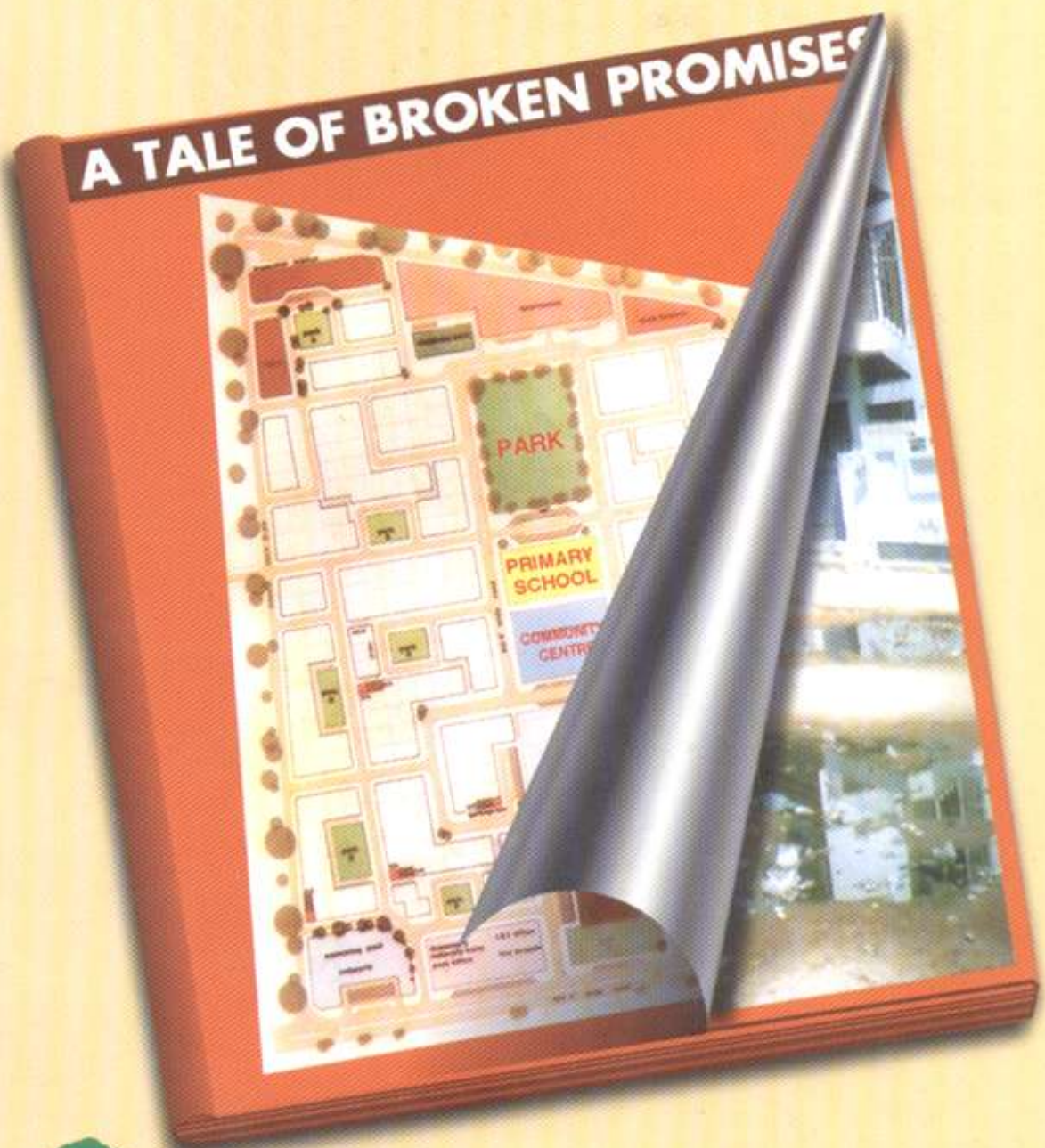


RIDING FOR A FALL

**Analysing the
Public Housing Sector In Karachi**

by
Farhan Anwar



Shehri-Citizens for a Better Environment

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Editor

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SHEHRI-Citizens for a Better Environment

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DESTINATION

One of the greatest challenge of the next century facing the developing world is the management of their existing and rapidly emerging urban centers. The issue of immediate concern to the urban planners and managers is to regulate and control the growth of urbanised areas in such a way that they effectively contribute to the national growth in a sustained manner while keeping the critical 'Urbanization – Environmental Quality' relationship within manageable limits.

The pace of urbanization has gained rapid momentum in the past two decades and it is presently estimated that about 45% of the world's population lives in urban areas. With the urban population growing two and a half times faster than its rural counterpart, the level of urbanization is projected to cross the 50 per cent mark in 2005. United Nation projections show that by 2025, more than three fifths of the world's population will live in urban areas. The urban population in that year will be approximately 5.2 billion, of whom 77 per cent will live in developing countries. Of the 26 urban agglomerations expected to have 10 million or more inhabitants by 2010, 21 will be in developing countries. Asia being home to 14 of the very large cities!

In the developing countries, the process of urban growth has produced varied models for fulfilling the housing needs of the growing population. However, two broad categories can be identified. The first refers to the 'formal sector', housing initiative by an organized system of institutions, and governed by certain rules and regulations. This can be termed as the 'provider' approach where the key players are government agencies, consultants, financiers, big contractors and developers.

The second category can, and is usually termed as the 'informal sector'. In this case housing is provided on land where ownership or tenure is not officially recognized. This is the 'self help' model of housing, where the key actors are the local developers, community based, groups, non-governmental – organizations, small contractors and money lenders.

If we take the case of Karachi city, since 1947, four distinct periods can be identified when the housing sector and related actors have been put to great stress due to sudden rises in population levels. Immediately after independence, there was a massive influx of refugees which needed to be housed. Initially, makeshift arrangements were made. Later, during the 60's, through the development of some new housing schemes, pressure on the inner city areas, mostly in the Saddar and adjoining areas was released to some extent.

The second, wave of immigrants came during the 60's from upcountry regions of the Punjab and Frontier in the 'green revolution' days during President Ayub Khan's government. Industrial activity was greatly enhanced and whole new localities like Orangi and Baldia cropped up within no time at all.

Then, following the breakup of Pakistan with the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, Karachi experienced another big boost in its population levels, with people mostly belonging to the Bihari community, who were uprooted from Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) opting to migrate and settle mostly in Karachi.

The fourth period was during the 80's when war in neighbouring Afghanistan brought in its wake the un-controlled migration of substantially large number of Afghans (mostly Pukhtoons) into Pakistan. Many eventually found their way into the financial, industrial and commercial hub of Pakistan – Karachi.

How did the planners and developers related to the housing sector meet this challenge? We find that up until the 70's things were pretty much under control with the Karachi Development Authority (KDA), Karachi's premiere development agency playing a fairly active role. However, since then, conditions have gradually deteriorated. KDA, for the past 25 years or so, has failed to 'properly' develop any new housing scheme (Scheme # 33 being the last effort in this regard). Growing politicization of the agency with the resulting corruption, inefficiency and technical/financial mismanagement are some reasons for the drastic fall in service levels.

In the absence of the state playing the role of the provider, private enterprise has filled the gap. The 'builders', have moved in a big way. Although their significant role in providing housing for the growing population is undeniable, their non-compliance with land-use/zoning laws and regulations with the resulting degradation in the local environment is a matter of concern and serious debate in the society. Growing corruption in government regulatory agencies and the huge amount of money involved in this sector is making it difficult to solve this highly important and contentious question of regulation in building and land use/zoning. Political will to solve this problem is also lacking.

Almost 45% of Karachi's population resides in illegal settlements or '**Katchi Abadis**', as we call them. Very interesting and sophisticated models of 'self help', most significant being the 'Orangi Pilot Project', have developed over the years in these settlements. The Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority (SKAA) is playing the role of the facilitator in the regularization and development of these areas.

It is now quite apparent that the weakest link in this equation is the government sector. In this study, within a limited scope, an assessment has been made of the causes of decline of the housing development sector in providing new housing facilities and also in failing to properly maintain the ones they had developed. This assessment is based on an effort made to trace the history of development of a particular government housing scheme/project, right from the planning to the implementation, occupancy stage in order to analyse what went wrong – where and how. Why has the government failed to sustain its leading role in the formal housing sector in Karachi and why the developed housing schemes, particularly in lower/middle income areas have become planning and management nightmares. These are some of the issues this study aims to address.

Another important aspect of this study is the emphasis laid on 'Public Opinion', while both assessing and later analysing the findings of the study. It is unfortunate that most of the city plans of the past and present have been prepared without bothering to gather the opinions, ideas and suggestions of those very people whom these plans are meant to benefit. The way the plans have been implemented and have later unfolded with damaging consequences for the users and the city at large have proved the folly of this isolated approach, divorced from the ground realities on the part of our planners.

So, we have made an effort feel the pulse of the common man. How does he or she perceive the problem, who do they hold responsible, what are the priority concerns and how are the day to day matters being resolved.

Credit is due to the Shehri-CBE management, which is actively engaged in efforts to bring about positive and lasting changes in the housing sector in Karachi, for approving this project and providing valuable inputs during various stages of the project. This project would also not have been possible without the financial assistance provided by the Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation, which is greatly appreciated.

Our ongoing programme of consultation and cooperation with the Departments of Environmental/Civil Engineering of the N.E.D. University of Engineering & Technology, Karachi, proved most helpful. The desk top publishing expertise of Mohammad Arshah Shah of Graphisense Pakistan contributed immensely in the final layout and design of the document. Of much value was the eager cooperation provided by the residents of the study area.

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February 1999.

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The present case study, aims to analyse the issues related with the planning, implementation and occupancy stages of Sector 5D of the North Karachi residential district of Karachi city. North Karachi project was one of the earliest planned and documented development exercise undertaken by the Government of Pakistan with the help of foreign consultants in the sector of urban housing.

Preliminary planning documents have been accessed to determine the guidelines and development parameters set forth by the early planners. An assessment of the present situation in the case study area vis-a-vis the state of the living conditions and infrastructure/utilities has been made, mainly through the eyes of the residents.

Data analysis and subsequent evaluation has led to the forming of certain questions, suggestions and recommendations for sustainable future growth in the housing sector of the city.

Before analysing and assessing the present state of affairs in the study area, it would be worthwhile to delve into the past and orient oneself with the history of development of the North Karachi sector of Karachi city.

Establishment of the National Housing and Settlements Agency

After partition, in 1947, some 9 million displaced persons found themselves in Pakistan, of whom over 1.0 million moved into Karachi. Thus, the first Federal Capital of Pakistan expanded at a very high rate. New residential districts grew up with very high densities and very low standards of community facilities, and without proper planning of the Greater Karachi Area as a whole.

Up until the year 1959, 35% of the population was either totally homeless, or so badly housed as to be virtually homeless.

In order to meet the pressing housing needs of the country, an agency by the name of "**National Housing and Settlements Agency**" was formed at the Ministry of Rehabilitation in March 1959. The aims of the Agency, as defined in

the scheme and as eventually formulated were:

- a. To ensure nationwide uniformity of policies and coordination of efforts in the field of Housing and Settlements.
- b. To plan and programme national schemes on general lines, coordinate action and study ways and means of mobilizing government and private financial resources.
- c. To design and assist in the implementation of housing and settlements projects.
- d. To arrange for the training of specialists in the field of ekestics and to establish the Pakistan Ekestic Training Centre.
- e. To develop pilot demonstration projects of major significance, far exceeding in importance the limits of the area in which they are located.

Principles of Planning

The preparation of the long term programme for the development of Korangi (First housing project undertaken in the programme) was

set forth in the reports on "The Development of the Korangi Area - The Programme" (DOX-PA 17) and "The Development of Plots" (DOX-PA 34). This planning exercise was undertaken by the world famous Greek consulting firm "Doxiadis Associates". The basic principles observed in the drafting of this programme are discussed below. They were also the principles on which North Karachi was later planned.

- Each settlement was to be independent as far as all basic functions of daily life such as trade, industry, education, hospitals, parks etc are concerned. The aim, to cut transportation and allied costs particularly for low income groups and create an integrated society.
- People belonging to all income groups to be housed to prevent the lower income groups from settling exclusively therein and thus endangering the communities to be labeled "poor districts" and condemned to stagnation.
- The families to be housed will themselves contribute to the housing effort through the application of various self help methods, or by being granted nuclei of houses only to be completed later by the

occupants, or by being provided plots upon which the people themselves will build upon.

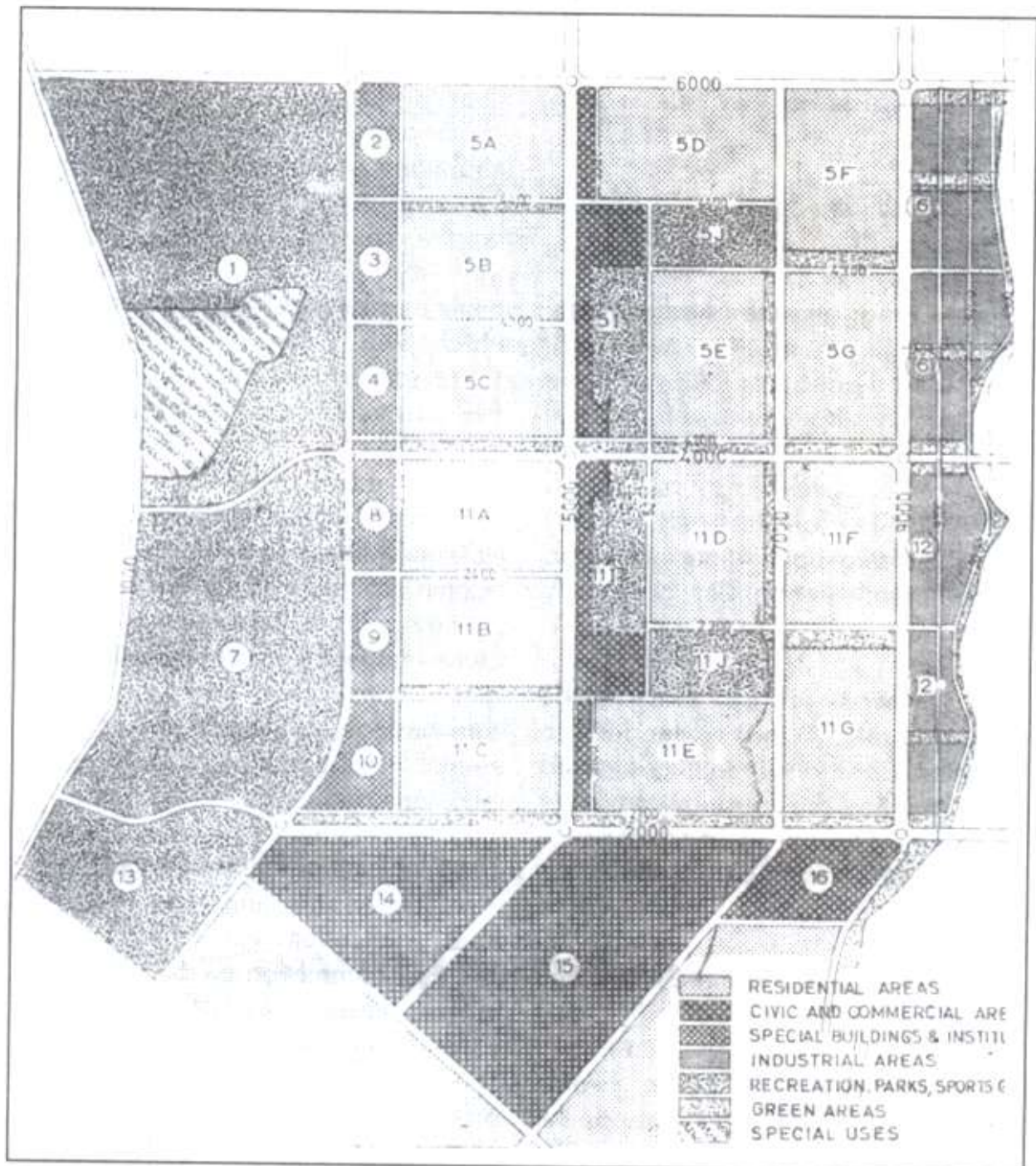
- The beneficiaries, other than the lowest income groups (for whom government subsidies to the tune of 30% were to be provided) fully pay for the housing facilities.
- Varying housing options ranging from just housing nuclei to fully developed plots with necessary community facilities to be provided to differing income groups.
- The project to become self sustaining both financially and consequently in the development needs in the long run with the government contribution becoming progressively smaller with the yielding of greater profits as market forces set their own prices for housing units purchased and the ensuing commercial activities.

The Initiation of the North Karachi Project

In order to enhance the scope of the project for greater service delivery for the rising population, the second major housing project (after Korangi) i.e. North Karachi was initiated under the "Greater Karachi Resettlement Programme".

The building of the new settlement at

Master Plan (North Karachi)



North Karachi began in December 1960. Relief was specially meant to be provided for the families of Lyari.

Concerns of the Initial Planners

Taking the overall perspective of the housing needs of the city, the following concerns and suggestions were registered by the early planners.

Need for Further Expansion of the Programme

The Korangi and the North Karachi projects in themselves were not considered adequate to cover all the actual housing needs of Karachi even if viewed only in respect of providing housing to the shelterless low income families only, mainly due to rising population levels and insufficient economic prosperity levels.

So, it was feared that if the programme is not extended to create additional self contained communities, the housing situation in Karachi, instead of improving will deteriorate (mainly in the shelterless low income families).

Intermingling of Income Groups in the New Settlements

Although meant to house people belonging to all income groups the programme become confined to the

building of houses for the lowest income groups in accordance with the decision of the planning commission.

It was thus feared that there was a great risk of Korangi and North Karachi becoming a vast sea with tens of thousands of more or less identical houses, a city consisting of single-room dwellings, with inhabitants of more or less the same class and occupation. It was stated that the risk was a serious one, not only for the people of these localities, but also for the state, which will witness the gradual depreciation of the enormous investments, it has made in this area.

The involvement of private enterprise for the construction of houses on the plots for the middle and higher income groups, with the government providing them incentives such as tax exemptions, and undertaking special construction works including communications facilities, community buildings etc. was recommended.

The Problems of Employment

Special attention was drawn to the fact that completion of township be in accordance with the original concept and plan, namely as self contained integrated communities providing facilities for every aspect of normal life. Therefore, along with

DEVELOPMENT / FINANCIAL PLAN

The following works were to be carried out in North Karachi during the five-year programme period:

- a. Construction of 17,500 houses for low income families, inclusive of the corresponding land development. These houses were to be subsidised similarly to those in Korangi.
- b. Development of 5,000 plots for middle incomes, to be allocated by auction.
- c. Construction of the necessary community buildings.
- d. Development of the necessary special zones (industrial, business, special uses, etc.), the plots of which will be allocated at commercial prices.
- e. Carrying out of land development works.

housing, priority should also be given to the development of industrial zones and business centers.

Problems of Housing Management

Special mechanisms be developed for setting in place proper allocation procedures, selection of the beneficiaries, collection of the installments on the houses, maintenance of settlements and so on.

The procedures had to be realistic taking in view the socio-economic ground realities in order to render the project a success.

Sector 5D, North Karachi

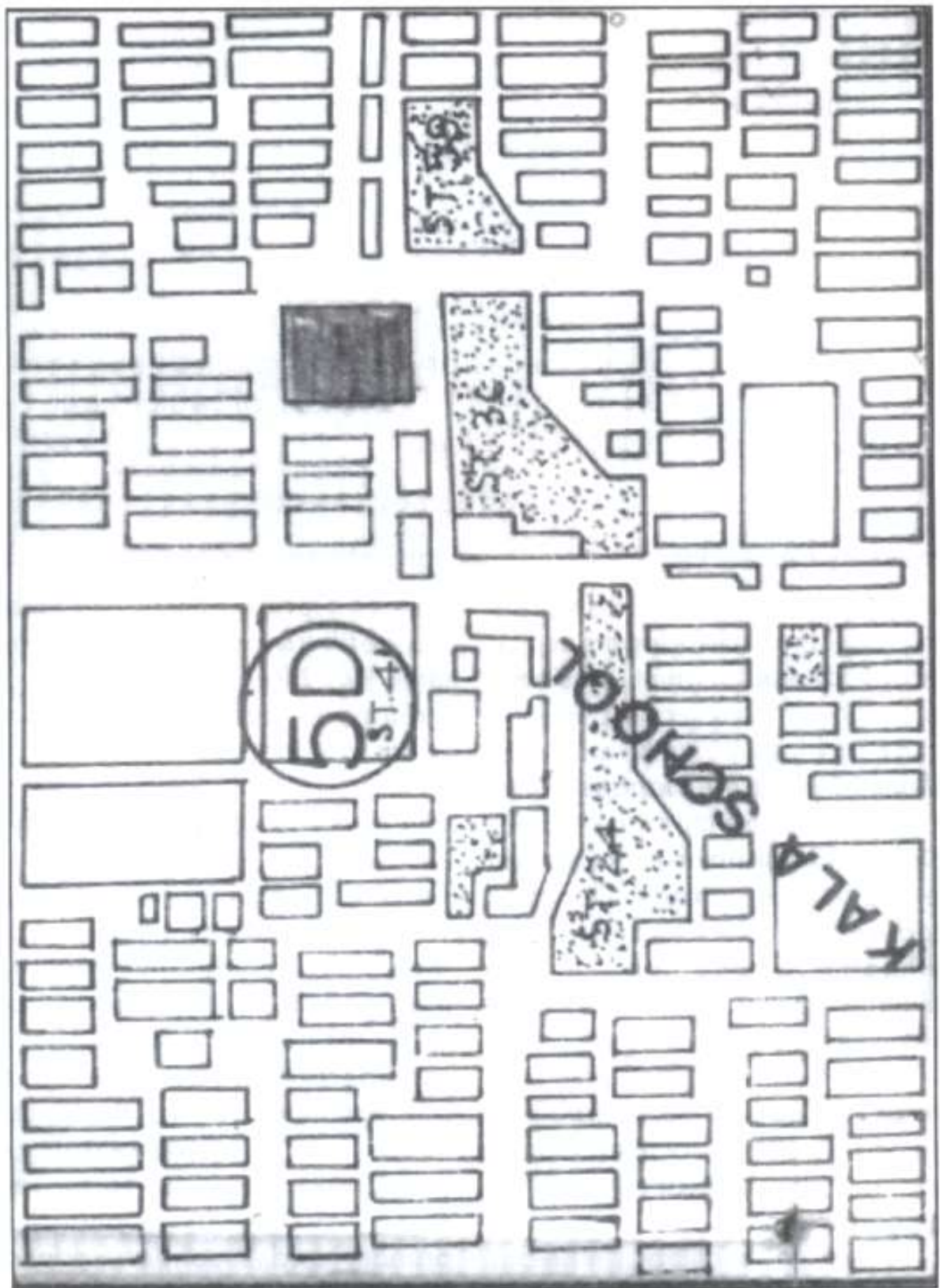
Sector 5D, as defined by the Master

Plan of North Karachi, is located at the northern part of the community class V, No. 5. This sector was planned to form a community class IV for low income families.

The Structure of the Community

The community class IV, the size of which depends on factors such as prevailing educational system and the financial status and occupation of the resident population, was to be considered as a self contained urban unit as far as the everyday needs of the inhabitants were concerned. It was supposed to provide within its boundaries for primary and secondary education, shopping, social life, public health, religious and recreational activities. Class IV is organized into a number

Layout Plan (Sec.5D, North Karachi)



of communities class III and these again into communities class II and so forth, until the single house unit is reached.

Description of the Sector

Community 5D was planned to compose of four communities Class III comprising about 700 houses grouped around the civic/commercial centre of the sector, with provisions of a primary school, a place of worship, a

garden, a public car shelter. All the facilities to be provided in the centre of the community, so as to be easily accessible to all.

Parking spaces had been provided along the internal roads of the sector. More than one parking space corresponding to every four houses, besides the 75 parking spaces under car shelters. Provisions were also made for pedestrian movement.

S T A T I S T I C S

The Community 5D, measuring 2,200 ft in width and 3,300 ft in length, covers an area of 8,06,666 sq. yds. The right of ways of the surrounding vehicular roads are not included in this number.

This area of 8,06,666 sq. yds was distributed to the various land uses of the Sector as follows:

a. Residential plots:		
128 sq. yds x 2,884	=	3,69,152 sq. yds or 45.76%
b. Pedestrian roads and squares	=	2,39,316 sq. yds or 29.67%
c. Vehicular roads and parkings	=	42,790 sq. yds or 5.30%
d. Parks and green areas	=	58,368 sq. yds or 7.24%
e. Community buildings	=	21,552 sq. yds or 2.67%
f. Educational buildings	=	75,488 sq. yds or 9.36%
Total		8,06,666 sq. yds or 100.00%

The adopted strategy was that in order to trace and assess the history of development of the case study area, right from the planning to the implementation, occupancy stage and beyond, the best indicator of the pace and quality of development would be 'Public Opinion'. By going to the residents themselves, the areas of concern and causes of discontent could best be identified. The users are always the best judge of the services and facilities being provided to them and are most likely to come up with the most appropriate solutions and suggestions. These findings were then matched with the independent survey of the study team.

Standardization

To conduct the public opinion survey, a questionnaire was developed which covered various aspects of utility and infrastructure planning and development to management. Issue like housing and land use management and related infrastructure development of water, sewerage and waste management to recreational development were targeted for information gathering. The role of government agencies, public representatives, citizen organisations and individuals was

assessed. The aim was to prepare a profile of development of the locality in which defects and shortcomings are identified in relation to the possible causes, and solutions are put across.

A total number of 100 households of Sector 5D, North Karachi, were covered in this survey and the residents were in most cases asked to give multiple reasons to justify and identify a particular area of concern so that the issues are highlighted in a wide focus.

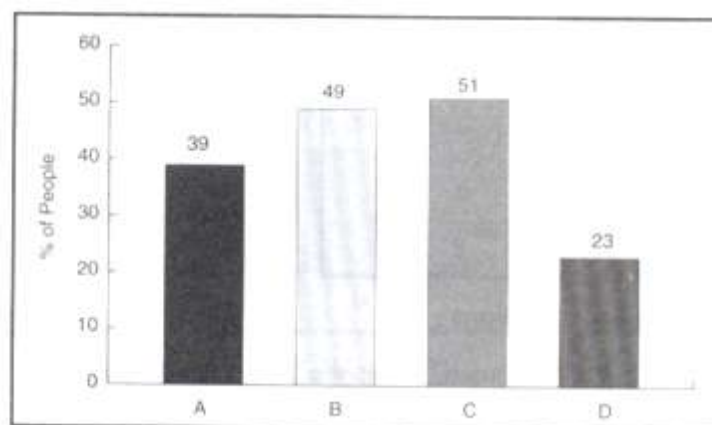
After the collection of data, a detailed analysis was made in which a number of correlations between the various aspects of the findings were made in the economical, social, developmental and environmental contacts to come up with possible causes of decline in the quality of living in the case study area. Based on the analysis several issues have been highlighted.

Examination

In the field survey, public opinion was obtained on numerous issues ranging from the identification of the causes of decline in the quality of living, the sectors worst effected to the role being played by the various

DOCUMENTATION (Public Opinion Survey)

1. Reason for selection of the area for residing

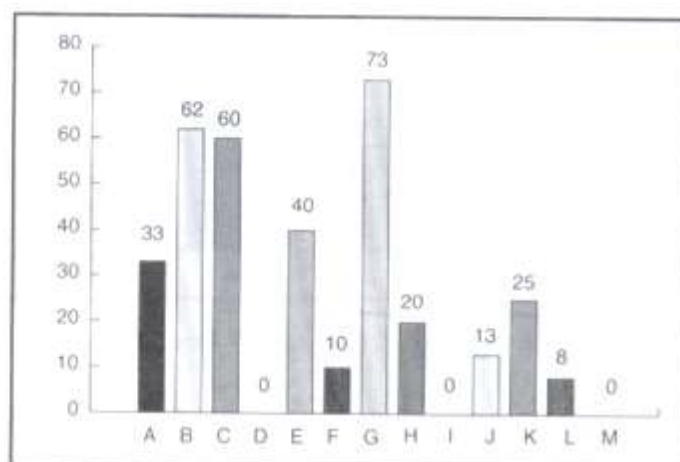


Reasons for selection of locality

- A. Economic (Low Cost)
- B. Cleanliness (Provision of Utilities)
- C. Proximity to Business/Employment
- D. Miscellaneous

* Misc. includes family connections, inheritance etc.

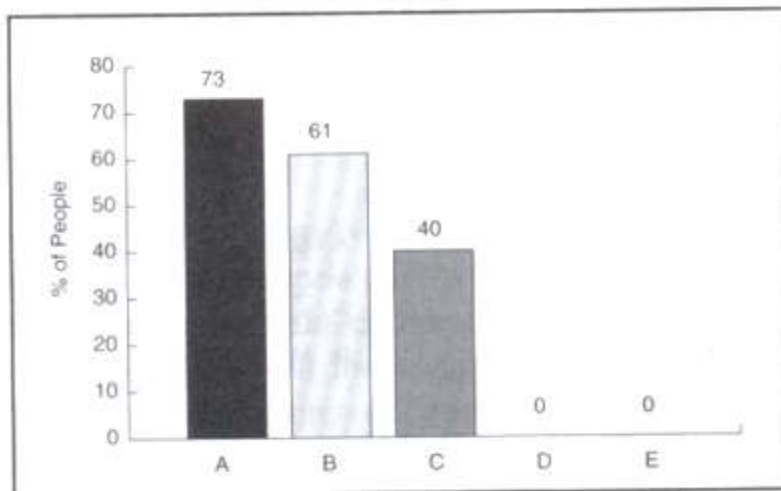
2. Have the living conditions deteriorated in the area during the period of your residence? If so, identify the worst effected sector



Decline in Infrastructure / Social / Environmental

- A. Housing
- B. Garbage
- C. Sewerage
- D. Power Supply
- E. Drainage
- F. Road/Traffic
- G. Water Quality
- H. Water Availability
- I. Air Quality
- J. Privacy
- K. Law and Order
- L. Noise
- M. Encroachments

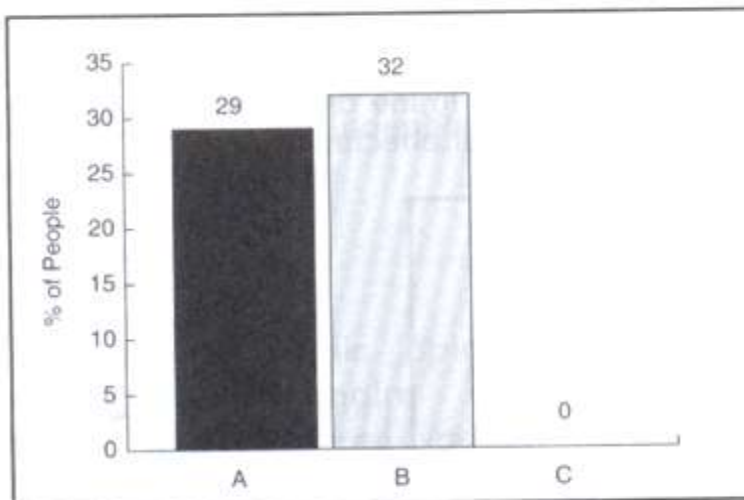
3. Causes for decline in living conditions



Causes for decline in living conditions

- A. Planning Defects
- B. Improper maintenance by government agencies
- C. Lack of extension in facilities / utilities
- D. Overpopulation
- E. Misuse of facilities / Utilities by residents

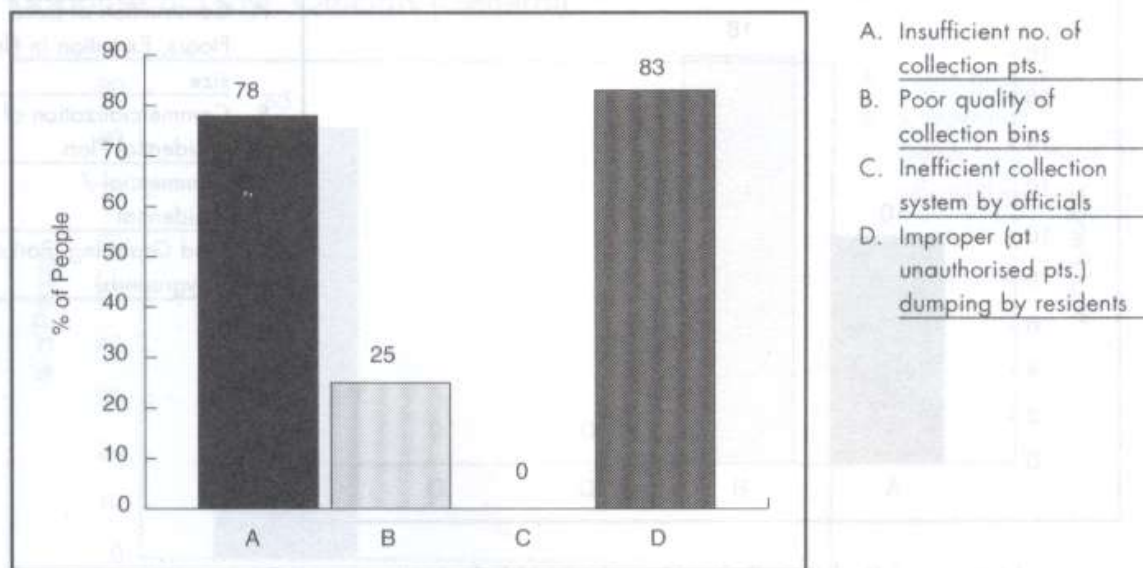
4. What is wrong with the housing facilities?



Causes of Housing Defects

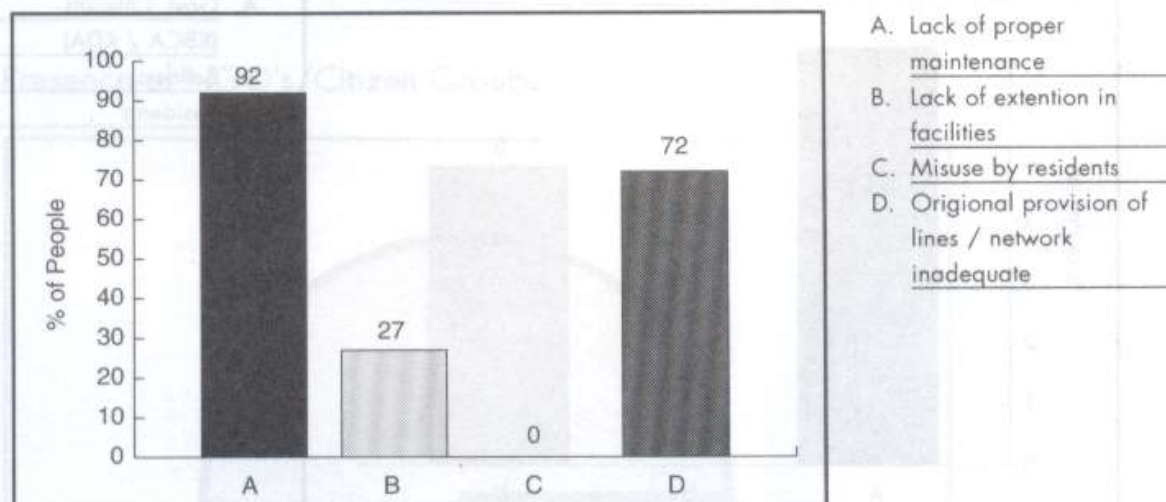
- A. Small Plot size
- B. Poor Construction/Design
- C. Construction of access floors by residents

5. What is wrong with the Garbage Collection/Disposal System



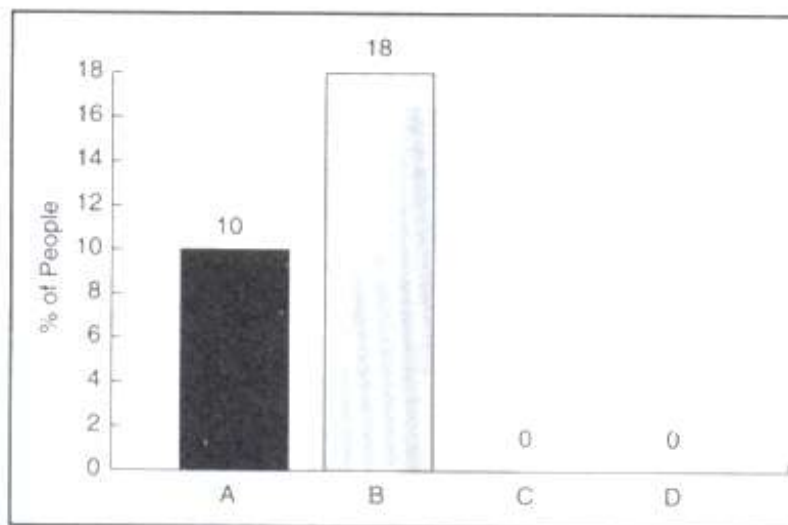
Causes of Garbage Collection/Disposal System Defects

6. 'What is wrong with the Water and Sewerage System?



Causes of Water and Sewerage System Defects

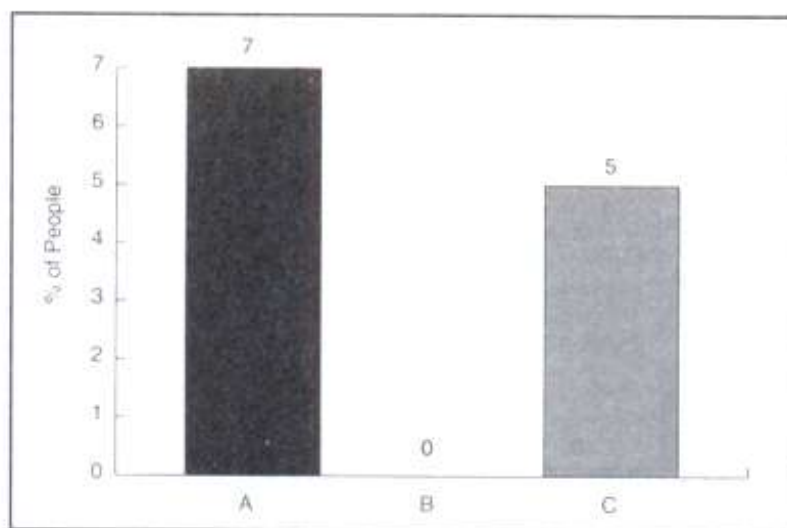
7. Nature of Building Rules/Regulations Violations



- A. Construction of Extra Floors, Extension in Plot size
- B. Commercialization of Residential Plots
- C. Commercial / Residential
- D. Land Grabbing (Parks / Playgrounds)

Nature of Building Rules/Regulation Violations

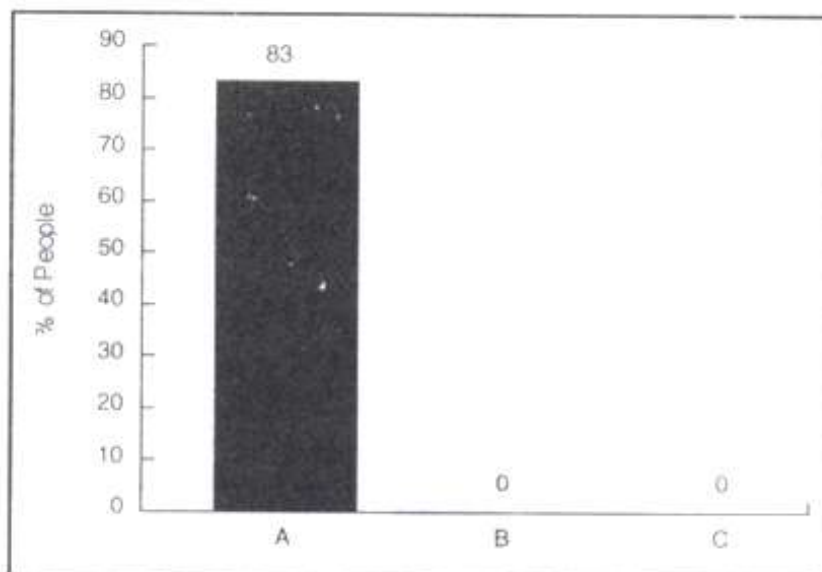
8. Responsibility for Building Rules / Regulation Violations



- A. Govt. Officials (KBCA / KDA)
- B. Builders
- C. Residents

Responsibility for Building Rules/Regulations Violations

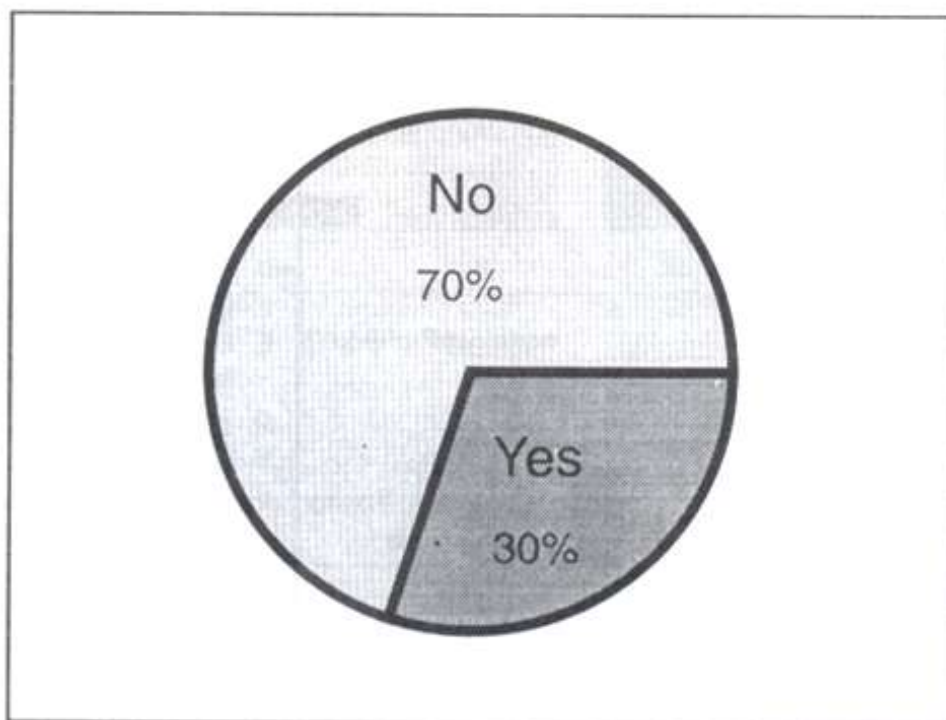
9. Response of Govt. Officials (General)



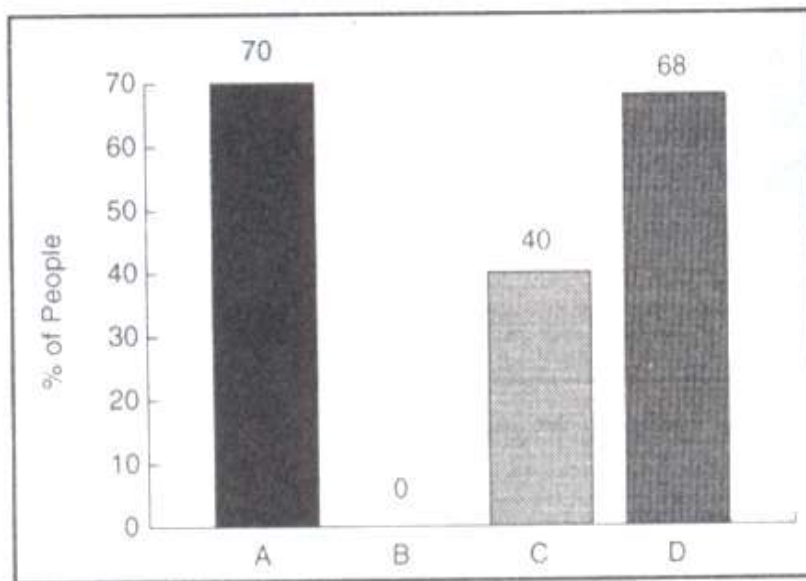
- A. Non-Cooperation
- B. Cooperation
- C. Differs from officials to official (Govt. to Govt.)

Response of Govt. Officials (General)

10. Presence of NGO's/Citizen Groups

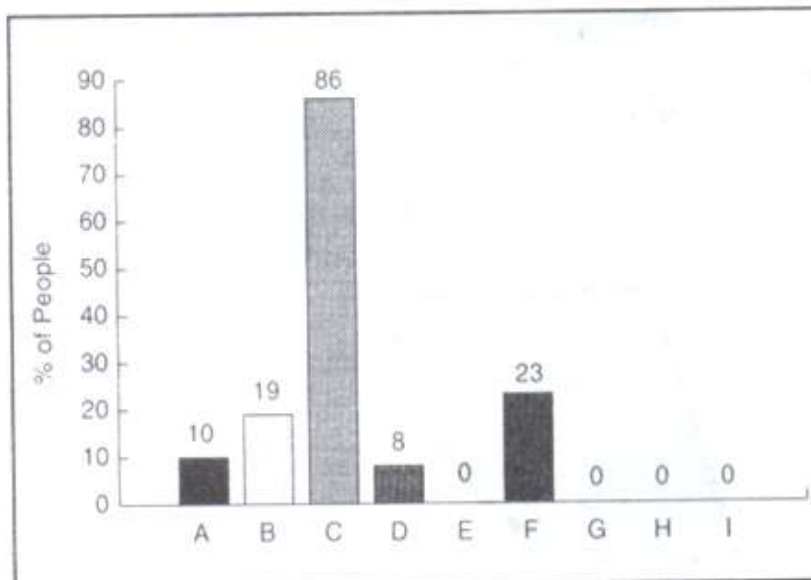


11. Whom do you approach for redressal of your problems



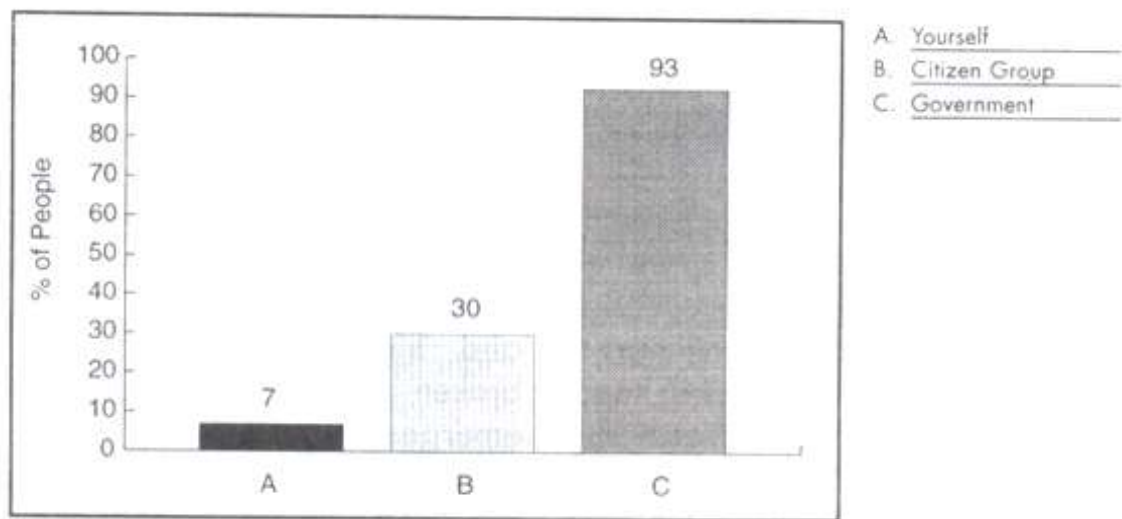
- A. Govt. officials
- B. NGO's/Citizen Group
- C. Political Representatives
- D. Try to solve ourselves

12. Given a choice, which problem would you prefer to be solved first



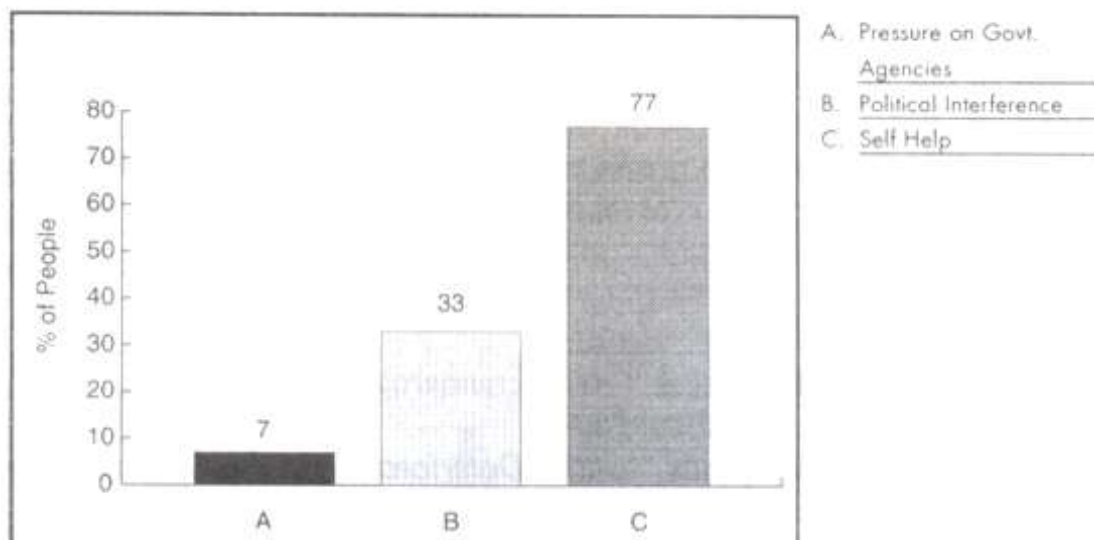
- A. Housing Conditions
- B. Garbage
- C. Water/Sewerage/
Drainage
- D. Health
- E. Education
- F. Recreational
Development
- G. Power Supply
- H. Noise
- I. Encroachments

13. Whom would you like to solve your problems?



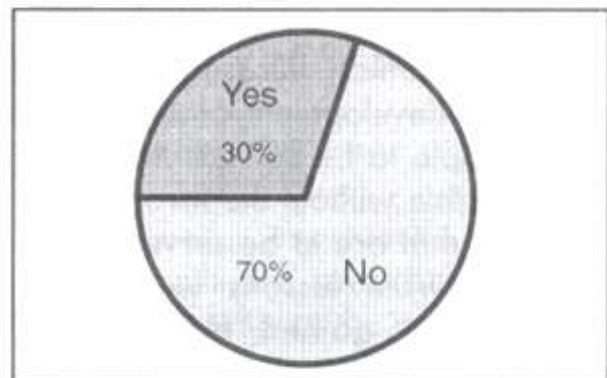
Who should resolve the issues

14. How do matters eventually get resolved in your area?



Problem Resolution

15. Do you think things are likely to improve in your area?



actors in the equation - government agencies, political representatives, citizen groups and the individuals themselves in either facilitating better management or otherwise.

Inter-relationships have been developed between social, managerial and technical aspects of observed problems and concerns to better understand the issues at hand. As has been stressed earlier in this report, in most of the planning and development exercises which have taken place in this country or are in the process of implementation, the element of public input and involvement has been the vital missing link. This critical failure on the part of our urban managers has resulted in the putting in place of various flawed policies and projects which have failed to deliver the required and expected results.

In such an important urban development sector such as "Housing", the main aim should be to come up with plans and procedures which properly address the ground realities while realistically forecasting the future development trends and patterns of the city in sectors as diverse as social dynamics, infrastructure and economic development of the areas and people to be served. All this is not possible without the involvement of those that are to be served or by drawing from lessons learnt and experiences gained from similar past projects.

Illumination

It is quite often the case, as has also been highlighted during the course of this study that in the process of gaining real access to the needs and concerns of the common people by closely interacting with them, certain long established, protected and highly revered myths are broken and the real picture that emerges is at odds with the development theories being practiced with great vigour and zeal by a host of NGO's and government agencies.

In the analysis that follows some of the issues which figure uppermost among the concerns expressed by the residents of the area are examined first and then the role of the players involved with the management of these issues is evaluated.

Enumeration

Deterioration in the Quality of Living

It was the unanimously held view of all the people who were



Rooms with a view!

approached during the course of the field survey that living conditions in the locality have deteriorated during their period of residence. Since the period of residence differed from person to person (family to family) from as much as 30 years in one case to 3 years in another, it can safely be assumed that the decline in living standards (housing, sanitary and environmental conditions) is gradual and continuous rather than sudden or passing.

A majority (73%) felt that the original planning of the scheme was flawed. Improper maintenance of existing facility was also considered an important factor (61%). Nobody expressed the view that overpopulation was a reason nor the misuse of facilities by residents!

Worst Effected Sectors

As per the views expressed by the residents (field data) it would be



Scene from a planned locality,
not a squatter settlement



Storm drains carry sewage and garbage

appropriate to deal with the areas of major concerns separately, for reasons of clarity in analysis and evaluation.

Water/Sewerage/Drainage

When the residents were asked as to which was the worst effected sector, a majority (73%) agreed that water quality was the primary concern. This fact equates well with the detection of a fairly large percentage of health related problems in the area, particularly among children. Water availability, however does not seem to be a major issue as only 20% of residents were not satisfied on this count. Use of unauthorised water drawing 'Suction Pumps', on a large scale could be one reason as most of the 20% dissatisfied residents lived in 'tail end' parts of the study area.

A proportionately large percentage (60%) of the households interviewed, expressed dissatisfaction with the sewerage system, while 40% felt that the area was not served with a properly functioning

drainage system. An overwhelming number of people (92%) felt that the main reason for the sorry state of affairs was lack of proper maintenance on the part of concerned officials, while 72% residents were also of the view that the original provision of lines/network was inadequate and not capable of meeting future demands. Quite interestingly only 27% residents suggested an extension in facilities while none felt that there were any cases of misuse of facilities by residents, which might be responsible for the breakdown in the system.

The priority given to this sector was further enhanced when 86% households opted for improvement in this sector if given a choice as to which problem they would prefer to be solved first.

Garbage

60% of the residents termed the Garbage Management System inadequate. The major reason cited for the unsatisfactory conditions is random dumping of garbage at unauthorized points by the residents (83%) which is a result of insufficient number of garbage collection points in the neighborhood (78%). Not many expressed dissatisfaction

with the garbage collection system. They felt that there were just too many nooks and corners where garbage was routinely dumped, thus rendering the collection process ineffective.

However, it is interesting to note that only 19% of the people felt that the garbage issue needed priority solution as compared to 86% who voted for solving the water/sewerage problem first. It seems that garbage is not equated with the health and sanitation problems in the area as is water quality and open sewers.



The easy way out

Housing : Not an Issue?

One of the most illuminating part of the whole exercise was that the issues of housing, building rules violations and encroachments elicited little or no response from the residents and figured comparatively very low in their priority list.

When asked as to which were the worst effected sectors, only 33% mentioned Housing. Even less enthusiastic was the response when asked to identify the defects in the housing facilities. 29% said it was due to small plot size, while 32% felt poor design/construction was the cause.

Majority of the residents felt that building rules/regulation violations was not an issue.

The few who felt that it was an issue termed the government officials (7%) and residents (5%)

responsible for breaking the rules. None mentioned the builders - This could be attributed to the fact that the role of the

builders is almost non-existent in the area and most of the new constructions and alterations are managed between the residents and officials.

Another revelation was that the residents did not feel that they were in any way responsible for the problems. When asked as to cite the problems facing the housing sector, none voted 'yes' when posed with the question *'Is construction of access floors by residents a cause'*? Another related question, *'is overpopulation a cause of decline in the living conditions in the area'*? received a unanimous 'no'.

Nobody felt that encroachments was an issue. Also, only 13% people felt that over the years conditions of privacy have deteriorated.

Road Conditions/Traffic

All the related data indicates that traffic and the associated factors are not a significant concern. Only 10% felt that there was deterioration in

this sector. The related factors like air quality and noise received extremely low priority. One reason could be that since the inner lanes are extremely



Narrow and closed lanes prevent the flow of heavy traffic.

narrow, there is no significant heavy or even medium level traffic within the neighborhood and almost all the traffic is restricted to the main roads.

A big vote for Recreational Development!

When the residents were asked that if given a choice which problem would they prefer to be solved first, 23% voted for recreational development, second only to their concern for water and sewerage and much ahead of issues like garbage, housing, power supply etc.

This figure should give our urban planners some food for thought, who consider this important sector of development of no consequence at all while planning new housing projects and facilities.

Information Matrix

(Housing and related problems in N. Karachi Sec. 5D)

Impact on Quality of Living

Causes of Deline in Quality of Living	Housing	Water/Sewerage /Drainage	Garbage Collection/Disposal	Ratings (Decline in Quality of Living)
Planning Defects	a (3)	a (3)	b (2)	8
Improper Maintenance/ Regulation by Govt. Agencies	b (2)	a (3)	c (1)	7
Lack of Extention in Facilities / Utilities	c (1)	b (2)	b (2)	6
Misuse of Facilities / Rules Violation by Residents	c (1)	c (1)	a (3)	5
Ratings (Impact on Quality of Living	7	9	8	

Note: Level of Impact is being defined by ratings. Higher ratings indicate greater adverse effects. The ratings are relative to one another.

Level	Ratings
a	(3) High
b	(2) Moderate
c	(1) Low

Conclusions

1. Water/Sewerage/Drainage are issues of major concern with both planning defects and improper maintenance being cited as causes of system inefficiency.
2. Shortcomings in the original planning of the Housing Scheme is considered the uppermost cause of decline in the quality of living

Information Matrix based on public opinion survey.

The Players

The role of government officials, citizen groups and individual efforts have been considered

The Government Official

Ideally the most active and efficient player in the process of managing the affairs of the area should be the government official, representing the municipal and development agencies. However, this does not seem to be the case in the case study area. 83% people were of the view that the government official was non-cooperative - an aspect of his behavior which is not effected by changes in political and administrative setups.

Citizen Groups

Although 30% people admitted to the presence of citizen groups in the area, none seem to approach them for redressal of their problems. Interestingly enough, again 30% answered in the affirmative when asked if they would like citizen

groups to help them in resolving their problems. This statistic seems to indicate that either the present groups are not effective or the people are not very comfortable with the idea of approaching them at present or both. However, the possible effectiveness of their role is also not being denied.

Individual Effort

77% people said that problems are solved on self help basis, or through political interference and pressure (33%). Despite this fact only 7% people preferred to solve their civic issues themselves and 70% still approached government officials for help while 93% felt that the government should be the agent of positive change in the civic management of their neighborhood.

Losing Hope?

A worrying aspect of the exercise was that 70% of the residents felt that given the present state of affairs, things were unlikely to improve in the future!



Another garbage collection point



Death traps!

As one retraces the history of Urban development in Pakistan, the tale that unfolds its complex web of hope and disillusionment, progress and decline, devotion and intrigue is dotted with one unfortunate byline - *broken promises and unfulfilled dreams*.

A Dream Gone Sour

In the early stages of development, the major development projects, particularly in the housing sector were not devoid of planning having a forward looking focus. The "Greater Karachi Resettlement Programme", was one such project. However, do any of the two housing projects i.e. Korangi and North Karachi exhibit any features which even closely resemble the guidelines, provisions of facilities, utilities and infrastructure, as outlined in the original planning documents? Obviously somewhere along the road, something went terribly wrong. **What happened and which factors or actors can be held responsible? Have we learnt any lessons?**

The answers to these questions are not easy and to address them in their totality was beyond the scope of this study. But some landmarks can certainly be set and some probing questions can indeed be posed.

A False Start?

If one looks at the original planning

document, references are made to facilities like central shopping centres, parks, theaters, parking spaces, pedestrian walkways etc. All these facilities are conspicuous by their absence in the study area. Were they ever built or wether over the years open spaces were encroached upon and land use conversions took place? A careful assessment of the historical development process of the area seems to point more to the former alternative. **So should the government share the major part of the blame?**

A Recipe for Disaster

There is also no denying the fact that the users have also abused the services available and violated the rules applicable. This is evident from the wide use of such devices as "suction pumps", alterations at the individual level in the water piping network, throwing of garbage in drains and sewers and conversion of single unit houses into multi-unit complexes. However, is it not valid also to point out that the residents were maybe forced to break the law and pollute the environment. The argument goes like this. When you have no provision for safely disposing your garbage, when sewer and water supply systems are not rehabilitated at regular intervals, when you do not have 24 hours water supply, when the regulators of the state turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to incidences of encroachments and land use conversions, are we

not mixing a recipe for the wanton disregard of rules and rape of systems and services? **Is it then a problem of maintenance of services?**

It would also be pertinent to ask the citizens whether they availed of all the legal remedies at their disposal before taking the law into their own hands. More often than not it would be found that they did not, either from want of knowledge or simply as a result of distrust in the system. So, is there a ray of hope to be found in educating and energizing the common man? It is also important to note that the common man is not willing to admit to his mistakes (committed consciously or unconsciously) and the government official is characterized by his behaviour of non-cooperation. **Maybe it is a social problem!**

More of the Same?

One can endlessly go on piling up a list of questions and identifying issues, such is the labyrinthine nature of the route to development (!) we have charted for ourselves. But the most important question of all is whether we are learning any lessons from our continuing follies, mistakes and misadventures? Have our development agencies, public or private, stopped making promises they cannot fulfill, given their lack of vision and defective planning mechanisms? Is there a conscious effort on their part to methodically and analytically evaluate the past development efforts and incorporate into their future plans provisions and safeguards to prevent breakdowns from happening again?

A Wake up Call from Shehri

Shehri, through this study has taken

a step in the direction of positive change by setting standards and parameters for assessing the causes of the decline in the housing sector of Karachi - particularly the state sponsored and managed housing sector. We have stressed the importance of gauging and documenting public opinion on issues which affect them directly and in which their input is of vital importance for our planners and developers.

We have assessed the respective roles of institutions, private enterprises, citizen groups and individuals that go into the making of urban development dynamics, given our own special social, administrative and management context. The following landmarks can be set

Why the Gap between Planning and Implementation?

It was interesting to note that the information matrix (see chart 3h) based on the public opinion survey revealed that the public very strongly felt that the original plans were inadequate to meet the future needs of the citizens. This feeling could be explained away by saying that since the plans never got fully implemented, it is useless to blame the planners. However, another inference could also be made. Pakistan is made up of a lot of different races and ethnicities. Karachi, being a mini Pakistan is a representative of all of them. These communities have their own socio-economic peculiarities, more apparent in the people belonging to the lower-middle income brackets. Housing and living patterns differ. Maybe, apart from engineering and technical concerns, socio-economic

factors need also to be considered while developing housing for a certain community. Most of the housing projects do not seem to reflect the character and socio-cultural traits of the communities that inhabit them. Some food of thought here?

Probably that is also why, at times setbacks have been met and seemingly insurmountable hurdles have been encountered during the process of allocation of plots and houses. Various housing schemes have failed to get off the ground due to mishandling of plot/house allocations, and have led to occupation of the same by land grabbers and land speculators, while the deserving occupants crowded the sidelines.

Disbursement of Housing Loans have also failed to stimulate growth in this sector due to non-conformity of the loaning procedures with the societal socio-economic trends and capacities to avail of the option.

Development and Management of Systems

There can be no two opinions about the fact that civic management systems have registered a progressive decline in their capacities to deliver in our country. Important civic services like water/sewerage/ garbage disposal are in a state of continuous decay. In the absence of efficiently functioning official systems, the citizens take matters in their own hands, a practice, which, if it is devoid of professional supervision of responsible organizations or groups is likely to result in abuse of systems and services. This process is further

aggravated by the failure of government agencies to enforce the writ of law, either by design or by default.

Need to Revive the Role of Government in the Housing Sector

It can be seen that even in advanced countries, where spending levels of citizens are extremely high as compared to ours, public housing is a popular and thriving link in urban development. The United States of America is one such country. So Why are we relying so much on the private sector?

The government can take various steps to facilitate the process. These may include, lowering the prices of land, offering plots to prospective buyers after the provision of basic infrastructure at site. Various models of development can adopted, say the Orangi Pilot Project Model, particularly for housing low to middle income groups.

End Note

Planning without vision, administration without transparency and knowledge and regulation without justice and fairplay has led us into one planning and development disaster after another. We can only reverse this trend if we learn from our mistakes, broaden our vision, ensure transparency and rule of law in our functioning and seek citizen help and support.

Shehri cannot claim to have all the answers but in the backdrop of this analytic exercise, it certainly has posed questions which we all need to understand and answer in double quick time.

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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



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Shehri is an NGO, involved in various projects related with protection and conservation of the natural and built environment of our country. Over the years, Shehri has built for itself a sound reputation in the field of environmental advocacy and the development and management of participatory approaches for solving regional issues. Whether they be issues of land use and zoning, solid waste management, nature conservation or policy debates, we can proudly claim to have made a significant contribution. We are also engaged in research work and preparation of environmental impact studies on several issues of environmental concern. Shehri also specializes in managing dialogues and interaction between local people and government agencies on issues and concerns which require joint action and participation.



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