CHAPTER IV.

KLONG TOEY SLUM

One of the slum areas of the Klong Toey Slum is selected for the present study. Prior to our study of the selected slum area, it is thought necessary to deal with the emergence and the development of the whole Klong Toey Slum since its inception. This Chapter, therefore, deals with the following aspects of the Klong Toey Slum as a whole.

(I) The spatial Aspects of Klong Toey Slum

(II) Inter-relationship between the Klong Toey Slum and the Bangkok city.

(III) The salient features of the survey of the Klong Toey Slum conducted in 1973.

(IV) The housing and environmental conditions in the Klong Toey Slum in 1973

(V) The housing and environmental conditions in some of the areas in the Klong Toey Slum observed by the researchers of the present study during his survey in 1988-89.

The three variables viz., historical, spatial, and economical are used to study the inter-relationship between the Klong Toey Slum and Bangkok city.

(a) The study of this type facilitates us to gain an insight into the emergence and the development of
slum because of the availability of the employment opportunities with the construction of Klong Toey Harbour. Likewise, the development of the Klong Toey Slum is also related to the changes in Bangkok city. The families from other slum areas in Bangkok resettled themselves in the Klong Toey Slum. The historical variable helps to know the growth of slum.

(b) The spatial variable helps us in understanding the location of slums in the city. The location and relocation of the slums is governed by the increasing land values and desire to profit from this. Slums are pushed towards the underdeveloped areas where land values are low.

(c) The economic variable helps us in showing the connection of the slum through its labour-power and as a client of the consumer goods with the urban economy of Bangkok.

A brief review of the Klong Toey slum existed in 1973 may facilitate us to know the socio-economic life of the slum-dwellers and also their housing conditions and environment. This understanding may further help us in knowing how far the housing situation further has changed in Klong Toey slum during 1988-89.
The three aspects (historical, spatial and economical)\(^1\) are discussed in detail in this chapter as follows:

(I) Spatial Aspect of the Klong Toey Slum:

The whole Klong Toey Slum area at present is bounded in the West and North by the new express-way, connecting Klong Toey with the centre of Bangkok and the Airport Don Muang. In the South and East the harbour area of the Port Authority of Thailand (PAT) is situated. A map of the Klong Toey Slum and its surrounding area giving necessary detail is given here. The map is self-explanatory (Figure 4.1).

In this area some land is occupied by the slums flats of the National Housing Authority (NHA), Police Housing and community facilities such as school, kindergarten. The land is also seen occupied by the Duang Pratheep Foundation which renders its assistance of the slum-dwellers for their welfare.

The rest of the land is vacant a swamp area.

The Klong Toey Slum area is divided in 12 Locks (parts) and Kow Lao. Except for Muban Pattana (Lock 12)

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and Kow Lao, all the Locks are situated along at Narong Road.

The Klong Toey Slum area as Lock No. 9 selected for the study is also shown in the map.

(II) Inter-relationship Between The Klong Toey Slum And the Bangkok City:

Not until the mid-fifties did significant numbers of the people begin to settle in the Klong Toey area. The development of the port in Bangkok began with the movement of people in the Amphoe Klong Toey and building of houses on the swamp land of the Port Authority.

Because of the sand bar at the mouth of the Chao Phraya river no bigger vessels were able to enter the river. In the year 1930, it was decided to dredge the sand bar and build a major port in easy reach of the city. Klong Toey was selected as a cite for new harbour. In 1939, a small harbour was damaged during World War-II. The Port Authority was established in Thailand in 1951. Thai Waters Act was formulated which required all imports, except military cargo and petroleum, to be unloaded through Klong Toey harbour. The land measuring 2,259 rai (904 hectares) were given to the Port Authority.

As per the belief in Thai Society, the surroundings of the harbour were treated as haunted by evil spirits
because a temple formerly located on it was used for cremations and graves of many soldiers died because of bombardments during the war. Still to-day, this area is regarded as dangerous due to these spirits.

The employees of the Port Authority of Thailand were the first settlers in this area. The rapid influx of people in this area took place because of the construction work and the heavy demand for work in the harbour. In the beginning mainly temporary migrants desiring to earn money and return to their natal village came to Klong Toey. Then came the wave of migrants from inside Bangkok and permanent migrants.

In the beginning the migration to Klong Toey was temporary. This is because the migrants wanted to earn some amount of money either for marriages or for something else. They used to return to their villages after earning enough money. Klong Toey for the people became only a temporary destination in Bangkok. Because of this, there was no need for them to build good houses. A small hut was enough for everyone. Later on, they more or less permanently stayed in Klong Toey. Since then Klong Toey has emerged as a slum.

The first slum came into existence on the land close to Fama IV Road and the Railway line. Now a days this place is came to be known as Klong Toey market.
As a result of burning down or eviction of slums within the city for providing space for other buildings, most of the residents of these slum arrived in the Klong Toey slum. These residents also found their way to new areas and new slums came into existence. Because of 1962 Land Use Plan implementation number of evictions took place in Klong Toey. In the year 1963, old slum area was evicted to make the space available for Klong Toey market. The inhabitants were sent back to their home provinces. But later they came back to Klong Toey and other slum areas. Because of this, new slums such as Wat Klong Toey, Toumchay Pattana, Kao Lao and other big slums alongside the railway track and At-narong Road developed leading into the harbour. During the year 1964, slum-dwellers living in slums near the slaughter house were evicted. They were allowed to resettle in the slum along the railway track called Lok 1 to Lok 12. Again in 1966 the people from slum near the mouth of Phrakanong canal were evicted. They were allowed to resettle in Lock 12. As a result of the planning of a wide harbour extension again a slum area was evicted. In this matter, the people organised themselves against the wrecking of the house by the Port Authority. The change in the government in 1973 and the phase of democracy helped the slum-dwellers to bargain a compromise with the Port Authority. Slum families were permitted
to move into newly built high rise flats constructed by the National Housing Authority or more in Lock 12 until enough flats were provided by the National Housing Authority. A new super-highway was built in 1979 which crosses parts of the slum area. Because of this, people again were evicted and were permitted to settle in Lock 12 or into the flats. The National Housing Authority built houses for slum-dwellers at the fringe of Bangkok. A new attempt of eviction of slum-dwellers took place in 1982. The Port Authority had a plan to clear the whole area between the customs fence and the railway line and set up a new container terminal and private godowns there. The Port Authority argued that a new container is necessary for the harbour. An agreement was reached in 1982 to leave parts of the area and resettle families further away from the main road on vacant space.

The construction of the harbour and opening of the opportunities of employment led to the influx of people from outside areas of Bangkok in Klong Toey slum. Because of inadequate housing, the people had to solve their own housing needs individually by erecting houses themselves on the land. In the beginning the Port Authority took a soft stand against the squatters. This is because there was high demand for labour-power during that time in the harbour.
The history of Klong Toey has clearly shown that the eviction did not lead towards finding solution to the slum problem. In turn, eviction gave rise to slums. In Klong Toey several slums have emerged after the eviction of slum families from other slums.

Thus it is seen that the initial emergence of Klong Toey slum is related to the development of the harbour in Bangkok. But the location of slums close to the employment opportunities is not the only reason for the emergence of the Klong Toey slum. The emergence and the development of the Klong Toey slum is also related to the changes in Bangkok. The eviction of slum families from other slums in Bangkok also is the reason for the emergence and growth Klong Toey slum.

(2) The Spatial Variable:

The expalantion of the location of slum is also given by using spatial variable.

It has already been said that slums are located where employment opportunities are available.

Because of rapid urbanization after sixties, Klong Toey became part of Bangkok city. The development of Bangkok for the slum people meant a further moving away into undeveloped land. This means away from the main
road and public utilities. The pattern of land prices explains this trend. Amphoe Klung Toey slum in the beginning was established on swampy land with a low land value. But this land was close to the main road. With the possibility of the use of this land, this slum was evicted and the slum-dwellers built new houses on land further away from the road. Thus spatial variable explains the location of slums in the city. This location and relocation is governed by the possibility of increasing land value and a desire to profit from the same. This results in pushing slums into undeveloped areas.

(3) The Economic Variable:

A slum is not an isolated spot in the city. It is necessarily connected with the urban economy through the inhabitants. Most important in this economic context is the connection between slum and city in terms of labour-power and the consumption of goods from the urban markets in the slum. The occupational distribution of the household heads of the slum area under study as discussed elsewhere in this study show that most of the heads of households are hired workers/labourers in the urban labour market. Some of the household heads are petty traders and vendors in the slum. They buy goods in the urban market sale the same in the slum. The labour-power supplied by the heads of the households of this slum is
integrated into the urban economy. The labour power generates an income which is spent for the purchase of consumer goods on the urban markets. The purchases are directly on the big markets in the surrounding areas or indirectly through various buying goods in the city and selling them in the slums. Thus economic variable invariably connects Klong Toey slum through its labour power and as a client of consumption and other necessities with urban economy.

(III) A Brief Review of the Klong Toey Slum Surveyed in 1973:

(1) Socio-economic Life of the Slum-dwellers:

The nature of the Klong Toey Slum existed in 1973 is given here. On the background of this, it may be interesting to know the present nature of the slum under study. This slum was comprehensively surveyed in 1973 by conducting house to house survey by Tongchut Hongladaram and others of the Asian Institute of Technology jointly by Chira Sakornpan and others of the Thammasat University. This survey was conducted for the National Housing Authority of Thailand. This study has only presented the results based on the data and no attempt has been made to analyse the data to obtain solutions of this complicated problem. This study has mainly tried to focus the socio-economic needs of the Klong Toey Slum-dwellers.
A brief review of the results of the survey conducted in 1973 are given below:

The Klong Toey slum in 1973\(^2\) was a homogeneous community in terms of ethnic and religious background. It has a high degree of conformity in social and educational level, economic status as well as the distributions of sex and ages in the population. However, the study has revealed that though unemployment did not seem to be a problem, the income of the majority of the slum-dwellers were rather low and they could not afford to live in better houses and better environment. The low income was the major obstacle to the education of the children and the good health of the areas population.

The family structure was predominantly that of the nuclear family, consisting of six persons on an average. There were 6,027 households having 37,004 persons registered during the survey.

Birth was not the only factor that contributed to the growth of the Klong Toey. Migrations was another significant contributing factor to the growth of the Klong Toey slum population. The birth rate and the rate of migration combined to form alarming evidence of the

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fast growth of Klong Toey slum.

Klong Toey is not only the largest slum but it is the oldest slum in Bangkok city.

Klong Toey residents were homogenous in their beliefs and languages used. The findings revealed that more than 95 per cent of the population were Buddhist.

On the subject of education, it was observed that most of the population (64.6%) had some formal education whereas 16.0 per cent never attended school. The rest of the 19.4 per cent were too young to go to school. The majority of the residents only reached 4 grade or below level of schooling.

The vast majority of children who were of school age but were not going to school. The main cause of their not attending school was nothing but poverty. Poverty was the major deterrent to school attendance because of cost of clothing, supplies and transportation, and because of the removal of child for the family economy. It was evident that many youngsters were not attending school simply, because their families could not afford to pay for their education. In many cases they dropped out from school to work and earn extra income for their families. There were a large number of children who just simply were wandering around the area doing

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nothing. This was a serious social problem.

Most of the houses were built over swampy ground and they could be reached only via small wooden walkways. There were hardly any open spaces and playgrounds for children. The Klong Toey Slum residents desired for the availability of the facilities such as a school, a medical clinic, a market place and a children's playground.

**Occupations of the Families:**

Most of the heads of the households in Klong Toey were labourers and workers as well as mechanics and craftsmen. A number of the heads of the households were traders, mainly retailers in the slum area. Some of the heads of households were employed by the Port Authority and some of the heads of the households were employed by private enterprises who were working or dealing with the Port Authority. It was observed that majority of the slum residents were working in Klong Toey area and its vicinity.

A small number of the heads of households were unemployed at the time of survey. As the unemployment among the residents of the Klong Toey was low, it was not seemed to be a serious problem. The unemployment was of temporary nature. The major reason of unemployment was that the job they have been employed to do had
been completed since the jobs of these slum residents were predominantly jobs for unskilled labourers who were normally employed on a job to job basis or casual labourers were laid off from their previous employment and are thus 'between jobs'.

(IV) Housing and Environmental Conditions and Public Utilities:

The houses in Klong Toey\(^3\) were mainly constructed of wood collected from wherever it can be obtained cheaply. The houses were cramped and unhealthy. Inspite of this, these houses served those who lived in them as their shelters, as places to eat, to sleep and to enjoy their family lives. The low income people in Klong Toey could afford to own houses since they were not required to pay for the cost of land in the city. Otherwise, the house ownership would have been beyond their imagination.

Most of the families in Klong Toey were owners of houses, and one-fourth of the families were living in rental houses.

The public utilities in Klong Toey were inadequate. Most of the people lived there without tapped water in their houses or nearby. The majority of them had to purchase water in containers. Electricity was available

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at a cheap rate. Some families who were poor to pay the cost of electricity had to resort to oil lamps or candles for lighting.

The following photographs reproduced from the report on 'Klong Toey - 1973' are given below with a view to understand the deteriorating conditions of the houses and their surroundings in the Klong Toey slum.

A variety of building materials were used for house construction. Traditionally the materials most commonly used were wood and bamboo as these materials were available in plenty and cheaper in cost. The modest structures had walls and floors of wooden planks and iron sheets; and roofs of iron sheets or nipa palm branches. The houses were built on the raised platforms above the swampy ground. Wooden walkways were constructed above swampy ground.

The following photograph No.1 shows the typical shabby wooden houses with roofs of rusty corrugated iron-sheets or nipa palm branches, walls of wooden planks and wooden walkways.

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Photograph No. 1
The following photograph No. 2 shows another group of houses with roofs of rusty corrugated iron-sheets, walls and floors of wooden planks and built on raised wooden platforms above the swampy ground. The stagnant dirty water is seen beneath the houses.

Photograph No. 2
Still another group of houses as shown in Photograph No.3 were built using wood and rusty iron sheets. The wooden walkways is seen erected above swampy ground. The housing shown in this photograph gives an ugly and dirty look. The dwellers live in dehumanized conditions.

Photograph No.3

The house shown in Photograph No.4 is a ramshackle house constructed of abandoned lumber and materials around the harbour area. It is constructed on the raised wooden plant-form. The dirty water is seen stored under these houses.
The following photographs No. 5 and 6 show that the residents of Klong Toey slum were accustomed to live with unhealthy and heavily polluted environment. Refuse and human wastes is seen dumped into the swamp (Photograph No. 6). The houses on both the sides of the wooden walkways are substandard houses unfit for human living (Photograph No. 5).
The residents of Klong Toey slum were accustomed to the dirt around their houses. A pig is seen searching food in piles of rubbish beside a row of ugly houses.

Photograph No. 7

(V) The Housing and Environmental Conditions in Some of the Areas in the Klong Toey Slum Observed by the Researcher of the present study during his survey in 1988–89:

Some of the photographs of the present housing conditions in the Klong Toey Slum are taken by the researcher of the present study while surveying the slum in 1988–89. These photographs are displayed below.

The houses are seen constructed along with the sides close to the railway track. These are temporary
and semi-temporary houses. The cheap and freely available substandard housing materials (wood, bamboo, rusty iron sheets, grass, leaves) are used for construction of the houses. The doors are absent or mobile in respect of some of the houses. The trees are seen to have grown around the houses to give cooling effect during hot season. The waste is also seen thrown on the railway track and around the houses. These are not the houses in real sense of the term 'house', but are shelters to sleep and to eat. These are the compromising efforts against the hardships of life.

Photograph No.8
The house shown in the Photograph No. 9 is a single-room multipurpose house. All the household activities right from the dawn to the next dawn are carried out one after the other in this house. A man sitting on the threshold of the house is seen engaged in lighting the woven kept outside the house for cooking food for the family. As the house is Fire-prone, the woven is lighted outside the house and after it is fully lighted the same is taken inside the house for cooking if the space outside the house does not permit to cook food there. Because of the inadequate space inside the house, some of the household belongings are kept outside the house. A child is seen standing behind the man and watching outside. A wooden walkway is constructed in front of the house. A family of five members live in this single room house. This speaks the overcrowding in the house. This small, wooden, fire-prone and substandard house meets only the bare needs of the family.
The back-side view of the row-houses is seen in Photograph No. 10. The houses are entirely of wood and rusty iron sheets are used for roofs. The houses are constructed on the raised plant-forms on the swampy ground. The bushes are seen grown on the swampy ground. The poor people who live hand-to-mouth cannot imagine for modest housing. They are accustomed to live in substandard houses and in dirty environment.

The left hand side house is a shop house. Country-liquor is sold here. Liquor bottles are kept on the tables and in the wooden rack. Cutioned chair and sofa are kept across the table for the customers. The utensils used for cooking food and for serving food are kept in tray. Besides earthen jar is kept filled with water. The customers gather here mostly in the evening for drinking purpose and to relax after the day's hardwork.

Photograph No. 10
The houses shown in the Photograph No. 11 are somewhat better than the earlier houses shown in the Photographs. The houses here are built close to each other. They are built on the ground. The good material is used for house construction. The appearance of the houses here is satisfactory. The bushes are seen grown. The dirty water is also seen stored near the houses.

Photograph No. 11

The house shown in the Photograph No. 12 is still another type of house. It differs from the houses discussed earlier in this chapter. The front
part of the house is wide open with no doors. The roof of the house is of iron sheets supported by the inside wooden walls or the wooden or bamboo poles. At the left hand side a show-case without glass is fixed on the platform constructed by using the bricks, lime or plastered by cement. This show-case is built for keeping the eatables to be sold. The young housewife, well-dressed is modern style, is seen sitting across the table ready for selling the eatables and is inviting the customers for the purchase of the eatables.

Photograph No.12
An overview of the areas of the Klong Toey Slum is shown in Photograph No.13. Mostly double storeyed houses are constructed in this area close to each other along one side of the railway track. Iron sheets are used for roofs. Roofs are supported by wooden walls and bamboo-wooden poles. This is one of the congested housing area of the Klong Toey. This Photograph of crowded housing is self-explanatory and does not need any explanation.

Photograph No.13
To sum up, the inter-relationship between the Klong Toey Slum and the Bangkok city was studied by using three variables, viz., historical, spatial and economical. The more or less close inter-relationship was found between the Klong Toey Slum and the Bangkok city.

The initial emergence of Klong Toey Slum and its further growth was related to the development of the harbour in Bangkok from time to time. In 1939 the small harbour was damaged during the World War-II. The Port Authority was established in 1951 and the work of construction of big Port was entrusted to it. The rapid influx of people in the Port area took place because of the construction work and the heavy demand for work in the harbour. The first slum came into existence on the land close to Rama-IV Road and the railway line. Likewise, as a result of the burning down or eviction of slums within the city for providing space for other buildings most of the residents of these slums arrived in the Klong Toey Slum and they also found their way to new area and new slums come into existence. The Klong Toey Slum began to grow in size from 1962 and this growth further continued.

The implementation of 1962 Land Use Plan, the space required for Klong Toey market in 1963, eviction
of slums near the Slaughter house in 1964 and the mouth of Phra Khanong canal in 1966, building of Super Highway in 1979, setting up of new container Terminal and private godowns in 1982 caused the evictions and re-evictions of the slums in the Klong Toey area. The history of the Klong Toey Slum has clearly shown that the expansion of the developmental activities in the harbour and in the Bangkok city gave rise to slums in the Klong Toey area.

The spatial variable has shown that the location and relocation of slums in Bangkok city is governed by the possibility of increasing land value and a desire to profit from the same. As the demand for land for developmental activities increases the land prices go up and with a view to profit from the land the slum-dwellers are pushed to the place where land value is low. This has exactly happened with the Klong Toey slum in Bangkok. The Klong slum-dwellers are pushed to the undeveloped area where land value was low.

The economic variable inerriably connects Klong Toey slum through its labour power and as a client of consumption and other necessities with urban economy and also through the petty traders and vendors who buy the goods in the city market and sale the same in the Klong Toey slum, in the Port area and in their vicinity.
The Klong Toey slum in 1973 was a homogeneous community in terms of ethnic and religious background and in their beliefs and language used. It had a high degree of conformity in social and educational level, economic status and the distributions of sex and age in the population. The family structure was predominantly that of the nuclear family. The birth rate and the migration have contributed to the alarming fast growth of this slum. The most of the population had some formal education. The vast majority of the children who were school going age were not going to school. The main cause of their not attending the school was nothing but poverty. They were employed by their families to earn some income for their families.

So far as occupational pattern is concerned most of the heads of the families of this slum were labourers and workers as well as mechanics, craftsmen and traders. A small number of family heads were unemployed and were 'between jobs'.

The survey conducted in 1973 had reported that variety of building materials were used for house constructions. The traditional materials such as wood, bamboo and nipa palm branches which were easily available in plenty were used for house construction. The modest structure had walls and floors of wooden planks and iron
sheets and roofs of iron sheets. Some of the houses were built on the raised platforms above swampy ground. The wooden walkways were constructed on the poles to have an access to these houses.

The photographs given in this Chapter give an evidence of the deteriorating housing conditions and unhealthy and unhygienic environment. The houses were ugly and dirty in look. The dwellers were living in the dehumanized conditions. The residents of this slum were accustomed to the dirt around their houses. They were not disposing off the rubbish from time to time.

The researcher of this study has surveyed the Klong Toey slum area and took photographs of some of the houses in 1988-89. The housing conditions continue to deteriorate. The environment around these houses is unhealth and unhygienic.

Inspite of the adverse housing conditions and bad environment, the people continue to live in the slum. This seems to be an adjustment to the pathological situation. The people get themselves accustomed to the adverse conditions as they find themselves helpless in all respects.