

**THE CITY OF KARACHI:
PLANNING AND MANAGING FOR
URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

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1 Introduction

A large metropolitan area (megacity) is usually defined as a primary centre of industry, commerce and trade with populations in excess of 10 million. In a developing country these megacities provide a substantial share of gross national product and many of the goods and services required for the development of the other sectors. Accompanying economic and physical growth of the city is a governing demand for transport, water supply, sanitation, shelter, communications and other essential services which outstrip supply. With the expected emergence by the end of the century of 17 of 27 megacities in the developing countries, the brunt of the urban challenge will thus fall on these megacities of developing countries. These are and will continue to be hard pressed to find the requisite funds, skills and institutional capacities to meet the task unless changes in megacity management are instituted [Prud'homme, 1996; Davey, 1993; Willoughby 1987].

Megacity management has been identified recently [Clarke 1996] to be a combination of a number of factors, not limited to, good governance, development of mechanisms for policy and investment coordination, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of assets, the generation of

resources to meet needs, effective monitoring and a positive response to indicated changes needed. Urban management is concerned with policies, plans, programmes and practices. The performance of urban government is critical to the effective management of urban growth. Effective management is dependant on political stsbility, social cohesion, economic buoyancy, the skills and motivation of policy makers and the staff who serve cities [Davey 1993].

'the rapid growth of cities and the resulting stresses and strains will continue to be a major focus of attention in most developing countries, including Pakistan. According to projections, there would be an additional 18 million urban residents in Pakistan by the turn of the century of which Karachi is projected to draw 4 million. Housing these new residents, creating the jobs that they need to support themselves, maintaining the environment in which they live, providing transport systems that can move them from one place to another and administering the city where they will reside will be a major challenge, but one which must be met [Khan, 1987]. As a result, urban managers and planners are rightly concerned about the means to cope with this growth in an efficient and effective manner and are concerned that they have to meet the urbanisation challenge without adequate financial resources, a coherent guiding policy, or sufficient technical or managerial skills. Part of the problem may be the absence of a consensus on how to view urbanisation and how to deal with it [Juneja,

1987].

The metropolis of Karachi like all other major cities in the region is faced with many of the same problems that are faced by cities of the developing world. Population growth has been high for several decades and in-migration continues unabated. Despite road improvements and the introduction of traffic management, congestion continues to worsen as the numbers of private and commercial vehicles increases rapidly. Water distribution and sewerage collection network and services are designed to serve the needs of the more affluent pockets of the population. Sites and services projects are designed for the middle- to upper-income segments of society. This has led to the rapid expansion of squatter settlements. It is estimated that there are over 500 squatter pockets ranging in size from a single plot of land in a developed sites and pservices project to large tracts of undeveloped public land in the peri-urban areas of the city and their number is increasing daily. Solid waste disposal is conspicuous by its absence in large of the city - these are serviced by scavengers who earn a livelihood from recycling household and industrial waste dumped on the streets - the residual is left to pollute the environment. Air and noise pollution have reached hazardous levels - lead poisoning is a real threat. Karachi, which was once considered the cleanest city of Asia (circa the 1940s and 1950s) has now the distinction of being, perhaps, the filthiest.

2 The Management Of Metropolitan Karachi: **Its** Structure

Metropolitan Karachi today consists of five administrative districts and is managed by over 30 federal, provincial and local agencies each with *its own priorities*. *In theory these are coordinated by the Commissioner of Karachi who is nominally to be assisted by the Master Plan and Environmental Control Department (MPECD) of the Karachi Development Authority (KDA)*. Effective

early 1996 coordination has also become the responsibility of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) the prime municipal body managing the delivery of services to the citizens of Karachi. More often than not, the civic agencies, even though providing essential municipal services, are not responsible or accountable to the people of Karachi largely because of the structure of government, the centralisation of control and authority and interference, even in day to day management and operations, by higher tiers of government. The response to better management has not been the development and strengthening of institutions, but has been the creation of specialised agencies with too narrow a vision to serve vested interests, such as the recent fragmentation of Karachi Development Authority into three development authorities, the Malir, Lyari and Karachi. Bureaucracy has responded to the need to change by focusing on one or two functions or issues at a time, with the result that development is unplanned and management has become more fragmented, both sectorally and territorially. The metropolitan wide assessment of needs and resources

coupled to the establishment of sectoral priorities have not been undertaken on a continuing basis. After studying the way in which Asian cities are managed, Sivaramakrishnan [1986] states "Even though Karachi has its Development Authority and Metropolitan Corporation, a metropolitan policy continues to be lacking and there is little coordination of spatial and socio-economic planning for the metropolis at any level of government". This statement is as true today.

The apparent lack of planning and coordination is not unique to Karachi. Most large cities in the Asian and Pacific Region have development authorities which are charged with planning and coordination but without the legal framework to ensure compliance. A functional analysis of Colombo's urban management reveals that there is no legislation which could be used for overall planning and coordination of metropolitan development. In Calcutta, Madras and Bombay where a metropolitan perspective was used to plan initially, the process of integration has yet to be established successfully. In Karachi several city-wide growth and development plans have been prepared and have not been implemented because of the inability to enforce compliance largely due to the ability of agents and agencies to circumvent regulation. It would appear that throughout Asia the development authorities have, by and large, failed to make an effective impression or have tended to adopt sectoral roles themselves, such as in Karachi and Calcutta. A major

contributing factor has been the urban manager's concern with the political climate. It would appear that city managements are faced with severely restricted horizons jurisdictionally, functionally and temporally. Within these confines it is no wonder that the agency created for metropolitan development and planning - Karachi Development Authority (KDA) has strayed from its original goals and adopted new roles as it has accommodated itself to the changing political environment.

The experiences of most development authorities in the subcontinent would tend to indicate that these, like KDA, have developed into "little more than special public works agencies that are organised on orthodox bureaucratic lines and sector specific".[People's Bank, 1980]. The general consensus would appear to be that development authorities, even though established for undertaking metropolitan wide development and planning, have restricted themselves to the former only; and within the former to executing commercially profitable ventures by undertaking (on a self-financing basis) the partial development of strategically located and valuable urban land in a cost ineffective manner. Similar conclusions have been cited in the context of development authorities in India, particularly Delhi, and others in Pakistan [Sivaramakrishnan, 1986].

3 Key Issues And The Malaise In Planning And Management In common with other megacities in the region the major issues

which impact on the lack of efficient and effective planning and management may be categorised into six components. These are:

1. Institutional Framework
2. Planning and Coordination
3. Land and Shelter
4. Urban Infrastructure and Services
5. Transportation
6. Environmental Control

Karachi's problems appear to be compounded largely because of three major structural factors. The first would appear to be the lack of a metropolitan government committed to improving the quality of life of its citizens through good governance. It is generally accepted that the capacity of a city to manage itself is dependant on the way in which it is governed, that is, the extent to which it is autonomous, both administratively and fiscally, from higher tiers of government. Karachi is the only port city, the centre of international trade, the generator of a major portion of resources for both the federal and provincial government and perhaps its functionaries, the financial capital of Pakistan and the largest centre of employment and also a large pool of developed land which can be used for political patronage, it is no wonder that the upper tiers of government are not willing to grant it any autonomy. From the days immediately after partition when Karachi's municipal government was governed by an elected Council which sufficient resources to meet its needs there has been a gradual attrition of its autonomy culminating with the blatant denial of any autonomy following the latest amendments to the

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Local Government Ordinance which has placed municipal government as part of the fief of the Commissioner and respective Deputy Commissioners [Nauman, 1996].

The second factor contributing to Karachi's problems appears to be poor urban planning and management practices, and the third factor is cited to be the fragmentation of responsibility and authority in the delivery of municipal services. Each is closely inter-linked to the other. Even though market forces contribute to and shape the growth of urban growth and space utilisation, the role of planning and managing the growth and demand for services cannot be ignored [Khan, 1996]. A recent study on metropolitan management in Karachi concluded that even under the most favourable light the limited amount of urban development planning that is carried out is weak, unprofessional, uncoordinated and little more than a "vain hope". Coordinated and integrated planning and management, physical, financial, development and operational is almost absent in Karachi. The failure is the result of many and varied causes, but common themes include dominance of a crisis management style, absence of consistent systems and a human resource base is limited in numbers, quality and authority. Effective coordinated planning demands high level control. It needs to be a top down private sector management style activity and must be manned by qualified and dedicated professional team of managers. Another cause of failure is the indiscriminate use of

discretionary powers by Chief Executives to over-ride and set aside rules and regulations. These discretionary powers are perhaps the **greatest and singly the most important** factor leading to a lack of co-ordination. The use of discretionary powers is necessitated, perhaps, because of the need to assist **special interest groups from time to time** and also because of the Cantonment Boards' and development authorities' role in creating a demand rather than in responding to it.

Existing systems and procedures governing coordination and management were instituted several decades ago with little or no change. The existence of these set procedures lies in the premise that centralised decision-making and expenditure controls are seen as being essential for proper co-ordination of development activities and their subsequent management. Research on the planning and management process in Karachi concludes that the procedures are ineffective and in fact a spurious form of co-ordination; these are exhibited by time-consuming, energy-wasting, and patience-exhausting checks and counter-checks, references and cross-references, conferences and consultations, often at the wrong levels and about unimportant matters; and, co-ordination in the true sense of unified administrative leadership at vital points is generally lacking [Inbucon, 1991; Nauman, 1996; Pakistan, 1958; Waterston, 1979].

Only one agency in the city is truly metropolitan in character in that 9

its services and reach is throughout the city cross cutting all jurisdictional boundaries, namely, the Karachi Electric Supply Corporation. However, it is not managed and controlled by the citizens, but is controlled remotely from Islamabad through the Water and Power Development Authority. Where the

construction of new roads, bridges or implementation of traffic management schemes are concerned, KDA or its concerned component department is made responsible for planning and execution. Putting together any scheme requires approval from at least five agencies, one of which will invariably be a federal government agency. Here begins the story of years of frustration to bring about a consensus. One particular example is the proposal for an alternate access to Karachi Airport, first cited in 1984 as part of the Karachi Special Development Programme. Consensus on the alignment has yet to be achieved - 12 years have elapsed. The problems of urban management and planning can best be explained with the help of an Institutional Responsibility Analysis. Figure 1 demonstrates clearly not only the wide range of agencies from the three main control groups involved in individual functions, but also indicates the duplication and fragmentation of effort and the consequential gaps which remain unplugged, largely due to the proliferation of agencies.

The excessive fragmentation or duplication of functions makes it hard to get all government agencies concerned to do what is needed under a coherent policy. Land use is controlled by the Cantonment Boards,

MPECD and the Directorate of Planning & Urban Design, while building control rests with the Cantonment Boards, the autonomous Building Control Authority within KDA and K-MC. Each is autonomous and rarely, if ever, refers to the other. Thus there does not appear to be a single agency responsible for land use or shelter policy and management, nor does there appear to be any coordination between the several agencies of the three tiers of government or the private sector over either land use or shelter programmes. Public sector policies used to develop sites and shelter especially for low income communities have failed. The more effective informal sector provides shelter but on encroached land and in an unplanned manner causing many civic problems. Regularisation and upgrading of these informally developed squatter settlements is cumbersome, cost ineffective and by its very procedures assists in creating demand for more land. Community based programmes such as the Orangi Pilot Project and the Baldia Project provide a more affordable improvement in the quality of life. KMC has been working closely with the OPP in developing low-cost solutions to slum upgrading.

The most pervasive reasons for the failure of providing infrastructure and services to match demands is the lack of integrated urban planning, either in itself or in the coordination and implementation required to achieve success, the shortage of resources and the backward administrative practices of the public sector. Studies around the world in

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developing countries have concluded that many government offices appear to be overstaffed, while others cannot obtain extra personnel for essential increases in services. Officials are appointed and frequently shifted from one position to another without regard for their qualifications and experience, and often government officials do not enjoy sufficient continuity in office to enable them

to become really useful. Promotions appear to be based almost entirely on seniority and other considerations rather than on merit thereby affecting morale, which is generally low. The low remunerative structure compels many government servants to eke out a living taking outside jobs with resulting neglect of their official duties, while some find it difficult to resist the temptation to use their official position as an opportunity for illicit gain [Clarke, 1996; Prud'homme, 1996; Inbucon, 1991; Pakistan, 1958; Waterston, 1979]. Karachi is no exception to these observations. While most megacities are reasonably well endowed with funds, the management and budgeting procedures could see some improvement. Resources are used to subsidise services which should be able to cover full costs, such as land development and water supply. In some cities, such as Karachi, however, the overall metropolitan finances are unable to cover the costs of operations and maintenance largely because of poor tax administration and the lack of political will to exploit the full potential of the existing sources of revenue, unpredictable transfers from higher tiers of government and the lack of access to capital markets [Pasha, 1996, Inbucon, 1993].

Effective transportation policy is central to the economic and social well being of megacities. It can promote accessibility, reduce the costs of congestion, and improve lifestyles by reducing commuting times and pollution. Major constraints to achieve this objective include the lack of an awareness of the need, the lack of a purpose to deal with politically sensitive issues and solutions, the high costs of solutions, and weak inter-sectoral planning processes. In Karachi this is compounded by the vested lobby of engineers, not all trained in transportation engineering or transportation planning, pushing for the most expensive solutions in the presence of an apparent insurmountable resource constraint. This dichotomy causes inordinate delays in implementation and a widening of the need-resource gap while solutions are sought either for alternative cheaper designs or funding for the cost-ineffective proposals. None of the multi-year development plans have included a transportation plan for the city. Transport administration in Karachi, like most other functions for the metropolis, is carried out by a large number of agencies drawn from all tiers of government. There is little or no coordination between them as the Regional Transport Authority, charged with city-wide control of public provision of services, does not have the skills or the legislation needed.

In the development of Karachi generous allowance has been made for roads rights of way which has provided a sound basis for highway

network development to accommodate increasing traffic levels in areas outside the core urban area. Standards of road design and construction are reflected in generally poor alignment and lack of attention to detail and vary from agency to agency, particularly at signal controlled junctions and roundabouts.

Para transit services are provided by a combination of stage buses, mini-buses and pick-ups and contract vehicles belonging to cooperative societies and large industrial and commercial organisations catering in-house to members and staff, respectively. Excepting for about 120 buses of the Karachi Transport Corporation the rest are privately owned by small scale operators.

KTC services are concentrated mainly on the eastern corridor and area to the north. In the private sector the present route network is evolved in response to interest from an operator or public pressure, with the Regional Transport Authority deciding on route details. There is, in effect, no control over the number of buses or frequency on any route and no mechanism to ensure that there are any buses at all on a particular route.

In the urban area of Karachi peak hour traffic flows are reaching saturation levels and a number of projects, mainly under a special programme have led to network improvements and area and spot traffic

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management schemes; the largest being the Sadar area scheme. The road hierarchy is not clearly defined and to-date little use has been made of modern traffic management techniques to utilise secondary roads at peak times to reduce congestion. Bad driving habits and the "W" culture does not help in improving flow. Road **use management has improved** largely through the efforts of the Traffic Engineering Bureau. This has included area traffic management schemes and junction improvements. These "physical" have not been accompanied by

more rigid enforcement and a consumer education programme. The Traffic Police are hampered by having to deal with traffic regulation rather than enforcement. They are also restricted by outdated legislation and limited police procedures, restricted training and mobility, ineffectiveness of courts and the sensitive law and order situation.

One of the principal contributions to an improvement in the quality of life in megacities is through improvements in the environment. Environmental management is concerned with the provision of clean water, the drainage of waste water, removal of solid waste, the control of industrial effluent, the cleanliness of the air and the general upkeep of public places. The growth of the urban sprawl in Karachi, an increase in the density of its traffic, a deterioration in work ethics, the interference of politics in the appointment and utilisation of staff has resulted in a deterioration of the urban environment. Garbage rots on streets and is only

partially collected by scavengers in much of the city. Pools of waste water linked to overflows from surface drains (used as sewers) and blocked sewerage pipelines are breeding grounds for disease. Air pollution resulting from improper vehicle maintenance and the use of leaded fuels cannot be controlled as implementation of available legislation is weak. The highest contributors to air pollution are public sector vehicles. Industrial effluent is discharged untreated leading to a contamination of the aquifer and of the sea. The latter affects marine life and indirectly the health profile of the citizens. All this occurs because the responsibility for environmental management is fragmented between the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency, the MPECD of KDA, KMC and the Cantonment Boards, comprehensive legislation is conspicuous by its absence and the implementation machinery for what legislation exists is weak on all accounts, finance, skills, manpower, and is further hampered by weak judicial processes.

The budgeting and financial management systems are of dubious utility and have become increasingly irrelevant and the basic approach to staffing the financial function is misconceived [Inbucon 1991 and 1993]. An integral part of any budgeting system is good management information not restricted to financial information alone. This is lacking in most agencies in Karachi as this is considered to be a federal prerogative. The MPECD which should be the repository of all data on physical and

demand parameters in the city has no data base on which it could plan, yet its officers continue to draw a research allowance for this very purpose.

Accounting practices are unable to produce information in time for remedial action to be initiated. The process of computerisation was started in the late eighties. This has yet to be completed as the staff fear redundancy and the officers a reduction in incomes coupled to accountability [Nauman 1996, Inbucon 1991 and 1993].

4 Solutions For Change

The effective framework for urban growth depends on the arrangements of urban government, both structurally and endowed with systems and procedures which are flexible and imaginative and manned and operated by motivated, talented and skilled professional. The economic, political and social environment must support this. These factors are interactive. The first pre-requisite, therefore, appears to be the political will to let the megacities manage their own affairs without interference from higher tiers of government. Thus megacity governance must be guaranteed constitutionally to ensure continuance and a permanent existence and must be spread over a comprehensive boundary which includes both the developed core and the peri-urban areas. This must be endowed with an institutional mechanism that will coordinate the overall management, coordination and development planning processes (preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluating and modification)

with the individual sectoral planning and contribution of line agencies. The institutional arrangement must ensure the integration of the management, plan

implementation and monitoring process with land use control and building control. Megacity government should be ensured of a constant source of funds which are buoyant and must be supported by higher tiers through a guaranteed share of funds.

In the context of Karachi this would mean the enactment of legislation which ensures that the KMC is paramount and all urban service providing agencies from any tier of government fall within the overall control of the elected council. The role of the KMC should be restricted to gathering city-wide cross-jurisdictional taxes, planning for growth, coordinating the development effort and the delivery of services, monitoring the management effort, ensuring a city-wide set of regulations for land-use and building control, slum regularisation and upgrading, preparing transportation and traffic management schemes and approving any new sites, services and shelter proposals.

The delivery of services and the development of the urban infrastructure could then be given to specialised agencies which provide specific services such as the KWSB, KESC, KTC, or localised service units which provide a range of municipal services, such as the Cantonment Boards and the DMCs. These latter should be designed to cater to about 2

million residents. The role of development authorities should be restricted to land development in ways similar to the informal sector and NGOs, that is ensuring that there is a strong community participation in the development process. This should prove to be cost effective. It would appear that KDA has outlived its useful life after the creation of the MDA and the LDA. Government would be well advised to merge this into the KMC and sections pertaining to its various land development schemes into the DMCs for operational maintenance.

The lack of transport management and planning is becoming a major bottleneck to improving the quality of life for Karachi's residents. Existing legislation and implementation mechanisms are weak. Legislation should be amended and the penalties for infringement should include a mandatory detention period under custody, but not within the existing. Special holding areas should be introduced. The not so recent suggestion by the Supreme Court of appointing honorary traffic magistrates from amongst citizens of repute should be implemented without delay. Off street parking should be encouraged by permitting and facilitating, perhaps through loans or debenture financing, the construction of multi-storeyed car parks in congested areas in the CBD and the main shopping areas.

Managing the environment is another crisis area. Each element of

the field requires specific action. Waste water disposal can best be achieved by a faster response to complaints of leakages. As soon as the KMC, the DMCs and the CBs have an elected council, maintenance staff from K.WSB or CBs should be placed under the control of area councillors who should form the focal point for complaints and redressal. Solid waste collection should be privatised after redressal of the causes of failure of the recent trial private sector initiative. Street cleaning should also use the same principles as for waste water disposal, that is staff from DMCs and CBs should be placed under the control of area councillors. The recently announced NEQS should be implemented vigorously, but the KMC should be the monitoring agency and the honorary traffic magistrates' mandate should be expanded to deal with violations. Pollution by vehicles, should result in mandatory restraint under custody of both the driver and the owner or Chief Executive of the organisation owning the vehicle.

A large part of the changes suggested would require external assistance. A programme for change should be developed and international agencies approached for funding this.

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