Inner City Issues

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Inner City - A general term for impoverished areas of large cities. The inner city is characterized by minimal educational opportunities, high unemployment and crime rates, broken families, and inadequate housing.

In the 19th century, it was the center for industry in cities with rows of terraced housing for low-paid workers. In the 20th century the factories closed and relocated & the inner city declined and decayed.

There are many issues that the inner city faces:

- There was no distribution of such utilities as gas and water.
- People lived in slum dwellings.
- Direct sunlight was seldom available.
- Open spaces were nonexistent.
- Disease was pervasive.
- Mortality rates ran high.
- Crime
- Traffic
- Unemployment
Inner-city faces a growing gap between the cost of needed service and availability of funds to pay for them. Due to this cities have two choices:

- Reduce services by closing libraries, eliminating some public transportation, collecting trash less frequently and delaying replacements of outdated school equipment.
- Raise tax revenue.
- The luxury hotels, shops, restaurants, and offices all still provide minimum wage work for inner-city residents.

Terms and Issues

**Slum**, according to UN-HABITAT is a run-down area of a city characterized by substandard housing and squalor and lacking in tenure security.

**Urban Renewal**, in response to the problems associated with the decline of the inner city, urban renewal and redevelopment began in the 1960s with many areas in the UK’s inner cities being cleared. In their place, multi-storey tower blocks were built. Unfortunately these flats were not as successful as they were designed to be. Despite the better access to modern facilities such as running water and indoor bathrooms, which had been absent in many of the old terraced houses which had been demolished, further social problems were created.

**Disease** is very prominent when inner cities emerge. In London this was the case. The outbreak of cholera was due to unsanitary living conditions in the inner city and the pollution of the drinking water.

**Traffic** is a large problem due to roads being often narrow and thus they cannot cope with increased traffic due to the number of commuters travelling daily to the CBD. This leads to congestion and gridlock, causing the CO2 levels to increase as exhaust fumes choke the air thus causing environmental problems to also occur.
**Unemployment** (caused by the centrifugal movements of companies) - High land values close to the city center force companies to relocate on the edge of city sites. Low skilled workers in the inner city face unemployment, as companies on the edge of cities require higher-skilled workers.

**Immigrants settle in areas of poor quality housing (shantytowns),** leading to lower than average educational standards in poorly staffed schools. This in turn leads to mainly unskilled jobs creating a general lower than average income and a high dependency on social security.

**Crime** is very high in inner cities due unemployment and the rates increase with muggings, drug-related incidents and robberies.