CHAPTER - III

THE PROFILE OF SLUMS IN BANGKOK (THAILAND)

This Chapter mainly deals with the profile slums in the capital city of Bangkok in that it deals with the following aspects:-

1) The growth of the city of Bangkok
2) A Profile of slums in Bangkok
3) The causes and effects of slum eviction
4) The plight of the evicted
5) Resistance to eviction
6) The Role of Institutions in urban Poverty Alleviation in Thailand

This study will facilitate us in understanding the magnitude of the slum problem consequent upon the growth of the city of Bangkok. In view of the seriousness of the slum problem, an attempt is made to understand the nature and effectiveness of the role played by the Institutions in urban poverty alleviation in Thailand.

(1) The City of Bangkok:

Bangkok is not very old city. As a capital it is even less ancient. In Thai language Bangkok is called
The Map of Thailand No.3.1 showing the location of Bangkok
"Krungthep", "Krung" in Thai means City and "Thep" means Angel i.e., the city of angels. "Bang" in Thai also means a village or district and "Kok" is a wild olive-like-fruit that was once common in the area.¹

After the World War-II, the urban situation of Bangkok has changed rapidly. Many part of the city were destroyed during the war. This has resulted in the first sign of the housing problem.²

But, a powerful change came after the launching of the first five-year National Economic and Social Development Plan started in the year 1962. The City of Bangkok is rapidly developed fastly in a centralized fashion economically as well as politically. This change can be seen by the fast growing urban area, migrants flooding the city, low-income housing problems and the emergence of growing slums and squatter settlements.

The rapid development of Bangkok can be seen from Table No.3.1.

(1) Thailand in the 1950s, p.215.

(2) NHA Annual Report 1980s, The Establishment of NHA - National Housing Authority.
### TABLE No. 3.1

**Population and Urbanized Area of Bangkok³**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population (000)</th>
<th>Urbanized area (km²)</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>Absolute Monarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>State Capitalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>1,622</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>3,075</td>
<td>183.7</td>
<td>Capitalist by National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>4,800</td>
<td>220.7</td>
<td>Economic and Social Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>5,200</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>5,446</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Compared to the Absolute Monarchy and State Capitalist periods, the urban area in Bangkok is seen to have grown very rapidly under the period of Capitalist by National Economic and Social Development Plan (Table No.1). During the period of Absolute Monarchy in 1900, the urbanized area was 13.3 km² with a population of 600,000 persons. During the State Capitalist period in the year 1958, the urbanized area rose to 96.4 km² with a population of 1,622,000 persons and the same was 220.7 km² in the year 1977 with a population of 4,800,000.

Compared to the population figure (600000) of the year 1900, the increase of population in the year 1958 was more than two and half times and eight times in the year 1977. However, the figures of the growth of population of 1980 (5,200,000) and 1986 (5,446,000 persons) were more than 8.5 and more than 9 times respectively compared to the population figure of the year 1900. With the increase in the population naturally the urbanized areas are also seen to have been increased since 1900 A.D.

One out of ten Thais is a resident of the capital city of Bangkok. This city of Bangkok is 45 times bigger than the second most prosperous city of Chiang Mai. The metropolitan area sprawls on both sides of the river Chao Phya.
The major domestic and foreign companies, governmental ministries, leading educational institutions, sport and cultural institutions are located in Bangkok. Likewise, most of the export and import goods pass through Bangkok. Bangkok is well connected to the places in and outside Thailand through aviation, railroad and other communication network. With this in view, it is said that Bangkok acts as a magnet for Thais from all corners of the country.

The Thais use to come to Bangkok in search for employment in the factories, firms and offices. They also use to come to this city for prosecuting school, college and University education. "Bangkok, with its huge, diverse population, its shopping centers and high rise office buildings and its cosmopolitan sophistication presents itself as a city in the international sense of the term. Thus, to understand modern urban culture in Thailand it is necessary to examine the capital (Bangkok) in detail."4

Outlying residential areas continue to expand rapidly as more housing estates and shopping complexes are built to accommodate the flow of migrants coming to

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(4) Thailand in the 1980s, p.215.
the capital city of Bangkok from upcountry. Similarly, heavy industries are concentrating at the fring area of Bangkok. Other residents in Bangkok live in separate, private houses in high density neighbourhoods. Those who are fortunate live in relatively spacious compounds in long established residential areas, viz., Bangkapis. A tremendous rise in land values are producing new housing concepts, especially in the more congested inner city areas. The foreigners reside in western style buildings, the Thais largely are moving into "town house" projects in which they own the actual land and buildings but share a common wall with their neighbours. These projects have been constructed in large numbers in Bangkok. Some of them consist of several dozen units in area that once contained in single dwelling.

Throughout Bangkok, two, three and four story shophouses which contain speciality shops and or small factories that are generally family concerns are located on main roads and sides lanes. Workers and their families are generally housed on the upper floors. These dwelling mostly lack recreational facilities and gardens. The vehicles are parked inside or on the ground floor. The children play on the sidewalks outside.

The people belonging to poorer section reside often in single storey houses. These houses are made of scrap
lumber. These houses are concentrated around port area and certain suburbs. Government public welfare housing usually takes the form of low-rise blocks of simple flats located throughout the city.

The rapid growth of Bangkok has heavily put a strain on facilities. This has led to the number of serious problems. Over 900,000 registered motor vehicles are in Bangkok and because of the limited road surface traffic congestion is heavy within the city. Some parts of the city are sinking due to the pumping of the water from wells to supply suburban projects. Drainage facilities are inadequate in other parts of the city. This has resulted in periodic flooding during the rainy season.

The Chinese and Indians account for almost 10 per cent of the capital city of Bangkok's population. Japanese and Asians from neighbouring countries are also seen in the city. Generally these minority people enrich the city's cultural life.

"Western influence has been instrumental in introducing and creating a taste for new fashion, new life-styles and new leisure activities. Western cultural impact has been inestimable as countless facets of Bangkok's contemporary scene includes golf, music, and boutiques, music and drama, libraries and popular games,
fashions and interior decorators.  

Urban way of life is seen introduced in Bangkok and elsewhere in urban areas of Thailand. But at the same time it may be noted that Buddhism is at the center of Thai view of life and forms the foundation of most of attitudes in both rural and urban areas. Eventhough, Buddhism has undergone certain changes in appearance caused by the stress of Bangkok's fast paced urban life style, Buddhism still remains the same for the people, its influence is powerful in the city of Bangkok as elsewhere in rural areas.

The Wat (Temple) is at the centre of social and religious life in the villages. In case of Bangkok, monasteries today normally are visited only for religious observances or on the occasions of festivals. This is because they are not easily accessible. To visit them entails a long, hot drive in heavy traffic. Because of this, many homes in Bangkok have a room for Buddha images and a small altar. This small private sanctuary serves for prayer and meditation in the morning and evening. But in the villages in Thailand, easy accessibility of the Wats facilitates the performance of daily rituals there.

\[5\] Thailand in the 1980s, p.228.
(2) A Profile of Slums in Bangkok

The latest detailed survey has shown that in Bangkok there are 1020 slum and squatter settlements having 1.01 million population. As per earlier survey conducted in the year 1984, there were only 400 to 500 slums in Bangkok. This shows tremendous growth in the slums and squatter settlements.

Again it may be noted that those slumming areas close to the city, but outside the administrative boundary also were not included in the survey. These areas have strong interaction with the metropolis of Bangkok. Hence they should also have been included. Had this been included the number of slums and squatter settlements could have been much more.

Table No. 3.2 shows that in the year 1940, there were just eightysix slums with a population of 85,282 persons in Bangkok city. In the year 1950, the number of slums (183) and their population (181,472 persons) had more than doubled. In the year 1960s, the number of slums are seen to have been doubled (361 slums) compared to the earlier figure of 1950. While the slum population of these slums are seen to have nearly doubled (357,986 persons). A similar trend of doubling the number of slums (678) and close to the figure of doubling in
### TABLE No. 3.2

Table showing decadewise figures of the number of slums and their population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of slums in Bangkok</th>
<th>Number of population</th>
<th>Percentage of slums population to Bangkok population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>85,282</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>181,472</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>357,986</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>672,339</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>991,650</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td>1,011,483</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
population (672,339 persons) is observed in the year 1970. In the year 1980, though the number of slums is not doubled to the earlier figure of 1970, the number of slums (1,000 slums) has certainly fairly increased and the population has also increased to 991,650. In 1985, there were 1020 slums with 1,011,483 persons.

It may be noted that the growth of the slums and their population had shown increasing trend since 1940 to 1985. But the share of the slum-population in the total population of Bangkok has not significantly increased. In 1970, the percentage of slum-population to the total population was 19.1 per cent. In 1980 and 1985 the percentages of slum population were 19.2 and 19.6 respectively. This shows that the growth of population of the slum and the general growth of the population other than the slum-population of Bangkok more or less proportionately increased.

Major Characteristics of Bangkok's Slums:

The major characteristics of the slums in Bangkok is covered in various number of settlements.

(1) There are slum and squatter settlements from as few as 15 households upto the 7,390 in Klong Toey slum as a whole. This is the Bangkok's largest settlement. The average number of households per settlement is 189.3.
This indicates that the majority of slum settlements in Bangkok are small in size. Of the total of 1020 slum settlements some settlements have less than 117 households and only 114 consist of more than 350 households.

(2) Nearly about one-third of these settlements are of the age of 15 years or less. The average age of all settlements is 25.3 years. This indicates that most of the slum settlements are quite recently came into existence.

(3) Fifty per cent of the settlements are located within 6.5 Kms., radius from the city center of Bangkok. This naturally reflects the people's desire to live near their work-places.

(4) So far as the occupancy of the land is concerned the majority of the slums (64.5 per cent) are located on private land. The sub-division of this private land for rent is a common phenomenon in Bangkok, the payment of which constitutes a kind of tenureship. It is these areas which are considered slums. However, the squatter settlements pay no rent and have no legal tenureship. Small number of areas (16.3 per cent) are considered as squatter settlements. This shows that the slum-dwellers have not unauthorisedly occupied private lands for settlement. Only squatter settlements have occupied private and government lands without legal tenureship.
(5) Very few slum areas have been upgraded. The number is 180. The improvements have benefitted over one-third of the slums population. All those upgraded slum settlements have a community committee. Some un-upgraded slum settlements also have such committees. Their number is 80. Thus 260 upgraded and un-upgraded slum settlements have community committee. In all 451,000 slum-dwellers have been given some benefits of slum improvement. This shows that more than three-fourths of the slum settlements have no community committee to aid in the development process. The purpose of the establishment of the community committee is to aid the slum-dwellers to improve themselves in the development process.

Legal Status:

The settlements are divided into two, viz., slums and squatter settlements. Slums are treated legal because they exist on rent basis. The squatter settlements are located illegally on the land of others without the permission of the land owners. These squatter settlements lack legal tenureship. The percentage of the squatter settlements on the public land is 41.4 per cent. Only 4.0 per cent are on private land.

The government organizations have acquired large amount of land. But the lack on the part of the government organizations about protection of land from encroachment
and the colossal delay in the use of the land gave an opportunity to the homeless people to encroach upon the land. But the private land owners were careful in protecting their land from encroachment. Hence the extent of encroachment on the private land by the homeless is small.

The illegal status of the squatter settlements deprived the slum-dwellers from extending the benefits of the upgrading programmes. The outside organizations also do not wish to involve themselves in upgrading these settlements because if these settlements are evicted their efforts of the development may go in vain.

**Upgrading Squatter Settlements:**

The following organization are responsible for upgrading programmes in the slum settlements.

(i) *Bangkok Metropolitan Organization* as a local government, and

(ii) *National Housing Authority*, which is a public enterprise.

Upgrading programmes involve physical improvement of the settlements and also the improvement of social and economic activities. As stated above, 260 settlements have community committees. These committees look after
the work of the upgrading of the settlements. The governmental or non-governmental developmental and charitable organizations are included in the community committees.

Classification of Slums in Bangkok:

All the slums and squatter settlements in Bangkok are classified into seven categories according to their locations as follows:

(1) Old Inner City Slum Areas:

The inner city slums are located in the old city areas, viz., Phra Nakhon, Pom Prab and Samphanthawong districts. These settlements are old. The slum-dwellers reside in old buildings formerly used for business activities.

(2) New Inner City Slum Areas:

Some old slums still exist in the new inner-city areas such as Pathumwan, Bang Rak and Suriwong and other modern commercial areas like Siam Square, Rachadamri and Pratoomram. But these slums either are demolished or are under the pressure of demolition due to conversion of land for high-return commercial activities.

(3) City Residential Slum Areas:

These slums are located in areas stretching from
Nontha Buri in the north through Dusit, Phaya Thai, Huai Khwang to a part of Phra Khanong in the west.

(4) **Scattered Slum Areas:**

The scattered slum areas are located in Bang Kapi, Bang Khen and the eastern parts of Phra Khanong districts. These settlements are scattered, except for the squatter settlements along the irrigation canals in Bang Khen district. With the acquisition of land by the government for earners belonging to high income and middle income, the option of land renting by low-income earners has been made very difficult in this areas.

(5) **Isolated Slum Areas:**

These settlements are located in areas like Min Buri, Lad Krabang and Nong Khaem districts.

(6) **Ribbon Development Slum Areas:**

These slums are along with the Petcha Kasem Road, in Phasi Charoen district and along on road in Phra Khanong district.

(7) **Industrial Slum Areas:**

These slums are found in the newly developed industrial areas, viz., in Yan Nawa, south of Phra Khanong, Thon Buri and Khlong San (which is considered
an old industrial area) and in Bang Khun Thien, Rat Burana districts and parts of Samut Prakarn province.

**Locational Pattern of Slums and Squatter Settlements in Bangkok:**

It is interesting to understand the locational pattern of slums and squatter settlements in Bangkok. The existence of these slum-settlements is related to the economic concentration in the city suburbs of Bangkok. There are fifty city commercial sub-centers in Bangkok apart from central area of the city. These commercial sub-centers serve different parts of the city. There exist a close relationship between commercial sub-centers and slum and squatter settlements through mutual support. These commercial sub-centers facilitate the growth of these slum and squatter settlements while these settlements help maintain these sub-centers by providing low-cost labour. Such type of inter-play often takes place in the expanding modern commercial and industrial cities. The studies of the slum development conducted in some cities in India and outside lend support to this. Generally these settlements appear in any area of the city where economic activities have been firmly developed.

**The Formation, Development and Decay of Slum and Squatter Settlements:**

The process of formation, development and decay of slum and squatter settlements take place in the expanding
modern commercial and industrial cities. The rise and fall of any slum-settlement is linked to the changes in economic activity in the surrounding area. The income-earning opportunities are the prime stimulator of the formation of slum and squatter, settlements. The city of Bangkok is no exception to this. Such a process has taken place in this city which is described below.

(1) **The Formation of Slum and Squatter Settlements**:

Income-earning opportunities are afforded by Klong Toey Port, factories in new industrial areas of Bangkok, and the collection of resalable refuse in Huai Khwang. The people engaged in these income earning activities solved their shelter problem by developing slums and squatter slums in Bangkok.

(2) **The Development of Slum and Squatter Settlements**:

When slums and squatter settlements and other housing stocks centering around job opportunities develop, service activities then emerge to serve the population in that area. Small markets with vendors appear and their survival is dependent on the population of immediate vicinity. These activities need labourers, resulting in an increase in the population.
(3) The Decay of Slum and Squatter Settlements:

As development continues overtime local business, which become increasingly linked to city business activity will continue to grow until it is no longer dependent on its local area. This will negatively affect low-income housing stock. The example of Klong Toey can be cited in this respect. In Klong Toey area in the past was mainly settled by labourers. However, when this area developed, the present Klong Toey market replaced the settlement. At this stages city activities like modern business firms, receational activities will appear by replacing low income housing area.

(4) The Causes and Effects of Slum Eviction:

The process of eviction in Bangkok is endangering hundreds of thousands of slum residents living in low-income settlements in the Bangkok city. These settlements are old residential areas and because of fast development of the Bangkok city, these areas are serving as the reception centres for rural migrants. Inspite of the fact that these slum areas are fulfilling the important socio-economic function by providing shelter to a large portion of the city's labour force, they have been put under constant threat of eviction because of rapid urban development pressures and land speculation. The slum-
dwellers have been rarely offered alternative accommodation. They had to re-establish themselves with lower security of land tenure. They are the urban refugees in their own city.

Land Ownership And Eviction:

The slum settlements survey in 1981 shows that two of every three families residing in slums on government land were evicted or were under eviction. Only one out of five families residing in slums on private land were evicted or were under eviction. This shows that eviction and the threat of eviction were more frequent on government lands than on private lands. This is because slums on public lands are more centrally located. They are, therefore, under great pressure for eviction and redevelopment. The land tenure of the slums on the public land is less secure as the slum-dwellers have unauthorisedly occupied these lands. In turn, the slum-dwellers on private lands have some type of rental agreements with the owners of the lands.

The survey has reported that "there is no government policy to guide the utilization of public land under the jurisdiction of the various agencies (such as The Crown Property Bureau, The Treasury Department, Monasteries and Abbots, The Port Authority, The Petroleum Authority, The
State Railways, The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and other Government Agencies) and each agency has taken a different attitude towards slums located on its land. These attitudes can be categorised into three major types: passive, speculative and utilitarian. Passive agencies are generally tolerant towards slum dwellers on their land, collect low monthly land rents, and have no alternative use for the land. Speculative agencies are those desiring to use the land for income generation through eviction and commercial development. Utilitarian agencies are those needing the land to carry out their own work.  

The reason for the eviction of slum-dwellers residing on private land is that the new private land owners inheriting land of their ancestors now wish to dispose off their land for more financial gain.

With the rapid expansion of Bangkok city the public agencies and the private landlords have now realised about the value of land and its alternative uses either for generating more income, financial gains by way of disposing the land or by putting the land to other more fruitful uses.

either resort to court action or encourage arson to speed up evictions. The Courts generally accepts the landlords' right to evict the slum-dwellers. To prevent the land owners attempt of intentional fires, the slum communities form vigilance squad to patrol their areas at night.\(^8\)

(5) The Plight of the Evicted:

Evictions occur under various circumstances such as wars, racial and religious persecutions, repatriation of the alien minorities and natural calamities like earthquakes, floods, great fires, famines and other developmental activities. The circumstances under which eviction occurs, create the problems of resettlement and other problems. The resettlement arising from the developmental activities entails a calculated, well thought-out pre-planned programme. But in the absence of this, the evicted community has to suffer greatly.\(^9\)

Eviction is harmful as it brings with it human suffering and great financial loss throwing the people down to the path of misery to worse housing locations. This may perhaps be the universal feature of the plight of the

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evicted communities and the eviction of the slum communities in Bangkok may not be an exception to it.

About the plight of the evicted or uprooted village communities due to the construction of the irrigation dam across the Godavari river near Paithan town in Aurangabad district of the Maharashtra State (India), Joshi, B.L. writes that "The construction of a number of multipurpose dams of small, medium and big size has been undertaken in India to provide irrigation and to generate hydro-electricity. As a result, the people inhabiting these villages or hamlets are uprooted from their hearth and home and probably fields as well. This requires the evacuation and rehabilitation of the people of a large number of villages from the submerged areas. The villagers, especially the cultivators have a deep attachment to the soil and their homes. The people also desire to live among their kinsmen at the place of rehabilitation. They are called upon to give up their love and attachment to their ancestral property and a living possibly among their kinsmen and with their traditional neighbourhood relations at the altar of the well-being of the community as a whole. Their whole social and economic life is thus disturbed. The Government, no doubt, gives compensation in terms of land, site for house, and other expenses. But this economic compensation may not

satisfactorily counterbalance the social and psychological disturbances. They need to be rehabilitated not only economically but socially and psychologically as well. The rehabilitation process, therefore, brings in its wake many stresses, and strains to the affected people."10

Similar is the opinion of Somsook Boonyabancha about the plight of the evicted slum communities in Bangkok. He writes that "communities from which people are being evicted have been in existence for thirty to forty years on an average. They are places where people have spent the greater part of their lives. Leaving them unwillingly brings with it a feeling of humiliation and powerlessness. For many it is disorienting. For some, particularly the older population, it may be a severe life crisis. People leave behind friends and neighbours they have learned to trust, a familiar environment, and a supportive community. For the great majority, the move is a change for the worse. When asked about their future plans, the majority reply that they do not know, almost as though they refuse to face their future."11


The other economic and the non-economic losses\textsuperscript{12} reported are as follows:

(1) The financial loss brought about by eviction is a cumulative loss resulting from higher housing expenditures and higher transportation expenditures in the new location, heavy costs of resettlement and loss of income. The compensation given by landlords are insufficient to cover these losses.

(2) Eviction brings with it increased rents. All new house seekers in the city pay considerable higher rents than long-time occupants. In addition to this, with the increase in the number of evictions, the number of houses in good localities decline. The increased demand for houses results in higher rents. If the houses in old localities are not available because of high demand and high rents, the result is the increase in transportation cost required to pay for transportation to reach to work, school and social services. The increased commuting time means loss of work and reduced income and income earning opportunities.

(3) Most of the families in the slums engage themselves in a number of informal economic activities to

supplement their family income. These activities depend upon the development of contacts with the people who offer occasional work, supply merchandise or make credit available. These contacts are possible on remaining at one place. These contacts are lost once people are evicted.

(4) Besides the above losses, the process of resettlement involves considerable expenditure. Old housing materials have to be taken down and transported to the new locations. Rebuilding at the new locations require new housing materials and new foundations, new septic tanks, new electric connections, new water system and additional expenses.

(5) The compensation offered to evicted families is far from sufficient to cover the losses incurred by evicted families. Because of unaware about real cost of eviction, the evicted families may be attracted by offers of cash payments of compensation offered to them. Those families who accept their fate, agree to any amount of compensation. Moreover, there are no rules regarding compensation, and the residents have no legal rights to stay. The amount of compensation mostly depends on the outcome of negotiations.
(6) The financial loss results in housing deterioration. Because of the increased cost of eviction, reduced incomes and inadequate compensation, the evicted families suffer from decrease of their housing budget. The majority of the evicted people will continue to seek shelter in slums and squatter settlements since they are unable to pay for the cheapest houses or flats produced by the private sector and the production of flats and serviced sites by the government is slow.

(7) As the slum-dwellers move from one slum to another, their housing conditions tend to become worse. Those who move more than once, their housing conditions deteriorate even further.

(6) Resistance to Eviction:

There is no protection to the slum-dwellers regardless of their stay either on the public land or the private land. In the absence of their right to stay, they cannot even resist their evictions by appealing to the Courts. The private landlords give an understanding to the slum-dwellers that their stay on their land is temporary and they may be asked to vacate the land. Hence they do not allow the slum-dwellers to construct permanent structures on their land. Even they do not sign a long-term agreements. But inspite of this, the landlords try to avoid direct confrontation, cultivate good relations with
the slum-dwellers and offer compensation to facilitate the clearance of the land. The private landlords adopt this policy to subdue the resistance to eviction of the slum-dwellers from private land.

But the resistance to eviction from public land is possible. This takes a form of humanitarian appeal to the Government to help the poor people who suffer because of government action. The people appeal to the responsibility of the government toward them. They point out that they have nowhere to go and hence government has a duty to help them to stay on the land or give them alternative residential accommodation.


This part of the study reviews the role of the institutions dealing with the urban poor. The problems of the urban poor have attracted much public attention in Thailand. The government agencies and private institutions have initiated programme to help alleviate some of the problems experienced by the urban poor populations.

The National Housing Authority (NHA) and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) are the two government

agencies. The NHA is involved in the provision of low income housing in various forms while BMA's functions are linked to urban poors' livelihood, i.e., to improve their economic and social conditions.

This review may help in understanding whether these institutions and agencies were able to alleviate the urban poverty and improve the living conditions of the urban poor by providing them better living conditions. If not, their failure may be responsible for the present plight of the urban poor. The slum-dwellers also constitute the urban poor.

There are private institutions or non-governmental organization (NGO's) engaged in the issues of poverty.

The National Housing Authority:

The National Housing Authority was established in 1973 to address the Thailand's pressing housing problems. Prior to the establishment of the NHA, little attention was given to low income housing development.

The brief history of the NHA (1973-1986) is given below.

The history of the NHA shows a remarkable consistent pattern of great expectations frustrated by lack of resources. The NHA launched first plan in 1975. By 1977,
financial position of the government restricted both
direct government funding for the projects and ability
of the NHA to raise funds from external sources, since
these loans would also require government guarantees.

The NHA produced the corporate plan, 1985-87 and
the future plan 1987-1991. In both of these plan emphasis
is placed more on financial self-sufficiency of the NHA
and on reducing NHA's role in low-income housing and
reducing dependence on foreign funding in favour of local
resources.

The history of the NHA is the result of the lack of
resources to support a vision of public assistance to the
poor by means of improving their physical environment.
The high subsidy element of the programmes with little
prospect of cost recovery for the government limited the
number of beneficiaries of the project.

The attitude of the Thai government is that it cannot
afford to pay for urban low income housing and it does not
consider the problem to have a high priority within the
overall scheme of government policy. The government is of
the view that in spite of their poor standards of living,
the urban low income group can do better than their rural
counterparts. Thus the NHA is not in a position to do
much for the urban poor population.
Because of the financial constrains, an agreement between NHA and BMA took place in 1982 on co-operation to carry out slum improvement projects.

The following is the review of the role of the BMA in slum development.

**The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration:**

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration has a wide ranging responsibility for the management and welfare of the population of the BMA.

The BMA has focused on slums as the centre for its urban poor work. In co-operation with the NHA, the BMA undertakes a number of activities centred on improving the conditions of living in the designated slum areas. The activities proceeds from a survey of an area to determine its slum status then establishment of a community organization to consider further improvement and co-ordinate activities between the community and the other agencies. Improvement in physical and infrastructural services are then the responsibility of the NHA. The BMA handles the social and economic aspects of community improvement.

**Slum Improvement Activities:**

The overall approach in the improvement of slums is to ensure that the slum population can meet their basic
needs such as nutrition, environment, work service access, personal and property security, ability to meet subsistence needs, family planning, participation in social, government and a sound mental development. For achieving these broad goals, the BMA undertakes the following programmes.

(1) The BMA provides medical health centres and mobile health visits to slums. Family planning services are also provided.

(2) The BMA provides compulsory primary education. In addition to this the BMA runs a mobile special schools for slum children who fail to attend the regular schools.

(3) Vocational training is also organised to provide some skills to slum-dwellers. Courses offer training to be mechanics, electricians, welders and other training for building work, plumbing, and dressmaking and beautician is available.

_Private Voluntary Organizations (PVO) or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)_

The poor are the target group of the Private Voluntary Organizations (PVO) or the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) in their work on development. The NGOs or the PVOs are also referred to as Private Developmental Organizations. They work without seeking profits or interests. Among these some of them work on slum as
their mainstay and shoulder responsibility of all aspects of slum development. The rest operate this as their secondary setting and focus on certain developmental aspects, viz., children, family planning, education and culture.

The NGOs undertake the slum activities because of humanitarian reasons. They assist the needy. The roles of these organizations can be classified as follows:

1. Service and Assistance
2. Research and information Dissemination
3. Creating group consciousness
4. Stimulating development activity.

(1) Services and Assistance:

The Non-government Organizations offer services to help solve the immediate problems such as educational funds, free lunches for children, clothings for the underprivileged, and family planning services. These organizations also assist during crisis, i.e., in times of fire, etc.

(2) Research And Information Dissemination:

The organizations undertake research and information dissemination campaigns for the realization of important problems. But there are very few organizations which show
their interest in research studies. However, the propaganda of slum problems and their activities through mass media or in print would help to motivate people to realise the social problems and co-operate in solving these problems.

(3) **Creating Group Consciousness:**

The creation of group consciousness among people is the basic role of these organizations for development.

(4) **Stimulating Developmental Activity:**

Given to their small-scale and flexible characteristics in terms of administration and decision-making, these non-governmental organizations are capable of stimulating people and government agencies for co-operation in their activities.

**The Classification of the Private Developmental Organizations on the Basis of Their Slum Perspectives:**

The private developmental organizations look at the slum problem from different perspectives.

(1) **Humanitarian Perspective:**

According to the humanitarian perspective, slums are seen to have occurred from the deprivation, poverty, lack of opportunities and education as well as laziness and self-helplessness. However, as human beings, there is a
need to assist others, particularly children. The solutions to problems are, therefore, aimed to provide the necessary services, vocational training and the teaching of savings.

(2) **State Welfare Perspective**:

The private development organizations holding the 'State Welfare Perspective' considered slum dwellers to be citizens whom the state should provide welfare for. The government should provide the population to opportunities to participate in the programme and develop slum areas into good areas.

(3) **The Perspective that Slums have the Potentiality for Development**:

According to this perspective, the slums have the inner potentiality. Their potentiality could be enhanced to be more progressive and strengthening by furnishing with certain facilities. The internal development of the slum dwellers will be more effective in solving problems than insisting an aids from outsiders, i.e., from various agencies.

(4) **The Development of Human Potentiality Perspective**:

The last perspective, i.e., the development of human potentiality is generally accepted. The poor slum
dwellers are assisted to develop their capabilities and augment their experiences so that they can stand on their own and finally solve their problems. This is the principle of public participation recognized all over the world.

The above discussions are summarised as follows:

In Thai language "Bangkok" is meant as the "city of Angels". Bangkok is a fast developing city and is well connected in and outside places through rail, road and aviation for the purpose of carrying passengers and goods. It acts as a magnate for Thais from all corners of the country. Bangkok with its huge population, its shopping centres and high rise office buildings and its cosmopolitan sophistication presents itself as a city in the international sense of the term. Though urban way of life is seen introduced in Bangkok and elsewhere in urban areas in Thailand, Buddhism still is at the centre of Thai view of life and its influence is powerful in the city of Bangkok and elsewhere in rural areas. Western influence has been instrumental in introducing and creating a taste for new fashion, new life-styles and new leisure activities.

The population of the fast growing city of Bangkok is increased from six hundred thousand in 1900 to 5.4
millions in 1986. It also spatially expanded from more 13.3 square kms., in 1900 to 220.7 square kms., in 1977 and even after 1977, the outlying residential areas continue to expand to accommodate the flow of migrants coming to Bangkok. The heavy industries are concentrating also at the periphery of the city.

Those who are fortunate live relatively in spacious homes. The Thais largely live in town house projects in which they own the land and buildings but share common wall. The people belonging to the poorer section reside often in the houses made of scrap lumber. These houses lack basic needs of life.

According to a latest survey conducted in 1985 there are 1020 slums and squatter settlements with a population of 1.01 million in the city of Bangkok. The slumming areas outside the administrative boundary of the city were not included in the survey. Had this been included the number of slums and squatter settlements could have been much more. The growth of the slums (86) and their population (85,282) had shown increasing trend since 1940 to 1985.

The major characteristics of the Bangkok's slums are as follows. (1) There are slums and squatter settlements from as few as 15 households upto the 7,390 in
Klong Toey slum as a whole. The average number of households per settlement is 169.3. (2) Nearly about one-third of these settlements are of the age of 15 years or less. The average age of all settlements is 25.3 years. (3) Fifty per cent of the settlements are located within 6.5 kms., radius from the centre of the city of Bangkok. (4) So far as the occupancy of the land is concerned the majority of the slums are located on private land. It is these areas which are considered slums. These slums have a legal tenureship as they pay rent for the land occupied by them. However, the squatter settlements pay no rent and have no legal tenureship. (5) Very few slum areas have been upgraded. In some of the slums community committees are appointed to aid the slum-dwellers to improve themselves in the development process. The illegal status of the squatter settlements deprived the slum-dwellers from extending the benefits of the upgrading programmes.

The failure of the government organizations to protect their land from encroachment and colossal delay in the use of land gave an opportunity to the homeless people to encroach on the land whereas the private landlords were careful in protecting their land from encroachment. Because of these reasons, there are more encroachments on government lands than the private lands.
All the slums and the squatter settlements are classified into seven categories according to their locations. These categories are - (1) old Inner City Slum Areas, (2) New Inner City Slum Areas, (3) City Residential Slum Areas, (4) Scattered slum Areas, (5) Isolated Slum Areas, (6) Ribbon Development Slum Areas, and (7) Industrial Slum Areas. The locational pattern shows that the existence of the slums and the squatter settlements is related to the economic concentration in the city suburbs of Bangkok. These settlements appear in any area in the city where economic activities have been firmly developed. The rise and fall of any slum-settlement is linked to the changes in economic activity in the surrounding area.

With the rapid expansion of Bangkok city the public agencies and the private land-lords have realised about the value of land and its alternative uses either for generating income, financial gains by way of disposing the land or by putting the land to other more fruitful uses. But the eviction of the slums is not the general rule. The centrality, accessibility, land use and land value are the four interrelated locational factors affecting eviction. The eviction pressure is great near the city centre and from the centre, the eviction pressure diminishes towards the periphery.

The eviction brings with it financial loss. It
is a cumulative loss resulting from higher housing expenditures and higher transportation expenditures in the new location, heavy costs of resettlements and loss of income. Besides, eviction also brings with it the loss of social contacts, feeling of humiliation and powerlessness, and further deterioration of housing conditions at the new places. Thus, the eviction process brings with it the economic, social and psychological losses to the evicted families.

The slum-dwellers cannot resist to eviction because they have no right to stay on the public or private land. The private landlords adopt the policy to subdue the resistance to eviction by paying some compensation to the evicted people. There may be resistance to eviction from public land. The affected slum-dwellers may appeal to the government on humanitarian ground either to allow them to stay on the land or give them alternative residential accommodation.

There are government and the private agencies which work for alleviating the urban poverty and improving living conditions of the urban poor by providing better living conditions. The National Housing Authority (NHA) shows a remarkable consistent pattern of great expectations frustrated by lack of resources. The NHA had to cancel its development plans and had to prepare new plans from time to time because of financial constraints. Thus
the NHA could not do much for the urban poor people.

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration has sought the co-operation from NHA in the number of activities centred on improving the conditions of living in the designated slums. The BMA provides medical health centres, mobile health visits, family planning services, primary education, vocational training, etc., to the slum-dwellers.

The NGOs or the PVOS work without seeking profits of interests. They shoulder responsibility of all aspects of slum development. Some among them focus on certain aspects such as children, family planning, education and culture. These organizations look at the slum problem from different perspectives. These perspectives are -

(1) humanitarian perspective, (2) State welfare perspective, (3) the perspective that slums have the potentiality for development and (4) the development of human potentiality perspectives.