



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

APRIL - JUNE 1997 Vol. 1/No. 20

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Environmental Legislation in Pakistan: Reaching a dead end?

The Pakistan Environmental Protection Ordinance 1997, though carrying certain inherent weaknesses, was still, the culmination of more than a decade of hard work in the field of environmental legislation, incurring much public expenses. It was allowed to lapse on 11th June 1997.

Farhan Anwar traces the history of environmental legislation in Pakistan, and pleads for a continuation of the process, vital for stemming the rising tide of environmental degradation in the country.

The industrial revolution of the 19th century, brought in its wake much progress and prosperity for the human mankind. However, the exploitation of earth's natural resources on such a massive scale, and the resultant waste produced by industries, the vehicles of modern growth and development, also introduced dangerous, and initially little understood threats to human health and the physical environment. Rising global population levels also began to tax the resource base of the world. The first conscious efforts, to stem the growing tide of environmental degradation were made in the field of public health protection. In the United States, now leading the cause of environmental protection, initially it was the sanitation sector which was targeted, with massive investments in the construction of municipal waste water treatment plants, starting in

the 1930's, under the Public Works Programmes of the "New Deal" of President Roosevelt.

However, in the following decades, the great impact of industries, industrial products like automobiles, development activities etc. on the environment was better realized. It was also felt that environmental degradation was, in many ways a global phenomenon, not limited by national boundaries. Thus,



arose the need of developing national environmental legislations and also concluding global treaties on issues of global concern. The landmark conference in this regard was the United Nation's Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm (1972), in which the international community adopted the "Stockholm Declaration" on the Human Environment. Following up on the Stockholm recommendations, the United Nations Envi-

PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The National Environmental Quality Standards (NEQS) were issued by the Government of Pakistan on August 29th, 1993. They were applicable with immediate effect to municipalities and vehicles. July 1, 1996 was set as a deadline for the final phase of the NEQS to come into force, mostly applicable to industries. Ever since this announcement, a heated debate has centred around the NEQS. Those opposing the standards term them as anti-development, while for the other side, the NEQS holds the key for sustained growth and development of the country. The implementation of NEQS is likely to have long term effects on the economic growth of our country. So there is a great need for objective assessment.

Any government faced with the job of establishing and enforcing environmental quality standards, must first weigh the cost



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EDITORIAL

Another World Summit

The five day (June 23-27) UN General Assembly's Special Session on Environment and Development is being held in New York, amidst reports that leaders of most developing nation's, including virtually all of the South Asian and South East Asian countries are to be represented only at the ministerial level. In contrast, the developed world is according great importance to this session, with the United States to be represented both by President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore! This glaring dissimilarity in priorities may be indicative of the developing nations growing frustration at being forced to link their economic growth with the observance of strict environmental standards, while the developed world, responsible for much of the environmental damage, and enjoying record growth and booming economies, fails to meet its financial commitments towards the global environmental challenge. Pollution control is an expensive undertaking, offering hard choices for struggling economies. The affluence of the developed world allows them the luxury of investing ever more in their grandiose environmental protection schemes. However, the approach towards the struggling majority of this world should be more pragmatic, both in financial and technological terms, and instead of roping them into high sounding treaties and pacts, which promise much but deliver little, emphasis should be more on seeking area specific solutions which offer a fair reflection of the harsh socio-economic ground realities prevailing in major portions of our world.

ronment Programme (UNEP) was created. The United States took the lead in environmental legislation by enacting its "Clean Air" and "Clean Water" acts, tackling the so-called "first generation" environmental problems. European countries and Japan soon followed suit.

Pakistan was slow to realize the importance of this issue, and even when realization did come, it was not accompanied with the desired policy initiatives and political will. The first serious efforts, materialized in the form of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act of 1983. However, the Pakistan Environmental Protection Council, formed in 1983, could not meet till 1993, when its first meeting was held under the Chairmanship of the former caretaker Prime Minister, Mir Balakh Sher Mazari. Pakistan's subsequent environmental policy was shaped by the National Conservation Strategy (NCS), the ownership of which, was a complex mix of institutions and individuals, both within the government and outside. Research institutes, University departments

and NGO's also participated (see box). In the meantime, outside pressures also began to build on the Pakistani government to prepare and enforce proper environmental legislation.

The Pakistan Environmental Protection Council, formed in 1983, could not meet till 1993, when its first meeting was held under the Chairmanship of the former caretaker Prime Minister, Mir Balakh Sher Mazari.

This was because most of our major development projects are, in one way or another funded by foreign donors, such as the World Bank, and it is mandatory for such projects to follow strict environmental guidelines. The efforts of the NCS culminated in the preparation of the National Environmental Quality Standards (NEQS) in 1993 (see box), and subsequently on January 20th 1997, the Federal Cabinet (caretaker) approved the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, 1997. The Act was finalized during the tenure of the previous government. Although, reservations were raised from various sectors, including NGO's, industrialists and independent experts about various provisions of the Act and the methodology behind the formulation of the NEQS, it was widely acknowledged that more important was the approval of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997, by the State



NEQS (Continued)

of controlling pollution, against the costs of other goals such as education, housing, economic growth and so forth. So, it must decide not only whether pollution should be controlled, but how much pollution and what kind should be controlled and where.

It is here that one feels that the NEQS do not adequately address our priorities. It seems that the industrial sector has been identified as the major polluter and most of the efforts are aimed at forcing the industries to adhere to the prescribed standards. This is strange, as the country does not possess a broad industrial base in terms of large process industries, and the effect of industrial pollution is limited.

Some experts insist that the NEQS must properly establish the priority to protect public health and natural resources of the nation. Available surveys and news reports identify other sources of pollution as posing higher risks compared to the industries. These sources include refuse management, polluted drinking water, drainage of raw sewage, accelerated desertification due to loss of forest cover, ground vegetation, and water logging/salinity. Non-point sources of pollution such as run-off from agricultural fields (fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides) and the discharge of SCARP are damaging the quality of the nation's waters.

Over the years, no efforts have been made to determine the state of the country's resources. Can anybody say with any certainty about the exact pollution levels in the Indus, and which sources are causing how much damage to our waters? How can we hope to apply any realistic standards in the absence of such vital data. Also, the standards should always be area specific. The NEQS establishes unified national effluent/emission standards, whereas Pakistan possesses extremely diversified ecological setups which require a set of NEQS, i.e. regional standards versus uniform standards.

One reason for this irregularity, according to experts, could be that the standard setting process has been done without properly defining the level of available technology, manpower, economic conditions and ecological/environmental characteristics of the country. The contention being that environmental quality standards are always established taking into account the level of locally existing technology and Research & Development experience.

Legislature, which could always be updated. In fact certain amendments in the Act had already been made to make it more acceptable to public concerns.

It was the job of the present government to convert this 'Act' into

a law, which, owing to the massive two thirds majority it enjoys in the National Assembly, was certainly not beyond its powers. However, it has been noted with deep concern that the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act has been allowed to lapse on 11th June 1997, without being convert-

ed into a law. As development of pollution control technology, has not been encouraged in Pakistan even if it is available, people do not have confidence in it. So, this technology will be imported. Import of such expensive equipment would not be cost-effective, for in many cases the same amount of money could be utilised to set up a new industry!

These are hard decisions to take for a country which desperately seeks to broaden its industrial base and that too in double quick time in order to compete in an increasingly competitive world market. It is for this very reason that nations frame their environmental laws with an eye on the level of advancement and sophistication of the locally available technology.

In our country local technology could easily have evolved and can still be developed if sufficient investment were made to strengthen R & D institutions, universities, and other technical institutions. In the absence of cheap and affordable indigenous technology the local industry is likely to suffer, while multinationals will have no problems in meeting our environmental quality requirements.

The general public will be the ultimate losers as industries would raise the cost of their products to meet the additional cost. Has such a scenario been fully taken into account by our policy makers?

Another area of concern is the monitoring process. It is the belief of most experts that our local regulatory bodies, such as provincial EPAs and R & D institutions do not possess the technical wherewithal to effectively enforce the regulations. It is feared that unless, first these institutions are strengthened, both technically and financially, they will always be prone to manipulation from outside forces, thus seriously reducing their effectiveness.

There is no doubt that industrial pollution should also be monitored and controlled. However, should we not readjust our priorities. Should not the provision of safe drinking water, housing, proper collection and disposal of garbage/sewage and education take precedence or atleast be given equal importance in our environmental priorities, rather than just targetting our already vulnerable industrial base. (our industrial sector registered a - 1.4% growth rate last year). Our nation's future growth and prosperity depends on the decisions we take now.

— Farhan Anwar

ed into a law.

Over the last 10-15 years, much hard work of many individuals and institutions and common citizens money has gone into the framing of the environmental standards and the environmental Act. Due to constant changes at top levels of the government,



countless frustrations and hardships have been faced and endured with great patience. These legislations have various shortcomings, but can always be improved upon. At present it is a matter of survival. Pakistan is faced with massive environmental problems. Less than 20% of Pakistan's land can be intensively farmed, nearly all of which is already cultivated, only half the human wastes in cities are disposed of in sewers, and most of that is then not treated. Almost 70% of the irrigation water is lost during application, while pollution of some waterways has

reached such a point that fish production in the Ravi River below Lahore has been cut by 5000 tonnes a year! In view of these alarming facts and figures, we must not let the environmental legislation process die a cruel death.

However, some good news is that Ms Abida Hussain, who is the Minister for environment, in addition to various other ministries she heads, has recently held out an assurance to the heads of a number of NGO's operating in Pakistan (including Shehri) that the Presidential Ordi-

nance on environmental Protection, already drafted in the form of a Bill, will be introduced in the Parliament after the ongoing budget session, where it will be subjected to the proper legislative process. Not much is known about the fate of the Freedom of Information Act, another act which has not yet been converted into a law. We hope that better fate awaits the Pakistan Environmental Protection Ordinance 1997. □

(Farhan Anwar is Editor, Shehri Newsletter)

PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY

On March 1, 1992, The Cabinet of Pakistan approved the National Conservation Strategy. This 406-page document was prepared by a team of experts over a three-year period under the supervision of the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of Pakistan. It involved more than 3,000 people through workshops, comments on drafts and other consultations.

It describes the stark reality of the country's deteriorating resource base and its implications for what is still largely a natural resource-based economy. It sets forth the beginnings of a plan to integrate environmental concerns into virtually every aspect of Pakistani economic life.

The Strategy has three overriding objectives: conservation of natural resources, sustainable development, and improved efficiency in the use and management of resources. Reaching these goals depends in turn on three operating principles:

- Achieving greater public partnership in development and management
- Merging environment and economics in decision making
- Focusing on durable improvements in the quality of life of Pakistanis

Part I of the report surveys the state of Pakistan's environment in the broadest sense by examining the quality of its land, water and air, its energy use, the health of its people, and the institutions and policies that deal with these concerns.

Part II contains detailed recommendations for various sectors of the economy. It makes a strong statement about the urgency of merging economics and the environ-

ment in decision making and the use of economic instruments rather than regulation to control pollution. It also identifies a series of cross-cutting intersectoral programmes for population, education, communications, research and the role of women.

Part III contains 68 different programmes which would boost the government's spending on projects broadly related to natural resource management and the efficiency with which resources are used from about 4% of national investment to 8% by the year 2000. Perhaps most important, it lays out a wide ranging set of recommendations to reform the way in which economic decisions are made.

Fourteen core areas are set out for priority implementation:

- Maintaining soils in croplands
- Increasing irrigation efficiency
- Protecting watersheds
- Supporting forestry and plantations
- Restoring rangelands and improving livestock
- Protecting waterbodies and sustaining fisheries
- Conserving biodiversity
- Increasing energy efficiency
- Developing and deploying renewables
- Preventing and abating pollution
- Managing urban wastes
- Supporting institutions for common resources
- Integrating population and environment programmes
- Preserving the cultural heritage



Ms. Abida Marjori Kabraji, the driving force behind Pakistan's NCS

(Courtesy: The Story of Pakistan's NCS, IUCN Pakistan)



SHEHRI ACTIVITIES

Seventh Annual General Meeting

(April 12th, 1997, Shehri Office)

The agenda of the Seventh Annual General Meeting of Shehri, included -

1. General Secretary's report of Shehri activities in 1996.
2. To adopt the audited accounts for the year ended on 31st Dec. 1996.
3. To appoint and fix remuneration of auditors for the year 1997.
4. Elections for the post of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, General Secretary, Treasurer and three other Managing Committee Members was also due.

Qazi Faez Isa, Chairman of Shehri - CBE conducted the meeting. He read out the report of Shehri's Activities in 1996. The participants were informed about the activities of various sub-committees of Shehri. The performance of the Media and Outreach Sub-Committee was highlighted. It was regretted, that the Sindhi Newsletter had to be discontinued due to financial constraints. It was also observed that the newsletters of Shehri were gaining in popularity and were attracting a large readership. Shehri's Legal Sub-committee, it was told had remained in constant contact with KBCA and other concerned sectors, and due to the efforts of Shehri, the former caretaker Minister for Housing and Town Planning, Mr. Maqbool Rahimtoola and the (former) Director General KDA, Mr. Wajid Rana, had formed an "Oversee Committee", on the workings of the KBCA, having representation from citizens representatives (Shehri) professional bodies, academics etc. The gathering was also informed about the achievements of seminars on the issues of vehicular pollution and power plants, organized by the Anti Pollution Sub-committee of Shehri. The aims, objectives and achievements of the seminar on the Citizen's Role in the Governance of Karachi were also highlighted

The audited accounts for the year 1996 were read out. Copies of the same were also distributed among the participants. The issue of remuneration of auditors for the year 1997 was also decided.

Elections for the post of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, General Secretary and three other Managing Committee members were held. Following are the results:



The newly elected (L-R) Qazi Faez Isa (Chairperson) Victoria de Souza (Vice-Chairperson) Amber Ali Bhal (General Secretary)

Mr. Qazi Faez Isa	Chairperson
Ms. Victoria de Souza	Vice Chairperson
Ms. Amber Alibhai	General Secretary
Mr. Navaid Hussain	Executive Member
Mr. Khatib Ahmed	Executive Member

(Post of treasurer to be filled at a later date)

Questions from the participants, about the workings and future plans of Shehri were also entertained. □

NEW SHEHRI MEMBERS

Ms. Azra Akil	Principal, Karachi Cambridge School
Mr. Altaf Hussain	Business
Mr. Iltekhar Yqoob	Chief Executive
Mr. Abdul Hadi Khan	Planning Engineer
Mr. Syed S. Haider	Private Job
Mr. Farrokh Captain	Private Job
Mr. Mohammad Salim Habib	Marketing
Mr. Irfan Aziz	Professor
Mr. S. M. Laigir Maharaj	Shri Mahant (Religious head)
Mr. Laique Ali Shah Kazmi	Advocate
Mr. Farrukh Salim Khan	Private Job
Mr. Joseph Eugene	Private Job
Mr. Sikander Khan	Self Employed
Mr. Mohammad Bachal	Govt. Employee
Mr. Naeem Ansari	Banker
Ms. Amra Javed	President, Active Parents Association
Dr. Sajid Mahmood	Doctor
Mr. Asadullah Shafi	Marine Engineer
Mr. Imran Javed	Business
Mr. Tanveer Nasir	Business
Mr. Ghulam Rasool Pervana	G. S., Kheer Thar Khuzdar Welf Soc.
Mr. Mubashir Maqbool	Assistant Executive Engineer
Mr. Miraj Ahmed Khan	Electronic Engineer
Mr. Amin Haroon	Business
Mr. Mahboob Ali Haider	Systems Manager
Ms. Raheela Majeed	Business
Ms. Mumtaz Wasi	House Wife



Seminar on the KBCA Overseas Committee

(May 31st, 1997, Hotel Metropole, Karachi)

Shehri, in collaboration with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, held a seminar on the workings of the Karachi Building Control Authority (KBCA), with the following aims and objectives:

- To review codes, acts, aims and objectives of PCATP, PEC and ABAD with a view to bringing them in conformity with Karachi's / Pakistan's Town Planning and building by-laws and KBCA's procedures.
- An update of Overseas Committee's performance.
- Composition of Overseas Committee and problems if any as a result of it.
- Problems faced by members of Committee in carrying out their activities with solutions that would facilitate transparency, professionalism and co-ordination to ensure a fair deal for all concerned, which in turn would result in a better environment.
- Shehri's experiences over the last nine years in dealing with illegal construction, problems citizens are facing as a result of it, and a long term view of Karachi.

Speakers:

Mr. Maqbool Rahimtoola	Ex-Minister, Housing & Town Planning, Govt. of Sindh
Mr. Shah Mohammad Misbah	Chief Controller of Buildings, KBCA
Dr. Jamil Ahmed	Chairman PEC
Mr. Misbah Najmi	Chairman PCATP
Mr. Roland de'Souza	Electrical Engineer, FND, Shehri Nominee.

(Mr. Abdul Karim Tai, Chairman ABAD, was also invited as a Speaker, however, he expressed his unwillingness to attend, and speak at the Seminar, citing differences of opinion with Shehri - CBE)

Mr. Navaid Husain of Shehri, in his opening remarks, stressed the need of formulating a long term urban Housing and Town Planning policy, which addresses the issue of *katchi abadi's* (60% of the urban population) and the exponential growth in population levels (6% per annum). Mr. Husain called for reviewing the Master Plan, which at present is non-operative. He urged the need of self accountability on the part of ABAD, PCATP PEC,



Speakers (L-R) Roland de Souza, Farhat Adil, Maqbool Rahimtoola, Navaid Husain, Misbah Najmi, Shah Muhammad Misbah

KBCA and all the concerned parties, for the common good of the city. He also demanded review of certain obsolete laws and regulations of these agencies.

Mr. Maqbool Rahimtoola gave a background of the Overseas Committee, and the circumstances and

rules under which it was set up. He also discussed his own experiences in dealing with the issue of illegal construction.

Mr. Shah Mohammad Misbah, lauded the role played by the members of the Overseas Committee in tackling the issue of illegal construction. He cited various reasons for this uncontrolled growth, including the tremendous rise in population levels, increase in property value and vertical rather than linear expansion of the city. He stressed the need of reviewing the laws and rules of KBCA and demanded judicial powers for KBCA. He also criticised the role of District Administration, Police and Judiciary. He deplored the harassment of KBCA officers by ABAD, through the filing of contempt applications. Mr. Misbah felt that greater awareness/education on the rules and procedures of the KBCA among the users/purchasers, could also go a long way in improving the situation. He also put forward various recommendations (see box).



Mr. Misbah Najmi, lamented the fact that the workings of the Oversee Committee, of which he himself is a member have not always been very smooth. Particularly, there is constant confrontation between the departments and the rest, and the recommendation of the Committee members were not being given due consideration by the concerned authorities. Mr. Najmi proposed, that since money is the controlling factor in this business, the fines and penalties imposed on those who break the law should be very stiff in the monetary terms. This would ensure compliance, as money is the language, the law breakers understand best.

Mr. Farhat Adil, represented Dr. Jameel Ahmed. Mr. Adil felt that the reasons of KBCA's failure were unrealistically harsh building regulations, outside pressures, misuse of authority, corruption, inefficiency, lack of co-ordination with District Administration and unbecoming attitude of law enforcement agencies. He suggested updating of zoning regulations and upholding of the rule of law in KBCA. Mr. Adil regretted that much time was consumed in the Oversee Committee meetings on discussing the sealed buildings issue, rather than undertaking debate on broader issues.

A question and answer session followed the speeches, and the seminar ended with a vote of thanks by Mr. Navaid Hussain. Ms. Sadia Munir represented the Friedrich Naumann Foundation in the seminar. □



Shah Mohammad Misbah, Chief Controller of Buildings, Karachi Building Control Authority, delivering his paper at the seminar.

KBCA OVERSEE COMMITTEE ACHIEVEMENTS & SETBACKS: SHEHRI'S VIEWPOINT



Shehri's representative on the KBCA Oversee Committee, Mr. Roland de'Souza provided the following assessment of the performance of the Committee, in the seminar:

- A Sub-Committee has been formed to look into the issue of upgrading of building by-laws and regulations. However the performance of this committee has not been very satisfactory.
- A Sub-Committee has been formed to look into the Sindh Building Control Ordinance (SBCO).
- It has been observed that government officers have not proven to be very willing members of the committee.
- Shehri and AEAD are probably the only really interested participants.
- Regular assessment of the workings of the committee has not taken place, and often irrelevant issues have dominated the committee's proceedings.
- It has been acutely felt that the Oversee Committee has no authority.
- Most of the members of the committee consider the meetings a mere formality and are hence not fully prepared for them.
- A public information counter has been set up, which does not function properly.
- It was decided that a media campaign would be started for public awareness. However not a single ad has been published in the last two months.
- N.E.D. Engineering University and Indus Valley School of Arts & Architecture have been incorporated to undertake a study of 35 roads, earmarked for widening. Also, for the checking of violations around the Quaid's Mazar.

Mr. de'Souza asked the citizens of Karachi to be more vigilant and seek constant accountability of the government servants.



Some Recommendations

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| <p>(a) Determined political will to tackle illegal construction, without any interference of higher-ups (political or bureaucratic) for granting illegal permission.</p> <p>(b) Mis-use of Authority and abuse of powers must be restrained.</p> <p>(c) Appropriate amendment in restriction of clause 19 of SBCO: identifying clearly the Regularizable and nonregularizable offences.</p> <p>(d) Amendment in registration law to stop leases/sub-leases, except in accordance with the approved plans issued by Building Control Authority.</p> <p>(e) NOCs from utilities agencies required prior to grant of approval by KBCA should be discontinued.</p> <p>(f) Utility agencies be instructed not to provide temporary services prior to the approval of building plans and permanent connections prior to issuance of completion certificate by KBCA. However, applicants request may be processed at any stage but services shall not be provided prior to issuance of completion certificate by the authority.</p> <p>(g) In Civil Suits before granting stay/status-quo, the Courts may be requested to:-</p> | <p>i) Determine pecuniary jurisdiction.</p> <p>ii) Establish the current state of the disputed construction with inspection report and photographs.</p> <p>iii) Legality of injunction against actions of KBCA, District Administration and Police.</p> <p>iv) Conditions of status-quo for both sides i.e. KBCA and the Builder.</p> <p>(h) Appointment of Special Judge having an Additional District Judge with jurisdiction exclusively for KBCA.</p> <p>(i) Special Police Squad with all facilities be placed under Chief Controller of Buildings.</p> <p>(j) Updating the Zoning Regulations and Building Bye-laws as per recommendations of Overseas Committee.</p> <p>(k) Provision of favourable conditions in the NOCs being issued by KBCA to protect the right of public and safeguard their interest as well.</p> |
|--|---|

*Shah Muhammad Misbah
Chief Controller of Buildings, KBCA.*

SHC EHTESAB BENCH SENTENCES KDA OFFICIAL

The three member Ehtesab bench of the High Court of Sindh on 19-6-97 handed down the first ever decision in a reference received from the Chief Ehtesab Commissioner, sentencing Ejaz Ahmed, the former controller of buildings, KBCA, KDA.

By a 2-1 majority judgement, the bench awarded him two years in jail and a fine of Rs. 2 million which, if he fails pay, would keep him for another year in jail. The main accused in the case was Syed Abdullah Shah, the former Chief Minister of Sindh, who had

issued the orders for raising the building higher than what was permissible then on a direct request made by another accused, a director of the construction company, Sara Ashraf, wife of Mohammad Ashraf, who had made an application to the Chief Minister for permission to raise three additional floors. Ejaz Ahmed had prepared the summary recommending that it should be allowed.

The Ehtesab Bench observed that a subordinate in the hierarchical structure of the government was under no obligation to comply with an illegal or unlawful order, be it of his immediate superior or even of the chief executive in the government himself.

*(Excerpts from Dawn Newsreport,
June 20th 1997)*



An evening with Shehri

(June 1st, 1997, Sada Bahar Lawns, Karachi)

In order to raise public awareness on the issue of environmental degradation in Karachi, and also to raise funds for Shehri's management and staff related costs, citizens were invited to spend some time with the Shehri team and discuss issues of mutual concern, relating to the environment of Karachi. Noted businessman and columnist, Mr. Ardeshir Cowasjee, was the Chief guest, and the whole programme was co-ordinated by Mr. Imran Javed, a member of Shehri.



Ms. Amber Ali Bhai addressing the gathering. Seated (L-R) Farrokh Captain, Ardeshir Cowasjee, Victoria de' Souza, Roland de' Souza.

Ms. Amber Alibhai, General Secretary, Shehri CBE gave a brief introduction of Shehri and its various activities. Mr. Roland de'Souza, member Shehri, spoke about the responsibilities of a common citizen.

He urged the citizens to be more vocal in their demands for accountability of the government servants. He felt that in the prevailing environment, unless the citizens stood up and asked for their civic rights, from the government servants, and by constantly keeping watch on the officials, who are being paid from their taxes, ensured that good governance is carried out, there was not much hope for any real improvement. Mr. de'Souza asked every citizen to keep a strict watch on the environment of Karachi city and fulfil their responsibilities as good citizens.

thropists and businessmen, to come forward and donate funds to Shehri. Mr. Ardeshir Cowasjee, himself donated a generous amount towards the cause of Shehri while local businessmen Mr. Ahmed Ibrahim and Captain Farrokh also announced donations.

A short documentary film on the issue of urban environment, prepared by UNICEF, was also shown on the occasion.

Mr. Khatib Ahmed, member Executive Committee, Shehri, in his concluding remarks, thanked Mr. Ardeshir Cowasjee and other guests for their valuable participation. Free saplings were also distributed to the guests. □

Mr. Ardeshir Cowasjee lauded the selfless services of individuals like Mr. Roland de'Souza, Ms. Amber Alibhai and the Shehri team as a whole, who were finding time from their professional and personal pursuits, to care for the citizens of Karachi. He felt that since Shehri is a non-profit voluntary organization, it needed all the moral and financial support of the citizens, for whom it was striving to create a better environment. Mr. Cowasjee asked philan-



The Chief Guest, Mr. Ardeshir Cowasjee, addresses the participants



Mr. Imran Javed acted as program co-ordinator

COMMENTS

Uncontrolled urban growth: Issues and solutions

Navaid

Husain analysis the dynamics

of uncontrolled urban growth in Karachi, with a particular reference to illegal buildings,

There is no denying the fact that in the final analysis citizens consider Karachi Building Control Authority (KBCA) acting under the Sindh Government, as being responsible for the alarming growth of illegal buildings in the city. Shehri as a citizens group, has been advocating the need for a long-term urban policy, which addresses the need of all sections of the society and takes into account 60% of the urban population that live in unplanned *katchi bastis* which do not fall under KBCA.

We see illegal buildings in the perspective of housing and commercial need emerging from the unsustainable population explosion taking place in Pakistan, which has placed this small country, with meager resources, as the third fastest growing country after China and India. The true impact will be felt by both urban and rural areas, when the country settles down at zero growth, with a population of 450 million persons, with over 40 million living in Karachi, with the city perhaps ceasing to exist as a single entity when there may come a time, when the entire highway belt from Karachi to Peshawar is inhabited!

Karachi's population can be estimated at 10% of the whole country, putting the city population at

some 14.5 million, expected to reach 16.5 million by the year 2000. In this situation, we see the housing demand growing at a rate of 6% for the natural population growth and migrants coming to the city as a result of the push factor from the rural areas. If we place a minimum of 100 square feet of habitable space per person,



Defying all rules and regulations

then the city needs 87 million sq ft of housing per year! If ground plus 4 storey housing blocks were to be constructed for this need, then we would require 2200 units per year. And if the backlog of housing needs for those living in *katchi abadis* were to be met, then we would have to come up with 800 million sq. ft of housing requiring 250,000 housing units. The housing needs and population explosion have rendered the government incapable of addressing this issue and the homeless are left to fend for themselves. To address this issue, land and town planning is required, and this falls beyond the ambit of KBCA. While recognizing that the Overseer Committee and KBCA are

charged with the role of monitoring illegal buildings, Shehri has been looking at the larger canvas, which is that of the masterplan and working with planners, architects, demographers, urban economists, transport and infrastructure specialists and a host of other experts working on this agenda.

Unfortunately, a lot of time and millions of dollars have gone into this masterplan (Master Plan 2000) but to no avail. Neither a political will, nor the legal cover exists to implement the plan. The city is being run by over 20 agencies, some reporting to the federal government

and working at cross purposes with the Sindh Govt. and the Masterplan authority. The Masterplan must address growing housing needs and plan for it.

The aims and objectives of all the players in this complex and multi disciplinary issue of urbanization must fall in line, with some degree of transparency, accountability, and professionalism. The Overseer Committee participants too, have to establish self accountability which will minimize illegal buildings. ABAD in its aims and objectives of association must clearly state that it will "build flats, shops and commercial ventures within the building and town planning laws." The Pak-



istan Engineering Council must protect citizens from the hazards of occupying high rise buildings, which have been built without structural engineers, structural drawings, calculations or supervision.

The Pakistan Council of Architects, and Pakistan Engineering Council have to take action against architects and engineers who are indulging in white collar crimes by abetting builders, politicians and officials in illegal buildings. Licenses of all concerned architects and engineers involved in illegal buildings should be suspended by their own bodies (PCATP & PEC) pending finalisation of court judgments. Shehri would encourage its lawyers in getting KBCA and the Courts to declare all high-rise buildings declared as dangerous for occupation and have these buildings evicted and demolished, where soil tests have not been conducted and structural drawings not put up for approval, prior to construction. It is mandatory under provisions of law for KBCA structural department, to monitor the construction of high-rise buildings, aside from their legality. This is not being done, thereby endangering occupants. KBCA can under no circumstance regularize illegal high-rise buildings in the absence of vetted structural drawings and supervising such construction.

Shehri, as a citizens group has to do both, facilitate long term housing policies, and at the same time protect citizens who are being duped into occupying illegal buildings. After all citizens too are profiting from the sale of properties to builders, profits from speculation in illegal buildings and from the actual occupation of such structures.

Furthermore, KDA and KBCA, over the years have seemingly turned themselves into real estate agencies, since their incomes are derived from the sale of land, fines and regularisation fees. There are outdated provisions, by which KBCA should be collecting scrutiny fee based on 3% of the construction cost. Instead, of that, there seems to be a financial motivation in commercialization fees which often leads to environmental degradation. In large parts of the city, citizens are either not paying urban taxes or are paying outdated taxes. This needs to be revamped with a view of making KDA and KBCA independent of regularisation fees or sale of land, and instead generate resources from the services they are providing and from rationalized and updated urban taxes.

Whilst KBCA & the Overseer Committee need to regulate buildings, the long-term solution lies in stemming urban growth. Rural land and agricultural reforms, setting up of secondary towns, decentralization, population planning, raising literacy levels and good governance should result in poverty alleviation leading to smaller family sizes and less demand for buildings. Raising awareness is important, which in turn will result in greater accountability, leading to a curb on corruption across the board at all levels which in turn will also reduce illegalities in buildings. We have an under-

standing and perspective of the issues at stake. The institutions of the country face great challenges and only with concerted effort and the recognition of the much larger issues, will a workable solution emerge. If any of the actors in the Overseer Committee wish to pursue either an irrational course or a selfish one then we will continue to be in state of confrontation rather than sharing a common goal. But meanwhile the Overseer Committee can attempt to stem illegal buildings, which are a small part of the larger dynamics of urbanization and underdevelopment. □

(Navaid Husain is an Architect, and Executive Committee member of Shehri - CBE).

Whilst KBCA & the Overseer Committee need to regulate buildings, the long-term solution lies in stemming urban growth. Rural land and agricultural reforms, setting up of secondary towns, decentralization, population planning, raising literacy levels and good governance should result in poverty alleviation leading to smaller family sizes and less demand for buildings.

URBANIZATION

Urban areas occupy less than 1% of Pakistan's land area but contain 30% of the population. Karachi alone accounts for one-fifth of the urban dwellers, and seven other cities above 500,000 population each contain another 30%. More than one quarter of the urban population lives in legal settlements, many on marginal sites subject to floods and other hazards. Given the continuing high population growth rates in cities and migration from rural areas, the nation is expected to become predominantly urban sometime other 2010.

(Courtesy: NCS Pakistan)



VIEWPOINT

Resolving the water crises in Karachi: Efficiency in equitable access

As the Sindh Government pushes forward with its plans to privatize KW&SB, CREED, a citizen's alliance, strongly challenges the methodology of this process and calls for an immediate review of the whole process.

More than a fourth of Karachi is still without piped water supply, and well over half of the city remains excluded from the sewerage system. Pipes deliver water infrequently and inequitably. Polluted water supply and regular sewage flooding endanger the health of all citizens. Virtually all sewage disposal poisons rivers and the sea. It robs the livelihoods of farmers and fishermen, and destroys nature without reason.

Through increasing incompetence and pervasive corruption, at least half of water supply is wasted, or delivered at extortionary prices by the *tanker mafia*. Bills are uncollected from the majority of customers. Excessive labour costs are evident. In consequence, KWSB relies on ad-hoc subsidies and grants to cover operating costs, service debts, and undertake maintenance. Excessive borrowing is undertaken for rehabilitation and expansion.

Despite billions in outstanding debts, KWSB faces a crisis of services and finances. These problems come from many years of cynical disregard by the state of its social obligations. Equally devastating has been political opportunism for gross misdirection and apacious misappropriation of public resources.

Need for Comprehensive Reforms

A sustainable resolution of these problems has to be based upon three principles. First, government is obligated to ensure a decent level of basic services to all citizens. Second, cost-effectiveness in equitable provision requires fundamental

reforms both in delivery organisations as well as in the institution that monitor and guide their performance. Third, privatisation is neither necessary nor sufficient for these goals.

Narrow Privatisation Strategy

Acting upon international advice, the Sindh Government has confined KWSB reforms to maximising privatisation. As a result, the official reform strategy sacrifices equity for greater commercial liability, and dilutes efficiency for access to international finance. Poor and low-income households would continue to receive low priority in water supply. Neither sewerage coverage will increase, nor will pollution of rivers and the sea decrease. All tariffs will increase 300% in five years. Such massive increases in consumer burdens are not linked to corresponding efficiency gains, service improvements, and penalties for deterioration in the supply of services. Staff is to be halved, but without any commitment to similar reduction of labour costs. Efficiency gains are illusory if the city will continue to lose more than a third of its water supply to leaks and theft, even after five years of privatisation. By mid-1998, multinationals will be handed the entire KWSB system free of charge, in return for equity finance of less than 10% of investment needs. Taxpayers will nevertheless guarantee high profits as well as repayment of billions in current and future.

No guarantees of service improvements will be required from the privatised system. Rather than encourage equity, efficiency and local participation through decentralisation,

a private monopoly will be enforced over all water services.

It is only fair to conclude that the government has endorsed a deeply flawed reform strategy. Inappropriate and self-service advice cannot but come from foreign consultants, protected as they are against the devastating social consequences of their schemes and strategies for the city. Uncritical acceptance of prescriptions of international creditors ignores lessons for the past.

Informed Debate and Consent

Even as it is obvious that KWSB should not be allowed to continue business as usual, it should be equally clear that accelerated privatisation will fail to provide any sustainable solution to the crisis of water services. As alternatives to the narrow official strategy, comprehensive reforms can be developed to promote equitable services with efficiency and fiscal responsibility. But this process requires broad-based public consultation, open discussion, and substantive debate between and among stakeholders.

We urge an immediate review of the PSP Strategy in consultation with citizens. Until such time as a genuine consensus has been developed for the nature, pace, and extent of reforms, both local democratic governance and global commitments require of government and donors to halt all actions that fundamentally alter the organisations and institutions charges with provision of water services to Karachi. □

(Creed, citizens alliance in reforms for efficient and equitable development)



ANALYSIS

A smashing success

The much publicised World Food Summit was held last November in Rome, which ended on an upbeat note. However, Norman Myers does not share the optimism of the FAO officials, as he feels that the summit failed to tackle the real causes of food scarcity such as soil erosion, desertification and deforestation.

In 1974, I attended the World Food Conference at the Rome headquarters of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). FAO leaders proclaimed time and again that within ten years nobody should be going to bed hungry any more. The response of those experienced in the ways of FAO was "Deliver, then we'll believe it." Ten years later there were more people chronically malnourished - jargon for semi-starving - than ever before. Another ten years on and the situation was worse yet again; a whopping 800 million people underfed, every sixth person in developing countries.

So the world's governments asked FAO to convene a World Food Summit, whereupon agricultural leaders foregathered in Rome last November. The fact that the conference was needed at all, implied a continuing duff job on the part of FAO. But instead of making amends, FAO dropped the ball once again, and with even greater panache.

During the months prior to the summit, FAO produced a mountain of background documents with a decidedly upbeat stance. Yes, we can produce enough extra food within the next 30 years to feed an extra 2.5 billion people. All we need to do is to follow a part of the same as before, only more so.

That is, set the plant breeders and genetists to work and produce another Green Revolution. In any case, if we had any doubts about that long-standing approach, what else could we possibly do given that our only guide to the future must be the past? This supposes, of course, that the future will be a simple extension of the past. There is abundant reason to think that won't be so any more, and that we must expect a host of basic departures from former patterns and trends.

First are the mounting problems of past. Soil erosion, for instance. We have been losing 25 billion tonnes of top soil per year, a rate fast enough to despatch most of the world's topsoil by mid-way through the next century. By that stage too, we are likely to have used up most of the world's oil. But whereas there are plenty of alternative sources of energy, nobody has devised a substitute for topsoil. If a hectare of farmland is losing 17 tonnes of topsoil per year, that can be enough to reduce crop output by a full one-fifth within 20 years. Yet it

amounts to only five millimetres off the soil horizon. What farmer is going to notice that? Hence FAO's response to the erosion problem: what problem?

Just as erosion levies a fearful price for agriculture in the long

Just as erosion levies a fearful price for agriculture in the long run, so too do salinization and water logging of irrigation systems. Also, naturally enough (so to speak), advancing deserts, demise of genetic stocks for crop plants, and declining water supplies, whether from rivers or aquifers.

run, so too do salinization and water logging of irrigation systems. Also, naturally enough (so to speak), advancing deserts, demise of genetic stocks for crop plants, and declining water supplies, whether from rivers or aquifers. FAO accorded them hardly a nod as compared with its trumpeting of the next Green Revolution - even though the

environmental underpinnings of any revolution need to be safeguarded through an Evergreen Revolution.

FAO further asserted that if there had been any real problems with our capacity to feed our evermore numerous selves, that would surely have shown up in climbing prices for food. True, prices changed little from 1960 till 1995. But then prices for wheat



and maize doubled almost overnight, and that of rice increased by one-third. Still more significant, prices tell only part of the story. The people who suffer the worst food shortages, the poorest people, hardly possess the means to enter the marketplace at all, meaning they are denied the chance of registering their 'dollar preferences' with respect to food. At least 1.3 billion people have a cash income of under \$1 per day, and another 1.7 billion people scarcely manage \$3 per day. These people amount to over half of humankind, yet they account for well under one-tenth of the global economy. Their poverty causes them to be economically disenfranchised and nutritionally destitute.

Thus arises the profound differ-

ence between marketplace demand and actual need for food, the first being only a part (and in some regions and communities, a small part) of the second. So it is strictly inaccurate in economic terms (let alone humanitarian terms) to assert that marketplace prices have much to do with the food purchases of those who most need food of any kind. Yet economist planners at FAO still speak about food prices as if all people enjoy the affluence to eat whatever they want. Anybody with a wallet can order a five-course dinner in Addis Ababa at the height of a famine.

Despite all this, FAO blithely asserted at the World Food Summit that all we need is "continued efforts to maintain and upgrade the world's food production

capacity, for example, investment in agricultural research, extension services, increased efficiency in water use, etc." Yet each of these three issues is headed in the wrong direction, as are problems all but omitted from the FAO documents, notably soil erosion, desertification, water shortages and deforestation among other forms of land degradation, plus emergent super-problems such as global warming.

None of this seemed to trouble FAO much. They declared the Summit a smashing success. □

(Norman Myers is a Fellow of Green College, Oxford).

(Courtesy: People & the Planet, Volume 6, Number 1, 1997).



The poor child has probably never heard of the term 'occupational safety'



Solid waste (mis) management?



Drugs: the urban nightmare



Where there is despair, there is also hope

COMMUNICATION

Theatre - Can it carry our message to the masses?

The power of theatre is acknowledged by all who have been touched by it. However, can this engrossing medium of interaction, effectively educate and mobilize our masses on issues as complex as human rights, family planning and environmental degradation. Zofeen T. Ebrahim, traces for Shehri, the history of theatre in Pakistan, reviews the present situation and talks with the theatre personalities on their problems and pitfalls, hopes and aspirations.

The young woman sitting on the charpai in a courtyard, hardly twenty, is weak, anaemic and sickly. The child, not even two, nestles further into her bosom. The girl beside her is screaming and crying for water. She is not more than four. Squatting on the floor, a little boy around six, oblivious to her sister's crying is playing with marbles. He is barefoot. The mother is completely nonchalant as the girl's wailing grows louder. Her eyes are vacant. And then the door opens and in walks the husband (apparently) with two kids (aged five and seven) behind him. The mother leaves the infant on the charpai, gets up, and goes into the corner of the courtyard and starts warming up the food.

There are hardly any dialogues so far, but the audience sits with rapt attention. The audience comprises mostly women, and the message by, the theatre group, which is presenting the play is family planning and a woman's right over her body. The complete involvement of the captivated audience seems to indicate that the message is also getting across. The power and hold of theatre has never been in doubt.

Rahat Kazmi says that "theatre should please you aesthetically." But adds that "it is not necessary that any work of art that is

aesthetically satisfying and pleasing should not have an underlying meaning. It will have one, only it may not be obviously stated." And that is why it is so potent. However, he is not in favour of the "maqsadi theatre" - a theatre which has to offer some message. He feels it is all very cliched to say that drama and theatre can bring about revolutions.



Good theatre touches your heart and leaves a lasting impression on your mind. (Photo Courtesy Dawn)

It is not blase but on the contrary, the charm lies in its subtlety. Theatre is not just pure entertainment, it can be turned into a very effective tool to educate people on social and environmental issues. It may not enjoy a wide audience, but it is a medium with the most response. Unlike other media, it deals with live audience which are receptive to you because their attention is focussed on the play.

The Theatre Movement in Pakistan

Probably the first play in Pakistan's checkered theatre history is *Lal Qile Se Lalukhet* by Khawaja Moinuddin. It was popular because it related to the problems faced by the inhabitants of Karachi, specially the refugees. It was about their hopes, sorrow, sufferings and aspirations. Sigrid Kahle, a German who was directing plays back then, had come to Karachi in 1952. "The real refugees, living in squalor in Lalukhet, arrived at the theatre with one rupee notes and were very sad when they were turned back because the tickets were sold out."

Kamal Ahmad Rizvi says, "I'm still doing theatre and making a fool of myself." KAR was just a young fella of seven or eight, when he first saw theatre in Behar and was so mesmerized by it that he made it his metier. Disgruntled and disenchanted after almost fifty years, he still goes ahead and does it. The high that theatre gives him is so potent that he can't leave it now.

On the other hand, for Mansoor Saeed "theatre was never a passion." He just used the medium "to put across" his "political ideas and activities and raise conscious-



ness among the masses." And so he formed Dastak in 1978. He may have initiated it but he cannot claim it to be his own idea completely. It was the Communist Part of Pakistan which decided to give the sleeping minds a nudge. The times were difficult since it was Zia-ul-Haq's dictatorship. Dastak therefore was joined by a lot of noncommunists too to start some artistic activity and to generate some political thought and movement.

Qazi Wajid, Imran Aslam, Rahat Kazmi, Kamal Ahmed Rizvi, Khalid Ahmad, Zia Moheyuddin and the rest all feel that theatre could not bloom because there were no playwrights. What we had and even now have is adaptations. "Very few original works were written for theatre. We basically stage adaptations," says Rahat Kazmi. It is felt by some that the chosen themes at time do not target our real problems. Rahat Kazmi feels that "the schools keep putting up plays, and annual concerts, in which the theme invariably is environment. The children are quite aware, it's the political will which is amiss here and without the latter we can't change much".

Doing theatre in Pakistan means fighting a battle against successive governments and their unnecessary impositions, like getting the NOCs, police clearances, excise clearance and a number of censorships. Theatre has therefore not flourished in

these fifty years, while its counterpart across the border has prospered by leaps and bounds. Hundreds of groups are active, academies and institutions have been formed and indigenous traditions have been fused successfully and skillfully with modern techniques. In Bangladesh there are more than one thousand registered theatre groups. Dacca alone has more than two hundred groups giving regular performances each day of the year without fail.

"Theatre is an incredible form of education, if I can reach the grass-roots, even succeed in having them think one small little thing, then for this generation which we have spoilt in such a terrible fashion, the world may become a 'fit ball' after all,"

Yasmeen Ismail

Getting Social, Moral and Environmental Messages Across

The late Ali Ahmad started theatre as a part of the *Mazdoor Tehreek* in pre-partition India. "We were using theatre as a means to convey what we felt to the masses. For me, theatre is an opportunity to change society, to make a statement. Theatre is one of the most powerful forms of communication and expression. That is why, in our society, theatre is the only medium that is subjected to pre-performance censorship," said Ali Ahmad in one of his interviews.

In this day and age, and when we talk about

meaningful theatre, probably the closest that anyone has come so far is Yasmeen Ismail and her *Gripps Theatre*. The two are synonymous. "In German it means coming to grips with your brain, or an exercise with your brain. These plays are about kids who are very smart and 'with it', who make their parents look quite absurd." Many may contend that her plays are satirical and outrageous, but she says defiantly "they're not aimless or meaningless." Theatre is an incredible form of education and she says, "if I can reach the grass-roots, even succeed in having them think one small little thing, then for this generation which we have spoilt in such a terrible fashion, the world may become a 'fit ball' after all." Plays by *Gripps*, focus on the same problems which we in contemporary, urbanised society are facing today. She's been doing these plays now for more than fifteen years and the admirable ingredient in her plays (notwithstanding the political innuendoes interjected by Imran Aslam which fall flat on children's ears) is the small messages on environment that she tosses out to her Lilliputian audience and their parents, lest they have forgotten. The first one I did some eight or nine years ago was *Hawa Ko Daw Do* which the kids did not really



Theatre relies a lot on symbolism (Photo Courtesy: Dawn)



understand. They did not know that smoke was toxic, it all went over their head literally, but the little they understood was not to throw trash around etc. The second one I did some three years ago was *Unfit Ball Hai Duniya Mere Agay*. In the span of three to four years I noticed that the environment message had really got through. She has done the latter a number of times and even in schools. She strongly feels that lack of funding and lack of good playwrights is a problem. She is keen on taking her plays to various localities but chickens out, "as it is not practical. The anti-elements are always there to ruin the show."

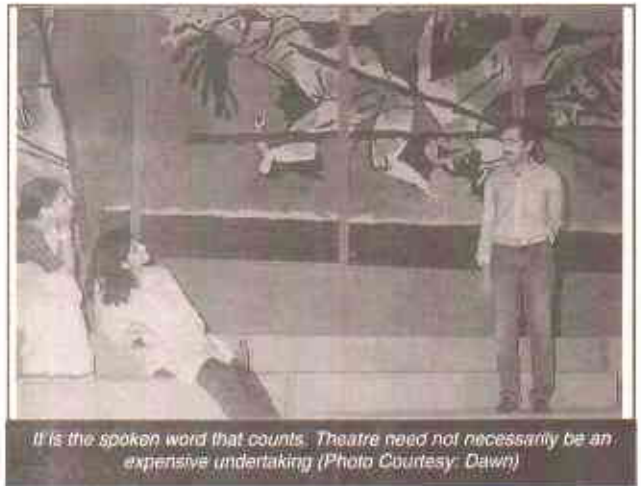
Some call their theatrical stunts 'theatre of protest' or 'theatre of politics', but there are some groups of die-hard theatre walas who have been performing as parallel theatre. They perform sporadically and some even perform as street theatre. Ajoka in Lahore has been reflecting social realities now for more than a decade. They talk about the consequences of uncontrolled population growth, or the complex paradigm of village life, the deprivation and misery, the lack of basic amenities and the abhorrent customs of *watta satta* etc.

The Power of Street Theatre

A group of youngsters disbanded from Ajoka in 1987 and formed their theatre group by the name of *Punjab Lok Rehas*. What sets them apart from other

groups is that they perform their plays in Punjabi, they never do comedies and are prone to doing serious stuff with a definite social message. There was one they did on the plight of rape victims and how society reacts towards them. They did a few plays at the Goethe Institute, but now they perform in villages and on the streets. They visit remote areas and have worked in collaboration with various organisations and NGOs like DWF and WAF. Sania Saeed of Dastak, which has done quite a few plays as street theatre, feels that it is a much better medium. "Auditoriums are a problem because they are expensive and we have problems with a tumultuous audience. Theatre is reciprocal. The actors can feel the response of the audience and the audience can feel the actor's energy."

Street theatre on the other hand, she opines, is better because people take notice. It's shorter, more direct and sometimes on a fixed issue." She feels that it can make people aware of the happenings around them



It is the spoken word that counts. Theatre need not necessarily be an expensive undertaking (Photo Courtesy: Dawn)

and mould their opinions and perceptions in a positive manner." She strongly feels that they need an active support from both the NGOs and the government. Rahat Kazmi on the other hand feels that putting up an amateur performance should not be a problem. "All you need is a team of dedicated actors, who work for free, get a place like PACC which charges something like Rs. 3,000 for a night which one can easily put up. People who say that they could not do theatre because of certain reasons have a "defeatist attitude."

We have good acts and we have a good audience, despite that theatre has not helped in moulding public opinion. Why has it not been potent enough? It seems to be an uphill task for the diehard theatre performers to put up their shows. So much of their precious time is spent on getting it going that all their creative energies are channelised in the wrong direction. Or is it that they are not sincere in their endeavour? And when all else fails we normally blame the government. Maybe we should do just that. □

(Zofeen T. Ebrahim is a feature writer at Dawn)



Children can be made to learn a lot from theatre

PROJECT PROFILE

Gul Bahao: An organization on the move.

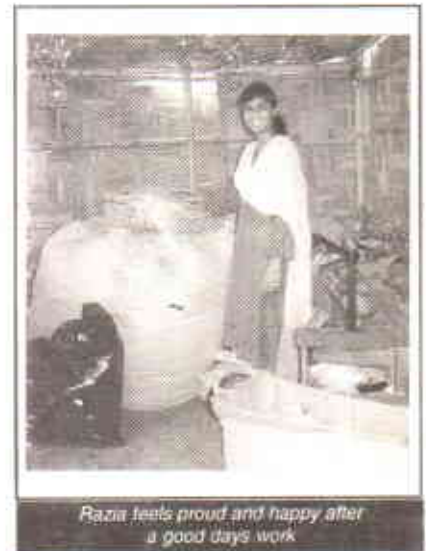
Gul Bahao is an organization which is trying to raise public awareness on the issue of garbage recycling. It promotes public participation and offers financial incentives for those willing to join their programme. Salika Enver profiles for Shehri, the organization and the people, who are making it all happen.

Did you know that 7000 tons of mixed garbage is generated in Karachi everyday? 14% of the total garbage is paper (1000 tons). This waste paper sells at anywhere from between Rs.2000/ton to 6000/ton depending upon the quality of the paper i.e. Rs. 20 lacs - 60 lacs in a single day! Similarly, waste plastic accounts for about 7% of the total garbage. Converted into rupees, this again works out to another half a crore rupees a day! Other waste items like paper, plastic glass and metal altogether bring the figure to an astounding Rs. One crore a day.

Ideally, managing this waste should come within the ambit of local government organisations. In Karachi, the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation is responsible for the collection and disposal of garbage or solid waste. Unfortunately, as we all know, KMC is unable to provide us with an

acceptable level of service. KMC only collects about 30% of the total generated waste, and does no recycling. This is where NARGIS LATIF comes in, with her slogan: "Garbage is gold! Do not throw it away", - she has formed *Gul Bahao*, and is the Managing Trustee of the operation. According to her, *Gul Bahao* is a glorified garbage collection system - a modern version of the kabari wala, where people can come and sell their dry garbage in a clean environment, and have their wet garbage converted to khad or compost - thus eliminating the practice of throwing garbage on the streets, playgrounds, roads, etc.

Although a fairly organised recycling industry flourishes in Karachi in the informal Sector, Nargis Latif, it seems has brought a new freshness to the whole business. As she explains, it is just like our preference to go to a super market rather than the small corner store down by the road, or to hospitals for deliveries rather than availing the services of the traditional midwife. By the same token, *Gul Bahao* gives a new face to the traditional practice of selling litter to junk dealers, reminding, especially the middle and higher income classes, of the wisdom of this option, and gives people cash incentives not to litter the streets. At the same time, it is a commercially viable venture for the person putting in the effort. A point to be noted is that Ms. Latif also buys rubbish that is not taken



Razia feels proud and happy after a good days work

by many of the informal sector junk dealers (Kabaris) such as plastic bags, polyethylene, mineral water bottles, and other such material.

Gul Bahao operates from a thatched hut near Clifton Centre, just off Schon Circle. It is headed by Nargis Latif, and her small team of dedicated workers, comprising Razia, Mohammed Akbar, Ms. Mumtaz, Mushtaq and Ghulam Ali. Young Razia and Mohammed Akbar are there to accept your garbage everyday, except Sundays, from nine to five. The small size of the team and their modest surroundings are more than made up by their zeal, enthusiasm and devotion to their cause.

"Garbage should be separated at source, at home, into dry and wet", we are told. Dry consists of all kinds of paper, plastics, glass,



You get full value of your garbage



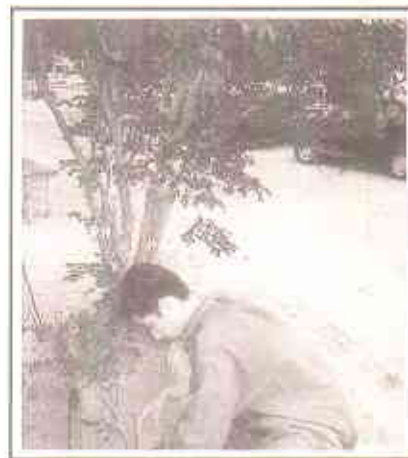
metal, cloth, etc., whereas wet is made up of vegetables peels, fruit peels, egg shells, leaves, and left-over food. At Gul Bahao, paper can be sold at Rs. 2-6 per kilo, whereas plastic is worth upto Rs. 6 per kilo. Wet Garbage can also be brought and sold at 'Safai / Kamai Bank' as a separate entity. Wet items are used for composting and making of 'thandi meethi khad.' A mincing machine run by hand or the electric grinding machine used for domestic purposes, may be used for grinding vegetables and fruit peels. These are then dried outside under the sun. This grinded waste decomposes quickly to form compost, when put into a pit.

At the Safai/Kamai Bank at Schon Circle, the garbage is brought in by people to be sold there. It is first weighed according to its separate constituents and in case of dry waste, compacted and then put into neat bundles.

The response of the general public, according to Nargis Latif is

fairly good, however, she feels that the required level of awareness is lacking. She feels that a powerful media such as Television should mobilise the people to separate their dry and wet garbage everyday, as this is the key to the success of the program.

Some public awareness is raised by Gul Bahao by holding seminars and conventions. A convention of the Safai/Kamai Bank was recently held by Gul Bahao, on the 25th of April which was sponsored by Hamdard Laboratories, Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), and Habib Bank. Like many other local NGO's, mobilization of funds is also a major concern of Gul Bahao. The previous Governor had donated Rs. 25000 to Gul Bahao and the District Commissioner Rs. 6000. Various other sponsors include ICI Berger, ICN, Caltex, Habib Bank, Burmah Shell, Hamdard, The News, and private concerns and individuals, who also regularly supply large volumes of dry garbage to Gul Bahao.



Plantation, using the Thandi Meethi Khad

Gul Bahao is planning to hold another programme 'A first from Karachi to the World', on the 14th of August, in connection with Pakistan's 50th Independence Anniversary. It is a joint venture, in collaboration with KMC. However, Nargis feels that much more money is required to sustain the programme and expand it even further. □

(Salika Enver is an environmental activist and a member of Shehri-CBE)

"Proper garbage management is commercially viable". Nargis Latif

Vibrant is the adjective one can use to describe Ms. Nargis Latif - the driving spirit of Gul Bahao. Her lively and animated personality always makes an impression, and she wants people to be motivated by her work, and to initiate such programmes in their own localities. She says that "proper garbage management is commercially viable, and so, apart from achieving the desired cleanliness, one can also make money". Nargis wants others to benefit from her experience and is willing to disseminate her knowledge and experience, and to give demonstrations.

According to Nargis, tapping the waste market is a golden goose. It is not useless. There is no stagnancy in this business, as we will always generate garbage. Like Nargis Latif, Gul Bahao is an organisation on the move. There is hard work involved and also a lot of investment. Nargis feels that such causes, need the whole-hearted support of the citizens, which includes financial support. When asked the cliched question as to why she started this operation, she confided that her intentions initially were just stereotyped i.e. to live in a clean



city, and to do something about the problem of burning garbage, which not only pollutes the environment, but is also a major cause of increasing lung diseases. But later, over and above all this, she began to realize that she owed it to Allah to do something for others as well. Hence, she set up Gul Bahao. I guess that explains the religious zeal and energy that characterises her personality.

With such altruistic motives, she can only move ahead. We wish her success in all her ventures.

- Salika Enver



INVESTIGATION

What's up doc?

Investigations carried out by Amanullah Memon and Salmullah Memon, bring to light the disturbing business of trade in used disposal syringes and other items, taking place in leading hospitals of the city.

Much awareness is being created these days about the causes and effects of infectious and deadly diseases such as AIDS and various forms of Hepatitis. One major cause of transmission of these diseases into humans is through the use of used and infectious syringes. Apart from a few hospitals of the city, which employ the use of waste incinerators, most dump their waste inside the hospital compound or in some ill-constructed 'Kutchra Kundi' (dustbin) located in close proximity to the hospital. Recently, a survey by *Business Recorder* showed alarmingly, that more than 30 traders operating in New Karachi, Botal Gali, Afrasiab Colony and Light house, purchased used disposable syringes from waste merchants and repacked them for reuse.

It has been disturbingly revealed that the administrations of some major and reputable hospitals of the city both in the govt. and private sectors may also, knowingly or unknowingly be involved in this business. An environmental study into the waste management practices of a leading private hospital of Karachi city, revealed that the business of selling used disposable, nondiscarded (needles intact) syringes is going on in the said hospital.

Initially we were told by the senior staff that the syringes are discarded (needles crushed) and are then burnt in the furnace. However, when we visited the furnace (which was in operation at the time) site we were first surprised at the very small size of the furnace which, it was felt was hardly capable of meeting the requirements of a such a large hospital. Then we were surprised to notice that no syringes were visible in the waste that was being burnt. When we asked the attendant about this, he replied "Baboo the syringes are not burnt, but are seperated and sold to the contractor and good money is made. Do you want us to burn our livelihood?" Much shaken on receiving this disturbing information, we confronted the management staff, who denied that any such practice was taking place.

We then decided to change the line of our investigation. We asked a friend of ours to help us, who posing as a pharmaceutical company representative met the

waste disposal attendant, and offered to buy from him disposable syringes. He was immediately taken by the attendant



to a room near the furnace, which was filled with used syringes (non discarded) bottles, drips etc. all ready to be sold! The attendant also told our friend the name and contact number of the hospital's regular contractor (waste merchant) and offered to sell him 100 bales of such disposable articles. He also told our friend that he would introduce him to the relevant persons in some other local hospitals, which are also involved in the same business!

It is a matter of great shame that institutions which should be responsible for saving the lives of people are involved in this game of death. The top management of such hospitals (if they are not involved themselves!) should put an end to such practices, while the government should also, immediately look into this very serious matter. □

(Amanullah Memon and Salamullah Memon are engineering students)

EDITOR'S NOTE

In the absence of adequate hospital waste disposal mechanisms in most of the city's hospitals, the practice of improper disposal of hazardous clinical waste, has over the years assumed alarming proportions. Without naming the hospital, Shehri has identified the callous and inhuman nature of this despicable business, not unique to the said hospital. Any person or organization willing to take up this issue, with the concerned authorities or at any other forum of debate is welcome to contact Shehri, as we will be more than glad to provide any help possible, on this issue of great public concern - Ed



GLOBAL

Wirranendi - The Halifax EcoCity Project

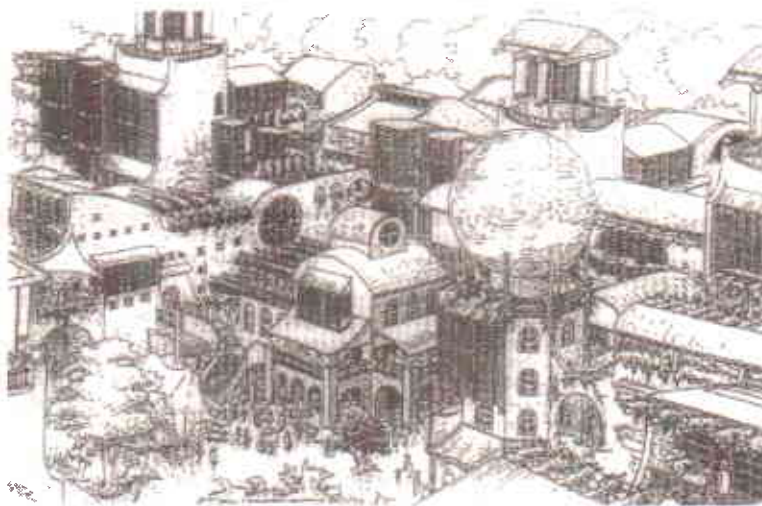
The deteriorating state of our cities today is a cause for despair and agony. With the proliferation of garbage, inadequate public transport, breakdown in urban services, the cities are unable to cope with mounting problems leading to stress and distress. Yet on the brighter side, attempts are being made to stem this rot. A project which attempts to make an ecological city for the people is on the card in Adelaide, South Australia. Sharon Ede writes about the development of an "Eco-City"

In the centre of Adelaide, in the Tandanya Bioregion of South Australia, Urban Ecology Australia, a UN-accredited non-profit NGO and member of the Conservation Council of South Australia, and Ecopolis Pty. Ltd., an ecological architecture, planning and design consultancy, have initiated the Halifax EcoCity Project. The EcoCity Project is a proposal for a mixed-use ecological development on a 2.4 hectare (6 acre) site, containing commercial and community facilities as well as housing with the emphasis on middle and lower income accommodation. The EcoCity Project believes that cities should belong to their citizens. Control of capital is usually in the hands of those who build only to make a profit - not to make beautiful and healthy cities. But this project will ensure ecological development with the community in control. The Project concept and design received the South Australian Civic Trust Commendation in 1992, and in 1994 it was awarded the inaugural World's Best EcoCity Project prize by Ecocity Builders of Berkeley, California, USA. The Halifax EcoCity Project is a positive example that the city, instead of being a planetary parasite, can save the world!

Adelaide - the City

In 1836, the British 'planted' Adelaide on the plains between the hills and sea, and the city grew. Today, Adelaide is a city of one million people, with most of the benefits and problems of modern cities. Urban sprawl has made the city spread over 90 km to the

north and south, with the geographical limits of hills and sea making east-west development difficult. The sprawl, a cause and consequence of a young city's over dependence on the car, has resulted in a level of smog which, while hardly comparable with larger cities, is a concern for a city of only one million. Adelaide's air pollution is largely 'invisible' pollution, with most factories located in or near residential areas.



The Halifax EcoCity Project

The city largely depends on Australia's only major river system, the Murray-Darling, for a water supply (typically 50%, but up to 90% during drought years). The water must be pumped from the river, over 60 km away, over hills and plains to reach the city's reservoirs. The city's water supply infrastructure is old and deteriorating. The sewerage systems cannot keep up with demand, resulting in several spills of raw sewage off the metropolitan coast in 1995, and millions of litres of secondary-treated sewage are flushed into the sea annually. A lack of local coal sources means that half of Adelaide's electricity is produced from burning natural gas, which is piped to the city from the state's far north.

South Australia is the driest state in the driest continent on earth, but the methods of agriculture which were imported in 1836 belong to those involved in northern Europe. European farming practices have caused massive soil problems, including erosion and salinity, in South Australia's rural areas.

These were some of the issues which prompted the



EcoCity Project's co-initiator to choose Adelaide as the home of the World's first piece of ecological city.

Community participation in EcoCity

Adelaide was chosen also because of its people cooperation and their participation in the EcoCity Project. In the four years since the Project was launched the response from South Australians has been enormous - particularly since the opening in May 1993 of the Centre for Urban Ecology (CUE) - the 'shop front' for all this activity. The CUE is staffed solely by volunteers. The process of making the Halifax EcoCity Project a reality is community driven.

Adelaide - the EcoCity

What is this EcoCity Project, this 'ecopolis', all about? Firstly, the Halifax EcoCity Project is a piece of eco city, not an ecovillage or any other form of ecological settlement (these are also important, of course). The UN estimates that shortly after the turn of the century, over 50 per cent of humanity will be living in urban areas. Currently the centre of global ecological destruction, the city must become the solution to global ecological problems.

Secondly, the Halifax EcoCity Project is an example of ecologically sustaining development, that is, development which sustains the ecology (not the other way around).

The rammed earth walls of the Project will be constructed from remodelled erosion gullies, with the gently regraded sides of these gullies established using vegetation. As these gullies (which are many metres high) were formed by poor farming practices in the past, and have resulted in soil loss and salinity, the Project will be actively healing the landscape through its construction.

The contamination of the proposed Halifax EcoCity site (a former tannery, bitumen plant and Adelaide City Council depot) was one of the reasons the inner city site was specifically chosen for an ecological development.

Thirdly, living in an eco-city allows people to act on a whole range of environmental and social issues just by choosing where they live. The resident of Wirra-

neni, just by becoming residents, will help to reduce their 'ecological footprint' and enhance their local environs in a number of ways.

Cities do not come into being by following an arbitrary rule of creation. The nature of their existence is determined by the 'invisible systems' - political structures, economic systems and other intangibles.

* A Solar Aquatics Greenhouse biologically treats and recycles all greywater and sewage on-site, meaning that Wirranendi's contribution to raw sewage spills and/or release of secondary treated effluent will be nil. All rainwater will be captured and used, and for the site, the 'problem' of stormwater (that is, rain water which has fallen on hard surfaces and has been contaminated) will cease to exist in conventional terms.

* For every resident of Wirranendi, at least one hectare of degraded rural land in South Australia will be restored to ecological health through revegetation and methods and programmes such as Permaculture.

* A contaminated, inner city site will be bioremediated and brought back to ecological health. The population density of the City of Adelaide will increase by 6%, with an expected 800 people (350-400 dwellings) set to take up residence in Wirranendi. This will help stem the tide of Adelaide's urban sprawl.

* The central city location will allow residents to access a wide range of facilities, including the main public transport hub, and reduce the need for car dependency. While Wirranendi has some underground and peripheral parking available, through traffic is excluded, enhancing the health and safety of pedestrians and non-motorised transport users.

* The greenery on balconies, roof gardens and in courtyards will play an important part in cooling the urban environment, filtering pollutants and providing habitat for animals and birds.

* Climate responsive, passive solar design will greatly reduce the need for electrical energy generation. Electrical energy will be generated using solar photovoltaic panels linked into the mains electricity grid. Wirranendi will be able to sell electricity to the grid when yields of solar power are high, and buy it back when yields are low. Greenhouse gas emissions are virtually eliminated, Wirranendi will become a power sta-



tion in its own right, and with the EcoCity Project linked to the mains grid, the need for toxic batteries will be negated.

- * The Project's non-toxic, allergy-neutral construction will benefit the health of all occupants, as there will be no outgassing of poisonous glues, paints and other materials.
- * Building materials will be sourced locally wherever possible to reduce the energy required in transportation. Ecological restoration programmes will supply approximately 2.5 per cent of construction materials, and 10-15 per cent of materials will come from recycled sources.
- * As one of the EcoCity Project's goals is to create work opportunities (as opposed to the sole pursuit of profit), the development process requires labour intensive rather than capital intensive methods.
- * Finance for Wirranendi will be provided primarily from ethical investment funding sources, to reduce the negative social and environmental impacts of the economic base. A Local Exchange Trading System (LETS), Urban EcoLets, is already operating.
- * Finally - and most importantly the Halifax EcoCity Project is about education and cultural change, and the evolution of an ecological society.

Cities are made by people

The development process should reflect the awareness that exploitative relations between people typically result in exploitation of the planet, and the invisible systems and power structures of city making should work to change the product - cities - by changing the process.

Cities do not come into being by following an arbitrary rule of creation. The nature of their existence is determined by the 'invisible systems' - political structures, economic systems and other intangibles. Who plans cities? Who decides how they should be designed? Who chooses the materials for construction and on what basis are these choices made? What impact do those choices have on environments and people far removed from the immediate reality in which decisions are made?

Genuine community participation in shaping urban

settlements, and economic systems which both reflect ecological realities (e.g. the real cost of fossil fuel use) and promote social equity, are the keys to ecological development.

Well before the first residents put keys in their doors, the community of the Halifax EcoCity Project is all ready forming. People keen to live in the Halifax EcoCity Project meet in the six weekly Potential Residents' Meetings at fund-raiser and public events held by UEA and by dropping into the Centre for Urban Ecology. Almost 700 Registrations of Interest have been received from people wanting to live in the Project, and over 60 households are participating in the 'Barefoot Architect' programme, where residents participate in the design of their dwellings whilst learning about the demands of construction, planning and ecology. Through this, people gain a sense of ownership and understanding of the process that leads to the creation of their living space. Many potential residents work as volunteers at the Centre for Urban Ecology.

To attract a broad, socio-economic mix of people, there will be a variety of housing tenures within the Project, including housing co-operatives (self managed public housing) and co-housing (some share facilities) groups. At least 25 per cent of the dwellings will be made available to low income households - ecological development has to work for everyone, or else it won't work at all.

In contrast with typical housing estates there will be a number of community facilities within the Project including a meeting hall, cafes, a restaurant, child-care centre, kindergarten, Ecology Centre and library, market place and other shops and services. These facilities, including commercial premises, the restaurant and the marketplace, will be available for the use of the wider community. The Project will be part of the whole city, not an enclave.

The Halifax EcoCity Project is a genuine ecological development because it addresses social issues as well as environmental issues. □

(Excerpts from an article written by Sharon Ede, Urban Ecology Australia for Urban Voices No 19, March 1997).



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

SHEHRI invites the residents of the city to share with us, their concerns, on issues which are adversely affecting their neighbourhood's environment. Please write to us, preferably with a supporting photograph, so that efforts are made and solutions sought - Ed.

WILL SOMEBODY LESSEN OUR MISERIES?

I reside in the Federal Capital (FC) Area. This colony is located in the District Central of Karachi, surrounded by the densely populated localities of Federal -B-Area, Liaquatabad and Nazimabad. FC Area was developed in the year 1953 to provide housing facilities to the Federal Government employees. The area was further extended during the years 1972-75 and 1985-89. It is estimated that about 0.1 million people inhabit this locality today.

Today the FC area residents are faced with a variety of problems. FC Area houses the largest residential complex for Federal Government servants in Karachi (about 5000 flats) so, a lot of sewerage and garbage is generated. Many of the sewer lines in the area remain blocked and thus overflow most of the time.



The playgrounds of FC Area



It is the same scene, day after day

Garbage disposal is a major concern. Previously KMC/ZMC used to lift the garbage under an agreement with Pakistan Public Works Department (Pak PWD) for which PWD paid conservancy charges. However, this arrangement is not working now and garbage can be seen littered everywhere. There is also the problem of irregular drinking water supply.

Over a period of time the problem of encroachments spread to such an extent that KDA had to declare these encroached areas as Katchi Abadis, namely *Moosa Colony* (4.5 acres) and *Punjab Colony* (7.4 acres). These densely populated Katchi Abadis are now tapping into the already inadequate public utility systems of FC Area, thus causing much distress to the legal residents.

Health facilities are almost non-existent as the area is served by only one inadequately staffed dispensary. There is no ambulance facility. Only two secondary schools, poorly maintained, and inadequately staffed are serving the 100,000 odd population of the area. Despite of all these drawbacks, the area enjoys a literacy rate of over 90% and residents are striving to improve their lives against heavy odds. Lack of green areas adds further to the misery of the residents.

The problems of FC Area are of a special nature due to its special administrative status and require immediate attention. □

*(Syed Shabi-ul-Hassan,
FC Area, Karachi)*



JUNIOR SHEHRI

Here are a few tips on how you could better manage your household garbage. Proper management of household garbage reduces pollution, conserves nature's resources and also saves a lot of money. So go ahead and try out this experiment in your homes - Ed.

What Does Nature Recycle?

Do this experiment to learn which materials will decompose naturally and which will not.

What you need

- * a clay flowerpot
- * a small stone
- * enough soil to fill the flowerpot
- * assorted litter, including foil, food scraps, leaves, paper, a plastic bag, and some polystyrene foam
- * a pair of scissors
- * some water
- * a glass pie plate
- * four weeks to wait for results
- * some newspapers
- * a stick about 12 to 18 inches long
- * a pair of rubber gloves (optional)



What you do

1. With the stone, cover the hole in the bottom of the flowerpot so that water will not drain out too rapidly.
2. Put soil in the pot until it is about one-third full.
3. Cut, crush, tear, or break the litter into quarter-sized bits and pieces.

4. Scatter the litter over the soil.
5. Cover the litter with soil until the pot is almost full.
6. Sprinkle the soil with water until it is thoroughly dampened but not completely soaked.

7. Cover the flowerpot with the glass pie plate.

8. Place the flowerpot in a warm, dark place.

9. Check the soil in the pot regularly and add water as needed to keep it moist.

10. After four weeks, empty the contents of the flowerpot onto open sheets of newspaper.

11. Put on the gloves if you intend to handle the soil, or use your stick to spread the soil so you can see what has happened to the litter.

12. Carefully observe the litter. Which materials decomposed? Which did not? What does nature recycle?

WHAT IS RECYCLING?

Recycling is processing and treating discarded materials so that they can be used again. Materials that are commonly recycled include aluminum, glass, and paper. Recycling helps the environment in three very important ways.

When we recycle, we save space. Things that would have been thrown away are kept and reused. Thus, fewer discards find their way to crowded city dumps and bulging landfills. Outdoor spaces can be left open instead of being filled to capacity with mountains of trash.

When we recycle, we save energy. Of course, some energy is needed for the recycling process - to melt aluminum, to crush glass, or to convert newsprint into clean paper that can be used again - but recycling requires less energy than

making new products from raw materials.

When we recycle, we save natural resources. In the recycling process, old materials are made into new products so fewer raw materials are used. Also, some of the coal, natural gas, water, or wood that might have been used to produce energy for the manufacturing process is not needed.

Recycling saves space, energy, and resources - three things we can no longer afford to waste - and it helps to reduce air and water pollution. □

(Courtesy: Earth Book for Kids, the Learning Works Inc., U.S.A.)



ASK SHEHRI

Most residents when faced with any civic problem do not know which person or organization to contact in order to solve their problem. In this column we invite the readers to share their worries with us and seek our help, which is always forthcoming - Ed.

Q. *There is a lot of confusion about the exact status of the KMTP project, with conflicting reports coming in the newspapers. I would like to know the present status of this important city project?*
(Haris Zubair, P.E.C.H.S. Karachi)

A. You can receive guidance on the issue from KMTP Project Cell, 6th Floor, Civic Centre, Karachi. Tel: 4934810.

Q. *There is a park in my locality, which is in a very bad state. The park is the property of KMC. I may be able to encourage some private sector concern to adopt this park. Whom should I contact, for information about the park?*
(Batool Azfar, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi)

A. Director General Parks, KMC
Khialdas Park (Opp. Arambagh Thana)
Tel: 2636393.

Q. *I would like to know what the Sindh Govt. is doing to properly monitor the pollution from power plants in Karachi?*
(Javed Rizvi, P.E.C.H.S. Karachi)

A. Contact
Mr. Fazal A. Nizamani
Director, Sindh EPA, Tel: 5867925.

Shehri needs volunteers

The various projects of Shehri are managed by the following six sub-committees:

- Anti Pollution
- Media & Outreach (Newsletters)
- Legal (Illegal Buildings)
- Conservation & Heritage (Old Buildings)
- Parks & Recreation Fund Raiser

Any person who wishes to help out in Shehri's ongoing and planned projects (cash / kind) should visit the Shehri Office for further information or contact the Shehri Secretariat through phone, fax or e-mail

JOIN SHEHRI TO CREATE A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

If you wish to join shehri please send this card to

SHEHRI Citizens for a Better Environment
206-G, Block 2, P.E.C.H.S.,
Karachi-75400, Pakistan
Tel / Fax : 453-0646

Name : _____

Tel. (Off) : _____ Tel. (Res) : _____

Address : _____

Occupation _____

SHEHRI MEMBERSHIP

Don't forget to renew your membership for 1996! Join Shehri and do your bit as a good citizen to make this city a clean, healthy and environmentally friendly place to live in!

HOUSING

Saner shades of development

Not all that Karachi has to offer is covered with gloom and doom. A model housing colony serves as a beacon of hope for the beleaguered citizens, suffering the ravages of uncontrolled urban development. Zeeshan Ahmed and Riaz Ahmed report.

When we consider the housing sector in Karachi, images of improperly designed and constructed flats and housing colonies lacking the very basic public utilities systems such as drinking water, sewerage and garbage disposal, are conjured up. However, amidst all this chaos, exists a housing colony which offers a sharp contrast to the prevailing urban mess in Karachi and stands as a model for future development in the city. The colony is "Gulshan-e-Maymar".

Gulshan-e-Maymar is situated in the north eastern region of Karachi (10 Km from Sohrab Goth). Total area is 1200 acres. The colony is made up of about 500 houses. An excellent water supply system exists. On an average 1000 to 1500 gallons of drinking water is supplied every day to each house. Separate water arrangements are made for the parks, playgrounds and nurseries. Water is stored in 4 overhead tanks (5000 gallons capacity

each) and in on-ground reservoirs.

Garbage collection and disposal is managed in an efficient manner. Each residence is provided a large garbage collection drum, for disposing household garbage. On every Sunday, sweepers take a round of the colony and collect all the garbage.

Plenty of opportunities exist for rest and recreation. There are in all five beautifully kept parks in Gulshan-e-Maymar. There are six well kept and hygienic refreshment spots provided for the residents. A number of mosques, depicting modern trends in architecture, are built and maintained by the Gulshan-e-Maymar authorities. A post office is provided inside the housing colony. There is a large playground, which is used for playing cricket, football and hockey. A club exists for indoor games like lawn tennis, table tennis and carom, etc. Basketball courts are provided at different locations.



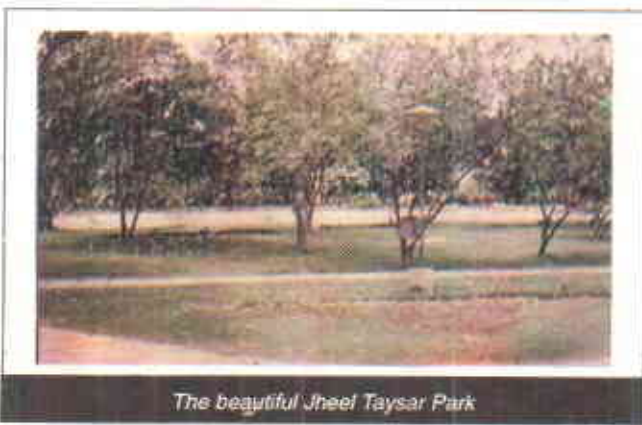
The impressive Town Hall building

A properly equipped dispensary is being run with the assistance of Baqai Medical College. A school (Sir Syed School) having separate branches for KG, primary and secondary levels, meets the educational needs of the colony children. A hall for holding marriages and other social functions is also provided.

Gulshan-e-Maymar has its own security system, being run by a private security agency, which employ about 80 private guards, armed with sophisticated security gadgets. Recently a police station has started functioning in the colony.

The residents enjoy a good quality of life in a well planned and efficiently managed housing development. It is hoped that future development in the city, follows similar guidelines. □

(Zeeshan Ahmed and Riaz Ahmed are engineering students)



The beautiful Jheel Taysar Park



HERITAGE

Kot Diji: A fort in peril

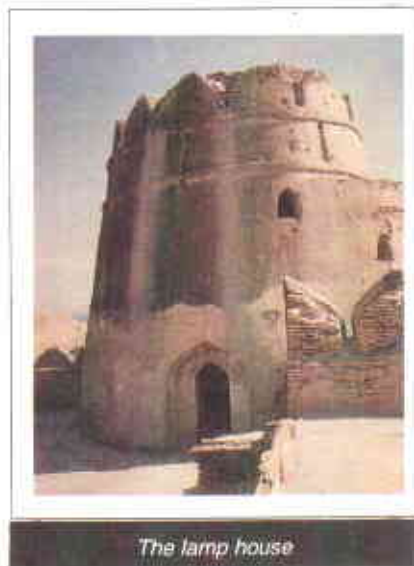
Kot Diji fort, another important historical landmark of Sindh, faces, an uncertain future. Qamar Hussain Lakho and Jameel Ahmed Larik advocate the need for its preservation.

The famous 'Kot Diji Fort' is situated about 15 miles south of Khairpur town, and it was built in the year 1803 by Mir Sohrab Khan Talpur. The fort is divided into three distinct parts, which can be entered through huge, intricately designed wooden gates.

The Fort

Some distinct features of the fort include the lamp house, water reservoir, bungalow of the Mir, and the ceremonial platform. The huge water reservoir, still reasonably well preserved, is 3.85 meters deep, 12.55 meters long and 68 meters wide. Water from two wells, one inside the fort and the other outside the fort was collected here.

The bungalow of the Mir is situated in the centre of the fort. It contains a large living hall, bathrooms, kitchen, store rooms and servant quarters. The walls, roof



The lamp house

and balcony are decorated in floral and geometric designs.

There is a ceremonial platform. This high platform, supported by ten beautifully designed pillars was used by the ruler to address the general public or soldiers on important occasions.

Decay and Degradation

Like many other historical sites in Sindh and elsewhere in Pakistan, Kot diji fort is also facing decay and destruction due to the apathy and neglect of the concerned officials and departments. The issue of salinity and waterlogging, which is causing serious land degradation in Khairpur and the adjoining areas, is also threatening the structure of Kot diji fort. The growing settlements in Kot diji city and the resulting problems of liquid and solid waste disposal are another concern.

The fort is located right next to the National Highway. Although this good for tourism, but the continuous flow of heavy traffic and the resulting smoke pollution is causing serious harm to the structure of the fort. Heavy excavation of stone from the hills of the Kot-diji fort has also taken place.

Official Apathy

Not much effort is underway to preserve this historic site. Some



Kot diji fort towers over the plains of Khairpur

years ago a committee was formed by the Government of Sindh, with the Sub-Divisional Magistrate Kotdiji, as the Chairman of the Committee to devise preservation measures for the fort. The Committee met once in two years! Neither the Sindh Tourism Development Authority nor the Sindh Archaeology Department maintain any offices near this important site.

Shah Abdul Latif University (Department of Archaeology) has taken some initiative, and has prepared a comprehensive report, "Documentation of Kotdiji Fort".

Apart from Kot diji fort, Khairpur houses various other sites of historical importance. Most are threatened due to the neglect of the concerned officials.

It is high time that some steps are taken to preserve this important historical site, and the Government of Sindh should take the lead in this regard. □

(Qamar Hussain Lakho and Jameel Ahmed Larik are Civil Engineers)