns.

To study the correlation between the economic status and marginalization we used the Kendall tau correlation coefficient because the variable of the amount of impact of marginalization and economic status is a ranking variable.

	amount	Degree of freedom	Test statistic	Level of significance
Ordering-ordering Kendall tau	0/553	0/54	7/062	0/00

Considering R=0/553 if correlation coefficient is between 0/35 and 0/65 we see 25% of shared variation between the two variables. Looking at the above tables we find that there is a correlation between marginalization and the quality of life of people in Lahijan regarding the economic index.

Now for finding the relationship between marginalization and economic status we use the chi-square test.

Table3- the relationship between marginalization and the economic status based on chi square test

	amount	Degree of freedom	Fisher's exact test
Chi square, Pearson	140/423	12	0/0001

A glance at the chi-square test and Fisher's exact test and noticing that SIG is below 0/001, lower than 5 %, we find that H0 is rejected ; this means that marginalization has a kind of effect on the quality of life of people in Lahijan regarding the economic index.

Hypothesis 2:

H0: marginalization does not have any impact on the quality of life of urban people regarding social concerns.

H1: marginalization affects the quality of life of urban dwellers regarding social concerns.

To study the correlation between the economic status and marginalization we used the Kendall tau correlation coefficient because the variable of the amount of impact of marginalization and economic status is a ranking variable.

Table 4- measurement scale

	amount	Degree of freedom	Test statistic	Level of significance
Ordering-ordering Kendall tau	0/583	0/057	6/950	0/000

Considering R=0/583 if correlation coefficient is between 0/35 and 0/65 we see 25% of shared variation between the two variables. Looking at the above tables we find that there is a correlation between marginalization and the quality of life of people in Lahijan regarding the social index.

Now for finding the relationship between marginalization and social status we use the chi-square test.

Table5- the relationship between marginalization and the social status based on chi square test

	amount	Degree of freedom	Fisher's exact test
Chi square , Pearson	323/465	12	0/000

A glance at the chi-square test and Fisher's exact test and noticing that SIG is below 0/001, lower than 5 %, we find that H0 is rejected; this means that marginalization has a kind of effect on the quality of life of people in Lahijan regarding the social index.

Hypothesis 3:

H0: marginalization does not have any impact on the quality of life of urban people regarding environmental concerns.

H1: marginalization affects the quality of life of urban dwellers regarding environmental concerns.

To study the correlation between the environmental status and marginalization we used the Kendall tau correlation coefficient because the variable of the amount of impact of marginalization and environmental status is a ranking variable.

Table 6- measurement scale

	amount	Degree of freedom	Test statistic	Level of significance
Ordering-ordering Kendall tau	0/443	0/064	5/516	0/000

Considering R=0/583 if correlation coefficient is between 0/35 and 0/65 we see 25% of shared variation between the two variables. Looking at the above tables we find that there is a correlation between marginalization and the quality of life of people in Lahijan regarding the environmental index.

Now for finding the relationship between marginalization and environmental index we use the chi-square test.

Table7- the relationship between marginalization and the environmental status based on chi square test

	amount	Degree of freedom	Fisher's exact test
Chi square , Pearson	127/961	12	0/000

A glance at the chi-square test and Fisher's exact test and noticing that SIG is below 0/001, lower than 5 %, we find that H0 is rejected; this means that marginalization has a kind of effect on the quality of life of people in Lahijan regarding the environmental index.

According to the performed tests we can claim that:

H0: marginalization does not have any effect on the quality of life of people in Lahijan regarding the economic and biology concerns: rejected.

H1: marginalization affects the quality of life of people in Lahijan regarding the economic and environmental concerns: accepted.

CONCLUSIONS

If we consider the neighborhood range an Urban Ecosystem and the urban dwellers and marginalized people as the building blocks of this urban ecosystem, we find that these parts affect each other and the

environment; moreover, they are affected by the environment too. a glance at the literature by the researchers, and studying the current status of the margins of Lahijan (Yusefabad and Khalubagh) regarding the three indexes of economy, social and environmental ones indicates that the most important reason for the occurrence of marginalization in Lahijan is the disorganized urban development. Other reasons boosting the current status are: migration of peasants to the city because of the repelling factors of their abodes like stagnation of farming and due-to-it economic problems, unemployment, and lack of educational, health and other social services. Objective observations and field studies and results of interviews with the marginalized people indicates the undesirable quality of economic, social and environmental indexes and also the discontent feeling of these people, but the conditions of these people regarding having access to the basic services, environmental sceneries, and the structure of buildings are not similar to other provinces in the form of slums.

In the northern informalized centers of Iran because of the short distance between cities and villages we see better conditions from the viewpoint of having access to services and regarding the urban structure. Noticing the performed questionnaires from the urban dwellers and officials we find that marginalization affects the quality of life and economy of the city. So we understand the importance of the point that these effects should be positive. We can decrease the adverse effects of marginalization here by a good and systematic programs with the aim of increasing the amount of social services (educational, health, passing leisure time), and correct education in all realms like personal health, personal skills for having personal jobs; these all can help prevent destructing the environment. In poor neighborhoods the structure of families, relations and national identities vulnerable to threats, and the dwellers of such areas are impacted most from the economic crises. Environmental abnormalities harm mostly the low income people, but its effects can be seen in national and social realms. We also should not forget that with the occurrence of unexpected incidences such as earthquakes, floods, pollutions, and different social harms, because of the disorganized transportation systems of such neighborhoods the range of harms can be vaster than this even in a global range.

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