



Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

—Margaret Mead

SHEHRI

October - December 1998 Vol. 8/No. 4

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Towards a Metropolitan Police System in Karachi

The 'Gun Free Society' campaign, jointly launched by Shehri-CBE, CPLC and HRCF seems to have had a trigger effect. Efforts to de-weaponise the city and putting in place a 'Metropolitan Police System', in Karachi are taking concrete shape. This initiative can only succeed with the active involvement and participation of the civil society, and the putting in place of a strong metropolitan government

Learning from the Colombian Experience

In the last week of October, 1998, the Government of Pakistan decided to embark upon a package of reforms to improve the security climate and living conditions in Karachi. The government started by imposing *Governors Rule* in the Province of Sindh. In a meeting called to discuss the law and order situation, which was presided over by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, it was decided to seek assistance from international organizations, as well as



Can the metropolitan police extinguish the raging fire in Karachi?

from friendly countries, having experience in facing similar law and order situations. The task to seek and co-ordinate such assistance was entrusted to the Governor of Sindh, who is the constitutional head of the province and of the Citizens - Police Liaison Committee (CPLC).

In pursuance of these decisions the CPLC approached the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP), seeking their guidance in the matter. The Governor of Sindh, Mr. Moinuddin Haider had previously discussed with the Chief of the UNDP Governance Unit, the relevance of the learning experiences accumulated with regard to peace processes, organized crime fighting and citizen security in the Republic of Colombia.

Consequently, a mission comprising of Dr. Dario Barbarena, Co-ordinator, Office of the High Commission for Peace, Presidency of the Republic of Colombia (Ex-Director, Plan for National Rehabilitation and ex-Secretary of Popular Integration, Presidency of the Republic), Mr. Edger Suarez, Advisor, Office of the High Commission for Peace, Presidency of the Republic of Colombia (Ex-Chief of Police) and Dr. Paul Oquist, Chief of Governance Unit, UNDP / Pakistan arrived in Karachi on the 23rd of November 1998.

Salient features of the proposed KMPD

KMPD shall be headed by an Inspector General of Police (IGP).

KMPD Chief shall be responsible to a Public Safety Commission comprising the following:

- a. Chief Minister or his nominee to be the Chairman.
- b. One MPA from the Treasury to be nominated by Leader of the House.
- c. One MPA from opposition to be nominated by Leader of the Opposition.
- d. Five members from amongst eminent professionals to be nominated by the Governor.
- e. CPLC Chief as ex-officio member.

The Commission itself as a body would be under the guidance and control of the Chief Minister (Provincial Govt). The Chief Minister or his nominee has been proposed to head the Commission. The commission is expected to place its annual performance before the Provin-

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Interested contributors should contact the SHEHRI office for writers guidelines. SHEHRI newsletter readership is from students, professionals, environmentalists, policy makers, NGOs and other organizations.

Views expressed herein do not necessarily express the views of the Editor/Editorial Board.

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EDITORIAL**Death of an Institution**

To say that the murder of Hakim Said has deprived the nation of a great benefactor and 'Hamdard'

(well wisher) is to state the obvious. In actual fact, in his death, the nation has lost an institution.

For amidst the crumbling institutional framework of the state, they are individuals like Hakim Said, Maulana Edhi, Akhtar Hameed Khan and Dr. Adeb-ul-Hasan Rizvi, to name a few, who are filling to some extent this administrative gap.



This is unfortunate, for the beginnings were very promising. It is a historical fact that our country was born on the 27th of Ramazan, based on the ideology of Islam—a religion whose early followers were the primary builders of many institutions of the state which now form integral pillars of modern age's administrative structures. Hakim Sahib was one such person who knew the importance of institution building. He was first and foremost a man of action, who had the capacity (for which he was ever thankful to God Almighty) of translating his dreams and visions into concrete reality. He possessed numerous valued facets to his impressive personality. Provision of health services and quality education for his fellow countrymen were his priorities, which he pursued with great vigor. But for many, his supreme lasting legacy was that he devoted much of his time towards caring for the most neglected segment of our society - our children.

In any civilized society, children are considered VVIP's and are looked after in a manner commensurate with their exalted status in society. Reasons are obvious. They are quite simply, the nations future. Hakim Sahib cared for children from the bottom of his heart

and always found the time to write for them.

It is often said that producing literature for children is the most difficult of literary assignment. Hakim Sahib achieved this objective with such ease and facility that young minds instantly related with and learnt from his educative and character building writings. He wanted to develop a model Pakistani, aware and respectful of his/her religious and eastern values and capable of

blending them with the requirements of the present age. Of late, he had moved from character building to putting in place modern, state of the art educational services for the youth of the country.

Now that Hakim Sahib is no more amongst us, who will further this legacy. Do we, as common citizens comprehend that this most precious of resources is going to waste. Or is the state even aware of its awesome responsibility of nurturing and developing the 'Pakistani Child'?

On the untimely death of his adopted son, Zain-ul-Abden Khan Arif, Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib wrote a moving and poignant elegy, worth its weight in gold (as is the case with all of Ghalib's work). A couplet from that elegy goes a long way in illustrating our profound grief. □

جاتے ہوئے کہتے ہو قیامت کو ملیں گے

کیا خوب قیامت کا ہے گویا کوئی دن اور



The main objective of the mission was to prepare recommendations for the Karachi Peace Process based on international learning experiences, from the perspectives of national actors and stakeholders. Following field work and preparation of preliminary report in Karachi, the final report was to be compiled in Colombia by the 21st of December, 1998.

On the 25th of November, 1998, the Colombian mission was introduced to the press and noted citizen organizations and agencies in a local hotel by Mr Jameel Yusuf, Chief of CPLC. Shehri-CBE was among the selected group of invitees.

Dr. Dario Barbarena in response to several questions put to the Colombian experts, gave a briefing on this occasion about the aims and objectives of their mission. He gave an insight into their work in Colombia. He said that Bogota, the capital city of Colombia is inhabited by about 9 million people, out of which 60% live in illegal settlements. When they started their work in Bogota, their aim was to enforce the rule of law by ensuring justice and equality. In Colombia the national police is controlled by the military. Dr. Barbarena said that they were trying to push for a 'Metropolitan Police System'. He informed that presently municipalities are financing the policing system in certain areas, which he termed as "the first step towards Metropolitan Policing", which is people friendly and responsive to their

needs and concerns.

Tracing the history of the crisis, he said that once policemen and school teachers were symbols of public respect. However, from the 50's, onwards the police became politicised as it was used by successive political governments to suppress the opposition. This practice continued till the imposition of martial law. In addition, other problems emerged which further aggravated the situation. These included political violence, guerrilla

warfare, drug mafia and social violence.

Presently, there is social inequality in the system, as European influenced sections dominate while the blacks and the Indians are the marginalized and victimised sections of society. Most of them find refuge in cultural activities. Dr. Barbarena informed that about 6 years ago the annual homicide rate in Bogota was about 9000, out of which, it was found that 10% related to guerilla movement activities, 10% due to infightings among drug cartels and 80% were common crimes. Due to the efforts of the High Commission for Peace, aided by the civil society, the rate was last year brought down to 2800.

In the de-weaponisation programme and in the efforts to reduce corruption levels, the active involvement of the civil society was the prime facilitating factor. The city of Bogota has been

divided into 20 sub divisions to further decentralize and enhance the community development and participation process.

An interesting fact was highlighted by Dr. Barbarena, when he said that even business groups have contributed in the process of rehabilitation. In the Kali area, business groups have worked for the rehabilitation of 'Aqueous Blancos', a tough neighbourhood inhabited by the marginalised sectors of the Colombian society.

Dr. Dario Barbarena identified various new initiatives taken in Colombia. He said that their *Witness Protection Programme* has proven very successful, as has the programme of '*Judges Without Faces*'. The experiment of introducing *Local Courts* has also yielded positive results.

Dr. Barbarena laid great stress on the positive role played by the NGO's in this regard. He said that in 1992 a new constitution was passed due to NGO pressure. In the municipal elections a '*vote for peace*', in Colombia was taken owing to pressure from NGO's. He informed that now NGO's can execute about 10% to 15% of the municipal budget.

He cited a particular case when the death of a girl in a police station resulted in the formation of a '*Commission*', to put forward recommendations for police reforms. Businessmen, academics, NGO's and lawyers were represented on the commission. A law was formulated as a result of the findings of the commission in which specific kinds of police malpractices were identified. It was decided that only a high school graduate could become a policeman.

Also, an '*Adult Education Programme*', was initiated for



existing staff. In Colombia there is necessary military service. Option was provided to undertake police service as an alternative to military service. This policy attracted a lot of youth towards police from good backgrounds. Salary levels of policemen were also increased.

Dr. Dario also lauded the role played by academic institutions. He said universities have been involved to educate police towards their role in the society. This police staff was required to go to universities for training and education. A 'School for Police Training', has also

been opened.

Dr. Dario said that "Alliance Against Crime" the present peace movement in Colombia has posed two questions to all sectors of Colombian society.

1. How can each sector of society contribute to the peace process.
2. Where do they see themselves and Colombia, thirty years down the road.

Dr. Edgar Saurez also briefly spoke on the modalities of the implementation of the ongoing peace programme. The Colombia experts

said that in Karachi also, the rehabilitation of the public institutions should be spearheaded by civil society, which is a learning and evolving process.

Mr. Jameel Yusuf stressed the importance of communities and citizen organizations and said that the process of de-weaponization constitutes only a short term policy in the overall drive for peace in Karachi. He mentioned the viability of the Japanese model for Karachi and stressed the urgent need of putting in place a metropolitan police system in Karachi.

Salient features of the proposed KMPD (Cont.)

cial Assembly for its evaluation and future guidance. The responsibilities of maintenance of law and order will continue to rest with the Provincial Government.

The proposed system provides for a single control system of the Provincial Govt. through the *Public Safety Commission*. Members will not act as individuals and will only act as a unified body.

- The screening of corrupt and inefficient members of Police is a requirement of any system. Better mechanism will be provided by the Metropolitan Public Safety Commission.
- Checks and balances have been proposed at all levels through a linear chain of command.
- The Office of the Chief KMPD will provide the Secretariat of Public Safety Commission. The Commission will have the same linkages with the Provincial Govt. as other commissions (e.g. Public Service Commission).
- The *Metropolitan Police Act* envisages the creation of an inde-

pendent prosecution service.

- The proposed Metropolitan Act lays down responsibilities and powers of the police officers to deal with the unlawful assemblies and processions. Necessary amendments in CrPC have been proposed.
- The proposed system gives only such Magisterial powers to the police officers of KMPD which are necessary to deal with unlawful assemblies and agitation. The remaining Magisterial powers of the District Magistrate shall rest with the competent courts.
- KMPD in co-ordination with the Relief Commissioner will provide help and relief.
- Separation of judiciary from the executive is an internationally accepted principle. This has also been incorporated in the Constitution. The implementation of this principle has not resulted in the breakdown of Administration in any country. Metropolitan system of policing is functioning successfully in many countries.



Jameel Yusuf of CPLC:
Fighting against heavy odds

- Any system of policing has to be supported by an efficient, responsive and independent (not subordinate) judiciary for efficient administration of criminal justice system.
- Necessary rules relating to horizontal mobilities shall be framed by the Public Safety Commission in consultation with the IGP Sindh.

The system may be implemented as per following plan:

Phase-I

1. Promulgation of Karachi



- Metropolitan Police Act/
Ordinance.
2. Formation of Karachi Metropolitan Public Safety Commission.
 3. Selection/designation of KMPD Chief.
 4. Establish Secretariat of the Commission in the KMPD Headquarters.
 5. Fine tune the relevant laws and the proposed amendments in Cr. P.C. Evidence Act, Traffic Laws.
 6. Organise functional/branches of KMPD i.e. CID, Administration, Special Branch, Central Reserves etc.
 7. Apportion assets and liabilities between KMPD and the remaining Sindh Police.
 8. Re-organizing operational units i.e. Police Stations/Police Division.
 9. Work out the manpower

- required for various units and distribute existing human/physical resources.
10. Impart the training of behavioural and attitude changes.

Phase-II:

1. Take measures to weed out corrupt and inefficient elements on war footings.
2. Revamp the police by:
 - i) Procuring operational vehicles.
 - ii) Procuring Communication and Computer equipment.
 - iii) Procuring Forensic Science Laboratory equipment.
 - iv) Procuring Anti-Riots equipment, Arms and Ammunition.
3. Recruiting against existing vacancies as per policy framed by the Karachi Metropolitan Public Safety Commission.

4. Take steps to rectify Officers-Subordinate ratio.
5. Upgrade and equip training schools to impart training on modern lines.
6. Computer Networking.
7. Develop Data Bank relating to all subjects.
8. Establishment of Forensic Lab for KMPD.

Phase-III

1. Restructuring judiciary for speedy dispensation of justice.
2. Recorganize/reform prisons system. □

(Note: The salient features of the KMPD have been extracted from the publicised "Proposed Metropolitan Police Setup", in daily DAWN, October 21, 1998, and can be subject to change - Ed)

Congratulations!



Dr. Rene Klaff, formerly the Country Representative of Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) in Pakistan has now joined the United Nations of Germany, as its General Secretary. During his stay in Pakistan, Shehri-CBE as a local partner of FNF, gained much from his experience and insight in mobilizing individual and collective efforts for the benefit of the civil society as a whole. The strong and mutually beneficial partnership which has been fostered over the years between FNF and Shehri owes much to the efforts and initiatives of Dr. Klaff. Shehri management/staff and members extend their hearty felicitations to Dr. Rene Klaff on the assumption of the important office of General Secretary of the United Nations of Germany and wish him all the success in his future pursuits. □



SHEHRI ACTIVITIES

Seminar on the 'Transportation Sector' in Karachi

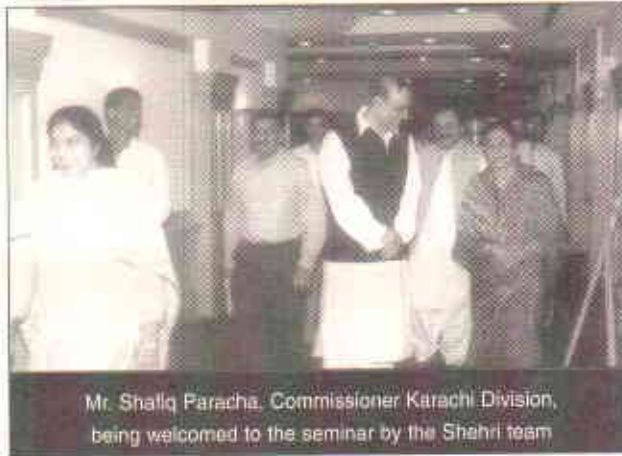
A seminar on the 'Transportation Sector' in Karachi was held by Shehri-CBE in collaboration with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation on the 14th of November 1998, at Hotel Marriott, Karachi.

The focus of the seminar was on the public transport system in Karachi, (being run by the private sector!). The concept of the seminar was to discuss among other things, the setting in place of a rational fare structure, acceptable to the general public, transporters and the government agencies managing the transport system in Karachi.

It was also asked of the transporters to come up with such a fare structure, which would not be a burden on the public and at the same time ensure that the public received a high standard of service. For this purpose a detailed questionnaire was also circulated among the transporters prior to the seminar. The concept for this seminar was prepared by Mr. Navaid Husain, a member of the Managing Committee of Shehri-CBE.

On the seminar day Ms. Amber Ali Bhai and Mr. Farhan Anwar, acting as joint seminar moderators highlighted the aims and objectives of the seminar.

Mr. Shafiq Paracha, Commissioner, Karachi Division, said that the transportation sector in Karachi was faced with many problems. Traffic jams on roads meant lost productivity in time and money, which was a national loss. Overcrowding in buses and coaches was another issue. Mr. Paracha also blamed the public for their



Mr. Shafiq Paracha, Commissioner Karachi Division, being welcomed to the seminar by the Shehri team

apathy and failure to stand up and demand what was for the common good of all the citizens.

He praised the role of Shehri, which he said was an organization working to remove the apathy among the public and making them aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Mr. Masood Iqbal Qureshi, Secretary, Regional Transport Authority, said that research has shown that the common man, at an average spends 10% of his monthly income on transportation related expenses. As such, he felt that any increase in fares would result in public anger and disapproval. He said that the government was trying to improve the conditions of public transport. In this regard, he cited the decision to have proper partitioned seating for ladies in buses.

Mr. Malik Zaheer-ul-Islam, Director General Traffic Engineering Bureau (TEB), informed the participants that there were 10 lac registered vehicles in Karachi out of which 82.3% were private cars and vehicles, which showed that public transport was not an attractive option in Karachi.

Mr. Islam said that in 1971 a 'Free Transport Policy' was introduced in Karachi whereby anyone could bring buses/mini buses on the road. Presently there were 110 classified bus routes out of which



(L-R) Mr. Masood Iqbal Qureshi, Mr. Malik Zaheer-ul-Islam, Mr. Irshad Bukhari and Mr. Tehmas Malik



buses were plying only on 48 routes! He proposed the introduction of a 'Composite Transport Policy' in place of a 'Free Transport Policy'. Absence of proper bus terminals was another problem.

Mr. Islam informed the seminar participants that a scheme was underway in which 32 plots were to be converted into 'Bus Terminals'. Out of these 32 sites, 18 were to be operated by KDA, 12 by KMC and 2 by DHA.

Malik Zaheer-ul-Islam, also stressed the need of constructing by passes so that heavy commercial traffic could be diverted. He gave details of TEB's work in improving various roundabouts in the city.

Mr. Mohammad Tehmas Malik, said that the very low fare structures were the main cause of the bad state public transport was in. He said that transporters in Karachi were being treated unjustly as the fare structure in other parts of the country was much more rational than it was in

Karachi. He said that because of unjust government policies, new investment was impossible. Mr. Malik said that there was a ban on introducing new mini buses since 1985. Non availability of loan facility was another hindrance.

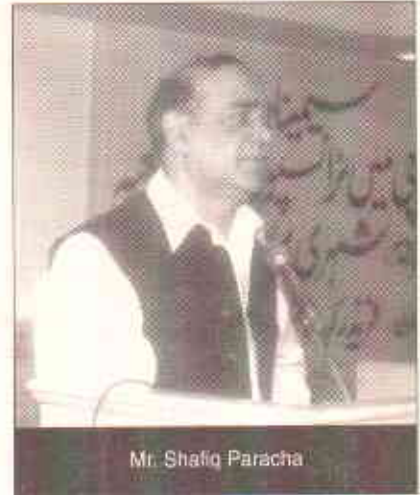
Mr. Islam informed the seminar participants that a scheme was underway in which 32 plots were to be converted into 'Bus Terminals'. Out of these 32 sites, 18 were to be operated by KDA, 12 by KMC and 2 by DHA.

Another major concern of transporters, said Mr. Malik was the issue of compensation of vehicles burnt during frequent rioting and strikes in the city. he said that 25,000 private buses have been burnt so far for which minimum or no compensation has been provided.

He also deplored the improper behavior of traffic police and the 'Bhatta' system. Bad

conditions of roads also contributed towards damaging the vehicles.

The speeches were followed by an extremely interactive question and answer and dialogue session. The general participants raised various issues of public concern with the speakers, which included, overloading and rash driving and the use of pressure horns and



Mr. Shafiq Paracha

playing of music in buses. Need for observing traffic rules, such as the respect of the right of pedestrian on Zebra crossings was also highlighted.

Malik Zaheer put forward various proposals such as franchising of routes (as was being done in Lahore) and tendering system for profitable routes such as Landhi - Tower. The transporters dispelled the impression that they were against the Karachi Mass Transit Project. The transporters also demanded that the fares should at least be increased three times from the present rates.

In the end Mr. Farhan Anwar concluded the workshop proceedings with a vote of thanks to the speakers and participants. □



A question for the panel members



Ms. Amber Ali Bhal and Mr. Farhan Anwar



Seminar on the 'Housing Sector in Karachi: Strategies for Sustainable Development'

A seminar on the 'Housing Sector in Karachi: Strategies for Sustainable Development', was held by Shehri-CBE in collaboration with the Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation, on November 28, 1998 at Hotel Marriott, Karachi.

Mr. Farhan Anwar, of Shehri-CBE, who acted as Seminar Moderator outlined the aims and objectives of the seminar and provided an overview of the Housing Sector in Karachi. He said that a growing and healthy housing sector was indicative of the overall prosperous economic growth of the country. He deplored the fact that the Karachi Development Authority (KDA) for long had been failing to provide this service to the residents of Karachi.

He identified the role of the builders as very important, as it was the builders who were facilitating access to adequate housing to the residents. Mr. Anwar however, felt that in so doing, the builder community was proving guilty of violating existing building laws and regulations. He also asked for the updating of the laws.

Mr. Anwar lauded that role of organizations like Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) who were facilitat-

ing access to adequate housing to millions of inhabitants in squatter settlements like Orangi.

He also spoke of the need of strengthening the role of House Building Finance Corporation (HBFC) so that its policies could



The housing sector in focus

become people friendly and its reach is enhanced.

Mr. Abdul Moid Khan, Deputy Managing Director, HBFC spoke about the role and responsibilities of HBFC. He stressed the need of financial strengthening of the organization so that its services could be accessible to a large percentage of the population.

Ms. Perveen Rehman, Director, Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) informed the seminar participants that now in practical terms there is no difference between the formal and informal sectors. She said that presently 60% of Karachi's population resides in 'Katchi Abadies'. She termed the development initiatives taking place in places like Orangi as 'Peoples Alternatives'.

Ms. Rehman gave a historical perspective of the growth of Katchi Abadi's in Karachi, which she said had started with the influx of refugees in 1947, when places like Lines Area, Bazzerta Lines and Barracks were converted into housing colonies.

The next watershed was the 'Green Revolution' during Ayub Khan's era when settlements like Korangi, Landhi and Baldia were formed where industrial workers used to live.

Ms. Rehman pointed out some planning defects when she said that KDA schemes like Metroville,



(L-R) Mr. Tasneem Ahmed Siddiqui, Mr. Allah Rakha Aasi, Mr. Abdul Moid Khan and Mr. Firdous Shamim



meant to house low income groups are actually housing people belonging to the middle income bracket.

She said that in the absence of government role, characters like the 'Dallal' (Middle Man) and 'Thalle Walla' (Block Maker) are playing the role of providers of land and housing material.

Ms. Rehman informed that huge amounts of money has been invested in these so called 'Katchi Abadis', as 6000 out of the 7000 lanes in Orangi are served by sewer lines! She also lauded the role of Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority (SKAA) in improving the lot of squatters and stressed the need of the involvement of professionals in providing services in the informal sector by providing social and technical guidance, as was being done by OPP.

Mr. Firdous Shamim Naqvi, representing the Association of Builders and Developers (ABAD) said that we need to reduce the number of Katchi Abadis rather than wait for them to increase. He deplored the fact that while there was a short fall of 7 million housing units annually in Karachi, only 50,000 new units were being built every year.

He discussed in detail the role being played by ABAD and the

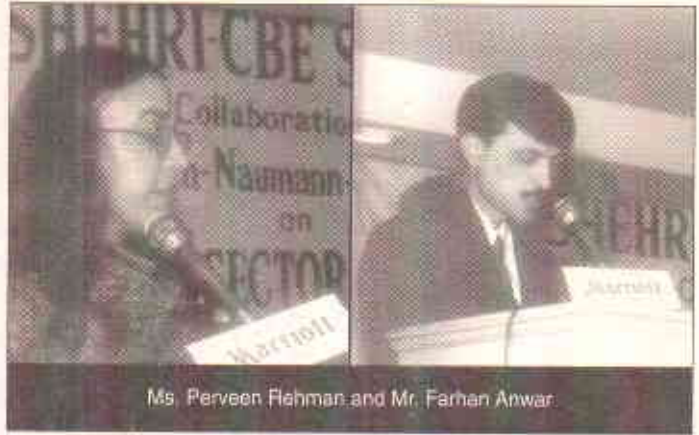
problems being faced by the builders. He said that there was no acceptable 'National Housing Policy'. Mr. Naqvi said that apart from Karachi

very little land was owned by the government in other parts of the country and the builders have to first buy the land at exorbitant rates before going for construction which automatically raises the price of the housing unit.

Lack of infrastructure is another inhibiting factor. He said that there are so many departments and agencies in Karachi that most projects fail because of interdepartmental clashes. He cited the example of Scheme # 33, which failed due to non cooperation between KW&SB and KDA. He said that till this date there is no grid station in scheme # 33!

Mr. Naqvi gave various suggestions for improving the functioning of the housing sector. He said that first government should acquire land and then provide it to the private sector so that the cost factor is brought down. Infrastructure development should precede the development of housing facilities.

Mr. Naqvi stressed the need of building satellite towns. He also said that the cost of construction material should be brought down and the housing sector should be recognized by the govern-



Ms. Perveen Rehman and Mr. Farhan Anwar.

ment as an industry.

Mr. Allah Rakha Aasi, Director General, KDA agreed that a more active role of KDA was needed in the housing sector. He said that the issuance of licenses to builders was done through a transparent process and all the rules and regulations were followed in this regard. Mr. Aasi said that he was open to suggestions from all sectors of society on how the functioning of KDA could be improved to bring it in line with the demands and aspirations of the public.

Mr. Tasneem Ahmed Siddiqui, Director General, Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority (SKAA), in his address said that the aim should be to provide affordable housing to the public. He said that the government has a vital role to play in this sector. In this regard he cited the example of 'Khuda Ki Busti' project of the Hyderabad Development Authority (HDA) in which the people were provided cheap housing by the government.

The speeches were followed by an interactive dialogue and question and answers session. Mr. Farhan Anwar concluded the seminar with a vote of thanks to the speakers and the participants. □



A captive audience



TRANSPORTATION

Towards a better public transport system

Among the various factors plaguing our urban transport system is the deplorable state of public transport. Navaid Husain identifies various strategies which can be adopted to make public transport an attractive option for the people of Karachi.

We in Pakistan are faced with numerous problems. An extremely low level of industrial production leading to low level of workers, an extremely high birth rate thereby increasing the number of people in search of jobs which is keeping the income level very low. We, in fact will become the third largest country in population terms in the world at 358 million people in 50 years time!

All aspects of life i.e. work, housing, education and transport are related to the cost of wages of a country. In other words, in a crowded country like Japan, all the aspects inspite of it being overcrowded are much better than Pakistan. In Pakistan the problems are being made worse still by the population increase which if not halted is going to bring the country to its knees.

If we take the case of transport, we need to correlate the level of income with transport. Every one, the world over must pay for transport from his or her pocket which constitutes a portion of their earnings. It may be interesting for everyone to note that for example the same kind of bus will be carrying individuals from one place to another in Tokyo, London, Buenos Aires, Kenya or Karachi yet the costs will differ. For example it may cost us fifteen pounds i.e. rupees one thousand five in London yet only rupees twenty in Karachi to travel the same distance, why? The buses are the same, although in London

the passengers sit in comfort yet why this astronomical difference between the tickets?

The price of petrol in London may be double of Karachi but why the difference between fifteen hundred rupees and rupees twenty for the same distance traveled? Firstly the bus driver gets twenty times the salary compared to the one in Karachi. Secondly the bus driver in London will follow all the traffic rules and codes irrespective of the fact that the owner might tell him not to. In Karachi the buses may be falling apart and crammed with passengers, overtaking each other at breath taking speeds but it still does not explain the huge difference in tickets.

But it might be worthwhile pointing out that the bus driver in London is not stuffing his pocket with say a thousand pounds a month i.e. a hundred thousand rupees. In fact these hundred thousand rupees go directly or indirectly towards a lot of things which make life livable there. Better education, housing and amongst other things indirectly, towards better traffic on the road. You might ask how does it make traffic better? It makes traffic better because the taxes on the income of one hundred thousand are taken up in a small part by the traffic planning department, higher salaries for the policemen on the road, better facilities for the urban planning bureau. In other words the taxes go towards promoting better salaries for everyone and in turn when every-

one gets higher salaries the quality of life improves.

The difference in ticket prices is to do with income levels of society as a whole. Because the levels of income are extremely low here, there is government pressure to keep transport prices to a bare minimum. Therefore every form of transport be it bus, rickshaw or taxis is at the lowest cost. For example taxi fare in UAE where taxis are duty free and the price of petrol one third of Pakistan, fares are higher than Pakistan. Why? This is irrespective of the fact that the taxi can barely run on the road in Pakistan but it does carry passengers which is its job. Abroad many of our vehicles may be banned from running on the road because they are emitting too much smoke or are not road worthy.



Will our public transport system ever become people friendly?



There are two obvious ways by which road transport can be improved. The first, if there is a government subsidy for transport whereby passengers and the governmental subsidies together can contribute to making up a fair ticket so that we may move in comfort. That is extremely difficult because of our economic situation. In fact recently the government closed down the Karachi Transport Corporation.

The other way is if we manage to stabilize our population and eventually bring it down and our earning becomes much more so that we can pay better for transport. Barring these two, all other attempts will just keep on adding to our misery on the roads and with time the situation will just get worse.

Our roads are controlled by not a professional traffic police, the roads are covered with all forms of transport where buses or trucks that run slowly are on the right side of the streets and often encroachments cover the road. How can we blame the traffic police when they are grossly underpaid. Why blame them for taking a kickback from a car driver when the traffic policeman knows that he will never be able to afford a car.

For example a policeman used to get rupees three thousand three hundred a day when the dollar was forty to the rupee and still gets the same when it has fallen to rupees fifty six. In other words the policeman has grown poorer, in fact so have all of us!

It may be of interest for you to know that in South Asia, the air borne pollution is eight times the acceptable levels. In New Delhi the pollution is lethal and ten to

twelve thousand people a year die from breathing this polluted air and hundreds of thousands others suffer from all sorts of diseases. There, the Supreme Court of India has issued suo moto rulings on controlling pollution and traffic. All buses that have been on the road for ten years are forbidden from plying in New Delhi. Cars have to have an annual car fitness test.

There is a new addition in buses in India whereby each bus will be fitted with a card reader which is similar to the plastic cards we use for telephones. Each card will carry a certain value the user can afford. For example a card with a value of rupees five hundreds will carry you in a bus and each time you board the bus you will punch in where you want to travel with your card in the machine and that amount will automatically be deducted for your card. And when the value of your card is finished you get a new card. This way the bus owner will each day get what he has earned instead of the conductor short changing him and the government will get its taxes as well. With a conductor on board a bus, both the owner and the government loose revenue.

In short there is no other way to improve traffic on the road unless we as a whole make simultaneous attempts to bring other things under control such as education, increase our wage levels, improve our housing, otherwise we will end up as a nation that will tear

apart and perish. And then in Pakistan unlike other countries there is the risk of a bus, van, taxi or rickshaw being burnt by some hooligan without insurance and the transporter has to bear the brunt of its loss.

We would like to recommend to the transporters that they develop an insurance on their own. Insurance money they collect can be put away in a high profit account and in case of loss they can be covered. The insurance money will be collected from everyone willing to join this scheme. Buses

and taxis will be examined by insurance specialists who know the value of the vehicle plying on the road and the vehicle insured will be only up to that value and no more. In case the vehicle is set afire by some hooligan, the owner will only get what it is worth, no more.

All of us need a higher income in order to live with dignity. Low, income leads to all forms of vices developing amongst us all especially in a society where there is breakdown of rule of law. It is up to us, especially the better off class to lend our time and money into improving society. If this society wants to improve then all of us have to put in our best and make that effort. □

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Because the levels of income are extremely low here, there is government pressure to keep transport prices to a bare minimum. Therefore every form of transport be it bus, rickshaw or taxis is at the lowest cost.