CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Bangkok metropolis is a primate city. It is the Centre of Thailand's administrative system, education, trade, banking and the seat of major industries. The rapid population growth, primarily and mainly as a result of migrants looking for work in industrial sectors, has posed serious problems for the metropolis. "These includes problems of congestion and of inefficient and disorderly land use pattern due to the lack of proper city planning. The congested and traffic-jammed city of Bangkok has to face many other related problems resulting from environmental pollution, floods, inadequate public utilities and social services, a shortage of housing supply and expanding shanty towns."

The housing problem is primarily a question of building enough dwellings for the new-comers who keep flowing into the city. This problem has nowhere been solved and the number of slum areas and their populations have been increasing over time. According to the estimate by the school of Urban Community Research and Actions,² there are 1020 slums and squatter settlements in Bangkok with more

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than 1.01 million (1,011,483 persons) people living in them.

There are some of the important studies of the slums in Bangkok. They cover various aspects on social work.\(^3\) Still others deal with sociological and anthropological aspects.\(^4\) The National Housing Authority conducted surveys in slum areas during 1978-80 preparatory to implementing the Four Year (1979-82) Accelerated Plan for slum Improvement.\(^5\) The City Planning Division of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration conducted surveys of the slums in peri-urban areas of Bangkok during 1979-80 and the densely settled areas along the canals in 1980.\(^6\) The Bureau of

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(3) Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University, 1971: Klong Toey: A Social Work of a Squalter Slum, Bangkok In Thai.

1977: Bangkok Slum: Organization and Needs, Bangkok Thai Khadi Research Institute, Thammasat University, Monograph.  

A Detail of 108 slums in Bangkok, Monograph.  

(6) City Planning Division, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Reports of the Surveys of the Slums in Peri-Urban Areas of Bangkok, 1976-80, 21 Vols., Monograph in Thai.
Policy and Planning of the Bangkok Metropolitan conducted a survey in 1979 of 125 congested communities in the Bangkok. The present study differs from some of the above studies in that it mainly deals with the sociological aspects of slum life in Bangkok city.

The slums in urban life has drawn the attention of social scientists, administrators, policy makers and planners. Slum has been studied from different angles.

The data gathered from various developed and developing countries of the world suggest that urbanization is and will be growing apace in this and next century. Urbanization and slum are twin processes. The pace of urbanization is faster in the West. Slums continue to appear with the increasing pace of urbanization. The consistent and comprehensive details of slums are not available in plenty because of the pervasiveness and rampant nature of slum. It has been maintained that slum is a consequence of poverty and socio-economic backwardness.

Whatever may be the factors responsible for the genesis of slum, it is a fact of the social system in urban centres everywhere. Thus the slum is a world-wide urban phenomenon. Its a rash on city landscape, a blot on civilization. Slum is characterized by over crowding.


filth, substandard housing, drinking, vice, violence. The evil aspects are not confined always to the slums. A positive attitude is to recognize the slum as a 'component of city evolution', an 'element' of urban complex, as a transitional settlement at the low level of survival, and to appreciate the contribution of the slum-dwellers to the city's low-wage labour force and its gross product. The slum represents both physical and human adjustment to poverty, and in developing countries, depicts, subsistence urbanization.

The urban malaise of shelterlessness and man's efforts to solve it in the most adverse circumstances of poverty and illiteracy are seen in its most concrete form in slum. The problem of slum has to be viewed from high degree of urban congestion and has to be accepted as a living reality, an inevitable phenomenon accompanying urban growth. The present study intends to investigate slum life in Bangkok metropolis. The details of the objectives of the study are as follows.

Objectives of the Study:

The present study intends to undertake an indepth study of the life of slum-dwellers of Bangkok metropolis in Thailand in that it will focus its attention on different facts of slum life in Bangkok and in the slum under study. The physical, environmental, familial, social, economic, etc. aspects of slum life under study will be dealt with.

The broad details of some of the selected aspects of the present study are as follows:-
(1) The Salient Features of Thailand:

(2) The Profile of Slums in Bangkok:

i) The growth of the city of Bangkok

ii) The major characteristics of the slums in Bangkok

iii) The causes and effects of slum eviction

iv) The plight of the evicted

v) Resistance to eviction

vi) The role of the institutions in urban poverty alleviation in Thailand.

(3) Klong Toey Slum:

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

iv) The housing and environmental conditions in Klong Toey Slum in 1973

v) The housing and environmental conditions in Klong Toey Slum in 1988.

(4) The Klong Toey Slum Area (Lok No.9) under Study:

i) The housing conditions and environment

ii) Education, health and sanitation

iii) Public utilities and facilities

iv) The Community problem and the way out,
(5) **Family, Marriage and Community Life**:

a) **Family**:

   i) The definition of family
   
   ii) The family size and type
   
   iii) The educational achievements
   
   iv) Inter-generational educational mobility
   
   v) Status positions of individuals in the family
   
   vi) Division of labour in the family
   
   vii) Household possessions

b) **Marriage**:

   i) Criteria used for mate selection
   
   ii) Age at marriage
   
   iii) Family planning

c) **Community Life**:

   i) Social network and social organizations

(6) **Economic Life**:

   i) The occupational structure
   
   ii) The occupational mobility
   
   iii) Income and earning members
   
   iv) Strategies of survival
   
   v) Household expenditure
   
   vi) Rural-Urban origin
   
   vii) Migration
viii) Social differentiation
ix) The productive slum

The details of the objectives are as follows:

The brief account of the salient features of Thailand as a country wherein the present study is conducted will be given to provide a background knowledge of Thailand and its society. The salient features studied will include Thailand's geographical features, its political organization, its population, its natural and other resources, its infrastructural facilities and its society.

In order to understand the framework in which slums exists in Bangkok metropolis, it is felt necessary to consider some general characteristics of Bangkok metropolis. Slums exist in the city not in vaccum, nor they are isolated part in the city, but they are treated as an integral part of the city in the sense that they share in the city's economy. This means they have certain relations with the city of which they are parts. With this in view, this study will deal with the growth of Bangkok city (Thailand) and the profile of slums in Bangkok. The growth of Bangkok in terms of the growth of population, the geographical spread, location of various institutions, industries and housing, etc., will be dealt with. The profile of slums will deal with – (1) the growth of the slums and their population, (2) the characteristics of the slums, (3) the
legal status of the slums, (4) upgradation of squatter settlements, (5) classification of slums according to their locations, (6) the formation, development and decay of slums, (7) causes and effects of slum eviction, (8) land ownership and eviction, (9) the plight of the evicted, (10) resistance to eviction, (11) the role of the voluntary organizations in urban poverty alleviation in Thailand.

The whole Klong Toey slum is the biggest slum in Bangkok. It has been suitable divided into 13 areas. First 12 areas are known as Loks 1, 2, 3 .... and so on. The thirteenth area is known as Kow Lao. Of these areas, one area is selected for the present study. Prior to our understanding of the selected slum area, it is felt necessary to deal with the emergence and the development of the whole Klong Toey slum since its inception. The study of the Klong Toey slum will deal with (1) Spatial aspects of Klong Toey slum, (2) inter-relationship between Klong Toey slum and Bangkok city, (3) the salient features of Klong Toey slum, (4) the housing and the environmental conditions in 1973 and at present time.

The above aspects of the study of the Klong Toey slum will help us in gaining an insight into the emergence and development of this slum, its relations/connection to the changes in Bangkok city, socio-economic life of the slum-
dwellers and their housing conditions. As the slum area selected for the study is a part of the whole Klong Toey slum, for good understanding of the part, the understanding of the whole is thought meaningful.

Further the following aspects of the Klong Toey Slum area (Lok No.9) selected for the present study will be dealt with.

These aspects are - (1) the housing conditions and environment, (2) education, health and sanitation, (3) public utilities and facilities, and the community problems.

The objectives behind the study of the housing conditions and environment and the facilities and utilities provided is to understand the quality of living conditions of the slum-dwellers. The efforts are made on the governmental and non-governmental levels to improve the physical conditions and thereby the socio-cultural life of the slum-dwellers as well. The objective conditions may speak how far this has been done. The good community is that which is free from social problems. With this in view, the community life in brief will be studied.

The family is the basic unit of society. The examination of this basic unit may facilitate us to understand the family life of the slum-dwellers. The topic treated here will include the study of definitions of family for
selecting appropriate definition for the present study, typology of families, family size, age composition of respondents, inter-generational educational mobility, status position of individuals in the family, division of labour in the family and household possessions.

The section on marriage will deal with the marriage system in that it will deal with mate selection, criteria used for mate selection, age at marriage and the stability of marriage. This discussion may be useful in understanding the marriage system prevailing in the slum.

The section on family planning will deal with the adoption of family planning, family planning methods adopted, reasons for not adopting family planning measures and the sources of family planning knowledge. This is to understand how far the respondents are conscious about the size of their families or small family norm.

The topic on community life will discuss the social network (social relations) and social organization in the slum. This may facilitate us to understand how far the community life is organized in the slum.

This study will deal with the economic life of the slum-dwellers under study. The economic aspects include occupations pursued by the respondents, their occupational background for understanding inter-generational occupational mobility, income of slum households/families and earning
members in the households, expenditure pattern, the strategies adopted for survival, rural-urban origin and migration, the reasons of migration and the social differentiation.

The occupations followed by the respondent may show the nature of the occupations pursued by the respondents in the sense whether the occupations are of manual or non-manual type. The manual nature of occupations generally indicate low income and low status of those who follow them. The occupational background of the respondents will highlight whether there is movement from manual to non-manual work or continuity in the type of work pursued by the respondents fathers and the respondents. This is to understand the inter-generational occupational mobility. The income pattern will be discussed with a view to understand the levels of income earned by the households. For securing sustenance, the slum households may follow the strategies of survival and may engage in different income generating activities or specialize in the same occupations. This is an interesting aspect of the study. It will focus on the type of strategy followed by the slum households for the livelihood. The expenditure pattern of the households will be discussed to know only the items on which the households spend in order of priority. This is to understand whether the households spend more on basic needs or otherwise. The rural-urban origin of the respondents
is studied to understand whether the urban origin places them comparatively in a better position than those with the rural origin. The migration pattern is studied to understand whether the migration to Bangkok is from within the region or from outside the regions. The basis and the purpose of the migration are also studied. This is to understand which factor actualizes the migration process. The respondents' perception of social prestige of the slum occupations is also studied with a view to know the basis of perception.

**Hypotheses:**

The following hypotheses are developed with a view to test them in this study.

(1) The occupational structure of the slum may be closely inter-related with the economic opportunities that the city provides.

(2) The persons with urban origin may be in a better position comparatively than those with rural origin.

(3) Migration may not actualize mainly because of perceived economic advantages but with support network of kin acquaintances.

(4) The earlier migrants who succeeded in getting regular employment in the city acted as the stimuli to
movements to towns and cities.

(5) The social evils such as prostitution, delinquency, alcoholism may thrive in slum areas where there is a high floating population and where the settled community life is minimal.

Research Methodology:
(a) Selection of Slum:

There are two types of slums in Bangkok city, viz., slums and squatter settlements (slums). Slums are treated as legal because they exist on rent basis. The squatter settlements (slums) are located illegally on the land of others without the prior permission of the land owners. The illegal status of the squatter settlements deprived the slum-dwellers from extending the benefits of the upgrading programmes of the Thai government. The outside organizations also do not wish to involve themselves in upgrading those settlements because if these settlements are evicted they fear that their efforts of the development may go in vain. The squatter settlements are slums. But because of their illegal occupancy of the others land, they are treated separately as squatter settlements. The squatter settlements means the settlements which occupy the land of others unauthorized. The squatter settlement will be referred to as slum for the purpose of this study.
The slum-dwellers of the squatter settlements are put to threat of constant eviction. This is a threat to their life and belongings. It was thought that it would be better to gain an insight into the life of the slum-dwellers of the squatter settlements - who are subjected to unstable life.

As a case study, Klong Toey slums as the squatters' settlement is selected for the present study.

Klong Toey is a big slum and is divided into 12 Loks (areas) and K.Lao. Of these areas one Lok is selected for the study. This Lok is No.9, will be studied as a case study.

Method of Selection of Sample Families:

From this Lok of Klong Toey slum, 50.0 per cent of the families are selected using random sampling method. Thus 200 families are selected.

The occupational distribution of 200 sample families are given in Table No. 1.1.
### TABLE No. 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Principal Occupations</th>
<th>Number of Families Selected</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Civil Servants</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Traders</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mechanics, Artisans and Professionals</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Transport and Communication</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Tool of data collection)*

The Family Schedule:

The survey method is used for the collection of data from the families. A family schedule was convassed among the respondents to seek information about their families on all the chosen aspects as given earlier in the objectives of this study. Besides this, the researcher while moving into the slum and collecting information from the families has also noted down the observations and reactions of the slum-dwellers on the matter pertaining
to the subject matter of the study.

The response of the heads of the families i.e.,
the respondents to my study, as I being the stranger to
them, was not initially responsive. But my frequent visits
to them for explaining the purpose of my study and my
establishment of rapport with some of the knowledgeable
persons in the slum facilitated me to collect information
and observed them from a close angle
thereafter the overall response of the slum-
dwellers was encouraging and satisfactory.

The Lay-Out of the Thesis:

My thesis is suitably divided into seven chapters,
and the last Chapter-VIII summarizes the discussions on
the study. These chapters are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Chapter Number</th>
<th>Title of the Chapter</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>The Salient Features of Thailand</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>The Profile of Slums in Bangkok</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>The Klong Toey Slum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>The Klong Toey Slum Lok No.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>The Family, Marriage and Community Life</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>The Economic Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Secondary Data:

The secondary data required for the study was collected from the Census Reports, Journals, Books and from the agencies and the organizations directly or indirectly working for slums improvement, housing and other developmental work.

Significance of the Study:

Although the slum has come to be regarded as a major problem of urbanization, poverty and illiteracy, there have been only a very few full-length studies of slums in Thailand which give both insights into them as well as a general picture of slum life. This study is an attempt to fill this gap.

Relevance of the Study to the Present Day Needs:

The sprawling slum condition in the third world have raised many questions. What would be the pattern of socio-cultural living in slums? Under the impact of the 'revolution of rising expectations', how are the ever-growing slum-dwellers attempting to satisfy their aspirations? How are they struggling to build up an institutional and associational complex which would make their living worthwhile. The acute struggle to share the extremely meagre amenities available to them is causing many tensions.
What would be the impact of sub-human conditions in the slums and what would be the way out. The study would try to answer some of these questions. The study, it is hoped, will be useful to the scholars, urban planning authorities, voluntary organizations/institutions in particular and the students and readers in general.