



CITIZENS FOR
A BETTER
ENVIRONMENT
(SHEHRI-CBE)

"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

CITIZENS FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

JULY - DECEMBER 2023

"ONE FOR ALL AND ALL FOR ONE" – THIS IS THE SPIRIT OF THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT !

We read the word "cooperative/ Cooperation", in all matters where more than one person is involved and where the benefit of one person's action either benefits or creates loss for the other. Cooperatives were formed out of necessity in earnest at the turn of the 19th Century as a response to the Industrial Revolution, to protect the rights, lives, and livelihoods of blue-collar workers from the harsh realities imposed upon them by the Industrial Revolution. Cooperative emerged to protect labour rights, frame cohesive communities, and vocalize the struggles of the working class.

As time went by many

cooperatives were formed and failed and dissolved. However, in 1844, the Rochdale Pioneers a group of 28 cotton workers from a small town in Rochdale, UK, who were facing poor working conditions and unfair wages, came together and established the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society which has come to be considered the first modern cooperative business. The tenets of their community were regarded as the Rochdale Eight Principles were built upon the principles of democracy, professional ethics and inclusivity. These principles have become the footholds of the Cooperative Movement, they have been refined and



adapted over time. They are broadly accepted as the defining features and code of any and every cooperative society, they were compiled by Charles Howarth, one of the founders of the Rochdale Society.

The Original Principles Were;

1. Open membership
2. Democratic Control (one person, one vote)
3. Distribution of surplus in proportion to trade.
4. Payment of limited interest on capital.
5. Political and Religious neutrality.

Thereafter over time 8 principles have evolved and been accepted.

The Seven (07) Cooperative Principles

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Members' Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

The eighth Cooperative principle now established and recognized is Diversity, Equity and inclusion. Cooperatives believe we are stronger when a proactive effort is put forth to engage everyone in governance, management and representation.

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SHEHRI-CBE

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From the Rochdale Pioneers, many new and different cooperative societies began to emerge.

Some prominent cooperatives, whose work has helped shape our societies.

The order of the Patrons of Husbandry-established a much needed connection between cooperative society and marginalized groups "Representation because a core aspect of the Cooperatives Movement".

Female suffrage, was also raised from the platform of a cooperative society, "The Women's Cooperative Guild" in 1883 by Alice Acland.

As time progressed after World War 2, many agricultural cooperatives were established, among these was the development of the first dairy and cheese cooperative, which later evolved into major players. Coop helped establish consumer cooperatives, they played an important role in the Civil Rights Movement and in the development of the organic food industry. Dairy cooperatives were among the first type of agricultural cooperatives and farmers have relied upon this cooperative system to sell dairy products successfully in all countries.

Robert Owen the Social Reformer (b 1771 - d 1858) is credited as the spiritual father of cooperative movement.

We mentioned all this to set the tone for the coming/introduction formally of the Cooperative Movement in pre-independence India, which can be classified into phases;

➤ From 1904-1911, initiation stage when first Cooperative Societies Act was adopted in 1904. It covered individual India, Bengla Desh and Burma.

➤ Modification Stage (1912 - 1918). When All India Cooperative Societies Act was passed in 1912.

➤ Expansion Stage (1919 - 1929) when the Cooperative Societies Act 1925 was enacted.

The Cooperative Movement in pre-independence India was introduced by the British primarily to aid small-scale farmers to improve and access rural credit. It was established in parts of India which were part of the Bombay Presidency which was made up of the present day state of Gujrat, the Western two-thirds of Maharashtra State including the regions of Konkam, Desh and Kandesh, and North Western Karnataka state of India. It also included Pakistan's Sindh Province and the British Territory of Aden in Yemen. It consisted partly of districts which were directly under British Rule, and partly of native or princely states, which were ruled by local rulers under the administration of a governor.

The first Cooperative Societies Act was adopted in 1904, which then only included credit-co-operatives. The Act was soon amended to grant registration at the State level of non-credit co-operatives, including housing and its administration, allowing them to adapt the legislation to prioritize local needs, in the years 1912 and 1919.

In tandem with co-operative societies, the co-operative housing movement started to develop at the beginning of the 20th century. Bangalore Building Co-operative Society, the first housing cooperative in India, was founded in 1909 in the State of Karnataka (former State of Mysore). In 1913, the State of Maharashtra (former

State of Bombay) set up a non-official body, the Bombay Co-operative Housing Association, which pioneered the propagation of co-operative housing. Among many milestones, the association elaborated model by-laws used in the organisation of several housing co-operatives. It was also the first one to get financial participation of the state in the affairs of housing co-operatives.

Types of Cooperatives

1. Producer/Marketing Cooperatives: Producer Cooperative Societies is an artificial voluntary association of people who work together to protect the interest of small producers by making available all the materials, tools and equipment needed for production at a reasonable rate e.g. agricultural cooperative business to buy farm tool, seeds and equipment.

2. Consumer Cooperatives: The main objective is to supply consumer goods of daily use at cheaper rates e.g. Credit unions, Utility corporations, Electric corporations.

3. Worker Cooperatives: A worker cooperative is a cooperative owned and self-managed by its workers. This control may mean a firm where every worker-owner participates in decision-making in a democratic fashion, or it may refer to one in which management is elected by every worker-owner who each have one vote, e.g. bakeries, retail stores, software development groups and agriculture.

4. Housing Cooperatives: Intended to provide better and cheaper houses especially to the low and middle income groups who, otherwise, cannot afford to own houses through individual efforts. A housing co-op can be an apartment

complex, a neighborhood of single-family homes, mobile home parks or student housing. Regardless of location, cooperative housing residents enjoy affordability, financial stability and collective ownership, e.g. largest cooperative housing development in the world with 55,000 people "Cooperative city" in The Bronx, New York.

Types of Housing Cooperatives:

● *Tenant Ownership Housing Societies:* The land is held either on leasehold or freehold by the societies; the members own the houses, and are leaseholders of the land. They must strictly comply with regulations regarding subletting and transferring of houses but they can build their houses according to their own needs and taste, e.g. Pakistan Employees Cooperative Housing Society (PECHS), Sindh Muslim Cooperative Housing Society (SMCHS).

● *Tenant Co-Partnership Housing Societies:* The societies hold both land and building, either on leasehold or freehold basis, and members have an occupancy right upon paying an initial share and a monthly rent.

Types of societies-support system for housing co-operatives

● *Housing Mortgage Societies:* These are like credit societies which lend money to their members for the construction of houses. Though, the arrangement for the construction is the member's responsibility.

● *House Construction Societies or House Building Societies:* They build the houses on behalf of members, which are then handed over to them upon completion and the money spent is recovered through

loans.

5. Financial Cooperatives: is a type of financial institution that is owned and operated by its members. The goal of a financial cooperative is to act on behalf of a unified group to offer traditional banking services.

6. New Generation Cooperatives: Represent an emerging trend in agriculture, forestry, fishing and other industries that are supplied by producers. These are distinct types of cooperatives formed to enable members to process raw commodities.

7. Multi stakeholder Cooperatives: Multi stakeholder Cooperatives are co-ops that are controlled by more than one type of membership class such as consumers, producers, workers, volunteers or community supporters. Eroski, the distribution arm of the famous Mondragon Cooperatives in Spain is probably the largest multi-stakeholder cooperatives in the world with half a million members and a board evenly divided between workers and consumers.

8. Non-Profit Community Service Cooperatives: Non-profit Community Service Cooperatives provides services to the community on a not for profit basis, for example a child care centre owned and operated by the parents using the centres.

The introduction to the cooperative history is important to understand the cooperative housing movement in present day Sindh, Karachi.

Since Sindh was part of the Bombay Presidency, many cooperative societies were established in Karachi, since our focus is on the Housing

Cooperative Societies established in Karachi, we shall discuss them. The earliest record of the Gazette

of Pakistan, December 1950 names a few Housing Societies which are still existing to-date, they were

all registered under the Bombay Cooperative Societies Act of 1925 and they were/are

Registration No.	Date of Registration	Name of Society	Address
S-478	05/02/1947	Khudabadi Amil Town Cooperative Housing Society Ltd.	C/o Mr. Mulchand Kripalani, Hyderabad Amil Panchayat Hall, Burns Road, Karachi.
S-481	03/03/1947	Cutchi Memon Cooperative Housing Society Ltd.	Feroz Shah Street, Memon Mohalla, Ram Bagh, Karachi.
S-484	06/03/1947	Bombay Muslim Cooperative Housing Society Ltd.	C/o A.G. Mirza Esqr., Haroon Chambers, South Napier Road, Karachi.
S-497	22/09/1947	Dehli Mercantile Muslims Cooperative Housing Society Ltd.	C/o Mr. O.M. Martin Asstt, National Savings Officer, Block No.48, Pak Secretariat, Karachi.
S-500	23/12/1947	Pakistan Employees Cooperative Housing Society Ltd.	Auditor General Office, 243, Staff Lines, Karachi.
S-501	22/01/1948	U.P. Muslim Cooperative Housing Society Ltd.	735/3, Elphinstone Street, Karachi.
S-503	22/03/1948	Ismailia Garden Cooperative Housing Society Ltd.	C/o. K.J. Nota, The Political Services & G.A. Deptt., Sindh Secretariat 7, Napier Barracks, Karachi.
S-506	30/03/1948	Pir Illahi Bux Cooperative Housing Society Ltd.	7, Lalchand Hassomal Road, Parsi Colony, Bunder Road, Extension, Karachi.
S-515	12/05/1948	Karachi Memon Cooperative Housing Society Ltd.	217, Princes Street, Nanak Wada, Karachi.
S-517	03/06/1948	Bihar Muslim Cooperative Housing Society Ltd.	19, Court Chambers, opp. City Court, Wadhumi Udharam Road, Karachi.
S-525	16/09/1948	Delhi Cooperative Housing Society Ltd.	69, Forbes Forbes & Campbell Building, Dunnoly Road, Karachi.

Fast forward to 2023 in the matter of a case in High Court of Sindh M.A.69/2022 Meerut Cooperative Housing Society Ltd (Appellant) Vs. Shahid Akhtar Qureshi & others (Respondent), Justice Salahuddin Panhwar gave the following observations, he was ably assisted by Amicus M/s. Abbadul Hasnain, Muzamil Hussain Jalbani, Akash Gehani, Muhammad Hanif Samma, Ms. Sara Malkani and Ms. Saira Shaikh Advocates, Amicus.

“... the entire history of legislation speaks that cooperative societies meant to help out of agricultural societies and uplift poor people and marginalized segments and this was not meant for housing societies for affluent and influential persons, as understood by the department of Sindh Government,” declared Justice Panhwar in his verdict.

The bench observed that the aspect of housing societies was

a small component that qualified to be registered for economic activities and serving low-income communities.

It directed the Sindh chief secretary to constitute a high-level committee comprising prominent economists, agriculturists, philanthropists, bankers and representatives from development sector to ensure implementation of the Sindh Cooperative Societies Act, 2020 in letter and spirit.

The SHC also asked the provincial authorities to amend the rules, framed under the law in 2020, in order to meet the main objects, scheme and purposes of the law to the promotion of thrift, self-help, mutual aid amongst the agriculturists, small farmers, labours and poor people with common economic needs so as to bring about better living, business and methods of production preferably the model adopted by Punjab be taken as example at the first phase.

“The secretary law department shall ensure that rules are framed within the spirit of Cooperative Societies Act, 2020 as discussed above,” the order added.

Unfortunately, close perusal of the Sindh Cooperative Societies Act 2020 shows that it is flawed, it goes against the spirit of the cooperative movement. It has completely misunderstood the genesis of the Cooperative movement and its ethos. It does not truly represent the cooperative which are people centred enterprises. The regulatory authorities of cooperative are guilty of not speaking,

educating and doing their due diligence into the affairs of cooperative.

The cooperative housing section in Karachi and Sindh is before us, it is flawed, weak and corrupt. Many a people have been hood winked into investing in them, only to discover that they invested in a mess. Old cooperative societies are guilty of non-transparency, corruption, not giving shares to new owners e.g. PECHS. Despite complaints there is no relief. When the change of land use Policy 2003 was framed, no cooperative society stood up the fight this flawed policy, resulting in many litigations and an environmental mess for its other members. PECHS has six (06) roads within, SMCHS has three (03) three. We mention these old societies because their deterioration is visible. Old Catholic Colony 1 & 2 in Jamshed Town has become a flat site, each and every plot built in violation of the society's own rules, the office bearers of most cooperative societies are not following their own rules.

Quetta Town Cooperative Housing Society is a recent example of collusion of taking

over members plot, allowing encroachment and pushing members into false litigation and strees.

Cosmopolitan Cooperative Housing Society in front of the Quaid Mazar is guilty of violating the height restriction of the founder of the nation, Clause 25-1.10.2. of the Karachi Building & Town Planning Regulations 2002 "The Height of the Building shall not be above the podium level of 91-ft (27.72 m) MSL within 3/4 miles (1.2 km) radius of Quaid-e-Azam's Mausoleum". [To determine the permissible height of building a certificate (height pavement) shall be obtained from MPGO - CDGK on payment of Rs.1200/-].

SMCHS has recently changed its byelaws, total members are 418, but a new section 33 has been included to allow 20 members to decide any matter. (Many other sections have also changed).

We recommend that the cooperative regulatorys educate cooperative housing societies, its members, new societies that wish to register as cooperative and save ordinary people homes and their money.

Legislative History of Cooperative Laws

1904	First Cooperative Societies Act was adopted
1909	First housing cooperative, Bangalore Building Cooperative Society, was founded in the State of Mysore.
1912	In 1912, an All India Cooperative Societies Act was passed.
1913	Bombay Cooperative Housing Association was founded
1914	Sir Edward Maclagan Committee formed to review the position and to suggest a development plan for the movement in 1914
1919	Cooperative Societies Act was further amended to allow the registered societies (both credit and non-credit, to adopt the legislation to prioritize local needs
1925	The Cooperative Societies Act, 1925 enacted.
1945	R.G. Saraiya Committee formed.
Post 1947	
1952	The Punjab Government appointed a Cooperative Inquiry Committee in 1952 to review the position of the Cooperative movement.
1962	The Cooperative Development Board established
1966	The Cooperative Board was abolished.
1972	The Cooperative Societies Reforms Order was issued
1976	The Federal Bank of Cooperative (FBC) was established
2020	The Sindh Cooperative Societies Act enacted.
2020	The Sindh Cooperative Societies Rules enacted.

GREEN BUILDINGS IN PAKISTAN: PAVING THE WAY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

BY: RESHMA AFTAB



As the world grapples with the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation, the concept of green buildings has gained significant traction. This is because green buildings mitigate climate change head-on by curbing emissions, reducing energy and water consumption, and encouraging the use of sustainable materials and building practices. This is true especially for a country like Pakistan, whose rapidly growing construction and housing sector has exacerbated its vulnerability to climate change and impeded its path towards sustainable development.

The Case for Green Buildings in Pakistan

According to the Global Climate Risk Index, Pakistan is currently the eighth most climate-vulnerable country globally. This is a result of numerous environmental issues such as rapid population growth, urbanization, environmental degradation, and macroeconomic challenges.

In terms of urbanization, Pakistan has witnessed a remarkable increase over the years, whereby 36% of the total population of 242 million now reside in urban areas. This figure is also expected to rise exponentially in the coming years. Alongside urbanization, challenges such as rising air

and water pollution, deforestation and energy scarcity continue to simultaneously exacerbate climate-change risks in Pakistan.

The construction sector, known for its resource-intensive practices, contributes significantly to such environmental challenges because it generates the highest energy consumption levels within the domestic sector and industrial sector. With the country's housing market size consisting of 79% residential buildings, 21% commercial buildings, and warehouses growing at a rate of 16.3%, such high energy consumption patterns are likely to continue growing at a rapid rate.

Green Buildings: A Growing Strategic Priority for IFC in Pakistan

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, is the largest global development institution focused on the private sector in emerging markets. One of IFC's strategic priorities in Pakistan is to foster low-carbon economic growth and resilience, including in the construction and housing sectors.

Buildings have been identified as a key climate intervention globally as they consume 33%

of the energy produced, 40% of total water consumption and contribute 18% of Green House Gases (GHG). To facilitate low carbon development of real-estate in emerging countries like Pakistan, IFC developed the EDGE green building rating and certification system. The free online EDGE software at www.edgebuildings.com provides a quick way to evaluate a building's performance and compare it against a local baseline. EDGE certification, which is now the fastest green building certification system globally, provides a simple way for marketing and increasing access to climate finance.

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) recently launched a report titled 'Building Green: Sustainable Construction in Emerging Markets' (<https://www.ifc.org/en/insights-reports/2023/building-green-in-emerging-markets>) The report found that the total cost of greening construction value chains would amount to just 0.03 percentage points of global GDP per year on average between 2022 and 2035 if recommended energy efficiency measures are taken. Global investment needs are estimated at \$3.5 trillion, of which \$1.5 trillion is for emerging markets. Meanwhile, the green building market in Pakistan is predicted to grow and be worth USD 5.5

billion by 2030. (World Bank Group, Country Climate Development Report 2022).

Energy Efficiency and Reduced Carbon Footprint

Green buildings in Pakistan can prioritize energy efficiency by incorporating various design elements and technologies. These include efficient insulation, solar panels, energy-efficient lighting, and smart building management systems. By reducing energy consumption, green buildings significantly lower carbon emissions which can help Pakistan progress in its climate change mitigation goals.

Water Conservation and Management

Water scarcity is a pressing issue in many parts of Pakistan. Green buildings tackle this challenge by implementing water conservation measures such as rainwater harvesting, greywater recycling, and low-flow fixtures. These initiatives not only reduce water consumption but also alleviate pressure on the country's strained water resources.

Promoting Sustainable Materials and Waste Management

Green buildings in Pakistan emphasize the use of sustainable materials, such as recycled or locally sourced materials, which reduce the environmental impact of construction. Additionally, these buildings incorporate waste management strategies,

including recycling and composting, to minimize waste generation and promote a circular economy.

Government-led Initiatives

Pakistan has committed to unconditionally reducing its overall emissions by 15% by 2030. It has also committed to reducing emissions by an additional 35%, which is conditional on the availability of climate finance. This will be accomplished in part through: (i) expanding renewable energy (RE); (ii) greening transportation (30% of all new vehicles sold in Pakistan in various categories must be EVs by 2030); and (iii) reducing dependence on coal. In addition, in 2021, the National Action Plan reiterated the need to mainstream decarbonization across all sectors.

Pakistan has therefore demonstrated its commitment to achieving energy efficiency as soon as possible, especially by conserving environmental resources, lowering greenhouse gas emissions, and enabling the operation of buildings in a sustainable manner through its participation in the 'National Climate Change Policy,' 'Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities),' and the 'United Nations 10YFP Program on Sustainable Buildings and Construction.'

Challenges and the Way Forward

As the green building movement in Pakistan gains

momentum, several challenges need to be addressed. These include limited awareness and understanding of green building concepts, misconceptions about higher upfront costs and a lack of skilled professionals. To overcome these challenges, it is crucial to invest in education and training programs, promote research and development in sustainable construction, and create awareness campaigns to highlight the long-term benefits of green buildings.

Green buildings in Pakistan are not just a trend but a necessity towards advancing sustainable development in countries most vulnerable to climate change. By reducing energy consumption, conserving water, improving indoor air quality, and promoting sustainable materials, these buildings are transforming the construction industry and contributing to a greener future.

In particular, the EDGE program (<https://edgebuildings.com/>) is a powerful example of how a country like Pakistan can create a green building market by promoting new standards, financing mechanisms, and enabling regulations for green construction.

With continued government support, increased awareness, and collaborative efforts from all stakeholders, green buildings certainly have the potential to revolutionize Pakistan's urban landscape and pave the way for a more sustainable and resilient future.

ROOTS OF RESILIENCE: SHEHRI-CBE'S 'MILLION TREES' CAMPAIGN



Tree planting isn't just a hobby; it's a vital response to the environmental challenges confronting us. It's about securing a greener future for generations to come. That's the spirit behind Shehri-CBE's ambitious 'Million Trees Campaign,' which has already seen over 25,000 saplings take root in different parts of Karachi.

Recently, dedicated Shehri members Amra Javed and Amber Alibhai added over 200 trees to Burns Garden, including fragrant Jamun, sweet Imli, and even two Ajwa date palms. This dedication mirrors Amra's long-standing commitment to greening Karachi. For over four years, she's been nurturing fruit trees and indigenous species like Gul Mohar and Neem on the Quaid-e-Azam Management Board premises. Her vision? For Karachites, especially children, to experience the magic of nature, to witness fruit ripening on branches, and to taste its fresh sweetness. Many of the saplings Amra planted years ago are now thriving trees, proudly bearing their fruit.

Shehri-CBE's story reminds us that environmental action thrives on collective spirit. When individuals, communities, and governments join hands, planting trees becomes more than just a task; it becomes a shared commitment to our planet's well-being and the future we inherit.

Greening Karachi through tree plantation is a multifaceted

approach that addresses environmental, social, and health-related concerns. As the city continues to expand, the importance of preserving and enhancing its green spaces cannot be overstated. Through

collaborative efforts and sustained initiatives, Karachi has the potential to transform into a greener, more sustainable urban environment for generations to come.



Tree Plantation at Burn Garden (05/12/2023)

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AMRA'S ADVENTUROUS VISIT TO GILGIT



IUCN Pakistan National Committee (PNC) meeting had been planned in Gilgit in 2021, but was canceled due to heavy rains and rescheduled on 8th-10th August 2023 in Gilgit.

IUCN arranged for a coaster to take its members on 7th August early morning from Islamabad and with night stop over at Naran to reach Bungli on 8th August, visit the Markhor conservation community where members from Karachi were to meet them around 5:00 pm, driving down from Skardu. We had arrived by direct flight from Karachi to Skardu as it was suggested that this was the safest route as flight from Skardu seldom gets canceled, while those to Gilgit are often delayed or canceled.

As I and Dr. Sumera from HEJ were on this flight which took off at 6:00 am, we had to leave our house at 4:30 am. After an hour's delay, we reached Skardu at 9:30 am, the flight was very pleasant with the Captain giving us information about the places we were flying over e.g. Tarbela Dam and the mountain ranges of Karakoram. Once in Skardu we had to wait for 30 minutes for my daughter Sara who had to join me on my request from Islamabad as I was a bit shaky to take this trip alone.

IUCN had arranged for a car trip to Gilgit but as we got to the car we were informed by the driver that due to overnight heavy showers there had been a land slide mid-way between two cities and it was expected it will be cleared by 3:00 pm.



We had 2 choices either to get to the blocked road and sit in the car or meanwhile visit some picnic spots like Kachura lake and Soag Valley. We opted to do that and started off to journey to Kachura Lake. I was a bit disappointed to see how those beautiful sights all along the road with water gushing into water channels littered with plastic bottles and wrappers.

Once we reached the end of journey to Kachura lake, there were small cabins of refreshment, food and artifacts.

The trees laden with apricots, walnuts' and apples were a treat for Karachiites, who had come from a concrete jungle-excited Dr. Sumera wanted to pluck a few apricots but was politely told by the owner of shop it is forbidden.

There we tasted the freshest juice of apricots and plums made directly from plucked fruit without any chemicals added.

The trip down to Kachura Lake had nearly 70 steps which I did

not risk taking but Sara and Sumera went down to the lake to dip their feet in the ice cold water of the lake.

On their return we had hot coffee and started off for Soag Valley where they had made a sitting spot in the river bed and here we could order there famous Trout fish, which we instantly ordered since it was lunch time now. When the trout arrived I was a bit shocked to see as I had expected good sized fish but it was hardly 4'-6 inch fish with hardly any real taste of trout so we offered this to the driver.

While all this time the driver Haider who was a very polite and decent man kept himself in contact with his team about situation at road block.

As informed earlier about the approximate time of clearance of road at 3:00pm, we decided to move towards the blocked road and reached the point by 3:00 pm. Once there, were told that it might be delayed till 5:00 pm. We had no choice but to

sit and wait once it was 5:00 pm and after many sorties by the poor driver we were told that this is not possible till next day after 12:00 o clock, which meant that we had already missed one event of the visit to Bunji Conservancy/CCHA, District Astore and would also miss the meeting for which we had travelled all the way from Karachi.

Now I decided to go myself up to the officer of FWO who were handling the operation and find out the real position. I walked ½ KM up to the site and requested the officer to clear a path of 2-ft so that we could walk over to the other side of the blocked points as we could see another excavator on that side, and there was just one big rock plus small ones on edge of road blocking the road, and he agreed to get it done. Once on the other side Haider had arranged a switch over with his friend who had passengers for Skardu.

After my conversation, the officer was surrounded with locals who were talking in their language, on his return he said it is not possible - which I gathered was due to pressure from locals who were trying to



rope in people to spend the night at their village as there was no Guest house or hotel for miles along.

Now the only option left for us was either to go back to Skardu and miss the meeting or climb over the dangerous mountain and descend on the other side of it - which seemed impossible to both my younger partners, while we could see the locals doing this feat.

I inspected the ascent to the mountain which posed one very dangerous climb over a rock at the top where there was no path.

I finally decided to go for this seemingly impossible feat

because if we waited more with the sun setting down , it would have been impossible to surmount this task. I told my daughter that my belief is strong, if I am to die here nothing can stop, so be brave and let's do it.

I requested Haider and one of his friends to help the two girls first to climb a few feet, and then come back and assist me –like this we made to the top of the mountain. Then the driver informed us that a large number of stranded people, when they saw how three ladies, one with white hair ,were climbing the mountain, they too opted for it. The trip down the mountain was more dangerous as it was slippery with more sand. After our safe landing on the other side, the team went back to get our luggage and this whole feat took about 2 hours and we started off to our destination and reached Gilgit by 10:00 pm, a journey expected to take 7 hours, took us 18 long tiring hours.

On 9th August we had a very informative meeting till mid day, where we were briefed about numerous projects of





IUCN. Thereafter we went to visit Markhor Conservancy/Community Controlled Hunting Areas, where we were informed about their problems and success story of markhor trophy hunting. All along the drive, unlike Skardu, we did not see any litter around and the fruit laden trees were a treat for the eyes. This year they had given 4 licenses for hunting and the community got 22 crores as their share, which is 80% of income and 20% is government share, from 80% they are supposed to reinvest 30% for up keep and beneficial project. This is such a big success story.

After the visit to community we went to see the ancient Buddha (also locally known as Yashani) site. We had a good view of the engraving from the point by the stream. That night IUCN had a dinner where the Secretary and other local heads were invited at the Buffett of Serena which is such a beautiful place—in its spacious lawns.

The next day we had a meeting with the Chief Secretary Gilgit, Mohiuddin Wani, which was expected to last only 15

minutes but once it started it ended after nearly one hour.

This Chief Secretary has brought about the numerous changes in the province within a short period of 14 months.

1) Starting with change from 2 rooms primary school to 6 rooms school with proper tables, painted walls, libraries, IT facilities and most important healthy lunch as he found most of the children had stunted growth. He also managed to get eyes tested for students, and learnt that 20% students were short sighted and provided free glasses. All this was done by his personal engagement with his friends, philanthropists and LUMS management.

2) He sent its students for teachers training, also required for extended primary schools.

3) Improvement of all government schools and provisions of toilets in schools.

4) All these steps taken have increased 20% - 30% enrolment in schools and 90% attendance.

5) There were many other uplift projects taken up by him and his team.

From his office we left for Rakaposhi view spot, enroute Fauzia collected snacks from the local pizza road-side shops for the whole team, which we consumed at the Rakaposhi view spot. The enjoyment of eating at this delightful sight cannot be expressed in words and will be a treat whenever recalled.

After this we went to visit Ghulkin Valley where the prayer area was built by Aga Khan in 1986 -a beautiful building.

The 3 villages there had 100% literacy rate, out of 1300 people, 14 were studying abroad, the girls coming to school have to cross a glacier to get to the place. Here IUCN will be doing

a restoration project on an old house which will ultimately be a tourist site which will help the villagers further increase their income. This place is like a bowl with fruit trees surrounding it, then crop fields, and finally water channels which bring water from glaciers to it. Here the locals served us a sumptuous lunch and gave brief documentary record on their activities.

After which we went to visit the "Glacier Breeze Inn" which serves excellent walnut and apricot cake with a hot cup of coffee which was truly out of this world, as you are so close to Passu cones and Passu glacier with stream running beside the hilltop restaurant and at foot of this mountain you could see a long queue of cars visiting the YAK Burger Restaurant.



On our way back, we stopped at Attabad lake which was located in Gojal region, it was formed in January 2010 due to a significant landslide in Attabad, where you can clearly see human activity spoiling the pristine blue water into grayish tone due to boating activity. This sight sends shivers down your spine as you can see tree tops and electricity poles now buried under water. They say that people were informed of the danger and most of them had gone to safe places ,but one family stayed back as there

was a wedding taking place and sadly about 15 people were buried alive.

From here we went back to Rakaposhi market where the team did some very good shopping of local precious stones and local gowns, Chitrali caps, and dried cherries, mulberry and apricots.

By the time it was done we felt it was now too late as the journey back would take at least 1 ½ hours and we had to take a flight back the next day from Skardu. So along with my daughter I decided to go back

to Hotel with Cheema Sahib while the rest of the team went to eat special trout and came back late.

The following morning we started off for Skardu at 5:30 am, and all along the river side we could see numerous mines dotting the mountain range and reached there by 9:00 am and then Islamabad by 12:45 pm.

Pakistan has 36 National parks. 25 are under respective provincial governments. Only some are under conservation scope of IUCN.

Due to more awareness about their importance in conservation of bio-diversity 10 National Parks have been established during 1993-2005.

According to the Modern Protected Anasligestation, a natural park is a protected area set aside by the government for the protection and conservation of its flora and fauna , and its wildlife in a natural habitat . It is accessible to public for research, education and recreation. In order to promote public use, Construction of road, and rest houses is permitted. Use of firearm, polluting of wildlife is banned in these areas. The oldest park is Lal Suhana in Bhawalpur established in 1972.



A CITIZEN'S ORDEAL (GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY IN KARACHI)

BY: SAMEER



Karachi's infrastructure crisis has reached a critical juncture, not solely due to funding constraints, but also because of a pervasive and deeply concerning apathy from all responsible government agencies.

This negligence is exemplified by the state of the service road near the National Bank of Pakistan Shaheed-e-Millat Branch in Baloch Colony and the Baloch Colony Flyover on Shahrea Faisal.

A concerned resident in Karachi is actively addressing issues of neglect. Here are the specific concerns identified:

1. Choked Storm Drain (Location: Balouch Colony to Tipu Sultan Road, Managed by KMC):

- The storm drain is obstructed, posing a threat of potential flooding and drainage issues. (Managed by KMC)

- Part of the storm drain is left uncovered, creating potential hazards. (Managed by KMC)

2. Choked Gutter Lines (Managed by KWSB):

- Gutter lines are compromised, resulting in damage, seepage, and potential water-related problems. (Managed by KWSB)

3. Road Pits and Service Road Obstruction (Managed by KMC / KWSB / Local government):

- Pits in the road have been dug due to blocked storm



drains and gutters, affecting traffic flow. The service road is obstructed by pits and mud, presenting safety concerns and disrupting traffic.

Below are the details of the filed complaints and the subsequent follow-up with various municipal agencies and the local government.

Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC)

On December 21, 2022, an initial complaint was filed, addressing critical issues by submitting complaint letters to key authorities, including the Administrator, KMC, Commissioner Karachi, DC East, Administrator DMC East,

and Senior Director Municipal Services. Regrettably, no response was received to address the reported issues. On February 14, 2023, a follow-up complaint was submitted to the same authorities, but despite repeated attempts, no response was received. The struggle continued on March 6, 2023, with a continued appeal as another complaint was submitted to the relevant authorities seeking resolution. Unfortunately, no action was taken, leaving the issues unaddressed.

Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB)

Frustratingly, despite delivering official complaint letters to the

Karachi Water And Sewerage Board (KWSB) on multiple occasions, no action has been taken. These letters, duly acknowledged with reference numbers 7218 on December 14, 2022, 7451 on December 22, 2022, and 9424 on March 30, 2023, were addressed to the Office of the Executive Engineer, Karachi Division Civil-I, Block-B, 9th Mile Karsaz, Shahra-E-Faisal, near Awami Markaz, Karachi. Despite consistent follow-ups, the lack of progress on these issues remains a stark disappointment.

Chief Minister Sindh

Despite seeking the Chief Minister's intervention in resolving our grievances, there was a disheartening lack of response from his office. In April 2023, an online complaint form was submitted through the official portal (<https://cm.sindh.gov.pk/complaint>). Disappointingly, this initial attempt received no acknowledgement. Undeterred, a hard copy letter on May 2nd, was sent addressed to the Chief Minister via the Chief Secretary's House. Even this direct appeal remains unanswered, leaving us with the profound impression that the Chief Minister's office holds the concerns of Karachi residents in utter disregard.

Governor House Sindh

A complaint sent to the Governor House on May 2, 2023, garnered an unexpected response from Mr. Ashraf Qureshi (Contact: 0300-2203994). Despite his assurance to resolve the issue, the indifferent attitudes of KMC and KWSB prevailed, rendering



the Governor House helpless.

Unfortunately, no action was taken.

If the Governor House, despite its efforts, is unable to address and overcome issues, especially when faced with entrenched bureaucrats, having a complaint cell seems ineffective. It raises questions about the efficacy of such mechanisms.

Local Authorities

The Union council and town chairman were also approached. Letters were sent to both:

Mr Farhan Ghani, Town Chairman, Jamshed Town, Karachi – 4 letters received with the reference 028 on 28 September, 2023.

The Chairman, Union Committee 2, Chanesar Town, District East, - Karachi, received letters reference 35, 36, 37, 38 –dated 28 September, 2023

Regrettably, there has been no

response from either of the esteemed gentlemen. The Town Chairman is affiliated with PPP and the Chairman of Union Committee 2 belongs to Jamaat-e-Islami, but both have displayed a similar level of indifference, not deigning to acknowledge or reply to the concerns raised.

Mr. Murtaza Wahab

Mr. Chachar Fayaz, known to be close to Mr. Murtaza Wahab, was contacted on 0333-7164657 on July 8, 2023. Despite many assurances and months of follow up and promises, no action ensued.

A formal letter was sent to Mr. Murtaza Wahab, accompanied by a follow-up WhatsApp message and presentation to his mobile number 0333-2349631. Unfortunately, no discernible action or response was received. While the Mayor of Karachi excels in public relations, but it seems that he has no time to solve actual problems.

Provincial Ombudsman Sindh

A formal complaint (ref 2415) was lodged with the Provincial Ombudsman Office of Sindh, and it appears to be a rare institution in the province demonstrating integrity and genuine concern for citizens. Notably, Mr. Syed Farrukh Habib, the Regional Director, personally visited the site, emphasizing the gravity of the issue.

However, a challenge remains as the bureaucracy seems relatively unconcerned about the Ombudsman's interventions, often ignoring letters until multiple notices are issued. Despite the Ombudsman's directive for senior officials (Grade 18 and above) to attend, junior personnel are frequently sent. In the case of KWSB, a junior person Mr. Ali (contact: 0341-3158536) provided a litany of excuses. Astonishingly, he even resorted to blaming Mustafa Kamal for past changes, deflecting from addressing the pressing issue of gutter cleaning and repairs.

After multiple notices from the Ombudsman to KMC, a breakthrough occurred on December 13, 2023, when three representatives from KMC Works and Services finally attended the meeting.

Under the pressure exerted by the Ombudsman, they visited the site and, while the service road remains problematic due to sizable pits, they managed to clear some mud, making it somewhat passable. However, the storm drain still remained choked and the gutter lines in decrepit condition and obstructed.



Presently, the government departments conveniently cite Election Commissioner of Pakistan ban on development works as a reason to halt all work, claiming a delay in the approval of PC1. (Ironically, the media team of Mr. Farhan Ghani consistently boasts about ongoing development work in the area where the PPP candidate will be running for election.)

Clearing the storm drain, a vital responsibility for KMC, does not necessitate a capital budget. Similarly, the maintenance of gutter lines by KWSB doesn't appear to demand a significant capital allocation. This seems more like an excuse from these departments rather than a genuine constraint.

Ironically, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari engages in discussions about Karachi's development;

however, under the governance of PPP, the city seems to mirror a village in interior Sindh. The pivotal institutions, namely KWSB and KMC, exhibit an indifferent attitude towards the pressing issues faced by the city.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1790784>

Karachi, once a bustling metropolis, has morphed into a living nightmare. Its streets, choked with filth and neglect, stand as a stark testament to the utter indifference of civic agencies, bureaucrats, and the local government. These supposed servants of the people hold the very populace they swore to protect in utter contempt.

This is not mere inconvenience, it's an assault on our dignity, our health, our very lives. While bureaucrats fiddle and politicians preen, Karachi's citizens drown in misery.

KARACHI'S TAX DILEMMA

BY: PROF. DR. NOMAN AHMED



Our municipal institutions are revenue-starved. Be it the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), towns or the union committees, the problem is the same.

To consolidate finances, the KMC has been pursuing the imposition of municipal utility charges and taxes (MUCT) for some time now. The decision to collect Municipal Utility Charges and Taxes (MUCT) in Karachi is yet to take any concrete shape.

Several weeks ago, the mayor succeeded in passing a resolution through the City Council to move ahead with his idea of engaging Karachi Electric (KE) to collect this levy. The matter has landed in the Sindh High Court. A strong opposition has been voiced by different quarters, especially the opposition ranks in the City Council.

Conversations with ordinary people inform that the current economic recession and the depressing situation do not make it an opportune time to impose any new levy. The citizens are already grappling with the issues of power shutdowns and poor levels of service in water, sewerage and drainage.

Overall inflation that stayed around 40 per cent during 2023 has crippled the life of the ordinary in the metropolis and beyond. It is argued that burdening ordinary folks with another financial charge is grossly unjustified.

The imposition of municipal utility charges is likely to divide

the city into 'have' and 'have not' divisions

People also decry the poor performance of the KMC on many counts. For instance, no intervention has been done to undertake the most vital maintenance works that the metropolis requires. Roads, streets, lanes, water mains, drainage channels, sewerage lines, solid waste management spaces, footpaths, pedestrian bridges, natural water drains (nullahs), traffic signals, green belts, bridges and other components of essential civic infrastructure has completely or partially broken down. While some tasks fall under the control of other civic agencies, KMC is supposed to lead being the premier elected municipal forum of the metropolis.

Our people are often confused between taxation and utility charges. Taxation is a levy imposed by an administration on citizens, institutions or both concerning the fulfilment of certain conditions. Property tax is charged from the owners of immovable property, and motor vehicle tax is collected from users of vehicles in stipulated categories. Each category clearly defines the inclusion and exclusion of user groups according to their respective characteristics.

The important point is that the KMC has taxed a set of public goods which must be freely accessible to all without hindrance. The improved environment is a long-denied right of the people. This argument derives from the fact

that this city contributes the highest proportion of direct and indirect taxes to the national exchequer. Thus, a better living environment and the corresponding infrastructure become a matter of right, not a charged privilege.

Our provincial and local administration complain about a lack of financial resources. After the passage of the 18th constitutional amendment in 2010, the provincial share in the National Finance Commission award has significantly increased.

Billions of rupees are transferred to the provincial coffers every year. Sindh also receives a special allocation on account of the abolition of the Octroi and Zila tax. As Karachi accounts for more than one-third of the province's population, one assumes that a proportional amount would be allocated for shoring up the urban infrastructure and related needs. But nothing of the sort has been done.

Disappointingly, the provincial finance commission, a body responsible for allocating and distributing funds to the districts in the province, remained largely dysfunctional.

Karachi is also the prime location for real estate development, generating billions in value addition. However, the city only collects a paltry Rs. 2 billion or thereabout in this most crucial tax form.

Property tax is one of the foremost taxes imposed upon

urban and sub-urban properties on those owners who are the direct beneficiaries of capital investments and general price escalation of their properties due to multiple factors. Similarly, Rs8.5bn was collected through motor vehicle tax, despite the city reporting registration of over 900 cars/other four-wheelers and over 1,000 motorcycles every day.

Many more challenges will emerge if the KMC receives a go-ahead for collecting MUCT. It is observed that the MUCT is likely to divide the city into 'have' and 'have not' divisions. The upper- and middle-income localities, commercial areas and posh localities shall be the focus of this levy and perhaps consequent spending.

Unregularised areas, expanding low-income neighbourhoods and peri-urban areas will eventually be left to their own low fates. Pressure from taxpayers will not allow public infrastructure spending to address less privileged locations. High visibility but low relevance projects shall keep evolving around the old contexts. It is already a well-known fact that roads and highways have marginally benefited low-income localities.

Additionally, the conflict of jurisdiction is also an issue which needs to be streamlined. The residents of such neighbourhoods which do not fall under the control of KMC shall continue to get services through varied formats, while the residents in the municipal limits will be burdened with the payments of levies.

The coverage of new levies must consider the nature and

scale of users. For instance, road user charges must be revisited, and probably made commensurate with the road development schemes that have been recently built. Benefits to motorists should not be charged to pedestrians or property owners.

It may be noticed that the lion's share of investment has gone into roads, expressways, flyovers, interchanges and by-passes. In the majority of cases, road widening schemes have deprived pedestrians of the basic right of proper sidewalks. Pedestrian crossings are too few. High velocities of traffic have rendered crossing of streets as prohibitively dangerous.

The status of solid waste management in the city is utterly dismal. Whereas contractual complications did not allow the involvement of a foreign firm in this service, the existing performance of KMC on this count is far below the desirable standard.

Our municipal agencies complain about a low revenue base. This fact merits a review of the recovery of existing levies. The city has enormous potential for revenue generation with respect to property taxes. Under-statement of property values and poor collection practices are only two of the various ailments in this sector.

The water supply in the city is almost free for those who get it from the pipes or those who obtain it through informal means. Though the collection of water charges has improved, it is still below 60pc of the number of consumers. In total contrast, a vast number of consumers obtain it through super expensive water tankers.

No monitoring is done to impose and effectively collect motor vehicle tax from the motor cars and motor bikes which now exist in millions. They are a genuine source of revenue pertinent to motor vehicle tax. Non-utilisation fees on vacant plots are another head that can be explored to its logical end.

Lessons can be drawn from other cities in South Asia. For example, Dhaka generates about 70pc of revenue from own sources. The remaining is obtained from intergovernmental grants and other options.

The KMC must revisit the concept and application of municipal charges. The proposal of new taxation must emanate from the premise of beneficiaries and affectees. Those who benefit must share the cost of investment.

Adequate allocation must be ensured for less developed locations in terms of basic infrastructure. An equalisation fund can be created to establish the mechanism of public spending in less privileged localities.

These types of funds draw a certain percentage of taxes collected from affluent localities to develop less developed contexts. In addition to the exposed components of infrastructure, emphasis must also be given to revitalising underground drains, conduits and pipelines.

The tariff and schedule of charges need to be fixed after a scientific review of the ground realities. Participation of stakeholders can add substantial value to the whole exercise.

THE INFILTRATION OF PLASTIC INTO OUR BODIES THROUGH THE FOOD CHAIN

BY: AMRA JAVED



The statement that “plastic pollution is destroying our sea” didn't have the drastic effect on the reader but the news that **“plastic has entered our bodies through food chain” jolted me out of my comfort zone to do something about it.**

We have reached a stage where plastic pollution has become the biggest menace in the world due to which the survival of animals & humans is under threat .It is estimated that over 100 millions marine animals are killed each year due to plastic debris in the ocean and there are around 100 million tons of plastic in oceans around the world.

Thousands of whales, birds, seals and turtles are killed every year from plastic bag litter in the marine environment as they mistake plastic bags for food such as jelly fish. Plastic bags once ingested cannot be digested or passed by an animal so it stays in the gut

causing blockages in digestive system & eventual death. Nearly all species of sea turtles are classified as Endangered. They also face habitat destruction as their nesting beaches are littered with plastic & the babies cannot distinguish between food & plastic they eat whatever is near them & hence die by ingesting plastic few which survive often get entangled in ghost nets or fishing gear.

If we look around us & take into account the situation all along our coasts it will dawn upon us that the **one invention that has harmed our environment most is plastic. It is a global problem.** But the solution lies in dealing with it locally as it has reached a level where drastic steps need to be taken urgently. If we don't stop this flow of plastic to sea than by 2050 **there will be more plastic in sea than fish.**

The first step to be taken is to

reduce its use & secondly stop its entering our rivers & sea as from there it is coming into our food. A new study has found that more than 90% of plastic in our oceans comes from ten big rivers eight of them are in Asia **Yangtze, Indus, yellow, Hai He, Ganges, Pearl, Amur& Mekong& two are in Africa Nile & Niger.** These rivers are in Cambodia, Laos, India and Pakistanis we are able to clean up these rivers we can clean up our oceans .To do this we need mass awareness plans not to pollute our rivers by using them as dumping sites for solid waste & industrial effluents.

What is needed most is to put a ban on manufacturing of one time use plastic bags & straws, plates, cups etc.

Most plastic bottles are made of polyethylene terephthalate (pet) which is recyclable but it's use soars than the capacity to recycle it resulting its

entrance into the oceans once there it takes about a 1000 years to break down .about 1-4 million bottles are being used across the globe. There should be a ban on carrying plastic bottles on ships & boats. It is estimated that about 5-13 million tons of plastic enters our oceans each year which is ingested by sea creatures we consume scientists at Ghent University in Belgium recently calculated that people who eat sea food ingest up to 10,000 tiny pieces of plastic each year. Last August the results of a study of Plymouth University reported that plastic was found in a third of fish, like Cod, Haddock, Mackerel and shell fish which are caught in UK. The toxic chemicals leach out of plastic& are found in the blood & tissues of nearly all of us, exposure to them is linked to cancers, birth defects, impaired immunity, endocrine disruptions and other ailments. The microscopic small pieces which enter our sewerage system are mostly used in cosmetic stuff like scrubs, masks etc. But most high end chains are now opting for organic substitutes but the cheap ones which are largely consumed are still using them there is need for creating awareness about it & some strong laws banning their use China is one of the biggest polluter of oceans. However recently it has ordered 46 of its cities to start sorting its waste & recycle up to 35% by 2020 it has become one of the nations making most changes since IUCN president has been Chinese.

Now coming to our situation in Pakistan the problem is of such gigantic magnitude that it will require combined effort of govt.



NGO,s Civil Society, ports authorities fisher community and mass media in creating awareness about the dangers it poses and means how to go about it are not being considered.

As I said earlier that the statement about how plastic has entered our bodies was enough to compel me to do something about it being member of Shehri and IUCN I thought it to be my duty to do what little I could in my capacity. So I contacted My colleagues in IUCN & it's head Mahmood Akhtar Cheema sahib who encouraged me to start a campaign in this regard and the IUCN office was given the duty to arrange a meeting with the stake holders thou I was disappointed that the ones most concerned i.e. port authority and navy representative did not turn up. We got response from NIO, PSO WWF, cantonment board & Caritas different sites were suggested to take as a pilot project to make it plastic free in a sustainable manner. Finally it was decided to go ahead with Selecting Soomar Goth a Village at hawks bay & try to make it plastic free to b

emulated as an example for other villages as these fisher folks are the segment of society who are most affected by plastic in our seas.

With help of George Sadiq from IUCN and Sarfraz Anwar from Caritas we were able to visit Soomar Goth on 11th sep 2018 it was headed by me with Dr. Nuzhat Khan from NIO, Mr. Javed Mussarat from PSO, Mr. Sarfraz from Caritas and George Sadiq from IUCN. There we were greeted by the elders of the village where we sat at their committee room, introduced ourselves to them, purpose of our visit a brief about the hazards of plastic was shared with them, its effects on human life and fish was explained. We found them very receptive then they took us around the village and school, we were able to give a brief talk to children there and requested them to stop the use of plastic bags and promised to give them cloth shopping bags on our next visit. On the plastic waste they had collected we were informed inquiring what they did with that a man comes and collects it but later on it is dumped at a site and set on fire. We also

told them about the hazards of inhaling that toxic fumes and suggested to find a person who could sell it to a recycling facility. This is the meager start we have taken now we want to hold a cleanup activity near the village involving some donor partners to highlight the issue for public awareness. Mr. Javed from PSO also offered to hold medical camp there with the help of his wife who is a doctor. We also gave them a number of different species of saplings to be planted so that on our next visit we can see which ones had better chance of survival so that we can do mass plantation of it there as we were shown how the sea is advancing and they are being pushed back due to land erosion.

Surprisingly we did not see many large plastic bottles on inquiring we were told that they bind together empty bottles and turn them into small dingy for single man to fish. That proves that Pakistanis are brilliant at JOGAR.

Now a few suggestions for a concerned citizen that each one of us can do to reduce use of plastic.

1. Always carry a reusable water bottle
2. Carry your own food containers for takeaways & milk & yogurt
3. Avoid one time use plastics like glasses, straws, plates, bags, bottles etc
4. Prefer using recyclable bottles
5. Always keep cloth bags handy in your car
6. Choose products with less packaging material



7. Promote use of drinking fountains & dispensers in offices

8. Ditch household products like glass cleaner. Fabric softeners room sprays etc buy in jumbo packs & use refillable

9. Use soap bars instead of bottles

10. Create awareness or demand your sewerage authorities to try to net their resource entering the sea to restrict discharge of solid into it.

With this little information now I request all our countrymen to spread the word and take whatever measures we can in our capacity as a concerned citizen.

A paper cup by nature should absorb water, if it is not absorbing water, then must be a barrier in between the paper and the liquid. And that barrier is polyethylene plastic.

A study found that in 15 minutes, of contact with hot liquids, leached 25000 microplastic particles into your cup, but no one's questioning this. No one's really thinking about it, because its just part of our daily lives.

Are we very good at metabolizing plastic? No plastic is a foreign body, it's a foreign particles. In fact it will break down into nanoplastics, and nanoparticles in general have the issue of being able to penetrate cell membranes. So it can penetrate very deeply into the cell, it can cause inflammation, your body does not know how to deal with it, it's a foreign object. So you will get the inflammatory response when you encounter these.

But to make things worse, the microplastics themselves are a foreign body, but they also release plasticizer chemicals when they are in contact with your body, and they can also carry toxic chemicals into your body.

The fact that they can basically invade and integrate into our cells, and you are what you eat, are we turning into real-life Barbie and Kendolls?

We could be actually microplastics that have been detected in human lung blood and placenta. And who knows how much of this is getting into Barbie's? Are barbies being born with plastic in their bodies? I could guesstimate yes.

MOTHER LANGUAGE-BASED INSTRUCTION IN PAKISTAN

BY: ADIL ASHRAF



71 years ago, the Administration clamped down upon student protests at Dhaka University by gunning down students. The students were vehemently opposed to the imposition of a single language, Urdu, as the national language and completely ignoring Bengali. The protests laid the seeds of the Bengali independence movement and the day, 21st February, is now celebrated by UNESCO as International Mother Language Day. Despite its sordid history of language policy, the Pakistani state remains limited in its perspectives and approaches to language policy. Its fixation with English and Urdu has been perhaps the most damaging in the education sector. Students, teachers, and parents have suffered from both learning and teaching in languages they do not speak or completely understand. There is broad consensus amongst educators, academics, and researchers that children learn best when taught in a language most familiar to them. Their motivation and interest levels are significantly higher when learning in the mother tongue as compared to a second or third language. Moreover, learning in the mother tongue also helps in language acquisition of other languages like English. Thus, an education system must accommodate mother language-based instruction policy as an integral node. Yet,



Pakistan, despite being a deeply linguistically diverse country, has resorted to a blunt insistence on teaching in Urdu or English. Our nation-building has always been oriented toward erasing differences instead of celebrating diversity. When only 7% of Pakistanis hold Urdu as their first language, and absolutely none are familiar with English as a vernacular, what explains this unfounded emphasis on teaching all subjects in either of the two languages? Moreover, when teachers nor parents have the desired competency with English or Urdu in a large number of cases, then how do policymakers expect them to teach their children in those languages? Unfortunately, the medium of instruction issue, despite a glaring one, has little traction in government, private, and donor circles. The entire discourse around education

reform in the country revolves around three main issues: out-of-school children, curriculum reform, and low learning outcomes. While all three are significant policy issues, they cannot be comprehensively addressed without considering the medium of instruction problem. Having classrooms where children learn in their language will help increase learning outcomes while also improving school retention capacities. Estimates suggest approximately 92-95% of children in Pakistan have no access to education in their mother tongue. Children and teachers often translate Math problems presented in English to Urdu and then to their mother tongue. A lot of learning content is lost in these translation(s). Ultimately, such learning processes create barriers to effective education, undermine skill and knowledge

development, and limit economic mobility. The rot is deeper than just that of a mere policy issue. Children are reprimanded for speaking in Punjabi and Pashto in schools by teachers and school administration. Remarkably, Western Punjabi, the one spoken in Pakistan, is the most spoken language in the world which holds no space in the classroom, not even as a subject let alone a medium of instruction. Sindh fares better in this regard since Sindhi is given its due respect and is taught as a subject in public schools. Ultimately, Pakistan has a long way to go before it accords due respect and value to regional languages within and outside the education system. Readers might argue that mother-language-based instruction is a worthy goal but seems impractical. One does not need to look far to note a healthier policy and cultural approach to regional languages; India has celebrated its local languages and children often learn in their mother tongues across the country. Depending on the state, languages like Tamil and Bengali are often employed in schools as the medium of instruction. Within Pakistan, The Citizens Foundation has designed a multilingual education model in Thar which integrates Dhatki (mother-tongue), Sindhi, Urdu, and English as part of a language progression model from Nursery to Grade 10. The project is being piloted in 21 schools in the area and aims to improve learning and literacy levels in the



community. Such efforts are nascent but necessary steps to generate evidence and learnings for mother-tongue-based instruction to be instituted at scale. There is substantial research and evidence which suggests the primacy of mother-tongue-based medium of instruction in improving education outcomes. The need is for academics, researchers, policymakers, NGOs, and educators to start bringing the issue to mainstream discourse in Pakistan. Subsequent steps would involve devoting

resources and efforts to developing textbooks in regional languages, training teachers in multilingual education, and ensuring that students learn and are assessed in languages most familiar to them. Ultimately, the benefits will transcend improved learning outcomes; they will be a part of a broader cultural and political shift in the country where we start celebrating our linguistic diversity and maintaining our rich literary traditions culminating in more social cohesion for the country.

BRIDGING THE GAP: ELECTED OFFICIALS & CONSTITUENTS



13/05/2023 at Rohri, District Sukkur

A healthy democracy thrives on trust and communication between elected officials and citizens. By working collaboratively, they can ensure effective governance, representation, and the advancement of collective interests.

The relationship between elected representatives and voters in a democratic society is of utmost importance. Face-to-face interactions play a vital role in establishing a strong connection, promoting transparency, and bridging the gap between them. The Open Court, an innovative platform, facilitates this essential interaction by bringing citizens and elected representatives together.

The Elected representatives have the crucial responsibility of creating policies that cater to the needs and aspirations of the people. To be effective, they must actively engage with their

constituents. Proactive engagement helps them understand the current conditions and needs of their constituency. Lawmakers can also seek constituents' opinions on bills and policies they aim to introduce, which gather support and encourages greater trust and ownership in the citizens when the bills become laws.

Open Court workshops facilitate this connection:

- **Citizen-representative dialogue:** Both parties share concerns, ideas, and expectations.

- **Mutual understanding:** Officials gain insights into constituents' needs, while citizens learn about their representatives' challenges.

- **Improved governance:** By working collaboratively, representatives can better serve their communities.

Outcomes:

- **Informed officials:** Workshops

equip representatives with knowledge of their roles and responsibilities.

- **Open communication:** A platform for transparent dialogue between officials and constituents is established.

- **Citizen engagement:** Workshops encourage active participation and expression of concerns.

- **Shared vision:** Both parties gain a stronger understanding of each other's perspectives and roles.

These workshops were held in following dates.

1. 13/05/2023 at Rohri, District Sukkur
2. 15/07/2023 at Shikarpur
3. 22/07/2023 at Mirpurkhas
4. 12/08/2023 at Karachi
5. 13/10/2023 at Hyderabad
6. 14/10/2023 at Khairpur
7. 21/10/2023 at Karachi



14/05/2023 at Shikarpur



22/07/2023 at Mirpurkhas



12/08/2023 at Karachi



14/10/2023 at Pirjo Goth, District Khairpur



13/10/2023 at Hyderabad



21/10/2023 at Karachi

UNLEASHING PAKISTAN'S YOUNG POWER: IGNITING YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



In today's complex world, young people face a daunting inheritance: environmental crisis, rising inequality, and insecure futures. Amidst these challenges, limited opportunities and unresponsive leaders often leave them feeling unheard and voiceless.

Despite constituting over half the population in many countries, youth (18-30) are often marginalized from mainstream politics and decision-making. Pakistan exemplifies this. With 64% under 30, 29% between 15-29, their potential lies untapped.

This disconnect manifests in abysmally low youth voter turnout. Pakistan's past eight elections saw a meagre 31% average youth participation, compared to 44% overall - a 13-point gap. In 2018, a staggering 18 million registered young voters simply didn't vote.

Yet, hope lies in their immense potential. Under-35 voters now constitute 45% of the electorate, capable of changing the game, as Dawn News reports. However, fragmented efforts by youth activists, often reliant

on social media, haven't bridged the gap.

While promising steps like Sindh's 2021 student union bill and 2018 youth policy exist, implementation lags. The education system remains silent on equipping young people with the knowledge of their rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution.

This is where our "Youth Civic Education: Political & Freedom Rights" workshops ignite change. We connect diverse, politically active youth to:

- **Empower their voice:** Increase their willingness and ability to engage in electoral processes, public hearings, policy debates, advocacy, community organizing, and government oversight.
- **Ignite critical thinking:** Equip them with the knowledge of democratic principles, institutions, and practices, along with the skills for effective participation.
- **Champion democratic values:** Help them recognize and apply fundamental values

like critical thinking, respectful dialogue, and accountability, crucial for a healthy democracy.

By tackling social taboos, addressing current challenges to democracy, and understanding the reasons behind youth disengagement, we empower young leaders to claim their rightful space in Pakistan's political life. Their voices, once heard, can spark a brighter future for their nation.

The workshops were organized with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation in Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Sukkur and Pano Aqil on these dates.

1. June 3, 2023 at Hyderabad
2. June 10, 2023 at Mirpurkhas
3. June 15, 2023 at Karachi
4. June 24, 2023 at Karachi
5. August 5, 2023 at Karachi
6. September 15, 2023 at Karachi
7. September 16, 2023 at Pano Aqil
8. September 25, 2023 at Karachi.



15th June 2023, Karachi.



15th September 2023, Sukkur.

SHEHRI - CITIZENS FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT



INTRODUCTION

Shehri-CBE is a Karachi-based voluntary advocacy group established by concerned citizens in 1988 to project their apprehensions about the deterioration of the built and natural environment.

There is a special emphasis on tackling illegal construction and zoning violations, and their related symptoms, e.g., drainage, encroachments, parking and infrastructure. Shehri monitors the regulatory bodies and government agencies and encourages civil society to do the same.

SUCSESSES

Passing of Sindh Senior Citizens Welfare Bill 2014 Demolition of Glass Towers illegal encroachment on the notified road-widening of Clifton Road.

Saving of 480-acre Gutter Baghicha Park on Manghopir Road. This is the largest open recreational space in a low income congested area of Lyari-inhabited by approximately one million people.

Saving of 62-acre Kidney hill Park in Karachi Cooperative Housing Society Union inclusive of 18-acre notified KWSB installations.

Establishment of the Oversee Committee of the KBCA and a

Public Information Counter.

Halting commercialization and sale of 11 KTC and 15 SRTC bus-depot plots in Karachi and Sindh. Today these plots are to be used by the CDGK for intercity bus terminals and other related transportation activity.

Saving (Makro) webb Ground playfield in Lines Area, Karachi.

Demolition of apartment structure Costa Linina in amenity Bagh-e-Ibne-Qasim, Clifton. CDGK has now developed it as a park.

Preventing commercialization of Doongi Ground park / playfield in Lahore.

Reducing, as part of Lahore Bachhao Tehrik, the amount of damage from Canal Bank Widening Project.

Reaffirmation of seismic building code in Quetta.

Training 1600 (Approx) police officers all over Pakistan on participatory citizen-police interaction, human rights violations and police reforms.

Over the years, Shehri's expertise has been recognized by superior courts and it has been called as amicus curiae (friend of the court) in cases dealing with built environment violations.

OBJECTIVES

Establishment of an aware and pro-active civil society, good governance, transparency and rule of law.

Promotion of research, documentation, dialogue with and influence of public policies.

Setting up an effective and representative local government system.

Preparation of a representative Master Plan / Zoning plan for Karachi city and effective implementation of the same.

Observance of basic human rights in society.

HOW IS SHEHRI RUN?

A volunteer Managing Committee, duly elected by the General Body for a term of two years, thereby functioning in an open and democratic manner. Membership is open to all who subscribe to its objectives and memorandum.

SHEHRI needs Volunteers

to work in the following areas:

- Legal Affair
- Media and Outreach
- Million Trees Campaign
- Conservation and Heritage
- Fund Raising
- Gun Free Society

Name: _____

Occupation: _____

Address: _____

Contact No.: _____

E-mail: _____

JOIN SHEHRI

To Create a Better Environment

Submit A Cross Cheque of PKR 7000/= in favor of Citizen for a Better Environment (Shehri-CBE) Along with 2 passport size photos to become a member

Address: 88-R, Block-2, P.E.C.H.S., Karachi-75400.
Tel / Fax : 021-3453-0646

SHEHRI MEMBERSHIP

Don't forget to renew your membership for 2024 (Rs. 7000/=)

Join Shehri and play your role as a good citizen to make this city a clean, healthy and environmentally friendly place to live in!



HBL

More than just a bank

HBL contributes over Rs. 4 billion in the social uplift of Pakistan.*

HBL is committed to support growth and improve the quality of life for its staff, clients, and the people of Pakistan.

HBL invites you to read its **Impact and Sustainability Report 2022** to learn how profitability and sustainability together make a real difference.



Scan for Impact & Sustainability Report 2022