



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

July - September 1998 Vol. 8/No. 3

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Targeting for a Gun Free Society

Shehri-Citizens for a Better Environment, Citizens-Police Liaison Committee and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan jointly launch a campaign for a "Gun Free Society", and ask the citizens to strengthen their hands in curing the society of this fast spreading cancer.

It pains one to say that violence has become a way of life in this country. Newspapers are filled every day with the gory and gruesome accounts of sectarian, religious, political and domestic violence, to name a few declared "reasons" for the senseless, repugnant and despicable acts of brutality. Shamed is a society where guns and arms of all make and model are more cheaply and easily available in the market than good books!

Any talk of enforcing the rule of law in a society where differences of opinion between ordinary citizens are now being routinely resolved on the point of the gun can at best be termed as idle talk. So, how can the sanity of a civil society be preserved and nurtured amidst the death rattle of a Kalashnikov!

Crime control and punishment is an issue which can have several

dimensions. Having justice and equal opportunities, freedom of thought and speech and accountability at all levels of society and state is a desirable approach to ensure that a peaceful environment prevails. However, in a country where such visions can only be found in the manifestoes and speeches of our politicians and planning documents of our civil servants - far removed from reality, the civil society demands more immediate measures to stem the tidal wave of violence, threatening to engulf us all.

A viable course of action is being outlined by three noted non-governmental organizations of the city. Shehri-Citizens for a Better Environment, Citizens-Police Liaison Committee (CPLC), and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) on 19th September, 1998, at Karachi Press



ROAD MAP OF A GUN FREE SOCIETY

The following resolution was passed at the Shehri-Citizens for a Better Environment's Annual General Meeting held on 23-5-1998 and endorsed by the Citizens-Police Liaison Committee, (CPLC) and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). It was later presented to the general public on 19-9-1998.

1. The members of police or any other law enforcement authority which carry concealed weapons must do so only whilst in uniform and carry identification.
2. Guns must not be carried in a manner whereby the nozzle points at any person to avoid injury resulting from accidental fire. Nozzles should ideally be pointed sky wards.
3. Stringent criteria for issuance of licences be laid down and enforced without exception and not merely on the recommendation of any MPA, MNA or Senator.
4. Computerised record with



SHEHRI

206-G, Block 2, P.E.C.H.S.,
Karachi-75400, Pakistan.
Tel/Fax: 92-21-453-0646
e-mail/address:
shehri @ onkhura.com
(web site) URL: http://
www.onkhura.com/shehri

EDITOR

Farhan Anwar

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

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

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EDITORIAL

Reforming the "System"

When we talk of reforming our system, we seem to presuppose that a system of some make and kind exists. That it needs reforming implies a malfunction. What is the reality of this system we are committing ourselves to correct? Suffice is to say that the basic principle guiding this system is the oppression of the common man (more popularly known as the 98%). Living off the sweat and labour of the common man, fleecing him of his due share in the nation's wealth while keeping him ignorant about his rights in a just civil society are a few pursuits which have become the favourite pastimes of the perpetrators and protectors of the system. Where is the room for reform? May be it is not the system but the victims of the system that need to be strengthened. No better way then to provide them with the most valuable and safest asset-education. In a properly functioning democracy, the strongest checks on the working of the state are provided by an aware and educated populace. In the vital development sector - education, we are the laughing stock of the world. True reform can only come when an aware and educated common Pakistani has the last laugh.

Club, jointly launched a "Gun Free Society" campaign. A comprehensive plan of action (see box) has been prepared which calls for several administrative measures aimed at effectively lacking this menace.

Mr. Qazi Faez Isa of Shehri, Mr. Jameel Yusuf of CPLC and Mr. I. A. Rehman of H R C P spoke of the gravity of the situation and called for immediate implementation of the plan. Mr. Isa



The message was loud and clear

quoted various Quranic Verses and Hadiths to highlight the repugnance Islam holds for such acts of violence. He felt that success can only be achieved through a massive show of public support and involvement. He urged that we should be able to solve our differences of opinions through

dialogue in a peaceful manner. Mr. Isa told the audience that once while his illustrious father Qazi Isa, a famous Muslim League leader from Baluchistan was addressing a public gathering in Chaman, his supporters asked for permission to gun down Congress people for their opposition to Muslim League. However, Mr. Isa calmed his supporters and told them that they were our political opponents and our battle against them should

only be fought in the political arena. This is the spirit that should prevail today.

Mr. Jameel Yusuf S.ST, of CPLC said that there was massive proliferation of arms in society and ordinary citizens should actively participate in the



efforts to establish the rule of law, even if it may just involve writing letters to newspapers. Mr. I. A. Rehman of HRCP said that the country is facing a serious law and order situation with both internal and external factors adding to the worsening situation. He asked the citizens to adopt secular politics, work for rule of law and equal rights and opportunities for all.

Some victims of violence, their relatives and general participants also spoke on the occasion. Mr. Qamar-ul-Islam, whose son Mr. Shahid-ul-Islam, Director Finance PIA, was recently injured seriously in a shootout, Faraha and Fahmida, daughters of slain local journalist Manzar Imkani, Yaseen Alibhai, nephew of Basheer Alibhai, killed in the Mehfil-e-Murtaza massacre couple of years

ago and Navaid Husain of Shehri another victim of gun related violence shared their pain, sorrow and resolve with the audience and wholeheartedly supported the gun free society movement.

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Mehboob-ul-Hasan Rana of All Sindh Haqooq-e-Insani and Father Arnold of Idara-e-Amn-o-Insaf announced the association of their organizations with the movement.

S y m b o l i c burning of a few wooden guns also took place and stickers / hand bills bearing the message and symbol of the movement were distributed.

The programme ended with a strong resolve on the part of the participants to do all they could to make the movement a success. □

GUN FREE (CONTINUED)

complete particulars of all new licences issued should be maintained forthwith and records in respect of licences issued previously must be computerised within three months. Such records should be available with the Federation and each Province and continuously updated and exchanged between them.

5. Confiscated illegal weapons must only be utilised by law enforcement agencies or destroyed
6. No person should be issued a licence unless it has been established that such person can wield the gun in respect whereof the licence is sought.
7. Other than by the police and law enforcement authorities, carrying of prohibited weapons, in particular the Kalashnikov (AK47) be banned.
8. No person who has been convicted of any offence or against whom a criminal case is pending should be granted a licence. Similarly, no such person should have the power to recommend the issuance of a licence.
9. Government should make and implement policies for gradual withdrawal of all guns from society in a systematic and phased manner.
10. Any person who ensures the seizure of a weapon should be rewarded 25% of the market value of such seized weapon.
11. Gun manufacturers operating in the Darra area should be inducted to manufacture weapons for armed forces and sales by them to the public should be stopped.

Shehri, CPLC and HRCP urge upon the Federal and Provincial Governments to immediately implement the said resolution to make Pakistan a safer and better place. □



(L-R) Mr. Qazi Faez Isa, Mr. I. A. Rehman, Mr. Jambal Yusuf and Mr. Navaid Husain



MATTER OF MOMENT

Civil society at crossroads

As Shehri braves up for another clash with the divisive and criminal elements of society, it calls to all countrymen to make the hard choice between action and inaction vis-a-vis the struggle to establish sanity and the rule of law in society

A fundamental teaching of Islam is the propagation of goodness and protestation, against inequity and injustice in society. However, in a society where injustice is way of life and resulting rule of law is conspicuous by its absence, it is often a tortuous and hazardous route to follow. Pakistan is a case in point. Those willing to risk upsetting the apple cart (the precious status quo) are subjected to various forms of harassment, ranging from physical abuse to public ridicule. Vested interest groups belonging to various sectors of the society, through years of practice and hard work have become most efficient in the art of throttling the faint yet persistent voice of a minute section of our civil society, brave enough to stand up for their rights and liberties.

Shehri-Citizens for a Better Environment are presently standing trial-their crime "Working for a Better Environment".

Through public demonstration and use of media, a group claiming to be the crusaders of Islam are accusing Shehri of protesting against the construction of two mosques in the city. The obvious inference being that Shehri is a Jewish organization (American and CIA influence an understood fact!) being patronized by non-muslim agents of hell. The classic time tested made in Pakistan conspiracy scenario, guaranteed to succeed. The only ingredient miss-

ing is the RAW element. Maybe in due course of time it will also figure in this hateful campaign. Shehri, certainly cannot deny that it is not getting the full course VIP treatment, saved for the very troublesome persistent and thick skinned of civil rights activists!

A very basic level of investigation into the accusation against Shehri

the evidence was however not hidden from the actual perpetrators of this malicious campaign. They took refuge in the one issue capable of whipping up public emotions-religion. Shehri was accused of harbouring non-muslim agents having Jewish and American connections and calls are being made to bring out a "Fatwa" for their death!



Vested interest groups belonging to various sectors of the society, through years of practice and hard work have become most efficient in the art of throttling the faint yet persistent voice of a minute section of our civil society, brave enough to stand up for their rights and liberties

proved the ridiculously apparent falsehood of the claim. A fake letter head of Shehri with forged signature of one its member was produced as a proof of the said claim. Later KBCA itself denied receiving any such letter from Shehri.

A local Urdu newspaper in which this false accusation was first carried, later on printed the denial of both Shehri and KBCA.

The ridiculous claim and the flimsy, false and fabricated nature of

However, all these attempts have met with failure as the public can distinguish between the works of an organisation actively and publically engaged in the welfare of the common men since the last ten years as against an organization which apparently does not even exist anywhere other than on the banners on the streets. To quote an article appearing in the NEWS (September 27, 1998) "seemingly no traces of the said organization exists as all efforts to get JJI's version failed to bear fruit" unquote.

This is not an isolated incident. Our civil society, today is at a crossroad. Should one let the perpetrators of crime, injustice and human rights abuses continue with their shameful activities by turning a blind eye and a deaf ear to the acute misery and inequity around us or opt for the harder yet nobler choice-stand up and be counted. Shehri made its choice long ago and come what may we will do our bit towards making this country a safer, saner and better place for us and our future generation. So God help us all. □



POLICY MATTERS

A self appraisal

As the KBCA Oversee Committee nears the completion of its two year term, members of the committee highlight the positive impact they have been able to make despite adverse circumstances

By Notification No. S.O. Land (KDA)/H&TP/3-89/96 dated 23-12-1996 the Government of Sindh appointed a Committee to oversee the functioning of the Karachi Building Control Authority for a period of two years.

The then Minister for Housing and Town Planning in constituting this Committee stated:

"It has been the demand of the people of all major cities of Sindh to have organised growth, planned growth, not growth by use of discretionary powers. Every city needs to expand but according to rules. We need to preserve the character of each city. Now this is in the hands of your Committee. You have to come up to the expectations of your fellow citizens. Remember, it is easy to be disruptive, you need to be constructive in both your thoughts and ideas."

This Oversee Committee comprises of sixteen members. Other than the relevant officials, concerned professional bodies, professionals, concerned NGOs and eminent citizens are its members.

This Oversee Committee meets once a month and carries out a number of important activities.

It has proven effective in checking the brazen flouting of laws governing buildings. Buildings were earlier raised either without obtaining requisite permissions or in violation therewith. KBCA did not take action because it either colluded with illegal builders, was incom-

petent or was prevented from proceeding because of interference by important functionaries and politicians. The Oversee Committee ensured that there was no departure from the applicable laws. This resulted in a situation where bribes could not be demanded as no law was permitted to be broken. Effective measures were also taken to check the prevalent incompetence within KBCA.

Our major achievements

1. Establishment of "Public Information Counter" at KBCA to
 - a) provide information and copies of building plans/documents to the general public, and
 - b) receive complaints about illegal constructions and other KBCA related problems.
2. Establishment of transparency and openness in the working of KBCA, by making information and documents freely available to the public.
3. Standardisation of various procedures, forms and documents for use by KBCA, such as notices under sections 7-A of Sindh Building Control Ordinance 1979, properly

detailing the violations.

4. Publication in the English/Urdu/Gujrati press of regular Public Notices to assist the common man in making proper decisions. These notices dealt with:
 - a) warning the public against investment in unauthorized structures,
 - b) giving lists of under-construction unauthorized buildings in various areas, and
 - c) list of building approvals in various zones.

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c) list of building approvals in various zones.

5. Bringing attention of the KBCA's problems (with frivolous cases by the builders) to

the attention of the High Court. Reduction in number of interim orders being issued by Courts. Monitoring of the District Court orders on buildings by the Member Inspection Team. Establishment of procedure where DCBs and ACBs can immediately and directly assist the Courts, thus reducing frivolous litigation and misuse of court orders by illegal builders.

6. Re-enforcement of the need to obtain "Plinth Verification Certificate" so as to arrest illegal

The Oversee Committee ensured that there was no departure from the applicable laws. This resulted in a situation where bribes could not be demanded as no law was permitted to be broken



construction at the initial stage.

7. Re-enforcement of the need to regularly maintain "Field Books" by ACB's, so as to record the weekly status of construction in the various areas.
8. Resolution that no action will be taken by KBCA in violation of Regulations and in misuse of discretionary powers by politicians and bureaucrats.
9. Formulating amendments to the Sindh Building Control Ordinance 1979 to make it more effective (draft of which was sent the Government in mid 1997).
10. Co-ordination with the Heritage Committee for the preservation of old buildings in Karachi.
11. Identification of political and bureaucratic interference in

the internal working of KBCA, and support to the builders' mafia by vested political interests. Support of KBCA officers in their fight against such interference.

12. Efforts in updating of "Building and Town Planning Regulations" to bring them in line with current realities of the city.
13. Re-enforcement of the mandatory need to solicit public objections and assess the existing state of the infrastructure before conversion of land use, e.g. from residential to commercial, through ads in newspapers with wide circulation i.e. DAWN and JANG.
14. Suspension of licenses of over 40 "brief-case" architects and engineers who were heavily involved in illegal construction throughout the city. □

Members of the Overseas Committee

- Chairman of the Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners
- Chairman of the Pakistan Engineering Council
- Chairman of the Pakistan Institute of City and Regional Planners
- Chairman of the Association of Builders and Developers (ABAD)
- Chairman of the Indus Valley School of Architecture
- Ardeshir Cowasjee
- Roland de Souza of Shehri-Citizens for a Better Environment
- Professor Muhammad Nauman of NED University of Engineering and Technology
- Qazi Faez Isa, Barrister-at-Law
- Professor Noman Ahmed, Coordinator Urban Design Graduate Programme, Dawood College of Engineering
- Director General Sindh Environment Protection Agency

URBAN PHOTO ALBUM



Say "Yes" to trees



"Khoka", our own version of the road side motel!



One way of escaping the worries of life



One man's waste is another man's wealth



ACTIVISM

The art of complaining successfully

Citizens often say that their complaints do not evoke an appropriate response from the government departments. Maybe it is because they do not complain properly. **Khatib Ahmed** outlines, a guide map on the art of complaining successfully. Give it a try, you may be pleasantly surprised.

People generally bear a lot of inconveniences without raising their voice, or registering complaints. They should remember that making a complaint is a step forward in improving things for ourselves. Even if the matter is small, complaining successfully will give you a sense of satisfaction, of not being exploited. Also, not only is it a matter of principle to register an appropriate protest, complaining may also save others from suffering the same problems. It helps to keep the managers (employees/officials of public organisations) alert to their duties and responsibilities.

In order to extract maximum results from the process of complaining, it is necessary to proceed methodically.

Whom to direct your complaint to

In lodging, registering one's complaint, it is advisable to follow the organisational/management levels i.e. starting from the person / official directly concerned and later proceeding to higher levels of authority (in case of non-response or unsatisfactory results). In lodging your complaint, adopt the following sequence:-

- The person who is responsible for doing the job
- His immediate superior
- Head of the department
- Head of the organisation
- Elected representative of the people
- Ombudsman (federal or

provincial)

- Governor/President

How to complain and get results

Be courteous and polite.

- First write to the person who is required to do the work/or man-in-charge:-

* Identify yourself - give name, address, phone and fax contact and ask for your complaint to be officially recorded and acknowledged. It is important to obtain a receipt or proof of submitting your complaint. You can also send it by Registered AD, by post or Courier Service.

- Ask for specific relief within a reasonable period of time - specify the date by which you expect the work to be done. Emphasise the fact that he is bound by his terms of service to render efficient service.
- If within the stipulated time the work is still not done without reason, then
- Send the first reminder with a copy to his immediate superior, request him to intervene, reminding him of the rule where an officer is responsible for the behaviour of his subordinate (Rule Sl. Nos. 129 and 130, page 551, ESTA Code, The Civil Establishment Code).

If satisfactory response, intervention and relief has still not been received.

- Write to The Head of the Department enclosing copies of both the above complaints, for immediate attention. Remind him of ESTA CODE Rules. Sl. Nos. 129 and 130 (page 551)

- If still no response, file a complaint with the concerned authority (Chief Minister, Chief Secretary) under the Sindh Civil Servants Efficiency and Discipline Rules, 1973, Notification No. SOVII (S & GAD) - 1/123/73

If still satisfactory response has not been received

- Report to
 - * The Ombudsman
 - * The Governor/President

In complaining to the above sources of relief, you do not have to pay Court or lawyer's fees. You can pursue your own complaint and do not need to engage a lawyer.

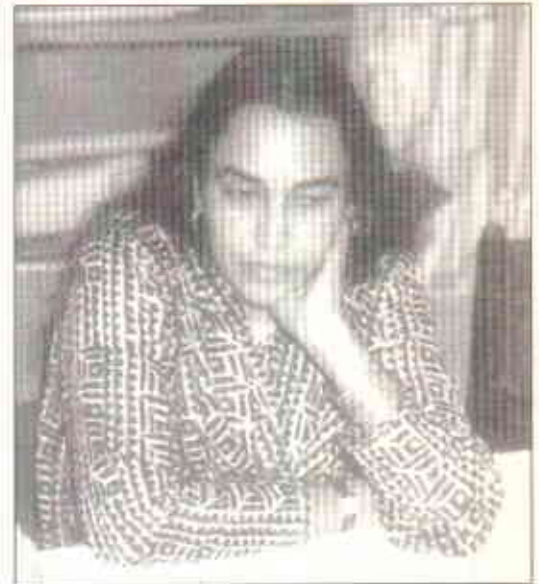
Court of Law

The other path of redress available to each citizen is to file one's complaint in a court of law. In choosing this option the complainant will need to incur legal expenses (lawyer's fees, court fee, etc.) □

(Khatib Ahmed is Treasurer and Member Managing Committee, Shehri-CBE)

INTERVIEW

We need to build a relationship based on trust and understanding between government and citizens to ensure an acceptable level of development **Perveen Rehman**



*An architect by training and a social worker by choice, **Perveen Rehman** balances her teaching responsibilities at the Dawood College of Engineering and Technology, Karachi with the task of serving as Director of the famed Orangi Pilot Project with an ease and facility which indicates her total satisfaction with her chosen roles in professional life. It also speaks volumes for her commitment and drive for social change. In this exclusive interview with Shehri, she talks with **Farhan Anwar** on our urban development challenges and identifies channels for positive change.*

Q. It is being increasingly felt that the state is failing to deliver an acceptable level of basic services to the public. Should the citizens come forward and share the workload or wait for the government to devise their own solutions?

A. It should now be realized that government cannot solve all our problems. If we talk about basic services such as health, education, housing, water than already people are showing their willingness to lend a helping hand either by choice or by necessity. Sanitation and housing are two sectors where this trend is quite evident.

Q. What can be an effective mode for citizens involvement?

A. Lets take the case of sanitation, which is close to everybody's

heart. After years of action research and extension education, we at OPP have evolved a model of low cost sanitation. In this model, government and communities are partners and sanitation development takes place at two levels. Levels one is called "internal development" and level two "external development". Level one comprises of a sanitary latrine inside the house, an underground sewage line in the lane and a collector sewer at the neighborhood level. It has been demonstrated in Orangi that communities can finance, manage and maintain internal development.

External development comprises of trunk sewers and treatment plants. This level of development cannot be undertaken by the people and is the responsibility of the government. Such a model can be

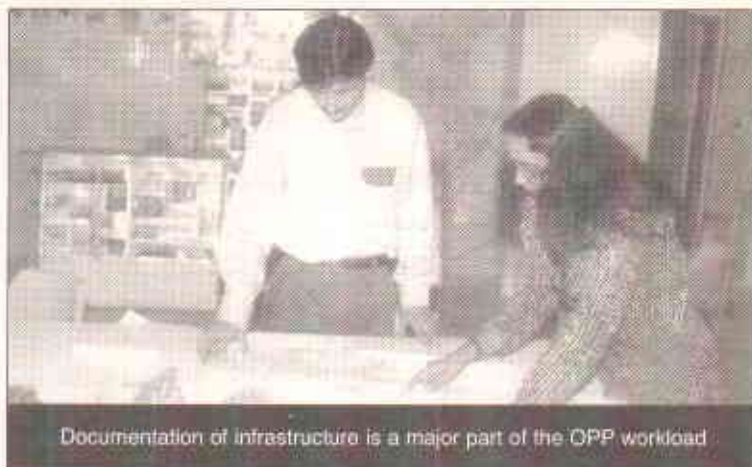
applied to other sectors of development also.

Q. You seem to be suggesting a kind of public-private partnership. However, presently the relationship is characterized by a deep sense of mistrust. How can such a model function?

A. It has to function. It is the only way out. At OPP we have had a fair measure of success in operating such a model. In neighborhood level projects, we have enabled communities to solve their civic problems mostly on their own, while on major infrastructure development projects we try to assist the government in implementing projects in a way that they address the real ground realities by taking into account the actual need of both the citizens and the system on ground. It is not



something new we are trying out. Let me tell you that while I was studying the history of the early stages of urban infrastructure development in England, I found that their planners, instead of imposing plans from above, which could have been divorced from reality, opted to allow citizen enterprise to develop and complimented citizens efforts at the higher scale of development. We need to build a relationship based on trust and understanding between government and citizens to ensure an acceptable level of development. It may not be easy, but it is the most desirable and realistic approach.



Documentation of infrastructure is a major part of the OPP workload

Q. Could you elaborate on your theme of "internal development" a little further?

A. The term basically implies infrastructure devel-

opment which can be managed totally at the neighborhood level. Citizen groups, NGO's/CBO's are ideally suited to handle this level of development. To provide technical know how for sustaining such initiatives we can build technical support institutions

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES: OPP PRINCIPLES AND METHODS

The Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) has become one of the best known NGO project in the world in the provision of sanitation. In the 16 years since its inception, the Project has directly and indirectly assisted about one million people in Orangi (Karachi) to improve sanitation. Their intervention has been developed through research into household resources and aspiration in Orangi. From the beginning, OPP staff have sought to minimise external support in order to assist households to achieve their objectives for local development in the provision of number of services including housing, health, credit for entrepreneurs, education and rural development. More recently, staff have been assisting both government and non-government agencies to initiate a number of new projects in other cities in Pakistan, drawing on the experience of the Orangi Pilot Project, whose guiding principles include:

1. The community has the resources it needs for development: skills, finance and managerial capacity. But it needs support to fully use these resources, to identify further

skills that are required and to receive training in these skills.

2. A study is not needed to identify the projects in katchi abadis. But a study is required to understand the people, their process and relationships, and to identify the solutions and methods that are appropriate.

3. The role of the NGO is to be a support organization and the technicians develop the advice. The social organizers who "extend" the advice into the settlement need to be drawn from the local community.

4. The package of useful advice is developed through interaction with all levels and groups within the community. There is a need for an attitude of mutual respect and learning.

5. The role of the activist is critical. Activists are community members who are already aware of problems, think about them and try to resolve them. The programme needs to identify these activists.

6. The smaller the level of organization, the better it will



function. In Orangi, a lane of 20 to 40 people is the level of organization.

7. The initial process is slow but after success has been demonstrated, progress readily accelerates. The concept and process should not be modified to obtain quick results.

8. The people and government are partners in development. Neither can solve all the problems of development alone. □

Source: Rahamn, Perween and Anwar Rashid (1992), "Working with communities: some principles and methods", OPP-RTI, Karachi.

such as OPP or within citizen groups, academics, professionals can give their time and expertise. However, institution building is the preferred approach to sustain long term success. There is need to develop a partnership between people and professionals also.

Q. You say that professional and academics can lend technical support to such ventures. Do you feel that professional and academic institutions are playing their due role in the urban development process?

A. It is unfortunate that our academics and professional are not coming up with effective solutions for tackling our urban crisis. One reason could be that they do not fully comprehend the evolving dynamics of our urban development process. The thought processes of our architects and engineers are not geared to the needs of the city. The practical, common sense approach is missing. They need to overcome their stagnancy and broaden their horizons for they have an important role to play in the future development of this city and the country. But an ostrich like attitude will lead us nowhere.

Q. How would you assess the role of the NGO sector in this equation?

A. Our experience with NGO's has been disappointing as compared to community based groups and organizations. We need to build institutions which can be achieved if one concentrates on capacity building among individuals over a period of time. That approach is missing in NGO's.

Q. What can other NGO's learn from the OPP experience?

A. OPP is an organization which has evolved over a period of time. It is our belief that this attitude that somebody else will do our work can lead us nowhere. That is why we focus on capacity building among individuals. Boys who used to spend idle hours on the streets yesterday are today documenting the land use profile of Orangi with us! We have no prejudices against any section of society. It is important that a forum for dialogue is established so that



Young residents of the area get useful training as part of OPP's capacity building exercise

free flow of ideas takes places.

OPP is working to develop alternative models of development in which the maximum input comes from local enterprise. More emphasis is now being placed on supporting residents to increase their bargaining power and skills within the local political context. We have decentralized our own functions in five separate areas namely sanitation, health, education, housing and micro-credit.

Q. Your micro-credit scheme has done a lot to empower people to take control of their own lives. How can we use this tool of poverty alleviation more effectively with a broader network of operation?

A. Banks can do a lot to spread this system. However, our banks are not structured to deal in micro-credits. They may loan 1 lac rupees to one person, but will find it difficult to distribute the same amount among ten persons.

Q. Privatization is being offered as a panacea to our problems. Your comments.

A. Privatization can only succeed if the ground realities are taken into account. Since our infrastructure is not properly documented, not many people know that already much of the system is being managed by citizens and the organized private sector. It is 'already privatized! Whether it be transport, garbage management or water and sewerage the informal sector is making a major contribution. We have to acknowledge their role and properly document our system. Otherwise, no privatization plan or major development initiative can succeed. Baldia is a classic example. We at OPP are painstakingly documenting various sectors of our infrastructure development. The results may surprise many.

Q. Is it not time we had a functioning "Master Plan" for Karachi?

A. There can be no two opinions about the urgent need of preparing a Master Plan for Karachi, which also functions. However, as I have said before a Master Plan can only work if it responds to the ground realities. We first need to document the existing situation and acknowledge the role being played by the various sectors of society. □



NGO PROFILE

Book Group: Educating the child

Saleka Enver of Shehri, profiles the work and achievements of an organization striving for positive change in the field of child education

It was like being transported into another world - the world of childhood, a world full of books, colours, pictures, a world of fantasy and truth. This is how I felt talking to Ms. Rumana Husain, the Director of the Book Group.

She, along with Mr. Sami Mustafa, the Principal of the Centre of Advanced Studies (CAS) School formed the Book Group with Mr. Mustafa as its Chairperson in 1988.

The Book Group started with 2 dedicated people, both belonging to the CAS, a private school in Karachi, with the aim of producing quality books in Urdu for children. They both felt that attending seminars and condemning the then available books in Urdu as pathetic and inadequate, was not their cup of tea. They both decided to produce what they thought constituted a quality book. Hence, Sami Mustafa wrote the story of "*Hassan ki Gali*" and Rumana Husain illustrated it. This was in 1988 - since then there has been no looking back. "*Hassan ki Gali*" is now in its fifth edition, and there are over 69,000 copies of the book in use in schools!

The BG, represents a success story in Pakistan, a great effort in the field of quality Urdu literature for children.

When asked how the BG books were different from others available in the market, Rumana said that the most significant aspect

about these books is that their content is a major departure from the routine way in which the subject was being handled. The text is about simple everyday life, and about interesting issues and objects that children experience. Presented with beautiful illustrations to which the child responds very favorably.

Unfortunately, our present text books, have rote-learning built-in them. It limits the child's creativity, and BG has striven to change this methodology.

Most BG books are accompanied by a teachers guide which spells out guidelines for teachers, "session by session, and include conceptual and vocabulary development, articulation of thought and confidence building", says Rumana.

I spoke to a teacher from the Froebel Education centre, Karachi, Mrs.

Mehar Khan, who teaches Prep-I and Prep-II. Her feedback is very positive. She says that whenever she reads a story written by the BG, class participation increases



The Book Group team, committed to the goal of professional excellence

to hundred percent. The child's interest is aroused, their thinking level improves and their response matches the contents of the book. The teacher's guides further help in improving the performance of the teacher.

Talking about the type of research that goes in the preparation of their books, it was enlightening to

hear that the authenticity of each and every word of the book is checked and measured by the members of the BG. Sometimes there are arguments, but almost always there is a consensus. For instance, one of the upcoming book "*Pakistan ki Sair*", which will take children on a whirlwind ride covering the whole country, was held back due to last

minute changes in both text and layout. I was shown a beautiful looking book, but Rumana pointed out a sentence which said "*Sindhi aur Balochi aurtein...*". Now, "*Balochi*" is the word used

"Unfortunately, our present text books, have rote-learning built-in them. It limits the child's creativity, and BG has striven to change this methodology"
Rumana Husain



for the language of the Baloch people, it cannot be used to describe its women. Hence, the book was sent back for reprinting! Such perfection is commendable.

The BG is also venturing to write about rural villages. For this, members of the BG visited Sachadino Goth, spoke to the residents, took photographs etc., so that they should obtain first hand knowledge on a Sindhi village. Likewise, they want to do a story on Thar as well. They are also planning to do a series on the major cities of Pakistan.

The Book Group has also adopted a girls school with the purpose of demonstrating improvements in

show that improvements can be made in the present system with the same staff, The real issue is not inefficiency but good governance and accountability", Says a confident Rumana

According to the Book Group's Quarterly Report (January to March 1988), the results of the assessment were satisfactory. The students have shown signs of improvement, their confidence and interest in learning can be seen from the work they have produced.

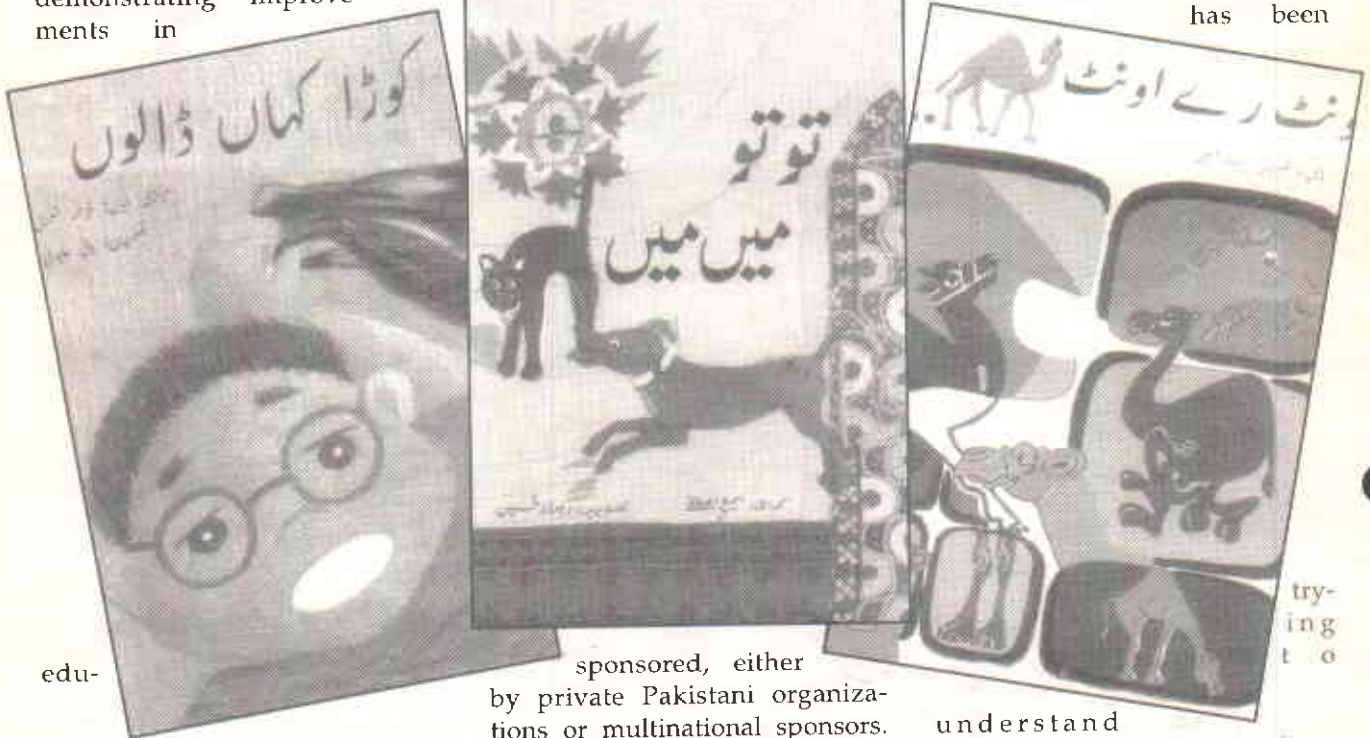
How do Book Group finance their books? Almost all the books are

organizations and individuals is a source of encouragement to Book Group, which it greatly appreciates.

"PARAMOUNT BOOKS" is the sole distributor for the BG books. Most books are priced at Rs. 20, but for schools operating in low income communities the prices are subsidised according to each schools financial ability to pay for the books.

What are their future plans? The BG will continue in their endeavour to write quality books for children.

Starting as a pilot project in October 1988, the Book Group has been



edu-

sponsored, either

by private Pakistani organizations or multinational sponsors. Some of the sponsors are Engro Chemical Ltd., Fuji Film, Pak Ltd., Hub Leather Products, The German Speaking Women's Club, Ihsan & Sons (Pvt.) Ltd., Badin Concession Joint Venture, ABN-Amro Bank, New Zealand High Commission, CIDA, General Tyre and Rubbers, UNDP, Australian High Commission, etc. The continued support and help from

understand and address some of the issues of curriculum development and teachers training. During this time work has expanded and diversified considerably, and the alternative textbooks produced have been accepted by a large number of schools.

The BG has decided to upscale its work into a centre for Education-

try-
ing
to



al Research and Development Foundation (ERDF). The ERDF will consist of a school and the Book Group. Syed Babar Ali, Chairman, Packages Ltd., has agreed to be the patron of ERDF. The eight members of the Board of ERDF are Mr. Shaukat Mirza, Mr. Atif A. Bajwa, Mr. Jehangir Siddiqui, Ms. Zohra Yusuf, Mr. Rasheed Jan Muhammad. Mr. Mahmood Y. Mandviwalla, Mr. Farrukh Sheikh and Mr. Sami Mustafa.

Regarding the National Education Policy, the cabinet subcommittee had

formed an experts Committee consisting of ten eminent educationists to be co-ordinated by

Sami Mustafa, Chairperson of the BG. The Experts Committee comprises of Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, Nargis Alvi, Nasra Wazir Ali, Zulfiqar Ali, Rumana Husain, Stella Jaffery, Dr. Mehmood Meemon, Rakhshee Niazi, and Dr. Attaur Rahman.

Regarding the concept paper they prepared, Sami Mustafa has this to say, "The concept paper we prepared builds its case on the argument that if the education profile has to change in real

terms, and if 50 percent or so of school-age children, who are out of school, need to be brought into

if the education profile has to change in real terms, and if 50 percent or so of school-age children, who are out of school, need to be brought into the folds of the schooling system, then the focus should not be on bricks and mortar, but on improving the academic standards and providing a quality of education which meets pedagogical standards.

the folds of the schooling system, then the focus should not be on bricks and mortar, but on improving the academic standards and providing a quality of education which meets pedagogical standards. This would motivate the out-of-school children to enter the a schooling system once they see that education can be intellectually stimulating, vocationally useful, and may lead to social mobility. At the higher education level, quality in education would help promote scholarship and establish scientific traditions".

Perhaps the biggest contribution of the Book Group, and their related work, is their professional attitude, which does not compromise on quality. Striving for excellence is their aim, and we wish them luck in all their endeavours. □

(Saleka Enver is a citizen activist and a Member of Shehri-CBE)

ONE AT A TIME

A friend of ours was walking down a deserted Mexican beach at sunset. As he walked along, he began to see another man in the distance. As he grew nearer, he noticed that the local native kept leaning down, picking something up and throwing it out into the water. Time and again he kept hurling things out into the ocean.

As our friend approached even closer, he noticed that the man was picking up starfish that had been washed up on the beach and, one at time, he was throwing them back into the water. Our friend was puzzled. He approached the man and said, "Good evening, friend. I was wondering what you are doing."

"I'm throwing these starfish back into the ocean. You see, it's low tide right now and all of these starfish have been washed up onto the shore. If I do not throw

them back into the sea, they will die up here from lack of oxygen."

"I understand," my friend replied, "but there must be thousands of starfish on this beach. You can not possibly get to all of them. There are simply too many. And do you not realize this is probably happening on hundreds of beaches all up and down this coast. Cannot you see that you cannot possibly make a difference?"

The local native smiled, bent down and picked up yet another starfish, and as he threw it back into the sea, he replied, "made a difference to that one!" □

- Contributed by Hanif Sattar, Member, Managing Committee, Shehri



INSTITUTION PROFILE

Sindh Agricultural University Tandojam: A potential unfulfilled



Syed Ghazanfar Ali of Shehri, profiles the Sindh Agricultural University, Tandojam, calls for investing resources in research and development in this important development sector of the country and also talks with faculty members on the issues facing the agricultural sector in Sindh.

Agriculture is the backbone of our economy. Pakistan is one of those fortunate countries in the world which can meet most of its food demands by itself. However, there are many issues which are causing serious doubts about our ability to sustain our food demands of the future. Water logging and salinity, pollution of irrigation waters, injudicious use of pesticides / herbicides, outdated and inappropriate farming methods are some of the main factors which are reducing the capacity and yield of our agricultural output.

Many of the problems that our farmers are confronted with, they share with farmers in other parts of the world. Such problems can be overcome by investing in new research into the field of agricultural development, as is happening in most of the countries whose economies are sustained and driven by the agriculture sector. Our country has also made commendable progress in this field even though we have been found seriously lacking in effectively implementing our agricultural strategies.

One such institution working in

this field is the Sindh Agricultural University Tandojam. Sindh, the land of the mighty Indus, has always had an agricultural economy with most of its people involved either directly or indirectly with this sector. However, modern farming and agricultural advances were not in practice till the construction of the Sukkur Barrage in 1932. With the commissioning of the Sukkur Barrage, it became essential to enhance the knowledge of the people about the advanced methods, techniques and modern know-how relating to agriculture so as to boost the agricultural production. The productive efforts of the planners in this direction resulted in the establishment of a higher seat of learning in 1939, bearing the name of King George V Institute of Agriculture, Sakrand, District Nawabshah. This Institute later on was shifted to its present

site in 1954-55 and was redesignated as Sindh Agriculture College, Tandojam.

In view of the great need of more advanced research in this area of development, the status of the agriculture college was subsequently raised to that of an additional campus of Sindh University Jamshoro on 1-7-1976. Ultimately on 1-3-1977 via the Sindh Agriculture University Act 1977, it was upgraded to the status of the present full-fledged Sindh Agriculture University, Tandojam.

Water logging and salinity, pollution of irrigation waters, injudicious use of pesticides / herbicides, outdated and inappropriate farming methods are some of the main factors which are reducing the capacity and yield of our agricultural output.

The University now possesses an academic complex comprising Faculty of Crop Production, Faculty of Crop Protection, Faculty of Agricultural Social Sciences, Faculty of Agricultural Engineering, Faculty of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sciences and Directorate of



Advanced Studies and Research.

Graduate degree programmes, post graduate degree programmes (MSC) and M.Phil / PhD degree programmes in various disciplines are offered by the University. Besides a modest number of short courses and training programmes are regularly offered to meet the continuing in programme service education needs of Agriculture

officers, field assistants, bank officials, agriculture technicians, progressive farmers, small farmers, tenants and house wives.

Students are encouraged to take interest in practical and applied education. Apart from providing in house research facilities such as libraries and modern laboratories, the University also maintains Horticultural Gardens, Botanical Gar-

dens, Student Farms, Livestock Experimental Station, Poultry Farms, Veterinary Hospital, Agricultural Engineering Workshop and Instructional Media Center for imparting practical training to the students. There is 750 acres of land available for in house crop and fodder production.

The prime motive behind the establishment of the University is

What the academics of the university say about the problems facing the agricultural sector in Sindh

Pollution of Irrigation Water

Prof. Mohamad Moin Khan, Chairman Department of Entomology,



feels that deterioration in water quality of the Indus river is a major cause of degradation of the agricultural lands in Sindh. The Indus which also collects on its way to the sea, the waters of river Kabul, Sutlaj, Beas, Ravi contains harmful waste products from factories such as tannery and textile wastes. Another major polluting factor is the run-off from agricultural lands upstream containing harmful pesticides/herbicide residues. Municipal waste from urban areas and disposals from RBOD and LBOD projects are also having their adverse effects. Efforts should be made to assess the water quality of the Indus, identify the major pollutants and their sources and initiate measures for improving the water quality of the river.

Improving the yield of our crops

Prof. Dr. Abdul Jabbar Shah, Director Student



Affairs, is of the view that proper preparation of land, correct selection/application of seeds, fertilizer pesticides are essential if we are to have good crops. Dr. Jabbar feels that crops usually give less yield when standing crops are not effectively protected from diseases, pests and when the mature crop is not harvested and thrashed at a proper time, which leads to wastage. In order to improve the yield of crops, he also suggests cross breeding of local seed varieties with foreign varieties. This process, if carried out with due research and care will yield positive results in the next 10-12 years with the growth of a new strong superior product.

Problems of the small farmer

Prof. Dr. Mohammad Khan Lohar,



Department of Entomology identifies the pre and post spray toxic effects of pesticide chemicals as a major concern of the small farmer. According to Prof. Lohar many young farm workers die during the process of pesticide application due to lack of education on the proper methods of pesticide application. He feels that it is the responsibility of the pesticide companies to solve this problem. They should fund the setting up of health centers at Taluka level which special-

ly cater to this need. They might also send visiting health teams and also educate the farmer on the proper use of chemicals. Regular health checks of farmers should be carried out, they should be insured by PAPA and by the government and penalties should be imposed on pesticide companies in case of death of farmers due to pesticides.

Introduction of new farming techniques

Shamshad Hussain Sipio, Lecturer,



Department of Agricultural Education, recommends the introduction of revolutionary technologies such as laser technology for soil leveling and new innovations in soil conservation, protection of soil fertility to make the agricultural sector more productive. He also calls for improving the working conditions of small farmers as most of our agricultural output comes from small farms of less than 12.5 acre area. Mr. Sipio is sure that if the small farmer is properly educated in new farming techniques and his financial position is improved, a substantial improvement will take place in the agriculture sector of the country. □

- Syed Ghazanfar Ali



to promote rapid transfer of technology, farm skill and expertise to farming community through continued output of graduates. However, it is a matter of grave concern that presently no research project is being undertaken. The reason according to the officials of advance study department is lack of funds.

Agricultural graduates and post graduates may be absorbed to work as farmers and managers in agricultural estates. Government and semi government departments that they can have access to include Agricultural Development Bank of Pakistan, Agricultural Research Council, Water and Power Development Authority, Sindh Arid Zone Development Authority and Dairy and Poultry Industries, Sindh Sugar Corporation and Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission.

Graduates can also share the business and management of agro-based industries such as fertilizers, pesticides/herbicides, sugar



What is experimented in the lab is applied in the field

/ Jute mills, cotton industry, feed mills (livestock and poultry) Veterinary pharmaceuticals and milk processing plants. They can also involve themselves in special projects sponsored by agencies such as FAO, Food Foundation, and agriculture consultancy firms, besides seeking employment in other developing countries, an option for which the university provides special training.

It is no hidden fact that our educational and research development institutions are functioning under extremely adverse financial conditions. Adequate trained manpower and state-of-the-art research facilities are thus often lacking. It is also unfortunate that at times the finances available are also not properly utilized by our educational administrators. The crisis which our educational sector faces is of long standing and is getting worse by the day. Institutions like the Sindh Agriculture University, Tandojam can form the engine of our future mobility. Such a process can only get underway in full drive if the problems facing our education sector are tackled and solved on a priority basis. □

(Syed Ghazanfar Ali is an expert in agrochemicals and member of Shehri-CBE).

New Deputy for UNEP

Secretary-General Kofi Annan has appointed Mr. Shafqat Kakakhel of Pakistan as the new Deputy Executive Director for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi, Kenya.

Mr. Kakakhel, 54, is a career diplomat who has served as Pakistan's ambassador to Ethiopia and Rwanda, as well as High Commissioner to Kenya, among other posts.

With the rank of Assistant Secretary General, Mr. Kakakhel is now UNEP's second in command. He takes over the position from Mr. Reuben Olembo, who will become special Representative of UNEP's Director-General, Klaus Topfer. □

Courtesy: United Nations Newsletter



POLITICS

A test of peoples power

The political and administrative system of India is bedeviled by many of the problems that also confront us. For our citizen activists, a reference point for positive change within our own system could be the Lok Satta Movement, recently launched in India. With clear objectives and a specific time frame within which to achieve them, it is mobilizing the general public for a National Referendum in the year 2000.

Foundation for Democratic Reforms is a registered non-profit voluntary society dedicated to the cause of comprehensive reforms of our governance structure. The chief objective of the Foundation is to launch grass-root public awareness campaigns, to network with concerned institutions and individuals, and to promote national consensus on the desired reforms. To achieve these objectives the Foundation has sponsored a movement called Lok Satta (People's Power). Lok Satta has also been registered as a Society. It is a voluntary, non-profit, non-partisan movement for democratic reforms. Lok Satta is different from other voluntary efforts in India in four respects.

Measurable Objectives

The movement has specific, tangible, verifiable and measurable goals for the rejuvenation of Indian polity. Lok Satta advocates specific, practical implementable reforms which will create a genuine democratic structure of governance and will in turn achieve the desired goals. There are five essential ingredients in a true democracy, viz., freedom, self-governance, empowerment, rule of law and self-correcting institutional framework. Except in respect of freedom, Indian democracy is seriously flawed when measured by the other four yardsticks. Flawed electoral processes, limited choice between Tweedledom and Tweedledee, uninformed public dis-

course, autocratic functioning of political parties and increasing criminalization of parties reduce our self-governance to a mockery. High degree of centralization, extremely inefficient, tardy and corrupt delivery of services, and despair and helplessness of citizens as stake-holders deny the people any meaningful degree of empowerment. The largely feudal administrative structure, non-participative model of governance, slow justice system, and insufficient checks and balances make rule of law virtually non-existent. As a result, the governance institutions have no inherent capacity for self-correction.

In view of this complex scenario, Lok Satta advocates the following specific democratic reforms as national goals.

Reform Goals

- i) to make political parties fully accountable to their own members and the general public
- ii) to ensure effective separation of legislature, executive and judiciary at all levels with appropriate checks and balances
- iii) to promote electoral reforms.
- iv) to ensure balanced distribu-

tion of functions and responsibilities among the union, state and local governments

- v) to ensure effective decentralization of governance and empowerment of local government as participative tiers of constitutional, democratic governance at appropriate levels.
- vi) to make bureaucracy truly accountable, responsive and efficient at all levels
- vii) to ensure speedy, efficient, accessible and affordable justice to people

The largely feudal administrative structure, non-participative model of governance, slow justice system, and insufficient checks and balances make rule of law virtually non-existent.

viii) to ensure right to information to citizens in all matters of state, without prejudice to national security or enforcement of law

ix) to ensure insulation of crime investigation and prosecution from partisan pulls and political vagaries

- x) to ensure creation of an effective, independent mechanism to combat corruption in public offices, and
- xi) to ensure creation of an independent mechanism for appointment of constitutional functionaries



All these are measurable objectives and all together their implementation will bring about the rejuvenation of the democratic polity.

Method of Transformation

Lok Satta believes that the Indian political process has lost the resilience to bring about fundamental changes in our polity. While the positive power to work for the public good is exceedingly limited in the hands of state functionaries, negative power of abuse of authority is virtually unlimited and unchecked.

Given the complexity of the situation and the near impossibility of the required constitutional reforms through traditional democratic means within the existing framework, Lok Satta advocates a creative, peaceful and democratic

response in order to achieve the reform goals. Lok Satta believes that a non-partisan National Referendum on the need for fundamental reforms is a creative way out of this impasse. The many successful referendums held throughout the world in mature democracies from time to time on fundamental national issues, are a case in point. The referendums in the UK, Norway, France and other countries on the question of entry into European Economic Community, the referendums in France in 1958 that led to the creation of the Fifth Republic, the referendum in Austria in the 70's on the question of use of nuclear energy, many referendums in Australia and the US from time to time, the almost habitual use of referendum as a tool of direct democracy in Switzerland, the recent referen-

dums in Scotland and Wales in the UK on the creation of separate parliaments for those regions with powers of taxation, and the proposed referendum in Sri Lanka on major constitutional reforms - are all examples of practical application of the referendum method to resolve major national issues in post-war democracies by seeking direct verdict of the people.

As the people are the ultimate sovereigns in a democracy, the right of the people to directly decide on issues of fundamental national reform is inherent in any democracy. Most Indians, cutting across all barriers of caste, creed, region, religion, language and class feel that there must be fundamental reforms in our governance process. However, in the normal political process they are fragmented in their

response on the grounds of caste, group, region, language, religion or ideology. The National referendum is a creative, democratic and peaceful method to bring about consensus and unity in the fragmented polity on vital national issues.

Finally, the judges of the Supreme Court in their judgements have enunciated clearly the principle for seeking direct public mandate for major reforms that might affect the basic features of the constitution. These judges have pointed out that in a democratic polity, a time might come when fundamental changes are needed to meet emerging challenges. If the Parliament is not empowered to amend the basic features of the constitution, and if there is no other peaceful, democratic way out, there will be

inevitable anarchy, chaos, violence and bloodshed and the rule of the gun will triumph in place of the rule of law. Recognising these dangers, the judges held that in such a situation, the only viable course open is to seek a direct verdict of the people on constitutional reforms, and such a verdict will be binding on the polity.

Means to Achieve the National Referendum

In order to achieve the National Referendum Lok Satta has embarked upon a two-pronged strategy. At the grass-roots level, at first in Andhra Pradesh, groups of local people are being organised in manageable numbers of about 50 in a group. These citizen's vigilante groups will focus their attention essentially on the local institutions of governance, which are also service-providers to them.

In effect, citizens as stake-holders will closely monitor the functioning of local schools, hospitals, ration shops, revenue offices, panchayats, municipalities and police stations, in whose functioning they have great stakes. By organizing these groups and articulating people's concerns, Lok Satta believes that there will be measurable improvement in the functioning of these local institutions. People will learn to work together to fulfill certain limited common objectives. Over time, through experience in dealing with these local institutions, people will understand the need for larger democratic reforms and the link between such reforms and delivery of services to them.

Lok Satta is working to build the environment for a National Movement for democratic reforms. Such a movement will become real only when three conditions are fulfilled. Firstly, there must be a common national platform comprising of credible Indians with proven

The National referendum is a creative, democratic and peaceful method to bring about consensus and unity in the fragmented polity on vital national issues.



record of service, unquestioned integrity and wide public support. There are scores of such eminent Indians who are now working in isolation. These individuals and many such institutions can come together without giving up their existing identities, organisations and goals. This national coalition will have specific goals which are accepted by all. They can affiliate their respective organisations and networks with the National Movement, without compromising their goals.

Secondly, this national platform must clearly and emphatically articulate a set of national reform goals, over which there is broadest possible measure of consensus. Contentious issues will be kept out of the national agenda, and where there are differences on the details of the democratic reforms, the majority view should prevail.

Finally, wherever there is no existing network of people's initiatives which form part of the National Movement, participants in the national platform must be committed to building a credible network at least upto the state and district level, and upto grass-roots level where possible, so that there is an accessible institutional network available for facilitating the participation of ordinary citizens.

National Movement

Most of the efforts are now concentrated in propagating the ideas and building a network in Andhra Pradesh. Lok Satta also recognises that credible and successful people do not easily come together without a great deal of interaction, mutual trust, confidence, broad agreement on goals and the willingness to separate areas of disagreement for future

debate and resolution. This is necessarily a slow and steady process, which requires patience, hard work and rigorous intellectual discipline. Lok Satta believes that the national platform will be viable by about the end of 1998 or early 1999. Once such a national platform with clearly articulated goals comes into being, it will take about one more year to build at least the district branches of the National Movement in all the more than 500 districts of India, where there is no existing network of people's initiatives already affiliated to the national platform. It is expected that by the beginning of the year 2000, such an accessible network of National Movement will have been built throughout the country.

Lok Satta believes that the National Movement can be launched after careful preparatory work on the 26th January 2000 AD, which also marks the completion of 50 years of the Indian Republic. At that stage, a few months of intensive national campaign for democratic reforms will inevitably result in a National Referendum. The other logistical details of the referendum and the post-referendum situation will have to be resolved in consultation with constitutional scholars, jurists and political parties.

Conclusion

The task is difficult, but vital. The struggle is hard, but necessary. The risks are high, but cannot be avoided. The effort will demand courage, resourcefulness and endurance. We must work for such a movement with the sure knowledge that people want reform, and if we fail to translate their frustration and anger into a constructive reform movement, the nation will have to forsake

peace, freedom and unity, and at least a generation or more will needlessly suffer pain, anguish and misery on a scale unprecedented in human history. □

How literate are we?

Literacy-the ability to read and write - vastly improves income-earning potential. Traditionally, Pakistan has not measured literacy according to accepted international definitions. As a result, it has been difficult to make meaningful comparisons of literacy rates with other countries. In Pakistan, a person's literacy has been judged by the ability to read the Quran and sign their name. In earlier times, the literacy rate was measured according to international norms in the Censuses of Population. However, the last such census was in 1982. Since then, the government has computed literacy by taking the number of literate people recorded in the census and adding to it the number of graduates from Grade 5 and Adult Literacy Programs. This figure is then divided by the estimated population, whose current growth rate is 2.6% a year, according to official statistics. There are two major problems with this methodology. The first is that it assumes that Grade 5 graduates are indeed literate. The second is that it assumes a decline in the population growth rate. Both of these assumptions have been disputed by social development researchers and practitioners, casting grave doubt on the accuracy of official literacy statistics. □

Courtesy:
SPDC Annual Review 1998



REFORMS

Social Democratic Movement-Striving for political reforms

Some prominent intellectuals, academics, professionals and human rights activists recently decided to launch a movement aimed at introducing political reforms in the country, leading to the restructuring of its economic, administrative and judicial systems. Shehri analysis SDM's charter of reforms

It has been argued since long that our political system can only improve if academics, social reformers, technocrats and ordinary citizens, presently on the fringes of the decision making processes in the country, come forward and strive actively for political reforms. Recently a movement named the Social Democratic Movement (SDM), comprising of just such individuals was launched with a non-electoral but essentially, political agenda for action, with Dr. Qaiser Bengali as its Central Co-ordinator.

The SDM workers are of the view that although the country has made significant gains in the social, economic and political spheres since its birth fifty years ago, these gains have been far below national potential on account of poor administrative and economic governance.

Also, gains have been divided unequally between different income groups as well as between regions. As a result an environment of injustice and mistrust prevails.

If it is unfortunate that owing to bad governance and non-democratic measures, Pakistan, a coun-

try which is resource rich, is faced with issues of poverty, depletion of physical infrastructure, degradation of natural resources and unemployment.

The SDM points out that direct taxes levied on the rich contribute a meagre 15% of total tax revenue while 55% of tax revenues accrue from indirect taxation - from the pockets of the poor

In order to promote an alternative form of people-centered politics aimed at redressing the ills of our present political system, SDM proposes a 5 point charter of political reforms (see box).

In order to reduce income/wealth inequalities, eradicate unemployment and poverty, ensure provision of basic

services and manage sustained economic growth, SDM identifies the following two economic sectors for reforms.

Agrarian Reforms

Land reform and the introduction of new institutions capable of ensuring sustainable use of land/water resources and equitable distribution of the gains of agricultural growth are the need of the hour. The would replace the repressive feudal order, presently in place.

Fiscal Reforms

Fiscal policy is manifested in the budgetary process as it outlines the allocation and distribution of

Programme for Change

- Restructuring the Socio-economic system
- Decentralizing the state
- Strengthening the Judiciary, particularly the lower Judiciary
- Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy
- Establishing accountability and transparency

resources. The SDM points out that direct taxes levied on the rich contribute a meagre 15% of total tax revenue while 55% of tax revenues accrue from indirect taxation - from the pockets of the poor. The fiscal structure is also so designed that it fails to promote productive capacities of the economy while economically unsustainable defence and administrative, non-development expenditures are supported.

SDM outlines two urgent measures for reform.

- Taxation of investment / production to be replaced by taxation of wealth, income and luxury consumption.
- Public expenditure on provision/maintenance of infrastructure and services aimed at bringing improvement in the standard of living.

Decentralizing the State

In order to ensure that local government is constitutionally recog-



nized as the basic unit of government and effective decentralization of power takes place, SDM suggests various constitutional amendments which include abolishing the concurrent legislative list, and all federal control over tribal areas and the instituting of local governments. The resulting devolution of power, SDM argues, will create an effective network of co-ordination between the federal, provincial and local governments capable of delivering the required results.

The structure of local government will then have to be suitably strengthened in administrative, economic and technical capacities – its work being watched over by a local judiciary.

Strengthening the Judiciary

As the SDM calls for decentralizing the state with strong local governments, it also calls for strengthening the lower level of the judicial system functioning at the local level.

For the superior courts, it is felt that appointment of judges is the main problem. SDM identifies various measures to make this process impartial and transparent. It also calls for a complete restructuring of the subordinate judicial system by providing district and session courts with constitutional status and subsequent strengthening of their role and capacity to function.

SDM calls for radical measures like abolishing the 8th Amendment in its entirety, providing direct elections to the Senate, abolishing separate electorates and doubling the size of National and Provincial Assemblies. SDM also demands an allocation of 33% seats in National and Provincial assemblies for women

SDM feels that simultaneous with the reforms of the judicial system should be carried out reforms in the police and investigation and prosecution process. The criminal investigation system allows the police to manipulate the cases

before being presented to the courts while provisions like Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code confers vast powers on the police and section 169 which enables the police to enter and withdraw cases in courts at will.

Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy

SDM argues that while discussing the merits and demerits of various systems of governments, the debate centres around the balance of powers b/w the President and the Prime Minister, while the real issue is that of the right balance of power

between the Prime Minister and the Parliament.

In our country the legislature exercises little control over executive actions. Even budgets, duly passed by the legislatures are amended by executive choice through the mechanism of supplementary budgets and SRO's. Given the extent of discretionary powers available to the executive branch of government, elected governments actually emerge as elected dictatorships.

To redress this serious flaw in our "democratic" system SDM calls for radical measures like abolishing the 8th Amendment in its entirety, providing direct elections to the Senate, abolishing separate electorates and doubling the size of National and Provincial Assemblies. SDM also demands an allocation of 33% seats in National and Provincial assemblies for women. Parliamentary ratifications on many key national issues are also demanded.

Ensuring accountability and transparency

Corruption is rampant in our society. It can be attributed to two broad factors. First, inequalities in the distribution of income/wealth and two, availability of the means to acquire wealth through unethical and illegal means.

SDM is confident that their land and fiscal reform measures can bring positive changes in the distribution income/wealth, thereby curbing one side of the corruption coin. Curbing the other side requires constitutional and legislative measures, which may include a requirement of declaration of assets by all elected officials, their spouses, civil and military officers in grade 20 and above, reestablishment of a permanent *Accountability Commission* and the enactment of a *Freedom of Information Act*, among other things.

The setting up of forums like the Social Democratic Movement are much needed, where new ideas and strategies for national governance can evolve. It is hoped that all sectors of society can mobilize themselves to contribute their bit in the efforts to bring positive changes in the functioning of the state. □



DIPLOMACY

Building regional security: NGOs and Governments in partnership

Despite an active "track two diplomacy" process between Pakistani and Indian citizens, relations on the official front have gone from bad to worse. What went wrong? Maybe the requisite mechanisms were not in place. James Notter and Johan McDonald write on how such a process can be made to deliver

In dealing with issues of global security and regional stability, the U.S. government has a major, but often unrecognized, ally in the community of nongovernmental organizations, who are playing an increasingly important role in the development and implementation of government policies. There is a specific part of the NGO community that focuses on issues of "conflict resolution" or "track two diplomacy," where NGOs work unofficially - often in cooperation with governments - to help resolve ethnic conflicts around the world that constitute a major threat to regional stability and peace.

The term "track two diplomacy" was coined in 1981 by former U.S. diplomat Joseph Montville to describe the efforts of ordinary citizens and unofficial organizations to resolve conflict. The basic notion behind track two diplomacy is that peace and conflict resolution cannot be achieved by governments alone. Unofficial, informal, behind-the-scenes contact play a vital role in conflict resolution and in promoting regional security.

The real challenge of track two diplomacy lies in the interrelationship between the official and unofficial spheres, which can be a sensitive one. Those working unofficially do not want to feel pressured or unduly constrained when they explore a policy or process that government officials oppose. Official rejection of a

multi-track plan can preclude project implementation.

Government officials, on the other hand, should be kept informed. It is governments, after all, that are responsible for negotiating, signing, and ratifying treaties and other formal documents that may be needed to seal the unofficial, successful initiatives. These two important parts of the peacemaking system become more effective when they work in cooperation with each other, instead of on parallel tracks.

During the Cold War, even before the term was coined, many NGOs and individuals were involved in track two diplomacy, attempting to build bridges between the two superpowers and working to de-escalate conflicts and crises, which, given the nuclear capabilities of the United States and the Soviet Union, represented very serious threats. The American Friends Service Committee and Moral Re-Armament worked unofficially on relations between East and West Germany, and between France and Germany, in the 1950s and 1960s. Several prominent individuals and journalists have been involved in unofficial dialogues in crisis situations, including the Dominican Republic in 1965 and the Cuban

Missile Crisis in 1962. The Dartmouth Conference, a nongovernmental dialogue group that focused on Cold War issues, started in 1959 and continued through the late 1980s. The group met many times during those decades, discussing informally the important differences of the day in U.S. Soviet relations. Even at times when government officials of the two nations refused to meet, the officials, actually requested that Dartmouth Conference groups continue to meet, to keep the door open and information flowing between the two adversaries.

As we enter the next millennium, it appears that unofficial actors, in particular NGOs, will continue to play an important role in foreign policy development and implementation. This can occur in a variety of ways, including very specific conflict situations (as in Cyprus), indigenous NGOs working in a region plagued by ethnic conflict and instability (the Horn of Africa), and links between intergovernmental organizations and NGOs (Bosnia).

Cyprus

The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD) in Washington, D.C., and the Conflict Management Group (CMG) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, have

The real challenge of track two diplomacy lies in the interrelationship between the official and unofficial spheres, which can be a sensitive one



joined together under the name of the "Cyprus Consortium" in order to implement a training program in Cyprus focusing on conflict resolution. The U.S. government has put an emphasis on resolving this conflict, as evidenced most recently by the appointment of Bosnia peace broker Ambassador Richard Holbrooke as Special Presidential Emissary for Cyprus. The Consortium has trained several hundred Greek and Turkish Cypriots in conflict resolution skills, project development and management, and training design and delivery. This group of grass-roots peace builders has organized dozens of bicomunal projects including musical concerts and youth programs, and has facilitated dialogue sessions on the Cyprus conflict.

From the beginning, the relationship between the Consortium and U.S. government personnel has been one of cooperation and mutual support. The Consortium continuously keeps the U.S. government staff well informed of its activities, and the U.S. Embassy and officials in Washington have often called upon Consortium staff to consult on issues they are working on. Similarly, the Consortium has often enlisted the support of embassy staff in developing and implementing its training programs. Once the grass-roots work in Cyprus reached a certain level, the embassy even appointed a special coordinator for bicomunal affairs to serve as a liaison between the embassy and the Greek and Turkish Cypriots doing bicomunal conflict resolution work.

When bicomunal contact was cut off by the Turkish Cypriot authorities in December 1997, the U.S. Embassy issued a statement urging that the bicomunal activities be allowed to resume. An embassy spokesperson stated that while bicomunal activities "will not solve the Cyprus problem," the

"free association" that they permit "is what civil society is all about." Such a statement demonstrates that the work of governments and of NGOs in resolving conflicts and enhancing regional stability are not so separate and distinct.

Horn of Africa

In 1994, President Clinton launched a Greater Horn of Africa Initiative (GHAI) within the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). In an initial concept paper entitled "Building a Foundation for Food Security and Crisis Prevention in the Greater Horn of Africa," GHAI representative recognized the link between development and emergency aid on one hand, and conflict prevention, crisis management, and conflict resolution on the other.

More importantly, they also explicitly recognized, from the very beginning, the link between governments, intergovernmental organizations, and NGOs. In the report, GHAI describes itself as a "collaborative effort among African states, nongovernmental organizations, concerned citizens, Inter-governmental Authority on Drought and Development, and the international donor community to address the root causes of food insecurity in the Horn." The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy was one of several NGOs that were consulted in the development of the report and the set of activities that followed from the report. IMTD also cooperated during a training program organized by the United States Institute of Peace (an independent, non-partisan organization funded by the U.S. Congress) and GHAI staff.

Finally, GHAI recently requested proposals looking for a team of NGOs to manage a grant-making program/institutional strengthening for NGOs in the Horn of Africa that would implement activities in

support of the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative.

OSCE

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is working closely with many NGOs, both from the United States and locally, in organizing and implementing programs to support the civilian aspects of the Dayton accords in Bosnia. IMTD was approached in December 1996 by the OSCE to see if the two groups could work together on the matter of social peace building. With funding from the U.S. Information Agency, IMTD trained 70 Bosnians from the Bosnian-Serb, Bosnian-Muslim, and Bosnian-Croat communities. The OSCE played a vital role as the convener, in the five cities in which the training took place, because it provided a "safe haven" for all participants.

As all of these examples indicate, government/NGO cooperation in the area of security policy and regional stability is increasing. Partnership between NGOs and governments enables both groups to be more powerful and effective in achieving their missions. Both NGOs and governments retain their particular characteristics; the goal is not to merge the work of these two actors in the system. Rather, as in any system, when component parts work together in harmony, respecting and capitalizing on their differences in structure, resources, and abilities, the system of building peace and regional stability around the world will work more productively.

(Ambassador McDonald is Chairman and co-founder of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy in Washington D.C. and James Notter is a Program Associate at the Institute).

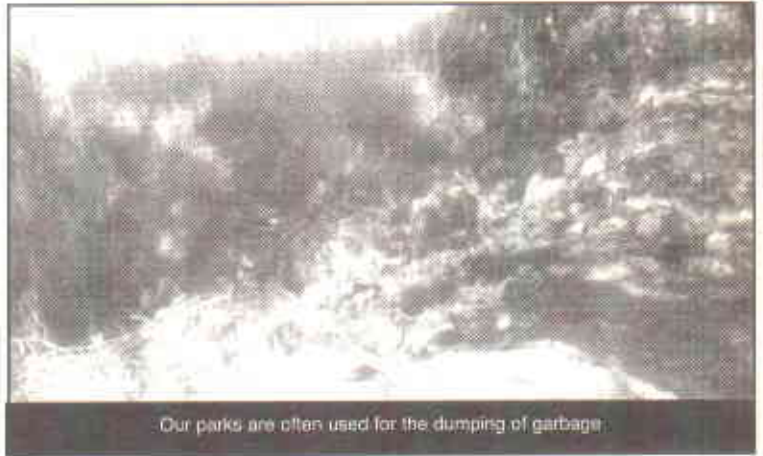
(Courtesy: Electronic Journal of the United States Information Agency. Vol. 3/No.3, July 1998).



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.

Development of Parks



Our parks are often used for the dumping of garbage.

I am a resident of K.D.A. Overseas Bungalows, Gulistan-e-Jauhar, Karachi. It is a well planned, peaceful locality of one unit bungalows, wide roads, plenty of open spaces and adequate security provisions.

The colony which consists of more than 350 houses is also provided with about 20 or so open spaces designated for parks/play grounds. However, it is extremely unfortunate that apart from one single park none is developed. Thus open spaces are lying idle and some of them are even being used for the dumping and burning of garbage.

A joint campaign is needed between

the area residents, administration and relevant government officials to bring verdant life to these desolate parks.

Some of the parks can even be adopted by private concerns as funds for the development and maintenance of parks will also be needed.

The city is already desperately short of parks/play grounds. To have such a housing scheme where so much open space is available is a rarity. The chance of getting full value out of them should not be allowed to lapse. □

(Anwar Jafri, K.D.A. Overseas Bungalows, Gulistan-e-Jauhar, Karachi)



JUNIOR SHEHRI

Write a Letter!

Writing a letter is a good way to communicate your concerns about the environment to other people. Keep these points in mind when you write.

1. **Make your letter simple and direct.**
2. **Focus on one problem.**
3. **Organize what you want to say. First, explain why you are writing and what your concern is. Then, express your opinion and offer some suggestions about how the problem might be solved.**
4. **Type or use your best handwriting so your letter will be neat and easy to read.**
5. **Before mailing your letter, check it for spelling, punctuation, or other errors, and correct any you find.**
6. **Sign your name and include your address so that the persons to whom you are writing can respond.**

Write a letter to the officers of a company congratulating them on practical, sensible packaging. Let them know that you appreciate what they are doing to help heal the earth.

Write a letter to officials of your local, provincial or national government explaining your concerns about the environment. In your letter, ask them what they are currently doing about a specific problem. Find out what legislation is pending on this issue. Share any information you receive with others.

Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper expressing your feelings and opinion about air pollution, deforestation, endangered animals, oil spill,

VOICE OF MY HEART

This is the voice of my heart,
One day this world will change,
The feeling of love will spread far and wide,
And will embrace one and all.

This is the voice of my heart,
One day everyone will have their share,
There will be no fight or injustice,
For each other-people will care.

This is the voice of my heart,
One day everyone will be treated equal,
No white over black, no rich over poor,
No one will adopt means illegal.

This is the voice of my heart,
One day this world will be a better place,
But for it we all have to work together
Without thought of retreat.

– Saba Jawed

water pollution or some other environmental problem. In your letter, describe what steps community leaders might take toward solving this problem.

Write a letter to the officers of a company that is not doing its share to help heal the earth. Let them know how you feel. Challenge them to make their products more earth-friendly. □

Courtesy: Earth Book for Kids



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. Which ministry administers Karachi's Cantonment Boards and how many boards presently function in Karachi?
(Sana Khalid, Defence Housing Authority, Karachi)
- A. The Ministry of Defence administers Karachi's Cantonment Boards and there are six boards in all, namely Karachi, Faisal, Clifton, Korangi Creek, Malir and Manora.
- Q. How can I contact the District Health Officer of DMC Central?
(Abbas Kazim, Nazimabad, Karachi)
- A. District Health Officer
Hifzan-e-Vasti, Near Hadi Market, Nazimabad # 4. Tel: 628220, 622241
- Q. Is it safe to use sewage water to irrigate parks/green areas?
(Hina Shahid Mehmoodabad, Karachi)
- A. Municipal sewage water may facilitate the growth of plants due to the presence of nutri-

ents, however, it also contain pathogens harmful to human health and its use in public places without pre-treatment is not recommended.

Shehri needs volunteers

The various projects of Shehri are managed by its 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

With a cross cheque of Rs. 200/- (Annual Membership Fee) in the name of Shehri-CBE with passport size photograph

Name : _____

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

Address : _____

Occupation _____

SHEHRI MEMBERSHIP

Don't forget to renew your membership for 1998! Join Shehri and do your bit as a good citizen to make this city a clean, healthy and environmentally friendly place to live in!

CONSERVATION

Shehri Park , put in forward gear!

On the 14th of August 1998, coinciding with the nation wide independence day celebrations, Shehri members and residents of the locality formally inaugurated the 'Shehri Park', which they have adopted in the Clifton area of Karachi. About 60 trees were planted by Shehri members and a sizable number of residents who had gathered on the occasion. Young and old participated with equal vigour and enthusiasm.



Age is no barrier when it comes to performing noble deeds



and the Shehri Secretariat. Plantations were done under the expert supervision of a gardener who has been employed by the 'Park Managing Committee', to look after the park.

According to Mr. Arshad A. Shamsi, Secretary of the Park Managing Committee and a resident by the area, future plans for the park include the construction of a boundary wall and for a small treatment facility to treat the sewage water for reuse in the park.

Plants were provided by the Parks and Recreation Department of KMC, while the activity was organized and managed by Mr. Imran Javed, coordinator of Shehri's Parks Programme

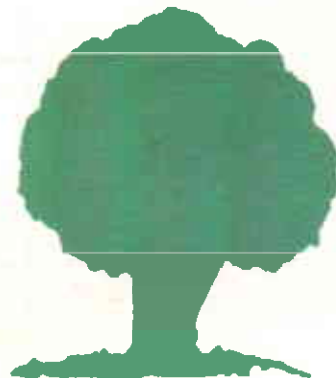
Mr. Adnan Asdar, a renowned architect of the city and resident of the area has volunteered to prepare a landscape plan for the park.



A day well spent

It was the shared view of all those present that through joint efforts, the park should be turned into a model of citizen enterprise so that others can also be encouraged to undertake such initiatives in other parts of the city.

In particular, the enthusiasm showed by the children present on the occasion filled everybody's heart with the hope of a better and cleaner tomorrow.



Say yes to trees

Despite the commendable spirit of volunteerism exhibited by all the people involved in this project, funds are desperately needed to support the various construction activities, procurement of pumps, children's play-things etc. and running expenses, which include salaries of park staff. Those willing to contribute should contact the Shehri Secretariat for further guidance and instructions. □