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**URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN
"BEYOND HOUSING"**

By

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Introduction

That for lack of housing our cities are in deep crisis of utmost consequences has in recent years come to be part of our conventional wisdom. So heart winning has been the slogan for shelter that it still maintains a prominent place in (the briefs held by all the main stream political parties and so much had been its development worth that it always had won appreciation and positive response of successive governments.

Surprisingly enough the incidence of homelessness has been reported only marginally in the population censuses conducted in the country over the past three decades. Perhaps for the reason that people always tend to manage a shelter no matter how basic it is___ ranging from a road side canvas tent, to a thatched and mud built "jhuggie" amongst Katchi Abadies or a precarious quarter in the blighted precincts of walled city and the census does not discard them as a worthless assets.

Regardless of the fact as to how pronounced are the prevalent housing shortages and how exponentially these are presented in our planning documents to maintain authenticity of housing issues, the real situation is that every town and city in the country is home to many square miles of Katchi Abadies and many more miles of dreary blighted precincts.

Over 25-million of urban dwellers i.e. 50-percent of total urban population of Pakistan lives in squalid, inhuman and barbarous socio-economic conditions in these Katchi Abadies which is seriously telling upon whatever little hope is left in them to improve their lot in responsive and responsible manner. They feel deprived and plundered. They are more than 50-percent in number in our cities but share less than 3-percent of urban prosperity and only 15-percent of them have access to urban facilities such as safe water, proper toilet, electric & gas connection, a hospital, a school premises and a play ground.

There is therefore, a strong cause to look beyond housing and focus our concern on the improvement of living conditions in their totality amongst our urban areas, This entails ensuring for all adequate and nourishing food, adequate space in which to sleep, eat and live, ample work opportunities to earn a living and to pay for food, shelter, good education for children, health care for the family and assurance of ample natural amenities such as fresh air, good water, openness and recreation. We need to reinstate the confidence of majority of our urban dwellers that urban developments happening in our cities do not arise out of comfort, convenience and business advantage of few well to do people but is to do with more serious problems of those living along or below the poverty line.

This concept of improving conditions of our settlement in totality is at the core of Habitat Agenda (1996) that envisages evolution of healthy, safe, equitable and sustainable human settlements, inter-alia, through better management of human settlements of all sizes with reference to a well nested hierarchy. It is also strongly associated with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) committed to be achieved by all Nations through Millennium Declaration adopted at United Nations in year 2000. The Goal 7, Target - 11 seeks "to achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020" across the globe where slums are home to 1-billion people (one sixth of total population of the world).

Past Approaches

Unless this concept of 'total package' programme is conceived and steps are taken for its deliverance with collective national dedication our isolated efforts to house people will, inevitably, fail, no matter how

One finds positive changes and some headway in the right direction, in the country. There is a greater realization that growing urbanization is not transferring assets but poverty from rural to urban centers and need to be controlled discreetly. Micro finance sector has in focus small towns & villages to trickle down financial assistance to gross root urban and rural level in an effort to eradicate poverty and permit people to be gainfully employed in villages and small towns. Highly centralized, vertically aligned and horizontally disjointed governance setup has been given a more coherent structure through Local Government Plan-2000 in which the district administration is answerable to elected representatives and urban planning & development process devolved to union council. Several best practices, aiming at improving total environment of our urban centers have covered a lot of ground, such as, 'Orangi Pilot Project, Karachi, 'Faisalabad Area Upgrading Project', 'Khuda-ki Basti' Hyderabad, Urban Shelter project, Farash, Islamabad and have generated a lot of interest as replicable development models. All said and done very well does not however satisfy the acidic test of the real situation prevalent at the national level. The Medium Term Development Frame Work 2005-10, brought out the following dismaying picture of urban profile.

Pakistan Housing Status (2005)

Population	1998	2005
Total	133.3 Million	153.5 Million
Urban	42.5 Million	60.8 Million
Rural	90.8 Million	106.55 Million

Housing Backlog (units)	4.3 Million	6.0 Million
Urban	1.4 Million	2.2 Million

Housing Supply

0.3 Million

Proportion of Pop. living in Katchi Abadies & Slums

About 50 - percent

Decreasing Sharing of direct Public Sector participation in housing

5.9 percent (1990)

Beneficiaries of HBFC & other financial institution

About 10 - percent

Beneficiary of site & service Scheme (Public & Private)

About 20 - percent

Risk of air poljution (%_age urban population)

T 40 -percent

Solid Waste Management (Urban)

Production = 55,000 tons per day

Collection = 60 - percent

Disposal = 8 - percent

Number of Settlement by population size

1. Mega Cities (over 5 - Million) = 2 (Lahore & Karachi)

2. Major Cities (over 1 - Million) = 4 (Faisalabad, Multan, Gujranwala, Hyderabad,

Peshawar, Rawalpindi & Quetta)

3. Medium Sized Cities (About 0.1 Million) = 40

4. Towns (Less than 100,000) = 448

5. Villages (Less than 10,000) = 50,000

It will be realized that urban services have been doubled and trebled but inadequacies continue as before, the housing shortages are more pronounced now than when we started our housing

programme, slums have been cleared but more have come back at their place, cities have been expanded and even new cities have been founded any yet the phenomenon of Karchi Abadies could not be prevented and that our housing programme perceived and implemented for decades lead to the creation of more problems than solving them.

This is so because the solution we attempted treated only the symptoms and not the root cause of plague confronting us. While the symptoms subsided momentarily the malaise returned back ultimately with more complications, physical damages and social sufferings. How else the situation could express itself than the furoar we witness every day along our urban streets, crimes, tensions, reactions, social disorder, vandalism, violence, terrorism, lawlessness and frustration. The proud hallmarks of our city life namely tolerance, peace, harmony, security and affluence all have withered away.

Quest for New Options

We must accept that principal cause of our past failings have been our neglect and contempt with which we treated our fellow human beings. First we deprived them of their rightful income and decent living in villages and small towns and when they turned around at cities in search of employment and better living conditions they were pushed to slums, Katchi Abadis and precarious quarters in the old buildings and sent for begging or to fill in the niches of informal sector. They were not in consideration when urban development plans were drawn or projects for upgrading their abadies were launched. The cities then started decaying save few islands of prosperity here and there.

When Edward C Banfield brought out similar anomalies in technologically advanced society of US in his book titled "The Un-heavenly City" (1970) it was received by many readers as the work of an ill tempered and mean spirited fellow but many were amazed at the closeness of his title to real situation prevailing all over the World.

We are already wary of trying 'Concentration' and 'Decentralization' concepts in urban development. The concentration approach led to land speculation in major cities which were focus of economic development and resulted in haphazard physical development and in the segregation of functions and population according to socio-economic classes. Katchi abadies and slums were the unavoidable results of the process.

The decentralization approach rendered urban development go in the hands of 'developers' with imagery of 'garden town', 'ideal city', 'sky heights' springing up indiscreetly on the peripheries of congested cities. The results of haphazard sprawl started showing up soon. The inner city fabric has been destroyed to make room for roads and parking lots, the neighboring districts have lost residential value due to over commercialization and the developers towns burdened with economic problems of maintaining elaborate services over large areas have started dying under their burden. Municipalities have started disowning them that has further compounded the chaos.

A number of planners, however, strongly believe that debate of 'concentration' and 'decentralization' must end. It has lost its relevance and is obsolete in view of satellite based tele-video communications.

The concept of "balanced urban and rural development" aiming at retarding urbanization and converting lagging cities and towns into substantial and buoyant economies in the national and regional (provincial) context had been tried by Pakistan and other emerging economies but with limited success as in most of the cases national economies stagnated over decades with little in hand to trickle down at regional (provincial) and district level.

Returning to City is now developing into a movement but with focus on sustainable human development. The United Nation's Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio-de-

Janeiro in June 1992 Pioneered the concept which means reforming total environment of our cities and respecting culture and aspiration of all those who turn up at city doors. The urban development efforts shall only then, succeed in generating economic growth that distributes its benefits equitably, regenerates the environment rather than destroying it and that people be empowered rather than marginalized.

The qualities of such an urban environment comprises of congenial relationship between residences, work & recreation in terms of their mutually compatible and convenient location, uninterrupted and smooth inter flow of movements from one another and satisfaction or return deriving from each other. The houses must be adequate and comfortable for the family and relate themselves to a neighborhood which should provide adequate facilities - education, health, social, shopping & recreation for the families. There should be choice of employment and work satisfaction to the employed. The work should provide the income required to meet the comforts of living for the family. Recreation should provide the necessary variety to release stress and strains of urban life and diversity to satisfy physical, mental and emotional needs.

Impediments

To attain such an environment is a formidable task. The government and people have to act together with a single purpose. Why this has not happened so far may have several reasons, foremost, being the limited capacity to handle such a gigantic task of providing for a total urban environment, in terms of resources, professional manpower, innovated skills and advanced technology. Pakistan do not have such a capacity. The size of urban population is exceedingly large and touching 53 million (2005) and is growing rapidly in comparison with our resources.

Public apathy and inertia is also a powerful barrier in breaking new grounds. An article contributed to Daily Dawn dated 15.10.2006 reviewing progress on Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) reported that nearly half way to the target "the ball is no where near the goal post". Describing the abysmally low level of awareness amongst public and private quarters it added, "Most leaders and people who should be spear heading the process in achieving the goals, when contacted were not informed at all on the subject. Many admitted that they are hearing the word MGDs for the first time".

Our economy had been sluggish. For the first time since 1984 it has now turned around and leaped forward at GDP growth rate of 8.35% during 2004-05. Bad economic conditions relegated urban development to low priority and forcing adhoc and essential works instead of comprehensive and total development. Faced with this situation, we have been engaged in Pakistan in partial patch up works which have failed to bring about any permanent relief or improvement in the living environmental situation.

New Solutions

Altogether new solutions, departing from traditional wisdom has to be found to address our problems and new ways have to be struggled for achieving them. Broadly such efforts shall fall in to the following categories at the micro urban level;

Redistribution of population ___particularly in high density urban centers through internal density adjustments, provision of basic urban amenities and services to slums, katchi abadi and to what ever buildings left in the old city, even - distribution of urban economic activities and employment opportunities by creating multiple nodes, densifying urban development but limiting at the same time the use of precious urban land to a minimum critical level for a convenient and comfortable urban living, free from problems such as air, water and noise pollution.

Organization of any land that would be freed from the population burden as a consequences of aforementioned density adjustment measures for sustained production, conservation and development of natural amenities to be accessible to every one in the city for periodic visit on a sustained and monitored basis, and

Establishing a dynamic balance between the above two essential urban elements in a sustainable manner and within frame work of total urban environment that guarantees normal growth and normal use of resources,

At he regional and district level equilibrium between natural resources and human habitat may be maintained by focusing attention at such considerations as;

Exploitation of natural resources to provide sustainable social and economic base to urban and rural areas and bring to villages, intermediate towns and small cities the prosperity and affluence that would eradicate poverty and ensure development of facilities, at par with major and mega cities, preventing at the same time over exploitation of natural resources that may cause degradation or depletion.

At the macro national and provincial level **nature should be allowed to prevail** over indiscreet urban and industrial sprawl which is depleting precious cultivable land. Together with looking into economical and spatial viabilities our national human settlement policies should mainly be steered by environmental considerations for achieving sustainable settlement system.

Without an institutional frame work (i.e., law) for vigorously pursuing holistic policies at all levels of development i.e., urban, regional and national, of the type envisaged in the foregoing, any effort directed at housing alone will end in frustration similar to what we have experienced since independent in 1947.

CONCLUSION

Between the choices of mere focusing at housing and acquiring a total environment for the urban dwellers to live, work and recreation the later must come first. In fulfilling the later the former will automatically be achieved.

These lessons we have learnt form our past housing efforts of five decades and must now lead us to a more pragmatic evaluation of new solutions.